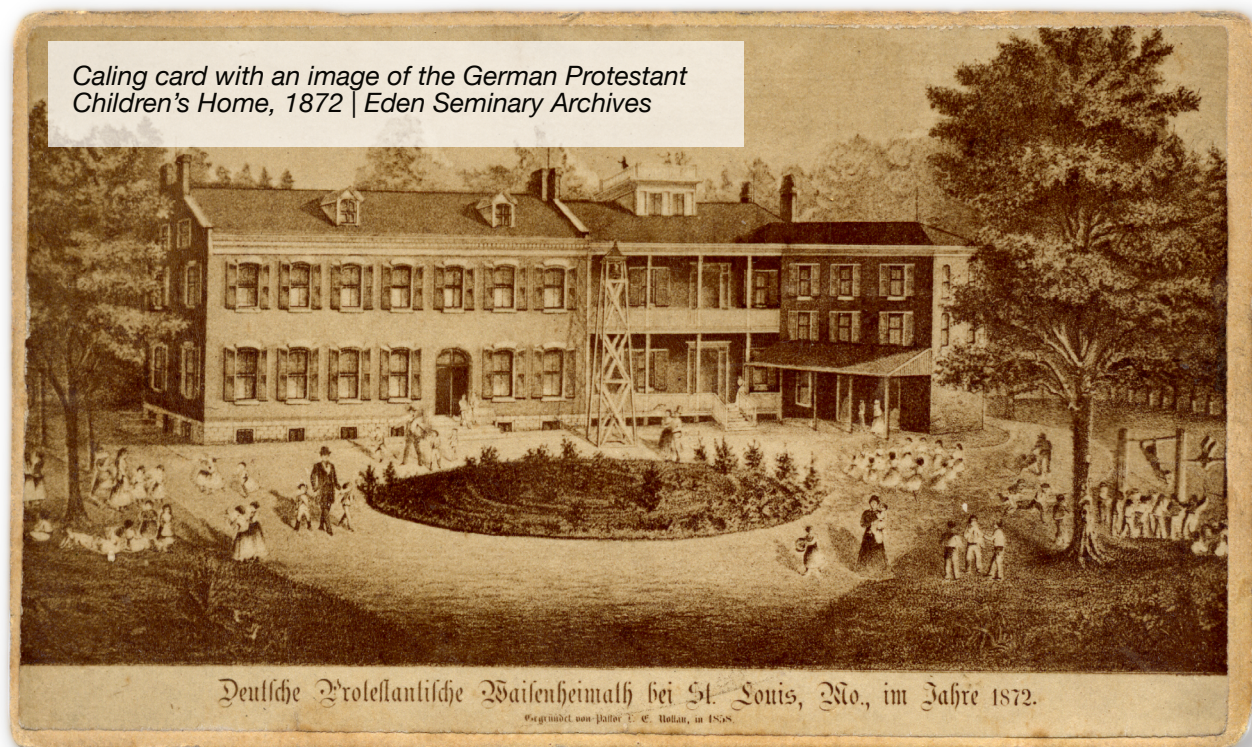


This Week in Eden History
March 25 | Evangelical Children's Home



The German Protestant Children's Home was incorporated on March 25, 1861. The institution was founded by Louis Nollau, a missionary, pastor, and early Evangelical leader who was also important in the development of Eden Seminary.

Cholera ravaged large portions of the world in the 19th Century. Millions died in recurrent epidemics from diarrhea caused by bacteria transmitted through contaminated water. The illness affected St. Louis several times in the middle of the century, but the epidemic of 1849 was the

most severe; over six percent of the city's population died, including many fatalities among newly arriving immigrants and residents living in poverty.

The orphans resulting from epidemics and other disasters were vulnerable to starvation and abuse before the establishment of government welfare programs. St. Louis religious denominations created organizations to help care for these children, including the Protestant Episcopal Orphan's Home (1848), Roman Catholic Orphan Society (1849), St. Vincent's German Orphan Society (1851), the Industrial School and Temporary Home for Destitute Children (1854), a secular institution. As St. Louis continued to grow, however, the need outpaced the response.

The fledgling German Church Society of the West (later known as the Evangelical Synod) became involved with orphans indirectly when Louis Nollau, pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Church, assumed the care for two orphans, housing them in the parsonage with his family. He recognized the need for a larger response and solicited contributions among congregations within the denomination. As a result, twenty-five orphans were moved into a four-room house on Jefferson St. in 1859 and subsequently to a larger facility at Jefferson and Dayton in 1860. These efforts were institutionalized on March 25, 1861, when the German Protestant Children's Home was incorporated.

A fire destroyed the home in the summer of 1863, necessitating a temporary move to the Evangelical Good Samaritan Hospital on Carr St. A 65-acre farm west of the city on St. Charles Rock Road was purchased and, in fall 1866, sixty orphans transferred into a new facility. At the time, the location was a half-day's ride by wagon from the city. The new home was a significant improvement, but the need continued to grow. By 1874, the institution housed 250 children. After fire destroyed a new building, it was rebuilt and dedicated in 1877.

The Board renamed the organization the Evangelical Children's Home in 1945. As orphans increasingly were placed in foster homes rather than residential orphanages, the focus of the Home changed from housing orphans to educating children with emotion, educational and behavioral problems. Today the organization founded by Louis Nollau has evolved, expanded, and is now known as Every Child's Hope.

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