

# History of the OSSO/OVCH AXP Museum

## Library/Museum

In the early 1920's, the Association of Ex-Pupils (AXP) raised the money needed to build a library. The new Memorial Library was formally dedicated in July of 1925, with plaques on each side of the entrance to the Museum stating: *This Memorial erected by the Ex-Pupils of the Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home* (on the left) and *Dedicated to*



*Library Circa 1925*

*the Memory of the Grand Army of the Republic Founders of the Home* (on the right). On April 5, 1964, the building was designated as the Hobby Center by the American Legion Auxiliary (Department of Ohio).

On August 3, 1979, the Board of Trustees designated this building as the **AXP Museum**, in order to perpetuate the memory and tradition of the Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home. This museum stands as a symbol of the diligent and tireless efforts of 24 individuals on the Museum Committee, chaired by Alfred "Abie" Reynolds. The AXP continues to operate the museum on the grounds of the former Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home/Ohio Veterans Children's Home. The building is leased by the AXP from Athletes in Action.



Upon entering the Museum, a photograph of Lucy Webb Hayes, wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes, is on display. As stated on pages 95 and 96 of the book by Emily Apt Greer, "First Lady, The Life of Lucy Webb Hayes:"

"Lucy had been interested in the establishment in Ohio of a home for soldiers' orphans ever since her long periods spent in Civil War camps, where she had developed a lifelong concern for the welfare of soldiers and their families. The Grand Army of the Republic, having failed to get the 1868-69 legislature to support their plan for an orphans' home, decided to start one by voluntary contributions, and then try to persuade the state to take it over. With the help of Lucy Hayes and others, they acquired a large tract of land near Xenia. When Gen.

J. W. Kiefer, a leader of the movement, asked Lucy to become a member of the board, she refused for fear of adverse publicity on the eve of the "bitter contest" for governor in 1869. She sensed that her appointment might cause trouble for those sponsoring the home. After the election of Rutherford to a second term as governor in October, Lucy openly supported the project. In the words of her husband, Lucy "ransacked" Columbus for money, books, and gifts to make the first public event at the home, a holiday celebration in December, a memorable event for the orphaned children.

In the spring of 1870, the state senate passed, by a single vote, a bill converting the home into a state institution. Since Lucy exerted pressure on her legislative friends to have the measure approved, she received considerable credit for the senate's action. The last night of the session, Democratic senators made a final effort to negate the bill by blocking confirmation of the proposed Board of Managers. What followed must have been one of the wildest nights in the history of the Ohio Senate, an evening the Ohio State Journal labeled "A High Fling in the House." With the hour of adjournment for the session predetermined, opponents knew that if they could prevent confirmation of the Board, the Orphans Home could not operate as a state institution for at least a year. Since an even number of senators from each party was present, the Republicans tried to return Sen. Moses D. Gatch from his home in Xenia to break the tie and the Democrats looked for their missing member. In the meantime, Sen. Michael Goepper, a warm friend of Lucy's from Cincinnati, carried a filibuster in German, French, and English until the carriage sent by Rutherford to the depot arrived with Senator Gatch.

Noting the arrival of Gatch, opponents tried to flee the legislative chamber to prevent a quorum from being present for the vote. Several hid in the water closet and others bolted out into the street. An alert assistant sergeant-at-arms captured one senator and brought him back, much to the chagrin of his copartners, who accused him of being too drunk to stay out of sight. The Journal (Republican in sentiment) called the legislators' conduct, "unjustifiable, undignified, unmanly, and ungentlemanly." The vote, when finally counted, confirmed the Board of Managers as proposed by Governor Hayes, and the state-supported institution, so important to Lucy and Rutherford, had weathered its first storm."

Also displayed in this room is the Association of Ex-Pupils Hall of Fame – We Honor These Members For Mighty Deeds of Mind and Heart (established July 6, 1985). Another plaque on display is a layout of the Cemetery that is located behind Collier Chapel and it includes the name and location of the people buried there.

**SPORTS ROOM** - On exhibit in this room are sports clippings, Boy Scout Troop 176 and Rifle Team memorabilia, the Harold Mart Athletic Award, center court from the Woodrow Wilson High School gym, and photos and uniforms from the decades of Cadets who represented the Home High School or Woodrow Wilson High School. The Ohio Veterans Children's Home (OVCH) Cadet's scoreboard reflects the final score of the December 3, 1988, game between the Cadets and Landmark Christian -- 71 to 66.



Also on display are photos of Coach Warren "Mousie" Eisenhut and a recap of the "Mousie Era" (1941-1976) written by his sons, Todd, Torrey & Bruce Eisenhut.



**SENIOR ROOM** –Artifacts on exhibit in this room are from the Ohio Veterans Children’s Home (OVCH) era that began on July 24, 1978, until The Home closed in 1995. The Superintendent’s Residence exhibit on the ceiling of this room includes two black light fixtures from the front porch; the two crystal light fixtures from the first-floor foyer and

hall; and a brass and white light fixture from one of the rooms on the first floor.

The Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home became the OVCH on July 24, 1978. As stated in the Change of Name Ceremony Program from July 23, 1978: “In February 1978, legislation was introduced in the Ohio General Assembly to change the name of the Home to broaden the base of admission requirements in order that more children might have the opportunity for the services that the Home can provide. The first priority of admission would be for the children whose mother or father served honorably in one of our nation’s armed forces. Secondly, once the need of the veterans’ children has been met, and providing that space is available, any child of a resident of the state could be considered for admission. On April 24, 1978, Governor James A. Rhodes signed the bill into law. Thus, it is, that on July 24, 1978, the Ohio Veterans Children’s Home enters a new era.”

An oral history of the name change comes from conversations in February 2013 that James Beaver (son of James Beaver, teacher) had with Jack Newhouse (teacher) and Em Whilding (principal). The April 24, 1978, bill signing photo is on display in this room, and according to Mr. Newhouse, he was in Columbus and snapped only that one photo that day. When asked why the name changed from OS&SO Home to OVCH: Jack said that by allowing all Ohio children to be eligible, this would also include all branches of our military and not just Soldiers and Sailors. Since the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars groups were big supporters of the Home, this pleased them with the name change as well. Em said that the OVCH name took the word "orphan" out of the title and allowed for more children to be eligible to enter the Home.

**PETER PAN ROOM** –Artifacts on exhibit in this room are from Collier Chapel, the Peter Pan Cottages and cottage name plates and photos from some of the demolished buildings.

A description of life in Peter Pan from a girl’s perspective follows: The Peter Pan complex consisted of an arc-shaped building with seven doors. Doors for Pans 1, 2 and 3 were to the left of the



center of the front of the building and were designated for boys. Doors for Pans 5, 6, and 7 were to the right of the center of the building and were for the girls. The doors in the center of the building led to the office of the Dean of Peter Pan, the dining room, and kitchen. There was a wading pool to the outside of the kitchen. The building was adorned with shutters on the front windows. A weather vane and other decorations reminiscent of young children also accented the building.

Each Pan housed up to 20 children. There was a large play room with banquettes under the windows for storage. Toys, games, and dress up items were kept in the banquettes. The children slept in a dormitory in child-sized beds. A dresser between each bed was shared by the children. Each child had one or two drawers for folded clothing. Hanging clothes were in a wardrobe. The children's bathroom was also appropriately sized for children. It contained one bath tub made from green one-inch tiles, two shower stalls of the same tile, three toilets and three sinks. Each Pan had a living room that had normal sized furniture and, generally a piano and a television. Across the hall from the living room was the supervisor's apartment consisting of a small living room, bathroom and bedroom.

A typical day for a Peter Pan child was to be woken up by the supervisor or the whistle, make beds, get dressed, face washed and teeth brushed and off to the dining room for breakfast. The dining room had graduated sized tables and chairs depending on the age of the children. It was somewhat humorous to see the supervisors sitting in the small chairs, but no one laughed. After breakfast it was a walk to school or play in the recreation room. In good weather it was time to play outside. After lunch it was time to "rest." After rest it was time to go outside again. There were swing sets, slides and other games to play. Summertime was time to play in the wading pool. After cleaning up it was back to the dining room for dinner. After dinner it was again outside for a short time. Next came baths, brushing teeth and pajamas. The supervisors would read a story or the children would watch an hour of television. Many supervisors also held devotions for the children. The Peter Pan children did not go to the Chapel for Sunday services. At times, the children were bused to a church outside of the Home grounds.

During inclement weather the children would walk through the cottages to get to the dining room. Other than the hired cooks, the servers in the dining room were girls from campus working "detail." The boys made food deliveries to the kitchen and storage rooms in the basement of the kitchen.

Children in Peter Pan were generally ages 5 to 8 or 9. At times, younger children were admitted. In the late 50's, two buildings were built adjacent to Peter Pan. These buildings were identified as Taylor and Washington cottages. Children ages 8 to 10 or 11 were housed here prior to moving to main campus. Each building was divided into two cottages – A and B. Each cottage consisted of a large living room, a supervisor's apartment, a bathroom and a dormitory. In the dormitory each child had a bed with a closet that contained a dresser, a toy chest and a place for hanging up clothes. Up to 20 children could be housed in each side. The basement had a large recreation room and a full-sized kitchen. While these children played behind the cottages and on Peter Pan grounds, they ate their meals in the main dining room.

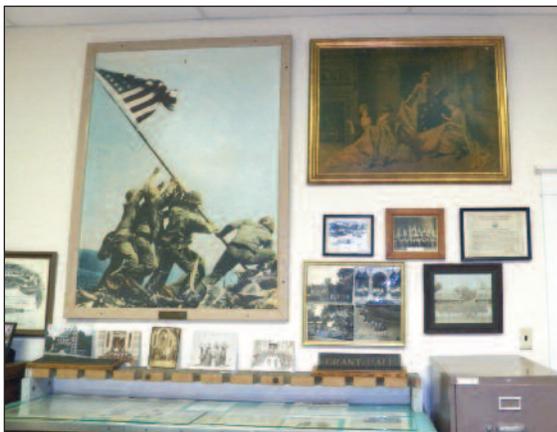
A girl child, aged 5, entering the Home could be expected to start in Pan 5 as a kindergartner, Pan 6 during first and second grade, Pan 7, for third grade and Taylor B for fourth and fifth grades prior

to moving to main campus. Once on main campus, the child could expect to move two more times prior to a move into Hayes Hall for her senior year.

**NOLAND READING ROOM** - Morrill W. "Hat" Noland(Class of 1929) was the owner of the Noland Paper Company, Inc., Buena, Park, California. "Hat" refurbished this room in the AXP Museum. It was named in his honor and his photo is on the wall. According to Chester R. Lundgren (Class of 1944) and the Print Shop teacher for many years, "Hat" sent a boxcar full of paper to The Home for use in the Print Shop in the 1960's.



Artifacts on exhibit in this room include the picture of Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima that hung at the front of the Children's Dining Room, the picture of Betsy Ross that hung in the school library, copies of The Home Weekly (1876 – 1933), and a photo of a mail run in the 1890's made by horse and carriage, leaving through The Home gates.



**BAND ROOM** –Artifacts on exhibit in this room are from the farm, the hospital, and the biology and health classroom of Jack Newhouse. Band photos and uniforms from different decades are on display.

The trophy case includes 197 trophies organized by decade (1922 - 1993) and represent achievement in: band, baseball, basketball, color guard, cross country, drama, football, hymn singing, military field day, rifle, scholastics, softball, track and field, and volleyball.



The exhibit of Flossie Quick uniforms was donated by Mary Kay Impson Gillespie (Class of 1945). Miss Quick was admitted to The Home in 1908. She was the mother of Mary Kay and Robert Impson (Class of 1941).

## **Museum Related Clippings from Home Reviews...**

### **Hobby Photos Produced**

Dale Baker, Jack Porter, Mike Allen, Phyllis Calo, and Earl Spears have been industrious "photo workers." Under the leadership of Mr. Jack Newhouse they have turned out contact prints and enlargements by the dozens. The Photo Club admits there have been a few unrecognizable pictures that ended up in file No. 13 (the waste basket).

Mr. Newhouse, club advisor, would be happy to receive any photography equipment and developing paper that any friend of the Home may wish to contribute.

The Photo Club developed pictures of some of the different hobby clubs for display in the Main Building. A Club project to create a series of photographs of the buildings on campus for sale during reunion is in the making to earn money to make the club self sufficient, at least for a while.

**Hobby Shop Photo Club - Home Review, April, 1965**

### **American Legion Auxiliary Sponsors Hobby Center**

Through the generosity of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Ohio, plans are underway to establish a hobby center for the children of the Home. Mrs. William Gill, department president, has designated this undertaking as "The 1963-64 Department President's Project for the Ohio American Legion Auxiliary."

Work on the center, which will be located in the Memorial Building on the Home campus, is being carried out with all possible speed. Plans are being made for a dedication ceremony to be held on the official American Legion Auxiliary Visitation Day, April 5, 1964.

The entire expense of this project, from redecorating and refurbishing the building to supplying the equipment and materials necessary for the various hobbies, is being borne by the Legion Auxiliary.

When the hobby center is completed, facilities will be offered for such hobbies as stamp and coin collecting, model making, knitting, crocheting, needle craft, leather craft, weaving, ceramics, and photography.

**Hobby Center - Home Review, November, 1963**

## Museum Related Clippings from Home Reviews Continued...

### Boy Scouts Move

The Boy Scouts have completed their move from the old scout den in the basement of Grant Hall to the new scout den in the basement of the Hobby Shop. The scouts, before they could move in, had to move all of the green steel benches out of the Hobby Shop basement.

At the scout meetings the scouts have been alternating every two weeks between transferring the scouting equipment and watching films obtained by Mr. Philip Norris and Mr. Charles Minch, scoutmasters.

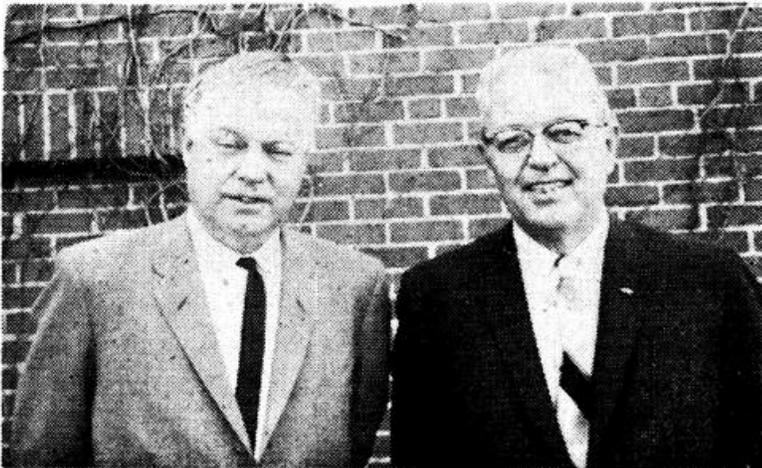
The Scout Committee approved a scout camping trip this summer. Mr. Minch was designated to pick an appropriate camping site for the trip.

—Gary Crawford

Home Review, May, 1964

### Ex-Pupils Visit Home

Mr. Morrill W. "Hat" Noland, an ex-pupil of 1928, and Mr. Lloyd Brewster, a 1923 ex-pupil, visited the Home Monday, February 2, in the interest of the book "Pride of Ohio," a history of the Home which will be published in the near future.



Mr. Morrill "Hat" Noland and Mr. Lloyd Brewster

Mr. Noland, who is donating the paper for the book and also this year's senior issue of the Home Review, is the head of the Noland Paper Company, one of the top paper distributors in Southern California. A nationally recognized authority on paper, Mr. Noland established his own firm in 1949 for the distribution of all types of paper in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Mr. Noland has been the largest contributor to the Loyalty Fund of the Association of Ex-pupils since its establishment in 1949 by Mr. Brewster who was president of the association at that time. This was his first visit to the Home in more than ten years.

Mr. Brewster, with whom Mr. Noland visited while in Ohio, is history committee chairman of "Pride of Ohio." He is associated with the Federal Housing Administration in Columbus where he resides.

Hat Noland - Home Review, February, 1964

## Museum Related Clippings from Home Reviews Continued...

### Visitation Day Features Hobby Center Dedicated April 5

A group of 214 members of the American Legion Auxiliary and their families, representing 13 of the 14 Ohio districts, were present at the annual Auxiliary Visitation Day at the Home Sunday, April 5, to enjoy a full day's program of activities climaxed at 2 P.M. by the official dedication of the Hobby Center.

Mrs. William Gill, Department President, American Legion Auxiliary of Ohio, who designated the center "the 1963-64 Department President's Project for the Ohio American Legion Auxiliary," cut the ribbon which marked the official opening of the center. Colonel S. L. Stephan, Home superintendent, expressed the gratitude of the children and personnel of the Home to the Legion Auxiliary.

More than \$3,500 has been donated for the Hobby Center which is located in the Memorial Building. (Cost of redecorating and refurbishing the building and supplying the equipment and materials for the various hobbies has all been borne by the Legion Auxiliary.)

Assisting with the work has been the Child Welfare Committee including Mrs. Ernest Hughes, Greenville, chairman; Mrs. Melvin Junge, Holbrook; and Mrs. Robert McCue, Lima.

During the open house held at the center from 1:30 to 2:30, student guides were on hand to show the guests rooms occupied by the various hobby groups, equipment which has been purchased, and examples of the student's work. Included are a room for the Home girls' 4-H Club equipped with sewing machines, ironing boards, irons and work tables; a photography darkroom; a leathercraft area; a citizens ban and short wave radio room; and a room for the construction of model airplanes, cars, and boats.

#### Registration Held In Auditorium

Registration for Sunday's visitors was held in the auditorium from 9 to 10:30 A. M. District Number 2 of Lima had the most members present. District Number 4, which includes Blanchester, Wilmington, Dayton, and Cincinnati, was runner-up and District Number 3, the local area, was third.

Following regular Sunday



Mrs. William Gill of the Ohio Department of the American Legion Auxiliary, officially opened the auxiliary-sponsored Hobby center, cutting a ribbon across the front door on behalf of the 46,000 auxiliary members. At left is Colonel S. L. Stephan, and in the center is John Warfield



Dale Baker and Edgar Stephens try out equipment in the radio room at the Hobby Center.

morning services in Collier Chapel the noon meal was served in the children's dining room. At this time Colonel Stephan officially welcomed the visitors and Mrs. Leo McElroy, first vice president of the Auxiliary introduced the distinguished guests. Mrs. Melvin Junge presented