

State Inst - Faribault

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Medical Superintendent

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS

PACIFIC COLONY
SPADRA, CALIFORNIA

March 12, 1945

Superintendent,
State Hospital for Mental Defectives,
Faribault, Minnesota.

Dear Sir:

I should like some information regarding the way in which your dances for patients are conducted. Information is desired particularly concerning: (1) Number of dances held per week or month; (2) length of dance for one evening; (3) type of music provided; (4) type of patients attending; (5) the way in which patients select partners. How are the patients instructed regarding the manner of asking for a dance, of conduct during a dance, and the escorting of a partner to her seat at the close of a dance? Is the instruction given by the teachers of the academic school and/or in connection with school training? If you have for distribution any catalogs describing the general care and management of patients, I should like very much to receive one. I am the psychologist here at Pacific Colony where we have about 1600 epileptic and/or feebleminded resident patients.

Thanking you very much for any information you may give, I am

Sincerely yours,

Anna M. Shotwell
Anna M. Shotwell, Ph.D.

AMS:mb

[Handwritten signature]

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ADDRESS ALL INQUIRIES TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 16, 1945

Anna M. Shotwell, Ph. D
Pacific Colony
Spadra, California

Dear Dr. Shotwell:

We received your request for information concerning the dances which are conducted here for patients. About three hundred of our school children with mentalities in the upper imbecile and moron levels attend a dance every other week. The institution has a total population of 2,580. On alternating weeks long movies are offered instead. On Tuesday night the half of the three hundred who are brighter than the other half, have their dance, while on Friday night the half who are duller have both games and dances. The entertainment period last one hour from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and the teachers are on duty and in charge of the affair. The music is furnished by an orchestra consisting of three or four boys who are in the patients' band, the music master, who plays the violin, and the music teacher, who plays the piano.

The dances consists of fox trots and an occasional waltz. On Tuesday night the group is divided so that the younger ones may choose partners for the first dance and the older ones choose someone for the second dance, etc. A patient may dance only one dance with another patient and the girls may dance together. The patient who takes the initiative goes to the section where his or her partner is seated and conducts her to the dance floor and then returns her to her seat afterwards. The selection is usually played through twice.

On Friday night the patients who do not know how to dance have an opportunity to play games which are usually arranged by the kindergarten teachers. Interspersed with the games are dances at which anyone may invite a partner. The principal presides at both of these affairs and announces either the game or the dance before each number. Some of the children knew how to dance when admitted and others have learned from their friends here or from the teacher of physical education.

The adult patients who do not live in the school division have a dance once a month in their own buildings. At these dances the sexes are not mixed but the women have one on one evening for an hour in their own division, while the men have another on another evening in their division.

To: Dr. Shotwell

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March 18, 1945

The smaller children who are not bright enough to attend school occasionally enjoy marching at these dances.

Current popular numbers are usually played by the orchestra as well as old time pieces. A new patient usually learns the routine by imitating the others with whom he lives.

We regret to state that we do not have any individual reports about our institution but our biennial report is included in the Tenth Biennial Report of the Division of Public Institutions, St. Paul, Minnesota. We believe that either you or your librarian could obtain a copy by writing to Mr. Carl H. Swanson, Director, Division of Public Institutions, 410 Globe Building, St. Paul, Minnesota (1).

We shall be glad to answer any more questions which you might have in mind concerning our school.

Very truly yours,

E.J. Engberg, M.D.
Superintendent

CP:RR