**Document of the Month:**

**Report of the Trustees and Other Officers of the Soldiers and Orphan’s Home**

The idea for a Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Children’s Home in Indiana began in 1865 as an addition to a proposed Home for Disabled Civil War Soldiers. A home for children was proposed by Indianapolis philanthropist George Merritt, who was familiar with dying soldiers' concern for their children's welfare. Merritt privately established the Soldier's Orphan's Home in the military ward at City Hospital, now present day Wishard Hospital. The Home underwent numerous location and name changes between 1865 and 1929. In 1929, the Home was renamed the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home.

The Home was located approximately two miles south of Knightstown, Indiana, on State Road 140 and consisted of 419 acres that included an administration building, children's dormitory cottages, Morton Memorial School, a hospital, dairy farm, camp grounds and recreational facilities. Children from the ages of 4 to 18 were cared for with each child being eligible for vocational training. The Home was owned by the State of Indiana and was managed through a superintendent.

The Annual reports of the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Children’s Home provides a look into the early history of welfare systems in Indiana. The reports include detailed financial statements, expenditures, and statistical information such as number of residents and counties they represented. The annual reports are also divided into sections such as: Matron’s Report, Steward’s Report, Treasurer’s Report, and Superintendent’s Report. Later reports include a descriptive roll of children with information such as name, date of birth, admission date, and parent’s names. These and other interesting items can be found in the Indiana Collection, I 362.7 I385ss for the years 1870-1953. For more historical details and information on the Soldier’s and Sailor’s Home, see the Indiana State Archives website on the [Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home](http://www.in.gov/icpr/2550.htm).