

10-HM)-UWB
State Inst - Faribault

HISTORY OF THE
MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR FEEBLE-MINDED AND
COLONY FOR EPILEPTICS.

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Recognition of the necessity and advantage of public care for the feeble-minded and the establishment of institutions for this purpose have been matters of later historical sequence than the institutional education of the Deaf and Blind. This has resulted from two facts: First, the lack of knowledge as to the large number of feeble-minded in society and Second, the assumption that nothing could be done for them. So, in Minnesota, while the Deaf and Blind had for a number of years previous been educated in Faribault it was not until March 8th, 1879 that a law was passed looking to the care and training of the feeble-minded.

Under date of November 30th, 1868, Dr. J. L. Noyes, Superintendent of the Minnesota Institution for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind reported that two children were dismissed on account of being weak-minded, there being no facilities for their training and the law limiting the privileges of the institution to those of "capacity to incur instruction." The act of 1879 established a Commission to visit the hospitals for Insane and among other duties they were required to select idiotic and feeble-minded persons found there and turn them over to the trustees of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind institution. The latter were authorized to establish a school for their training. Five thousand dollars was appropriated for this purpose in 1879 and Six thousand for the year 1880. This school was spoken of as the "Experimental School" and the work was begun in a frame building belonging to George M. Gilmore, situated on the east side bluff between Second and Third Streets. This building was formerly used as a private school for young ladies and known as the "Fairview House." The school was organized by Dr. Henry M. Knight, a veteran in the care and training of the feeble-minded from Lakeville, Conn. His son, Dr. George H. Knight was elected Superintendent on June 1st, 1879 under the general superintendency, however, of Dr. Noyes at the head of the School for Deaf. On July 18th, 1879 Dr. George Knight arrived to take charge of the work and on July 28th of the same year fourteen children (nine boys and five girls) selected by the Commission, consisting of Dr. George W. Wood of Faribault,

Dr. W. H. Leonard of Minneapolis and Dr. C. H. Boardman of St. Paul, from the St. Peter Hospital for Insane, were received at the Institution at Faribault.

On March 7th, 1881 the Legislature passed a bill introduced by the Hon. R. A. Mott from Faribault establishing a permanent school at the latter place, termed a "Department for the Training of Imbeciles and the Custody of Idiots" in connection with the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, nominally, although to be located in new buildings for which the Legislature provided Twenty-five thousand dollars. The contract for the new permanent quarters was let on May 2nd, 1881. On May 19th, 1881 Dr. George Knight was made Superintendent of this Department, the administration being entirely separate from that of the School for Deaf.

On February, 1882, the inmates were moved into their new quarters, which is now the north section of the North Wing of the present Administration Building. On April 20th, 1884, the Legislature having provided for same, contract was let for an additional building attached to the one mentioned above of equal capacity. These two sections provided, when completed, for about one hundred children.

On April 20th, 1885 Dr. Knight resigned as Superintendent and on July 6th following Dr. A. C. Rogers, at the time physician to the Government Training School for Indians near Salem, Oregon, was elected to the position and took charge on September 1st of the same year. Dr. Rogers' previous experience had been at the School for Feeble-Minded at Glenwood, Iowa, for five years.

Each succeeding session of the Legislature has provided in part to meet the large demand for admission that has constantly faced the institution. In 1890 the Board purchased a tract of land consisting of 190 acres, known as the "Gilmore Farm," which has since provided the garden produce and milk consumed by the institution population.

In 1894 "Sunnyside" was first occupied as a distinct custodial or asylum building for those children unable to profit by schoolroom training. The corresponding building, known as "Skinner Hall," was constructed in 1896 and named in honor of George E. Skinner, of St. Paul, a former trustee of the institution and whose influence had been exerted strongly in support of a better classification of the inmates, realized by the construction of these buildings.

The original administration building with the various additions thereto since 1881 has been devoted to the work of school training.

A corps of twenty teachers conduct a well organized school in which manual and industrial training are predominant features. For the girls there is training in netting, basketry, plain and fancy sewing as well as mending and darning, lace making, ironing, domestic work and gardening. And to the trained girls comes the opportunity to do work for which each has an aptitude. Such helpers, often quite independent, are found in the dressmaking and tailor shops, in mending room, kitchen and dining room, in the laundry and at the chicken ranch.

While boys who are schooled in netting, basketry, sloyd work, mat braiding and sewing, and brush making later become valuable helpers in the care of their own departments, at the institution, mattress and cabinet shops, the barn, laundry, greenhouse, garden, farm and dairy.

In 1909 the Board purchased for the school a colony farm in the town of Walcott, its nearest point being one and one-half miles south of the administration building. Here it is proposed to colonize the trained boys where they will have a farm home and assist in land culture and stock raising.

Until 1901, when the legislature adopted a central Board of Control for State Institutions, this institution was under the general management of a Board of Directors, consisting of five members appointed by the Governor, the latter and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, being ex-officio members thereof. Politics never has effected the organization of the institution itself, and the governing board changed but little in personnel, except during a short time just before the Board of Control organization. The members who were in control of this institution at its beginning, had already served long periods in charge of the schools for the Deaf and Blind. Rodney A. Mott, appointed in 1863, was still serving in 1901. Hudson Wilson, appointed in 1866, served till 1899 when he was succeeded by Edgar H. Loyhed. Thos. B. Clement served from 1875 till 1900; B. B. Sheffield succeeding him. George E. Skinner, of St. Paul, Appointed in 1876 served until his death in September, 1895. Rev. Geo. B. Whipple, who was appointed in 1882, served until his death in 1888 created a vacancy filled by Anthony Kelly of Minneapolis. Ill health caused the retirement of the

latter in 1898 and he was succeeded by John O'Brien of Stillwater.

J. G. Pyle of St. Paul succeeded Mr. Skinner and remained on the Board until December, 1898. He was succeeded by A. B. Ovitt of St. Paul, whose removal from the state again created a vacancy and for the short, unexpired term, the place was filled by Geo. H. Gifford of St. Paul and Henry D. Stocker, Jr., of Minneapolis, successively.

Mention should be made of Horace E. Barron, an old pioneer of Minnesota, who served as steward for the three schools for many years until the time of his death in February, 1892.

In April, 1901, the Board of Control of State Institutions consisting of, at that time, W. E. Lee, Long Prairie, C. A. Morey of Winona and S. W. Leavett of Litchfield, took charge. An accident to Mr. Morey in May of that year, incapacitated him for work and he was compelled to resign the first of July, three months after his appointment, and the vacancy was filled by O. B. Gould of Winona.

In 1900 the first building distinctively for epileptics was erected as the beginning of the epileptic colony, which now has five cottages devoted to the care of this class of patients.

In 1909 the legislature created a department for incurables, those who are not mentally effected but are physically permanently helpless as a result of disease.

At the present time there are about sixty buildings of all kinds, pertaining to the institution and its functions; about eight hundred and sixty-three acres of land, all of which, with furnishings and equipment have cost about \$881,000.00.

The population of the entire institution the first week in June, 1910 was as follows:

I---Feeble Department.	M	F	Total
School	226	195	421
Farm Colony	55		55
Custodial	283	266	549
II---Epileptic Colony.	88	122	210
III---Incurables.	1	2	3
	Total		<u>1238</u>

Funds have been provided for extending the capacity to 1500 and four buildings are now under construction, or being planned by the architect, for completeing such extension.

The general purpose of the institution is to make a life home for the feeble-minded requiring it and for such epileptics as cannot be restored to health or independence; and now, to provide in addition a retreat for certain cripples and helpless people.

~~The institution is a village~~

Such an institution is also an insurance for the benefit of the citizens of the commonwealth; for no young family is free from the possibility of an accession to its membership of a defective child.

The institution is a village community for the classes indicated with the same activities as pertain to a community of normal people with its regular duties, recreations and pleasures where in a happy community they can be protected from the results of their own mistakes and the slights and rebuffs of a cold world too busy to be patient with their peculiarities, and yet where their efforts be they much or little contribute toward their maintenance.