

Sept. 1883

Seneca Weekly Courier, Fr. 14 Sept. 1883:

New York Children's Aid Society.

For about thirty years this organization has been clothing, feeding, educating and sheltering the needy and destitute children of New York City. It has accomplished and is accomplishing a great work. Boys and girls are taken from the streets, given shelter, taught some useful occupation, educated to shun vagrancy and crime, given wholesome instruction in morals and manners, and when the current of daily life is turned into channels of industry and sobriety, they are put in good homes away from the temptation and vices of the city, and are given ample opportunity to grow up into useful men and women.

Last week James Mathews, resident western agent of the society, started from New York with 71 of these homeless children, and upon his arrival in Seneca, on last Friday, had but 22, the others having found homes by the way. There seems to be a somewhat general impression that these boys and girls belong to the criminal classes, have the taint in their blood, and cannot be made any better, or taken into our homes with any promise of good results. Here are some extracts we glean from reports and letters of the society:

Our boys are not the "refuse of creation," as is often supposed in the West; they are not legally paupers or criminals, but they are the children of honest parents, who have become unfortunate, and in their homeless condition have drifted into our industrial schools and lodging houses. They are often bright, and intelligent children, and make industrious and faithful workers. We admit, of course, that the large boys change their places, that sometimes a boy is placed in a home where he does not suit the family, or the family him, and in such cases we seek immediately to replace the lad, and to make things right in regard to him. We carry on an immense correspondence with the boys and their Western employers; we hear from the committees who are responsible gentlemen of the place, and our own agents are continually traveling through the States where the children are placed. The agents also employ clergymen or other responsible persons in these villages to visit these children. We have received much assistance in that way. Mistakes will occur, of course, but they are as few as might be expected in a work on so large a scale. If, out of 4,000 sent out each year by this society, 2 per cent only turn out bad, and this number happened to be in the Northwest, it would be very natural that gentlemen engaged in charities in those States should form a bad impression. We do not claim that these "New York Orphans" turn out saintly boys, but on the whole they do as well as the average run of boys in the villages. The great change in circumstances, and the kindness and Christian influences of their Western homes produce a wonderful effect on their characters, and as they grow up they become a useful addition to the laboring class of the West. Many raise themselves above this, and are highly valuable citizens, as our records show. One of the best proofs of the general success of the work is the wide-spread applications for these children from the Northwest, especially where we have placed other parties. It is not at all uncommon to place two or three companies of children in one district.

Our work for the improvement and education of the poorest children is thoroughly well organized in every part. The Industrial and Half Time schools reach the considerable number of tenement house children, who are employed a portion of the day on the street, or in factories, or who are too ragged, irregular, dirty and vagrant for public schools. The Lodging Houses embrace the homeless and street-wandering and utterly friendless youth. The Sick Children's Mission relieves a portion of the great number who are sick during the summer months; and the Summer Home gives fresh air, good food, sea-bathing and many pleasures to thousands from the tenement houses, who are usually shut out from these enjoyments. The Emigration branch finally takes those who are utterly homeless and adrift and redeems and elevates them by placing them

in good homes in the country. We repeat what we said last year, that there is no occasion now for any child in New York to be homeless or street-wandering; no child need beg or steal for a living; no little one need want for food; no boy or girl engaged in a street occupation, is obliged to be without a home for the night or a school for instruction; every one can easily find a place where moral and religious instruction is given. Labor, and a home, and kind care and protection are open to all the poorest children of the city.

Our work among the homeless and ignorant and needy children this year has been unusually thorough and wide-spread. The accounts of the West have been cheering in the extreme. Many hundred youth have grown up throughout the country to show by their success and character what reward there is in persistent and intelligent labors for the children of the most unfortunate. The public, too, who have but little time usually to stop and consider quiet and benevolent efforts, such as these, have recognized their value and have made the largest annual amount of gifts ever received by this Society. This generous supply of means will, we trust, be continued, for the public cannot be too often reminded that this society depends for its great work on individual subscriptions from every part of the country. When these small gifts cease to be made by the conscientious and benevolent throughout the Union, then our work will be seriously contracted, or come to an end.

WORK OF THE YEAR (1882)

There were during the past year, in our Lodging houses, 14,122 different boys and girls; 305,524 meals and 230,968 lodgings were supplied. In the twenty—one day and thirteen evening schools were 13,966 children, who were taught, and partly fed and clothed, 3,957 were sent to homes, mainly in the west; 2,341 were aided with food, medicine, etc, through the "Sick Childrens' Mission;" 4,033 children enjoyed the benefits of the "Summer Home" (averaging about 309 per week); 484 girls have been instructed in the use of the sewing machine in the Girls' Lodging House, and in the Industrial Schools. There have been 7,613 orphans in the Lodging Houses; \$10,380.84 have been deposited in the Penny Savings Banks. Total number under charge of the Society dur the year 36,971.

Here is the method employed to find homes for the youth as told by one of the Society's agents:

First I seek a town located in a good farming community. Then I personally visit four or six of the leading citizens, state that I am going to send a company of children there to procure homes, and obtain their consent to act as a committee, whose duty it is to receive the names of applicants, and before the arrival of the agents with the children, hold a meeting at which they compare their list of names and pass upon the characters of the applicants. A list is then made of those whom they approve, and is handed to the agent. Even this is graded, so that the agent is perfectly familiar with the character of each applicant. In this way the committees are made to feel a personal interest in the welfare of the children, and notify me at once of any case needing attention.

That there are homes in the West suitable for such boys and girls there is not a particle of doubt, and homes, too, in numbers sufficiently large to absorb every homeless wanderer and outcast that can be found in New York City. It is only a question of time when pauperism and crime in the great cities may be reduced to the minimum by those commendable efforts on the part of the persons who have this grand work in charge. It is gratifying to note that Seneca and surrounding county has taken the first installment of New York Boys and girls (there was only one girl) and provided them with good, comfortable homes. In fact the supply was not nearly equal to the demand, and Nemaha county will be called upon in about six weeks to find homes for others, whom Mr. Mathews promises to bring West.

Much interest was manifest by the citizens in the little folks as they landed at the depot, and the court house, to which they were conducted, was packed full. The number of applicants for the only girl was large enough to place the committee in an embarrassing dilemma, but the matter was finally settled

and Mr. and Mrs. D.R. Magill took the girl home to live with them. She will be well cared for. More girls are promised with the next company brought to Seneca.

The names of applicants, and homes to which they have been assigned are here given. Much credit is due the committee, Messrs. A. Wells, A.J. Feit, and J.A. Amos, for the active part they have taken in the matter:

Augustus Chritchley, aged 10, with Theo. Rosengarten;
Earnest Chritchley, aged 8, with Crawford Bruner;
Arthur Hammond, aged 7, with G.W. Clawson;
Harry Hammond, aged 5, with G.E. Black.
Willie Osborn, aged 6, with D.B. McKay.
Joseph Lawrence, aged 9, with C.G. Scrafford;
Caroline Addie Bounard, aged 13, with D.R. Magill;
Fred Howell, aged 9, with Josh. Mitchell;
Willie Jones, aged 13, with Joseph Meyers;
John Ryan, aged 15, with S.C. Neff, Oneida – refuses to stay;
Fred Minnerly, aged 13, with H.R. Jones, Centralia;
Ed. Minnerly, aged 12, with J.W. Clelland, Goffs;
Otis Canfield, aged 13, with L.H. Evans;
Fred Jelly, aged 13, with Wm. Teegarden, Goffs;
Dickran Toumayan, aged 15, from Constantinople, with Tim McLaughlin, Centralia;
Mrs. Mortise and 3 boys aged 8, 6, and 4, with Jacob Ramser;
James Smith and wife with girl 8 years, D.G. Buck, Sabetha.

AGENCY O.

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Mrs. Mortise and 8 boys aged 8,
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8 years, D. G. Buck, Sabetha.

Hunting a Divorced Wife.

At the time the New York orphans were brought to this city a married woman with two children were among the party. She stopped for a time with Jacob Ramsey, of Washington township, and afterwards worked at Koffler's hotel. It seems as though she left her husband, to live with a "handsomer man," who afterward deserted her; not, however, until after a child was born, which subsequently died. After arriving here she wrote to her folks in Germany, and by this means her legitimate husband got track of her and came here, applied and secured an order of divorce from the court and the custody of his two children. He owned some property in the old country which he sold and took a mortgage on the same, and his former wife's name was included in the instrument. Now the money can not be paid unless she also signs the release, as the proper order of the court was not secured. The husband is now on the hunt for his divorced wife, and when last heard of she was in St. Joseph, Mo., where she had given birth to another child and was taken to the hospital. When the doors of this institution closed upon her all trace was lost, and whether she has ended her life, as so many of the unfortunate of her class do, is a problem yet to be solved.

Seneca Courier Democrat
Fr. 25 Feb 1887

Ernest Critchley of Topoka has been visiting in the R. T. Bruner home. Mr. Critchley when four years of age, was brought to this vicinity in company with a carload of New York orphans and was taken by Mr. Bruner's father. He remained with the latter until his death when he went to make his home with a brother of R. T. Bruner at Topoka where he grew to manhood. He has lately been employed by the Santa Fe at Topoka but is in search of a new position.

The Courier Democrat
Th 7 Apr 1910

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Murphy and Mrs. R. T. Bruner had guests over Memorial day. They were Miss Janet Winkler, who attended Washburn college in Topeka and will soon return to her home in Washington, D. C.; Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hummel and Ernest Critchley, also of Topeka; Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Griffith and daughter, Mrs. Emery Herda, Marysville, and Miss Mary Belle Murphy, Kansas City. Mr. Critchley is interested in Seneca from the fact that he was given away at the courthouse here years ago by a New York Orphans Society to O. C. Bruner, county surveyor and father-in-law of Mrs. R. T. Bruner.

The Courier Tribune (Seneca)
Mon 1 Jun 1942