

**THE STATE'S OLDEST ORPHAGE AT OXFORD**

**Has Trained More Than 5,000 Boys And Girls**

In 1872 the Grand Lodge of Masons in North Carolina established what is now the oldest existing Orphanage in the State, when by a close vote the Oxford Orphanage came into existence. During the first year of its existence 125 boys and girls were admitted. The destitute orphan children of North Carolina prior to this time, were either bound out into families or were placed in the County homes over the State.

Mr. John H. Mills felt the need of better facilities for the care of these children and saw the dangers of both plans then in use. He was, therefore, able to lead the Masons into the establishment of an Orphanage at Oxford and thus begin an influence in the field of child welfare in North Carolina. Today more than 4,000 children are provided for in the various orphanages in our State, besides those who receive assistance from the Government and other agencies and permitted to remain in the homes of relatives.

The orphanage at Oxford has a population of 350. Only one-half of these children are of Masonic parentage. The population is made up of children from 69 of the 100 counties in the State. There is a waiting list yet to be admitted and almost every day brings requests for applications for the admission of other children.

More than 5,000 boys and girls have received the services and benefits of the Oxford Orphanage and are today scattered all over the world. Many of them attended the colleges and universities and have

taken places of leadership. The Oxford Orphanage from the very beginning also became a pioneer in the field of vocational education and training. Trade schools were established in that early day, with the printing industry, the shoe shop and later entered the field of electricity. Orphan boys have received training and are found in large numbers today in these various lines of work. The girls have gone into the teaching profession, while scores of them have entered schools of nursing and are now in the hospitals in North Carolina and other states.

The campus of the Oxford Orphanage is composed of 325 acres of land and more than 30 buildings have been erected. This constitutes a small city within itself. The farming activities have become a model for this whole section of the state. Much of the work in these departments is done by the pupils. The financial support for this institution is secured from a variety of sources. The Grand Lodge of Masons makes an annual appropriation and the State of North Carolina gives a grant in aid annually. The "Orphan's Friend", the journal of the Masons of this State with a circulation of more than 12,000, is edited and published at the Orphanage. The Singing Class, composed of a group of small children, continues to tour the State and has done more to make North Carolina Orphanage minded through the 60 years of the existence of the Singing Class than probably any other single influence. This class visits more than 200 communities in North Carolina every year and has become the source of substantial income. Masonic Lodges frequently take collections for the Oxford Orphanage. At Thanksgiving each year, the Oxford Orphanage make a public appeal to North

Carolina from which a substantial sum is secured. Income is also derived from endowment funds which have been donated to the Orphanage through the years.

It is a striking fact that no pupil trained at the Oxford Orphanage has ever been sentenced for the commission of a major crime.

The value of an orphanage home to the State of North Carolina cannot be estimated. The value which children represent the hopes and possibilities which surround them were visioned by the Masons and their friends and became the object of investment of their interest, affection and resources. The economic saving to North Carolina alone from these thousands of boys and girls, many of whom might have turned into channels of crime and sin, could not be estimated. They have been trained into substantial citizens and have contributed to the economic structure of the State.

The Oxford Orphanage is, therefore, not merely the channel through which charity may find expression, but has become the means whereby investment may be made in a group of boys and girls who might have a chance in life. Masons the State and by far seeing individuals are proud of the healthy bodies, trained minds and hands and splendid character in the thousands of boys and girls who are fortunate enough to receive the benefits of its training.



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