



## Hebrew Orphans’ Home Article Archives (1929 – 1940)

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## Part I: Hebrew Orphans' Home (1889 – 1948)

### Photo of a Birthday Party held at the Hebrew Orphans' Home, circa 1929



#### *Hebrew Orphans at Birthday Party*

CHILDREN OF THE HEBREW ORPHANS HOME WERE GUESTS OF MISS ANGEL Faeman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Faeman, 824 Washington Street (shown in inset), at a party celebrating her sixth birthday, held recently in Piedmont Park. Each guest received a toy airplane and prizes were awarded winners of the various contests. After the ice cream and cake, the children were taken for rides around Atlanta in automobiles donated by friends of the little hostess. Officials of the orphanage took part in the entertainment.—Staff photo by Winn.

## Benjamin J. Massell Added to Board of Hebrew Orphans' Home, circa 1930

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### *Benjamin J. Massell Added To Board of Hebrew Orphans' Home*

Mr. Ben. J. Massell was elected to the local board of the Hebrew Orphan's Home at the last General Board Meeting, held in February.

The officers of the local board of the Hebrew Orphan's Home consists of the following Jewish leaders of Atlanta:

Joseph Loewus, Chairman.

Alfred E. Mayer, Vice-Chairman.

Mrs. A. J. Harris, 2nd Vice-President.

J. H. Haas, Treasurer.

Joseph N. Reisman, Secretary.

Armand Wyle, Superintendent.

The officers of the General Board of the Hebrew Orphan's Home are:

V. H. Kriegshaber, President.

Lional Weil, Goldsboro, N. C., 1st Vice-President.

O. R. Strauss, 2nd Vice-President.

M. C. Michael, Athens, Ga., 3rd Vice-President.

Joseph Loewus, 4th Vice-President.

Joseph N. Reisman, Secretary.

Armand May, Treasurer.

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### *Council of Jewish Women*



**Broken Orphanages by Armand Wyle,  
Superintendent, Hebrew Orphans' Home, The  
Southern Israelite, circa 1930**

THE SOUTHERN

## *Broken Orphanages*

By **ARMAND WYLE**

*Superintendent, Hebrew Orphans Home, Atlanta, Ga.*

*The following article was so  
in demand that the Child  
Care Committee of America  
found it expedient to reprint it.  
This reason we believe that  
readers will be interested in  
reading this paper in the  
SOUTHERN ISRAELITE. We would  
like to receive comments on  
this article.—EDITOR'S NOTE.*



*Armand Wyle*

tality, physical weakness, had home training and other causes of behavior problems as they are known today. About one-third of their population needed benefit from care and re-education in a type of institution that does not seem to exist anywhere in an eleemosynary capacity; they are only a few of the many in our midst whom the late Dr. Pearce Bailey aptly called "social defectives". They are "different" from other children, unamenable to ordinary instruction and correction, unable to maintain a fixed purpose, sensitive, irritable and emotionally unstable generally. They disturb the routine of family life, are untruthful, often stealing without motive. As they grow older they respond even less readily to discipline and often incite normal or weak-willed associates to progressive wrong-doing. They are, of course, unhappy and unfortunate because, being neither insane nor feeble-minded, no one knows what to do with them except (to escape responsibility for the problem) to send them to institutions too harsh for their needs, where their difficulties grow worse from emphasis. Other children have every right to be protected from them whether at school or in orphanages where they are often thrust by overburdened social workers.

Present day orphanages could well terminate their obsolete practices and devote their endowed buildings to the construc-

## Broken Orphanages by Armand Wyle, circa 1930 (con't)

### Orphans of the Storm

(Continued from page 10)

pallor, the obvious signs of malnutrition; the physical frailty of so many of the kids there. These kids and the tens of thousands more back on the other side of the frontier were being subjected to a cruel and inhuman pressure that was crushing their souls and making them bent and broken old men and women before they reached their teens.

Some of them, fortunately, possess more resilience than the others. Bobby Bergmann, for instance, ten years old, red-faced and chubby. Bobby is a poet and writes verses in German and French. He wants to be a writer and will probably be a good one. Bobby smiles slowly and laughs quietly and after you talk to him for a while you can notice a glint of mischief in his eye. He is lucky in that he is younger than most of his comrades and will probably forget easier.

But then there is a little girl of thirteen, undersized for her age, bearing the responsibilities of a mature woman. Her father died in Buchenwald. Her mother caught pneumonia in the internment camp of Gurs and died. Now Lisa mothers her four younger brothers and sisters and writes cheerful letters to a woman at the Gurs camp "because she was my mother's friend." Lisa is taking her brood to live with her grandmother in America.

And the baby of the party. Seven-year-old. Her mother wept bitterly when she was given leave from the Gurs camp to go to the station at Oleron to bid her baby farewell, for in the intervening months the child had forgotten how to speak her native German and mother and child had no common language in which to say this final farewell.

There they were. A hundred and fifteen of them—one is in the hospital with appendicitis and may have to be left behind here. Bruised in spirit, most of them. Frail in body, many of them. Their clothing tattered and torn, clumping

around in wooden-soled shoes. They are the lucky hundred. Their physical needs are being attended to. They're being fed up here as though for a sacrifice. Troper ordered new outfits and shoes for them. They'll arrive in New York looking browned and healthy and well-dressed and people will say:

"What's all the fuss about? These kids are a hundred times better off than lots of the kids in this town. Charity ought to begin at home."

But they will be wrong. Most of these kids will never be what they ought to be, what every kid ought to have the chance to be. Whatever their fate may be in America, whatever heights they achieve—and I know some of them will go far—they have been robbed of a childhood spent in peace and security in their family, of personal affection manifesting itself every day—and they will bear the scar of the last few years to their graves.

And these are the lucky ones. For every kid playing on the beach this afternoon on the *Coste de Sul*, there are a thousand more whose chances for escape are virtually non-existent. They are war-victims, but worse than that, I watched war-victims back in London. I went to the railway stations daily and watched weeping fathers and mothers send their children off to "evacuation areas" for the duration. But these kids knew that they had families and homes to go back to eventually. They weren't alone in the world, they were among their own people and among friends wherever they scattered over the English countryside.

But these "lucky" kids now going through Portugal. If they have parents, they're in internment camps or doing forced labor for the glory of the Third Reich. They are hated and despised in the country of their birth. They are the real refugees. They are the gravest charge to which the creators of Europe's "New Order" will some day have to answer.

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## “Wanted: Homes For Jewish Children”

“Wanted:  
Home for  
Jewish  
Children”  
The  
Southern  
Israelite,  
circa 1930

The 17th Annual Meeting of the Hebrew Orphan Home was held at the synagogue on January 26th, 1930. It was significant as the ending of another year of service to Jewish children in the Southern States under the 5th District of the Insular Board of Hosi Frith, which supervised the home and still continues to support it on a per capita basis, though no longer under its control.

The new epoch in its activities is shown to be inaugurated in testimony to the reports that were presented by the president, Mr. Victor H. Frith; the chairman of the board, Mr. Joseph Loewes, and by all of the various communities who have functioned throughout the year in upholding the standards which placed among the front rank of welfare institutions for the care of dependent and neglected children. The superintendent, Mr. Armand Wyle, also presented a report outlining in detail the functioning of the institution during the year that he has been in charge. Throughout all the reports of the officers ran a common theme which was definitely expressed in a report of the New Policy Committee, which was read by Mr. Joseph J. Haas.

For twenty years the Hebrew Orphan Home has been subsidizing children in their own homes with their mothers, thus conserving what has been known to be the unit in civilization—the family. These children have been supervised in recent years by trained workers and efforts made to give them the same advantages and the efficiency of an institution at home. Their physical and mental health, their education and religious training have been safeguarded, and they have had preserved for them the boon that comes only from contact with their own mother, and which no paid worker can possibly duplicate. Only such children whose parents were unable for various reasons to supervise them during the year were placed in the institution, and the reports showed that there was fewer children now in the institution than in subsidized and boarding homes. Therefore the new policy has been ratified of finding boarding homes for as many of the children now in the institution as can be found and an effort is about to be made to appeal to each mother to give room and care for underprivileged children. While this policy has been new to those who have always looked upon the orphanage as the natural place for dependent children, there is no doubt in the minds of those who have given thought and consideration to the question that “family life,” as expressed in the words of the White House Conference called by President Roosevelt twenty years ago, “is the highest product of civilization and no child should be deprived of it for reasons of poverty alone.” There is adopting this plan which has been found successful in every instance where it has been tried by trained workers, the orphanage home is only keeping pace with modern tendencies and changing conditions. Following

its efforts to preserve family life in its normal situations, it now takes another step forward in making further efforts to give the children under its care the next best opportunity to enjoy home life by placing its children in thoroughly investigated and carefully supervised boarding homes. The pride which comes from pointing to brick and mortar as a criterion of success will now be transferred to that of achievement in serving the Jewish children in this locality in a way that is best for the child. Much has been said against this plan by those who have not investigated its workings elsewhere. When contacted by experienced workers, there is no chance for exploitation by foster-parents, because no home is accepted until every detail regarding its integrity has been investigated, and if a mistake were made in this selection the trained supervisor soon discovers it. It is admitted that this has occurred in cases where laymen with the best of intentions have attempted to place children. However, the Jewish communities in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and the two cities in California, as well as many other Jewish communities, have found from long experience that this is the happiest solution for the care and training of unfortunate children. The Jewish community of Baltimore, a decade ago, had two orphanages which were combined and a new orphanage built. Several years ago this new institution was also abandoned and the entire child care problem is now conducted in private boarding homes without any suspicion of commercialism on the part of those to whom the children are entrusted.

Mr. Wyle in his work in Los Angeles, found more acceptable homes than there were children in which to place them. Out of every four homes applying for children, only one was regarded as fully measuring up to the standards required for this type of care. The foster-mothers were paid so little above the actual cost of rearing these children, that there was no chance of the foster-parent doing it for gain, because of the slight margin. He attributes the success in this work to the fundamental principle that is inseparable from the Jewish religion and its traditions of ethics and justice. It is not only the rich, he said, who have an urge for social service to those less fortunate than themselves. There are many Jewish mothers who have these same philanthropic impulses, but cannot afford to express them financially; it is among these that those mothers are found who are willing to give service in lieu of money.

The officers of the home feel that Atlanta Jewry is neither exceptional nor backward in its desire to be a part of this movement and that when the purpose and efficiency of the plan is understood by this community, there will be little difficulty in finding many doors opened to these less privileged children. Already inquiries have been made from potential foster-parents, and as soon as plans can be

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## The Hebrew Orphans' Home Activities of 1931

# The Hebrew Orphans' Home Activities of 1931

The Following Resume Was Given by Mrs. Armand Wyle  
at the Yearly Board Meeting

With the promulgation of our newest plan of foster home placement for children whose home life has been unacceptably interrupted, that I would like at this meeting, to revert to your old, though still unique policy of subsidizing children in their own homes. After all, we must not forget that most of our children (about two-thirds) are thus cared for, and the policy today seems to be to adhere to this highly preferable method of child-care and use a substitute family home only when the child's natural home and protection cannot possibly be retained.

In discussing this subject, I wish to say that this type of work of preventing the disruption of families is the highest aim in social service and gives us an opportunity to raise the standards of the child's environment. However, a budget sufficient to insure the mother an adequate living is required, including provision for education and recreation. Our communities have always been alive to the financial needs of an orphanage caring for children from "broken homes." It is now our job to acquire the communities in which we function to the even greater importance of caring for children in their own homes. In the institution, our children had every chance for a higher education, as do those in their present foster homes. If our subsidized children show mental ability and are otherwise worthy, we should give them the same opportunity for higher education. We must realize that there is no satisfactory substitute for the child's own home, where the importance of individual and intensive care of the children is taken for granted.

We must be just as much concerned about conditions in our subsidized homes as in our foster homes in regard to sanitation, play, rest, proper food and protection. For the past twenty-five years, the great development and tendency have been for the generalization of the home. The home is the keystone of civilization; therefore, in providing for our families, we must recognize that it is the right of all classes of society to maintain a standard which insures for health, comfort and the possibilities of physical and intellectual improvement. Develop children healthful, effective personalities and they will grow up efficient, able people.

With the division of service giving all supervision outside of Atlanta to Mr. Wyle, in conjunction with his visits of organization in the various communities of our District, the children subsidized outside of Atlanta are visited, with a few exceptions, about once or twice a year. This is quite insufficient as my own experience in Atlanta certifies. Of course, to have these families visited and a letter would involve an expenditure of money which even in normal times makes this a desirable procedure almost prohibitive, and some days of depression completely out of the question. Our subsidized families in Atlanta are visited about every three weeks, some requiring frequent visits, others carrying on without necessary intrusion on our part. Of course, illness, accident or other unusual incident may require we offer our service at any time. When such events happen in the families residing at a distance, our service could not be rendered so



MRS. ARMAND WYLE, Social Service Director of Hebrew Orphan's Home.

### Recommendations Drawn Up by Committee of Hebrew Orphan's Home

The following recommendations were drawn up by the committee of the Hebrew Orphan's Home after the recent annual board meeting were opened into question. (A list of the recommendations was...)

That the suggestion in the report of Mrs. Armand Wyle, Executive Vice-President, that a study of the organization and procedure for making the work more scientific, be created and presented to the next annual meeting. That the following organizations be notified of grateful thanks for their interest and cooperation: The Atlanta Tuberculosis Association; the State Department of Public Welfare with special thanks to Mr. J. P. Franklin; the Atlanta Community Chest and Mr. Frank Miller, its Executive Secretary; the medical staff; the Council of Jewish Women, the Sisterhood, Hebrew Orphan's Aid and other such institutions that have given assistance. The committee took special cognizance of the unusual showing of the Simon Wolf Endowment Fund under the leadership of Mr. Herbert J. Hays.

The committee also recommended that a copy of Mrs. Armand Wyle's report be sent to the General Board and to the different institutions in Atlanta, as well as to the orphanages throughout the United States. Deep appreciation was expressed for her outstanding accomplishments and keen interest. The committee expressed particular appreciation to the President of the Hebrew Orphan's Home, Mr. V. H. Kriegerman.

easily. Nevertheless, it can readily be perceived that we are not doing this particular job as effectively as we should like with only casual visits made at times secondary to the purpose of Mr. Wyle's visit to the communities where our children live.

Organized charity today differs from the early method of just giving relief. In our work with mothers and their children we do help financially, but the bigger service we render is that of adjustment—helping individuals to have a more effective way of living. Relief always gives us an entrance into the family and gives us an opportunity to be of service when other problems present themselves. Most of our families are cared for over comparatively long periods, because there is no wage earner in the family. This long time care gives us an opportunity to know our families better and makes it possible for us to carry our prolonged plans of treatment for the children, which in these cases is a distinct advantage. So if we are to perform the service we have set out to do it should be done with thoroughness, and efficiency depends upon what is known among social workers as case load. In a digest of the work and cost of 15 Jewish child placing agencies throughout the country, which was compiled from data received monthly from these agencies, we find that though divided between Mr. Wyle (outside Atlanta) and me (in Atlanta) we are given the largest of them all, 59 which has since been increased to 63, the smallest being 20 and the average 33.

Any case load running over 40 is abnormal. Home-finding and placement is a carefully prepared job in which references must be obtained, histories, including personality, health and schooling of individuals in the foster family as well as the child's family thoroughly studied and possible psychological reactions considered, to make the placement lasting. Even at best we must sometimes transfer a child from one home to another. The frequency of re-placements must necessarily depend upon the types of children under care, problems children requiring more frequent transfer than so-called normal children. We are happy to report only one transfer during the year.

An overload of duties in industry has been found to affect efficiency and ultimate profits, and the analogy in this instance is clear. Social service is most exacting if it is done with even moderate justice to the client, and consists of much more than merely interviewing the beneficiary in her home or in our office. Some cases require more service and correspondence than others, but a record must be made of them all in order to keep an accurate picture of the family before us at all times, and each case has its changes in condition from year to year and from month to month. Our work is becoming increasingly important and arduous and the expense of it must be paid by dollars and energy with a suitable ratio for each which cannot be emphasized too greatly. The alternative is wasted energy and money in terms of incomplete service somewhere.

In my report to you last year, I dwell largely on the work done for our foster home children. This work has continued with few changes and the children placed have shown marked improvement in health appearance. (Please turn to page 15)

[9]



## Hebrew Orphans Home to Retain Building The Southern Israelite, circa 1934

### *Hebrew Orphans Home to Retain Building*

Although it was the original plan of the Board of Directors of the Hebrew Orphans Home, with its capacity for 150 children, to abandon the plant and direct the future policy of the Home to that of concentration on subsidized and boarding home care for its eighty-five children, the plan has recently been considerably changed. In a letter written by Armand Wyle, Superintendent of the Orphans Home, he stated that "there was an intention of disposing of the present building occupied by the Hebrew Orphans Home, and locate in smaller quarters. However, it has since been decided by my Board to remain in this building for various and excellent reasons. While we have at present no children in the building, we shall retain it for such children as cannot be placed in foster homes. There will always be a Hebrew Orphans Home in this city, and I trust that the moral, spiritual, and financial support of the citizens of our Southeastern States will be retained in support of the latest progressive step that this institution has taken consistent with its forward-looking policy for the past forty years."





# The Orphan Child...In the South by Viola Wyle and Armand Wyle, The Southern Israelite, circa 1934

## THE ORPHAN CHILD

IN THE SOUTH

By VIOLA WYLE  
and ARMAND WYLE

**D**URING the past year a new world has come into existence. Changes in the industrial, commercial and social structure have had their effects upon social service to an extent that would a year ago have seemed bizarre to foretell. Before the depression 70% of the funds supporting welfare service to the people came from public taxation and of course this has been increased by the millions of dollars belatedly appropriated by the Federal Administration, conditioned upon matched funds, also raised by taxation from states, counties and municipalities, bring this percentage today to ninety-five.

The social worker has come into his own and the socially conscious president of our nation has used this trained and experienced person to advise and direct the "New Deal." The N.R.A.A., F.E.R.L., P.S. and other A's have all had repercussions upon the ultimate potentiality of those who seek social justice with increasing hope that it will be dispensed evenly for all time. That child welfare has not been overlooked, as it has seemed, is evidenced by virtual abolition of child labor, a tremendous advance which the past decade of endeavor had failed to obtain. There is a practical certainty that the help given to raisers of hogs and cattle will likewise be extended to dependent and neglected children in the near future. It could not be otherwise with such men as President Roosevelt has called to his side. Harry Hopkins, whose experience in social service and his administration of Federal Relief Funds, has more than fulfilled the expectations of his fellow social workers throughout the country. His personal knowledge of the capabilities of other workers who are willing to make any sacrifice for the privilege of following his leadership, has displaced the politician whose efforts were usually for personal gain and ambition for those whose service to humanity in the past make for the solution of problems too rugged for the individualist to attempt. Federal relief for this purpose would no doubt effect the policy and financial support of many charitable institutions and social service organizations who struggle to exist today.

Meanwhile, however, the Hebrew Orphans' Home (located in Atlanta, Ga., devoted to the care of homeless Jewish children in the South) has carried on through the four years of the depression without sacrificing the high standard of care consistently maintained although its supporting income has suffered a decrease. The following presents a summary of the work carried on by this institution and the important part it plays in the prevention of family breakdown and the conservation of wholesome family life for children.

During the past few years there has been a changing conception in the field of child care. The Hebrew Orphans' Home is concerned with a new type of client due to the years of economic distress and its aftermath. Many families formerly well-to-do, have found it necessary to seek the advice and help of this or-

ganization for their children. Every means are employed to make applicant feel that they do not lack friends and that there is sympathy and understanding which will give them hope that will eventually enable them to rehabilitate their fortunes.

The training of a child in the artificial surroundings of an institution is no longer regarded as a satisfactory substitute for home influence and training. For this reason the stable family has been selected as the best unit for the rearing of normal children. To obtain results the work of the Hebrew Orphans' Home has been based upon a program of sound family case work, supplemented by child placement only when it becomes necessary. The development of this organization has been, therefore, from an institution into a children's agency, with a flexible program of case-work and placement ready to meet the needs of its District in the care and development of its children.

Most essential to the work are periodic investigations of children's own homes or homes of relatives. Cases are reviewed twice a year including the adjustment of the children and consideration of discharge or transfer from foster care to their own homes. Supervision of boys and girls is carried on after discharge and every effort is made to follow these children and assist them in their educational, vocational and social progress, as long as necessary.

There are many people among contributors and friends of the Hebrew Orphans' Home who believe that subsidizing children in their own homes is merely a matter of giving relief over a period of years—that if a widow applies for aid, she is allowed \$20 a month for a child, or \$40 for two children. This interpretation is incorrect and inadequate. Many years ago, when the Hebrew Orphans' Home began to subsidize children in their own homes, the work was done by members of the Board or volunteers who, out of the goodness of their hearts, decided upon a uniform stipend to be allowed mothers for each child in the home. Today the Hebrew Orphans' Home has developed Mothers' Aid into more constructive methods involving more than mere giving of relief, which is only incidental to the rehabilitation plan. Many precautions are taken to see that the standard of living for the subsidized home has provided everything necessary for the physical, spiritual and moral welfare of the children and the parent.



VIOLA WYLE

*The authors of this article, Mr. and Mrs. Armand Wyle, executive vice-president and director respectively of the Hebrew Orphans' Home, Atlanta, Ga., have achieved wide recognition for their services for child welfare. The work they have carried on in connection with the Hebrew Orphans' Home in Atlanta despite heavy handicaps is indispensable to the Southeast. This article is only a brief outline of the work for which they are responsible.*



ARMAND WYLE

When a child is accepted for care outside his or her own home, plans must be made whether he has a family which can be rehabilitated, or will require permanent care away from home. Through careful study of each case the child's future welfare is planned. When substitute parental care is necessary, a foster home is selected that will approach the child's family background as nearly as possible. In order that this plan of care does not fall short of desired permanent results, a program is carried out not only during the child's stay in the foster home but after the child is returned to its own home. Of the 102 children now under care, only 24 are in boarding or foster homes which means that home ties and family relationships are preserved.

The health program is practically the same as in any private home with intelligent parents. Every child is given a detailed physical examination before admission. The mother and foster mother notifies the home immediately upon the slightest indication of illness. Much credit is due the unselfish and faithful services rendered by the staff of physicians of the Hebrew Orphans' Home under the direction of Dr. Herbert J. Rosenberg. The medical staff includes Doctors Simon Smith, Louis C. Rouglin, O. H. Matthews, Hal Davidson, Floyd McRae, Herman Cohen, Cecil Stockard, Robert E. Latta, Clyde C. Crawford, P. L. Moon and Joseph Yampolsky.

The Hebrew Orphans' Home recognizes the fact that a happy childhood is the foundation for the mental and physical development of children into healthy, mature men and women equipped to face the responsibilities of life. Steps are taken to (Please turn to page 18)



## The Orphan Child...In the South by Viola Wyle and Armand Wyle (con't), The Southern Israelite, circa 1934

### THE ORPHAN CHILD IN THE SOUTH

(Continued from page 4)

provide sufficient recreation and diversion and while there is no hard and fast rule, this thought has been emphasized to the foster parents who realize the need for good, wholesome recreation and see to it that the children receive their share. Their recreation follows in a large measure, that of the family with whom they live.

All children under the care of the Hebrew Orphans' Home except those who are too young to enter, attend public school. One South Carolina boy is in his last year at the University of South Carolina, studying Business Administration; one girl is in her second year at the University of Georgia majoring in Physical Education, and a Norfolk boy who finished a course at the National Farm School last year has been appointed a member of the faculty while taking post-graduate work. This boy has recently been discharged from the care of the Hebrew Orphans' Home since he had reached the age of 21. These students have been provided with loans from the Student Aid Fund. The particular talents of the children are encouraged and every possible advantage is given them to study in the field for which they show any real aptitude.

Infinite care is given to provide proper religious environment. All of the children above the age of eight attend synagogue, temple and Sunday School. The families with whom they are placed are affiliated with one of the synagogues and Kashruth is observed in their homes. Hebrew instruction is given to the boys. All of the Holy days are observed in the homes of the children.

Much of the work that is performed by the Hebrew Orphans' Home does not appear in the records of its activities. Many families seek advice concerning domestic, court and even business perplexities. The most interesting cases are those of problem boys where financial assistance is neither asked nor needed.

The Hebrew Orphans' Home has accomplished much to help solve some difficult problems, to give Jewish children a chance in this world, to provide them with wholesome surroundings and recreation and to perpetuate a love for Judaism. The future has the promise of a boundless hope because of this service, a prospect that will lead us on and up into a world that will be better for having tried to help Jewish children and widows towards a more abundant life.

★ THE SOUTHERN ISRAELITE

## Hebrew Orphans Home Takes Forward Step In Child Welfare at Meeting, The Southern Israelite, circa 1937

The Southern Israelite

June 11, 1937

### Hebrew Orphans Home Takes Forward Step In Child Welfare At Meeting

A forward step which will seek to correct physical, mental and social abnormalities in underprivileged children was taken at the last annual meeting here of the Hebrew Orphans'

Home. For nearly half a century, the institution has taken care of every destitute and neglected child in the Area comprising the states embraced by the 5th District of B'nai B'rith. Creating and maintaining the Hebrew Orphans Home for the first ten years of its existence, B'nai B'rith lodges in the 5th District now contribute to its upkeep through a per capita assessment on its membership.

Stressing the need for a searching inquiry into the causes of maladjustment among children, Armand Wyle, Executive vice-president, declared in his report: "... It is not alone that modern life creates many problems for childhood as it does for adults; we are in these days more definitely searching for the causes of physical, mental and social abnormalities where in former years we only saw them when they became exigent. These conditions must be met by us in the

ever-increasing expansion of our activities and usefulness as has been our history in the past half century. The removal of Jewish children from destitution and neglect is not enough. We must compensate them for the inadequacies of their natural parents and protect them from the defects of our social and economic system; we must see to it that at least so far as Jewish children are concerned, the former delinquencies of society must be corrected in the elimination of ignorance of physical and mental diseases, and provision of the spiritual and secular education which children of self-sufficient members of our race provide for their own offspring."

The eight years of Mr. Wyle's administration have seen, with the assistance of Mrs. Wyle, Director of the Children's Service Bureau, the development of a subsidy plan whereby two-thirds of the child-

ren are maintained in their own homes wherever in the District they reside. A subsidy granted their widowed mothers, who are also included in the monthly allocation, makes this possible. Children who cannot be maintained under this plan in their own homes are now either boarded with relatives or brought to Atlanta for placement in carefully investigated Jewish foster homes. Professional workers supervise these children until they are prepared for independent self-sufficiency, economically and socially.

Officers of the Hebrew Orphans' Home, in addition to Mr. and Mrs. Wyle, are Armand May, president; Lionel Weil, of Goldsboro, N. C., first vice-president; Joseph Loewus, second vice-president and chairman of the local board; Moses G. Michael, of Athens, Ga., third vice-president; Bert Lillenthal, fourth vice-president; David Slusky, of Augusta, Ga., fifth vice-president; Joseph N. Reisman, secretary-treasurer; Herbert J. Haas, chairman of the Case Committee, and Mrs. Victor H. Kriegshaber, honorary vice-president.

### Jacobs Class Inducted By Columbus Lodge

Columbus, Ga.—The largest class ever inducted into the B'nai B'rith order here was witnessed by a large attendance of men and



# Orphans at Home, Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home Moves Forward Into Era of Greater Service to Parentless, The Southern Israelite, circa 1940

## Orphans at Home

### Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home Moves Forward Into Era of Greater Service to Parentless

By Melrick Rosenberg

*Perhaps best known of all Jewish agencies in the Southeast is the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home which for more than fifty years has served a fundamental need of humanity—the harboring of youngsters without a home. An understanding and humane transition has brought abandonment of the "orphanage" the Home once occupied for literally scores of private homes where children find a happier and more normal life.*

**"A** DEFINITE contribution towards making our American democracy work."

That is, in effect, the modern requirement of an "adequate" community agency to justify its existence, according to the keynote of the 1940 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy.

Officials of the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home, in conference at the White House, and directors, could have exchanged knowing glances, for to them this definition of an "adequate" community agency was not new.

The breadth of purpose employed by them in administering the work of the Hebrew Orphans' Home had followed the line of the democratic process for many years. The general progressiveness of aim as set down by the White House Conference had already been in practice. In fact, during the preceding decade those officials and directors had made a working principle of the yardstick the Conference had set forth as program for the next ten years.

The line of democratic utility had been working for years during which the Hebrew Orphans' Home had long served a significant purpose in Jewish communal life throughout the Southeast. During well over fifty years, the far-flung influence of the Home's service had become an indication of its acceptance.

"Throughout the South" covers a large territory, and such unequivocal commendation and approval as the Home has won might just as easily be withheld by the communities at large were it not for the unchallenged results achieved during those years. For nothing touches us so deeply or quickly as the subject of children, particularly those tiny tots in need. And no agencies are so zealously observed for breaches of faith as those dealing with children.

It is the universality of this appeal which has knit together in support of the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home hundreds of small and large communities in the Southeastern states. There is no territorial quota of admission, no sectional limitations, the question of aiding orphans or children in need being a subject which exceeds the bounds of city limits.

Stories of the rectified unhappiness of children, of the service by which the Orphans' Home has turned pathos into hope,

tragedy into reclamation, and even sickness into well-being, would be dramatic to the final recounting.

But only a few know those touching stories, for it is not the policy of the Home to publicize the childhood maladjustments of those who now are leading normal lives.

But the stories are there . . . hundreds of them . . . reaching into the past, when the institution came into existence under the aegis of the B'nai B'rith more than half a century ago . . . the accounts of kiddies—boys and girls—who came under the influence of the Home and grew up into lives of usefulness . . . of charges now men and women, with families, even grandchildren.

Center of the picture of that period is focused on an ivy-covered building—the orphanage.

The large red brick building on Washington street in Atlanta was "home" to orphaned children who received as much individual care and attention as it was possible to give them in an institution.

The "Orphanage," as such, was artificial and unsatisfactory, despite the fact that it functioned to the final degree for what it was; the occupants—inmates despite everything—knew no loving consideration of parents, had no sense of "belonging," and frankly were all too glad when they could

*Sharing the place in the hearts of American Jews for its own homeless boys and girls are "Orphans of the Storm" (see story, page 10), like the European war victims below, shown upon arrival in New York through efforts of the Joint Distribution Committee. Photo courtesy N.R.S.*

separate their physical identity from the quasi-home.

Sometimes that identity never was psychologically severed.

Realization of this failing was why, as early as 1911, the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home began the subsidy of children in their own homes, so, instead of being transported into a socially unnatural set-up, they could remain with their family, or what was left of it.

Today the "Orphanage" is no more. Parentless children are placed in foster homes so that they may know the care of a mother and father. Partially orphaned children are subsidized in their own homes, expenses of maintaining the household being shared if need be.

This trend of orphanage abandonment and private-home adoption has changed the complexion of the Atlanta Hebrew Orphans' Home as it has most other agencies in this nation dealing with child welfare.

For one thing, the trend means heavy emphasis on child placement, since only with sufficient and scrupulous attention to child placement can the agency maintain its purpose.

Guiding the Children's Service Bureau, which works in close conjunction with the Home, is a determination to insure that whatever solution is attempted is in the main possible and for the best interests of the child.

Recognizing that the natural home environment is best under all circumstances, save where it is destructive, every effort is made for children to remain in their own homes, maintenance of widowed mothers being taken over by the agency.

When it is felt necessary, the foster home—best known substitute for the child's own home—is employed.

There was nothing the old orphanage could provide that the foster home doesn't; in addition, the latter has many advantages, chief of which being that the child feels he belongs to a natural family group. The foster home set-up also eliminates the many rules and regulations necessary where large groups of people are congregated under a single system, whether in asylums, homes for the aged, or soldiers in barracks.

(Please turn to page 12)

