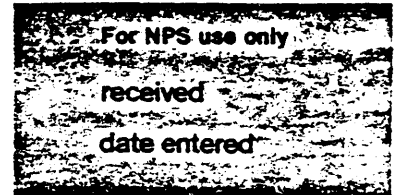


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

and/or common Boys Town

## 2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Boys Town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 02

state Nebraska code 031 county Douglas code 055

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	_____ museum
_____ building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	_____ unoccupied	_____ commercial	_____ park
_____ structure	_____ both	_____ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
_____ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	_____ entertainment	_____ religious
_____ object	_____ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	_____ government	_____ scientific
	_____ being considered	_____ yes: unrestricted	_____ industrial	_____ transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	_____ no	_____ military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: juvenile care facility

## 4. Owner of Property

name Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, Inc.

street & number ---

city, town Boys Town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state NE 68010

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registrar of Deeds, Omaha/Douglas County Civic Center

street & number 1819 Farnam Street

city, town Omaha \_\_\_\_\_ state NE 68102

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Preservation in Nebraska has this property been determined eligible? <sup>\*Father Flanagan's House</sup>  yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date 1971 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln \_\_\_\_\_ state NE 68508

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved

date 12/6/83

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The village of Boys Town, Nebraska, originally comprising 94 acres of land west of Omaha, has grown to include more than 1,310 acres. One-third of the land is developed as the campus. The remainder is under cultivation as an integral feature of the educational system. Municipal ownership of the land is limited to the public street rights-of-way; the remainder is owned by Father Flanagan's Home, Inc. Designated a municipality in 1934, Boys Town includes more than 70 buildings, 41 of which are homes. Other buildings include a high school, middle school and grade school, a music hall, a field house, the nondenominational Nativity Chapel, the Dowd Memorial Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, a visitor's center, and several dormitories. The Boys Town Center, the newest building on campus, houses administrative offices. These structures, of various periods and styles, are interspersed throughout the campus.

Each of these buildings relates to Boys Town's goal as a functional community, and reflects the growth and success of Father Flanagan's original ideas for juvenile health care. Boys Town's contemporary appearance thus contains evidence of its origins, more recent developments, and future directions. Structures like the Gatehouse, old Post Office, and Father Flanagan's Home reveal aspects of Boys Town's earliest appearance. Buildings added during the home's most renowned growth period during the late 1930s and 1940s testify to Boys Town's notable successes in its first decades. The Dowd Chapel and visitor's center, among others, were built during this period of expansion and today are central features of the "City of Little Men." Most recently, the Home's modified directions in juvenile care have emphasized the building of new homes. These homes harbor residents and their "teaching parents" in accordance with the progressive "family-style" living concept. The Boys Town Center, also built recently, directs these and other Boys Town activities. (Photo No. 1 presents a 1977 aerial overview of Boys Town.)

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) juvenile care
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** Oct 22, 1921-Present **Builder/Architect** several, some unknown, see individual descriptions.

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Boys Town is significant because it led the development of new juvenile care methods in 20th century America. Boys Town has been unique since its inception and continues to be the recognized prototype in public child care.

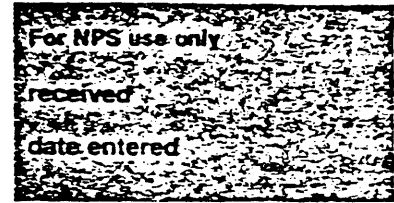
In general, Boys Town was significant for two reasons: First, it created a homelike and morally upright atmosphere as the foundation for sound juvenile care. Boys Town emphasized social preparation and enculturation, processes boys without homes could not otherwise experience. This program differed from contemporary juvenile institutions of the early 20th century, which stressed physical well-being and technical education in a custodial environment.

Second, Boys Town is important for the popular acceptance of its methods and the subsequent national and international prominence of the home itself. State, national, and foreign governments and organizations have consulted Boys Town on matters of child care reform. Acceptance of the Home's techniques led to the worldwide establishment of a number of boys homes based on the Boys Town model.



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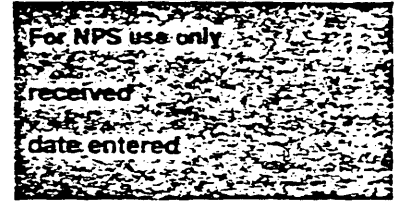
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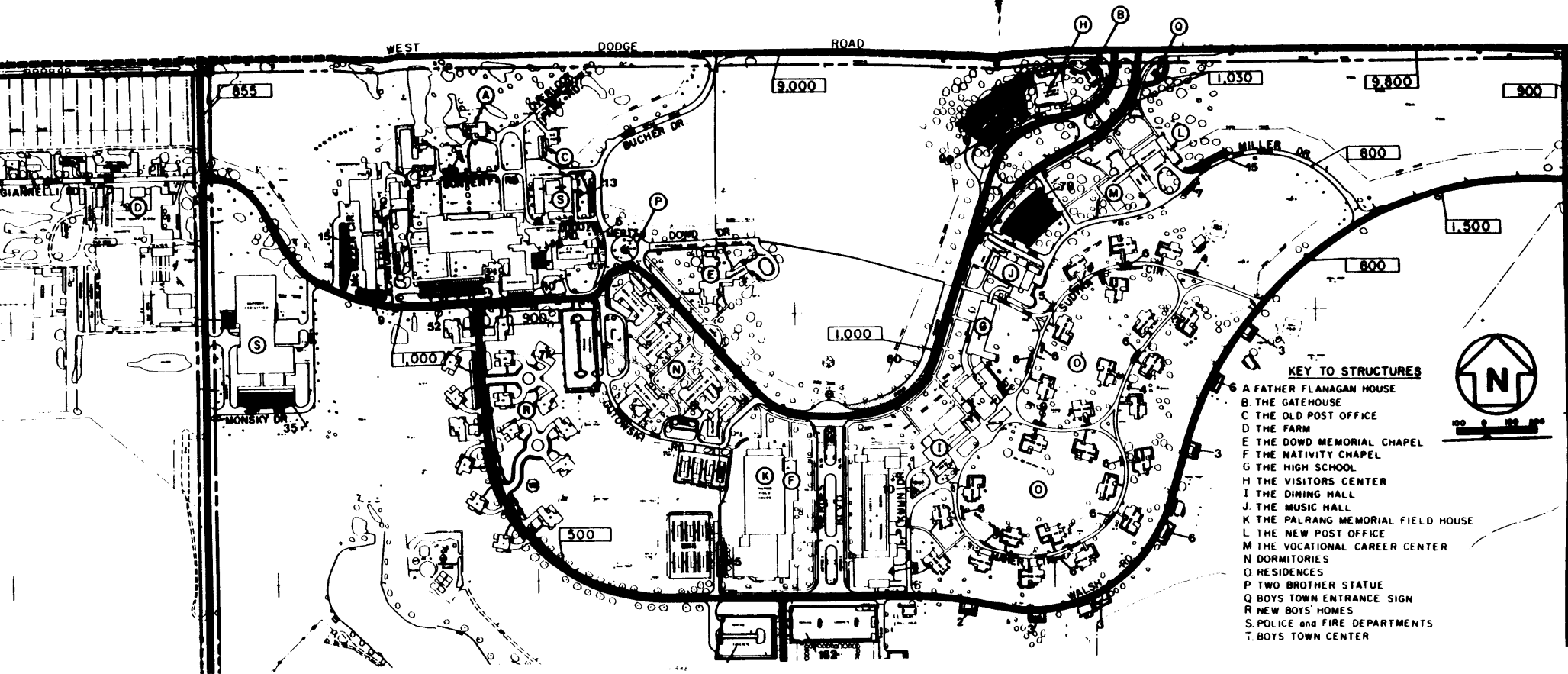
Item number 10

Page 1

USGS Nebraska

1:24,000 scale

- |    |    |        |         |                      |
|----|----|--------|---------|----------------------|
| A) | 14 | 738940 | 4573000 | Elkhorn Quadrangle   |
| B) | 14 | 741420 | 4573000 | Irvington Quadrangle |
| C) | 14 | 741420 | 4570750 | Ralston Quadrangle   |
| D) | 14 | 738940 | 4570750 | Gretna Quadrangle    |



**KEY TO STRUCTURES**

- S A FATHER FLANAGAN HOUSE
- B THE GATEHOUSE
- C THE OLD POST OFFICE
- D THE FARM
- E THE DOWD MEMORIAL CHAPEL
- F THE NATIVITY CHAPEL
- G THE HIGH SCHOOL
- H THE VISITORS CENTER
- I THE DINING HALL
- J THE MUSIC HALL
- K THE PALRANG MEMORIAL FIELD HOUSE
- L THE NEW POST OFFICE
- M THE VOCATIONAL CAREER CENTER
- N DORMITORIES
- O RESIDENCES
- P TWO BROTHER STATUE
- Q BOYS TOWN ENTRANCE SIGN
- R NEW BOYS' HOMES
- S POLICE and FIRE DEPARTMENTS
- T BOYS TOWN CENTER

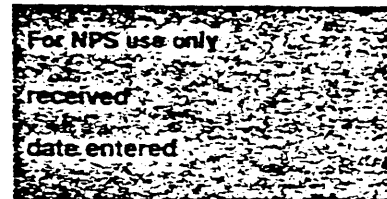


T

**FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME**

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EARLY STRUCTURES

The first structures at Boys Town, built during the first year at the Overlook Farm location, consisted of a group of one-story buildings arranged like barracks in a quadrangle. The buildings held a grammar school, trades school, dormitories, a chapel, dining room, and a recreation hall. In 1922, a five-story building was constructed for many of these same purposes. This building was demolished in 1973 after a fire partially destroyed it. Father Flanagan's first residence was built in 1921. It consisted of a one-story garage converted into a two-room dwelling. That building was razed in 1926. Father Flanagan's permanent residence, erected that same year, stands today as a museum. The original portion of the house has been restored and furnished as it appeared in Father Flanagan's day.

(A) Father Flanagan House:

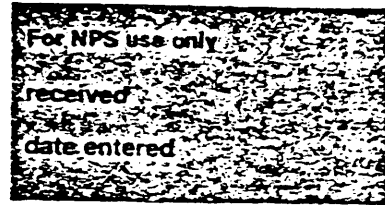
The house is on the northwestern edge of campus. It measures 3,800 square feet, with dimensions of approximately 76 feet by 50 feet. It is surrounded by an expanse of lawn which continues on the north to Highway 6 and to several educational buildings on the south.

Architect Jacob M. Nachtigalt designed the house along puritanical Georgian Revival lines. It is a five-bay central block structure with hipped roof and a two-story wing to the rear. (See Photo No. 2.) The open veranda on the east front is encircled by a masonry balustrade. The elliptically arched entrance to the gabled, one-bay porch accents the centered door with sidelights. Above the east entrance is a hip-roofed dormer whose central opening is topped with a gable. (See Photo No. 3.) The first floor of the south wing is an open piazza with entrance from the living room. The west addition was extended from the original rear wing. The main side entrance is on the south and is accented by the door's stone surround and pseudo-half-timbering on the upper level. (See Photo No. 4.) The floor arrangement is a central hall plan with living room on the south and dining room and office on the north. The rear wing contains the kitchen and housekeeper's room. The second floor comprises four bedrooms (one in each corner), a bathroom (center of east side), and a sunroom (entered from the south two bedrooms).



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The original construction of the house was completed in March 1927. The west addition was constructed in 1940 as dormitory space for the De La Salle Christian Brothers, who were occupying the house at the invitation of Father Flanagan. Today, the 1940 addition is the Alumni Center, housing offices on the first floor and bedroom facilities for visiting alumni on the second. In 1974, Boys Town officials decided to stop using the original portion of the house as a personnel residence and to refurbish it as a museum. The restoration was essentially completed in 1979.

(B) The Gatehouse:

A second important reminder of Boys Town's early history is the Gatehouse. Located at the village's main entrance on West Dodge Road, the Gatehouse is a cabin-like structure which stands approximately 35 feet by 40 feet in dimensions. It is a stone block structure with a slate roof. (See Photo Nos. 5 and 6.) Until the 1940s, the Gatehouse served as the admittance center for new residents. The building currently houses the Boys Town Credit Union offices.

(C) The Old Post Office:

This building is directly east of the Father Flanagan House and Museum. It marks Boys Town's establishment as a legitimate "town" in 1934. Designed along basic lines of 1930s commercial public institutional style, the 25-foot square Post Office is of brick construction with a concrete roof. (See Photo No. 7.) It served as the mail hub of the village until the 1940s, when the current post office was built.

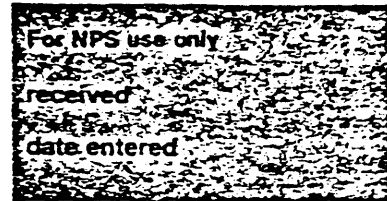
(D) The Farm:

The farm is west of 144th street on the northwest edge of the campus. Designed and built by Leo A. Daly Construction in 1926, the wood frame buildings have concrete foundations and wood-shingled roofs. (See Photo Nos. 8 and 9.) This building testifies to the importance of agriculture as part and parcel of the curriculum at Boys Town.

Today, the farm is a full fledged production center. It includes such structures as a dairy barn, maternity calf barn, machine sheds, silos and grain storage buildings, all designed

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and built for educational purposes. In 1974, a horse farm was established in the southeast section of Boys Town's acreage for both educational and recreational purposes. (See Photo No. 10.)

STRUCTURES BUILT DURING THE 1930s-1940s

The vast majority of construction at Boys Town occurred during two periods. Having survived the Depression, Boys Town expansion began immediately after release of the "Boys Town" movie in 1938 and extended into the 1940s. For nearly two decades prior to the production of the movie, Father Flanagan had been successfully administering juvenile care at the home. The film enhanced the home's reputation and stimulated contributions. This gave tremendous impetus to Boys Town's first major period of physical expansion. A description of the extant structures built during this period follows.

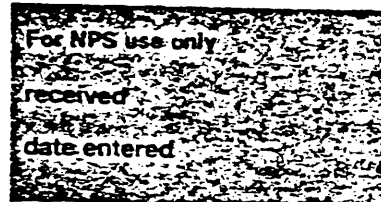
(E) Dowd Memorial Chapel:

The distinctive Dowd Memorial Chapel is in the center of campus at the corner of Flanagan Boulevard and Dowd Drive. Its central location is accented by an access of lawn which encloses it on three sides. Construction on the Dowd Chapel, designed and built by Leo A. Daly Construction, began in late 1939 and was completed in January 1941. The church is an English rural gothic structure which encompasses more than 23,000 square feet. (See Photo No. 11.) Its massive Indiana Bedford stone columns and lofty timber ceiling are characteristic of this architectural style. (See Photo No. 12.) The chapel roof is comprised of lightweight English tile; all gutters, downspouts, and louvers are heavy copper. The chapel floor plan resembles the form of a cross. Two smaller chapels flank the center one.

The original hand-crafted tile in Dowd Chapel is intact. The floors of the sanctuary and altars are of Travertine marble with inlaid patterns of Rouge de Rance marble. The sanctuary paneling, pews, choir loft, and ceiling are carved from oak.

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(F) The Nativity Chapel:

This chapel is adjacent to Palrang Field House on Flanagan Boulevard. Designed and built by Leo A. Daly Construction, the chapel was finished in 1939 and remodeled in 1965 and 1972. Its exterior walls are of brick, tile, and plaster construction with a concrete foundation and a concrete deck build-up roof. Its rectangular dimensions are approximately 20 feet by 120 feet. (See Photo No. 13.) The Nativity Chapel is nondenominational, intended for use by all students.

(G) The High School:

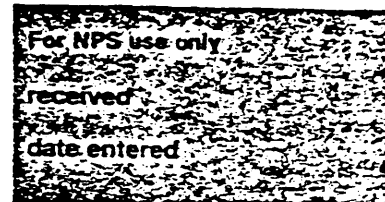
This building is east of Dowd Memorial Chapel on Flanagan Boulevard. Designed and built by Leo A. Daly Construction in 1939, the high school parallels the style and design of most of the other educational buildings on campus. It is built of brick, tile, and plaster with a concrete foundation. The roof is a concrete deck with a build-up. Its dimensions are approximately 200 feet by 60 feet, with a 30-foot extension to the east. (See Photo No. 14.)

(H) The Visitors Center:

This building is north of the Gatehouse off West Dodge Road. Built by Leo A. Daly Construction in 1939, its walls are comprised of brick, tile, and plaster over a concrete foundation. The roof is a concrete deck with a build-up. Its dimensions are approximately 110 feet by 80 feet. (See Photo No. 15.) The Visitors Center's purpose remains to assist and guide the continually increasing numbers of people who request information or visit Boys Town each year. One of the world's largest stamp and coin collections is on public display on the main level. A feature attraction, the museum is the result of years of private donation and bequests.

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(I) The Dining Hall:

This building, also built by Leo A. Daly Construction in 1939, is to the southwest of the high school on Flanagan Boulevard. Designed along Tudor Revival lines, the hall is a solid brick structure with a tile roof. The building measures approximately 200 feet by 50 feet. (See Photo No. 16.) Today, the dining hall is used exclusively as the high school cafeteria. Before the new homes were built, the residents ate all their meals here.

(J) The Music Hall:

The Music Hall is also on Flanagan Boulevard, south of the visitors center and north of the high school. Leo A. Daly Construction built it in 1948. Constructed entirely of brick, tile, and plaster, this structure stands 110 feet by 75 feet in dimensions. The entrance to the hall is a 60-foot by 15-foot extension to the west. Across the front of this building is a frieze of carved figures sculptured in sections as part of the hall's original construction. The frieze depicts angelic assistance in bringing boys under Father Flanagan's care, helping make better, more productive citizens out of God's children. (See Photo No. 17.) The hall is the official stage of the world famous Boys Town choir.

(K) The Palrang Memorial Field House:

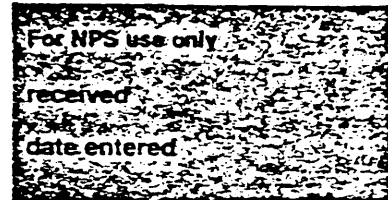
Located just off Heroes Boulevard and south of Dowd Memorial Chapel, the Field House was designed and built by Leo A. Daly in 1947, and was remodeled in 1965 and 1972. This building was also built with brick, tile, and plaster with a concrete foundation. The roof is a concrete deck. With dimensions of 150 feet by 200 feet, the auditorium houses indoor sporting events and campus assemblies. (See Photo No. 18.) It has a seating capacity of 3,500.

(L) The New Post Office:

The new federal post office is adjacent to the Youth Care Administration building, on its northeast side. This building was also built in 1946 and remodeled in 1969. The post office is a brick building with a concrete roof deck and measures 30 feet by 110 feet in dimensions. (See Photo No. 19.)

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(M) Vocational Career Center:

Next to Heroes Boulevard in the center of campus, and just across from Palrang Field House, the center is a one and one-half story building of solid brick construction. Its dimensions are approximately 200 feet by 75 feet. (See Photo No. 20.) Fifteen diverse trades are taught at the Vocational Career Center, including such fields as architecture and culinary arts.

(N) Dormitories:

There are four dormitories in the courtyard off Flanagan Boulevard and Gutowski Road, south of Dowd Chapel. Designed and built in 1939 by Leo A. Daly, the dorms were constructed with brick, tile, and plaster along Tudor Revival lines. The foundations are concrete and the roofs are tile. The dimensions of Eagle Hall (see Photo. No. 21) are approximately 115 feet by 80 feet; the others are similar in size. Before the construction of the boys' homes began in 1940, the dormitories housed most of the residents at Boys Town.

(O) Residences:

The earliest boys homes were built in 1940 on Walsh Road across the southern half of the campus. In all, 25 homes were built during this period. Designed along popular 20th century Tudor Revival lines, these homes were built of brick, tile, and plaster construction with concrete foundations. Most of the homes entail approximately 65 feet by 65 feet dimensions. (See Photo Nos. 22 and 23.)

(P) Two Brothers Statue:

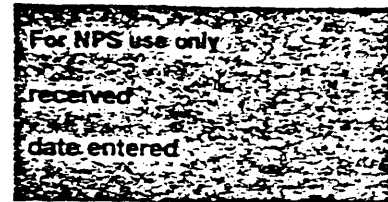
The original statue is located in the Boys Town Center. Executed in soft sandstone, the sculpture was completed in 1943. A copy of the original can be found in Mertz Circle across from Dowd Memorial Chapel. (See Photo No. 24.) The "He ain't heavy, Father...he's m' brother" caption was selected by Boys Town officials to reflect the fundamental spirit and mission of the Home.

(Q) Boys Town Entrance Sign:

This pylon, probably built circa 1938, marks the main entrance to the Boy's Home. (See Photo No. 25.)

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RECENTLY BUILT STRUCTURES

The most recent era of expansion at Boys Town has concentrated on the building of new residences for the boys in accordance with the new "teaching parents" philosophy of juvenile care. In 1977, 16 new ones were built.

(R) New Boys' Homes:

These homes were built in the same general area as those built during the 1940s. Leo A. Daly designed and structured these homes according to Tudor Revival lines. The new homes included exterior walls of wood frame with brick veneer. The roofs are covered with slate. Most of these homes are slightly larger than the 1940 homes.

(S) Police and Fire Departments:

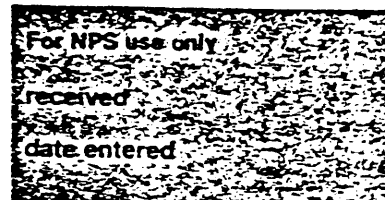
The police department is in the town hall building, northwest of Palrang Field House on Flanagan Boulevard. Built in 1952 by Leo A. Daly Construction, it is a brick and tile structure designed along modern institutional lines, and includes a frame of 75 feet by 100 feet. (See Photo No. 26.) Leo A. Daly Construction built the fire station in 1970. The fire department, across from the dairy farm off 144th Street, is of brick and tile construction. Its dimensions run approximately 200 feet by 400 feet. (See Photo No. 27.)

(T) Boys Town Center:

The new administrative heart of Father Flanagan's Home, on the south side of Boys Town Lake, was built in 1975 by Leo A. Daly Construction. Designed along contemporary lines, the exterior walls are stucco, concrete block, and plaster. The structure has a metal deck and a copper roof. (See Photo No. 28.)

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Origins and Historical Development of Boys Town

On December 10, 1917, Father Edward J. Flanagan established his first boys home at 2506 Dodge Street in Omaha, Nebraska. From his experiences gained in running a home for transient men,<sup>1</sup> Father Flanagan believed that by providing homeless boys a more homelike environment, he could prevent them from becoming social outcasts.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis on a family-like setting, coupled with a vigorous faith in moral, religious, and vocational education, has endured and remains the basis of the Boys Town philosophy.

Although the Boys Town approach has not changed, the home itself has evolved markedly. Since its establishment, Boys Town has expanded its physical boundaries, diversified its curriculum, and secularized its administration. These developments have enabled Boys Town to maintain its leadership in juvenile care.

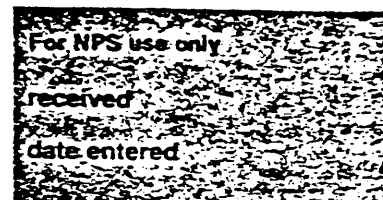
The first home, established without any set program and rented with \$90 Flanagan borrowed from friends, held only five residents and a staff of two nuns. The home's capacity grew to 50 residents within two months, in part due to the open admissions policy and the family-like setting which continued throughout Boys Town's history. The boys attended Omaha public schools at first, but eventually the Sisters of Notre Dame began teaching at the Home.<sup>3</sup> New residents came to the Boys' Home by recommendations from concerned citizens, by assignment of the Omaha juvenile court, or by personal choice.<sup>4</sup>

Unrestricted admissions, however, soon filled the Dodge Street facility beyond capacity. In the spring of 1918, Father Flanagan moved his group to the large German-American Home at 4606 South 13th Street, Omaha. The Boys Town philosophy and methodology developed as Father Flanagan introduced programs in education, athletics, instrumental music, journalism, and agriculture. During this time, Flanagan's home gradually gained recognition in Omaha and the surrounding area; as it had served more than 1,300 boys from 17 states. Donations and volunteers increased accordingly.<sup>5</sup> By 1920, however, the 13th Street location also became overcrowded, and Father Flanagan once again needed a larger residence.

In early 1921, the priest bought a 70-acre poultry farm and an adjacent 40-acre plot in Omaha's Florence district. Again the home was overrun by students. Local residents protested. Father Flanagan decided a larger and more isolated location was

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necessary for the expanding home. He negotiated with David Baum to purchase Overlook Farm. In October of 1921, this 94-acre property became the permanent location of Boys Town.<sup>6</sup>

During the early years at Overlook, Boys Town continued to expand. A formal trades school was established in 1921. Father Flanagan believed the key to giving the boys a stable and productive life lay in teaching them a trade: the means for that education should be hands-on experience. Progressive-era rhetoric and the doctrines of John Dewey had an important effect on the home's founder.<sup>7</sup> This emphasis on practical skills and trades was gradually expanded to include a wide range of fields such as engineering, music, and electricity by 1932.<sup>8</sup>

While this general expansion progressed, nationally and internationally known people honored Boys Town with visits. Among the visitors were baseball players Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig and actor Tom Mix.<sup>9</sup> These events, combined with vigorous publication and fundraising activities in the Omaha area, the wide distribution of Father Flanagan's Boys' Home Journal, and weekly Boys Town Band radio broadcasts (heard on both coasts by 1931), served to make Father Flanagan and the Boys' Home nationally recognized symbols of successful juvenile care.<sup>10</sup>

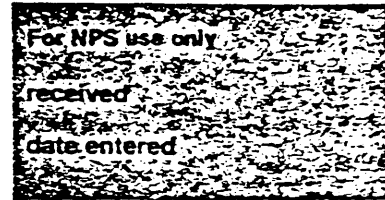
The Great Depression hurt Boys Town as much as it hurt the rest of the nation. Expansion slowed after four fire-damaged buildings were replaced in October of 1930.<sup>11</sup> Donations, which had been based on personal and group gifts in the 1920s, dwindled to a trickle.<sup>12</sup> To improve this financial situation and to keep the home in the public eye, Father Flanagan and his close assistant Patrick Norton<sup>13</sup> appealed for corporate and foundation bequests and launched a series of original public relations events.<sup>14</sup> The most famous of these was a horse-drawn traveling circus made up of Boys Town residents which briefly toured parts of the Midwest. Although the caravan was a short-term failure --it returned destitute within months of its departure--its tour helped publicize the home and sowed the seeds of recognition for the later world famous Boys Town choir.<sup>15</sup> During the Depression the home was primarily occupied with self-maintenance and preparing the increasing number of residents for the future.

The late 1920s and 1930s brought about a number of changes. In 1925 the increasing complexities of managing the home forced Father Flanagan to turn over many of the normal operational tasks to a system of resident commissioners with an elected boy mayor, modeled after the Omaha city government.<sup>16</sup> In December of 1934,



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Boys Town became a municipality. The student organization became the city authority and set up a system of urban government and municipal services,<sup>17</sup> providing the home with another educational tool: actual experience in self-government and administration.

Father Flanagan, in the meantime, intensified his efforts to spread his philosophy of juvenile care. Two actions in particular earned the priest and his institution national attention: Flanagan's unsuccessful efforts in 1931 to plead clemency for a 12-year-old boy convicted of murder in Seattle,<sup>18</sup> and his successful prevention in 1937 of the placement in state prison of a 15-year-old Colorado boy accused of murder.<sup>19</sup>

The Depression period, although a time of frugality for the home, was also a decade of vigorous experimentation, transition, and activity for Father Flanagan and the residents. This growth not only allowed the home to survive but also set the stage for an event which catapulted the home into the limelight of American society: the "Boys Town" movie.

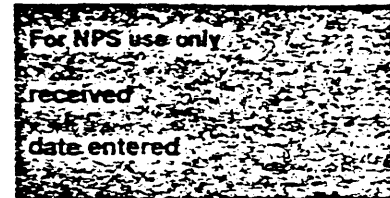
This movie, filmed and produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in early 1938, and starring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, depicted Father Flanagan's efforts to raise 1.5 million dollars for expansion of the home. Released in September 1938, it played an important role in spreading the story of Boys Town. Movies were the principle medium of mass communication during this period, and "Boys Town" gave the entire country a chance to witness Father Flanagan's unique work. As a result of this publicity, the home gained lasting national and international recognition as a leader in juvenile care.<sup>20</sup>

This growth in reputation set three factors in motion which boosted Boys Town to national prominence. First, state, national, and international officials began to follow Boys Town policy on matters of juvenile care. Second, donations and bequests were obtained on a national scale, allowing the home to expand and diversify. Finally, leaders of other juvenile care centers began to revise their institutions or construct new ones based on Flanagan's model. The result: new "boys towns" were established worldwide. These trends, recognizable by 1939, have persisted to the present.

Father Flanagan's role in politics during the 1940s testified to the home's growing reputation among national leaders. In 1941, he headed a three-man commission organized by the Governor of California and the Director of the Federal Bureau

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of Investigation to investigate accusations of malpractice and apparent suicides at the Whittier, California, home for boys. As a result of this study, Boys Town Superintendent Patrick Norton was named interim director at Whittier. Norton reorganized this state institution along Boys Town guidelines.<sup>21</sup>

In 1947, General Douglas MacArthur asked Father Flanagan to go to Japan and Korea to make recommendations for establishing juvenile and orphan homes. One year later, Father Flanagan traveled to Germany and Austria at the request of the War Department to study youth conditions there.<sup>22</sup> It was on this mission that Father Flanagan died. His successors, Fathers Nicholas Wegner and Robert P. Hupp, have continued the tradition of cooperation with government officials on matters of child welfare.

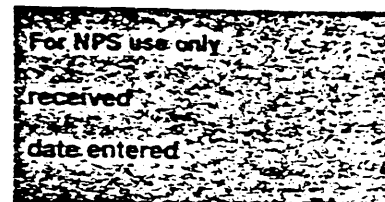
As Boys Town's philosophy and methodology became recognized, donations and bequests continued to pour in. The Dowd Chapel, built in 1939, was New Yorker Mary A. Dowd's gift after viewing the Boys Town movie. In that same year, the national convention of the Eagles Clubs pledged \$100,000 to aid Flanagan's expansion plan.<sup>23</sup> Boys Town's increased popularity also attracted Ted Miller, a professional fund raiser, to the home's staff in 1939. Miller redirected Boys Town's fundraising methods by using regular semi-annual mailings to individual contributors.<sup>24</sup> This created a steady stream of funds which helped stabilize Boys Town's economic base and provided for growth.<sup>25</sup> The home's broad, national base of financial support launched it into the expansion of the postwar decades and aided in diversification and specialization in the last decade.

The national attention the home received in the late 1930s also inspired the creation of other "Boys Towns" in the United States and abroad. World War II helped to spread the Boys Town philosophy internationally, as many former Boys Town residents entered the service and carried their heritage overseas. By 1949, 88 children's homes worldwide had been patterned after the Boys Town model.<sup>26</sup> This trend continues into the present under the "Boys Town U.S.A." program.

Boys Town grew from a regionally recognized institution to a position as the accepted leader among juvenile care facilities. The success of the Boys Town program can be attributed to governmental and professional acceptance of the Boys Town model, an effective system of national fundraising, internal expansion, and institutional emulation in the United States and abroad. The

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1938 movie was extremely important. It spread the reputation of the home as a unique institution and established Boys Town as a prototype to be consulted and copied.

At the time of Father Flanagan's death, the home's ultimate importance in the field of juvenile care had not yet been recognized. He died of heart failure in Frankfurt, Germany, on May 15, 1948.<sup>28</sup> Father Nicholas H. Wegner formally took charge of the home on September 14 of that year and led Boys Town through the next two and one-half decades of postwar American social change.<sup>29</sup>

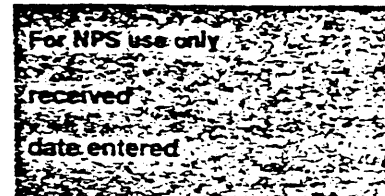
Father Wegner continued Flanagan's policies. The pattern of expansion, consultation with non-Boys Town officials, and use of the home as a model for juvenile care organizations continued through the 1950s and 1960s. In 1949, Wegner oversaw the home's expansion to a 1,000-resident facility. At the same time, Boys Town residences were decentralized with the introduction of a cottage system.<sup>30</sup> Father Flanagan had initiated both ideas in early 1946. Father Wegner added schools, a chapel, and many other buildings to the campus.<sup>31</sup> These structures were the first step in the home's gradual shift toward individualized attention and counseling, as well as specialized education in juvenile care. After World War II this became the general trend in American child welfare.<sup>32</sup>

Boys Town continued to work closely with government officials on matters of child and adolescent welfare. In 1955, Monsignor Wegner appeared before a Senate subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency.<sup>33</sup> In 1967, he and Boys Town were lauded by Vice-president Hubert Humphrey for their contributions to American society.<sup>34</sup> Boys Town continued to be imitated. In DaNang, Vietnam, a "Boys Town" was established in 1967. The popularity of associations such as the Boys Clubs of America continued to grow.

Although the home retained many of its traditional patterns of youth care during the 1950s and 1960s, it was not afraid of change. In keeping with the times, Boys Town emphasized academic and individualized education, social freedom, and diverse extracurricular activities.<sup>35</sup> Discipline and care at the home became even more parental than before, and restraints on Boys Town residents relaxed as did those on non-institutionalized youth during this time. Dating, choir and band, dances, organized team sports, and preparation for college became regular aspects of life at Boys Town.<sup>36</sup>

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Educational and administrative changes also took place during the Wegner era. The value of vocational education was still valued, but Wegner began to integrate more academic and elective elements into the curriculum. Gradually Wegner ushered in secular teachers and administrators. His actions paralleled the trend in American education toward specialized, more scientific methods of teaching in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>37</sup> In 1967 a vigorous counseling program was created. This completed the shift toward additional subject matter and placed even more emphasis on college and career orientation in the Boys Town educational program.<sup>38</sup>

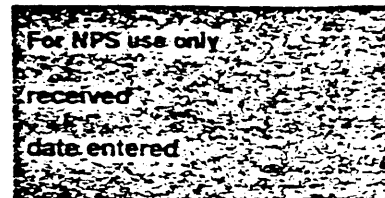
By the early 1970s, it was apparent that Father Flanagan's and Wegner's efforts had borne much fruit. The home was the undisputed national leader in child welfare procedures. The home had expanded to 1,310 acres and accommodated more than 1,000 residents.<sup>39</sup> Growth continued in different directions during the 1970s, however. Boys Town moved into the areas of juvenile health and youth development research in 1972. Coincidentally the home gradually reduced the number of residents and became increasingly deinstitutionalized. In the past troubled boys had traveled to the home. Now Boys Town began to bring the home's programs to the juveniles. This development took the original Boys Town goal of creating a homelike atmosphere one step further by allowing the troubled youths to remain in their own homes. This was in step with a nationwide trend in juvenile care. In accordance with new national welfare legislation, those entrusted with the responsibility for child welfare were gradually phasing out institutionalized care in favor of localized, in-home programs for which Federal funding and administration were available.

With this change in operations came a change in directors. Father Wegner resigned in October of 1973, having supervised the home for 25 years. His successor, Father Robert P. Hupp, has directed Boys Town since that time. He has guided the home through the energetic diversification phase of the last decade.<sup>40</sup>

The 1975 implementation of the teaching family program is perhaps Father Hupp's most important contribution. The program involves husband and wife teams trained in social work. Each couple supervises one of 25 cottages housing 8-10 youths.<sup>41</sup> This individualized care, combined with localized programs, has

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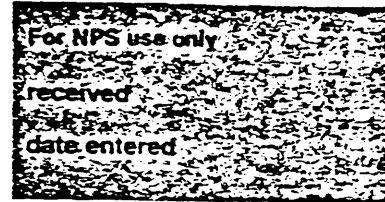
resulted in a moderate decline in Boys Town's population during the last decade.

Reduced population did not signal reduced dedication to youth care, however. The home has developed a group of national programs which enable thousands of juveniles to benefit from a good education, physical and mental health care and research, and a stable, homelike atmosphere. The Boys Town Center for the study of youth development was created in 1974, with a central office at Boys Town and branch research facilities at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and Stanford University in California.<sup>42</sup> The home established the Boys Town National Institute for Communication Disorders in Children in Omaha in 1975. The Institute treats four to five thousand youths yearly for learning, speech, and related disorders.<sup>43</sup>

On a daily basis, Boys Town assists more than 1,200 youths nationwide. The Urban Program in education, the Father Flanagan's Boys Town U.S.A. Program for establishing boys homes nationwide and the Communications and Public Service Division for disseminating juvenile care information are among the more contemporary developments. These programs have progressively widened the participation of Boys Town in the national effort toward treating disadvantaged youth.<sup>44</sup> From its humble beginnings in 1917, Boys Town has grown over half a century to become one of the most extensive, diverse, and influential juvenile-care facilities in America.

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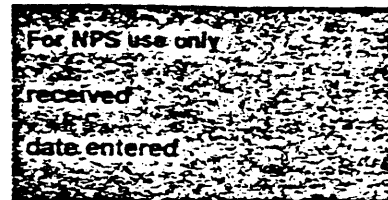
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2. Boys Town: Memories and Dreams (Boys Town, 1977), 3-4.
3. Fulton Oursler and Will Oursler, Father Flanagan of Boys Town (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1949), 146-47.
4. Memories and Dreams, 4.
5. Ibid., 71.
6. Oursler and Oursler, 196.
7. Stephen Szmrecsanyi, History of the Catholic Church in Northeast Nebraska (Omaha: Interstate Printing Co., 1983), 437.
8. Ibid., 438.
9. Oursler and Oursler, 230.
10. Szmrecsanyi, 447.
11. Omaha World Herald, 20 October 1930.
12. Szmrecsanyi, 447.
13. Norton was Father Flanagan's nephew. His career as an administrator at the home began June 15, 1920. See Omaha World Herald, 15 June 1967.
14. Szmrecsanyi, 447.
15. Memories and Dreams, 10.
16. Szmrecsanyi, 443.
17. Oursler and Oursler, 247-252.
18. The boy's name was Hubert Niccolls. After accidentally shooting a police officer during a grocery store robbery, the State of Washington sentenced Niccolls to life in prison. Flanagan's pleas to the state to parole the boy and release him into Flanagan's custody brought Boys Town national attention and affection. The sharp contrast between the state's treatment of

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the boy and Flanagan's won broad support for the "Boys Town philosophy." See Omaha World Herald, 21 November 1931.

19. This boy, Billy Meagher, was convicted of killing his abusive father. The State of Colorado paroled the boy and sent him and his brother to Boys Town for care. This incident, too, brought widespread attention and support to Father Flanagan's Boys' Home. See Omaha World Herald, 7 April 1937.

20. Memories and Dreams, 12.

21. Omaha World Herald, 6 April 1941.

22. Oursler and Oursler, 285-298.

23. Omaha World Herald, 21 August 1939 and 25 November 1939.

24. By 1965, this mailing list included 56 million addresses. Szmrecsanyi, 448.

25. Ibid.

26. Omaha World Herald, 18 November 1949.

27. [Omaha] Benson Sun, 29 June 1967.

28. Oursler and Oursler, 300-301.

29. Omaha World Herald, 14 September 1948.

30. Father Flanagan had envisioned a system of 25 cottages, each with 20 students and a counselor. He believed this system would provide a level of care that would promote stable, active adults. Thus the expansion was viewed as a vehicle to allow for a greater number of residents and a better quality of life for the students.

31. Omaha World Herald, 8 September 1949.

32. Szmrecsanyi, 442-444.

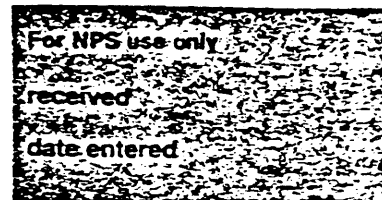
33. Omaha World Herald, 11 August 1955.

34. Ibid., 29 May 1967.

35. Szmrecsanyi, 444-445.

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36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 439.
38. Ibid., 440.
39. Catholic Annual Guide (St. Paul: Normandim Publications, 1972), 7.
40. "Ten Years of Progress in Caring for Youth," Boys Town Quarterly 7, No. 4 (Boys Town: 31 October 1983) 4.
41. Ibid.
42. Omaha World Herald, 14 October 1977.
43. Questions and Answers (Boys Town, 1983), 5.
44. Ibid., 2-5.