

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE GENERAL GERMAN ORPHAN HOME IN BALTIMORE, 1863-1963

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Those who are spared great suffering must feel called upon to help to relieve the misery of others. We all must share in carrying the burden of misery which weighs upon this earth (Albert Schweitzer)

At the outbreak of the Civil War the German element of Baltimore represented more than one quarter of the city's total population. The German language predominated in a large section of Baltimore while numerous churches, clubs, fraternal organizations, private schools and newspapers were maintained by this large German-speaking group in the city. This process of linguistic and social isolation from the population at large was even fostered by the constant attacks of Nativists and Know-Nothing elements who stood for "Americans rule America." German Americans in Baltimore felt nevertheless very much a part of their American homeland. During the Civil War about 3000 German-born Marylanders, mostly from Baltimore, enlisted in the Union armies.

One of the manifestations of German American segregation from the rest of the Americans was the founding of various charitable institutions for the exclusive use of their own group. The oldest institution of this kind in Baltimore is the General German Orphan Home which is now operating in its 100th year. In 1863, Martin Kratt, pastor of the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church, appealed to the Germans of Baltimore for the founding of an orphanage for German children who were victims of the ravages of war. On July 12, 1863 Pastor Kratt organized the German Protestant Orphan Association of the City of Baltimore, Md. to manage the German Protestant Orphan Asylum. After but a few months of preparations, the opening of the first Orphan Asylum located at 69 Pratt Street near Canal Street took place on November 8, 1863. A large circle of friends was present. The first officers were: Johann Christian Krantz, president, Ernest H. Moeller, treasurer and Heinrich Ohrmann, secretary.

In a short space of time, however, it was recognized that the close association of this orphanage with a church and the name itself would limit and hinder its future growth. Pastor Kratt himself and other influential men among the German element recommended a change to a non-sectarian organization. A new constitution was prepared and accepted in September 1866 and the name was changed to: The *General* German Orphan Association of the City of Baltimore, Md. to conduct and maintain the *General* German Orphan Asylum of the City of Baltimore (Der Allgemeine Deutsche Waisenverein der Stadt Baltimore, Md. und Das Allgemeine Deutsche Waisenhaus). This change of names was very favorably received and the entire German-American population of Baltimore, regardless of creed, became the friend and protector of this new institution.

The annual reports of the General German Orphan Home were printed in German up to 1896 when for the first time the report appeared both in German and English. The annual report of 1921 was the last one in

which the German text was used, from then on only English was used in all reports and meetings.

The Orphan Home on Pratt Street quickly became too small to meet the increasing demand of orphans applying for admission and it was decided to buy a house at 69 North Calvert Street. The move from Pratt Street to Calvert Street was made in July 1867. A great parade participated in by a large number of German-American organizations marched from the old house to the new one.

The annual report for the year 1867 is the first printed report on hand and is signed by secretary E. C. Linden who served the Home as a director until 1911, taking a very active part in all the major and minor developments during this time. He reports that of the 43 children in the Home 30 were of school age—22 boys and 8 girls. All these children went to the school of the Evang.-Luth. Trinity Church. He also mentioned that a Ladies Sewing Society had been in existence since the founding of the Home and that 18 different German-American organizations were affiliated with the Home and were giving it their financial support.

The constitution of 1866, the first of the General German Orphan Association was superseded by the one accepted in 1867. A few selections from this constitution deserve attention. The introduction, for instance, states: "The purpose of the orphanage is to admit needy and deserving orphans of both sexes, without regard to creed, of German ancestry (the grandparents from the father's or mother's side must have been born in Germany). This institution is to be their home as well as father, mother, teacher and friend. Half-orphans in especially sad cases can and shall be admitted by decree of the board of directors." Article one of the constitution says: The name of the institution shall be "The General German Orphan Asylum of the City of Baltimore, Md. and it shall continue with this name until all future time and shall be and remain the incontestable property of the General German Orphan Association which is recruited from the entire German population of Baltimore. Both languages, German and English, shall be taught, however, German shall be and shall remain the official language of the house."

Other articles state: "All children admitted shall be not less than two years and not more than ten years of age. Only the Board of Directors can make an exception. When the children are 14 years old, they are to leave the Home and the Board of Directors shall see to it that the boys are placed properly with businessmen or tradespeople who accept them as apprentices and keep them in their families until they are 21 years old. The girls may become domestics in respectable houses or choose an honorable career for which they are specially adapted. The boys shall stay under the supervision of the Board until they are 21 years old, the girls until they are 18 years old."

The constitution of 1867 provides for a Board of 25 directors, the same number as today.

One of the most interesting features of the early years of the Home was the large participation of societies and lodges concerned with the management and support of the orphanage. The constitution states: "All lodges and societies which join the General German Orphan Association 'in corpore' have the right to send representatives to the board meetings with the right to vote. When votes are taken, only as many representatives can vote as there are directors present at that meeting. The seniority of an organization decides which one can vote. All organizations which are members of the G. G. O. A. shall remit at least 5 cents quarterly for each

of their members to the treasurer. If the regular contribution of an organization which has sent children to the home is not sufficient for maintaining the children, this organization is obliged to remit additional amounts as decided by the Board."

The support coming from these organizations was rather substantial. In 1874 their total contributions amounted to \$1486 and the number of contributing organizations was 48. They gradually decreased and in the year 1887 their contribution totalled \$321 and in 1893 only \$91. This was most likely due to the dwindling membership of these organizations and the fact that the finances of the Home had improved so that more and more organizations felt that their support was not needed.

The committees of the Board established in 1867 are still functioning today as the finance, inspection, purchasing, admission and school committees. Other committees, however, were added in later years. Two directors of the inspection committee visited the Home twice a week, alternating every month. The school committee had the duty to make a quarterly report on all children who were apprentices, etc. and still under the supervision of the Board.

The collection of membership dues was quite different in 1867 from what it is today. For each political ward of the city three collectors were nominated by the Board and directors were obliged to serve as collectors. All those who paid one dollar or more received a membership card. The collectors went personally from house to house (no autos at that time). The collections were printed in detail every year in the annual report. By 1912 the city had spread into new suburbs, hence a new arrangement became necessary and the city was divided into 47 collection districts, each small enough for one collector. However some years later the use of checks became more and more prevalent and gradually the collectors were not needed any longer. Today all membership dues are collected by mail and a few by personal call.

The new home at 69 North Calvert Street offered many advantages compared with the previous one. The house was bought for \$16,000 and a mortgage of \$10,000 had to be paid off. An appeal was made to the ladies of Baltimore to join the Ladies' Sewing Society in holding a Fair for the benefit of the Home which actually took place in the Maryland Institute in December 1867 with a financial success of \$7,000 profit. By June 1868 the last mortgage was paid off. The Orphan Asylum was now free of all debts.

In 1868 the Home received the so called Steuben Fund of \$2,186 which had originally been intended for a monument in honor of General Von Steuben in 1858. However, the amount collected had not been sufficient and the money was lying in a savings bank in Baltimore for nearly ten years. In 1868 it was decided to give the fund to the General German Orphan Asylum with the obligation that part of the money be used for a suitable memorial to General Von Steuben. The Board of Directors decided to have a large portrait of General Von Steuben painted by Ludwig Encke, a beautiful frame was carved by Wilhelm Teubner and an artistic pedestal by Joseph Sudsburg. The picture was unveiled in 1869.

One day in July 1868 the waters of Jones Falls rose very rapidly and flooded the basement of the Home, causing some damage. A few years later a dangerous epidemic of scarlet fever broke out in the Home. Unfortunately the healthy and sick children could not be separated so that nineteen children were infected and two died. In spite of his advanced age Dr. Friedrich Hess, the doctor of the Home, attended the children with devoted care.

More and more children applied for admission and soon there was no longer enough room in the house on North Calvert Street. Only five years after the children had moved into this house the Board of Directors decided to look again for a larger place. A committee consisting of Jakob Trust, Christian Ax, Ph. R. Vogel, Carl Sachse and E. C. Linden was appointed to acquire a suitable property inside the city limits and on November 11, 1872 the property of the Convent of the Carmelite Sisters on Aisquith Street was bought. Since the buildings on this property were not at all suited to the needs of an orphan home a new building had to be erected. Confident that the German-Americans of Baltimore would support this undertaking generously and wholeheartedly the Board engaged architects and contractors. The new building was to be big enough to take care of 200 children, allowing 30 sqft. for each bed. Every consideration was given to good ventilation of fresh and clean air and to every other requirement which would help to keep the house clean and orderly later on. The final total cost of this new Home was \$55,647. A general collection of gifts and contributions was started and at the time of the corner stone laying on June 22, 1873 a sum of \$31,000 was available. A parade brought a large number of friends to this festive occasion. Wm. Pinkney White, Governor of Maryland and Joshua Van Sant, Mayor of Baltimore were present. Pastor Scheib, who spoke in German, said: "There are days and hours of greater import and value than others and these deserve therefore to be underscored in red on the calendar of life. Hours like these give our feelings a higher trend, awaken our thoughts in relation to mankind and bear evidence of how much is accomplished by man, in spite of all obstacles encountered."

In 1874 the new house on Aisquith Street was ready and the children moved in. Again the Board of Directors was faced with a large debt, but again the Ladies' Sewing Society helped most generously. First they contributed their entire funds of \$5,345 to the building fund and for the purchase of furniture for the Home. Then they arranged another great Fair, this time in the Concordia Hall, the gathering place of all the German-American societies, clubs and other organizations. The Fair, the chairman of which was Mrs. Johanna Wehr, was held in 1875 and was a complete success with net receipts of \$20,000. At the end of the year all debts were paid and even some new capital was on hand.

This new house on Aisquith Street represented a great step forward in the growth of the General German Orphan Association and it was destined to serve the needs of this organization for the next fifty years.

On October 15, 1919 the following item appeared in a Baltimore newspaper: "With the idea of moving the entire establishment to the suburbs the executive committee of the General German Orphan Asylum, located at Aisquith Street near Orleans, yesterday announced the purchase of the Talbot J. Albert estate called BELMONT at Catonsville. Conrad C. Rabbe, treasurer, said that steps will be taken shortly to remodel the buildings as a summer home for the children to be ready for occupancy next year.

The consideration was not announced. It was said, however, that the property was purchased September 24 by John G. Johannesen, Conrad C. Rabbe, George W. H. Pierson and H. G. Von Heine, officials of the institution, acting in a private capacity to prevent the property from slipping out of reach of the institution. At the Directors' meeting October 8 it was voted to buy the property of 44 acres at the figure given for it by the individual directors."

A building committee was formed which secured the services of Walter

Gieske as architect in 1920. In 1920 the children spent July and August in Belmont, quartered in the available buildings. The fresh air in the country improved their health greatly. Two cottages and the laundry and heating plant were built. One cottage was occupied by the end of 1922, the other early in 1923. By 1924 everything had been transferred from the Aisquith Street Home to Catonsville.

To be able to start the building program a number of loans were arranged, but to finance the new home a Building Fund campaign was started on November 1st, 1922. This campaign was in charge of a committee headed by Karl A. M. Scholtz as chairman, Lewis Kurtz, as secretary and John Lauber, as assistant chairman. Some 400 faithful women and men worked under their guidance and collected a total of \$128,000, confirming the confidence of the directors "that the acquisition of the 'Belmont' property for a new home has served as an inspiration to all those who have labored so earnestly for the cause of the Home during many years."

When the children were transferred from the city to Catonsville not all of them could be admitted to the school in Catonsville. Some were taught in the large living room of one of the cottages and the School Board provided the teacher.

In 1926 another cottage was added to the existing buildings. Ferdinand Meyer, a very successful Baltimore business man, who had come as a young man from Germany, generously gave the money to build this cottage. There were no further additions to the Home until 1938 when Mrs. Adele Von Heine-Wilcox presented to the Home a check for the construction of a swimming pool for the children. Later Henry Herzinger, who had been president of the Home for many years, provided in his will the necessary funds for a recreational building in memory of his wife. In 1958 the Mary C. Hax Herzinger Memorial Building was dedicated. During the next year a new home for the superintendent and his family was built, which completes the present equipment of the Home.

An Orphan Home should offer a child deprived of its parents the equivalent of a good family home: wholesome and conscientious care, a healthy moral and physical education, love and affection. Judge Waxter, when he was the head of the Baltimore City Welfare Department wrote to the Home: "Work with children is work with those who will later constitute the citizens of the country. People should grasp the full significance of the fact, that children who later become problems are such as a result of the natural process of developing having to do with heredity and the conditions under which they are reared."

The Board of Directors has always pursued the policy of providing the best possible care for the children and of preparing them to become valuable members of their community. While the constitution of 1867 provided that only orphans and half-orphans should be admitted to the Home, it soon became necessary to grant admission, perhaps for a limited time only, to children who still had both parents. In 1893 the Board discussed again this question of admitting half-orphans and non-orphans (both parents living) and the minutes of that meeting record the sentence: "There is always the danger that the Home may take charge of children of lazy fathers and disorderly mothers." However, the records show that in 1894 of the 119 children in the Home 40 were orphans, 70 half-orphans and 9 non-orphans attesting to the fact that it always was the greatest concern of the Board to help the needy child whether orphan or non-orphan.

As stated before, the children went to school until they were 14 years

old. The boys became apprentices and the girls usually were employed in households. A typical report of 1877 states that 13 children left the Home during the year, seven children became apprentices or servants in households, two returned to their parents, three were adopted and one ran away.

There did not seem to be any difficulty in placing the boys as apprentices with business men and trades people until the end of the seventies and eighties, but with the growing industrialization this became more and more difficult. There were fewer and fewer places where they could learn a trade and live in a family. Some of the boys went to factories, but in that case had to live in boarding houses, which the Board did not consider a good solution. Therefore, wherever possible the boys were taken to farms in the neighborhood, an arrangement, which worked out very well for a number of years, and other boys lived at the "Boys Home" or were helped by the Henry Watson Children's Aid. For many years there were a few boys at the McDonogh School to complete their education. The girls very often stayed in the Aisquith Street Home until they became 18 years of age while doing housework.

In the early years of the Home the children went to the school of the Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church, later on to the Scheib School connected with the Zion Church on Gay Street and to the Knapp School. After the English-German Schools were opened all children went gradually to public schools. However, it was not until the Home had been moved to Catonsville that any of the children completed the full public high-school course. The first boy graduated from Catonsville High School in 1926. Then it became customary that all children should complete their high school education before they left the Home and that those who showed that they were college material were helped to go to college. Even prior to 1926 a few boys acquired additional education. In 1888 one of the boys was a student at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, Ohio and in 1920 two of the former wards were attending courses at Yale University, two at Charlotte Hall College, one at Eden Seminary in St. Louis. The first girl of the Home graduated from college in 1942.

The physicians who took care of the health of the children during all these years should not be forgotten. Among them was Dr. Frank C. Bressler who attended the children for more than forty years. Others who contributed their knowledge and time for the benefit of the children were Dr. Joseph I. Kemler, Dr. Wetherbee Fort, Dr. J. Fred Andreae and Dr. Raymond E. Lenhard.

That the Board was always open for new ideas is shown by the Kindergarten and Turner movement. Until about the first World War the Home always had to take care of a number of children of pre-school age. When the Kindergarten idea was introduced to our country the Board engaged a Kindergarten teacher who had been trained in the famous Froebel School in Germany and another person to teach the girls handicrafts. This proved to be rather expensive and other arrangements were made, but the problem of taking care of the pre-school age children continued until a group of young women formed the Ladies' Auxiliary Association in 1898 (*Damenhilfsverein*) especially to take charge of the Kindergarten at the Home. In later years only a few children of pre-school age were admitted to the Home. By that time the Kindergarten had become part of the public school system.

The German-American *Turner* movement started in the decade before the Civil War. Its motto: "A sound mind in a sound body" emphasized

a true physical culture for its own sake rather than encouraging competitive sports. A special instructor was engaged in the early 1880's to give the children instruction in *turnen* (physical training). This training was a complete success not only in the progress of the various exercises and in the improvement of the health of the children, but also by increasing the general discipline of the children, a discipline which in former years could not be accomplished even by means of strictness and severity. It was not until 1898 that this type of physical training was recognized as a positive and important medium of general education by the Baltimore public schools.

In 1924 a Boy's Band of 18 pieces was formed at the Home and the Ladies' Auxiliary made a gift of the necessary instruments. This band was very popular and performed well on many occasions. When the public schools started to organize their bands, the boys joined the school band and in 1952 the instruments were sold to a school.

Instinctively the children entering the Home in their loneliness and insecurity turn to the house father and house mother or as we call them today the superintendent and his wife. The influence of the houseparents and of the cottage mothers is of great importance as they can and should impress on the children those qualities and values which are important to them in later life.

The Home can look back upon the work of its superintendents and their wives with great satisfaction. Mr. and Mrs. Friedrich Gleichmann supervised the children from 1866 to 1879. Mr. Gleichmann was a plain, modest, thrifty and very practical man who saw the Home growing from its modest beginnings on Pratt Street with 43 children to the large institution on Aisquith Street with 80 children. Mr. H. A. Lang (1881 to 1892) had an inspiring personality and exercised a conscientious and circumspect guidance over the children.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schmied took care of the children for 30 years from 1894-1924. Under their administration the number of children in the Aisquith Street Home increased in 1903 to 160, the largest number in the history of the Home. Mr. Schmied was a good housefather and devoted himself to the proper upbringing and care of the children. He was a strict disciplinarian as was customary at the time and necessary to enforce order in such a large institution. The life of the children began at 6 a. m. by the ringing of a bell. After breakfast the children marched two abreast to their school, had lunch in the orphanage and then went back to school. After school came playtime until supper, after supper was study time in the basement until 8 o'clock, which was bed time.

Mr. and Mrs. Wiley (1935-1955) took charge of the children at a time when new ideas of how to take care of orphan children were developing. When in 1922 the name of the organization was changed to General German Orphan HOME maintained by the General German Orphan Association of the State of Maryland it meant more than just a change of name. It meant changing from the dormitory system to the cottage system. It meant, following the trend of the time, a change from institutional living to a homelike living for the children. It meant making the life of the children at the Home as similar as possible to the normal life of an average child. Mr. and Mrs. Wiley were successful in bringing this about. Mr. Wiley had been a principal of a school and Mrs. Wiley a teacher, both having a full understanding of children. The uniform dress of the children had been abandoned. Mr. and Mrs. Wiley stressed a higher and better education and participation in athletics in school and at the Home.

Through their efforts the children were completely accepted in the community life and some of them showed outstanding leadership in school. Mr. and Mrs. Schmied's and Mr. and Mrs. Wiley's terms of office cover a span of 50 years. These many years of devotion to the upbringing and care of the children speak for themselves as a testimony of the esteem in which they were held by their wards, by the directors and the ladies' organizations.

During the term of Mr. J. W. Eisenhower as superintendent (1955-1960) the use of the professional welfare worker was increased, effecting some changes in the policy of the Board and the management of the Home. Since 1960 Mr. and Mrs. Harold T. McTeer have been in charge. There were other capable superintendents at the Home at various times who, however, were engaged for periods of one to three years only.

In the early years of the Home, charity of any kind was a private matter of individuals or groups of people. However, the State or the City governments were approached for contributions. The City of Baltimore contributed first \$500 and later \$1,000 annually to the upkeep of the Home, but when in 1875 a number of citizens energetically protested against "sectarian appropriations" these contributions were stopped. In later years financial help came from the State of Maryland. For many years the Home received from the State of Maryland \$3,750 annually towards the support of the children. After the Maryland State Department of Public Welfare was created in 1936, public charity and welfare work increased gradually. A Baltimore City Welfare Department had been established in 1934, while the federal social security act became law in 1936. In 1942 the State Department of Public Welfare gave the General German Orphan Home a license to operate in the State and afterwards required proof that the Home had a sufficient number of children without financial aid who were worthy of receiving help from State Funds to justify the expenditure of \$3,750 at the rate of \$44 per month per child. In 1951 the State Department of Public Welfare advised the Home that it would no longer receive any aid from the State of Maryland and that the Department of Public Welfare of Baltimore City would from then on distribute the allotted amount of \$44 per month per child. This department established the policy that only those of the newly admitted children would be certified for this financial aid who were sent to the Home by the welfare departments of the City and Counties. Children who were brought directly to the Home by parents or relatives and in need of financial aid could not be certified for public aid. Another change in procedure was that a Court would send children directly to the Home for care, but would now turn the children over to the Welfare Board for placement.

As early as 1913 the minutes of the Board meetings report that new ideas and theories were being advanced and that it was being advocated to abandon all orphan homes and send all orphan children into private homes (foster homes as they are called today). The use of foster homes for the care of needy children has increased greatly over the years and is now an important factor in public welfare. The question whether a child is sent to a foster home or orphan home is decided by the respective Welfare Boards. They purchase the care of children where they see fit and can terminate the care at any time. There is a growing tendency toward short term care of children instead of retaining them until they finish school, especially for half- and non-orphan children. During the 1940's and 1950's the Welfare Boards seemed to favor placement of children in foster homes. However, over the years experience has shown that both orphan homes and

foster homes have their place in the social structure of our cities. Especially when parents want to keep groups of brothers and sisters together the orphan homes have a definite advantage.

Looking back over the years it can be said that the General German Orphan Home was fortunate in that there were at all times men on its board and women in the women's organizations who were farsighted and competent to act for the benefit of the Home. Among the first directors there were two of the foremost educators of their time in Baltimore, Gustav Facius who took a most active part in the affairs of the Home and was its president from 1870-1875 and Friedrich Knapp, who had founded his famous school, the F. Knapp Institute, in 1853. He arranged for a large number of the children to attend his excellent school for only a nominal fee. Christian Ax served as a director for many years until 1886. He was a prominent German business man in Baltimore and well known beyond the limits of our city. It is impossible to mention the names of all officers or directors from every walk of life who gave generously of their time and means. There were men who served only a few years as directors and there were those who were on the board for twenty, thirty and over forty years, developing something like a tradition in the management of the Home.

There were John Lorz (1868-1891) who was president from 1887-1891, E. C. Linden, director from 1867-1911, and Ernst Schmeisser, director from 1875 to 1923, about as long as the Home on Aisquith Street was in existence. Ernst Schmeisser was a prominent tobacco merchant. He served as vice-president, president and chairman of the board. Robert M. Rother was a loyal director from 1892-1928. With his background as president of a savings bank he gave unselfishly of his time for the benefit of the finance committee. When he was instrumental in bringing the three Johannesen boys into the Home he could not anticipate the future benefits coming to the Home from this action. John C. Johannesen and his brothers Ernest and Niels Kristian entered the Home in 1892, because both of their parents had died. They were born in Norway and had come to Baltimore with their parents in 1890. John Johannesen was a good student and was admitted to the McDonogh School in 1894 from which he graduated in 1898. Early in his business career he joined the Southern Electric Company in Baltimore, a subsidiary company of the General Electric Company. Soon he showed his qualities for leadership and his great love for the Home. At the age of 27 he was elected a director of the Home and ten years later in 1918 he became its president. The minutes of the meeting at which he was elected read: "Mr. Johannesen has succeeded, through his energy and progressiveness, in establishing an enviable record in our community and we take pride in pointing him out as one of our former wards and as one into whose hands we can with the utmost confidence intrust the future of our fifty years of endeavor."

John Johannesen was the guiding spirit in the purchase of the Belmont estate in 1919 and the transfer of the Home from Aisquith Street to Catonsville changing the life of the children from regimented institutional living in a declining section of the city of Baltimore into life in healthy country air on a 44 acre farm. When his business demanded his moving to New York in 1924 John Johannesen was made chairman of the board in 1925, succeeding Ernst Schmeisser. Coming frequently to Baltimore he continued to partake actively in all affairs of the Home.

Henry Herzinger became the next president, presiding at the board meetings for the next thirty years (1925-55). Henry Herzinger, originally

by profession a tailor of uniforms, retired early from his business and devoted himself to his personal financial affairs and to the administration of the Home. Since the Herzingers had no children, he always was very much interested in the development and upbringing of the many children in the Home. During his term as president the funds to finance the increasing cost of maintaining the Home grew considerably through many large and small legacies. His name is justly perpetuated in the Herzinger Memorial Building.

In the meantime John Johannesen had become vice-president of the General Electric Supply Corp. in New York and when he reached his retirement age he returned to Baltimore devoting a great deal of his time to the affairs of the Home. It was natural that he was elected president again when Henry Herzinger passed away. His love of people, his warmth, his strength of character and integrity gained him many friends during his lifetime, and through these qualities he also gained many friends for the Home, as his 80th birthday celebration held in the Home in 1961 clearly demonstrated. When he died in 1962 he had devoted 54 years of his life to the betterment of the Home which had given him and his brothers shelter and care when they became orphans at an early age. No other director has served as long.

Henry G. Von Heine, called "a friend, worker and benefactor" of the Home was a director for 47 years until 1936. Others who devoted a long span of their lives to the welfare of the Home in various capacities are: John Kump, lawyer, (1913-1961), Conrad C. Rabbe, banker, (1901-1939), Lewis Kurtz, insurance agent (1923-1961), J. Harry Garmer, who served as secretary of the Board, (1923-1953). John G. A. Damm, a director since 1921 and treasurer since 1935 and men like Dr. Norman B. Cole and Dr. Vernon Scheidt, who had a great personal interest in the children.

It is of historical interest that a number of sons followed in the footsteps of their fathers as directors of the Home. Louis C. Schneidereith, a printer and secretary of the Board from 1900-1920 was succeeded by his son C. Wm. Schneidereith, a director since 1922. Fred H. Hennighausen, lawyer, followed his father Percy C. Hennighausen, lawyer, Andrew Hilgartner followed his father in 1931. Henry Pierson, who came from Germany, served as a director from 1900-1912 his son George W. H. from 1912-1943 and his grandson Kirvan Pierson has been a director since 1949. The first former ward of the Home who became a director was Louis R. Wilhelm, whose son succeeded him in 1915. Paul Yeager, who spent his boyhood in the Home in Catonsville, became a lawyer and served as a director from 1950-1961, when an untimely death ended his career. Clarence Lohran who grew up in the Aisquith Street Home became a director in 1934 and has been a devoted financial secretary ever since. There are many more who deserve to be mentioned here, but this list serves only to show the general trends running through all these years.

The successful management of an Orphan Home depends on the harmonious interplay between the superintendent and his wife, the Board of Directors and the women's organizations, with the children as the center toward which all efforts are directed. Right from the beginning of the Home the ladies took a very active part in its affairs as members of the Ladies' Sewing Society providing for the entire clothing of the children and the necessary linen for the growing household by their personal efforts in sewing, purchasing and so on. They were ever ready and always successful in raising money by special Fairs as in 1863, 1867, 1875 or by the annual oyster suppers and spring festivals, later on called picnics.

These took place in Riverview Park until 1926 when the annual picnic was held for the first time on the grounds of the Home in Catonsville, where it is still today an important event of the summer calendar.

As mentioned previously a group of young women formed the Ladies' Auxiliary Association in 1898 for the specific purpose of taking care of the small children between two and six years of age. The number of these pre-school children decreased gradually and became very small after the Home had been moved to Catonsville. In 1925 the Ladies' Sewing Society and the Ladies' Auxiliary merged into the Women's Association of the General German Orphan Home, which continued the traditional activities of the two older societies and adjusted these to the continuous change in our modern life. Over the years the ladies refurnished the three cottages and bought the equipment for a hospital room in the administration building. They continue to support extra curricular activities of the children by paying for their music lessons, by sending children to summer camp, purchasing scout uniforms for boys and girls, donating a deep-freezer for the kitchen. Among the many women who worked for the benefit of the children during all these years Johanna Wehr deserves to be recognized as the outstanding leader of the Women's Sewing Society, having been its president from 1870 to 1919. She was succeeded by Mrs. Albert Wehr, followed by Mrs. August V. Eidman. Mrs. Anna L. Lillich has been the prominent president of the Women's Association since 1937. Here again it is impossible to mention all those capable and praiseworthy ladies who have supported the Home since its existence.

There are probably very few orphan homes in our country which can pride themselves on having an alumni organization as early as 1903. It was John Johannesen who founded the Alumni Association that year. Soon after he had gotten a start in business he saw how the children after leaving the Home lost contact with each other. By founding the Alumni Association he created the nucleus of an active group of young men and women who helped each other and the younger ones leaving the Home. They have a warm interest in the children being brought up in the Home. John Johannesen was president of this association from 1903 to 1918 and was succeeded by his brother Ernest Johannesen who held this office for many years. Walter E. Price, John Dietrich and Frank Muller followed him. The Alumni Association lists among its members merchants, industrialists, lawyers and men of various professions, who all grew up and received the foundation for their active years in the Home. During the last war 40 boys and one girl served in the various branches of the armed forces.

Success of orphanages has often been measured by the number of useful lives emerging from the years of childhood and adolescence spent in an institution which at best can substitute in part for the environment of the parental home. In its work of one century the *Allgemeine Deutsche Waisenhaus* has not only been able to help its boys and girls to become useful citizens but it has sent out into the world many men and women who have led happy lives. Among the many letters which reach cottage mothers from their "boys" and "girls" a simple note like this one has the value of a testimony to the success of an institution which men and women of foresight established one hundred years ago:

I came in the Army to learn something and if they are going to teach me to work in a postoffice, I will work in a postoffice. Just as long as I can have a fine wife and a happy home with such fine friends as I have now, I will think, God has answered my prayers. Mrs. B. . . . at times I wonder where would I be today if I hadn't gone to the Home and had the right bringing up and had some one to show me the road.

The right road. Sure, at times I tried to take a shortcut but I came right back on the right road. I don't believe there is a shortcut. Yes, I owe the Home a lot and in years to come I hope I can do something.

Just as Baltimore's German element has grown into an integral part of the community, its General German Orphan Home has become a truly native institution at the service of those children who need more than just a helping hand—who need a home. Its history and its presence, its work for the future are a tribute "to all those who have labored so earnestly for the cause of the Home during many years."