

"DAD" HOEGER AND THE GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

by

613-8302

WAYNE LEE BUTE

B. A., Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va., 1967

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1973

Approved by:

Homer E. Socolofsky
Major Professor

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH THE ORIGINAL
PRINTING BEING
SKEWED
DIFFERENTLY FROM
THE TOP OF THE
PAGE TO THE
BOTTOM.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED
FROM THE
CUSTOMER.**

LD
2668
T4
1973
B878
C:2
Docu-
ment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iv
PREFACE	
PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY—DEMOGRAPHIC SOCIOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL—AN INTRODUCTION	v
CHAPTER I AUGUST JOHN HOEGER, LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY	1
CHAPTER II BIRTH OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY 1922 TO 1932	20
CHAPTER III DIFFICULTY AND DIVISION 1932 TO 1942	32
CHAPTER IV SURVIVAL 1942 TO 1952	45
CHAPTER V GROWTH 1952 TO 1962	52
CHAPTER VI EXPANSION 1962 TO 1972	61
CHAPTER VII FUTURE	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	84

List of Illustrations

Plate		Page
I	Population Chart	viii
II	Levels of Institutional Care	xvi
III	Photo of "Dad" Hoeger	19
IV	Photo of Home Day at Arthur, North Dakota . . .	27
V	Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1932	31
VI	Map of Good Samaritan Facilities before 1940 . .	44
VII	Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1952	51
VIII	Photo of Good Samaritan Center at Esterville, Iowa	56
IX	Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1962	60
X	Graph of Growth in Facilities	64
XI	Photo of Good Samaritan Center at Greeley, Colorado	67
XII	Photo of Central Office	70
XIII	Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1972	78

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express his thanks to the Hoeger Family and members of The Good Samaritan Society for the time, interviews, and use of their records which have made this study possible.

PREFACE

THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY—DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL—AN INTRODUCTION

"People just didn't use to be sick as much as they are today. They died when they got sick and didn't live sick."

Willie Johnson
Negro Sharecropper

With the population trends of the mid-twentieth century the problems associated with the elderly are developing into a major crisis, multiplying faster than the projections of Malthus.

In previous generations epidemics took large tolls of life with high frequencies of death in infancy and childhood. The use of modern chemo-therapy in technologically advanced nations has nearly eradicated some diseases. Better child care has brought a decrease in infant mortality. Many diseases of the young and middle aged have been conquered.¹

Ancient Greeks probably had a life span averaging well under thirty years and the newborn Hebrew of Judea likewise had little chance of attaining old age. Estimates of the average life span in those days range as low as twenty-three to twenty-five years.

The mid-twentieth century American newborn by contrast has

¹Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 2.

a far better chance of survival and if he reaches his twentieth birthday, chances are that he will attain age seventy.² Some scientists are projecting a future life span of one hundred to one hundred and twenty years.³

The population chart on the following page depicts this demographic trend demonstrative of the brilliant progress in medicine in the past fifty years. Life expectancy in America has increased approximately thirty years in this century. The age group of over sixty-five is by far the fastest growing segment of our population. This group, which was previously but four percent of the total population, is now approaching ten percent of the total.⁴

Since 1900 the number of persons over sixty-five has quadrupled while the total population has doubled. This is no longer a theoretical problem and is considered by some a grave menace to our way of life.⁵ One has viewed this with alarm as an inversion of biological law in the modern welfare state, "the survival of the unfittest."⁶

²Harold C. Steele and Charles B. Crow, How to Deal with Aging and the Elderly (Huntsville, Alabama: Strode, 1970), p. 14.

³Steele and Crow, p. 10.

⁴Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, Population and the American Future (New York: New American Library, 1972), p. 98.

⁵Ethel Sabin Smith, The Dynamics of Aging (New York: W. W. Norton, 1956), p. 63.

⁶Bernard Asaacs, Survival of the Unfittest (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 60.

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
THAT WERE
BOUND WITHOUT
PAGE NUMBERS.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

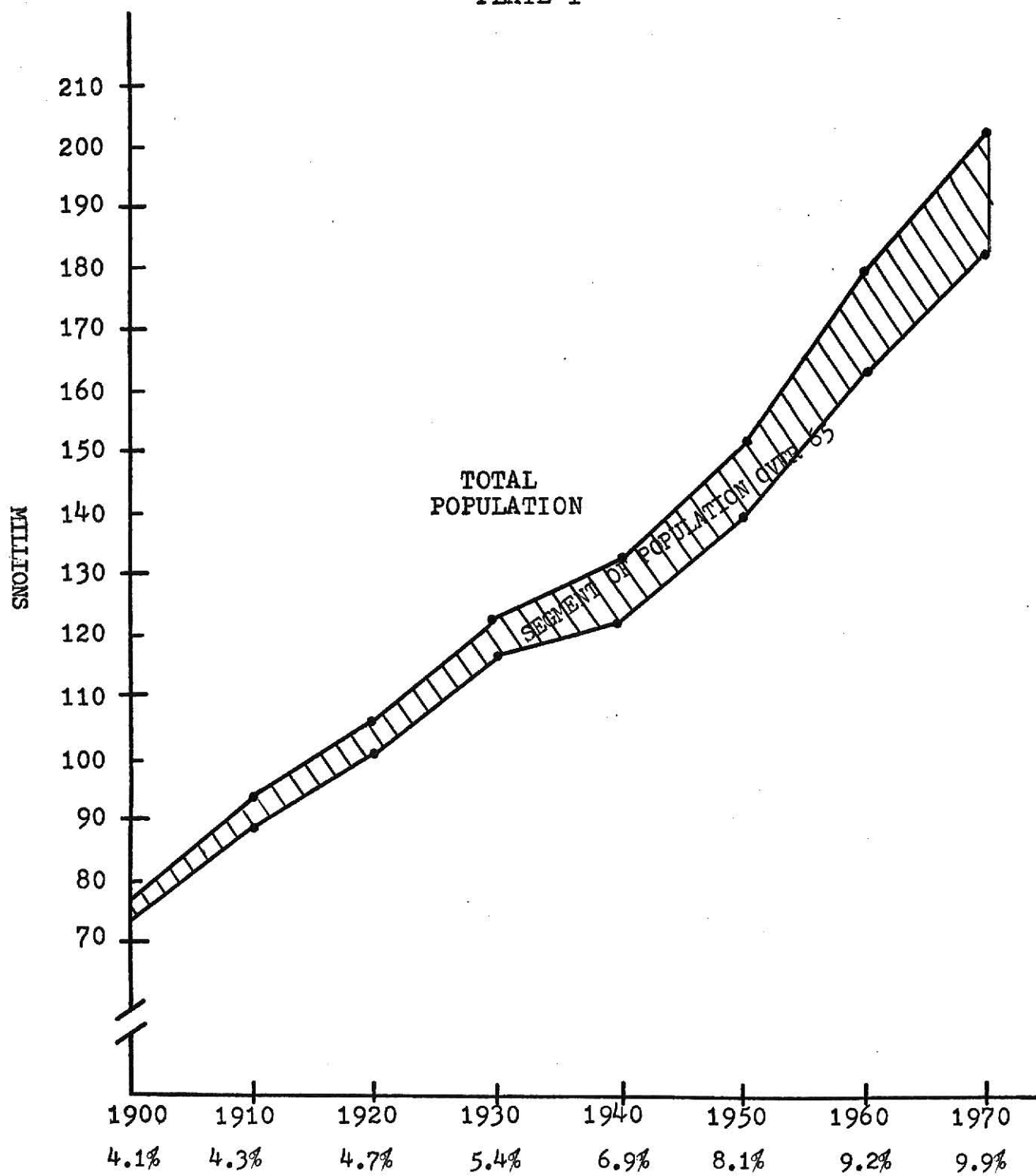
U.S. Total Population and
Population over 65

1900-1970

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

PLATE I



Our population is also urbanizing as the young migrate from rural areas to the city. The proportion of the elderly varies inversely with population density.

As the median age of our population increases, our population is actually an aging one. This phenomena is progressing at a geometric rate.

The elderly are the fastest growing minority in American society. Envisioned as a threat by some, they are discriminated against by others.⁷ It is debatable as to which is the greatest problem of the elderly, medical or sociological.

Shakespeare described the impairments of age in poetic fashion in As You Like It:

Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

Involutions of age cause physical changes. There is loss of physical vigor and attractiveness.

Senescence has been described as the gradual aging of the body or an increasing inability to heal. Senility is this aging process accompanied or aggravated by other complications. Senescence begins at birth at which point the healing process is most efficient and when the healing process begins to gradually slow down.⁸ Because of these factors, the average length of stay for hospitalization for people over sixty-five is about

⁷Milton L. Barron, The Aging American (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961), p. 60.

⁸Steele and Crow, p. 11.

two and one-half times those under sixty-five.⁹

Physical problems of the elderly are complicated by social and psychological problems. Our culture is oriented excessively toward youth as well as work. Gerontologists are now suggesting that mental frailty or senility may be a psychotic state of withdrawal.¹⁰

There is increasing socio-economic stress for the elderly in our modern technological society. Formerly, to be an "elder" was generally to be venerated. Chinese and Jewish law mandated honoring one's parents. A few years ago the titles Senior or Senator or Alderman denoted respect deriving from age. But this sense of respect has been pretty much dissipated in modern society.¹¹

The concept of social death has been used to describe the severing of relationships, to the extent that older persons become dead to us in an interpersonal sense. Although probably overstated the recent advice prevalent in American society according to Mr. Kutscher is not to trust anyone over thirty, which evidences that we may become socially dead to others of even slight age difference.¹²

⁹U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service, Hospital Discharges and Length of Stay, 1958-1960 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962 (U.S.P.H.S. Pub. #584-04)), p. 18.

¹⁰Dr. Victor Kassel, "Principles of Aging," lecture at Good Samaritan Society Annual Meeting, Northfield, Minn., Aug. 19, 1969.

¹¹Smith, p. 19.

¹²Austin H. Kutscher, Death and Bereavement (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1969), p. 31.

Previously in less technological societies, the elderly derived status from their role as depositories of the community's knowledge and guardians of tradition. Today, technological acceleration has produced progressive educational, craft and occupational obsolescence.¹³ This has led to the problem of availability of suitable employment for older persons. A response of modern society has been mandatory retirement based on chronological age.

The mobility of our population has led to a breakdown of the extended family. Our housing patterns have tended to rule out the possibility of elderly living with their children.

In the past man's concern has been to make longevity attainable. The problem now is in making longevity satisfying and fulfilling, in Browning's words, "The last for which the first was made." Because we have been slow to come to grips with this problem, our country's aged stand a good chance of being forgotten persons.

The impoverishment of America's aged has been documented as paralleling their growth in number. In 1922, about one-third of persons over age sixty-five depended on others for livelihood. By 1930, it was two-fifths; by 1935, one-half; and by 1940, two-thirds. Income level of the elderly as a group remained terribly low even into the 1960's.¹⁴

¹³Joseph J. Spengler et al., Social Aspects of Aging, ed. Ida Harper Simpson (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1966), p. 13.

¹⁴Dorothea Jaeger, The Aged Ill (New York: Appleton, 1970), p. 6.

As failing health leads to unemployment, the impoverishment of unemployment renders the older person less financially able to secure needed medical care.¹⁵

If the elderly person lives long enough, chances are good that he will eventually require some level of institutionalized care. The evolution of institutionalized care for the elderly has been a slow and sorry story.

The church started the first geriatric institutions. In the third and fourth centuries monastic orders of the eastern orthodoxy offered care for the aged in what were called gerontochia.¹⁶ Western Europe followed with the establishment of nosocomia in the fifth and sixth centuries offering services to the infirmed.

Infirmaries houses of pity, established in the middle ages by monastic orders in England, were dissolved by the Reformation Parliament. This abolished hospitals of England for nearly two centuries.

In 1601 the Poor Relief Act established the infamous poor houses of England. These custodial institutions attempted to protect society from moral degradation or embarrassment by giving asylum to the old, the sick, the blind, the mentally ill, and the destitute.¹⁷

¹⁵Jackson K. Putnam, Old Age Politics in California from Richardson to Reagan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 6.

¹⁶Peter Townsend, The Last Refuge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 17.

¹⁷Townsend, p. 18.

There was little difference between English and American poor laws. The colonial American versions were a direct inheritance from England.¹⁸

In the years following the Civil War, a new humanitarian concern developed which led to an emergence of specialized charitable institutions such as those for the mentally ill, the blind, and retarded children. By the end of World War I, the poor house had become an institution primarily for the elderly.¹⁹

By the 1930's the nation's aged were becoming recognized as a minority. The Townsend Plan in 1933 proposed to help end the depression by paying old age pensions of two hundred dollars per month with the stipulation that the money be spent within thirty days. Old Age Assistance was a provision of the Social Security Act of 1936.²⁰

The prospect of spending one's declining years in one of the many poor houses that still dotted the American landscape in the 1920's and 1930's produced in many a feeling of desparation, even terror, that is difficult to recapture in this day of comparatively widespread public welfare programs.²¹

The ill-starred reputation of the old poor houses and county poor farms is no doubt justly deserved. Churches, charitable organizations, fraternal groups, and even trade unions attempted relief by starting some of the first old age homes. From these have evolved a variety of types of care,

¹⁸Thomas, p. 18.

¹⁹Thomas, p. 27.

²⁰Thomas, p. 60.

²¹Putnam, p. 5.

ranging from apartments and housing for the elderly to extended care facilities. Typical levels of state licensure today are represented on the following page.

The standards of care for the elderly have been improved by the impetus of Medicare and Medicaid. These two programs included provisions for nursing home care as part of the Social Security Act of 1965.

From early times the traditional attempt of dealing with the elderly has been to put them out of mind and out of sight. A large segment of the population still seeks to ignore this problem. Investigations in the nursing home field by Ralph Nader and others have called attention to the needs of the elderly. Inadequate public assistance accompanied by ill designed plans of reimbursement have served to foster the continuation of low standards of care.

The history of serving the aging has shown us that the initial need was to provide facilities to care for the indigent and the ill. The community response was a crash program to provide nursing homes and congregate facilities that met the treatment needs.²²

Homes that evolved were generally established for the purpose of making a profit. Proprietary or for-profit interests have frequently operated substandard facilities.

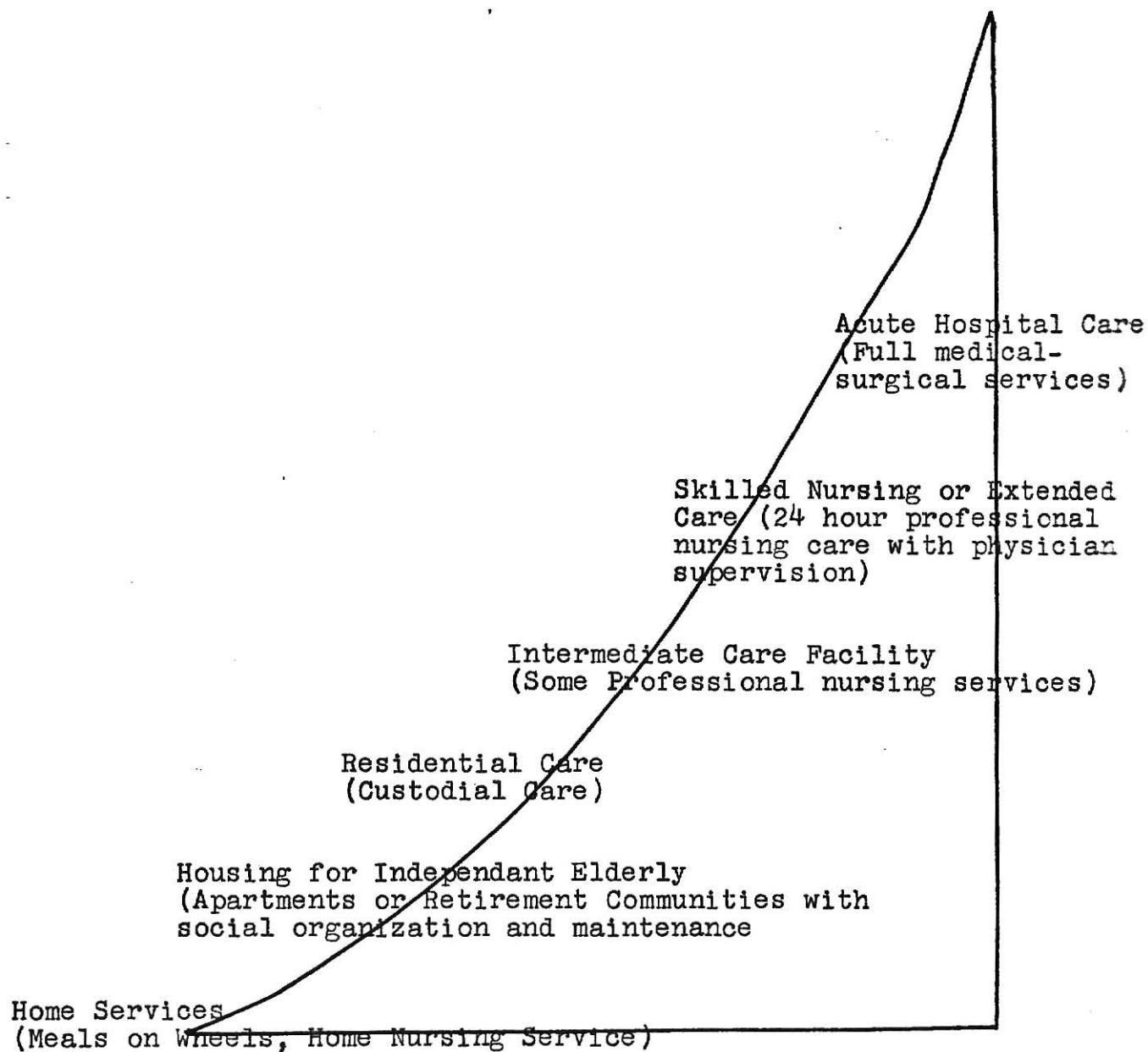
Non-profit institutions have traditionally rendered a high quality of care. In the non-profit concept, no profits go to any owners but must be put into additional services. Although

²²Joseph Douglas Weiss, Better Buildings for the Aged (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1969), p. 5.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Continuum of levels of care representing typical state
licensure categories in ascending levels of care.

PLATE II



non-profit groups operate over fifty percent of the total hospital beds in the United States, only fourteen percent of nursing homes are non-profit.²³

The thesis of the author is that a notable exception to the trend towards proprietary facilities is found in the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Founded by a North Dakota pastor, Reverend August J. Hoeger, Sr., this Society has grown to become the largest American corporate chain, either proprietary or non-profit, engaged in the area of geriatric care. By 1972 it operated some one hundred and sixty-five facilities in twenty states.

An early endeavor in the field of geriatric care, the Society today occupies a status of leadership in the field. In 1972, for example, the last government operated geriatric facility in the state of Colorado, Weld County Nursing Home, was closed transferring all patients to a new two hundred and fifty bed addition at the Bonnell Good Samaritan Center in Greeley.

The author had some reservations on the subject of "Dad" Hoeger because of the general tendency to over glorify successful persons. There were many other factors in the success of the Society besides the initiative and drive of one man, including support of employees and friends too numerous to be mentioned in this study, and the trends of the times as the

²³Charitable Research Foundation, Effective Standards for Institutional Care of the Infirm Aged (Wilmington, Delaware: Charitable Research Foundation, 1959), p. 26.

influx of state and federal funds for geriatric care and construction of geriatric facilities. Indeed the greatest growth of the Society occurred under the new management of August J. Hoeger, Jr. in the decade from 1962 to 1972.

Yet the fruits of this study have born out that the history of the Good Samaritan Society is the result above all of the lifelong dedication and determination of August J. Hoeger, Sr., known as "Dad" to his associates. He headed the early formation in 1922 and remained the guiding force active in the leadership of the Society until his death in 1970. His management, which some considered weak, was one of the great strengths of the Society and a key to its success. Whether this was intentional or not is a moot point, since the historical fact is the great success of the Society in providing geriatric care.

Care of the aged represents one of the great social problems in America in the twentieth century, but, as Mark Twain said of weather, "everybody complains about it but nobody does anything about it." Dr. Hoeger is important for recognizing this need as early as 1922 and taking the initiative to do something about it.

The Good Samaritan experience represents a significant contribution to the twentieth century evolution of specialized care for the elderly. Its development for the half century from 1922 to 1972 parallels the development of the modern nursing home concept. The Good Samaritan Society's existence today is a tribute to the concern, dedication and leadership of its founder, "Dad" Hoeger.

CHAPTER I

AUGUST JOHN HOEGER, LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY

"Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man—the biography of the man himself cannot be written."

Mark Twain
Autobiography

Developments of the last century in Germany directly and indirectly influenced the life of August John Hoeger. The nineteenth century German Luthern tradition was strongly influenced by the Pietistic Movement, or as they called it, the Enlightening. Pietist slogans included: "Life versus doctrine" and "Reality versus the appearance of godliness." Sanctification of life and outward exercise of love were seen as evidences of faith. Pietism manifested itself as a movement of social welfare tendencies and focused considerable attention upon individual man and the totality of his needs.¹

Pietism called for a reform of the orthodoxy of the church. It called for a personal rebirth in faith evidenced in one's conduct. Like English puritanism, pietism taught that all Christians had an obligation to daily scrutinize their own lives.²

A further outgrowth of pietism was the revival of the

¹Julius Bodensieck, ed., Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, III (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), 1899.

²Bodensieck, III, 1901.

welfare movement with its efforts to bring genuine help to the sick. The religious concern of pietism combined with the progress of science in the latter half of the nineteenth century to bring a powerful new thrust to the church's activism in areas of social and medical service.³

A part of this movement was the development of the Kaiserswerth Deaconesses. The Deaconess Houses or Mother Houses were similar to Catholic orders except deaconess vows obligated them to five years of service. Their realms of service included hospital and social work among the sick and unfortunate.⁴

An aspect of the German tradition is state involvement in support of the churches, both Catholic and evangelical. With this government sponsorship, the charitable outreach of the church such as missions and social welfare were left to voluntary establishment. With the growth of pietism, local and regional mission societies sprang up. One such group was Neuendettlesau. This mission society sponsored overseas programs including an early missionary work in New Guinea and establishment of the Wartburg Theological Seminary in Iowa. It also sponsored deaconess training.⁵ Pastor William Loehe, one of their missionaries to America, was instrumental in starting the old Iowa Synod.

³Bodensieck, II, p. 992.

⁴Bodensieck, I, p. 661.

⁵Interview with Rev. John Hoeger at Sioux Falls, S.D., Feb. 1, 1973.

A significant example of the "enlightening" is found in the life of Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. Bodelschwingh, a German nobleman who had entered the Lutheran ministry, accepted a position in Bielefeld in Westphalia in 1872. There he took over as director of two independent institutions. One was an epileptic home, Eben-Ezer, located outside the city. The other was a Deaconess Mother House, Sarepta, in Bielefeld. Bodelschwingh was acquainted with the Kaiserswerth and Neuendettlesau deaconess programs. His first move in Bielefeld was to build the new Mother House next to the epileptic institution. Through this proximity the young nurses gained experience through a difficult training assignment of caring for the epileptics.⁶

Both of the institutions grew rapidly in fame and numbers. In addition, a number of related charitable works grew up to meet growing social needs. Bodelschwingh was endearingly referred to as "Father" and the concept used to demonstrate his concern was "the Good Samaritan." "Father" Bodelschwingh often stated that he had done nothing towards the growth of the institutions. He preferred to be called an assistant in God's work. The institution near Bielefeld, called Bethel, has continued vigorously; by 1960 it comprised a complex of some ten thousand persons with hospitals, hostels, schools, and even a theological college.⁷

⁶ Margaret Bradfield, trans., The Good Samaritan, The Life and Work of Friedrich von Bodelschwingh (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), p. 107.

⁷ Margaret Bradfield, trans., City of Mercy, The Story of Bethel (Bielefeld: Thomas-Druck, 1964), p. 14.

John Jacob Hoeger, August's father, was sent by the mission society at Neuendettlesau to serve the Wartburg Theological Seminary as grounds superintendent. He brought his wife and three children to America, but his wife died soon after.

A deaconess, Sister Maria, was sent to take care of the three young Hoeger children. Maria took the children to the orphanage at Andrew, Iowa, where she worked for a time. When Mr. Hoeger was asked to become dorm father at the seminary, he turned to Maria to seek her hand in marriage. So they were married in 1873.

Mrs. Hoeger began a busy life caring for the three Hoeger children and doing the laundry and cooking for the students. The Hoegers later had two more sons.

I was to undertake the management of a large household—had to learn most everything myself first. It was no easy position to fill, but the dear, gracious Lord continually stood by me and helped me through all the hard places, so that it was really a joy to serve him. The first year I had also to do the laundry work for all the students. No small task this, to cook, bake, and wash for more than forty folk.

In the meantime, five little boys had come into our home as precious gifts from God; but I was unable to give them the attention they deserved, for there was no one else to take the responsibility of the kitchen, and that could not be neglected. But whatever the Lord blesses, is sure to prosper.⁸

Courage born of deep religious convictions, a zealous work emphasis, and a sense of mission in serving others were legacies of the Hoegers for their children which took firm root in their

⁸Maria Hoeger, "My Past," letter to August Hoeger, p. 20.

youngest son, August.

August was born July 12, 1885, at Mendota, Illinois. He spent his first six years there while his father was housefather at the seminary.

When John, August's father, died, the mother took the children to Sterling, Nebraska, and started a small variety store.⁹ At Sterling August attended grade school. Spelling and grammar were difficult for young August. His real interest was in tilling the soil. He enjoyed planting seeds and watching them grow much more than going to school. So at an early age he decided to become a farmer. He worked for a time as a hired hand. In the winter of 1902 he managed to rent some land and machinery. He was about to buy a time of horses to start planting in the spring.

Prior to doing so, however, young August began to feel some indecision. He began to wonder about his chosen life's work. His mother's religious training probably laid heavily on his mind. He decided, in his later words, to "Let go and let God." As his son John describes it:

In the newly settled lands of the upper midwest there was a lot of planting to be done—not just in the soil but in the building of His kingdom. So it is that the Lord told young August to become a minister.¹⁰

To become a minister not only meant that August would have

⁹Interview with Dr. Agnes Hoeger at Hastings, Nebraska, March 3, 1973; Wartburg Theological Seminary is now located at Waverly, Iowa.

¹⁰Rev. John Hoeger, "Reflections on Dad," The Good Samaritan, III (Dec. 1970).

to go to college but also to seminary. His decision was a step in faith in more ways than one. Academic excellence was not an easy virtue to August. Although not a promising student, August managed to make it through Wartburg College and Seminary.

His teachers put in a bit of extra work on the uneducated young man who could not spell or even pronounce common words correctly. At the seminary the Doctors Fritschel and lauded Doctor Reu practically served as private tutors.¹¹

August's optimism triumphed and on June 7, 1908, August John Hoeger was ordained in the Lutheran ministry. An additional benefit of his seminary years at Wartburg was some practical experience. Since students were sometimes sent out during the summer to teach summer vacation bible school, August was sent to Gothenburg, Nebraska. There by accident, running into her while roller skating, he made the acquaintance of a young lady named Amelia Aden, better known as Melia, whom he married on June 24, 1909.¹²

At the time of his ordination he was asked where he would like to serve in the ministry. He told the church officials, "Wherever no one else wants to go."¹³ So it was that he was sent to minister among the sod dwelling pioneers of blizzard swept North Dakota. He was sent as a missionary to Burleigh and Kidder Counties near Arena. August and his mother homesteaded near Tuttle in Kidder County during his first year

¹¹Hoeger, "Reflections."

¹²Interview with Amelia Hoeger at Hastings, Nebraska, March 3, 1973.

¹³Hoeger, "Reflections."

there in 1908.

In 1909 August took his new bride to this wilderness country which was to be their home for ten years. The German speaking settlers there had immigrated first to Russia then to North Dakota. August attempted to teach them some better farming practices. He built a model house, a model barn, and a model chicken coop. He tried to teach animal husbandry by introducing them to new and better breeds of farm animals. He brought into the area the first Leghorn chickens, a Holstein cow, and some high stepping trotters. His wife recalls: "He always got the unusual and the best. He drove to Moorehead, Minnesota, and paid one hundred dollars for one registered Holstein milk cow."¹⁴

Mrs. Hoeger also recalled that August's seminary training did not necessarily make him the best trainer or handler of the spirited trotters. Occasionally a driverless team would come to the door, followed by a tired young pastor.¹⁵

World War I aroused anti-German sentiments against German speaking immigrants in America. At one time a group threatened to punish August for preaching in German and teaching a German confirmation school. The parishioners were ready to protect him but there was never any confrontation.¹⁶

In 1919 Pastor Hoeger accepted a call to Arthur, North Dakota, near Fargo. Here August was to begin a number of

¹⁴Amelia Hoeger.

¹⁵Hoeger, "Reflections."

¹⁶Amelia Hoeger.

enterprises that would set the scene for his greatest contributions. August was an active and involved pastor. About this time he became deeply involved in the area of missions. The aftermath of World War I prohibited future German missionary activity in New Guinea. This was the mission sponsored by the Neuendettlesau Mission Society which had sponsored both of his parents as missionaries to America. Pastor Hoeger became naturally concerned for the young converts in New Guinea. Wherever he went, conventions, conferences or in casual conversations, he aroused interest for the New Guinea mission. He even mortgaged his own homestead for \$2,009, a substantial sum in those days, to buy printing equipment to start a foreign mission newspaper, Die Missionstunde. Significantly the mission auxiliary which he organized at the old Iowa Synod, "Missions Huelfs-Verein," was the forerunner of the Board of World Missions of the American Lutheran Church. The mission program in New Guinea that grew from this initial thrust is today one of the world's largest missions.

The original members of the committee were, in addition to Pastor Hoeger, Reverend Fred Brown, Reverend William Kraushaar, Reverend Curt Taubert, Reverend Richard Taeuber, and Taeuber's father-in-law, Mr. Mussgang, the one layman on the committee. Three Board Members even sent their own children into this missionary work. Reverend Brown's son, Ted, became a missionary doctor in New Guinea. Reverend Taeuber's daughter, Erma, became a teacher. Reverend Hoeger's daughter, Agnes, became a doctor and spent thirty-one years in mission work in New Guinea.¹⁷

¹⁷Agnes Hoeger.

A young man by the name of Fred Knautz was also sent.

Wrapping and mailing Christmas boxes for New Guinea was a family project at the Hoeger home. August personally ordered items from Montgomery Ward and Company.¹⁸

A rather humorous incident regarding the naming of the eighth child born into the Hoeger home is related by Doctor Agnes Hoeger. Amelia had decided upon the name Luther for a boy. When a girl was born the chosen name was modified to Lutherine. August preferred Gertrude and so at the baptism christened the child Gertrude Lutherine Hoeger to the surprise of all. "I was a sponsor and I know my mouth just about dropped open when Dad came out with the name, Gertrude Lutherine. That was it."¹⁹

August was always interested in new ventures. In 1922 an appeal for money for a crippled child led to more money than was needed. A committee was formed to decide upon a use for the surplus. August was active in this committee which established the first Good Samaritan home for crippled and epileptic boys at Arthur, North Dakota. The Good Samaritan Society changed in orientation as other concerns besides defective youth presented greater needs and opportunities for service. It started as a bootstrap operation, converting houses to old age homes and taking over old hospitals to meet rural health care needs. In some cases hospitals were started and turned

¹⁸Hoeger, "Reflections."

¹⁹Agnes Hoeger.

over to local groups.

August was always enterprising in using available resources to a good advantage. When cement blocks were needed for a new building at Arthur, August started to produce them with the help of the more able boys in the facility.²⁰ The Board Minutes document, "We approve what Reverend Hoeger has done and what he plans to do as to making cement blocks."²¹

August used the mission printing shop to economize on newsletters for the Society. The original Freudenstrahlen was a German text publication. An English version, Sunshine, followed.

The Good Samaritan Society divided in 1940. The majority of the facilities became Lutheran Hospitals and Homes. The Good Samaritan Society continued under August's leadership with a handful of homes. After the division the Society began to specialize in geriatric care while Lutheran Hospital and Homes catered to hospital care in rural areas.

"Dad" Hoeger, as he liked to be called, was a personality of much interest. At first glance he appeared folksy but on deeper examination he was a rather complex man.

But his philosophy was homespun. His son recalled an incident when "Dad" parked several blocks from a store. When asked why, "Dad" responded, "The walk will do us good and I'm

²⁰John Hoeger, interview.

²¹Good Samaritan Society Board of Directors Minutes (hereafter referred to as Board Minutes), Meeting of April 10, 1928.

not putting a nickel into a parking meter on a street that I already paid for with taxes."²²

Once after a family meal happy with conversation, Mrs. Hoeger said to him, "August, you did not eat very much." He responded with the interesting answer, perhaps born of some false sense of pride or sensitivity, "No one passed me the potatoes."²³

His love in growing things was a lifelong interest. In each Good Samaritan center he planted trees, like a modern Johnny Appleseed.

"Dad" was a doer who enjoyed rolling up his sleeves and joining in any work to be done. A week before his death in 1970, at the age of eighty-five, he was helping to build a chapel at the Good Samaritan Village at Hastings, Nebraska.²⁴

Hoeger's philosophy was influenced by the life and works of Friederich von Bodelschwingh of Bielefeld. Mrs. Hoeger stated, "He read everything he could get his hands on about Bodelschwingh."²⁵ His early endeavor at Arthur, North Dakota, to provide a Christian home for epileptics and feeble minded followed Bodelschwingh's first institution. Instead of "Father" as Bodelschwingh was endearingly called, Hoeger chose to be called "Dad." He took the name Good Samaritan as proposed by

²²Hoeger, "Reflections."

²³Hoeger, "Reflections."

²⁴Hoeger, "Reflections."

²⁵Amelia Hoeger.

Reverend Walter Keller to symbolize the Society's work.

The Good Samaritan Society did differ from its German predecessor. Good Samaritan grew from town to town and state to state, instead of developing one large institution. Hoeger was criticized for this, for not building up the facility at Arthur rather than starting new projects, but this was his decision.²⁶

Hoeger owed much to his mother's influence, that is her faith, social concern, and work emphasis, in addition to the ideas of Bodelschwingh. But "Dad" had some uniquely individual traits.

To some, his image was that of a man of tremendous faith, a man who would enter impossible ventures with no security except faith. He built and bought hospitals not knowing from where the money would come.²⁷

He was not a detail man. Doctor Agnes Hoeger said that he would never have made a good administrator of a facility.²⁸ He found even the intricacies of language an encumbrance not worth mastery. He said jest instead of just, me instead of I, and ain't. He was not overly interested in details of business. His records were haphazard. The original copy of the articles of incorporation read "Ev. Lutheran Good Samaritan Society," according to some because of his alleged difficulty in spelling.

²⁶Amelia Hoeger.

²⁷John Hoeger, interview.

²⁸Agnes Hoeger.

According to others this may have been part of his usual pattern of short cuts. He abbreviated wherever possible. Even his contracts and official documents often bear his own signature abbreviated, "Aug. Hoeger." In this image he was a motivator whose genius lay in getting the wheels in motion, leaving the details for others to work out.²⁹

His son John recalled:

I can remember traveling with Dad during the summer of my college days . . . I can remember how he bargained a good Hebrew out of a big empty shell of a hospital. I'm certain said Hebrew was thrilled to get rid of the giant sized lemon. It had stood there as an eye sore and testimony to man's lack of faith and initiative for over twenty years in Mason City, Iowa. That night in a motel room, I tossed and turned wondering where the money would come from to complete the buildings, who would operate it, etc. It was no more than two minutes after Dad lay down that he began to snore, soundly asleep. The two minutes were for prayers, perhaps simply, 'Lord, you take care of the details. Amen.'³⁰

In the depression years, Fred Knautz became Hoeger's assistant. In the late thirties Knautz and members of the board began to worry about such aspects of August's business practice. Fearing bankruptcy, their concern led to the division of the facilities. "Dad" was left with only four facilities, those in the worst financial condition. "Dad" opposed the division but when it came he said, "This will not stop us."³¹

²⁹Interview with Richard Gorsuch at Sioux Falls, S.D., Feb. 2, 1973.

³⁰Hoeger, "Reflections."

³¹Amelia Hoeger.

Another image of "Dad" Hoeger is that he was in his own right a business wizard. There must be some glimpse of the man "Dad" Hoeger in both images for there is evidence that he had some amount of business acumen. In the first eighteen years of the Society there was phenomenal growth under his leadership. After 1939, left with only four bankrupt homes, he took these cast-off facilities and built an organization surpassing in size the Lutheran Hospitals and Homes. One cannot deny that "Dad" must have had some business understanding and foresight. Both his sons, August and John, believe their father was a man who had certain formulas in his mind of what was necessary to make a venture successful.

A quality of "Dad" was his flexibility and openness to change. In many ways, both in theology and business, he was conservative and unyielding. One of the reasons for the split in 1939 was his refusal to accept funds raised at dances. Yet when convinced of the validity of an argument, he would instantly change his opinion and direction.³²

Although the starting interest was in children's work, he quickly changed his emphasis to the elderly, when he saw that here was a greater need. In later years when the chance to start a program for problem boys in California was being passed over by the board, "Dad" influenced them to try the project.³³

He was considered an extreme optimist in his younger years;

³²Interview with Rev. August J. Hoeger, Jr., at Sioux Falls, S.D., Feb. 2, 1973.

³³Gorsuch.

in later years however he was a conservative influence, especially when the Society grew beyond anyone's expectations.

"Dad" Hoeger was a visionary. Driving by an old army barracks or deserted Hutterite colony house, "Dad" could see great possibilities. When others saw only a skeleton of a dead building that should only be buried, he saw possibilities for service.³⁴ Among his favorite expressions were "Every knock is a boost," and "Immer vorwärts (always ahead)!"³⁵

"Dad" motivated devotion in others to his work through his own example. The highest salary he ever collected even when the Good Samaritan Society had become a multi-million dollar corporation was four hundred dollars per month. He repeatedly mortgaged his own home to help a Good Samaritan home in financial trouble.³⁶

His overriding compassion, in his own favorite words, was "a sincere love for souls." A story is related of how "Dad" arrived back at the Arthur, North Dakota, facility after several tiring days on the road. A pitiful and sloppy epileptic woman with her mouth dripping saliva came running to him, threw her arms around him and planted an affectionate kiss. Where most would have been repelled, "Dad" turned to a companion and called this act one of the rewards for being in this work. By his own request he was buried at the Arthur farm cemetery in the

³⁴John Hoeger, interview.

³⁵Agnes Hoeger.

³⁶August J. Hoeger, Jr.

midst of the marked and unmarked graves of the unlovables of this world, whom he loved.

"Dad" continually guarded against the Society becoming "topheavy" in management, especially after the split of 1939. If anything, quite the opposite was true. Even into the 1950's he was managing the entire Good Samaritan organization from a closet. Records were filed in cardboard boxes. He refused to have needed secretarial help. He trusted people to a fault, usually offering a second chance to those employees who proved unworthy of his generous trust. Each facility was locally autonomous to serve local situations and needs.³⁷

"Dad" retained the German tradition that the primary obligation of the church was evangelism. Social services of the church, accordingly, were better met through adjuncts of the church, lest the primary preaching mission of the church be overshadowed. Even when the Society was invited to join the American Lutheran Church he declined.

To the last year of his life "Dad" exercised a dynamic and firm influence in the affairs of the Society. At the age of eighty-five he made a trip from southern Kansas to northern North Dakota visiting the various Good Samaritan facilities. Two days before his death in 1970 he held a funeral service for a resident at Hastings Good Samaritan Village.

The sincerity of "Dad" and Melia Hoeger's religious faith is also reflected in their family. All of their eight children

³⁷Gorsuch.

entered some church related to work as missionaries, pastors, pastors' wives, or parochial school teachers.³⁸

Never interested in amassing fortune or fame, he endeavored to serve his fellow man from the framework of his theological perspective. He helped call attention to social needs that were being ignored through his compulsion to serve those in need.

The contributions of "Dad" Hoeger are great and many. By mortgaging his homestead, he helped start one of the largest American overseas missions in New Guinea. He originated what became Lutheran Hospitals and Homes, a large chain of hospitals serving the Midwest. He founded the Good Samaritan Society, a multi-million dollar corporation serving the elderly. For these contributions Wartburg Theological Seminary awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity on May 30, 1956. In all of these ventures, "Dad" Hoeger was ahead of his time.³⁹

It seems to be a human tendency to glorify successful persons no longer living. When questioned about this, one who had known and worked for "Dad" Hoeger for a number of years stated, "If he wasn't a saint, he was the closest that I have met."⁴⁰

³⁸Hoeger, "Reflections."

³⁹Agnes Hoeger.

⁴⁰Interview with Ray Conlon at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Feb. 1, 1973.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III

Photo of "Dad" Hoeger

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS SEVERAL
DOCUMENTS THAT
ARE OF POOR
QUALITY DUE TO
BEING A
PHOTOCOPY OF A
PHOTO.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED
FROM CUSTOMER.**

PLATE III



CHAPTER II

BIRTH OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY 1922 TO 1932

"Things get done in our society because of a man
or a woman with conviction."

Robert Townsend
American Business Strategist

The year 1922 was one of those more prosperous years of the early twenties. It was during that year that Reverend Wuert of Upham, North Dakota, sought help for a boy in his congregation who had been crippled as a result of polio. Since this was in the years prior to federal welfare programs, he appealed to fellow Christians through the church newsletter with a request for a two cent contribution, per reader, to help pay for treatment for the boy. The response was so great that there was a surplus of some \$2,000 after the youngster, Chris, had been sent to Kansas City for treatment.

The question of what to do with this balance was carefully discussed at a church conference with representatives from neighboring churches. This group decided that, since the money had been contributed for the purpose of helping a crippled child, the balance should be used in somewhat the same manner. However no agency in the Lutheran Church at the time was involved in work with crippled children. At a subsequent meeting the group decided to establish their own facility for crippled children.

Reverend August Hoeger, who was pastor at the Arthur,

North Dakota, Lutheran Church at this time, was active in these discussions. Since his mother had been a deaconess and a matron of an orphanage in Waverly, Iowa, his interest in this work was natural. When the decision was made to begin this independent project, he was selected to be in charge.¹

On September 29, 1922, Reverend August Hoeger, Reverend W.W.A. Keller, of Jamestown, and F.J. Koehn, a businessman of Jamestown, subscribed their names to the original articles of incorporation of "The Ev. Lutheran Good Samaritan Society." The Board was to be comprised of nine members. The original members were representatives from the Iowa, Ohio and Norwegian Synods of the Lutheran Church. Reverend Hoeger was elected president. The articles of incorporation state the following purpose:

The purpose of the organization shall be to open and maintain Christian homes for epileptics, cripples and other defectives, and to engage in other work of charity and benevolence; and it shall have the power to acquire property, both real and personal, by purchase, devise or bequest, and to hold the same, and may sell, exchange, or mortgage any or all property determined by its by-law or by a majority vote of its members at a meeting called for that purpose.²

In the fall of 1922 a six room home in Arthur was rented for twenty dollars a month, and near Christmas time the first members of the staff arrived from Fargo. Arthur, North Dakota, therefore became the birthplace of a dream of service to

¹"Arthur, North Dakota, Where it All Started," The Good Samaritan, III (Christmas, 1969).

²Original Articles of Incorporation, Ev. Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, 1922.

crippled and "defective" youth sponsored by Lutherans of the area.

One of those original staff members was Sister Augusta. Fifty years later she recounted the experiences of that first year:

We were drawn together and nearer to Jesus because we were so dependent on God. It was not easy. We pumped our own water, heated the water on the range and washed clothes in the kitchen (no government regulations then!); we had no sewer or electric lights. If the kitchen would have had a corner to spare, we would have put a bed in it. And when the food was gone . . . I would go into the cellar (only place I could be alone) and pray. We were always crowded and we never turned anyone away. There never were any 'real' salaries. Rev. Hoeger said he would try to give us twenty dollars per month, but we knew he didn't have any money. So, we just worked—and if we received it, we just bought what we needed for the home. When Dad would start a new home, he would send two or three to train people and get it started. The contact with other workers and the patients truly enriched our lives, and made us very sensitive to the crippled and retarded. I always challenged new girls to stay close to God and be faithful to Him. Miracles were expected because God always answered our prayers.³

By the spring of 1923 there were more than enough applications to fill the home. The question of how to provide more room was answered by a \$1,000 gift from a Mrs. Trautman of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With her check she wrote, "You can give without loving, you can't love without giving."⁴

With this money forty acres adjacent to the rented home were purchased and plans were made to erect a building. The

³Lifetime, 50th Anniversary Publication, Good Samaritan Society, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1972.

⁴The Good Samaritan, III (Christmas, 1969).

lower floor of the two story dormitory was built first with a temporary roof of lime and cement. As the roof began to leak, the incentive to complete the home was mandatory.⁵ So in 1924 the second story was completed and the original home was purchased.⁶

By 1925 the Arthur institution provided care for eleven epileptics, thirteen feeble minded and eight crippled persons. In addition a new building for the crippled was started, providing three buildings for the program at Arthur. For the destitute and those who chose to be buried there, a cemetery was dedicated in 1925.⁷

Some of the early contracts with patients stipulated fifteen dollars per month if they could pay.⁸ By 1926 a total of ninety-three patients had been admitted. Fifty persons were in the home in that year with "eleven charity cases, some paying more than others."⁹ In 1926 an additional one hundred and sixty acres, the Ed Viestenz farm adjoining the facility, was purchased¹⁰ and in 1928 another three hundred and twenty acres was rented.¹¹

An early incident at Arthur called attention to the needs

⁵The Good Samaritan, III (Christmas, 1969).

⁶Board Minutes, Aug. 22, 1924.

⁷Board Minutes, Nov. 18, 1925.

⁸Conlon.

⁹Board Minutes, Oct. 19, 1926.

¹⁰Board Minutes, Oct. 19, 1926.

¹¹Board Minutes, Oct. 17, 1928.

of certain elderly people. An older man with no financial resources came and made application at the home. He pretended to be crippled. He was actually aged and in need of care.¹² So the Board took action in October of 1928 to rent a home in Arthur "to take care of old folks."¹³ By 1929 two houses had been rented for this purpose.

On March 6, 1929, a special meeting was held to decide whether or not the Society should establish a permanent home for the aged in Fargo. The vote was yes, so a large house with eight additional lots was purchased for this purpose.¹⁴

The reputation of the good work the Society was doing began to spread. In 1929 the county commissioners of Barnes, North Dakota, offered the Valley City Hospital to the Good Samaritan Society for a nominal rent. The hospital was renamed "Valley City Home for the Aged of the Lutheran Good Samaritan Society."¹⁵

In April of the following year "Dad" Hoeger's report for the year 1929 outlined three priorities: the patients, the workers, and finances.

The Good Samaritan Home was organized seven years ago to take care of the epileptics, cripples, and feebleminded and other destitute people. The patients must therefore remain the main object in all our reports. In other words they take the first place.

¹²John Hoeger, interview.

¹³Board Minutes, Oct. 17, 1928.

¹⁴Board Minutes, March 6, 1929.

¹⁵Board Minutes, Aug. 28, 1929.

With the thirty old people in Fargo and the forty at Valley City we have a grand total of one hundred seventy. Truly a great responsibility, but also a wonderful privilege to take care of the best that God has created. We do not want to give the impression that this work is all joy. We receive many a hard knock and it is often nerve wrecking. For instance this last week an elderly man who a few months ago lost his only sister has become mentally unbalanced. For awhile he became so unruly that we had to put him in a jail. He there promised and hoped that he would not be mean again, saying that he knew nothing about it. We did not like to see him go to the insane asylum, as he had always been a nice man. Thus we gave him another chance. Others for a time become angry and unruly. But we like to forget these unpleasant things and think more of the happy, satisfied, smiling faces. For all in all we have a happy family.

Next to the patients come our workers. We consider them the backbone of the work. We can not have a Christian Home if we do not have Christian workers. Sometimes we get a worker who comes to work here more for the salary rather than to serve the Lord. They do not feel at home among us, and generally do not stay long. We do not look upon our workers as hired help but they all should have more or less a call from God to serve Him by taking care of these, His least.

The third big item is the finances. Some people seem to think it is the only great problem. It would be if there were no God in Heaven, but with Him we believe all financial troubles can be overcome. We do not say that there will be no financial troubles, we continually have them. But the good Lord helps us over all these seemingly mountains.¹⁶

In those early days of the Society annual reports were given at the Annual Meeting and Home Day. Generally held on a Sunday during the fall, this event was quite an occasion. A large, circus type tent was erected on the grounds at Arthur to provide protection from the elements and also perhaps for a

¹⁶Board Minutes, April 1, 1930.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IV

"Home Day" at Arthur, North Dakota

PLATE IV



touch of showmanship. People gathered from miles around for the festivities which included morning worship, a noon picnic and an afternoon program.¹⁷

In 1929 the Good Samaritan Society was farming five hundred acres of land of which they owned one hundred and eighty acres. The farming operation provided most of the food for the Arthur institution. Expansion in 1930 resulted in the purchase of another three hundred and twenty acres and the Augsburg Business College of Fargo.¹⁸ The college was operated as a business college and also provided a central office for the Society.¹⁹

In 1930 a hospital at Harvey, North Dakota, was acquired by the Good Samaritan Society by assuming the indebtedness of \$6,000.²⁰ Another home was purchased in Fargo.²¹

In 1931 two hospitals were purchased, the Lincoln Hospital of Aberdeen, South Dakota, and the Lutheran Hospital at Beatrice, Nebraska.²² The Good Samaritan Society had grown to become interstate with operations in North and South Dakota and Nebraska. A sanitorium at Hot Springs, South Dakota, was also

¹⁷The Good Samaritan, III (Christmas, 1969).

¹⁸Board Minutes, April 1, 1930.

¹⁹Agnes Hoeger

²⁰Board Minutes, Aug. 26, 1930.

²¹Board Minutes, Oct. 27, 1930.

²²Board Minutes, Aug. 12, 1931.

purchased.²³

In 1932 the hospital at Wayne, Nebraska, was bought and also management of the Ambrose, North Dakota, hospital was assumed.²⁴ Fargo College was purchased and opened as a school for crippled children and a Christian home for first offenders.²⁵

The minutes of 1932 state: "The report showed that in spite of the depression the work of the Society is progressing in a most satisfying way."²⁶ These early years of development were described by Reverend John Hoeger as "a bootstrap operation."²⁷ Management was assumed and purchases made of hospitals in financial trouble. Old homes were revamped for use as homes for the aged.

By 1932 the Good Samaritan Society consisted of eight hospitals, two homes for the aged, an academy for problem children, a business college, a home for defectives, and an eight hundred and twenty acre farming operation.

In 1930, Reverend Hoeger moved to Fargo to assume full time responsibilities as General Superintendent of the Good Samaritan Society. The Society had become a growing concern with the highest humanistic goals.

²³Board Minutes, Nov. 6, 1931.

²⁴Board Minutes, April 11, 1932.

²⁵Board Minutes, June 20, 1932.

²⁶Board Minutes, April 11, 1932.

²⁷John Hoeger, interview.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE V

Map of Good Samaritan Facilities of 1932

Arthur, North Dakota

Fargo, North Dakota

Valley City Hospital, Barnes
County, North Dakota

Harvey, North Dakota

Aberdeen, South Dakota

Beatrice, Nebraska

Fremont, Nebraska

Hot Springs, South Dakota

Ambrose, North Dakota

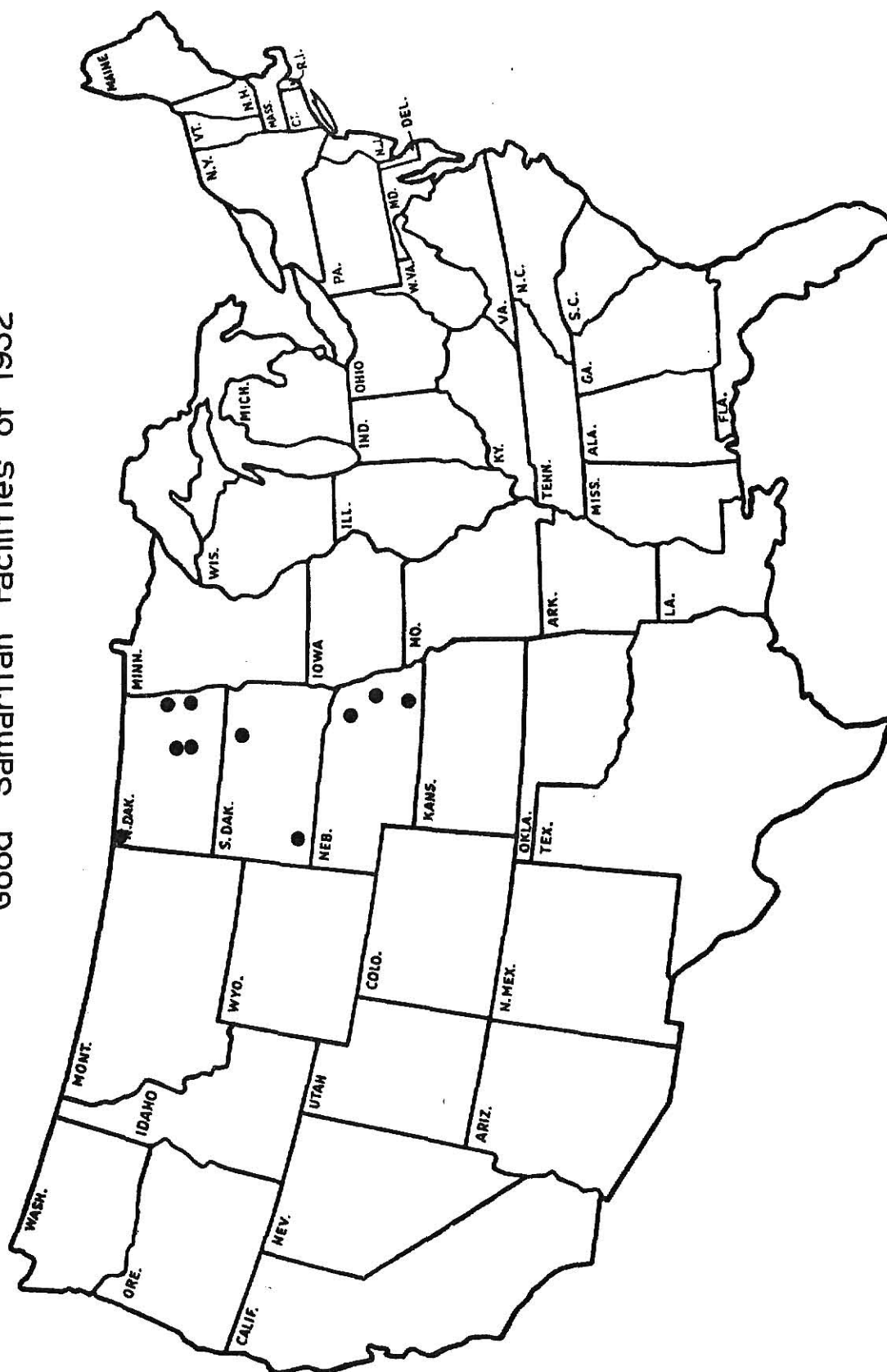
Wayne, Nebraska

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

PLATE V

Good Samaritan Facilities of 1932



CHAPTER III

DIFFICULTY AND DIVISION 1932 TO 1942

"Money shall never be queen but charity. This will also prosper the Institutions materially. Not the fixed assets but faith shall be the security on which our existence rests."

Friedrich von Bodelschwingh
German Pastor and Noted Humanitarian

The Good Samaritan Society showed a steady growth in the thirties despite the continuing economic crisis in the nation.

In fact, the great panic, which is causing so much distress throughout the nation, has opened many a door of opportunity enabling the society to extend its works to many other states. That there is a shortage of funds and the organization's bank account frequently shows an overdraft, need hardly be mentioned. There are days when our Superintendent Hoeger and our Manager Mr. Knautz pass through the unpleasant and trying experience of facing collectors and past due accounts without a cent of money, worrying and wondering where the next dollar will come from. However, behind the darkest clouds God's sun is always shining and when the need is greatest, the Lord in his own wonderful way provides.¹

If the depression opened doors of opportunity it also contributed to the greatest crisis of the Society. The rapid expansion during the depression resulted in extending credit, withholding salaries from employees, and providing minimum levels of service.

Fred Knautz, who had been sent to the New Guinea Mission by

¹Board Minutes, Aug. 1, 1932.

Reverend Hoeger, returned to join the Good Samaritan Society in 1929; in 1932 he was appointed Field Manager.²

During these difficult times salaries were often not paid when funds were short. Although all such salaries were eventually paid,³ the devotedness of such unnamed persons was a real contribution to the survival and eventual success of the Good Samaritan organization. However, there were a number of legal actions by staff workers to collect outstanding salaries and so a resolution was passed that future contracts stipulate salaries "payable whenever the funds are available."⁴

A letter to the Good Samaritan workers in 1933 offered this slogan or motto: "Serving Christ by Serving Man." The following excerpts from the letter demonstrate the theology of "Dad" Hoeger and his call for a radical response from the workers which defies paraphrasing.

Of course, if we serve Christ by serving man we must serve man as Christ did and that means that we must always remember that Christ's great object was to save man from sin, death, and the devil. We can plainly see that in the story where he fed the five thousand and the people wanted to make him king as they did not look further and expect more of him than just bread for this life. Jesus was disgusted and went by himself in the mountain. The next day he met the same people and he reproved them sternly for seeking him because he had given them bread and stilled their hunger. Whereas this miracle which might have revealed a God-head to them had made no

²Board Minutes, Oct. 1933.

³Interview with Violet Baugatz at Hastings, Nebraska, March 3, 1973.

⁴Board Minutes, March 15, 1936.

impression on them. 'Labor not,' he said to them, 'for the meek which perish but for the meek which endureth unto everlasting life which the Son of Man shall give unto you.' He therefore said unto them, 'I am the bread of life.' So we see that Christ has compassion with the bodily needs of suffering mankind but he most emphatically rebuked those who saw no bodily relief, the whole purpose of life and whose bodily comfort was their life's goal. Just as emphatically he showed those Jews who had been the object of his charity, that his purpose of life to lead them to and through him to His works, the one true God that by Him to life forever. If we, in our Good Samaritan Homes and Hospital, only offer food and care for the body and do not offer the Bread of Life, our work is a total failure. Would to God that everyone of our workers would realize that more and more so that the word of God would dwell among us richly. We do not want to try and force anyone into Heaven; Christ died beside a lost sinner but we do not want to be guilty of not having offered the Bread of Life to our patients.

I would like to emphasize again that the Good Samaritan Society was not organized for profit. That it was started without money; that nearly every Home and hospital that we have was started without any funds; that our great object is to do good to our fellowmen and all to the glory and honor of our God. In other words, MONEY SHALL NEVER BE KING IN THE GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY. Whatever we do, the first thing dare not be, 'How much money is there involved?' Truly we must urge our patients to pay and we must economize wherever possible, but our standard, that which we measure with, shall never be money. We were organized to do good and we are trusting in God for our support and if He fails us we fail, but as long as we let God and charity rule in our Society we will never fail but when money becomes the ruling power we will fail like the banks and other money institutions fail.

Being organized and having this aim, we of course can only use workers who are heart and soul with us. We realize that some of our workers are just as good a Christian and want to serve God as much as we do, but because of family connections, they might have a mother or sister or brother that they are supporting, and thus need their salary every month. As we are not able in these times to always pay our salaries

as we would like, we have to request those workers and nurses who absolutely need their salary to look around for such a place where their salary will be paid promptly. Our finances and way of doing things will not permit us to give such a guarantee. We have all reasons to believe that in the end we will be able to pay up all our indebtedness and pay all our salaries, —every depression has ended and better days came, but when that will be of course no one knows. In other words, we need workers who will join us in this work and get their joy out of the pleasure of 'serving Christ by serving man' and who at this time can get along without having their full salary paid. We believe that God's blessing will rest upon all of us and that in the end we will be gainers, for what good does it do to have five hundred or a thousand dollars in the bank and the bank fails of what good does it do if you store up much money and then you become sick and must pay it out in doctor and hospital bills. Finally everything rests on God's blessing—without Him we can do nothing.

Although money shall never rule, that does not mean that we are fanatics; we must have money. We are working at our books and we will print a financial statement in our next Sunshine paper. We can say though so far that God has again richly blessed us and it would be a sin to complain, although we are sorry that we have salaries that are not paid and we have interest and taxes and bills that are not paid.⁵

August was optimistic through the depression. When a collection of outstanding accounts at Hot Springs, South Dakota, yielded only wood, hogs, chickens, eggs, and cows, "Dad" stated, "This is the way we have to work through the depression and we might just as well enjoy it as to make a long face."⁶ He saw humor in difficult situations, as in an incident at Sterling, Nebraska.

⁵Rev. August J. Hoeger, Letter to the Good Samaritan Workers, Feb. 11, 1933 (mimeographed).

⁶Hoeger letter, Feb. 11, 1933.

One of the feeble-minded boys enjoys playing with matches and for the second time the barn was set afire. The livestock was saved—Sister Sina pulling the last sheep out by the tail. We would like to have had a picture of that.⁷

In 1934 the idea of a Good Samaritan training school for workers was passed by the Board.⁸ Two were established; one at Fargo, North Dakota in conjunction with the Augsburg Business College and another at Waterloo Iowa, at Allen Memorial Hospital. Courses in Bible, business and nurse aid training were offered for young men and women entering the Good Samaritan work.⁹

Many new projects undertaken during the thirties ended in failure or bankruptcy. In 1932 a county poor farm at Aberdeen, South Dakota was taken over on a rental basis.¹⁰ It later underwent bankruptcy.¹¹ A hospital at Blair, Nebraska and one at Wayne, Nebraska were purchased in 1932;¹² both of which were later returned to the original owners. The Harvey, North Dakota hospital was sold.¹³ Two Wisconsin institutions at Oconomowac and Fond du Lac were purchased in 1936 but were later sold to

⁷Hoeger letter, Feb. 11, 1933.

⁸Board Minutes, April 2, 1934.

⁹Agnes Hoeger.

¹⁰Board Minutes, Aug. 1, 1932.

¹¹Letter from Fred Knautz, Oct., 1939, Good Samaritan Society Archives, p. 10.

¹²Board Minutes, Oct. 30, 1933.

¹³Knautz, p. 7.

Lutheran churches in the area of Wisconsin.¹⁴ An Ordway, Colorado hospital was purchased, converted to a nursing home, and sold back to the community.¹⁵ The facilities for feeble-minded children which the Society had started in Nebraska at Sterling and Beatrice were turned over to local operation.¹⁶

Some of the new operations were more successful such as a hospital at Sterling, Colorado and the "Ark of Refuge" Home for the aged at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, but even these were behind in payments. The unwise ventures called "Dad" Hoeger's strong leadership into question by Knautz and some members of the board. A power struggle emerged to take control of the organization from Hoeger and in 1937 the board called for a reorganization and a change to the name "Lutheran Hospitals and Homes."¹⁷ The minutes record that Fred Knautz was called as general manager of the Society until his reorganization had been effected. Apparently this was never followed and at a special meeting in January of 1938 it was decided that reorganization would not be advisable at that time. No reasons were mentioned.¹⁸

In 1939 Knautz wrote a sixteen page letter documenting his

¹⁴Board Minutes, Nov. 15, 1938.

¹⁵Board Minutes, Jan. 17, 1935.

¹⁶Knautz, p. 12.

¹⁷Board Minutes, Nov., 1937.

¹⁸Board Minutes, Dec. 6, 1937.

position and concern regarding the number of hospitals being taken over with little success in spite of the financial condition of the Society.

I wondered as to how the institutions were financed that were taken over during these years; we were told that they were opened without the cost of a cent; what was meant was: that it probably did not cost much cash right at the beginning, in a way of down payment, because usually the purchase was made for a certain amount, payment to commence after a prolonged time. Of course, it was not quite true that an institution right at the beginning was opened without the cost of a cent, because naturally it would cost some money for expenses, connected with looking over the proposition, traveling, etc. Sometimes various trips were made, and of course, in many instances, repair to some extent was necessary, alterations, redecoration, traveling, etc.; since workers were placed in the institution, salaries began and the expense of overhead started.

How were these homes opened and how was the work begun? Usually after a purchase had been investigated, we went to the local pastors and business men, telling them we represented the Ev. Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, which Society owned and operated several institutions throughout the country. Although it was not directly connected with any Lutheran bodies. We went to the various stores, to arrange credit, and, of course, the business men were glad to have an institution of that kind in their town. It was quite easy to establish credit. A Matron was hired and began taking charge of the institution; a pastor was asked to cooperate with her in looking up old folks, who might desire entering an Old Peoples' Home, and so the work began.

Furniture and equipment was purchased and groceries were purchased on credit, salaries for the workers were entered in the books and although at first very slowly, we began quite definitely to go into debt. After the various merchants had furnished credit some two or three months, they requested payment of the Matron, who had to inform them that the income was not sufficient to meet the overhead to pay their various expenses: in several instances they were asked by the merchant to write the main office for financial assistance. The main office, of course, could help but very little and so before long, letters

came direct to the office from various merchants in the town where the institutions had been opened, asking that payment be made on the accounts. Therefore, it became necessary to have some one in the field to take care of the various institutions and see that these matters were taken care of and the merchants in some way satisfied.¹⁹

In his letter Knautz listed each facility which had been affiliated with the Society and the high incidence of failures. He charged that poor management was often practiced and that many of the facilities were behind in payments and in a bad state of repair. "Several of the institutions have been closed. We are standing in immediate danger of losing others. We are continually being threatened with suits."²⁰

Knautz felt that the Society had drifted along with no direction and poor business practices. In more than one case, no written contracts existed on lease agreement. Knautz called upon the Board of Directors to realize the seriousness of their condition.

Two years ago, I believe, the Board earnestly tried to remedy a bad situation. I believe that the working plan, as drawn up by the Lutheran Hospital and Homes and adopted by the Good Samaritan Society would have to a great extent, been successful had it been followed out. I must point out to this Board that it has not been followed, there has not been proper cooperation. You have not received reports. . . . We have not had an audit.

So I could go on. The picture seems dark, but it is not painted darker than reality.

I have been accused of disrupting and upsetting the ideals and ideas of the Good Samaritan Society.

¹⁹Knautz, p. 2.

²⁰Knautz, p. 14.

I have been accused of holding secret meetings. I have been accused of wanting to get Rev. Hoeger out of the organization and many other things. I care little about these accusations; they are untrue.²¹

Knautz recommended cooperation in a working plan of re-organization with more centralization, an audit, refinancing and a strict economy.

On January 13, 1939, the Board Minutes show the following institutions purchased by Lutheran Hospitals and Homes for one dollar each: Lutheran Hospitals at Columbus, Nebraska; Sterling, Colorado; and Sheldon, Iowa; Lutheran Old Peoples Homes at Fargo, North Dakota and Eureka, South Dakota. A separate maintenance was agreed on between the two organizations.²²

The Good Samaritan Board resigned to become the Lutheran Hospitals and Homes Board with one exception. Reverend Walter Keller attempted to straddle the fence by remaining on both boards. Keller had been on the original Good Samaritan Board and in fact had suggested the name, Good Samaritan, in 1922. When a conflict of interests appeared on June 24, 1940, Reverend Hoeger wrote him a letter encouraging his resignation from the Good Samaritan Board in no uncertain terms.

Not Knautz and not you, but I am the guilty one who started this whole work of the Good Samaritan Society. I have put the best years of my life in it and also my reputation, and with God's help I intend to live up to the principles of which this work was founded. It was Knautz, with your assistance, who cooked up the whole idea of separating

²¹Knautz, p. 15.

²²Board Minutes, Jan. 13, 1939.

the Good Samaritan Society and Hospitals and Homes. Not one word was breathed to me, everything was done in secret and like a gang of highway robbers. Then you expect God's blessing to rest upon it. At that meeting, April ninth, I was told that I was to have the debts and a few institutions left to the Good Samaritans—that I was the leader. I accepted this work and I have taken ahold of this affair and I absolutely refuse to have Knautz butt in this work. You also will have to realize that I am the president of the Good Samaritan Society and also the superintendent, and you'll have to work out the problems of the Good Samaritans with me and not with Knautz. We are saving and paying every cent we can and if this had been done the last three years, many thousands of dollars would have been paid off.

I love peace and go to the very limit to keep it, but I'm up against the wall now and cannot back down any farther.²³

Since the Society went mainly into nursing home work and the Lutheran Hospitals and Homes went mainly into hospital work there was little conflict between the two organizations. "There was room for both of them. They both grew bigger because of it."²⁴

But the divorce was not a happy one and not without scars. Many years later, in 1968, Fred Knautz was a mystery guest on a "This Is Your Life—Dad Hoeger" program. As he approached "Dad" the two older veterans embraced one another.²⁵ One spokesman from Nebraska credited Knautz and Hoeger with doing more for institutional care in Nebraska than any other persons.²⁶

²³Letter from August J. Hoeger to Walter Keller, June 24, 1940, Good Samaritan Society Archives.

²⁴Agnes Hoeger.

²⁵Conlon.

²⁶Agnes Hoeger.

Perhaps the most painful period for Dad was when other leaders, in these difficult years of the depression, had their honest differences with Dad. He wasn't always easy to work with. Just think about the mashed potatoes and the impossible ventures that he loved the most. The organization divided and became the Good Samaritan Society and the Lutheran Hospital and Homes Society. I can still remember overhearing from the next room Dad pouring out his heart and hurt to District President Landgrebe of the American Lutheran Church. He thought that perhaps he should go back into the parish ministry. But it was not long until he accepted this too as from the loving hand of his Lord and set to work again to rebuild the Good Samaritan Society. Today the Lutheran Hospital and Homes is one of the finest and largest organizations that provides mainly hospital care to rural communities. Perhaps the Lord knew that as one organization they would never accomplish what they would be able to do as two organizations.²⁷

Fortunately the end of the depression was at hand with America's entrance in World War II. At the beginning of the war years, the likelihood that the Good Samaritan Society would survive looked slim. But it was blessed with the determination of one man. Amelia recalls her husband's words, "This will not stop us. I'm not going to quit. I'm going right on."²⁸

²⁷Hoeger, "Reflections."

²⁸Amelia Hoeger.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VI

Map of Facilities Affiliated with the Good Samaritan Society before 1940

North Dakota
Fargo
Harvey
Valley City
Jamestown
Ambrose

Montana
Jordan
Terry

South Dakota
Aberdeen
Eureka
Sioux Falls
Hot Springs

Colorado
Sterling
Greeley
Ordway

Iowa
Sheldon

Nebraska
Sterling
Fremont
Blair
Wayne
Friend
Beatrice
Columbus

Wisconsin
Fond du Lac
Oconomowac

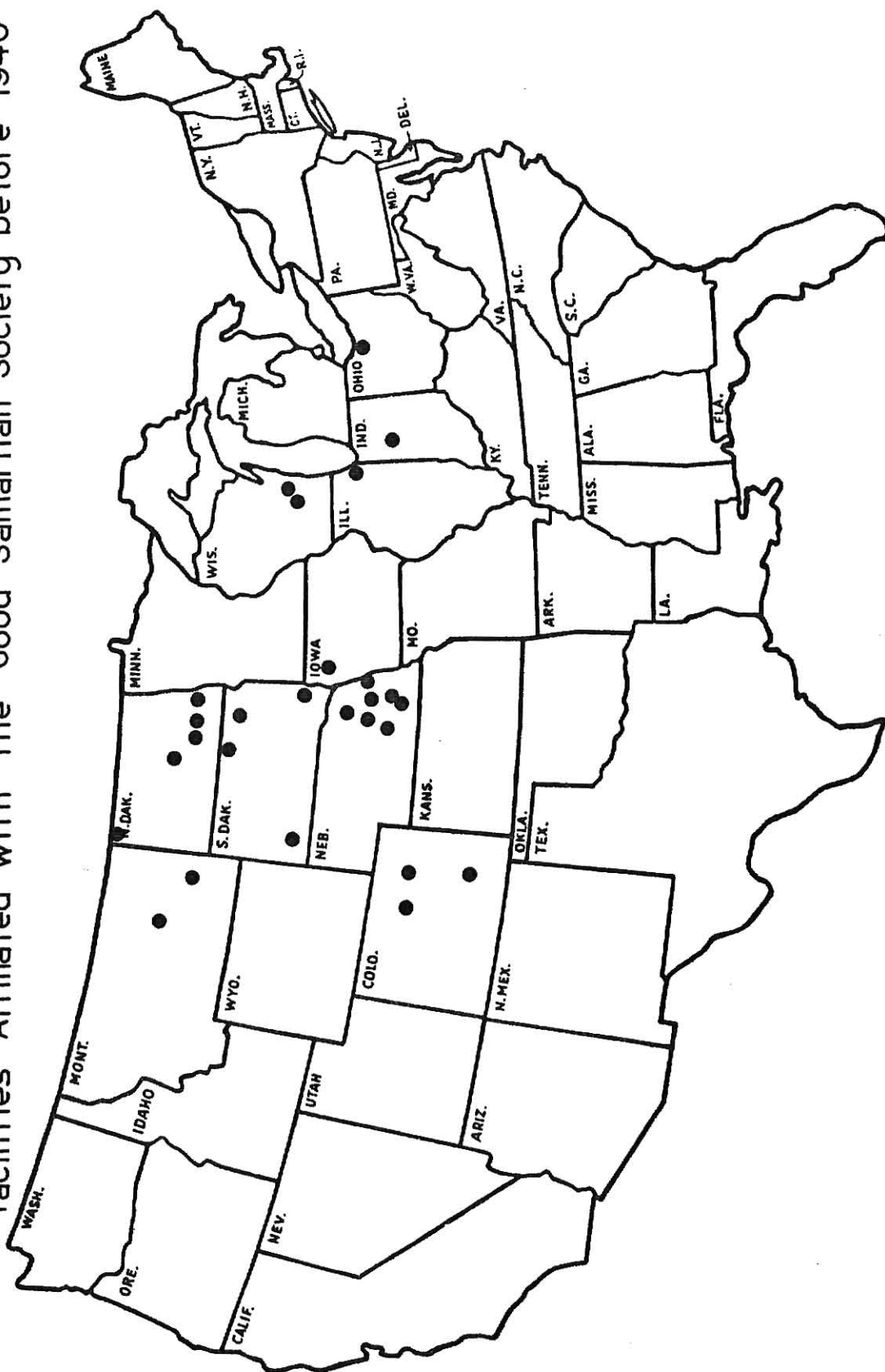
Ohio
Williston

Indiana
Lafayette

Illinois
Chicago

PLATE VI

Facilities Affiliated with the Good Samaritan Society before 1940



CHAPTER IV

SURVIVAL 1942 TO 1952

"Every knock is a boost."

August J. Hoeger, Sr.

The years immediately following the breakup of the original Good Samaritan Society into Lutheran Hospitals and Homes and the remaining Good Samaritan Society were mainly a "holding operation" for "Dad" Hoeger.¹ The facilities left to Hoeger were in poor finances and seemed those least likely to survive: Ambrose and Arthur, North Dakota, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Greeley, Colorado.² It was a time of rebuilding the organization and some expansion did occur.

The Board Minutes for the period from 1940 to 1948 are missing. The Sunshine publication continued although not all copies for these years are present in the archives of the Good Samaritan Society.

'Dad' began rebuilding in his usual fashion; always risking, working on a shoestring budget, borrowing, praying, constantly running into obstacles, asking for extended credit, praying, moving forward, and praying. 'Every knock is a boost,' he would say. He carefully stored the Society's records in the closet of his home and his office was usually in his vest pocket or his car.³

¹John Hoeger, interview.

²Board Minutes, June 18, 1972.

³Lifetime.

Amelia Hoeger recalls a humorous incident about her husband's office when Irv Chell came to visit.

Chell came to the door and he said, 'Could I see Dad's office?' At that time it was in my clothes closet, you know. (I said,) 'I should say not.' I don't know why I said that. He must have thought Dad had some wonderful organization. We had a lot of fun about that.⁴

In his rebuilding "Dad" selected employees who were "heart and soul" with him and whom he felt were called to this service.⁵ The depression was over and there was a growing awareness of the need for services to the elderly. The Society began to grow from town to town, mainly serving rural areas.

The war did touch the Good Samaritan Society in various ways. A former Good Samaritan nurse went to New Guinea as a missionary and was victim of World War II as was her husband.⁶

There were shortages of many commodities during the war. Also help was difficult to find. This may have prompted "Dad" to sponsor some fifty persons from Latvia to come to America at the close of the war. Of these persons only one couple, the Rheinfelds, remained with the Society. Most of them were evidently accustomed to a more aristocratic way of life than the Hoeger's life of service. Mrs. Hoeger remembered one requesting maid service, "Wo ist die Magd?"⁷

⁴Amelia Hoeger.

⁵Letter from A. J. Hoeger to Walter Keller.

⁶Sunshine, Arthur, North Dakota, XXII (June, 1944).

⁷Amelia Hoeger.

Despite the problems, a 1945 edition of the Sunshine newsletter carried the headline "Still going Ahead."

There is a shortage of help everywhere; there is a shortage of necessary furniture, beds, bedding, washing machines and frigidaires, so in the last years we have not opened very many new Homes, but that does not mean that we are folding our hands and doing nothing. The need for Homes for the aged is too great so that we cannot sit idle and wait for better days. We have opened some homes . . .⁸

Although his first love had been serving youth, "Dad" apparently foresaw that care for children would be better done through foster homes and other services. He observed that the greatest need was developing in the area of geriatric care and concentrated on this.⁹ The farm facilities at Arthur continued in service to epileptics, crippled and feeble-minded. "Dad" worked incessantly with the drive of a man with a vision.

"Dad" continued to guard against becoming top heavy in management which he felt had contributed to the breakup in 1939. With the renewed growth of the Good Samaritan Society some help was required. Reverend E. M. Mueller became his assistant superintendent.¹⁰

Thus "Dad" had more time to investigate facilities offered for sale. Where community interest in a home for the aged was great enough to arouse financial support, homes were opened.

Five additional facilities were opened by the year 1945,

⁸Lifetime.

⁹August J. Hoeger, Jr.

¹⁰August J. Hoeger, Jr.

located in the state of North Dakota: Lakota, Devils Lake, Ambrose, Aneta and Parkston. In 1946 a new facility was opened in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In 1947 Tyndall, South Dakota and Mason City, Iowa were added, but none in 1948. A facility at Groton, South Dakota, was leased in 1949.¹¹

The financial report of 1950 showed total assets of over a million dollars with an indebtedness of \$139,000. Also, the Society owned over fourteen hundred acres of farm land.¹²

By 1952, thirty-two institutions were operated by the Good Samaritan Society, most all homes for the aged. Additional locations were at Cresco, Laurens, Rockford, Rockwell, Waukon, and West Union, Iowa; Ellsworth, Olathe, and St. Francis, Kansas; Clearbrook, Gaylord, Luverne, Pelican Rapids, and Warren, Minnesota; Kearney, Nebraska; Elgin, Hillsboro, Mapleton and Parkston, North Dakota.¹³

The Society had grown large enough that Reverend Hoeger suggested district divisions in 1952. He proposed the following divisions: Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota, and Central (Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado).¹⁴

"Dad" was firmly convinced that the work of the Society would grow as people became aware of its program.

¹¹The Good Samaritan Society, promotional booklet, 1952.

¹²Annual Report, Good Samaritan Society, 1950.

¹³The Good Samaritan Society, promotional booklet, 1952.

¹⁴Annual Report, Good Samaritan Society, 1952.

This past summer we again had many visitors at Arthur. Most of them generally say, if only more people could and would come and see this noble work, we are sure your financial problems would be taken care of. To see Christian workers, devoting their time to these poor, suffering people, to see their kindness and patience with them and to see how happy and contented they all are, ought to make everyone willing to share in this work.¹⁵

The survival of the Good Samaritan Society hung by a bare thread after the division in 1940. That it survived is testimony to the hope of "Dad" Hoeger.

Hope is the Society's middle name. In the life of a Christian even the valleys are on higher ground. Dad preached a message of hope in Christ. He was a living symbol of hope. He could see hope in everyone, everything. He could see the world filled to bursting with possibilities.¹⁶

¹⁵Sunshine, Arthur, North Dakota, XV (September, 1937).

¹⁶Lifetime.

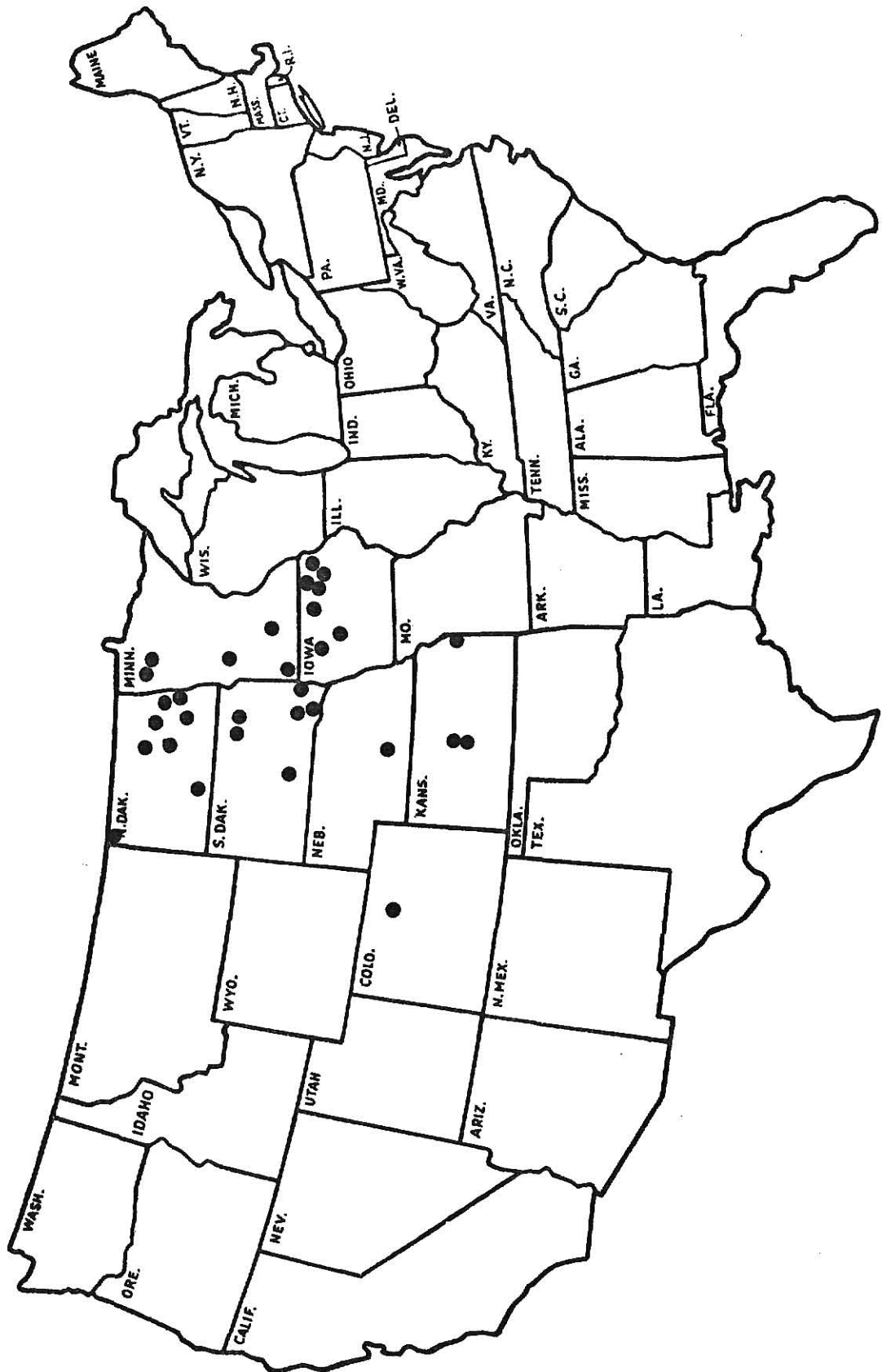
EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII

Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1952

North Dakota	Arthur, Ambrose, Aneta, Devil's Lake, Elgin Hillsboro, Mapleton, Lakota
South Dakota	Aberdeen, Groton, Parkston, Sioux Falls, Tyndall, White River
Minnesota	Gaylord, Clearbrook, Luverne, Warren, Pelican Rapids
Iowa	Cresco, Laurens, Mason City, Rockford, Rockwell, Waukon, West Union
Kansas	Ellsworth, Olathe, St. Francis
Nebraska	Kearney
Colorado	Greeley

PLATE VII

Good Samaritan Facilities in 1952



CHAPTER V

GROWTH 1952 TO 1962

"A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."
Isaiah 60:22

The ten years from 1952 to 1962 of the Good Samaritan Society were years of good growth with emphasis on geriatric care. These years saw the emergence of a modern business administration operation from a "bootstrap operation."

A majority of facilities started by Good Samaritan during this time were conversions of old homes, hospitals and even hotels to homes for the aged. Few were up to modern standards. For example, a letter from Doctor Albert J. Chesley of the Minnesota Department of Health on December 10, 1953, demanded remodeling of the five institutions operated by the Good Samaritan Society in Minnesota.¹

But most of the institutions founded were started where there had previously been none at all. A growing number of communities in rural areas became concerned with the plight of elderly in their towns. Looking for someone to help them in their concern, an increasing number of communities offered land and money to the Good Samaritan Society to establish and maintain facilities.

¹Letter from Dr. Albert J. Chesley to Rev. August Hoeger, Dec. 10, 1953.

In the late 1950's a variety of buildings were taken over for use as homes for the aged. Hotels were used, as in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, and Frederick, Oklahoma. A naval air base hospital was taken over at Ottumwa, Iowa. Parkston, South Dakota had been a Hutterite colony abandoned since 1918 when the Hutterites emigrated to Canada to avoid service in World War I. A Pawnee Indian boarding school was purchased at Pawnee, Oklahoma for conversion to a home for the aged. A millionaire's mansion was purchased at Corona, California.² Another Indian school was purchased at Pipestone, Minnesota to be used as an old age home.³

A large complex of fifty acres of land with old barrack buildings that could provide room for five hundred persons was purchased from the city of Hastings, Nebraska.⁴ In 1958, after remodeling these buildings, a "Good Samaritan Village" was developed with a variety of levels of care for the elderly.⁵

A growing number of new facilities designed and intended for use specifically for the elderly were also being built. In 1956 such modern homes were opened at Esterville, Iowa and Jackson, Minnesota.⁶

The Society remained a non-profit corporation whose

²Good Samaritan Directory of Homes.

³Board Minutes, May 7, 1958.

⁴Board Minutes, Oct. 14, 1957.

⁵Board Minutes, Aug. 28, 1958.

⁶Directory.

employees and management were mostly Lutheran; however, no actual relationship existed with any Lutheran Synod. An offer was made by the American Lutheran Church to establish a relationship in 1959.⁷ The American Lutheran Church requested a reorganization of the Society to give control of the various facilities to local Lutheran control. When this proposal was rejected by the Society, the offer was withdrawn.⁸ In 1961 the Good Samaritan Board passed a resolution to seek a closer relationship with the American Lutheran Church.⁹

Although "Dad" Hoeger maintained a strong leadership of the Society, the growth resulted in an undeniable need for more management. Field men were at first managers or administrators of local institutions who spent some time on the road as regional directors. In 1957 a resolution was passed to provide additional office help for Reverend Hoeger. The field men at the time included Reverend E. M. Mueller for Iowa, Reverend E. H. Adams for Kansas, Clarence Austad for Minnesota and Oscar Deins for Nebraska.¹⁰ In 1959 the field men were relieved as local managers to become fulltime regional men. Operations served by a field man became responsible for his salary.¹¹

⁷Board Minutes, Aug. 23, 1959.

⁸August J. Hoeger, Jr.

⁹Board Minutes, June 7, 1960.

¹⁰Board Minutes, Oct., 14, 1957.

¹¹Board Minutes, Aug. 23, 1959.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VIII

Photo of Good Samaritan Center
Estherville, Iowa

PLATE VIII



"Dad" continued to emphasize spiritual concern as the Society grew in size. A list of qualifications for Good Samaritan workers in 1960 consisted of all religious qualities, such as "To ask the Lord to give you a sincere love for souls."¹²

A board resolution in 1959 showed the following recognition of fair employment practices:

Although the joy of Christian service should be the real reward for working in our Good Samaritan homes, it must be recognized that most of our workers are dependent on the wages we pay them as employees. Therefore we have a Christian obligation to pay them a fair wage in line with the duties they perform.¹³

In addition to the ten previously mentioned, new locations added from 1952 to 1962 included: Albert Lea, Pine River, Windom, Lafayette, Luverne, and Westbrook, Minnesota; Pocahontas, Algona, Holstein, Manson, Rockford, and Davenport, Iowa; Beatrice, Alliance, Arapahoe, and Osceola, Nebraska; Oberlin, Junction City, Dodge City, Lyons, Ellis, Atwood, Goodland, Colby, Lincoln, Parsons, and Winfield, Kansas; Lennox, Scotland, Centerville, Corsica and Miller, South Dakota; Noonan and Mott, North Dakota; Greenacres and Fairfield, Washington; Boise, Idaho; Simla, Colorado; and Hobart, Oklahoma.

The burdens of directing the Good Samaritan Society were growing for Doctor Hoeger, who was seventy-five years of age in 1960. The minutes that year state "Dr. Hoeger asked that the president appoint a committee to select a new general

¹²Board Minutes, June 7, 1960.

¹³Board Minutes, Aug. 28, 1958.

superintendent."¹⁴

The society's rapid rate of growth during these ten years reflects an increasing public awareness for the need for care of the elderly. As communities concerned for their elderly in need of institutional care attempted to find someone to help them provide this care, the Good Samaritan Society benefited from its status as an early pioneer in geriatric care. Where needs and opportunities presented themselves, the Society with its traditional faith accepted the challenge.

¹⁴Board Minutes, June 7, 1960.

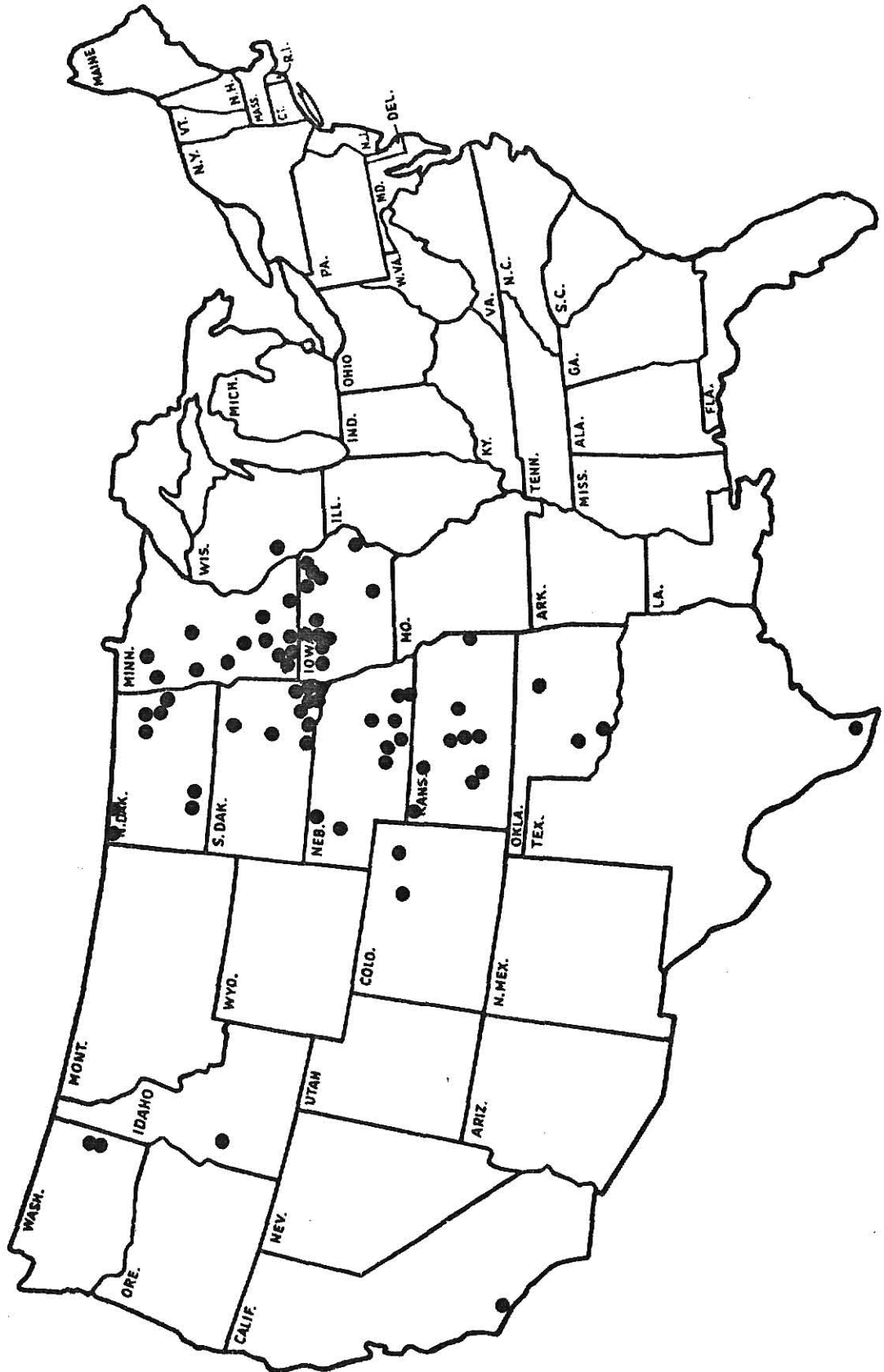
EXPLANATION OF PLATE IX

Map of Good Samaritan Facilities in 1962

North Dakota	Iowa (Cont'd)
Arthur	Rockford
Devil's Lake	Cresco
Mott	West Union
Elgin	Waukon
Ambrose	Ottumwa
Noonon	Davenport
Aneta	
Lakota	Kansas
South Dakota	Ellsworth
Aberdeen	Junction City
Sioux Falls	Olathe
Parkston	Lyons
Lennox	Oberlin
Scotland	Ellis
Tyndall	St. Francis
Corsica	Dodge City
Delmont	Lincoln
Centerville	Nebraska
Miller	Kearney
Minnesota	Gibbon
Warren	Gordon
Clearbrook	Beatrice
Pelican Rapids	Hastings
Paynesville	Wymore
Pikestone	Arapahoe
Pine River	Alliance
Luverne	Osceola
Gaylord	Other States
Lafayette	Greeley, Colorado
Jackson	Simla, Colorado
Windom	Hobart, Oklahoma
Albert Lea	Pawnee, Oklahoma
Iowa	Frederick, Oklahoma
Pocahontas	Greenacres, Washington
Lauverna	Fairfield, Washington
Holstine	Corona, California
Manson	Elsa, Texas
Algona	Boise, Idaho
Estherville	Dallas, Wisconsin

PLATE IX

Good Samaritan Facilities in 1962



CHAPTER VI

EXPANSION 1962 TO 1972

"God buries His workmen, but carries out His work."
John Wesley's Epitaph

In 1963 the office for the Good Samaritan Society was moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sioux Falls provided a more central location for the organization than Fargo. Reverend August J. Hoeger, Jr., better known as Augie, came as Executive Director. "Dad" remained as General Superintendent of the Society. To begin with the office was in the basement of Augie's home.

Augie's background was an academic one, having served as a campus minister and college teacher. Reverend M. Adams of the Society approached Augie about the position of Executive Director. Apparently Adams felt he was next in line for the position and when Augie unexpectedly accepted, Adams resigned suddenly.¹

Augie's management brought more order and arrangement for solid development. Previously the Society had operated as a kind of "little kingdom." Now there was increased centralization and a new acceptance of the real management problems of a larger operation.²

¹August J. Hoeger, Jr.

²Conlon.

However "Dad" remained more than a figurehead of the Society. He continued to mold the direction of the Society, constantly warning of the danger of making the physical more important than the spiritual. "If he was out to pasture, 'Dad' still exercised a lot of muscle."³

In the fifth decade of the Good Samaritan's history, Americans evidenced a growing awareness of the need for care for the elderly. The nursing home industry became a recognized specialization in the health care field. With this came new types of government assistance and higher levels of standards for better patient care.

Examples of increasing concern for the elderly included the provisions for nursing home care attached to the Medicare bill, which was originally intended for doctor and hospital costs. Only about ten percent of the facilities of the Society have participated in this program. The Medicaid program has been of greater benefit to nursing homes and all Good Samaritan homes entered this program. These programs have been conducive to better patient care.⁴

During the decade more and more communities offered funds to the Good Samaritan Society to start nursing homes in their communities. After the Society was invited into a community, a feasibility study is made. A pattern of requesting capital of a thousand dollars per bed was established. The Society has

³Gorsuch.

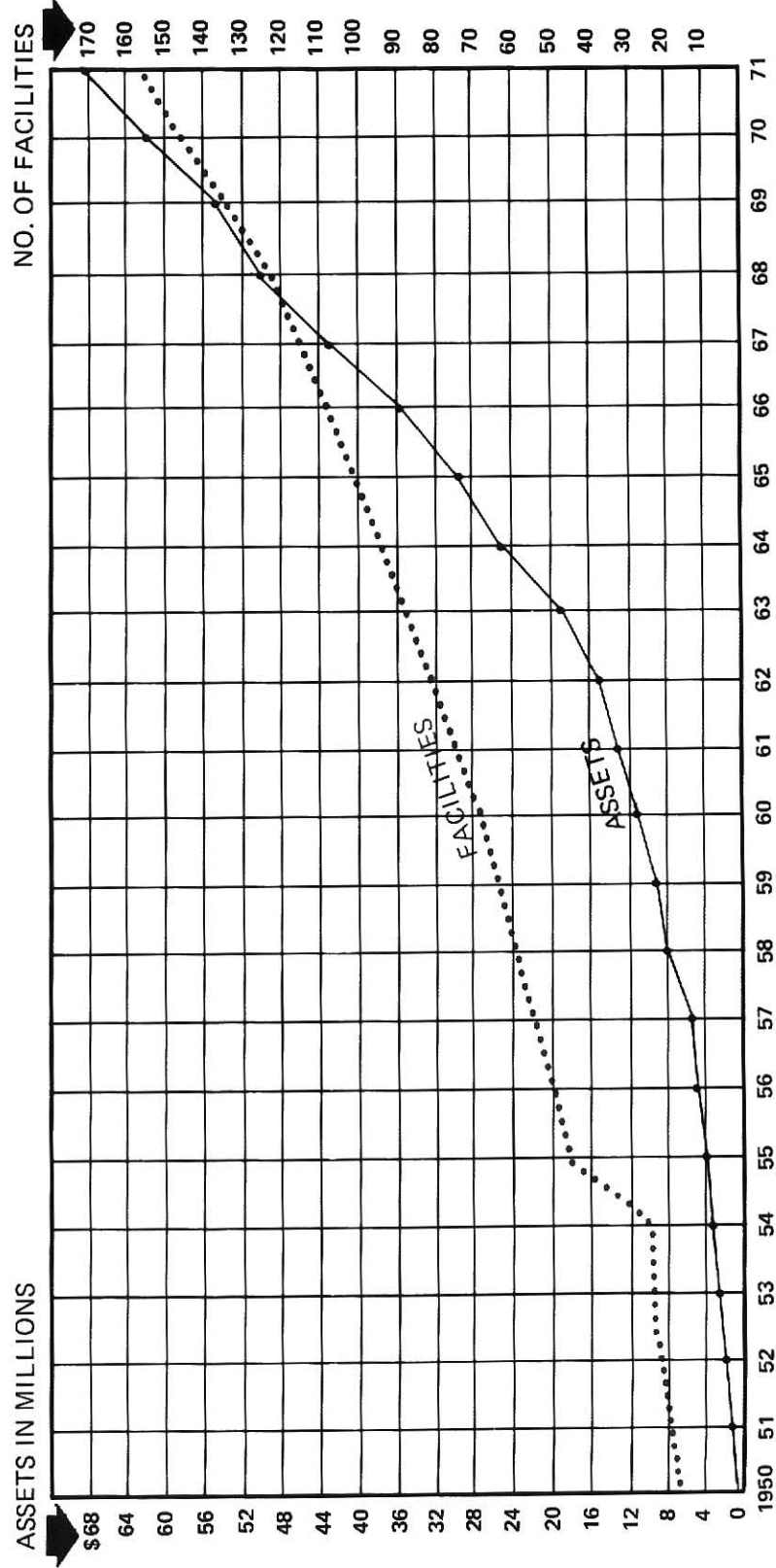
⁴Conlon.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE X

Graph of growth of
Good Samaritan Facilities

PLATE X

20 Years History & Growth



never started a new project except by invitation.⁵ In the period from August of 1969 to August of 1970, donations amounted to \$528,000.⁶

This program of involving the local community has benefited both the Society and the local community. The early years for a new facility were often deficit years, since even a few patients require a full staff and expenses could not be paid out of current income. Because of these problems a number of locally owned nursing homes have been turned over to the Society for management. In 1972 some twenty-two homes were so operated by the Society.

The Society has also been assisted in a number of projects through federal funds. At Greeley, Colorado, for example, \$600,000 was received through the Hill-Burton program for the seven story tower of the Bonnell Good Samaritan Center.⁷

In earlier days, John Hoeger remembered his father filling out withholding forms at night.⁸ After his brother, Augie became Executive Director, bookkeeping was contracted to a computer firm. When the new Good Samaritan central office was built in 1969 in Sioux Falls, a complete computer department was included. Erv Chell, a former missionary to India who had

⁵Board Minutes, June 14, 1971.

⁶Expansion Report, Board Minutes, Aug. 7, 1970.

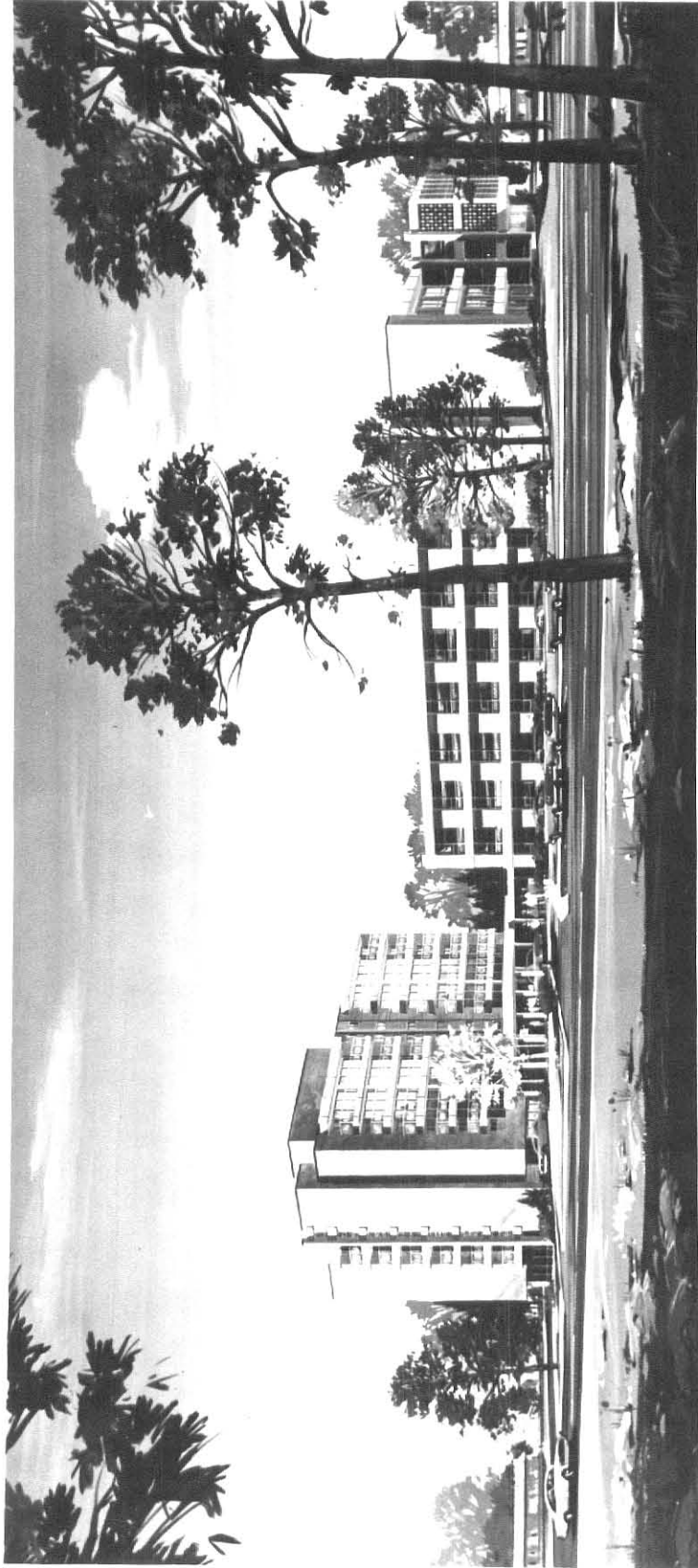
⁷The Good Samaritan III (August, 1970).

⁸John Hoeger, interview.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XI

Photo of Bonnell
Good Samaritan Center at
Greeley, Colorado

PLATE XI



spent some years with the Society, was trained to take over this department.

Other efforts have been made to upgrade business practices. Starting in 1965, budgets have been prepared for each facility to provide goals and comparisons of facilities.⁹

In addition to computer technology, Augie's leadership brought in a number of key management people. Most of these men, like Erv Chell, have come from within the ranks of the Good Samaritan organization. Also, Ray Conlon, Director of Development and Purchasing, developed direct from factory purchasing. John Rude, Public Relations Director, made visits to ghetto areas in Chicago and Kansas City to explore the possibility of projects for the care of elderly.¹⁰

The new facilities built by the Good Samaritan Society were constructed by Nursing Home Builders of Broken Bow, Nebraska. In 1969 Ray Brown, president of the company, reported that more than one hundred new facilities had been constructed by his firm for the Society. He reported that cost comparisons showed their costs to be below national averages.¹¹

There has been much soul searching with the management of the Good Samaritan Society regarding future directions and the amount of growth. Although a ratio of sixty to forty of assets to indebtedness has been established as a guideline for maxi-

⁹Board Minutes, Nov. 28, 1967.

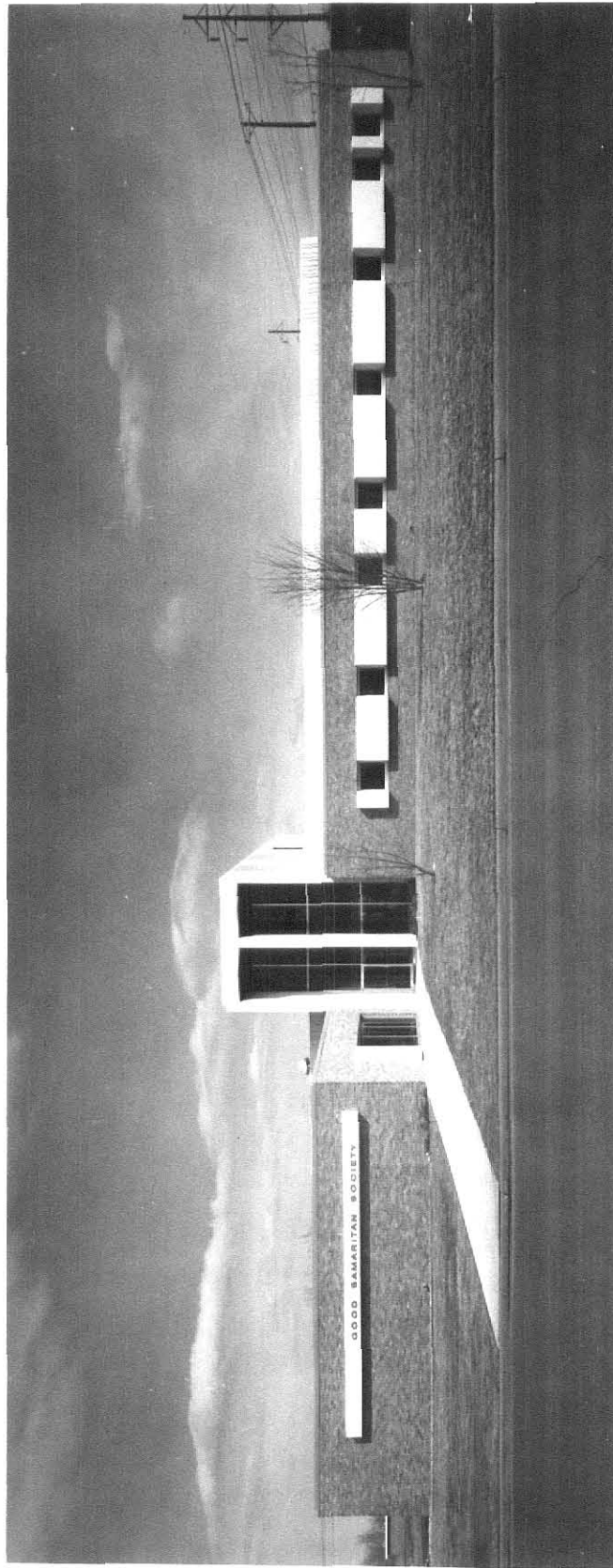
¹⁰Board Minutes, Nov. 20, 1970.

¹¹Board Minutes, Nov. 24, 1969.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XII

Photo of Central Office
Good Samaritan Society,
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

PLATE XII



mum indebtedness,¹² no limits as to size have been set for the Society. There is a strong feeling that the Society with its religious emphasis and increasing expertise in geriatric care can offer a real contribution in care for the elderly and that growth should be in accordance with needs.

Statements by the Board of Directors in 1971 reaffirmed policy in the following manner:

Christian concept—that is a paramount concern of the Society; everything is based on that assumption. Business-like approach on business affairs of the corporation is not inconsistent with Christian approach. . . .

As guardians of the great assets of this organization, we are responsible to so few directly; indirectly we are responsible to so many—patients, relatives, church that spawned us. Conversely, fear of making mistakes could impede our meeting areas of need. We need to maintain maneuverability; Dad would have used the word 'elbow-room.'¹³

There has been an increasing concern for services outside the field of geriatric care. Ray Conlon invited consideration into expanded areas of service such as alcoholism, drug abuse, retarded children, mentally disturbed adults, and day care centers.¹⁴

In 1969 Project Vietnam was started as an overseas service arm of the Society. Its object is to support and maintain child care and related missionary projects in war torn Vietnam.¹⁵

¹²August J. Hoeger, Jr.

¹³Board Minutes, June 13, 1971.

¹⁴Board Minutes, Nov. 16, 1972.

¹⁵Board Minutes, June 15, 1969.

A Good Samaritan Boys Home was established in Corona, California, in 1967. This program has developed into one of the most progressive child care programs in the state of California. By 1971 it was serving over one hundred troubled and homeless boys ages eleven through eighteen. William Steiner was the first administrator to develop this work. The Society now operates six such facilities in California. Boys are referred to a home by welfare and probation departments.¹⁶ The Society also maintains the Jim River Ranch in North Dakota offering camping experience to under privileged youth.¹⁷

The Good Samaritan Society has engaged in services to aging persons outside the nursing homes long before such programs, like meals on wheels, reached national attention. For a number of years "Dad" tried to develop a volunteer program among retired and older persons to assist elderly persons needing help. He felt it should be a natural thing for elderly to help other older folks less able to take care of themselves. "Dad" Hoeger's ideas of 'Helpers' Clubs' dating back to 1961 was essentially what others are now advocating."¹⁸

With the great growth of the Society, twenty-nine administrators and six interns were hired in 1971.¹⁹ But with the

¹⁶The Good Samaritan, IV (April, 1971).

¹⁷Board Minutes, June 14, 1971.

¹⁸Board Minutes, June 18, 1972.

¹⁹Board Minutes, June 18, 1972.

new licensure laws for administrators as part of Medicaid, maintaining only Lutheran administrators became unfeasible. Therefore in 1971, voting rights were extended to non-Lutheran administrators. At the same time the Lutheran identity of the Society was maintained by requiring that Board Members and Regional Directors must be Lutheran.²⁰ There remains a strict emphasis vigorously retaining the religious ideals upon which the Society was founded.

In keeping with "Dad" Hoeger's wishes not to become too heavy, the Society has not gone into fund raising or other areas which would require more men.²¹ In 1972 the staff members of the central office were: Executive Director August J. Hoeger, Jr., Associate Director John Hoeger, Accounting Director Erv Chell, Purchasing Director Ray Conlon, Public Relations Director John Rude, and Ed Kilen, Director of Development of Adult Services. In addition there were seven regional directors: Henry Foege, Nebraska; Ron Klipping, Minnesota; Wayne Muth, midwestern states; Craig De La Barre, Iowa; Charles Peterson, South Dakota; David Walters, Kansas; and Mel Risting, western states.²²

There is much loyalty and devotedness among employees of the Society. In November of 1972 Bertha Christian Millers completed forty-five years of service and many others have long-

²⁰Board Minutes, Aug. 12, 1971.

²¹Board Minutes, June 14, 1971.

²²Sioux Smoke Signals (Dec., 1972).

time service records.²³ Violet Baugatz has been with the Society since 1931. She chose to remain with the Society after the division in 1939, "Because of Dad's interest in patient care."²⁴ Strangely, however, one of the facilities of the Society has voted for unionization.²⁵

On October 8, 1970 "Dad" Hoeger passed away at the golden age of eighty five. He remained active as General Superintendent to his death.

Back where it all began, Dad's body was placed in the ground in his beloved Arthur cemetery along with the marked and unmarked graves of the friends he loved so much. The life time of Dad Hoeger has affected thousands of individuals in many significant ways.²⁶

Reminiscences always emphasize his sincerity and human qualities. For example one writer recalled:

I first met that delightful man called "Dad" Hoeger in Perkins Pancake House in Fargo, North Dakota. He ate there occasionally and once when I also was there, the owner introduced me to Dr. August Hoeger.

It hardly seemed like the place to meet such a distinguished man. Meetings with such personages should take place in formal rooms surrounded by ceremony. Yet amid strawberry pancakes and pots of coffee, we shook hands and said hello.

As I now look back, I realize that is precisely the way to have met Dad Hoeger. Indeed, he was a distinguished man. But what made him so was his

²³Board Minutes, Nov. 16, 1972.

²⁴Baugatz.

²⁵Board Minutes, Nov. 16, 1972.

²⁶Lifetime.

traveling along the ordinary paths of life seeking to help a lot of ordinary people.²⁷

As of December 31, 1972, one hundred and forty-three Good Samaritan Centers had a total liability and net worth of \$73,839,074.93.²⁸ In addition over twenty non-owned facilities were managed by the Society. When asked if they were the largest corporation in geriatric care, a spokesman for the Society replied, "We don't know and we're really not interested in that. Our concern is about the quality of care we provide."²⁹

Mrs. Dorothy Fowler, administrator of the center at Arthur, showed the general attitude when she said, "Good Samaritan is not a center. It's people."³⁰ "Dad" Hoeger's philosophy for the Society remains strong.

Much has been said and written about the life of this great man. My most memorable experience was in the year 1961 at an obsolete railroad station in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was on a sunny August day that I first became acquainted with Dad Hoeger. He spoke in detail of the history and philosophy of the Good Samaritan Society and what he expected from his managers. I remember his great emphasis that a Good Samaritan Home is different from other nursing homes. He mentioned, 'In a Good Samaritan Home the manager must love the Lord God.' This love is reflected in the Christian care provided to the resident on an individual basis. I recall during our entire conversation of Dad Hoeger having a pencil and envelope in his hand. Little did I know at that time the significance and importance of the pencil and envelope. After a few short months with

²⁷The Good Samaritan, V (August, 1972).

²⁸Good Samaritan Society Balance Sheet, Dec. 31, 1972.

²⁹Statement by Ray Conlon, C.H.C.A. Financial Statement Seminar, Denver, Colorado, Nov. 28, 1972.

³⁰"Where Everybody Is Someone," Case and Counsel, V (Sept., 1970), p. 5.

the Society I was amazed, with all Dad Hoeger's duties and varied experiences, his office was that simple home at Fargo, North Dakota, sufficient for his needs.

Dad Hoeger retained throughout his lifetime a natural simplicity of outlook which enabled him to express in common tones his faith in God, and with a special eloquence the thoughts and feelings of humble expression to the common man. Dad possessed a quiet humor, but above that, he had the wisdom and real comprehension of the world around him.

In the words of Dad Hoeger, 'The outstanding characteristic of our work must be the Christian spirit pervading in the homes, not the fine buildings and modern equipment found in time.'³¹

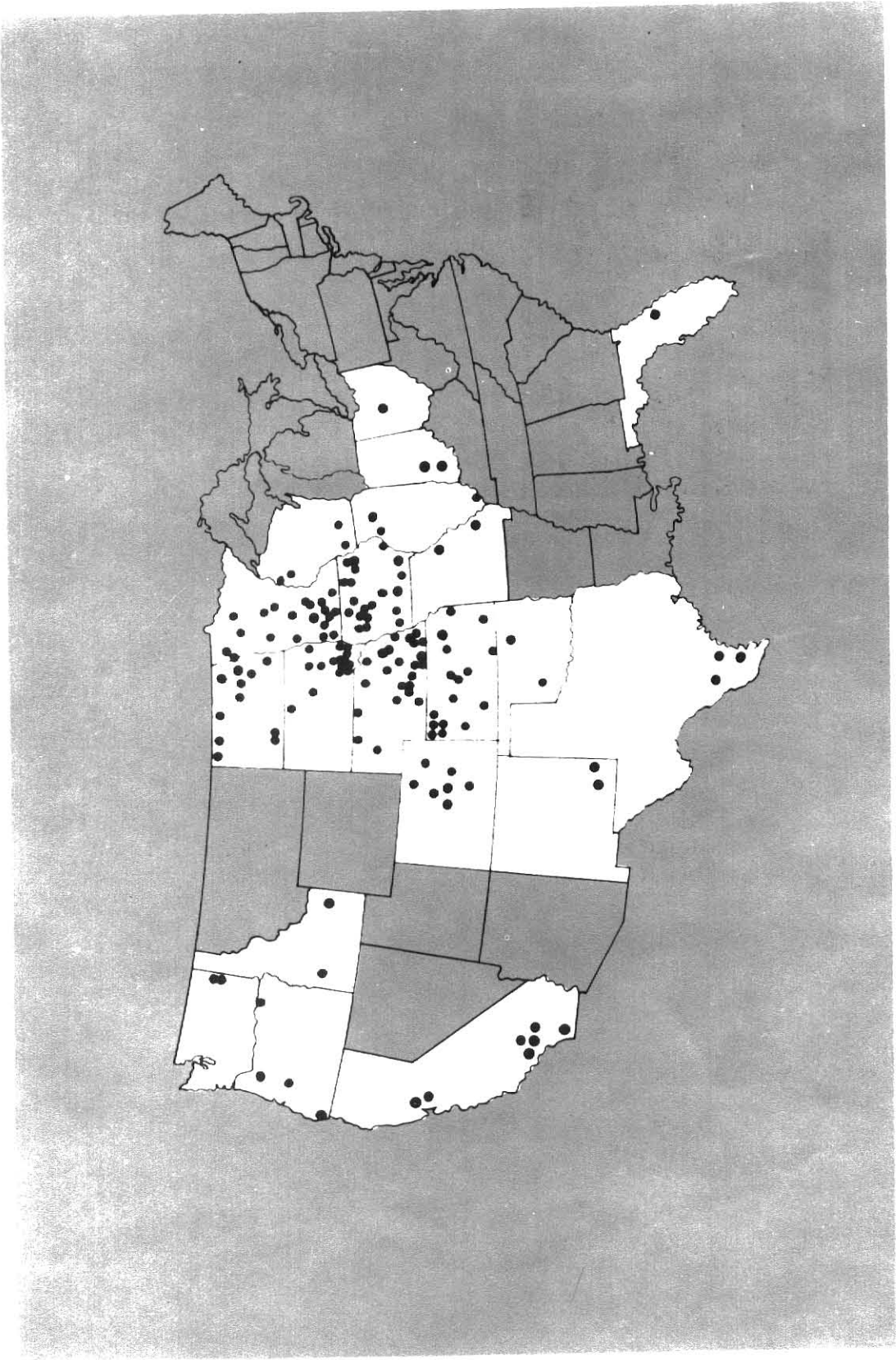
³¹David Brewer, "Administrator's Desk," Bonnell Torch, Bonnell Good Samaritan Center, Greeley, Colorado (Dec., 1970), p. 2.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIII

Facilities Operated by Good Samaritan Society in 1972

California	Corona; El Cajon; Fair Oaks; Grapewin; Prado; Rancho Cordova; Riverside; Upland.
Colorado	Arvada; Colorado Springs; Denver; Englewood; Fort Collins; Greeley; Loveland; Simla; Yuma.
Florida	Daytona Beach.
Idaho	Boise; Idaho Falls.
Illinois	Geneseo; Metropolis; Mount Carroll; Prophetstown.
Indiana	Jasonville; Jasper.
Iowa	Algona; Davenport; Des Moines; Estherville; Fontanelle; George; Hostein; Indianola; Keosauqua; Laurens; LeMars; Newell; Ottumwa; Pocahontas; Postville; Red Oak; Rockford; St. Ansgar; Villisca; Waukon; Veteran's Memorial Hospital, Waukon; West Union Nursing; West Union Custodial; Palmer Memorial Hospital, West Union.
Kansas	Atwood; Colby; Dodge City; Ellis; Ellsworth; Goodland; Junction City; Leoti; Lincoln; Lyons; Oberlin; Olathe; Parsons; St. Francis; Wamego; Winfield.
Minnesota	Albert Lea; Arlington; Brainerd; Bethany Center, Brainerd; Clearbrook; Clinton; East Grand Forks; Gaylord; Jackson; Kelliher; Lafayette; Luverne; Mountain Lake; Paynesville; Pelican Rapids; Pine River; Pipestone; St. James; Warren; Westbrook; Windom.
Missouri	Cape Girardeau, Hannibal.
Nebraska	Albion; Alliance; Arapahoe; Atkinson; Auburn; Beatrice; Bloomfield; Callaway; Deshler; Gibbon; Gordon; Hastings; Humboldt; St. John's Center, Kearney; St. Luke's Center, Kearney; Millard; Nelson; Osceola; Ravenna; Scribner; Superior; Syracuse; Community Hospital, Syracuse; Valentine; Wood River; Wymore.
New Mexico	Artesia; Lovington.
North Dakota	Aneta; Arthur; Bottineau; Crosby; Devil's Lake; Elgin; Lakota; Larimore; Mott; Noonan; Osnabrock.
Ohio	Arlington
Oklahoma	Hobart; Pawnee.
Oregon	Brookings; Eugene; Hermiston; Mount Angel.
South Dakota	Canistota; Canton; Centerville; Clear Lake; Deuel County Memorial Hospital, Clear Lake; Corsica; DeSmet; Howard; Lennox; Miller; New Underwood; Parkston; Parkston Country; Scotland; Selby; Sioux Falls; Good Samaritan Village, Sioux Falls; Tripp; Tyndall; Wagner.
Texas	Brownsville; Harlingen; McAllen.
Washington	Fairfield; Green acres.
Wisconsin	Fennimore; Lodi; Siren; St. Croix Falls.

PLATE XIII



CHAPTER VII

FUTURE

"In Christ's love everyone is someone;
Fifty years of service and we have just begun."
Good Samaritan Fiftieth Anniversary Motto

The phenomonal success of the first fifty years of the Good Samaritan Society is something of an enigma. Cynics might consider "Dad" Hoeger's leadership a management by default. His informal and loose business practices aroused concern and apprehension resulting in the division of 1939. His management was informal, trusting people to the hilt.

Even the new office building in Sioux Falls was caricatured by one observer as "a country kitchen." Each day starts with daily devotions around a large coffee table. As "Dad" would meet over a cup of coffee at one of the old homes, management decisions are still made informally amidst friendly surroundings.¹

There is a uniqueness here that is perhaps only understood in knowing something of the founder of the Society. His management may not have been as haphazard as it seemed. In fact it may have been ahead of its time. Things get done through persons of conviction.² Not only did "Dad" have strong convic-

¹Gorsuch.

²Robert Townsend, Up the Organization (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 44.

tions, but he selected men and women who answered his call for a radical response in discipleship.

Do you consider it an honor, yes a great privilege to care for the aged? To look upon them as Christ's mother and brothers? 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my bretheren, ye have done it unto me.' (Matthew 25:40).

What do you expect for your work? Is it enough that you are privileged to serve in His name? Or do you expect to get rich, to receive much honor?

Are you too good for this work? Think of Christ as He put a towel about Himself and kneeled down to wash His disciples' feet. He is God and Lord of all. Who are you? Wouldn't you like to take Him as your example and follow His steps? He would like to have you as His examples: you are to take His place.³

Mrs. Hoeger cited two important aspects of "Dad" as his trust in God and his trust in man.⁴ Because he trusted his managers with authority, they were given the incentive to achieve.⁵ Each facility was locally autonomous contrary to business practice fifty years ago. Now modern systems of management advocate that decisions should be made as low as possible in an organization.⁶ Modern companies such as Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing practice this in their management with an inversion of the classical business pyramid.

"Dad" always remained on a common level with all, employees and residents alike. His favorite technique of checking up

³"Would You Like to Be a Real Good Samaritan?" Memorandum from "Dad" Hoeger, undated.

⁴Amelia Hoeger.

⁵Agnes Hoeger.

⁶R. Townsend, p. 45.

on one of the Good Samaritan facilities was to stop by unexpectedly and visit with the residents, many of whom were unaware who he was. By so doing he learned much about the administration and staff of the facility. The impact of this common touch was tremendous.⁷ In spite of his lifelong difficulty with language he was very effective in communicating his ideas and inspiring others.

There are many contributing factors to the success of the Good Samaritan Society. The main ones are: (1) "Dad" early recognized the growing need for care of the elderly in our century. (2) During the depression years, facilities could be acquired at bargain prices. (3) Thousands of persons were willing to give of their labor and financial support because of their great concern for the elderly. (4) Levels of public support for nursing home care have increased. (5) Local community support and federal government programs have assisted in health care construction.

But perhaps the greatest reason for the Society's continued existence and success is the unique combinations of faith, determination, and flexibility in one man.

The key to the future success of the Society will be adaptability to the challenges of change. One senses this quality in hearing regional directors of the Society discussing new ways of being of service to the community. Good Samaritan Centers are being used for day care centers, bringing the young

⁷Richard C. Anderson, Management Strategies (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 1.

into the geriatric facility to serve the greater community. New possibilities of services to the elderly outside the institution are being explored. "A nursing home can be the conscience of the community to its elderly."⁸

August John Hoeger, Senior, constantly searched for new ways of fulfilling his faith. Reflecting upon "Dad" Hoeger and the Society, comparing earlier days to today, one person stated:

The Hoeger family was growing; the Society was growing; and God continued to answer his simple day-by-day prayer, 'Lord what do you want of me today?' Under the strong leadership of those who picked up the reins from August Hoeger, Sr., the Society continues to pray the simple prayer, 'Lord, what do you want of me today?' and continues to stay open to new directions. . . .

The message of Dad's life is clear for all who care to see it. It matters not who you are, young or old, strong or weak, handicapped or able, educated or not; all you need to do is tell the Lord I go where you want me to go!⁹

⁸Board Minutes, Aug. 9, 1971.

⁹Lifetime.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Documentary Materials

- Chesley, Dr. Albert J. Letter to Rev. August Hoeger. December 10, 1953. Good Samaritan Society Archives, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Good Samaritan Society. Annual Reports. Good Samaritan Society Central Office, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Good Samaritan Society Balance Sheet. December 31, 1972. Good Samaritan Society Central Office, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Good Samaritan Society Board of Directors Meeting. Minutes from 1922 to 1972. Good Samaritan Society Central Office, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Good Samaritan Society Directory of Homes. Good Samaritan Society Central Office, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Good Samaritan Society. Original Articles of Incorporation. 1922. Good Samaritan Society Central Office, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Hoeger, August J., Sr. Letter to Walter Keller. June 24, 1940. Good Samaritan Society Archives, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Hoeger, Maria. "My Past." Letter to August J. Hoeger. Undated (estimated 1911).
- Hoeger, Maria. "Daybook 1866," diary.

2. Government Documents and Publications of Learned Institutions

- Charitable Research Foundation, Inc. Effective Standards for Institutional Care of the Infirm Aged. Wilmington, Delaware: Charitable Research Foundation. 1959.
- Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. Population and the American Future. New York: New American Library, March, 1972.

- U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service. Hospital Discharges and Length of Stay, 1958-1960: Health Statistics from the U.S. National Health Survey. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O. (U.S.P.H.S. Publication #584-04), 1962.
- U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service. National Health Survey Chronic Conditions Causing Limitations of Activities, U.S. July 59-61. Health Statistics Series B., No. 36. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O. 1962.

3. Books

- Anderson, Richard C. Management Strategies. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.
- Asaacs, Bernard. Survival of the Unfittest. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Barron, Milton L. The Aging American: An Introduction to Social Gerontology and Geriatrics. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961.
- Beatty, Ralph P. The Senior Citizen. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1969.
- Bodensieck, Julius, ed. Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church. 3 volumes. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965.
- Booth, Charles. Aged Poor in England and Wales: Condition. New York: Macmillan, 1894.
- Bradfield, Margaret, trans. City of Mercy: The Story of Bethel. Bielefeld: Thomas-Druck, 1964.
- Bradfield, Margaret, trans. The Good Samaritan: The Life and Work of Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1961.
- Dasco, Michael M. Restorative Medicine in Geriatrics. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1963.
- Jaeger, Dorteia. The Aged Ill. Durham, Duke University Press, North Carolina, 1966.
- Kutscher, Austin H. Death and Bereavement. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1969.
- Metchnikoff, Elie. The Prolongation of Life. English trans. ed. P. Chalmers Mitchell. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908.

- Miller, Dulcy B. The Extended Care Facility: A Guide to Operation and Management. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.
- Palmore, Erdman, ed. Normal Aging: Reports from the Duke Longitudinal Study 1955-1969. Durham: Duke University Press, 1970.
- Putnam, Jackson K. Old Age Politics in California from Richardson to Reagon. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970.
- Rogers, Wesley Wiley. General Administration in the Nursing Home. Waco, Texas: Davis Brothers, 1971.
- Smigel, Joseph O. et al. Nursing Home Administration. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1962.
- Smith, Ethel Sabin. The Dynamics of Aging. New York: W.W. Norton, 1956.
- Somers, Anne R. Health Care in Transition: Directions for the Future. Chicago, Illinois: Hospital Research and Educational Trust, 1971.
- Spengler, Joseph J. et al. Social Aspects of Aging. Ed. Ida Harper Simpson. Durham: Duke University Press, 1966.
- Steele, Harold C., and Charles B. Crow. How to Deal with Aging and the Elderly. Strobe Publishers. Huntsville, Alabama: Strobe Publishers, 1970.
- Thomas, William C., Jr. Nursing Homes and Public Policy: Drift and Decision in New York State. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.
- Townsend, Peter. The Last Refuge. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Townsend, Robert. Up the Organization. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970.
- Weiss, Joseph Douglas. Better Buildings for the Aged. New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1969.

4. Journals and Periodicals

- Brewer, David. "Administrator's Desk." Bonnell Torch, Bonnell Good Samaritan Center, Greeley, Colorado. December, 1970.

Freudenstrahlen. German edition of Good Samaritan newsletter.
Arthur, North Dakota.

Good Samaritan, The. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I to V,
1968 to 1972.

Good Samaritan Society, The. Promotional booklet. 1952.

Hoeger, John. "Reflections of Dad," The Good Samaritan. III,
December, 1970.

Journal of the American Geriatric Society, 1969 to 1972.

Lifetime. Good Samaritan Society Fiftieth Anniversary Publication. Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Good Samaritan Society, 1972.

Sioux Smoke Signals. Newsletter of the Good Samaritan Society.
1972, mimeographed.

Sunshine. Arthur, North Dakota. XXII, September.

"Where Everybody is Someone." Counsel and Comment. V,
September, 1970.

5. Interviews and Other Unpublished Sources

Baugatz, Violet. Interview by author at Hastings, Nebraska.
March 3, 1973.

Conlon, Ray. Statement at Colorado Health Care Association
Financial Management Seminar, Denver, Colorado. November
18, 1972.

Gorsuch, Richard. Interview by author at Sioux Falls, South
Dakota. February 2, 1973.

Hoeger, Agnes, Dr. Interview by author at Hastings, Nebraska.
March 3, 1973.

Hoeger, Amelia. Interview by author at Hastings, Nebraska.
March 3, 1973.

Hoeger, August J., Jr. Interview by author at Sioux Falls,
South Dakota. February 2, 1973.

Hoeger, August J., Sr. "Would You Like to be a Real Good
Samaritan?" Memorandum from "Dad" Hoeger, mimeographed.

Hoeger, John. Interview by author at Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
February 1, 1973.

Kassel, Dr. Victor. "Principles of Aging," lecture at Good Samaritan Society Annual Meeting at Northfield, Minnesota. August 19, 1969.

"DAD" HOEGER AND THE GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

by

WAYNE LEE BUTE

B. A., Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va., 1967

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1973

The unprecedented longevity in the twentieth century has created one of the fastest growing sociological problems. Since 1900 the population over sixty-five has quadrupled while the total population has doubled. The health care needs of this increasing number of elderly have given rise to the development of the modern nursing home. Institutionalized care for the infirm aged has its historical roots in provisions for the poor.

The largest chain operation in America by 1973 in geriatric care is the Good Samaritan Society of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It was founded by Reverend August J. Hoeger, known as "Dad" to his associates. Hoeger's ideas bore a striking resemblance to the earlier works of Bodelschwingh in Germany of whom "Dad" had read extensively. Both of Hoeger's parents were missionaries from Neuendettlesau in the pietist tradition. Though his first interest was farming and he was not a promising student, Hoeger entered the Lutheran ministry and became a missionary to North Dakota. He became concerned when the Neuendettlesau mission work of New Guinea was taken from the Germans after World War I. Mortgaging his homestead, he set up a print shop to publish a missions paper. This early activity in the Iowa Synod was the forerunner of the World Board of Missions of the American Lutheran Church.

In 1922 an appeal to help a crippled child resulted in a surplus and Hoeger was on a committee which began a work for

defective youth at Arthur, North Dakota, incorporated as the Good Samaritan Society. An elderly man feigning being crippled to gain admittance called attention to the needs of many elderly.

The Society grew from town to town under Hoeger's active leadership, starting as "a bootstrap operation." Many facilities were taken over by the Society during the depression with a high rate of failure.

In the difficult years of the 1930's with many unsuccessful ventures, a split developed out of concern for financial management. Hoeger operated the Society loosely and on faith. Members of the Good Samaritan Board and the Field Manager Fred Knautz pulled out of the Society leaving Hoeger with four facilities. This other group became Lutheran Hospitals and Homes which grew to be one of the largest organizations in hospital work in the Midwest.

Undaunted, saying "Every knock is a boost," Hoeger began to rebuild the remaining Society specializing in geriatric care. The war years were difficult but by 1955 the Society had become a million dollar corporation.

The fifth decade of the Good Samaritan Society's history from 1962 to 1972 heralded unprecedented growth and new business techniques under August J. Hoeger, Jr. Despite computer technology and modern business practices, the Society still retains "Dad" Hoeger's common touch and spiritual emphasis. August J. Hoeger, Sr., died in 1970 at age eighty-five.

The Good Samaritan experience of the last fifty years

parallels the development of the modern nursing home, from county poor farms, to homes for the aged, to the modern regulations of several levels of care from residential to extended care facilities. The Good Samaritan Society remains in the vanguard of this growing specialization in the health care field with an operation of one hundred and sixty-five facilities in 1972. Its existence is a tribute to the determination, flexibility and faith of a Lutheran pastor from North Dakota, Dr. August J. Hoeger better known as "Dad."