

A BRIEF HISTORY  
of  
THE CHILDREN'S HOME FOUNDATION  
of  
The Eastern Shore of Maryland, Inc.  
by  
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Following the Civil War, and a small pox epidemic in this area, there were many orphans and homeless children on the Eastern Shore. These were generally placed in the County poor houses, or with farmers to work for their keep, where they were often literally worked to death. Miss Anna M.L. Earle, a wealthy spinster of Queen Anne, decided to do something about it; on November 4, 1863 she contacted Mr. & Mrs. Elias Dawson, who lived at Washington and Bay Streets in Easton, and they all agreed it was a terrible situation. In April 1869, Bishop Henry Champlain Lay D.D.L.D. Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Easton, chose as his text "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25-44). They considered this to be a direct message to go ahead. The Bishop approved and that same week a meeting was held at the home of Bishop Lay. Those present were: Miss Anna M.L. Earle, Mrs. Sidney C. Hutton, Miss Eleanor A. Goldsborough, Miss Alice E. Colquhoun, and Mrs. Marie Tilghman. They banded themselves together to establish a Home for Friendless Children.

They drew up a Constitution, which was presented to the Diocesan Convention in Easton that year, it was enthusiastically received. The Convention voted to sponsor the Home. The name of the Home was to be "The Home for Friendless Children of the Eastern Shore of Maryland". The sole object of the organization was to give physical comfort, education and religious instruction, so as to fit the children for useful and respectable positions in life. Records of proceedings were to be kept and presented to the convention when it met each year. To this day an annual report is filed with the Convention, and the members are elected by the Convention.

The Articles of Incorporation were drafted on the 18th day of May, 1870, the following people acknowledged the certificate to be their deed and act: Miss Anna M.L. Earle, D. Cornelia Dawson, Sidney C. Hutton, Honrietta M. Tilghman, S. Catherine Chamberlain, Anna K. Dawson, Alice C. Colquhoun, Marie E. Pascault, Anna M. Tilghman, Eliza W. Lay, Lucy A. Powell, Susan G. Powell, Elizabeth F. Loveday, Josephine H. Hayward, and Elinore N. Goldsborough. Word of the plan was spread throughout the Eastern Shore by the Clergy of the Episcopal Diocese, Preachers and Circuit Riders of many denominations.

Furniture, clothing, and money were collected and stored at the house of Bishop Lay and Mrs. Dawson. Talbot County provided money, and the Maryland Legislature appropriated \$5,000.00. With over \$6,000.00 on hand they purchased a house on Globe Road. It was small, 4 rooms, a shed kitchen, and a hall, with 46 acres of land. The collected furniture was arranged, a Mrs. Winsor, the widow of a clergyman, was hired as foster mother.

The home opened on January 13, 1871 with two children, a boy named George Todd, and a girl, whose last name was Brent. The children did much of the work, but it was done in an atmosphere of love and kindness. By the end of the year there were 14 children, 13 girls and one boy in residence, and a cook had been hired. The members of the Board of Managers had close contact with the children and the home; they provided much in the way of food, necessities, and actual work.

It was soon obvious that the house was too small and too far from the center of town. In 1873 when the lot on North Street, across from the land already owned by the Diocese, where the present Cathedral stands, was for sale the Board bought the property, and Mrs. Goldsborough took over the original home for \$5,000.00.

West and Van Nort built the new home and the children moved in during January, 1874. In that year they had their first death, a Mary Dail from Cambridge. The Foundation still provides care for the grave. Mrs. Winsor left in that year and was replaced by Miss Lilly W. Tiffey and Miss J.W. Whitton. Miss Whitton lasted only a short time and was replaced by Mrs. M. Owings. In those days the children were taught in the Home and generally trained to be servants.

In 1875 George Todd, the only boy left, and the Home cared only for girls up until a few years before its closing. In 1873 the congregation of St. Mary Anne's in North East obtained the measurements of one of the girls and thereafter provided her clothes, similar action followed throughout the Diocese. In the fall of the year in-gathering of food, produce, clothes, etc. were held, this is the basis of our present day Thanksgiving Appeal.

Miss Carrie Bryan came to the Home in 1900, and eventually instituted three changes. 1. The girls were to attend public schools in Easton. 2. The wearing of a Home uniform was abolished. 3. The establishment of a fund to provide vocational training for the girls (this was established in 1927).

Life continued at the Home much the same, until 1924 when Bishop Davenport felt that the building was in such a run down condition that a complete overhall was needed. A fund raising campaign was held throughout the Diocese. While the work on the Home was in progress, part of the home of Mr. & Mrs. Taylor on Washington St. was rented and the girls stayed there from April 1924 until February 24, 1925, when the renovation was completed. Wings had been added and the building covered with stucco.

With the advent of various government funds, changing ideas of social responsibility, the popularity of foster homes, and increasing government regulations, after a deep study of the situation, in October 1958 the Board of Managers of the Children's Home of the Eastern Shore announced their plans to cease operations of the Home as of January 1, 1959. The Home actually closed on December 20, 1958.

In 1959, The Children's Home Foundation of the Eastern Shore of Maryland was incorporated, with the same Board members, consisting of two women from each County, with 10 members at large, continuing to serve and to administer the income from the endowment funds of the Home.

The income was to be used for: 1. Vocational training, 2 Summer Camperships, 3. emergency aid of children of the shore area in case of disaster or deprivation, where no other funds were available. There is also a Council of Advice, consisting of a clergyman and a lay man from each Convocation, with the Bishop serving as advisor. During all of this period of transition Mrs. Lawrence Marynov of Cambridge, Md., was the Chairman of the Board.

In January 1960, the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee sent a letter to the High School Principals of the Eastern Shore of Maryland announcing the availability of scholarships for vocational training to be awarded on the basis of need, ability, and worthiness of the student. This same program is the main work of the Board today. A campership program was in effect before the Home was closed and is still functioning today. Emergency funds for each County are still available, but seldom used today.

During 1966 when Mrs. Helen Sleasman was President of the Board, the money from the sale of the Home and its contents, with recently received bequests, was used to establish a revocable trust, to be handled by the Union Trust of Baltimore.

The Board usually consists of three members from each Eastern Shore County, with one County having a fourth. The Board meets in Easton at least eight times a year, with special meetings as needed. The members are all volunteers, who give of their time, energy, and means. A list of the names of those who have served over the years, would read like a Who's Who of the Eastern Shore, including the wife of the present Governor of Maryland, and would take pages to enumerate. Each year the list of members is confirmed by the Diocesan Convention, and a report of the year's work is submitted to the Convention. From recent years and personal experience, I would have to mention the work of Mrs. Marynov, Mrs. Arthur Sleasman of Easton, and Mrs. A. Temple Blackwood of Queen Anne County. The names of all current members are readily available. Of those serving today, Mrs. David A. Bramble and Mrs. L. Creston Beauchamp would have to be mentioned for their work with the Scholarship Committee, and Mrs. Harry Boertzel for her work in the reorganization of the financial set-up of the Foundation.

In summary the following dates are noteworthy:

May, 1870 - established, actually incorporated

Jan. 13, 1871 - First home opened.

Jan. 1874 - Moved to Home across from the Cathedral

1924-1925 - Home remodeled and enlarged

Jan. 1959 - Home closed and sold.

Jan. 1960 - Scholarship program, throughout the Eastern Shore, established.

References: "Unto the Least of These" by Polly Ross, in 1960, by the Easton Publishing Company.

The Journals of the Convention of the Diocese of Easton  
The minutes and records of the board.