

Refuges in Canada and the United States in the second half of the 19th century

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Toronto Industrial House of Refuge

- The Toronto Industrial House of Refuge, also known as the Magdalen Asylum opened in 1853. It is the most mentioned Refuge in the articles studied for this research.
- It was a refuge for former prostitutes and homeless men and women.
- It was opened by a small group of Toronto Church women on Christian principles.
- A department for elderly women was opened in the Refuge in 1883, and another for elderly men a few years later thanks to a legacy gift which allowed the erection of a new building
- The Refuge closed in the beginning of the 20th century, due to the multiplication of other refuges in the city



Refugees from the US to Canada

- Many slaves came from the Southern United States to Canada before the Civil War in order to become free since Canada, as a British colony, had abolished slavery.
- Many associations in Canada helped escaped slaves, such as the British North American Association for the Relief and Protection of Slaves and the Ladies' Association in Aid of the Coloured Refugees.
- Lots of men came to Canada to seek refuge during the American Civil War in order to escape conscription, which became mandatory in Northern States in 1862.
- After the war, the number of refugees coming from the US decreased dramatically. Still, a considerable number of criminals continued coming to Canada in order to escape the charges they were facing in the United States.
- In 1865, the Governor General even organized a system of detective police on the US-Canadian border to prevent those criminals from entering Canada.

Women's role in Sanctuaries

- Women played a crucial role in Refuges, from opening some to helping in the daily organization
- The Ladies' Association in Aid of the Coloured Refugees which helped slaves who had escaped from the Southern United State find refuge and a better life in Canada
- The Ladies' Protestant Home in Quebec City, which was a refuge for orphan children and aged women, managed by a committee of 24 ladies.
- The Women's Christian Association which founded the Industrial House in Montreal in 1875 to help young unmarried women be more autonomous. It was also a place of refuge for women fleeing from the police
- In Toronto, the Ladies' Montefiore Society took care of the sick and destitute Jews
- Women also played an important role in the everyday management of the refuges, working as nurses, cooks, and matrons and by doing fundraisers.

The multiplication of Refuges

- There was a great increase in the number of refuges in Canada in the second half of the 19th century, as well as in the groups those refuges offered help to
- Many new refuges were offered to prostitutes. New Houses of Refuge were opened to them, for instance the Erring Women's Refuge in Chicago as well as many Magdalen Asylums, such as the one in Yorkville, New York, in 1873.
- There was also a new desire to better integrate former prisoners into society after their release from prison. In New York, for example, a refuge for discharged convicts was opened in 1879, in which the men, in exchange for food and lodging, had to work all day.
- There were two main reasons for the multiplication of Refuges. One of the reasons, in Toronto, was the Toronto's mayor's decision, in 1850, to form a Committee to provide money, through direct public taxes to an Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, one for the Blind, to a House of Refuge and a School for the reformation of juvenile delinquents. Another reason for the multiplication was the Canada's House of Refuge Act, in 1890. The act stated that each county was to provide a house and an associated "industrial farm" in exchange of a grant of up to \$4,000 to purchase at least 45 acres of land and construct a suitable building for those refuges.