

For Their Maintenance and Education: An Analysis of Children Entering Christ's
Hospital, London, 1763-1803

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ABSTRACT PAGE

Since 1552, Christ's Hospital has operated within Great Britain in order to educate and mold children from poor, disadvantaged families into productive members of society. While the school has a rich history that warrants examination in itself, this study is concerned with Christ's Hospital in the eighteenth century and the children that lived and learned there.

Unlike previous scholarship about the school, this study provides new insight into how Christ's Hospital operated during the eighteenth century. By examining presentation petitions set forth to Christ's Hospital between the years 1763 and 1803, it is possible to gain a better understanding of what type of children were entering the school and where they were coming from throughout this time period. Furthermore, the school's Children's Register provides information about what happened to each child upon his or her departure from Christ's Hospital. Together, these documents illustrate that the school was not merely an insular, isolated institution within the City of London, but instead served as a hub by taking in children from within Great Britain and sending them out across the globe.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Christ's Hospital in Context	5
Chapter 2: Life at Christ's Hospital During the Eighteenth Century	17
Chapter 3: Children Entering Christ's Hospital, 1763-1803	31
Conclusion	60
Bibliography	64
Vita	69

For Pop
I wish you were here to read this.

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Introduction

When King Edward VI issued the charter for the royal foundation of three hospitals in 1552, the city of London was reaching the peak of a crisis.¹ City officials were convinced that the vagrants and wandering poor littering the streets of the city would destroy the social and political order of England. The foundation of these hospitals was a measure encouraged by the King and other officials of the city to remedy this problem. Christ's Hospital, one of the hospitals created by Edward VI's charter, helped poor and overburdened families of the city by taking in children for the purposes of educating them and molding them into productive members of society. From the start, the school took in both boys and girls from poor families, and it still continues to operate today, over four centuries after its foundation.

In 1984, G.A.T. Allan wrote that "Christ's Hospital boasts a literature richer than that of any other school."² While a plethora of literature that pertains specifically to Christ's Hospital certainly exists, very few academic studies of the school have been undertaken. Individuals with direct connection to the school wrote the majority of its history. According to Allan, who attended Christ's Hospital from 1897 until 1902, "the unique traditions of the Hospital and [a] profound sense of community and gratitude" sparked "generations [of alumni] to set to print their tributes and their recollections."³ Many of these authors maintained their relationship with Christ's Hospital during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and their work concentrates largely on the

¹ It should be noted that the Oxford English Dictionary contains several definitions for the term "hospital." The word hospital, for the purposes of this study, is defined as both "a charitable institution for the housing and maintenance of the needy; an asylum for the destitute, infirm, or aged" as well as "a charitable institution for the education and maintenance of the young." See "hospital, n.," OED Online, March 2011, Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/88724> (accessed April 15, 2011).

² G.A.T. Allan, revised by J.E. Morpurgo, *Christ's Hospital* (London: Town County Books, 1984), 9.

³ Ibid.

time they spent at the school in addition to maintaining the nostalgic nature of the secondary literature pertaining to Christ's Hospital.

For the most part, these books offer narrative histories of the school and provide commentary on traditions, classes and the school's administration. Authors such as E.H. Pearce, Edmund Blunden, J.E. Morpurgo, William Trollope took great pains to outline the foundation of the school and its most well-known traditions.⁴ Each book about the school lauds the accomplishments of prominent students that were educated there as well as the various masters and teachers that spent time at Christ's Hospital throughout its history. The entire historiography of the school is extremely self-referential. Almost all of the books published about Christ's Hospital look to the 1582 history of the school written by John Howes, an early school official, for information about its early years. Other histories such as Charles Lamb's *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago* and Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* are also relied upon heavily by Christ's Hospital historians in order to describe other periods of the school's history. Although extant literature about Christ's Hospital is undoubtedly useful, all the books tend to contain the same information: history about the school and its traditions. As a result of the self-referential nature of the studies of Christ's Hospital, each book tends to have a positive tone about the school as they gloss over various aspects of the school's past that do not put it in a glowing light.

⁴ See Edmund Blunden, *Christ's Hospital: A Retrospect* (London: White Friars Press, Ltd., n.d.); Edmund Blunden, J.E. Morpurgo, et. al., eds. *The Christ's Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953); J.E. Morpurgo, *Christ's Hospital: An Introductory History* (N.p.: n.p., 1991); E.H. Pearce, *Annals of Christ's Hospital* (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1908); William Trollope, *A History of the Royal Foundation of Christ's Hospital* (London: William Pickering, 1834).

Only two academic studies of Christ's Hospital have appeared over the past twenty years. These are Carol Kazmierczak Manzinoe's *Christ's Hospital of London, 1552-1598: 'A Passing Deed of Pity'* and Christopher Daly's *The Hospitals of London: Administration, Refoundation, and Benefaction, c.1500-1572*. Manzinoe's study looks at the social and political context in which Christ's Hospital was founded in addition to how it operated from 1552 until 1598. While Manzinoe relies heavily on the literature previously discussed, she also uses the school's archival records in order to discuss the operation of the institution during the sixteenth century. Daly's work, on the other hand looks at the foundation of all the royal hospitals during the sixteenth century. He looks at the histories of St. Thomas the Apostle Hospital, Bridewell Hospital and Christ's Hospital, in order to illuminate the problems faced by London officials in regulating and caring for the poor. While both of these studies are beneficial to the historian of the sixteenth century, very little has been written about Christ's Hospital in the eighteenth century.

To that end, this study is intended to illuminate information about Christ's Hospital during the eighteenth century. By analyzing the records pertaining directly to the entry of children to the school dating between 1763 and 1803, a variety of information about what kinds of children were taken into the school, where they came from and how demographics across the England differed during this period. Looking at these records will also provide an understanding as to where children came from in order to be educated, and, in turn, where pockets of poverty existed within England. Additionally, the records of Christ's Hospital illuminate the effect that the institution had across the British Empire and the world throughout the century.

For the purposes of explaining the background of Christ's Hospital, chapter one of this study looks at the early years of the school, the structure of its administration and how this changed over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter two pertains directly to the eighteenth century. Literature about the school and memoirs left by its students have been used in order to better understand how the school operated on a daily basis and what the boys and girls experienced while there. Finally, chapter three provides a statistical analysis of presentation papers dating from 1763 until 1803 in order to illuminate issues discussed above. This chapter provides a unique contribution to literature pertaining to Christ's Hospital as the demographics of the student body have not been studied before. This chapter also illustrates key demographic differences between metropolitan London and other areas within Great Britain.

Overall, this study analyzes the records of Christ's Hospital in order to illustrate the demographics of the student body at Christ's Hospital during the later half of the eighteenth century. In looking at the flow of students into the school, it is possible to see that Christ's Hospital, in addition to taking in children from London families, served to aid unfortunate children from across England as a whole. Additionally, the body of literature pertaining to the Christ's Hospital consists mainly of memoirs and other nostalgic accounts. As such, this study illuminates typical experiences of the student body as a whole, which supplements the accounts left by an unrepresentative sample of individuals who published their memoirs about the school.

Chapter 1: Christ's Hospital in Context

“. . .neither children yet being in their infancy shall lack good education and instruction, nor when they shall obtain riper years shall be destitute of honest callings and occupations, whence and whereby they may honestly exercise themselves in some good faculty and science, for the advantage and utility of the commonwealth . . .”¹

Foundation Charter of Christ's, Bridewell and St. Thomas the Apostle Hospitals

While this study pertains mainly to the eighteenth century, it is necessary to understand the conditions under which Christ's Hospital was founded and how it evolved during its first two centuries of existence. Although the school's history itself is rich enough to warrant study, looking at the foundation of Christ's Hospital in conjunction with St. Thomas the Apostle Hospital and Bridewell Hospital, which shared a the royal charter with the school, illuminates how Englishmen in the sixteenth century viewed their surroundings and how they manipulated societal structures in order to gain control over forces they perceived as threats to order and stability.

When Christ's Hospital was chartered in 1552 along with St. Thomas the Apostle Hospital and Bridewell Hospital, English society was rapidly evolving. This was a time of political, social and economic integration that led to growth in societal stability and the prominence of England within a larger European context.² While England's place in the political world was solidifying, by the end of this period, economic conditions had deteriorated. Thousands of individuals were propelled into of poverty.

¹ “Foundation Charter of King Edward VI, of the Hospitals of Christ, Bridewell and St. Thomas the Apostle,” in *A History of the Royal Foundation of Christ's Hospital with an Account of the Plan of Education, the Internal Economy of the Institution and Memoirs of Eminent Blues*, translated by William Trollope (London: William Pickering, 1834), li.

² D.M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England under the Later Tudors, 1547-1603*, 2d ed. (London: Longman Group Limited, 1992), 10-14.

In his book *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England*, John Pound argues that ex-servicemen, the rising population, changes within the cloth industry, enclosure, inflation, the plague and the dissolution of the monasteries all played significant roles in the rise of impoverishment throughout the Tudor era.³ While no one of these factors can be singled out as the sole cause of widespread distress, it is apparent that over time, they combined to force the less fortunate into lives of vagrancy and pauperism, a lifestyle that many felt threatened England's stability. Although it is impossible to accurately quantify the number of poor and vagrant individuals in England during this time, it is apparent that poverty, for a variety of reasons, was a widespread problem and a major concern for English officials. Furthermore, the effects of the Reformation and its attacks on alms served to exacerbate the issue of poverty in England. The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in 1536-1538 served to eliminate a pillar of charitable support that had once provided food and care for the needy vanished.⁴

Like the rest of England, London was not immune to the problem of poverty. While charity and relief were not entirely absent from England's capital, unemployment and vagrancy were so prevalent and the gap between rich and poor so great that city officials took it upon themselves to create an infrastructure to deal with the issue and, in turn, restore order.⁵ The absence of support from the monasteries, along with the growing population of the city, caused mainly by an influx of migrants into the city from outlying areas, only served to exacerbate the problem of vagrancy and pauperism on London's

³ John Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England*, Seminar Studies in History (London: Longman Group Limited, 1971), 4-5.

⁴ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 42-48.

⁵ Carol Kazmierczak Manzione, *Christ's Hospital of London, 1552-1598: 'A Passing Deed of Pity'* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1995), 20.

streets. In fact, Carol Kazmierczak Manzione notes that half of the urban growth in England between 1500 and 1700 was due to the growth of London. In the 1550s, the London was home to seventy thousand, a number that increased to two hundred thousand by the end of the century. By 1700 the city contained 10 percent of England's population.⁶ Consequently, Londoners recognized the need to establish formal institutions to deal with the poor, whom contemporaries began to see as a citywide and national problem; not something isolated to certain parishes.⁷ It was this social context that inspired city officials to impose order on their environment by creating a number of hospitals within London, which would be charged with providing relief for the worthy poor and reforming those who were considered to be idle.

It was typical during this time to divide the poorer sorts into distinct categories: the poor by impotency, the poor by casualty and the thriftless poor. The deserving poor included the aged, orphans and blind. The poor by casualty included those who were sick, diseased and wounded, while the thriftless poor included rouges, vagabonds and prostitutes. This system of categorization determined which individuals would receive relief and which individuals would be reformed. The poor by casualty and the impotent poor, who reached their station by no fault of their own, were deemed worthy of relief, while the vagabonds and rouges were deemed to have character flaws and moral defects were sent to be "reformed."⁸ Possibly drawing inspiration from hospitals already operating in Continental Europe, English officials strived to create a similar system in

⁶ Manzione, 17.

⁷ Steven Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 125-126.

⁸ Eric Bennett, "The Beginnings" in *The Christ's Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 5-6; Christopher Daly, "The Hospitals of London: Administration, Refoundation and Benefaction, c. 1500-1572" (D. Phil. Dissertation, Jesus College, Oxford University, 1993), 113-115; Edmund Blunden, *Christ's Hospital: A Retrospect* (London: Christopher's, n.d.), 4-5; Manzione, 21.

their own society to assist in regulating the impoverished population. Christopher Daly notes that there is not enough evidence to state how influential contemporary accounts of Europe, such as William Thomas's *History of Italy* and the travel accounts of Thomas Hoby, were on those involved with the hospital movement in London. However, it seems apparent that the city-run hospitals of Geneva and Lyons may have served as loose models for the London system.⁹

What resulted, over the course of several years, was a system of individual hospitals governed by the city that would "form a part of a larger whole" by "integrating their efforts and cooperating with one another to deal with an array of social problems faced by [London]."¹⁰ This involved the creation of three new organizations, Christ's Hospital, St. Thomas the Apostle Hospital and Bridewell Hospital. Of the three hospitals, St. Thomas's treated the sick. Christ's served as an orphanage and school, while Bridewell "functioned as a house of correction and center of vocational training."¹¹ Taken together, city officials and hospital administrators believed that these institutions, while functioning separately, would work together to rid London of its social dilemmas.

Funding for these institutions came from a variety of sources. While some funds were put up by those involved directly in the hospitals' foundation, the committee also appealed to the public for donations. Committee members divided themselves into teams and turned to the clergy of the city for help by persuading "them that they shoulde drawe

⁹ Daly, 139-140.

¹⁰ Ibid., 145-146.

¹¹ Ibid., 146.

on the rest of their parishioners to a frank benevolence & weekly pension.”¹²

Furthermore, the committee “devised also that there should be boxes provided to every Inholder” in the hopes that they “might gather of their guests their benevolence to that good work.”¹³ Tender boxes were also given to the livery companies that operated within the city for the purpose of raising funds, and some individuals, such as “Mr. Calthorpe,” donated 500 feather beds, 500 pads of straw, blankets and 1000 pairs of sheets for the purpose of furnishing Christ’s Hospital specifically.¹⁴

With the funds raised and the sick and idle taken care of at St. Thomas’s and Bridewell, respectively, children deemed worthy of charitable assistance were sent to Christ’s Hospital. Established so that “children yet being in their infancy shall not lack good education and instruction,” Christ’s Hospital served the dual purpose of orphanage and school.¹⁵ In its early years, the school took in orphans, foundlings and even children of individuals who were situated in St. Thomas’s or Bridewell in addition to children from overburdened families. Other children were taken in for the express purposes of receiving medical attention, upon the completion of which, they were discharged.¹⁶ The primary purpose of the institution, however, was to insure that children from destitute families had the opportunity to receive training and skills that would ultimately make them productive members of society. Housed in the former monastery of the Greyfriars,

¹² John Howes, *A Brief Note of the Order and Manner of Proceedings in the First Erection of the Three Royal Hospitals of Christ, Bridewell & Saint Thomas the Apostle*. (1582; reprint, London: n.p., 1904), 23-24.

¹³ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁴ Bennett, 7.

¹⁵ “Foundation Charter of King Edward VI, of the Hospitals of Christ, Bridewell and St. Thomas the Apostle,” in *A History of the Royal Foundation of Christ’s Hospital with an Account of the Plan of Education, the Internal Economy of the Institution and Memoirs of Eminent Blues*, translated by William Trollope (London: William Pickering, 1834), li.

¹⁶ Manzione 138-145.

Christ's Hospital was not intended as "a warehouse for unwanted children," but a "caring place" where children could "receive an education" and then return "to London society as useful and productive members."¹⁷

A body of individuals with varying job descriptions was charged with the day-to-day workings of the school and the care of the children housed there. These jobs were divided into two main categories: governors and paid employees. Governors, who were not paid, concerned themselves with administrative duties, including supervising the hospital's funds and keeping track of the hospital's outlying properties in addition to paying employees, insuring that the school's buildings were sound, and admitting and discharging children.¹⁸ While the governors did not come into contact with the children of Christ's Hospital regularly, paid employees insured that children in the hospital received proper care. A list of the hospital's first employees appearing in John Howe's 1582 account of the school includes a warden, a clerk, a steward, a butler, an under butler, a cook, porters, a matron, several "systers" and a brewer. Additionally, he notes that the school employed a grammar master, a grammar usher, a writing instructor, "Schoole-maisters for the Petties A.B.C.," a music instructor, two surgeons, a barber, a tailor, a coal keeper, and a mason.¹⁹

Obviously, instructors were charged with the task of imparting knowledge to their young students, and it is their mention in the first record of the hospital that historians of the school claim illustrates the fact that Christ's Hospital was, from the start, intended to

¹⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸ Ibid., 40-46.

¹⁹ Howes, 34-37.

be a school as opposed to an orphanage or foundling hospital.²⁰ As such, early governors of the hospital expected that “men children should be able to read, write and cast up accounts and be found ‘apte thereunto’” before being discharged.²¹ Music also served an important role in the early years of Christ’s Hospital as a vocation in the field “was no very unusual means to a livelihood.”²² Children who did not excel in the Writing or Music Schools were sent to Bridewell to learn trades or kept at Christ’s Hospital in order to learn skills such as spinning and needle-making. E.H. Pearce states that four children were taught trades at Bridewell in 1562 and that their meals were taken at Christ’s Hospital. Other children were brought in to make thread and spin flax. A tapestry maker was also employed by the school and was charged with the task of teaching two children.²³

Christ’s Hospital was not intended as a place exclusively for male students. On the contrary, governors of the school selected girls as some of their first admissions. One ward of the school was completely devoted to female students. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, benefactors began to leave money specifically designated for the education of girls.²⁴ The Writing School’s master taught girls to read and write “when the boys did not need the building.”²⁵ They were also trained in skills that would make them good domestic servants, a fate that met most of the girls discharged from Christ’s Hospital.²⁶ The girls’ dormitory was situated near the wardrobe and cutting room of the

²⁰ E.H. Pearce, *Annals of Christ’s Hospital*, 2d edition (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1908), 26.

²¹ Bennett, 9.

²² Blunden, 19; Edmund Blunden, “Introduction,” in *The Christ’s Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), xxxi.

²³ Blunden 19; Pearce, 170-171.

²⁴ Page, 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

hospital, which suggests that in the earliest years of the hospital's existence, female students were employed in the construction of clothing for other students at the school. Christ's Hospital minutes from 1637 state that "the children's coats, petticoats and other things were always made by the children of this house in the tailor's shop."²⁷ As such, girls at Christ's Hospital were not merely taught to read and write, they were provided with a vocational education that, as the hospital's charter intended, allowed them to become productive members of English society.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, Christ's Hospital was a well-known institution within the city of London. Although the school had its initial difficulties, many success stories came out of its formative years. Several Christ's Hospital students attended Oxford, including John Preston in 1566 and Elias Corlett in 1626. Others attended Cambridge, while others explored the New World. Thomas Sexton, for example, came to Virginia only to be killed in the Opechancanough uprising at Jamestown in 1622. Elias Corlett and Ezekiel Cheever took more fortunate paths and became schoolmasters in Boston.²⁸

Although Christ's Hospital saw nominal change in the seventeenth century, the school reached a major turning point and milestone on August 19, 1673, when King Charles II approved the establishment of the Royal Mathematical School.²⁹ The idea for the Mathematical School came about at a time when England was concerned with expanding and improving its navy, especially after its poor performance in the Second Dutch War. While several schools already existed in London for the purpose of teaching

²⁷ Pearce, 170.

²⁸ Bennett, 12-13.

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

mathematics and navigational techniques to potential mariners, “a well organized and adequately funded school for the training of sailors” did not exist. Christ’s Hospital was chosen to house the Royal Mathematical School at the behest of Samuel Pepys, who was a fervent support of mathematic education reform as well as “the prime mover” in maintaining educational standards at Christ’s Hospital during its earlier years.³⁰

Initially, the Mathematical School was intended to provide training to forty boys, who had already completed their training in grammar and common arithmetic. These students were also instructed in the “whole Science of Arithmatique” and navigation until they were old and able enough to serve as apprentices to ship captains.³¹ The idea was to train up the Mathemats, as students of the Mathematical School were known, to be a “hybrid of theoretically and practically competent individuals.”³² The students of the Royal Mathematical School were housed in a separate ward from the rest of Christ’s Hospital’s students and, as such, had their own matron. Additionally, the forty students in the school were mandated by the royal charter to wear certain “kinde of Badges and Cognizences upon their Blew coates.”³³

The first students to complete their tenure in the Royal Mathematical School found occupation in the East Indies. Several went on to serve in the Royal Navy, but “almost all went to the merchantmen.”³⁴ This was mostly due to the fact that the first Mathemats left the school in 1675, a year after the Second Dutch War ended and about

³⁰ Rob Iliffe, “Mathematical Characters: Flamsteed and Christ’s Hospital Royal Mathematical School” in *Flamsteed’s Stars: New perspectives on the life and work of the first Astronomer Royal (1646-1719)* Frances Willmoth, ed. (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 1997), 115-116, 121.

³¹ Pearce, 100-101.

³² Iliffe, 117.

³³ Pearce, 101.

³⁴ Blunden, 51-52.

the time when the Royal Navy demobilized.³⁵ During its formative years, finances occupied the minds of many officials connected with the school. Charles II's original endowment was not sufficient to keep the school running and pay shipmasters fee for taking on apprentices. However, these stresses were eliminated when Henry Stone, a Governor of Christ's Hospital, provided in his will for the school to receive £50 per year beginning upon his death in 1688. Additionally, the Royal Mathematical School received gifts from other benefactors, many of whom were Governors of Christ's Hospital.³⁶

The initial years of the Royal Mathematical School were not necessarily deemed to be a triumph by its main advocates, including Pepys. While he was one of the main advocates for the foundation of the Royal Mathematical School, he was concerned by the lack of progress shown by the school and its students. He was particularly concerned with the fact that school officials did not adhere to the school's original charter and was apprenticing boys to merchant ships rather than sending them directly into the Royal Navy.³⁷ This concern carried into the 1680s, when many still considered the progress of the Mathematical School to be lacking, despite a curriculum that included geometry, trigonometry, astronomy and cartography.³⁸ By 1703, however, students bound out from the Mathematical School went, as had been an exception before, directly to serve Queen Anne in the English Navy.³⁹

Christ's Hospital saw another addition to its holdings when, in 1682, the governors of the school acquired the land of John Seward in Hertford, a town north of

³⁵ Pearce, 104.

³⁶ Ibid., 105.

³⁷ Blunden, 53; Iliffe, 121.

³⁸ Pearce, 111-112.

³⁹ Blunden, 53.

London.⁴⁰ Initially, children housed in the country were boarded out and walked to the Hertford school in order to be instructed in the home of Thomas Estwick, the first headmaster, who lived in “Meager’s House.” Eventually, in 1685, improvements began to be made to the Hospital’s holdings, and eventually, “it was decided to erect on the site enough cottages to accommodate about 320 children, together with a school house and two houses for masters.”⁴¹ Additionally, children who were taken into Christ’s Hospital that were too young to learn were sent to Hertford, as well as Ware and Hoddeston, to live with foster families. Children were also sent to Hertford for instruction in reading and writing if there was no room for them in the London school.

Eventually, Christ’s Hospital Hertford evolved into a school for girls. One of the newly constructed cottages was designated to house girls, and by 1729, Mrs. Elizabeth Mallett, a schoolmistress, had upwards of 50 girls in her care.⁴² While several changes to the structure and administration of the Christ’s Hospital system, including the closure of the school at Ware, caused the school at Hertford to be closed to girls in the 1750s and 60s, it ultimately reopened as an exclusively female school in 1778.⁴³

Christ’s Hospital suffered from growing pains during its first years of existence. It was during this time, however, that many of the rituals and traditions that held fast in later years of the school’s history took root. As the school matured and entered the

⁴⁰ Frances M. Page, *Christ’s Hospital Hertford: A History of the School Against the Background of London and Horsham* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1953), 25-30, 36; William Lempriere, *A History of the Girl’s School of Christ’s Hospital, London, Hoddesdon and Hertford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 16.

⁴¹ Page., 32.

⁴² Lempriere, 21-22.

⁴³ Ibid, 24-25, 34. When the Hertford school was closed to girls, they still had a presence at Christ’s Hospital in London.

eighteenth century, Christ's Hospital garnered a strong reputation in London. As Charles Lamb stated of his time at Christ's Hospital,

For the Christ's Hospital boy feels that he is no charity-boy; he feels it in the antiquity and regality of the foundation to which he belongs; and the treatment he is accustomed to out of [the school's] bounds; in the respect, and even kindness, which he his well-known garb never fails to procure him in the streets of the metropolis.⁴⁴

It is apparent that the school's reputation and its impact on impoverished families and individuals were strongest in London. The charitable works of Christ's Hospital were surely felt across England and its empire as children left the school to serve aboard naval vessels and merchant ships, as apprentices in London's trade shops and, for girls, as domestic servants across the country.

⁴⁴ Charles Lamb in "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," in Thomas Noon Talfourd, ed., *The Works of Charles Lamb to Which Are Prefixed His Letters, and A Sketch of His Life*, Vol. 2, (New York: Harper & Broders, 1838), 338. The well-known garb that Lamb references in this passage refers to the traditional Christ's Hospital blue coats worn by the students of the school since its inception in 1552. This topic will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Life at Christ's Hospital During the Eighteenth Century

“ . . . I am grateful to Christ's Hospital for having bred me up in old cloisters, for its making me acquainted with the languages of Homer and Ovid, and for its having secured to me, on the whole, a well trained and cheerful boyhood.”¹

Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*

By the eighteenth century, Christ's Hospital was a firmly established institution within the city of London. While issues of vagrancy and pauperism that once plagued the city in the sixteenth century had somewhat subsided, the poor were still “the migraine of local government.”² Under the 1662 poor law, individuals within England were required to achieve settlement in only one parish. As a result, the law served to “immobilize the poor and forestall droves of vagrant beggars” by encouraging individuals to settle and remain in a fixed location. Individuals could achieve settlement in a variety of ways including being born in a certain parish, having a father living in a certain parish as well as marrying, serving as an apprentice or renting a house within a parish.³ This policy also placed the responsibility of providing most of the poor relief on England's individual parishes; however, if an individual failed to achieve settlement, he or she was denied this relief and was forced to turn elsewhere. While parishes provided the majority of poor relief, that is not to say that Christ's Hospital stopped providing education to poor children. In fact, Percy Young, J.E. Morpurgo and Edmund Blunden call this era in the

¹ Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries, and with Thornton Hunt's Introduction and Post Script*, vol. 1, Roger Ingpen, ed. (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903), 92. Hunt was a student at Christ's Hospital from 1791 until 1796.

² Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1982), 142.

³ *Ibid.*, 143.

history of the school “a century of substance,” the age of “the golden generation” and “the good-natured age,” respectively.⁴

By the eighteenth century, Christ’s Hospital had become a model for other charity schools founded in Great Britain. A pamphlet printed in 1712 lists a number of charity schools “set up within the past 15 years,” and includes schools within London as well as those that existed in other parts of Great Britain and Ireland.⁵ Although these schools varied in size, many appear to follow the same model as Christ’s Hospital in that children were provided clothing and bound out as apprentices for a variety of trades. A school that followed such a model was located in North Mymms, Hertfordshire, which clothed and taught fourteen boys “to be put out” as apprentices.⁶ Another school in Stourbridge, Worcestershire, educated and clothed sixty boys, three of four of whom were apprenticed every year to “some Handicraft Trade.”⁷ Other schools outside of England followed the same model. Thirty-five schools are listed as being set up in Wales, while eighteen are said to be in Scotland. Dublin alone boasted twelve schools, and other parts of Ireland, including Belturbet, Cashel, Drogheda, Enniskillen, Kilkenny, Magherafelt and Wicklow, contained at least one school each.⁸ In addition to schools outside of London, this pamphlet also includes a tally of children educated in charity schools all over the city. Many parishes throughout the city contained one or more school intended to educate children coming from poor, indigent families. In total, by May of 1712, at least 3047

⁴ Percy Young, “A Century of Substance, 1688-1788,” in *The Christ’s Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 29; J.E. Morpurgo, “The Golden Generation,” in *The Christ’s Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 55; Blunden, 63.

⁵ *An Account of Charity-Schools in Great Britain and Ireland: With the Benefactions thereto and of The Methods Whereby they were Set up, and are governed* (London: Joseph Downing, 1712), 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 53-59.

boys and 1640 girls were educated “in about London and Westminster, and within ten miles thereof,” while an additional 2037 were bound out as apprentices.⁹

Henry Grimstone’s 1794 pamphlet lists twenty-four charity schools operating within or near the city of London, including Christ’s Hospital. Of these, fourteen were founded or incorporated between 1709 and 1791 and accepted poor children under a variety of circumstances. The British or Welsh Charity School instructed, educated, clothed and apprenticed the “poor Children descended of *Welsh* Parents, born in or near the *Metropolis*, having *no Parochial Settlement* within the Bills of Mortality.”¹⁰

Likewise, the Westminster French Charity School was “intended for the same purposes as the last, excepting that the objects of its attention are descended of *French Protestant Refugees*.”¹¹ The Royal Cumberland Free-Mason School, the School of Soldiers’ Girls and the Asylum took in and educated girls. Children who were the offspring of clergy were the main concern for the Society for the Relief of the Widows and Children of Clergymen, while the Philanthropic Society educated the children of vagrants. These children were “rendered useful Members of Society by being brought up to different Trades. – The Boys are instructed as Carpenters, Shoemakers, Taylors, &c. The Girls are educated as Menial Servants, and are employed in Washing the Linen, making their own Cloathing, and Shirts for the boys, &c.”¹²

Two schools of industry were established in 1784 and 1791. The first, located near Portman Square, was intended for girls only. There, they were taught to spin, knit

⁹ Ibid., 11-14.

¹⁰ Henry Grimstone, *A List of Short Account of Various Charitable Institutions in Great-Britain for the Benefit of the Poor and Infirm, &c.* (York: W. Blanchard, 1794), 3.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 12.

and sew in addition to reading and writing. The goal of this school was to bring girls up to qualify for domestic servitude. The Day School of Industry founded in 1791 was located on Paradise Street in the parish of Saint Marylebone. Boys and girls at this school were instructed in reading and writing. Additionally, boys “put Heads upon Pins” and learned to “close Shoes and Boots intended for Exportation” while girls were taught to “spin wool for a Blanket Manufactory, make Shirts, &c. for a Warehouse, and knit their own Stockings.”¹³

While these schools obviously provided some of the same relief that could be found at Christ’s Hospital, it is not particularly apparent that any of them were modeled after their predecessor. Christ’s Hospital is the oldest establishment listed in this particular pamphlet, and it is clear that at least two schools, at least partially, were modeled after this institution. The schools are expressly mentioned as being “somewhat on the plan of Christ’s Hospital” are the Grey Coat Hospital and the Green Coat Hospital, both of which were located on the Artillery Ground in Westminster.¹⁴

The Grey Coat Hospital was established in 1698 with the intention of educating poor children “in the Principles of Christian Religion,” reading, and “Instructing them in the Church Catechism, and Discipline of the Church of England.”¹⁵ Additionally, children were sent out to apprentice “to benefit Trades and Employments.”¹⁶ The Green

¹³ Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁴ Ibid., 14. It should be mentioned that Christ’s Hospital was colloquially known as the Blue Coat Hospital due to the distinct nature of its student’s dress. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

¹⁵ Grey-Coat Hospital (Tothill-Fields, London, England), *The charter of the governours of the Grey-Coat-Hospital in Tothill-Fields, of the royal foundation of Queen Anne* (London: n.p., 1712) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale, College of William & Mary, 16 February 2011 <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW105770709&source=gale&userGroupName=viva_wm&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>, 1.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Coat Hospital, on the other hand, was established in 1633 during the reign of Charles I. Children who were sent to this school were “clothed, educated, and wholly maintained.”¹⁷ These children were “for their future good and that of the public instructed in manual arts,” presumably to be sent out as apprentices.¹⁸ By the end of the century, about sixty schools existed in Great Britain that were “modeled wholly or partly on Christ’s Hospital but otherwise connected” with it.¹⁹

It appears that there was no lack of charitable education available to the poor children of England and London throughout the eighteenth century. Dozens of schools dotted the landscape, and, as George Dyer observed in 1793, “perhaps no country in Europe abounds with so many charitable institutions as Britain.”²⁰ Impoverished families had a number of outlets in which to educate their children, one of which was Christ’s Hospital, which was entering its second century of operation during this time.

In order to gain a feel for life at the school during this period, it is necessary to look at different aspects of Christ’s Hospital. By looking at the students’ curriculum, their dress, their housing and their diet, the atmosphere of the school during this period can be discerned. Accounts left by “Old Blues,” as alumni of the school are called, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb, provide a first-hand perspective of life at Christ’s Hospital that much of the secondary literature does not provide. While these individuals are not necessarily typical examples of the eighteenth-century Christ’s

¹⁷ Peter Cunningham, *A Handbook for London: Past and Present*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1849), 353.

¹⁸ John Adolphus, *The Political State of the British Empire*, vol. 3 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818) 661-662.

¹⁹ London Metropolitan Archives, *Records of Christ’s Hospital and Bluecoat Schools* (London: London Metropolitan Archives, 2010), 2.

²⁰ George Dyer, *The complaints of the poor people of England* (1793; reprint, Oxford: Woodstock Books., 1990), 143. George Dyer attended Christ’s Hospital from 1762 until 1774.

Hospital students (all three went on to attend university as opposed to serving an apprenticeship), their insight provides detailed information about life at the school.

Education at Christ's Hospital during the eighteenth century was "more general than at most schools."²¹ Children at the Grammar School learned Latin, Greek, English, some mathematics and Hebrew. Those who were students at the Writing School received instruction in writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping and commerce, while the masters at the Royal Mathematical School continued to instruct students in the art of navigation.²² The Music School continued to operate during the eighteenth century as well. There, children learned how to play instruments and sing, with the intention that a "boy should be brought up to play the [church] services."²³ Percy Young, who attended Christ's Hospital in the twentieth century notes that, as a student of the Music School, he was taught to play the organ, sing in choirs and play chamber music, in addition to serving as a member of the orchestra and the band. He was also taught the arts of composing and conducting. While Young's experiences took place nearly two centuries after the time period in question, it is quite possible that the curriculum of the Music School during the eighteenth century included many, if not all, of these subjects.²⁴

The placement of students into these schools was, for the most part, based on academic competency. In a letter to Thomas Poole, Samuel Taylor Coleridge explained the succession of students at Christ's Hospital into its various schools:

When a boy is admitted, if he reads very badly, he is either sent to Hertford or the Reading-School . . . If he learns to read tolerably well before 9, he is drafted into the lower Grammar-school – if not, into the writing-school, as having given proof

²¹ Young, 32.

²² Ibid., 32-33.

²³ Percy Young, "Music at C.H.," in *The Christ's Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 302.

²⁴ Ibid., 302-303.

of unfitness for classical attainment.—If, before he is eleven, he climbs up to the first form of the lower Grammar-school, he is drafted into the head Grammar School—if not, at 11 years old he is sent into the writing School, where he continues till 14 or 15—and is either apprenticed or articed as a clerk...²⁵

Students selected for the Mathematical School were to “go out as Midshipmen & Schoolmasters in the Navy,” while boys in the Head Grammar School matriculated into the Writing School if they were not chosen to attend university.²⁶ Leigh Hunt notes that “the Writing School was by far the largest,” and that “all the schools were kept quite distinct; so that a boy might arrive at the age of fifteen in the grammar school, and not know his multiplication-table.”²⁷

A typical school day for boys in Christ’s Hospital varied depending on the season.

Leigh Hunt’s *Autobiography* provides details about daily life in the school:

Our routine of life was this. We rose to the call of a bell, at six in the summer, and seven in the winter; and after combing ourselves, and washing our hands and faces, when, at the call of another bell, to breakfast. All this took up about an hour. From breakfast, we proceeded to school, where we remained till eleven, winter and summer, and then had an hour’s play. Dinner took place at twelve. Afterwards was a little play till one, when we again went to school, and remained till five in the summer and four in the winter. At six was the supper. We used to play after it in summer till eight. In winter, we proceeded from supper to bed.²⁸

Sundays were occupied with church, and the Bible was read to students daily so much so that they “rivalled the monks in the religious part of our duties.”²⁹

Girls at Christ’s Hospital in the eighteenth century, like those that came before them, received training in skills necessary to make them respectable, industrious domestic servants. By 1778, girls were housed exclusively at Hertford along with young

²⁵ Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Poole, 9 October 1797, in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Letters* ed. H.J. Jackson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 65-66. Leigh Hunt also writes about the succession of boys throughout the various schools of Christ’s Hospital in his *Autobiography*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Hunt, 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

boys receiving education before heading to London. Even though the girls were removed from the city, they were expected to undertake all the needlework for the school, including knitting stockings. Frances Page notes that the “educational standards were too low, for the girls seemed destined to schooldays of drudgery on behalf of the boys.”³⁰ In addition to this vocational training, girls received one hour of instruction in writing and arithmetic a day.³¹

A typical day for girls was more restricted than that of the boys, and they were subject to “impermanent and continually changing circumstances.”³² This was, in part, due to the fluctuating numbers of boys, who always outnumbered girls, entering and leaving the school. Girls, for the most part, were cut off from contact with boys in the school. Girls occupied the western portions of the school grounds, while the boys lived and learned in the eastern half. A locked gate divided the two halves of the school, and “the high walls of their nurses’ back garden prevented any boy from ever appearing on the western side of the premises.”³³ In 1802, a headmistress at Hertford complained to the governors of the school that girls were worked too hard and did not have enough time for recreation; complaints that were certainly extant in the eighteenth century.³⁴ Unfortunately, no girls who attended Christ’s Hospital during this period left written accounts of their experiences, however, it can be determined that the girls at the school led a much different existence than that of the boys.

³⁰ Lempriere, 33; Page, 74.

³¹ Page, 74.

³² Ibid., 73.

³³ Ibid., 42.

³⁴ Ibid., 74.

Boys at Hertford, on the other hand, received instruction in a variety of subjects, including basic reading and writing. Every boy that entered Christ's Hospital was required to stay at Hertford, at least for a little while:

If he was precociously quick or very advanced in his studies, his sojourn there might be a matter of weeks. If he was abnormally dull, it was prolonged till he was sent up, as we say, 'for age,' on the principle that, as he was never likely to learn much, he would only get into mischief and 'corrupt other[s].'³⁵

In the 1780s, the Hertford school housed about 300 boys preparing to go to London.³⁶

Although all boys spent at least a bit of time at Hertford, the majority of their years at Christ's Hospital were spent in London.

Christ's Hospital in London was divided into twelve wards, also known as sleeping rooms, in which there were:

. . . rows of beds on each side, partitioned off, but connected with one another, and each having two boys to sleep in it. Down the middle ran the binns for holding bread and other things, and serving for a table for when the meal was not taken in the hall; and over the binns hung a homely chandelier.³⁷

Together, these wards housed 700 boys, of whom; Samuel Taylor Coleridge quipped, "nearly one-third were the sons of clergymen."³⁸

A nurse was assigned to each ward in order to look after the children during the night. In addition to that task, she was also in charge of the children's laundry as well as carving meat for them at mealtime. Each ward also had four monitors and four markers. Monitors were appointed by the Steward and were responsible for supervising the other boys within their ward. Occasionally, these boys would abuse their privileges. Charles Lamb wrote that the "tyranny" and "the oppressions of these young brutes are heart-

³⁵ Pearce, 167-168; Coleridge to Poole, 65. Coleridge stayed at Hertford for six weeks in 1782.

³⁶ Coleridge to Poole, 65.

³⁷ Hunt, 65-66.

³⁸ Coleridge to Poole, 65.

sickening to call to recollection.”³⁹ Leigh Hunt confirms this “tyranny” in his *Autobiography*, “There was a monitor, or ‘big boy’ in office, who had a trick of entertaining himself by pelting lesser boys’ heads with a hard ball. He used to throw it at this boy and that; make the *throwee* bring it back to him; and then send a rap with it on his cerebellum, as he was going off.”⁴⁰ While monitors, aside from the nurses, wielded the most power within the ward, markers were also an integral part of life at Christ’s Hospital. These individuals were chosen by the Head Grammar Master and listened to the boys of the school read every Sunday. Markers yielded less power than monitors, however, the same boys were very often assigned to be both monitors and markers.⁴¹

Discipline was, of course, a part of life at Christ’s Hospital as well. A common offence committed by students was running away. The first consequence for this crime was to be shackled in fetters, a type of restraint resembling handcuffs fastened around the ankles. For a time, boys were sent into the dungeons for running away a second time, but this practice was discontinued after several instances of “lunacy” were reported. Finally, if a student ran away three times, he or she faced expulsion.⁴²

While running was the most egregious crime committed by Christ’s Hospital students, smaller offences warranted punishment too. Church bills and gate bills listed children who were caught talking during church services and those who were caught

³⁹ Charles Lamb, “Christ’s Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago” in *Essays of Elia* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1884), 25.

⁴⁰ Hunt, 58.

⁴¹ Coleridge to Poole, 65-66.

⁴² Lamb, 29; Morpurgo, 115.

leaving hospital grounds without permission, respectively.⁴³ Other offences committed within the confines of the dormitory were dealt with via public ceremony:

In the middle of the floor of the hall there was inserted a flat paving stone, on which, or about which, those boys who had behaved ill in their wards, were put to stand at breakfast time . . . the monitors would make their respective complaints to the steward, who punished the culprit according to the degree of his demerit.⁴⁴

Corporal punishment was also utilized at the school. James Boyer, the Upper Grammar Master in the time of Lamb, Coleridge and Hunt, was notorious for his punishments:

He once (though the anecdote at first sight may look like a burlesque on the remark) knocked out one of my teeth with the back of a Homer, in a fit of impatience at my stammering. The tooth was a loose one, and I told him as much; but the blood rushed out as I spoke: he turned pale, and, on my proposing to go out and wash the mouth, he said 'Go, child,' in a tone of voice amounting to paternal.⁴⁵

Samuel Taylor Coleridge also remembered an incident in which he crossed Boyer. Coleridge ran away from Christ's Hospital to beg a shoemaker to take him in as an apprentice as he was not interested in becoming a clergyman, which he presumed he would become if he stayed at the school. Upon returning to the school, Coleridge admitted to his misdeeds and was flogged by Boyer "wisely, as I think; soundly, as I know."⁴⁶

⁴³ Orphanotrophian, *The Fortunate Blue-Coat Boy or, Memoirs of the Life and Happy Adventures of Mr. Benjamin Templeman; Formerly a Scholar in Christ's Hospital* (London: J. Cooke, 1770), 8. Although this is a work of fiction, it is presumed that Charles Lamb wrote it. In *Christ's Hospital: A Retrospect*, Edmund Blundered says that the novel gives the reader a picture of life at Christ's Hospital during this time.

⁴⁴ W.P. Scargill, *Recollections of a Blue-Coat Boy; or, a View of Christ's Hospital* (Swaffham: F. Skill, 1829), 124.

⁴⁵ Hunt, 92.

⁴⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, &c.* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1884), 89. This incident was recalled by Coleridge on 27 May, 1830.

The diet of the students at Christ's Hospital had been described as "very scanty."⁴⁷ Breakfast consisted of bread, beer and water, which, according to Leigh Hunt, were "not much for growing boys, who had had nothing to eat from six or seven o'clock the preceding evening."⁴⁸ The midday meal seems to have been the largest of the day. In 1797, seven years after he was discharged, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote to Thomas Poole about these meals. "On Sunday, boiled beef & broth – Monday, Bread & butter, & milk & water – on Tuesday, roast mutton, Wednesday, bread & butter & rice milk, Thursday, broiled beef & broth – Friday, boiled mutton & broth – Saturday, bread & butter and pease porritch."⁴⁹ Leigh Hunt claims that portions of meat given to the students were "a small slice, such as would be given to an infant three or four years old" and that it was "very often left half-eaten – the meat was so tough."⁵⁰ The evening meal consisted of bread with cheese or butter.⁵¹ Boys did not receive vegetables to eat, nor were they allowed pudding; which prompted Coleridge to remember, "our appetites were *dampened* never satisfied."⁵²

Unlike the Christ's Hospital food, students' dress at the school was an integral part of life at the school and a point of pride. Since its inception in 1552, boys and girls were expected to don the traditional blue coat and yellow stockings upon their arrival at Christ's Hospital.⁵³ Although the boys and girls of Christ's Hospital wore livery made of russet cotton at their first public appearance at Christmas of 1552, they were dressed in blue by the following Easter. Origins of the blue uniform are unknown. However, several

⁴⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁴⁸ Hunt, 67-68.

⁴⁹ Coleridge to Poole, 66.

⁵⁰ Hunt, 68.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Coleridge to Poole, 66.

⁵³ Bennett, 8.

theories exist as to why blue was chosen as the particular color of the school's clothing. Blue was easily obtained by cheap dye, and thus, was an economical choice for the children's clothing. Additionally, blue was also a color traditionally worn by servants and apprentices around the city of London and was thus, a visual means of distinguishing a person of humble status from others.⁵⁴

The Christ's Hospital costume consisted of the blue coat, which was open in the front to expose yellow breeches for boys and petticoat for girls. Children also wore a leather strap, or girdle, around their waists. Leigh Hunt describes his Christ's Hospital uniform as:

. . . the coarsest and quaintest kind . . . It consisted of a blue drugget gown, or body, with ample skirts to it; a yellow vest underneath in winter-time; small-clothes of Russia duck; worsted yellow stockings; a leathern girdle; and a little black worsted cap, usually carried in hand.⁵⁵

Some students also wore badges to distinguish themselves from others. Mathemats, in particular, were set apart from other students by three distinct badges.⁵⁶ Forty children in the Mathematical School were distinguished as being part of the King's Foundation, while twelve were a part of Henry Stone's Foundation and two children of deceased lieutenants in the Royal Navy wore the badge of John Stock's foundation. The latter badges indicated that a child was brought into the hospital under the benefaction of a donor.

Clothing at the hospital was more than likely sewn by girls of the school. The school provided thread, needles and thimbles, while the hospital's tailor was responsible for procuring his own shears and irons. After the boys' measurements were taken "a

⁵⁴ Manzione, 35.

⁵⁵ Hunt, 67.

⁵⁶ Mathemats and King's Boys were two nicknames for students in the Mathematical School.

sufficient interval took place before the completion of the order.”⁵⁷ The wardrobe keeper, who was assisted by the hospital’s stewards, distributed coats, shirts, girdles and other articles to the children. The school’s shoemaker and his assistants, on the other hand, “stood with shoeing-horns in their hands, ready to fit them on: these, however, were rarely used, for they were not very precise as to the fit.”⁵⁸

Most of the information available about life in Christ’s Hospital during the eighteenth century results from the fact that Leigh Hunt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb and a few others left detailed accounts about their experiences at the school. While the information provided by these individuals was written years after they left Christ’s Hospital, aspects of student life at the school in the eighteenth century can be discerned from their accounts. Unfortunately, these accounts also illuminate the experiences of only a small number of students who were at the school towards the later years of the century.⁵⁹ These three also went to university, which the majority of students at Christ’s Hospital did not do during this period. Therefore, since the memoirs of Hunt, Lamb and Coleridge are somewhat biased, two questions begging to be asked are who else was at the school during this period and what did they do?

⁵⁷ George Wickham, *A Blue-Coat Boy’s Recollections of Hertford School* (London: Harvey and Darton, 1841), 135. Although Wickham entered Christ’s Hospital in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, it stands to reason that the same process for distribution of clothing was operating in the eighteenth century.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 135-137.

⁵⁹ Lamb was admitted to Christ’s Hospital on 17 July 1782 and discharged 23 November 1789. Coleridge stayed from 17 July 1782 until 7 September 1791. Hunt came in on 23 November 1791 and left on 20 November 1799.

Chapter 3: Children Entering Christ's Hospital, 1763-1803

“At length, the time came, & I donned the *Blue* coat & yellow stockings, & was sent down to Hertford . . . I stayed there six weeks; and then was drafted up to the great school at London . . .”¹

Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Poole, 19 February 1798

Regulations regarding the admission of children into Christ's Hospital were relatively relaxed upon the school's foundation in the sixteenth century. Officials took in foundlings, orphans and children from overburdened families. By the eighteenth century, however, governors and aldermen of the school were obliged to act under strict guidelines that had been established in order to insure that children admitted into the school were qualified for and worthy of the hospital's services. The presentation process became systematic during this time and much more structured than the admission process that existed in the sixteenth century.

Christ's Hospital governors and aldermen were charged with the task of finding and determining which children were worthy of admission into the school. Governors who donated a substantial amount of money to the hospital were permitted to have two children in the hospital at the same time. Once one of the two said children left the school, that governor was permitted to find and present another student for admission. Aldermen, on the other hand, were not limited in their presentation privileges. These individuals could present several children for admission each year, and thus, could have up to five or six children in the school simultaneously. While the governors and aldermen

¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Poole, 9 October 1797, in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Letters* ed. H.J. Jackson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 65-66.

were at their discretion in choosing children, they were still obligated to follow strict rules and guidelines that determined the children eligible for admission.²

A 1780 document entitled “Regulations to be Observed in the Admission of Children into Christ's-Hospital,” lays out restrictions and rules that governors and aldermen faced upon presenting children. The first of these regulations set forth to insure that for every three presentations governors made to the school, at least two of the children were to be selected from within the city of London. This rule delineated that “every Governor may present the Child of a Parent not free of the City of *London*, either on his First, Second, or Third Presentation, as he shall think proper, and so on, one in every three Presentations subject to the Qualifications hereafter mentioned.”³

The second guideline for governors and aldermen outlined which children were deemed eligible for presentation:

That none be deemed qualified Children, but such as are above seven and under twelve Years of Age, wanting either Father or Mother, or having one Parent so disabled as to be incapable of giving any Assistance to the other, and are the Orphans or Children of the Freemen of the City of *London*, unless as before excepted, or of Clergymen of the Church of *England* . . .⁴

Preference was also given to children whose fathers possessed the freedom of the City of London; however, this was not always the case. Freedom of the City refers to membership in a livery company, London’s equivalent to a trade guild. The records

² C.M.E. Seaman, *Christ’s Hospital: The Last Years in London* (London: Ian Allan, Ltd., 1977), 47. While Seaman’s book pertains mostly to the nineteenth century, it can be assumed that the guidelines followed by governors and alderman during the Victorian era also applied to those presenting children during the eighteenth century.

³ "Regulations to be observed in the admission of children into Christ's-Hospital," London, [1780?], Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 7 February 2010 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CB3330271286&source=gale&userGroupName=colonial&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>

⁴ Ibid.

indicate that 1510 or roughly 42.2 percent of parents whose children were taken into the school between 1763 and 1803 did not possess the freedom of the city. Additionally, as this regulation suggests, a child coming from a single parent home or from a home where one parent was disabled was more likely to be taken into Christ's Hospital on account of additional hardships.

Health was also a concern taken into consideration upon admitting a child into the school:

That no children who have any probable Means of being otherwise provided for, or who are lame, or have any infectious Distemper, as *Leprosy, Scald-head, Itch, Scab, Evil, or Rupture*, or Distemper which shall be judged incurable, shall be taken into the Charge of this House on any Account, or any Presentation whatever.⁵

While medical issues were not as prominent in the presentation process during the eighteenth century as in the nineteenth century and later years, it was necessary to insure that students entering the school were not endangering others through infectious diseases.⁶ This attention to health and well-being could also indicate that there was an interest on the part of governors to take in children that would survive their tenure at Christ's Hospital to become productive citizens.

The remaining regulations set forth for admitting children into the school pertained mostly to administrative issues. For example, children admitted under the gift of a benefactor must "appear to be duly qualified according to the Wills of such Benefactors or Donors."⁷ Additionally, parish officials were required to attest to each child's case. No child was to be admitted "without a due Certificate from the Minister,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Percy Young, "A Century of Substance" in *The Christ's Hospital Book* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 31.

⁷ "Regulations to be observed in the admission of children into Christ's-Hospital."

Church-Wardens and three or four of the principal Inhabitants of the Parish from whence such Children [came]; certifying of the Poverty and Inability of the Parent (if any be living) to maintain and provide for such Children.”⁸ Certificates, affidavits and vouchers were required in order to verify information presented along with the child.⁹

Upon presentation, these documents were taken to the General Court, who examined “into the Truth of the Certificates, Vouchers, and Testimonials required, touching their Age, Birth, Orphan Age, or other Qualifications.”¹⁰ If the court deemed a child ineligible for admission or was found to be unqualified after entering the school, he or she was “immediately sent Home to the Parent or Parishes from whence they came.”¹¹

A close understanding of the presentation process at Christ’s Hospital is key to an analysis of the presentation papers. These petitions consisted of a packet of papers that was compiled to delineate a child’s case for admission into Christ’s Hospital. These papers included certificates, affidavits and vouchers, the petitioner’s name, most often a parent or a close relative of a child; the parish or county from which the child came. They also contained a reason for presentation; the child’s name, age, birth date and date of baptism. Finally, signatures from the minister, churchwardens and prominent members of the presenting parish were included in the packet. Presentation petitions also included some sort of baptismal certification for the child and, on occasion, the marriage information for the child’s parents. Burial location and other pertinent information were also provided for the deceased parents of children.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

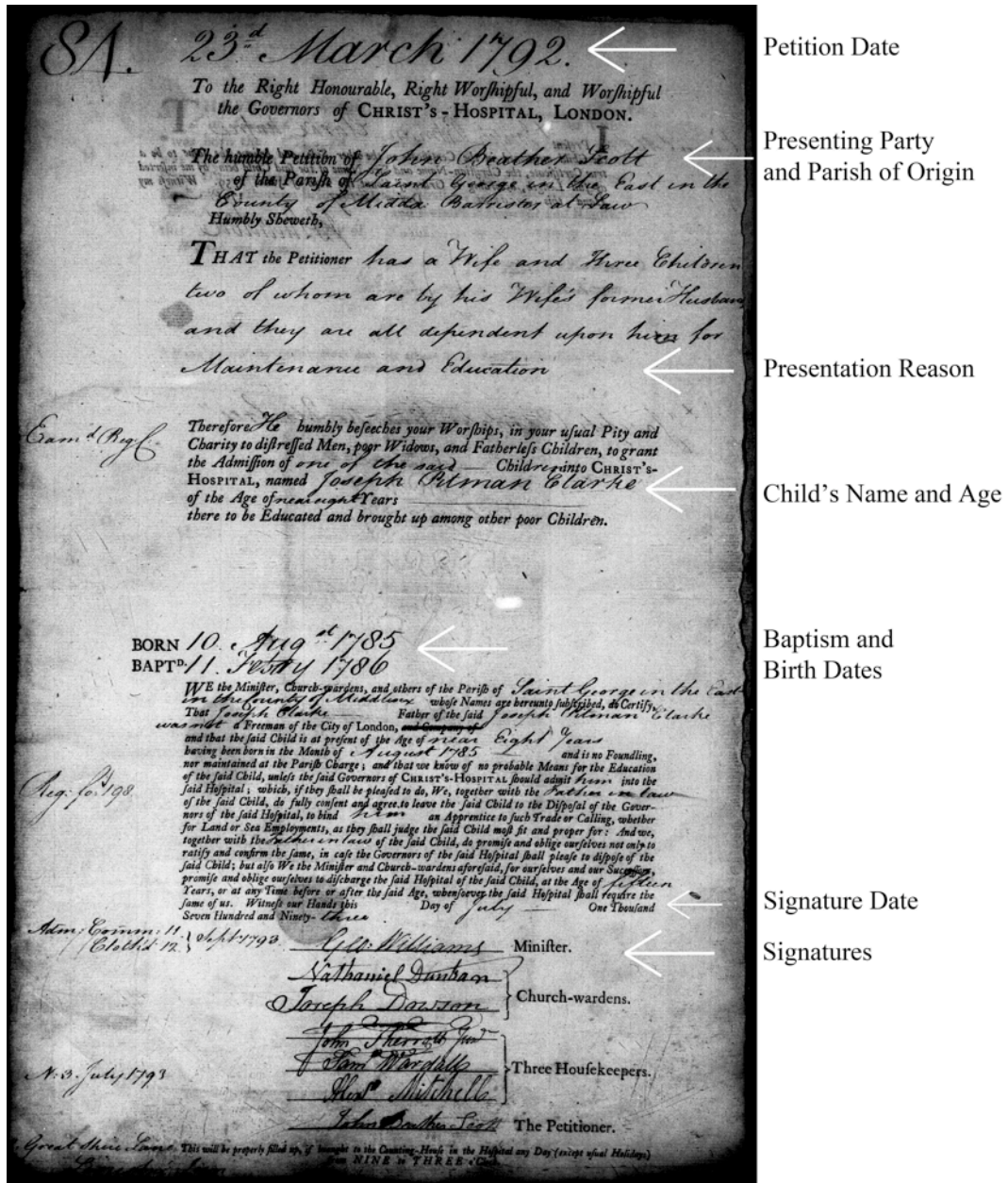


Figure 1: A typical presentation petition. Along with this page, proof of baptism and marriage of the child's parents were provided.

While these papers provide only a brief glimpse into the lives of children attending Christ's Hospital, it is possible to discern a great deal more about the social make up of the student body of the school. Unlike the memoirs of Coleridge, Lamb and Hunt, a statistical analysis of information provided in the presentation papers provides a

different picture of Christ's Hospital that is not readily accessed in the literature about the school. While those memoirs and histories are valuable in their own right, the presentation papers provide a deeper insight into which children were deemed acceptable for care within the institution during the eighteenth century.

This study examines presentation papers dating from alternate years between 1763 and 1803.¹² The year 1763 was chosen as a starting point due to the fact that this year marks the end of the Seven Years War in North America as well as the fact that it is close to the middle of the century. The end date, 1803, was chosen to include the turn of the century and to capture any changes that might have taken place in the presentation process during this time. While no significant changes in the inflow of students can be indicated during this period, these temporal boundaries encompass the era in which the American colonies separated themselves from Great Britain as well as the rise of India as a bastion of the British Empire, which certainly effected the placement of children upon leaving the hospital.¹³

Over the course of a year, presentation papers from this period were transcribed and broken down into various categories of information. Each child's name, date of birth, parish of presentation, reason for presentation, presenting party and presentation date were entered into a Microsoft Excel database. This data was then imported into the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to calculate trends occurring over the forty-year span that this study covers. In order to fully understand trends present in the Christ's Hospital presentation papers, an overview of

¹² By using alternate years, it was possible to cover a wider temporal span in the time allotted to complete this project.

¹³ This certainly warrants further study, however, the placement of children as apprentices upon leaving the hospital is discussed briefly in the conclusion of this paper.

statistics will be provided for the entire data set, the London data set and the data set covering children who entered the school from outside London. Since the vast majority of children were from within the city of London or its surrounding counties, looking at the two data sets separately will provide a more detailed perspective of who was coming into the school during this time period.

On alternate years between this time period, 3578 children were presented to the school. Therefore, it can be assumed that at least 7000 children obtained presentations during the entire time span. It should also be said that, while attempts have been made to include every child presented throughout this time period, it is possible that, due to the nature of the records, some individuals have been inadvertently omitted from the study. It is believed, however, that the children present in this study are a representative sample. Of the presentation papers examined for this study, 3319 (92.8 percent) stated the case for boys to enter Christ's Hospital, while only 259 (7.2 percent) represented girls. An average of 170 presentations were made each year from all over England, but the most significant portion of these came from London and Middlesex, a county located to the northwest of London. Children from these places represent 27.3 percent and 32.3 percent of all children coming into the hospital respectively. Children from Surrey, which is located immediately south of London, make up 10.6 percent of the presentations between 1763 and 1803. The remainder of children entering the school came from across England from various counties including Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Derby, Devon, Durham, Essex, Gloucester, Hampshire, Hereford, Hertford, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire,

Shropshire, Somersetshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

Proximity to London, however, clearly played a roll in acquiring a presentation for Christ's Hospital. As previously stated, presentation petitions from London, Middlesex and Surrey accounted for over 70 percent of incoming petitions between 1763 and 1803. In addition to Middlesex and Surrey, many children entered the school from "home counties," such as Kent, Essex, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, all of which surround London.¹⁴ These counties collectively account for a total of 484 (14.6 percent) students coming into the school. A total of 100 students entered the school from Berkshire, 38 came from Buckinghamshire, 167 came from Essex, Hertford accounted for 69 children and 110 Christ's Hospital students came from Kent. Outside of the home counties, the place of origin for most students entering the school is concentrated in the southern counties of England. The counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Huntingdonshire, Sussex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Somersetshire and Wiltshire account for more presentations per county as opposed to their northern counterparts. Together, the southern counties account for 376 (10.4 percent) of petitions presented between 1763 and 1803. This calculates to 25 children average for each county. Northern counties accounted for far fewer children coming into Christ's Hospital. For the purposes of this study, the northern counties include Cheshire, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Durham, Hereford, Lancashire, Leicester, Lincoln, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Westmoreland and York. Of the 3578 children admitted

¹⁴ "Home Counties," *Brewer's Britain and Ireland*.

into the school, 149 (4.0 percent) came from northern counties, averaging nine children per county. Additionally, a total of thirty-one children were presented from various counties in Wales, while three children came from Scotland. Dublin and Nova Scotia were also represented in the presentation papers with one presentation each.

As such, it should not be surprising that the majority of children presented to Christ's Hospital came from parishes within or immediately surrounding London. The first regulation set forth in 1780, which permitted governors to present one child from outside of London in every three presentations, is reflected in the total make up of presentations from 1763 to 1803. A total of 2512 children were admitted from London, Middlesex and Surrey, while 1066 children came from outside of those three counties, which reflects an approximate 2:1 ratio.¹⁵

Presentations also followed a seasonal pattern. While petitions were signed throughout the year, most presentations took place in the month of April.¹⁶ Of the 3578 included in this study, 983 or 27.5 percent occurred during that month. March and May also drew large numbers of presentations with 635 (17.7 percent) and 491 (13.7 percent) respectively. This should not necessarily be surprising since children were often admitted into Christ's Hospital close to Easter every year.¹⁷ August saw the least number of presentation signatures with only 75 or 2.1 percent.

¹⁵ London, Middlesex and Surrey have been lumped together to represent greater London in this study. Outside of London proper, these counties represent the highest percentage of presentations. Both of these are also considered to be "home counties," or counties immediately surrounding London. ("Home Counties," *Brewer's Britain and Ireland* (London: Chambers Harrap, 2005) *Credo Reference*, 23 Feb. 2011 <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/orionbritainireland/home_counties_the>.)

¹⁶ Dates for presentations were calculated using the date that appears at the bottom of the main page of the presentation petitions. This indicates when the petition was signed as opposed to the large date at the top, which represents the date of issue.

¹⁷ Orphanotrophian, *The Fortunate Blue-Coat Boy or, Memoirs of the Life and Happy Adventures of Mr. Benjamin Templeman; Formerly a Scholar in Christ's Hospital* (London: J. Cooke, 1770), 5.

Contrary to the 1780 regulations, children between the ages of six and thirteen were taken into the school. Forty-seven (1.3 percent) of the children taken into Christ’s Hospital during this time were six years old; most of these are listed as “near seven” on the presentation petitions. Only two thirteen-year-olds were presented during this time. Seven-year-olds, however, made up the largest group of children taken into the hospital; 1365 (38.1 percent) of the 3578 of children entering the school at this time were seven. Eight and nine-year-olds made up 25.0 percent and 18.4 percent of incoming children respectively. Ten-year-olds made up 11.7 percent of the presentations between 1763 and 1803, while 4.3 percent consisted of eleven-year olds. Forty-one children were twelve years of age were presented to the school. Together, the average age of an incoming student was 8.2 years between 1763 and 1803.

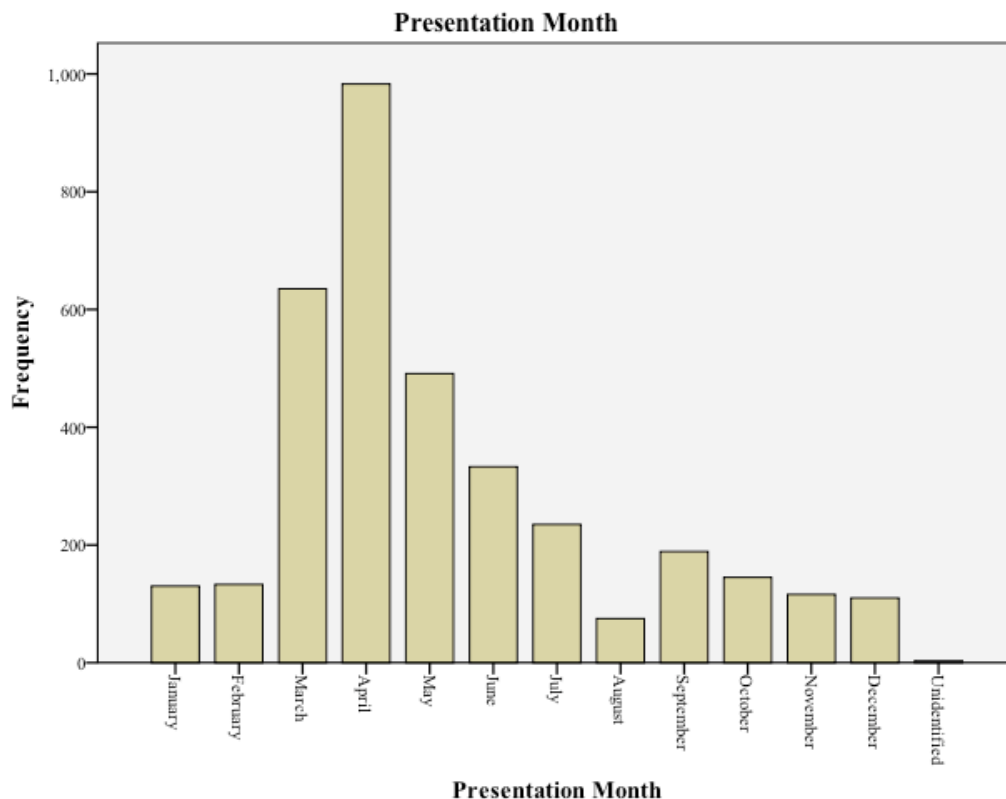


Table 1: Presentation month frequency.

Seven year olds account for a total of 39.7 percent of children entering Christ’s Hospital during the period in question. A total of 638 (25.4 percent) were eight years of age upon entering the school, while 442 (17.6 percent) were nine. Ten-year-olds accounted for 11.0 percent of entering students, and eleven-year-olds made up 4.0 of incoming students from London, Middlesex and Surrey. Twenty-three (0.9 percent) of these children were twelve, while 33 were only six years old. The average age of students coming from the greater London area was 8.1 years, slightly lower than the total average.

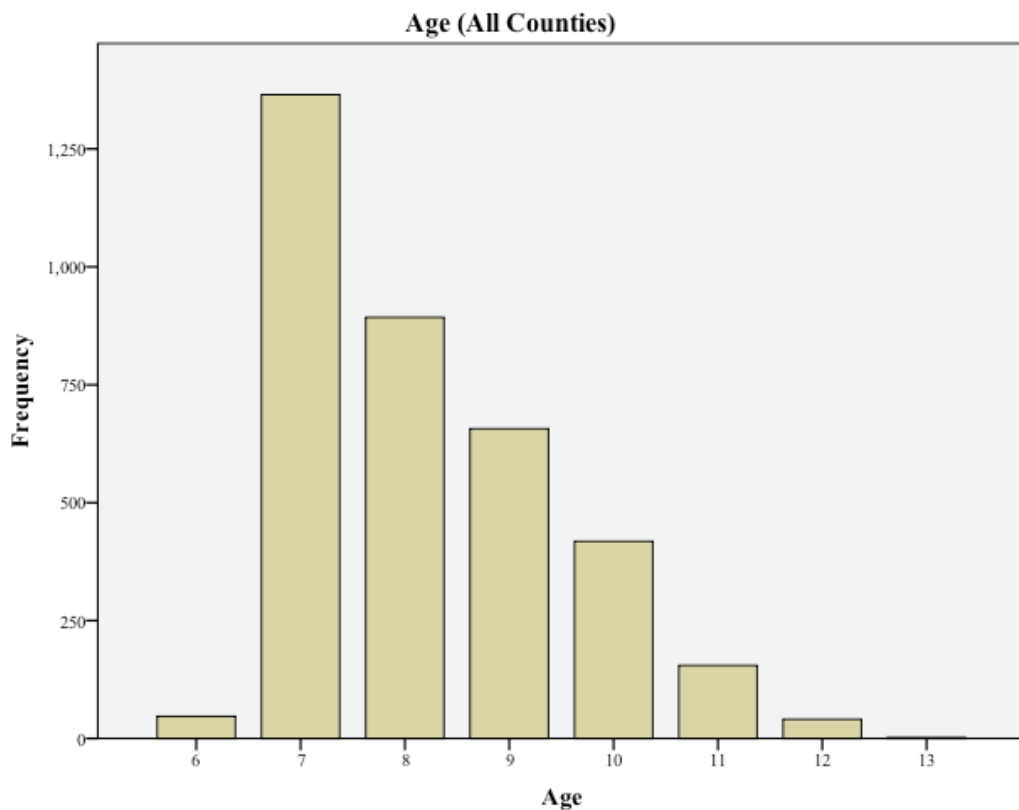


Table 2: Age frequency for all counties.

Seven-year-olds also made up the largest group of students coming into the school from outside the greater London area, accounting for 366 (34.3 percent) of 1066. Eight-year-olds totaled 255 (23.9 percent) of these children, while nine-year-olds numbered 215 (20.2 percent). A total of 141 (13.2 percent) students coming into the school from outside

of London, Middlesex and Surrey were ten years old upon presentation. Eleven-year-olds comprised 5.2 percent of incoming students from outlying areas of London, while 18 (1.7 percent) of these students were twelve. Of these 1066 students, two were thirteen and made up 0.2 percent. The average age of the children coming into Christ’s Hospital from outside London is slightly higher than the national average at 8.3 years of age.

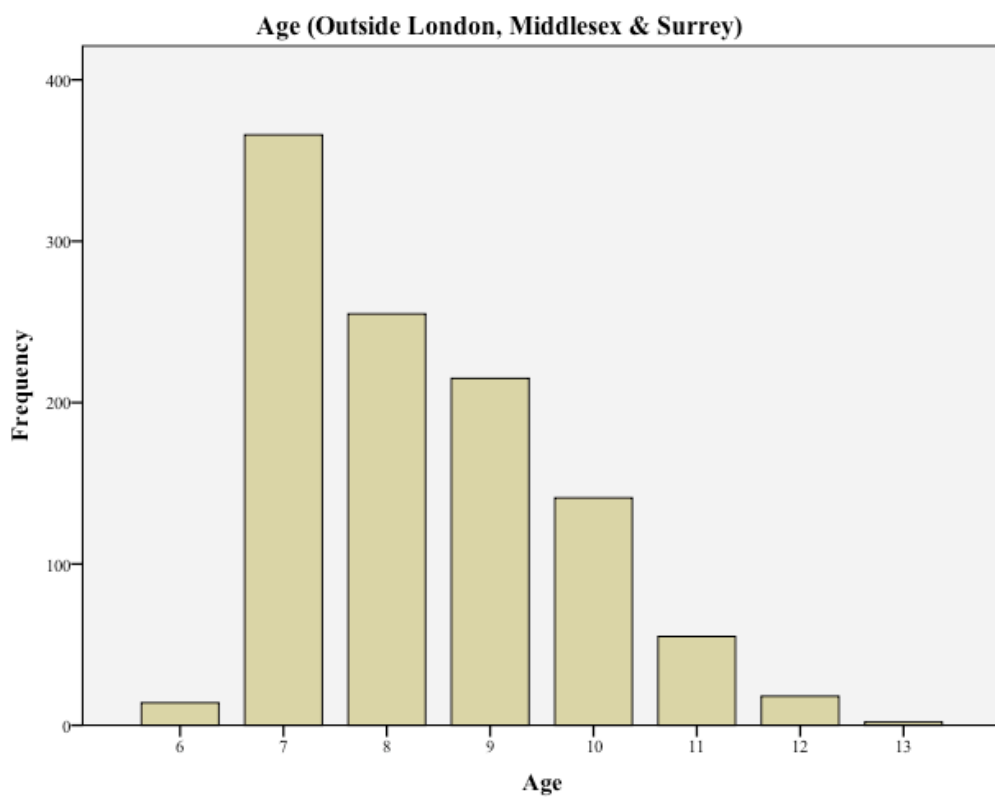


Table 3: Age frequencies for children outside of London, Middlesex and Surrey.

Mothers and fathers were responsible for the majority of presentation petitions to Christ’s Hospital from across England. Fathers served as the presenting party and signed 2114 or 59.1 percent of the presentation papers looked at for this study, while mothers signed 1037 (29 percent) petitions.¹⁸ Aunts, uncles and friends often presented children in

¹⁸ It should be noted that both parents presented only four children.

the event that the child was an orphan or a surviving parent was not able to sign the petition. Uncles signed 82 (2.3 percent) petitions while aunts made up 1.4 percent of signees. Friends or parties unrelated to the presented child accounted for 2.7 percent of signatures, while grandmothers and grandfathers signed 1.0 percent and .6 percent of the petitions respectively. Children were also presented by siblings. These individuals represent .6 percent of signees on presentation petitions.

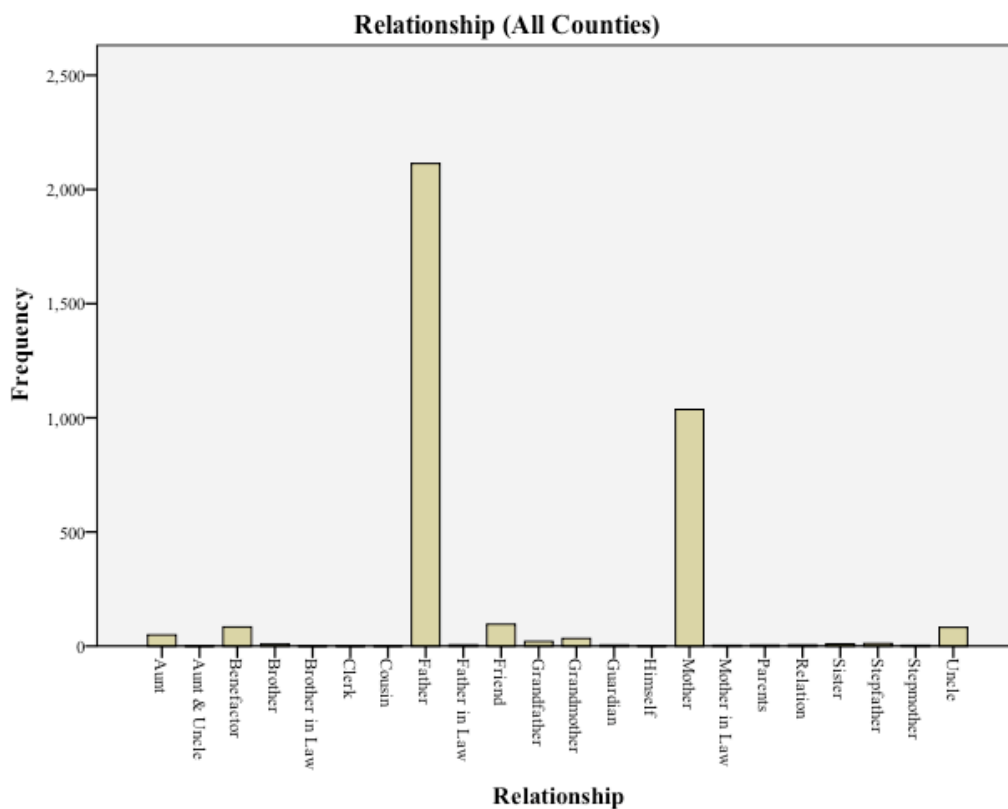


Table 4: Relationship of presenting party to child for all of England, Wales and Scotland.

Of the 2511 children entering the school from London, Middlesex and Surrey, fathers presented 1437 (57.2 percent) of the children. Mothers, on the other hand, account for 772 (30.7 percent) of the presentations made between 1763 and 1803. Aunts and uncles petitioned for the entry of 99 (3.9 percent) of children entering the school.

Individuals identified as “friends” accounted for 74 (2.9 percent) presentations, while grandparents presented a total of 39 (1.5 percent) of incoming children from London, Middlesex and Surrey. Siblings presented a total of 19 children from London, and stepparents filed 11 (.5 percent) petitions between 1763 and 1803.

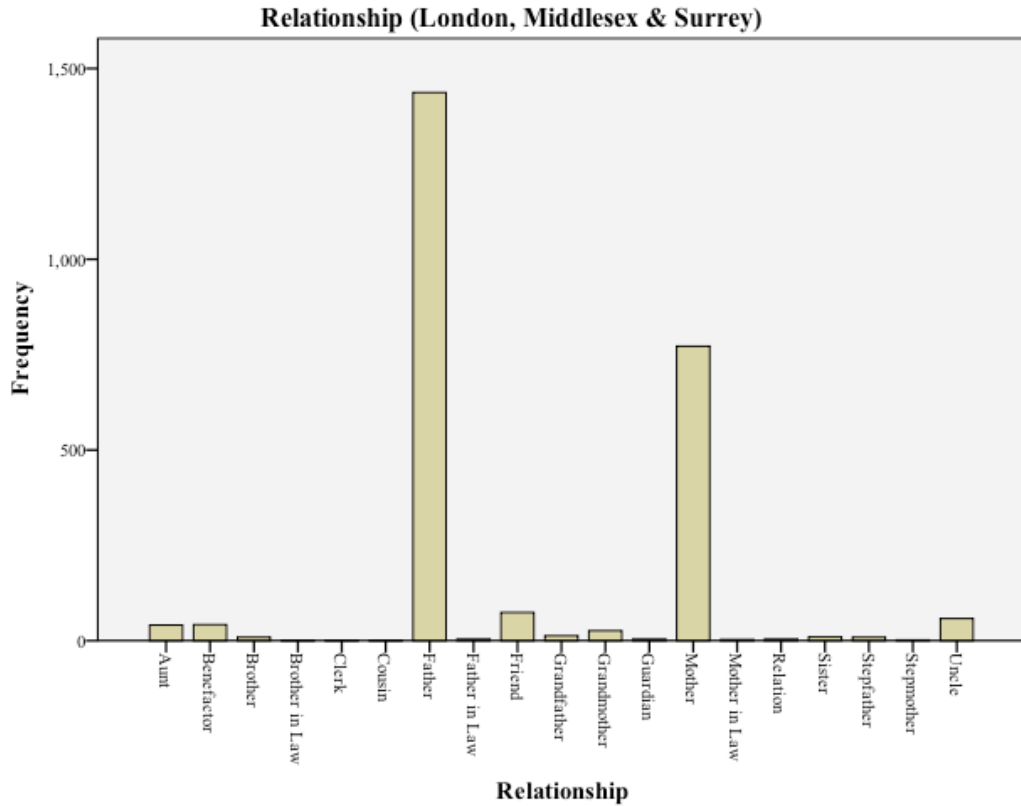


Table 5: Relationship of presenting party to children from London, Middlesex and Surrey.

Outside of London, parents took the bulk of responsibility for presenting children. Of the 1066 presentation papers analyzed, fathers signed 676 (63.4 percent), while mothers signed 265 (24.9 percent). Aunts and uncles account for 33 (3.2 percent) petitions filed, while the “friends” of children account for 22 (2.1) presentations. Grandparents presented a total of 16 children, which makes up 1.6 percent of the 1066 children presented. Stepparents signed four (.4 percent) presentations. Although the

number of children presented from London, Middlesex and Surrey greatly outnumbers children presented from outlying counties, the presenting parties for the regions are very similar. In both cases, parents signed the majority of the presentation petitions presented between 1763 and 1803. When a parents was not able to present a child into the school his or herself, aunts and uncles took on the responsibility. Friends of children also petitioned Christ’s Hospital for the entry of children unrelated to them, while grandparents fulfilled that role as well.

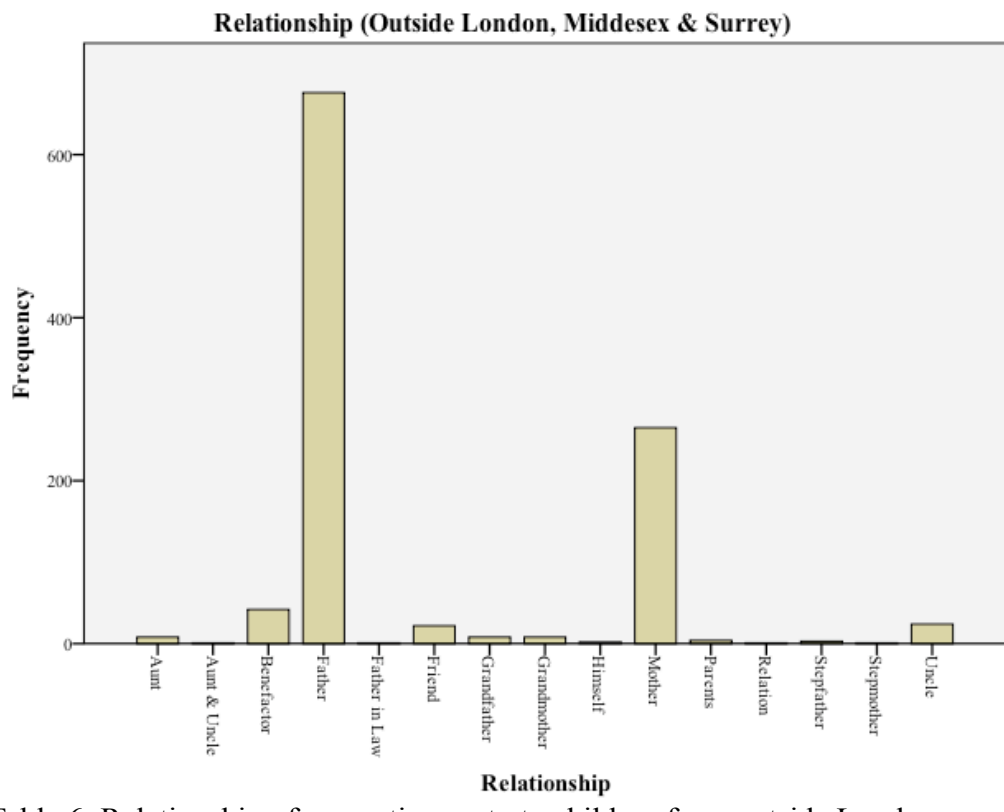


Table 6: Relationship of presenting party to children from outside London, Middlesex and Surrey.

It should also be noted that 224 (6.3 percent) of children presented to Christ’s Hospital between 1763 and 1803 were designated as orphans. These children tended to be presented by friends, grandparents, aunts or uncles. Typical presentations for orphaned

children contain the relationship of the petitioner to the child and the number of children under the petitioner's care. Robert William Rumford's 1799 petition for the presentation of his nephew, William Rumford, reads, "That the Petitioner is uncle to and takes care of one boy whose parents are both dead and have left him unprovided for and the petitioner is himself a married man."¹⁹ Together, aunts and uncles were responsible 89 presentation petitions linked to orphans between 1763 and 1803. Individuals identified as the "friend" of orphaned children were responsible for presentation petitions on behalf of 69 orphans. It is assumed that since these individuals were not described with a term such as aunt, uncle or cousin, they were not related to the child and were a part of the presented child's extended kinship network. Furthermore, grandparents also took care of and presented children into Christ's Hospital. Of the 224 orphans taken in between 1763 and 1803, grandparents presented a total of 23. Siblings also accounted for individuals responsible for presented orphaned children. Brothers presented a total of 7 children, while individuals identified as sisters presented 8 orphans. Of the 224 orphans entering the school between 1763 and 1803, a total of 177 (7.0 percent) came from London, Middlesex and Surrey. Forty-seven entered the school from outlying areas, which accounts 4.4 percent of the 1066 presentations.

Children could also be presented by gift of a benefactor. The number of children admitted to the school upon a gift and the reasons they were admitted were dependent upon stipulations set forth in the will of the benefactor. A total of 501 children were admitted to Christ's Hospital between 1763 and 1803 upon the gift of a benefactor. One prominent benefactor was Thomas Guy, the founder of Guy's Hospital. When he died in

¹⁹ Presentation Papers, Manuscript Department, MS12876 (Guild Hall, London, England), 1067347, Bundle 2.

1724, the governors of his institution were instructed to donate £400 to Christ's Hospital in exchange for the right to nominate four children a year. A total of 84 children were admitted to Christ's Hospital on alternate years between 1763 and 1803 from all over England under Guy's gift. It appears that while his will stipulated that no children over the age of ten be taken into the school, there were no geographical limitations placed upon presentations made upon his gift.²⁰ John and Frances West, who were prominent citizens of London, also left stipulations in their wills for children to be admitted to Christ's Hospital upon their gifts. Each year, children from Reading, Berkshire, Twickenham and one girl from the City of London were admitted into the school under the Wests' gifts. Since the Wests had no children of their own, preference was also given to individuals who could prove relation to the West family.²¹ Between 1763 and 1803, the Wests' gift accounted for the entry of 112 students into Christ's Hospital. Giles Russell also provided for children's entry into Christ's Hospital. His will, which was dated October 10, 1669, provided for nine children from Sherborn, Dorset as well as the Middlesex parishes of Saint Ann Blackfriars and Saint James Clerkenwell to enter the school. These children account for 38 children taken into Christ's Hospital between 1763 and 1803. Mark Quedstedt designated his wishes for children to be taken into Christ's Hospital in his will. Ten children whose fathers maintained membership in the Honorable Company of Fishmongers were to be students the school under Quedstedt's gift at one

²⁰ London Metropolitan Archives, *Records of Christ's Hospital and Bluecoat Schools* (London: London Metropolitan Archives, 2010), 3.

²¹ "Special Entry Categories," Christ's Hospital, accessed 24 February 2011, <http://www.christs-hospital.org.uk/adm-yr7-special-entry-categories.php>; "Christ's Hospital," John & Frances West Family Group, accessed 24 February 2011, <http://www.west-group.org/html/christhospital.html>.

time.²² This bequest accounts for 24 students entering Christ's Hospital between 1763 and 1803. Christopher Clark's will, which was dated February 1661, stipulated that two children from St. Giles without Cripplegate and two children from Saint Mary's Whitechapel were to be educated in the school until the age of fifteen. A total of 14 children were taken into the school under Clark's gift. Additionally, John Stock's bequest of £3000 in 1780 provided for four fatherless boys to be educated in the school at one time. Two of these children were to be taught the arts of navigation, while two others were educated in trades.²³ Between 1781 and 1803, eight boys entered Christ's Hospital upon Stock's gift.

While the gifts of Thomas Guy, John and Frances West, Giles Russell, Mark Quested, Christopher Clark and John Stock account for over half of the children presented upon the bequest of donors to Christ's Hospital between 1763 and 1803, others provided benefactions for children taken into the school. Together, donors such as Walter Woodward and William Stoddard provided for the education of 50 children at the school during the period in question. Thomas Webb and Gilbert Keate's bequests were responsible for bringing in at least 14 children each, while Thomas Lockington and George Fettiplace were responsible for a total of 17 children. Other gifts brought in fewer children. These include the bequests of Richard Stratton, William Tudman, Thomas Hanbury and George Butteris, who each brought in between one and three children.

Aside from children presented upon the gifts of benefactors, most children entering Christ's Hospital came from families who were overburdened. Of the 3578

²² Royal Commission on the Livery Companies of the City of London, *Report & Appendix*, vol. 4 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1884), 268.

²³ John Iliff Wilson, *The History of Christ's Hospital from its Foundation by King Edward the Sixth* (London: John Nichols and Son, 1821), 41.

children taken into the school, the petitions of 2342 (65.5 percent) simply stated that the petitioner found his or herself subject to poor circumstances. Typical presentations falling in this category read very similarly to the petition of Major Purser, the father of Major William Purser, who admitted his son into Christ's Hospital in 1789. His presentation reads, "That the Petitioner has a wife and three children to provide for and being in poor circumstances he finds it difficult to support the charge of their maintenance and education."²⁴ Other petitions did not directly state that the petitioner was subject to poor circumstances, but it can be assumed from the wording of the presentation that he or she could not provide for his or her family. For example, the 1763 petition of Thomas Flett for his son reads, "That the Petitioner has a wife and four children on his charge which he is not able to maintain without assistance."²⁵ The total percentage of children coming from overburdened families in London, Middlesex and Surrey totals 66.0 percent. Children who were presented from outlying areas account for 68.1 percent of the 1066 students entering the school.

In addition to children coming from overburdened families, 1151 (32.2 percent) of children entering Christ's Hospital came from homes where at least one parent had died. The vast majority of these cases involved widowed women presenting their children into the school. A typical petition set forth by a widow stated the amount of time since her spouse's death and the number of children left in her care. Elizabeth Smith issued such a presentation for her son William Smith in 1773. Her petition states, "That the Petitioner's husband died near five years ago leaving her in very poor circumstances with

²⁴ Presentation Papers, 1067338, Bundle 2.

²⁵ Ibid., 1067320, Bundle 1.

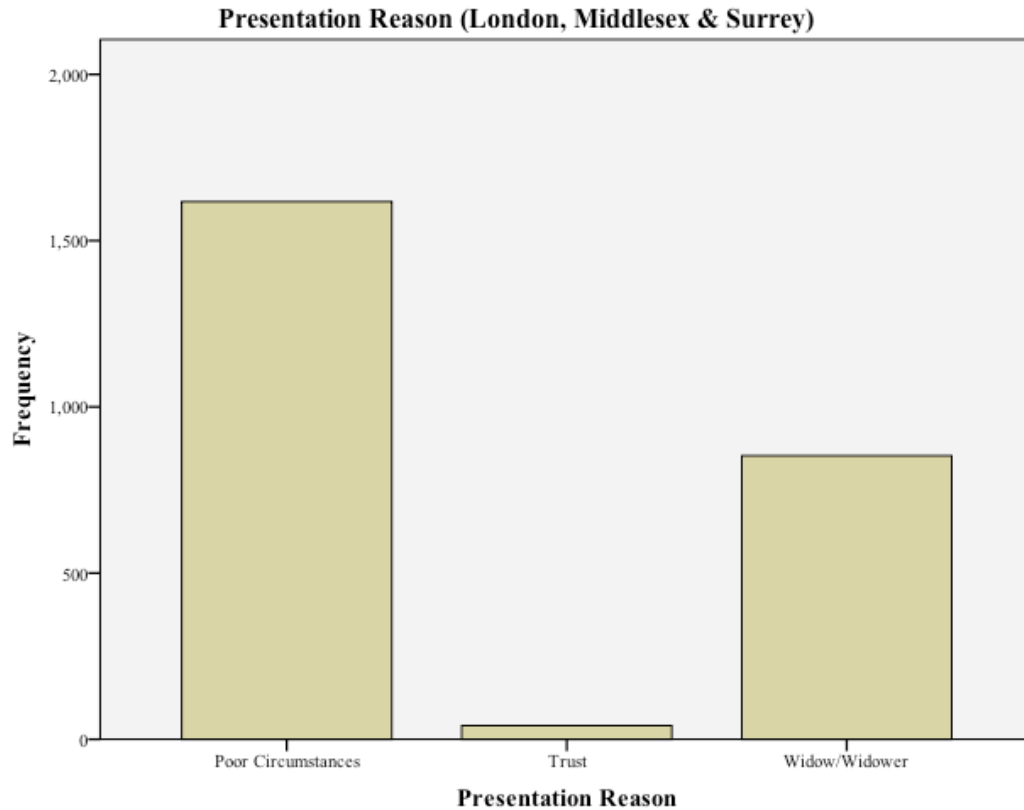


Table 7: Presentation reasons for London, Middlesex and Surrey.

seven children.”²⁶ Another example, issued in 1797 for the presentation of Elizabeth Mary Crapp, reads, “That the Petitioner's husband died in June 1794 leaving her with three children to provide for whose maintenance and education she finds the charge of supporting very difficult.”²⁷ Widowed men also presented children into Christ’s Hospital. While widowers’ petitions occurred at a much less frequent rate than those of widows, their presentation reasons read almost identically. For example, Harry Wise’s 1767 petition reads, “That the Petitioner's wife died upwards of two months ago leaving him in very poor circumstances with four children to provide for.”²⁸ The number of widowed

²⁶ Ibid., 1067325, Bundle 2.

²⁷ Ibid., 1067346, Bundle 1.

²⁸ Ibid., 1067322, Bundle 2.

parents presenting children from London, Middlesex and Surrey totals 753 or 34.0 percent. Out side of these three counties, on the other hand, 27.9 percent of the presenting parties were widowed. This suggests that the death rates in London, Middlesex and Surrey may have been higher than those of outlying areas.

It is interesting to note, that while the regulations issued in 1780 stipulated that a child must be “wanting either Father or Mother,” the majority of children taken into the school between 1763 and 1803 came from homes with both parents.²⁹ The only years in which children from single-parent homes outnumber those coming from homes with both parents are 1763, 1765 and 1769. After 1780, the number of children coming from homes with both parents greatly outnumbers those coming from homes with a widowed parent.

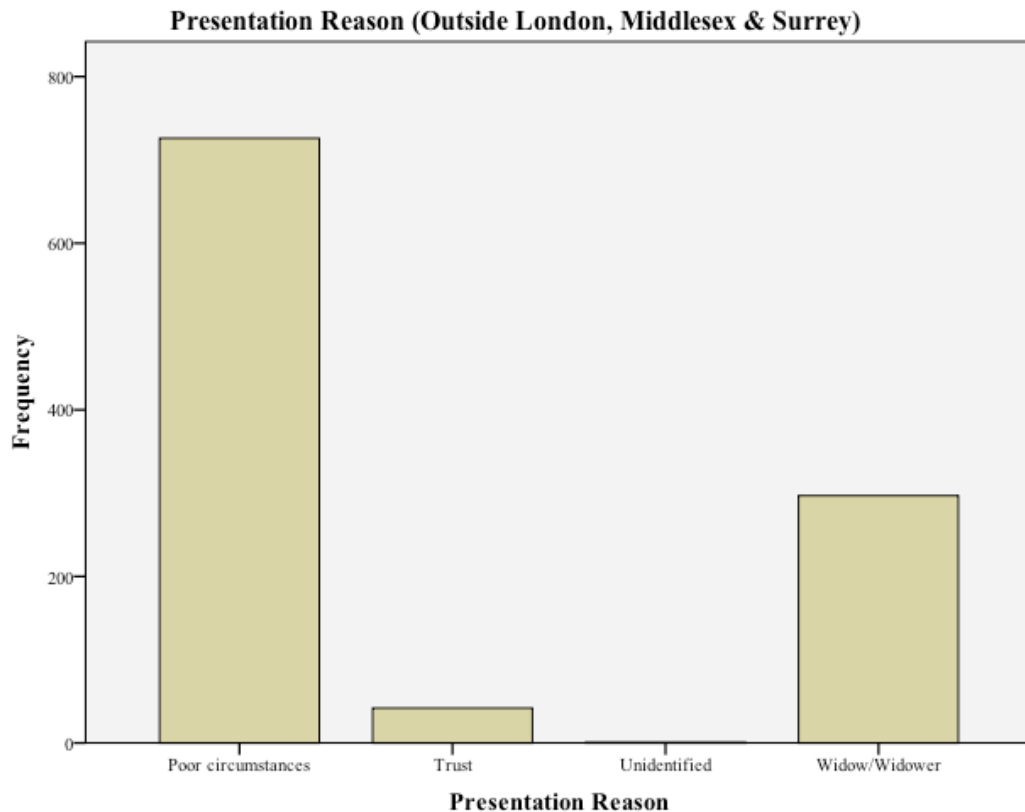


Table 8: Presentation reasons outside London, Middlesex and Surrey.

²⁹ “Regulations to be observed in the admission of children into Christ's-Hospital.”

In 1781, 64.4 percent of the presentations made for entry into the school came from two parent homes. That number grew to 71.3 percent in 1785 and 73.8 percent in 1787. The largest number of children coming from two-parent homes occurred in 1795 when 75.8 percent of the 198 children taken into the hospital had two parents. Clearly, by this time, governors picking children for presentation into the hospital did not necessarily regard the presentation regulations set forth by the hospital.

The abuse of the presentation system even drew commentary from eighteenth century essayists, including former Christ's Hospital student George Dyer. In his pamphlet *The Complaints of the Poor People of England*, he states, "Presentations, as they are called, which ought to be given gratis to those who have nothing to pay, have been known to be frequently bestowed on those who have given a handsome premium to the governor."³⁰ In other words, the ability for a child to be presented to Christ's Hospital depended upon at least two factors. The first was the capability of a parent or a guardian to obtain the notice of a governor, and the second, if the governor was so inclined, the ability of that parent or guardian to make a payment in order to receive a presentation.

Occasionally, petitions listed additional reasons aside from poor circumstances for presentation. Secondary reasons included in the presentation petitions between 1763 and 1803 include the ill health of a parent or sibling, spouses deserting their families, spouses being in the military or abroad and incapable parents. Of the 3578 children that entered Christ's Hospital, 109 (3.1 percent) came from homes where one parent was described as being so ill or disabled that he or she could not contribute to the care of the family. A typical petition of this sort was placed on behalf of James Phillip who was presented by

³⁰ George Dyer, *The complaints of the poor people of England* (1793; reprint, Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1990), 147.

his father in 1769. It states, “That the Petitioner has a wife and three children to provide for and is not able to maintain them without assistance being in an ill state of health and in narrow circumstances.”³¹ A total of fifteen children (.4 percent) had siblings who posed as a burden to their families. For example, William Worrall’s 1783 petition for his son, William Richard Worrall, states, “That the Petitioner has a wife and three children to provide for, one of whom is unfortunately a cripple, and he finds it difficult to maintain and educate them without assistance.”³² Daniel Hall presented a more extreme case of this type in 1781. His petition reads, “That the Petitioner has a wife and ten children to provide for and having only a small income and five of his children having been unfortunately born blind, he is unable to maintain and educate them without assistance.”³³

Additionally, 92 (2.6 percent) children came from homes where a parent deserted his or her family. Of these cases, the offending party was most often the father of the child presented. A typical case of this was put forth by Dorothy Findlay in 1795. The petition for her son states, “That the Petitioner's husband deserted her about five years ago leaving her in distressed circumstances with one child to provide for the charge of whose maintenance and education she finds herself unequal to.”³⁴ Other times, a relative or other party presented children whose mothers were unable to take care of them upon their fathers’ desertion. An example of this occurred in 1781 when William Giles presented his nephew, Andrew White Piercy, into the school. His petition states, “That

³¹ Presentation Papers, 1067323, Bundle 3.

³² Ibid., 1067334, Bundle 1.

³³ Ibid., 1067332, Bundle 2.

³⁴ Ibid., 1067344, Bundle 2.

the Petitioner is uncle to and takes care of a child whose father has deserted him and whose mother is unable to maintain and educate him without assistance.”³⁵

While the motivations of parents that deserted their families are unknown, a total of 62 parents of children presented to Christ’s Hospital were abroad for a variety of reasons. Many of these children had parents in the military or serving abroad upon the service of the king. For example, Mary Wainwright’s 1777 petition for her son John states, “That the Petitioner's husband is abroad as the Master and Commander of one of His Majesty's Ships and they have two children to provide for whom they are unable to maintain and educate without assistance.”³⁶ It appears that other parents went abroad to seek opportunity not available in England. Several petitions mention a child’s father going to the West Indies, America and other parts of the British Empire, which presumably offered different employment and economic opportunities than those that were available in England. Gwyn Chambers’ 1803 petition falls into this category. Her petition claims, “That the Petitioner's husband is supposed to be in the West Indies, if living, but not having heard from him in the last three years it is doubtful and having only her yearly wages as a servant she can ill afford the charge of educating her two children.”³⁷ Rachel Horwood’s husband, on the other hand, “is in Maryland in America, and in a state wholly unable to [provide] for his wife and three children who are therefore dependent upon her friends for support.”³⁸

Furthermore, parties presented children into Christ’s Hospital on behalf of parents stated to be incapable of caring for their families. These petitions do not specify if a

³⁵ Ibid., 1067332, Bundle 1.

³⁶ Ibid., 1067329, Bundle 2.

³⁷ Ibid., 1067351, Bundle 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 1067342, Bundle 2.

parent is in an ill state of health or abroad, but from the language used, it is clear that these individuals were still in England and could not contribute to the support his or her family. Of the 3578 children presented between 1763 and 1803, 53 (1.4 percent) had a parent rendered incapable. Either an aunt or uncle presented eighteen of these children, a grandparent presented ten children and friends presented nine children with incapable parents. Four fathers presented children who had incapable mothers, while six mothers presented children with incapable fathers. One child was presented by his sister when both parents were deemed incapable of caring for their family.

Of the 2511 children taken into Christ's Hospital from London, Middlesex and Surrey, a total of 77 (3.1 percent) had parents who were in ill health, while the ill health of siblings accounted for 28 (1.1 percent) cases presented to Christ's Hospital. A total of 72 parents (2.9 percent) deserted their families. Sixty-five parents (2.6 percent), on the other hand, either served in the military or were abroad when the child was presented to the school. A total of 42 (1.7 percent) of the children presented from London, Middlesex and Surrey had parents who were deemed to be incapable. Outside of London, ill parents accounted for 3.0 percent of the children taken into Christ's Hospital, while only 3 (.3 percent) of the children had ill siblings. A total of twenty (1.9 percent) parents from outside of London deserted their families, and 34 (3.2 percent) were either abroad or in the military. Out of the 1066 children taken into the school, twelve (1.1 percent) had parents deemed incapable.

While these numbers are not drastically different, it is apparent that a higher concentration of children coming from outside of London had parents in the military. Additionally, a child coming from outside of London was less likely to have been

deserted by his or her parent. These children were also less likely to have a sick sibling contributing to the hardships undertaken by their families.

The number of children within a family obviously played a role in admissions for Christ's Hospital. Obviously, the more children within a family, the more resources parents needed in order to care for them. Of the 3578 children that entered the hospital between 1763 and 1803, 678 (18.9 percent) came from families with only one child. Seventy-six (2.1 percent) petitions included in this number are from petitions that do not mention a specific number of children. Even though a specific number is not mentioned, it can be assumed that these families had at least one child since he or she was the subject of a petition for admission. Additionally, petitions also only mention the number of children still upon the charge of the petitioner. It is possible that each child had additional siblings that were omitted from the presentation petitions due to the fact that these individuals could provide for themselves.³⁹ A total of 572 (16.0 percent) children came from families with four children, while 553 (15.5 percent) came from families with at least three children. Children entering the school from families with at least five children accounted for 477 (13.3 percent) of the presentations made between 1763 and 1803. Families with two children account for 422 (11.8 percent) of presentations, while families with six children account for 335 (9.4 percent) petitions. A total of 234 (6.5 percent) children came from families with seven children, while 127 (3.5 percent) of the children entering Christ's Hospital came from families consisting of eight children. Ninety-six (2.7 percent) children entered the school from homes with nine children. Families with more than ten children account for 94 (2.4 percent) of the presentations made between

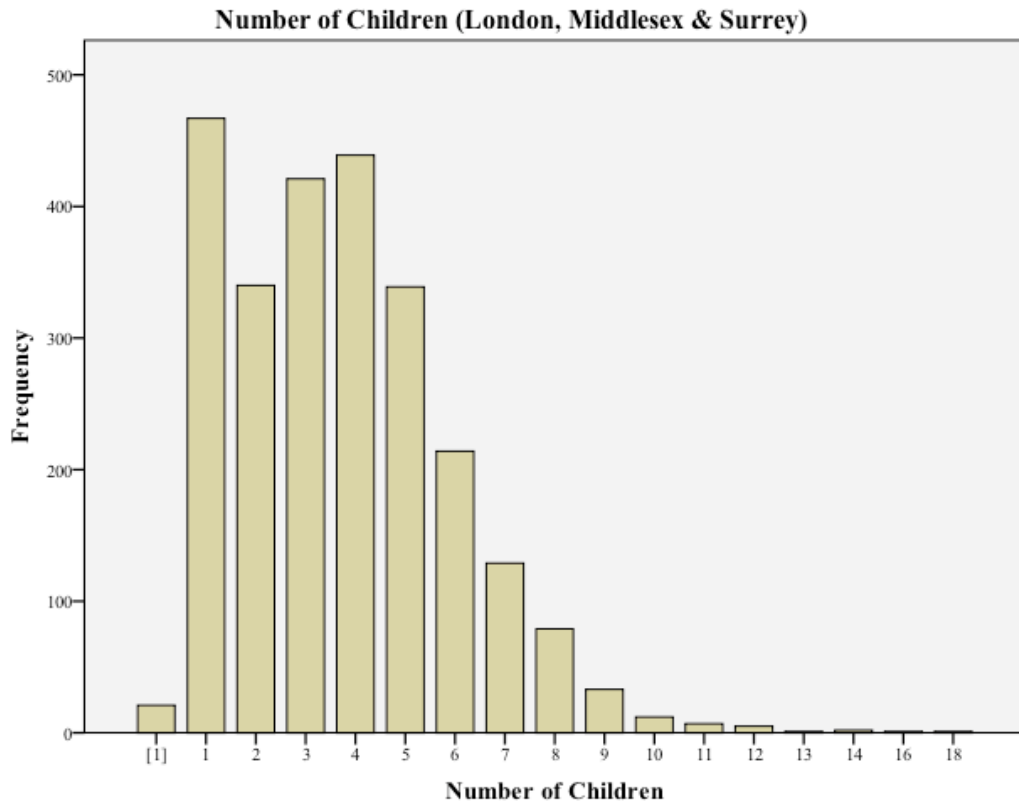


Table 9: Number of children per family for London, Middlesex and Surrey.

1763 and 1803. Thirty families had at least ten children, 20 had eleven and 18 had twelve. Six families had thirteen children, while five had fourteen. Only one family had fifteen and sixteen children each. Two families had eighteen children. The highest number of children within one family was twenty-two. The number of children coming from homes with multiple children far exceeds those coming from homes with only one child, accounting for 81.1 percent of all presentations. Together, these petitions issued between 1763 and 1803 average four children per family.

Of the 2511 children presented from London, Middlesex and Surrey, a total of 488 (19.4 percent) children came from families with at least one child. Families with four children account for 439 (17.5 percent) of the petitions presented during this time, while

421 (16.8 percent) of presentation petitions from London, Middlesex and Surrey came from families with three children. Families with two and five children both account for 13.5 percent of presentations from greater London. A total of 214 (8.5 percent) families had at least six children. A total of 129 children came from families with seven children, while 79 (3.1 percent) were presented from families with eight children. Thirty-three (1.3 percent) children came from families with at least nine children. A total of 29 children came from families with ten or more children. Families presenting children from London, Middlesex and Surrey averaged a total of 3.7 children, which is almost on par with the average number of children per family represented in the presentation papers.

While fewer children were presented from counties outside of greater London, the average size of the families from which these children came were larger. Of 1066

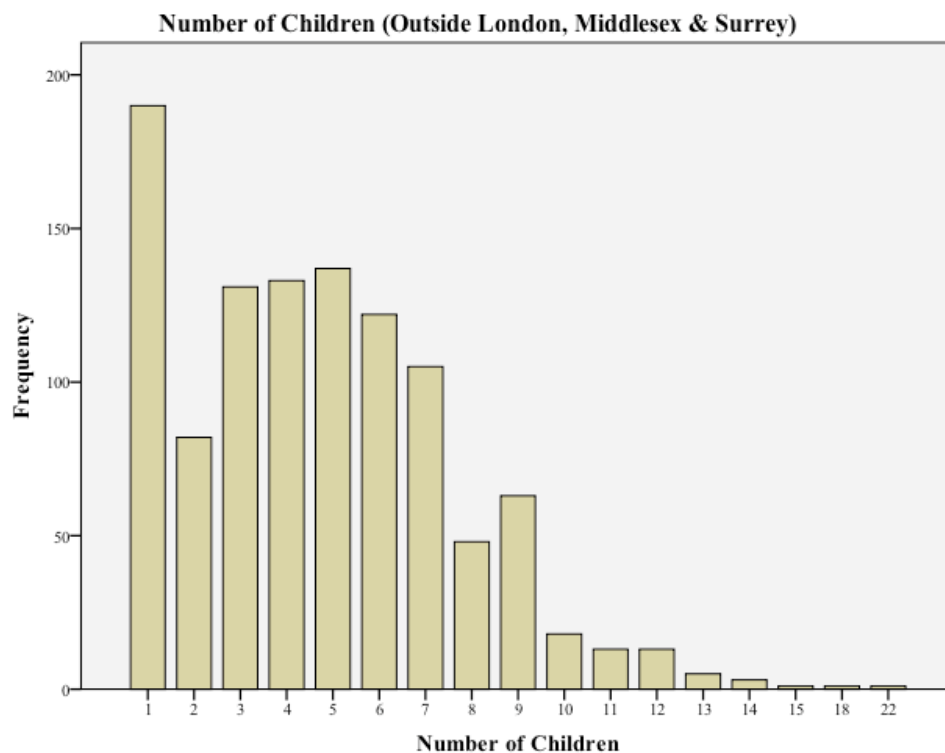


Table 10: Number of children from families from outside London, Middlesex and Surrey.

children, 190 (17.8 percent) came from families with only one child. A total of 137 (12.9) children came from families with at least five children, while families with three and four children accounted for 12.3 and 12.5 percent of presentations coming from outside of London respectively. Families with at least six children account for 122 (11.4) presentations made between 1763 and 1803. A total of 105 (9.8 percent) children entered Christ's Hospital from families with at least seven children, while 63 (5.9 percent) came from families with at least nine children. Forty-eight children entered the school from families of nine children. Families of ten or more children account for 55 (5.2 percent) children coming into the hospital. Again, the number of families with multiple children exceeds those with only one child as they account for 82.2 percent of these presentations. The average number of children per family outside of London totals 4.7, which suggests that outside of the urban metropolis, couples with larger numbers of children were more likely to have difficulty supporting their families.

Conclusion

It is clear that throughout its long history, Christ's Hospital played a major role in shaping young English citizens into productive members of society. Although the school was founded at a time of crisis in 1552, its continued operation throughout the eighteenth century protests to its success as an educational institution. While the benefits of the school were felt the strongest by disadvantaged children in London, Christ's Hospital has had a lasting effect across England and the world.

While Christ's Hospital served to educate children from across England, Wales and Scotland, upon leaving the school, they scattered across the globe. As a result, Christ's Hospital is arguably an international institution. The Children's Register, which includes the occupation and destination of each child upon leaving the school, indicates that many children stayed in England upon being discharged from the school. An example of this occurred when John Saunders was discharged in February of 1789 to "John Darby, his cousin, of Willow Street, Bankside, Southwark at the desire of his mother, Deborah Saunders of Highworth, Wilts, who is to provide master for him."¹ Similarly, William Le Feaver was released to "Sarah Le Feaver, his mother, living at No. 87 in Kent Street Borough, who is to provide a master for him" in 1786.² Although the entries in the Children's Register indicate that these children stayed within England, it is difficult to discern what happened to these children upon their departure from the school. It is feasible that upon leaving Christ's Hospital, children such as William Le Feaver and John Saunders were sent across the British Empire in order to serve as apprentices for a variety of trades.

¹ Children's Register, Manuscript Department, MS12876, Guild Hall, London, England.

² Ibid.

Other children were sent abroad as apprentices to ship captains. Thomas Daniell, for example, was discharged “by James Baldwin, Esq. commander of the ship *General Coole* in the service of the Honorable East India Company with whom he is to serve seven years.”³ Additionally, Samuel Carless was taken from Christ’s Hospital “by Luke Meriton, master of the ship *Supply*, burthen 480 tons, bound to Barbados with whom he is to serve seven years.”⁴ Geroge Barnes, on the other hand, served “Benjamin Mellanby, master of the shop *Diana of Scarborough*, Burthen 280 tons, bound for Saint Petersburg.”⁵ While the Children’s Register does not provide much detail into the lives of children at Christ’s Hospital, it is apparent from the few entries mentioned above, that Christ’s Hospital students were sent across the globe.

Children were also brought across the Atlantic in order to serve apprenticeships with individuals in the West Indies, Canada as well as the American colonies. For example, Henry Russell, who entered Christ’s Hospital in 1763, came to Antigua under the direction of William Thomas in 1768. Likewise, Henry Russell was apprenticed to Thomas Walker who resided in Jamaica upon leaving Christ’s Hospital. Sy Smith and Thomas Rennoldson were both sent to St. Kitts after leaving Christ’s Hospital in 1776 and 1777, respectively. Furthermore, Thomas Yates served a Mr. Gibbs in Charles Town, South Carolina when he left the school in 1768. Samuel Wallace was sent to Boston in 1772 while John Hollinworth served Effingham Lawrence in New York. Bateman Baker was sent to Nova Scotia as apprentice to Henry Mowat in 1771. Additionally, John

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Sedgwick served Joseph Judge in Quebec upon leaving Christ's Hospital in 1770.⁶ From the few examples mentioned above, it is apparent that many children leaving Christ's Hospital did not stay within England. In fact, the movement of these individuals outside of England and across the world speaks to the international nature of Christ's Hospital during the eighteenth century.

The eighteenth century also saw number of notable individuals that attended Christ's Hospital. While exceptional individuals like Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Leigh Hunt were educated at the school during this time and left valuable memoirs about the school at this time period, the vast majority of students in the school faded into the historic record, leaving nothing but the few records they accumulated whilst at Christ's Hospital. In looking at these records, this study has shown that, while the majority of its students came from London or its immediate surrounding area, hundreds of children from all over Great Britain and its empire benefitted from the instruction and care provided by Christ's Hospital. Each child presented to the school between 1763 and 1803 had a different story, and the outcomes of their education and Christ's Hospital also differed. However, in being selected for a presentation to the school, each also demonstrated the need for charitable assistance and education. While it appears from the records that students at the school came from the southern portion of England, the school had far-reaching effects across the country. This was not only due to the fact that students came to the school from all of England and its empire, it is also due to the fact that a variety of schools modeled on Christ's Hospital sprung up across England during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁶ Peter Wilson Coldham, *Child Apprentices in America from Christ's Hospital, London 1617-1778* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1990), 130-138.

Additionally, the presentation papers also give insight into Christ's Hospital that is not present in the literature written about the school. While the hospital's historians have illuminated details about the structure, operation and notable persons associated with the school, very few of these books look at the reasons, aside from poverty, that children were sent to the school. The records created during the eighteenth century at Christ's Hospital provide a nuanced look into the lives of children before they attended the school in addition to where they went upon their departure. By looking at these records in an analytical way, it is possible to see that Christ's Hospital was not an insular, isolated institution situated within the city of London. In fact, the school served as a central hub that brought children in from across England, Wales and Scotland in order to send them as productive members of society across the globe.

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Vita

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