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"MBCH is committed to serving God by responding to the needs of children, youth and families to make a lasting difference in their lives."

MISSOURI BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME



*A Brief History of
Missouri Baptist Children's Home
as Depicted by the Graphics of
"Heritage Hall"*

The story of Missouri Baptist Children's Home is one of faith, determination, cooperation and willingness to change. It has been said that history is really "His story" and the history of this agency is a testimony to that truth.

Scripture is replete with God's command to remember what He has done. God often tells us to "write it down" or "build a memorial." The reason given is always the same, "so that when your children ask 'what does this mean,' you can tell them what God has done." That is the purpose of our Heritage Hall.

As you peruse the different eras of the history of Missouri Baptist Children's Home you will be introduced to great women and men of faith. As you marvel at what they accomplished with so little, remember that this is HIS story. To God be the glory!

Missouri Baptist Children's Home

Celebrating a Heritage of Faith

As part of the celebration of 130 years of "serving God by responding to the needs of children, youth and families," Missouri Baptist Children's Home has developed "Heritage Hall" on the first floor of the Blake Administration Building on the Lowe-Frillman Campus in Bridgeton. "Heritage Hall" tells the story of MBCH through a series of 42" x 65" museum-quality dimensional panels. While we welcome everyone to come to Bridgeton to view these panels, we understand that many will not be able to do so. This booklet contains a reduced version of those panels. We also have a series of pull-up banners representing the panels which will enable us to take a portable version of Heritage Hall to all areas of the State.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Missouri Baptist Children's Home and its affiliates continue to respond to the needs of children, youth and families in Missouri. The ministries and services provided now are different than the ones from 100, 50 or even 10 years ago. The ministries and the locations in which those ministries are provided will probably continue to change as we move into the next chapter of this wonderful story.

But one thing will NOT change and that is our commitment to be a Christ-centered agency. While we are committed to providing care that meets or exceeds the best professional standards, we will only do so as we unapologetically share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all of the children and families in our care.

"As we face the challenges of this new day, let us be as determined as our forefathers to minister. Let us make our commitment to be here one hundred years from today doing what Jesus has commanded us to do if He tarries. If He does not tarry, then let our commitment be that when He comes, He will find us diligently at the task of caring for children.

As we look through the history, each of us surely feels the swelling pride of accomplishment in the service of those who have gone before us. May those who come after us look back on this century of caring with the same sense of pride that we now have in our Baptist forebears."

Dr. Raymond R. "Bob" Kenison

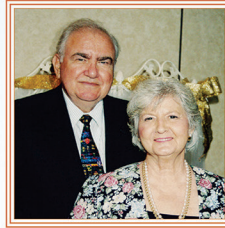
Missouri Baptist Children's Home

The Story Continues

To God Be the Glory,
Great Things He Has Done
through the People and Ministries
of
Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

THE NEXT ERA

When Raymond (Bob) Kenison assumed the role of Administrator (later changed to Executive Director and then to President) of the Home, he came from the position of Development Officer, which he had held for three years. He not only possessed a thorough understanding of the requirements of the position, but his statewide experiences afforded him a real overview of both the needs and assets of the Children's Home, causing him to be excited about charting new dreams.



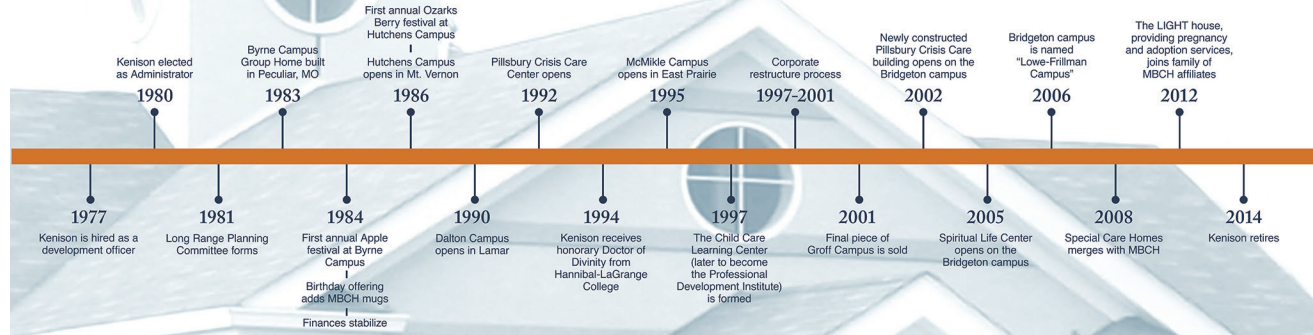
DR. RAYMOND AND MRS. MARJORIE KENISON

NEW VISION

In an early move Kenison formed a long range planning committee. This committee travelled to Baptist child care agencies in South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Oklahoma – prime examples of excellence in child care ministries – and reported back to the Board. This set a new direction for MBCH.

HALLMARKS OF THE KENISON ADMINISTRATION

- Leadership Stability: Russell Martin and Robert Springate served alongside Kenison during entire administration
- Financial Stability
- Geographic and Ministry Expansion: 5 campuses plus regional offices significantly broaden MBCH's impact, resulting in new and varied ministry programs.
- New corporate structure is established to form affiliates (MBCH Foundation, MBCH Children and Family Ministries, MBCH Properties, MBCH Professional Development Institute and The LIGHT House)



1980-2014

The Kenison Years

INFLUENCE BEYOND THE WALLS OF MBCH

Kenison's influence extended beyond his work at MBCH. As it became more apparent of the need to collaborate with other like-minded private agencies, MBCH was one of the founding agencies of the Missouri Alliance for Children and Families to provide care for children with severe emotional and behavioral needs. Kenison also served as president of the Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies, a group dedicated to protecting Missouri's children at risk.

Nationally, Kenison served as secretary of the board of the National Association of Homes for Services for Children (later became the Alliance for Children and Families) as well as President of the Baptist Child Care Executives.

ORGANIZATION CHANGES STRUCTURE

With the forming of Professional Development Institute in 1997, a staff development organization, began an overall restructuring of the board culminating in 2001. Under the parent corporation, three other corporations were formed. This brought a new organizational stability to MBCH.

ASK ME ABOUT TAX CREDITS!

State social service tax credits became a major funding source during Kenison's years. Full use was made of the award and sale of credits for the support of children.



KENISON QUOTES

"I didn't sleep last night!"
Staff knew an idea was emerging!!

A real motivator of staff, "Just work half a day... and I don't care which 12 hours you work!"

CONTINUING PARTNERSHIP

Missouri Baptists give of their time, talents and financial resources to care for children, youth and families through MBCH. Some of those ways through our history are:

- Cooperative Program
- Birthday Offerings
- Estate Plans
- Prayer support
- "I Care Day"
- Rheubin L. South Missouri Missions Offering
- Strawberry Festival (and other festivals /special events)
- Serving as Trustees
- Volunteer service through construction projects, tutoring, making clothing, quilts, crafts, etc.
- Camp Sponsorships
- Individual Giving
- Church Budgets
- Providing Christmas presents, clothing, baby supplies, school supplies
- Serving as foster and adoptive families
- Thanksgiving Offerings



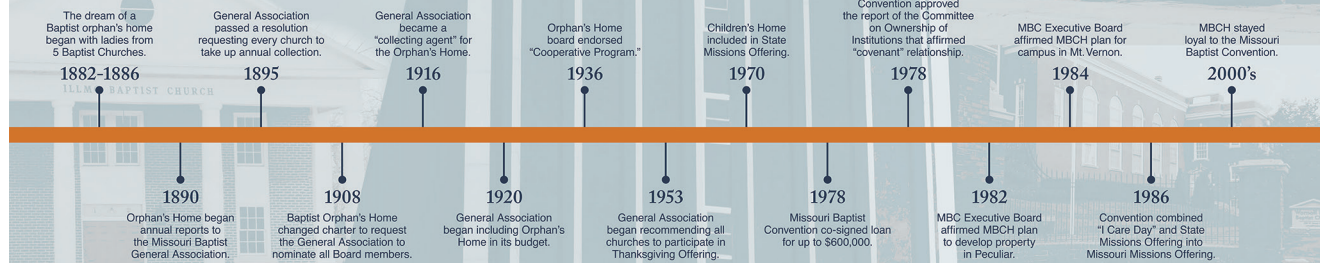
HISTORICALLY BAPTIST

Missouri Baptist Children's Home was a product of St. Louis Baptist churches. As the ladies from 5 Baptist churches planned, pondered and "agitated" to create an Orphan's home, there was never any doubt that it would be a Baptist orphan's home and would be managed, supported and operated by Baptists. Throughout the years the bond between Missouri Baptist Children's Home and the Missouri Baptist churches has remained strong.

MISSOURI BAPTISTS AND THE CHILDREN'S HOME

"Our children's Home is an integral part of the program of Missouri Baptists. It represents a phase of our ministry as a denomination that is essential. Nothing in Missouri Baptist life is closer to the hearts of our folk than the care of orphaned and homeless little folk."

Dr. T. W. Medearis, General Superintendent of Missouri Baptist State Convention, 1944



Partners With Missouri Baptists

BEST MANAGED BAPTIST ENTERPRISE

In 1923, Corresponding Secretary Alice K. Messerly wrote:

"Our State paper, 'The Word and Way,' has this to say about the home: 'About the best managed enterprise among Missouri Baptists is the Orphan's Home. This charity is so well managed and with such economy, our friends are delighted to contribute to its support.'"

MINISTERING TOGETHER

"Missouri Baptists have long sought to serve God by ministering to children, youth and families. Nothing defines this cooperative effort more clearly than the work of Missouri Baptist Children's Home. As Missouri Baptists give through their churches to the Cooperative Program, the Missouri Missions Offering and other ways, they demonstrate, through their partnership with MBCH, the eternal value of each person created in the image of God and the need to experience the love of God through faith in Jesus Christ."

Dr. John Yeats, Executive Director, Missouri Baptist Convention, 2016

WE NEED EACH OTHER

"We can do so much more when we partner together. That is one reason we value the covenant relationship we have with the Missouri Baptist Convention. This relationship has been the foundation of our ministry to children, youth and families. We believe our strength as an agency comes from our unwavering commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to following His command to 'serve the least of these.' We greatly appreciate the faithfulness of Missouri Baptists in supporting the ministries of Missouri Baptist Children's Home through prayers and contributions. It takes all of us joining hands together under the leadership and Lordship of our Savior to make a lasting difference in the lives of children, youth and families. May He receive all the honor and glory."

Russell L. Martin, President, Missouri Baptist Children's Home, 2014 -

BIRTHDAY OFFERING

The Birthday Offering has been an historic partnership with Missouri Baptist Churches since 1891. Hundreds of churches have used MBCH birthday cards, banks, pencils and mugs to "extend a hand of love" to children and families.



THE STORY BEGINS

In 1882 Mrs. Joseph B. Thompson dreamed the dream of beginning a St. Louis home for orphaned children. Together with Mrs. William Page, they embarked on a four year journey to see the dream realized. Little did they then know the impact they would have on children's lives for years to come.



MRS. JOSEPH B. THOMPSON

RAISING FUNDS

In December of 1882 the first festival was held to sell "fancy goods" to raise money for the Home. Mrs. Page announced two quilts were sold for \$5.00 each. A total of \$2,077.31 was raised. Through investment and further gifts, the Home's account grew to \$2,742.78 by January, 1884.

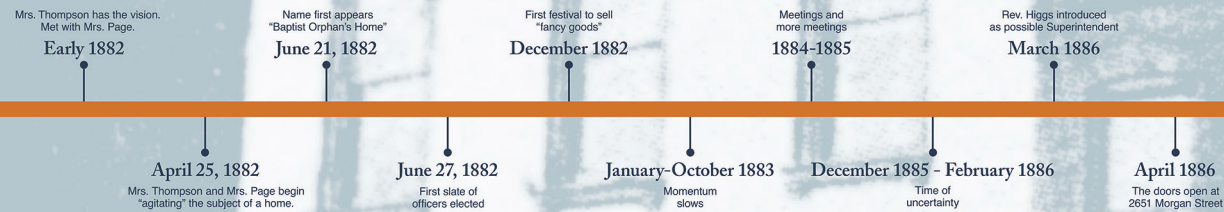
FOUNDING COMMITTEE

Founding committee composed of ladies from five St. Louis churches:

- Second Baptist
- Third Baptist
- Fourth Baptist
- Garrison Avenue Baptist
- Park Avenue Baptist

MEETINGS & MORE MEETINGS

The minutes of almost every meeting show that "Shall we go on, or shall we wait for larger means?" was the one question which engaged the greater part of the discussion.



1882-1886

The Dream



MRS. WILLIAM PAGE

FROM THE MEETING MINUTES

The ladies were ready to open the home, but given the social climate of the day, they needed a male figure to serve as administrator. As recorded in the meeting minutes, that figure, Rev. Higgs, was introduced to the group.

"The president requested Dr. Boyd to state the object of the meeting which he did in a very happy manner, putting to flight any doubts as to the immediate necessity of work in caring for the little waifs of our city. A general discussion and expression of opinion was called for - during which Rev. Mr. Higgs came in and was presented to the ladies."

Excerpt from "The Little Ones" - The History of The Missouri Baptist Children's Home

BIBLE USED AT THE HOME CIRCA 1886



THE HOME OPENS

And so, in April, 1886 the Baptist Orphan's Home opened its doors, at 2651 Morgan Street (pictured in this panel background) housing and giving care to five orphans. Mrs. Thompson's dream became a reality.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

When Dr. Blake retired everything seemed to be progressing smoothly. True, the campus was aging and needed much work. True, there were methods of modern child care which needed to be implemented here. But the Home was out of debt and had an income sufficient to meet its needs. Perhaps things were too calm. Perhaps this was simply the calm before the storm.



MR. HOWARD MEYER

NEW LEADER AT THE HELM

With Dr. Blake's retirement, the Board of Managers began to look for a new Administrator who would inaugurate new programs to keep up with a changing world. They wanted a man who was capable of dreaming exciting dreams. Howard Meyer seemed to be such a man.

CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL AND FAMILY SERVICES

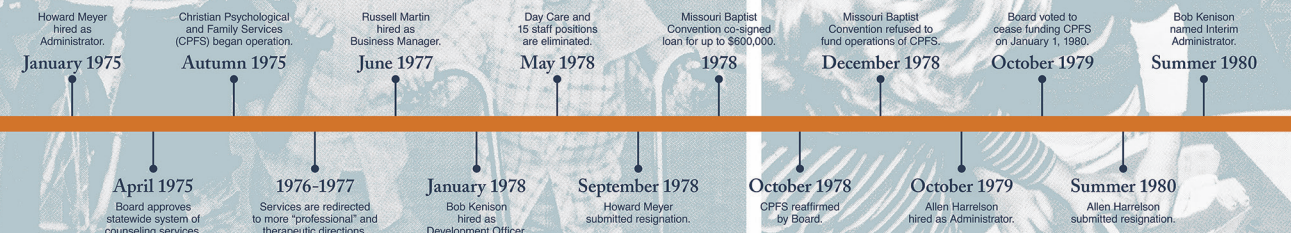
In April 1975 the Board approved a plan for a statewide system of counseling services to be administered through the Home. The goal was to develop a "family-oriented preventive outreach program ... providing professional Christian counseling, education and training services to the families and children of churches and communities in Missouri." The CPFS grew rapidly from a one-member staff to 8 professional counselor-administrators who supervised 42 part-time counselors in 13 different centers across the state (St. Louis, Kansas City, Joplin, Springfield, Hannibal, Kirksville, St. Joseph, Bolivar, Rolla, Columbia, Jefferson City, High Ridge and Belleville, Illinois).

THE GAZEBO WAS ONE OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE 1970'S.



CAMPUS EXPANSION

The growth in staff quickly produced a need for campus expansion. In 1977 the Home purchased an abandoned dormitory of the defunct Midwestern College in Denison, Iowa. The plan was to raze that building and salvaged materials would be used to build two apartment buildings on the Bridgeton campus. While initially endorsed by the Board as a good idea, the apartment buildings were never constructed and a return on the investment of nearly \$320,000 was never realized.



1974-1980

Years of Turmoil

SCOPE OF CPFS

The 1977 MBCH Annual Report published a map showing the locations and staffing of the CPFS.



FINANCIAL TURMOIL

The costs associated with the Christian Psychological and Family Services program and campus expansion could possibly have been overcome, although at the cost of depleting reserves. A third problem arose, however, that added to the financial burden. The boiler system which provided heat for all the buildings on the campus needed to be completely replaced. The financial strain took its toll. Howard Meyer resigned in September of 1978 and the Home had to ask the Missouri Baptist Convention to co-sign a loan for up to \$600,000 so bills and other debts could be paid. Budget cuts resulted in staff reduction and the elimination of some programs.



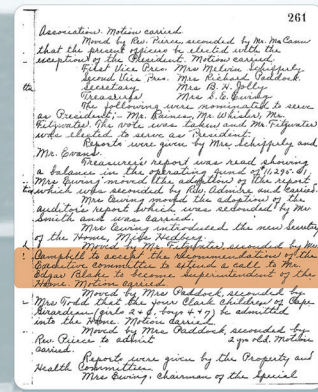
MINISTRY STILL PROVIDED

In spite of the financial difficulties of the day, the Home continued to provide residential care, group home care, foster home care, adoptive care, unmarried mother services, day care and counseling services.

A NEW LEADER EMERGES

The years between 1974 and 1980 were some of the most difficult in the history of the Children's Home. God, however, was already raising up the next generation of leadership. Russell Martin and Bob Kenison had already been added to the staff as Business Manager and Development Officer. When a second Administrator (Allen Harrelson) resigned after less than a year, the Board did not want to enter another long search for an Administrator and Kenison was unanimously elected as Interim Administrator and a few months later the position became permanent. The team of Kenison and Martin was to usher MBCH into the greatest days of the agency's history.

Minutes approving Blake as Superintendent



CHANGE OF APPROACH

Edgar Blake, coming from a school administrative position, was accustomed to boards and also to making "on-the-spot" decisions. In his new position he intended to cooperate with the Board, but also to be a decisive leader.



DR. EDGAR AND MRS. GERTRUDE BLAKE

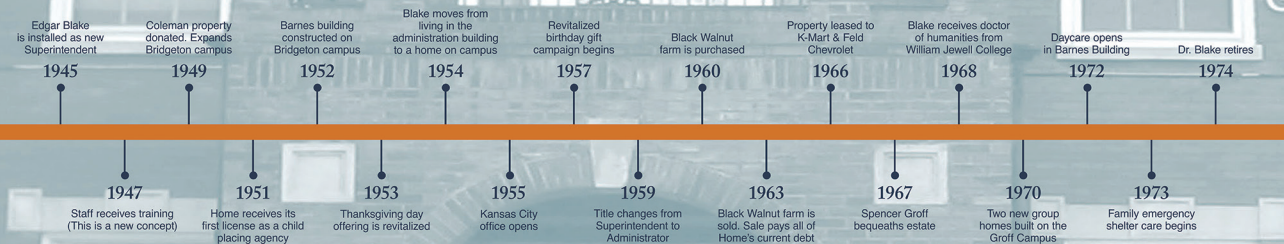
Blake immediately began the long process of changing Missouri Baptist Children's Home from a child's warehouse to an individual treatment center. First, he eliminated the large dormitory, putting children into cottages. Each cottage had smaller numbers of children, allowing for an environment resembling a home like atmosphere.

BEQUEATH OF AN ESTATE

In 1968 board member and long time supporter, Spencer Groff, left his estate to the home. A foundation continued to hold title, but profits earned from the management of the estate accounted for approximately 12% of the Home's annual budget. The final piece of the Groff Campus was sold in 2001.

NEW LEADERSHIP

Edgar E. Blake became the new Superintendent on January 1, 1945 fully prepared to face the challenges lying ahead.



1945-1974

The Blake Years

WORKING WITH THE BOARD

Blake's advancing the Children's Home's mission had to begin with small steps and decision making leadership had to be employed. Here's a quote from Dr. Blake in those early years:

"On one occasion I had the maintenance man rebuild a closet in one of the boys' dorms. It was an old-fashioned closet, not deep enough to get a normal coat hanger in it, so I had it enlarged. Our own man did the work, and it didn't cost anything, but the Board didn't like it because I didn't wait and come to them for permission."

However, another occasion the Board did make an effort to give permission for an improvement before Blake made it. The minutes reflect that the Board voted to allow Mr. Blake to have the old stump removed on the lawn.

Excerpt from "The Little Ones" - The history of The Missouri Baptist Children's Home

THE BRIDGETON CAMPUS CIRCA 1959



PROGRESS THROUGH THE DECADES

1950's Social work expands. A great change occurred in 1951 when the State Department of Public Health and Welfare recognized the Home as a Child Caring Institution and gave it the new rating of Child Placing Agency. This allowed the Board to extend the Home's service by setting up an authorized program of foster home care for babies under the age of two.

1960's Home begins to emphasize foster care as primary method to care for children

1970's Daycare opens in the Barnes Building as a model center. Child care could now be summed as follows: Institutional Care, Group Home Care, Foster Home Care, Adoptive Home Care, Unmarried Mother Services, Day-care Service, and Counseling Services.



REALITY

On April 1, 1886, the rented house at 2651 Morgan Street was comfortably furnished and opened to receive five infants who prior to that time had been under the protection of the Educational Aid Society. The dream had become a reality.



MRS. J. S. EMILY DUNHAM

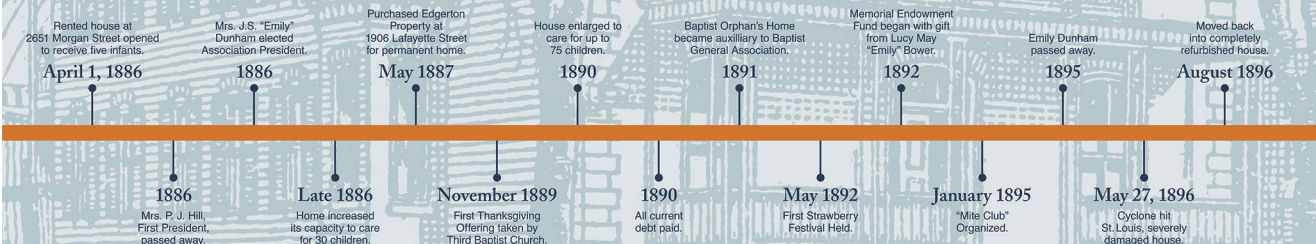
EARLY HEALTH PROBLEMS

Many of the admitted infants were either weak or actually ill. Often the baby was born with some illness or malformity. Sometimes the babies from such circumstances did not live long enough to reach the Orphan's Home. When they did, they were susceptible to every contagious disease which swept the city. The babies died from many causes, but whether the death record stated the cause as "inanition" or "meningitis," most of them simply wasted away and died. During the first six months of operation, twenty-six infants were lost.

Circumstances improved over the next few years. The 1894 Annual Report listed but six deaths. *"The health of the children has been remarkably good, the percentage of deaths very small."*

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

With the death of Mrs. R. J. Hill in 1886, the actual Board role of leadership fell to Emily Dunham, "a carefully precise woman in the midst of vigorous middle age." She continued to serve as President until her death in 1895 and was a vital part of the early success of the Home.



1886-1896

Realizing the Dream

FINANCIAL DISASTER

While the Home was managed by women during its early history, they did feel the need for male advice when it came to investing their money. They chose an Advisory Committee which consisted of three men: Joseph B. Thompson, Thomas West and William Senter. Within the first three months of existence, the bank in which funds were deposited closed its doors. The bank failure made the Home's operation dependent upon collections solicited by the managers.



EARLY PHOTO SHOWS LADIES FROM THE BOARD OF MANAGERS WITH THE CHILDREN ON THE PORCH OF THE HOME.

STATISTICAL REPORT

- During the Baptist Orphan's Home first nine years:
- 821 children were received
 - 97 were placed in homes by adoption
 - \$27,876 were spent on operation of the Home

STRONG FOUNDATION LAID

"The years between 1886-1896 were years of struggle but highly successful. Dedicated Board members and competent Matrons set a pattern for succeeding years. It had taken them long enough to get the doors opened, and they would never see them closed."

Excerpt from "The Little Ones" - the history of The Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

