

Guide to the **Reconstruction Home Collection**

The History Center in Tompkins County

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Accompanying Collection – FBO Photography Collection 0159.1-._

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

This collection contains materials regarding the Reconstruction Home in Ithaca, NY. Following the 1916 Polio Epidemic the New York State Department of Public Health assigned Anna Quackenbush to lead rehabilitation services for victims of infantile paralysis, or polio, in the Ithaca area. Miss Quackenbush took up residence in Ithaca with Miss Mary Hibbard. Miss Hibbard quickly became involved in the rehabilitation mission and voluntarily took four children with infantile paralysis into her home. Together, both ladies provided care to the children under Miss Quackenbush's direction. Miss Hibbard used networking opportunities, especially luncheons with local businessmen, to bring in donations and funding to support local polio victims. In 1920, the Bostwick House on S. Albany St. was opened and devoted exclusively to the rehabilitation of those who suffered from infantile paralysis. It was the first home of its kind in the nation and received praise from such notable figures as Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In 1929 the Home was able to expand even more thanks to the donations of one of the Home's most generous supporters, Virgil D. Morse or "Daddy Morse." Around the same time, the Home also cared for local orphans like Charles Taggart who later wrote an insightful memoir about life at the Home. The Reconstruction Home continued to flourish due to Ithaca's outpouring of support. The local radio station, WHCU, even dedicated an entire week, known as "Operation Polio," during the annual March of Dimes initiative to raise awareness and donations for victims of infantile paralysis.

By 1932, the Reconstruction Home no longer exclusively treated polio patients. They expanded care to include patients with spastic paralytics. As the polio vaccine began to reduce the need for a polio rehabilitation home, the Reconstruction Home opened its doors to elderly patients seeking a nursing home and rehabilitation services. In the 1990s, the Home became a pioneer in health care once again as it opened the only Alzheimer's Unit and Adult Day Health Center and on-site rehabilitation in the area.

At the time of this writing the Home still exists by the name of Beechtree Care Center and cares primarily for elderly patients.

CONTAINER LIST

<i>Description</i>	<i>Folders</i>
General Histories and Pamphlets (1916-1995)	1
Student History Project (N.D.)	Loose in box
Home Newsletters	2
RHI News (1948)	
Recon Reporter (1995, 1997, 2000)	
News Clippings (1920-2008)	3
Annual Reports and Financial Journal (1943, 1950-1954)	4
Correspondence (1921-1923, 1929, 1936, 1975, 1995, 2004)	5
Morse Family Materials	6
Board Minutes (1921)	
Correspondence (1921-1923)	
News Clippings (1929, 1937)	
Family Tree	
“V.D.’s Stories as Told by Virgil D. Morse” (1861-1937)	Loose in box
Hibbard Family Materials	7
Will of Henry F. Hibbard (1865)	
Will of Mary Hibbard (1925)	
News Article (1928)	
Secondary Organizations	8
Reconstruction Home Guild (1929, 1934)	
Mary Hibbard Aid (1972)	
Mary Hibbard Aid Minutes (1971-1972)	Loose in box
Boy Scout Troop (1928-1971)	9
“Operation Polio” (1948)	10
Home Reunion (1941, 1955)	11
2004 Gala	12
Miscellaneous	13
Sheet of notes about the Home	
Record	Loose in Box
Taggart Family Excerpt from Taggart Family Genealogy File	14
Correspondence (1990, 1991)	
Charles Taggart Memoir (1928-1948)	