

to caring for sick and needy soldiers and their families, but after peace came the interest of the society revived and its efforts were renewed. In 1866 its name was changed to the Ladies' Union Benevolent Society. The house on Lagrave street was sold, and in 1869 the large lot at the corner of Lyon street and College avenue was purchased. In 1873 the society was incorporated as the Union Benevolent Association, for the purpose of doing all kinds of benevolent work, and with the privilege of equipping, maintaining and managing a home and hospital for the aged, infirm, sick, and needy. Within two years the Cuming homestead on Bostwick street was purchased, equipped and opened to receive inmates, and was occupied for thirteen years, during which time it was nearly always filled to its utmost capacity. When the home was opened the society was in debt, but in 1878 the entire debt of the society on its building, amounting to more than eight thousand dollars, was paid by the Hon. Thomas D. Gilbert, the treasurer of the association.

The needs and work of the association increased, and on March 25, 1882, it was determined to erect a building on the lot which had been owned for many years by the association at the corner of Lyon street and College avenue. At the annual meeting, held in October of that year, nine thousand five hundred dollars were reported pledged for building. This amount was soon increased to fifteen thousand dollars, when plans were proposed and accepted, and on September 21, 1883, the association advertised for bids on the foundation work. The Hon. Thomas D. Gilbert, William Widdicomb and Mrs. Marion L. Withey were appointed a building committee, and the structure was erected under their supervision. The building was completed in February, 1886, at a cost of \$31,707.32, of which \$28,096.23 was secured before it was finished. While the building was going on a furnishing committee was appointed, and for weeks were actively engaged in soliciting contributions for furnishing the building. The people of Grand Rapids responded most generously and their donations fully and completely equipped the institution. The new home was opened with an informal reception to the public on February 23, 1886.

When the new home was opened the inmates of the old home were immediately transferred, and about a year later the old