

File Mrs. Rittenhouse
Macon County

Decatur and Macon County

Welfare Home for Girls

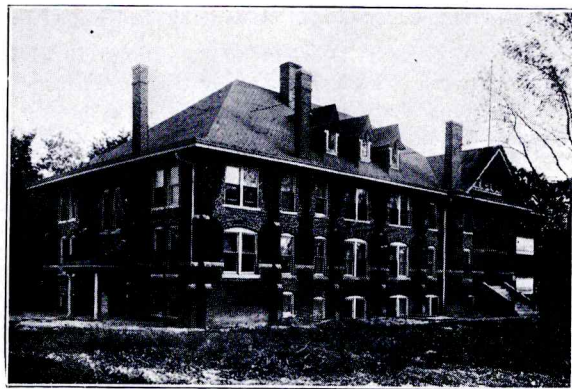


From Mrs. LeBarstien

DECATUR and MACON COUNTY

Welfare Home for Girls

DECATUR, ILLINOIS



VISITING HOURS

Every Thursday Afternoon and the first Sunday
afternoon in each month



736 SOUTH BROADWAY STREET

DECATUR, ILLINOIS

FOREWORD



Why You Should Support the Welfare Home

What service to the community does the Welfare Home render?

A question every citizen should ask and know.

This little booklet answers that question. It tells you of the work being carried on by this organization of thirty women—not for gain—not for pleasure—not for glory—but for the love of humanity.

The hope of this nation lies in the girls—the mothers of tomorrow—the womanhood of the coming generation.

The Welfare Home Reduces Your Taxes.

No state or county institution could operate for one-half what it costs to maintain the Welfare Home—nor could it do half the good this institution accomplishes.

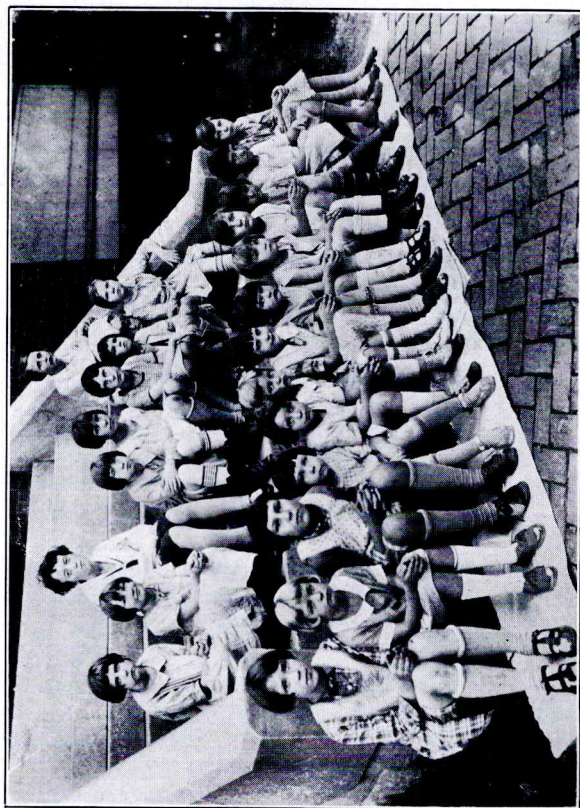
If homeless and neglected children are to become clean, useful citizens, some one must get behind them during their childhood. The job of making them good citizens cannot be left to chance. When parents fail in their duty or death robs a child of the love and care it should have, some one must supply that care

and love, if the child is to be saved from delinquency and crime. There is no greater service we can perform than to help these homeless, neglected children to become good citizens. It is far wiser and less expensive than to permit them to become ne'er do wells or criminals.

That is what the Welfare Home is doing.

It needs your moral and financial support.

Phillips Brooks says: **"He who helps a child, helps humanity with a distinctiveness and an immediateness which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life, can possibly give again."**



Some of the Welfare Home Girls

Its Purpose

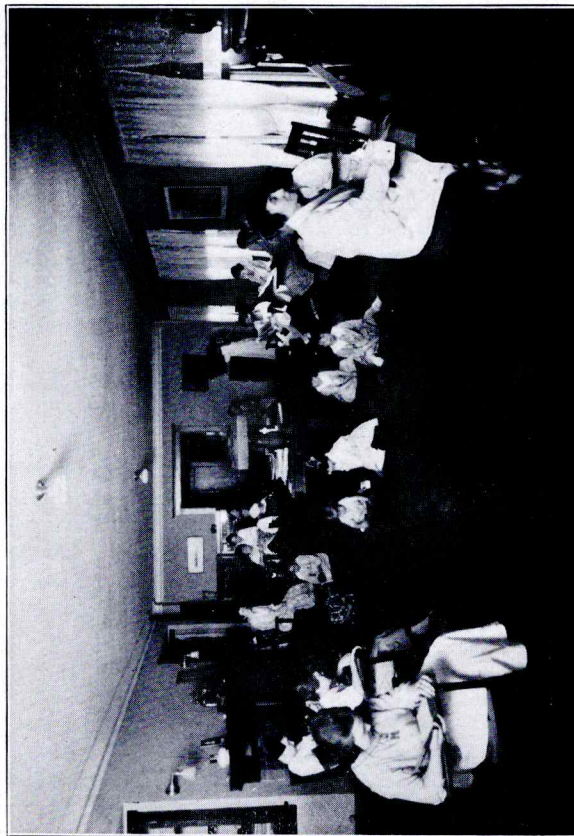
The Decatur and Macon County Welfare Home for Girls is a home for any motherless—fatherless—friendless child, all ages from babyhood to womanhood—all classes—all creeds. If they are friendless that admits them. It affords a start in life to destitute orphans and waifs who otherwise have no other helpers.

The Welfare Home is a place where love and sympathy and devine teaching reach lives that have suffered physical, mental and spiritual neglect.

When children are brought into the Home, their first days there are not the happiest. They are scrubbed, their heads are cleaned, teeth and tonsils, adenoids and all other physical defects attended to. Milk takes the place of tea and coffee—good wholesome food replaces the irregular makeshift meals to which their palates are accustomed to. But they soon learn what real mothering means and responding to the influence of love and kindness and good food, gradually assume habits of cleanliness and courtesy.

They are trained in the essentials of proper home life and correct living habits, and physical handicaps removed. They are placed in foster homes as rapidly as they are fit.

Nothing can take the place of family life as a means of good influence and it is the aim of the directors of the Welfare Home to place these children in private homes whenever it is possible to do so.



Living Room

Welfare Home for Girls

After thorough investigation as to the moral character and fitness of parties wishing to adopt, and the suitability of the particular child chosen, the final arrangements are made through the County Court.

Surely there is no nobler deed than to take one of these little waifs, love it, rear it and educate it. The great teacher himself said: "**Who so shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me.**"

The Welfare Home cares for children whose parents are temporarily unable to care for them (as in case of sickness or death) until their own homes can be rehabilitated.

While the Welfare Home is open to all friendless girls and children it can not, in justice to the community that supports it, take in all who apply. Some would use the Welfare Home to relieve themselves of a care or responsibility which is rightfully their own and which they are well able to carry. Therefore all cases except those brought in by the city or county are thoroughly investigated and passed on by the Case Committee before being admitted.

Because the Welfare Home is a temporary one the work is difficult and more expensive than a permanent home, for as fast as a child is cleaned and built up physically and trained fit to enter a foster home, we place it, making room for another child, upon whom we repeat this same building up process.

We feel that no matter how short a time a child lives in the Welfare Home, it has learned **something** and has been bettered for having been there.



New Arrival in the Welfare Home

The story of some of the charges committed to our care, is seemingly illustrated in a little Hymn which our children are especially fond of singing:

Open the door for the children,
Tenderly gather them in,
In from the highways and hedges,
In from the places of sin;
Some are so young and so helpless,
Some are so hungry and cold;
Open the door for the children,
Gather them into the fold.

All girls are trained in the proper care of their bodies, taught household work, darning, mending and plain sewing, no fancy cooking or art needle work, but such things as will be essential to them in life. Even the small girls learn to make beds, wait on the table and serve properly.

The Welfare Home acts as a detention home for young girls who have strayed too far from the beaten path of good conduct and are in need of careful supervision and guidance which the Home can give them. It cares for semi-delinquent girls held by the Court, instead of placing them in jail. One floor with a woman in charge is devoted to this class of girls. These girls do all of the work and laundry for that floor and are brought down stairs to do the heavy cleaning while the other children are in school. While a strict division is made between the two groups of girls and they do not mingle in any way, the same



Toothbrush Brigade

thoughtful, considerate and conscientious care is given them. They are allowed to attend religious services and all entertainments in the Home and are shielded and protected in every way while under our roof. Each one is studied in order that each may be given the wisest care and direction and the most efficient training, that they may become useful self-respecting citizens instead of paupers and criminals.

Crime cannot be prevented by punishment. Crime can only be hindered by letting no child grow up a criminal. We should learn to cultivate the children the Creator sends us in such a way as to make perfect chrysanthemums of good citizens out of the skimpiest little wild flowers of waifs, that have heretofore languished in neglect on stone waste unnourished and uncared for.



Every Day is Wash Day in the Welfare Home

*From Studio
of
Welfare Home*

Dependents and Delinquents

Many ask, what is the difference between dependents and delinquents?

Dependents are children who have lost one or both parents; or who have parents who are deemed by the Court not fit to rear their children; or children who have been deserted by their parents. They are friendless children, who have no one to care for them or who are responsible for their care.

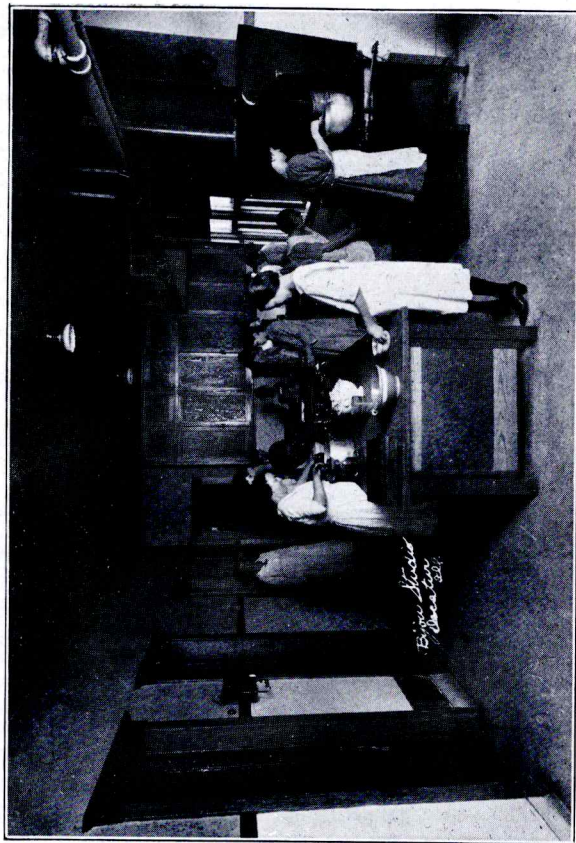
Delinquents are incorrigibles, but are not delinquents until the Court pronounces them as such, when they are sent to reformatories. Hence we say we handle semi-delinquents instead of delinquents.

Dependent children are placed for adoption, wherever possible or if their mental or physical conditions do not permit, are placed in the proper institutions, as their special need requires.

Dependent girls old enough to work are placed in families where they can earn their living or other employment is secured for them, some times day work when they still live in the home and pay what they can afford, for their board.

One nine year old dependent girl was brought to the Home by the Police Matron because of deplorable conditions she was living in with her father. Her mother was dead and this child not only did all of the housework but was brutally mistreated by her father. The child was cleaned, fed and clothed and sent to

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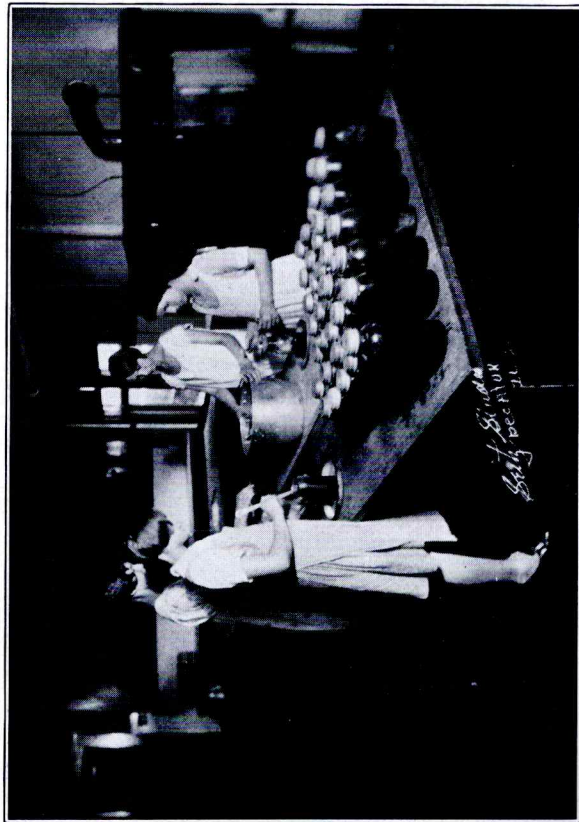


Kitchen

Welfare Home for Girls

school, but seemed so dull it was thought she must be mentally defective. However, the mental specialist said without knowing the history of the case, that in his opinion the child had been mistreated and would probably come out all right under proper living conditions and a little kindness and sympathy. She not only improved physically and mentally but made her grade in school at the end of the year, and was sent to school three more years. She was a very obedient and industrious child from the first and showed great tact and likeness in the care of children and she was placed in a family to care for children during the vacation. She went very reluctantly and tearfully said: "Please don't send me away. This is the first kindness I have ever known." She was assured that if she was not happy she could return to the Home but at the end of the vacation period her employers asked to allow her to remain with them. They sent her to school, clothed her and paid her for what service she could render after school hours. After a time she saved enough to take a course in child nursing in Chicago, and is now and has been for three years in one position earning a very good salary. She is a fine young woman and a useful member of society, and regularly visits the Welfare Home to whom she says she owes everything.

It makes one shudder to imagine what would have happened to this child, had she not been rescued; yet she was in no wise to blame for her wretched condition. This is only one of many equally interesting cases which have been handled through the



Learning to Can Fruit

Welfare Home, and illustrates just one dependent case.

Small children (dependents) are more easily disposed of as there is always a waiting list for adoptions and the Home has in its ten years existence, placed many children in good foster homes.

Della, a beautiful three year old, was brought in by her mother. The father of the child had deserted and the mother had to go out to work for a living. The mother's visits to the child became less and less frequent and finally ceased. She had transferred her affections for Della to a man. We found an excellent home for Della, where she is beautifully reared and educated.

Another five year old girl and her three year old brother were adopted by a splendid couple, who came to the Home to select a little girl. Their choice was this little sister, but the superintendent advised choosing another little girl as these two children were so attached to each other it seemed a pity to separate them. The couple could see no other child which appealed to them as this one, so compromised by taking little brother, too. It is indeed a happy family now. The children have found a home, are given loving care and every advantage.

Delinquents or semi-delinquents are naturally harder to readjust, but equally interesting and are very much **worth while**.

One bad girl came to the Home through the Court, who was incorrigible and at first very hard to manage, but through firmness and much patience and

Decatur and Macon County



Dining Room

Welfare Home for Girls

kindness finally unbended and became not only obedient but very industrious. The superintendent observed in this girl an inclination towards nursing and talked to her about taking up this kind of work. She was very much interested and we were able to place her in a nursing school out of the city. The head of this school took this girl knowing her history. From the first, the reports on her progress were excellent and after six months, the superintendent asked us for as many girls with the same training, as we could furnish. This was four years ago and the now full-fledged nurse is making good.

Other semi-delinquent girls have been redeemed and are filling responsible clerical positions in our city.

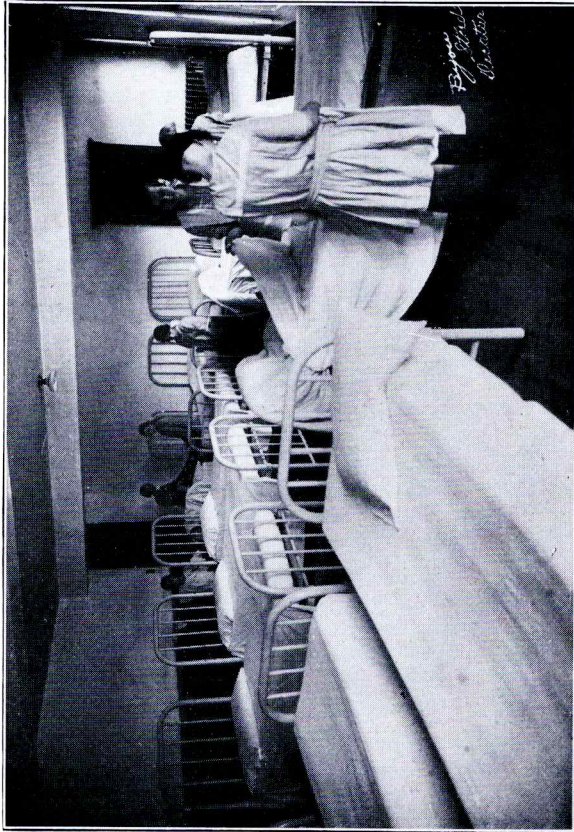
We have our disappointment on some promising cases. Not all of them turn out so well, some are placed and replaced and finally have to be sent to Geneva. Others have been replaced as many as four times but have made good in the end. It is gratifying to say that about 60 per cent of the semi-delinquents are redeemable and if only one in every hundred were saved would it not be **worth while?**

The fruitful results of this redemption work are far reaching. The gain to the individual, to the family, to the county and to the state is a convincing argument for the importance of the work.

The Master says: **"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me."**

Said a wealthy tax-payer to a board member, as

Decatur and Macon County



Dormitory for Older Girls

Welfare Home for Girls

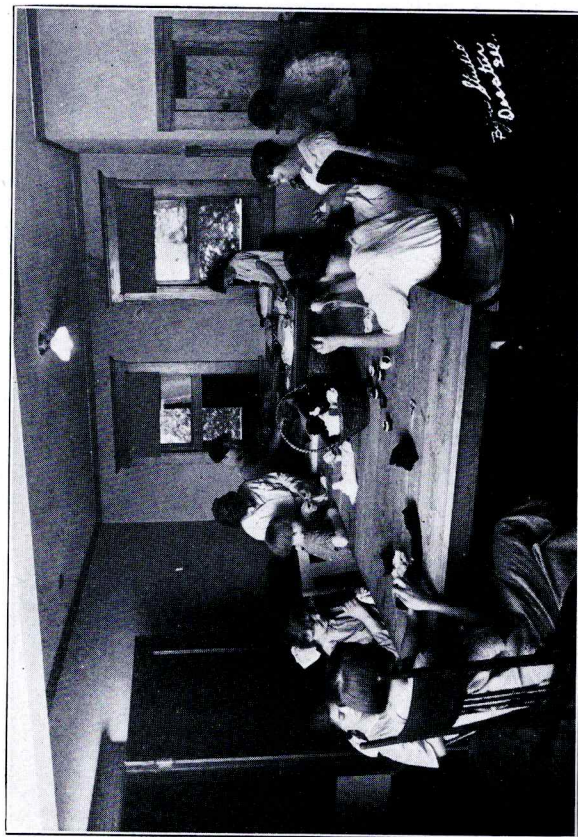
he handed her a cash gift for the Welfare Home, "This work of reclaiming girls is the best and most constructive social work I know of—I give this most gladly. I consider this an investment for my children. I would rather give \$100 a year to train these future mothers than have my own children taxed ten times that amount by and by to sustain prisons and penitentiaries."

Many letters of appreciation are received from girls who have gone out of the home and made good.

This mission of rescue from criminal tendencies and habits promises a return crop of material for good citizenship whose character and efficiency shall in a single generation save at least one-tenth of all taxation and add a proportionate percentage to the productive equipment of society.

Don't forget that society is indebted to the mother instinct of the race for the finest expression of character.

It is surprising to see how the older girls (without being prompted) look out for, care for, and love the younger children in the Home. It is like one big family and when a baby goes out for adoption, there is real sorrow among the other children.



Sewing Room

Instructions

All girls of school age are sent to public school, no matter how short their stay in the Home. They have study periods every evening, when they are required to get their lessons.

Some girls with special talent have been given music lessons, gratis. Others have had business college education, tuition being paid by someone interested in the particular girls. An opportunity of this kind is given only to one who is deemed worthy and one who would be adapted for such training.

Sewing classes, darning classes and cooking classes are instructed in the Home once a week by trained women who give their services free. In addition much of the mending and sewing is done by the girls in the Home, supervised by the superintendent or one of the board members.

The sewing room is a busy place nearly every day in the week. Cast off clothing that is donated is made over into useful garments, which means a great saving to the Home.

The sewing room is equipped with machines and material and the work is planned and marked by the sewing committee of the board.

Girls are taught cooking, canning fruit, and every other household duty.

A Kindergarten teacher comes forenoons to instruct our little ones, when such a teacher can be secured without cost.

Decatur and Macon County



Kindergarten Room

Welfare Home for Girls

The home strives to keep away from the "institutional" as much as possible. It bends every effort towards creating and maintaining the family spirit and the Welfare Home Family is an object lesson to many more fortunate private families.

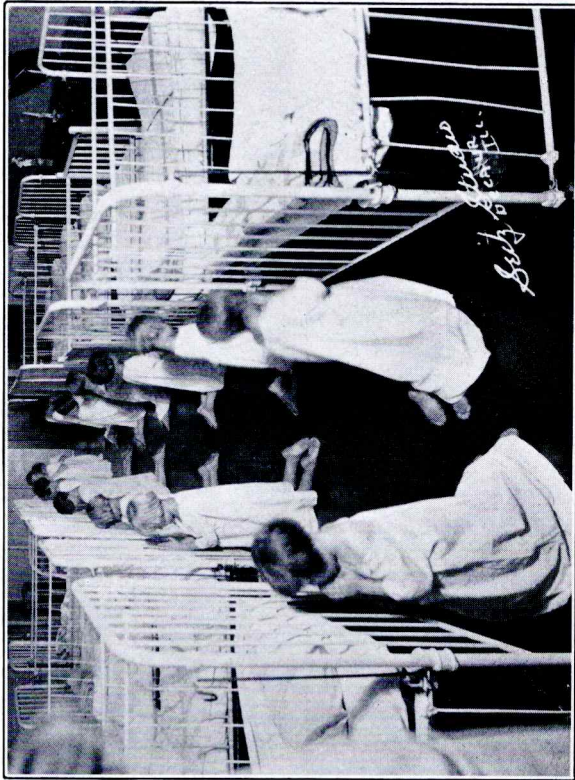
Girls who go out to work voluntarily spend all of their holidays and days off in the Home—the only pleasant home they ever knew.

Recreation

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and this applies to girls as well as boys. Every Friday evening is recreation evening and some kind of entertainment in the home is provided. Sunday school classes, sororities and school societies are most liberal in supplying programs and entertainment, and seem to get much pleasure out of their contribution to these girls. The personal interest of these fine young people has a splendid influence on the girls in the home.

The piano and victrola add much to their pleasure and many good books and periodicals are provided by friends of the home.

The smaller children use the kindergarten room for indoor play and play-ground equipment has been generously supplied by friends of the home.



Good Night Prayers

Christian Influence

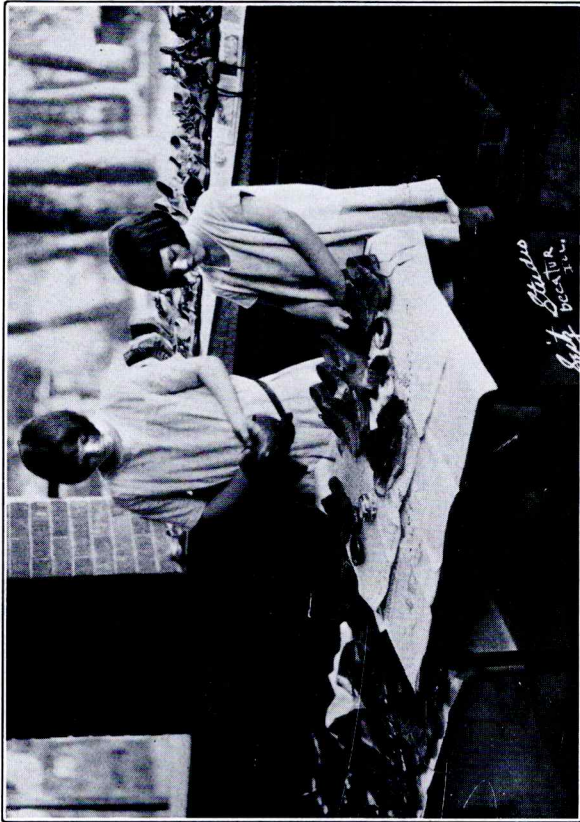
The Welfare Home is non-sectarian and its family is an ever changing group. As some of these girls are not allowed to leave the Home (by order of the Court) it is deemed the wisest plan to have all religious services in the Home, that all may enjoy its blessing. The Religious Committee arranges with different church organizations by rotation for services every Sunday afternoon.

Children say their evening prayers, ask the blessing at the table in unison, and religious services are held on different special holidays, led by the superintendent.

Management

The Home is managed by a board of directors of thirty women, who meet once a month in the Home for their regular business meeting. A Finance Committee, a House Committee, Case Committee, Emergency Committee, Religious Committee, Educational Committee, Entertainment Committee, Sewing Committee, House Committee, Case Committee, and a Nominating Committee, are made up of women on the board, who manage their respective branches of the work; giving much time and conscientious thought thereto.

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Shoe Cleaning Day

Welfare Home for Girls

The board of directors are justly proud of the business-like methods used in the operation of the home. The State Charities inspector made the statement that this institution was not only the best managed, but operated at less expense than any other like institution under the jurisdiction of the state. In spite of the high cost of food, the board of managers have maintained the high standard of the home most economically.

Practically all of the work is done by the girls in the home; though it takes much patience and supervision by efficient workers to teach even proper dish washing and proper bed making. Every girl has some special work assigned to her for a given period of time, then it is changed to something else. This is to hold their interest and teach them all kinds of household duties. Their work is graded and they are given merits in the way of special privileges and demerits by being denied certain pleasures. Even seven and eight year old girls wipe dishes, set tables, and dust. A regular daily schedule is carried out for all, and, in that way, the home is kept in good order and the children are taught system and responsibility. It is the aim of this Home to teach the girls industry, cleanliness, and order, as well as honor, good fellowship and fairness among each other.



Sand Box

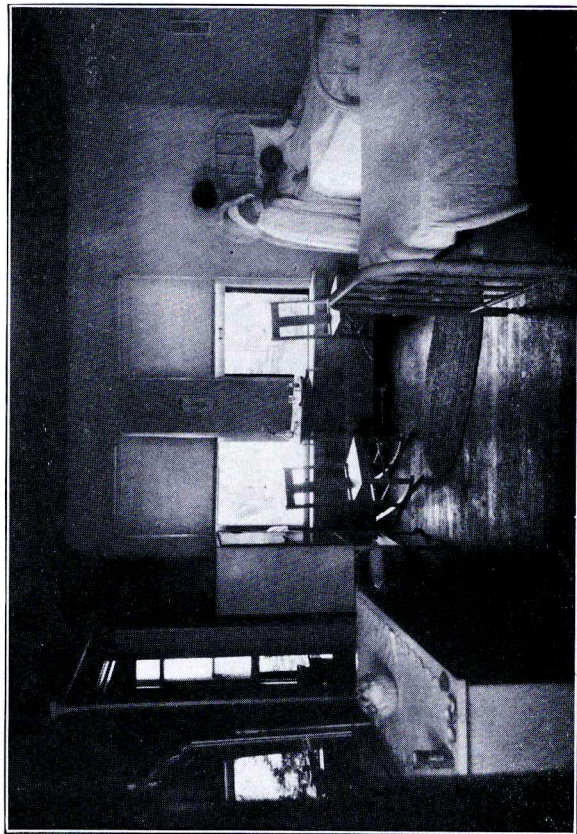
Source of Support

The Welfare Home is supported by the charity of the citizens of Decatur and Macon County. Operating expenses (except a small amount paid by the County) are financed by the Community Chest, which makes a drive once a year to raise funds for this and other affiliated charitable organizations. Many donations of food and used clothing to the Home are a substantial help towards feeding and clothing these children. The board of directors is very grateful for this assistance. Don't throw away your half worn garments or shoes. Send them to the Welfare Home. The women on the board sew one day a month, church organizations and clubs of women sew at the Home and make over garments for these children.

It is nothing short of criminal extravagance to allow fruit to rot on the ground, when it could be used to such good advantage for these undernourished, friendless children.

The Welfare Home or any of the board members will be only too glad to see that any donation is called for, if they are notified.

How sweet 'twill be at evening
If you and I can say,
"Good Shepherd, we've been seeking;
The lambs that went astray;
Heart-sore and faint with hunger,
We heard them making moan
And lo, we come at night fall
Bearing them safely home."



Hospital Room

Endowment Fund

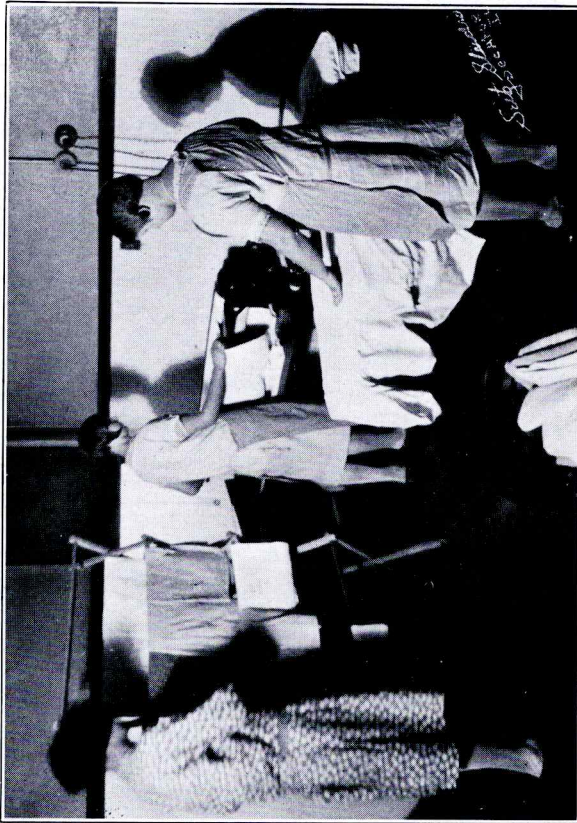
An endowment fund has been created for the Welfare Home by several donors, and it is the earnest desire that this will be increased each year, in order to perpetuate the work of the Home and insure its financial support.

Accumulated wealth must some day be left; often by those with no near kin. To what nobler purpose can it be devoted than giving to an endowment for the Decatur and Macon County Welfare Home for girls? Think of this when you are making your WILL. This will add to a fund which it is hoped will soon grow to an amount that will properly care for every demand on the institution.

The cause of the Welfare Home appeals to every one; Capitalist, and real estate owner on account of ultimate economy; to Society on the score of duty; to Humanitarians on the plea of pity; to Womankind in response to the Mother impulse of protection and care; and to Christians by order of the mandate, **For inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, even so have ye done it unto me.**"

The Welfare Home is chartered under the State of Illinois and the corporate name is:

Decatur and Macon County Welfare Home for Girls.



Laundry

Sunshine or Memory Fund

A beautiful custom has been established by the Welfare Home board for remembering birthdays, anniversaries, messages of condolence and remembrances of all kinds.

A sum of money (any amount one would expend for a gift) is sent to the Welfare Home in the name of the friend it is wished to remember; with a statement of the occasion for the gift.

The Secretary of the Home sends to the friend an appropriate note of thanks, giving the name of the donor who has contributed to the Welfare Home's Sunshine or Memory Fund, as the case may be.

This kind of a gift is much more appreciated than flowers or other perishable gifts. In addition to being a lasting remembrance, it is a compliment to the friend—and the highest kind of a tribute to the one in whose memory it is made. It is a noble deed and a gift to a most worthy cause.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."



Slide

Two Flowers

One grew, a little wildling, Nature's child,
Exposed to careless feet and dust-choked air;
Within a sheltered nook the other bloomed,
The Zephyrs left their gentlest kisses there,
Then turned to where the little wild flower grew,
To tease and toss her in their merry play,
Till, rougher grown, they broke the slender stalk,
And laughing, hurried on their careless way.
The Gardener came, saw one in purity,
The other, bruised and broken lay apart;
He lifted them and kissed each tenderly,
And placed the flowers together on His heart.

—Forrestine C. Hooker

Officers and Directors Year 1928

Mrs. Guy N. Scovill	President
Mrs. J. T. Miller	1st Vice-President
Mrs. J. Foster Waltz	2nd Vice-President
Mrs. J. Frank Beall	3rd Vice-President
Miss Beatrice Atlass	Recording Secretary
Mrs. Charles Bachman	Corresponding Secretary
Miss Harriett Childs	Treasurer

Board of Directors

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Mrs. C. F. Bachman	Mrs. Guy P. Lewis
Mrs. J. S. Baldwin	Mrs. Carlos Lyon
Mrs. Frank Beall	Mrs. B. A. McGorray
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Fanny Hurst

Jan 8

Art of Writing

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