

King's Daughters and Sons ^[1]

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The King's Daughters and Sons developed out of a new Christian service order, the Silent Sisters of Service, formed in New York City by Margaret Bottome on 13 Jan. 1886. Originally open only to women, it accepted men in 1887 and was incorporated in 1891. Emma G. Williams of [Wilmington](#) ^[2] was in New York when the order was founded. After returning home in 1886, she organized a branch at Wilmington's First Baptist Church, which was soon opened to women of all churches. Its first project was the purchase of a cemetery plot for the "worthy poor." In 1887 a group was formed in [Greensboro](#) ^[3], and from 1891 to 1893 it operated that city's first hospital. Salisbury, Greenville, and Henderson soon had local orders, and the first state convention in North Carolina was held in Greensboro in 1890.

By 1902 there were 26 active groups of King's Daughters engaged in charitable projects at the local level. At the annual convention that year the president, Margaret Burgwyn, led in uniting them to undertake projects of statewide significance. Chartered by the General Assembly in 1903, they soon offered to donate a 50-acre tract in [Moore County](#) ^[4] for a "reform" school and pledged \$1,000 for construction of a carpenter's shop. They failed to secure legislative support, however, and it was not until 1907 that lobbying efforts led to the creation of the [Stonewall Jackson Training and Industrial School](#) ^[5]. Three members of the King's Daughters were named to the board of trustees and the order, joined by the [Federation of Women's Clubs](#) ^[6] and other organizations, lent significant financial support to the new school. A handsome stone memorial chapel erected in 1914 was named for Burgwyn, who served as president of the North Carolina branch of the King's Daughters for 23 years.

In 1911 a retirement home for women was erected by the Durham order, and in 1923 a similar home was dedicated in Raleigh. In 1921, with the help of churches throughout the state, the King's Daughters began to raise funds to construct a chapel for young female offenders housed at [Samarcan Manor](#) ^[7], a state correctional institution in Moore County. Support of the order in Durham resulted in the construction of the Sara Barker Development Center in Durham to enrich the lives of children with developmental disabilities.

Although membership in the North Carolina branch declined near the end of the twentieth century, local orders of the King's Daughters and Sons have continued to support programs of long standing, some nearing the century mark. The group continues to operate as an interdenominational, interracial Christian service organization dedicated to the "development of spiritual life and stimulation of Christian activity." It supports a scholarship program to train leaders for positions of Christian leadership and for health-related careers and to educate [North American Indians](#) ^[8]. It also supports such international projects as Laubach International, World Vision, and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, it places emphasis on the global eradication of leprosy. The group's headquarters is at Lake Chautauqua, N.Y.

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Additional Resources:

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Wilmington](#) ^[16]

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Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.^[17]

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