Many years The New York Foundling Hospital provided annual shelter and protection to the hundreds of homeless mothers and married women who had been subject to contempt and have been cast out by those nearest to them. Because these women could not take care of their children, the sisters of the foundling hospital would open their arms to all of those desperate women in need of help. According to Annual Report of the Foundling Hospital of the Sisters of Charity, the mothers from time to time would be allowed to see their children and were encouraged by the hope of claiming them in the future, if they could prove themselves able to provide for them. When the babies were first entered into the hospital, they were registered and received a name and a number, and finally they were placed temporarily in one of the nurseries. The following day, they were confined to a wet nurse. After the nursery, the children were placed in the kindergarten where they would participate in exercises that developed their young minds. This prepared them for the serious labors of the classroom, which they were promoted to in due time. After the classroom, 40 to 50 children were sent to a western hope in the hopes of providing them with a better life.


### General History

The time period 1882-1884 was very significant for American History. During this time, the United States was starting to get very strict with their immigration policies. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Chester A. Arthur. This law forbid the Chinese labor immigrants from coming to the United States for ten years. Congress passed this law because they felt that the Chinese would endanger the good order of certain localities. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a very significant act because it was the first time in American history that the Federal law prohibited people to come to the States based on ethnicity.

http://www.archives.gov/research/chinese-americans/guide.html

### Letter #2

To The Foundling Hospital,

The things I’ve seen horrify me. These men that work by the ports are terrifying. They have no emotion or care for any other being. I have seen a man meeting with a woman every day after his shit. They seem quite happy when they meet. He seems well put together and works quite hard. They get intimate, and then the man (Joseph) always seemed like a girl who wants to take advantage of her. She seems like a girl who wants to take it slow and wants to invest in a long-term relationship. Such a sweet girl she was, and for her to be betrayed by Joseph is just horrible. One day, she comes to the port in such excitement due to her being pregnant. During the day, the baby was supposed to be born. Joseph was nowhere to be found. The young lady wasn’t too happy about it, either. Come to think of it now, as the pregnancy date came closer and closer, Joseph showed up less. She took care of the baby as long as she could have. I offered to care for her child as she went to look for work so she could support her child. She rejected my offer for someone reason which I do not want to know. Told her about how the foundling hospital cares for children and that they may be able to help her. She decided to take my advice, and here I am, writing this letter for her as she continues to look for work. I will say what she has said to me: “I will come back to care for my child as soon as I am able to support the two of us. My child is my responsibility, and no one else should have to hold the burden.” Please consider the situation the poor women is in.

### An everyday struggle for homeless children of New York during the years of 1882-1884

During the time period of 1882-1884, the New York Foundling Hospital was a center of hope for struggling mothers striving to provide a better life for their children.

Office of Undergraduate Research

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