

Mansion on a Hill

The Story of The Willows Maternity Sanitarium
and the Adoption Hub of America

By KelLee Parr



Leona
May

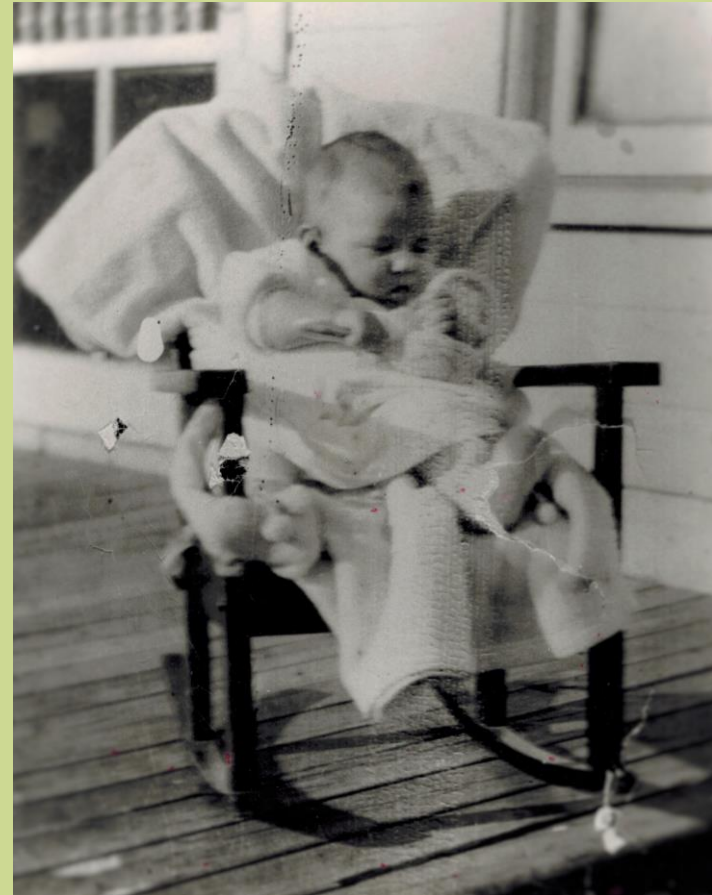


On November 17, 1924,
Leona May entered
The Willows Maternity
Sanitarium at the age of 16.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium



Marcia was born on
Valentine's Day,
February 14, 1925.



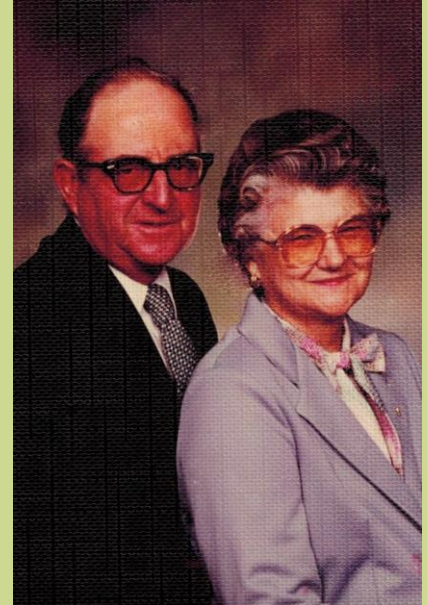
Lynn and Emma Keller



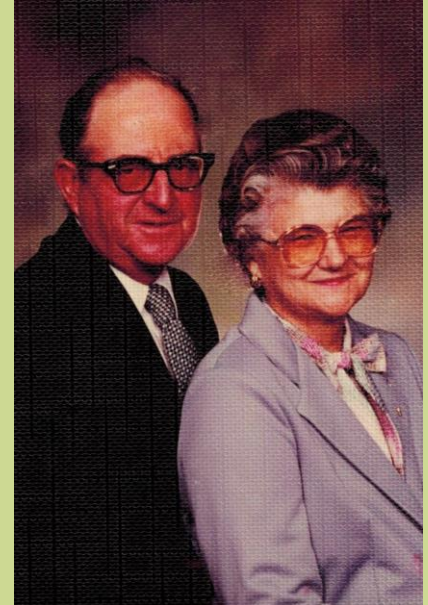
In March of 1925, they adopted Marcia
and named her Wanda.



Wanda had a wonderful life
and family, but...



...she always wanted to know
about her birth mother.



In 1991, I was able to locate my
birth grandmother Leona May.



After 66 years,
Leona and
Wanda (Marcia)
met in the
summer of 1991.



They had 13 years to share together.



My Little Valentine

The story of a mother and daughter's lost love

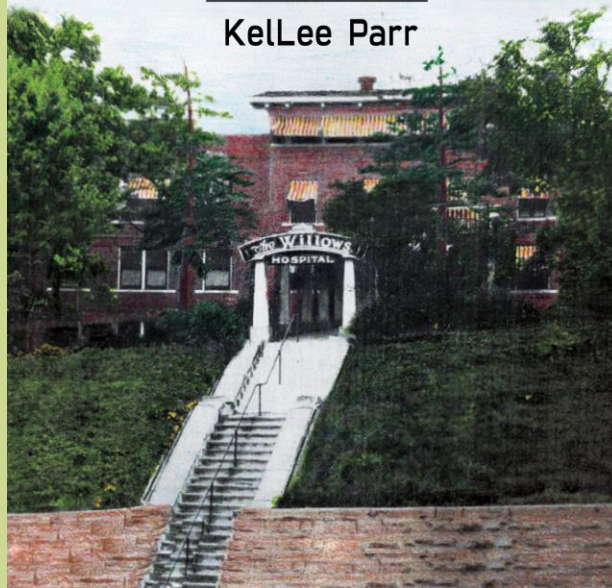


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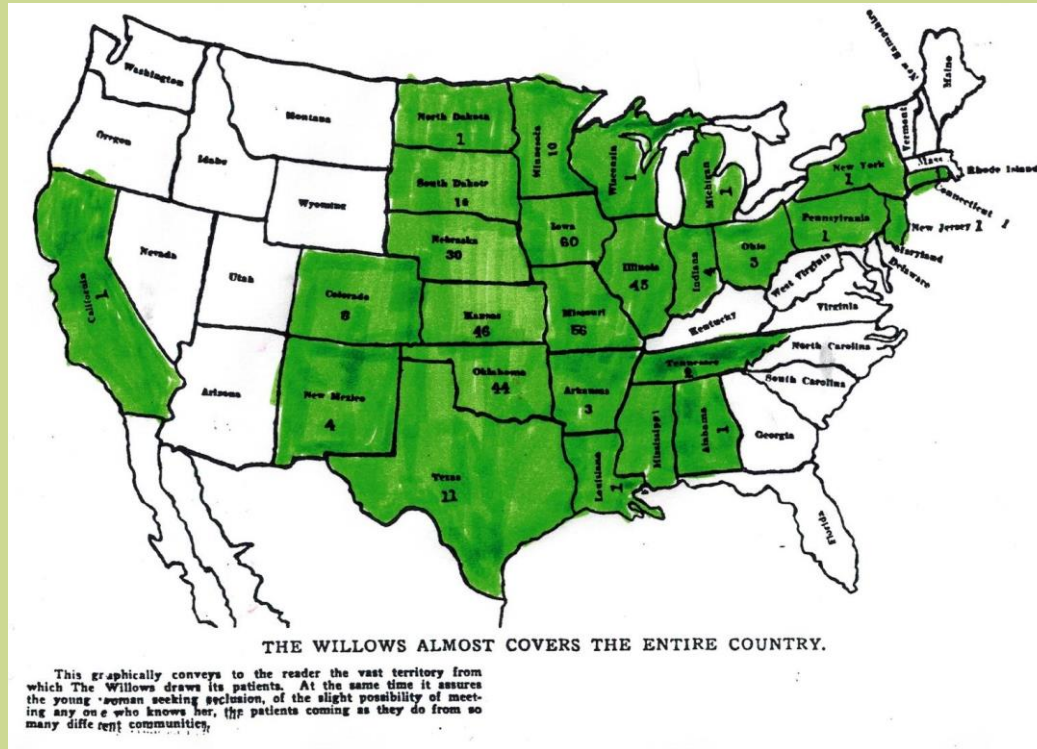
Kansas City, Missouri – Adoption Hub of America

During the early to mid-1900s, it is estimated over 100,000 babies were born in Kansas City and placed for adoption.

Why Kansas City?

- Centrally located in the United States

In 1920 The Willows had 353 residents from 26 states.

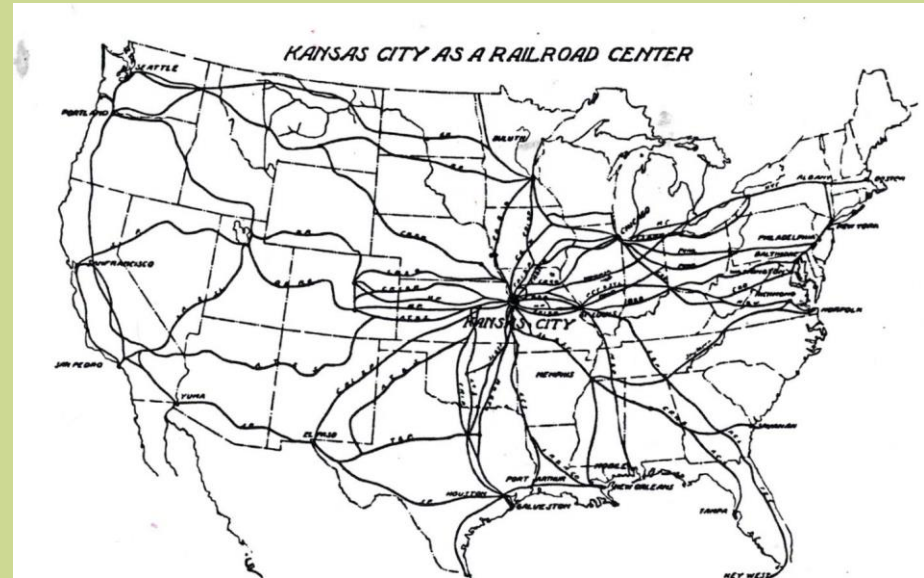


Distribution by States in 1920 (353 girls from 26 states)

• Iowa	60	• Arkansas, Ohio	3
• Missouri	56	• Tennessee	2
• Kansas	46	• Alabama, New Jersey, Wisconsin, North	
• Illinois	45	Dakota, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York,	
• Oklahoma	44	California, Louisiana, Michigan, West Virginia	
• Nebraska	30		1 each
• South Dakota	16		
• Texas	11		
• Minnesota	10		
• Colorado	8		
• New Mexico	4		
• Indiana	4		

Why Kansas City?

- Centrally located in the United States
- Railroad system



Kansas City Union Station

- Completed October 30, 1914 to replace old depot
- 25th Street and Grand Avenue
- Second largest train station in the U.S



Photo courtesy Kansas City Museum and Union Station Archives

Kansas City Union Station



Annual passenger
traffic peaked at
678,363 in 1945.

Photo courtesy Kansas City Museum and Union Station Archives

Why Kansas City?

- Centrally located in the United States
- Railroad system
- Simplified court adoption system

**Reporter Norma Lee Browning wrote in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune Grafic Magazine* on July 2, 1950,
about America's adoption systems :**

“There is one city, however, that has solved its own ‘black market’ baby problems by devising a simplified court adoption system that has gained a nation-wide reputation for its high standards, fine work, and success in the child placement field. That is Kansas City, Missouri. The adoption court there places about 1,000 babies a year, thus making it one of the largest and possibly ‘the’ largest child placement agency in AMERICA.”

Why Kansas City?

- Centrally located in the United States
- Railroad system
- Simplified court adoption system
- Sealed records

Sealed records

- Records were closed and unavailable to adoptees and birth parents
- Protection for birth parents' identities
- Protection for adoptive parents

Adoption Hub of America

Kansas City had many different maternity and adoption homes in the early to mid-1900s.

Some of the Maternity Homes

- Washington Sanitarium
- Fairland Maternity Home
- Dr. Hartman's Sanitarium
- The Rest Cottage
- St. Vincent's Maternity Home/St. Anthony's Home for Children
- Florence Crittenton Home for Girls
- East Side Hospital
- Evan Children's Finding Home Society/Kansas City Cradle
- The Veil/Mt. Washington Maternity Home
- Conley Maternity Hospital
- The Fairmount Maternity Hospital
- The Willows Maternity Sanitarium

St. Anthony's Home for Infants and St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital



- Opened August 17, 1899
- Was relocated in 1954 to 1414 E. 27th
- In 1964 – babies placed in foster care – name changed to St. Anthony's Home
- Closed in 1969

3210 E. 23rd Street between
Walrond and College

The Fairmount Maternity Hospital



1414 E. 27th Street

Located at 4909–11 East 27th
Street from at least
(1917 – 1934 and moved back
1951 – 1963)

1414 E. 27th Street
(1934 – 1951)

Officially closed
August 24, 1963

Harry M. Evans Children's Home Kansas City Cradle

WHERE BABIES WILL BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR
FUTURE PARENTS.



The future home of the Kansas City Cradle Home Finding Society will be in this building to be erected on Wornall road just north of St. Luke's hospital. Designed by Keene & Simpson, the architects, it will contain the latest of equipment for the care of babies. The total cost will be around \$40,000.

Harry M. Evans Children's Home was located at 520 Woodland Avenue.

Later became the Kansas City Cradle located at 4321 Wornall Road.

Cost \$40,000 – \$50,000 to build. Held open house Jan. 15, 1937. Closed July 31, 1945 and became part of St. Luke's Hospital.

Florence Crittenton Home for Girls and Florence Home for Colored Girls



FLORENCE CRITTENTON HOME, KANSAS CITY, MO.

225 W. 43rd Street at Wornall Road

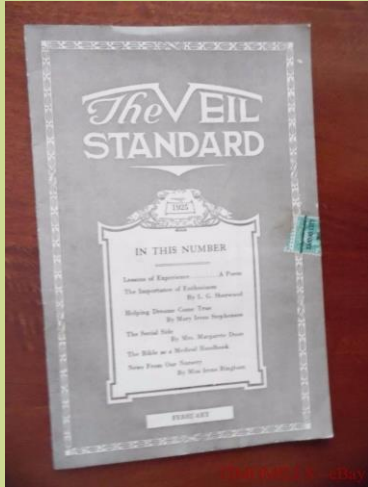
Began in
1896 and
closed in
1973.

Opened in 1925.
Changed to
Florence Home in
1958 and two
merged in the
1970s.



2446 Michigan Street and later
2228 Campbell Avenue

The Veil



Charles and Irene Janes

- First home opened in August 1913
- September 3, 1913 – First listing as Mt. Washington Maternity
- Many names over the years
- Many lawsuits
- Closed in the 1930s
- Later opened homes in Corry, Langhorne, and West Chester, Pennsylvania

Names used by The Veil in advertisements over the years.

Private Confinement Home

Mount Washington Infant Home

Mt. Washington Private Maternity Home

Mt. Washington Sanitarium

Kansas City Women and Children's Hospital

Veil Babies' Home

Missouri Baby Home

Arlington Infant Home

Missouri Maternity Home

Mt. Washington Maternity Home

Mt. Washington Hospital

Veil Hospital

Veil Sanitarium

Fair Park Maternity Home

Washington Sanitarium???

Fairmount Sanitarium???

THE VEIL Maternity Hospital. Superior accommodations for patients particulars, address Secretary 416 N. Howard St., Baltimore, Md. desiring privacy and seclusion before and through confinement; charges reasonable; may work for expenses; babies for adoption. Mrs. C. M. Janes.
15 West 31st, Kansas City, Mo.

The Wichita Daily Eagle (Wichita, Kansas)
Sun, Jan 19, 1919 –Page 23

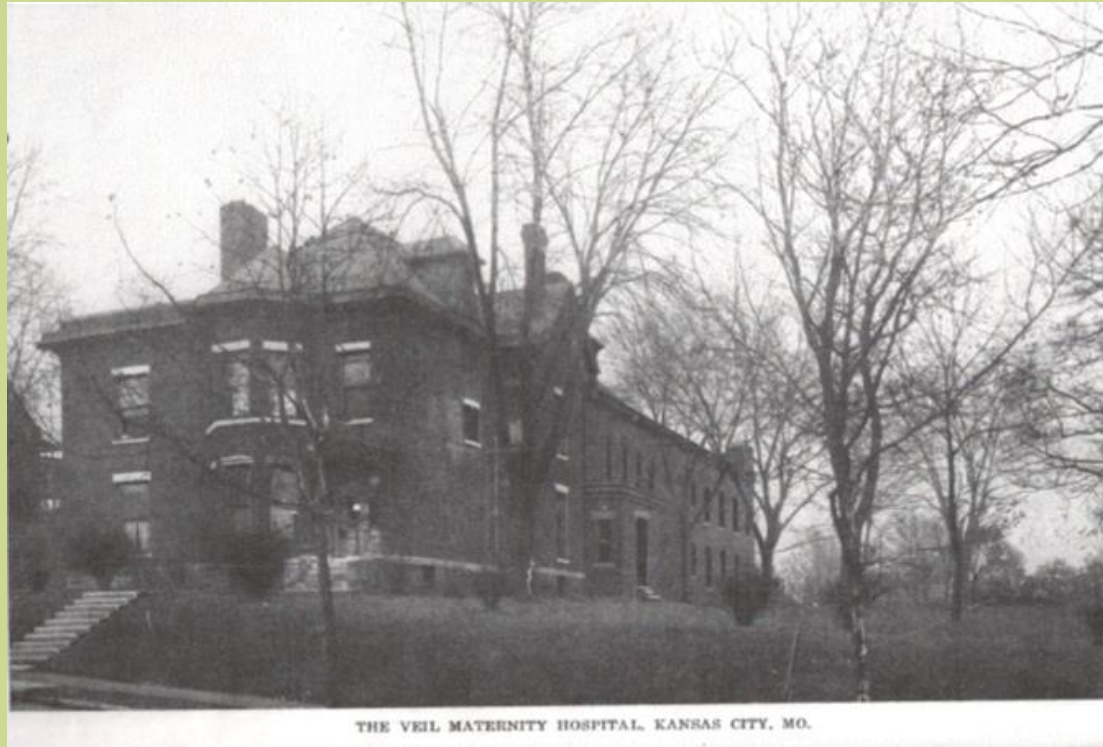
The Veil





The Veil Hospital and Home, 15 W. 31st St.,

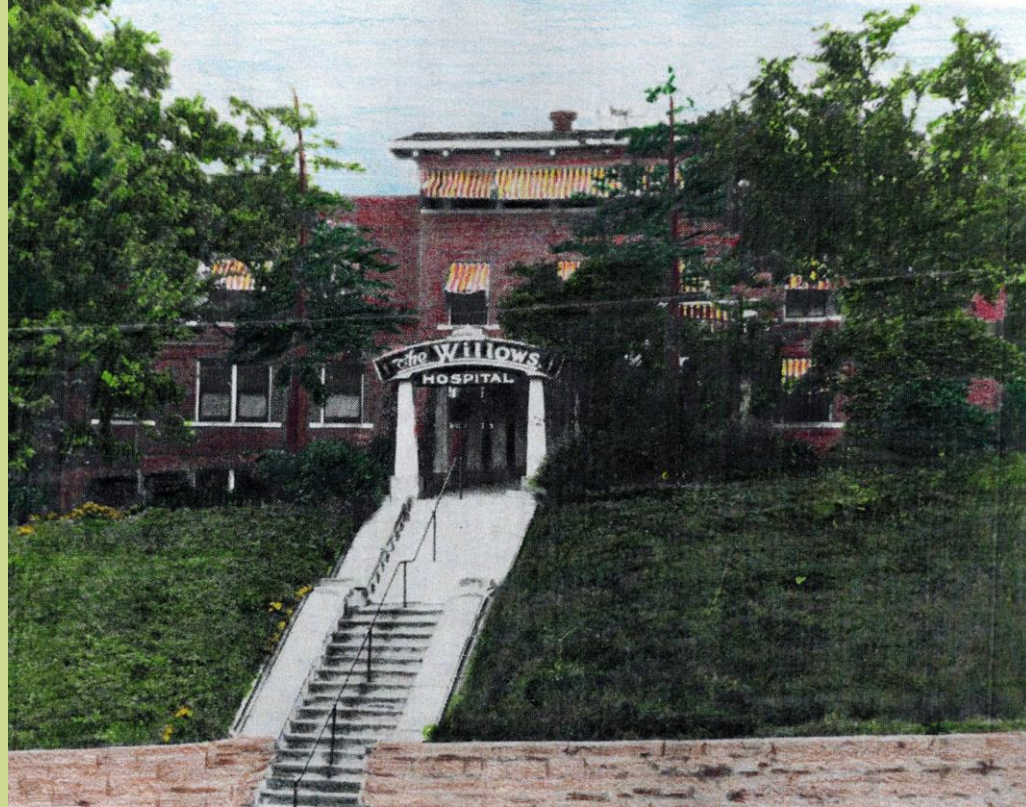
Rented in 1919



Purchased old St. Luke's Hospital for \$50,000
1111 Euclid Ave. 1924—early 1930s

Of all the many maternity homes in Kansas City, the largest facility was known as the “Ritz” or “Waldorf” of the homes.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium



What made The Willows different from the other maternity homes?

- Was a privately owned facility
- Same family owned for 64 years
- Operated at same location for 61 years
- Did not receive financial aid from grants or government money
- No donations from philanthropic groups or individuals
- Selective in who they admitted as patients

Established in 1905 by E. P. and Cora May Haworth.



The Willows

It is estimated approximately 35,000 babies were born at The Willows from 1905 to 1969 when it closed.

1906 and 1907 Ads for The Willows

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium
Regular Physicians Invited to Care for Their Own Patients.
A **Sanitarium** Home especially adapted to the care of **Unfortunate Girls and Women** who wish to avoid **Publicity**. Cases not requiring seclusion also taken.



Strictly Ethical.
The House Physician personally conducts the confinement of each patient not provided with a local physician.
The **sanitarium** furnishes strictly modern home comforts, home life and home privileges and is liberally equipped with apparatus for obstetric work. Patients may enter and be in retirement as long before confinement as they desire. Each is taught to prepare herself for sickness while in waiting.
Child adopted if desired.
Light, airy, comfortable rooms; new furnishings and equipment; palatable and nourishing food; modern sanitary conveniences; elevating influences and good moral atmosphere.

For further information and terms, address
JNO. W. KEPNER, M. D., House Physician.
E. P. HAWORTH, Superintendent.

THE WILLOWS.
217 Park Ave., KANSAS CITY, MO.

217 Park Ave. KCMO

14 ADVERTISEMENTS.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium

Strictly Ethical. Regular Physicians Invited to Care for Their Own Patients.
A **Sanitarium** Home especially adapted to the care of **Unfortunate Girls and Women** who wish to avoid **Publicity**. Cases not requiring seclusion also admitted with separate accommodations.

Nest, airy, comfortable rooms; new furnishings and hospital equipment; modern sanitary conveniences. The recent doubling of capacity has materially added to the comforts and advantages offered patients, including a parlor and reading room for patients' exclusive use.



The **Sanitarium** is homelike. Patients may enter and make it their home as long before confinement as desired. Each is prepared for sickness while in waiting. Elevating influences and good moral atmosphere. Good homes are found for the babies when adoption is arranged for.

For further information and terms, address
E. P. HAWORTH, Superintendent.
JNO. W. KEPNER, M. D., House Physician.

THE WILLOWS,
1215 and 1217 Park Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri.

1215 and 1217 Park Ave. KCMO



217 Park Ave., Kansas City, MO



1215 Park Ave., Kansas City, MO

Asa Maddox Mansion



2929 Main Street
overlooking
downtown
Kansas City

Photo courtesy of MVSC, Kansas City Public Library.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium



Asa Maddox's second wife sold the mansion and five acres to the Haworths in 1908.

Fire Christmas Eve Morning 1908

“Six women were carried out by firemen. Mr. Haworth, aided by neighbors, carried out all of the babies first. The infants and the mothers were taken to another house, an annex of the hospital.”

Kansas City Star – December 24, 1908

Office



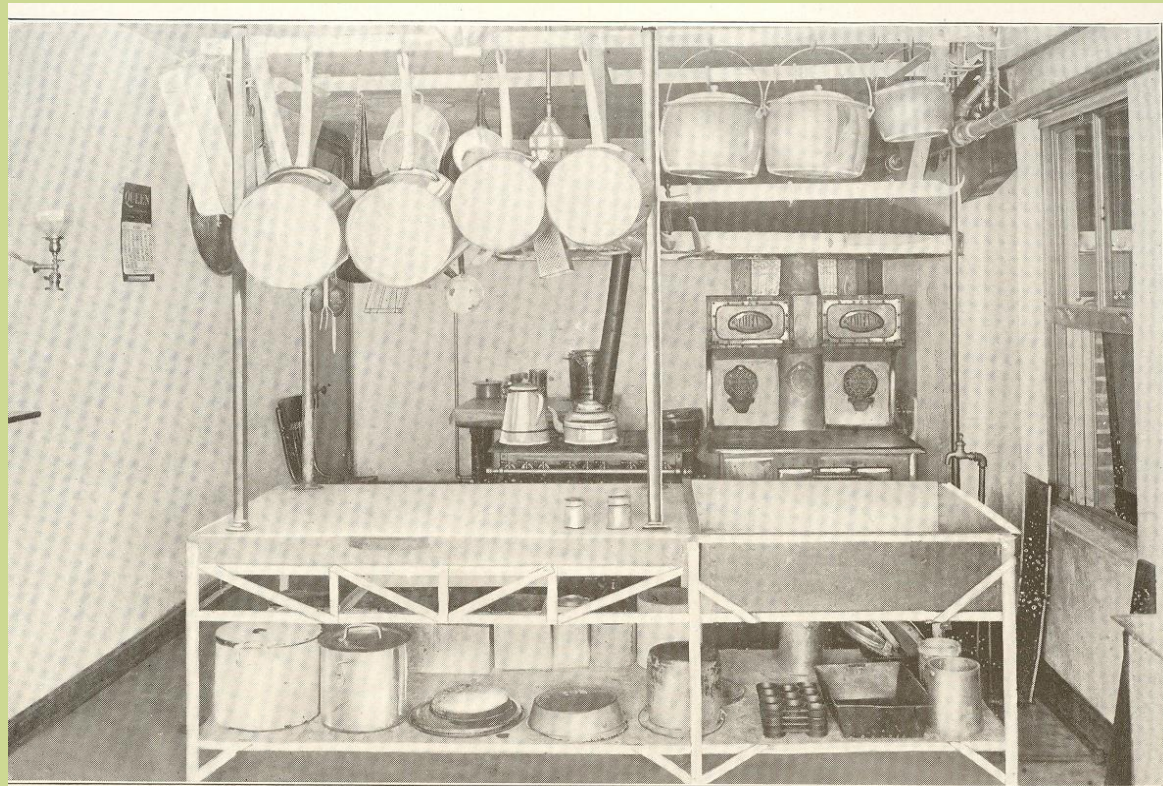
Philosophy of The Willows Best Expressed in Quote

“She knows that she has made a mistake. It had already occurred and she cannot avoid the misfortune that follows in the wake of this mistake. And in any case she cannot provide the child with freedom from the stigma of conception that society places on cases like hers.” – E. P. Haworth

Client's room



Kitchen



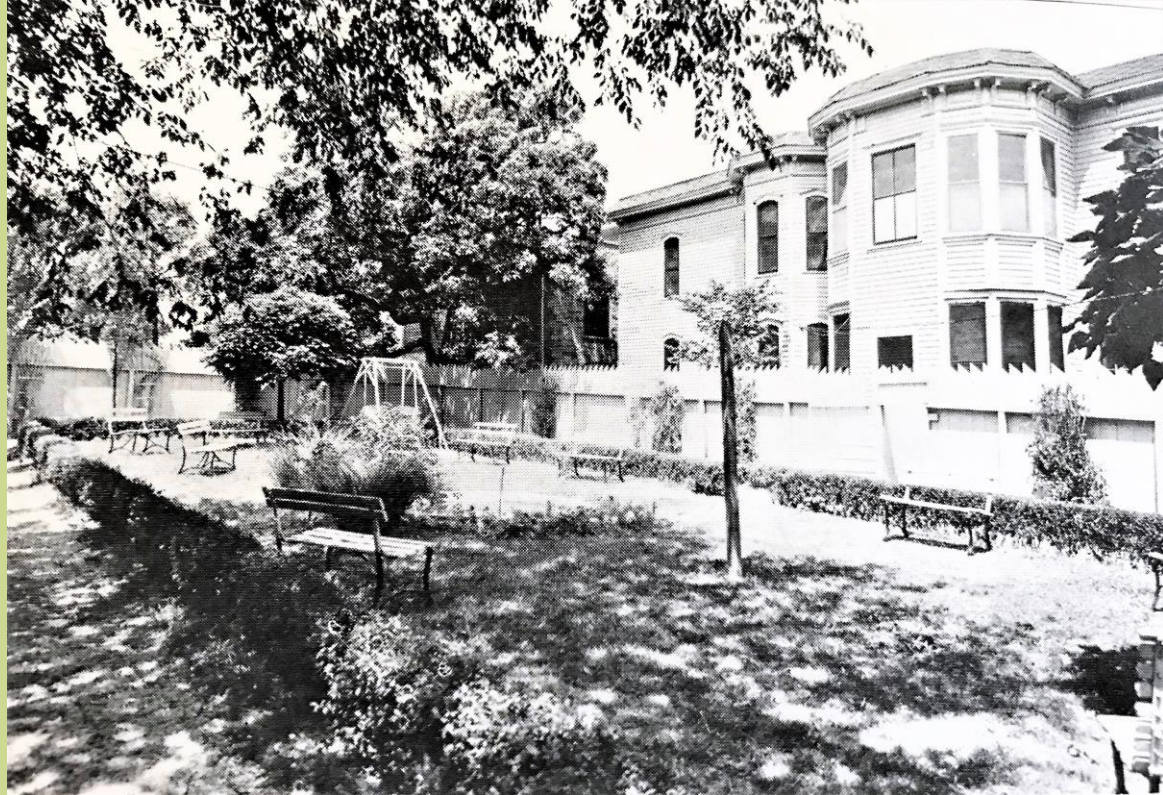
KITCHEN

Dining Hall



DINING ROOM

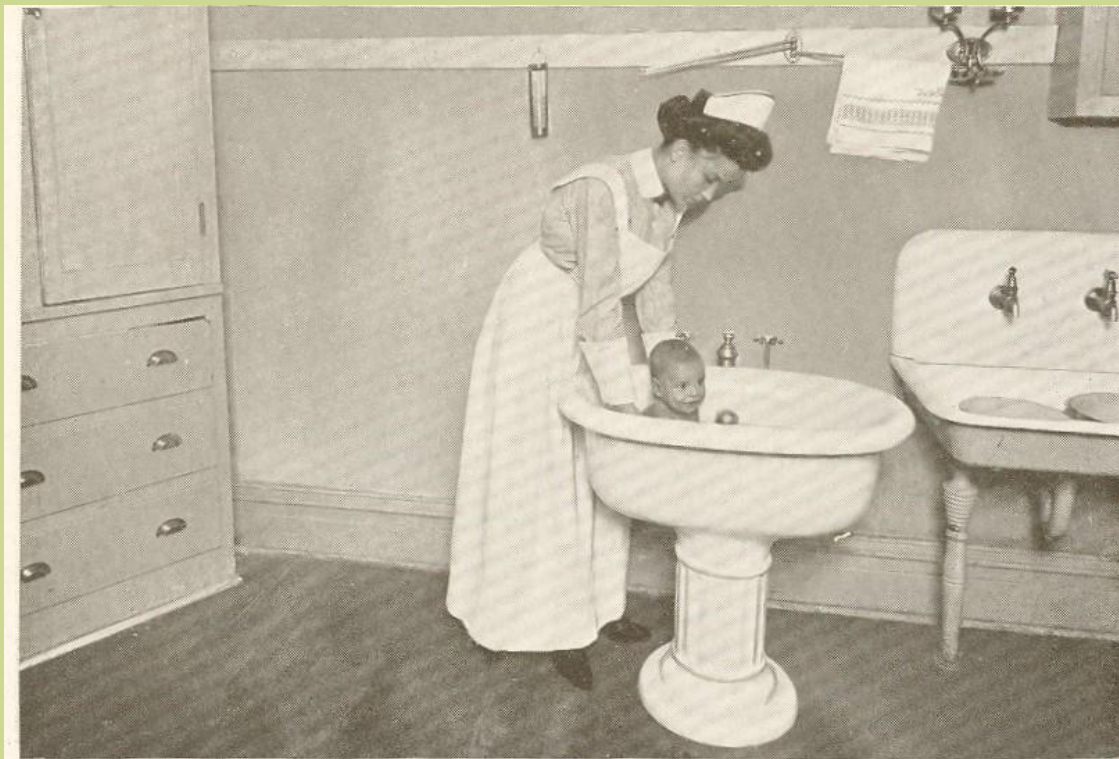
The Bull Pen



Delivery Room



Washroom



THE MORNING BATH

Roof Garden Nursery



ROOF GARDEN NURSERY

The Willows in the Winter





Training School
For
Obstetric and
Infant Nursing

The Willows
Maternity Sanitarium
Kansas City, Mo.
Established - 1905

Staff of nurses and doctors



Dr. Kepner with Willows' nurses

Some of The Willows' Doctors Over the Years

- Dr. John W. Kepner (Co-founder) 1908–1931 (Born 10-4-1874, Died 4-20-1931)
- Dr. Frank Neff (pediatrician 1906–1940s?) *Running Out of Footprints* by Cathy Callen
- Dr. C. D. Trask (1918) – also listed with The Veil
- Dr. R. T. Boone (1931)
- Dr. Dwight T. Van Del (1932–1953) – also listed with Crittenton, Menorah, and St. Vincent's
- Dr. R. D. Dwyer (1951) – also listed with The Fairmount
- Dr. D. M. Love (1950–1959) – also listed with The Fairmount and St. Mary's
- Dr. Robert F. Lamar (1953–1954) – also listed with St. Mary's and Crittenton
- Dr. William W. Patterson (1960)
- Dr. R. A. Slickman (1961–1968) – also listed with The Fairmount
- Others: Dr. Hermit Knoch and Dr. Burger

Prolific Advertisers

E. F. HAWORTH,
Superintendent.

JOHN W. KEPNER, M. D.
House Obstetrician.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium

A STRICTLY ETHICAL HOME AND HOSPITAL FOR
THE CARE OF SECLUSION MATERNITY PATIENTS



THE WILLOWS MATERNITY SANITARIUM is a modern and up-to-date Sanitarium and Hospital devoted to the seclusion and care of unfortunate young women. It offers to the medical fraternity an ethical and Christian solution to one of the difficult problems of the profession. The Sanitarium extends to these young women protection and seclusion in congenial and home-like surroundings before confinement, as well as providing efficient medical and hospital care during delivery and convalescence.

The Willows has been located, planned and especially equipped for seclusion maternity work. It is strictly modern, having steam heat, electric lights, gas and baths with hot and cold water. The patients' rooms are light, airy and furnished for home-like comfort as well as hospital convenience. The dining service has been especially planned for the work and wholesome, nourishing and well cooked meals are served.

The Hospital equipment is complete and modern, having been installed for this particular work. It includes two specially fitted Confinement Chambers, sterilizing rooms, massage room, diet kitchen and necessary drug and linen rooms.

The Sanitarium is open to any reputable physician to handle his own high-grade cases in it. When the physician is not accessible to The Willows or finds it otherwise impractical to care for his case, Dr. John W. Kepner, House Obstetrician, will handle it. The mothers and babies are attended by a corps of efficient, specially trained nurses.

Entering early in gestation is important for preparing the patient for accouchement through systematic, hygienic methods and massage. Patients may enter as early as they desire. A special system of abdominal and perineal massage has been devised and has proved very successful in the prevention of *Sitras Gravidarum* and as an aid to labor.

The care of the babies is one of the important features of The Willows' work. The Nursery is modernly equipped and no reasonable expense is spared in the babies' care. When such arrangements are made the institution assumes the entire responsibility of the child, keeping it until a good home can be found where the child will be legally adopted.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium has accommodations meeting the requirements of the most fastidious as well as others for those patients whose means are limited. But, notwithstanding the many advantages of its services, the charges are reasonable.

Send for new 80-page booklet.

The Willows

2929 Main Street,
KANSAS CITY, MO.

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium
2929 Main Street, Kansas City, Mo. Date.....

Gentlemen:

I have a patient who is in need of services similar to those your Sanitarium offers. I would be pleased to receive information relative to services and expenses for the care of the unfortunate young woman. The date of expectancy in this case is about.....191.....

Dr.

Address

Remarks:

.....

The Willows Maternity Sanitarium

2929 Main Street, Kansas City, Mo. Date.....

Gentlemen:

I have a patient who is in need of services similar to those your Sanitarium offers. I would be pleased to receive information relative to services and expenses for the care of the unfortunate young woman. The date of expectancy in

this case is about.....191.....

Dr.

Address

Remarks:

THE VEIL MATERNITY HOSPITAL

512 East Main Street, Corry, Penn.

1111 Euclid Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

Date.....192.....

Gentlemen:

I have a patient who is in need of services similar to those furnished by your Hospital. I would be pleased to receive information relative to services and expense for the care of the unfortunate young woman.

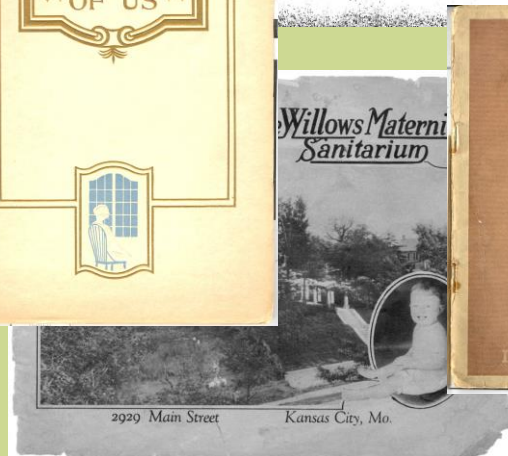
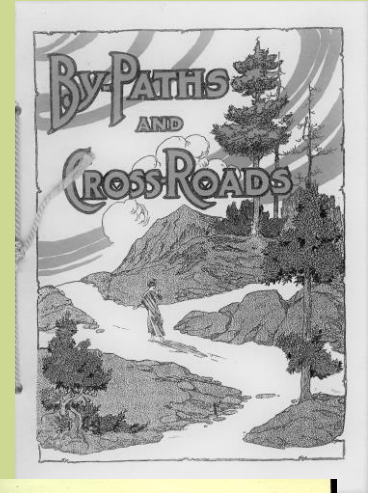
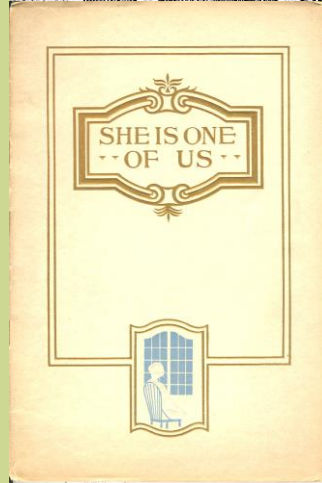
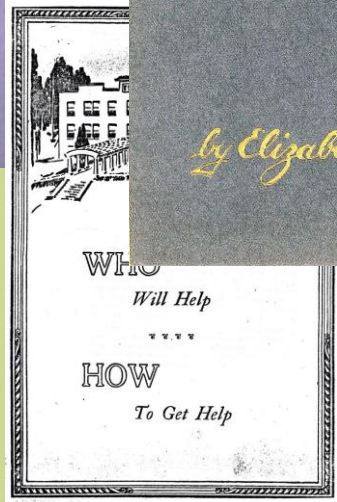
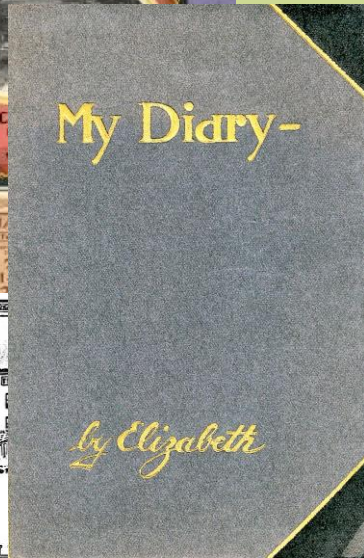
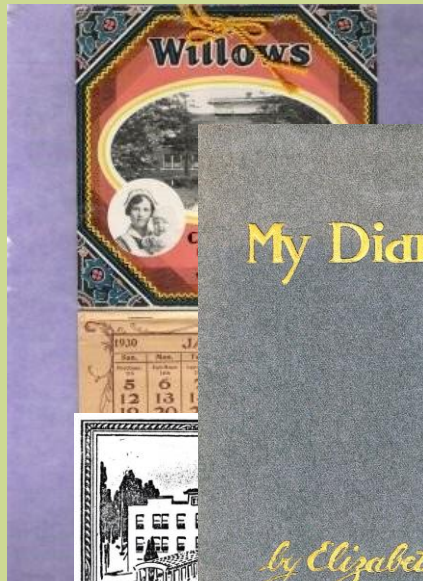
The date of expectancy in this case is about.....192.....

Dr.

Address

Remarks:

Prolific advertisers





1920–1929: Ages of Willows Patients

Total of 3,021

• Twelve	2	• Twenty	358
• Thirteen	16	• Twenty-one	249
• Fourteen	36	• Twenty-two	217
• Fifteen	91	• Twenty-three	163
• Sixteen	177	• Twenty-four	112
• Seventeen	320	• Twenty-five	105
• Eighteen	377	• Twenty-six	77
• Nineteen	416	• Unknown	34

Advertisement in
Kansas City Star
October 23, 1917



HOSPITAL for Women—Expert physicians and nurses; confinements; adoptions free; strictly private; terms to suit; may work for board; home like. Washington Sanitarium. Both phones. Office 1205 Michigan.

MOUNT WASHINGTON Hospital—For confinement; elegantly located; strictly private charges reasonable; babies adopted. May work for board. Mrs. C. M. Jones, office 2828 Main. Home phone East 210.

HOSPITAL for women, expert specialists, private confinements, adoptions free; terms to suit may work; both phones; Washington Sanitarium homelike. Office, 1205 Michigan. Mrs. Pierce.

FOR ADOPTION—Ten healthy, bright baby boys ranging in age up to 5 months; some are of exceptional parentage. Call or write for "Anti-Rac Suicide Album." The Willows, 2929 Main st.

NEW Fairmount Maternity Hospital, 4911 East 27th. For confinement; private; charges reasonable; may work for board; babies for adoption. Home Linwood 697. Bell East 2201.

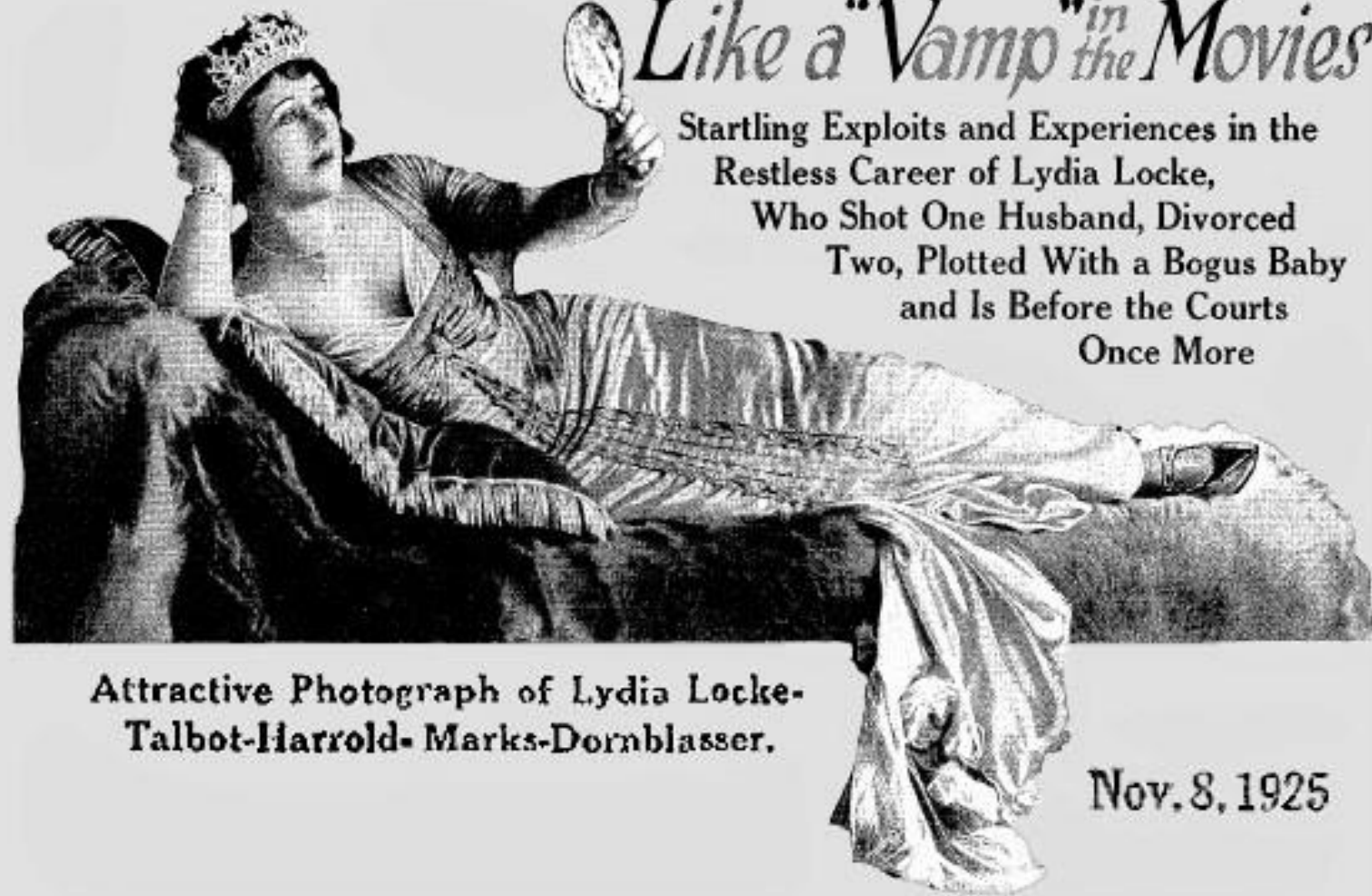
Advertisements for Babies

- ▶ **September 6, 1918** "SAVE THAT BABY--AMERICA NEEDS IT" 20 choice boys and girls for adoption, ranging in age up to 10 months.
- ▶ **January 26, 1920** FOR ADOPTION-- Ten bright babies of exceptional parentage, ranging in age up to 1 year. For further information call or write The Willows 2929 Main Street.
- ▶ **December 10, 1925** A MERRY CHRISTMAS Why not brighten your home this Christmas by adopting an attractive, healthy boy? We have 30 boys of exceptional parentage ranging in age up to 6 months. For further information write or call personally. The Willows 2929 Main Street.
- ▶ **May 26, 1929** FOR ADOPTION-- 20 attractive boy babies, ranging in age up to 5 months. For further information address The Willows 2929 Main Street.

Lydia Locke

(also known as Lady Talbot)





Like a "Vamp" in the Movies

Startling Exploits and Experiences in the
Restless Career of Lydia Locke,
Who Shot One Husband, Divorced
Two, Plotted With a Bogus Baby
and Is Before the Courts
Once More

Attractive Photograph of Lydia Locke-
Talbot-Harrod-Marks-Dornblasser.

Nov. 8, 1925

Garnet “Peggy” Haworth took over running The Willows in 1953 until its closing in 1969.





Garnet in her office

What made The Willows a success for 64 years?

- Dedication and belief in their cause
- Wanted to help young women in time of need
- Not judgmental
- Treated clients with respect
- Privately family owned and operated
- Continually upgraded facility
- No grants, federal money, or donations
- Loyal staff

Dedicated Willows' Staff



- Joan Nichols – 10 years social worker
- Alice U. Dysart – 30 years superintendent of nursing
- Nelle T. McEwen – 48 years head of adoption, secretary



- Maudene Lowe – 53 years home administration, assistant superintendent

The Willows closed in
1969 after the last girl left.

The myth that the records
were burned in the backyard
is not true.



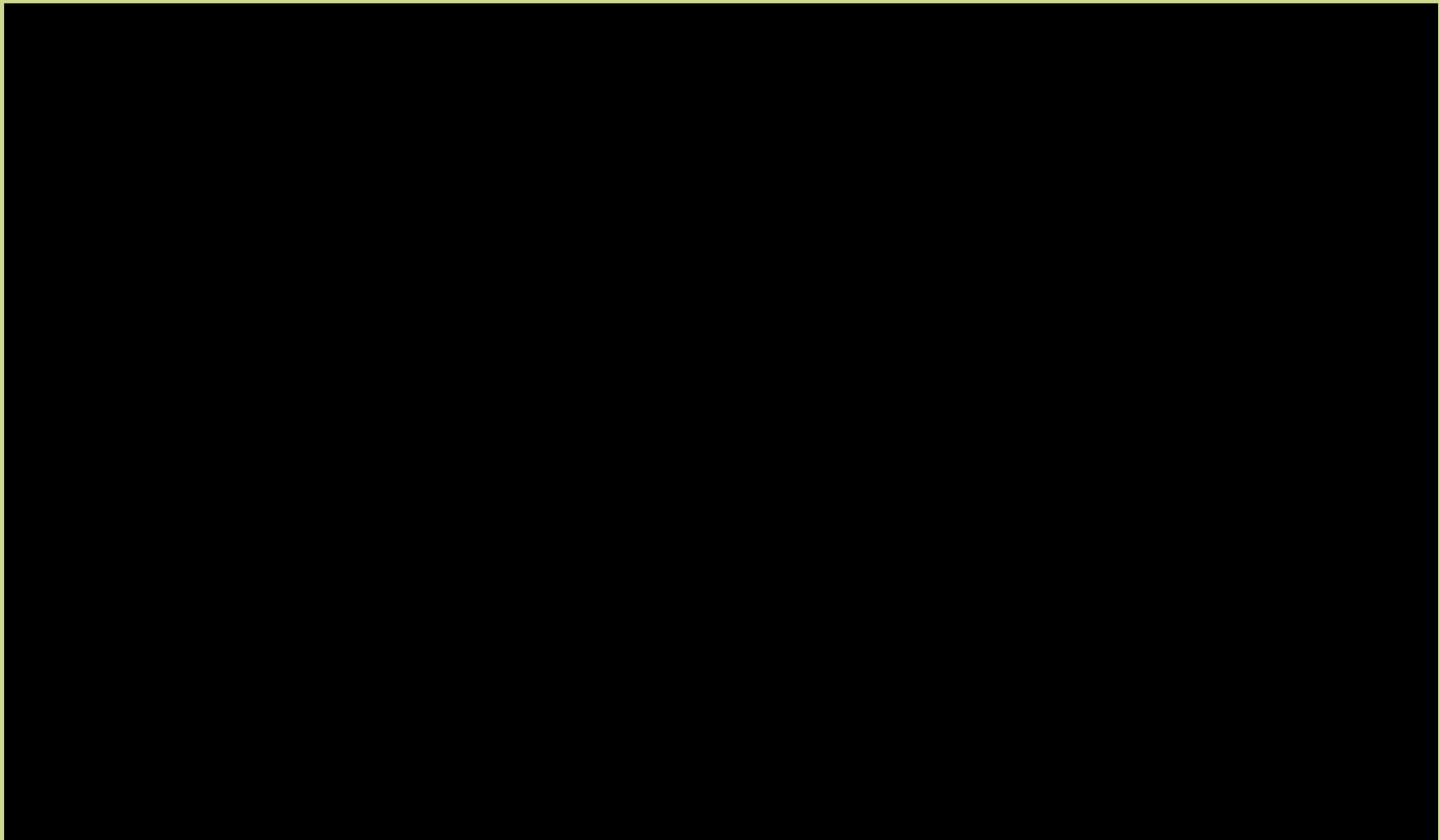
Garnet and Don Haworth with their daughter
Carol in 1969 when The Willows closed.

Voice of The Willows

Anita's Story

Anita's biological mom





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