

# The Children of the Oxford Orphan Asylum in Front of the Main or School Building 330 in Number.

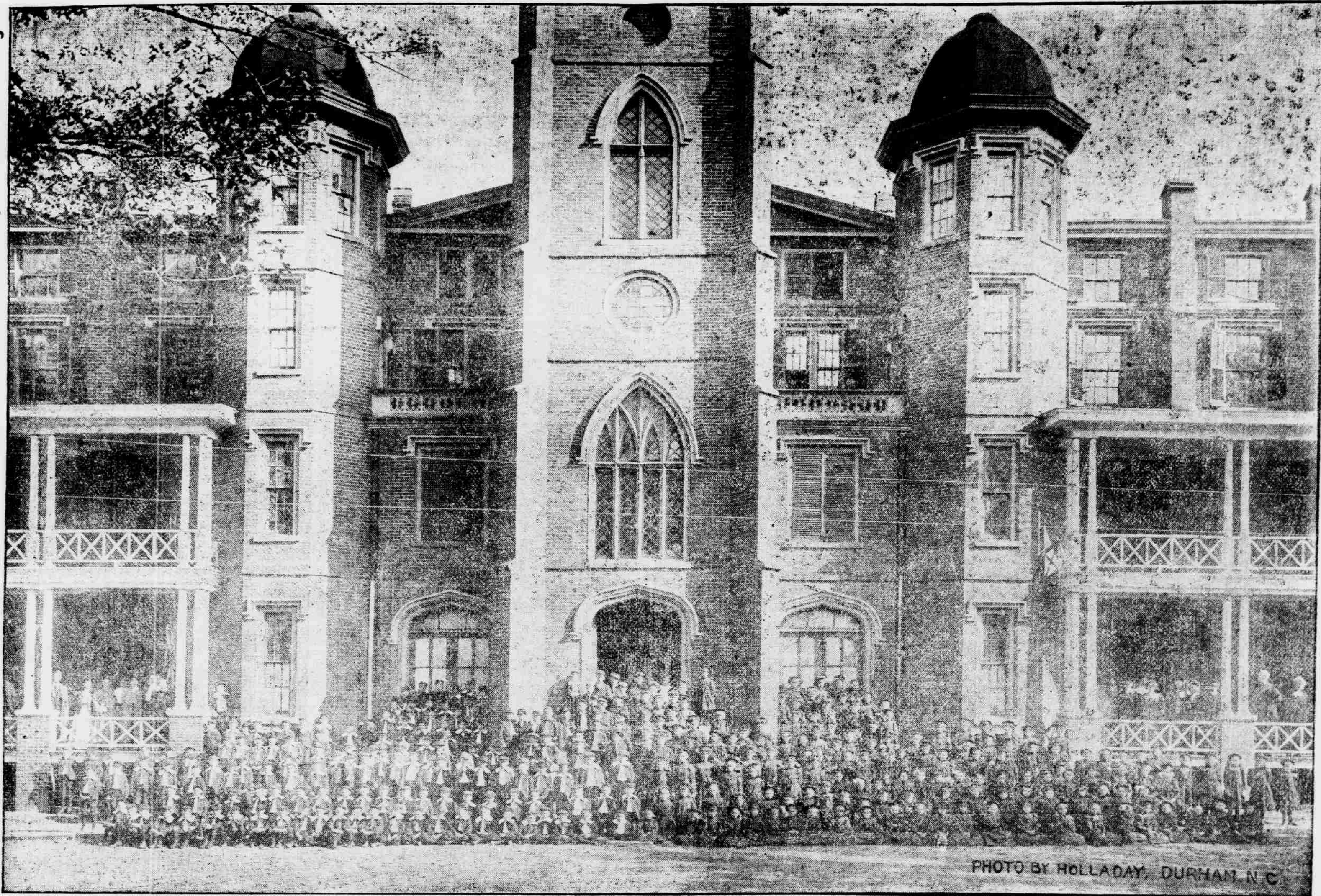


PHOTO BY HOLLADAY, DURHAM, N. C.

## These Bright Boys and Girls are Trained to Become Useful Men and Women in the Battles of Life

### HISTORY OF THE ASYLUM

Continued from first page.

were not many miles of railroad within the State.

This difficulty of transportation, the desire to reach the great western section for the cause, the offer of building and grounds by the Trustees of Mars Hill School, Madison Co., the healthfulness of the mountains for some of the delicate children at Oxford, were doubtless causes which led to the establishment of a "western branch" of the institution at Mars Hill. This experiment is rather interesting, but I shall not go into the details of it here. It is probably sufficient to say that the subsidiary institution in the West became burdensome and embarrassing to the work. The property at Mars Hill after a little more than a year, reverted to the Trustees of the school there. For a time an effort was made to conduct the western branch in Asheville, as Rev. L. M. Pease of that city, had offered conditionally, a site for the institution. In 1877 Brother Pease proposed to conduct orphanage independently and the property he had offered went back to him upon his payment to the Grand Lodge for the Oxford Orphanage of the sum of five hundred dollars for improvement which had been made on his property at Asheville. The work of the Masons was again centered at Oxford.

In 1876 the Grand Lodge chose a Committee of three, W. E. Anderson, J. A. Leach and F. H. Busbee, to represent the claims of this effort for orphan children to the General Assembly and to urge an annual appropriation to the institution at Oxford. At the following meeting of the Legislature this Committee performed its duty and while the appropriation was not then made, the report of the Committee to the Grand Lodge in December, 1877, indicates that its members were encouraged to believe that such an equitable, wise investment would later be made by the State.

At the communication of the Grand Lodge in 1877 this resolution was discussed and adopted:

It shall be the duty of every Lodge to pay the Orphan Asylum five dollars for every person initiated, and not less than five cents a month for every member on its roll, and to State in its annual returns to what extent this duty has been performed."

Many of the Masons throughout the State rather regarded this in the nature of a tax imposed upon the membership of this Grand Jurisdiction. They preferred to give in a more voluntary manner the funds needed in excess of the regular appropriation.

The year 1877 was an exceptionally trying one on the Orphanage. The lack of unity as to the method of obtaining funds from the Masons, the discussion of the matter of a State appropriation and other causes entered in to test the hold of the institution upon the Fraternity and the other people of North Carolina. At the meeting of the Grand Lodge in 1877 a Committee was selected to visit

and inspect the Asylum and to ascertain whether it was expedient and practicable to continue the work.

At the same time a Committee composed of Thos. S. Kenan, Zebulon B. Vance, Edwin J. Rouse, J. M. Worth, Eugene Guson, W. E. Anderson, J. A. Leach and F. H. Busbee, was appointed to bring again before the Legislature the matter of an appropriation to the Oxford Institution. Special attention was called to the obligation imposed by the Constitution upon the State of North Carolina to care for destitute orphan children within its bounds.

In 1877 the Grand Lodge was appropriating \$2,000 and liberal Masons and others outside the Fraternity were contributing to the cause, but the needs of the work had grown to such an extent that it was essential that largely increased financial support be gained. The benefits of the Orphanage have never been restricted to the children of Masons, and a very large majority of its beneficiaries did not have fathers who were members of the Masonic Order.

The special Committee, consisting of W. R. Cox, John Nichols, Z. M. Paschall, J. B. Neathery and R. T. Grady whose duty it was to visit the institution and advise as to the continuance of the work, at the meeting of 1878 commended its management and strongly advised a continuance of the work. The committee, at this time, made special mention of the generosity of the good people of Oxford and Granville County, who were so close to the institution and so conscious of its need.

The regular Orphan Asylum Committee, in its report that year, resolved "that there is no purpose on the part of the Grand Lodge to abandon the orphan work, but it is its determined resolution to maintain and support it with all the energy and vigor our resources will permit." The Committee wisely suggested that it would be well for the talk of discontinuance of the work to stop, as such talk was of injury to it. The Grand Lodge heartily adopted the report of the special and regular committees on Orphan Asylum.

In December, 1878, the plan for gaining support for the institution from the subordinate lodges was changed. The Orphan Asylum Committee was to be appointed in the lodges to lead in the endeavor to increase interest in the undertaking and to get aid for it. These Committees were to report monthly the amount raised and to transmit it to the Superintendent. Aid to the Orphan Asylum was to be a regular order of business at the stated communications of the lodges. Practically the same method is in operation today and when the local Orphan Asylum Committees are composed of zealous, influential, active helpers of the cause the plan works in an ideal way.

In this same meeting of 1878 Grand Master W. R. Cox was requested to confer with Governor Zebulon B. Vance with regard to the constitution and obligation of his State to provide for orphan children, and to suggest to him the propriety of a statement in the Governor's message to the General

Assembly that the same object might be more economically accomplished by an appropriation to aid the Orphan Asylum at Oxford. The Grand Master conferred with Governor Vance. The Governor in his message briefly presented the matter. W. S. Harris, Senator from Franklin, introduced a resolution making appropriation of \$3,000 per annum. With singular unanimity the measure passed both Houses. In 1881 the amount was raised to \$5,000 and in 1885 to \$10,000, which is the appropriation at this time.

As far back as 1879 some slight effort had been made, without much result, to raise an endowment for the institution. The regular maintenance of the Orphanage was the obligation more directly upon the hearts and hands of the Masons and their fellow workers.

In the year 1879 a house to be set apart for hospital use was constructed. The following year the Grand Lodge approved the recommendation of Brother Mills that a separate building for the boys of the Orphanage be erected. The sale of a part of the unoccupied land contiguous to the town of Oxford was authorized to help meet the expense of this additional building. The small amount of endowment fund was placed at the disposal of the Committee on boys' building for investment in this improvement or in land. The new building, located on a hill several hundred yards from the Saint John's College building, was completed in 1882. To aid in paying for this addition, seven acres were sold for \$2,500. Seven acres cut near the boys' building site were bought at \$200.

The resolution passed by the religious denominations of the State at their gatherings in 1879 and 1880 were strong in their commendation of the work at Oxford and of their purpose to continue and increase their aid to the cause. During these years there was a quickening of interest in Orphanage work in the State.

From 1872 to 1884 the Superintendent of the institution reported direct to the Grand Lodge by which Body he was annually elected. The management of the work was to a great extent vested in the Superintendent, alley 19-119.

In January, 1884, upon recommendation of Grand Master Bingham and the Orphan Asylum Committee, the Grand Lodge appointed a Board of Directors for the institution. Brother Mills was at this time re-elected to the Grand Lodge, but he declined to again accept the Superintendency. He agreed to remain in charge until the Board could meet and provide for the further organization of the Asylum.

The Directors first elected were: H. F. Grainger, Goldsboro, Julian S. Carr, Durham, Thos. Kenan, Raleigh, A. H. A. Williams, Oxford, H. H. Munson, Wilmington, H. F. Grainger withdrew, and H. T. Bahnsen, of Salem, was selected as his successor.

Since that day, in addition to the above named, the Board has had as

members those by the Grand Lodge, Brethren C. T. Bailey, and J. M. Curran, and the present Directors on the part of the Grand Lodge: G. Rosenthal, N. B. Broughton, T. A. Gray, J. W. Cotten and B. S. Royster. The Grand Master of Masons is ex-officio Chairman of the Board.

In 1893 the Grand Lodge requested Governor Carr to appoint three Directors on the part of the State and the Ramsey, of Seaboard and Fielding chose B. N. Luke, of Durham, J. N. Ramsey, of Seaboard, and Fielding Knott of Oxford. Upon the resignation of Mr. Knott in 1896 C. W. Toms of Durham was appointed his successor. Dr. Ramsey died in 1904 and E. F. Lovell of Womto County, was chosen to fill the vacancy. When Ben Duke resigned in 1901, on account of his removal from the State, Dr. Fred Peacock, then of Greensboro, was chosen by the Governor as Mr. Duke's successor.

In 1889 an Advisory Board of three Granville County masons was created by the Grand Lodge. The first members of that board were John W. H. N. A. Gregory and J. M. Curran. S. H. Smith and W. L. Mitchell have rendered service on this board and it is today composed of T. L. Booth, F. P. Hixson and W. B. Ballou.

Since the board of Directors and the Advisory Board were established the change in their personnel have been remarkable few. The institution has been greatly blessed in the appointment of good business men, of a high order of intelligence and character and deeply interested in the "well fare of the institution."

One of the first acts of the newly created Board of Directors at its first meeting January 25, 1884, was the reelection of John H. Mills to the Superintendency of the Orphanage. Brother Mills was still convinced that the time had come for him to withdraw. He declined to accept the position, but remained until his successor could be secured and stalled.

After Mr. Mills had laid down the work at Oxford, he became probably the greatest human agent in the opportune and successful movement to found the Baptist Orphanage at Thon asville, an institution which has grown to be one of the largest and most efficient in all our Southland. Since that time all of the leading denominations of North Carolina have established orphan homes of their own, and by doing this they have greatly promoted the work in the State.

Dr. B. F. Shelby, now Auditor of the State of North Carolina, was the choice of the Board of Directors for Superintendent to succeed Mr. Mills. He entered upon his duties April 1, 1884.

Mrs. Letitia Morehead Walker in 1841 offered a thousand dollars to be invested in a bath house at the Orphanage as a memorial to her son, John Morehead Walker. This amount was gratefully accepted and, later, by consent of all interested, was used in the Walker memorial residence, the home of the Superintendent. Still later this building was added to and it was the residence of the Superintendent until 1904 when it was converted into a hospital, rooms having

been fitted up by the Saint John's Hospital, of Raleigh, N. C.

In the year 1884 the institution acquired, by purchase, from R. O. Gregory and wife 1125 acres of land adjoining its grounds. In addition to this, the Orphanage acquired a small tract of land of about 186-100 acres from L. C. Taylor and wife, giving the institution about 1242 acres in all.

Among the progressive steps taken at this time was the improvement of the printing office which had been established early in the history of the institution, in the shoe shop and on the farm.

Superintendent Dixon, in his report December 31, 1890, advised the continuance of all of the industrial features and the addition of other new ones as fast as possible.

During his progressive administration the number of children cared for went as high as 204. He and his wife, a faithful, capable, helpful, performed a service of lasting, in calculable value.

When in September, 1890, he resigned, an able and devoted man, was elected by the Board, Brother Lawrence, in the part of the State, a man of large means, was much impressed with the worth of the work deeply interested in its further development and improvement, and keenly conscious of its great need of more buildings of suitable construction and better equipment. Mr. Duke, desirous of rendering the most permanent aid to the institution in thorough co-operation with the Masonic Fraternity, made propositions to the Grand Lodge to contribute half of the funds required for the buildings needed and planned, and urged by Brother Lawrence, the Superintendent, The Fraternity gratefully accepted Mr. Duke's liberal offers and together they erected four cottages for boys and a central dining room building, and later on, four cottages for girls. The boys' cottages and the dining room building were completed in 1897. The girls' cottages were not finished and occupied until 1899. These additions and improvements to the material plant were essential to a better grade of work, and Mr. Duke, and the Masonic Order in recognizing the value of such improvements and uniting to make it possible for the institution to secure them, increased the effectiveness and the possibilities of the Orphanage immeasurably.

Since the organization of the work in 1872 the gifts from Masons and other charitable people throughout the length and breadth of North Carolina have been many. In this

ness, Many whom she served will rise up and call her blessed.

In May 1894, Dr. Black gave up the work deeply interested in its further and perching ministry of the Methodist Church.

The Board elected Mr. N. M. Lawrence, of Tauboro, Superintendent. The institution had become more and more thoroughly established and was in a strong, vigorous, healthy condition, and the Orphanage work in the State had enlarged greatly through the establishment of Orphans' Homes by the Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches.

Today the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Church also has an Orphanage and a movement is well under way for the establishment of such an institution by the Western Conference of that Church.

Early in the administration of Brother Lawrence the institution was incorporated as "The Oxford North Carolina Orphan Asylum," but was later changed to The Oxford Orphan Asylum.

In 1896, the Hundley Bros. Wood-working shops were purchased to be conducted by the institution more for the industrial training of the boys than as a commercial enterprise. This is one of the leading industries of the Orphanage.

Among the many difficult tasks which Mr. Lawrence applied himself energetically were the more thorough organization and systematizing of the institution and its transformation from the congested or barracks system to the more efficient and modern cottage system.

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