

## BRIEF HISTORY OF MOOSEHEART

At the International Convention of the Loyal Order of Moose at Detroit in 1911, Director General James J. Davis recommended that the Supreme Council look for property which could be obtained for the establishment of a "Moose Institute," to serve as a home and school for the children of Moose families in need.

When it became generally known that the Moose planned to build a school, property offers came from all parts of the country. For an entire week in December 1911, a joint committee of Trustees of the Supreme Council met at the Willard Hotel in Washington to receive and examine the offers.

During these meetings, and a number of subsequent ones, it was decided that the school should be located somewhere near the center of North America's population at the time. This ruled out many possible sites. Finally in December 1912, it was decided to purchase a dairy farm known as Brookline Farm, near Aurora, Ill., and several hundred acres from an adjoining farm. The land was acquired in January 1913 and consisted of approximately 1,000 acres of fertile farmland in the scenic Fox River Valley.

The name "Mooseheart" was suggested by Congressman John J. Lentz of Ohio, who served on the original Mooseheart Board of Governors. The name was formally adopted at a meeting in Chicago, February 1913.

Dedication of Mooseheart was set for July 27, 1913. Supreme Governor Ralph W. E. Donges, in inviting United States Vice President Thomas R. Marshall to take part in the dedication ceremonies, said, "What we are planning will not be an orphanage at all. It will be a home and school for the dependent children of our deceased members."

On July 27, 1913, Mooseheart consisted of Aid Hall, a few ramshackle buildings, and a circus tent which was erected to provide covering for the day's ceremonies. Most importantly that day, there were eleven children--an in-the-flesh vanguard of the thousands who have passed through Mooseheart in subsequent years.

In his dedicatory speech, Vice President Marshall said, "Thank God, here in this Middle West-- here on this most sacred day, humanity has again proved its right to be called the children of the Most High, has again reached out its hand in love and loyalty to the needy brothers and has disclosed not only the right, but the duty of this great Order to exist."

Five years later when Vice President Marshall traveled to Mooseheart to take part in the dedication of the Roosevelt Memorial Auditorium, he said, "Thank God for miracles. All that I hoped for, longed for and prayed for upon that interesting occasion five years ago has come to pass at Mooseheart."

In August 1913, Supreme Secretary Rodney Brandon moved from Anderson, Ind., to Mooseheart, to serve as the community's first Superintendent. He brought with him Dean J. A. Rondthaler, who took charge of the home life and education of the children.

Under the guidance of Brandon and Donges (who completed his one-year term as Supreme Governor in August 1913), the future design of Mooseheart began to take shape. James A. Young, owner of a nursery in Aurora, was employed as landscape designer and also to develop a botanical nursery on the Mooseheart grounds.

It was Young who drew the plans for the basic Mooseheart street layout, which he made roughly in the shape of a stylized heart. He also designed the Mooseheart entrance, which was later adorned by gates handcrafted by Lorado Taft, a nationally-renowned sculptor of the period.

Robert F. Havlik, a young civil engineer, was employed to handle construction and some elements of vocational training. William Stephens, a Pennsylvania farmer, was put in charge of the farm and the planting of an orchard. An Aurora physician was utilized on a part-time basis to care for the health of the children.

Mooseheart began to grow rapidly. A complete water and sewer system was installed in the spring and summer of 1914. A deep well was drilled and a water tank erected. A carload of elm trees was purchased and set out on the bare campus, which

today is tree-lined and shaded. Work was begun on Purity Hall, a girls' dormitory. As soon as this was completed, work began on Loyalty Hall, a boys' dormitory. In 1919, the then-mammoth Philadelphia Lodge 54 funded construction of a three-story hospital building.

The construction of new buildings has continued until the present day. The House of God, with its Tower of Tolerance rising into the sky, was dedicated in 1950 after a fund-raising drive that took more than 30 years. The Malcolm R. Giles Memorial High School, with a wing for the junior high school, was dedicated in 1954. A new wing with five more classrooms was added in 1963. All students, except for those of nursery school level, currently attend classes in this building.

The Pennsylvania Hall residence, dedicated in honor of James J. Davis in 1958, was designed to strongly resemble Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The new California building was dedicated in 1959, and the new Ontario building in 1961. In celebrating the Golden Anniversary of Mooseheart, the Mooseheart fieldhouse was dedicated the opening day of the 75th International Convention, June 1963.

The Health Center, provided by the Women of the Moose, was dedicated at the International Convention of 1974, and the first floor of the original hospital now serves as the Student Services Building, having Counselors' offices and other functions.

In 1984, the Herbert C. Heilman Fitness Center was dedicated in honor of the Past Director General. In 1988, at the 100th International Convention in Chicago, the California/Nevada Moose Association announced the financing of a new archives and supply building to be located adjacent to the Supreme Lodge. Through the 1990s, beautiful new residences built by the Moose of West Virginia, Illinois, Michigan, Maryland/Delaware, New Jersey and North Carolina. Additionally, full renovations of the New York, Tennessee, Washington/Northern Idaho, New England, Arizona/New Mexico, Ontario, Oregon, Virginia, Alabama, South Carolina, Indiana, Minnesota, Boys' California, and Pennsylvania Baby Village residences were undertaken.

In 1998, the first major new multipurpose structure since 1963 opened, with the dedication of the Paul J. O'Hollaren Centre for Tomorrow. This building, named in honor of the fraternity's Director General from 1984-1994, was funded by portions of new member application fees, with additional funds for landscaping and furnishings from the Moose Legion and the Women of the Moose.

In 2001, the first major addition to the school complex since 1965 was completed, a facility joining both north and south wings on their east end. This 12,000-sq.-ft. addition consists of the Florida/Bermuda Cafeteria, the Kay Cancie Gymnasium for physical education, and a Band Room funded by the Order's Fellows and Pilgrims.

Today, Mooseheart is a model community for children which accepts applications of all children in need--not just those from Moose families-- and provides them with food, clothing, and shelter. But more than that, Mooseheart trains and educates its youngsters so they may take their place in society as useful and productive citizens.