In November 1921, the founding members of Arizona Children’s Home Association realized their dream of building a receiving Home for the children of Arizona. One week before Thanksgiving, the agency moved from a modest 14-room rental house into a permanent two-story Home located on the south side of Tucson. This original building remains central to our agency operations and is now called “Angel House”.

The story that follows is an excerpt from the memoir of our most recognizable founding member, Mrs. Minnie Davenport. As she recounts the events of “Moving Day” and “Our First Thanksgiving” it is an opportunity to reflect, in thanksgiving, for all those who have made this agency possible.

The [new] receiving Home faced east on south 8th avenue. The main floor consisted of a large living room, a hall-way leading to a large nursery room, two north rooms for children and a separate room for the nurse and matron. On the south end of the build was the dining room, kitchen, and pantry. In the basement was a laundry, playroom and furnace room. The second floor consisted of a girls dormitory, boys dormitory – room for ten single beds [each] – a room for the cook and housekeeper, two bath and toilet rooms, a clothes room with shelves and a small closet for linen and clothing. There were plenty of windows and radiators, so the place was properly ventilated and heated. The walls were tinted in light tan with white ceilings. The wood work was silver grey through-out the building. Two large homemade tables for the dining room were also painted the color of the wood work. The baths were in all white porcelain – tubs and showers.

All was in readiness for the move, as the city water had been piped on the premises. We paid to put in separate electric light and telephone extension, so besides the cost of a [thirty-five] thousand dollar building, funds were raised for all other necessities through friends. A new range was placed in the kitchen and through some grocery store closing out, we had an opportunity to secure a large ice box and Arizona Ice Company said they would supply us, gratis, all the ice we need. On November 14 [1921] we planned to move.

The ladies were placed on committees of three, to assist at ten o’clock. Mrs. N.C. Plumer, Mrs. S.M. Franklyn, Mrs. H.E. Heighton, Mrs. E.G. Spoerleder and Mrs. Geo. Reid, arrived [at the rental home] at 430 West 5th Street, filled their cars with bedding, groceries and linens. Then they placed the babies and children, too young to attend school, in the cars with the nurse and cook and went to the new Home. Mrs. Franklyn, Mrs. Plumer and Mrs. Heighton, were to oversee the placing and arranging of the furniture and all beds were to be put up in the nursery and two dormitories.
Mrs. Albert Steinfeld sent two 9 by 12 rugs, a couch, two rockers, and a wicker living room set, which made the place look homey....Each furniture store sent complete beds and cribs, small chairs, and dining room chairs. This, with the furniture we had from the old receiving home, made it possible to care for 50 children, but there were only three women on the staff: a nurse, housekeeper and cook. We had advertised for a trained matron whom we hoped to have there to take over, but illness in her family delayed her taking the position for ten days. Mrs. Geo. Reid and Mrs. Spoerleder made many trips to and from the two Homes. The Citizen and Tucson Transfer Companies gave us free service.

That day at noon, the children came from school and a picnic lunch consisting of sandwiches, cookies, milk and fruit was given them [at the rental home on 5th Street]. The lunch was furnished by Mrs. Blair, Mrs. Buchanan, Mrs. Spoerleder and Mrs. Davenport. After lunch the children returned to school and the women had about cleared the house of all boxes and furniture, leaving the laundry equipment, wood, coal and playground equipment, to be taken for the last load. After school, Mrs. Reid took the children to the [new] Home....Things at the Home began to hum, as the first Thanksgiving in the new Home was only a week off...We were in correspondence with Mrs. Williams of El Paso. She had retired as a field matron for the government Indian Service. She wired she would arrive on an early train Thanksgiving morning. She was to come direct to my home. Later she and I went to the Home and found a committee of women busily assisting in the preparation of the dinner, arranging the tables, and dressing the children who were all so good and bubbling over with excitement.

Two big turkeys and all the “trimmings” were brought out for the dinner, supplied by the Ladies of the Tucson Temperance Union. The children said “Yummm, yummm, yummm, it smells good, Mrs. Davenport, and won’t we eat!”...What a feast those children enjoyed. The cook baked a number of pies from the pumpkins the ladies furnished. Many lovely gifts came into the Home during the following weeks, but in spite of all, there were many articles needed.