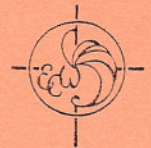




Episcopal Church Women — Diocese of Pennsylvania

240 South Fourth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106



During Women's History Month at the turn into this century it is well that we examine some of the gifts of our foremothers. The Episcopal Women of the Past of The Diocese of Pennsylvania, was published by the Episcopal Church Women in 1986 about women no longer living. Archives are the other document sources. For this effort we select two women by name and many, many others as individuals or groups.

Miss Mary Coles daily continues to touch the lives of many women in Philadelphia and the Diocese of Pennsylvania. She founded Coles House in 1863 "to provide working girls with a comfortable house for a reasonable board... and to offer protection from the various temptations of a large city". With part of her fortune for an endowment, Coles House continues today to provide shelter at modest cost to young working women and students. She also remembered church women in two ways. First, with the bequest to the diocese used for space for "women's work". This is highlighted in the sheet about the E.C.W. Office. Miss Coles' second legacy was a monetary gift where the interest is to be distributed annually by the E.C.W. Board. The four areas for this endowment to continue to honor her wishes are: Domestic Mission, Overseas Mission, Black Colleges and Indian Hope. These distributions are made annually and the use of this money, otherwise undesignated, is monitored.

Lea Farmer Hill (Mrs. John E.) shepherded many children who, as adults today, are communicants of All Saints, Rhawnhurst. They remember her for her loving discipline and nurturing support. We and all of the women of the Episcopal Church benefit from her trail blazing work. She was involved in the work of the Diocesan Women's Auxiliary serving as Vice President, and then as President. Her abilities were such that she was the first woman to be elected to National Council and to address the General Convention. In addition to being a model of vision and deportment for us, Mrs. Hill left money whose income is distributed annually in the same manner as Miss Coles.

Many women are remembered by name in our history book and anonymously in the mission fund and maintenance fund. The documents identifying the many money gifts have been put in the archives. The numerous funds were combined into two endowments in 1990 at the request of the Church Foundation. The mission money is distributed in the pattern of the two bequests. The work of the office touches all, thanks to the maintenance fund.

Over and over we have women remembered who "did it all". A huge proportion of these- we each remember at least one example - are clergy wives. These women lived in church-provided housing, not always conscientiously maintained, often next door to the church. Each of them did some or all ministries such as teaching huge Sunday School classes, serving on Altar Guild, participating in all Women's Auxiliary efforts, counseling and guiding children and young people. Their individual concepts of community and of fellowship for women which they passed on by example, not words, bind us to one another today.

In his introduction to Episcopal Women of the Past, Bishop Ogilby spoke to us all.

"One of the most wonderful gifts Our Creator has conveyed to us, dignifying our human nature, is blessing us with memory, reason, and skill. This makes it possible, yea important, for us to recall and recollect the past.....to tell the story, history, of those who have gone before us. As Christians, it helps us on our pilgrimage to hear and read about the steps our elder sisters have taken as disciples and followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Rt. Rev. Lyman C. Ogilby
Bishop of Pennsylvania
Epiphanytide 1986

Amy Lancaster
March, 2000

