

HISTORIC SITE FILE:

PARTRIDGE SCHOOL

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Partridge Schools Pioneering Training of Mentally Retarded

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The Partridge Schools and Rehabilitation Center, located in a beautiful rural setting near Gallsville, are a fitting memorial to a man, his philosophy and his life work. The George Everett Partridge Memorial Foundation, Inc., was created both to

honor a gifted and dedicated pioneer and to continue and expand his philosophy in working with the mentally and emotionally handicapped. Dr. Partridge believed that, whatever a person's limitations, one can and must feel himself part of the working world.

The Founder and Director of the Partridge Schools, also the daughter of Dr. Partridge is Miriam Partridge Speck, B. S. (Boston University), Mrs. Speck, Diplomat in Clinical Psychological Association, did graduate work and research at Yale and

John Hopkins Universities in clinical psychology. She was following research at the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, and research assistant at Yale Psychiatric Clinic, now Geisel Institute.

The Partridge Schools had their origin in a demonstration center for seven mentally retarded, brain-damaged boys in Herndon, in October, 1954. Less than a year later, in January of 1955, a second center was opened in Springfield, for younger boys and girls with similar problems.

The clear need for such residential centers led to the renting of a 555-acre modern farm in Gainesville, where two earlier centers were consolidated and expansion was possible. A year later this farm was purchased by the

Foundation, and The Partridge Schools became established on a permanent basis. Within one year the enrollment of 16 had doubled and there was again need for regrouping and expansion. In 1957 a spacious modern building on an adjoining farm, was rented in order to provide a more sheltered spot for the severely handicapped child where he could receive more individualized training.

This new section was called Meadowbrook School. In 1958 Meadowbrook School was transferred to the main center upon completion of a building on the Partridge Farm. Three years later the various units for children four years and up with minimal brain damage with moderate



STUDENTS of Nokesville High School (now Brentsville District) perform at the 1936 Piedmont Dairy Festival which was held in Manassas.

Monument to Civic Duty

Hyl-Mann Kindergarten

Neatly among the pines along Hammer Road in Woodbridge, next to Manassas School—whose PTA gave it birth—stands Hyl-Mann Kindergarten.

Once upon a time, about nine years ago, when Manassas School was itself incomplete and stood on the perimeter of the village, when Botts Avenue and the Hills and all the subsequent development were still undisturbed woodland, a small handful of teachers and parents looked about and said, "we must have a kindergarten."

Mrs. Martin Kirchner, having come to Manassas School as a teacher from California, where she had taught kindergarten and was convinced of its tremendous benefits, was one of the greatest single forces in moving the idea forward. R. Dean Kilby, principal of Manassas School, also was

of the kindergarten under the sponsorship of the Manassas School PTA and Jim Basson, Ned Baker, Ted Phillips, Kilby and Thibet were named to the first board of directors.

The new "child's" earliest "teacher" was Cecil D. Rodalbe, who volunteered land if \$15,000 could be raised for a building which his crews would build. This, however, was exactly \$16,000 more than the would-be founders had. So Grover P. Manserfield, chairman of the board of what is now The American Bank, became the next "teacher" by arranging financing through his institution, with the members of the Kindergarten's Board as co-signers to the note.

The idea was finally on the way. The idea had taken root early in spring and almost exactly nine months later, the kindergarten opened its doors. And there the story might have ended with a "happily ever after." But though Hyl-Mann Kindergarten was planned and built initially for the benefit of Manassas Village children, who still take priority enrollment on a closed registration date, it was also intended as a model to prove to the State and County the need and value of pre-school training.

The Kindergarten charter reads that when public kindergarten is adopted by the local School Board, the school and all its assets will be turned over as a gift to Prince William County. And a handsome gift it will be: at the current appraisal value of some \$55,000 to \$60,000.

New needs again arose in 1961. Older boys, now ready for apprenticeship or employment placement, required a Half-Way House" as the final stage in preparation for assuming their responsibilities as adults. To meet these needs Waverly Lodge in nearby Haymarket, came into being later transferred to Manassas

to mild retardation, and also for those with normal intellectual potential, were grouped together in a distinctively separate program called the Tappan School. The two schools have entirely different child care and instructional staff, but they operate under the same administration and share such special services as speech, recreational, and pay therapy.

The enrollment is now limited to 100 and in keeping with the basic belief in the value of the regional center and called Loudoun House.) Today, The Partridge Schools have five half-way Houses in outlying communities.

The Partridge Schools are making a valuable contribution in that they are demonstrating to the nation the greater value of the regional, informal, homelike rehabilitation center program as compared with the "larger institutional colony approach."

Partridge is now ready to launch its building program to provide better facilities for those already in the school, and to accommodate a proposed maximum enrollment of 150 pupils.

In addition to its already varied program, Partridge has added the Tri-County Workshop is a day school to offer vocational training for mentally handicapped children.

Congratulations

JOURNAL MESSENGER.

