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THE ARCHIVES AT BETHANY

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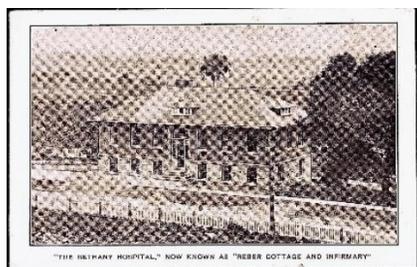
The Buildings of Bethany

This will be our third installment looking at the buildings of Bethany, for August we will look at Reber Cottage (1912), and Knerr Cottage (1927).

REBER COTTAGE 1912

Doctors asked to Found Hospital, Special to the Inquirer, WOMELSDORF, Pa., May 28, 1912 – During a great deal of sickness last winter among the quite little folks at Bethany Orphans' Home the superintendent, Rev. Wilson F. More, realized the necessity of a proper hospital and he has made a public appeal to the physicians and surgeons who are members of the Reformed Church, which directly supports the home.

Reber Cottage and Infirmary was dedicated on October 10, 1912, the infirmary would end up costing a little more than .18 cents per cubic foot of usable space. The rooms to be used for strictly hospital purposes are two large wards, two small wards, a nurse's room, a bathroom for the girl patients, a convalescent room, a bathroom for boy patients and a laundry and sterilizing room. Besides these there is a kitchen and dining room, a heater room, halls, and toilet rooms. (Reading Times, Feb. 2, 1912)



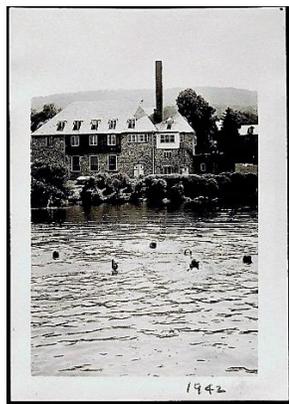
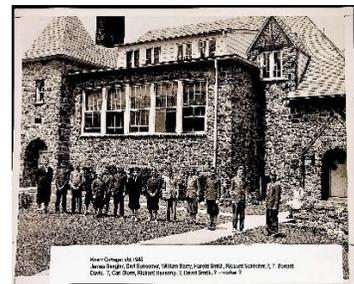
KNERR COTTAGE

1927

Formation of Knerr Cottage: Although the creation of Dietrich Cottage for the oldest of the boys who worked at the farm solved one problem, another developed. The older ADM Building was still too crowded with boys.

With the number of children being admitted at its highest level to this point, more boys were coming than were girls. Rev. More and the newer Rev. Kehm wrestled with several problems to create a cottage for boys ages 5 to eight years old. After a start, the contractor died. A second contractor quit before completion. But on Thursday, April 7, 1927 the D. Frank Knerr Cottage was dedicated. The cottage was a gift of D. Frank Knerr in honor of his parents. Instead of serving boys directly from Frick Cottage, it was finally decided the house mid-ranged age boys 9 to 14.

This building also served as the CENTRAL HEATING plant for the campus, had a gymnasium in the basement also used as an auditorium for plays and movies. In the modern era, Knerr Cottage was rented out to the Berks County Intermediate Unit and then to the Conrad Weiser School System. In 2016, Knerr was renovated again to house children from the Helping Hands Program to assist refugees get settled in America.



Mrs. Emma C. Schminke Memorial School-Gardens, 1916

When one is digging through old files, it still amazes me the things I can find that I didn't even know existed on our campus. One such find in the Knerr Cottage folder was the Mrs. Emma C. Schminke Memorial School-Gardens, built here on the campus in 1916.

A gift from Mrs. Emma C. Schminke and made a reality by her son Paul F. Schminke after the passing of his mother. "My mother, Mrs. Emma C. Schminke, died on October 14, 1915, and in a letter to me which I found after her death, she wrote as follows:

"I would like you to give \$100 to Bethany Orphans' Home for a memorial to me, as you have always taken an interest in the Home since you were a little boy." I am only too glad to carry out this request and write to you to know what it shall be.

"Yours very truly, Paul F. Schminke."

We used the above-named sum in reclaiming a small tract of swampy land and converting it into a garden, wherein it is hoped the desert will blossom as a rose. As its entrance we have erected an arbor, which is thus inscribed: Mrs. Emma C. Schminke Memorial School-Garden, 1916.



Please let me know if the larger typeface is easier on everyone's eyes; it is not a problem to increase the size and make it a page or two longer.

Do not forget to visit the Bethany Home page often as we are updating it with new information constantly! <https://www.bethanyhome.org/>