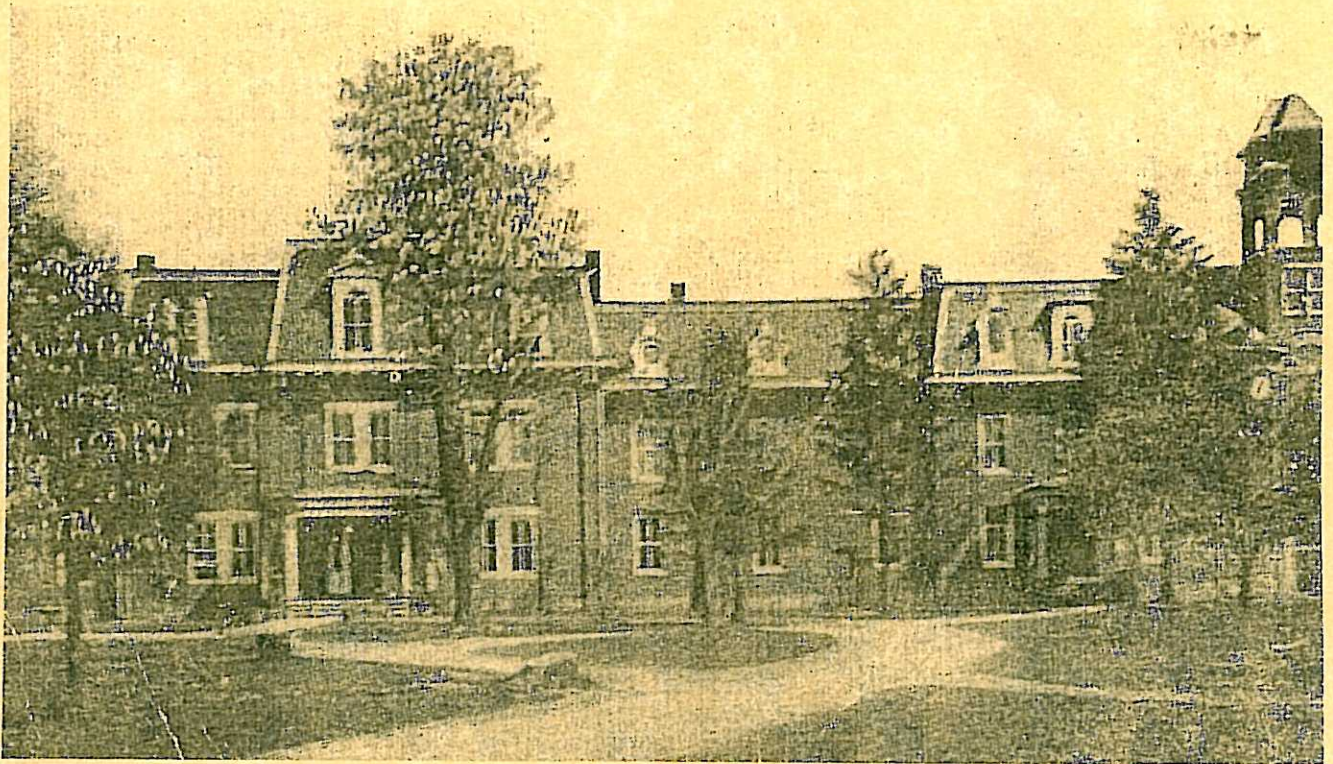


*Early History
Of the*



*West Virginia Schools
for the Deaf and the Blind*

1870 - 1970

Selden W. Brannon

EARLY HISTORY
OF THE
WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND
1870-1970

This story of the first one hundred years of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind has been compiled, edited and typed by Selden W. Brannon, Principal, West Virginia School for the Blind, and Mary Frances Stickley, Secretary.

Much of the material has been copied verbatim from the writings of superintendents, teachers, and students, as found in handbooks of information and the WEST VIRGINIA TABLET, school paper. The information is impersonal and professional. Hopefully, stories of the students, alumni, teachers, houseparents, and other employees will constitute an addendum.

June 1, 1970

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EARLY HISTORY
of the
WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS FOR THE
DEAF AND THE BLIND

West Virginia, up to 1863, was a part of Virginia and therefore upon her entrance into statehood had practically no institutions within her bounds. As for the deaf and the blind, the school at Staunton cared for such as were not able to receive instruction by private facilities. From 1863 to 1870 the deaf and blind of the State either forwent education or were entered in the schools of neighboring states, especially Maryland and Ohio. This, of course, was expensive and inconvenient and only a comparative few were able to avail themselves of such opportunity. The result was that the deaf and the blind children of the State were practically deprived of adequate educational opportunities.

Toward the latter part of the 1860's agitation began for the State to assume its own responsibility for the handicapped. This activity first began in the interest of the blind under the leadership of one Howard H. Johnson, a zealous blind citizen and teacher of Franklin, Pendleton County. It was he who took a delegation of blind to Wheeling, then the capital of the State, and there gave such an appealing presentation before the Legislature that that body, at his urge, and the Governor, William E. Stevenson, passed a resolution on March 3, 1870, to establish a school for the blind. Before this entered the last phases of enactment, it was amended to include the deaf and "dumb" as they were then called. Eight thousand dollars was appropriated to inaugurate such a school and a Board of Regents appointed to initiate and pilot the project. The first Board consisted of eleven members from various sections of the State. They were: William G. Brown, President, Kingwood, Preston County; Rev. D. W. Fisher, Wheeling, Ohio County; General D. N. Couch, Concord Church, Mercer County; Rev. T. H. Trainer, Benwood, Marshall County; Rev. R. N. Pool, Clarksburg, Harrison County; Col. G. K. Leonard, Parkersburg, Wood County; Henry Brannon, Weston, Lewis County; J. D. Baines, Charleston, Kanawha County; Major J. H. Bristor, Martinsburg, Berkeley County; Professor H. H. Johnson, Franklin, Pendleton County; and Captain A. W. Mann, Falling Springs, Greenbrier County.

The Governor designated April 30, 1870, as the time for the first meeting of the Board to organize and take steps necessary to establish the school. Accordingly a meeting was called to convene at Dailey's City Hotel in the city of Wheeling on the above prescribed date. The first matter of business was the question of location for the new institution. It appears that no profferment of site was ready for presentation on the first day for it was specified that all propositions had to be in writing and under seal; no open or oral presentations would be admitted to record. Any such for submittal to the Board should

be ready for the next day.

The matter of location of the school came after matters of organization. Four sites were proffered by: County of Ohio (Wheeling); Citizens of Romney, Hampshire County; Citizens of Clarksburg, Harrison County; and Citizens of Parkersburg, Wood County. The first ballot gave five for Wheeling, two for Romney, one for Clarksburg, and one for Parkersburg. (Some other appointed member must have entered the meeting, for the record shows only eight members present, while the vote shows nine, and by the fact no decision vote was declared there must have been ten present. Matters are not clear here.) At the next vote Wheeling got six, Romney one, and Clarksburg one, and the Wheeling proposition was accepted as temporary location of the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, subject to good faith and proper title papers from citizens of Wheeling.

Upon the request for bonafide papers the Board of Supervisors of Ohio County was directed to purchase the Wheeling property, known as Wheeling Female College, and tender it to the State of West Virginia for use of the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, said property, however, to revert in event of not being used for such, the Board of Regents agreed to accept such property upon the delivery of deed. The inclusion of all furniture, fixtures and instruments of the building was requested. It later developed that, at an adjourned meeting to be held in the city of Parkersburg on June 23, 1870, the committee designated to receive the property reported that the Supervisors of Ohio County had failed to present proper title papers, and further stated the matter was involved in litigation denying the right of the Supervisors to consummate their proposition to the Board of Regents.

Therefore, Mr. Leonard, in behalf of Parkersburg, submitted the offer of a property near said city for the location of the institution, temporarily. Now for the second time the word "temporary" would seem to indicate that there was indecision as to permanent location. A motion was made that Wheeling be given until July 7 to make valid their proposition, and in case they failed so to do, that _____ be the location for the school. By the dash in above motion it is indicated that the Board would not settle on the Parkersburg proposition. At this juncture a communication was received stating that the Judge of the Circuit Court of Ohio County had rendered a decision prohibiting the Supervisors to purchase and convey the Wheeling Female College to the State. Accordingly, the motion to accept such Wheeling property for the Institution was withdrawn and again matters were open for other offers.

For reasons not stated the Parkersburg proposition falls out of consideration and the Rev. W. Fisher presented, at a meeting of the Board of Regents, held in the Swann House, Parkersburg, June 23, 1870,

a resolution to accept the building and grounds of the Romney Literary Society as tendered by the citizens of Romney. Again the word "temporary" occurs, saying "hereby locate the 'temporary' institution". Proper titles had to be in the hands of the Board by July 20. A committee consisting of W. G. Brown, Henry Brannon, and J. H. Bristor was appointed. It appears that the property was offered by the Literary Society of Romney for and on behalf of the people of Romney. It is evident, however, that other grants were made besides that of the Literary Society. No doubt this organization owned the building and the other grantors gave adjacent land.

Very soon after the offer of the Romney Literary Society was accepted, July 20, 1870, a meeting was held in Romney to plan the opening of school in the fall. The selection of a superintendent was first in order. After considerable balloting, H. H. Hollister, A. M. of the Ohio School for the Deaf, was selected. The following constituted the staff to inaugurate the school: Mrs. H. H. Hollister, Steward; H. H. Johnson, Teacher; Miss Rosa R. Harris, Teacher; Mr. Holdridge Chidester, Teacher; Mrs. Lucy B. White, Matron, and Dr. Samuel Lupton, Physician. Twenty-five deaf and five blind students were inrolled at the first session, beginning the last Thursday of September (29th) 1870.

HISTORY OF ADMINISTRATIONS

The school grew rapidly from twenty-five to sixty deaf children and from five to seventeen blind children within the three years of Principal Hollister's tenure. Ere he resigned there was successfully placed before the Legislature the need of additional buildings. Accordingly, in 1872 wings were placed at each end of the original Literary Society building, a structure already of some years, yet very substantially built. Thus a building about 200 feet long and three stories high afforded much-needed accommodations.

Mr. Hollister, desiring to take up medicine, resigned in 1873 and Dr. Lupton, already serving the institution, was made temporary Principal. A Mr. C. H. Hill, teacher in the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, was called to the office, but declined, whereupon Mr. Levens Eddy from the Wisconsin School for the Deaf, accepted a call in 1874. He remained only a few months, resigning in July. The Board then extended the Principalship to Major John C. Covell, Superintendent of the Virginia School for the Deaf at Staunton. Under his very able leadership, the school made rapid progress, both in physical equipment and personnel. For thirteen years he faithfully served, until in 1887 death removed this outstanding servant from the institution.

Again a temporary principal was chosen in the person of the Secretary of the Board, Mr. H. B. Gilkeson. Once more the Board turned To C. H. Hill, who was now in the North Carolina School for the Deaf. This time he followed the call and entered upon his duties in the fall of 1888. The school was blessed under his wise guidance. Extensive additions were made in the erection of a unit paralleled to the first, giving the form of an "H" to give accommodations to about 200. The enrollment increased in four years from 89 to 125, somewhat more than half being deaf. He recorded that to his time the school had already served 320 deaf and 138 blind students. He pioneered the change of the name from Institution for Deaf, Dumb and Blind to West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The educational status of the school likewise advanced under his direction by a wider and more up-to-date curriculum and procedures. During his tenure J. J. Cornwell, who years later became governor, was the Secretary of the Board. Mr. Hill closed his service in 1897, giving nine years of valuable service to the institution.

In the fall of 1897 Principal James T. Rucker assumed the reins, continuing to January, 1910. He, also being a teacher of good training and experience, continued the elevation of the school in educational achievement. It appears, under his regime, oral instruction was given increased emphasis, although still the manual method predominated,

most of the teachers being deaf. Under Mr. Rucker the title of Principal was changed to that of Superintendent. A four-story school building was erected during his administration.

It appears Mr. Rucker, himself somewhat of a politician, permitted politics to affect the school, a condition adverse to any educational enterprise.

An unfortunate occurrence terminated his tenure of almost thirteen years and in the midst of the school year R. Cary Montague was appointed by the Governor as new Superintendent of the school. He, too, was a teacher of ripe experience and in true sympathy with the peculiar problems of educating the deaf and the blind. Advances were made in oral work by more speech and lip reading, the number of hearing teachers increasing, becoming more reasonably proportionate to the number of deaf teachers. In one of his reports he stated: "The oral method of teaching the deaf to speak and read lips is now firmly established here, and six of our eleven teachers gave instruction entirely in this way last year to 75 pupils". It appears that the road to oralism in teaching the deaf was greatly opposed by the deaf of the nation and the West Virginia School did not present an exception. The oralists rightly contended that the deaf child should be prepared as much as possible to get along with his speaking and hearing associates. Mr. Montague was a strong contender for oralism, but was wisely temperate, realizing that there were not a few deaf whom this method could not approach. Therefore he gave due place to manualism. Mr. Montague's vision was very impaired, which fact with other causes brought about his withdrawal.

We would here divert to mention some of the outstanding teachers of the deaf in this school. They are E. L. Chapin, H. Chidester, A. D. Hays, John A. Boland, M. Relihan and Miss M. H. Keller. The above teachers have been held in grateful commemoration by the deaf and a bronze tablet in the front corridor of the administration building gives mute but abiding testimony to their long and cherished services.

A pioneer of the oral work was Miss Grimm, who had articulation and lip reading separate from regular classroom instruction of subject matter. Later, under the establishment of a regular oral department wherein regular classroom instruction was by oral method, a Miss Emma Dobbins headed the department.

In the School for the Blind, memory cherishes first H. H. Johnson, who was blind; Mrs. L. W. Ferguson; Miss Nettie Lucas (taught for fifty years, resigning in 1935); Mr. C. E. Whipp; and Miss Agatha Estill in the music department (resigning in 1938 after serving over thirty-five years).

The administration of the schools has fallen under three state

departments, first a Board of Regents, then at the establishment of the Board of Control, under their direction being looked upon principally as an eleemosynary institution and finally in the administration of Governor Cornwell (1919-1920), the schools came to their rightful place under the State Board of Education as to educational policy and personnel, while finances and physical equipment remained under the Board of Control. Being placed under the Board of Education, a long step was made to remove the schools from politics which so adversely affected the welfare of the school.

Upon the withdrawal of Mr. Montague as Superintendent, Governor Hatfield appointed Mr. Parley DeBerry, of Terra Alta, as Superintendent, who assumed the reins January 1, 1914. Mr. DeBerry's years of school teaching and administration, together with a keen business ability, were invaluable assets for a successful administration. Though not conversant with the special type of education he soon so applied himself to at least the theoretical side that he came in happy and effective sympathy with the work. His sympathy inclined decidedly to the side of oralism as invaluable for the deaf and accordingly considerable advance was made in the oral department. Mr. DeBerry was always keenly interested in political issues and, as so often happens, this accumulated against him, bringing about his removal at the completion of the 1916-1917 term. Mr. F. L. Largent was appointed Superintendent pro tem. During Mr. DeBerry's administration the school was honored by the visit of the famous deaf-blind speaker--Miss Helen Keller.

Hon. John J. Cornwell, a resident of Romney, became Governor in 1917 and the appointment of a new Superintendent fell to him. He chose a well-educated and experienced school man in the person of F. L. Burdette from Huntington, West Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Burdette found that with their delicate sympathetic qualities the work played too much on their heart cords and so after only two years wrestling with the many problems, he resigned. It was during his administration that Governor Cornwell placed the schools under the direct control of the Board of Education, where it rightfully belonged.

It became now, for the first time in the fifty years of the school, the prerogative of the State Board of Education to select a new head. They chose H. F. Griffey, likewise a school man of ripe experience. An outstanding achievement of his administration was the separation of the blind from the deaf to another side of the campus. This accomplishment was greatly facilitated by the intelligent interest and championing of Governor Cornwell, well aware of the unpleasant complications of having two types of the handicapped in so close affiliation when there is nothing in common about the two. A modern and commodious dormitory was built east of the old Potomac Academy school building which had been owned and operated by the Presbyterian church. It was in the Academy building where Dr. W. H. Foote, prominent in the educational interests of the South Branch Valley,

rendered his long services in offering secondary training. Perhaps motivated by the desire to perpetuate this historic edifice it was only remodeled to afford school facilities for the blind. A most unfortunate act was this, but perhaps the best that could be done at the time for lack of funds. The building is still used today, but in a very different way. It was remodeled and is now the dining hall for the School for the Blind.

Upon Mr. Griffey's resignation, effective August 1st, the State Board of Education cast about for one to pilot the institution. At the consent of Governor Cornwell, former Superintendent Parley DeBerry was appointed superintendent the second time and assumed office with the 1923-24 term. Having had three years of experience he was fitted to enter upon his work with good effects. Immediately steps were taken to build a dormitory for the blind girls; the money for such having been already appropriated during Mr. Griffey's tenure of office. A dormitory of the same type as the boys' was built at a cost of about \$100,000. With this a very satisfactory housing and separation was made of the blind. Mr. DeBerry continued actively developing and beautifying both schools. A commodious and beautiful dairy barn was erected about half a mile from the main campus, namely on the farm land formerly acquired by the institution. A sympathetic interest of the legislature under the able urging of the Superintendent effected the erection of an up-to-date bakery and industrial arts building. The old vocational building was remodeled to serve as a dormitory for the larger deaf boys. Much interest was given to the farm and it reached a high degree of production under his experienced direction.

The enrollment of pupils considerably increased, reaching 400 for both schools, while the teaching staff came to number about 60. Improvements in scholastic and vocational work were made and oralism came to be a definite part of school procedure. The yearly appropriation increased to amounts that would provide better care and instruction of the youth. In general we may say Superintendent DeBerry did much to bring the school to a higher standing both in physical equipment and personnel. Mr. DeBerry became a valiant champion for the cause of the deaf and the blind, seeking their good welfare in school and life. An outstanding service he worked untiringly for was the right of the deaf to drive automobiles. In this he was successful.

As Mr. DeBerry was already over seventy years of age when he accepted the second appointment, thirteen years of service weighed heavily upon him, and in the summer of 1933 he was relieved of his responsibility and retired to his home in Terra Alta.

Mr. DeBerry died in 1941 and is buried in Indian Mound Cemetery.

Dr. A. E. Krause became Superintendent August 1, 1933 at age 51. He was born in Michigan where he attended elementary and secondary school. He continued his education at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, preparing for the ministry in the Lutheran Church. In 1910 he came to the South Branch Valley, assuming church work seven miles above Franklin. About 1920 he succeeded in having his church establish a school named St. John's Academy at Petersburg which he was called to launch and serve. Later he served as business manager and instructor of St. John's Junior College. Because of financial reasons this school was closed. Governor H. G. Kump recommended him to the Department of Education and he assumed the office of Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

In October 1934, during Dr. Krause's administration, football for the deaf boys was resurrected with Chester Collette of the School for the Blind as coach. The deaf boys had football prior to 1904. In December 1934, the School for the Deaf had their first football banquet.

With Chester Collette as coach, wrestling was started in the School for the Blind in 1940-41. Their first match, other than scrimmage matches with the deaf boys, was with the Maryland School for the Blind, February 1, 1941. Incidentally, Maryland won the match.

In 1934, Ruth Stackpole, from the Perkins School for the Blind, was employed to establish the first class for the Deaf-Blind.

Dr. Krause secured P.W.A. funds for the erection of the Primary Building. Groundbreaking ceremonies for this building were held in October 1937 and the laying of the corner stone was Sunday, May 15, 1938. The cost of the building was \$290,000.

Dr. Krause resigned as Superintendent July 15, 1941; he died March 28, 1949.

Stanley R. Harris became Superintendent of the Schools for the Deaf and Blind in 1941. Previously he was Principal of Romney High School, and a teacher in the public schools of Wayne and Cabell Counties. He was a graduate of Marshall University and West Virginia University.

Outstanding achievements in Mr. Harris' administration were a new heating system, a physical education building, funds for the construction of a dormitory and hospital building (Seaton Hall) at the School for the Deaf, and an increase in salaries.

In the spring of 1949 a central heating plant was finished at a

cost of approximately two hundred fifty thousand dollars. The first fire was built in the boilers of this heating plant February 28, 1949.

Mr. Harris was able to secure from the legislature an appropriation of four hundred thousand dollars for the construction of a dormitory and hospital building for the School for the Deaf. The hospital facilities are shared with the School for the Blind.

Not the least of Mr. Harris' accomplishments for the school was a large increase in salaries. Salaries were more than doubled during the twelve years of his administration.

Mr. Harris' superintendency was interrupted in 1945, from March until October, when he was a member of our Armed Forces. During this time R. M. Golladay, Principal of the School for the Blind, was acting Superintendent.

A half million dollar physical education building was completed in 1953. The first school activity in it was the combined Commencement exercises of the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, May 27, 1953. It was the next day, May 28, that Mr. Harris announced his resignation as Superintendent to become the assistant registrar of West Virginia University.

James R. Thompson, business manager, was acting Superintendent about six weeks during the summer of 1953, filling in the interval between Mr. Harris' resignation and Dr. Schunhoff's arrival.

Dr. Schunhoff's administration saw the erection and completion of Seaton Hall, a dormitory building for the School for the Deaf. Seaton Hall was dedicated June 1, 1955; the dining room and recreation room were added and occupied November 19, 1958.

During the summer and fall of 1959, the old dormitory wings (East section of the administration building) were torn down.

Dr. Schunhoff transformed a section of land at the North end of the campus into the present athletic field; it was first used for athletics in the fall of 1957. Dr. Schunhoff was so proud of this project that he called it "Schunhoff's Folly".

Picking up where Stanley Harris left off, Dr. Schunhoff did a great deal toward increasing salaries.

Dr. Schunhoff resigned as Superintendent August 31, 1960 to head the California School for the Deaf at Berkeley, California.

Jack W. Brady, Principal of the American School for the Deaf at West Hartford, Connecticut, was appointed by the West Virginia Board of Education on August 29, 1960, to succeed Dr. Hugo F. Schunhoff as Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

Eldon E. Shipman, at that time Principal of the School for the Deaf, assumed the duties of the superintendent until Mr. Brady's arrival in September.

So far as buildings and grounds are concerned, Mr. Brady's outstanding achievement was the securing of funds from the legislature to erect a classroom building for the School for the Blind and the renovation of the old classroom building into a dining hall. The groundbreaking for the classroom building was held in May 1963 and the first classes were conducted in the new classroom building at the opening of school in the fall of 1964. The old classroom building was the former Potomac Academy. It was renovated into a dining hall and the first meal served in it was lunch November 30, 1964.

At the same time the two rooms in the basement of the Girl's Dormitory were remodeled for instruction in sewing and cooking.

During Mr. Brady's tenure the administration building offices and apartment were remodeled and refurnished along with installation of electric heat.

Mr. Brady resigned July 1, 1966, to become Superintendent of the Kentucky School for the Deaf at Danville, Kentucky.

Eldon E. Shipman was appointed Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind July 1, 1966

Mr. Shipman was brought to Romney by Mr. Stanley Harris as a teacher in the School for the Deaf in 1952. He next served as Principal of the School for the Deaf from 1956 to 1966 when he was appointed to the Superintendency.

Mr. Shipman has secured funds for the Academic-Vocational building for the deaf. It will replace the present classroom building for Advanced Deaf.

Mr. Shipman has continued to work for larger salaries for school employees.

It was under Mr. Shipman's administration that the Parent's Institute for parents of pre-school deaf children and pre-school blind students was inaugurated. A very important addition to the curriculum is Orientation and Mobility for the blind. We now have two instructors in this area.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Administration Building

Romney Classical Institute building (presently known as Administration Building) erected 1846; occupied by school in 1870.

Third story to Administration Building 1871-1872

North wing, West section, Administration Building 1871-1872

South wing, West section, Administration Building 1871-1872

Steam heat system installed 1874

Pupils' dining room and chapel 1875

North wing, East section, Administration Building 1891-1892

Kitchen, storerooms, Administration Building 1892

Hospital (over kitchen and storerooms) Administration Building 1901

Electric system, basement of kitchen, Administration installed 1903

East section, Administration, razed summer and fall 1959

Third floor, Administration Building, razed summer of 1964

Vocational Building

Vocational Building, School for the Deaf, erected 1872

Enlarged 1876 and 1903

Changed to deaf boys' dormitory 1928

Changed back to vocational building 1956

Advanced School for the Deaf

Advanced School Building for the Deaf occupied 1900

Third story removed 1962

Primary Building

Primary Building for the Deaf occupied 1939

Industrial Arts Building

Industrial Arts Building erected 1926

Seaton Hall

Seaton Hall dedicated June 1, 1955

Seaton Hall dining room and recreation room occupied November 19, 1958

Power House

Power House built 1949

Dining Hall -School for the Blind

Potomac Seminary or Potomac Academy erected 1850, purchased 1919
School Building, School for the Blind, remodeled 1923
Converted to dining hall - first meal November 30, 1964

Blind Boys' Hall

Blind Boys' Hall occupied 1922

Blind Girls' Hall

Blind Girls' Hall occupied 1925

Classroom Building, School for the Blind

Classroom Building, School for the Blind, occupied 1964

Athletic Field

Present Athletic Field first used fall of 1957

Laundry Building

Laundry Building occupied 1937

Barn

Barn built 1930

Bakery

Bakery built ?

Farm

Farm purchased 1901-1902
Lots from farm were either donated or sold for the State Police
Barracks, Hospital, Shoe Factory, Town Sewerage Plant, and
Department of Natural Resources

SUPERINTENDENTS

During J. T. Rucker's administration, 1897-1910, the title was changed from Principal to that of Superintendent. During Mr. DeBerry's first administration 1914-1917, the title of Principal was given for the first time, to the head teachers of the Department for the Blind and the Department for the Deaf.

The following is a list of all the superintendents and the dates of their administration:

Horace H. Hollister, Columbus, Ohio, 1870- October 1873
Dr. Samuel R. Lupton, Acting Superintendent, Romney, October 1873-
February 1874
Levens Eddy, Acting Superintendent, New York State, February 1874-
August 1874
Major John Collins Covell, Staunton, Virginia, 1874-1887
Henry B. Gilkeson, Romney, 1887-1888
C. H. Hill, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1888-1897
James T. Rucker, Lewisburg, 1897-January 1910
R. Cary Montague, Lewisburg, January 1910-January 1914
Parley DeBerry, Terra Alta, January 1914-1917
F. L. Largent, Acting Superintendent, Romney, June 19, 1917-
June 30, 1917
F. L. Burdette, Huntington, 1917-1920
Harold F. Griffey, Hinton, 1920-1923
Parley DeBerry, Terra Alta, 1923-1933
A. E. Krause, Petersburg, 1933-1941
Stanley R. Harris, Sutton, 1941-March 6, 1945
R. M. Golladay, Acting Superintendent, Romney, March 6, 1945-
October 6, 1945
Stanley R. Harris, Sutton, October 1945-1953
James R. Thompson, Acting Superintendent, Romney, July 1, 1953-
August 10, 1953
Hugo F. Schunhoff, Illinois, 1953-1960
Eldon E. Shipman, Acting Superintendent, Fulton, Missouri,
August 31, 1960-September 17, 1960
Jack W. Brady, Waycross, Georgia, 1960-1966
Eldon E. Shipman, Fulton, Missouri, 1966 -

PRINCIPALS AND HEAD TEACHERS

The following is a list of Head Teachers or Principals of the School for the Blind:

Howard Hill Johnson, Pendleton County, 1870-1913
R. M. Golladay, Romney, 1913-1918
A. H. Cox, Kansas, 1918-1920
Miss Susan Stump, Romney, 1920-1921
Charles O. Hiser, Pendleton County, 1921-1924
Miss J. B. Warren, Virginia, 1924-1925
R. M. Golladay, Romney, 1925-1945
Selden W. Brannon, Romney, Acting Principal, March 6, 1945-
October 5, 1945
R. M. Golladay, Romney, October 6, 1945-1948
Selden W. Brannon, Romney, 1949-

The Principals of the School for the Deaf have been:

Rose R. Harris, 1870-1874
H. H. Chidester, 1874-1875
R. G. Ferguson, 1875-1880
H. H. Chidester, 1880-1897
E. L. Chapin, 1897-1899
A. D. Hays, 1899-1904
E. L. Chapin, 1904-?
Miss Linda Miller, ?
Miss A. E. Dunn, 1913-1914
Miss Emma K. Dobbins, 1914, 1917
Miss Mary H. Keller, 1917-1923
J. A. Weaver, 1923-1929
Miss Elizabeth Daniels, 1929-1932
Miss Adelaide Coffey, 1932-1937
Stanley Roth, 1937-1940
James Kirkley, 1940-1944
Wesley Mayhew, 1944-1945
Lloyd Ambrosen, 1945-1946
John R. Blue, 1946-1952
Paul C. Bird, 1952-1956
Eldon E. Shipman, 1956-1966
John Baughman, 1967-1969

HOWARD HILL JOHNSON

Howard Hill Johnson was the founder of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind; therefore his life story is pertinent.

Scotch-Irish, Irish, Germans, and English, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, began to move into the South Branch and Shenandoah Valleys to found permanent homes. Born early in the eighteenth century in Pennsylvania, Joseph Johnson (English) lingered long enough in the Shenandoah Valley to find a wife, and moved on to what is now Pendleton County, West Virginia, about the time of or shortly before the American Revolution. There, near the headwaters of the Potomac, he began to raise a family. Having married late in life, Joseph himself was too old and his sons were too young to fight for their country's independence.

One of these sons was James Johnson who became a man of influence in his county. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1829, and represented Pendleton County in the Virginia General Assembly two or three terms. His son, Jacob Fisher Johnson, followed in the father's footsteps by representing the same county in 1872-73 in the Legislature of his new state. For fifty years Jacob F. was a public spirited citizen of Pendleton County, and held positions of honor and trust there throughout his life. Joseph, James and Jacob Johnson, respectively, were the great-grandfather, grandfather, and father of Howard Hill Johnson.

Jacob Fisher Johnson married his first cousin, Mary Ann Fisher of Hardy County. Their common grandfather was Jacob Fisher, physician, who had married Susan Burns, a lineal descendant of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns. Dr. Fisher, born and educated in Germany, came to America and finally settled in what is now Hardy County to practice his profession. The fact that Jacob Fisher Johnson and Mary Ann Fisher, parents of Howard and James, were first cousins has been suggested as a possible cause of the boys' blindness. The other six or seven children were normal in all respects, except a brother who was blind.

Howard Hill Johnson was born February 19, 1846, at the old family home on Friend's Run just north of Franklin, Pendleton County, then Virginia. From birth Howard had very poor vision, and in a few years became totally blind. An older brother, James (1838-1907), had the same handicap.

At the age of ten James was sent to the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton, and in 1855 finished the usual course of instruction there in seven years. During summer vacations and during the two years which followed his graduation, James with care prepared his brother to enter the school. Accordingly, in 1857, at the age of

eleven, Howard enrolled at the Virginia school. He attended this school only four years, for in 1861 he withdrew because of the Civil War.

By this time his brother (later known as Professor Jim) had established himself as a teacher in Pendleton County and was conducting a school near Franklin. Howard entered "Professor Jim's" school in 1861 and again in 1862. By this time it was believed that Howard was grounded sufficiently in the essentials required to enter a classical school. The next two years (1863-1865) he attended school at Newmarket, Virginia, where he was a student of Professor Joseph Salyards, a distinguished teacher of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

During his forty-three years of teaching in the school for the blind, Johnson is known to have taught classes in French, German, Latin, Algebra, Geometry, and Chemistry, as well as the usual classes in History and Literature. He must have been schooled in these branches at the Newmarket Institution, for with his leaving that school in 1865 his formal classical education ended. In 1865 he and his brother opened a school "of High Grade" at Franklin, which was attended by young men from miles around, who had been deprived of educational opportunities during the war. Maxwell and Swisher say:

In 1866 the institution at Staunton offered the young student-teacher advantages in the prosecution of his studies which he availed himself of for one more term. In September, 1867, he began a school at Franklin under the provisions of the free school system which had just gone into effect. The next year he went to Moorefield, where he taught in the public schools for three successive terms.

While teaching the sighted Johnson began to realize the need of a state school for the blind. Then, too, he noted with concern that the new school system of the state made no provision for the education of people with his handicap. True, the state would arrange for such handicapped persons to attend schools for the blind in other states, but this was too expensive and inconvenient, and few blind children in West Virginia had availed themselves of that opportunity. West Virginia should have its own school for the blind, and Johnson decided to set afoot the movement for its establishment.

He opened correspondence with Governor William E. Stevenson in regard to the need for such an institution. The governor assured him of his sympathy and support. So during the summer of 1869 Johnson toured the state to win public support for his enterprise.

Encouraged by the results of a state-wide canvass, Johnson, now only twenty-four years old, decided to place his plans for a school

before the Legislature which was to convene in Wheeling, January 18, 1870. He thought it best to appear before the Legislature himself to fight for his project. With a bill in his pocket, proposing the establishment, he set out for the capital. On his way to Wheeling he fell in with certain influential men whose support he sought to win for his bill. One of these men, ex-governor Francis H. Pierpont, upon being asked to present the bill to the Legislature, replied that he could not afford to connect his name with an enterprise so certain of failure. Delegate Joseph H. Wheat of Morgan County declared that "the bill will fail because it ought to; the state is not financially able to establish any more public institutions".

In Wheeling Johnson could find not one person willing to put his bill before the Legislature. Finally, through the assistance of friends, he obtained permission to use the house chamber for a demonstration of the benefits blind people can receive from an education. Before a packed house he, assisted by his brother, James, and Susan Ridenour (all blind), revealed the value of formal education to blind in music, public speaking, and reading and writing. Then for an hour he reasoned with the lawmakers and begged for the establishment of a school for the blind. The appeal worked, for, as the people gathered around to congratulate him, several members of the house offered to introduce his bill. Even Mr. Wheat declared that he would vote for the bill, if it cost a hundred thousand dollars. It was introduced by Delegate John J. Davis of Harrison County. The bill became law on March 3, 1870.

Governor Stevenson appointed "Professor" Johnson a member of the board of regents which was to select a site for the school, and, in July 1870, the board, accepting the offer of the Literary Society of Romney, located the school at Romney, Hampshire County. September 29, 1870, the school opened with its founder as head teacher in the blind department instead of Superintendent of the whole institution. Numerous attempts were made to have the board designate "Professor" Johnson as head of the school, but he never was given that honor.

"Professor" Johnson had another disappointment in connection with the founding of the schools. He never intended that the institution should be one for the education of the deaf also. He felt that these two classes of handicapped should never be in an institution under a single management. This belief is held today by authorities on education of the deaf and the blind. It is said that the amendment providing for the dual character of the schools was slipped into the bill and passed while Johnson was temporarily out of the capital city. It was this dual character of the institution, more than anything else, which prevented Johnson's being made its first Superintendent. It is believed that the board of regents felt that a blind man wouldn't be suitable, for many reasons, to direct the education of the deaf. These disappointments Johnson drowned in the satisfaction that he, in about a year's time,

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had founded the school, and as Principal of the Department for the Blind, could mold and shape it pretty much as he pleased.

During his term of forty-three years as Head Teacher of the Department for the Blind, many honors came to Mr. Johnson in recognition for his service in the interest of the blind. In 1877 he received from the Virginia Polytechnic-Institute at Blacksburg a master of arts degree.

Mr. Johnson was married twice--first in 1868 to a Miss Barbbe of Virginia, to whom three children were born: Leila B., William T., and H. Guy. His first wife died in 1880; in 1882 he married Elizabeth Neal, daughter of Dr. H. V. Neal of Keyser, West Virginia. They had two children, George N., and Lucy N.

Throughout his life Johnson was engaged nationally in the promotion of education for the blind. He attended most of the meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind and frequently served on important committees of that body. His wonderful gift of language and his evident sincerity of purpose caught the attention of the members when he addressed a convention.

One of Johnson's outstanding achievements was his work in bringing about the passage of the bill providing for the free transmission through the mails of reading matter for the blind. In this he was ably assisted by other men in the profession who were also actively interested in getting this bill passed. Johnson wrote the bill, which was introduced in Congress by Representative Rucker of Missouri, a brother of Mr. James T. Rucker, Superintendent of the Schools for the Deaf and Blind at that time. It has been said of him, "There was no matter of philanthropy, or legislation, in behalf of the sightless in any part of the country that escaped his alert mind, and to which he did not render aid, either financial or editorial."

Mr. Johnson died February 6, 1913, after one week's illness from paralysis, at his home in Romney. He had been Head Teacher of the Department for the Blind for forty-three years. He is buried in Indian Mound Cemetary, Romney.

It is impossible to speak too highly of Johnson as a teacher in the West Virginia School for the Blind. No teacher in the school asked fewer favors; he was in his place and doing his duty at all times; he never allowed any sort of outside attraction to interfere in the slightest degree with his obligation to the school and its pupils. His lack of sight served as a spur to his ambition, an obstacle to be overcome with resignation, but with an unflinching courage and determination.

His outstanding ability, his faithfulness to duty, and his never failing interest in the welfare of the blind in his state and nation, all contributed toward his great success. At his death the profession lost one of the noblest illustrations of its own work. Mr. Montague, Superintendent of the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at the time of Johnson's death, wrote, "In the death of H. H. Johnson, M.A., this school lost an instructor who had a national reputation, a man, who by his indomitable energy, his untiring industry, and his strong intellect, had made his personality known and felt throughout the country."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
of
SUPERINTENDENTS

Horace H. Hollister

Horace H. Hollister, the first Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, came to Romney in 1870 from the Ohio School for the Deaf at Columbus, where he had been a teacher for many years. Having served the school three years, Hollister resigned in October, 1873. He returned to Columbus to take up the study of medicine.

Hollister was admirably fitted for the difficult task of launching the school, having had several years of experience in a similar institution in Columbus, Ohio. The records of his administration as well as those of his successors testify that Hollister fulfilled the expectations of all.

Samuel R. Lupton, M.D.

Samuel R. Lupton was born near Winchester, Virginia, in 1827 and died at Romney, September 7, 1880. His ancestors were Quakers and belonged to that group of persecuted persons who were imprisoned in Winchester during the Revolutionary War on the charge that they were friendly with the British. Little is known of Samuel's youth except that he was graduated from the Winchester Medical College in 1848. He began the practice of medicine in Pennsylvania; leaving that state, he came back to Winchester, and then to Romney in 1858, bringing with him a recommendation from Dr. Hunter H. McGuire of Winchester. He developed a lucrative practice in Romney and Hampshire County.

Dr. Lupton was a member of the Literary Society of Romney and, from the first, took an active part in the society's efforts to have the Schools for the Deaf and Blind located in Romney. He was the school's first physician and continued in that capacity, except for a couple of terms, until his death. When Horace H. Hollister resigned as Superintendent, October 2, 1873, the board of regents persuaded Dr. Lupton to become Acting Superintendent until a successor to Hollister could be found. A new superintendent, Levens Eddy, arrived, February 8, 1874, and Dr. Lupton returned to his practice of medicine. He was the school physician and a member of its board of regents at the time of his death, September 7, 1880. In his last years, he suffered from heart trouble and fell dead while in the act of reaching to a shelf for a bottle of medicine for a patient who had called at his office. Dr. Lupton is buried in an unmarked grave in Indian Mound Cemetery, Romney. His home was the property now belonging to the John Blue estate adjoining the entrance grounds of the school.

THE REVEREND LEVENS EDDY

Levens Eddy was the third Superintendent of the Schools, succeeding Acting-Superintendent Dr. S. R. Lupton, February 8, 1874. Not caring for the position particularly, he resigned in July of that same year but remained in charge of the institution till John C. Covell, his successor, arrived on August 1. The Reverend Eddy's connection with the school was so brief that few people really knew him. It has been difficult to patch together the following chronology of his life.

Levens Eddy was born in Caxenovia, New York, 1834. He was graduated from Williams College in 1853, and did some surveying and teaching during the next two years. In 1856 he received his M.A. degree, also from Williams. He taught in the Wisconsin School for the Deaf from 1858 to 1874. In 1861 he was married to Orpha Taylor, matron in the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. From Wisconsin he came to West Virginia as Superintendent of the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind from February to August, 1874. From 1874 until 1905 he was a teacher in the Kentucky School for the Deaf. Eddy was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1878. He died at Danville, Kentucky, September 20, 1905.

"Major" John Collins Covell

John Collins Covell was born at Newport, Rhode Island, or Princess Ann, Maryland, December 19, 1824. The descendants are inclined to accept Newport, Rhode Island as the birthplace, under the supposition that Covell's father, the Reverend Joseph Covell, moved to Maryland when John was but an infant. His mother was the daughter of Governor John Collins, who was governor of Rhode Island from 1786 to 1789, and afterwards was a representative of that state in Congress. His father, an Episopalian minister, moved his family to the Princess Ann (Maryland) parish while John was yet but a very young child. It was here that the boy lost his mother, and her body now lies under the pulpit of the Princess Ann church. Soon after this, his father was transferred to a parish in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he resided until his death.

It being his father's desire that John should enter the ministry, John was accordingly carefully educated for that purpose, and was graduated from Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut in 1844. It was here that he came in contact with a fellow student, the Reverend Mr. Clerc, son of Laurent Clerc, the deaf-mute teacher whom Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet brought from France to become the co-founder of the Hartford School for the Deaf. From association with people in Hartford interested in the education of the deaf, John, himself, became interested and elected that profession in preference to the ministry much to his father's disappointment. While the Virginia Institution was yet in its infancy, Covell accepted a position as teacher in the deaf-mute department when he was not quite twenty-one years of age.

He was married to Miss Anita Eskridge in 1852. To them were born five children, one of whom married David H. Heiskell, the parents of Mrs. Avery Baird, secretary and stenographer in the office of the superintendent for many years; another married Garrett Parsons, the parents of Mrs. Mamie Kenny, formerly the blind girl's matron.

When Principal Tyler died in 1852, Covell became vice-principal of the deaf-mute department of the Virginia School along with his brother-in-law, Dr. Charles Merrilat. It was during the difficult days of the Civil War that Mr. Covell made himself conspicuous as an executive. Virginia suffered severely by the war and only with great difficulty were many of her institutions able to carry on. Covell took upon himself the arduous task of continuing the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind with a diminished number of pupils. He successfully conducted the affairs of the institution throughout the war, notwithstanding the privations "Old Virginny" was subject to from 1861-65. It must have been for this difficult and tremendous task that he was made "Major" in the Confederate Army under General Wise. There is no word that the commission of "Major" placed him upon any actual battlefields. His battlefield was that of a teacher, educator, and administrator during the War. For twenty-seven years, Major Covell taught in and then piloted the Virginia Schools. A disagreement with the board of governors of the Virginia institution led Covell, in 1873, to resign and accept a position in a Boy's Preparatory School for the Deaf near Baltimore. He was there only a short time when the Virginia School, recognizing and regretting the loss of Covell's services, successfully implored him to return as head teacher in the deaf-mute department.

His stay at the Virginia School this time was short, for on August 1, 1874, he became Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. As Superintendent, Covell made many improvements in the plant: gas lights were introduced, supplanting oil lamps; steam heat was installed to take the place of stoves and fireplaces; well water was superceded by piping spring water to the institution; a dining hall, school rooms, and a chapel were erected in back of and adjoining the center part of the main building; the shop building was enlarged, and several acres of adjoining land were added to the grounds. In general, the institution received a new impetus of growth and improvement; the standard of instruction was elevated, and enrollment of pupils grew. Covell championed a broad and thorough education for all pupils, keeping in good balance the academic and vocational work. Having been first educated for the ministry, it is easy to understand his interest for the spiritual welfare of the pupils. He, himself, held services for the school, using the sign language.

On Saturday morning, June 4, 1887, Major John Collins Covell died, having served the institution twelve years and ten months, longer than

any other superintendent.

HENRY B. GILKESON

H. B. Gilkeson, lawyer and attorney, was born at Moorefield, 1850, and died at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, September 29, 1921. He was the son of Robert W. and Sarah E. Gilkeson, of Scotch ancestry, and married, in 1884, Mary D., daughter of J.J. and E. J. Paxton of Virginia. His three children were Laura P. (Mrs. George Arnold), Robert W., and Henry B. Having served the people, first as a school teacher, then as county superintendent of Hampshire County, he then took up the study of law, and had the good fortune to acquire a substantial reputation, not only in his county but in the state at large. He was secretary of the board of regents for several years before he was appointed fifth superintendent of the Schools for the Deaf and Blind, when Major J. C. Covell died, June 4, 1887. He served in that capacity only one year with the understanding that the board should take this time in the selection of a suitable successor to Major Covell, and principally because he had a stronger liking for the law than anything else. He lived in Romney nearly all his life. He was buried in Indian Mound Cemetery, October 2, 1921, that day being the third anniversary of the death of his son, Robert, in the battle of the Argonne.

C. H. HILL

Cornelius Harnett Hill was born September 28, 1839 in Milton, North Carolina. He received his early education at Graves Academy in Virginia. With the opening of the Civil War he volunteered in the Confederate Army. At the request of the Superintendent of the North Carolina School for the Deaf at Raleigh, Hill was discharged near the end of the war, in order to help keep that school open. Shortly after the war he left North Carolina to teach in a private school for hearing children. In 1870 he accepted a position as teacher in the Maryland School for the Deaf at Frederick. While in Maryland he was offered the Principalship of the West Virginia, Mississippi and Florida schools, all of which offers he declined. Returning to Raleigh school in 1886, he spent two years there as teacher and when in 1888 the West Virginia school was offered him for a second time, he accepted, where he remained for nine years, resigning in 1897. In October of that year he went to Fulton, Missouri and taught in the school for the Deaf until 1915, when he was forced to resign because of ill health. Mr. Hill died November 13, 1920.

Mr. Hill was twice married. To the first union one son was born but died at birth. By his second wife, Miss Sarah K. McGill, of Frederick, Maryland, he had two children, Dr. Halbert R. and Elizabeth Pinckney Hill, who taught in the Missouri School for the Deaf in Fulton, Missouri, and later in Florida.

JAMES THOMAS RUCKER

James Thomas Rucker, son of William Parks Rucker (doctor and lawyer) and Margaret Scott Rucker, was born November 22, 1856, at Covington, Virginia, and died August 20, 1916, at Lewisburg, West Virginia. When James was fourteen years old, his father moved to Lewisburg, West Virginia to practice law, having some years before graduated from the law school of the University of Virginia. In Lewisburg, James attended an academy and read law in his father's office. He did not stick to the legal profession, choosing teaching instead. His first teaching was done in the schools of Greenbrier County, West Virginia. He was married to Ida Riffe in 1882 with whom he moved to Missouri, where for several years Rucker was principal of the grades and high school of Keytesville. When he returned to West Virginia, he became principal of the grades and high school of Lewisburg. He was appointed the Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in 1897. Of Rucker's record as Superintendent of the schools from 1897 to 1910, his daughter says:

He secured an appropriation for the erection of a new and spacious school building, enlarged the shop building, built an infirmary, installed an electric light plant, erected fire-escapes and more baths. For the school he bought a farm, his pet project. My father enlarged the music department for the blind, employed the first regular physical education teachers for both boys and girls, and football and basketball were played on the campus for the first time. He permitted dancing in the school for the first time; for this he received a storm of criticism from the townsfolk.

It will be recalled that Rucker was the first head of the school to be officially called "Superintendent" instead of "Principal". Until shortly before his death in 1916, Rucker was employed by the state compensation commission.

R. Cary Montague, D. D.

The Reverend R. Cary Montague was born at Chelsea, Massachusetts, August 10, 1877. His parents moved to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, before he was a year old. In early childhood it was discovered that he and his sister, Margaret Prescott Montague, had serious trouble with their eyes, a disease called retinitis pigmentosa. The best doctors of that day said that the disease was of a progressive type, and the probability was that both children would be totally blind by the time they were twenty years old. Consequently it seemed hopeless for their parents to plan their education along normal lines, so their early studies began through the medium of the old raised line type used in schools for the blind. As they grew up,

however, the disease did not seem to progress as it had been predicted, so they could use their eyes for studying in the normal way.

They were most fortunate in that their parents were highly educated; the father, Russel W. Montague, was a graduate of Harvard University, and the mother, Harriet Ann Cary Montague, was a woman of unusual ability. Practically all of the early education of Cary and Margaret was given by their parents in the home.

At the age of twenty-one, Cary Montague began teaching in the West Virginia public schools, and was quite active in educational work throughout the state, instructing numerous county institutes during summer vacations. He also was active in politics, having been elected a justice of the peace at the age of twenty-two and member of the Legislature at twenty-four.

In 1906 he gave up teaching and studied law at West Virginia University from October to January. He passed the state bar examination and practiced law at Lewisburg in Greenbrier County.

On May 6, 1908, he married Miss Margretta McGuire, daughter of Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire, who was surgeon general in the Stonewall Jackson brigade in the Confederate Army.

In 1910 he was appointed by Governor William E. Glasscock as Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. The previous Superintendent, James T. Rucker, had had a stormy administration, and was the object of a great deal of criticism. Mr. Montague came to the institution with instructions from the governor not to allow the former superintendent to remain in the institution over night after his arrival. Mrs. Montague became the head matron of the school.

A strong friendship developed between Mr. Montague and H. H. Johnson, head of the blind department, and they spent many hours together playing chess, as both were unusually good chess players. The mistakes made by Mr. and Mrs. Montague in their efforts to learn the sign language afforded the deaf teachers and pupils a great deal of amusement. Many of the difficulties and amusing incidents of the deaf and the blind pupils living together and of the life of the officers of the school have been incorporated into a book of seven short stories entitled Closed Doors, written by Montague's sister, Margaret Prescott Montague. Miss Montague lived at the school much of the time while her brother was Superintendent.

In the deaf department Mr. Montague's efforts were directed toward the further use of the method of teaching speech and lip-reading to the

deaf. There was a prejudice against this system among the adult deaf themselves. For years the blind department had used the New York Point system of writing, and during his administration Montague urged the adoption of Braille which has since become the universal type for the blind. In the first year of Montague's administration he prepared three of the senior blind boys for the examination for public school teachers held at the time in various counties. All three of them passed with sufficiently high grade to obtain teacher's certificates. He also organized a literary society in the School for the Blind, naming it "The Columbia Literary Society", for the one to which he had belonged while in the West Virginia University.

During his administration Mr. Montague kept the school entirely free from political influences. Because of this independence of action, he was not reappointed to the position when a new governor came into power.

He had been brought up in the Episcopal Church and had always taken an active part in the affairs of that denomination. He anticipated trouble with the politicians, and so began his studies for the Episcopal ministry about two years before the expiration of his four-year term at the schools. Immediately upon leaving the superintendency of the schools, January 1, 1914, Bishop Peterkin of the Diocese of West Virginia placed Montague in charge of Grace Episcopal Church, Elkins, as a lay reader. He was ordained deacon in June, 1914, and priest in September, 1915. In November, 1917, he went to Richmond, Virginia, to be Episcopal City Missionary. This position calls for preaching and ministering in state, city, and charitable institutions. In 1926 the University of Richmond conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity upon Mr. Montague, the citation being "for outstanding work for the Unfortunate."

Parley DeBerry

Parley DeBerry, twice superintendent of the school, was born August 19, 1854, in Preston County; he died at his home in Terra Alta, February 14, 1941, at the age of eighty-seven. At the age of sixteen, he began his school-teaching career in the public schools of his native county and was Principal for several years of the Terra Alta schools. Aside from teaching, DeBerry early became interested and acquired holdings in coal, timber, oil, and gas lands. He first served as Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind from January, 1914 to June 19, 1917; he was removed by John J. Cornwell for political reasons. In July, 1923, DeBerry returned to the school as Superintendent, and his tenure this time covered a period of ten years. He was replaced by A. E. Krause in July, 1933. Mr. DeBerry was a member of the Romney Presbyterian Church, and is buried in the Indian Mound Cemetery, Romney. June 1, 1887, DeBerry married Anna Connell. To them were born four daughters: Helen, Corinne, Anna Holmes, and Virginia.

F. L. LARGENT

Flourney L. Largent, Acting Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, was born and educated in Hampshire County. He came to the schools early in Montague's administration as steward or financial secretary. In 1917, between the administrations of Parley DeBerry and Franklin Burdette, he was Acting Superintendent for eleven days, June 19 to June 30. He resigned as financial secretary in 1919 to accept a government position in New Jersey. For many years he was engaged in the general merchandise business at Boyce, Virginia.

While employed in the schools, Largent was married to Ethyl Riley, daughter of George W. Riley of Augusta, West Virginia.

Franklin Lee Burdette

Franklin Lee Burdette was born January 20, 1867, in Putnam County and died at his home in Huntington, February 26, 1942. He attended elementary schools near his home in Ona, Cabell County. He was graduated from Marshall College in 1886, received the L. I. degree from Peabody Normal College, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1891, and an A.B. from the University of Nashville in 1892 and again from George Peabody College for Teachers in 1920. He was a student in the graduate school of the University of Chicago during 1901-1902.

His teaching career began in the schools of Cabell County. From 1892 to 1893 he was Principal of Clarksville (Tennessee) High School; Superintendent of the Weston (West Virginia) Public Schools from 1893 to 1897; Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind at Romney from 1917 to 1920. From 1915 to 1919 he was also a member of the West Virginia state board of education. From 1920 to his retirement in 1938 he taught Latin and other subjects in the Huntington Public Schools, chiefly Enslow Junior High School.

Mr. Burdette was a member of the Baptist Church, of the Masons, and a member of both the Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution. At the time of his death he was state historian of the latter organization and in former years had been state historian of the Sons of the Revolution. He had also served as state secretary of the Sons of the American Revolution and as historian of General Andrew Lewis Chapter, Huntington. He was the author of many monographs on historical subjects including "First Counties and Settlers of West Virginia", "Early Forts and Battle Grounds of West Virginia", and "History of the Ona Community".

HAROLD F. GRIFFEY

Harold F. Griffey came from Indiana to Kenova, West Virginia as Superintendent of schools of that place. From Kenova he came to Romney in 1920, as Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. It was during his administration that the School for the Blind was moved to its present location on the campus. He served as Superintendent for three years leaving in 1923.

Parley DeBerry

Mr. DeBerry was Superintendent of the school for the second time from 1923 to 1933.

A. E. Krause

A. E. Krause, Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind from 1933 to 1941, was born in Iosco, Michigan, January 12, 1882. He received his elementary and high school education at Ann Arbor and Detroit and was graduated from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio in 1906. He was ordained to the Lutheran ministry in 1910, after three years at the Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. He did post graduate work at West Virginia University and the University of Pittsburgh and received his D.D. degree at Capital University in 1923. From 1910 to 1921 he served as pastor in Lutheran churches at North Canton and Akron, Ohio and Moyers, West Virginia.

He was President of St. John's Academy at Petersburg, West Virginia from 1921 to 1931, and when the Academy was changed into a Junior College, he became an instructor in Religion, Languages and Psychology. After eight years as Superintendent of the State School at Romney, he taught for two years in the high school at Petersburg, West Virginia and later was pastor in the Lutheran Church in Bergton, Virginia.

He was married to Minnie C. Lawrenz of Dayton, Ohio in 1912 to whom were born four children, one son and three daughters.

Stanley R. Harris

Stanley R. Harris was born at Little Birch, Braxton County, West Virginia, May 18, 1908, the son of George R. and Nannie C. Harris. He was graduated from Sutton High School in June, 1927, attended Glenville State College for one year, received his A.B. degree from Marshall College in 1931, and his M.A. degree from West Virginia University in 1934. His first employment in school work was at Wayne County High School, Wayne, West Virginia, where he taught biological science and mathematics for three years. In September, 1934 he was employed as teacher of the same subjects in Vinson High School, Huntington, West Virginia. In July, 1935, he was employed as Principal of Romney High

School, where he remained for six years, after which he came to the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind as Superintendent.

Harris has always been active in community activities, being especially interested in the welfare of young people. He served as scout master a number of years; for three years he attended the Boy's State Camp as counselor; and for three summers was a director of 4-H camps, sponsored by the West Virginia Extension Service.

He was married to Della W. Holbert June 9, 1935. They have four children: Bill, Mary, Margaret, and Martha. He has been an active member of the Romney Lions Club, having been president of the club in 1942. He became a member of the Masonic Lodge #18 in 1933.

As Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, he first attempted to raise the standards of the school by raising the requirements for teachers coming into the system. This effort was thwarted by the war emergency, but he continued his efforts after the war was over. He was inducted into the armed forces of the United States March 6, 1945, having been given a leave of absence by the state board of education. He received his basic training and medical basic at Fort Lewis, Washington. After a few weeks of further training at Camp Crowder, Missouri, he was sent to the Valley Forge General Hospital, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, where he was a counselor in rehabilitation for blinded war veterans. He was mustered out of the Army in late September and returned to take over active duties as Superintendent on October 6, 1945, having spent about seven months in the armed forces.

Mr. Harris resigned as Superintendent in the summer of 1953 to become Assistant Registrar at West Virginia University. Presently, 1970, he is registrar at the University.

R. M. Golladay

R. Miller Golladay was born at Rio, West Virginia, January 8, 1887, the son of David M. and Hannah Rebecca (Neese) Golladay. His parents were natives of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

He attended the public schools of Hardy County and after three years of farming, he began teaching in the public schools of Hampshire County. In 1909 he entered Shepherd College State Normal School from which he was graduated in 1912. After teaching for a year in the Paw Paw High School, he was tendered the appointment as head teacher in the Department for the Blind at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind by Superintendent R. Cary Montague. Frequent changes of Superintendents prompted him to resign in March, 1918, to enter government service in Washington, D. C. Within a brief time he entered the

employ of the Riggs National Bank, where he served seven years as departmental manager. During that time, he attended the Washington School of Accountancy for two years and attended also the American Institute of Banking, Washington Chapter, for a period of three years.

In 1925, he returned to the West Virginia Schools as Principal of the Department for the Blind, the position he held until 1949. From March until October, 1945, he served as Superintendent of the Schools during the absence of Superintendent Harris who was serving in the armed forces.

On January 30, 1928, he married Lucile Hatch of Centerville, Pennsylvania. They have one daughter, Mary Joan.

Mr. Golladay has always been interested in the civic affairs of the community. He was a member of the Board of Trade of Washington, D. C., for a number of years. He is a charter member of the local Lions Club and served a term as President in 1941, and was deputy District Governor in 1940. He is a Mason, a member of the Presbyterian Church, was a member of the City Council, and served three years as Chairman of the local Selective Service Board.

He resigned as Principal on January 1, 1949 to become Cashier of the First National Bank of Romney. In 1970, Mr. Golladay is retired and living in Romney.

James R. Thompson

James Robert Thompson was Acting Superintendent from June 30 until August 10, 1953. Mr. Thompson began his career as a school teacher and taught in Hampshire County for twenty years. He was the business manager at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind for sixteen years prior to his retirement in 1957. He was a veteran of World War I, a member of the Methodist Church and Hampshire Post 91, American Legion.

He was married to Naomi Moler and they have two sons, James and Harwell.

Mr. Thompson was born November 1, 1897 and died August 6, 1963.

HUGO F. SCHUNHOFF

Dr. Hugo F. Schunhoff was born at Fort Gage, Illinois, December 21, 1907. He grew up on a farm and attended rural schools. He graduated from Sparta (Illinois) High School in 1925.

Dr. Schunhoff received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Illinois

College, Jacksonville, Illinois; his Master's degree in education at the University of Missouri; and his Doctor's degree, with emphasis on elementary school and school administration and supervision at the University of Maryland.

He taught in the public schools of Illinois for three years. He was a teacher in the Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Illinois School for the Deaf; Principal at the Texas School for the Deaf and Missouri School for the Deaf. He was on the faculty of the University of Texas and Director of the Teacher Education Department, Gallaudet College, Washington, D. C.

Dr. Schunhoff served in the armed forces during World War II.

He was the Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind from August 1953 until August 1960, leaving to accept the position of Superintendent of the California School for the Deaf at Berkeley, California.

Dr. and Mrs. Schunhoff have two children, John and Janet.

He has written several articles published in the American Annals of the Deaf and has served on many government committees concerning the deaf.

At this time, 1970, he is Superintendent of the California School for the Deaf.

Jack W. Brady

Jack W. Brady, Superintendent, Kentucky School for the Deaf, Danville, Kentucky, was born at Waycross, Georgia, March 2, 1927.

Mr. Brady graduated from Waycross Senior High School in June, 1944, and received a B.S. degree in education in June, 1950, from the Georgia Teachers College. He had special training to teach the deaf at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and the University of Pittsburgh in 1952-53. Mr. Brady received his Master's degree in education with a major in administration from the University of Pittsburgh in August 1959.

From 1944 until 1946, Mr. Brady was in the United States Navy.

He was a teacher and coach of football, basketball, and track at the Georgia School for the Deaf, Cave Spring, Georgia 1950-52, 1953-54 teacher and boy's supervisor at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, 1954-57 Field Representative and Counselor at the Georgia School

for the Deaf, and returned to the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf as a teacher from 1957 until 1959. Mr. Brady was employed as Principal of the American School for the Deaf, West Hartford, Connecticut, for the 1959-60 school year and came to the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in 1960, where he served as Superintendent until 1966, when he moved to the Kentucky School for the Deaf as Superintendent.

Mr. Brady is a member of the Danville Rotary Club, Conference of Executives, American Association of the Deaf, Alexander Graham Bell Association of the Deaf, and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators.

Mr. Brady and his wife, Dorothy, have two daughters, Beth Ann and Ruth. The Bradys are members of the Methodist Church.

Eldon E. Shipman

Eldon E. Shipman was named Superintendent of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, effective July 1, 1966. Mr. and Mrs. Shipman first moved to Romney in August 1952, when he was a teacher in the School for the Deaf. In the fall of 1954, Mr. Shipman moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he assumed the Principalship of the Mississippi School for the Deaf. Mr. Shipman returned to Romney at the start of the 1956-57 school year as Principal in deaf department.

Prior to teaching here, Mr. Shipman had served as a houseparent at the Kendall School for the Deaf for one year and as a houseparent at the Missouri School for four years.

He is a veteran of World War II, having served with the United States Sea Bees in the South Pacific. He holds a Master's degree from San Fernando Valley State College, a Master's degree in education from Mississippi College, and a Master's degree from Gallaudet College. His undergraduate work was done at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

Mr. Shipman is very active in many civic and professional organizations including Lions International, Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf, Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf, National Education Association, West Virginia Education Association, and American Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped. He is a member of Clinton Lodge #48, and Osiris Shrine. Mr. Shipman is a member of the Baptist Church.

His father, the late E. O. Shipman, served in various capacities at the Missouri School for the Deaf for fifty-three years and his mother is a retired employee of the school. His brother, John Shipman, is Principal of the Virginia School for the Deaf.

Mr. Shipman and his wife, Jean, have two daughters, Mary Lee and Sandy Lou.

MISCELLANY

When the school was established in 1870, it was called the West Virginia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind. It was during Covell's last year as Principal, or Superintendent, that the school received its present name. Under date of March 14, 1887, the following item appeared in The West Virginia Tablet, the school's publication: "We have been newly christened by our legislature; our name is the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind".

Until 1909, each state institution was governed by a separate state board, generally styled board of regents. The regents were appointed by the governor and were responsible to him. The first board of regents for the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind consisted of eleven members, each appointed for a one-year term, 1870-71. Professor Johnson was a member of this first board, and Colonel Robert White of Romney was its secretary; Mr. White was secretary for the next two years. Successive boards were appointed for two-year, four-year, and then again two-year terms; board membership varied at times from seven to eleven. John J. Cornwell, West Virginia's World War I governor, was secretary of the eighth and ninth boards of regents, 1892-94, and 1894-96.

The board of regents had complete charge of the school, employing the superintendent and his teachers, determining courses of study, and fixing the school's budget. In 1901, the Legislature abolished the several boards of regents and, along with other state institutions, placed the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind under a central authority, the state board of control, composed of three members appointed by the governor. Like the board of regents, the board of control had complete charge of the school, regulating its educational and financial affairs. However, in 1919, the educational or scholastic affairs of the school were lodged with the newly created state board of education. At present this board employs the superintendent and other personnel, fixes salaries, and may determine the course of study, although that matter it has left largely to officials of the school.

For the first thirty years or more, the official constantly and directly in charge of the school was called Principal. During J. T. Rucker's administration, 1897-1910, the title was changed from Principal to that of Superintendent. During DeBerry's first administration, 1914-17, the title of Principal was given for the first time, to the head teachers of the department for the blind and the department for the deaf. Previously he or she had just been called "head teacher".

Each of the first three superintendents, Hollister, Lupton, and Eddy, was his own steward or financial secretary. When Covell became Principal in 1874, the office of steward was separated from that of principal, and David R. Williams was the steward during all of Covell's

administration. Under Rucker, the steward became the clerk, later clerk and secretary, and finally the financial secretary, now business manager.

At first all of the teachers lived in the school, many still do. For those living in the school in 1870, board and room cost \$12.50 a month, and was increased in 1879 to \$20.00. In 1870, and for years afterwards, matrons, supervisors, and other employees were paid a salary of \$30.00 or less a month, and teachers were started on \$45.00 a month, plus board and room; a few salaries rose rapidly to \$60.00 a month.

The board of regents always, some early superintendents, and for a decade, the board of control referred to the pupils as "inmates".

Generally the school has paid the pupil's costs of transportation to and from school. Before a railroad was built into Romney, the pupils were brought from various parts of the state by train to New Creek (Keyser), Patterson's Creek, or Green Spring. From these points, the pupils were brought the remaining fifteen or twenty miles to Romney by stage or road wagons. In 1870, daily stages ran from New Creek Railroad Station to Romney and Moorefield; they ran tri-weekly from Patterson's Creek Railroad Station to Winchester, Virginia, through Romney. The people of the South Branch had to be content with this stage service until the fall of 1884 when a branch of the Baltimore and Ohio, begun a year before, was completed into Romney. About December of that same year a telegraph line was run into Romney from Green Spring Railroad Station. With a railroad into Romney, the school, twice a year, arranged with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company for a special train to transport the pupils to and from school. In the thirties, the school began to transport a few of the pupils in its own buses, but most of them were still carried in the special train. In 1941, Superintendent Harris abandoned the use of the special train, and used the Greyhound, West Virginia Transportation, and the school's own services to carry all the pupils.

At a meeting in October, 1874, the board of regents ordered that all boys in the school wear a uniform to be furnished by the school and made in the school's tailorship. These uniforms were a smart cadet gray and were worn by the boy's daily until about the turn of the century. The girls had a uniform for Sunday and holiday dress; a blue one for winter, and a white one for early fall and late spring. The girls abandoned the wearing of uniforms about 1920.

In 1895, the board of regents employed for the first time a regular supervisor for the boys. For the first twenty-five years all the men teachers acted as supervisors at various times; they were assisted by some older boys called monitors. In October, 1894, there

were 156 pupils enrolled and only one matron and one governess for all. The next year a second matron was employed. The deaf and the blind had the same matrons, supervisors, and used the same dormitories until 1910.

The first club or society in the department for the blind was the "Saturday Morning Club", organized November 28, 1879, by the blind boys under the direction of Professor Johnson. It was a debating club and for years met regularly every Saturday morning. On February 16, 1880, members debated the following questions: "That the Indian has better right to complain than the African", and "That times are tending towards evil". It is not known just when this society passed out of existence. The deaf pupils organized, about 1889 or 1890, a literary and debating society, named the "Covell Literary Society" in honor of their late friend and Superintendent, John C. Covell. This society exists today. In 1910, Superintendent Montague organized a Christian Endeavor Society for the blind boys and girls which met each Sunday afternoon. Ministers and students of the Potomac Academy assisted in the leadership of this society.

Beginning in 1871, and lasting for a decade thereafter, examinations in the literary departments were conducted only once a year, during the last two weeks of the school year. They were conducted by the superintendent and teachers before an examination committee made up of members of the board of regents or some distinguished gentlemen of Romney or other nearby towns. In 1881-82, the examinations were held about every twelve or thirteen weeks, three times a year.

For years the only maps used in the School for the Blind were those made by Professor Johnson, or rather those made under his direction. In the making of these maps the only instruments used were two common sewing needles, one of a larger and one of a smaller size. With these needles an ordinary map was punctured in its coast lines, rivers and boundries, a triple row of punctures, the middle row made by the larger needle, represented mountains, a double row indicated boundries, and a single row, rivers. Towns were designated by round head tacks or large pins. Such maps of the United States and of West Virginia were sent by the board to regents to Philadelphia in 1876 where they were on display in the centennial building.

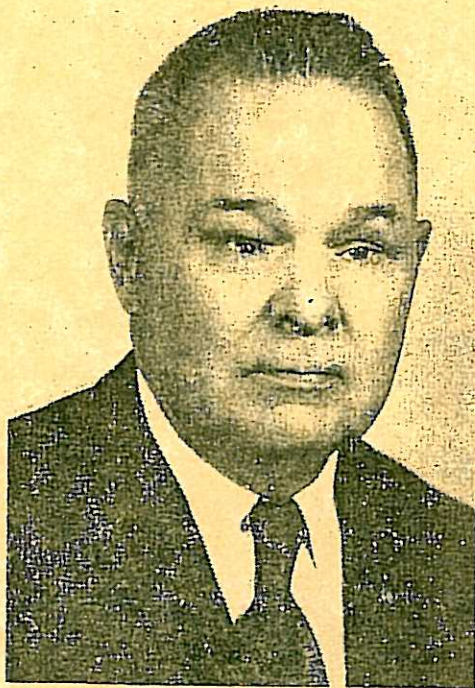
In 1881 the colored deaf and blind were formally admitted as pupils of the school at Romney. They were always sent, however, to schools of other states, usually Maryland, with whom an arrangement had been made. In 1919, the Legislature established a school for the colored deaf and the blind at Institute, near Charleston. It opened for its first term in 1927. The two state Schools for the Deaf and the Blind were intergraded in 1955.

The first issue of the West Virginia Tablet, the school's magazine or newspaper, was published January 1, 1877, with Superintendent Covell as editor and A. D. Hays assistant editor and publisher. Printing as a trade for the deaf boys had been introduced in 1876 and the Tablet was printed by these boys as a part of their instruction under Mr. Hays. The oldest issue of the school's collection today is one of January 12, 1880. It is in newspaper form, four pages, eight and one half inches by twelve and one half. One of these four pages is filled with advertisements of business and professional firms of Romney. For years the Tablet was published weekly, and contained excerpts from other exchanges, and items of the pupils in the form of letters to the editor. About the turn of the century, it began to carry more news of the school, pupils, and teachers. In 1901, the pupil's grades were published in the Tablet. By this time it was a small, six page magazine. For the first time the Tablet, in its February 6, 1904 edition, contained a list of the officers and teachers. In 1911, the Tablet was a bi-weekly, eighteen-page magazine; this year, for the first time it contained pictures. Today it is published monthly.

The Schools for the Deaf and the Blind were represented at the West Virginia educational display at the world's fair at Chicago, 1893. Specimens of examination papers, school room appliances, aids in teaching as well as samples of work from the industrial departments were on exhibition. An award was made to the school for the specimens of work showing good plans and results of instruction. At the close of the fair, the school received from the Crown Organ Company of Chicago a beautiful oak-cased reed organ as a gift to the music department of the school for the blind. During the fair, the organ had been used in the West Virginia building.

More than once the school has had epidemics of communicable diseases. One of the worst was a flu epidemic in October and November, 1918, when about two hundred pupils and employees were stricken. The school hospital and the dormitories were filled with the sick. Four nurses were secured but they soon became patients, and the nursing fell upon the remaining teachers and officers and a number of voluntary residents of Romney. Later, two Red Cross nurses from Parkersburg were secured, and some patrons of the school came to help out. Only four deaths occurred. In February and March, 1922, another flu epidemic visited the school. For two weeks, 180 pupils and teachers were ill. Again four extra nurses were employed, but this time only one death occurred.

During the administration of R. Cary Montague, the school was honored by the presence of an author of international reputation, Margaret Prescott Montague, novelist and short story writer. She was the sister of R. Cary Montague. Many of the teachers and pupils learned to know Miss Montague well, for she found in them inspiration for a collection of short stories. Her "Closed Doors" is a series of seven short stories treating of the life of the deaf and the blind children, officers and teachers of the school. Only the names in the stories are fictitious.



In MEMORY of

SELDEN W. BRANNON

03/16/06 - 12/17/97

**Born in Orma, WV. Husband of
Irene Hubbs.**

For many years, Mr. Brannon was associated with WWSB. First as a student, then as teacher, later to become Principal. Mr. Brannon retired in 1971, but continued to serve as Braille teacher for many years. He was greatly admired and respected by the administration, staff, and students and will be greatly missed by all. As Beth Delawder writes, "I always smile when I hear the name 'Seldon Brannon', what a kind, intelligent and honorable man he was. I feel I am a better person to have known him". Another staff member, Margie Kinder, reflects on memories of Mr. Brannon. She states, "He was my Braille Teacher when I started to work at WWSB in 1982. He made me feel at home in his classroom, and I learned a lot of Braille that first year. One thing for certain, you did not want to go to his classroom without doing your homework. I will miss him greatly." In closing, a short epitaph was submitted by Paula McIntyre, which states:

**What words can't say
a Lifetime of Action can
Mr. Brannon
MY MENTOR, MY FRIEND
I am so fortunate to
have fond memories from
which to Draw.**

With Love and Respect