

CRIPPLED CHILDREN IN OKLAHOMA

By Earl D. McBride, M. D.*

When the writer of this article was discharged from the United States Army in January 1919, he came to Oklahoma City with the intention of practicing general surgery. Upon his arrival several Oklahoma City doctors who knew Mrs. McBride, Pauline Wahl, in her earlier years, proposed that he take over the practice of Doctor L. Hull, who had died during his Army service as the result of influenza and pneumonia. Doctor Hull had taken his training at the Hospital for Ruptured and Crippled in New York City and had practiced orthopaedic surgery in Oklahoma City since about 1915. The writer felt as many general surgeons feel, that orthopaedic work was about the last special field he would want to enter. However, at the insistence of Mrs. Hull and a mutual good friend, Doctor A. B. Chase, the writer took over Doctor Hull's orthopaedic surgery on the second floor of the Colecord Building.

At this time orthopaedic surgery was new. The public knew little or nothing in the accomplishments of this special field of practice. The writer soon found that he was deficient in the knowledge of orthopaedic surgery for small children and therefore returned to New York City and entered a service in the Hospital for Ruptured and Crippled, under the tutorage of the renowned orthopaedic surgeons, Royal Whitman and Virgil Gibney.

Upon return to Oklahoma City it was fully realized that much good could be done for the under privileged crippled children if they could be found for treatment. At first no one seemed to be

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As Chairman of the Editorial Committee of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, he was sent to London, England, in June, 1947, to attend a meeting for the editorial interests of the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. On May 26, 1949, Doctor McBride left San Francisco by air for the Far East, as civilian orthopedic consultant for the Surgeon General. His work will include a lecture and instructional course for the staff of the U. S. Army hospitals in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, and in Tokyo, Japan.—Ed.

especially interested. Fortunately, Miss Mildred Hamlin, who was the writer's first secretary and the daughter of Charley Hamlin, a member of the Oklahoma City Rotary Club, saw to it that the writer soon became a member of this Club. Leonard Bailey was President of the Rotary Club in 1919 and 1920. He was deeply interested in boys' work and had appointed Walter Dean, prominent businessman, and later Mayor of Oklahoma City, as Chairman of the Boys' Work Committee. The writer approached Walter Dean with reference to crippled children. A meeting was held with several of his Committee and it was decided that they knew of only two or three crippled children in Oklahoma City. One was a newsboy who sold papers on the corner of Broadway and Main Streets, near what is now the Tradesmen's National Bank.

One day during the year 1920 the writer observed a little fellow about eleven years old, who was walking down the sidewalk on Northwest Fifth Street, tiptoeing on one foot. His marked limp was obviously from a severe attack of infantile paralysis. This boy appeared to be such a good example of the type of case that could be improved by orthopaedic surgery that the writer could not refrain from making an investigation. It was found that this boy's parents were very poor and they had never been told that surgery could be of benefit to him.

The boy was taken to Walter Dean who offered to pay his hospitalization and the operation on his foot was done. Within a few months the boy's foot was straight and he was walking with only a very slight limp. Mr. Dean and his Boys' Work Committee were so favorably impressed that they bought this boy a new suit of clothes and a nice hat and took him to the Rotary Club luncheon. The enthusiasm spread throughout the entire membership of the Club and the Crippled Children's Committee was formed as a subcommittee of the Boys' Work Committee, of which Mr. Dean was chairman. The Committee was composed of George Curtis, Chairman, Dan O'Hearn, Tom Roach, Cy Anderson, James Devine, and Doctors Horace Reed, Harry Sorrels, Everett Lain, C. N. Gould and Earl D. McBride.

The first work of the Committee was to consider an investigation of the Oklahoma City Schools for crippled children. The doctor members of the Rotary Club were authorized to visit each of the public schools and examine children for poor posture and various physical defects. Many abnormal conditions were found. Mr. A. C. Parsons, Superintendent of the schools in 1921 and 1922, was enthusiastic about carrying out these clinics within the schools.

There were two families who were extremely interested in doing something for crippled children. One was that of Mrs. J. E. Donaldson and the other, that of Mrs. W. L. Kitchens. Mrs. J. E. Donaldson had a son, Paul, whom the writer had treated for a

tuberculous hip. Mrs. Kitchens had a son, Billy, with cerebros-
pastic paralysis, who was confined to a wheel chair, but was mak-
ing fine progress in school, except that he could not attend regu-
larly because he was unable to walk. Also, Mrs. Fred Nowlin, wife
of Doctor Nowlin, dentist, was interested in a special school for
crippled children. These women, together with Mr. Parsons and
others, developed the idea of a special school for crippled and un-
der privileged children as a part of the Oklahoma City school
program. The Crippled Children's Committee of the Rotary Club
sponsored this project and the doctors of the Club and other doc-
tors of the City, including Doctor Cloudman, School Physician, en-
thusiastically entered into this activity to the extent that the
William Jennings Bryan School was established about 1922. It was
located at 1148 Northwest Eighth Street, Oklahoma City.

The activity of the Crippled Children's Committee of the
Rotary Club was chiefly that of making some visits to the schools
of the City and arranging for examination of children for survey-
ing the number of crippled children and the number of children
with poor posture and other physical defects. This Committee dis-
cussed the necessity of having a new state-wide society for the care
of crippled children. At the meeting of Rotary International 1920,
attention was directed to crippled children's work on a national
scale. Rotary International had become interested through the ac-
tivities of the Rotary Club in Toledo, Ohio, which undertook the
treatment of a boy without arms or legs in the year 1915. His name
was Alva Bunker. This boy was provided with artificial arms and
legs and was given advantages of education by the Toledo Rotary
Club. Later the boy came out on the stage at one of the International
Out of this original incident the International Society for Crippled
Children was developed by Rotary International. The Children's
Hospital at Elyria, Ohio, previously had been established through
the interest of the Rotary Club in that City. A man who had been
in charge of that institution for sometime, was well known as
"Daddy" Allen.

In 1922, the writer approached Governor William J. Holloway
of Oklahoma, and explained the necessity for the care of crippled
children to him. In turn, Governor Holloway talked with a number
of the legislators and a meeting was held in September, 1922, at
the Huckins Hotel, to determine how a law might be provided. A
commission was discussed and it was decided that the Commission
should be headed by the State Public Health Officer and that the
Dean of the School of Medicine should have an important part in
this Commission. The plan was not adopted. In 1923, Representative
Allen Street, of Oklahoma County was chiefly responsible in secur-
ing the enactment of the first State law (Senate Bill 311) for crip-
pled children. This bill was signed by M. E. Trapp, President of
the Senate, Murray F. Gibbons, Speaker of the House of Representa-

tives, and Governor J. C. Walton. The law provided that crippled children could be committed to the University Hospital through the County Judge. The medical staff of the University Hospital was to provide treatment. No doctor was allowed any compensation for his services.

Paul Fesler, Superintendent of the State University Hospital at that time, was much interested in crippled children. He gave his support and help in interesting the Rotary Club in this matter. On September 12, 1922, Mr. Fesler made a four-minute talk on crippled children before the Rotary Club, and at a committee meeting later on, it was decided to recommend that other Rotary Clubs throughout the state organize crippled children's committees and hold crippled children's clinics. Letters were written to the various clubs nothing was done because no one seemed to know just how to go about the right procedure.

In November, 1922, the writer attended a National meeting of the American Orthopaedic Association in Toronto. At this meeting Doctor Stern, an orthopaedic surgeon of Cleveland, Ohio, showed a motion picture in which the Rotary Club of Cleveland was holding a crippled children's clinic, with Doctor Stern as the medical examiner. The picture showed Club members in teams of two each going to different vicinities. They brought the crippled children assigned to them into the clinic, and returned them to their homes. The film showed social workers consulting with the parents and later in the picture the child was shown as it was in the hospital and then after it had been dismissed, greatly improved. Permission was given the writer to bring this film to Oklahoma City.

On February 12, 1923 the Crippled Children's Committee of the Rotary Club endorsed the suggestion that this motion picture be brought to Oklahoma City for the Rotary Club and representatives of other Clubs to see.

On March 6, 1923, George W. Curtis, Chairman of the Crippled Children's Committee, together with the members of the Committee and the writer met at the Liberty Theatre through the courtesy of Allen Street, owner of the theatre, to see the showing of this picture. This aroused much enthusiasm, and everyone was eager to accomplish something of the same work in Oklahoma.

Letters were written to the various Rotary Clubs explaining how a clinic might be held as shown in this picture; and how Rotarians might survey and locate crippled children in their districts, and later bring them into the clinic. It was requested that the writer assist in these clinics by serving as orthopaedic surgeon to examine the children.

The first clinic was held in Ardmore on October 1924. At this clinic 125 children were examined by the writer, assisted by Doc-

tor Andrew Cowles and Doctor Walter Hardy of Ardmore. The Clinic was held in the Hardy Sanitarium. At noon luncheon the Ardmore Rotary Club raised \$7,000 in about ten minutes. Following this meeting, the writer traveled to Ardmore once a month for more than one year, holding clinics and operating on crippled children. John Dexter of Ardmore, District Governor of Rotary in 1925, called especial attention to crippled children at the Annual District Convention in Ponca City. Following this, the writer was asked to go to Pawhuska where the second clinic was held on May 12, 1925. Then a clinic was held at Cushing, another at Stillwater, another at Duncan; and in all fourteen clinics were held, with the writer as examiner, before any definite organization was established.

The writer and others realized that there should be some central organization known as the Crippled Children's Society. The Tuberculosis Society had been successful and at that time Heber Hickson was the Director of this Society. Upon request of the writer and the Rotary Club Committee, Mr. Hickson agreed to act also as Secretary for the Oklahoma Crippled Children's Society although there was really no organization set up at the time. It was the plan, however, to develop the Society by memberships throughout Oklahoma for the establishment of a definite organization.

From 1923 to 1924, the Crippled Children's Committee of the Rotary Club were composed of the following men: George Curtis as Chairman, Joseph Blatt, D. C. Patterson, W. T. Sorrels, William Guthrie, M. L. Crowther, Gus Houck, Heber Hickson, Faye Thompson, Charles W. Sims, George Woodworth, Everett W. Hill, John D. Thomas, Paul Fesler, Charles Knight, John Prest, Earl Snedeker, Charles Poole, and Doctors Looney, Earl D. McBide, Leslie Westfall, Harry Lamb, and M. M. Rowland.

During these years the William Jennings Bryan School for Crippled Children had been established in Oklahoma City. A number of children had been treated at the University Hospital, but the writer was not yet established as a member of the staff of the University Hospital. In September, 1923, a crippled children's clinic was established at what was then called the Baptist Hospital, now Mercy Hospital, at the corner of Twelve Street and Walker. A clinic was held once each week and all doctors in the state were invited to send crippled children to this clinic. Doctor W. M. Dickson, who had previously owned this hospital, and sold it to the Baptist Church was also interested in this clinic in respect to the general surgery of children. The writer continued his work throughout the state holding crippled children's clinics during 1923 and 1924. One day in January 1924, a child came to St. Anthony's Hospital for treatment under his care. This child, a little

girl, needed a brace for her foot. At Rotary Club one day, the writer sat by Earl Bridges, and made the statement there was a child at St. Anthony's Hospital who was greatly in need of a brace and the mother was without funds to purchase it. Immediately Earl spoke up and said that he would be glad to pay for it. The amount was about \$35.00. The writer refused to take money from Earl, but suggested that Earl see the mother and give the money to her and then the brace would be made for the child. Earl did this and became intensely interested in this child and in crippled children in general.

At the meeting of Rotary International in Cleveland, Ohio, in June, 1924, Earl Bridges attended this meeting and assigned to the Crippled Children's Committee round table. He was very enthusiastic, and upon his return home in Oklahoma City, proposed that a meeting be held at once and a Society for Crippled Children be organized which would be state-wide. He explained that Mr. Lew Wentz in Ponca City had been interested in crippled children for some years; and that Mr. Arthur Capper in Kansas was doing this work through his newspaper. An enthusiastic effort was begun toward organizing this Society. In 1925, A. A. Brown, E. T. Overand, Fred Letts, Fred Unland, Earl Bridges, Charlie Hamlin and Doctor A. C. Hirschfield were added to the Rotary Club Crippled Children's Committee.

On July 20, 1925 the Board of the Rotary Club, on a motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Sam Shelbourne, endorsed the program outlined by the Crippled Children's Committee, of which Earl Bridges was acting Chairman, in the organization of the State Society for Crippled Children. Allen DeShong of Ardmore, who had done much work along this line was very enthusiastic about this organization. On September 24, 1925 a meeting was held of the Crippled Children's Committee and other interested persons, to organize this Society. Allen DeShong was present, together with several men from Ardmore. At this meeting a motion carried to invite Mr. Lew Wentz to join in the organization of this Society. In reply Mr. Wentz said he would join and help organize the Society, provided an efficient secretary could be obtained. In the meantime, a temporary secretary for the work had been provided by the International Society. His name was Harry Howett. An office was established and he came to this City to act temporarily until a permanent secretary could be provided. The Oklahoma Society for Crippled Children was organized on September 24, 1925.

On November 2, 1925, "Daddy" Allen, Secretary of the International Society for Crippled Children, in charge of the International Rotary Club Hospital at Alyria, Ohio, was invited to speak to the Oklahoma City Rotary Club. He came to the state in November, and was entertained first at Oklahoma City, then at Ponca City by Mr. Wentz and the Miller Brothers of the 101 Ranch. He

aroused the enthusiasm of every member in the new organization. On December 7, 1925, a Ford Coupe was provided by Fred Jones and the Rotary Club for the Oklahoma Crippled Children's Society. For 1925 and 1926, George Woodworth, Doctor William Bailey, J. R. Barton, Harry Gilstrap and Harvey Everest were added to the Crippled Children's Committee. Mr. Howett was still Secretary of the Crippled Children's Society.

On February 1, 1926, Joe N. Hamilton, Principal of the Ponca City Schools, came to Oklahoma City to be Secretary of the Oklahoma Crippled Children's Society. His salary of approximately \$5,000 a year was donated by Mr. Wentz. Mr. Wirt Franklin of Ardmore provided office space free of rent in his Franklin Building at 217 Northwest Second Street, Oklahoma City.

The crippled children's clinics have always been a most important feature of the program. Usually they are sponsored by a civic club such as Rotary, Kiwanis or Lions Clubs in the state cities. Announcements of the clinics are published locally by the Society.

On the specified date the clinic staff, usually from Oklahoma City, or Tulsa, are gathered up by Mr. Hamilton at an early morning hour and delivered to the designated location in the city where the Clinic is to be held. The party consists of one or two orthopaedic surgeons; a plastic surgeon, the local county health doctor and nurses, the special service personnel of the State Crippled Children's Society, the Vocational and Rehabilitation representative and members of the sponsoring club. In some clinics as many as 125 to 150 children are examined. Usually, however, the number is from 25 to 60.

A record is made of each case. The attending surgeon's recommendations are made to the parents through the Social Service Office of the State Crippled Children's Hospital and Crippled Children's Society. Miss Kitty Shanklin, now Mrs. C. R. Rountree, was in charge of Social Service at many of the early clinics.

In 1926 and 1927, Mr. Lew Wentz became very interested in affairs of the State. He was appointed member on the State Highway Commission. He gave all of the salary paid him in this office to the Crippled Children's Society. Through his influence the Crippled Children's law was broadened and the State Hospital for Crippled Children was built in 1927. Mr. Wentz, provided the school building in connection with the hospital which was located just East of the University Hospital on the campus of the Medical School of the University of Oklahoma. Mr. Wentz, personally attended many of the crippled children's clinics and provided refreshments and entertainment for the children .

The Crippled Children's Act as amended in 1927 made it possible that hospitals other than the University Hospital could ac-

cept orthopaedic or plastic cases for treatment. It provided for a one-tenth mill levy in each county, the proceeds from which were set aside in a Crippled Children's fund. Thus, any afflicted child under twenty-one years of age could be provided treatment in a hospital.

In 1935 the Act was again amended. A Commission was established for administration of the program. This commission was composed of the State Superintendent of Health, Dean of the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. An Executive Secretary was appointed by the President of the University of Oklahoma. Thus, the organization was finally established very much as originally planned at the beginning of the movement.

The 1935 Act further provided for a Committee on standardization, composed of five doctors appointed by the Governor to approve hospitals, physicians and surgeons to treat cases under the act. The appointments were made by Governor Marland in 1935 as follows: Doctors Morris Searle of Tulsa, W. N. Browning, of Waurika, Pat Fite, of Muskogee, Earl D. McBride, of Oklahoma City and J. F. Park, of McAlester.

There were three classes of hospitals provided: (1) crippled children's hospitals; (2) general hospitals; (3) standard hospitals. This plan made the Oklahoma law for crippled children one of the most complete plans for such work throughout the Nation. It has been used as an example as other States have enacted legislation for a similar purpose.

The adoption of the Federal Social Security Act made a further provision necessary and, in 1935, Initiative Petition 155 was adopted which was known as the Oklahoma Security Act. It called for one-half of one per cent of the two per cent sales tax to be allocated to a fund known as the State Assistance Fund and expanded on the treatment of afflicted children under the direction of the Oklahoma Public Welfare Commission.

In 1941 the Crippled Children's Act was rewritten and Senate Bill 13, (Session Laws 1941) is the basic law under which the crippled children's work operates. There are over 62 hospitals authorized to admit children under the act.

The State Crippled Children's Hospital was established in 1927. The hospital provided beds, pediatric, orthopaedic and plastic cases. The Chief of Staff was Doctor LeRoy Long, Dean of the Medical School. Other members of the Staff were Doctors W. K. West, S. R. Cunningham, C. R. Rountree and the writer. Doctor Don H. O'Donoghue was the first Resident in Orthopaedic Surgery. Doctor Howard B. Shorbe and Doctor R. L. Noell followed. In 1936 the legislation provided for a full time Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Doctor Paul Colonna of New York City accepted the posi-

tion. Many Residents have been trained in this institution and are now among the leading orthopaedic surgeons nationally. Doctor John F. Burton developed the Plastic Surgery Service. More than 83,291 children have received treatment in the Crippled Children's Hospital from 1927 to 1949.

In 1925, the writer established a hospital in connection with the McBride Clinic. The name was "The Reconstruction Hospital". It was located at 717 North Robinson Street. In 1938 a new building was constructed at the corner of Northwest 10th Street and Dewey, and the name was changed to the "Bone and Joint Hospital." A crippled children's ward was provided and the institution was approved as a crippled children's hospital under the Crippled Children's Act.

In 1926, Elias Margo, Orthopaedic Surgeon joined the Staff of the Reconstruction Hospital. In 1937 Doctor Wm. K. Ishmael, was added to the Staff as an Internist and Specialist in Arthritis and Rheumatic diseases. Early in the year of 1938 Doctor Howard B. Shorbe, was added as an Orthopaedic Surgeon. The present Staff of the Bone and Joint Hospital includes in addition to the original Staff mentioned above; Doctor Lucile Spire Blachly, Dietary Specialist in the Division on Arthritis, and Doctors J. R. Stacy, William L. Waldrop, and Russell D. Harris as orthopaedic surgeons. This hospital has 81 beds for orthopaedic cases. A solarium is especially arranged with 15 beds for small children.

The Oklahoma State Orthopaedic Society was established in 1947. The members of this organization at this time (April, 1949) are: Doctors Samuel T. Moore, Elias Margo, Howard B. Shorbe, Robert L. Noell, L. Stanley Sell, D. H. O'Donoghue, Charles Rountree, W. K. West, William L. Waldrep, James C. Amspacher, J. R. Stacy, Robert Holt, John Florence, John Dague, Russell D. Harris, all of Oklahoma City; Doctors Frank Stuart, Ian MacKenzie, Wade Sisler, John E. McDonald, Charles Brighton, all of Tulsa; Doctors Pat Fite and P. E. Johnson, both of Muskogee; Doctors Charles Graybill, of Lawton, and L. S. Willour, of McAlester, Oklahoma.

It is interesting to recall that when suggestions were made thirty years ago to give crippled children in Oklahoma special attention, the reply at first was that there were very few of these children even in Oklahoma City. Now, we have twenty-four orthopaedic surgeons in the state, all of them busy daily seeing patients who are injured or deformed in one way or another. The citizens of Oklahoma should be proud of the accomplishments in the work for cripples.

It may be said with acclaim that the citizens of Oklahoma have provided generously for the crippled child and, also, the crippled adult. Citizens of the State may well be proud of the great good that has been accomplished in the field of orthopaedic surgery in Oklahoma.