Minnesota's German Forty-eighter

"Brighter and Better for Every Person": Building the New Salvation Army Rescue Home of St. Paul, 1913

"Children of the Home." This large portrait of twelve children is from the Salvation Army Rescue Home and Maternity Hospital annual report for the year ending September 30, 1916. The home, located on Como Avenue in St. Paul, cared for 207 children that year, 109 of whom had been born in the home. The inset photo is Adjutant True Earle, superintendent of the Home from 1913 to 1918. Photo courtesy of The Salvation Army USA Central Territory Historical Museum.

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Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Buildings often tell stories. Historian Kim Heikkila shares the story behind the drive to build the Salvation Army Rescue Home on Como Avenue, which was led by Adjutant True Earle and businessmen Joseph and William Elsinger. Designed by Clarence Johnston, the Home served many young women and their newborn children as part of the Salvation Army's outreach programs. Not far away from Como Avenue, near Hamline University, sit eleven houses constructed by a Swedish contractor, Carl Florin, or his brothers, John and Gustav, all of whom lived in St. Paul in the early 1900s. Authors Barbro Sollbe and Ann Thorson Walton give us a rare look into the family who constructed middle-class homes of that era in the popular bungalow style. Records from the St. Paul Building Permits Collection, available in the RCHS Research Center, helped with this article. This issue also contains a biographical profile of Albert Wolff, a journalist with training in theology who came to St. Paul to escape the strife of 1848 in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. According to author LaVern Rippley, Wolff founded German-language newspapers in New Ulm, Chaska, and St. Paul, encouraged emigrants to move to Minnesota for new lives in our invigorating climate, and supported Abraham Lincoln's Union.

Anne Cowie
Chair, Editorial Board

"Brighter and Better for Every Person":
Building the New Salvation Army Rescue Home of St. Paul, 1913

Kim Heikkila

On October 29, 1913, a large crowd gathered on the lawn at 1471 Como Avenue West to celebrate the opening of the new Salvation Army Rescue Home. Among the assembly were Salvation Army officials and, according to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* "some of the most prominent men and women of St. Paul." Adjutant True Earle and the other six Army women who had run the home in its previous locations downtown and on the east side of St. Paul were joined by Brigadier Mary Stillwell, who recited the opening prayer, and Commissioner Mary Estill, head of the Salvation Army Women's Social Department in Chicago. Joseph McKibbin, president of the wholesale firm McKibbin, Driscoll and Dorsey, spoke as the treasurer of the home. Belle Swearingen, wife of the Rev. Henry Chapman Swearingen of the House of Hope Presbyterian Church on Summit Avenue, delivered the chairman's address, while Mary Griggs, president of the home and married to Chauncey Milton Griggs of the wholesaling and manufacturing firm Griggs, Cooper & Co., hosted tours of the building "assisted by fifty other St. Paul women."[1] The home had also earned the support of wholesalers Charles Noyes and Henry Merrill, and Charles Ames, president of West Publishing Company.

The opening festivities thus featured many of the home's most powerful supporters. But ultimately, the day was made possible through the perseverance, generosity, and talent of four specific individuals, all of whom called St. Paul home during the peak of their professional careers: Salvation Army Adjutant True Earle; businessmen, philanthropists, and brothers William and Joseph Elsinger; and state architect Clarence Johnston.

The Salvation Army's Rescue Work in St. Paul

Commissioner Estill provided the dedication address that fall day in 1913, during which she explained that the goal of the rescue home was "to lift fallen girls out of the mire into morality." Though the Salvation Army espoused a vocal evangelical Christianity, Estill assured her listeners that the home welcomed all girls into its fold, regardless of religion. Still, the Army hoped that providing for the girls' social and material well-being would ultimately lead them to adopt Army-style Christianity. This mission of achieving spiritual salvation through social uplift dated back to the Army's origins in London in 1865, when a young evangelical couple, William and Catherine Booth, began work in the city's slums and realized that the best way to a sinner's heart was through a full belly, a clear mind, and a bit of fun. The Army opened soup kitchens, held open-air meetings with preaching and singing, and paraded its uniformed "soldiers" through the streets banging drums and tambourines, all in the name of bringing converts to Christ.

By 1884, the Army had turned its attention to helping "fallen" women—the homeless, the addicted, the prostitute, the unwed mother. Army officials, like other evangelicals involved in such work, viewed their female charges as victims—of predatory men, of the dangerous urban environment, of naïveté—who could be redeemed through the motherly influence of female Salvationists and training in the

A Salvation Army band, ca. 1910. The Army sought to spread the gospel of Christianity to the downtrodden by providing food and shelter, holding open-air revivals and parades, and providing musical entertainment. Women Salvationists played central roles in all of these activities. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

domestic arts of sewing, cleaning, and laundering (and mothering, for those who were pregnant). The Army opened its first rescue home in London in 1884 and its first in the United States in Brooklyn, New York, in 1886. By 1900, the Army was operating seventeen such homes across the country.[2]

The Salvation Army Rescue Home in St. Paul opened in 1898 at University Avenue and Jackson Street.[3] St. Paul's population boom had slowed since its mid-nineteenth century heyday, but the city welcomed nearly 30,000 new arrivals between 1890 and 1900, increasing its citizenry by 22.5%, to 163,065.[4] Among these migrants were young women in search of work, some of whom were innocent enough to succumb to the advances of smooth-talking men or desperate enough to resort to prostitution. In 1901, a reporter for the *St. Paul Globe* wrote that the goal of the home was "to rebuild and reconstruct into its lost shape and pattern the torn and mangled fabrics of ruined lives of girls." An average of fifteen girls occupied the two-story home at any given time, staying anywhere from two days to six months. They were under no obligation to pay for their lodging but were expected to contribute to the home's upkeep and if possible, to sew items that would be sold to help finance the home's operation. The *Globe* reported that "nearly all" of the girls who left the home went on to lead "virtuous, Christian lives," whether as converts to the Salvation Army's particular brand of Christianity or not. The laudatory article offered special praise for the home's administrator: "Ensign Davis, the matron, is a real mother to them. She takes a true motherly interest in each girl that comes to her for help or advice." So it was, the Army hoped, that "from a chaos of depravity, disorder and lawlessness" a "new existence" could be created.[5]

By 1912, the Salvation Army Rescue Home, now located at 480 North Street, was bursting at the seams. One hundred sixty women and 132 children came under its care that year. The home's "inmates" were working women: showgirls and cooks, telephone operators and dress-makers, factory girls, teachers, nurses, clerks, and school girls. Fully one half worked as domestics.[6] Nearly half of these young women were unmarried mothers, reflecting the shifting focus of the Salvation Army's rescue work. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, sympathy for prostitutes among social welfare experts was beginning to give way to a view of them as perpetrators, rather than victims, of immoral behavior and civic disorder. Unmarried pregnant girls and women, however, still commanded concern and hope for redemption among rescue workers.[7] Indeed, the 1912 annual report for the rescue home in St. Paul de-

Ensign True Earle is in the center of the front row. The other Army women have not been identified. This photo was taken sometime in 1902 or 1903. Photo courtesy of The Salvation Army Museum of the West.

scribed the primary beneficiary of its services as "the poor fallen girl who has been the unsuspecting victim of some unscrupulous person," noting that "some of these child-mothers are little more than children themselves." In addition to seeking refuge and reform, these young women could also deliver their babies at the home. Dr. Jeanette McLaren from the University of Minnesota served as the home's physician and offered her obstetrical services free of charge. Of the 132 children cared for in the home in 1912, 65 of them had been born on site.[8] Army policy "insist[ed] that girls keep, maintain and rear their own children" in order to develop the mater-

nal characteristics that would restore their good character.[9]

By mid-1912, plans for a new home on Como Avenue in St. Paul were well underway. In fact, Salvation Army officials had been looking for a new location for the busy rescue home as early as 1904, according to an account in the *St. Paul Globe* in October of that year. The article noted that "St. Paul philanthropists" were supporting the effort to build "a model institution, the largest of its kind in the country," in either Merriam Park or St. Anthony Park. Construction was to begin in the spring of 1905 with staff and residents taking occupancy that fall.[10] For reasons that are not entirely clear, however, that plan never came to fruition. The rescue home would remain at the Jackson Street location until 1909, then spend the next five years at the East Side location.

Adjutant True Earle served as superintendent of the home throughout this planning period. Her skills as "a financier, a capable administrator, and a dignified Matron" were instrumental in publicizing the campaign for a new home and raising funds to cover the cost of such an undertaking.[11]

Adjutant True Earle

True Earle was born in 1877 outside the small town of Cook, Nebraska, where, as a girl of twelve, she came across a rousing Salvation Army street meeting. According to a 1951 article in *The Daily Oklahoman,* Earle was so moved by the theatricality of the event and the apparent contentedness of the Salvationists that she vowed to one day join their ranks. Six years later, when her family moved to Lincoln, she joined the local corps, despite her parents' misgivings. The U.S. branch of the Salvation Army was only fifteen years old in 1895 and its flamboyant methods led more staid religionists to view it as a radical fringe. That women were as much involved in such antics as men made it all the more scandalous. Still, Earle persisted in her commitment to the Army and, when she gained legal independence at age 21, applied to become an Army officer. She trained in St. Louis, then worked at rescue homes there and in Chicago and Cleveland before coming to St. Paul in 1903, where she was appointed superintendent of the home on Jackson Street.[12] Earle would make rescue work among fallen women her life's calling, taking her place among the many committed women Army officers.

One of the distinguishing features of the Salvation Army was its inclusion of women among the rank-and-file and in leadership positions. Indeed, scholar Diane Winston has shown that the Army "was one of the few purely religious endeavors that welcomed [women] as the equals of men."[13] The Booth women had played critical roles in the Salvation Army at the highest levels from its inception. Co-founder Catherine Booth had been just as fiery a preacher as her husband, and in 1887, their son Ballington assumed command of the American Army, sharing duties with his wife, Maud. In 1934, after having climbed up through the ranks of the organization, Catherine and William's fourth daughter, Evangeline Booth, became the first female general of the International Salvation Army. There were limitations to this equality, however, especially for women outside the Booth family. If a female officer married an Army man of lower rank, for instance, her rank would

be downgraded to match his, her career trajectory would follow his, and her salary would be subsumed by his. Such policies reflected the prevailing Victorian ideology about women's secondary status in the home and family. Still, the Army offered women meaningful work, the opportunity to travel, and a measure of independence that wasn't widely available otherwise.[14] Among the rank and file, Salvation Army Lassies were as visible on the streets as their brothers and played an especially important role in rescue work, wading into the seamier corners of the city to locate women beholden to drink, drugs, or debauchery and escorting them to safety in the rescue homes where they could sober up and, ideally, repent of their sins and find salvation. This is exactly what Earle did during her years in Chicago, according to the Oklahoma newspaper: "In the brothels she cared for girls who were ill. She told the story of Christ and his forgiveness to those driven to despair. Again and again she talked some girl into returning to the Army home with her."[15]

By the time she was installed in St. Paul, Earle had achieved the rank of captain and was about to embark on "the most exciting and rewarding period of her Army life."[16] The rescue home on Jackson Street was bustling, its eighteen beds nearly always occupied. Planning for the new home stalled after the optimistic reports of 1904 and the situation was becoming dire. "We have passed, on the whole, a prosperous year altho we have been quite disappointed in not getting into our new building by this time," Earle wrote in a letter to Charles Ames in early January 1908. "Our hands are so tied here that we must of necessity turn a great many away who come to us and this is the most disappointing feature of our work."[17] Earle and those in her charge would move to the home on North Street several months later. Though the new location could accommodate 27 adults and ten infants, there was still more need than there was space.

According to the laudatory article in *The Daily Oklahoman,* sometime during this period Earle took matters into her own hands and began campaigning for a new home. This account credits her for bringing Joseph Elsinger to the cause:

"True cast about for funds with which to buy or build a larger place. She thought of Joseph Ellsinger [*sic*], a prominent St. Paul businessman, with a character as humane and forceful as her own."[18] She reached out to the well-known philanthropist who had had a longstanding interest in the welfare of women and children. "True saw to it that Joe Ellsinger learned about the Salvation Army work for unwed mothers and their illegitimate babies in St. Paul. She invited him to the home. She took him through and introduced him to the staff and inmates." Elsinger plied Earle with a businessman's questions about finances, then spoke to a resident about the care she received in the home. Though the clear financial need and the young woman's testimony helped sway Elsinger to lend his support to the new home, the Oklahoma newspaper claimed that it was Earle's character and resolve that ultimately won him over: "And looking into her intelligent blue eyes, he came to a conviction: Any organization that attracted to its leadership a woman of such character and unflagging effort and goodness, deserved whatever support he could give it. He talked with his brother, Will. The result was a gift of $25,000 from each for construction of a new Salvation Army home and hospital."

The Elsinger Brothers

The article with its praise for Earle offers one account of how Joseph and William Elsinger became involved in financing the new rescue home. Other reports offered slightly different details. A 1959 *St. Paul Dispatch* article tells a story of William hearing that the home offered shelter and redemption to a pregnant girl who knocked on its door in search of assistance. "Elsinger was so touched that he went to the old hospital and, noting its condition, decided to give the Salvation Army land and money for a new structure."[19] Yet another account claims that one or the other of the brothers heard about this girl in need, and adds a telling detail: she was Jewish, as were the Elsingers.[20]

Hailing from Cleveland, Ohio, the Elsingers migrated to St. Paul in 1878, part of the second wave of Jewish settlers in the city.[21] In 1886, William and Joseph opened the Golden Rule Department Store (now
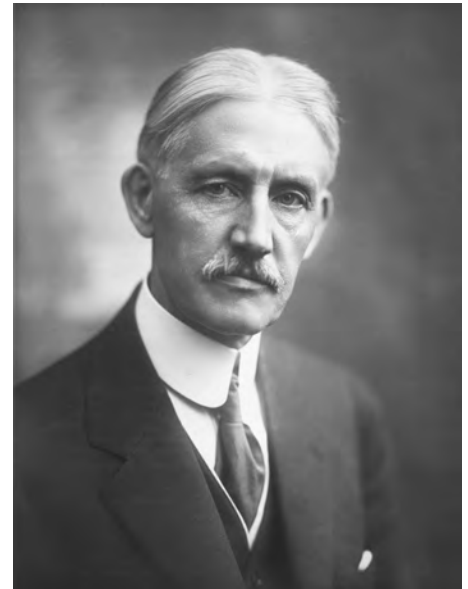
Businessman and philanthropist Joseph Elsinger. Joseph and his brother William, founders of the Golden Rule Department Store, donated land and money for the new Salvation Army Rescue Home. The Elsingers were part of an elite community of businessmen who interacted professionally, personally, and philanthropically. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

to lose so true a friend as the head of this generous firm."[24] Joseph replaced William as president of W.H. Elsinger & Co., the Golden Rule's parent company, in 1906.

As for their involvement in the Salvation Army Rescue Home, it may indeed have been the case that True Earle sought out Joseph Elsinger to solicit his support. But chances are that one or both of the Elsingers were already aware of the work the rescue home was doing. They were part of a relatively tight-knit community of St. Paul businessmen that took an active interest in the life of the city. More than just professional colleagues, these men lived in the same neighborhoods and socialized at the same clubs. William Elsinger and Jacob Dittenhofer, in-laws and business partners, lived next door to each other at 701 and 705 Summit Avenue, respectively.[25] By 1907, Joseph Elsinger had moved his wife and five children into 985 Summit Avenue, at which point the Swearingens were living at 780 Summit Avenue, the Milton Griggses at 365 Summit, the Daniel Noyes family at 366 Summit, and Louis W. Hill at 260 Summit.[26] Other men who sat on the rescue home's advisory board lived on Grand, Virginia, Goodrich, and Lincoln Avenues.

These prominent St. Paulites also rubbed elbows in a network of exclusive social clubs that sprang up around the city in the late nineteenth century. They lunched or played cards with railroad builder James J. Hill, businessman and philanthropist Amherst Wilder, and the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M)'s investor and executive Lucius P. Ordway at the Minnesota Club on Washington Street, adjacent to Rice Park. At the Town and Country Club, overlooking the Mississippi River from its perch near the Marshall-Lake Street Bridge, they played golf alongside fellow members such as former railroad man and investor Crawford Livingston, Hill and his son Louis, and occasional visitors such as J. Pierpont Morgan. The Commercial Club, at Fourth and Minnesota Streets, hosted banquets and buffets and provided a forum for discussing "matters of common public interest" to the citizens of St. Paul.[27] Of the nine men who served on the rescue home's advisory board between 1914 and 1916,

Clarence Johnston, 1919. As state architect from 1901 to 1931, Johnston designed numerous buildings for the state. He also designed William Elsinger's home at 701 Summit Avenue and many remodeling projects for the Elsingers' Golden Rule Department Store. It may have been through his association with the Elsingers that he became involved in the rescue home on Como Avenue. Golling Studio photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

at least eight belonged to one or more of these clubs. William and Joseph Elsinger were members of the Commercial Club, and it was there that they may have first learned about the Salvation Army's work with women in need.

On October 11, 1904, a crowd of "a hundred women and several men" gathered at the Commercial Club to hear "Mrs. Col. [Catherine] E.J. Higgins" speak about the Salvation Army's rescue work.[28] Higgins pointed out that the 21 Army rescue homes then in operation across the United States had "protected" more than two thousand girls in the past year, and that the home in St. Paul had cared for 442 girls and 197 infants since it opened its doors in 1898. "We shall be gratified," concluded Mrs. Higgins, "if we can obtain in the Twin Cities a larger opportunity for our rescue work." The *St. Paul Globe* reported that Higgins and another speaker provided "hints" that plans were underway for such a home to be located in the Midway district.

There are no surviving records to in-

the Metro Square Building) at East Seventh and Robert Streets with their brother-in-law Jacob Dittenhofer. The Elsingers were more than businessmen, however; they were committed philanthropists, sharing their wealth to advance the social causes they supported. Though active in the Jewish community, the Elsingers' interests crossed religious and racial lines. Indeed, historian Gunther W. Plaut described them as "Jews who as Jews gave freely to Christian causes."[22] Joseph donated money, land, and advisory support for institutions such as the Crispus Attucks Home, for elderly and orphaned African Americans, and the Children's Home Society's Jean Martin Brown Receiving Home for infants and orphans.[23] In 1905, the African American newspaper *The Appeal* mourned William's passing in a brief article entitled "A Good Friend Gone." His death "was very much regretted by the Afro-Americans of St. Paul because of his great friendliness toward them, shown on divers occasions and in many ways. The Golden Rule has given employment to a greater number of Afro-Americans than any other establishment in St. Paul and they are profoundly sorry

dicate whether or not Joseph or William Elsinger, or their wives (Mary and Blanche, respectively), attended Higgins' talk that fall evening in 1904. It is impossible to tell which of the stories of the Elsingers' involvement in financing the building of the new home are true or in what order they occurred. What the records do show is that the Elsingers were part of a network of successful entrepreneurs who were interested in civic affairs and who supported the Salvation Army's rescue work; that William bequeathed $25,000 to the Salvation Army Rescue Home upon his death in September 1905; and that Joseph Elsinger donated at least $12,500 and the land on which the home was built.[29] Their contributions, together with furnishings donated by land speculator Orlando A. Robertson, covered virtually the entire cost of the new home, enabling it to open in 1913 free of debt. The Salvation Army paid tribute to the brothers in its 1913 and 1914 annual reports, noting that its "beautiful new hospital [was] erected by W.H. and Joseph Elsinger."[30] And it was undoubtedly through the Elsingers that the final key figure became involved in the rescue home's relocation to Como Avenue.

Clarence Johnston

Of the four St. Paulites who were so central to the erection of the new Salvation Army Rescue Home, architect Clarence H. Johnston left the most visible legacy, not just in St. Paul but in the state of Minnesota. If you have strolled down Summit Avenue, attended a concert at Northrop Auditorium or a basketball game at Williams Arena on the University of Minnesota campus, toured the Glensheen Historic Estate in Duluth, or admired the livestock in the Cattle Pavilion at the Minnesota State Fair, you have encountered Johnston's work. If you or your forebears have taken refuge or sought teacher training or been confined in any one of a number of state institutions, from the prisons in Stillwater and Shakopee to the state hospitals in Anoka and St. Peter, your history has intertwined with Johnston's work. During a career that spanned nearly half a century, with thirty of those years as the state's official architect, Johnston worked on 3,000

Construction of the new rescue home begins at 1471 Como Avenue (once known as Langford Avenue), along the Como-Harriet streetcar line. Clarence Johnston designed the building; the George J. Grant Construction Company built it. This is the view looking east down Como Avenue. Charles P. Gibson photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

projects spread across Minnesota; his aesthetic has defined much of our constructed landscape.[31]

Unlike Earle and the Elsingers, Johnston was a lifelong Minnesotan, save for a few years spent in Boston, New York, and abroad. He was born in Waseca County on August 26, 1859, the second

of Alexander and Louise (Buckhout) Johnston's four children. By 1868, the family had moved to St. Paul. In 1874, while a student at St. Paul High School, Johnston took a job as a draftsman at the architecture firm of Abraham Radcliffe; two years later, Cass Gilbert joined the company as an apprentice. Thus began

Construction proceeds. This view is looking northeast toward the front of the new rescue home, 1913. Charles P. Gibson photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

a decades-long relationship between the two Minnesota architects, one defined by mutual respect, competition, and, ultimately, rivalry.[32] While Gilbert translated his success at designing the Minnesota Capitol into notable commissions in New York, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C., Johnston built his life's work in Minnesota. It may have been an instance of professional competition between Gilbert and Johnston that ultimately led to Johnston's work on the rescue home.

By the late 1890s, the Golden Rule Department Store was thriving under the leadership of the Elsingers and Dittenhofer, so much so that William Elsinger and Dittenhofer planned to build new homes on St. Paul's premier avenue. Cass Gilbert, by then having won the commission for the state Capitol, believed he was to design both Summit Avenue houses, but while he was traveling in Europe, Johnston "snuck the Elsinger commission away from" Gilbert.[33] The result of this maneuvering was the construction in 1898 of side-by-side houses of similar design, Dittenhofer's by Gilbert and Elsinger's by Johnston, and a long-term association between the Elsingers, Dittenhofers, and Johnston. The Jewish businessmen turned to Johnston when it came time to build a new Mount Zion Temple in 1904 and relied on him for the Golden Rule's remodeling projects for more than twenty years. A mere seven years after moving into the house at 701 Summit, William Elsinger died at the age of 45, leaving behind his wife and infant daughter. His bequest triggered a new round of planning for the rescue home, and, at least by 1908, Johnston's firm had been contracted to design it, with additional financing coming from Joseph Elsinger and the good citizens of St. Paul.[34]

The details of exactly when and how Johnston got involved in the project and how the Como Avenue site was chosen are unclear, as are the ebbs and flows of the design process. A drawing from 1911, now in the Johnston collection at the Minnesota Historical Society, suggests that the original plan was for a much larger facility than was eventually built.[35] In any case, construction began in early 1913, undertaken by the George J. Grant Construction Co.[36] The building, a two-and-a-half story Tudor Revival made of red brick and half

The Salvation Army Rescue Home and Maternity Hospital, 1920; view looking north from Como Avenue. The two-and-a-half story Tudor Revival contained kitchen and dining facilities in the basement; Army officer and staff accommodations on the first floor; and delivery rooms, baby nursery, and dormitories on the second floor. Altogether, the home could accommodate 75 mothers and babies. C.J. Hibbard photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

timbering, faced Como Avenue with an entry tower and a cross gable roofline. The interior contained a dining room, kitchen, and children's play room in the basement; Army officer and staff accommodations, a convalescent porch, and a large "memorial room" with fireplace on the first floor; and sleeping porch, operating room, dormitories, and babies' ward on the second floor. In total, the new home could accommodate 75 girls and babies, a marked increase over the capacity of 37 at the North Street location.[37]

These plans heralded new promise for the rescue home. Ten days before its grand opening in October 1913, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* previewed the upcoming event by describing the difficult circumstances under which Adjutant Earle and her staff had been carrying out their important work on North Street during the previous year. Demand for the home's services was high, salaries for the staff were low, and money was in short supply. "Many times in the coldest part of winter there was neither coal in the bin nor potatoes in the larder," wrote the reporter. Still, Army women and the home's medical staff continued their good work, delivering 58 babies and tending to approximately 100 girls. Despite the hard-

ships, Earle's commitment to the "'unfortunate'" pregnant young women in her care never wavered and she took comfort in the success with which the home's efforts were often met: 'When you keep the mother and baby together, as we do, you have saved a girl and made a good mother. Eighty per cent of the girls that we have that become mothers lead absolutely good lives.'

St. Paul leaders agreed. After investigating the home's operations and finances, Joseph McKibbin, Charles Noyes, H. M. Merrill, Charles Ames, and Chauncey M. Griggs declared that 'the rescue work of the Salvation Army of St. Paul is carried on with unusual sense and strictest economy and with wonderfully good results.' Having passed muster with a committee of businessmen and with the continuing support of Joseph Elsinger, whose "generosity and labors . . . made the new home possible," Earle and her staff would be able to fulfill their mission even more effectively in the home designed by Johnston. "In the new home things are going to be brighter and better for every person connected with it," promised the paper.[38]

The Legacy

If the opening of the new Salvation Army Rescue Home in 1913 was met with pomp and circumstance by the St. Paul elite, the sight of the building might have evoked different emotions for an unmarried pregnant woman who broached its façade out of necessity rather than curiosity or civic engagement. She may not have known about its well-heeled supporters and design pedigree or that its floors were made of terrazzo and maple. She may have found the three-story entry tower a bit imposing. She may have had other things on her mind, her thoughts consumed by worry over two dual lives, the one behind her and the one in front of her, her own and her baby's. If William and Joseph Elsinger and Clarence Johnston were just names to her, however, True Earle would have been very real, for it was Earle's domain that she entered when she climbed the marbled steps leading from the front door to the home's interior.

We are left to speculate about the lives of the women to whom Earle dedicated her professional career. Existing records reflect the perspective of St. Paul's more prosperous and powerful classes—the media, the financiers, the Salvationists. These accounts paint the women as passive, grateful recipients of Army benevolence. As challenging as it is to recreate the lives of Earle and the Elsingers, if not Johnston, it is even more difficult to reconstruct the individual lives of the home's residents in the early twentieth century. We know their stories only in the aggregate: 260 young women passed through the halls of the rescue home during its first year on Como Avenue, 89 of them delivering babies in the second floor operating room. If Earle's statistic was accurate, 71 of those new mothers retained custody of their children and went on to lead "absolutely good" lives.[39]

The surviving three members of the team that was so instrumental in building the new rescue home also went on to lead good lives. Joseph Elsinger died on June 10, 1917, having built a prosperous family, a successful business, and a philanthropic legacy. After his death, the *St. Paul Dispatch* described Elsinger's charitable work as "proof of a thoughtful mind as well as of a generous heart.

Nurses tend to babies at the Salvation Army Rescue Home and Maternity Hospital, 1920. The Salvation Army cared for 260 young women and 171 children, 89 of whom were born in the home, during its first year in the Como Avenue location. In 1920, the Army made unwed mothers the sole focus of its rescue work with women. By 1938, the facility was known as Booth Memorial Hospital. Occupancy at Booth reached its peak 1959–1961 but was in steep decline by 1968. Booth closed its hospital operations in 1971 and ended its unmarried mother program entirely in 1973. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

He went down into the lowly lanes and byways of St. Paul and gave where money relieved necessity and turned suffering into rejoicing."[40] Several years later, former Minnesota governor J.A.A. Burnquist described him as "an influential factor in the upbuilding and progress of St. Paul."[41] Clarence Johnston served as the state architect until the position was dissolved in 1931, having been the only one to occupy it. His private firm, C.H. Johnston Architect, continued work during this period as well, with the help of his two sons, Cyrus "Thur" and Clarence "Howard." (Johnston suffered a personal tragedy in 1920, however, when Thur died from the effects of influenza; Howard would go on to a successful architecture career of his own.) His firm designed an addition to the rescue home in 1923 and continued work for the Golden Rule, which was operating under the leadership of the next generation of Elsingers and Dittenhofers. Johnston's wife, May, died in 1932, and Johnston remained close to his four surviving children until his death on December 29, 1936.

True Earle remained at the helm of the

rescue home and maternity hospital on Como Avenue for its first five years. In January 1918, Salvation Army Captain Maud Lee wrote to Charles Ames to solicit financial support for the home and noted that Earle had suffered a "breakdown" and was on "extended furlough."[42] No records exist to explain the nature of this breakdown; we know only that it did not deter Earle from future success or happiness. After fifteen years in St. Paul, she relocated to Spokane, Washington, in 1918, having achieved the rank of Field Major. There she took command of the maternity home and adopted three girls, becoming a single, if not "unwed," mother of her own. In 1925, Earle married Commandant John Barnes, a widower with a daughter. In so doing, she took not only Barnes' name but his rank, a demotion that ensured that she would not hold a higher position in the Army than did her husband. They stayed happily married as they traveled from post to post with their four children. John Barnes died in 1947; True Earle Barnes died on September 25, 1962.

The Salvation Army tended to unmarried pregnant women at 1471 Como

OFFICERS OF HOME

Capt. Ivy Oldenburg,
Capt. Jennie Barron,   Capt. Pearl Osborn,   Lieut. Esther Johnson,
Adjutant T. Earle,
Capt. Mary E. Whelan,
Capt. Hilma Swensen,   Lieut. Alma Kihlgren.

"Officers of the Home," from the 1916 annual report of the Salvation Army Rescue Home and Maternity Hospital. Adjutant True Earle, top center, would serve as matron of the home for another two years. Photo courtesy of The Salvation Army USA Central Territory Historical Museum.

Avenue for the next sixty years, having made them the exclusive focus of its rescue work by 1920. In 1938, the home changed its name to Booth Memorial Hospital.[43] If, in its early years, the home had emphasized maternal custody of "illegitimate" children, in the post-World War II period it followed suit with maternity homes across the country in emphasizing adoption as the best option for mother and child alike.[44] By the mid-twentieth century, approximately 70% of mothers at Booth surrendered their children for adoption, often under duress and believing they had no other choice.[45] Changing cultural mores, an altered political and medical landscape, and declining occupancy eventually rendered cloistered maternity homes for unwed mothers obsolete, and in 1971 the Salvation Army ceased all hospital functions at Booth. It ended its unmarried mothers program entirely in 1973, converting its program into one that served "predelinquent" juvenile girls. Now known as the Salvation Army Booth Brown House, the facility provides housing assistance for young people, both male and female. Over

the course of its 75-year history, the Salvation Army's St. Paul rescue home and maternity hospital cared for 13,500 young mothers-to-be.[46]

The building has had an interesting history of its own. A new wing was added to the east side of the structure in 1977. A form submitted to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission in 1993 described the addition as "modern in design, utilitarian in appearance," noting with understatement that it "does not complement the historic character of the 1913 building" and encouraging the Salvation Army to "buffer it" from the more pleasing views of the original building.[47] The aesthetically unappealing addition did not prevent the original structure from receiving its due recognition, however: in 1983, the Clarence Johnston-designed Salvation Army Women's Home and Hospital was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The historic appeal of the home is more than architectural, however; it also resides in the purpose to which the structure was put for most of its history and to which all four of the figures profiled here were committed, to varying de-

grees. As True Earle herself explained, "Our Home is beautiful in itself, but much more beautiful is the work we are able to accomplish in it by the help of God."[48] She dedicated her life to helping women cast aside by polite society, viewing them as fallen sisters in need of firm but compassionate, Christian care. William and Joseph Elsinger found the rescue home worthy of their considerable financial support, falling in line as it did with their commitment to social uplift for those less fortunate than themselves. Even Clarence Johnston, seemingly the one most removed from the goings-on in the home itself, was known as a man of "extraordinarily broad sympathies" who possessed "an abiding sense of how much of the value of his work stemmed from its service to other people's needs and aspirations."[49] In this case, his work enabled the Salvation Army to expand its services to unmarried mothers and their children in hopes of making their lives brighter and better. Although the contours of the Army's program would shift over the course of the twentieth century, sometimes inspiring enthusiasm, other times engendering controversy, Earle, the Elsingers, and Johnston would likely have taken satisfaction in the enduring legacy of their efforts.

Endnotes

1. "Salvation Army Rescue Home Opened; Many Visitors Inspect New Building," *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* October 30, 1913.

2. For more on the history of the Salvation Army and its rescue work, see Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890–1945* (Yale University Press, 1993); Edward H. McKinley, *Marching to Glory: The History of the Salvation Army in the United States, 1880–1992,* 2d ed. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995); Lillian Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads & Lasses: Remaking the Salvation Army in America, 1880–1930* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Diane Winston, *Red-Hot & Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Harvard University Press, 1999); Lt. Col. Edith A. MacLachlan, "Women's & Children's Social Services 1886–1978," May 1988, at Salvation Army National Archives, Alexandria, Virginia (hereinafter SANA).

3. "For the Rescue Home; Salvation Army Home Will Be Open in September," *St. Paul Globe,* July 22, 1898, available online at Chronicling America, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers, accessed June 8, 2015.

4. *1900 U.S. Census, St. Paul, Minnesota,* Census Published Table Volume I: Statistics of Population, Section 8, Table 6: Population of Cities Having 25,000 Inhabitants or More in 1900, At Each Census: 1790 to 1900, 432, and Table 7: Increase in Population of Cities Having 25,000 Inhabitants or More in 1900, At Each Census: 1790 to 1900, 436, digital images, IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org, accessed June 10, 2015.

5. "Rescue Home for Women; Work of the Salvation Army for Girls Who Have Gone Astray." *St. Paul Globe,* November 24, 1901, available online at Chronicling America, Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers, accessed 8 June 2015.

6. "The New Salvation Army Rescue Home," capital campaign booklet, 1913, Salvation Army Central Territories Museum (hereinafter SACTM).

7. For more on this changing focus, see Kunzel 16–19; Winston 157–58. The 1907 opening of the Sauk Centre Home School for Girls also aided in this shift in Minnesota; the more difficult, delinquent cases were sent by the courts to Sauk Centre, allowing the rescue homes to focus on unmarried mothers whom they considered to be "the most hopeful type" of resident. U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, *A Study of Maternity Homes in Minnesota and Pennsylvania,* by Ethel Watters, Publication No. 167 (Government Printing Office, 1926), 14, available online at Internet Archive https://archive.org/stream/studyofmaternity00watt#page/14/mode/2up, accessed July 7, 2015.

8. "The Salvation Army Rescue Home: 480 North Street," annual report for year ending Sept. 30, 1912, Minnesota Historical Society (hereinafter MNHS). The affiliation between the rescue home/maternity hospital and the University of Minnesota became more official in 1917 under the leadership of Dr. Jennings C. Litzenberg and endured until the closing of the rescue home and maternity hospital in 1973. J. Arthur Myers, *Masters of Medicine: An Historical Sketch of the College of Medical Sciences, University of Minnesota, 1888–1966* (Warren H. Green, 1968), 325; "The Salvation Army Booth Brown House Services, 75th Anniversary, 1975," 2, folder 17, box 47, United Way of the Saint Paul Area (Minn.) Organizational Records, MNHS.

9. "The New Salvation Army Rescue Home."

10. "Plan Rescue Home for Twin Cities," *St. Paul Globe,* October 9, 1904, Chronicling America, accessed June 10, 2015.

11. "A Typical Home for the Rescue of the Fallen," *Social News,* August 1915, 8, SANA.

12. "True in Blue," *The Daily Oklahoman,* January 7, 1951. Date of Earle's appointment as superintendent of St. Paul rescue home taken from a document titled "Institution History" that lists all superintendents of the home 1901 to 1977. Thanks to Maj. John Price of the SACTM for providing me with copies of both of these items.

13. Winston 65. See also Lillian Taiz, "Hallelujah Lasses in the Battle for Souls: Working- and Middle-Class Women in the Salvation Army in the United States, 1872–1896," *Journal of Women's History* (9.2), 84–107.

14. See; Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads and Lasses,* chapter two; Winston, chapter 2; Andrew M. Eason, W*omen in God's Army: Gender and Equality in the Early Salvation Army* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003), available online at ProQuest ebrary, accessed June 15, 2015.

15. "True in Blue," 10.

16. Ibid.

17. True Earle to Charles W. Ames, January 11, 1908, Box 2, Folder: Salvation Army 1907–1918, Charles W. and Mary Lesley Ames Papers, MNHS.

18. "True in Blue," 10.

19. Falsum Russell, "Booth Hospital Offers Security," *St. Paul Dispatch,* October 29, 1959.

20. "The Salvation Army Booth Brown House Services, 75th Anniversary, 1975," 3.

21. Gunther W. Plaut, *The Jews in Minnesota: The First Seventy-five Years* (American Jewish Historical Society, 1959), 159.

22. Ibid., 262.

23. Paul D. Nelson, "Orphans and Old Folks: St. Paul's Crispus Attucks Home," *Minnesota History* (Fall 1998): 102–19.

24. "A Good Friend Gone," *The Appeal,* September 23, 1905, Minnesota Historical Society Digital Newspaper Hub, http://newspapers.mnhs.org/web/mhsnews/web/imu.php?request=access, accessed June 3, 2015.

25. Ernest R. Sandeen, *St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue* (Living Historical Museum, Macalester College, 1978), 101.

26. Daniel Noyes wrote a letter to the St. Paul Globe in July 1901, expressing his support for the work of the home (see Daniel R. Noyes, "Work of Rescue Home," letter to the editor, *St. Paul Globe,* July 19, 1901, available online at Chronicling America, accessed June 8, 2015). By 1915, Louis Hill was a member of the home's advisory board. In 1916, bankers George H. Prince and Cyrus P. Brown, attorney James R. Hickey, and C.E. Stone of the Great Northern Railway joined McKibbin, Griggs, and Hill on the home's advisory board. Residence information taken from Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *The Book of Minnesotans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the State of Minnesota* (A.N. Marquis & Co., 1907), available online at Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/bookofminnesotan00marq#page/332/mode/2up, accessed June 3–4, 2015.

27. For more on these clubs, see Robert Orr Baker, "The Minnesota Club: St. Paul's Enterprising Leaders and Their 'Gentlemen's Social Club,'" *Ramsey County History* 19:2 (1984): 3–22; John A. Pfaender, *The First Hundred Years at the Town and Country Club* (St. Paul: The Club, 1988), available online at Open Library / Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/firsthundredyear00pfae#page/n7/mode/2up, accessed June 22, 2015; *Commercial Club of St. Paul, 1903: Its Object, Organization, Government and Membership* (The Club, 1903) and *Commercial Club of St. Paul, 1910: Its Object, Organization, Government and Membership* (The Club, 1910), both at MNHS.

28. "Woman Tells Need of Rescue Home," *St. Paul Globe,* October 12, 1904, available online at Chronicling America, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers, accessed June 8, 2015.

29. Various sources report slightly different figures for Joseph Elsinger's contribution to the home. The 1913 capital campaign booklet and "Salvation Army Rescue Home Opened" article reported that he donated the land and $12,500, the latter source further noting that Elsinger also paid for "other expenses" and that the Salvation Army itself raised another $12,500. A 1929 article in a St. Paul newspaper, however, claimed that each brother contributed $25,000 to the project ("Salvation Army Home Arranges for Baby Party," July 15, 1929. A copy of this article was provided by the SACTM, which noted only that it came from a "St. Paul paper"), as does "True in Blue."

30. "Salvation Army Rescue Home Opened"; "The Salvation Army Rescue Home," report for year ending September 30, 1913, box 2, Charles W. and Mary Lesley Ames Papers, MNHS; "The Salvation Army Home and Maternity Hospital," report for year ending September 30, 1914, Louis W. Hill Papers, MNHS. It may be that the William Elsinger bequest of $25,000 altered the original plans to open a new home in 1905. In November 1905, Salvation Army officials gathered to discuss the disposition of the funds and planning for the building; several months later, in April 1906, the Army was still "striving to find exactly how much money is available before approving any plans" for the new home. See "Rescue Home Will Be Built," *Minneapolis Tribune,* and "Plans for Rescue Home," *Minneapolis Journal,* April 2, 1906, available at Chronicling America.

31. The State Board of Control created the position of state architect in 1901; Johnston was the first to hold the position and did so until 1931. Paul Clifford Larson, *Minnesota Architect: The Life and Work of Clarence H. Johnston* (Afton Historical Society Press, 1996), xi–xiii.

32. For more on the Gilbert-Johnston relationship, see Larson, esp. 6–17, 87–90, and 129–32; *Gracious Spaces: Clarence H. Johnston, Minnesota Architect,* directed and written by Lisa Blackstone, Twin Cities Public Television, Inc., 2011.

33. Larson in *Gracious Spaces.*

34. The first entry for work on the rescue home appears in Johnston's accounts ledgers of June 3, 1908; the project was called the "Elsinger Rescue Home" and was commission number 1725. Johnston also designed a 1923–24 addition to the home. Account ledgers, boxes 1 and 3, Clarence Johnston papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota. See also Larson, 138–39.

35. Salvation Army Rescue Home for Fallen Girls, St. Paul, 1911, Clarence Johnston collection of architectural photographs, MNHS.

36. George Grant was also a member of the Commercial Club (Marquis, 192).

37. "The New Salvation Army Rescue Home"; annual report 1913.

38. "Great Struggle for Charity Will Be Won When Salvation Army Home Is Dedicated October 29," *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* October 19, 1913.

39. "Salvation Army Rescue Home," report for year ending September 30, 1914.

40. *St. Paul Dispatch,* June 11, 1917, as cited in J.A.A. Burnquist, *Minnesota and Its People* (S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924), 66.

41. Burnquist, 66.

42. Letter from Lee to Ames, January 3, 1918, Box 2, Charles W. and Mary Lesley Ames Papers, MNHS.

43. *Handbook of Information: Homes and Hospitals for Unmarried Mothers,* New York: Salvation Army, 1952, 13–14; "A Directory of Maternity Hospitals, Infant Homes, Agencies Receiving and Placing Children, Which are Licensed or Certified by the State Board of Control," 1920–1939, St. Paul: Minnesota Children's Bureau, 1939, MNHS.

44. For more on the shift toward the surrender of children in the postwar period, see Solinger; Ann Fessler, *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade* (Penguin: 2006).

45. "The Salvation Army Hospitals and Maternity Homes in the United States of America and Canada, as of October 31, 1961," 7, Vertical File: Women's Social Services—Rescue Homes (Unwed Mothers), SANA; "WCCO Television Reports: Unwed Mothers," recorded October 26, 1960, aired November 28, 1960, available online at The Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, University of Georgia Library Special Collections, http://www.libs.uga.edu/media/collections/peabody/. That trend would change again by the 1970s, such that 77% of all unmarried mothers in Ramsey County in 1971 kept their babies. Ramsey County Welfare Department Annual Report, 1971, 26, MNHS. My larger research project focuses, in part, on this shift in policy and practice regarding maternal custody vs. surrender of children as it occurred at Booth St. Paul.

46. Statistic from "Historic Booth Hospital," Booth Brown House website, http://salvationarmynorth.org/community/booth-brown-house/community-pages/historic-booth-hospital/, accessed July 7, 2015.

47. Site Nomination Form for St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, prepared by Thomas R. Zahn & Associates, Inc., July 27, 1993. This form noted that additional work was being done on the wing added in 1977 during the summer of 1993, after which the 1923 "brick box" addition that Johnston's firm designed would be demolished.

48. "A Typical Home," 8.

49. Larson, *Minnesota Architect,* xi.

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