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HISTORY OF THE IOWA STATE ORPHAN ASYLUM.

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The present war for the maintenance of our national integrity, had not been carried on a year ere the question came to every thoughtful and humane mind, what can be done for the orphans made destitute by its ravages?

As call after call came for volunteers, and the fathers of Iowa nobly responded, leaving at home families whose sole dependence had been their labor, the patriotic ladies of the State, while working zealously for the soldier in the field, began also to inquire what can we do for those children whose fathers will never return. Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer called a Convention of the loyal ladies of the State, to meet at Muscatine, Oct. 7, 1863, the principal object of which was, to devise means for the support and education of the orphan children of Iowa soldiers. The Convention was well attended, and the interest manifested in the subject was so great that it was decided to go forward with the good work, trusting to Providence and the generous people of Iowa to sustain it. Accordingly, on the 30th of December, 1863, the following persons formed an association for this object, under the name of the Iowa State Orphan Asylum: Caleb Baldwin, Ge. G. Wright, R. P. Lowe, Samuel J. Kirkwood, Wm. M. Stone, J. W. Cattell, N. H. Brainerd, C. C. Cole, Oran Faville, John R. Needham, S. S. Deming, Mrs. Hancock, Mrs. Newcomb, Isaac Pendleton, Mrs. Stephens, Jas. G. Day, Mrs. Bagg, Mrs. Cadle, H. O. Henderson, Mrs. Andrews, Mrs. Crandall, Mrs. Darwin, E. H. Williams, J. B. Howell, Mrs. Shields, Mrs. Wittenmyer; Miss Mary Kibben, Miss M. E. Shelton, Elijah Sells, Dr. Horton and C. Dunham.

By the articles of incorporation, any individual or association numbering as many as ten persons, can become a member for life, by paying the sum of twenty-five dollars, or a member for one year, by paying five dollars.

The officers of the association are a President, six Vice Presidents, one from each Congressional District, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Board of Trustees consisting of twelve persons, two from each Congressional District. The officers first elected were—President, Gov. Stone; Vice Presidents, 1st District, Mrs. G. G. Wright; 2d District, Mrs. R. L. Cadle; 3d District, Mrs. J. T. Hancock; 4th District, Hon. John R. Needham; 5th District, Hon. J. W. Cattell; 6th District, Mrs. Mary M. Baggs; Recording Secretary, Miss Mary Kibben; Corresponding Secretary, Miss M. E. Shelton; Treasurer, N. H. Brainerd. Board of Trustees, 1st District, Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer, Mrs. C. B. Darwin; 2d District, Mrs. D. T. Newcomb, Mrs. L. B. Stephens; 3d District, Hon. O. Faville, Hon. E. H. Williams; 4th District, Prof. T. S. Parvin, Mrs. Shields; 5th District, Hon. Caleb Baldwin, Hon. C. C. Cole; 6th District, Hon. Isaac Pendleton, Hon. H. C. Henderson.

The Trustees held their first meeting on Feb. 4th, 1864, in the Hall of Representatives, at Des Moines. Committees from both branches of the Legislature were present, and invited to participate. Gov. Stone presided. An estimate of the amount of funds needed for the successful prosecution of the work, and a proposition that a home for disabled soldiers should be connected with the Institution, were presented by Gov. Kirkwood.

Various plans for raising the requisite means were discussed, and it was agreed that agents

should be appointed in each county, with sub-agents in every town, who should solicit subscriptions from all. Remarks were made by Governors Kirkwood and Eastman, Judges Cole and Henderson, Messrs. Clarke, Moor, Galland, Johnson and others, showing that the originators of this enterprise intend an Institution that shall be an honor to Iowa, and a home for every soldier orphan, and if the people of Iowa respond in the future as they have done in the past, we doubt not their wishes will be more than realized.

At its next meeting in March, at Davenport, the Board, finding quite a sum in the Treasury, decided to make immediate arrangements for the reception of the children; accordingly, appointed a committee with instructions to lease a building, procure a steward, and solicit donations of furniture from Aid Societies. Other committees were also appointed to secure the cooperation of the Masons, Odd-fellows and other organizations in the State.

Rev. P. P. Ingalls was appointed General Agent with instructions to visit every county in the State, and every regiment in the army, for the purpose of soliciting contributions.

The Committee appointed for the purpose, of which Mr. Howell, of Keokuk, was Chairman, leased a large brick building in Lawrence, Van Buren county, and engaged Mr. Fuller, of Mt. Pleasant, as Steward.

In June, 1864, the first annual meeting of the Association, was held in Des Moines, and though only six months had elapsed since its first formation, its members were numerous. From one single county, Des Moines, six hundred and fifty dollars were handed in, claiming six memberships, and as many more subscribed for but not paid.

The Association endorsed the past action of the Board, instructed then to go forward and open the Asylum as soon as possible, but enjoined upon them to take no steps at present toward purchase of property or permanent location.

The officers chosen for the present year were—President, Gov. Stone; Vice Presidents, Mrs. G. G. Wright, Mrs. R. L. Cadle, Mrs. A. Sanders, Hon. J. R. Needham, Hon. J. W. Cattell and Mrs. Mary M. Bagg; Recording Secretary, Miss Mary Kibben; Corresponding Secretary, Miss M. E. Shelton; Treasurer, B. F. Allen; Board of Trustees, Mrs. Wittenmyer, Mrs. O. B. Darwin, Hon. W. G. Woodward, Mrs. L. B. Stephens, Hon. E. H. Williams, Dr. James Wright, Prof. T. S. Parvin, Mrs. H. Shane, Hon. Caleb Baldwin, Hon. C. C. Cole, Hon. Isaac Pendleton and G. M. Woodbury.

Mrs. C. B. Baldwin, Mrs. G. G. Wright, Mrs. Dr. Horton, Miss Mary E. Shelton and Mr. Geo. Schramm were appointed a committee with instructions to furnish the building and take all necessary steps for the opening of the "Home."

Mrs. C. B. Darwin, Hon. C. C. Cole and Miss Mary E. Shelton were appointed a committee to frame rules for the government of the "Home," and report them at the next meeting of the Board. Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Association, a motion would be made to change the name of the Institution to Iowa Orphans' home, and the Institution though incorporated under the name of Asylum, is generally called the "Home."

The Executive Committee, in accordance with instructions, proceeded with the work of preparation, and, on the 13th of July, 1864, announced that inmates would be received. In three weeks, twenty-one were admitted, and the number has been constantly increasing, so that now, a little more than six months from time of opening, there are seventy children admitted, and twenty applications which the committee have not yet acted upon. All the orphans of soldiers.

The Board at a subsequent meeting adopted the rules reported by the committee, and elected officers of the Institution. Miss M. Elliott, of Washington, was first chosen matron. She having resigned in February last, Mrs. E. G. Platt, of Fremont county, was chosen in her place. A

matron, teacher, seamstress, nurse, steward, housekeeper, cook, and washerwoman are employed, the older girls and boys assist in various duties, one object of the "Home" being to form habits of industry. Applications for admissions should be made to Mrs. C. B. Darwin, of Burlington, Mrs. G. G. Wright, of Keosauqua, or Mr. Geo. Schramm, of Farmington. At present only orphans of Iowa soldiers are received

Donations in money may be sent to the Treasurer, B. F. Allen of Des Moines. Donations in goods may be directed to the "Home." Farmington, Iowa. A list of contents and value of the box, should be sent to Mrs. E. G. Platt, the Matron.

The General Agent meets with unprecedented success, both at home and in the army. Several Aid Societies have contributed largely in goods. Davenport, Iowa City, Muscatine, Burlington, Keokuk, Ottumwa, Oskaloosa, Des Moines, have given in the aggregate over two thousand dollars.

The interest manifested in every part of the State, is ardent and unabated. A single call for Christmas gifts brought them in profusion. In short, every thing connected with this cause evinces that Iowa's love for her brave defenders, stops not when the grave hides them from her view, but that she seeks to repay in kindness to the orphan child, the debt of gratitude she owes the father.