

Bogues Dedicated Estate to Caring for Children of Orleans County



Alice McIntyre Bogue and Virgil Bogue

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Ninety-five years ago, the Virgil Bogue Home for Dependent Children opened its doors to young children in need of a home due to the “loss of their parents or the inability of their parents to support them.” In the years leading up to the establishment of the Bogue Home, as described within the “Bogue and Allie Families” genealogy published in 1944, children in public orphanages were often adopted out, their parents unable to learn of their whereabouts until reaching the age of 21. It was the vision of the Bogues to change that and provide care for children until conditions or circumstances changed, allowing the family to reunite.

Virgil Bogue was born on June 25, 1851 at Elba, New York to Dan Harris Bogue and Lucy Maria Turner. One of seven children born to the couple, he attended local schools in Elba and later enrolled at the Cary Collegiate Seminary in Oakfield and the LeRoy Academy until reaching adulthood. At the time, Elba was known as Pine Hill and a local businessman named Elias Pettibone operated a small nursery in the area. Charles Bogue, Virgil’s older brother, was taught the art of tree grafting by Mr. Pettibone and later shared this skill with his younger siblings. In 1875, Virgil opened his own nursery at Albion with stock grown from his brothers’

nurseries and in the following year on January 27, 1876, he married Alice McIntyre, a local girl from Elba. According to historian Cary Lattin, at the peak of his business along with the nurseries of his brothers "...would have made the largest nursery in the world."

For one reason or another, the Bagues did not have any children of their own. According to Lattin, "It has been said that in his younger years Mr. Bogue was not fond of children and was frequently cross with small trespassers who attempted short-cuts across his property." At some point in time, he had a change of heart. Virgil and Alice believed that there should be an institution for the purpose of caring for children whose parents had passed away or fallen on hard times; should circumstances change, every effort should be made to reunite the children with their family.

This vision was entered into the will of Mrs. Bogue on January 16, 1909, that "...as soon as possible after my death, unless such corporation shall have been already organized, to cause to be organized, under the Membership Corporation Law, in the State of New York, a corporation for the care and maintenance of children under twelve years of age residing in the County of Orleans who are in need of a home by reason of the loss of parents to support them, such corporation to be known as, **The Virgil Bogue Home for Dependent Children.**" It is interesting to note that Alice added the stipulation for the institution to be named for her husband.

The organization was to consist of nine individuals, including Virgil Bogue, Isaac S. Signor, Charles Bidelman, Albert C. Burrows, Rollin A. Flagg, Walker Hannington, J. Sawyer Fitch, Burton Reed, and Lafayette H. Beach, who would serve as directors. In her final direction, Alice indicates that should the organization not be established, the residual of her estate should go to the Town of Elba to support the schools. Following Alice's death May 12, 1911, incorporation papers were drafted just five months later on October 11, 1911. Virgil held regular meetings of the Board of Directors until his death on October 6, 1922. His will set forth the stipulations for investing his estate, allowing the organization to draw from the interest of investments to operate the Home.

Initial plans to open the Bogue Home involved the use of Bogue's orchard on Clarendon Road in Albion, but the Board of Directors felt that it was disadvantageous to remove the Home from the boundaries of the village where it had access to the municipal water and sewage systems. Instead, the Bogue property on the northwest corner of Clarendon Street and East Avenue was selected as the site for the Home; all of the family's furnishings remained in the home when it opened on November 1, 1923.

Mrs. Martha Howard, mother of Charles W. Howard, was selected as the first matron of the Home; Mrs. Ada Dawson was selected to assist her. The Bogue Home quickly became a valuable resource for families who had fallen on hard times, housing anywhere from two to twelve children at a given time for over twenty years. On March 8, 1946, Mrs. Howard resigned her position as matron due to illness and the directors voted to cease operations effective March 15, 1946. Six months later, Margaret McCabe was hired to fill the vacancy left by Howard and the Home reopened its doors for three more years until a lack of funds forced the directors to shut down, yet again, on October 1, 1949. Due to the language within Virgil Bogue's will, the corporation was handcuffed to the amount of funds it could invest. By the 1940s, the amount of

interest gained from securities and bonds was no longer sufficient to support the operation of the institution.

Around 1963, it was determined that there was little need for this type of home as the State preferred to send children to foster or boarding homes. As a result, the Bogue Home for Dependent Children changed its name to the Bogue Fund for Dependent Children, sold the Bogue Home, and voted to turn over its income to the Child Welfare Association of Orleans County. Over the years, the organization continues to support scholarships and other endeavors in line with the intentions first set forth by Virgil and Alice Bogue over 100 years ago. In 2016, the Bogue Fund deposited a collection of records relating to the foundation of the corporation, which are now accessible to researchers in the County Department of History.