

## Making Home Life for Little Waifs

Omaha Institution Where Babies Get Loving Care When Bereft of Mother and Father and from Which They Go Out to Brighten Corners the Stork Has Overlooked or to Make Glad Hearts that Have Been Saddened by Bereavement



Little Indian Chief. A Full Blood Winnebago Waif



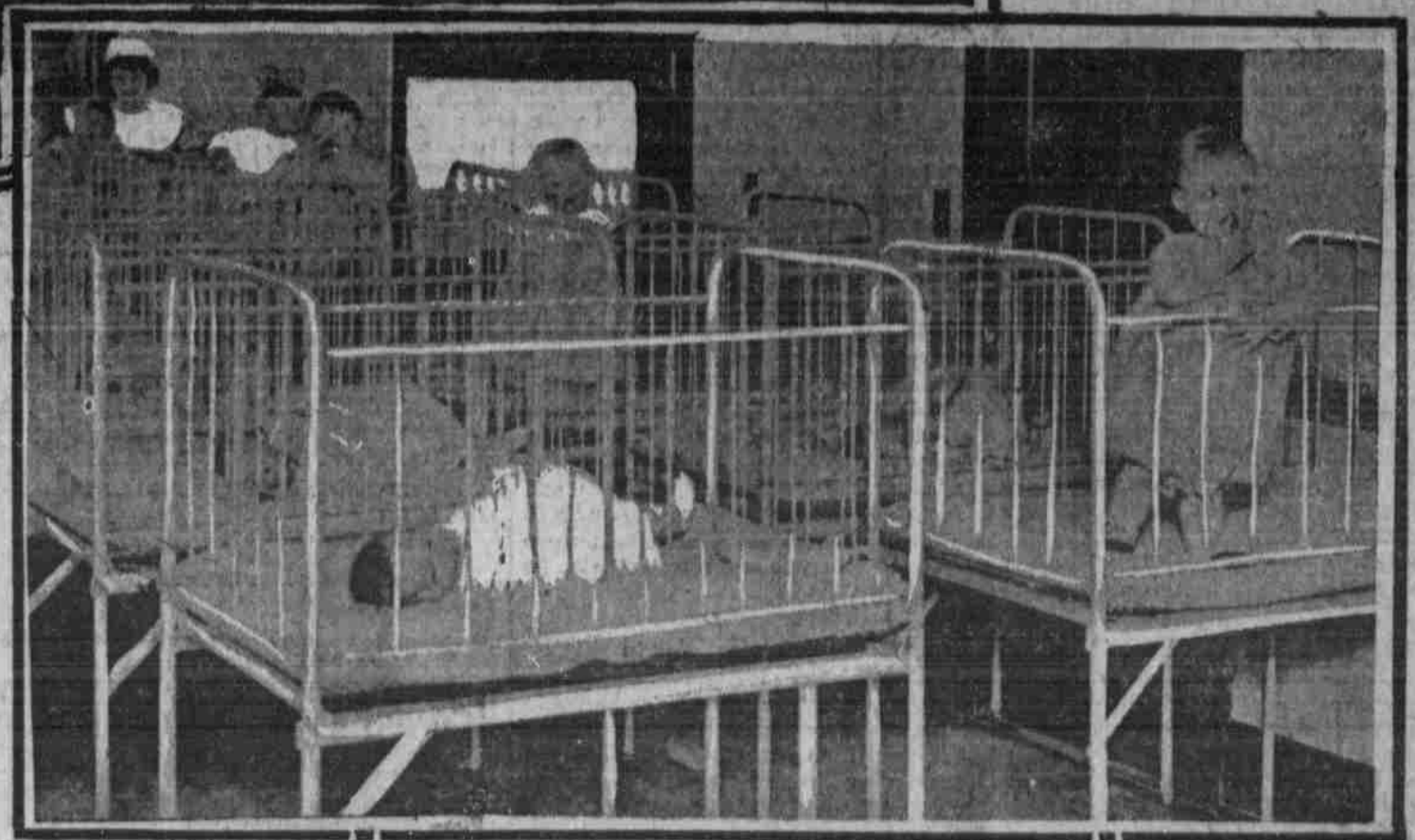
In the Dining Room



Here's the pride of the Nursery



Some of the Bright Little Waifs



In the Day Nursery

WHEN the Omaha Child Saving Institute finished last year with just one death among the 113 babies and young children cared for, it made a record unequalled anywhere so far as known.

One hundred and thirteen tender children, each a possible victim of any of a dozen diseases, and only one death!

"I think your record one of the most remarkable in the United States," said H. H. Hart, director of the Russell Sage foundation child-helping department, "and I have had occasion to refer to it frequently in public addresses. Many institutions we know of have a mortality ranging from 25 to 70 per cent."

And in the Omaha Child Saving Institute the mortality last year was less than 1 per cent!

The big building of the institute stands on a sunny slope at Forty-second and Jackson streets and it is one of the most interesting places in Omaha. Let's take a trip through it with the matron, Mrs. Julia F. Spaulding, as guide.

First we come into a south room on the second floor, where are a score of little beds and in each a little baby. Some are asleep. Several are awake and sitting up and turning big, wondering eyes on the visitors.

"I suppose the ladies fairly go wild with excitement when they come in here, don't they?" we opine to the matron.

"Oh, and the men too," she replies. "Some men are just as crazy about babies as the women. But as a rule men prefer them when they get a little older."

We proceed to another room that is all windows and the windows are open. Here are a number of bigger beds and in each is a slumbering form covered with blankets and with a hood up over their heads. These are "toddlers," older children, who sleep in the open air in sleeping bags. They have stone hot water jars in bed with them and the faces are all you can see.

In another room a number of little girl "toddlers" are playing and in still another the boy "toddlers" are romping. All are clean, cheerful, polite, rosy-cheeked, pictures of health and vim and vigor.

My, my, how things have changed since the days of Oliver Twist!

These children have as good care and as tender care as the children in the best homes. And they have the love of their guardians, Mrs. Spaulding, the matron, is a great favorite with them and she is constantly "dearing" them.

In fact, it would be hard to be anything but kind to such nice children. Their helplessness and trustfulness touch the very chords in the human heart, which respond with help and love and care.

Most of these children would be entirely uncared for or improperly cared for, if it were not for this institution. The transformation that is shown in them after a few months of care here, is sometimes astounding. Mere skeletons, sickly and forlorn, they come in, and soon, with proper care and nourishment they are healthy, smiling and on the road to good and useful lives.

The parents of some are dead. The parents of others are "no good." Many have pitiful histories which fortunately they will never know. Some have

been literally thrown into the street by those who should have loved them.

Cared for and nursed to health, they are constantly being placed in good homes. This is done with the greatest care. When people want to adopt a child they fill out an application blank with references. The application is then passed on by the children's committee. If the decision is favorable, the child is placed in the family on trial. The field agents of the institution look in on the home and report. After a time, if both sides are satisfied, the adoption is made legal. But even after that, the field agent keeps in touch with the child until it has reached maturity.

The institution is entirely non-sectarian and children are cared for without any regard to what the religious persuasion of their parents was.

It is supported by voluntary contributions of cash. Clothing is sent in and food supplies and various women's societies come there on certain days and "get busy" with sewing machines and needles and scissors and make all kinds of things for the little ones.

The kitchen is one of the most interesting places. It is big and well equipped and Mrs. Spaulding says, it is in charge of the most wonderful woman for this work she ever knew. It is spotlessly clean and the cooking is super-excellent. All you have to do is look at those healthy children to know that the cooking must be all right. The larger children and the grown folks, nurses and so on, who take care of them, all dine together in the big dining room.

And early in the evening all the "toddlers" are gathered in the big, cheery play room, where the matron entertains them and perhaps they sing "God Will Take Care of You," and then into their sleeping bags and to Dreamland.

Yes, God is taking care of you, little children.

God and a whole lot of good women and some of the men of Omaha.

The institute was founded twenty-four years ago. It moved into its present building about five years ago. This building represents an investment of about \$75,000. It was damaged by the tornado, but was repaired at a cost of \$5,000. The tornado was the cause of the withdrawal of about \$4,000 of the annual support from Omaha people, who were crippled financially by that disaster.

About \$1,500 of this support is still lacking and contributions are welcome.

Efficiency and economy are practiced here in the highest degree. "The average cost of a child to the institution from the time it is received till it is grown up is only \$50," said Mrs. A. A.

McGraw, chairman of the officers' nursery committee. This seems impossible until it is remembered that most of the children are adopted and then the cost of supporting them falls on the family with whom they live. This record is equalled by only one other institution in this country.

At the present time visitors are not admitted to see the children, because of the scarlet fever epidemic in Omaha. This is only one example of the precautions taken to safeguard the children's health. Nurses are under orders to stay out of street cars and away from places where people congregate. All children received into the institution are kept isolated from the other children for two weeks to see whether they have any disease.

The institute's officers are: William A. De-

Bord, president; E. C. William, vice president; Barton Millard, treasurer; Mrs. A. A. McGraw, secretary. George L. Alley, Mrs. George A. Joslyn, Dr. H. H. McClanahan, Dr. C. W. M. Poynter, Mrs. Joseph C. Westh, Judge J. J. Sullivan, Miss Myrtle Warren, Rev. George L. Peters and Rev. C. E. Cobbe, are trustees.

Rev. C. E. Glwits is field superintendent; Renee McKenzie, head nurse, and Mrs. Julia F. Spaulding, matron.

A large nursery committee is made up of the leading society matrons of the city. The medical staff includes many of the leading physicians and surgeons of Omaha.

Little children innocent helpless, trusting. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."