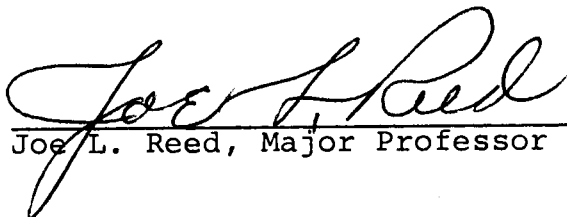
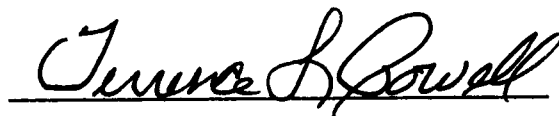
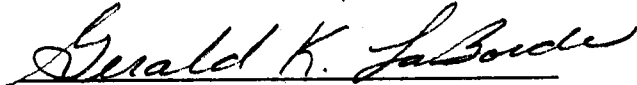


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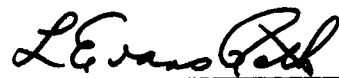
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Thomas H. Parrigin, Jr., entitled "The History and Development of the Vocational Program for Blind Students at The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Industrial Education.


Joe L. Reed, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

Thesis

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THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR BLIND STUDENTS AT THE FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR
THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Thomas H. Parrigin, Jr.

August 1979

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ABSTRACT

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind has been in operation since 1885 and no known attempt has been made by anyone to document the history and development of the vocational programs for the blind students. With each passing year, it would have been more difficult and, probably in some cases, impossible to conduct personal interviews and collect the necessary data to make this study as accurate as it should be. Further pointing to the importance of this study is the rapidly changing population in residential schools for the blind and the increasing need for specialized vocational training for the current and future students.

The data collected in the development of the study were helpful in pointing to the program's strength and weaknesses. Catalogues, brochures, annual and biennial reports, other school publications, literature, interviews and personal records were used in gathering data for this study.

Data were found on the operation of the vocational program for the blind students of the school from the early 1900s through 1979. Data on vocational programs conducted by other residential schools and agencies for the blind were collected and included in the study. Many facts about the actual development and operation of the vocational program were recorded. Recommendations for the improvement of the vocational program were also made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. PURPOSE OF STUDY	1
Origin of the Study	1
Need for Study	1
Limitation of Study	2
Sources of Data	3
Origination of Remaining Chapters	3
II. RELATED STUDIES AND LITERATURE	5
Summary	13
III. INVESTIGATIONAL PROCEDURES	15
Summary	17
IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	18
Introduction	18
1910-1930	25
The Depression Era	29
The World War II Era	32
The Modern Era	33
Summary	46
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	48
I. Summary	48
II. Conclusions	49
III. Recommendations	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
VITA	58

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The major objectives of this study are: First to collect, analyze and document the historical data available on the vocational programs for the blind students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind from its inception to the present. In addition the study should point out the trends in vocational education for the blind, reflect any changes in philosophy of the school and if the attitudes of the general public have changed regarding the blind persons capabilities in the world of work.

Origin of the Study

This study was selected as a result of several discussions on vocational programs for the blind by myself, other staff members of the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and several counselors from the Division of Blind Services in the State of Florida. Many counselors questioned why we no longer taught or ran production work shops such as broom making, chair caning and other areas of work formerly associated with the blind.

Need for Study

The school is approaching its one hundredth year, and to date no study of this nature has been conducted. With

each passing year it will become more difficult and in some instances impossible to conduct personal interviews with some of the retired or former instructors, principals or students necessary to make the study accurate. Therefore, one of the needs was to get first hand information while it was available.

This study should also provide the staff with information to help them understand the role of the vocational program and how it fits into the overall school program.

It is obvious that the Division of Blind Services counselors need to know what areas of work and/or training are available for their clients. They want and need to know what has occurred in the past, was it successful, is it still successful, and if not, why did it fail. They also need to know what areas of training are planned for the future.

Limitation of Study

This study has been limited to the vocational programs, past and present for blind students enrolled at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind located in St. Augustine, Florida.

This is a state supported, residential school and is the only one in the state serving deaf and blind students.

The study is not concerned with cost, numbers or other statistical data, except as such data may tend to clarify or document historical data on the vocational program.

Sources of Data

There are numerous bits and pieces of information available in the annual and biennial reports, bulletins, brochures, school catalogues and in the state archives.

Correspondence, interviews and discussions with many of the current and former staff and students contributed much valuable information that amplified data found in the reports and other bulletins.

In addition information pertinent to the study was obtained from magazines and other publications, school and personal records.

Origination of Remaining Chapters

Vocational programs conducted by other residential schools and agencies for the blind are discussed in Chapter II. It points to such data that parallels the development of the vocational program of the school.

Chapter III discusses the procedure and sources of information used to gather and document the data in the study.

The actual history and development of the vocational program for the blind students of the Florida School for

the Deaf and the Blind is discussed in Chapter IV. The major purpose of this study was to record and document this data.

In Chapter V conclusions and recommendations are made based on the data collected, interviews, personal records and observations.

CHAPTER II

RELATED STUDIES AND LITERATURE

Blind persons need vocational skills no less than other disabled rehabilitation clients, since they are compelled to compete with the ever present battalions of low-skilled sighted workers. Appropriate vocational training can be crucial for the blind job-seeker.¹

The first programs for the blind grew out of the intellectual interest and humanitarian concerns of a handful of people who were at once fascinated by the idea of attempting to educate children who could not see and horrified by the inhuman treatment often accorded them by their society.²

The beginning of organized work for the blind in America is usually set at 1828. The Massachusetts legislature passed a bill incorporating the New England Asylum for the Blind, which later became the Perkins School for the Blind. The school opened in 1832. At the same time several other states were opening schools for the blind.

As students were graduated from the schools for the blind they encountered great difficulty in obtaining employment. The residential schools began to build their own

¹Robert Scott, The Making of Blind Men, (Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Printers, 1969), p. 1.

²Herbert Rusalem, Coping With the Unseen Environment (New York: Columbia University, 1972), p. 185.

workshops in an effort to remedy the problem. Some states without residential schools began to operate workshops and support other agencies in an effort to employ the blind. By 1900, organized work for the blind was firmly established as a recognized specialty of social welfare in America.³

In 1932 Cutsforth discussed a condition found in institutions for the blind that he states was a formidable factor in shaping the blind persons personality.

It is quite generally conceded by educators and workers for the blind that the graduate's outlook for economic adjustment is not so happy as might be wished. This situation has produced a vicious institutional hypocrisy. Gradually the pupil discovers that the handicrafts that he has been taught and urged to learn, motivated by the expectation that they will contribute to his economic success, are but the archaic remnants of medieval handicrafts that have long since been rendered passe by the industrial revolution, and that he and the penitentiary convict are about the only ones to keep up the fight against steel and steam. Since the coming of the radio the student of piano-tuning has joined these ranks, and his outlook for the future is not made more easy by the occasional visits of alumni who are in the depths of disillusionment and despair. Doubt, fear, misgivings, dread, and surrender are the contributions that the industrial departments make to the healthy emotional life of the institutional blind.⁴

Realistic vocational training was recommended by Wilbur in 1937. Inadequately trained blind people would face even

³Rusalem, pp. 121-122.

⁴Thomas D. Cutsforth, The Blind in School and Society, (New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1951), pp. 220-221.

greater employment difficulties in the increasingly technical job market. Since then successful vocational training experiments have been conducted with the enrollment of blind secondary students in community vocational classes and schools.

One such program was conducted for high school juniors and seniors at the California School for the Blind in 1943. The students were selected through the use of vocational aptitude test and participated side by side with students attending an evening high school. These students were assisted by a sighted reader. The students competed successfully in several vocational courses offered by this institution.⁵

Howeiler conducted a survey in 1942 and discovered that three-fifths of his sample of blind persons employed in California had received no previous training for their occupation.⁶

In 1946 a cooperative program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, the Pennsylvania State Council for the Blind, and the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, blind students received six-months machine shop course at the Morse Vocational School.

⁵ Rusalem, pp. 186-188.

⁶ G. L. Howeiler, "Can Our Vocational Schools Help the Blind?," Industrial Arts and Vocational Education, 31 (1942) pp. 190-193.

With the help of specialized instructional techniques, small classes, and individual attention, most of the blind students enrolled were able to meet sighted norms and achieve placement in related jobs in competitive industry.

Vocational programs in agriculture and allied occupations have been developed in some states. The Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Georgia State Department of Education at the Georgia Academy for the Blind conducted a greenhouse and nursery training program for blind adults. This program featured special aids and teaching methods designed to enable blind trainees to acquire skill levels comparable to those of sighted workers. The project period was four-years and 45 trainees were enrolled most of whom were reported to have gained from the experience. Other programs in horticulture, agriculture and poultry-raising have been established, but these were too few in number to have met the apparent need. Large areas of rural employment training remain only partially explored, suggesting the need for many additional demonstration and service projects.⁷

Bauman and Yoder reported in 1962 that during the past two decades employment opportunities for the blind had developed in industry, agriculture and business at a rate well beyond the expectations of the early pioneers of

⁷ Rusalem, pp. 187-189.

vocational rehabilitation for the blind. However there remained one area of employment which had been virtually disregarded by state agencies, private agencies and others serving the blind, namely the professional occupations.⁸

In 1964 Dauwalder conducted a comprehensive study of vocational training opportunities for blind persons and found a general need for improved educational programs and suggested additional job-oriented courses in schools for the blind. His suggestions were that such courses should replace the traditional emphases on craft and outmoded machines with training equipment and activities that reflect current industrial reality. He also recommended the core curriculum be enhanced with vocational and technical training and with work experience and post-school training. The adoption of such a proposal would have brought the vocational programs of the schools for the blind into line with desirable vocational rehabilitation practices and provided blind students with realistic preparation for careers in a technologically advanced society.⁹

In a 1968 study concerning employer attitudes toward blind workers Bridges came to the conclusion the counselor

⁸ Mary K. Bauman and Norman M. Yoder, Placing the Blind and Visually Handicapped in Professional Occupations, (Washington, D. C.: Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1962), pp. ii.

⁹ D. D. Dauwalder, Education, Training and Employment of the Blind, (Pittsburgh: Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, 1964).

should watch for any and all signs of authoritarianism when interviewing prospective employers of blind workers and attempt to place the blind worker under a less authoritarian employer. The additional successful placements would be well worth the extra effort.¹⁰

In 1972 several residential schools for blind children were admitting adults to courses in piano tuning. An example of such is the program offered by the Alabama School of Piano Technology, a regional facility that serves 11 states. The program is co-sponsored by the Adult Blind Department of the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind and the Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation Service, this course has been able to place 66 percent of its trainees in appropriate employment in nine states.¹¹

The Cedar Spring Facility of the Commission for the Blind is responsible for the provision of applicable vocational rehabilitation services to blind and visually impaired students, who are fourteen years old and above, who are enrolled at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind. These services are designed to increase the student's readiness for future gainful employment. During the 1977-78 academic year, the Cedar Spring Facility provided

¹⁰James V. Bridges, "Employer Attitudes Toward Blind Workers as Indicated by F Scale Scores" (Masters Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1968).p. 15.

¹¹Rusalem, pp. 190-191.

applicable vocational rehabilitation services for approximately 86 students, all residents of South Carolina. Some of the students were involved in on the job training at a local day care center in Spartanburg, two received some electronics training in a special class at the Media Center of the school, one was involved in on the job training in a music store, one in a department store and other students were given mobility training or were involved in training within the school.¹²

An outstanding technical school in Wahpeton, North Dakota has established high-level training programs for blind persons in such fields as machine shop, gas engine repair, and electronics. Some institutions of this nature may become regional centers for training blind persons that reside in the area. With few exceptions, schools and agencies for the blind offer limited vocational training or facilities. There are several deterrents to broader vocational training. Some of the deterrents are: (1) agencies working with the blind cannot afford to train blind persons in more than a few of the thousands of occupations for which they may qualify; (2) training in more than a few occupations requires vast commitments of space, equipment and personnel; (3) training

¹²South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind, One Hundred Thirtieth Annual Report, (Spartanburg, S. C.: State Budget and Control Board, 1978), p. 37-38.

equipment and materials can become obsolete in relatively brief periods of time as industry changes to more sophisticated machines and processes; and (4) training conducted in specialized settings limited to blind persons probably does not reproduce industrial or commercial conditions sufficiently well to make for the best possible learning environment. Despite these problems, some residential schools for the blind continue to provide effective vocational training in such fields as piano-tuning, and some community agencies offer sound preparation in such fields as switchboard operation and dictaphone typing. These specialized programs, however, enroll a small minority of the blind adults who are capable of benefiting from vocational preparation.¹³

The passage of the Education for All-Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Public Law 94-142, was a long awaited event in the struggle for equal educational opportunity for handicapped children. This approach to education requires the involvement of many individuals to make the law meaningful to each handicapped child. According to the law, the essential element of any system of specially designed instruction is that it must be based on an individualized education program designed to meet the unique needs of each child. This instruction is not restricted to the classroom,

¹³ Rusalem, pp. 186-189.

it applies to the various vocational and technical programs available.¹⁴

Summary

This chapter has presented a review of studies and literature which tend to indicate that:

1. Blind persons need specialized training in the vocational areas and this training should be with their sighted peers and should be as close to actual working conditions as possible.
2. The start of organized work for the blind parallels the start of the residential schools for the blind.
3. During the late 1930s and the 1940s some of the schools began to move away from the traditional craft areas and explore training on a limited basis in the local communities. This practice continued to grow in the next two decades.
4. Blind persons do not have good success working for authoritarian employers.
5. Some schools, like Alabama are enrolling adults in their training programs. Others such as South Carolina are conducting on the job training with some of their students.

¹⁴Introducing P. L. 94-142, (Reston, Virginia: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1976), pp. 8-10.

6. There are several deterrents that effect broader training programs for the blind.
7. Public Law 94-142 may open avenues of training to the blind that have been unavailable in the past.

CHAPTER III

INVESTIGATIONAL PROCEDURES

This chapter deals with the procedure followed in organizing the study and in collecting and documenting the data available. After the decision was made to study the vocational program for the blind students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, it was necessary to decide how to obtain the pertinent information necessary to make the study meaningful. Knowing there were staff members that had attended the school, it was decided to make the initial contact with them. A list of the readily available current and former staff members and students was compiled. These staff members were then contacted and the study was explained to them. They were questioned as to where written information might be available. Several of the staff provided pamphlets, brochures and other school publications pertaining to the vocational program.

The next step was to gather all the available annual and biennial reports. This proved to be more difficult than expected. Some were located in the principal's office, some in the president's office, some were not available and the remainder had been bound and were in the school library. These were reviewed and information related to the vocational program was extracted for use in the study. An effort to

group this data into ten year segments proved to be undesirable. The information was then grouped into periods of development, significance or importance to the program.

Other school publications such as the school newspaper, catalogues, pamphlets and brochures providing information on the school were reviewed for information relating to the vocational program. As this information was collected the writer would contact some of the former students or staff for verification or documentation of the findings. Of great importance and help was the fact that one of the instructors during the period from 1921 until 1956 was still living and his replacement was still employed in the vocational department at the school.

National periodicals and publications pertaining to the education of the blind were reviewed for information concerning vocational programs at residential schools and in the public schools of America. During the course of the study the writer had the opportunity to visit the Tennessee School for the Blind, the Georgia Academy for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Blind. The vocational facilities were visited and members of their staffs provided information pertaining to their programs. Little information was available on other school programs, however there were several books that contained information pertaining to vocational rehabilitation and what the residential schools

were doing in this area. These books and several thesis were reviewed and the pertinent information noted for use in the study. This information was organized and arranged in the study according to the dates they occurred.

When all the available data had been collected a rough draft was assembled and again the writer contacted some of the former students and staff to make sure the information was correct and presented in the proper order.

Summary

This chapter has presented the methods used to collect, organize and document the data available. Most of the data pertaining to the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind has been verified by former or current staff members or by former students. This additional verification should make the study more valid. An effort was made to gather data that covered the development of vocational education for the blind as well as the development of the vocational program for the blind students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

To tell the history of the school properly, with the intertwining and overlapping of the lives of those men and women connected with it in its formative period, would be to afterwards, write partial biographies of the lives of these men and women. The school today is but the material embodiment of untold human endeavor, energy, aspiration, sentiment, fortitude, and grace of those whose lives have touched it.

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind's beginning was, like that of a number of similar schools throughout the country, closely identified with the labors of a deaf man—Mr. T. H. Coleman of South Carolina. In the American Annals of the Deaf we find the following:

Proposed institution in Florida. Mr. T. H. Coleman, a graduate of The South Carolina Institution and of the National College, aided by other gentlemen, is endeavoring to interest the Legislature of Florida in the establishment of an Institution for the Deaf. Florida is the only state of the union that has hitherto made no provision for the education of its deaf children. According to the last census there are 119 deaf mutes in the state of whom 78 are under the age of 25. The governor of the state approves the enterprise in his annual message and advises that a portion of the common school fund be set apart,

under the direction of the State Board of Education, for this worthy project.¹

This was in 1883, at the time when The Honorable W. D. Bloxham was the Governor of the State. It is also recorded in the American Histories of the Deaf, Volume II, under the heading of the "Florida Blind and Deaf Mute Institute" that Governor Bloxham's interest in the proposed school did not end with his term of office; he has ever since manifested the warmest feeling for the prosperity of the institute.

Mr. Coleman, the founder of the school (if the word "founder" be taken to mean the one who first conceived and carried to completion the idea that Florida should have a school for its deaf and blind children) makes the following statement in the above history referred to:

As to my connection with the founding, it dates from the Spring of 1882, when, in looking around for a field of usefulness, Florida seemed one of the most inviting. This was prior to my graduation from the college in Washington. With a view of cultivating the field, a correspondence was opened with His Excellency, Governor W. D. Bloxham. He was favorable to the project from the onset. The correspondence was kept up until I finished my course at college the following June, during my stay at home in the summer, and also in the fall and winter while I was in Mandarin, Florida, whither I had gone in order to be better located to carry on my work. Through the kindness and influence of Dr. E. M. Gallaudet, the census statistics were procured for the information of

¹The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Biennial Report of the President, 1914-1916 (St. Augustine, Florida: The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind), 1917, p. 25.

the governor and the legislature; likewise all other available facts bearing on the subject that could be had. The governor recommended the matter favorably to the legislature at the session of 1882-83 and that body granted an appropriation to build and equip the school. During the session a limited correspondence was carried on between a few of the most interested members and myself. After the appropriation was secured, proposals were invited for the site, and that of St. Augustine was selected. The buildings were in course of erection during 1884, and were ready for opening in early 1885. When the time came to organize I declined to be a candidate for the position of head of the school—my health then being bad—but desired the position of chief teacher to which I was elected. Mr. C. H. Hill, now the head of the West Virginia school, was chosen principal, and Mrs. M. D. Taylor of St. Augustine, matron. For some reason Mr. Hill did not take charge, and Mr. Park Terrell was then appointed. The school was opened in the early part of February, 1885. I was in charge of the buildings a few weeks before Mr. Terrell came, and no pupils arrived until, I believe, about the middle of May.²

Superintendent of Public Instruction, A. J. Russell, who came into office in 1883, makes this reference in his report for that year:

I found upon the record that my predecessor had advertised for proposals for the location of the institute, and that the best offer had been made by the City of St. Augustine, consisting of five acres of land immediately adjoining the northern limits of the city and delightfully located; and 1,000 dollars in cash. This offer was accepted by the Board of Managers in consultation with the governor, and deeds of the land were made to the state in the name of the board and their successors, and 500 dollars of the money paid into the treasury. Plans were made consisting of a group of buildings for the accommodation of both

²The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1914-16, p. 27.

racess, separately, both as to living and study. Advertisements were made for proposals of erecting them, and that of William A. McDuff being the lowest, amounting to 12,749 dollars, the contract was awarded to him. I have the pleasure to report their completion in a substantial and satisfactory manner. With a view to a proper organization, the board has elected Professor C. H. Hill of the Deaf Mute Institute of Maryland as principal, in consultation with whom the corps of officers and instructors will be completed and the institution made ready for the redemption and instruction of these unfortunate children.

It affords me great pleasure to report the universal approval on the part of the people of the state everywhere of the act providing for the education of these unfortunates.

Of course it is to be sustained and operated by annual appropriations made by the legislature, and I earnestly recommend a suitable appropriation as necessary for the equipment and support of the institute.³

CHAPTER 3450—Number 38

An Act to Provide an Institute for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb in this State

The People of the State of Florida, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION I. That the members of the State Board of Education, namely, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney-General together with the Governor, are hereby constituted the trustees of an institute, hereinafter provided for, under the name of the Board of Managers of the Florida Institute for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb.

SECTION II. That said board of managers are hereby empowered and directed to secure by donation, purchase, or otherwise, suitable grounds and buildings for the purpose of providing an

³ The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1914-16, pp. 25-26.

asylum for the indigent blind and deaf and dumb in this state, said grounds and buildings to be located at some healthy, convenient, and accessible point in the state.

SECTION III. It shall be the duty of said board of managers to make provision for the education, maintenance, and care of all persons residing in this state between the ages of six and twenty-one years who may be blind or deaf and dumb; and who are not able to educate and maintain themselves provided however, that any person who may be blind or deaf and dumb, but who may be possessed of sufficient means to educate himself, shall be received and cared for in said institution, and enjoy the advantage thereof, by paying such an amount per annum as may be necessary to cover the actual cost of his education and support.

SECTION IV. Any person desiring admission into said institute shall apply to the county commissioners of the county in which he or she may reside, and it shall be the duty of said county commissioners to examine into the pecuniary condition of the person making application, and upon satisfactory evidence that said applicant is unable to educate and support himself, they, the county commissioners, shall issue a certificate to the applicant to that effect, and upon receipt of the said certificate such applicant shall be received into the asylum.

SECTION V. It shall be the duty of said county commissioners to supply said applicant with means of transportation to said institute.

SECTION VI. It shall be the duty of the board of managers to provide for the inmates of said institute necessary bedding, clothing, food, and medical attendance, and such other conveniences as may be essential to health and comfort of said inmates.

SECTION VII. Said board of managers shall also provide for the education of the inmates of said institution by employing such teachers as may be competent to instruct both the blind and deaf and dumb, and fit them for aiding in earning a support, and in sharing the enjoyments of life.

SECTION VIII. Said board of managers shall at each session of the General Assembly make to that body a report of its dealings and doings with a statement of their expenditures of the support of said institute.

SECTION IX. That for the purpose of putting in operation and maintaining said institution the sum of 10,000 dollars for the year of 1883, and a like amount for the 1884 be, and the same is hereby appropriated with discretion on the part of the Board of Managers, to expend the whole of said sum, or so much therefore as may be necessary, in the proper inauguration and progress of the work of establishment and maintenance of the institute.⁴

This law has since been revised, but the changes have been, in great part, verbal; and the provisions of the statute have not been materially changed.

The law directed that the members of the State Board of Managers have charge of the school. In 1903, the Legislature passed an act relieving the Board of Education from the care of the school and authorized the governor to appoint a Board of Trustees to manage the affairs of the school. Pursuant to this act, Governor Jennings appointed the following members: J. M. Rivers, Gainesville; J. M. N. Peacock, Pine Mount; H. J. Drane, Lakeland; J. W. Estes, St. Augustine; and W. A. McWilliams, St. Augustine.⁵

⁴The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1914-16, pp. 27-29.

⁵The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1922-24, pp. 55-57.

After confirmation by the Senate, this board met and organized July 5th, 1903, by electing W. A. McWilliams, President and J. W. Estes, Secretary. It was continued for only two years when in 1905, the "Buckman Bill" abolished the Board of Trustees and placed the school under the management of the newly created State Board of Control which also had supervision over the State University and College for Women. The school remained under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Control from 1905 until 1963, a fifty-eight year period.

The act also changed the name of the school from The Florida School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb back to the Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb. The former name was altered by the legislature in 1903, when the school passed from under the care of the State Board of Education to that of the Board of Trustees. In the 1909 session of the legislature, the change was made to the present name—The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

The present Board of Trustees for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind was established by the 1963 Florida Legislature. This board consists of seven members and acts in conjunction with and under the supervision and general policies adopted by the State Board of Education. Henry D. Kramer of Jacksonville, Florida, was the board's first chairman.

The first commencement was held in May, 1898 for two deaf graduates, the late Artemas W. Pope, St. Augustine and Miss Cora Carlton, Island Grove, both of who later became the parents of Florida Senator Verle A. Pope, the most prominent supporter of the school in the Florida legislature.

Up until 1892, the highest number of students enrolled at the school was 62 as compared to more than 800 today. The school has grown from three small buildings on five acres of land to 45 buildings on 70 acres of land, 30 of which were reclaimed by filling marshland during 1956-57. The school has grown from an original biennial appropriation of 20,000 dollars to an annual operating budget of over 7,000,000 dollars.⁶

1910-1930

Around 1910 the school decided the students should become more independent. A decision was made that the students were capable and should become wage earners. The school's philosophy became one of providing every student with a knowledge of some useful trade. At the same time it was made very clear that the cultural standing of the school must not be lowered. The vocational side was to be fostered and perfected as far as possible. The two subjects were

⁶"History, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind," Dedication Program, Thomas M. Gibbs Hall, October 15, 1977.

to be considered coeval and interlap in the curriculum of the school.⁷

In 1913 the Industrial Building was completed. Students were housed on the second floor and the vocational classes were on the first floor. The trades taught the blind boys were broom making and chair caning; and for the deaf boys, printing and carpentry were taught. The classes taught both the deaf and the blind girls consisted of sewing, knitting, crocheting, cooking, and general housework. Through the next few years, broom making, chair caning, carpentry, and printing came to be successful trades and many of the students found employment utilizing their skills at good wages.⁸

On September 1, 1921, Mr. Thomas M. Gibbs began teaching at the school. He had received his education and vocational training at the Texas School for the Blind. His career was to span 35 years. During his tenure he taught literature, math, history, Spanish, physical education, and vocational classes in broom making, mop making, doormat weaving, mattress making, chair caning, and piano tuning. He taught the academic subjects during his first ten years;

⁷The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1914-16, pp. 11-12.

⁸The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1914-16, pp. 12-13.

after that, he taught vocational classes.⁹ At the time of Mr. Gibbs arrival, only broom-making and chair-caning courses were offered for the blind students; and carpentry and printing courses for the deaf students.

Soon after Mr. Gibbs arrival, it was decided the vocational department needed to be expanded. About the same time some looms for weaving rugs were given to the school and the blind students were taught to use them. They made all the rugs used in the bathrooms for the school. The weaving developed good finger dexterity for the blind students.¹⁰

By 1926, the Industrial Department was composed of the printing office, the cabinet shop, the chair-caning shop, the rug-weaving department, and courses in baking, domestic science, sewing, crocheting, and knitting. More and more, the school was realizing the importance of having the manual arts as near perfection as possible so that each boy and girl attending school could be taught some vocation upon which they could depend as a means of earning a living. The work was highly satisfactory and the boys and girls who became graduates from the school were able to take care of

⁹"A Tribute to Thomas M. Gibbs," The Florida School Herald, LVI (May, 1956), 3-5.

¹⁰The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1922-24, pp. 25-26.

themselves by putting into practical use the instruction and training which had been provided them.

During the 1926-28 biennium many of the male students living on the second floor of the Industrial Building moved into a new dormitory. This provided more space for vocational classes. Realizing that many of the student's instruction in a trade started too late, but that many wanted a trade and only a certain number could be instructed properly, it was decided to add trades that were taught in similar schools throughout the country. The proposed areas of training for the blind included piano-tuning and repair, and mattress renovation. For the deaf students, shoe repair and house painting were suggested. All of these courses, it was noted, would be of assistance in maintaining and caring for school or students' property. It should also be noted that during this time, there seemed to be some shifting of emphasis toward more vocational-oriented courses as evidenced by these statements: "While the cultural side is stressed, it is not to be denied that our pupils will find it necessary to depend on a trade for a livelihood after they leave school,"¹¹ and "Classes in Sloyd would furnish an excellent foundation for the smaller boys."¹²

¹¹The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1926-28, pp. 28-29.

¹²The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1926-28, pp. 28-29.

Four new areas of training were added during 1928 through 1930. Three of these were for deaf students and one for the blind students. Mattress renovating for the blind, and house painting, shoe repair, and barbering for the deaf students. These gave more students an opportunity of learning a trade and provided a background for gaining basic knowledge for future trades.

With the growth of the industrial department, there was a constant demand for equipment. The idea was the same as we find today, if we are to teach the trades properly, they must be supplied with the proper kinds of equipment. The request of 3,200 dollars was made for the following year, however, this included some furniture for the dormitories and some playground equipment.¹³

The Depression Era

"During the time of financial stress, one realizes more than ever that the person who has knowledge of some good trade is the better fitted to cope with the situation."¹⁴ From this statement one can surmise that during the depression there were additional reasons or incentives to further

¹³The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1928-30, pp. 23-28.

¹⁴The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1932-32, p. 25.

expand the vocational program. However, the statement also reflects the reason little expansion occurred during this time. Of note is the fact that the state purchased a farm north of the town and the dairy herd and other animals were moved to the farm. The existing barn on the campus was remodeled and transformed into an industrial building for the Negro department.

During this time much of the training was done in the areas that would benefit the school financially. For instance, mattresses were renovated for the dormitories, rugs were woven for the bathrooms, brooms and brushes were made for school use and for other state agencies. Some of the products were exhibited at the Orlando and Tampa fairs.¹⁵

As the country moved out of the depression era we find attitudes changing. Some of the occupational opportunities that looked promising for the blind began to require more academic preparations than the existing vocational offerings. Among these opportunities were social work, tutoring young children, dictaphone operating, switchboard operating, stenographic work, massage work, professional writing and lecturing. Vocational training was still given much emphasis, however no new areas of training were added during this time. The boys continued to be taught broom-making, mattress-making,

¹⁵The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1932-34, p. 19.

chair caning, piano tuning, and rug weaving. The school continued to sell brooms and mops to other state agencies and to cane chairs for the public as well as other agencies.¹⁶

In 1936, Herbert Sowell, the current woodworking and small engines instructor enrolled in the first grade at the school. He and the other first and second grade students were placed in the chair caning class for their vocational instruction. As the years progressed the students moved from chair caning to door mat weaving, from there to hand sewing brooms, winding brooms on the handles and finally into mattress making when they reached the secondary grades. All students were involved in vocational training from the first thru the twelfth grades. On Saturday mornings all students except seniors were required to take vocational workshop for three hours. These were primarily production shop programs.¹⁷

In the late 1930s we find a few students becoming interested in some different areas of training other than those that had become associated with blind persons. Some of the boys with limited vision became interested in radio

¹⁶The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1936-38, p. 26.

¹⁷Based on personal interview with Herbert Sowell, Vocational Instructor, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, St. Augustine, Florida. February 19, 1979.

and photography and a few of the girls became interested in beauty culture.¹⁸

The World War II Era

Very little change was evidenced during the war years in the vocational program at the school. The program continued to offer training in the areas of broom and mop making, mattress renovation, chair caning and rug and mat making for the boys. The products of these shops continued to be sold to other state agencies or used by the school. Home economics, crocheting, basketry, knitting and rug weaving continued to be offered for the girls. During this period some of the residential schools had to close their industrial shops due to the lack of materials to work with. The Florida school was not one of these. A few of the boys continued to be interested in photography and the radio and electronics area. Some basic instruction was offered in this area.

Following the war there was an effort to modernize the equipment in the shops. This was completed in the 1949-50 school year. Even though the shop itself had been modernized the course offerings remained the same and would remain so for the boys well into the 1950s.¹⁹

¹⁸The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1938-40, p. 34.

¹⁹The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1949-50, pp. 29-30.

It should be noted that during the 1941 legislative session the Florida Council for the Blind was established for the purpose of rendering services in the placement and further training of the blind. This organization will become more involved with the school later in the study.²⁰

The Modern Era

With the new equipment the industrial workshop found that it had outgrown its quarters in the Industrial Building. In 1951 the old service building was completely renovated and converted into a modern industrial workshop for the blind. This move located the blind vocational program in a separate building from that of the deaf students. The shop was considered one of the finest in the country.²¹

With the change in administration in 1952 the term industrial arts began to appear. It was pointed out that industrial arts and craft classes were even more important to the blind students than to the sighted, because the blind students could not learn from observation the information sighted students normally learned in that manner.

A second instructor in the arts and crafts area was added to the staff for the 1953-54 school year and instruction

²⁰The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1949-50, pp. 29-30.

²¹The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1950-52, pp. 27-28.

was provided in all twelve grades. The instructors made reference to better finished products and workmanship as a result of having more time to spend with each individual student.²² At the beginning of the 1954-55 school year a full time home economics teacher was appointed to the staff rather than several part time teachers as had been the practice. This allowed for the development of a much more comprehensive and beneficial program and supplied some continuity to the home economics program from the sixth to the twelfth grades.

During the 1954-56 school years some of the partially sighted students were taking courses in shoe repair, cleaning and pressing, and upholstery in the Department for the Deaf. This arrangement worked out quite well and gave the students more to choose from.

The end of the 1956 school year brought about the end of an era in vocational training for the students in the Department for the Blind. Mr. Thomas M. Gibbs retired after serving 35 years as vocational instructor along with many other duties. In his final report Mr. Gibbs stated:

Every school curriculum should provide a good vocational training program. Since blind children often find difficulty in developing manipulative skills, it is felt that their needs are intensely

²²The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1952-54, p. 31.

greater. Industrial training develops capable hands, helps eliminate mannerisms peculiar to blindness, provides for artistic expression, instills good work habits, provides for enjoyable leisure time activity, prepares one for earning a living, and helps to educate for good citizenship.²³

During the time Mr. Gibbs was at the school he continued to strive to improve the vocational program for the blind students and to develop the shop into one of the finest in the country.

In 1956 Mr. Herbert Sowell was appointed to replace Mr. Gibbs. Some major changes were to occur, the most dramatic came during the 1956-57 school year. The following is taken from the text of Mr. Sowell's first report in 1958:

During the school year 1956-57 most of the work was a continuation of the schedule taught by the previous instructor. This consisted of the following: broom-making, mop-making, chair caning, mat making, mattress making and a little wood-working. About two months before school was out our woodworking machinery was installed. We are glad to have the following machines: a 10-inch tilting arbor table saw; a scroll saw; a 12-inch lathe; a 6-inch jointer; a 14-inch drill press; a portable electric drill; a belt and disc sander; a portable belt sander; a vibrator sander; a 13-inch planer; a paint sprayer; various hand tools and three large woodworking benches with vises.

During the 1956-57 school year it was decided to abandon the mattress work. When the machinery is moved out this floor space will be devoted to enlarging the woodworking area and in setting up an electrical course.

²³The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1954-56, pp. 33-35.

Broom and mop making have been reduced to give the students more time to work on other projects centering around home mechanics.²⁴

Some of the mat making and chair caning were kept in the program as this was considered good finger and manual dexterity training so necessary for blind students.

As time progressed more and more training for the girls was offered. During the 1956-58 biennium the business education department reported that several recent graduates had obtained employment in various types of clerical or business offices. The business classes reported they had 16 standard typewriters, one electric typewriter, one Soundscriber dictating machine, two Soundscriber transcribing machines and one Dictaphone transcribing machine. All students from the sixth grade through the twelfth grade have instruction in typing. A course in modern machine transcription was offered to advanced students who were better than average spellers and had typing speeds of forty or more words per minute.

The switchboard operator continued to give instruction to several girls. After they had sufficient instruction and could demonstrate they had the ability these girls operated the school switchboard on the weekend and evening hours when

²⁴The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1956-58, pp. 26-38.

the regular operator was off duty. Several students have been employed in this field of work.

The business education class received one of the new IBM "Selectric" typewriters and an IBM combination dictating and transcribing machine during the 1961-62 school year.

In 1960 the Saturday morning workshop training was discontinued. In addition vocational or manual training for the first and second grade boys was discontinued. The industrial classes were moved into temporary quarters. These quarters necessitated the elimination of the broom and mop making training. In 1962 the third and fourth grade vocational and manual training was discontinued, the reason being the large enrollment in the secondary grades.²⁵

The 1962-64 biennium brought many changes, the most important being the integration of the staff and students into two departments serving the deaf and the blind instead of the former four departments.

Mr. George Smith now teamed with Mr. Sowell to give the industrial arts department two full time instructors. Mrs. Lonnye Gibson took over the home economics and this allowed Mrs. Margaret Sanchez to devote full time to arts and crafts.

²⁵The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1960-62, pp. 31-32.

The industrial arts department moved back into permanent quarters during the 1963-64 school year and small engine mechanics was added to the curriculum. Two new machines were added to the woodworking shop, a bandsaw and another lathe.²⁶

On January 1, 1968 the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind entered into a co-operative school program with the Florida Council for the Blind, later to become the Bureau of Blind Services and then the Division of Blind Services. The purpose of this joint effort was to expand the rehabilitation services for the students. The school furnished the office space and the Florida Council for the Blind furnished a staff consisting of a vocational rehabilitation counselor, a vocational rehabilitation counselor-evaluator and a secretary. To fulfill the objectives of the program, close cooperation between the staff and school officials was obtained. During 1968 most of the work was with the eleventh and twelfth grade students. An interesting by-product of the new program was the development of a summer program. This program was for visually handicapped students attending public school who it was deemed could benefit from a residential type experience. The summer program included training in such areas as, home mechanics,

²⁶The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1962-64, pp. 28-29.

practical arts, communication, mobility and physical education. The instruction was designed to give the participants added confidence and skills in areas that may have been neglected.

By 1970 the business education classes were all using electric typewriters. The typing classes continued with all students required to take three years. The switchboard and transcribing instruction continued and many girls became interested in medical transcription. Some students went to Southern Business College for additional training in this area.

The arts and crafts classes continued for the upper level elementary and junior high students. The major objectives of this instruction was to enhance learning through experience, tactile understanding, manual dexterity, motor and mental development and an appreciation of learning by doing.

The boys in the fifth thru the eighth grade were required to take industrial arts. Boys and girls were required to take at least two years of practical arts during grades nine thru twelve. Involved in the practical arts was some basic cooking and home making for the boys and some basic home mechanics for the girls. Home mechanics, basic electricity and electronics, woodworking and small engine mechanics continued as the main offerings by the industrial

arts department. The major objectives of the industrial arts department were, "to involve students in assorted and various workshop experiences; to instill good work habits and attitudes; to teach efficient and safe use of hand and power tools, and to help students develop skills and interest necessary for avocational and vocational success."²⁷

August of 1971 was another milestone in vocational education for the blind students. The new Vocational Facility for the Blind was completed. This building was named the Thomas M. Gibbs Hall on October 15, 1977 honoring him for his many years of service with the school. This building was made possible by the close cooperation between the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and the Division of Blind Services. An application for matching funds was made through Section 12 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act that resulted in the securing of \$305,552 which was added to the \$363,933 that was appropriated by the State Legislature. This resulted in a total expenditure for the building and equipment of \$670,545. The building is two stories and of concrete and brick construction. It is air-conditioned and houses the woodworking, small engines, sheet metal, electricity and electronics, arts and crafts and home economics laboratories and related classrooms. A

²⁷The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1968-70, pp. 25-33.

greenhouse was built adjacent to the main building. All the vocational areas are on the second floor with the exception of the greenhouse. In addition to the vocational programs the building houses the offices of the principal, director of student life, social worker, Division of Blind Services, mobility staff and the student center or "LaCantina" for the blind students.

When school opened the vocational and manual training for the fifth and sixth grade students was discontinued. Again the reason was the large enrollment in the junior and senior high school classes. The school was at or near its highest enrollment ever at this time.

Also during the 1971-72 school year additional vocational programs were initiated. The state began to stress career education during this time. The school administration stated:

We feel that our ever broadening career education program is keeping pace with the majority of such school programs. Our purpose is to make all our students become aware that eventually they will have to make a living and for our students who do not plan to go to college to learn skills that will make them "immediately employable" when they graduate.²⁸

In addition to the existing programs students were enrolled in the St. Augustine Technical Center and involved

²⁸The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1970-72, p. 29.

in on the job training programs. A total of 21 students were involved in off campus training programs. Thirteen of the students were enrolled at the St. Augustine Technical Center in the areas of chef training, waiter-waitress, building maintenance and in the distributive education classes. The on the job training program involved students as dispatchers for the emergency unit, florist helper, dental assistant aide, service station attendant, auto parts stock boy, and a veterinary aide. Six students received training on the switchboard.²⁹

The 1973-74 school year saw less emphasis put on vocational training and more on prevocational in the courses offered on the campus. The industrial arts, arts and crafts, home economics and to some extent the business education classes were geared more to the exploratory and practical experiences. A vocational horticulture class was started on the campus as was a course in small appliance repair and hotel and motel domestic employee training. These courses were offered to the senior high school students only. Nine students attended St. Augustine Technical Center and received training in food service, custodial training and distributive education. The off campus on the job training program continued to be successful. Eight students worked in the

²⁹ The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1970-72, pp. 29-31.

areas of child care, radio station assistant, medical transcription, veterinary hospital, ambulance dispatcher and flower arrangement. The Division of Blind Services continued to work very closely with the school. Many of the above programs could not have been carried out had not they provided transportation and financial assistance. Another program was set up in cooperation with the Division of Blind Services and the director of student life was the coordinator of this program. The students were to work from five to ten hours each week as teacher aides, dormitory aides, grounds maintenance, janitorial aide, canteen operator and other on campus jobs. The major goal of the work experience was to expose the student to some type of work and the responsibilities that go with a job. It was designed to allow the visually handicapped student-client to learn how to follow instructions from employers as well as to develop desirable work habits. Each student was required to keep a weekly time card and received a weekly evaluation on his or her performance.³⁰

Forty-two students were involved in some type of vocational training or work experience during the 1974-75 school year. The building maintenance and food service programs at the St. Augustine Technical Center continued to

³⁰The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1973-74, pp. 47-50.

be popular with the students. One of the main reasons for this was the number of former students employed as a result of training received in these programs. Of the vocational programs on the campus, horticulture, switchboard and business education were the most popular. Two of the partially seeing students were enrolled in the printing program in the Department for the Deaf. Only one student was involved in on the job training and the remainder of the students were in the work experience program.

A career education workshop was held at the beginning of the 1975-76 school year. The entire staff of teachers, dormitory teachers and administrators attended. Their goal was to help young citizens succeed in their future careers through the implementation of a good career education program.³¹

Little change has been made in the overall vocational program in the last five years. The St. Augustine Technical center, the Division of Blind Services and the Department for the Blind continue to work closely together to provide counseling, information and training for the blind students. During these years the training has varied according to the need, abilities and desires of the students.

³¹The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1975-76, pp. 47-48.

The industrial arts program continued to offer woodworking, small engines, electronics and electricity, some chair caning for the younger students and home mechanics. Home economics and daily living skills were recognized as an important part in helping a student maintain living quarters once employed. Approximately 40 percent of the junior and senior high students were involved in a vocational training program or work experience program during the 1976-77 school year. In 1977-78 a greater number of the students were receiving some type training or work experience, a total of 59 or approximately 66 percent of the junior and senior high students were involved. Several students continued to enroll at the St. Augustine Technical Center and the food service program remained the most popular. Some students also enrolled in courses normally not considered within the realms of the partially sighted or blind student. One such student enrolled in the auto mechanics class and had limited success. He later transferred to small engines and marine repair.³²

The school year 1978-79 brought the addition of a post graduate program to the Department for the Blind. Three post graduate students were enrolled in advanced food service training at the St. Augustine Technical Center. They

³²The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, 1977-78, p. 59.

received instruction and training in daily living skills and consumer education while they maintained a small apartment on the campus. Two of these students are now employed at Disney World as are several other former students that trained in this area. The horticulture, arts and crafts, home economics and business education classes continued to be successful. The industrial arts program continued to offer excellent prevocational training to those students enrolled. Again, some of the students are in on the job training programs. Flagler hospital has three students working on the weekends in their dietary department. Thirteen students were enrolled in the food service, small engines and marine repair with St. Augustine Technical Center. Ten students were enrolled in the horticulture class held on the campus. Seventeen students took switchboard training and 28 students were involved in the work experience program. Toward the end of the year two of the students were placed in a sheltered workshop type of program. This was a pilot program and was mainly for evaluative purposes.³³

Summary

The findings in this study show that the blind students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind are provided many types of vocational and job oriented training. The Department for the Blind has a good working relationship

with the St. Augustine Technical Center and the Division of Blind Services. The study shows there is a positive attitude toward vocational education.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Summary

The purpose of this study was to record and document information about the vocational program for the blind students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. This was the first time this information has been assembled and recorded collectively. Having been employed by the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind for eleven years, the author collected much information from personal experiences and contacts with many of the former staff and students.

The first seventy years the school was in operation the vocational programs were mainly the production workshop type. Many of these programs were self-supporting and provided the school with much needed services and supplies as well as some income. The broom, mop and rug making shops made articles to be used by the school and other state agencies. This program served a good purpose and provided good training for many years. There should have been a change in the function and purpose of the program soon after World War II instead of waiting until 1956.

The vocational department for the deaf students should have been used much more as this would have given the students more kinds of training to choose from.

The involvement of the St. Augustine Technical Center was a very positive step for vocational oriented students. This should have been initiated much earlier and with many more students.

The vocational program is not organized as it should be. Several members of the staff are responsible for various segments of the program. The vocational offerings are many and varied, but there has not been the concerted effort to organize and construct the program so that there is some continuity.

II. Conclusions

The long-range prospects for improved vocational training for blind persons are brightening as increasing numbers of vocational educators become aware of problems of blind trainees, as local technical institutes and vocational schools open their doors wider to blind persons, and as state and local rehabilitation agencies create improved vocational training facilities. Progress in this field is slower than it should be, however, due to the need for finding additional challenging types of work for the blind client or student who can master higher level manual skills. Although new inventions, discoveries, and processes are changing the face of American industry, relatively little of this technological change becomes translated into new

occupations for the blind. Of particular importance is the possibility that some of these changes may make it possible to circumvent the visual channel and, with electronic aids, enable the blind to function effectively on the job with the use of other senses. Such developments should be examined in depth so that technology can be promptly and routinely put at the disposal of the blind worker providing him with new means of gaining access to jobs in competitive industry. Once new occupational areas open as a result of occupational research, vocational training will follow.

The curriculum should be revised to serve all the students and not the select few that plan to attend college. Public Law 94-142 requires that each handicapped student have a written individual education plan. This should have some effect upon the curriculum. Due to this law and the ever increasing programs for blind students in the public school the population in residential schools throughout the country is rapidly changing. The number of students enrolled is decreasing and many of the new students have handicaps in addition to their blindness. The population at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind has dropped considerably during the last five years, approximately 45 percent in the Department for the Blind. Within the next three to five years the majority of the students in the Department for the Blind will need an education program much different from

that presently offered, due to the lower level of functioning and additional handicaps.

III. Recommendations

Nationwide approximately 20 percent of the high school graduates go to college, less than that graduate. For the blind student this percentage is even lower. In the public schools as well as in the residential schools for the blind we have structured the curriculum for the student going to college. All educators must become aware of career education from the first grade through completion of the student's formal education.

The number one need and a most urgent one is for some type of program for the elementary students. Industrial arts and arts and crafts should be offered to the third grade students and certainly no later than the fourth grade. Blind students require more time to learn many of the skills that are necessary in order to become employable. The students must start developing some finger and manual dexterity and knowledge of tools at that age if they ever expect to earn a living from some trade.

Secondly, the school needs a vocational director to bring all the varied programs together. A single director could set the program up so that all students would receive vocational training more suited to their aptitudes and

interests. This person would be responsible for coordinating all the prevocational, vocational and on the job training. He would work closely with the St. Augustine Technical Center and the Division of Blind Services and lend much needed continuity throughout the program. He would be responsible for the work experience program currently being administered through the director of student life office.

More counseling concerning jobs is needed and information as to the requirements for entering certain jobs. The vocational evaluation center in the Department for the Deaf should be used more as should the various vocational shops. For some of the blind students currently enrolled and for some of the future students there may need to be some production or repetitive skill training.

There should be much effort put forth to find the area in which the student most likely will be living upon graduation and conduct a survey of the available jobs in the area the student may be able to work in. The school, the Division of Blind Services and the St. Augustine Technical Center should conduct follow-up services and share the information with each other.

There should be more public relations work concerning the abilities of the blind worker. More effort should be expended in involving the community in preparing the students for entering the world of work.

The school has been doing a creditable job, but can improve greatly, if they will remember the first step in developing vocational training programs for blind persons is the identification of suitable occupational areas that offer employment opportunities for this group. Only then can courses be structured either in existing community facilities or in specialized programs for the blind. The search for new vocational areas, especially for the blind must be a continuous, since today's job may be obsolete tomorrow.

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VITA

Thomas Henry Parrigin, Jr., was born on a small farm in Overton County, Tennessee, on March 24, 1937. His father taught school and his mother was a housewife. He attended elementary school in Livingston, Tennessee, and was graduated from Livingston Academy High School in 1954. After attending Austin Peay State College for one year he transferred to Tennessee Technological University and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Arts Education in 1958.

In the fall of 1958 he was employed by the Tennessee School for the Blind as the instructor of Industrial Arts and assisted in coaching wrestling and track. In 1964 he decided to vary his work experience and accepted a position as an elementary teacher and coach of the football team in his home town. Wishing to gain additional work experience he began adjusting insurance for the General Adjustment Bureau in 1965. In 1966 the Livingston Area Vocational-Technical School opened and he became the counselor. In 1968 he was appointed and currently serves as the Director of Student Life at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind located in St. Augustine, Florida.