

120th Anniversary Special

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THE CLUBWOMAN'S PAGE

CONDUCTED BY
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THE MARY GALLOWAY HOME

Edited By Miss Mamie Looney



No sketch, however brief, of the Mary Galloway Home could be written without embracing at least the cursory review of the history of the Willing Hands Circle of the King's Daughters, for this devoted band of workers the institution owes its existence.

The writer does not know to whom the circle is indebted for its significant and inspiring name, but it is a matter of record that the dean of the organization itself was born in a place where love and service however have gone hand in hand. It was Miss Mamie Looney, who on a certain afternoon more than 15 years ago called into her parlor a little company of her neighbors and "over the tea-cups" suggested that they join hands "in His name" for a purpose of womanly well-doing in behalf of His little ones - the poor and sick and lonely.

Thus was born the Willing Hands Circle organized in 1890—a little band of ten earnest women, whose purpose in the light of what the circle has since accomplished, it may most truly be regarded that they builded better than they knew.

The "original ten" who formed the circle were Miss Mamie Looney, Miss Sallee Looney, Mrs. William Bowles, Mrs. G.S. Maclaran, Mrs. Irvin Massey, Mrs. Jack Harris, Mrs. W.B. Rogers, Mrs. Robert Wilkerson, Mrs. Richardson Morris and Miss Emma Tepo. The organization was perfected with Mrs William Bowles as president, Miss Ma-

mie Looney as vice president and Mrs G.S. Maclaran as secretary.

As the membership fees in the circle were merely nominal these "Willing Hands" busied themselves in varied industries to provide funds for their charitable work. One novel enterprise undertaken was the manufacturing of mattresses. Yes, good cotton mattresses! If any of the little band were at all dubious about this undertaking they valiantly choked back their misgivings, and with sublime confidence followed their intrepid officers into the untried field of mattress making.

Succeed? Of course they did! and the mattresses were of the very best, too, and were sold to a local infirmary, netting a goodly sum to the "Willing Hands" that fashioned them. Anyone who shall say that the subtle aroma of loving service which performed them did not woo sweet and refreshing slumber to weary sufferers in the Rogers Infirmary?

Another a venture led this dauntless ten into competition with their little feathered sisters, the hens, and we next find them busily engaged in the manufacture of eggs, real, golden-hearted eggs, made of purest fondant, much more wholesome than the hard-boiled hen fruit which is responsible for so much discomfort to the inner boy at Eastertide. These eggs sold as high as a dollar a dozen, and so great was the demand for them that the Easter hens and rabbits were almost put out of business.

It is quite time to drop this frivolous vein and adopt a state more in consonance with the sober facts of this history. Mrs. Bowles, at the close of her term as president, handed over the



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office of chief executive to her able first Lieut., Miss Looney, who remained at the head of the circle for three consecutive terms. During this period the work of the circle had gradually crystallized into the care of aged women left desolate in their declining years, without means or love ones to care for them. The desire to give these unfortunates a real home was soon felt, and this could be done by taking them out of the rented rooms scattered about the city and placing them under one sheltering roof.

An undertaking would have seemed well-nigh hopeless to women possessed of less faith and courage, but it would take more than the mere lack of money to dishearten these enthusiastic workers. Under the leadership of their tireless president, ably seconded by the vice president, Mrs. J. W. Falls, a brilliant concert was given at the Lyceum Theatre in aid of this noble cause. Artists and public responded generously to the circle's efforts, with the result that the affair was an unprecedented success, both socially and financially, and more than \$500 was realized. With just

this modest sum, plus an inexhaustible supply of faith and courage, the old Page residence on Court street was rented and comfortably furnished. It was soon filled to the utmost capacity with the circle's happy though infirm charges.

A patriotic incident is told in connection with the bringing to the shelter of a real home the forlorn and lowly and lonely old souls whom the circle had befriended. It was Mrs. Payne, long since called to her father's house-peace to her soul! - who chanced to be the very first to reach the home. Finding herself surrounded by so many comforts, she clasped her hands and in a burst of grateful enthusiasm exclaimed: 'O, I feel as if I had gotten to heaven! I wish I could be baptized all over again!' Dear old lady was a devoted Baptist.

In 1897 the institution was incorporated as the Home For Aged Women, with the following officers and directors: Miss Mamie Looney, president; Mrs. J.W. Falls, vice president; Mrs. Lucas Clapp, treasurer, Mrs. John Strong, secretary.

Directors: Mrs. P. P. Van Fleet, Mrs. Lewis Donaldson, Mrs. J.A. Omberg, Mrs. Mary Abbey, Mrs. J. M. Dockery, Mrs. B. M. Estes, Mrs. William Katzenberger.

At this time the work had grown to such proportions that the members of the circle wisely determined to associate themselves in the management of their affairs an advisory committee of five gentlemen. The first committee thus created consisted of Mr. R. H. Vance, Mr. J. W. Falls, Mr. W. A. Gage, Mr. O. H. P. Pieper and Mr. J. M. Goodbar. These and others who have since served on this committee have rendered invaluable aid to the circle in its work; indeed, without their assistance; the plans could not have been realized.

The home having last become an established fact, Miss Looney, who had served so long and faithfully as the circle's president, insisted that another should take the leadership. Accordingly, Mrs. John W Falls was elected president. Mrs. Falls brought to the office the same devotion and enthusiasm which she had shown as vice-president. The goal of the circle's ambition was now to acquire a permanent home; and it was during Mrs. Falls administration, in due in large measure to her untiring zeal during three successive terms of office, that the first steps toward the fulfillment of this ambition were taken, and the purchase of a beautiful site and the laying of the cornerstone of the present comfortable and commodious structure.

Mrs. Falls was succeeded by Mrs. J.A. Omberg, during whose term of office the building was rapidly pushed to completion, so that by June, 1901, it was ready for occupancy, with a debt of only \$3500 to be lifted.

Mrs. R. H. Vance was the next president and no more devoted officer ever served



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the circle and the home. During her term of office, the debt of \$3,500 was paid through the generosity of Col. Robert Galloway, and the Home for Aged Women became the Mary Galloway Home, in memory of the wife of its chief benefactor.

Mrs. B. M. Estes succeeded Mrs. Vance's president, and for two successive terms administered the affairs of the home wisely and well. During this time many comforts were added, notably the installation of the system of electric lighting.

Mrs. Omberg was again chosen president to succeed Mrs. Estes, and under her management a prosperous year was rounded out. At the close of her term, the circle prevailed upon Miss Looney to occupy the presidential chair once more. During her present term, an addition to the home of six much-needed rooms have been built and paid for; also a new system of heating by water radiation has been installed upon which there is yet a balance of \$800 to be paid.

The home has recently become still further indebted to its benefactor, Mr. Galloway, by reason of his gift of four beautiful lots in Evergreen subdivision.

This history of the home would be notably incomplete if no mention were made of the kindly ministrations of the physicians of the city. For Dr. E. M. Holder, especially, do the aged inmates feel gratitude and affection. Since the founding of the institution he has given his services without hope of other reward than the joy of well doing.

This sketch may well be closed with a list of the present officers, directors and members of the advisory committee of the Mary Galloway Home. They are as follows: Miss Mamie Looney, president; Mrs. William H. Bates, vice president.; Mrs. Presley Smithwick, treasurer; Mrs. Mattie Stewart, secretary; Mrs. Rebecca Chandler, assistant secretary.

Board of managers - Mrs. B. M. Estes, Mrs. J. A. Omberg, Mrs. R. H. Vance, Mrs. J. A. Buchanan, Mrs. J. Caldwell, Mrs. A. S. Buchanan, Mrs. George Griffin, Mrs. Mary Abbey, Mrs. Isaac Reese, Mrs. C. W. Heiskell, Mrs. T. A. Andrews.

Advisory Board - Mrs. W. H. Bates, Mrs. Robert Galloway, Mrs. R. H. Vance, Mrs. A. S. Baldwin, Mrs. W. A. Gauge.



Just one little afterword. The story of the Mary Galloway home is just the story of the venture of faith, fostered by loving service from "Willing Hands" and crowned with the success which faith and love and zeal must always win when they proceed from hearts quickened by the realization that what counts in God's sight is

"Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bear;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three-
Himself, his hungry neighbor and Me."

- Mary Beecher Ensley

Mission Statement

Our continuing goal is to provide "protection, comfort and support in a harmonious and dignified setting for retirement-aged women with financial needs" - the purpose stated over one hundred years ago.