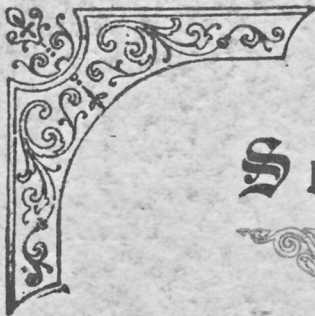




Souvenir



Seventy-fifth Anniversary



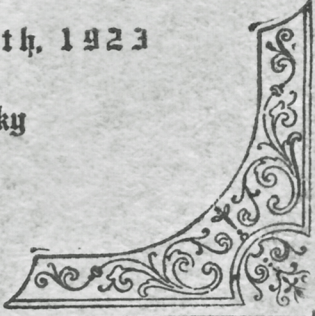
Saint
John's
Orphan
Society

1848

1923

Sunday, October 14th, 1923

Covington, Kentucky



1848

-:-

1923

SEVENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY

ST. JOHN'S
ORPHAN SOCIETY
OF
COVINGTON, KENTUCKY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER FOURTEENTH
1923



PRINTED BY ALBAN WOLFF, COVINGTON, KY.

HISTORY

... OF THE ...

St. John's Orphan Society

... OF ...

COVINGTON, KENTUCKY



ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER 1923, St. John's Orphan Society of Covington, Kentucky, will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee. This event should arouse the Catholic interest throughout the Diocese, because of the elaborate preparations which are being made for its celebration.

A brief history of the remarkable progress of this organization, during the past seventy-five years, should make an interesting and welcome review, especially, to the younger generation as it is only some few, who have been sufficiently observant to follow its course from organization to its present day.

Previous to the time at which the St. John's Orphan Society was called into existence, the Catholic orphans of Covington were cared for by the already established Catholic Institutions of Cincinnati. This, however, was highly unsatisfactory to the somewhat well developed congregations of Covington, who were spiritually interested in the orphaned children of their fellow citizens and were seeking to provide a home for their comfort.

In the early part of the year 1848 the first active steps were taken to bring about this result. On the fourth day of June in that year the first meeting of record was held, Mr. Frank Derhaber and Mr. Chr. Engert being chairman and secretary respectively. Although this was an informal meeting of a still unorganized Society, its notable object was plainly discernable, and so modestly performed, that the minutes fail to show in so many words its marvelous result.

True it is, that deeds make better history than words. A constitution was formed and the amount of dues levied by this constitution was subscribed to by this modest little band of men. As the meeting adjourned they had a combined capital of \$62.50 in advanced payments. From this humble start it steadily progressed to the magnificent Home and grounds of today, situated near Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

At the next meeting the affairs of the Society took definite form and its minutes were approved. Messrs. Joseph Lugers, Henry Hardebeck with the Secretary Chr. Engert formed a Committee to print its first Constitution and By-Laws.

As the membership multiplied very rapidly progressiveness became the watchword. At a meeting held September 3rd, 1848, the new Society resolved to build its own Orphans' Home. The Messrs. Henry Meier, H. Fibbe, H. Sommers, H. Rottingbrock and Jos. Lugers composed the Committee which selected and negotiated the site, situated on Madison Street near Fifteenth Street, with a frontage of 142 feet and a depth of 198 feet.

This property was suitably located and admirably adapted to the project of the Society. The price being agreeable a purchasing Committee composed of Messrs. H. Meyer, Gerh. Holzen, H. Fibbe and B. Janzen closed the deal, after receiving the approval of the Bishop of Cincinnati.

The next object of this progressive little organization was to liquidate the debt incurred, as soon as possible and to seek funds to defray the construction of its new Home. With this object in view a Soliciting Committee for voluntary contributions was appointed. It consisted of Messrs. Gerh. Holzen, H. Hardebeck, G. Wolking, L. Ordmann, Jos. Gier, H. Heimbrock, A. Jacob, F. Puthoff, L. Janzen, H. Putthoff, J. Freer and D. Bruns to solicit in Cincinnati. Messrs. J. Lugers, F. Ruemping, H. Fibbe, H. Kottenbruck, J. Hasemeier, Chr. Engert, Fr. Darbacher and Ed. Thoss, to solicit funds in Covington. A few days later this Committee was augmented with Messrs. G. Langhorst, B. Gausepohl, Wm. Logering, H. Meier, H. Ortmann and B. Winobs. Both Committees being assisted by lady members of the various Congregations, on the 18th day of November delivered to the Treasurer the sum of \$365.49.

Enthusiastic members advanced the difference to insure the purchase and to make the Orphanage a reality. Prosperity ran hand in hand with the promoters so that, on January 7th, 1849, seven months later, prompt collection of dues and early deliveries of funds solicited made re-payment at this date possible.

The first Anniversary was formally celebrated on June 3rd, 1849, in the Church of the Mother of God. In keeping with the spirit all officers as ordained by the Constitution were elected and installed. Those elected were President, Joseph Darbacher; Vice-President, Jos. Rowekamp; Secretary, Gerhard Holzen; Treasurer, J. Freer; Collectors, Jos. Piskopink and Gerhard Hardebeck. Committee on Deaths, L. Ortmann. Directors, F. Hugenberg, J. Lugers, G. Kossenbruck, G. Fibbe, Gerh. Dresmann, Geo. Dresmann and Chr. Engert. Its first annual report showed receipts \$1,084.64, disbursements \$1,032.17.

The building of the Orphanage apparently fell prey to a divergence of ideas, some directed towards merging with the St. Aloysius Orphanage of Cincinnati, Ohio. The minutes of July 8, 1849, record negotiations, tendering the surrender of the plot purchased by the St. John's Orphan Society to the St. Aloysius Orphanage for the building of a mutual Home, provided it would be permitted to retain its original name as a branch. This fortunately was held in abeyance only to be supplanted by an inertia towards building as had been anticipated in the earlier and more strenuous days. A plan was evolved to place Orphans tentatively, in worthy Catholic Families, the Society to pay for board and clothing.

The first orphaned girl to undergo this experiment, was the daughter of Mr. M. Schotler. No doubt it aroused considerable interest and was heralded by its supporters as the ideal plan. Almost every meeting the plausibility of the procedure was espoused and the Society was prevailed upon to desist from its purpose of building its own Home, and, furthermore, to sell the original plot purchased on Madison Street. At the first favorably opportunity it was sold.

However, since its organization the Society acquired a continuous list of new members. Profiting by its experience, and with an object to make the Society more workable it was incorporated in March 1850. Although this somewhat changed its character it failed to encourage its activity. A year passed by. The election placed the executive offices in the same hands. The official family of today is almost a replica of the one elected in 1850.

For the next twenty years considerable apathy marked its existence, although it accepted and cared for many orphans, molding them into useful

citizens. Having no Home of its own, very little of its meritorious work became known to any except its very active members.

In the year 1868, the Society apparently awoke from its lethargy to a period of renewed activity. The Venerable Bishop of Covington, Kentucky, George H. Carroll, held a deed title to a seminary near the now Dixie Highway on Lexington Pike. The student body had been removed to another institute of learning. A fortunate opportunity to purchase a Home equipped and adapted to its needs; surrounded by 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of very desirable ground of good fertility.

On January 28, 1868, this 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres was transferred to the St. John's Orphan Society, the consideration being \$17,000.00. The Society paid \$5000.00 cash and gave its notes for \$12,000.00, final payment was made March 26th, 1870.

From this time on events succeeded each other in rapid succession. The Orphan's Home was formally dedicated to its charitable designs on the second Sunday after Easter in the year 1871. The festivities were attended by great numbers of the Catholic Clergy and laymen of the City of Covington and its vicinity, the numbers of inmates being nine on the opening day.

The good Benedictine Nuns were placed in charge, whilst Rev. Lambert Wille was its first Chaplain, followed in later years by Rev. Quinn, Kayser, Kraus, Weissenberger, Jesse, Goebel, Weckes, Teutenberg, Stephany, Greifenkamp, Hensen, Eckmann, Gratz, Hillebrand, Gruber, Bocklage, Lingel, Blees, Hausterman, MacNamara and O'Melia.

The proximity of the institution induced nearby Catholics to attend Mass on Sunday and Holy-Days of obligation, at the new Orphanage chapel. The number of Orphans grew steadily taxing the accommodations to the utmost, and inducing the St. John's Orphan Society to construct a beautiful new chapel as an annex to the Home. This was during the year 1876.

Perhaps this was the incentive, nevertheless, on the 14th day of March 1885, the Right Reverend Bishop Maes, sent forth Father Bernard Hillebrand with the instruction to organize the Catholics in that vicinity into a congregation and to use the chapel as the Parish Church. All these duties carried to a successful conclusion and for many years was the spiritual counsel of the many Orphans at the Home.

During the same year an agreement was arrived at with the various Catholic Clergy of Covington, designating the St. John's Orphanage as a domicile of all the orphans of the various congregations which had established themselves in the City of Covington, Kentucky. Previous to

this time it had been a girls home exclusively. The boys being sent to the Orphanage at Cold Springs, Kentucky.

This new arrangement made great inroads in the accommodations at the Orphanage and in 1892 the Society constructed a three story, brick annex for the housing of the boys. It consisted of schoolrooms, dormitory, play rooms, and also suitable living rooms for the resident chaplain. The basement was utilized for storage in one compartment, the other being used to house the heating apparatus which provides heat for the entire group of buildings.

To-day the St. John's Orphan Society may well be reminded of its progress from its very small beginning of \$62.50 in 1848, to its marvelous growth and expansion of the present day. Situated in the choicest of suburban site on the Dixie Highway it has to-day a Home, equipped to meet its every need. Each successive Board of Administrative Officers have labored energetically to enhance its surroundings to provide for the comfort and to lessen the labors of its inmates.

The Girl's department has dormitory, sanitary wash room with bath, hot and cold water, lavatories and sick room appurtances situated on the third floor of the main building. The second floor provides reception room, individual bed rooms for the Sisters, consultation room, sewing room, rest room and medicine room and Chapel. The first floor provides office, dining rooms, play rooms, pantry, kitchen and laundry with electric labor saving devices to assist the shortage of help, as children after passing through the 8th grade are found suitable occupations elsewhere. A modern bake-shop with portable ovens, electric mixers provide bread for the entire institution situated apart from the main buildings, is entirely fire proof.

Surrounding but some distance from the main building is the farm hands home. Nearby a modern barn, houses the implements and stores the winter supply of forage for the stock. On the ground floor of the barn is the dairy, which supplies the rich milk a boon for the poor Orphans, who, come to the institution mostly suffering from under-nourishment. It also supplies the butter for table and buttermilk for beverage.

Of recent years, the growth of the community surrounding the Orphanage was such, that the late Right Reverend Bishop Brossart wisely decided to build a Church to care for the ever increasing number of the Catholic fold, now setting in this vicinity. As soon the Blessed Sacrament Church was completed, the St. John's Congregation withdrew from the Orphanage Chapel, which, had been their place of worship for many years, to the new edifice.

This change, was not without some benefit to the Orphanage, since, it became more and more evident, that, enlarged quarters were essential to health and well being of the inmates. Recent years brought to the Home great numbers of little inmates from three to five years. Separate quarters were very desirable, as these were not of a school age and the manner of living was entirely different from the rest. The north wing of the boys building, which has heretofore been occupied by the Chaplain and his servants, were remodeled to meet the wants of this new colony of little folks and the good Sister, supervisor, their constant companion during the day as well as night. Beds, chairs, tables, miniature furniture to meet the needs of these little changes were purchased; toys and pastimes to delight their little hearts were supplied. An emergency hospital was arraigned for as children diseases are more prevalent at this age, than in later years, and, in many instances complete isolation is absolutely essential. This building, as well as the others in the group are provided with fire extinguishers and out door fire escapes, with exits from any part of each floor.

The new quarters for the Chaplain have been arranged for, in the east wing of the original or main building. Modernized in every respect and surrounded by the solitude, so earnestly sought for, by those of a religious attitude.

The grounds have been enhanced, the landscape enriched, ample access for motor travel provided to all parts of the grounds, by improved roadway. As one walks north leaving the buildings to their rear, one passes the little school house, purchased from the congregation at the time of the formation of the new congregation.

A little further along the road in the same direction, you come to the Recreation Grounds, a beauty spot of nature so well known to every benefactor of this institution. A power driven merry-go-round, bowling alley, booths for exhibition of needle work and other handiwork contributed to by the Orphan Girls under supervision of the Venerable Nuns, are permanently located on the grounds.

Surrounding this grove, is fertile farm land, which, in fruitful seasons yields an abundance of vegetables, and fruits for the inmates of the Orphanage, and also supplies fodder and pasturage for the stock. The farm has been modernized with labor saving machinery, to offset shortage of farm help.

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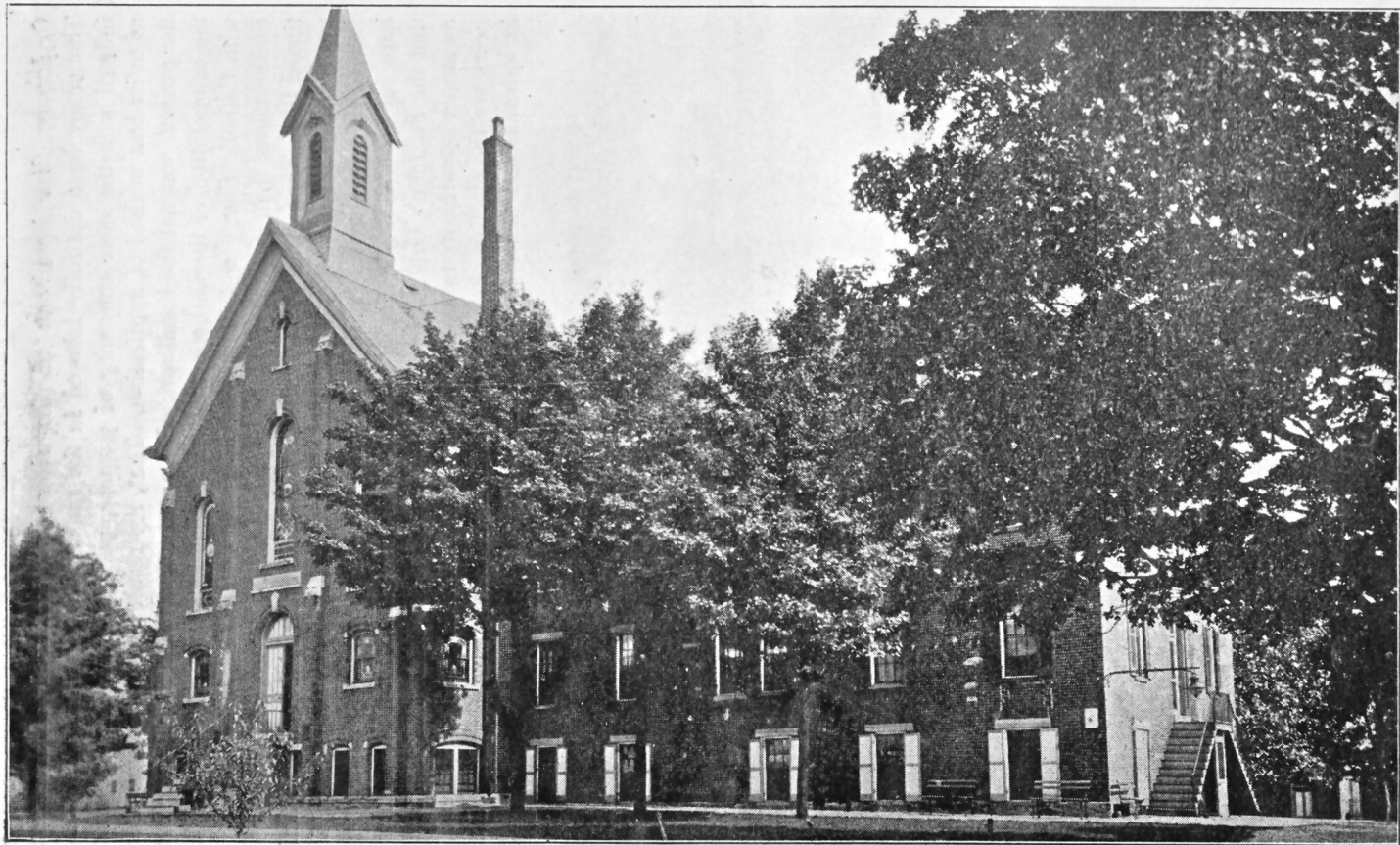
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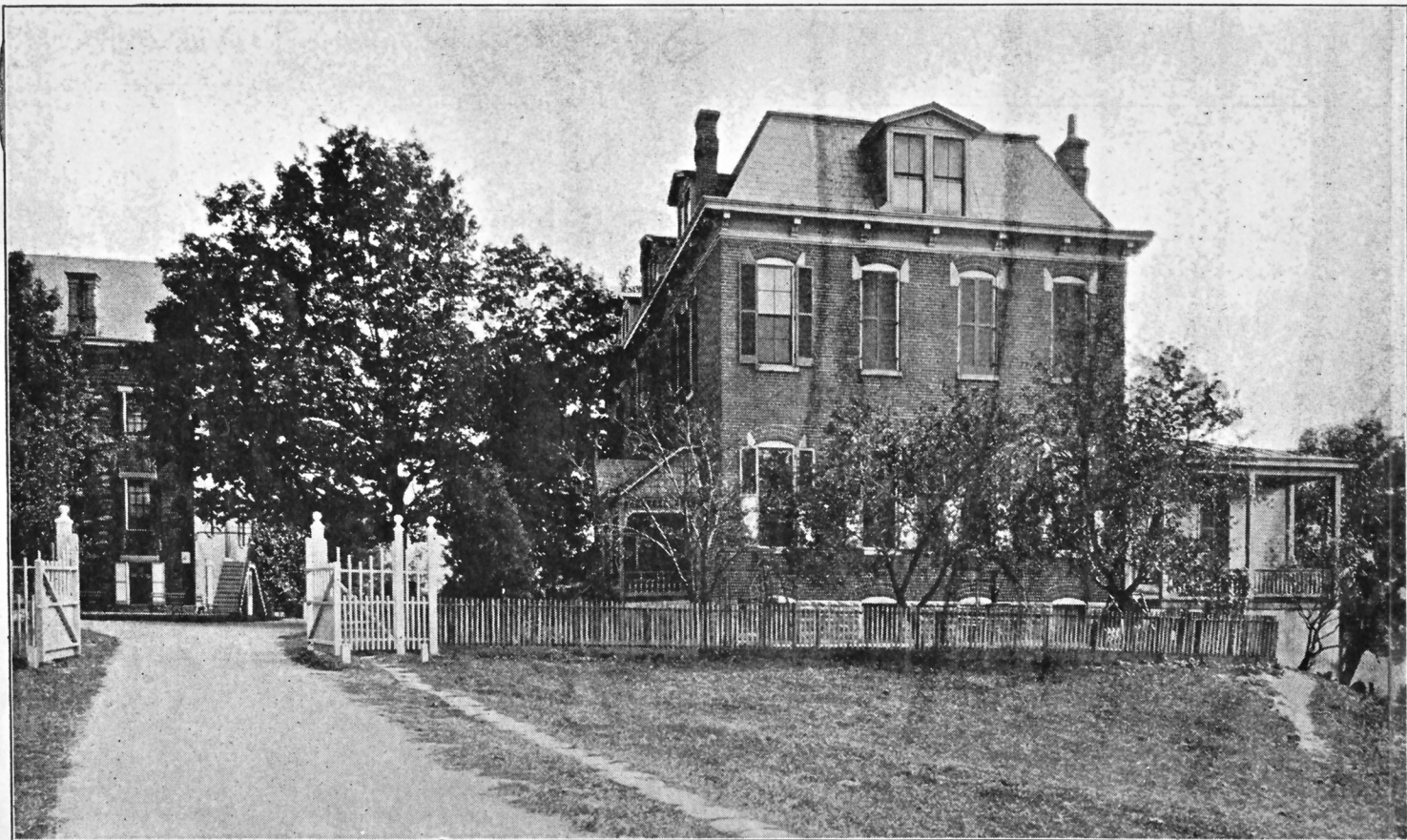
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This brief summary, should make it apparent, that the growth and progress of St. John's Orphan Society, and its progeny the St. John's

Orphanage, has been one of the slow but continued advancement. That many have dutifully labored in the ranks of its workers, who, were imbued with the same constancy of purpose, perhaps, sometimes confused as to its best method of application. That, the result attained up and unto the present, was not the handiwork of one man or any one set of men; but the co-operation of the Catholic men and women in agreeable co-ordination with Catholic Clergy and Sisterhood of the City of Covington and vicinity. Furthermore, that, continued financial assistance is imperative to its continued life. Those, who have given their time, money and labor, should find much gratification in the concrete evidence that they have not labored in vain in the vine yard of the Lord. To the younger generation, who are perhaps yet unmindful of laborers needed in this great work, should remember, that the St. John's Orphan Society welcomes all to its fold. All will have an ample opportunity to assist in its meritorious labors. The executive officers are the elective choice of the whole membership, and are pledged to its spiritual and material advancement.

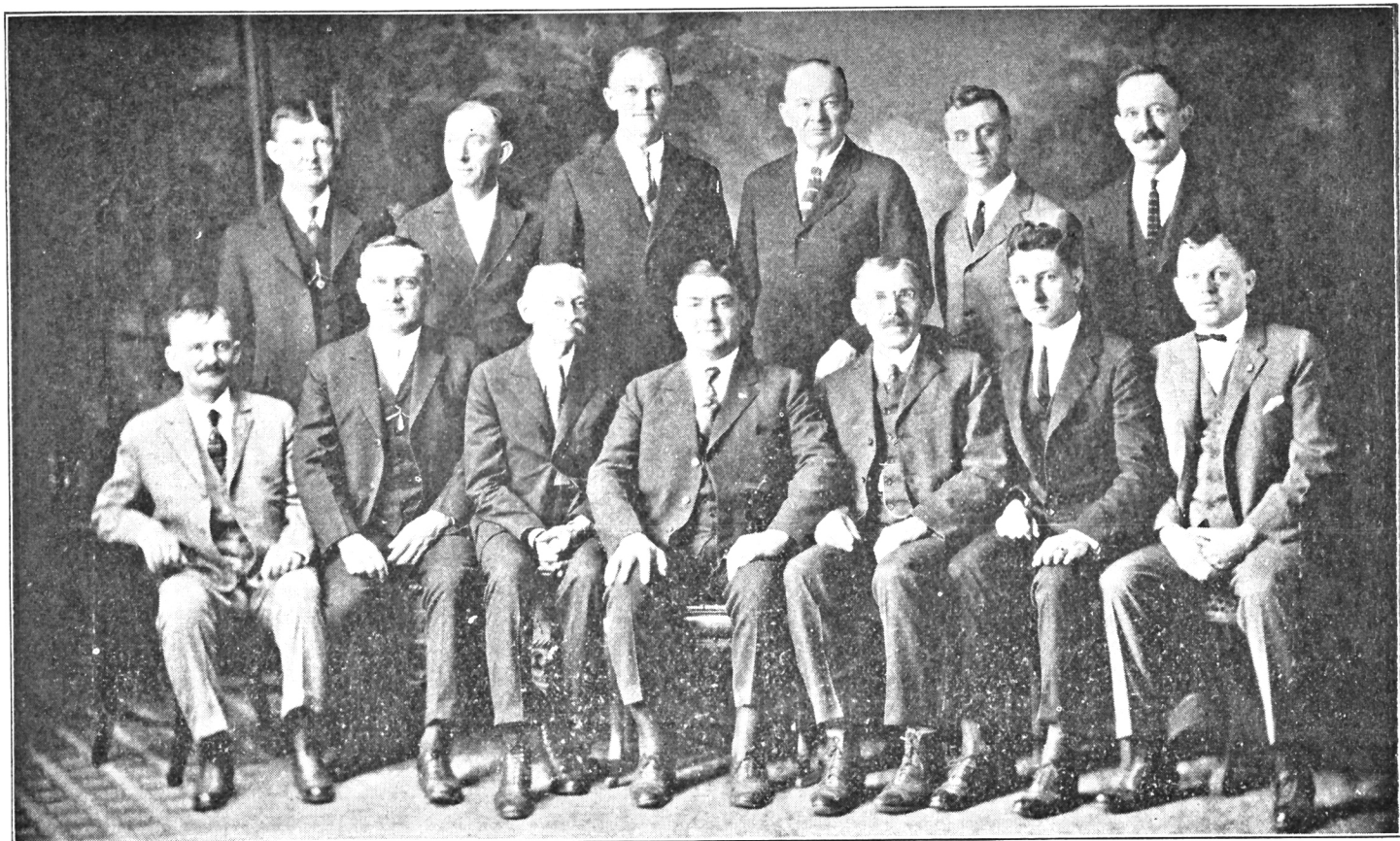






BOYS' DORMITORY





OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF ST. JOHN'S ORPHAN SOCIETY—1923—1924

Standing left to right—John Urlage, Jos. C. Nienaber, Henry Bernzen, Frank Fedders, Harry Tenfelle and Wm. A. Glaser, Directors.
 Seated, left to right—Edward Suchanek, Director; Henry Meimann, Financial Secretary; Herman Hoppenians, Recording Secretary; Peter P. Thiel, President; Henry Rauf, Vice-President; R. Clifford Dressman, Treasurer; Geo. Streibich, Director.

