



Edgar Allen

BIOGRAPHY



Edgar Allen was born in Newton, Mass., but moved as a child to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1876. Employed at the age of sixteen by the Bingham Hardware Company, by age 26 he invested all his savings to form the Cleveland Cedar Company. Allen made his fortune by supplying telephone poles to AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph). He also supplied railroad ties for the growing railroad industry.

By 1907, now married and the father of two sons, Allen moved his family to Elyria, Ohio. On Memorial Day weekend, Allen's 18-year-old son, Homer, was killed in a streetcar accident. Elyria only had a makeshift hospital and if emergency medical care had been available, the boy could have been saved. Allen sold his business and devoted himself to raising the funds needed for a hospital. Elyria Memorial Hospital opened in 1908. It was the turning point in his life.

While volunteering at Elyria Memorial Hospital, Allen met 8-year-old orphan, Jimmy Bodak, who was brought to the hospital in an effort to

"We have but one life. We get nothing out of that life except by putting something into it. To relieve suffering, to help the unfortunate, to do kind acts and deeds is, after all, the one sure way to secure happiness or to achieve real success. Your life and mine shall be valued not by what we take... but by what we give."

— Edgar F. Allen

help straighten his legs. Jimmy began calling Allen by the name for which he would come to be known, "Daddy." Allen became aware of the need for a facility for crippled children and through his fund-raising efforts, opened the Gates Hospital for Crippled Children in 1915. It was the first facility of its kind in the nation.

In 1919, Allen and fellow Ohio Rotary club members formed the National Society for Crippled Children. Allen was elected as its first president. By 1922, the organization became known as the International Society for Crippled Children. Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, was its first chairman. In 1930, the International Society for Crippled Children supplied data for the first White House Conference of Child Health and Protection. Allen and Harris coauthored "The Crippled Children's Bill of Rights," which led to federal funding for children's services, written into the Social Security Act of 1935.

In September of 1937, Edgar Allen died. His marker reads simply, "Edgar F. Allen, known as 'Daddy' to all friends of the crippled."