The Laying of the Cornerstone of the Old Main Building

The Frederick Maryland Herald
Saturday Morning, June 3, 1871

Wednesday last was the day long looked for by many anxious minds, it being the day set apart for the laying of the cornerstone for the Maryland Institution of the Deaf.

The morning was ushered in with a slight shower of rain, which did material good in laying the dust. About eight o’clock the sun made its appearance, and the prospects for a grand and beautiful day were vastly encouraging. A telegraph dispatch was received about half-past eight o’clock, announcing the fact that a large delegation from the Masonic Lodges, societies, civic organizations, and bands would be present for a parade and ceremony.

By this time the city appeared to be attired in the garb of a holiday; the streets were thronged with a surging mass of living humanity, and the fire bells of the city rang forth in merry peals of recognition of the grand ceremonies of the day. At the solicitation of several prominent citizens, Mayor Holtbrunner issued a proclamation requesting all manufacturers and dealers to close their respective places of business between the hours of one and five o’clock, which aided materially in the holiday appearance.

The route of the procession was from the corner of Court and Church Streets, down Court to Patrick, to Market, up Market to Seventh, countermarch down Market to Institution, where the ceremony attending the laying of the cornerstone was performed. The Grand Master then descended to the foundation and applied the plumb, square and level to the stone, saying:—“To you, Mr. Weber, the architect of this building, are confided the implements of operative masonry, with the fullest confidence that, by your skill and taste, a fabric shall arise, which shall add lustre to our honored State. May it endure for many ages a monument of the liberality and benevolence of Maryland.”

This picture of the laying of the cornerstone, dated May 31, 1871, is a copy of an archival photograph by Bylery Studio of Frederick. Fredericktown Bank presented this picture and two other historical photographs that are on permanent display in the teachers’ lounge in the Eby Building.
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ON THE COVER

EARLY FACULTY OF MSD
This photograph from the 1890’s was taken under the portico of the Old Main Building. The man in the center is Superintendent Dr. Charles Ely (1870-1912). To his left is Julie Young and next is Florence Doub, the famous artist. The man at the right is Edward Gale. Seated to the left is Charles Grow. Behind Mr. Grow is Annie Barry, one of the first MSD graduates and daughter of Board of Visitors member William Barry, who played a major role in the establishment of MSD.
Margaret S. Kent

There are some powerful and remarkable names associated with the life and history of the Maryland School for the Deaf; names like Ignatius Bjorlee who reached the pinnacle of his profession and was widely respected by his peers. More than that, his association with the Maryland School for the Deaf, as Superintendent, spanned a total of 37 years. Dr. Bjorlee was the epitome of the Headmaster of his day. He was tall and disciplined, and he presented himself with an air of dignity. He commanded the respect of his staff, the admiration of his peers, and at times, his sudden appearance at some unexpected place on campus was enough to strike fear into the hearts of his students, even including those uniformed and straight-backed members of the Cadet Corps.

Then there was the name of Ely... for 42 years Dr. Charles Wright Ely served as Superintendent of Maryland School for the Deaf, from 1870 until 1912. He literally lived out his life here. In many ways, Dr. Ely was the builder of the School, although he was preceded as Superintendent by Mr. William D. Cooke. Mr. Cooke served for two years from the opening of the School in 1868 until 1870. Opening schools was sort of his specialty because he did the same thing in Virginia, and possibly in North Carolina as well. But it was Dr. Ely who saw the campus through its period of childhood and adolescence, from the days of the Hessian Barracks well into the 20th century.

There is no name, however, more synonymous with the very life and essence of the Maryland School for the Deaf than that of Margaret S. Kent. The length of her association with this school is almost equal to that of Dr. Ely and Dr. Bjorlee combined. Her tenure has spanned 63 years. It is not, however, the length of her service that has most distinguished the career of Margaret Kent; it has been her guiding influence, her intellectual toughness, her endless search for insight and understanding, and her steadfastness that has seen the institution move to the very cutting edge of the profession. Her concentration has always been on those fundamental processes which uncover, harness, and direct the intellectual and emotional energy of the School... the minds and hearts of the pupils. Margaret Kent was drawn to teaching not by family nor by some personal emotional need, she came into the profession intellectually and philosophically free, and she has been able to maintain those qualities throughout her career.

The influence of Margaret Kent has been a constant in the experiences of the School, and without her presence some of the revolutionary changes that have taken place here could not have occurred. Margaret Kent was always able to see those things taking place here as part of the larger picture. Her influence has not been heavy or forceful, but over the generations it has been both dramatic and permanent.

This edition of The Maryland Bulletin was written and compiled by Margaret Kent, and I invite you now to join her for a rather personal walk through some of the years and some of the times within the life of this School... her School. There is no one for whom I have greater respect than Margaret S. Kent.

--David M. Denton

The class pictures of graduates from Maryland School for the Deaf span the many years of service Margaret Kent has given to the school. Beginning as a teacher-in-training in 1925, she taught for 20 years and served as principal for 28 years until her retirement in 1973. She currently serves on the Board of Visitors where she began as an advisor under the administration of Dr. Ignatius Bjorlee.
Located at the top of "Hallerstown Hill" on South Street, the towers of the Maryland School for the Deaf dominated the skyline of Frederick for nearly 100 years. The three cupolas on the top of the three-sectioned building could be seen in the early days as you approached the town from all directions, but especially from the south and the west. Started in 1870 and completed in 1875, it contained all the facilities of that day to educate and house at least 206 students. It was built mainly of red brick with an impressive portico supported by Greek columns with a floor and steps of heavy granite.

When the State of Maryland granted the charter to establish the school for deaf children in 1868, the original 34 students were housed temporarily in the Hessian Barracks. The barracks were built before the Revolutionary War and housed Hessian prisoners, many of whom settled in Frederick-known when given amnesty after the war. Frederick was a German language community with two German newspapers. One section of the barracks was torn down to make way for the north wing of the main building. The remaining barracks building is still in use as a museum showing how it has served the community for more than 200 years. After the Revolutionary War, the barracks was used as a repository for military supplies belonging to the United States Government. The supplies for the Lewis and Clarke Expedition to the west were stored in the barracks until they were ready to start out for the Northwestern Territory. During the Civil War, the barracks were used as a military hospital. Wounded soldiers were brought there from the Battle of Antietam at Sharpsburg, Maryland. This was a very strategic and bloody battle for the war between the states.

Residential schools for the deaf had been established in a number of eastern states. The first was at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1817. Others followed and in 1868 the charter for the Maryland School for the Deaf was signed in Annapolis.

The north wing of the main building was completed by 1873 and it was not until 1875 that the entire building consisting of a north wing, south wing, and central tower structure were ready to be occupied.

As you entered the big double front doors the first thing that caught your eye was the unusual tile in the vestibule. It was predominantly tan with dark blue and black designs. It was said that it was the same tile that was used in the United States Capitol and was designed by Latrobe, the famous architect. The inner door into the building was at the top of a short flight of steps. This door had frosted glass panels etched in flower and tassels which were typical decorations of the mid-nineteenth century. You had to ring the bell to enter the main hall. Someone was on bell duty 24 hours a day. In the daytime, one of the dining room maids answered the door and at night, the night watchman’s
primary station was in the front hall. There was a spiral staircase that went to the top of the central cupola. When you stood in the rotunda you could see the reflections of the colored glass and the painted dome four stories above. The ceilings were 12 to 15 feet high. There was a gate at the top of the fourth floor for safety since the stairway was very narrow at the top. I made the trip to the top only once as it was scary looking down the steep stairwell, but the view of Frederick and the surrounding mountains was beautiful.

At Christmas the older students and the staff trimmed a very tall Christmas tree in the rotunda. We smoked tallow down the brass stair railing. The trimmings stayed in place until everybody came back from Christmas vacation. Occasionally one or two students stayed at school through the vacation period for family reasons and the Superintendent and those of us who lived in the neighborhood tried to see that they had a pleasant holiday also.

The north wing which was completed in 1873 became the boys' wing. On the first floor there was the big room which was used as a study hall or activity room. It was furnished with long tables which were used for the study hall and chairs that could be pushed back against the wall when games or calisthenics were taking place. Each teacher had study hall for one hour each school evening, from seven until eight o'clock. As a young teacher, I remember finding a nice, bright, red apple on my teacher's chair from one of the older boys who lived in the apple country of Western Maryland.

In the activity room, the daily military drill was practiced using surplus guns from World War I. Of course, the vital mechanism was out. The younger children used wooden sticks shaped like guns as they were lighter in weight. The military training program was introduced by Dr. Ignatius Bierlee when he came from the New York School for the Deaf (Fanwood) in 1918. Dr. Bierlee had been a teacher at the Fanwood school for six years before coming to Maryland and had participated in a similar military training program where students wore cadet uniforms daily. At MSD, the boys wore blue-gray uniforms with brass buttons down the front with the proper bars, stripes, and chevrons on their sleeves to show rank and level of authority. The group drilled daily in close formation, had calisthenics, and drilled every Sunday on the front lawn after chapel. On Commencement Day, there was a drill contest judged by real military officers from town. Col. John Markley, who was a member of the Board of Visitors, and Col. Elmer Munshower, who later became mayor of Frederick, were among the judges. As I recall, everyone accepted this military discipline, not only the teachers but parents as well.

On the first floor on the girls' side was the infirmary and a dispensary. Several rooms were furnished with beds for wards to house children with illnesses. Classrooms were in a number of rooms on the first floor, up and down the main hallway.

On the second floor there was a large study hall and activity room for the girls. Here the girls had their study hour and at other times it was used as a play room. Off from this room was the dormitory for very small children. It was adjacent to the housemother's bedroom since she was on call 24 hours a day.

Advanced Department student Heather Herzig receives her first-place prize of $75 in the first annual Hazel McCanner Maryland School for the Deaf History Contest from Margaret Kent. The essay contest was named in honor of Hazel McCanner, who gave 47 years of service to the school in positions that ranged from secretary to acting superintendent. Margaret Kent, who is the niece of Miss McCanner, established the contest in memory of her aunt's interest in recording school history and to encourage student exploration of the school's history. Other winners include Advanced Department 2nd place, Melissa Herzig, $50; 3rd place, Michael Knapp, $20; Intermediate Department 1st place, Erin Himmler, $100; 2nd place, Nicky Hawkins, $20; and 3rd place Tanisha Jordan, $10.
The Superintendent’s Apartment

The Superintendent’s apartment was on the second floor of the center section of the Old Main Building. You walked up the winding staircase, past the first landing that led to the chapel, then to the second floor. There was a marble pedestal with a small lamp in the form of a small draped statue of a woman holding up the lampshade. No one paid any particular attention to it but it was always there and always on at night.

The Superintendent’s apartment consisted of four huge rooms extending across the front of the building with floor to ceiling windows facing west to the mountains in the distance. There was the master bedroom and bath of antiques, the very large parlor which accommodated at least three suites of parlor furniture, the dining room and a very small kitchen.

The first thing you noticed in the master bedroom was the massive brass bed which had to be polished at least once a year. Since we always had a maid, housekeeping help this never seemed to be a big issue. The story of the bed was that Mr. Clark, after whom Clarke Place is named, went to the World’s Fair in Chicago and purchased the bed. However, it was too big to go into his bedroom. His wife, who was the sister of Board of Visitors member Richard Ross, arranged to have the bed find a permanent resting place in the Boriele’s big bedroom.

We had many happy times in the Boriele’s parlor. Besides the sets of mohair settees and chairs, with scatered Oriental rugs setting off the conversational areas, there was the Knabe concert piano over by the big windows. The Borieles were very social hosts and entertained the staff often with progressive bridge parties where guests competed for high, low, and consensus prizes. The girls of the domestic science department served refreshments which were often very elaborate as Mrs. Cornelia Boriele was of Norwegian descent and enjoyed making wonderful Scandinavian concoctions that were loaded with whipped cream. The girls considered the chore of serving a privilege since it meant they could stay up late, great the guests, talk to teachers, and enjoy the refreshments.

Another activity which was very much a part of my life was the meetings of the Monday Musical. Mrs. Boriele, who was an accomplished violinist, would invite several local musicians to perform in her parlor. The room was large enough to accommodate 30 to 40 people when using folding chairs—something the school could easily supply. The group began in 1925 and I was asked to join one year later to play piano accompaniment for Mrs. Boriele. Over the years I had many delightful musical experiences playing in a variety of musical ensembles. Mrs. Boriele taught violin at Hood College for a number of years and also had a studio in the school. Although this did not have any direct connection with the deal, it helped to make the school for the deal an integral part of the community life of Frederick and it certainly enriched my life immensely. I shall always be indebted to Mrs. Boriele for the wonderful musical opportunities she so generously gave me.

The dining room was also very interesting. The big solid walnut table and chairs were made in our cabinet department by our teacher of many years, Horace Cusail, and the boys of his class. Some of the wood came from trees on campus that had to be removed. On the sideboard was a huge set of Steiff silver. It was very elaborate in the Repousse pattern with little roses carved over it. There was even a big water pitcher and huge tray. This was all made to order by the prestigious silversmiths in Baltimore.

Teachers were often invited to dinner with special guests. I remember sharing a memorable dinner with two students, Esther and Norris Lowe. Their father, an oysterman, had sent a bushel of Chesapeake Bay oysters. Mr. Lowe had even sent the proper knife for Norris to open the shells. Norris had worked with his father and was well acquainted with everything about oysters.

The Superintendent’s kitchen was very small but had all the essentials for Mrs. Boriele to indulge in making Scandinavian goodies. The regular meals were served up three times a day on the dumbwaiter, pulled by rope from the basement kitchen. The Superintendent, along with all of us, ate the same fare.

Eventually Mrs. Boriele added a studio across the hall on the second floor and had a second piano installed. It was a grand piano and I enjoyed many happy hours rehearsing for special musical events for the music club or for local civic events. We would get all dressed up in long dresses, even wearing a corsage of flowers at very festive occasions. I loved it all.

A sewing room was also on the second floor. Here older students mended clothing, sewed on buttons, and darned socks which seemed to belong mostly to the boys. On certain days of the week each girl sat in a circle around a large desk where the housemother, Miss Nannie Goosin, sat. Each garment was inspected before it was accepted. If the work was too bad, the girl was required to do it again. After this weekly chore they were free to go out to play.

The Superintendent’s office was right inside the front door. All visitors were referred there first. Right across the hall was the teachers’ library. Enclosed bookshelves held important books on ideal education and bound copies of our school biennial reports. There were comfortable chairs and tables here for visitors and for informal meetings of the staff. A small bust of Laura Bridges, the first deaf-blind girl to be educated in America, was on top of one of the bookshelves.

The students’ dining room was in the center of the first floor. There were rows of long tables seating at least 10 to 12 children. One or two of the older
students sat with the younger ones and helped them with their meals. The houseparents were all on duty and kept everything going smoothly. The older students took turns standing on a chair so that all could see and say the blessing before everyone sat down. Everyone stayed in place until the houseparents gave the signal to leave and all walked out in an orderly manner.

The food was plain and hearty—string beans, potatoes and ham with rice pudding for dessert. The teachers ate the same meal and thrived on it. One of my favorite dishes was salmon cakes with onions that was served on Fridays. We always had fish on that day in deference to the Catholic students and teachers.

Recitals by the Monday Musicales helped link the school to the social life of the surrounding community. Cornelia Bjorke on violin, Frank Sappington on cello, and Margaret Kent on piano rehearse in the parlor in the Superintendent's apartment.
The Third Floor

The third floor of the Old Main Building is where the teachers who "lived in" were housed. Most of the rooms were large with high ceilings and windows at least ten feet high. There were folding shutters at the windows to control the sunlight and of course, to keep out the draft in the cold winter months. The rooms were warm enough as we had a powerful heating system controlled from the power house in the rear of the main building and several big radiators in every room.

The furniture was quite plain, in the Victorian style with carved grapes on the bedsteads. Some of the pieces such as desks and small tables, had been made by the students in the cabinet shop. They were always of fine wood which was in good supply in the early days. The teachers would add some personal touches to their rooms such as pictures and cushions but the essentials were all supplied by the school. Each room had a wardrobe since there were no closets in the rooms.

There were several choice rooms at the corners of the main section of the building. An additional anteroom was often used as a sitting area or a place where teachers often played bridge. Bridge was a very popular pastime and was often used as a reason for a party. The teachers used to drudge up the long circular stairway to their bed-rooms four and five times a day but no one seemed to complain. I would guess that there were 25 to 30 steps from one floor to the next, making at least 75 to 90 steps every time a teacher went upstairs. That adds up to a lot of steps in one day, but I am sure it was good for us.

Speaking of steps, I remember an accident when I was a young teacher when one of the older teachers shook her head and said to me as I went bounding up the school stairway two steps at a time, "There will come a day!" I really did not believe her but I certainly do now. I am sure she did not consider that to be appropriate behavior for a teacher.

The Basement

The kitchen was in the basement where meals were prepared three times a day, seven days a week. It was located directly under the dining room. Big coal stoves with simmering pots were directed by the dietary staff of Leora Harper, Gilbert Johnson, George Smith, and Donald Bayton. Gilbert Johnson, who had served in France during WWI, often entertained us with tales of how he had made a prune pie when there was nothing else for a filling. Donald Bayton was a graduate of the famous Storer College at Harpers Ferry. George Smith was a tall reserved black man whose ancestors we often remarked must have come from the Masai of Central Africa. These people worked in the school for many years and we all knew each other very well.

The basement had all sorts of storage rooms for food, spare furniture, and almost anything that was temporarily stored until the right place could be found for it.

There were rooms for classes in sloyd, a system of woodworking developed in Sweden that was a prerequisite before beginning classes in cabinet work. George Faupel, a teacher, taught this class in the afternoon after he taught a class of older boys using finger spelling and signs.

In the early days, one of the most delightful areas in the basement was the bakery which was ruled by the baker, Mr. Schmidt. He made all our bread fresh daily. One of the nicest things I remember was the tray of freshly baked cookies in the dining room at recess time. There were big, round ginger cookies and sometimes we had sugar cookies at least four inches across. Needless to say they all disappeared in a hurry. The aroma of those cookies floated up the stairway to the main halls so that everyone was always ready for them.

The art department was also in the basement. Each class of intermediate and older students had art at least once a week. The teacher was Florence Doub, a well known artist of Frederick. She was appointed by the superintendent, Dr. Charles Ely, in 1881 and served for more than 50 years. His justification to the Board of Visitors in 1891 was that "this branch of study is of great practical value to the deaf." He felt that it would lead to "some kind of industrial occupation and that many of our pupils should become good craftsmen, designers, engravers, and lithographers." His prophecy turned out to be true. A number of graduates of the school made names for themselves as artists—Joseph Russell in the early days and most recently Louis Fрисina.

Beside the art class there was the domestic science department. Several rooms were devoted to cooking and sewing classes. Here the girls made special uniforms for themselves, plain blue chambray dresses with white aprons and little Dutch caps. In those days we thought you couldn't cook properly unless you dressed the part. The girls went through a prescribed course of simple nutrition, making breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They often invited teachers to the dinners where they practiced being hostesses, waitresses, and cooks. We were all on our very best behavior.

The class for the boys was held on Saturday. They were taught to prepare simple foods such as pancakes, scrambled eggs, and cocoa.
The Old Main Building . . . A Lasting Impression

The Old Main Building, with its ornate Victorian architecture, has been a popular theme for many artists. The photographers from the Byerly Studio of Frederick counted pictures of the laying of the foundation and a completed Old Main Building among its archival plates that capture life in Frederick during the turn of the century. Yet Fredericktonian Helen Smith’s numerous returns to the Old Main Building as the subject of her work best illustrates the fascination this structure has had on those who saw its indelible presence.

This needlepoint by Margaret Kent was on display in the Delaplaine Visual Arts Center in an exhibit of the Art Club, an over 100 year old organization of local artists, established by former Maryland School for the Deaf art teacher Florence Doub.

In 1936, Superintendent Ignatius Bjorlee was presented with 12 plates with pictures of local Frederick scenes handpainted by Helen Smith. Of the 12 plates, the Old Main Building is represented on three plates: a front view, the cupola, and the portico. The plates remained in the possession of the Bjorlees until they became the property of the school in 1981 through the efforts of Hazel McCann. They are permanently displayed in the lobby of the Ely Building.

APRIL 1991
A watercolor by Helen Smith of the famous cupolas.
A Typical Day in School

The school started very early in the Old Main Building. The children got up at six o'clock, ate breakfast and were in the classrooms by seven-thirty. This meant that the teachers had to be in their classrooms before that. I lived in town and had to be up at six to arrive on time. I walked to school with one of the older teachers, Miss Ethel Rucklife, who also lived downtown. On very cold, icy days we used to say we took one step forward and slid back two, but we always seemed to make it.

Usually my first chore was to play the piano in the chapel for a rhythm class. This meant that about 20 students or two classes of older students would practice patriotic and popular songs of the day. We learned the "Star Spangled Banner," of course, which really a mouthful, but we were all good patriots and managed. Other selections included "America, the Beautiful," "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Old Folks at Home," and other Stephen Foster favorites.

The students put a hand on the case of the big grand piano, feeling the vibrations and following the teacher's lead, as they "spoke" the songs in rhythm. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. At that time we had a number of students who were moderately to severely hard of hearing and others who had lost their hearing in early childhood. Only a small percentage of the students were deaf from birth at that time, so it was not too inappropriate an activity. We would perform for visitors and it seemed to break down the barrier to a degree between the hearing and the deaf of that day.

By eight o'clock we were in the classroom. The first thing we did was write the news. That was essential as we had to supply items for the Daily Bulletin, which was issued every day at recess. Each teacher was in charge of assembling and editing it for a week and we all contributed to it. It really was a log of the day-to-day activities of the school and gave us reasons for writing about our experiences. On Monday, we had to write letters home to parents. Each child wrote a rough draft and the teacher corrected it with the student and then it was copied, put into an envelope, addressed, and stamped. It went to the superintendent's office unsealed so that insertions could be added if necessary.

We covered the usual elementary subjects—arithmetic, history, geography, and language drill. Language drill was a series of sentence patterns we practiced from books written by three teachers of the deaf—Crooker, Jones, and Pratt. The books encouraged the students to dramatize stories. This also gave them an opportunity for natural expression. The students learned the stories and answered the questions in correct syntax.

One of the bright spots about the series was the step where the story was dramatized. Students would act out the parts and get the sense of the story. I will never forget the day a student named Joe Day acted like a goldfish in a bowl. The pantomime was as good as anything Charlie Chaplin dreamed up! Recess was from ten to ten-thirty. Everyone left the classroom for the dormitory and freshly baked cookies were passed out. The boys in uniform did a ritual in the boy's gym, the girls played outdoors when it was nice or in the girl's playroom when it rained, and the teachers trudged up the long winding stairway to their bedrooms and back again, to begin the next session.

Each teacher made her own class schedule for the week and was required to submit a lesson plan to the head teacher. Each subject was blocked for the amount of time to be spent learning the lesson and the material covered. The following week's schedule was due in the office the preceding Friday after noon. There was always time for practice in speech elements and words, and speechreading. Little contests in speech training were held between classes on reciting sentences the students had drilled. Spontaneity was not given much thought since we were more interested in setting the parame ters and getting it right.

Lunch was from 12 o'clock to one with students returning to the classroom until two-thirty. When school was out, the older boys and girls went to vocational classes. The girls had cooking and sewing on alternate days. They learned to prepare and serve meals elegantly. They made dresses for themselves, usually purchasing the material and pattern from Hendrickson's store downtown. At commencement and other special occasions the creations were modeled for the students in the chapel.

The boys went to the printing shop, cabinet shop and in the early days, the shoe repair shop. They also had a tailor shop where the boy's uniforms were mended. Children's shoes were resoled in the shoe shop. The print shop gave the students valuable training in that field since printing jobs were always available. Deal people were printers at The Frederick News Post for many years and a deaf man was a shoemaker at Drennenburg's Shoe Repair Shop on North Market Street. In the old days, these were considered secure lifetime vocations.

At a later date, cosmetology was introduced as job training for a few of the older girls. Mrs. Ruth Phelous Yin ger was the first teacher. After graduating, a number of the girls got jobs in Baltimore. We made an effort to keep abreast of the changing times and took advantage of all opportunities that presented themselves.

Supper was at six o'clock in the big dining room. The little children sat at separate tables with several big boys or girls helping to assist the houseparents.

Right after supper the little ones began to get ready for bed and were tucked in by eight or eight thirty. All of the older students went to the chapel for 15 to 20 minute talks by one of the deaf teachers. They talked about current events or moral lessons. I remember Mr. Faupel, Mr. Benson, and Mr. McMicken holding the stu
Another incident involving the train occurred after a Christmas vacation when we went to Camden Station to pick up children for the train ride back to the school. We had our regular list and checked off names as they came with their parents. As they arrived children boarded the coach that was reserved for MSD students. Tickets were purchased at the last minute at group rates and it was my responsibility to do this. I waited until close to departure time to go to the ticket window. An inexperienced clerk waited on me and took more than the usual time to produce all the tickets. When I returned to the tracks I found the train had departed without me. I stood there flabbergasted watching waves of trains at the station as it made its way down the track. A station detective appeared and asked what the problem was. "Deaf children are on that train going to Frederick and I have their tickets," I said. "Don't worry, we'll get you on the train," he offered. They put me on a commuter train at the relay station where the routes met. The children were waving out the train windows as I arrived breathless but safely clutching the tickets in my hand. Although we had many mix-ups, nothing of any serious nature ever happened.

Margaret Kent conducts a rhythm lesson for students who place their hands on the piano to feel the vibrations.
The Junior Bulletin, published tri-weekly by the students, recorded the commonplace to the historical, giving an accurate account of events that shaped the lives of students and staff. Here are actual pages from the January 10, 1927, issue.

**The Junior Bulletin.**

**The Kindergarten children are learning to read.** Sue Schneeman has a pretty new dress. It is yellow. George Singer has a card from his father Friday morning.

Henry Myers has a bad cold. He coughs often.—Trumble Lunnert.

Virginia King’s sister gave her parents a radio for a Christmas present.

Herbert Frey wore his new coat. He is very proud of it.

Ruth Jones gave an apple to me. She thanked her.

Freddie Schroeder likes to look at the flowers in their class room.

Charles Campbell did an excellent job of work Tuesday.—Benjamin Myer.

I shall get a box from my father. I shall be glad to get it. Mary.

Mrs. Merrill’s and Miss Groves’ classes were taken to the chapel Friday morning.

My father gave me a lumb wrapped in tissue paper for Christmas Day. I was very glad to receive it.

Miss Kinney and Miss Clark were in the Christmas play this morning.

Miss Stonebraker bought a new coat today. She wore it to school.—Carrie Smith.

Miss Rickford’s Miss Kent classes have joined the Junior Red Cross on its visits to the hospital.

**The Junior Bulletin.**

**IMPORTANT EVENTS OF 1926.**

January—Cardinal Mercier, head of the Catholic Church in Belgium, died. He was a hero of the World War, having aided the Allies and defeated the German invader at the beginning of the war.

February—Miners of Anthracite (hard) coal went on a strike in Pennsylvania. They started in September, 1925, but after five months they went back to work at the same wages.

March—London and New York were connected by telephone wire and radio in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of granting a first patent for the telephone.

April—The Byrd Expedition and the Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile Expedition start for Spitsbergen to fly over the North Pole.

May—Lieut. Com. Richard E. Byrd and Floyd Bennett flew in the “Josephine Ford” from Spitsbergen to the North Pole and back in sixteen hours.

June—Herbert Wensing, of Hollywood High School, Los Angeles, Calif., was the winner of the national oratorical contest. He also won the international contest held at Washington, D. C. in October.

July—The Philippine Legislature adopted a resolution demanding “complete, absolute and immediate independence.”

Aug.—New York City and State dedicated their buildings at the Sesqui-Centennial at Philadelphia.

September—Germany was admitted to the League of Nations thus making the famous London Pact effective.

October—Dr. W. D. Coolidge announced the invention of a superpowerful cathode-ray tube. This is a very important help to electricity.

November—Joseph G. (“Uncle Joe”) Cannon died. He was a member of the national House of Representatives for forty-six years and speaker of the House for eight years.

December—Ellen Root, of New York, was awarded the Woodrow Wilson Prize for 1926 for her help in establishing the World Court.

April 1927.
Dancing

Rhythm classes were introduced to MSD by Dr. Bjarke in 1918. They were part of the program at Fanwood where he had been a teacher.

Our first rhythm classes were exercises at the piano counting the beats by clapping and speaking simple nursery rhymes. The children stood around the large grand piano on the chapel stage performing singing games such as "London Bridge is Falling Down."

My first experience in the rhythm classes was playing the piano for an older group of students. The students would put their hands on the piano, close their eyes to concentrate, and guess which tune was being played—"America," "Yankee Doodle Dandy," or "Smiles." Then everyone would say the words in rhythm as I played.

Soon I was teaching dances to the older girls. We did a "Russian Dance" to Tchaikovsky’s "Nutcracker Suite." To keep together was not a big problem as we all counted and kept good eye contact; and of course, in those days some students had substantial amounts of residual hearing.

I had seen the Rockettes perform at Radio City in New York and tap dancing became very popular. I took tap dancing lessons at the ballroom of the City Hall and taught the routines to the girls. We even performed at the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf in Trenton, New Jersey. Not too long ago, a few survivors of those days danced on the stage in the Ely Auditorium. They had not forgotten the routine.

Square dancing

Courtesy: Hagerstown, Md. Herald Maryland School for the Deaf students gave rhythmic demonstration before the Kiwants Club, Rotary, District Conference, and Lions Intercity Meeting at Hagerstown.
Town Attitudes Toward the Deaf

As far back as I can remember, the attitude of the people in Frederick towards the deaf children and adults at MSD was very casual and positive. Much of it was due, I believe, to the position the superintendent held in the community. During Dr. Charles Ely’s tenure, he was viewed as a professional person who performed a very commendable service to a group of children who needed special attention. Subsequent superintendents continued to provide the same leadership by acting as public relations agents. In later years, Dr. Byorlee was active in service clubs such as the Rotary Club where he cultivated relations with businesses and other professionals in the community. He also assumed a leadership role in the Boy Scouts and found many ways to integrate the hearing and deaf scout troop activities, which was a very healthy and non-condescending attitude for this era. Current Troop 258 was established during this time and it is the oldest chartered troop in Maryland.

One problem the school had to overcome was the community’s habitual reference to the school for the deaf as the “D and D.” This dates back to when the school was referred to as the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. This derogatory reference persisted inspite of

Miss Kent and the Camp Fire Girls pose for a picture.
our efforts to present a more enlight-
ened image of what deaf children could
accomplish. The term was used in con-
versation by uninformed people in the
community more as an easy or short-
handed naming of the school than as a
statement on the limitations of the han-
dicap. We were all prepared to make
quick responses in any conversation where the uncomplimentary phrase
popped up. Due to the good relations
between the community and the
school, the deaf have always been well
received in Frederick.

During World War II, Mrs. Bjorle
organized a group of older girls and
teachers into a volunteer group for the
Red Cross. The rolling of bandages
once a week at the Francis Scott Key
Hotel was an eagerly performed task by
the MSD community. For the service,
we earned service bars that were worn
on the white nursing uniforms that were
completed by donning white head
scarves with the Red Cross insignia in
the middle. The girls loved being
excused from study hour to perform
this duty even though they had to com-
plete their written assignments in the
evenings. The walk downtown was an
enjoyable outing and we thought we
were making a real contribution to the
war effort.

One of the favorite stop overs on the
way to town was the Bright Spot, a local
ice cream and soda store on South
Market Street. Nearly all trips to town
included a brief stop at the Bright Spot.
After the movies on Saturday after-
noons the houseparents would stop
and buy ice cream for each of the kids.
The big boys would hang around the
Bright Spot until it was time to go
back to the school. The atmosphere in
the store was very benign and the
clerks learned to communicate easily
with the students.

We had both Boy Scout and Girl
Scout troops. The boys were active and
won all sorts of badges. They were
especially good at making things like
bird houses for various projects. Camp
Baker, a scout camp, was developed on
Ridge Road at Braddock Heights
through Dr. Bjorle's efforts. Our boys
helped to erect the buildings and would
go to the camp for the weekend. Some
would sleep in tents to qualify for merit
badges. We produced a number of
Eagle Scouts: George Singer, Robert
Daley, Charles Knowles, Lewis Long-
fellow and many others.

Mrs. Bjorle was very active with the
Girl Scout troop for a number of years.
Scout activities gave us many oppor-
tunities to interact with hearing scouts.
Inevitably the deaf children taught the
hearing to sign and fingerspell so that
the communication barriers just
clumsily naturally without any tautline,
philosophy or publicity.

I was the most unlikely person to be
chosen to start a Camp Fire Girls group
since I was not the outdoor type, but I
was young and willing to give it a try. A
troop was formed in the 1920s with Vir-
ginia Brushwood, Edna Brewer, Mary
Saylor and about a dozen girls. We
earned merit badges, hiked to Camp
Baker and stayed overnight. To sleep
on the hard floor with standard school
blankets for covers was very uncomfor-
table. There was very little sleeping and
dawn was a long time coming. The
breakfast of hot cakes helped comfort
us.

Another favorite activity on the week-
ends during a time when children stayed
at the school all through school
year until the Christmas holiday, was
going to the movies on Saturday after-
noon. In the early days, movies were
silent with captions and were very gra-
phic. We all appreciated Charlie Chap-
lin, whose acting was full of mime. At
our school parties, the boys often
dressed up like Charlie and could
imitate his mannerisms to a tee. I can
see Miss Nannie taking a group of about
20 children downtown on Saturday
afternoon, rain or shine. We had a great
deal of respect for her judgment, but
wondered why she never missed a Sat-
urday showing. It was later learned that
she was following a weekly serial that
ended with a cliff hanger. Those were
the fore-runners of today's soap ope-
nas. Instead of "Days of Our Lives"
there was "The Perils of Pauline."

This is a reflective look at life in the Old Main Building during the latter
days of the first century of Maryland School for the Deaf. It survived over
100 years of educating the deaf children of Maryland and its many happy
memories dwell in the minds of those of us who lived and worked within its
wells.

—Margaret Kent
Florence Doub is captured in a portrait by Helen Smith. Miss Doub served for 50 years as an art teacher at Maryland School for the Deaf.