

REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE
BENEDICT HOME

TO THE
GOVERNOR OF IOWA,

LOCATED AT
DES MOINES,

FOR THE BIENNIAL PERIOD ENDING AUGUST 31, 1891.

DES MOINES:
G. H. RAGSDALE, STATE PRINTER.
1892.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES BENEDICT HOME.

DES MOINES, IOWA, January 12, 1892.

To His Excellency, HORACE BOIES, Governor of the State of Iowa:

SIR—Believing you will be interested in learning the condition of all institutions receiving aid from the State, the undersigned trustees of the Benedict Home respectfully submit the following report, accompanied by a report from the Superintendent for the biennial period ending August 31, 1891.

We humbly acknowledge the guidance of Him who ruleth all things, and recognize the fact that it would have been impossible to have accomplished (as a charity) a work of such magnitude without the aid of the State. We also appreciate the direction and cooperation of the Executive Council in meeting the demand for support.

Dr. Alice Goodrich is the attending physician and has given perfect satisfaction. Her pleasant face and gentle mien wins all hearts in the home to her. Of her professional service we can not speak too highly.

In the early part of 1890, we fortunately secured the services of Mrs. S. R. Woods, the present efficient superintendent. The arduous task of enlarging and repairing the family building while the large family were occupying it was undertaken and successfully completed. Six rooms were thus added, not only furnishing more room, but many conveniences.

The entire house is now warmed with furnace heat. With the exception of the hospital and the roof of the barn, the property is in good condition. An insurance of \$4,000 has been carried on the building and \$1,300 on the personal property. There are no outstanding debts. The thorough cultivation of the yard and garden in flowers, fruits and vegetables has been a source of both pleasure and profit to the household. The different departments of work are systematically organized, and for the first time since the

institution has been of any magnitude, it is practicable to dispense with assistants and the superintendent will be the only resident officer in the home.

The home has been visited each month by one or more of the trustees, and every three months there has been a meeting of the full board, at which the accounts have been audited and the home inspected in all its parts.

We are pleased to report that the management has been entirely satisfactory and the results most gratifying. The harmonious relations between the family and superintendent and trustees have been very pleasant.

To continue the good work so successfully began, the trustees now, as in the past, look to the State for a large part of the funds for the support of the home. The interest taken in this work throughout the State leads to the belief that in no other charity do the people take a deeper interest.

The moral influence for good upon society appears to be appreciated, and the fact conceded that it is better in this way to prevent crime and pauperism than to punish and support through courts, prisons and almshouses.

The trustees sincerely hope that the coming legislature will appropriate sufficient aid to enable the management to receive all that the capacity of the enlarged family building will allow, which will increase the total number for the next biennial period to two hundred and fifty persons; \$3,000 for a hospital and \$5,000 each year for support will make this possible. With a firm reliance upon the people, through their elected Representatives, we humbly submit this report.

Very respectfully,

MRS. A. HOLMES,

MRS. S. C. SLAYTON,

MRS. E. J. NORTH,

Trustees.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT BENEDICT HOME.

DES MOINES, IOWA, January, 1892.

To His Excellency, HORACE BOIES, Governor of the State of Iowa:

SIR:—The Benedict Home being one of the public charities within the State and receiving much of its support from the State, I take pleasure in presenting this brief report of its internal condition and management, covering a period of two years ending August 31, 1891.

This Christian reformatory is yet in its infancy; it having been opened in the fall of 1882. The object is to furnish a voluntary Home to girls who have left the path of virtue but give evidence of a sincere desire to return to honorable and pure lives; thus blessing society, instead of becoming its most deadly foe.

Many are orphans who have not received the loving, watchful care of those with home and parents; while others, by force of circumstances over which they had no control, have been forced to earn a livelihood where they had very little or no protection. To such the Home extends a warm welcome while all other respectable doors have been closed against them. Here indeed, "The wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." All proper subjects for admission that the limited funds would support and the small hospital accommodate have been received. These limitations have compelled us to turn many away who would have gladly forsaken the old and begun a new and honorable life. Where have these poor outcasts gone? What society will be contaminated by their presence and burdened by their pauperism produced by them and their posterity? Who was the author of their ruin? These unanswered questions remain.

The funds appropriated by the Twenty-third General Assembly enabled us to increase the total number cared for from 126, reported for the two years ending August 31, 1889, to 193 for the two years ending August 31, 1891.

The enlargement of the family building has made it possible to increase the present number of inmates to a total of 250 for the next biennial period provided a suitable hospital can be built and sufficient funds for support be provided.

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION.

The Ministerial Association of Des Moines has kindly included the Home in its missionary work and at 3 P. M. each Sabbath a sermon is preached to a small but not less devotional and appreciative audience, than any whom they serve elsewhere. At 2 P. M. the superintendent conducts a Sabbath school, all the family taking a part; Cook's Topical Lessons are used.

Christian ladies from the city representing different denominations have conducted a prayer service on Thursday evening of each week, during most of the time, which has been of great value to the family.

The Sabbath is observed as a day of sacred rest. This is the only day in which visitors are not received.

Morning and evening of each day the family assemble in the center hall and join with the superintendent in reading a lesson from God's word and invoking divine blessing upon the household. At evening service roll-call, each girl responds by repeating a text of Scripture, after which all take part in a song-service of twenty minutes, then retire for the night.

HEALTH.

The health of the Home is a cause for thanksgiving. There has not been a case of serious sickness or death of any adult during this period. Of the twelve infants who died, only one was a healthy child, but it was artificially fed, and in the hot weather of 1890, at the age of four months, was attacked with cholera infantum and died. Five who were feeble from birth, lived a short time and died. Two were still born. Two born prematurely, and lived only a few hours. Two were born in an asphyxia condition, one living three and the other four days.

Dr. Alice Goodrich, a practicing physician, whose office is in East Des Moines, is the attending physician of the institution. We take pleasure in speaking of her faithful attention and skillful professional service rendered the Home.

EMPLOYMENT.

The several departments of work is done by the inmates, under the supervision of the superintendent. As far as possible the Home is a domestic training school, the aim of which is to teach each one how to earn an honest livelihood. Special pains are taken to impress them with the importance of doing well whatever they do.

Believing that labor is ennobling and "idleness the parent of vice," the constant aim is to organize the work so that each shall be usefully employed with work or books.

EDUCATIONAL.

The Home has a small but good library, which is read with interest by the family. Pains are taken to teach those to read and write who cannot, and the rapidity with which some learn is very gratifying.

MOVEMENT OF THE POPULATION.

Adults cared for from August 31, 1889, to August 31, 1891.....	115
Infants.....	78
Total.....	193

Of the adults two were married, eighty were honorably discharged, and thirty-three remain in the Home.

Of the infants receiving care sixty-two were born during the period, twenty-two have been adopted, twelve have died, twenty are being cared for by their mothers, and twenty-four remain in the institution.

SOCIAL CONDITION.

Orphans.....	85
Parents living.....	30
Total.....	115

It is but just to state that several who are reported as having parents, came to America in childhood with strangers, and these have been deprived of parental care; while others are worse than orphans on account of a separation of father and mother, thus breaking up the family relation.

AGES.

1—14 years.	19—19 years.	9—24 years.
5—15 years.	12—20 years.	2—26 years.
13—16 years.	9—21 years.	1—27 years.
13—17 years.	9—22 years.	2—28 years.
13—18 years.	6—23 years.	1—33 years.

POPULATION BY COUNTIES.

Appanoose, 4; Adair, 3; Benton, 2; Blackhawk, 5; Bremer, 1; Buchanan, 2; Boone, 2; Buena Vista, 1; Cherokee, 1; Cass, 3; Calhoun, 1; Clarke, 2; Clay, 1; Dallas, 5; Delaware, 1; Des Moines, 1; Davis, 1; Fayette, 1; Guthrie, 2; Greene, 2; Grundy, 2; Hardin, 3; Henry, 3; Hancock, 3; Humboldt, 1; Ida, 1; Jasper, 2; Johnson, 2; Jefferson, 1; Keokuk, 1; Lucas, 1; Linn, 1; Mahaska, 4; Mills, 1; Marshall, 2; Mitchell, 3; Marion, 5; Madison, 3; Muscatine, 3; Montgomery, 1; Monroe, 1; O'Brien, 1; Polk, 4; Pottawattamie, 3; Page, 2; Poweshiek, 2; Plymouth, 1; Ringgold, 1; Scott, 3; State, 2; Van Buren, 1; Wright, 2; Woodbury, 2; Wapello, 1; Webster, 3; Winneshiek, 1; Washington, 3.

NATIONALITY.

American, 81; Bohemian, 1; Canadian, 1; English, 3; French, 2; German, 6; Irish, 8; Norwegian, 4; Scotch, 4; Swedes, 2; Swiss, 3.

IMPROVEMENTS.

The east end of the family building was formerly heated by a furnace and the west end by stoves. The furnace gave out and two furnaces were put in, thus heating the entire house.

In order to increase the capacity and add to the comfort and convenience of the family the foundation walls under the center of the building were lowered, and a kitchen, pantry, two dining-rooms, two furnace and coal rooms, and a small store room were added to the basement.

These improvements made it necessary to make many other changes to adjust the old with the new. The old kitchen and dining-room were converted into sleeping rooms. The exterior of the house has also been improved by two coats of paint. The building is now in good condition.

The Hospital is a cottage with only two small rooms. We had hoped to enlarge this to enable us to receive as many inmates as

the Home proper would accommodate, but our limited funds would not permit and with the exception of new floors it remains the same as when last reported.

A foundation has been put under the barn and it has been improved inside so that the cows, chickens and pigs are comfortably housed. But the poor roof remains which, for want of funds, we were unable to repair.

CULTIVATION OF THE GROUNDS.

The yard on the north and south sides of the house was lowered several feet to get light and ventilation for the new basement. The drive was cut down and extended past the barn to the street north; the street front south was also cut down and the earth used to fill up the deep ravine which run through the grounds giving us a much needed yard for drying clothes. The yard has been sodded, substantial walks made, shrubs and flowers cultivated, adding much to the pleasure and comfort of the sad, discouraged girls, many of whom find this the only home they have ever known.

The soil of the small garden was very poor and having been cultivated by unskilled hands had become sterile and unproductive. We tried to overcome this by heavy mulching and thorough cultivation and the past year succeeded in gathering a good crop of small fruit and vegetables.

AID RECEIVED FROM THE STATE.

The Benedict Home has received aid from the Twentieth, Twenty-first, Twenty-second and Twenty-third General Assemblies for the care of these State wards not otherwise provided for by the State, amounting in all to \$17,000. The Twenty-third General Assembly appropriated \$6,000; \$4,584.18 of this amount has been drawn and expended as provided by the General Assembly. The balance, \$1,415.82 yet remains in the State treasury.

The receipts and expenditures for the Home have been as follows:

Balance on hand September 1, 1889.....	\$ 695.34
Undrawn from former appropriation.....	1,000.00
Total.....	\$ 1,695.34
Received from appropriation Twenty-third General Assembly.....	\$ 4,584.18
Received from personal donation.....	3,710.73
Total receipts.....	\$ 9,990.25

There has been expended on repairs and improvements	\$ 2,595.82	
For support.	7,101.87	
Total expenditure.....		\$ 9,697.69
On hand to balance.....		\$ 292.56
Remaining undrawn from appropriation of Twenty-third General Assembly	\$ 1,415.82	
On hand from donations.....	292.56	
Total available and unexpended.....		\$ 1,708.38

NECESSITIES OF THE INSTITUTION.

The great necessities of the home are funds for support and a suitable hospital. The present hospital is a cottage of only two small rooms. There are no facilities for isolating patients afflicted with contagious diseases, should there be any serious illness, or an epidemic prevail it would be impossible to properly care for the patients.

A hospital sufficient for the necessities of the institution could be built for \$3,000. With such a hospital the family building could be filled to its full capacity which would make it necessary to increase the support fund for the next two years, to \$10,000.

The individual friends of the home contributed \$3,573.87 during the last biennial term and we believe that if all funds that shall be thus donated could be credited to a hospital fund, this much needed hospital could soon be provided.

In reporting the work of the home we do so with a sincere appreciation of the obligations the institution is under to the legislators and the executive officers who from time to time have appropriated and directed the expenditure of funds for its support.

With the hope that the legislature soon to convene will include this institution with other public charities receiving aid, and thus provide for the care of a class of the State's erring but repentant citizens, we submit this report. Very respectfully,

S. R. WOODS,
Superintendent.