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The State School for the Deaf

By W. H. COCHRAN
Member State Board of Control

A state school to be known as the Washington School for Defective Youth was established February 3rd, 1886, its purpose being to educate the deaf, blind and feeble-minded youth of the state of Washington. The location of the school was fixed at Vancouver, in Clarke county. The school was made free to all resident youth in the state who were too deaf, blind or feeble-minded to be taught by ordinary methods in other public schools; provided, however, that they were free from vicious habits and from loathsome or contagious diseases.

The school was placed under the management of a board of trustees consisting of five persons, to be nominated by the governor, and the appointments to be such that the board should always contain at least one practical educator, one physician and one lawyer. The trustees were empowered to elect a director of the school, who should be an expert educator of defective youth, a hearing man of sound learning and morals, not under 30 nor over 70 years of age, and practically acquainted with the school management and class instruction of the deaf, blind and feeble-minded.

If the parent, guardian or next friend of any defective youth residing in the state, is, by reason of poverty, unable to pay the cost of transporting such youth to and from the school, then on satisfactory proof of such inability being presented to the county commissioners in the county where such youth resides, they shall issue to the parent or guardian a certificate ordering the county to pay the expense of such transportation.

A law was passed in 1890 requiring the clerks of all school districts in the state to report to the school superintendents of their counties the names of all deaf youth residing within their respective districts who are between the ages of 6 and 21 years. The county school superintendent shall then report to the county commissioners the names of all such youth on the first day of July of each year and shall transmit a duplicate copy to the superintendent of the state school.

The sum of \$7,000 was appropriated by the legislature to sustain the school, but no provision for the purchase of ground or the erection of suitable buildings were made. To meet this emergency several public spirited members of the Vancouver board of trade collected funds sufficient to purchase 100 acres of land and to build a small, plain building. The property was afterward exchanged for 17 acres of land, and in 1887 the present main building was erected. The school building for the feeble-minded was erected about a half mile distant, and what is now the school for the blind was erected in 1891.

Governor's Advice Followed.

On April 1, 1901, the School for Defective Youth came under the control and jurisdiction of the state board of control, the present governor, Ernest Lister, then being chairman of that board. In his first report of this institution to the legislature the board made a recommendation that the feeble-minded children be removed to another location and that the deaf children be located in one building and the blind children be moved to the building vacated by the feeble-minded. All of this recommendation has since been carried out, although not adopted at that time, and the governor can look back with satisfaction and feel that his advice at that time has been considered sound.

At that time the population of the blind school was so small that it was felt that the one superintendent over both the deaf and the blind would be sufficient. There were employed five teachers for the deaf, while one teacher was all that was required for the blind. The feeble-minded were transferred to Medical Lake in May, 1906, and at the same time the blind children were transferred to the building vacated by them, and the deaf remained in the location which they occupy at the present time.

On January 1, 1906, Thomas P. Clarke was appointed superintendent of the School for the Deaf and the Blind, and he still remains as superintendent of the School for the Deaf.

The board of control in 1909 recommended that the deaf and the blind be placed under separate heads, and this was done, in a way, yet the law of segregation was not passed until 1913, when one school became known as the School for the Deaf and the other as the School for the Blind.

The regular term at the School for the Deaf begins on the second Wednesday of September and closes on the second Wednesday of the following June. The state board of control may admit to this school deaf children from other states, but the parents or guardians of such children are required to pay annually or quarterly in advance a sufficient amount to cover the cost of maintaining and educating such children. It is the duty of parents or guardians of all deaf children to send them each year to the State School for the Deaf. The county superintendent must take all action necessary to enforce this unless she or he has satisfactory evidence that any deaf child is being properly educated at home or in some other suitable institution.

The day schools for the deaf which have been opened in some of our larger counties have taken nearly 100 children who would otherwise come to this school.

Use Combined System.

At our School for the Deaf we use the American combined system of instruction, under which all known methods and the variations are used for the attainment of an object common to all. Speech, and speech reading, commonly called the "lip language," are considered very important, but mental development, the acquisition of language and general knowledge are regarded as still more important. So far as circumstances permit, such method is chosen for each pupil as seems best adapted to his needs and capacity. Our rule is that adopted by the American instructors of the deaf in convention assembled, "Any method for good results, all methods and wedded to none." We are getting intelligent speech and speech reading from about 60 per cent of our children. In no case has a child's speech deteriorated while attending this school.

In June, 1913, we graduated the largest class in the history of the school, 10 in number. Of these, seven went to Gallaudet college, at Washington, D. C. As we then had three of our graduates attending this college, the entrance of this class raised our representation there to 10 and gave us second place in point of numbers, Nebraska taking first place with 12. Our school is very proud of this record and also of that made by our students at Gallaudet, our pupils being at or near the head of every class in which we are represented.

We class the industrial department of our school equal in importance to the literary. The handicap of deafness makes it difficult if not impossible for our graduates to secure jobs unless they have acquired a start while at school.

It is our aim to teach each child the rudiments of some trade and such habits of industry as will enable him to support himself after graduation. So far we are able to say with a good deal of pride that none of our graduates has ever become a charge on the public purse, either as an inmate of the poor house or a jail. While our graduates do not always follow the trade taught at the school, still they have learned to work while there and most of them become taxpayers very soon after leaving school.

Both boys and girls are taught to make up beds, sweep and take care of rooms. The children do all of the work in their dormitory buildings under competent supervision. Most are given lessons in cooking. We have classes in domestic science, cooking, dressmaking, cutting and fitting, printing, leather work and wood-working. All of our repairs during the term are done by the classes. Incidental instruction is given in plumbing, steam-fitting, concrete, iron and tin work and painting.

Cost Below Average.

The average cost per capita of the 64 state institutions for the deaf in the United States is about \$390 per annum. Our cost is \$292 per year of 365 days.

Pupils are not servants, and where the service of any pupil is desired, request must be made of the superintendent. Every officer, teacher and employe is expected to study and become acquainted with the methods of communicating with the deaf and preferment depends in a measure upon the ability of coming into closer touch with the pupils. Orally trained pupils must be talked to, while the alphabet and signs should be used freely in intercourse with scholars in the manual training department.

Kindness is the underlying principle of discipline in this school and must be the prompting of all relations between authority and service between officers, teachers, employes and the pupils. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Pupils must not leave the grounds without authority of the superintendent. Boys are not permitted on the girls' playground. No tobacco or spirits are tolerated.

I have already mentioned that we use the American combined system for instruction. The two prominent

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(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

J. C. SAMS announces his candidacy for **COUNTY COMMISSIONER** First District. Subject to the Republican primaries, September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

JOE FORSTELL announces his candidacy for **ASSESSOR** Subject to the Republican primaries September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

ERNEST L. WOLF announces his candidacy for **COUNTY ENGINEER** Subject to the Republican primaries September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

E. M. McCLINTIC announces his candidacy for **COUNTY CORONER** Subject to the Republican primaries September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

J. H. GIFFORD announces his candidacy for **SHERIFF** Subject to the Republican primaries September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

FRANK A. WEIR announces his candidacy for **COUNTY ENGINEER** Subject to the Republican primaries September 12, 1916.

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

RAY F. WOOD Now Assistant City Engineer of Olympia announces his candidacy for **COUNTY ENGINEER** Subject to the Republican Primaries, September 12, 1916

(PAID ADVERTISEMENT)

JESSE T. MILLS Acting Coroner announces his candidacy for **COUNTY CORONER** Subject to the Republican primaries, September 12, 1916.

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T. H. GAINES of Tono announces his candidacy for **SHERIFF** Subject to the Republican primaries, September 12, 1916.

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H. N. STICKLIN announces his candidacy for **COUNTY ASSESSOR** Subject to the Republican primaries, September 12, 1916.

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