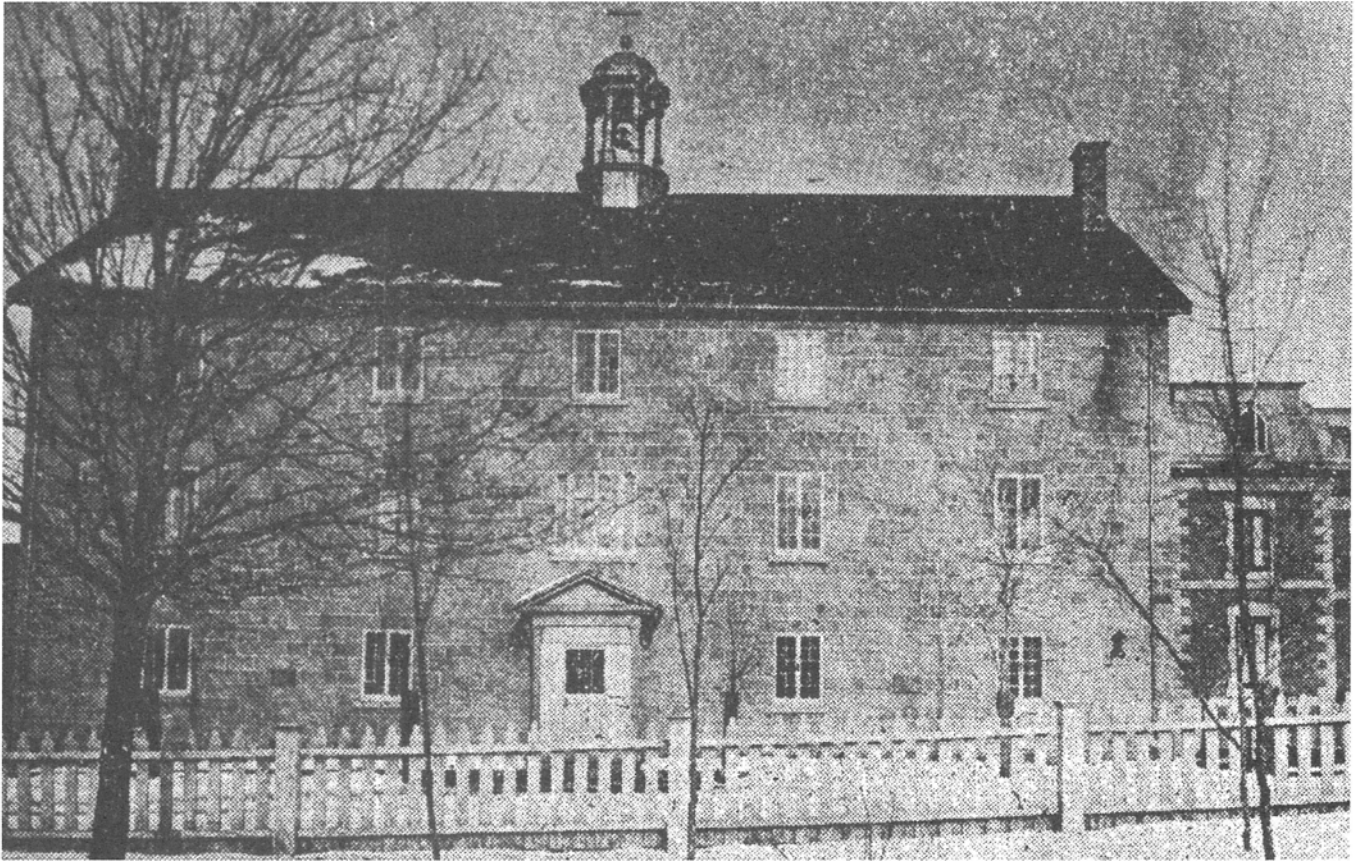


Schools in Québec and Ontario



Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets in Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End (Montréal) (1850)

L'Ami des Sourds-Muets/Gallaudet University Archives

Unlike the United States, Canada has no department of education at the federal level. There are few federal laws that apply equally in all provinces to the education of Canadian children (whether deaf or hearing). To a great extent, each province is responsible for the education of its children, and each is free to determine its own educational policies and procedures. As the provinces began to build residential schools for deaf children, develop curricula, and educate teachers, a variety of questions arose. Issues included the most appropriate educational environment for deaf children, the most appropriate communication method for use in the classroom, the role of deaf people in the provincial schools, training requirements for the teachers, the amount of vocational training that should be provided to deaf students, and the ways in which the schools could attract and maintain student populations. Each province addressed these issues in individual ways that reflected its own provincial character as well as the changing economic, social, and political climate of Canada.

The province of Québec responded to the unique linguistic situation found there by establishing separate schools for deaf children from francophone (French-using) and anglophone (English-using) families. The two francophone schools (Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets [Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Males] and Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes [Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Females]) were under the direction of the Catholic church, while the anglophone school (The Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes — now the Mackay Center for Deaf Children) was established for deaf children of the Protestant faith. Located in Montréal, Québec, these schools thrived for many years, but eventually came under the influence of integration (the practice of mainstreaming deaf students into local schools with hearing students), which adversely affected their enrolment. The two Catholic schools eventually closed in the late 1970s, and the Mackay Center still faces challenges caused by reduced enrolment.

Ontario — unlike Québec — did not face quite the same linguistic issues, because the majority of the students in Ontario's provincial schools are from anglophone families. (Francophone deaf Ontarians ages six through 21 can attend special classes at the Centre Jules-Léger, a program located in Ottawa that was established in 1979 by the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. The Centre now serves francophone Ontarians with special needs: learning disabilities, deaf, blind and low vision, and deaf-blind students. In 1995, funding for and administration of the Centre Jules-Léger became the responsibility of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training.)

The three schools in Ontario — the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (opened in 1870 as the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and later known as the Ontario School for the Deaf); the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (also called the Ontario School for the Deaf when it opened in 1963); and the Robarts School for the Deaf in London (opened in 1974) — have had their own challenges to face. Each school serves students from a different part of the province. Some students are from farming communities; others are from the inner city. Some students come from immigrant families that may not use English in the home; others are from the First Nations reserves found in Ontario.¹ Some students live close enough to the schools for their parents to be involved in the activities there; others come from families who live in remote, isolated regions in Northern Ontario accessible only by plane or canoe. All three schools enrol some deaf students with physical and emotional conditions that add to their educational challenges. The ways in which these three schools have grown, changed, and coped with their changing student population are described in this chapter.

For more than 70 years, almost all of the teachers working in Ontario's three provincial schools received their professional training from the Professional Training for Teachers of the Deaf department at the Belleville school. From 1919, when the program began, until 1991, when York University in Toronto assumed responsibility for teacher training, almost every educator working with deaf children in the province was a product of this one program and reflected its predominant philosophy (which was oral). From its beginning, admission was limited only to individuals who were already qualified to teach hearing children in Ontario's elementary or secondary school systems. This restriction effectively prevented deaf adults from receiving the teacher training courses. It was not until 1974 that the admission requirements were modified in such a way that allowed deaf candidates to enrol in these courses.

All the provincial schools in Canada (including those in Ontario and Québec) are now faced with changing social conditions that affect their very existence. These schools are under increased public and political scrutiny. All are faced with the challenge of finding innovative ways to provide effective and nurturing educational environments for Canada's deaf students during a time of reduced financial support, dwindling enrolment, and controversial changes in educational philosophies and policies. How these schools will continue to meet the challenges of the 1990s has yet to be seen, but meet them

they must if provincial schools are to continue to be a viable force in the lives of Canada's deaf people.

Québec

Québec is populated by a majority of French-using (francophone) and a minority of English-using (anglophone) residents. Most of the francophones are Catholic. Educational placement had been (and still is) determined primarily by the family's religious faith and language preference. In the 19th and most of the 20th centuries, deaf children from Catholic francophone families attended one of the two schools run by the Catholic Church (deaf Catholic anglophone children sometimes attended these schools as well; deaf Protestant anglophones usually attended the Mackay Institution). The Catholic schools for deaf children were further segregated by gender, with the boys attending the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets (Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Males), and the girls attending the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes (Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Females). The Catholic boys were educated primarily by priests and brothers, while the Catholic girls received their instruction from nuns. The institution for boys was under the auspices of the Clercs de Saint-Viateur (Clerics of Saint-Viator — CSV); the institution for girls was linked to an order now known as the Sisters of Providence.

Deaf girls in Québec owe much to one particular family — that of Victorin (Victor) Vandandaigue-Gadbois, a wealthy landowner, and his wife, Angelique (née Daignault) Gadbois. This family figures prominently both in the Sisters of Providence and in the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes. Eight of the 26 children of Victor and Angelique lived to adulthood (seven girls and one boy. Unfortunately, the son drowned at the age of 19). All seven daughters were educated at home by special French and English tutors (their father feared that if they were taught in a Catholic school by nuns, they might be attracted to the religious life as a career). Their father personally instructed them in the financial and business operations of the extensive family property, training that came in handy as the Gadbois sisters assumed administrative positions later in life. Ironically, despite their father's precautions, all seven of the girls became nuns; five worked with deaf children through the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor (the former name of Sisters of Providence). The first daughter to join this order, Sister Ignace de Loyola (formerly Cesarie Gadbois) (b. 1818; d. Mar. 20, 1894), became a postulant in 1844, and took her vows in 1846. She was followed by Sister Marie de Bon Secours (Albine Gadbois) (b. 1830; d. Oct. 31, 1874), who entered in 1847 and took her vows in 1849. Sister Marie Victor (Malvina Gadbois) (b. Dec. 16, 1834; d. Aug. 3, 1879), became a postulant in 1856 and took her vows in 1858. Her twin, Sister Ildefonse (Azilda Gadbois) (b. Dec. 16, 1834; d. Oct. 22, 1877) entered in 1858 and professed in 1860. The last of the Gadbois sisters, Sister Philippe de Jésus (Philomene Gadbois) (b. Jan. 9, 1836; d. Jan. 20, 1908), entered in 1861 and professed in 1863. The two other daughters also became nuns, but with different orders: Sister Marie Ursule (Aglae Gadbois) (b. circa 1824; d.

Jan. 28, 1892) was a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, and Sister Marie Marguerite (Leocadie Gadbois) (b. circa 1825; d. Dec. 17, 1901) joined the Sisters of the General Hospital (Grey Nuns) in Montréal.

Sisters Marie de Bon Secours, Ildefonse, Marie Victor, and Philippe de Jésus all served as superiors of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes (1851-1874, 1874-1877, 1877-1879, and 1879-1886/1894-1906 respectively). Buildings on the school and hospice grounds have been named in their honour. The work of the Gadbois daughters so inspired their parents that in 1861 they turned their home into a refuge for deaf children. Quickly becoming “familiar with the sign language, they were able to converse with their protégées and to interpret for them when visitors called, reciting their prayers with them, studying each one’s tastes at [the] table, and organizing trips and delightful amusements to please them.”² For some students, a trip to the Gadbois estate was a reward for hard work; for others, it was a place to convalesce after an illness. In his will, Gadbois left his property jointly to his daughters and the Sisters of Providence. It was turned into an hospice (orphanage), first called Providence of Beloeil (later it became known as Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, and was then renamed St. Victor’s). The Gadbois family residence remained a haven for poor children until it was destroyed by fire in July 1891. The current Mother House of the Sisters of Providence is built on the site of the former Gadbois home.

Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets

The Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets in Montréal (commonly referred to as the Institution des Sourds-Muets de Montréal) is considered the first permanent school for deaf people in Canada.³ Established by the Clercs de Saint-Viateur (CSV) in 1848, it flourished for 130 years until the Québec Ministry of Education closed the facility to students in 1978. (The CSV still occupies the building, which is now used as a home for the priests and brothers.) The roots of the school can be traced to Rivière Chambly, Québec, where Father Charles-Irénée Lagorce (b. June 6, 1813; d. Feb. 23, 1864), a hearing pastor of Saint Charles-sur-Richelieu Church, had two deaf adults in his parish. At first, Lagorce was unsure how to instruct these two deaf people. Fortunately, he had received his training for the priesthood at the Seminary Collège in Saint Hyacinthe, Québec (he was ordained there on July 30, 1837). During his frequent visits back to his alma mater, he learned of Antoine Caron, a deaf teacher who was working with deaf boys. In the fall of 1844, Lagorce hired Caron to come to Rivière Chambly and provide religious instruction to his deaf parishioners. From this experience sprang Lagorce’s idea to establish a school for deaf children.

Toward the end of 1848, Lagorce wrote to Monsignor Ignace Bourget (b. Oct. 30, 1799; d. June 8, 1885), a hearing man who was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montréal (1840-1876) and had been responsible for founding several orders of the Clercs de Saint-Viateur in Canada. Lagorce asked his opinion regarding the possibility of establishing an institution for

deaf boys in the province. Bourget, seeing that the Québec government evidently did not want to take charge of their education, supported the idea. He then asked Lagorce to leave the quiet surroundings of his rural parish to start a school in Montréal.

On November 27, 1848, the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets came into being when Lagorce began teaching a class of six deaf boys (Edouard Carry, Henri-Joseph Labelle, Philogone Mercier, Antoine Meunier, Benjamin Reeves, and William-Stephen Smith). The school was first located in south-east Montréal in an old wooden building belonging to the Hospice Saint Jérôme-Émilien (an orphanage). The orphans were primarily the children of Irish immigrant parents who had died from typhus, or those from extremely poor families. They were cared for by nuns from an order then known as the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor. (It was around this time that the nuns began considering the possibility of educating deaf girls as well. This interest later resulted in the establishment of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes in 1851.)

Lagorce served as both superintendent of the hospice (1848-1849) and director of the Institution (1848-1856). Even though he was assisted from time to time by Benjamin Reeves, a former deaf student of Caron’s, the bulk of the work fell on Lagorce’s shoulders. After a year, the responsibilities of managing two institutions proved too much for one man. Lagorce chose to withdraw as superintendent of the orphanage and focus his efforts only on the school. Resources were scarce, and only two out of 10 families could afford to pay the tuition. By May 1849, he had moved the school to a small house in Hochelaga (then known as Pied-du-Courant) owned by François Dufresene of Faubourg, Québec. For a short time, Lagorce had two other assistants helping him (a Mr. Mazurette and a Mr. David, both of whom are believed to be deaf). Even with charitable donations from the public and money raised by holding bazaars, the Institution just barely managed to survive financially. Help came in the summer of 1849 from a hearing man named Dr. Pierre Beaubien, who donated a piece of land in Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End (then a suburb of Montréal) to Monsignor Bourget. Bourget decided to build a permanent school for deaf boys on the property. Construction began in mid-September that year, and the large three-storey, stone building — measuring 80 feet by 43 feet — was ready for occupancy in May 1850.

Until this time, the education of the students had been disorganized and unstructured, interrupted by the school’s many moves. At first, things continued to be unsettled in the new building as well. After losing Reeves as assistant, Lagorce struggled on alone during the 1850-1851 school year. He relied on Abbé Roch Ambroise Cucurron Sicard’s *Eléments de grammaire générale* (*Elements of General Grammar*, which was first printed in 1799) as a guide, and also used sign language, drawings, and written notes. With no assistant to take over in his absence, Lagorce had to close the Institution temporarily when he left Montréal on May 2, 1851 for training in France. He returned to Canada on August 16, 1852 to find that the school building had been destroyed in Montréal’s Great Fire (July 8,

1852). While this building was being reconstructed, he held classes at the Novitiate of the Clercs de Saint-Viateur in Saint Charles de l'Industrie (now Joliette, Québec), beginning in October 1852.

On March 5, 1853, the Institution moved to the old presbytery of a Mr. Manseau for a few months. By August of that year, construction had been completed at the original site in Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End, and classes resumed there. Lagorce introduced an articulation class for the first time, but it was abandoned a short time later “for want of means, and the frequent changes of places.”⁴ In the spring of 1855, he reported on the situation facing the deaf population in the province (and essentially placed an ad for new professors) in a letter to *Le Bienfaiteur des Sourds-Muets et Des Aveugles* (a Paris publication):

The Canadian government has adopted the principle of the education of the deaf and dumb, and the blind, by the state; it has appropriated 20,000 louis to establish the needed institutions in Upper and Lower Canada. His Excellency, the Minister of Public Instruction has inquired of Mr. Lagorce, if the government could not obtain two competent French instructors, one of them a deaf-

*mute, by assuring them a yearly salary of 4,000 francs each. There are in Canada, 1,400 deaf-mutes — 850 males, and 450 females [sic] — and 870 blind — 493 males, and 377 females ... M. Lagorce has been obliged to train his own professors.*⁵

Ill health and overwhelming responsibilities forced Lagorce to temporarily suspend classes in June 1855.⁶ The school did not remain closed for long, however. Following the December 1855 arrival of the Rev. Brother Joseph-Marie Young (b. May 11, 1822; d. July 13, 1897) from France, classes resumed on January 7, 1856. Young, who became deaf at the age of five, had become an experienced teacher of deaf children in schools in Nancy, Soissons, and Lyon. He studied for the priesthood at the Clercs de Saint-Viateur in Voules, France, and was ordained in October 1855. During the summer of 1856, the Institution moved to Chambly for a year, and then returned to Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End, where it remained for the next 64 years (1857-1921). Young later became the first (and only) deaf director in the history of the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets, a position he held for seven years (1856-1863).⁷

On September 5, 1867, the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets hired its second deaf priest and teacher, the Rev.

Reverend Brother Joseph-Marie Young, CSV

In a Joliette, Québec, cemetery belonging to the Clercs de Saint-Viateur, lies a plain white marker bearing the name of a celebrated 19th-century deaf priest, the Rev. Brother Joseph-Marie Young (b. May 11, 1822; d. July 13, 1897).⁸ He had a remarkable career working with deaf people in the province. Young was born in Metz (Alsace-Lorraine), France, to Thérèse-Elisabeth (née Marcus) and Nicholas Jung, and was deafened at the age of five. He received an excellent education at an institution for deaf boys in Nancy, where he was placed in an élite class and won several honours. Following his graduation, he taught at his alma mater for five years, and then worked at an institution for deaf students in Soissons for 10 years. About this time, he felt the call to become a brother in the Roman Catholic Church, so he entered a religious training program at the La Grande Chartreuse monastery, near Grenoble in southeast France. However, Young was compelled to quit months later due to ill health. He returned to the teaching profession when he was hired by Claudius M. Forestier (b. 1810; d. 1891), the profoundly born-deaf director/principal at the Institution des Sourds-Muets de Lyon.⁹ (Forestier was one of only two deaf people who attended the infamous Congress of Milan in 1880. See Chapter 1: THE EARLY DAYS — ATTITUDES TOWARD DEAF PEOPLE AND THEIR EDUCATION, “The Mid- to Late-19th Century and the Milan Congress.”)

In the fall of 1854, while teaching at Forestier's school, Young met two hearing priests — Monsignor

Ignace Bourget, the second Roman Catholic Bishop of Montréal (1840-1876), and Father Louis-Marie Querbes, the 1831 founder and superior general of the Clercs de Saint-Viateur in Voules (near Lyon), France. Bourget was visiting Europe in search of a competent teacher to work

(Continued)



Rev. Brother Joseph-Marie Young, CSV
L'Ami des Sourds-Muets/Gallaudet University Archives

Brother Augustin-Benjamin Groc (b. May 26, 1839; d. Aug. 21, 1915). Born in the village of La Salvetat, France, he was deafened at the age of five. In 1849, his parents sent him to an institution for deaf boys in nearby Rodez, where he later became a teaching assistant. His formal teaching career began at Orléans (1859-1862) and then at Marseilles (1862-1866). In 1866, Groc accepted a proposal from the French Ministry of Public Instruction to teach deaf children in Constantine, Algeria. However, he was deterred from going when a CSV priest convinced him that he should go to Canada to help Young. On December 10th of that year, Groc entered the novitiate of Clercs de Saint-Viateur in Camonil, France, and then left the country in the spring of 1867 for Joliette, Québec to complete his training for the priesthood. Three weeks after he was ordained on August 14, 1867, Groc began working at the Institution, to which he dedicated himself for the next 46 years (1867-1913). During this time, the Institution's enrolment expanded considerably. Incorporation on January 28, 1874 helped stabilize the school's activities during this period of rapid growth.

One of the school's former students served as a teacher's aid in the late 1800s. Théodule Fortin (b. 1870; d. Mar. 30,

1899) of Saint-Francois-de-Beauce requested permission to enter the religious life shortly after he completed his studies at the school. Fortin was described as being intelligent, kind towards others, and always cheerful.¹² He was skilled in horticulture, but had to give up this activity because of ill health (he suffered from serious and frequent illness most of his life). He then turned to bookbinding, drawing, and decorative paintings. He was very popular among the students. Fortin was only 29 years old when he died, and was in his 13th year of service to the school.

The Rev. Alfred Bélanger (b. Apr. 27, 1835; d. June 5, 1910), a hearing CSV priest who had worked closely with Young since January 1856, was director of the Institution for a total of 26 years (1863-1884 and 1895-1900).¹³ He added training in bookbinding, shoemaking, and printing to the school curriculum in 1865. New physical spaces were added as well: a small wing for workshops (1871), a refectory and kitchen in the basement (1878), two new stories to the main structure (1878), and another workshop on the other side of Saint Louis street for tailoring, carpentry, blacksmithing, and painting (built in 1881; destroyed by fire in 1889; rebuilt in 1890; again destroyed by fire in 1897). (These workshops eventually became known as

Joseph-Marie Young, CSV ... cont'd

with deaf students in his own diocese. Young, who was highly recommended, accepted Bourget's invitation to come to Canada within a year to teach at the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets in Montréal. On November 15, 1854, Young entered training for the priesthood at the Clercs de Saint-Viateur seminary in Vourles. He also spent some time transcribing Forestier's methods of teaching deaf children, as well as collecting fingerspelled materials from a school for deaf students in Toulouse. Ten days before completing his CSV novitiate and taking his first vows on October 21, 1855, Young invited a deaf man by the name of Edmond Parot, a teacher in Nîmes, to be his assistant in Montréal. When Parot declined the offer, Brother Jean-Philippe Damais, a hearing priest, was assigned by Father Querbes to accompany Young.

Young received his French passport on October 29, 1855. It is interesting to note that his name was printed as Joseph-Marie Jung, but he signed J.M. Yung. His passport described him as being "1m 65cm in height, with soft cat-like hair, beard, gray eyes, average mouth and nose, round chin, oval face, olive skin, and aged 35."¹⁰ (In those days, passports relied on written description of the person rather than on photographs.) On the back of the passport, the Havre police wrote that he was to travel via the ship, *Ariel*, to New York City, on November 24 that year.

Upon their arrival in Montréal on December 9, 1855, Young and Damais were met by Henry de Courcy, a Parisian newspaper journalist for *L'Univers*, who was also Bourget's friend.¹¹ Four days later, the pair were taken to the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets, then located in Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End. Early in the new year,

Young became director of the Institution, a position he held for seven years (1856-1863). He also worked with deaf boys who were less gifted or who had begun their education at a late age. In addition, he taught bookbinding and in the last years of his life served as school librarian and nurse. He is credited with bringing better teaching methods to the Institution, similar to those used in France and the United States. He preferred that classroom instruction focus on literacy through the use of fingerspelling and sign language. It is said that he also wrote a manuscript about his teaching methods and his work at the Institution, but it remains uncertain as to whether or not it was ever published.

Described as having much zeal and motivation, Young would walk into Montréal each Sunday from the outskirts of Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End and Chambly (where the Institution was temporarily located for a year [1856-1857]) to give religious instruction to deaf adults at Bonsecours Church. He made regular weekly visits to the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes (Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Females) for the same purpose. He also travelled to other Canadian dioceses, as well as to the homes of deaf adults, to conduct sacramental rites. His health was unstable for many years. Despite experiencing chest pains, hemorrhaging, ulcers and the like, he worked unceasingly in the cause of education and religion for deaf people. He suffered from heart disease in his final years. On the afternoon of July 13, 1897, Young died in the chapel of the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets while at his daily prayers. He was 75 years and two months old. The day before, he had climbed to the top of a new chimney, some 60 feet high, an activity that many believe contributed to his death. ■

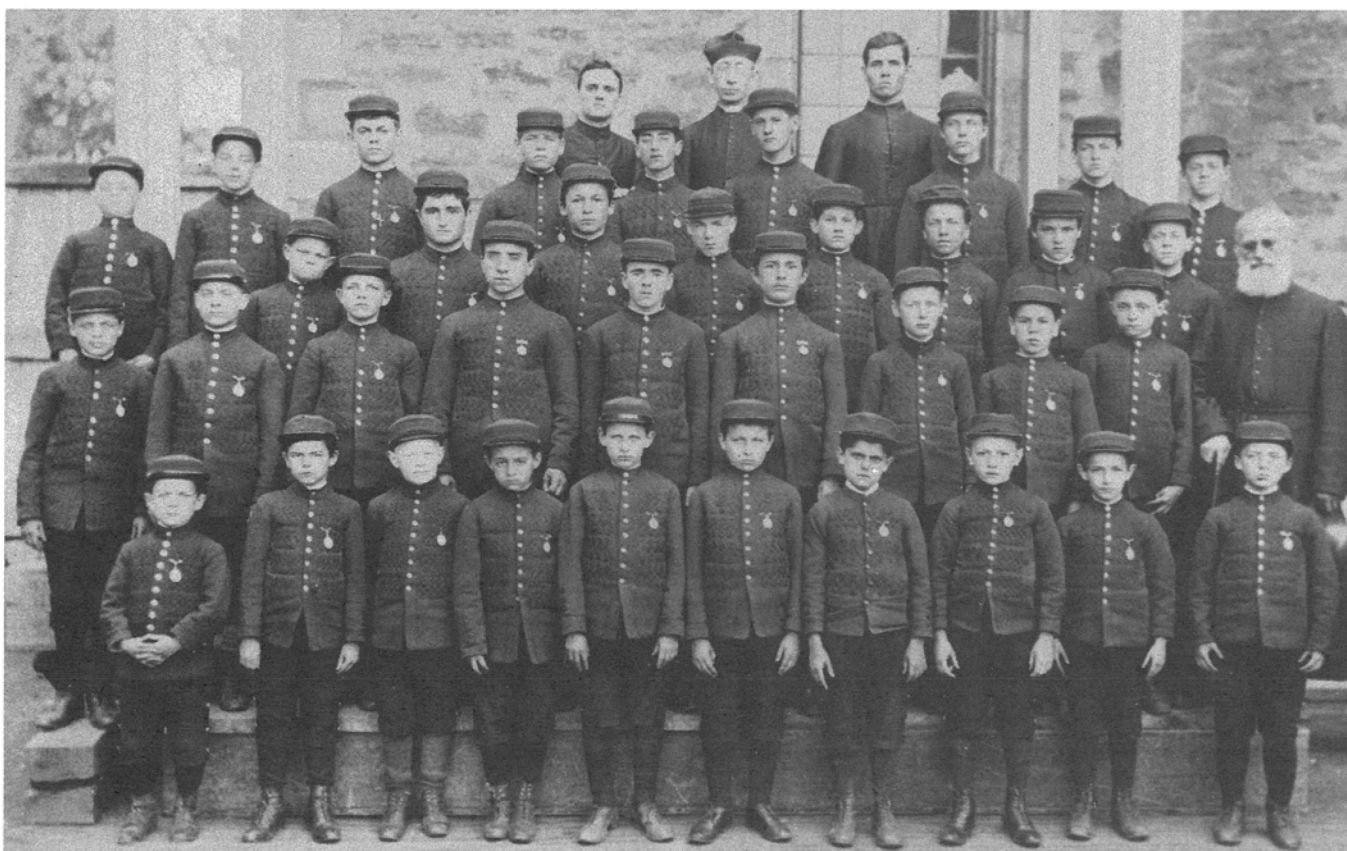
the Ateliers des Sourds [Industrial Shops for the Deaf]. In the 1960s, the Ateliers housed a machine shop, office steel furniture department, printing plant, and bookbinding shops. By this time, the employees of the workshops were mainly deaf adults rather than students. The output of products and income from sales was considerable. For example, in 1964, the Ateliers' metal shop produced "approximately 5,000 desks of various sizes and designs; 12,000 filing cabinets and 2,000 special pieces designed to customer specifications."¹⁴ That same year, "the company recorded sales of \$1,050,000. After salaries, plant overhead, maintenance and other necessary plant expenditures, the remaining profit is reinvested in the operation in the form of new equipment. A share of the profit is contributed to the school..."¹⁵ Bélanger's workshops, begun so modestly in 1865 to provide deaf boys with a marketable skill, developed into a source of employment for many deaf men.)

Bélanger also introduced other innovations to the school. In 1882, he began an agricultural program for older boys, with classes held on a farm in Terrebonne. In 1887, this program was relocated to a hundred acres in the town of Outremont, donated by a Mrs. Joseph Masson. The agricultural program continued until 1897, when the school decided that farming was not a lucrative trade in such an increasingly urban and industrialized era. The Outremont property was sold in 1907.

When Lagorce began the school, he relied primarily on manual teaching methods to educate the students. However,

Bélanger introduced "the system of teaching by the use of words" after an 1870 visit to Europe to study the educational methods used there.¹⁶ Ten years later, he was the only Canadian representative at the Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf in Milan, Italy (September 6-11, 1880), which passed a resolution to replace sign language with pure oralism in classroom instruction. Upon his return to Montréal, Bélanger enthusiastically expanded the oral program at the Institution. Deaf students were separated into two groups, which were kept apart in all areas of the school, including the classrooms, "playrooms, refectory, dormitory, chapel."¹⁷ Thus, the oral students were prevented from learning sign language from the manual students (i.e., those who had been deemed incapable of benefitting from the oral method).

According to the 1893 Rules and Regulations for Admission to the Institution, parents were required to send their child's baptismal records and to provide them with a trunk filled with "1 uniform at \$10.00 or \$12.00, 2 winter suits, 2 summer suits, 4 shirts, 6 pairs of drawers, 6 handkerchiefs, 2 neckties, 6 pairs of stockings, 2 pairs of boots, 1 pair of rubbers, 2 hats, 1 fur cap, 1 winter overcoat, 1 pair of mittens, 1 pair of slippers," plus "soap, brushes, combs, blacking, etc."¹⁸ Additional uniforms, which were made at the school and could be purchased there for \$10 to \$12, were also required. Parents also had to furnish (or rent from the school) one mattress, two pillows, one quilt, two blankets, four sheets, and two pillow cases. The annual



Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets students with some of their teachers (circa 1890s). The man with the white beard standing on the far right is Rev. Brother Joseph-Marie Young.

Courtesy of Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets/Clercs de Saint-Viateur Archives Provinciales (Montréal, Québec)

Regular Order of the Day (1898-1899)		
(Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets, Montréal, Québec)		
All Groups		
5:00 a.m.	Rise, toilet, care of beds	
5:20 a.m.	Exit	
5:25 a.m.	Prayer, study	
6:16 a.m.	Holy Mass	
6:45 a.m.	Breakfast	
Oral Department		
Work	7:30 a.m.	Class
Recess	9:00 a.m.	Class
Class	9:30 a.m.	Recess
Class	10:00 a.m.	Work
Study	11:30 a.m.	Study
Examination of Conscience	11:55 a.m.	Examination of Conscience
Dinner, Recreation	12:00 noon	Dinner, Recreation
Class	1:30 p.m.	Work
Class	3:00 p.m.	Recess
Recess	3:30 p.m.	Class
Work	4:00 p.m.	Class
Recess, spiritual reading	5:30 p.m.	Recess, spiritual reading
All Groups		
6:00 p.m.	Supper, recreation	
7:30 p.m.	Journal	
7:45 p.m.	Beads, prayer	
8:00 p.m.	Bedtime for children/study for young men and adults	
9:00 p.m.	Rest	
<small>Source: Annual Report of the Catholic Male Institution for the Deaf and Dumb of the Province of Québec, 1898-1899. Mile-End (now Montréal), Québec: Deaf and Dumb Institution Printing Office, 1900.</small>		

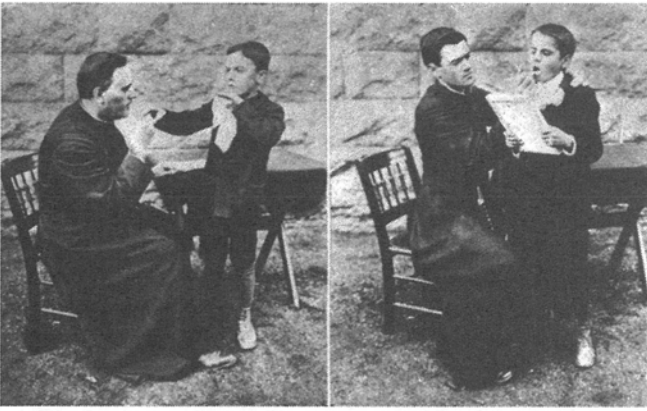
tuition in 1893 was \$150, plus an additional \$10 for laundry services. Most of the parents were farmers or labourers, and many found it very difficult to pay these fees.

The boys followed a highly regimented daily schedule. Students got up at 5:00 a.m., cleaned their rooms, and then went to morning prayers before breakfast and classes. Each student spent at least three hours a day in workshops, learning a trade — printing, bookbinding, tailoring, shoemaking, harness repair, carpentry, painting, carriage making, and blacksmithing were the most common workshops in the late 1800s. The younger students went to bed at 8:00 p.m., after finishing supper, a study period, and more prayers. Students in the oral and manual programs were separated except during meals and prayers. Apparently, the structured school day produced some tangible results. At the 1893 World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, Ill., the Institution was one of the three Canadian schools for the deaf chosen to participate. The exhibit of the

students' work covered "all subjects, including their drafting and architecture designs, pen and ink drawings."¹⁹ They also proudly displayed the medal won at the 1878 Universal Exposition in Paris, France.

Money to operate the school came from several sources. In addition to annual grants from the provincial government and fees paid by those parents who could afford them, the Institution also received funding from the "Committee of the Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in Aid of the Deaf-Mutes," which was formed in 1889.²⁰ The oral languages taught at the Institution, as stated in its 1898-1899 annual report, were "both English and French, whilst similar institutes in the United States and Ontario teach but one language."²¹ (Parents decided which of the two languages their child was to learn.)

Despite the fact that most of the students stayed at the Institution for only an average of five years, leaving "to make room for others," the school was still unable to serve all those



An articulation lesson (circa 1912)

L'Ami des Sourds-Muets/Gallaudet University Archives



A school play (circa 1919)

L'Ami des Sourds-Muets/Gallaudet University Archives

who applied for admission.²² Bélanger lamented the large number of uneducated deaf boys he had to turn away every year because there was no room for them at the school. In his report on the 1898-1899 school year, he stated that:

The census taken in 1891 fixes the number of deaf-mutes in the province of Québec at 2108 of whom 1074 are males. Three hundred and thirty-two (332) of these had already received instruction, and since then, we have given a course of instruction to one hundred and ninety-nine (199), including the pupils at present in the Institute. That leaves five hundred and forty-three (543) who have never received the least education. Granting that one fourth (1/4) of this number are under the age of nine (9) years, we still have four hundred and seven (407) deaf-mutes in this province, living in a state of absolute ignorance. You will indeed appreciate how painful it is to be forced to reject the appeal of these unfortunate children....²³

A decade before the turn of the century, the administration of the school decided to move the Institution from its location in Côteau-Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End to the Outremont farm. Stones for the new school building were carted to the site, but construction was suspended on April 15, 1891 due to rising property costs and taxes. At a meeting on the 11th of May that year, it was decided to abandon the Outremont site for a less expensive location. Another site, then known as the "Lalande"



Students and their teacher in the old school (1919)

Courtesy of Institut Raymond-Dewar (Montréal, Québec)

farm on Saint Laurent Boulevard in the northern part of Montréal, was chosen.

Construction on the new school was delayed by financial difficulties; it was 1913 before the required funds and resources became available to begin preparing the property. Despite the delays and hardships caused by World War I, the school was able to hold ceremonies on June 17, 1917 to commemorate the laying of the cornerstone. The new Institution on Saint Laurent Boulevard officially opened its doors on June 30, 1921, and received deaf boys for the next 57 years until it was closed permanently in 1978. Nuns were responsible for the kitchen and laundry; between 1939 and 1975, they lived at the school in a residence hall built for their use. On May 4, 1927, a religious association of deaf brothers known as the Oblats de Saint-Viateur (OSV) was officially formed at the Institution. It is



A postcard of the school building for Catholic deaf boys — Saint Laurent Boulevard, Montréal (1921-1978)

Courtesy of Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets/Clercs de Saint-Viateur Archives Provinciales (Montréal, Québec)

reported to be the first of its kind in the world. (Details about this religious order can be found in Chapter 10.)

By the 1947-1948 school year, the enrolment had reached 258 boys, 30 of whom were apprentices in the shops. Most of the students came from the province of Québec, but a few travelled from other areas to attend the Catholic institution — nine from Ontario, 14 from New Brunswick, two from Newfoundland, four from the United States, and one from South America. By this time, more than 2,500 deaf boys had received their education at the school. In the mid-1940s and 1950s, more students enrolled than the Institution could accommodate, and officials became concerned about what to do with the overflow. This dilemma was solved by the 1961 opening of a second school in Charlesbourg, which served male students in the eastern region around the province's capital city of Québec (girls began attending the Charlesbourg school in 1968). The old institution in Montréal thus began serving only those male students residing within the western areas of the province. It was during this time that more trained laypersons began working in both schools.



Students and teachers in the shoe shop, 1947

Courtesy of Institut Raymond-Dewar (Montréal, Québec)

Heads of the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets (Boys)

Montréal, Québec, Founded 1848/Closed 1978

Charles-Irénée Lagorce, C.S.V. Founder & Director, 1848-1856	
Joseph-Marie Young, C.S.V.*	Director, 1856-1863
Alfred Bélanger, C.S.V.	Director, 1863-1884
Anthyme Boucher, C.S.V.	Director, 1884-1885
Jean-Baptiste Manseau, C.S.V.	Director, 1885-1895
Alfred Bélanger, C.S.V.	Director, 1895-1900
Michel Cadieux, C.S.V.	Director, 1900-1936
Lucien Pagé, C.S.V.	Director, 1936-1947
Alphonse Gauthier, C.S.V.	Director, 1947-1953
Etienne de Blois, C.S.V.	Director, 1953-1958
Lucien Pagé, C.S.V.	Director, 1958-1960
Ferdinand Racan, C.S.V.	Director, 1960-1966
Edmond Telmosse, C.S.V.	Director, 1966-1969
Léo Charlebois, C.S.V.	Director, 1969-1970
Albert Desroches, C.S.V.	Director, 1970-1973
Emile Bayard, C.S.V.	Director, 1973-1976
Léopold Bourguignon, C.S.V.	Director, 1976-1978

*Deaf

A change occurred in Québec in 1964 that eventually had serious repercussions for the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets. Prior to that date, all Catholic schools in the province were controlled and administered by the Catholic Church. However, as part of Québec's "Quiet Revolution," responsibility for Catholic schools was transferred from the Church to a new provincial department of education, which then set up new channels of administration for the schools. Responsibility for the education of the older students was

assumed by the Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal in 1971. Deaf girls in grades four, five, and six from the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes began attending classes at the boys' school. The 130-year-old Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets came to an end in 1978 when local school boards assumed all responsibility for educating deaf students. The school building on Boulevard St. Laurent, built in 1921, has remained a residence for the Clercs de Saint-Viateur, who continue their religious work in a variety of other ways.

Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes

Plans for a school for both francophone and anglophone deaf Catholic girls in the province of Québec began in the fall of 1850. The story opens at a Catholic boarding school for girls on a village farm (then known as either "Farm St. Isidore" or "Providence St. Isidore") in Longue-Pointe (now part of Montréal). It was there that Sister Marie de Bon Secours, a young hearing nun whose birth name was Albine Gadbois (b. 1830; d. Oct. 31, 1874), encountered among her new hearing students a charming eight-year-old deaf girl. This motherless child was Marguerite (Margaret) Hanley (b. Sept. 19, 1842; d. Mar. 16, 1860), who was deafened at the age of five from typhoid fever. Her father, a hotel keeper, believed it was impossible to teach the girl anything, but he entrusted her to the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor (Filles de la Charité Servantes des Pauvres) "to keep her off the streets."²⁴ Before the year was out, another deaf girl (Georgiana Lavellée of Berthier) joined Hanley and her teacher. The nun set up a small classroom in the residence hall attic, where she devoted

her time to teaching the two girls how to pray, read, and write. This tiny school composed of one hearing nun and two deaf pupils was the nucleus of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes, whose official founding date is February 19, 1851.²⁵ Almost immediately after its founding, the school began to expand, adding three more deaf girls in the first year. By 1853, there were 10 students in attendance; this number had increased to 20 by the next year.

In 1851, Mother Caron became the second superior of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, following the death of Mother Marie-Émilie Gamelin, the foundress. Mother Caron wanted the nuns responsible for the deaf students to learn all they could about the education of deaf children. In 1852, she and Monsignor Ignace Bourget sent Sister Marie de Bon Secours and Sister Marie de l'Incarnation to Industrie (now Joliette), Québec to study sign language for seven weeks at the Novitiate Building (the same site where the Clercs de Saint-Viateur had set up a temporary class for deaf boys a few years before.) Later, Sister Bon Secours and a Sister Emilie spent a year studying the teaching methods used at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Washington Heights, New York City. They were tutored by Dr. Isaac Lewis Peet (b. Dec. 4, 1824; d. Dec. 27, 1898), a hearing teacher there who later became principal and superintendent (1866-1892) of the school. When the two nuns returned to Canada, they were accompanied by several American Catholic deaf girls. These girls had already received an education in a secular setting, but their parents wanted them to be in a Catholic school, where they could receive religious instruction. In 1865, Sister Bon Secours returned to New York for eight months to further her teaching skills, accompanied this time by her sister, Sister Ildefonse (formerly Azilda Gadbois).

Between 1851 and 1858, the dormitories, refectory, playground, and even the classrooms at the Longue-Pointe facility were shared by both the deaf and hearing boarders at the school. However, the Sisters of Providence had long felt that this arrangement was too distracting and thus detrimental to the education of the deaf students. On July 8, 1858, the deaf girls (then numbering 32) were moved to the Hospice St. Joseph near Providence Asile on Mignonne Street (now De Montigny Street) in Montréal. Sister Bon Secours accompanied her students. The hearing girls, who had learned sign language and had become very attached to their deaf companions, did not want them to leave, so they made a *novena* to prevent the departure.²⁶ The deaf girls, while understanding the affection their hearing friends felt for them, wanted to move to better facilities, so they made a *novena* of their own.

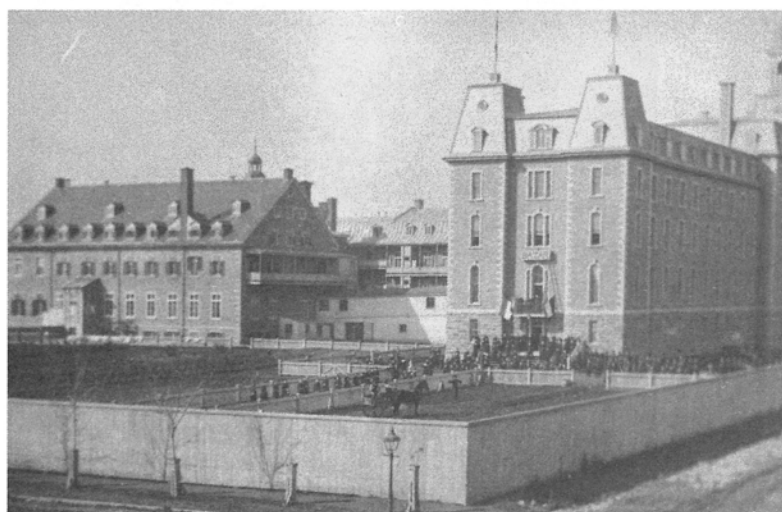
Funds were badly needed to operate the new quarters of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes. To raise money, Sister Bon Secours (and later her sister, Sister Ildefonse) travelled about the city and country parishes each year — usually on Sundays — to collect alms. They were accompanied by two deaf girls, who would demonstrate their ability to read, write, and answer questions on either a large blackboard or on their pocket slates. The audiences responded with donations to the school. This method was only one of several means of generating support for the school. Beginning in 1886

and continuing until 1946, a monthly appeal called “Saint Anthony’s Bread” encouraged the public to contribute money to pay for the cost of a loaf or two of bread for the deaf students.

As the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes continued to expand, the Hospice St. Joseph became too crowded to accommodate all the students. On July 17, 1863, Côme Séraphin Cherrier (a local lawyer) and his wife (a member of the Association of the Ladies of Charity who had taken an active interest in the deaf children) donated a tract of land on St. Denis Street within the city. (This part of Montréal was still a rural area at that time, without paved roads or sidewalks — “Pedestrians and horses splashed through mud puddles in rainy and thawing weather,” and the nearest neighbour lived seven or eight kilometres away.)²⁷ Construction began immediately on a two-storey stone building that measured 100 feet by 54 feet and contained a basement, two main stories, an attic, and a miniature dome. By July 1864, it was completed and ready to receive students. Although most students had to be nine years old before they could be admitted to the school, some children younger than that were occasionally permitted to attend classes as well. In addition, the school admitted “even those who are in an advanced age,” especially for the religious component of the curriculum.²⁸

The deaf girls’ daily life was as highly structured as their male counterparts at the boys’ school. The girls rose at 5:20 a.m. for prayers, followed by housework, and then Mass. After breakfast, they attended classes, had a break for lunch, and then resumed their classwork. The mid-day meal was at noon, supper was at 6:00, and bedtime was 7:30 for the younger children and 8:00 for the others. Unlike the male students, however, the female students did not attend workshops to learn a trade, focusing instead on domestic skills such as needlecraft, cooking, and drawing. (This continued well into the 20th century.) They also took walks and had daily recreation periods. Religious training was the foundation of the entire curriculum, both during the week and on Sundays. In November 1877, the Institution opened its Sunday religious services in the chapel to deaf people from outside the school.

Additional buildings were erected on the site between 1873



An 1887 photograph of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes on St. Denis Street, Montréal, during the horse-and-buggy days

Courtesy of Sisters of Providence, Mother House (Montréal, Québec)

and 1902. A new classroom wing, measuring 118 feet by 55 feet, was completed in the summer of 1873. A second 56-foot by 33-foot wing containing a laundry, powerhouse, and sewing room was ready for occupancy by 1877. An extra lot at the corner of St. Denis and Cherrier Street (measuring 187 feet by 230 feet), and another 143-foot by 690-foot plot bordering Berri Street were donated in 1878 and 1881 respectively. A third wing constructed of untrimmed stone on log stilts was completed in the summer of 1884. This five-storey wing was 314 feet by 50 feet and featured “a turret at each of the four corners and a projection in the centre.”²⁹ An inscription on a stone piece of this facade, facing Berri Street, reads: “*Il a fait entendre les sourds et parler les muets.*” (“He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.”)

A chapel and infirmary opened in the central part of the Berri Street building during the 1892-1893 school year. The original school building on St. Denis Street, built in 1864 on a layer of alluvial clay, had to be demolished in 1898, when it began to sink into the ground. To prevent this from happening again, the new building was supported by an underground “forest” of 1,718 cedar stilts and a three-foot layer of concrete. Reconstruction of the building took three years to complete (1899-1902).

In 1870, Canon Edouard Charles Fabre returned from Europe and suggested to Sister Marie de Bon Secours that she study the oral method of educating deaf students. In May of that same year, she and another of her sisters, Sister Philippe de Jésus (the former Philomene Gadbois), travelled to Europe, and spent three months studying the oral methods used in Gant and Brussels, Belgium; in Lille and Paris, France; in Leeds, London, Manchester and Liverpool, England; and in

Dublin, Ireland. Upon their return, oralism was introduced into the school. By 1879, the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes had switched from the combined system to a primarily oral system of education, with oral students physically separated from the manual students. Upon arriving at the school, new students were placed in articulation classes and taught in the oral method. They were forced to “abandon the sign method, so natural to the deaf child, and exercise themselves in lip-reading.”³⁰ After a year or two, they entered regular courses, progressing from primary through intermediate to the upper grades (to the end of the tenth grade). According to an article that appeared in the *Histories of American Schools for the Deaf (1817-1893)*, the education of the deaf girls was divided into three distinct categories: (1) the pure “Intuitive Oral Method” (introduced in 1879); (2) the “Intuitive Manual (or Dactylogical) Method” for the French section, and the “Combined Method” for the English section; and, (3) the “Asylum” for “ancient pupils who, for need of protection, remain in the Institution after their instruction.”³¹ Each of these departments had its own separate halls, refectories, dormitories, and playgrounds.

Teaching of English to the few deaf children of English-speaking parents began in 1878. In 1887, a congregation of deaf nuns, the Congrégation des Petites Soeurs de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs (the congregation of the Little Sisters of the Seven Sorrows) was formed at the Institution (this order is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10). The 1893 World Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago, Ill., featured exhibits from schools for deaf students around the world. These exhibits consisted primarily of photographs of the institutions, volumes of examination papers written by the students, student publications, and various examples of their work in such areas as carpentry, shoe repair, weaving and knitting, and drawing and painting. The girls’ institution was one of the three Canadian schools that participated in this exposition; the students’ work had previously won two medals at a similar exhibition in Paris, France.³²

As students with special needs began to be admitted, the school expanded its programs to accommodate them. On June 28, 1911, the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes received its first deaf-blind student, Ludivine Lachance, aged 16. She was assigned a special tutor to work with her. By the time she died on April 3, 1918, seven years later, she had become “a young woman of exquisite cleanliness, able to dress herself and to find her way about the house without help.”³³ In 1924, Virginia Blais, 50 years of age, became the second deaf-blind student at the school. She, too, was given a special teacher. More deaf-blind students, most of them adults, began to enrol in the school. Soon, these students had their own separate classroom, with special equipment and teachers. The institution began teaching Braille to the deaf-blind students in 1929. Each was assigned her own desk with lock and key, her own Braille typewriter, her books, and all the equipment needed for her studies.

On September 25, 1935, the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes was authorized by the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction to grant a Certificate of



Deaf nun, Sister Ildephonse (the former Evéline Gareau), and three of her students (1895)

Courtesy of Sisters of Providence, Mother House (Montréal, Québec)

Studies to students who completed the required course. With the approval of the Catholic Committee of the Department of Public Instruction of the Province of Québec, the Institution opened a professional school for nuns who wished to become trained teachers of the deaf on September 21, 1938. Called the Institut Chanoine F.-X. Trépanier (Canon F.X. Trépanier Institute), it was named in memory of the first resident chaplain and benefactor of the school (1871-1906).³⁴ For almost 30 years (1938-1967), the teacher training institute (sometimes



Speech training was an integral part of the daily routine in the late 1940s

Courtesy of Institut Raymond-Dewar (Montréal, Québec)



A lesson in breath control using toy pinwheels, part of the school's "demutization" course (1952)

Courtesy of Sisters of Providence, Mother House (Montréal, Québec)

referred to as "the Normal School") prepared hearing nuns to enter the classroom. In September, 1941, a separate department of domestic science was established for the deaf girls in "the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades up," under the direction of the new graduates of the Normal School.³⁵ That same year, fire damaged the building that housed the classrooms and dormitories. The school year had to be cut short so repairs could be made; students were sent home in February, and classes did not resume until the following September.

The Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes continued

to revise its curriculum and offer new programs. The School of Domestic Arts, founded in 1947, was established for young deaf girls who had reached the age of 16. In 1951, a preschool program opened for deaf girls and boys between the ages of five and eight. And the Family Institute, a school of feminine and family education, was officially recognized in 1959. In addition, the school housed deaf women who had completed their education, but wished to remain there. They became "a part of the personnel devoted to the housework at the Institution."³⁶ By the 1966-67 school year, the Institution was serving 443 students (419 from Québec, 14 from New Brunswick, six from Ontario, two from the United States, and one each from Manitoba and St. Pierre de Miquelon).

In May 1964, responsibility for Catholic schools was transferred from the Catholic Church to the newly created Québec department of education (Bill 60). This change led to the begin-

Heads of the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes (Girls)

Montréal, Québec

Founded 1851/Closed 1975

Sister Marie de Bon Secours*

Foundress & Superior, 1851-1874

Sister Ildefonse*

Superior, 1874-1877

Sister Marie Victor*

Superior, 1877-1879

Sister Philippe de Jésus*

Superior, 1879-1886

Sister Marie de la Merci

Superior, 1886-1889

Mother Charles de la Providence

Superior, 1889-1894

Sister Philippe de Jésus*

Superior, 1894-1906

Sister Marie Albine

Superior, 1906-1908

Sister Marie Rose

Superior, 1908-1911

Mother Bertille

Superior, 1911-1917

Mother Felicite

Superior, 1917-1918

Mother Jean de Canti

Superior, 1918-1921

Sister Antoine de Padoue

Superior, 1921-1924

Sister Marie de Bon Conseil

Superior, 1924

Sister Marie Eleonore

Superior, 1924-1930

Sister Alphonse du Sauveur

Superior, 1930-1936

Sister Marie Eleonore

Superior, 1936-1942

Sister Marie Rachel

Superior, 1942-1945

Sister Clarence

Superior, 1945-1951

Sister Therese de la Trinité

Superior, 1951-1957

Sister Louis Gerard

Superior, 1957-1963

Sister Jeanne Hermance

Superior, 1963-1967

Sister Emilienne Laporte

Superior, 1967-1970

Sister Simonne Leroux

Superior, 1970-1975

As a residence only for a few boarding students and nuns (1975-1978)

Sister Gisele Desaulniers

Superior, 1975-1977

Sister Helene Julien

Superior, 1977-1978

**Gadbois family members*

ning of officially sanctioned co-ed Catholic education in the province and the eventual demise of the two schools for Catholic deaf students. In the early 1970s, the Québec National Assembly (provincial government) passed Bill 65, legislation on health and social services that forced the various religious communities of the province “to give up their hospital work and their centres.”³⁷ One of the six “centres” within the municipality of Montréal that fell under this decree was the building housing the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes on the corner of St. Denis and Cherrier streets. It was sold for \$2,448,784 to the Ministry of Social Affairs through a non-profit company called the Housing Corporation of Québec.³⁸ The female students in grades four, five, and six were transferred to classes at the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets (Catholic Institution for Deaf and Dumb Males). (The younger boys from that school were already attending the “preschool” [grades one, two, and three] at the girls’ school.) On April 19, 1975, the Institution Catholique des Sourdes-Muettes held a farewell reunion and buffet dinner attended by “over 800 former female students from the provinces of Québec and Ontario, and the United States.”³⁹ The last classes taught in the school ended in June 1975; the next school year the building continued to serve as a residence for a few students and nuns. By that time, most of the older girls had begun attending classes in the local school system, primarily at the Lucien Pagé Polyvalent School for Seniors and later at the Gadbois School run by the Montréal Catholic School Board. All of the younger girls boarded and attended classes at the boys’ institution. Some of the deaf and hearing nuns continued their teaching careers, working with deaf students at the Lucien Pagé and Gadbois schools. On May 3, 1978, the remaining handful of aging deaf and hearing nuns who still lived in the building were transferred from the girls’ Institution to Cartierville Manoir, bringing to a close the nuns’ many years of involvement in the education of deaf girls. However, the building that once housed the school and served as home for deaf students and nuns alike has continued to serve deaf people. It was renamed the “Centre de’accueil Berri,” and now houses the Institut Raymond-Dewar and several other organizations.

Institut des Sourds de Charlesbourg

As a result of the crowded conditions at the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets in Montréal, a second school for deaf males was opened in the province in January 1961 to accommodate the overflow. Known as the Institut des Sourds de Charlesbourg, this school was situated about halfway between the localities of Charlesbourg and Beauport, a short distance from the province’s capital city of Québec. Today, this building (which is no longer used as a school) can be found within the boundaries of Charlesbourg East. The idea of establishing a second school for deaf boys in the province had first been envisioned some 15 years before it became a reality. On April 25, 1945, the initial proposal was submitted to Cardinal Villeneuve, but no action was taken at that time. A second attempt was made on March 18, 1953 when the Clercs de Saint-

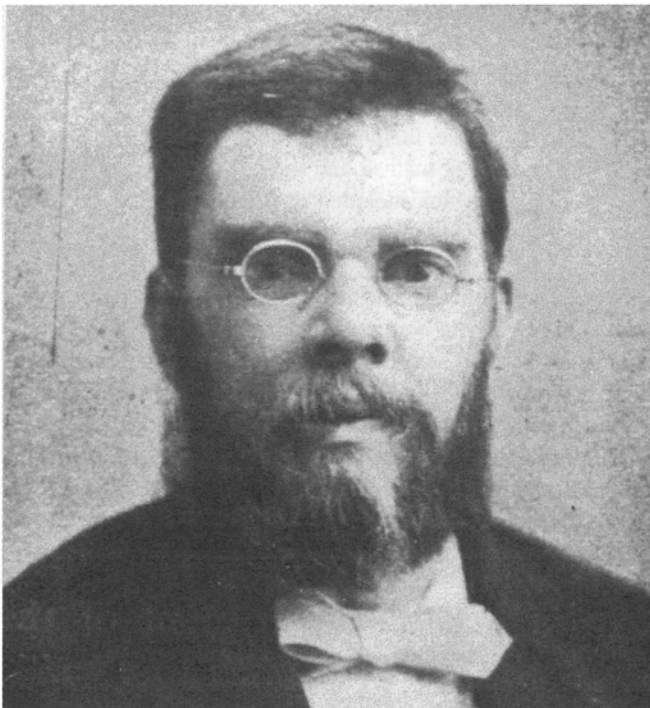
Viateur (CSV) submitted a report to Monsignor Maurice Roy (the Archbishop of Québec). This report requested that another school similar to that in Montréal be built elsewhere in the province. The project was eventually approved after the provincial government of Québec agreed to absorb the costs of construction and administration of the new school. Twenty-two acres of land (lots #1037-3 and #1047-2) in Charlesbourg were chosen for the site. Construction began in August 1959 on a building planned to accommodate administrative offices, private live-in rooms for CSV brothers, a kitchen, cafeteria, auditorium, chapel, gymnasium, infirmary, bowling lanes, a swimming pool, recreation and study rooms, dormitories for the boys, and 22 classrooms. This structure was designed with three wings set in the shape of a capital “I” — the two end wings consisted of a ground floor and two stories while the center wing was single story. Nearly all of the closets, desks, tables, filing cabinets, and cloakrooms were made by the students enrolled at the Ateliers des Sourds (Industrial Shops for the Deaf) in Montréal.

The CSV took possession of the Institut des Sourds de Charlesbourg on December 18, 1960, and opened its doors to the first 108 deaf male students on January 9, 1961. The school’s official inauguration took place on September 30, 1962. Five years later, the school became incorporated, and in the fall of 1968 admitted its first nine deaf female students. The academic program ranged from kindergarten through the elementary level and included part of the secondary level as well. Deaf children with special needs were later brought into the school. The Institute’s first principal was Father Lucien Pagé (b. Apr. 3, 1899; d. Nov. 20, 1964), a hearing priest who was ordained in the CSV religious order (in March 1925) and served as director (1936-1947 and again 1958-1960) of the Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets in Montréal. He was “the heart and soul of the school’s success” from the beginning.⁴⁰ On July 1, 1977, provincial responsibility for the Institut des Sourds de Charlesbourg was transferred from the Québec Ministry of Health and Welfare to the Ministry of Education. The building was gradually taken over by rehabilitation services for the Deaf community, and the school portion became an independent entity called École Joseph Paquin. By February 25, 1988, the classes had moved out of the building to nearby École Carrefour 1. Today, the Institut des Sourds de Charlesbourg is no longer a school for deaf children. Instead, its primary focus is on rehabilitation services for adult deaf and hard-of-hearing people, serving the eastern region of the province of Québec. Most of its employees are audiologists, speech therapists, psychologists, hearing aid technicians, and specialists in social and educational integration. Sign language classes in both FSL (French Sign Language) and LSQ (Langue des Signes Québécoise) have also been offered to the general public through this facility. This Institut also claims to be the only centre in Canada that provides rehabilitation services for cochlear implant patients.

The Mackay Center for Deaf Children

Founded by a deaf Englishman in September 1870, the Mackay Center for Deaf Children in Montréal is the oldest school for the deaf in Canada still in operation. The history of the school began with Thomas Widd, a deaf assistant editor with *The Daily Witness* (a widely read Montréal newspaper).⁴¹ Widd, a protestant, had received an unfriendly welcome from the Catholic Deaf community and the Catholic schools in Montréal. As he put it, “They taunted me with being the only ‘heretic deaf-mute’ in Montreal,” and hinted that no one would associate with Widd “until I changed my religious belief.”⁴² After local newspapers published his opinions about the need for a protestant school, Widd received even harsher criticism from the Catholic community. “The French press spread the cry that ‘Widd and the *Witness* wanted to destroy the Catholic Schools and make them Protestant Institutions’.”⁴³ One day, a hearing, English-speaking gentleman asked Widd for some advice. The man had a deaf son whom he wanted to have educated within the city rather than sent away to a school far from home. There were already two French Catholic institutions in Montréal — one for deaf boys and the other for deaf girls — but no facilities for deaf children of English-speaking families with Protestant backgrounds. Supported by requests like this from other parents, Widd began a drive to establish such a school. Despite the lack of exact census figures, he was able to estimate that there were about 200 Protestant deaf people in the province of Québec, including approximately 75 who were of school age.⁴⁴

This energetic and dedicated man wrote several articles on the need for a school, which were published in *The Daily Witness*.⁴⁵ His articles generated comments from readers, and

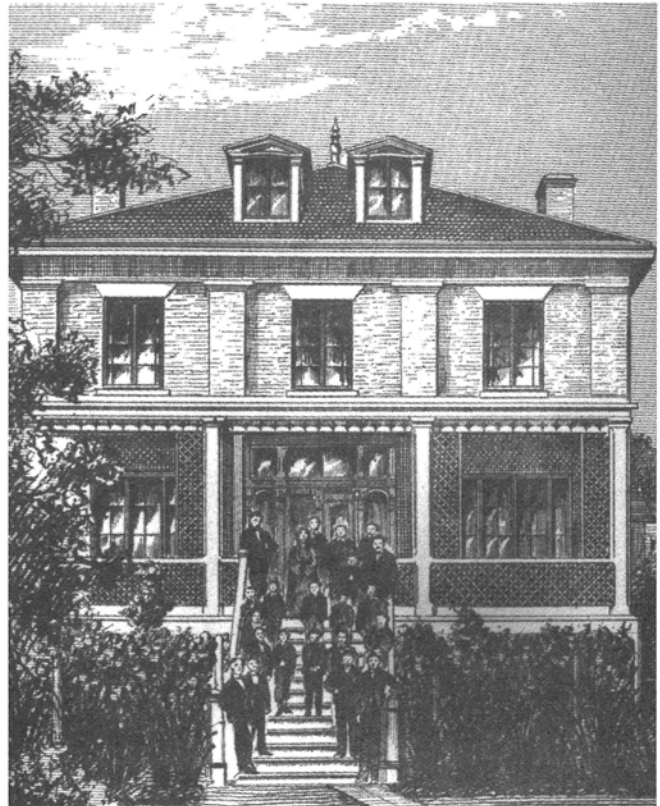


Thomas Widd

Representative Deaf Persons/Gallaudet University Archives

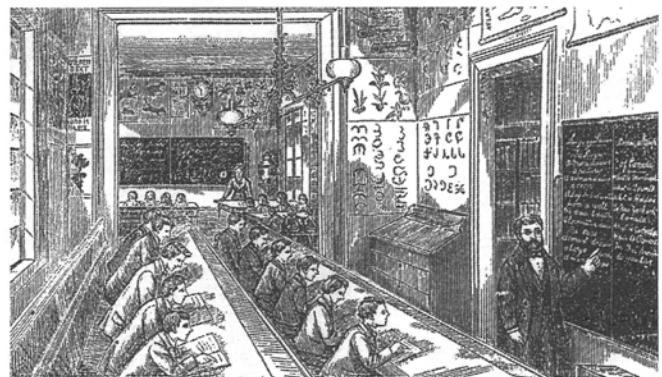
thus began a year-long correspondence on the subject, which was also printed in the newspaper. To gain additional support for his project, Widd invited John Barrett McGann, then headmaster of the Hamilton Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Hamilton, Ont., to come to Montréal. In late 1868, McGann and two of his students gave several well-received exhibitions in the city to demonstrate that deaf children could be educated successfully.

The publicity that resulted from Widd’s articles, the letters in the newspaper, and McGann’s visit to the city, aroused the interest of a group of philanthropic Montréalers and led to a



The Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes on Côte St. Antoine Road (circa 1873)

3rd Annual Report of the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes/Gallaudet University Archives



Widd’s classroom in the early 1870s (sketch by Charles E. Wilson, a deaf engraver)

The Deaf and Dumb and Blind Deaf-Mutes/Photo reproduction credit: Chun Louie and Joan K. Schlub, Gallaudet University Photo Services

public meeting on January 7, 1869. Those present formed a society “to establish an educational institution for Protestant deaf-mutes in Lower Canada” (now the province of Québec).⁴⁶ During a meeting held the next day, the committee members decided to raise as much money as they could while waiting for a response to their request for aid from the government. By their next meeting (on January 19th), the society’s fundraising committee reported that they had been able to acquire almost \$6,000. On April 5, 1869, the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes and for the Blind was incorporated by the Legislature of Lower Canada. The plea to the provincial government of Québec for financial support was initially denied. However, when the committee demanded the same financial rights as were being given to the Roman Catholic schools, the government responded with an annual grant of one thousand dollars. (By 1877, this figure had been increased to \$1,729.)⁴⁷

In July 1870, the society was able to rent a house with ample grounds and enough space to accommodate about 20 pupils. The property was located on Côte St. Antoine Road (at the corner of Clarke Avenue, about 500 yards beyond the Sherbrooke Street tollgate) in the village of Notre Dame de Grace (now the Westmount area of Montréal). The attic became the dormitory, while the lower floors were converted into schoolroom, sitting-room, kitchen, and chapel. The annual rent for the building and grounds was \$400, with “an option to purchase the whole property for \$8,000.”⁴⁸

The Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes welcomed its first students on September 15, 1870. Widd was principal and teacher, and his deaf wife, Margaret, served as matron (1870-1878). For the first year, she was also assistant teacher.



Margaret Widd, the school's first matron
Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)

By the time the institution officially opened to the public on November 1st of that year, it was serving 11 deaf pupils (nine boys and two girls). Five of these students were admitted free, and the other six paid fees of \$90 each. The number of students grew to 16 during the first school year. The method of teaching was exclusively manual (natural signs, writing, and both the American single-handed and British double-handed alphabets). The 13 boys and three girls who enrolled in the first year (1870-1871) were: John C. Moore (age 10), John MacNaughton (age 10), William Elliott (age six), Farrand C. Esty (age seven), James McClelland (age 14), James Outterson (age 13), William Butt (age 12), William Kimpton (age 17), Henry A. Porter (age 23), Lewie Maryshall (age 12), Robert Lunan (age 11), Robert Alexander (age 24), Eddy Pasche (age 11), Mary Jane Westover (age 17), Elizabeth A. Denison (age 14), and Catherine St. Just Taskey (age 23), “... a young woman deaf, dumb, and blind.”⁴⁹ Two of the students were found on the streets in Montréal and Québec City and brought into the institution as free pupils. At the time of admission, each student was required to bring the following items:

*For a Boy — Two dresses complete; four shirts; four handkerchiefs; four neckerchiefs; four pairs of knitted worsted stockings; two pairs of good boots or shoes; overshoes; two hats or caps; a warm overcoat; two pairs of woollen gloves; tooth-comb, comb and hair-brush in a bag, and tooth-brush. One of the suits must be plain and strong for every-day wear, and the other should be of dark cloth. For a Girl — Four shifts; four pairs of stockings; two flannel petticoats; two dark skirts; two pairs of stays; two dark stuff frocks; six pinafores or aprons; four handkerchiefs; four night-caps; two pairs of boots or shoes; overshoes; a warm cloak or shawl; two bonnets or hats; two pairs of gloves; tooth-comb, comb and hair-brush in a bag, and a tooth-brush.*⁵⁰

At first, the deaf pupils received instruction “eight hours a day, six days a week in the schoolroom.”⁵¹ Under Principal Widd’s supervision, the boys performed different kinds of work about the place, including carpentry and gardening. The girls, along with the matron and the cook, looked after all the domestic work, which included dressmaking, sewing, mending, and household management. At the dinner table, the children and staff frequently dined on potatoes and other vegetables from the school’s own garden. By the second year of operation, the original 48-hour-per-week schedule proved to be too exhausting for the staff and pupils, so it was changed to five hours a day of instruction for five days a week. On Sundays, the Widds usually spent three hours teaching religious studies.

At the suggestion of the school’s Board of Governors, Widd toured the province during the summer of 1871 with two of his more advanced students. They gave exhibitions of the students’ accomplishments and raised funds for the school’s operation. Québec City residents were so impressed with the students’ progress that they collected \$267.53 to provide the institution “with a printing-press and founts [sic] of type.”⁵² Printing classes were introduced at the school in 1872. Widd, who was experienced in this line, instructed the boys. Carpentry was taught by Henry A. Porter, a former pupil of Widd’s who ini-

tially received his training at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (1864-1867). When the Protestant Institution hired its first hearing and speech teacher (Clara Bulmer), lessons in articulation through the medium of signs and written language were given to “semi-mutes” (the old term for hard-of-hearing people). Bulmer replaced Margaret Widd as assistant teacher in 1871.

The school attracted the attention of numerous visitors, among them religious and civic leaders, and politicians. Lord Dufferin, the Governor General of Canada (1872-1878), and his wife, Lady Dufferin, visited the school on January 20, 1873. The pupils were pleasantly surprised that the Dufferins were able to converse with them using the British double-handed alphabet. In 1874, the Protestant Institution began producing its own Little Paper Family (LPF) publication called the *Côte St. Antoine Times and Canadian Deaf-Mute Chronicle*.⁵³ Printed on tinted paper, this monthly school newspaper was designed “to be of local interest outside of the institution, while devoting a good portion of its space to deaf-mute matters.”⁵⁴ That same year, the school began providing art classes as well. (The school’s first LPF publication ended some time between 1878 and 1882. The next school paper, *The Tuque*, began publication in April 1890, but continued for only two or three issues.)

It was not long before the school became overcrowded. By 1875, the building was trying to accommodate 26 students. Québec was experiencing poor economic conditions in general, and this caused a decrease in donations to the school. Funding became too scarce to allow the school to accept all those who applied for admission. Even though the government had increased its grant to \$1,729, the school found itself in dire financial straits over the next three years. Principal Widd’s salary and that of the teachers “did not exceed \$600 a year.”⁵⁵ In the midst of its struggle for existence, the school unexpectedly received a letter (dated November 24, 1876) from a local hearing philanthropist named Joseph Mackay (b. Sept. 18, 1810; d. June 6, 1881). Mackay, who had come to Montréal from Scotland in 1832, had prospered in the wholesale dry goods business. He offered to donate some property that he had just acquired on Decarie Road (now Décarie Boulevard), and pay for the construction of a new school building.⁵⁶ Mackay himself laid the cornerstone for his generous gift on June 6, 1877. The residential school, beautifully constructed in Gothic style, officially opened on February 12, 1878 on the same site where the present-day Mackay Center is located. To honour the man who had been so generous, the Board of Governors of the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes renamed their school “The Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes” on March 9, 1878.

In March 1879, Joseph Mackay wrote to Edward Miner Gallaudet, president of the National

Deaf-Mute College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C., requesting his assistance in finding a “superior female speaking teacher.”⁵⁷ No record has been found to determine how much help Gallaudet was able to provide in this search. Two years later, in September, the school hired its first articulation teacher — Harriet (“Hattie”) Elizabeth McGann (b. Dec. 1, 1846; d. Nov. 15, 1919), third daughter of John Barrett McGann (founder of the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Belleville in October 1870). Prior to coming to Montréal, she had worked with her father as a teacher at the Upper Canada Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Toronto (1858-1864) and the Hamilton Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in

THE MACKAY INSTITUTION For Protestant Deaf-Mutes, and the Blind		
PUPIL'S BILL OF FARE		
SUNDAY.		
BREAKFAST SAUSAGE OR STEAK, POTATOES, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE OR MILK	DINNER HOT ROAST JOINT, CANNED VEGETABLES, POTATOES, PIE OR PUDDING.	TEA BREAD AND BUTTER, CANNED FRUIT, CAKE, TEA OR MILK.
MONDAY.		
BREAKFAST PORRIDGE, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE, OR MILK	DINNER SOUP, COLD MEAT, PICKLES, POTATOES.	TEA BREAD AND BUTTER, APPLE SAUCE, TEA, OR MILK.
TUESDAY.		
BREAKFAST BREAD AND BUTTER, FRIED POTATOES, EGGS, COFFEE OR MILK.	DINNER MEAT PIE, POTATOES, PUDDING	TEA HOT BISCUITS, SYRUP OR HONEY, BREAD AND BUTTER, TEA, OR MILK.
WEDNESDAY		
BREAKFAST EGGS, PORRIDGE, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE OR MILK.	DINNER ROAST JOINT, TWO VEGETABLES.	TEA PORK & BEANS, BREAD AND BUTTER, TEA OR MILK.
THURSDAY.		
BREAKFAST HASH, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE OR MILK.	DINNER MEAT, POTATOES, PUDDING.	TEA CORN-CAKE, SYRUP OR HONEY, BREAD & BUTTER, TEA OR MILK.
FRIDAY.		
BREAKFAST PORRIDGE, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE OR MILK.	DINNER SOUP, TWO VEGETABLES, FRESH FISH	TEA CODFISH BALLS, CANNED FRUIT, BREAD & BUTTER, TEA OR MILK.
SATURDAY.		
BREAKFAST FRIED POTATOES, HERRING, BREAD AND BUTTER, COFFEE OR MILK.	DINNER STEW, POTATOES, FRUIT IN SEASON, BREAD AND BUTTER, BISCUITS, COCOA.	TEA CRACKED-WHEAT, PRUNES, BREAD & BUTTER, TEA OR MILK.
Fruit in Season.		

A school menu from the 1880s

30th Annual Report of the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes/Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)

Hamilton, Ont. (1864-1870). For six years (1875-1881), she also taught articulation at the Michigan Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind in Flint. In 1882, Widd took a year's leave of absence due to ill health and moved to Los Angeles, Calif. McGann was appointed acting superintendent in his absence, in addition to her duties teaching articulation. Widd never returned (officially resigning in 1883), and she served as the second (1883-1889) and later the fourth (1891-1917) superintendent of the Mackay Institution. She also shared superintendent



Some of the students and staff on the front steps of the Mackay Institution (photograph taken in June 1893 by John McNaughton, a former student)

Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)

responsibilities with her husband, John Imrie Ashcroft, for two years (1889-1891).

McGann favoured oral methods of teaching deaf children and reported in 1893 that “in the Mackay Institution we use every means to suppress the use of signs. The children who cannot articulate resort to the one hand alphabet, the others use their tongues.”⁵⁸ By 1894, the manual students had been separated from the oral students. “The congenitally deaf were instructed in entirely distinct classes from those taught orally, unless they displayed ability and had sufficient command of lip-reading to keep abreast with the other members of the class.”⁵⁹

In the years that followed, the Mackay Institution's population grew, and expansion of the school was inevitable. Additions to the school included two large playrooms with separate entrances — one for boys and the other for girls (1895); a gymnasium attached to the boys' playroom (1905); an addition to the dorm (1912); a kindergarten room (1925); eight new classrooms, a medical room, and enlargement of the Manual Training Department (1935); and a domestic science room (1937). By 1951, two houses on the north side of the school had been purchased as well, one for the girls' dormitory and the other for the principal's residence.

When blind (hearing) pupils of Protestant background were first admitted in September 1884, the school became known as “The Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes and the Blind.” The blind department continued until 1914, when it was transferred to the Institute for the Blind in Montréal. However, the school did not drop the words “and the Blind” from its name until 1933, following the passage of



Staff and pupils at the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes, June 1900

Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)

Assembly Bill No. 24. At about the same time, a request was made to drop the words “mute” and “institution” from the official name. Such a name change was an expensive procedure (costing at least \$1,000) and required passage of a Private Bill by the Québec Legislature. Apparently, no further action was taken at that time to change the school’s name, because it continued to be called the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes until 1960.

The third superintendent of the Mackay Institution (1889-1891) was John Imrie Ashcroft (b. June 21, 1858; d. Nov. 30, 1891), a native Montréaler. A hearing man, he was an experienced teacher of the deaf. Following his training at McGill Normal School (1883), he started his teaching career at the Mackay Institution (1884-1888). He also taught for six months in 1888 in the department for deaf children at the Washington School for Defective Youth in Vancouver, Wash., and then became the founding principal-teacher of the short-lived British Columbia School for Deaf Mutes and the Blind in Victoria (1888-1889). Ashcroft returned to Montréal in June 1889, where he married Harriet Elizabeth McGann, then superintendent of the Mackay Institution. The two served as joint superintendents until Ashcroft’s death from consumption two years later. Soon after he was buried (in Mount Royal Cemetery, Outremont), his wife resumed her role as sole superintendent of the institution.

After completing their education, several former students returned to the school as teachers. However, from the time of Widd’s official resignation in 1883, the number of deaf employees at the Mackay Institution gradually decreased. By 1897, the staff was composed entirely of “speaking and hearing instructors.”⁶⁰

Until February 1899, when electric lights were installed, school rooms were lit by coal oil lamps. The Mackay Institution got its water from nearby wells. During the long drought in the summer of 1887, the wells dried up, and large casks of water had to be brought to the school for the fall and winter months. To prevent this from happening again, the Board of Governors decided to sink an artesian well on the school property. When the drills reached 600 feet, they struck an abundant supply of water, enough to last the Institution for years.

The rural setting of the school may have seemed like a “paradise” to the students, especially those who had come from crowded, poorer sections of the cities. Arthur Stanley Walker, a pupil at the Mackay Institution (1894-1902), recorded his memories of the place in a letter to a friend:

The School building was alone in all its glory surrounded by orchards and farms and meadows for miles around. How I remember the beauty of the place! You could see miles of apple trees, inhale the scent of fresh vegetables, the odor of lovely wild flowers and enjoy exhilarating air. The Old Stone building was the only one on the property with the exception of the Carpentry Shop which at that time was connected to the Main building by a long gallery. Just above the Carpentry Shop was the Printing Shop and a Shoe-Makers room. A couple of years after my advent to the School, the Printing Shop was dispensed with. Why this was done, I do not know as I was very young then, but I realize now the seri-

*ous error made by those responsible, as the instruction of printing and type-setting was an outstanding factor in the moulding of deaf education Our sports in Winter were many and varied, hockey, to-baganning [sic], snowshoeing, and hiking for there was plenty of open spaces and in the Spring we would tramp the mountains ... gather wild flowers and butter-nuts.*⁶¹

In 1914, the kindergarten class at the Mackay Institution was the first in Canada to use the Montessori System with deaf children. Three years later, Ida McLeod (b. 1868; d. Aug. 31, 1953), a hearing woman who had joined the teaching staff at the Mackay Institution during the 1892-1893 school year, became principal. She continued in that position until her retirement in 1934. Deaf pupils from the province of Saskatchewan were admitted to the Mackay Institution for the first time during the 1926-1927 school year. This arrangement provided welcomed revenue for the school and continued until 1931 when Saskatchewan opened its own school in Saskatoon. The departure of the Saskatchewan students caused the Mackay Institution to suffer a financial setback.

Following McLeod’s retirement in 1934, the Board decided that the use of signs should be completely abandoned in teaching the deaf child, because it “sets apart or excludes the deaf from normal conversation.”⁶² Speech and lipreading instruction were to be the only teaching methods. To institute this philosophy, the institution hired Eva B. Hudson, who was then headmaster of the Hearnville Road School in London, England (1920-1934). Hudson had trained in the Stoke-on-Trent School for the Blind and Deaf Children and had worked for some time as an assistant teacher in schools for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in London. By the spring of 1936, the Mackay Institution had become exclusively oral. Hudson remained at the institution for three years, returning to England in 1937.

During their academic careers, the students participated in after-school activities that later provided them (and the school) with a little income. The boys took carpentry courses, and the girls attended classes in weaving taught by a member of the Canadian Handicrafts Guide. The Mackay Homecraft Studio, an independent entity, opened in early 1940 at 2063 Victoria Street to help older students and graduates of the Mackay Institution earn a living.⁶³ It was equipped with hand looms that had been built by the boys in the woodworking classes. The wool woven by the loom operators (who averaged five to six yards of material a day) was then used to produce such items as ties, blankets, clothing, and rugs. Over the next two decades, a portion of the Homecraft Studio’s profits were periodically donated to the school. In 1950, for example, the Studio donated a total of \$5,000 to the Mackay Institution.⁶⁴ (The Mackay Homecraft Studio was also instrumental in helping Joseph Pierre Alphonse Sevigny [b. Oct. 27, 1938] — a Canadian wrestler, Gallaudet student [1955-1961], and alumnus of the Mackay Institution [1945-1947 and 1949-1955] — compete in the 9th International [Summer] Games for the Deaf in Helsinki, Finland in 1961.) In 1954, the Mackay Homecraft Studio announced that it would grant a scholarship to send two teachers for a year of training at the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Mass. It is not known if any of the staff took

the Studio up on this offer to study at the exclusively oral American school.

The principal during the latter days of the Depression was Dena Isabel Louise Hagen (b. Feb. 1, 1907) (a hearing woman and relative of John Calvin Watson, the first teacher and principal at the Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Winnipeg [1888-1890]). Her degrees were from McMaster University (B.A., 1930) — then located in Toronto and now in Hamilton, Ont. — and Gallaudet College (M.A., 1931). During her three years as principal (1937-1940), Hagan established a normal department to train hearing teachers of deaf students. She also emphasized the importance of close communication between the school and the families, sending home copies of the students' work and monthly reports on their progress. Hagen was followed by Dr. Harold Davey Southam (b. Jan. 13, 1896; d. Jan. 11, 1973), a hearing man who had come to the school from his position as assistant professor of education at McGill University (1934-1940) in Montréal. A native of London, Ont., he attended the following schools: the University of British Columbia (B.A., 1929), and the University of Toronto (B.Paed., 1931; D.Paed., 1933).⁶⁵ Although he was not well-informed about deaf education, Southam's name lent prestige to the Mackay Institution.⁶⁶ He served for only one year (1940-1941).⁶⁷

Deaf students from the province of Alberta began attending the Mackay Institution during the 1940-1941 school year. They had previously attended the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg, but it was taken over by the federal government at the end of the 1939-1940 school year and converted into No. 3 Wireless School for the Royal Canadian Air Force in the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. (In addition to accepting students from the "temporarily" closed Manitoba School, the Mackay Institution also hired several former Manitoba School employees.) Deaf Albertans were accepted annually at the Mackay Institution until the province of Alberta opened its own residential school for deaf children in 1955. Sign language began to slowly reappear at Mackay in the 1940s. In 1941, there were eight oral classes and one manual class, with each class averaging about 10 students.

The next head of the institution after Southam was another hearing man, Melvin Scott Blanchard (b. May 22, 1904; d. Nov. 8, 1975), who served for 20 years (1941-1961). Formerly a teacher at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville (1923-1935), superintendent of the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg (1935-1940), and supervising teacher at the Mackay

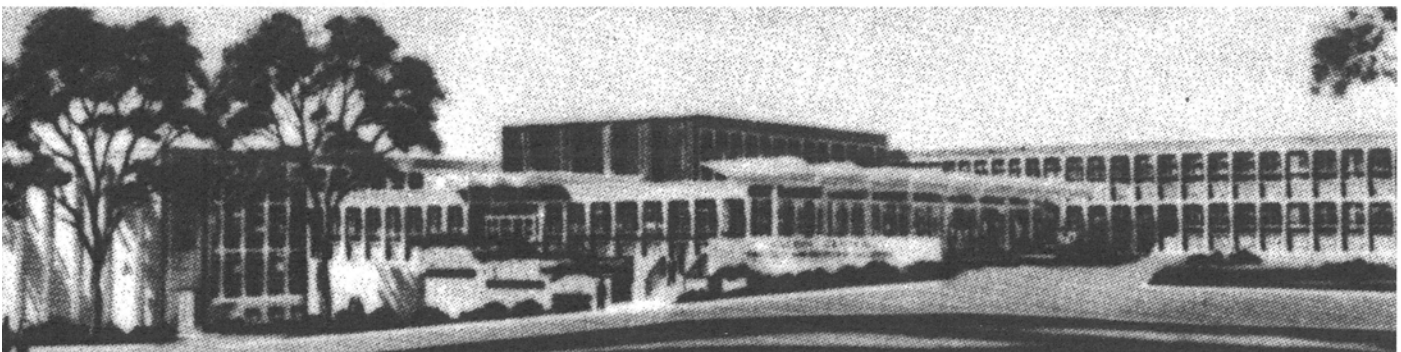
Institution (1940-1941), he had received a degree in mathematics from Queen's University (B.A., 1932) in Kingston, Ont.⁶⁸ Emphasis on manual work, such as carpentry, began to wane as more attention was placed on academics. Classes in lipreading for deaf adults also began while Blanchard was principal. During his tenure, the students began printing the *Mackay Bulletin*. The first edition of this monthly Little Paper Family publication rolled off the press in April 1942. For many years thereafter, the pupils contributed stories and items of interest to this monthly publication, which was finally discontinued during the 1960-1961 school year.

Students from other provinces continued to attend the Mackay Institution. By the late 1940s, the School for the Deaf in Halifax, N.S. had become too crowded to accept all of the Newfoundland applicants. Thus, two years before it became Canada's 10th province in 1949, Newfoundland transferred some of its deaf children to the Mackay Institution. The first group of seven Newfoundlanders, ranging in age from six to 14 years, arrived at Mackay on October 29, 1947. By 1958, all deaf Newfoundlanders had been transferred from the Halifax facili-



The Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in the mid-1950s

Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)



The present-day Mackay Center at 3500 Décarie Boulevard

Courtesy of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children (Montréal, Québec)

ty to the Mackay Institution. However, when the Interprovincial School for the Education of the Deaf was opened in Amherst, N.S. in 1961, a few Newfoundlanders transferred from the Montréal facility to the new school in Nova Scotia. Others remained at Mackay until Newfoundland established its own school in 1964.

On May 7, 1950, the Montreal Association of the Deaf presented the school with an oil portrait of Thomas Widd, the founder and first principal of the first school for Protestant deaf children in the province of Québec. The unveiling ceremony was performed by 81-year-old Jessie Skelly MacFarlane (b. Nov. 21, 1868; d. Nov. 23, 1952), a former deaf pupil of Widd's (1877-1885) and at one time a teacher at Mackay (1885-1897).⁶⁹ The portrait hung in the lobby of the school until the early 1960s, at which time it disappeared.⁷⁰

Changes were afoot during the late 1950s and early 1960s on the property donated by Joseph Mackay. The 1957 *Study on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in the Province of Québec* recommended that the Mackay Institution and the Montreal Oral School for Deaf Children be combined to accommodate both Catholic and Protestant English-speaking deaf children under one major administration. The Mackay Institution favoured the idea. But when it was suggested that the new school be established on the site of the Mackay Institution, the Montreal Oral School rejected the plan on the basis that "it would mean admitting that both systems [oral and manual] are of equal value."⁷¹ The plan to combine the two schools for deaf children was abandoned, but soon another plan took its place. For economic reasons, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Québec passed an Act in 1960 to combine the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes and Montréal's School for Crippled Children under the new name of "The Mackay Center for Deaf and Crippled Children." It was the unanimous desire of the Board of Governors that the Mackay

Center serve not only deaf children of Protestant background, "but deaf, disabled and handicapped children of all faiths and from all provinces."⁷² A new building was constructed on the site and officially opened on November 28, 1965. (In 1982, the name of this school was officially shortened to "The Mackay Center," as it is known today.)

The leadership of the institution continued to be dominated by hearing men. Following Blanchard's departure, Dr. Laurence Prescott Patterson (b. Oct. 11, 1904), who was originally associated with the School for Crippled Children as a principal (1950-1960), assumed the role of executive director of the amalgamated Mackay Center for Deaf and Crippled Children (1960-1966).⁷³ A native of Liscomb, N.S., Patterson went to the following universities: Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B. (B.A., 1924); Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. (M.A., 1930); and Columbia University in New York, N.Y. (Ed.D., 1947). The next executive director was Henry Minto (b. Dec. 25, 1930), who held the position for nine years (1966-1975).⁷⁴ Dr. James Colin MacDougall (b. May 2, 1942), the hearing son of deaf parents, was appointed executive director in 1975.⁷⁵ He grew up in Ottawa, Ont., where he attended Carleton University (B.A., 1965). His other degrees were from McGill University (M.A., 1966; Ph.D., 1969) in Montréal. MacDougall had worked as assistant professor in the department of psychology at Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld. (1969-1971), and as assistant professor and research associate at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, N.Y., for one year (1971-1972). At the Mackay Center, he served as research director (1972-1980), and also became executive director, a position he held for two years (1975-1977). William John Lockert held the executive director position for three years (1977-1980), after which MacDougall returned for another seven years (1980-1987).⁷⁶ MacDougall has been a part-time associate professor in the department of psychology at McGill since 1972.

Heads of the Mackay Center for Deaf Children*

Montréal, Québec, Founded 1870

Thomas Widd**	Founder & Principal, 1870-1882
Harriet Elizabeth McGann	Acting Principal, 1882-1883
Harriet Elizabeth McGann	Superintendent, 1883-1889
John Imrie Ashcroft [joint position with wife, H. E. (née McGann)]	Superintendent, 1889-1891
Harriet Elizabeth (née McGann) Ashcroft	Superintendent, 1891-1917
Ida I. McLeod	Superintendent, 1917-1934
Eva B. Hudson	Principal, 1934-1937
Dena Isabel Louise Hagen (later Wishart), B.A., M.A.	Principal, 1937-1940
Harold Davey Southam, B.A., B.Paed., D.Paed.	Principal, 1940-1941
Melvin Scott Blanchard, B.A.	Principal, 1941-1960
Laurence Prescott Patterson, B.A., M.A., Ed.D.	Executive Director, 1960-1966
Henry Minto, B.Ed., M.Sc.	Executive Director, 1966-1975
James Colin MacDougall, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Executive Director, 1975-1977
William John Lockert, B.A., M.A., M.Ed.	Executive Director, 1977-1980
James Colin MacDougall, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Executive Director, 1980-1987
John Ross Spencer, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Executive Director, 1987-present

*As of December 1994

**Deaf

Although the school first opened in September 1870, centennial celebrations were not held until 1978 (June 1st and 2nd). These celebrations honoured the 1878 official opening of the newly constructed Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes on Decarie Boulevard. During the centennial events, a descendant of Joseph Mackay (the man who had donated the land and paid to have the original buildings constructed) unveiled a drawing of the original school.

In 1980, the school for the deaf portion of the Mackay Center moved to Dupuis Avenue and established the Royal Vale campus. The crippled students remained at the building on Decarie Boulevard.⁷⁷ Eventually, it became too expensive to maintain two separate campuses, and the deaf students moved back to the Decarie Boulevard site. During the 1985-1986 school year, a program for deaf infants was established. By 1986, the Mackay Center was serving 50 deaf and 150 physically disabled students, who ranged in age from six months to 21 years.⁷⁸

The current executive director of the Mackay Center is Dr. John Ross Spencer (b. Mar. 15, 1943), a hearing person born in Ottawa, Ont. who was appointed to the position in 1987. Although he does not have a professional background in deaf

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Mackay Center for Deaf Children*

Montréal, Québec, Founded 1870

Thomas Widd	1870-1882
Margaret (née Fitzakerly) Widd	1870-1871
Henry A. Porter	1872-18??
Gordon Redmond	1876-1878
Robert Lunan	1878-18??
Jessie Skelly MacFarlane	1885-1897
Eugene C. Libbey	1912-1933
James McClelland	18??-1888 & 1889-1895
Francis George Jefferson	1888
Ellen Jones	1889-1???
Etta Wiggett	1896-1???
Gordon Steniforth	1904-19??
May Cunningham	1908-1949
Mabel Florence Bremner	1921-1934
Leandor Mitton	1934-1946 & 1949-1954
Dean Ellsworth Tomlinson, B.Sc.	1940-1941
Benedict Julis Eyolfson	1940-1943
Archibald Howard McDonald	1940-1961
Esther MeDora Paulson (later Deer)	1940-1943
Jo Anne Mary Stump, B.A., M.Ed.(2), M.A.	1971-present
Jon Harold Hough, B.A., M.Ed.	1973-1984
Macklin Youngs, B.A., M.Ed.	1976-1990
Ilene Bonnie (née Liebman) Youngs, B.A., M.Ed.	1980-1990
Peter Frank Sicoli, B.A., M.Ed.	1981-1982
Norman Lloyd Nelson, B.A., M.Ed.	1991-1994

*As of December 1994

Thomas Widd, School Founder and Principal

Thomas Widd (b. Aug. 4, 1839; d. Dec. 5, 1906), a deaf Englishman, was the founder and first principal of the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes in Montréal, Québec, in 1870.⁷⁹

Born at Driffield in the county of Yorkshire, England, Widd became deaf after a severe attack of scarlet fever that occurred when he was between three and four years of age. Prior to starting school, he learned the Dalgarno Hand Alphabet from his hearing father at home. He made rapid progress in acquiring knowledge through his father's "writing in the air with his finger."⁸⁰ In September 1852, at the age of 13, he was admitted as Pupil No. 405/6 at the Yorkshire Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Doncaster, England. Two years later, he left school to return home to Driffield. He had developed a

strong love for reading, which enabled him to acquire a good command of the English language. For a time, Widd worked as assistant engineer in a large steam sawmill in his native town. Upon learning of his dangerous occupation, however, the principal of the Yorkshire Institution became concerned for his safety and visited him in 1859. To lure him away from the dangers of sawmill work, he offered Widd a position as assistant teacher and printer, a safer kind of employment. Widd accepted and immediately began his training in both the teaching and the printing professions.

A few years later, Widd was invited to organize and establish the Sheffield Deaf-Mute Association, which he agreed to do. He resigned from the Yorkshire Institution in 1862 to become a lay missionary to the adult deaf, preaching in Leeds and Sheffield. Later, he founded other associations "for the moral and religious instruction of

(Continued)

Thomas Widd ... cont'd

the adult deaf and dumb in Sheffield and other English towns," while supporting himself as a journeyman printer at Grantham in Lincolnshire and by writing for the press.⁸¹ Once, in return for his work among the Deaf community, Widd was presented with "a handsome writing-desk with a suitable inscription engraved on the lid, expressing the gratitude of the Sheffield deaf-mutes for the services rendered them."⁸²

On New Year's Day in 1864, Widd married Margaret Fitzakerly (b. Aug. 5, 1836; d. Feb. 11, 1909), an alumna of the Yorkshire Institution. Charles, their first child (born in London, England), was the godson of Charles Dickens, the English novelist. After becoming acquainted with the Widds, Dickens began to write deaf characters into some of his stories (e.g., *Dr. Margold* and *Master Humphrey's Clock*).⁸³ The Widds, who later had two other hearing children (Kate and Frederick) born in Montréal, were married for 42 years. During the year of Confederation in 1867, the family moved to Canada to visit Margaret's father, Timothy Fitzakerly, who had a farm near Brussels, Ont. Widd landed an evening job as compositor on *The Hamilton Spectator* in Hamilton, Ont. While there, he visited the Hamilton Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb at Dundurn Castle. During his visit, Widd was asked to consider a teaching position at the new Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, then scheduled to be opened at Belleville in October 1870.

Widd was interested in this position and began to take steps to prepare himself. While he waited for the new school to open, he resigned from the newspaper and for a while sold books, including one written by John Barrett McGann on the education of deaf people in Ontario. Next, he moved to Montréal, where he worked as assistant editor with *The Daily Witness* newspaper. At first, when readers of the newspaper read the Widd's articles, they expressed doubts that he had actually written the pieces himself. Many were astonished that a deaf man could master the English language so well. While living and working in Montréal, Widd became convinced that the province of Québec needed a school for deaf children of Protestant background. In 1868 and 1869, he managed to have a few articles and letters on the subject published in *The Daily Witness*. His writings led to a public meeting on January 7, 1869. The next day, a committee of prominent Protestant citizens formed a society so they could work together to set up a school for the Protestant deaf children of the province. It was not until the 4th of May 1870, however, that Widd was told to look for a suitable house and grounds for the school. His involvement in this school in Québec prevented him from following up on the offer of a teaching position at the Ontario Institution.

The Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes was officially founded on September 15, 1870. Two months later,

on the 1st of November, the institution was formally opened to the public. Widd was the school's principal, and his wife was matron and assistant teacher. They received 16 pupils during the first session. Between 1874 and 1880, Widd compiled and published three books — *A Companion Guide for Deaf-Mutes* in 1874, *A Brief History of the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes* in 1877, and *The Deaf and Dumb and Blind Deaf-Mutes* in 1880. He also wrote two essays — "The Deaf and Dumb" (1874) and "Primitive Conscience" (1879) — that were published in the *Canadian Illustrated News*.

In 1882, he took a one-year leave of absence from his position as principal because of poor health. The next year, he officially resigned and moved with his family to Los Angeles, Calif., where he bought 10 acres of land between Washington and Adams streets on what was later Vermont Avenue. His arrival made him one of California's earliest deaf leaders and a pioneer in church work among the Deaf community there. In 1886, the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet visited Los Angeles. (He was the eldest son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the man who had founded the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in Hartford in 1817.) Rev. Gallaudet persuaded Widd to start a deaf mission in Los Angeles. Widd held his first Sunday Bible reading classes in the parish house of St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral. Three years later, he became the founder and missionary of the Los Angeles Association for the Deaf. On May 11, 1896, he was granted a licence as lay-reader by the Bishop of Los Angeles, the Rt. Rev. J.H. Johnson. At one time, Widd thought of establishing a public institution for deaf students in Southern California, because parents objected to the great expense of sending their children so far north to the California Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind in Berkeley. Unfortunately, he was unable to bring his dream to fruition.

The March 1, 1904 issue of *The Silent Echo* referred to Widd as one who "has done much for the cause of the deaf and his name will ever be a living monument to those who have benefitted by his good works."⁸⁴ In 1906, at the age of 67 years and four months, Widd died suddenly in Los Angeles as a result of angina pectoris. He was buried on the same day he died, in the city's Rosedale (now Angelus-Rosedale) Cemetery (the gravesites of Widd and his wife — Nos. 3-163-2SW and 3-163-3SW respectively — are unmarked). He was remembered fondly by his contemporaries, one of whom commented, "He spent most of all his life in going about doing good."⁸⁵ On May 7, 1950, the Montreal Deaf Association unveiled an oil portrait of Widd and presented it to the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes. It hung in the school's lobby until its mysterious disappearance in the 1960s. ■

education, he came to Mackay with strong administrative skills that he learned as dean and then director of the Continuing Education Program at Dawson College in Montréal. Spencer majored in philosophy at the following universities: Carleton University in Ottawa (B.A., 1966), University of Western Ontario in London (M.A., 1967), and McGill University in Montréal (Ph.D., 1972), where he also taught philosophy for four years (1972-1976). Under his administration, the Mackay Center is currently working on establishing a bilingual/bicultural program for deaf students.

The students and faculty held their first reunion on March 11-13, 1988. This event, which occurred during the school's spring break, was co-ordinated by Jo Anne Stump (a deaf teacher). The next reunion was held in the summer of 1993, with another planned for 1995 to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the school.

Ontario

Ontario currently has three provincial schools for its deaf students: The Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville, the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, and the Robarts School for the Deaf in London. Two of the schools are relatively new, built in the 1960s and 1970s to accommodate the increasing number of deaf children in the province. All three are also designated "resource centres" and as such provide support services to local school boards and to families with preschool-aged deaf children. Ontario's provincial schools operate under the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. Some of the public and separate (Catholic) school boards in the province also provide day schools or integrated programs for deaf children. These include the Metropolitan Separate School Board programs in Toronto and the Metro Toronto School for the Deaf (both of which are day programs).

The Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf

Originally called the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb when it opened in 1870, this educational facility in Belleville was renamed the Ontario School for the Deaf in 1913. Sixty-one years later, in August 1974, it was renamed the Sir James Whitney School for the Hearing Handicapped, in honour of a hearing statesman who had been premier of the province (1905-1914). The school owes its existence to the persistence of John Barrett McGann (b. Dec. 25, 1810; d. Jan. 22, 1880), a hearing Irishman who pioneered deaf education in the province (1858-1870).⁸⁶ On November 19, 1868, after years of pleading for a provincially funded institution for deaf children, McGann finally received positive support from the Ontario Legislature. However, there was considerable delay over the selection of a suitable location, and it was not until April 1869 that the city of Belleville was chosen as the site for the new school. A large tract of land of 86 acres was purchased about two and half kilometres west of the municipality on the picturesque shore of the Bay of Quinte, and work commenced at once with an initial grant of \$85,000.⁸⁷ The

contract to build the school was awarded to the firm of Kempster & Brother of Hamilton, Ont.; architect for the project was a Mr. James Smith of Toronto, with construction supervised by Ontario government officials. Masonic ceremonies marked the laying of the cornerstone on August 12, 1869.

McGann was offered the post of principal, which he declined, suggesting another candidate — Joseph John Gurney Terrill (b. 1839; d. Nov. 7, 1869), his hearing son-in-law and an experienced teacher of the deaf whom McGann had supervised



Main building of the Ontario Institution for the Deaf and Dumb from 1870 until a new building was constructed in 1921 (Belleville, Ont.)

The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives

when his school was in Hamilton. Tragically, Terrill died on the very day his appointment was confirmed. The search for an administrator began again. In the summer of 1870, Dr. Wesley ("Willie") Jones Palmer (b. June 11, 1834; d. June 3, 1888), a hearing man with considerable experience teaching deaf children, was secured from the United States to become the first principal of the Ontario Institution. A native of Milton, N.C., he held this position for nine years (1870-1879). Prior to his appointment to the Belleville school, Palmer had studied at Wake Forest College (now University) in Winston-Salem, N.C. (1851-1852) and at Columbian College in Washington, D.C. (B.Ph., 1852-1854).⁸⁸ He taught at the North Carolina Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind in Raleigh (1858-1860) before being promoted to vice-principal (1860) and later principal (1860-1870) there. (His was the only school for deaf students in the southern states to remain open during the U.S. Civil War.) Two other degrees were bestowed upon him by his alma mater (Columbian College) — an honorary M.A. in 1860 and an honorary Ph.D. on June 29, 1870.

When the Ontario Institution opened, it was estimated that there were 312 deaf people of school age in the province. A total of 107 of these enrolled at the new school, leaving 205 who were still not receiving any education.⁸⁹ The age of admission was seven to 17 years, and students could only attend for seven years (or until they reached the age of 21, whichever occurred first).

During Palmer's tenure, the Ontario Institution became the first Canadian school for deaf students to publicly embrace the American system of manual education. Palmer discarded the British two-handed fingerspelling, which was commonly used

in Ontario at that time, and introduced the American one-handed alphabet. He also encouraged the use of “the sign language” (which became widely known as American Sign Language in the 1960s). As he wrote in his first report, “we have adopted the system of instruction pursued in all of the older Institutions in America,” but admitted that he was still keeping an eye on the oral system being tried in a few United States’ schools.⁹⁰ For the majority of deaf students, Palmer felt that “the sign language, the natural language of the deaf and dumb, supplies the proper means of communication, and through this medium they are made to understand written words and to use them correctly.”⁹¹ To make sure that the instructors could communicate effectively with their students, Palmer reported that “the teachers are required to assemble weekly for practice in the sign language.”⁹²

Unfortunately, in the later years of his educational career, Palmer suffered from a drinking problem (more delicately referred to in those days as “intemperate habits”). This condition was attributed in part to the long illness of his wife, “which for several years deprived him of his much-needed rest at night.”⁹³ Whatever the reason for his personal problems, he lost his principalship in 1879.⁹⁴ He moved to Marquette, Mich., where he “engaged in business ... but never succeeded in recovering entire self-mastery.”⁹⁵ He then returned to North Carolina and was later committed to the Western Insane Asylum in Morganton. He died there in June 1888, killed “by deadly blows from one of the deranged inmates of the asylum.”⁹⁶

On the 20th of October, 1870, a large crowd witnessed the formal opening of the school, which had been built in the Gothic style and was officially named the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. The first three students were Duncan Morrison of Grey County, Arthur Bowen of Simcoe County, and Mary Ettie Grace of Norfolk County.⁹⁷ This number had increased to 70 by the end of the school term. One of the four teachers appointed for the first session was deaf. Samuel Thomas Greene (b. June 11, 1843; d. Feb. 17, 1890), a graduate of the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb at Hartford, Conn., and the National Deaf-Mute College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C., became the first deaf person ever to teach in the province of Ontario. Greene was described

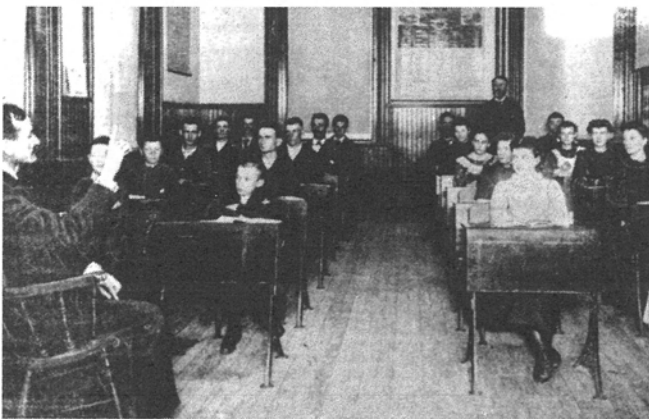
by one visitor to the school as “a born teacher, an accomplished scholar and a man of keen, strong, intellectual power. He has, and he deserves, the thorough confidence of his pupils and he is doing noble work.”⁹⁸ When a sixth class was formed in September 1871, Palmer recruited the school’s second deaf teacher — Annie Maria Perry (b. Mar. 28, 1838; d. Dec. 23, 1938) of Cobourg, Ont., a former student at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in New York City (1847-1852).

The years between 1873 and 1894 saw new construction at the Ontario Institution. In 1873, the east end of the main building was extended to enlarge the dining room so that two classrooms could be constructed overhead. The first vocational building (used for carpentry classes and unofficially called the “Carpentry Building”) was completed on the east side of the main building, and fully equipped for the students. During the 1876-1877 school session, Wood Hall, which was northwest of the Carpentry Building, was built to house a bursar’s store room, isolation hospital, sitting room, and dormitory for older male pupils; in 1896 this structure was converted to vocational classrooms. Both buildings were demolished in the late 1960s. The superintendent’s residence, the only one of the original buildings built between 1870 and 1877 still standing today, was constructed on the west side of the main school building. The next oldest building still remaining is the former Gibson



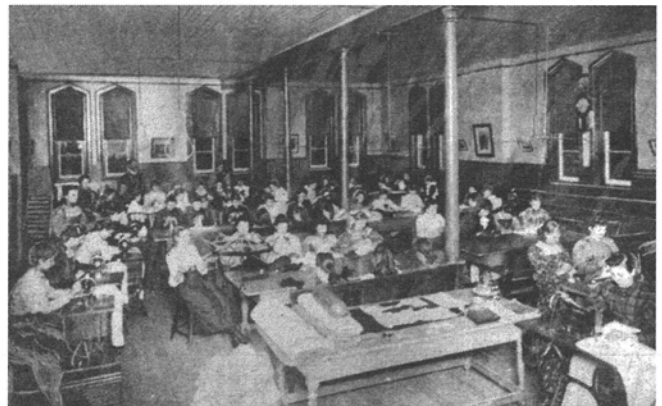
The school’s shoe shop (circa 1896)

The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives



Manual class for younger students taught by Paul Denys, a hearing teacher (circa 1895)

The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives



The sewing room (circa 1896)

The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives

Isolation Hospital, which had been built in 1894.

The first industrial subjects, introduced into the 1872-1873 school curriculum, were carpentry, cabinet-making, shoemaking (discontinued in 1941), tailoring, and general sewing. In the early days of the school, the male pupils made a large number of shoes each year for the London (Ontario) Asylum for the Insane, the Toronto Central Prison, and other public institutions. For instance, 400 brogans/buskins and 884 pairs of shoes were furnished in 1873 and 1874 respectively.⁹⁹

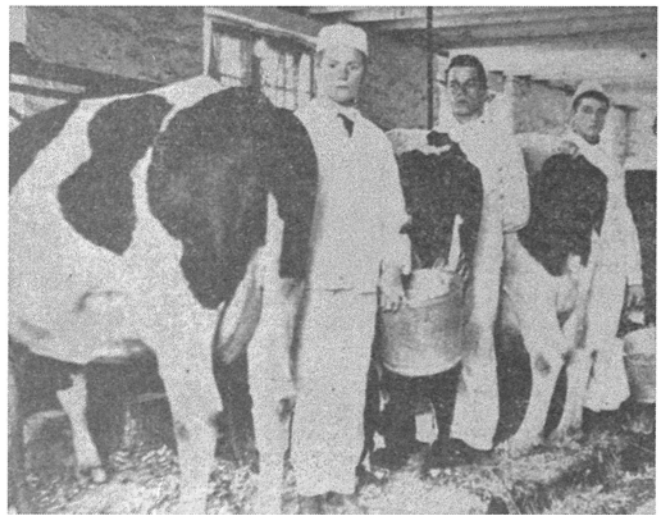
Baking was also taught at the school, with “master bakers” serving there “since the turn of the century.”¹⁰⁰ Boys made up the “bakers-in-training” class; one year, six of them displayed their prowess in cake decorating at the Canadian National Exhibition. Rather than being offered as a vocational subject, baking was taught so that the students could provide the school with baked goods. However, the number of students opting to take this course was always small; usually the bakery was occupied only by the master baker, a man employed by the school both as instructor — when required — and as the regular bread and pastry maker. Training in barbering, first mentioned in a 1904 report, was offered with the same practical view — students who learned the trade then cut hair for other students.

The female students helped out by washing, ironing, and mending clothes, cooking, and washing dishes, to name a few of their chores. Their efforts did not go unnoticed, but sometimes they might have preferred to be a little less in the spotlight. For example, the May 16, 1892 issue of *The Canadian Mute* (the school’s newspaper) published a list of the dishes broken by the girls since October 16, 1891. The list included the students’ names and the number of cups, saucers, and plates each had broken during that time period (the total was 83 cups, 38 saucers, and 38 plates). The boys were not overlooked in this list, however. The “waiter boys” were responsible for breaking 12 cups, 44 saucers, and seven plates. And the infamous “unknown” destroyed 33 cups, 11 saucers, and six plates.¹⁰¹ There is no indication what punishment — if any — the students received for the damage.

For almost 100 years (beginning in the 1870s and continuing to varying degrees until the early 1960s), the Ontario Institution operated a school farm on the acreage that was not occupied by buildings. (Crops were not harvested during the 1941-1945 occupation of the school by the armed forces, but the students continued to enjoy milk and eggs produced by the farm’s livestock.) The size of this farm varies depending on whose account is cited. For example, McGann stated that the entire school property consisted of 86 acres total, some of which was used for the school buildings and the rest for a farm.¹⁰² Another account refers to a 1917 issue of *The Canadian*, which reported the purchase of “the 98-acre Thomas Lewis farm for \$15,000 and how the school had sold two acres to the C.N.R., so that getting that much land for a net ten thousand was a great bargain, especially since it had forty acres — four thousand trees — of bearing orchard.”¹⁰³ A report in a 1923 edition of *The Silent Worker* states that connected to the school property “is a farm of about one hundred and eighty acres, including thirty acres of orchard.”¹⁰⁴ Then, in 1953, Superintendent

J.G. Demeza wrote that the school was located on 180 acres of land, 20 of which were occupied “by the campus proper and 140 acres being a school farm.”¹⁰⁵ Whatever the size of the property, deaf boys became very familiar with it, working before and after school hours to plant apple, pear, and plum trees, and learning to cultivate the land. Many of these students had come from farming families and probably would return to the farm after completing their schooling, so their labours were considered practical experience they could put to good use in later years. At certain times of the year, students in the agricultural program also picked apples and potatoes, raked leaves (one of the biggest chores on a campus filled with trees), put up snow fences, shovelled snow-covered sidewalks, mowed the lawns, and — on a daily basis — milked the cows and emptied the swill cart. They also raised a variety of garden vegetables, which the pupils enjoyed in the dining hall. The success of the farm was all the more impressive when one considers its original condition. When the school opened in 1879, the land available for agricultural purposes was described this way: “The land [is] at present in an impoverished condition ... it contains a crop of thistles four feet high, a crop which gives no small alarm to the owners of property North, West, and East of it.”¹⁰⁶ Cows were eventually added to the farm to provide the students with milk. Some of the farm products were exhibited at the annual September show of the West Hastings Agricultural and Belleville Horticultural Societies.

In addition to farm chores, some of the boys enrolled in the 1870s joined an élite service brigade. The May 26, 1874 *Daily Intelligencer* (a Belleville newspaper) reported that the Ontario Institution had organized its own fire company, composed of older deaf pupils and commanded by Samuel T. Greene, a deaf



The “cow boys”

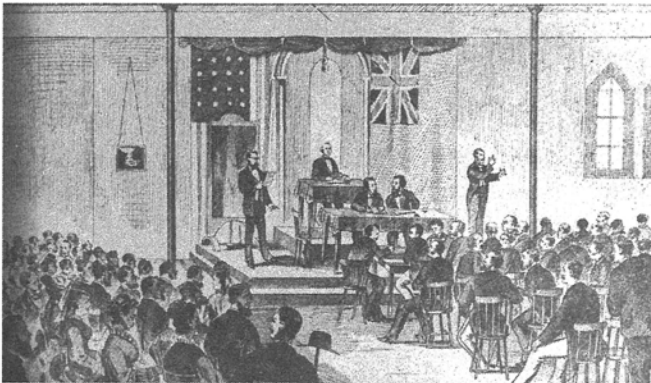
The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives

teacher.¹⁰⁷ These “firefighters” participated in periodic drills on the school grounds in the event of a fire, but it is unclear whether or not they ever participated in an actual fire or other emergency. Dressed in their “red shirts and glazed caps,” the fire company marched in the annual celebrations of Queen Victoria’s birthday.¹⁰⁸ In describing the 1874 celebratory procession, the *Daily Intelligencer* noted that the school’s fire com-

pany “was a prominent feature of the procession, the perfection in drill to which Mr. Greene has brought his company calling forth general admiration.”¹⁰⁹ The newspaper went on to point out that student fire brigades were “a feature worthy of being adopted in all our institutions. Aside from the security it offers in case of fire, it provides excellent physical exercise for the pupils, gives them an erect bearing, and trains them in desirable habits of rapidity and promptness.”¹¹⁰ The expenses for the fire brigade were covered by Greene, “which was rather unfair,” and the company became dormant after a few years.¹¹¹

After the school opened, visitors flocked to the site to see what was happening in the classrooms. The new buildings were also a popular site for conventions. In 1874, for example, the Eighth Convention of the American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb (July 15-20) met at the Ontario Institution. In attendance were about 155 educators representing 30 institutions for the deaf in Canada and the U.S. One of the delegates present was the celebrated Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet, then president (1864-1910) of the National Deaf-Mute College. While in town attending the convention, he also interpreted during a special service held at the St. Thomas Episcopal (Anglican) Church. The convention’s daily meals were served mainly by deaf student waiters (whose use of sign language presented delegates who espoused the oral-only method with some challenges). Sunday morning and evening religious services were conducted in sign language, in addition to the afternoon service interpreted by Gallaudet. Forty-nine years later, in 1923, the organization again met at the school for its 23rd Convention, June 25th to 30th.

The second head of the Ontario Institution was a hearing man named Robert Mathison (b. Jan. 9, 1843; d. July 30, 1924), whose career at the school spanned 27 years (1879-1906). He took the title of superintendent rather than principal. A native of Kingston, Ont., Mathison was educated in the common and



Opening of the eighth convention of the American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb, held on the Ontario Institution campus (1874)

The Silent Worker/Gallaudet University Archives

grammar schools in Woodstock, Ont. He had held a variety of jobs in the province, including reporter for *The Evening Times* (Hamilton, Ont.), part proprietor and editor of *The Expositor* (Brantford, Ont.), bursar of the London Asylum for the Insane (1872-1878), and manager of industries and bursar for the Toronto Central Prison (1878-1879).¹¹² Mathison’s new respon-

sibilities at the Ontario Institution represented “a field of work entirely strange to him.”¹¹³ There was some initial resentment from the school staff because of this, but in the ensuing years, he became popular and well-respected by his colleagues and by Ontario’s Deaf community. He made daily visits to each of the classrooms in the school and could report on the achievements of each student. Mathison was an uncompromising defender of the combined method of instruction for deaf children, a stand for which the Deaf community praised him.¹¹⁴ In 1893, the National Deaf-Mute College (now Gallaudet University) awarded Mathison an honorary master of arts degree. (Despite his support of the combined method, Mathison tried to play peace-maker between A.G. Bell and E.M. Gallaudet, who were publicly feuding in 1895 over the manual/oral issue at the 14th Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf in Flint, Mich. Trying to get the two men to reconcile their differences with a handshake, Mathison “rose and walked to the podium. ‘Let there be peace,’ he intoned, and motioned Bell and Gallaudet to the front.”¹¹⁵ His attempts to reunite the two former friends failed, and the battle between the oralists and the manualists continued to rage for another 100 years.)

During his tenure as superintendent, Mathison stopped the practice of letting students go home for the Christmas holidays. He had a very practical reason in mind — preventing the spread of illness. He had noticed that epidemics of mumps, measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, and other contagious diseases usually occurred shortly after the students returned for the winter session. Mathison sent a letter to the parents in 1901 indicating that they were welcome to take their children out of school for the holidays, but if they did so, the children would have to wait until the following fall semester to return.¹¹⁶ (In the early 1930s, a few students were again allowed to go home in December and return the beginning of January. Once again, mid-January would find the infirmary filled with children suffering from measles, mumps, and chicken pox. Diphtheria and scarlet fever epidemics struck the school in the winter of 1932.) One illness to visit with regularity, even despite Mathison’s precautions, was “La Grippe,” which left more than 70 percent of the entire school sick in February 1899 (“La Grippe” is another term for the “flu”).



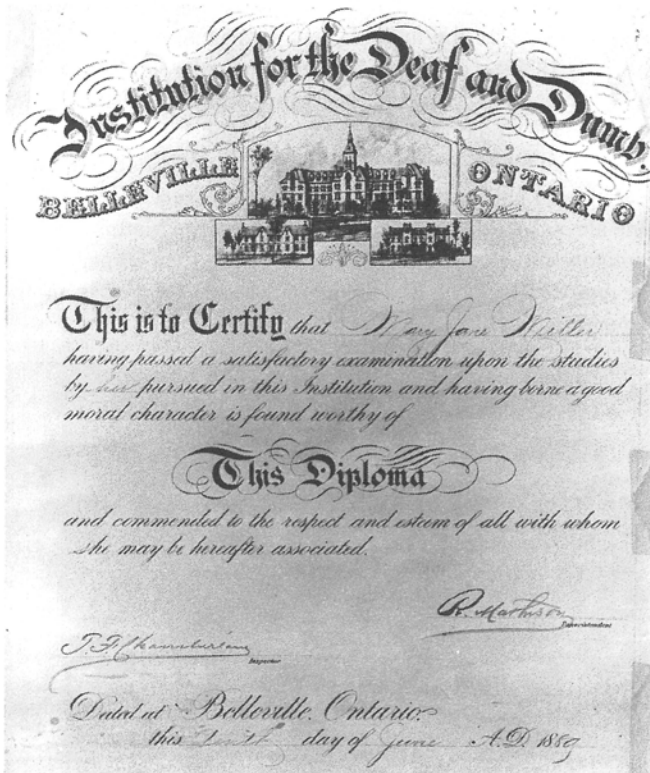
Every September and June, wagon loads of students’ trunks made the trip between the school and the railway station (1890s)

Courtesy of Dorothy Marion (née Goodbrand) Williamson (Brantford, Ont.)

Students at the school were encouraged by their teachers to reach for academic excellence, but they sometimes received mixed messages from the government. For example, during the 1879-1880 school years, three students applied for permission from the Inspector of Prisons and Public Charities (J.W. Langmuir) to attend the National Deaf-Mute College in Washington, D.C. Having almost completed their education at the Ontario Institution, they wanted to become teachers themselves. Langmuir responded:

Having regard, however, to the very limited number of deaf-mute teachers that can be efficiently employed, and to the fact that the number of that class then on the staff of the institution, either as regular or as monitorial teachers, was larger than necessary, I could not recommend such application to the favourable consideration of the Government, nor shall I be able to do so except under special circumstances, where a deaf-mute may shew marked ability and fitness for the teaching profession. I strongly recommended the applicants to learn the trade of shoemaking or carpentering, or the occupation of farm and garden work (all of which are taught in the institution) as being the best means of earning a living after leaving the institution.¹¹⁷

In 1882, one of the Ontario Institution's former students — Michael James Madden (b. Mar. 20, 1871; d. Unknown), who attended the Institution for five years (1877-1882) and the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Austin for another five (1882-1887) — became the first deaf Canadian known to have entered and graduated from both Kendall School (1887-1888) and the



Academic diploma issued to Mary Jane Miller on June 10, 1889, upon successful completion of her examinations
 Courtesy of Marion (Belle) Van Luven (Cupar, Sask.)

National Deaf-Mute College in Washington, D.C. (B.Sc., 1888-1893).¹¹⁸ Two years before the turn of the century, he returned to Belleville, where he was employed as a teacher at his former school for seven years (1898-1905). Alfred Harper Cowan (b. Mar. 8, 1872; d. May 12, 1949) was the first graduate of the Ontario Institution (1880-1889) to complete studies at Kendall School (1889-1890) and the National Deaf-Mute College (B.A., 1890-1895).¹¹⁹ He subsequently took up farming and then worked as a postal clerk for many years in his hometown of London, Ont., where his hearing father, James, was once town mayor (1887-1888). In 1889, the Ontario Institution received its first black pupil, George Henry, a young child from Chatham, Ont. Superintendent Mathison took special interest in this student. Nine years later in June 1898, Henry left the institution to work on a farm in Charing Cross, Ont. In later years, he settled in Detroit, Mich., but returned to Canada for many class reunions.

In 1891, the Ontario Institution established a printing department for the instruction of its pupils. Superintendent Mathison, a former newspaper man himself and member of the Canadian Press Association, was strongly in favour of the idea. William Nurse (b. June 15, 1854; d. June 12, 1923), a deaf instructor of shoemaking, was the man who enticed the school administration to inaugurate its own Little Paper Family publication, called *The Canadian Mute*.¹²⁰ The first issue was printed February 15, 1892, under the editorship of James Bell Ashley (b. circa 1841; d. Apr. 30, 1894), a deaf teacher at the school since 1883. (In 1939, almost 50 years later, the senior pupils in the printing department produced the school's first yearbook — *The Quinte Outlook*.)

By 1894, enrolment at the Ontario Institution was open to "all deaf mutes between the age of seven and twenty, not being deficient in intellect and free from contagious diseases, who are bona fide residents of the Province of Ontario."¹²¹ Students from the Ontario Institution participated in two major exhibitions (the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, Ill. and the Universal Exposition of 1900 in Paris, France). Their Chicago exhibit consisted of "a photograph of the building, two photographs of conventions, specimens of examination papers in all grades, nine specimens of work done in the shoe-shop, eight specimens of work from the sewing class, two volumes of *The Canadian Mute*, three oil-colors, three water-colors, and eight crayon drawings."¹²² At the Paris Exhibition, the school won a gold medal for its display.¹²³ In 1894, graduates of the school were reported to be:

... engaged as portrait painters, crayon artists, fresco-painters and decorators, teachers, wood-engravers, wood-carvers, printers, lithographers, painters, shoemakers, factory shoe-makers, moulders, book-binders, carriage-makers, spinners, bakers, sail-makers, mill hands, tailors, negative retouchers, cigar-makers, seamstresses.¹²⁴

Students at the Belleville school enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, most notably in the winter months. The skating rink was a popular site, as was the Bay of Quinte, where the students were allowed to skate "when the ice on the bay is in fit condition Snow three feet deep and mercury way down,



Ada James (far right), a deaf teacher at the school, and an angelic group of little girls in 1902

Courtesy of Pat (née Batho) Miller (Woodstock, Ont.)

Left to right: Sophie Fishbien, Jeannetta Yager, Mona McFarlane, Ethel Nelson, and Bessie Pollock, signing "Now I lay me down to sleep"

have no terrors for Canadian children."¹²⁵ In addition to athletics, students also participated in more intellectual activities. "Saturday evenings are nearly always devoted to some entertainment. Every teacher is expected to give one Saturday evening lecture during the session, then there are Magic Lantern Exhibitions, Literary Society meetings, and various other entertainments."¹²⁶ During the early years of the school, teachers were also assigned to additional duties such as supervising study periods and meals; accompanying students on the trains to school in the fall and home again in the summer; participating in "theatre duty" or "shopping duty" (which involved supervising large groups of students who were in town to shop or go to the movies); teaching Sunday School classes; and escorting children to and from religious services on Sundays. As pointed out by Jack W. Hodgson, a hearing teacher who worked at the school for 39 years (1938-1977) and wrote *The Way It Was*:



OSD's first high school entrance class, 1913-1914

Courtesy of Pat (née Batho) Miller (Woodstock, Ont.)

Standing (left to right): Drusilla Buchan, Gladys Sours, Isabel Barker.

Seated (left to right): Marie Gerolamy, Muriel Kennedy, Evelyn Hazlitt, Mona McFarlane, Dorothy Hazlitt.

A Trip Down Memory Lane at the Ontario School for the Deaf (1980), “perhaps today’s staff would strenuously object to some of these duties and spoiled weekends. You were told about duties and if you felt like objecting then you didn’t need to join the staff.”¹²⁷

For 34 years (1870-1904), the Ontario Institution was “classed with penal institutions and those for the insane.”¹²⁸ Superintendent Mathison was instrumental in having the Ontario Institution transferred from the Department of Prisons and Asylums to the more appropriate care of the Department of Education.¹²⁹ A new curriculum was developed to unify the work with that of the Ontario Public Schools, as well as to prepare some eligible deaf students to write High School Entrance Examinations. Before the end of the 1913-1914 school year, eight deaf girls had passed the exams, a first in the school’s history.

Mathison “clung tenaciously to the essential tenets of the [combined] system” and devoted years of his life to furthering the cause of quality education for deaf children.¹³⁰ Thus, the Deaf community was stunned when word spread in 1906 that he had resigned as superintendent. One deaf teacher commented that his resignation was “a blow to the deaf of Ontario.”¹³¹ Newspaper accounts implied that Mathison was leaving the school because he had received a more lucrative offer with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF).¹³² However, this seemed to be out of character with what the Deaf community knew of Mathison. A few individuals suspected that his sudden departure had more to do with the Department of Education’s investigation into his administration (an investigation that seems to have been precipitated by two reports condemning the small amount of oral training found in the Ontario Institution). It appeared that the government’s intention was to introduce oral methods of instruction into the school, and Mathison may have decided that he was fighting a losing battle.¹³³ Whatever the reason for his sudden departure from the school, he worked for the IOOF for the next 15 years, retiring in 1921. His final years were spent at his home (31 Albany Avenue) in Toronto with his invalid wife (a hearing woman who died in October 1923) and their two daughters, both of whom were hearing. In 1924, during the Eighth Biennial Convention of the Ontario Association of the Deaf (June 28-July 1), a large portrait of Mathison (painted by J.W.L. Forster, an eminent hearing

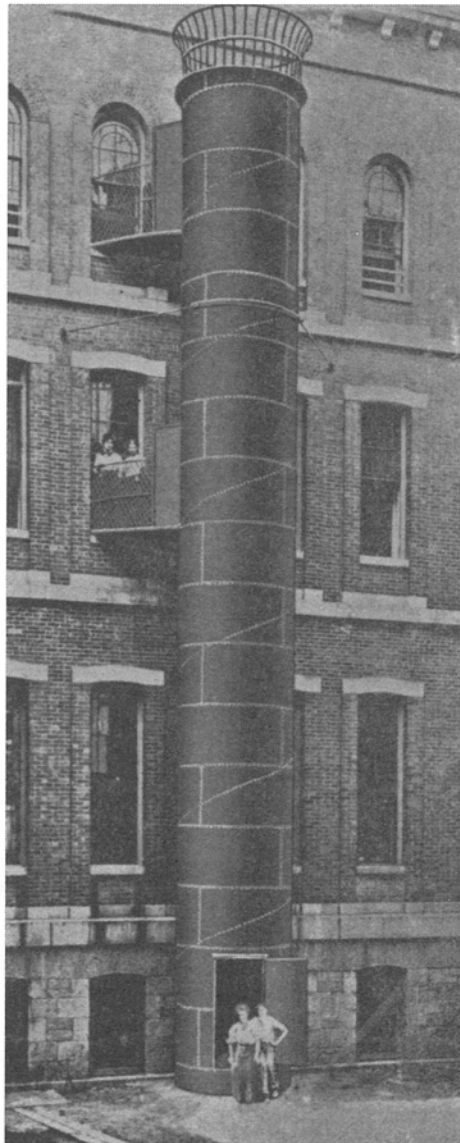
Toronto artist) was unveiled and presented to the Ontario School.¹³⁴ Mathison, who was too ill to attend the ceremony, died four weeks later.

Successor to Mathison and third superintendent of the Ontario Institution (1906-1928) was Dr. Charles Bernard Coughlin (b. Apr. 5, 1862; d. Dec. 10, 1928) of Peterborough, Ont. A hearing medical doctor with no knowledge of deaf education, he had received his public school education in Norwood, Ont., and completed high school at the Peterborough Collegiate Institute. In 1890, he graduated from Toronto’s Trinity Medical College and did post-graduate work in New York and Chicago. He was a prominent member of the Ontario Conservative Party. Some of Coughlin’s legacies include a curtailment on the hiring of deaf teachers, a complete revision of the school’s curriculum to the level of the public school system (1906), the introduction of oral methods (1907), new fire escapes (1912), a name change for the school (1913),

the completion of the Boys’ and Girls’ Residences (1914), establishment of a formal teacher training program (known as the Professional Training for Teachers of the Deaf, 1919), and the completed construction of the main school building (1923). During his tenure, the first boy scout troop was formed at the school as well (1926).

The new fire escapes of 1912 received special mention in *The Canadian Mute*. The following quotes describe these “modern” devices.

*Our new fire escapes are finished and are now ready for use, and they seem to be satisfactory in every way. The pupils have gone down them several times and take great pleasure in doing so. Every pupil in the Institution can, by this means, reach the ground in the space of four or five minutes. The escapes are made of metal throughout and are fire-proof. The accompanying picture gives some idea of the appearance. Inside the enveloping iron sheeting shown in the cut, there is a smooth spiral core, down which the pupils slide, fast enough to be expeditious, but not fast enough to incur any danger. The old fire-escapes have also been retained, and as there are three series of stairways running from top to bottom of the building, it is practically impossible for any lives to be lost in case of fire.*¹³⁵



This “slide” tower was the “latest” in fire escapes in 1912

The Canadian Mute/Photo reproduction credit: Burlington Camera Ltd. (Burlington, Ont.)

The oral system of teaching was introduced in three classes at the Ontario Institution in January 1907, and adopted as policy school-wide in 1912. Just after the close of the 1919-1920 school year, a group of parents met with



The graduating class of 1916

The Canadian/Photo reproduction credit: Mark Workman, Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville, Ont.

Standing (left to right): Charles Dorschner, James Green, Wesley McAdam, Peter McDougall.

Seated (left to right): Asa Forrester, Gerald Huband, Thomas L. Brigham, Thomas H. Brown, Ewart Hall.

Seated on floor (left to right): Elsie McDougall, John Buchan.

the Hon. R.N. Grant (Minister of Education), Superintendent Coughlin, and Catherine Ford (hearing director [1919-1950] of the Professional Training for Teachers of the Deaf). They requested that “some method be devised by which signs could be entirely abolished in the school, or at least among the pupils in the oral classes.”¹³⁶ *The Canadian* reported that “a large number of parents are in communication with one another, and it is the intention to have a meeting during the Christmas season with the object of forming a Parents Association for the purpose of securing the total elimination of signs from the school, or as nearly so as is possible, both in the classrooms and outside.”¹³⁷ The inspector’s report in the school’s 1920 report to the Department of Education, offered the following statements:

*If a general united effort be made to use our language [spoken English] and to use sign language as little as possible, mutism will disappear. Based on the premise that with the reduction of signs, speech improves, the deaf will be better prepared for full duties and responsibilities of life ... oralism is best for the brightest and more serious deaf. The ones who cannot learn by oralism are dull and they will be permitted to use signs outside the classroom.*¹³⁸

As a result of these attitudes, manual classes were phased out, and by 1923 only three of the 26 classes were still using signs and fingerspelling.¹³⁹ By 1931, sign language had officially disappeared from the classrooms, and the employment of deaf teachers was no longer sanctioned by the Ontario School. Ada Mary James (b. Mar. 10, 1870; d. Mar. 9, 1965), who had attended the Ontario Institution (1881-1888) and later taught there for 39 years (1891-1898 and 1899-1931), was the last of the deaf teachers to leave the school during this time (according to some older members of the Ontario Deaf community, she was “forced” into early retirement and onto a pension). Oralism prevailed until the 1972-1973 school year, when the Rochester Method (“Visible English”) was sanctioned in the classrooms. This method required that every word be fingerspelled as it was spoken. The Deaf community and its supporters were against Visible English and demanded that the school implement Total Communication, a philosophy already adopted by many North American schools for deaf students. By 1974, the communication policy had become a little more flexible, and signs were re-introduced as one of the modes of communicating with the deaf child (to be used only after amplification, speechreading, and fingerspelling had been tried and found unsuccessful, however). In 1976, the school hired Anne

Elizabeth McKercher (b. Mar. 4, 1948), the first culturally Deaf teacher to be employed since 1899 and the first to work on the campus since the departure of James in 1931.¹⁴⁰

In addition to revising its communication policy several times over the years, the school also changed its name. In 1913, the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb was renamed the Ontario School for the Deaf, dropping from all official references and documents the three misnomers, *dumb*, *mute*, and *institution*. This name change resulted in the renaming of the school's Little Paper Family publication from *The Canadian Mute* to *The Canadian*. The school continued to be known as the Ontario School of the Deaf until 1974, when it acquired its current name, the Sir James Whitney School.

On October 30, 1914, the Boys' and Girls' Residences (which still stand today) were formally opened with appropriate ceremonies, including the first appearance of an honour guard composed of 40 deaf, red-coated male students who served in a new, non-combat military company formed at the school. George William Reeves, a former student (1885-1894) and president of the Ontario Association of the Deaf (1914-1917 and 1917-1920), was one of several orators that day. A new residence for junior boys and girls up to 11 years of age (later used by the Sagonaska School) was opened in 1934.

All further reconstruction plans for the Ontario School were postponed until the end of World War I. In cooperation with the Canadian Invalided Soldiers' Commission, the Ontario School established lipreading classes for soldiers deafened in the war. By 1919, it was decided that alterations to the old school building, which had been erected in 1870, would be too expensive, so the construction of a completely new school building was decided upon. Work began in 1920 on the first section, which contained the administrative offices and 16 to 18 classrooms, to be erected directly in front of the old building. By May 1922, the new rooms were occupied, and the work of tearing down the old building commenced. The dining room and kitchen housed in the old building were left intact until the end of the school term, however. That year the pupils' vacation was extended to four months so the workmen could complete the building's second section, which included the dining room, kitchen, assembly room, and 12 more classrooms. The new Elizabethan-style school building, known to this day as the Main School, was fully occupied in March 1923. The enrolment for that year was 296.

In 1919, the Ontario School became the site of a training program for teachers working with deaf children in the province. From that date until 1991, almost every teacher of deaf children in the province passed through this training program; some went on to work with deaf students in local board programs, while others remained at the Ontario School or went to the two other provincial schools when they were established. In this way, the Belleville school's approach for educating deaf children spread throughout the province. All of the teacher trainers were hearing. The woman responsible for the first 31 years of the teacher training program was Catherine Ford. After she retired in 1950, the school's superintendent assumed responsibility for the program. This arrangement continued

until 1967, when the program was restructured as the Teacher Education Centre under its own principal, and given space in the former Girls' Residence. From its inception, the program was considered to be a "normal training course," open only to those who already held Ontario Teacher's Certificates that allowed them to teach in hearing elementary and secondary schools. This restriction effectively shut out any deaf applicants to the program. It was not until 1974 that this requirement was waived. Finally, deaf people who had a college degree that would qualify them for admission to a teacher's college or college of education, could be trained in Ontario as teachers of deaf students. The first three teachers to take advantage of this rule change were Anne Elizabeth McKercher and William Clyde Conley (both from the Sir James Whitney School), and Deborah Marie Johnston (from the Robarts School).¹⁴¹ The 10-month teacher training program was discontinued in 1991, when responsibility of training Ontario teachers of deaf students was transferred by the Ontario Ministry of Education to York University in Toronto.

Following Superintendent Coughlin's death in 1928, William John Campbell (b. Mar. 4, 1862; d. Feb. 3, 1939), a hearing teacher at the Ontario School for 38 years (1894-1932), was appointed acting superintendent (1928-1930). On July 1, 1930, Hiram Bingham Fetterly (b. 1874; d. May 10, 1947), a hearing man who grew up near Cornwall, Ont., took over the reins of superintendent (1930-1934). He inherited a student body of 356 students and a teaching staff of two supervising teachers, 27 teachers in the "literary" department, and eight teachers in the vocational program.¹⁴² Fetterly's educational background included a bachelor's and master's degree from Queen's University (B.A., 1904; M.A. [in Chemistry and Physics], 1906). Although he had no previous experience with deaf education, he had been a public and high school teacher in the southeastern section of the province for many years. He had also been in charge of the Continuation School at Avonmore (1896-1900), principal at the Public and Continuation School in Winchester (1900-1904) and the Cornwall Collegiate Institute (1911-1918), and inspector of public schools in Dundas County (1918-1930).

The school remained completely oral during Fetterly's term as superintendent. He felt that the use of sign language was inappropriate and detrimental: "As they [the deaf students] are taught by the oral method, they do not need to use the more conspicuous method of communication [sign language] and so the great barrier between the deaf and the hearing is being broken down."¹⁴³ Fetterly was transferred in the summer of 1934 to fill the position of inspector of public schools in York County, following the 1934 re-organization of the Ontario School by the Department of Education. The position of acting superintendent was then filled by Dr. Harold ("Harry") Edwin Amoss (b. 1880; d. Dec. 20, 1964), a hearing educator who at that time held the position of provincial inspector of auxiliary classes. He served as acting superintendent for one year (1934-1935). Amoss' only prior experience with deaf education had occurred during the previous school year when, on behalf of the Department of Education, he conducted a survey of pupils at the Ontario School. Enrolment dropped slightly during Amoss'

year (from 332 in January 1933, before Amoss started, to 291 in December 1934) due to three factors: (1) a number of senior students graduated; (2) it was determined that 14 students had a “mental age considerably below that of a five-year-old child” caused by “cerebral injury,” and their parents were asked to find other educational placements; and (3) the Toronto Board of Education set up day classes for local deaf students (the girls’ program was held in the Central Technical School and the boys’ in the Junior Vocational School), and a few of the Ontario School students transferred to these local programs.¹⁴⁴

After Amoss served his one-year as acting superintendent, he continued to visit the school on a regular basis as inspector for the Department of Education. His negative opinion of sign language continued to appear in the yearly reports; for example, in the 1938 report, he attributed the earlier age at which the younger students began to read as partly the result of the “segregation of juniors in the junior residence and the consequent delay in their acquisition of the sign language” (which students must have been picking up from each other in the residence halls, because signing was not permitted in the classrooms or dining hall by that time).¹⁴⁵

The fifth superintendent (1935-1953) was William John Morrison (b. Jan. 27, 1883; d. Dec. 8, 1967), another hearing person. Prior to his appointment, he had studied at the University of Toronto (B.A., 1911 [in Chemistry and Mineralogy]; B.Paed., 1932). In Ontario, he had been a high school teacher in Listowel and Dunnville, a high school principal in Dutton and Bowmanville, and an inspector of public schools in Brantford. While in Brantford, he was also a special provincial inspector of the school for the blind, where he became acquainted with the inner workings of a large, provin-

cial school. Untrained in deaf education, Morrison detested sign language and was opposed to the hiring of deaf teachers, supervisors, or maintenance staff.¹⁴⁶ He also banned signing during meals. The Ontario Association of the Deaf described him as a man who “is firmly committed to bending them [the deaf students] to fit a theory of teaching, rather than adapting the technique of teaching to their needs.”¹⁴⁷ However, he did manage to improve the re-organization of classes and curriculum at the Ontario School, and skilfully handled two serious situations — the polio epidemic of 1937, and the forced move when the school was taken over by the federal government during the war years.¹⁴⁸

At the start of the Second World War, the Canadian and Ontario governments announced that the Ontario School would become one of Canada’s seven Initial Training Schools for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF No. 5 ITS) for the duration of the war (1939-1945). The school’s staff and students had to move out as quickly as possible before the official turnover took place on July 9, 1941. When school began the next fall (one month later than usual), most of the students were housed in rented buildings scattered throughout Belleville. The St. Thomas Anglican Parish Hall and Rectory became the heart of the transplanted school, housing offices for the superintendent and bursar, a residence for pupils about 10 to 12 years of age, and classrooms. The rest of the uprooted Ontario School set up classes in the 34th Battery Building, a two-storey red brick structure on Church Street. The superintendent reported that “the three buildings used for school purposes are close together, which makes it possible for them to be operated as one unit.”¹⁴⁹ Several large city homes, such as the Mouck House, became residences for the students. About 225



OSD’s current Main School building, completed during 1922-1923

From the postcard collection of Michael J. Olson (Washington, D.C.)

students remained in Belleville, while some of the staff dispersed and established day classes in Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Windsor for about 60 students in those cities; these classes remained under the Ontario School's administration, although Superintendent Morrison was able to visit each of the day classes only once a year because of his other duties.¹⁵⁰ The day programs admitted only students over the age of 16. Some in this age group (both male and female) stopped attending classes and took jobs vacated by hearing men going off to war. The Ontario School's vocational training classes were suspended (although some of the students attending the day programs were able to take vocational classes in the regular public school system), and several of the vocational teachers resigned or took leave to serve in the military. Printing of *The Canadian* was curtailed from 1941 until December 1945. The school retained possession of the farm, which continued to provide the Belleville students with milk and eggs.

The RCAF No. 5 ITS erected a large drill hall on the property during its occupancy of the Ontario School. After the war, this building was converted into two gymnasias, one for the girls and the other for the boys. This large facility was a popular place for secondary schools in the area to converge each year for championship tournaments. For example, a volleyball jamboree was held each November where all four courts were used simultaneously. The OSD Gymnasium, as it was then known, was demolished soon after the opening of the school's new, modern sports facility ("The J.G. Demeza Sports Centre") in 1972.

The Ontario provincial government considered keeping the Ontario School closed when the war ended, and replacing it with a local day-school system. A wave of protest, particularly from deaf individuals and the Ontario Association of the Deaf, swept through the province when people learned of this tentative plan. The expression of dismay and outrage from the Deaf community led to the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Education of the Deaf. After the Commission had reviewed all briefs submitted to it and investigated the situation, the Ontario School was permitted to re-open on July 15, 1944, after the Royal Canadian Air Force had vacated the premises. Most of the province's deaf pupils returned that September.

In September 1950, Joseph George Demeza (b. Aug. 30, 1914), a hearing educator experienced with hearing children, was appointed assistant superintendent of the school. During his first year in this position, he was sent to England for training in deaf education at the University of Manchester, and to visit leading schools of the deaf in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Returning from Europe, he also made a series of visits to American and Canadian schools for deaf children. Upon Morrison's retirement in January 1953, Demeza took over the superintendency of the Ontario School, a position he held for the next 26 years (1953-1979). A native of North Bay, Ont., he was a graduate of Queen's University (B.A., 1943) in Kingston and the University of Toronto (B.Paed., 1947). He had been a one-room rural school teacher with 52 hearing pupils in Fossmill, Ont. (a lumber town), and later principal of Tweedsmuir Public School in West Ferrie (now North Bay), as

well as first superintendent of public schools for Teck Township in Kirkland Lake, Ont. (1947-1950). In 1967, Gallaudet College (now University) bestowed upon him an honorary doctor of letters (Litt.D.) degree in recognition of his years of service in deaf education.

In the fall of 1956, during Demeza's tenure at the Ontario School, the central courtyard of the Main School yielded up an historic treasure. Students in the agricultural program were digging in the courtyard grounds when they uncovered some remains of the original school (1870-1923). They brought in stones and converted the spot to a fountain surrounded by trees and shrubs. This site still exists and can be seen from inside the Main Building.

During the next two decades, several new buildings appeared on the school grounds, and some of the older buildings disappeared. The 1958-1959 school year saw the establishment of a junior school and residence, kitchen and dining room, a heating plant, a laundry, and a staff residence (which now serves senior girls). These structures were built on part of the school's farmland and orchards. The old buildings that had housed the outdated heating plant, laundry, and coal sheds were demolished during that same period. In 1961, the school's involvement with farming finally came to an end, for several reasons. Farming was becoming less of a career option as society became more industrialized; students were less interested in taking the agricultural courses, and fewer were signing up for work on the farm; fire had destroyed the main barn, and building another was too expensive; and the school was now considered within the city limits, where farming activities were restricted. So, on August 2, 1961, the school auctioned off its dairy herd, farm tools, and silo. With this auction, the Belleville school farming operations ended.

In January 1964, the new Boys' Vocational Building was completed. It replaced three of the older buildings: the Carpenter Shop (built in 1873 to be used as an industrial arts shop, maintenance department, and woodworking shop); Wood Hall (built during 1876-1877 to be used as a bursar's store room, isolation hospital, sitting room, and dormitory for older pupils; converted in 1896 to vocational classrooms [printing, barbering, and shoemaking] and a residence for farm employees); and the metal shop (which had been housed in the indoor pistol range left by the air force in 1944). These structures have since been demolished. The new J.G. Demeza Sports Centre, ceremoniously opened in early 1972, replaced the RCAF-built, hanger-like drill hall, which was slated for dismantling. The historic Gibson Isolation Hospital (built in 1894) was replaced in 1973 by a new infirmary (now used as a senior boys' residence). In September 1977, the former residence for junior boys and girls (built in 1934) was turned into the Sagonaska School, an educational program for hearing students with severe learning disabilities. It was also during Demeza's tenure that the first drivers' education course was offered (in 1961 after the donation of a new car for that purpose); the first preschool home visiting services began (1966); scouting (which had begun in the 1920s, but was discontinued in 1928) was reactivated; the school's name was changed to the Sir James Whitney School, a Regional Centre for the Hearing

Handicapped (unofficially in 1974; officially in 1975), and the facility became one of several regional centres for deaf children in the province.

The student population at the Ontario School changed when the new Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton opened in 1963. Students from southwestern Ontario were transferred to the school in Milton, leaving the Belleville school responsible for students from eastern and northern Ontario, a vast geographical area. The distances involved in this catchment area have presented challenges for the school in terms of transporting students to and from the more northern regions and providing resource services (including a preschool home visiting program) to deaf children and their families residing in the north.

The Ontario School in Belleville has continued to serve as a meeting place for professionals in the field of deaf education. In the early 1970s, Canadian educators of deaf students began to share information on a national level through the publication of a new journal, *Canadian Teacher of the Deaf* (which first appeared in 1971 and was later renamed *The ACEHI Journal*). The teachers also arranged for the first Convention of Canadian Teachers of the Deaf, which was hosted by the Ontario School on August 22-25, 1973. A total of 320 delegates (from every Canadian province except Newfoundland) were present at this meeting for the inception of the Association of Canadian Educators of the Hearing Impaired (ACEHI).

The seventh superintendent and the first (and so far only) female administrator (1979-1984) of the Ontario School (known by that time as the Sir James Whitney School) was Catherine Michalski (b. Jan. 8, 1921), a hearing educator. Born in Liverpool, she was living in Birmingham, England when she and her family immigrated to Canada in 1958. She later received degrees in English and psychology (B.A., 1968) and curriculum design (M.Ed., 1974) from Queen's University. Her father had become deafened while serving in the navy, and this led to Michalski's interest in deaf people and their education. She taught special education classes in North York and Kingston schools on both the elementary and secondary levels. At the time of her appointment to the Sir James Whitney School, she was working as assistant to the director (1979) of the curriculum branch in the Ontario Ministry of Education, where she had been employed since 1973. Interested in heritage languages, Michalski fought to re-establish manual communication in the classroom (in the form of Signed English) while she was superintendent. In 1984, she began working as special assistant to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education in Toronto, and Guy Ian Buller (b. Mar. 15, 1945) served as acting superintendent of the school in her absence (1984-1986). During this time, the Ontario Heritage Foundation (an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture) recognized the school's historical heritage and erected a marker on the school grounds. This monument, which was unveiled by the students on May 16, 1965, is now located in front of the school's Main Building.

After two years as assistant superintendent, Buller became the eighth administrator of the Sir James Whitney School. He held this position for seven years (1986-1993). A hearing per-

son, he had been associated with the school for 28 years as a teacher (1965-1971), supervising teacher/educational co-ordinator (1971-1980), resource services co-ordinator (1980-1983) and program director (1983-1984), and acting superintendent (1984-1986). Buller was a graduate of Queen's University (B.A. in psychology, 1974; M.Ed. in educational administration, 1980). In 1993, he was seconded to the Hasting and Prince Edward County Roman Catholic Separate School Board; Buller returned in September 1994 to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training's Provincial Schools Project as superintendent of program (he retired the end of December 1995). Replacing him as the Belleville school superintendent was Paul Stacey Bartu (b. July 29, 1946), who holds the dual role of superintendent of two provincial schools — Sir James Whitney School in Belleville and the Ernest C. Drury School in Milton.

Since 1886, the school's former students have gathered for unofficial reunions during the biennial conventions of the Ontario Association of the Deaf. Occasionally, these conventions were held on the Belleville campus. The first official reunion that was jointly sponsored by the school and its alumni took place on the school grounds from June 30 to July 3, 1989. Its theme was "The Spirit of OSD-SJW." A second gathering was held in the summer of 1995, to celebrate the school's 125th anniversary (1870-1995), and the unveiling of an Ontario Heritage Foundation plaque to commemorate Samuel Thomas Greene (which was erected in front of the Sir James Whitney School Main Building).

The school in Belleville, like those in Milton and London, has faced challenges because of the changing enrolment. First, it had to deal with a suddenly enlarged student body brought about by the rubella epidemic of 1963-1965. (Taken as a whole, those individuals affected by the rubella epidemic are referred to as the "rubella bulge." As they matured and moved through the educational system, this group presented new challenges to educators. In addition to causing a child to be deaf, exposure to the rubella virus might also contribute to such conditions as cerebral palsy and other motor difficulties, blindness, learning disabilities, early-adult-onset diabetes, heart conditions, mental and emotional difficulties, or a combination of any or all of these. Programs for these students had to be developed with all of these factors in mind.) The enrolment later dwindled as the rubella students graduated, and more deaf children were placed in integrated (mainstreamed) educational settings instead of in the provincial schools. At the same time, the student population at the Sir James Whitney School began to include a greater number of deaf children with physical and emotional conditions that increased their needs for special services. The school has had to adapt its programs and services to meet the needs of its changing student body. As the number of students has declined, the threat of school closure has increased. Fearing that the government planned to close the school, students and parents began to mobilize in 1993. Parents banded together in a parents' group to protest the anticipated announcement. Former students wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper, making known their love for the school. For months, the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training debated options for the three provincial schools. Because the

Heads of the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf*

Belleville, Ontario, Founded 1870

Wesley ("Willie") Jones Palmer, B.Ph., M.A.**, Ph.D.**	Principal, 1870-1879
Robert Mathison, M.A.**	Superintendent, 1879-1906
Charles Bernard Coughlin, M.D.	Superintendent, 1906-1928
William John Campbell	Acting Superintendent, 1928-1930
Hiram Bingham Fetterly, B.A., M.A.	Superintendent, 1930-1934
Harold Edwin Amoss, B.A., D.Paed.	Acting Superintendent, 1934-1935
William John Morrison, B.A., B.Paed.	Superintendent, 1935-1953
Joseph George Demeza, B.A., B.Paed., Litt.D.	Superintendent, 1953-1979
Catherine Michalski, B.A., M.Ed.	Superintendent, 1979-1984
Guy Ian Buller, B.A., M.Ed.	Acting Superintendent, 1984-1986 & Superintendent, 1986-1993
Paul Stacey Bartu, B.A., M.Ed.	Superintendent, 1993-present

*As of December 1994

** Honourary

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf*

Belleville, Ontario, Founded 1870

Samuel Thomas Greene, B.A.	1870-1890
Annie Maria Perry	1871-1872 & 1874-1880
Duncan John McKillop	1872-1901
Ambrose Wilcock Mason	1876-1878
Mary Ettie Lorenzen (later McDermid)	1878-1882
William Kay	1877-1880
William Nurse	1882-1923
Mary Bull	1882-1920
James Bell Ashley	1883-1894
James Hadden	1884-1890
Mary Nathalie L'Herault	1888-1892
Sylvia Lee (née Chapin) Balis, M.A.**	1890-1929
James Curtis Balis, B.A.	1890-1916
Ada Mary James	1891-1898 & 1899-1931
Georgina C. Linn	1894-1924
Angus Alexander McIntosh	1897-1898
Michael James Madden, B.Sc.	1898-1905
Nina Brown	1898-1929
Mary Jayne (née Doran) Durkin	1969-1976
Donna Jeanne Fano, B.Ed.	1973-present
Anne Elizabeth McKercher, B.A., M.Ed.	1976-1979
William Garth Gregory, B.Sc.	1991-present
Kenneth Wayne Roberts, B.A.	1991-present
Norbert Walter Robert Irion, B.A.	1993-present

*As of December 1994

** Honourary

Sir James Whitney School was the oldest and the most in need of physical repairs and restoration, it seemed the most likely choice for closure. But, although the school seemed to be on the brink of being shut down, it has been spared (for the time

being). In a November 17, 1993 announcement to "parents, teachers, students and other key stakeholders," the Hon. Dave Cooke (Minister of Education and Training) declared "there is no plan to close any of the Provincial or Demonstration

Schools.”¹⁵¹ However, the letter goes on to say that the government is still examining possible “choices” for schools, especially in ways they will be “organized (governance) and provided with resources (funding) in the future. The choices will help provide better programs and services to students in ways that are more cost-effective and fair.”¹⁵² So, for the moment the Sir James Whitney School — with its 125 years of history — continues to be a viable force in Ontario’s Deaf community. Only time will tell if this will continue to be the case.

Samuel Thomas Greene, Ontario’s First Deaf Teacher

Samuel Thomas Greene (b. June 11, 1843; d. Feb. 17, 1890), a deaf American, became Ontario’s first deaf teacher of deaf students when the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb opened in Belleville on October 20, 1870. He was nicknamed “the Laurent Clerc of Ontario.”¹⁵⁴ Deaf at birth, Greene was the youngest of five children. In 1855, he entered the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Hartford, Conn., following in the footsteps of his older deaf sister, Sarah (who had entered the same school in 1846 at the age of 10). A quick learner, Greene was soon writing compositions that were included in the school’s annual reports.¹⁵⁵ From 1866 to 1870, Greene studied for his bachelor of arts degree at the National Deaf-Mute College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C. He was interested in a career as a teacher of deaf children and was recommended highly for employment when the new provincial institution opened in Belleville. Among his qualifications, he was described as having “native talent combined with superior culture, a pleasing countenance, a creditable command of the English language, a mastery of pantomime [signs], and an ever active reasoning power.”¹⁵⁶ In August 1871, Greene married a hearing woman named Caroline C. Howard (she was the third daughter of Hiram E. Howard, president of the Marine Bank of Buffalo, N.Y., and niece of the Hon. Lewis Wallbridge [b. 1816; d. 1887], Chief Justice of Manitoba). The couple raised one son and four daughters, all of whom could hear. Some time after his marriage, Greene became a Canadian citizen, despite his Revolutionary War and anti-British ancestry.

In addition to being an excellent teacher, Greene was also a talented artist, excelling in illustrations. He used his artistic skills to produce visual materials to supplement his lessons. He also applied his expertise as a carpenter to making “objects and devices” for his students and turning his classroom into “a picture gallery and a museum of curiosities. He was a genius at contrivances for simplifying the lessons.”¹⁵⁷ An active man, Greene organized the first fire-fighting company at the Belleville school in 1874. Composed of the older students and

In the afternoon of Saturday, September 17, 1994, a “Fifty Years After the Fact” ceremony took place on the school grounds to mark the property as one of seven Canadian wartime facilities “to train, evaluate and select airmen for operational flying duties” during World War II (the school grounds were occupied from 1941 to 1944 for this purpose).¹⁵³ A commemorative plaque was dedicated and placed on the Main School building by the No. 418 (Belleville) Wing RCAFA (Air Force Association of Canada) and the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training.



Samuel Thomas Greene at his graduation from the National Deaf-Mute College in 1870

Gallaudet University Archives

commanded by its founder, this group of “firefighters” held their practice drills on the school grounds.¹⁵⁸

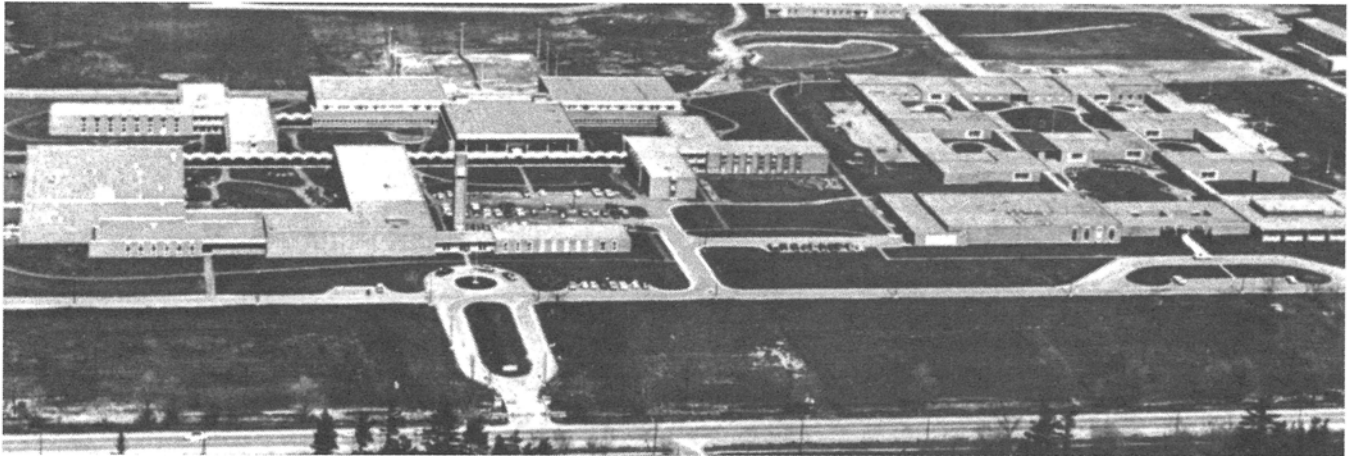
Greene was reputed to be one of the most graceful and impressive signers in North America. The principal of the Ontario Institution often called upon him to give visitors a demonstration of signs, especially those designating various passions such as love, hatred, bravery, cowardice, hope, and scorn. Enroute to the Seventh Biennial Convention of the New York Empire Deaf-Mute Association in Elmira, N.Y. in August 1877, Greene made an unscheduled stop for the day near Lake Chautauqua. He was unexpectedly invited to entertain a vast company of the Chautauqua Movement of Religious Education at their Third Annual Assembly. It was fortunate that a Mr. J.L. Hughes, public school inspector for the city of

(Continued)

The Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf

Concerned with the overcrowding at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville in the mid-1950s, educational officials in the province decided that a second residential school was needed. Several locales were explored, and the 97-acre "Old Kingdon Farm" in the town of Milton was selected as the site for the new school. The property, located at Milton's south-eastern limits on Highway 25 (Ontario Street), some three kilo-

metres south of Highway 401, was purchased on March 7, 1958. Ontario was essentially "cut in half" as far as school attendance was concerned, with Highway 400 serving as the dividing line. Those deaf students who lived east of Hwy. 400 continued to attend the school in Belleville; those west of the line were sent to the school in Milton. In the summer of 1961, construction began on the Ontario School for the Deaf, Milton (renamed in January 1975 in honour of Ernest Charles Drury [b. Jan. 22, 1878; d. Feb. 17, 1968], a hearing farmer, politician, writer, local historian, and premier of the province from 1919 to 1923).



Aerial view of the Ontario School for the Deaf, Milton, in the 1960s

Courtesy of the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Milton, Ont.)

Samuel Thomas Greene ... cont'd

Toronto and prominent member of the Movement, was there to interpret for him. The hearing audience of 5,000 was moved by his graceful signs and stirring message. Instead of clapping their hands in applause, they waved their handkerchiefs at frequent intervals while Greene made his presentation. This scene became famous, and the "Chautauqua Salute" was born.

In addition to his educational work, Greene contributed significantly to social activities for the deaf residents of Ontario. In 1886, he co-founded the Ontario Deaf-Mute Association (now the Ontario Association of the Deaf) and served as its first president (1886-1890). His wit and magnetic personality made him very popular with both deaf and hearing people, and he joined some of his hearing colleagues in such organizations as the Belleville Society of the Independent Order of Foresters.

Greene loved boating and the outdoors. He and Ambrose Wilcock Mason (a deaf man who became famous as a portrait painter in Toronto) built an ice-boat, which they named *The Zephyr*.¹⁵⁹ Sadly, this love of sailing ultimately led to his untimely death. On the 3rd of February, 1890, with the winds filling *The Zephyr's* sails, Greene and some friends were enjoying the frozen waters of the Bay of Quinte (not far from the Ontario Institution). Suddenly, one of the runners caught in a crack in the ice and whipped the boat around abruptly. Greene, who was standing in the

bow, was thrown out and landed on his head on the ice. Although he was able to walk home after the accident, he became dizzy and then unconscious later that evening. After 14 days in a coma, this beloved "good man ... and faithful friend" died on February 17, 1890 at the age of 46 years and eight months.¹⁶⁰

Greene's obituaries described him as "an accomplished sign-maker, a successful teacher, and a man of many genial and attractive traits of character," who "left a lasting impression on the minds and hearts of the deaf pupils who have passed through the classes during the past twenty years."¹⁶¹ His death was mourned on the campus by students and colleagues alike. A monument made of pink Scotch granite stands over his grave in Section P of the Belleville Cemetery. Erected in Greene's memory by "his mute and hearing friends" in 1891, the monument includes an inscription of his surname carved in the manual alphabet.¹⁶² In addition, the Greene name was memorialized by the city of Belleville, which designated one of its streets "Greene Street" (located between Howard and Ponton Streets on land that was once part of the large Wallbridge estate belonging to his wife's side of the family). In the main building of the Ontario Institution (renamed the Sir James Whitney School in 1974) hangs a large portrait of Greene painted in 1890 by his friend, Mason. The senior girls chose to rename their residence building "Greene Hall" in 1993, and an historical marker was erected in Greene's memory in July 1995. ■

Construction occurred in two stages. The first stage, started in 1961 and completed in 1963, included the Junior (elementary) School and residence, hospital, 40-bed staff residence, administration building, laundry, and powerhouse. The school's business offices were temporarily housed in Milton Motor Sales until the administration building was completed in February 1963. On April 23 of that year, classes began for 84 younger pupils and 10 teachers, most of whom had transferred from the Belleville school. A year later, workers began a three-year project to build the Senior (secondary) and Vocational Schools, a sports complex (pool and gymnasiums), and senior residences. The school's impressive 80-foot-high clock tower was Milton's highest structure at that time.¹⁶³ The total cost for this new educational institution was \$11,250,000 (\$8,360,00 for construction contracts plus \$2,890,000 for furnishings and equipment). The first group of 39 senior students and five teachers arrived for classes in September 1966. On May 12, 1967, the Hon. William Grenville Davis of Brampton, Ont., then Minister of Education (1962-1971) and later Premier (1971-1984), cut the ribbon to officially open the Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton. By that time, the Senior School had 170 students taught by 19 academic and 12 vocational teachers. (The vocational building was equipped to provide classes for the boys in auto-body repair and painting, carpentry, cabinet making, upholstering, metal work, printing, and drafting, and for the girls in hairdressing, sewing, and home economics.) By 1967, the Junior School had 213 students and 25 teachers. Four years later, the total school enrolment had risen to 586 students. Residential students returned home to their families on weekends and holidays. Their transportation was (and still is) paid by the local school board serving the area in which the student's family lives.

The school's first superintendent was Donald Elliot Kennedy (b. Apr. 16, 1915), a hearing educator who held the position for 11 years (1962-1973). Prior to his appointment, he had taught in both rural and urban Ontario areas, including Kirkland Lake where he became vice-principal and later principal of King George School. From there, he went on to become inspector of public schools in the Ontario towns of Cochrane (1951-1957) and Huntsville (1957-1958), and assistant superintendent of the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville (1958-1962). A native of Agincourt, Ont., Kennedy served with the Royal Canadian Air Force and England's Royal Air Force during World War II. His post-secondary education was received at the University of Toronto (B.A., 1948) and Gallaudet College (M.Sc., 1969). Kennedy's goal for the new school was to "prepare the students to become self-supporting, useful citizens, who contribute something to the world, rather than depend on the world."¹⁶⁴

The first issue of the *OSD Beaver* was published in 1964 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the school's opening (April 23, 1963 - April 23, 1964). This tabloid, stencilled and published periodically, did not become a regular publication until the operation of the school's print shop began during the 1965-1966 academic year. Participation in scout and guide troops kept the students occupied in their leisure time — in 1963, both the Fourth Milton Cub Pack and the Fifth Milton

Brownie Pack were organized. Girls formed an afternoon knitting group. Students also enjoyed team sports, a model railroad club, drama groups, and other extra-curricular activities. The first graduation at the Ontario School was held in June 1968. That same year, the enrolment rose to the point where the school had to "build two portable classrooms, rent a room in a nearby public school, juggle accommodation and introduce a home residence plan for 50 to 60 students living within a 15-mile radius of the school to cope with the increase."¹⁶⁵ This was the first time the school had enrolled day students. The same year, some students began attending integrated classes in Milton at the Martin Street Middle Public School and later at the J.M. Denyes Public School. In 1969, the school's football team ("OSD Beavers") downed a high school team from Mount Forest, Ont., to win the C.W.O.S.S.A. championship, a first for the school.

The initial method of instruction used at the school was strictly oral. Superintendent Kennedy stated in 1967: "We discourage sign language and finger spelling in the junior levels because we want students to practice their oral skills as much as possible while they are young."¹⁶⁶ Visible English (oralism supported by fingerspelling) became the school's preferred approach for teaching deaf children in 1971. However, by 1973, signs were being used in more and more classrooms as well as in the home-visiting program. By 1977, as a result of the Total Communication movement in North America, Visible English was replaced by Signed English. This was changed again in 1990 when the *Review of Ontario Education Programs for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students* (1989) recommended that American Sign Language (ASL) be introduced as a language of instruction.¹⁶⁷ The Ernest C. Drury School became the site of a bilingual/bicultural pilot project, which began in September 1991. Initially, the project involved all students enrolled in the nursery through Grade three classes. Team-teaching was central to the approach, with a deaf and hearing team in each grade level. The pilot project has now developed into an official bilingual/bicultural emphasis throughout the entire school program. Deaf teachers are now employed in each division in the school, including the preschool home visiting program.¹⁶⁸ In May 1993, a policy statement on bilingual/bicultural education for deaf children attending the three provincial schools for deaf students was ratified by their administrators. Effective September 1993, this new policy became part of the Provincial and Demonstration Schools' *Policies and Procedures Manual*, thus paving the way for bilingual/bicultural education at all three schools. Reinforcing this policy is Bill 4, provincial legislation passed in July 1993 and incorporated in the Education Act, that sanctions the use of American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) as official languages of instruction in all schools and programs serving Ontario's deaf students.¹⁶⁹

The student population at the Ernest C. Drury School became a concern as it grew from 510 in 1968 to 586 in 1971. This increase was a result of the rubella epidemic of 1963-1965. It became obvious that a third provincial school was needed to serve students whose homes were in the western half of Southwestern Ontario. With the June 1974 official opening of

the Robarts School in London, the new catchment area for the Milton school was changed to include the central southwestern part of Ontario “extending approximately to Midland in the north, Niagara Falls in the southeast, Waterloo in the west and Metro Toronto in the east.”¹⁷⁰

Following the retirement of Superintendent Kennedy in 1973, Roy Alban Wollaston (b. Feb. 22, 1935), the hearing son of a deaf British-born father and hearing Nova Scotia-born mother, was appointed as the school’s second superintendent (1973-1985).¹⁷¹ In 1952, Wollaston came to Canada to study at Dalhousie University in Halifax, N.S. (B.A., 1955). During this time (1952-1956), he also served in the Royal Canadian Army Chaplain Corps as a second lieutenant. He then returned to England to enrol in the teacher of the deaf training program at Manchester University (1956-1957). He taught at the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate for six years (1957-1963), and was also an itinerant teacher of the deaf in Boston (as well as an audiologist for the Holland County Council, both in Lincolnshire County) for three years (1963-1966). In 1966, Wollaston and his family immigrated to Canada, where he obtained employment at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton as a teacher (1966-1967), and later principal of the secondary department (1967-1970). After receiving his master of education degree from the University of Toronto in 1970, he became the school’s assistant superintendent for academic studies, a position he held for three years (1970-1973).

Since it opened in 1963, new programs and new names have appeared on the campus of the Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton. On January 5, 1975, the school’s name was officially changed to the “Ernest C. Drury School, Milton, A Regional Centre for the Hearing Handicapped.”¹⁷² (The words “hearing handicapped” were eventually dropped at the request of the Ontario Deaf Community.) Deaf students became eligible to receive Secondary School Graduation diplomas for the first time in 1975. Four years later, the buildings that had been used for staff residences and the infirmary became the Trillium School, a provincial residential program for learning-disabled hearing students. In 1984, a Resource Services department was created to more efficiently serve both students at the school and deaf children attending local and separate school programs in the school’s catchment area, as well as to provide audiological, psychological, and educational services to parents of newly diagnosed deaf children.

In September 1980, a new \$3.5-million-dollar high school for hearing students opened on the Ernest C. Drury campus. The decision to build the new Halton County facility onto the existing school for deaf students was a practical one — Halton County needed a new high school, especially one with vocational facilities; the number of deaf students enrolled at the Ernest C. Drury School had dropped slightly, so there was room to accommodate more students in its vocational classrooms and sports facility; and finally, there was enough space on the campus to construct another building. Approximately 630 hearing high school students arrived on opening day. At first, the situation was difficult for both hearing and deaf students. The hearing students did not have any experience being around deaf people and did not know sign language. The deaf

students had considered the Ernest C. Drury campus to be “their home away from home.” As John Vanderzand, then principal of the secondary department, put it, having the hearing students arrive in September was “as if you had opened your home to guests in the fall and they not only outnumbered you — they stayed.”¹⁷³ Four months later, on December 11, 1980, deaf students walked out of class in a demonstration of their discontent. They marched in front of the school carrying signs to protest the new arrangement that forced them to share dining facilities with the hearing students, and to complain about the fact that the hearing students enjoyed a 70-minute lunch break, while the deaf students had only 40 minutes. The deaf students also objected to being integrated in physical education and sports programs with the students from the other school. And finally, they protested the lack of signing skills among the teachers. The demonstration gave the students an opportunity to blow off steam, but did not accomplish all that they demanded. Dining facilities, physical education classes, and sports programs continued to be integrated. Reporters covering the story of the two schools described the integrated situation as

*... one of the most improbable and comprehensive mixes of students, teachers, and handicaps that has ever occurred in a North American educational institution. Educators fed all the information they had on this mix into a computer in California before the school opened, hoping to get some idea of the potential problems they faced. The computer came up with nothing because nothing like it has ever existed before.*¹⁷⁴

Bill 82 — legislation that received Royal Assent on September 1, 1981 and went into effect in 1985 — mandated that local school boards assume responsibility for all the children living in their jurisdiction, including deaf students. Also included in this legislation were procedures for identification, placement, and review of placements for children with handicapping conditions. Bill 82, like its predecessor in the United States (Public Law 94-142), was interpreted by some people to mean that *all* deaf children should be integrated (“mainstreamed”) into classes with hearing children. Enrolment at provincial schools began to plummet as parents took advantage of the laws and placed their deaf children in neighbourhood schools. At the same time, provincial schools were called upon to provide even greater resource services to the local school boards.

The current superintendent of the Ernest C. Drury School is Paul Stacey Bartu (b. July 29, 1946), the hearing son of deaf parents and grandparents.¹⁷⁵ He assumed the role of superintendent in 1985, but had been associated with the school since September 1972 (when he began his training) and worked on the campus in several different capacities — elementary teacher (1973-1976), junior school principal (1976-1983), and program director in the Resource Services department (1983-1985). Bartu grew up in Long Branch, Ont., where he received his elementary and secondary education. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.A., 1970; M.Ed., 1974), and the teacher of the deaf training program (1972-1973) at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville. Rapid changes in the school’s

atmosphere have occurred during Bartu's time at the school, and likely will continue to occur. As Bartu put it in 1990:

The challenges of the '90s are enormous! We, as educators of the deaf, need to be bold, creative and willing to re-examine what we do and how we do it. We need to delight in deaf children and deaf teenagers challenging what we do. We need to be proud of the fact that deaf graduates have learned to think for themselves and have developed the political savvy (and English Language literacy) to challenge the basic tenets of deaf education. I see in the demands of the deaf, their wish to become independent citizens of Canada, as well as a clear hope that their wish will lead to the achievement of the same goals that exist for hearing children.¹⁷⁶

In November 1991, the Ontario Ministry of Education hired Dr. Clifton F. Carbin as program director of Bilingual/Bicultural Education for Deaf Children.¹⁷⁷ With his appointment, he became the first deaf person to occupy a senior management position within the Ministry. His office is located at the Ernest C. Drury School, where the original pilot project began. Under his direction, a bilingual/bicultural policy was developed, reviewed, and approved by the three provincial schools. The first issue of the *Ontario Bi/Bi Deaf Education* newsletter appeared in January 1992; this publication covers events and issues surrounding the bilingual/bicultural educational philosophy and approach. In September 1992, he also achieved another "deaf first" in senior management by assuming the additional responsibilities of program director of the Ernest C. Drury School Resource Services department.

One of the most innovative programs initiated by staff at the

Ontario provincial schools is the Deaf Children's Festival, a biennial event that was first held at the Ernest C. Drury School on May 25 and 26, 1992. Deaf Children's Festival is an opportunity for students attending the three provincial schools (and other day programs such as the Metro Toronto School for the Deaf) to get together and enjoy a variety of activities in a Deaf culture setting. The event features both indoor and outdoor activities, including displays of the children's art, crafts, and written literature. Participants can enjoy videotapes and live performances of ASL stories, jokes, and poems told by the children. Deaf artisans are present to guide the children through craft projects. Live performances by Deaf actors and dancers range from interactive shows to plays performed by guest artists. The Deaf Children's Festival is held every two years at one of the three provincial schools on a rotating basis.

In January 1993, two deaf teachers were appointed vice-principals at the Ernest C. Drury School. This marked the second time in Canadian history, and the first in the history of the province of Ontario that such a position was offered to a deaf individual.¹⁷⁸ Heather Anne Gibson (b. June 5, 1959), an alumna of the school (1967-1977) and teacher there since 1990, became vice-principal in the elementary department. She had received her post-secondary education at Gallaudet College (B.Sc., 1977-1982), and Western Maryland College in Westminster (M.Ed., 1984; M.Sc. [in Teaching ASL], 1994). Prior to her return to Ontario, she taught at the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg for six years (1984-1990). Gibson has a deaf sister, Shawna Louise, and a deaf brother, James William. The other deaf vice-principal at the Ernest C. Drury School is Macklin Youngs (b. Nov. 30, 1944), the born-Deaf son of Deaf parents,



The Clock Tower at the Ernest C. Drury School was once the tallest structure in the town of Milton

Photo credit: Dorothy L. Smith (Burlington, Ont.)



Students at the Ernest C. Drury School can take both academic and vocational courses

Courtesy of the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Milton, Ont.)

Heads of the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf*

Milton, Ontario, Founded 1963

Donald Elliot Kennedy, B.A., M.Sc.
Roy Alban Wollaston, B.A., M.Ed.
Paul Stacey Bartu, B.A., M.Ed.

Superintendent, 1962-1973
Superintendent, 1973-1985
Superintendent, 1985-present

**As of December 1994*

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf*

Milton, Ontario, Founded 1963

Dianne Elizabeth Marjory Hodgins, B.A., M.Ed.	1974-1975
Nanae (née Imaoka) Ho, B.A.	1976-1979
Ronald William Hall, B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.	1977-present
Linda Teresa McLaughlin, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1977-present
Anne Elizabeth McKercher, B.A., M.Ed.	1979-present
Helen Woodward, B.A., M.Ed.	1980-present
Robyn Barbara Janet Sandford, B.A., M.Ed.	1982-present
Jon Harold Hough, B.A., M.Ed.	1987-present
Marilyn Anne Hunter, B.A., M.Ed.	1988-1990 & 1991-1992
Lowrie Margaret Barry, B.A., B.Ed.	1990-present
Dimitri Cominos, B.A., M.A.	1990-present
Heather Anne Gibson, B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.	1990-present
Laura Marie (née McManus) Hardman, B.Ed.	1990-1992
Darlene Dorothea Horsley, B.A., M.Sc.	1990-present
Debra Anne Peters, B.A.	1990-present
Robert Edward Petrone, B.A., M.Ed.	1990-present
Peter Frank Sicoli, B.A., M.Ed.	1990-present
Ilene Bonnie (née Liebman) Youngs, B.A., M.Ed.	1990-present
Macklin Youngs, B.A., M.Ed.	1990-present
Clifton Francis Carbin, B.A., M.Ed., LL.D.	1991-present
Karyn Ann (née Rosner) Goldstein, B.Sc., M.A.	1991-present
Martin Manus Goldstein, B.A., M.A.	1991-present
Patricia Jane (née Jones) Trofimenkoff, B.A.	1991-present
Blair Harold Bowman, B.Sc.	1992-present
Andrew Patrick Joseph Byrne, B.A.	1993-present
Cathy Ethel (née Armstrong) Cuthbertson, B.S.W., M.A.	1993-present
Helen Vera (née Wojcik) Pizzacalla, B.Sc.	1993-present
Laureen Charada Baskerville, B.A.	1994-present
Antony Alexander Leslie McLetchie, B.A., M.Sc.	1994-present

**As of December 1994*

appointed vice-principal in the secondary department.¹⁷⁹ He grew up in Edmonton, but received his primary education at the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in Montréal (1950-1956), and then at the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton (1956-1965). Youngs had also studied at Gallaudet College (B.A., 1965-1970), the University of Alberta (1976), and Western Maryland College (M.Ed., 1979). Prior to coming to Milton in September 1990, he taught at his alma mater, the present-day Mackay Center for Deaf Children, for 14 years (1976-1990).

The Robarts School for the Deaf

Opened officially on June 14, 1974, the Robarts School for the Deaf in London is Ontario's youngest provincial school. It is situated on a tract of land near the northeast corner of Highbury Avenue and Oxford Street, with its main entrance off Cheapside Street. (The original property consisted of 68 acres, 15 of which were later used by the London and Middlesex Separate School Board as the site of the John Paul II Secondary



A 1990 aerial view of the Robarts School, London

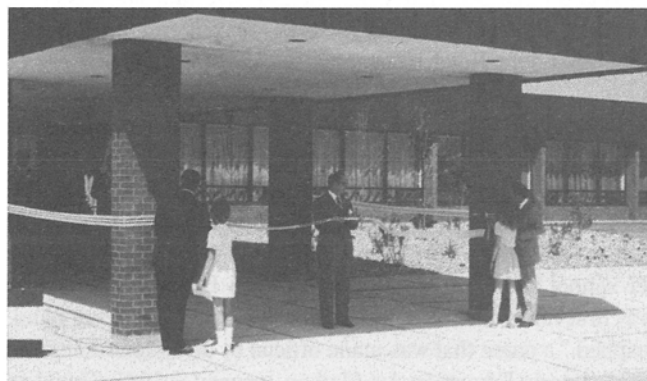
Courtesy of the Robarts School for the Deaf (London, Ont.)

School.) The school was named for John Parmenter Robarts (b. Jan. 11, 1917; d. Oct. 18, 1982), a hearing politician who had served as Ontario Minister of Education (1959-1962) and provincial premier (1961-1971). He and his wife were the first to sign the Visitors Register at the school's official opening, February 10, 1974.

The Robarts School is the third provincial school established for deaf children in Ontario. Plans for the school began in 1969 after it became evident that the 1963-1965 maternal rubella epidemic would cause a dramatic increase in the deaf student population. Officials estimated that the school in Milton would quickly reach its capacity, so construction on another school began in March 1972.

The Robarts School was designed to serve deaf children from the western half of Southwestern Ontario (Essex, Lambton, Kent, Elgin, Oxford, Middlesex, Haldimand, Norfolk, Grey, Bruce, Perth, and Huron counties). Many came from the city of London. Maximum capacity was set at 250 students. The facility was

designed by architect Bjarne Breivik as a complex of adjoining buildings connected by a single roof (218,226 square feet). Breivik was a past president of the London Association for Deaf and Hard-



Cutting the ribbon to open the Robarts School (1974)

Courtesy of the Robarts School for the Deaf (London, Ont.)

of-Hearing Children and board member of the Canadian Hearing Society; his deaf daughter, Joan Marion (b. Nov. 26, 1944), graduated from the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville (1959-1966) and later attended Gallaudet College (B.Sc., 1971).¹⁸⁰ Residential students at Robarts do not have to leave the building to reach the academic area, but they still get plenty of exercise going from bedroom to classroom — their route takes them past the cafeterias, down the corridors housing administration offices, past the sports facility with its indoor pool, past clinical facilities and the library, and finally into the academic areas. Unlike the other two provincial schools, the Robarts School has not emphasized vocational training programs, and instead has focused its efforts only on academic areas. When the school first opened, it was decided that students who wished to take vocational classes could use the facilities at the Ernest C. Drury School in Milton during their senior high school years. Today, students from the Robarts School who want to take vocational courses can do so at local schools, such as the John Paul II High School, a Catholic school located on 15 acres of the original Robarts School property. Some deaf students also attend academic classes there, accompanied by interpreters provided by the Robarts School.

To date, all three superintendents of the Robarts School have been hearing. The first (1972-1987) was Dr. John Boyd (b. Oct. 13, 1928), a native of York Township (now part of Metropolitan Toronto) where he completed his elementary and secondary education. Following his graduation from the Toronto Normal School (1947-1948), he joined the teaching staff at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville, and lived in the Senior Boys' Residence for eight years (1948-1956). He worked as boys' physical education teacher (1948-1951), social studies teacher (1951-1954), English language teacher (1954-1956), audiological advisor (1958-1963), and principal of the Teacher Education Centre (1967-1972). He also served as assistant superintendent (1963-1964) at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton, and inspector of audiological services with the Ontario Department of Education's Special School and Services Branch (1965-1967). Boyd earned his degrees from the University of Toronto (B.A., 1956), and Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. (M.A., 1957; Ph.D., 1965).

Two years prior to the formal opening of the Robarts School, a main office and five temporary classes for 34 local deaf children (ages 5-14) and eight teachers were set up in the Sir Adam Beck Secondary School. Because this site was close to the Robarts property, this arrangement allowed Superintendent Boyd to oversee the construction process of the new provincial school. By September 1973, the Robarts School's administration area and junior classrooms were habitable (although not finished); the first 57 day-pupils and staff to arrive there "were each issued with a hard hat."¹⁸¹ When the entire complex was completed and ready for occupancy in January 1974, some 137 deaf pupils and teachers from the sister school in Milton were transferred to London. The facility was first referred to as a "regional centre for the hearing handicapped," a name that was made official by an addendum to the 1974 Ontario Education Act filed on January 5, 1975. This designation was unofficially changed in 1987 to a "resource centre for communication exceptionalities."¹⁸² The school's mascot

was reflected in the name of the school's newsletter, *The Hawk*, which began publication in 1974. On June 12, 1975, the students, staff, family members, and other interested groups of people gathered to celebrate the first anniversary of the Robarts School. A time capsule was prepared and placed in the cornerstone of the school wall. It contained "records of the construction of the school, the 1974 opening programme, the official ribbon used in the opening, a set of 1974 Canadian coins, and colour slides of the first year's activities."¹⁸³ Two years later, the 42nd Biennial Convention of the Ontario Association of the Deaf was held at the Robarts School (July 8-10).

Like their counterparts at the two other Ontario provincial schools for deaf students, Robarts School students have participated in extra-curricular activities such as sports and clubs. The students played on football, basketball, and volleyball teams and often competed against hearing teams from local schools (one year after the school opened, the football team won the county championship, defeating hearing teams from other county high schools). Male students could also participate in wrestling; swimming and track and field were also popular activities. Competition was not limited to local schools, however. As early as 1977, members of the Robarts School community were traveling abroad to show off their athletic prowess. For example, four people associated with the school — Paul-Émile Senuita, hearing residence counsellor; Wesley James McConnell, hearing member of the aquatics staff; Armando DiBona, student; and Ann McDonald (later Delaney), student — travelled to Bucharest, Romania to participate in the 13th World Summer Games for the Deaf. (Senuita was coach of the wrestling team; DiBona was one of the wrestlers competing in the games; McConnell was assistant coach of the Canadian Swim Team; and McDonald was a competitive swimmer.)

In the early 1980s, Gallaudet College was faced with lack of space for its high enrolment of "rubella bulge" preparatory students. Restrictions were placed on the number of foreign students (including Canadians) who could be admitted into the Gallaudet program, so it became necessary for Ontario to establish an alternative program of its own. In co-operation with Gallaudet, a Gallaudet Alternative Preparatory Programme for deaf Canadian students (1983-1986) was established at the Robarts School and associated with Fanshawe College (whose campus is adjacent to the Robarts School). Eligibility for admission to the program was determined by Gallaudet, and a liaison between the Robarts and Gallaudet staff was established to accommodate the Gallaudet curriculum in most subject areas.

Like her sister schools, the Robarts School faced continuing challenges as the student population began to change. Enrolment at the school began to decline as the "rubella bulge" students graduated; meanwhile, requests for services from families with preschool-aged children began to increase. In 1983, resource services departments were set up in each of the provincial schools to better serve preschool-aged children, and to co-ordinate services to school boards by providing them with information that would help them better serve their deaf students. The impact of integration (mainstreaming) of deaf students into hearing schools began to show up in enrolment

figures as well. Canadian parents followed the trend set in the United States, especially after Bill 82 was introduced in provincial parliament in 1980 and passed in 1981; the bill provided for “universal access of all Ontario school-aged pupils to a publicly supported education, regardless of the pupil’s special educational needs.”¹⁸⁴

The decreasing number of students attending the Robarts School led to its first major crisis when, in 1984, the Ministry of Education set up a committee to study the ramifications of the declining enrolments. One possible solution proposed by the committee was to move the secondary program from the Robarts School to the Ernest C. Drury School in Milton. Parents of Robarts students coalesced into a strong parent association to protest the threatened relocation of the high school. They formed the Robarts School Parents’ group in the summer of 1984, sent out hundreds of letters to draw in additional parent support, and demanded that the government include them in future discussions on the issue. By effective use of the media, these parents kept the controversial issue in the foreground of public comment. Staff, too, expressed their opposition to the proposed move, and members of the Deaf community added their comments through letters to the newspaper editors. On November 23, 1984, approximately 65 students staged a demonstration at the school to protest the potential program closure. The proposed transfer of students was delayed while other options were being studied. In 1986, another committee recommended that the London Middlesex Roman Catholic Separate School Board assume responsibility for the academic component of the Robarts School (they also planned to build a Catholic high school on the Robarts campus). This proposal was opposed by the London School Board; it was supported by some parents, but opposed by others. When the Ministry of Education announced its decision for the school on December 18, 1986, the question of Robarts’ fate was made known. The secondary school was to remain at the school, as were all existing programs. New programs would be added, including one for hearing students with learning disabilities and aphasia (now known

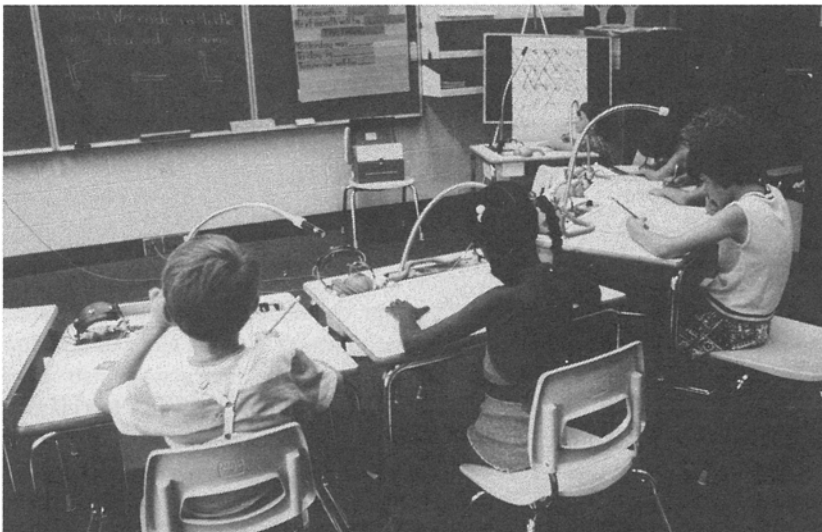
as the Amethyst School, a program similar to the Trillium School on the Ernest C. Drury campus and the Sagonaska School at the Sir James Whitney School in Belleville). The suggestion that the Separate School Board take over the administration of the school was rejected by the Ministry.

The next head of the Robarts School was Roger Elgin Miller (b. Mar. 25, 1936), who held the post as superintendent for three years (1988-1991). A native of Hamilton, Ont., he had worked for the city’s Board of Education as a teacher in the elementary (1959-1965) and secondary (1965-1967) school programs, and was an instructor at the London (Ontario) Teachers’ College (1967-1973). He received his post-secondary education at McMaster University (B.A., 1964) in Hamilton, and the University of Toronto (M.Ed., 1971). Prior to his appointment, Miller had been associated with the Robarts School as assistant superintendent (1973-1981), Resource Services program director (1983-1987), and acting superintendent (1987-1988). In 1991, he was transferred to the Ministry of Education’s Western Ontario Regional Office in London, where he became co-ordinator of special services.

The third superintendent of the Robarts School (1992 to present), David Arthur Neill (b. Jan. 1, 1943), holds dual positions in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. A native of Toronto and graduate of McMaster University (B.A., 1968) and the University of Toronto (M.Ed., 1972), Neill also serves as superintendent of the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in Brantford, Ont. (1978 to present).

One of the major controversial issues faced by the staff at the Robarts School has been the school’s communication policy (which has changed dramatically over the years). When it first opened, the Robarts School supported the use of Visible English, the system then in use at the other two provincial schools. The Deaf community opposed this approach because it ignored American Sign Language, the language of Deaf people. Later, Visible English lost ground to the Total Communication (TC) movement. The Deaf community supported Total Communication because American Sign Language (ASL) was considered to be one of the possible options. However, when TC

was actually implemented in schools throughout North America, some form of manually coded English (MCE) was usually chosen as the mode of communication, and ASL was rejected. At the Robarts School, Signing Exact English (SEE) — one of several MCE sign systems — was chosen in 1977, and by 1982 had become the school’s official communication policy (the schools in Milton and Belleville, on the other hand, moved from Visible English to Signed English rather than SEE). Hearing educators and parents endorsed MCE systems as the best way to teach English to deaf students. The Deaf community felt that ASL could also be used to accomplish this goal, but at that time, ASL was not one of the languages of instruction recognized by the Education Act of Ontario (only French and English were recognized languages of instruction, a situation that did not change until 1993).



Student desks at the new school were equipped with the latest in audiological equipment when it opened

Courtesy of the Robarts School for the Deaf (London, Ont.)

Heads of the Robarts School for the Deaf*

London, Ontario, Founded 1974

John Boyd, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.
Roger Elgin Miller, B.A., M.Ed.

David Arthur Neill, B.A., M.Ed.

Superintendent, 1973-1987
Acting Superintendent, 1987-1988 &
Superintendent, 1988-1991
Acting Superintendent, 1991-1992 &
Superintendent, 1992-present

*As of December 1994

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Robarts School for the Deaf*

London, Ontario, Founded 1974

Deborah Marie (née Johnston) Friesen, B.A.	1975-present
Helen Woodward, B.A., M.Ed.	1976-1980
Odete (née Lopes) Screpnek, B.A., M.Ed.	1987-present
Linda Irene (née Everett) Berkelmans, B.A., M.Ed.	1988-1993
Janice Lynne Drake, B.A.	1990-present
Shelley Ada Marie Funk, B.A., M.Sc.	1991-present
Janice Aileen Springford, B.A., M.Ed.	1991-present
Nancy Carolyn Geldart, B.A., B.Ed.	1992-present
Arnold John Potma, B.A., B.Ed.	1992-present
Mark Christopher Bremner, B.Sc.	1993-present
Krista Kleinwort, B.A.	1993-present
Darren Richard Holst, B.A.	1994-present
Lily Chin, B.Sc.	1994-present

*As of December 1994

After the 1988 "Deaf Ontario Now" movement, all provincial schools — including the Robarts School — had to answer to increasing criticisms from Deaf consumer groups and a few parents, who complained about the small number of deaf teachers and the delays in implementing the full use of ASL in the school curriculum. (Other parents, who support manually coded English, have protested about the small amount of ASL that *is* being used.) In October 1989, the Robarts School hired its first sign language interpreter. The number of deaf teachers on the school's staff has increased from three in 1988 to 11 by the end of 1994. Following release of the *Review of Ontario Education Programs for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students* in 1989, the Deaf community began making its opinions known through the media regarding their wish for change in the educational system for deaf children. Hearing teachers, administrators, and parents defended their school, while Deaf adults defended the rights of deaf children to be exposed to Deaf culture and to be educated in the language of that culture. As one writer summed up the situation, it was

... a deaf community empowered by its own strength and energy seeking to find equality after long, long years of subordination to a hearing majority; a strategy of affirmative action using confrontation, in order to gain political and media attention; an established profession of educators of the deaf, composed in the

main, of hearing people, who truly were dedicated to their cause, a system which for too long had not given deaf people the opportunities to qualify in order for them to teach deaf children; a split parental group of hearing and deaf parents, each holding a common goal for their children — that of a quality education — yet each sharing a different cultural allegiance; a cultural language which needed freedom of expression within the restrictive code of the education act; a minority which was tired of waiting, tired of dialogue, tired of subservience, and a majority who saw that dominance in this particular field had come to an end, but did not know how to end it.¹⁸⁵

The communication policy changed from SEE to Signed English in 1990. In 1993, the Robarts School, like its sister schools in Milton and Belleville, adopted the May 14, 1993 provincial policy statement on bilingual/bicultural education for deaf children — a breakthrough that will allow the gradual incorporation of ASL as a language of instruction. Instruction using ASL was introduced on a part-time basis in a few classes, with a deaf teacher using ASL to instruct the class part of the day, and a hearing teacher using Signed English to instruct the same students for the rest of the day.

Non-Residential Schools in Ontario

The province of Ontario is believed to be the first to introduce a systematic program to provide day classes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Canada. In 1924, a class for those residing within the boundaries of Toronto opened in the Clinton Street Public School, followed by other programs in Ottawa (1928), Toronto (1943) and Hamilton (1944).¹⁸⁶ This movement eventually led to the 1964 establishment of the Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf (MTSD), which is now one of the largest day schools of its kind in the country. The MTSD opened in half of the Davisville Public School and has served deaf and hard-of-hearing children from three to 14 years of age. It has a large ethnic deaf population (62 percent) for whom English is not the primary language used in the home. Many of the graduates continue their education at either Parkway Vocational School, Castle Frank High School, Parkview Secondary School, Heydon Park Secondary School, or Northern Secondary School.

In the beginning, day classes were restricted to the metropolitan areas, but the concept spread to smaller communities during the 1970s and 1980s. As stated earlier, increased parental pressure to have their children attend local schools resulted in the 1981 passage of Bill 82, which was amended to Ontario's Education Act and became effective on September 1, 1985.¹⁸⁷ Bill 82 called for an appropriate, free education for all handicapped children, and placed the responsibility for this on the local school boards. (Whether or not placement in a hearing school is really the most appropriate option for *all* deaf children has been, and continues to be, a matter of much discussion, however.) The population at the provincial schools for deaf students in Belleville, Milton, and London dropped dramatically following the implementation of Bill 82. At the same time, public and separate (Roman Catholic) school boards scrambled to provide services to an increasing number of local deaf and hard-of-hearing students. These programs are now so numerous that it would take another book to document their histories and current statistics.