

New Bern Benevolent Society ^[1]

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by Victor T. Jones Jr., 2006

The New Bern Benevolent Society traces its roots to the 1812 founding of the New Bern Female Charitable Society, the first [benevolent society](#) ^[2] incorporated in North Carolina. The society was formed to offer relief to the poor and to educate poor female children. According to an 1823 financial report, the society brought in \$324.50 that year, earning most of the money from the sale of manufactured articles. Expenditures amounted to \$240.31, with the majority of that used to employ poor women.

The society reorganized in 1837 and was [chartered](#) ^[3] in 1854, changing its name to the New Bern Female Benevolent Society. The name of the organization eventually evolved into the New Bern Benevolent Society. In 1953 the New Bern Benevolent Society built the Enoch Wadsworth Memorial Home to provide a home for elderly women on limited incomes. Funds for the building of the Wadsworth Home came in part from a trust fund left by Mrs. Enoch Wadsworth in her will. By the early 2000s the New Bern Benevolent Society had decreased to fewer than 20 members, mostly representatives from local Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups.

Additional Resources:

"An Act to Incorporate the Female Benevolent Society of Newbern, in the Town of Newbern." *Private laws of the State of North-Carolina, passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1854-'55*. Raleigh [N.C.]: Holden and Wilson. 1854. p.445. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/private-laws-of-the-state-of-north-carolina-passed-by-the-general-assembly-1854-1855/1952644?item=2051644> ^[3] (accessed September 27, 2012).

Carraway, Gertrude Sprague. *New Bern, North Carolina industrially : a modern city with historic traditions*. 1940. p. 57. <http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/fullview.aspx?id=can> ^[4] (accessed September 27, 2012).

Brown, Roy Melton. *Public Poor Relief in North Carolina* ^[5]. Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 1925. p. 152.

Johnson, Guion Griffis. *Volunteers in community service* ^[6]. North Carolina Council of Women's Organizations. 1967. p. 19.

Authors:

[Jones, Victor T., Jr.](#) ^[7]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[8]

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