



Superintendent's Office, c1890

Archives: Open to staff, students and the public

Deaf history enthusiasts, researchers, visitors, alumni, students and school staff are welcome to come and see several beautiful showcases of the collection in the Main School building.

Access to the archives is restricted for research purposes and must be made by appointment.

All materials are subject to copyright protection and FIPPA (*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*).

OSD-SJW ARCHIVES

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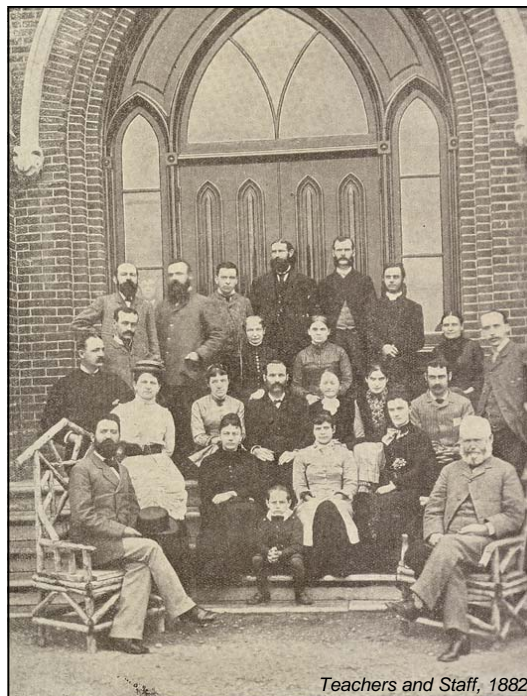
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May 2012

Preserving Our School's Heritage: The Past, the Present and the Future

DEAF EDUCATION IN ONTARIO: Early Attempts for a Provincial School for Deaf Children



Teachers and Staff, 1882

OSD-SJW ARCHIVES
Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
Belleville, Ontario



School Archives

The Provincial Schools Branch (PSB) of the Ontario Ministry of Education set up a project in 2008/09 to manage the school's collection of historical materials (artifacts, photographs, documents, and other items of historical value) to ensure their preservation and maintenance. Many of these materials are culturally-sensitive to Deaf history, Deaf people in general, and school alumni. Branch staff, volunteers from the Deaf community, school alumni, and summer co-op students have been assisting in the task.

One of the school's classrooms has been divided into two sections. The first section consists of an archival-quality storage environment with high-density shelves, temperature control, and improved conditions for high quality preservation. The second section is a reading room with a large table and chairs. It also has a display case and ample space for individuals who have a legitimate interest in research or are doing school projects. The two sections are secured by a camera monitoring system 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

With the exception of items on loan, all historical materials accumulated by the school or acquired by the archives are the property of the Government of Ontario. The constant expansion of the school archives owes much to the generosity of its alumni and other members of the Deaf community who have donated items over the years.

How you can help...

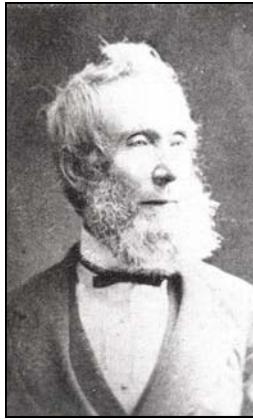
The OSD-SJW Archives is interested in collecting artifacts, photographs, documents and other materials from the school's alumni, students, current and former staff, family members, the Deaf community and the general public. These materials will help document and preserve the history and culture of the school. While the policy is to accept only permanent gifts, some items will be accepted as loans for displays and exhibits.

Acknowledgments

The Provincial Schools Branch and the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf wish to thank David Bentley, a former hearing residence counselor, and alumni Keith Dorschner '56 and Christina (née Bennett) Dorschner '56 for their early efforts in collecting and preserving historical materials and artifacts related to the school and the Deaf community in general. Clifton F. Carbin, a PSB employee and 1966 graduate of the school, has been assigned to supervise, sort, catalogue, stabilize and preserve the materials.

A special thank you is also extended to the alumni and former/current staff for their continued support and generous donations of school photos and so much more.

DEAF EDUCATION IN ONTARIO: Early Attempts for a Provincial School for Deaf Children



PROF. J. B. MCGANN
b. Dec. 25, 1810; d. Jan. 22, 1880

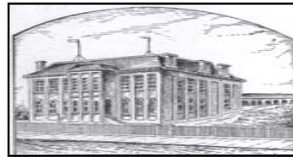
The credit for introducing and establishing Deaf Education in the province of Ontario belongs to John Barrett McGann, an Irishman, who immigrated to Canada in 1855 via the United States and taught hearing children in the Toronto Grammar School.

In 1858, McGann opened, at great personal sacrifice, a privately-funded school for Deaf children in Toronto which had to move around in so many locations, and again in Hamilton. After years of pleading for a provincially funded institution, he finally received support from the Ontario Legislature on November 19, 1868. Two years later, a permanent institution was established in the city of Belleville.

**Original, previous and current names*

TORONTO (1858–1864)

Upper Canada Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb*



FIRST LOCATION (1858):

A class with four pupils opened in a spare room at the Phoebe Street School near Queen Street West and Spadina Avenue on June 22nd.

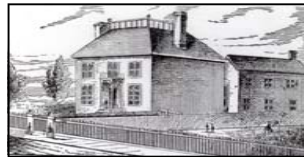
SECOND LOCATION (1859):

A large classroom with plenty of space was acquired at the Toronto Grammar School on Nelson (now Jarvis) Street.



THIRD LOCATION (1860):

Commodious buildings at 490 Queen Street West became the first site to include both classrooms and dormitories on May 1st.



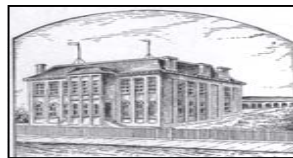
FOURTH LOCATION (1863):

Two houses were used as a residential school at 343 Richmond Street West (left) and 146 Brock Street (right).



FIFTH LOCATION (1864):

Classes had temporarily moved back to their original location at the Phoebe Street School, awaiting a move to a new location in Hamilton.

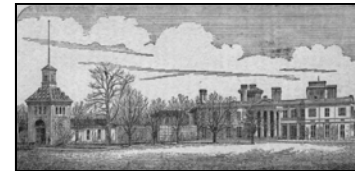


HAMILTON (1864–1870)

Hamilton Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb*



SIXTH LOCATION (1864–1866): School was relocated to Hamilton where it occupied a 54-room building known as the "Florence Hotel" on King Street West between Bay and Caroline Streets (left). The earliest known photograph of pupils and staff (right) was taken in the school yard (Fall 1865).



SEVENTH LOCATION (1866–1869): Dundurn Castle, a palatial residence that sat empty for four years, was rented for classes and dormitories.



EIGHTH LOCATION (1869–1870): Classes and dormitories were temporarily housed at adjacent buildings on Main Street (left, Nos. 29 and 30) and at Earlham Cottage (right) on Emerald Street, awaiting a permanent move to Belleville.

BELLEVILLE (1870–present)

- 1870–1913: Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb*
- 1913–1974: Ontario School for the Deaf*
- 1974–present: Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf*



NINTH & PERMANENT LOCATION (1870–present):

On October 20, 1870, the original school building (above) was formally opened. It was demolished in 1922. A completely new building (below) was constructed in front of the old school. By March 1923, it was fully occupied.

