

Mar. 1, 1937



**PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE OLD BONNY OAKS FRAME CHAPEL WITH A BRICK AND STONE MEMORIAL TO DR. J. W. BACHMAN, FOUNDER OF BONNY OAKS**

Bonny Oaks is housed in the original home of Capt. Peak, with its farm of some three hundred and sixty-five acres was obtained by the county in 1895 to become the center of an Industrial School for dependent and delinquent boys and girls of Hamilton county.

God uses men and women as his earthly angels on whose hearts He lays certain noble tasks to be performed. So it was in the founding of Bonny Oaks, this haven of refuge and rescue for the shattered driftwood, the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, which was being tossed about in the seething restless sea of life's tumultuous waters. Up to that time, these unfortunate youths of the county and city had been housed—really herded—in the county jail, a large room on the top floor having been converted into quarters to meet the need of detention. Such unthinkable conditions touched the noble heart of a man of God, who, like Gregory the Great, on seeing the British youths being sold into slavery said, "They should not be called Angles but Angels" and set about to better their condition. So, Dr. Bachman seeing in these youths of the county undiscovered possibilities determined they should be given opportunity to become not criminals but citizens.

As early as 1883 he begun investigations to the care, correction and training of unfortunate children. He visited cities and congested communities of the north and east where they were grappling with the problem of delinquency. Through his efforts, the Industrial School bill of Tennessee was enacted in 1895 and Bonny Oaks, the first school of its kind south of the Ohio river, was launched.

In its founding, the institution was penal in its nature but under the swing of the pendulum today the emphasis is protective and directive rather than punitive.

In the establishing and perpetuating of Bonny Oaks, many tributes are due. Lack of space permits the mentioning of only two outstanding figures: the late Z. C. Patten who made possible the Girls' Dormitory and left a small endowment for its annual re-furnishing; Mr. L. G. Walker, editor of the Chattanooga Times who aided Dr. Bachman in its establishment and has faithfully befriended the institution—for many years now having served as chairman of its Board of Trustees.

The exact date of the erection of the chapel has not been preserved but it was approximately thirty years ago. It was erected as a memorial to Scott Hyde whom many Chattanoogaans will recall. It was through the courtesy and kindness of Mrs. Anne Bachman Hyde, at that time serving her father as private secretary, that we have been able to procure some invaluable reminiscences

relative to the little chapel. Quoting Mrs. Hyde:

"My husband's aunt, Mrs. Mary Hyde Rice, the beloved Mother Rice, life missionary to the Hawaiian Island, was very devoted to her nephew, Scott Hyde. After his death, June 30, 1897, she wrote that she wished to erect some memorial to him. Knowing my father's interest in Bonny Oaks, I wrote him from my home in Fort Worth, Texas. He suggested that a chapel for the boys and girls was greatly needed. Aunt Mary's gift of \$600.00 was supplemented and thus arose the little building for religious purposes."

This story of beneficence, like Mary's alabaster box of old, shall retain its fragrance and beauty until the perfect day but wood, mortar, and other material things perish. So it is with the humble edifice about which clusters this colorful story. It still affords shelter for the Sunday School and other religious services each Sunday; it is inadequate and in disrepair. Its condition has given rise to the vision and inspiration of a new brick chapel on the site of the old to leave its impress of reverence and inspiration of service upon the hundreds of boys and girls who are destined to pass this way.

It has been suggested that a quiet, modest chapel on which should rest the mantle of his memory would be a befitting Bonny Oaks Bachman memorial and enshrine the imperishable influence of this great good man on the lives of the youth whom he served. In this building there should be a place for gifts, large and small, from children and adults alike.