



State Senator Caleb D. Randall (1831-1903), a Coldwater resident, served in the Michigan Senate in 1871. He was instrumental in bringing the State Public School to Coldwater. The city offered 27 acres and \$25,000 and was chosen as the site for the new facility.

**State Public School – Book 1 of 2**

MICHIGAN  
HERITAGE  
HISTORIC SITE

## STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL AT COLDWATER

In 1871 the Michigan Legislature authorized the building of a special state public school to furnish temporary support and instruction for dependent and neglected children between the ages of four and sixteen until they could be placed in homes or returned to their families. The school was opened in Coldwater on May 21, 1874. Once admitted, children participated in "family-like" life in cottages and a placing-out program. A third of each day was used for schoolwork, a third for recreation and entertainment, and a third for acquiring work skills. Children learned reading, spelling, counting, callisthenics, singing, cyphering and slate drawing. By the turn of the century, the facility had become the only home in Michigan admitting both normal and handicapped children.



## COLDWATER REGIONAL CENTER

By an act of the state legislature the State Public School became the Michigan Children's Village in 1935. The facility then began to admit only children with mild mental impairments. Most of the former residents were transferred to the Michigan Children's Institute, established in Ann Arbor in 1935. In 1939 the Children's Village became the Coldwater State Home and Training School, and persons of all ages with more serious mental handicaps were admitted. By 1960 there were 2,900 residents. During the 1970s, special education, training and living experiences in communities reduced the number of residents to less than 700. Renamed the Coldwater Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities in 1978, the remodeled facility provides training programs for independent living and self-help.

## COLDWATER REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

During the era of the "Orphan Trains" of the 1800's, children were loaded into trains for a journey through the midwest. Arrival times of the trains were posted well in advance, and anyone--without investigation of the home or its conditions--could select a child. As a result, many of these children would run away and eventually ended up in the poorhouses, or again on an "Orphan Train." At the end of the routes, the children who were left would go to various institutions across the country.

In this same time period, Laura Haviland, of Raisin Township in Lenawee County, devoted her life's work to help the oppressed and down-trodden of every race. Active in the underground railroad, the modest home of the Havilands became the refuge of the fleeing slaves on their way to Canada. The Havilands also opened a manual labor school on their premises designed for indigent children. They took nine children from the county house of Lenawee County, and along with their own children, taught them four hours each day.

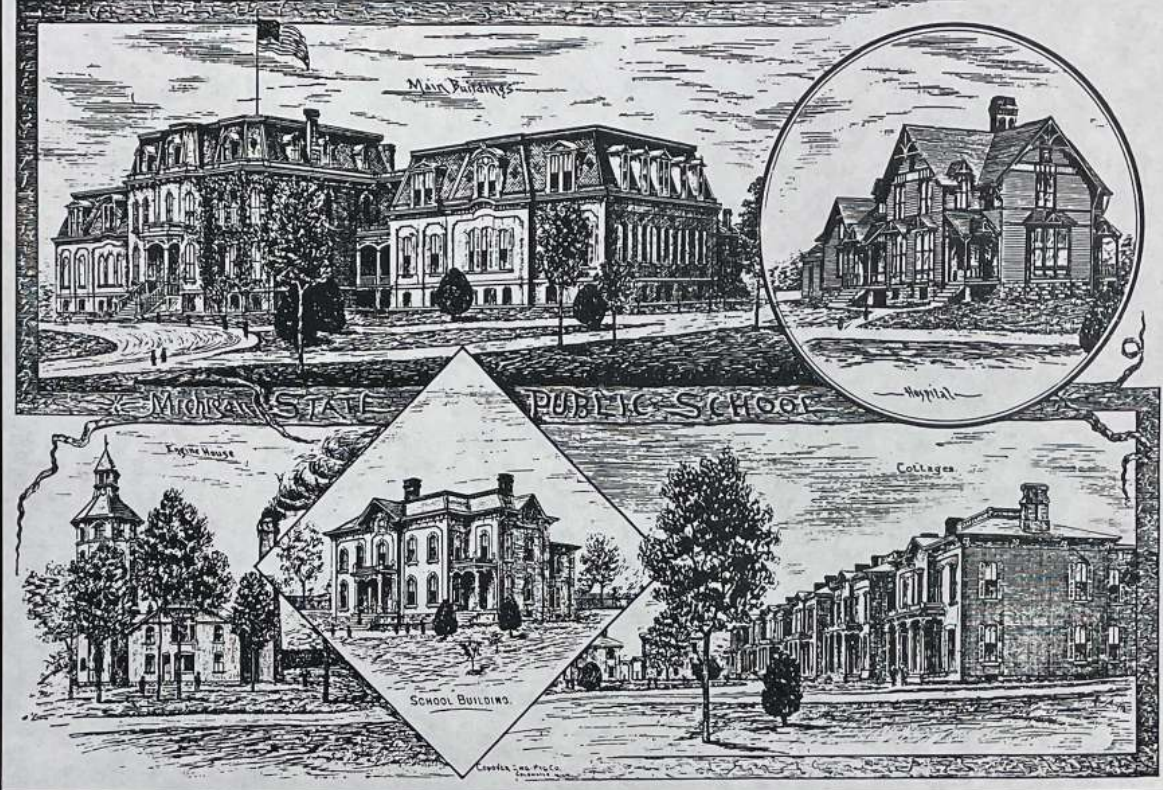
In 1837, the Raisin Institute initially was opened in Lenawee County. In 1864, the Institute closed as a house of learning, for so many of the teachers and students had enlisted in the Civil War. Mrs. Haviland sold the Raisin Institute with the stipulation that it was to be used for homeless and indigent children. Two hundred children of this class were cared for in this "home" until good homes were found for them. For four years this orphan's home was conducted with funds provided by charity, and throughout this time Mrs. Haviland hoped that the State might take over the task of supporting schools of this nature.

In his inaugural address to the state legislature in 1868, Governor Henry Baldwin called special attention to the lamentable living conditions of dependent children in the county poor houses. Through Mrs. Haviland's personal appeal, the Legislature passed a bill in 1871 to establish a "State Public School for Dependent and Neglected Children," and Senator Randall began a campaign to secure the facility for Coldwater, Michigan. Many other Michigan cities offered bids, but Coldwater's offer of 27 acres of land and \$25,000 was finally accepted.

The Coldwater Regional Mental Health Center first opened its doors on May 21, 1874, as the *State Public School*. The population consisted of 150 orphaned and dependent children.

On October 1, 1935, a major change in the original concept occurred when the agency became part of the Michigan Children's Institute, and the name changed to *Michigan Children's Village*. At that time, the admission of mildly impaired residents, who were capable of academic education or vocational training, were accepted.





On May 23, 1939, the facility was renamed **Coldwater State Home and Training School**, and began to accept residents of all ages and levels of retardation. The population growth from 150 residents in 1874 to a record 3,231 in 1960, reflected the trend of similar agencies throughout the United States. This trend started to reverse in 1969, when there were 2,800 residents, and has continued until today. Gradually, many placements were found in foster homes, group homes, and in independent living arrangements.

The next name change occurred in January 1975, to the **Coldwater Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities**, which again reflected administrative changes in the Department of Mental Health. In November, 1985, the first unit (Linden Hall--18) for chronic mentally ill patients was opened. In January, 1986, the agency's name was changed to the **Coldwater Regional Mental Health Center**. Finally, in June of 1987, the first acute admission unit was opened to patients from Branch, Hillsdale, and Jackson counties.

In March, 1991, the Department of Mental Health announced that it would be closing the Coldwater Regional Mental Health Center in June, 1992, due to deinstitutionalization of Michigan's mentally ill population. In July, 1992, Governor Engler announced that the Department of Corrections would move their Women's Work Camp Program from the Chelsea area to the vacated buildings of the former Coldwater Regional Center in October, 1992.

An official closure ceremony was held in front of the Administration Building on Saturday, September 26, 1992. The community band played, the flags were lowered and burned, and the keys to the facility were handed over to the Department of Corrections, thus ending 118 years of serving those citizens with special needs.



**Administration Building**



STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL, COLDWATER.



*The establishing of this school . . . is a step in the right direction to lessen pauperism and prevent crime . . . place them in a way of becoming useful citizens and self-supporting rather than expend thousands of dollars to build prisons and keep them shut up at great expense . . . - C. D. Randall*



## Cottage Row



*"The high character of any Commonwealth is founded on the morals, intelligence and industry of the people. Each child saved is one more pillar of the strong state edifice..." - C. D. Randall (1897)*



Scene on Cottage Row, State Public School. Coldwater, Mich.

*"The State stipulated the child could be "Freed" in one of three ways; by adoption, by reaching the age of sixteen and thus being declared self-supporting, or on a claim by the natural parents."*

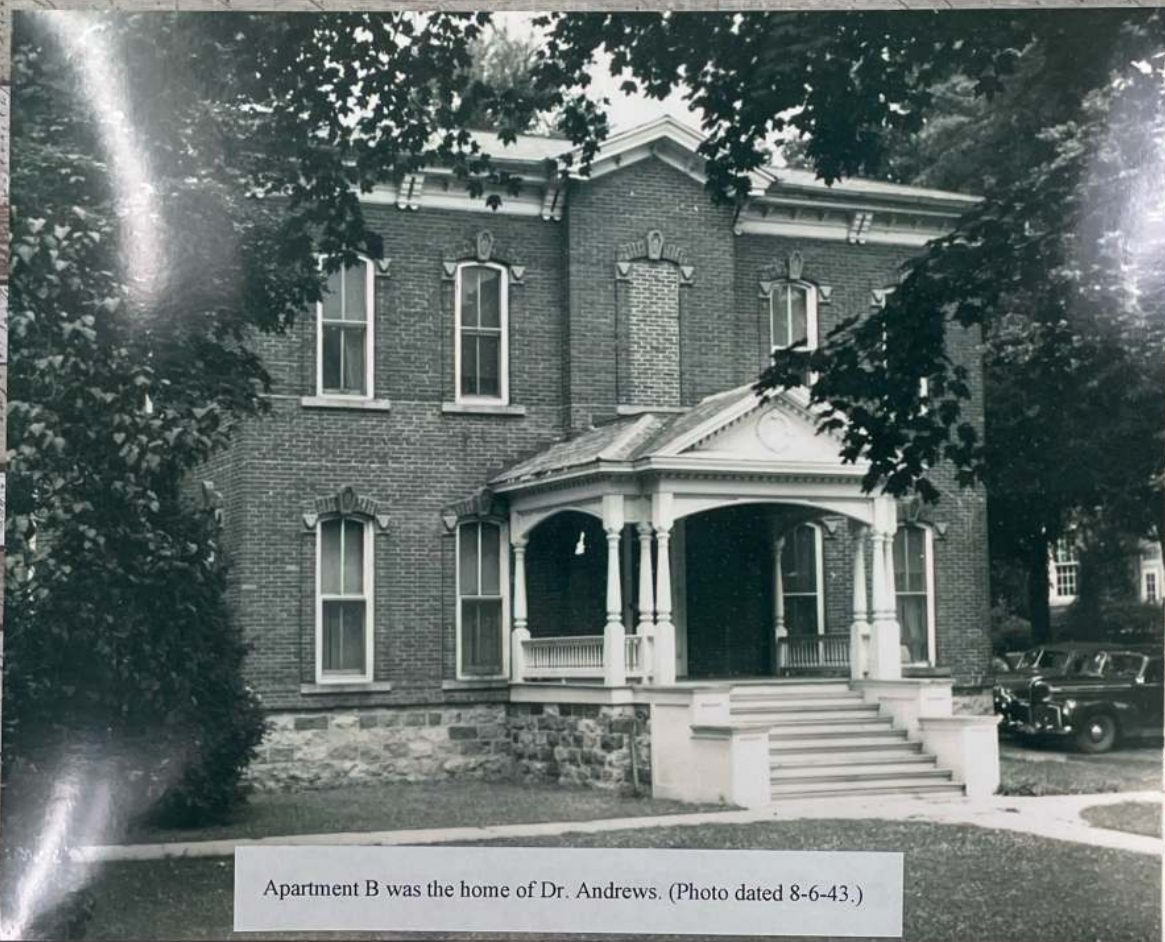
*"No child was to be admitted without evidence heard in the probate court. After all, even a destitute child has rights and these rights and the rights of the parents."* - C. D. Randall



Baby Cottage, State Public School, Coldwater, Mich. .



*"The children who were "placed" could be adopted, fostered or indentured. In the case of the State Public School as with other institutions it was the school policy to deny information to the natural parents on the whereabouts of their child."*

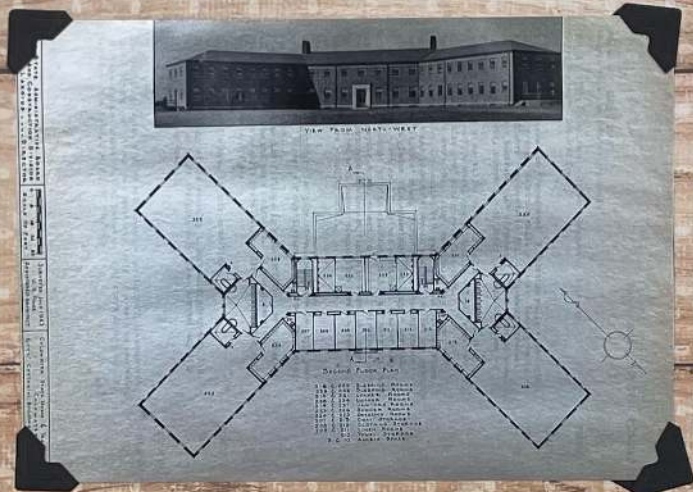


Apartment B was the home of Dr. Andrews. (Photo dated 8-6-43.)

*"Seventy-seven children in 1887 had been there for more than two years. They were still prone to all manner of wickedness and related afflictions from disease to viciousness. Physical attributes and handicaps also served as deterrents to adoption."  
(1887)*



Courtesy of Michigan Library & Historical Center, Lansing, Michigan.



*"From fifteen to eighteen (residents) are employed making beds, sweeping and scrubbing the cottages. About the same number are employed on the farm, in caring for the animals, milking, working in the garden, hauling wood, etc. The dining room and kitchen employed twenty-five children. Quite a number work in the bakery, laundry, engine and sewing rooms, while twelve are learning the shoemaking business."*



**The Greenhouse**

GREENHOUSE  
STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
COLDWATER - MICH

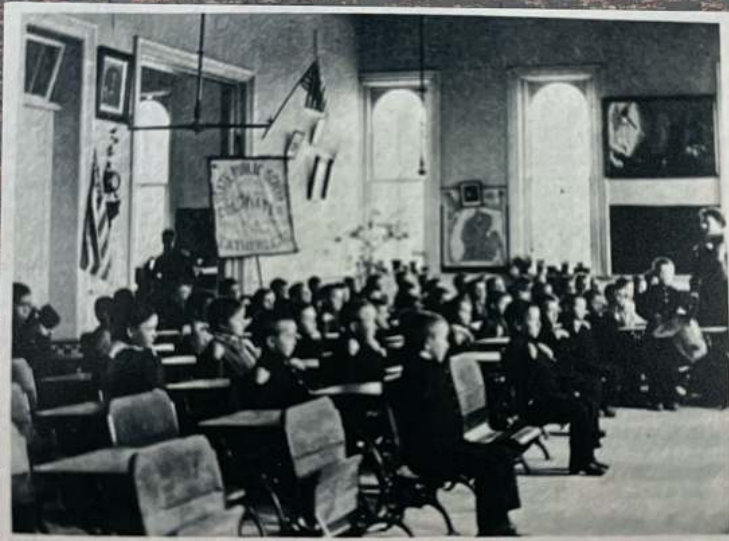




*"The message was clear and positive: dependent children are not delinquent and can be saved. Preventative measures such as a pastoral environment and discipline could render children deprived of a family acceptable to a new family. Coldwater's admission procedures and forced daily routine sound drab to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But the school has an exceptional reputation probably because it fulfilled the expectations of a reform-minded public."*

*(Forms.)*

1. What is the child's physical condition ?
  2. How many months has the child attended school ?
  3. What studies have been pursued ?
  4. What progress is made in school ?
  5. Does the child attend church and Sabbath-school, and how often ?
  6. Is the child obedient ?
  7. Is the child industrious ?
  8. Is the child accustomed to hear and use profane language ?
  9. Are the child's associates good ?
  10. How are the child's evenings spent ?
  11. What is the child's occupation, and is it suitable ?
  12. What has been the child's general treatment ?
  13. Does the child sleep alone ?
  14. Is the bed suitable ?
  15. Is the child's clothing suitable and proper ?
  16. Does the child take its meals with the family ?
  17. Is the food suitable and proper ?
  18. Are ardent spirits used in the family ?
  19. Does the head of the family complain of the child's conduct, or the child of its treatment ?
  20. Are there any other children in the family? If so, give sex and age of each.
6. That the Agent of this School may, in his discretion, require a similar report on said blanks, once in each year, from the person to whom said child is indentured six months from the time of the State Agent's report.
7. That when on such examination it shall be found by either of said agents that the interest of the child requires it, said child shall be removed from the person to whom he is indentured, and in case the removal is necessary by reason of fault on the part of the child, he shall be retained in this institution at least three months before placing him in another family.



Courtesy of Michigan Library & Historical Center, Lansing, Michigan.



The institution is located just north of the city, on an eminence overlooking the city and surrounding country. The buildings are on the cottage plan, and are represented on the accompanying cut. The cottages are the homes of the children, each accommodating about thirty children, and each presided over by a lady cottage manager, whose duties are very similar to those of a mother with a smaller family. It is made the special duty of the Board of Control to find homes in families for the children, as fast as practicable, and an agent is appointed to attend to this work, and to look after the welfare of the children after thus being placed in homes.

The institution is in charge of a Board of Control, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, for a term of six years each. The present Board of Control consists of the following persons:

Isaac B. Fancher, President, - - -	Mt. Pleasant.
Richmond E. Case, - - - - -	Three Rivers.
C. D. Randall, Secretary and Treasurer,	Coldwater.

The administration of the ordinary affairs is in the hands of a Superintendent, who is delegated large discretionary authority by the Board, and in whom is principally the responsibility of success. Wesley Sears is now superintendent of the institution and Wm. B. Streeter is State Agent. There are about 300 children in the school, new ones being continually received, and the older ones being furnished with homes in families. Since the organization of the school, more than 2,500 children have been provided for, proving this to be one of the grandest public enterprises ever attempted by any state or country.



## The Kitchen

### DIETARY.

#### *Breakfast.*

SUNDAY.	MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.
Oat Meal. Coffee. Potatoes. Bread. Meat Gravy.	Cr'k'd Wheat. Milk. Potatoes. Bread. Cream Gravy.	Hominy. Milk. Bread. Potatoes. Cream Gravy.	Coffee. Farina. Potatoes. Bread. Codfish.	Oat Meal. Milk. Bread. Potatoes. Cream Gravy.	Cr'k'd Wheat. Milk. Bread. Potatoes. Codfish.	Rice. Milk. Bread. Hash. Molasses.

#### *Dinner.*

Soup. Pickles. Bread. Fia.	Pot-pie. Potatoes. Bread. Meat Gravy.	Soup. Apples. Bread. Potatoes.	Salt Fish. Pickles. Bread. Potatoes. Meat Gravy.	Pork and Beans. Apples. Bread. Potatoes. Meat Gravy.	Soup. Apples. Bread. Cabbage.	Pork and Beans. Apples. Bread.
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Courtesy of Michigan Library & Historical Center, Lansing, Michigan.

*The State Public School "must not be an overgrown poorhouse with low grade employees. It must be plain and pleasant . . . a cheerful educational home".* - C. D. Randall

## The Faculty



Courtesy of Michigan Library & Historical Center, Lansing, Michigan.

### *HISTORY OF "THE BELL"*

The original bell of the State Public School was cast in West Troy, New York in 1881 by the Meneely Company. It is 22" high and 28" wide, and is complete with support arms of "Yok" and clapper. It is made of a special alloy called bell metal, which is composed of 90% bronze and 10% tin, and weighs an approximate 500 - 600 pounds. Upon it is inscribed "Meneely's Rotary Yok, Patented October 9, 1860."

The bell was located under a wood canopy on top of the roof of the Old Administration Building of the State Public School. The bell would ring six times to awaken the residents, seven times for breakfast, twelve for lunch, one for school, five for dinner, and any other time when they wanted the residents to move for special events. On a clear day it could be heard at least three miles away.

In 1950, the canopy had started to rot, forcing the removal of the bell by a high crane. At that time, the bell was no longer used, because electric clocks had been installed throughout the facility. It was declared salvage, and offered to the State Conservation Department for use in one of their parks. Eventually, the bell was relocated to Proud Lake Park, near Brighton, Michigan, where it was used to call campers to dinner.

An excerpt from a 3-13-75 memorandum written by E. John Klein, Administrative Officer, to the Superintendent follows: "Soon after I came to work at the Coldwater State Home & Training School in 1960, I was told many things about the history of the "old" institution by my predecessor who had worked here 42 years. One part of the history concerned a large bell which was, as I remember it, located in a cupola on the old Administration Building and was used to signal reveille, mealtime, close of the school day, bedtime, etc. I inquired as to the whereabouts of the bell, and was told that in 1950 it was transferred to the then Department of Conservation and housed at a state park near Brighton, Michigan.

It has been my opinion since being made aware of the bell, its use, etc. that a chapter of this agency's history left here when the bell was removed, and I was hopeful it could, somehow, some day be returned. It follows then to say I think the "rightful place" for the bell is here, and I am very pleased to report to you it has been returned today. This action followed a meeting which took place on March 11, 1975, with a Mr. Russell, Department of Natural Resources, who was here by prior arrangement to look at some surplus beds and furniture. He said the last time he had been to Coldwater was to pick up a bell. It was at this point I "lit up" and told him of my interest to some day have the bell returned. Much to my surprise he told me he thought it could be made available, and he, too, agreed with me the bell should be here. Another call this morning confirmed availability of the old bell, and I made arrangements to have it picked up immediately. It is my wish that a suitable and fitting location on these grounds be designated as the official site to place this historical "piece of the past" for both the people of the Institution and Community to see and remember as a monument to prior generations serving those in need."



In 1979, the bell was relocated to the park site at the facility and set in an enclosure which was fabricated from the bricks, slate, iron grill work and other artifacts from the original main or "administration building" built in 1874. A memorial plaque at the base of the bell reads as follows: "Memorial to George Palamaki, 1921-1978. In recognition of his lifetime of service to this facility and its residents. This bell was a vital part of daily life at State Public School, founded in 1874, from which the present day facility emerged." George Palamaki came to the State Public School as an orphaned baby, and was raised in the school. He later became a trusted employee of the facility and dedicated his life and career to serving the institution. Thus, the bell was dedicated, and the park named "Palamaki Park" in memory of George Palamaki, who died in 1978.

The Coldwater Regional Mental Health Center was officially closed on 9-26-92. The Branch County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution requesting "that a transfer be made by the Michigan Department of Mental Health of this cherished part of the Branch County Community and be understood that the County of Branch will commit this George Palamaki Bell to a permanent place within Branch County to entrust, preserve, and protect this irreplaceable symbol of our history."

# The Children







TABLE X.—*Sex, Parentage of Children, etc.*

Males.....	142
Females.....	80
Whites.....	162
Colored.....	10
Native parentage.....	110
Foreign ".....	62
Orphans.....	19
Half orphans.....	91
Who came from poor house.....	98
Whose parents were convicted of crime.....	27
Whose parents were intemperate.....	43
Whose parents were in poor house.....	32

Courtesy of Michigan Library & Historical Center, Lansing, Michigan.

1903



The smallest children are nearest to God, as the smallest planets are nearest the sun.

RIC



Some one said "Boys will be boys"; — he forgot to add, "Boys will be men."



ADMITTING CHILDREN.

The following is suggested as a form of application as required by Sec. 21, Act No. 58 of 1875:

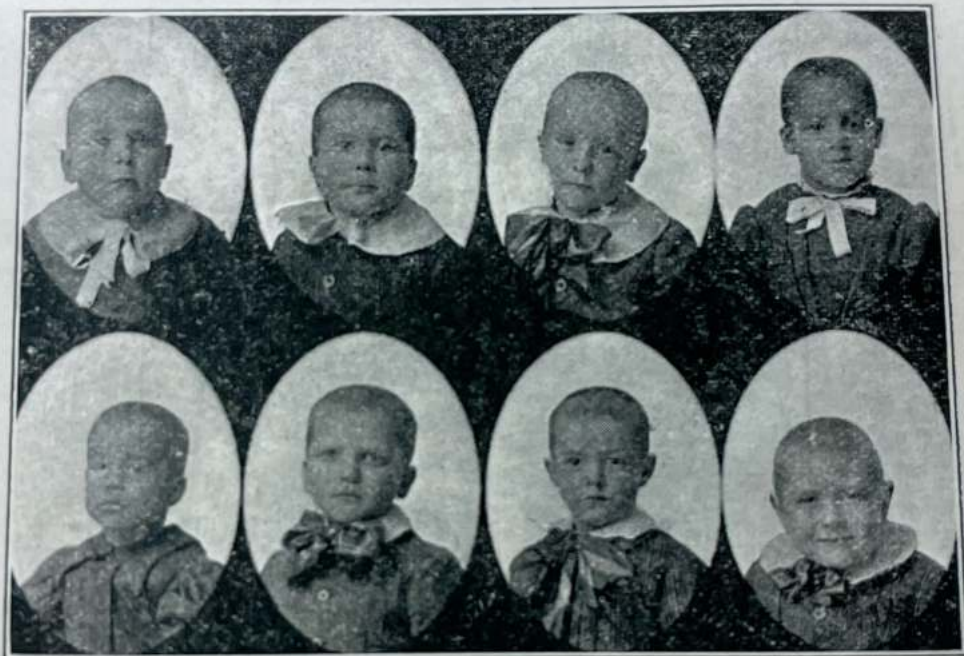
(Form.)

*To the Judge of Probate of the County of Wayne, ss :*

The undersigned, Superintendents of the Poor of said county, hereby apply to said court, and request an examination of the dependency of ----- a child under sixteen years of, on the public for support, pursuant to the provisions of Act No. 144 of the laws of 1873, with a view to have said child admitted into the State Public School at Coldwater. That in the opinion of the undersigned the said child is dependent on the public for support, and that he has no parents against whom his support can be enforced as provided in chapter 49 of the Compiled Laws of 1871.

(Signed) -----

2. That hereafter, on all such examinations, the Judges of Probate shall be requested to ascertain and report on the following inquiries in addition to what is now required by law :



A "BOUQUET OF BABIES" FROM THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL

lly, the School accepted only physically sound children between 4 and 16 years of age. Cripples are received, as well as babies of any age.

## Birthday Party - 1925



Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

## Wood Shop - 1925



Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

## Children – 1925



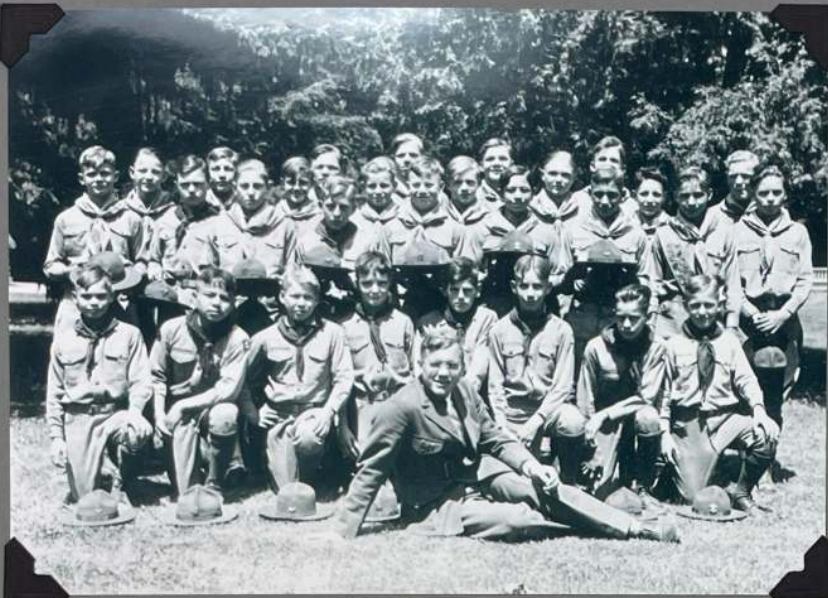
Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.



## Girl Scout Troop #1



The State Public School's Girl Scout troop was the first to be chartered in an institution of this kind in the United States.



**Boy Scout Troop #50**



## Camping 1930



Paul Venter, Gunnard Carlson, Billy Wheeler, Thomas Barker, Forrest Roggow (1930)

# Kite Tournament - 1929 and 1930





James Bass, Robert Steele, Albert Larkins, Billy Wheeler (May, 1929)



George Buckhold, (May, 1929)



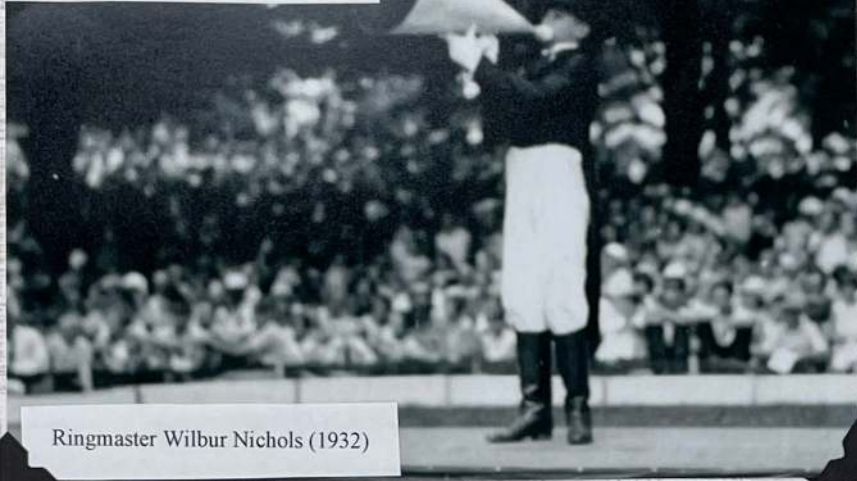
John Kozil (May, 1929)



Prize Kite Winners May, 1930

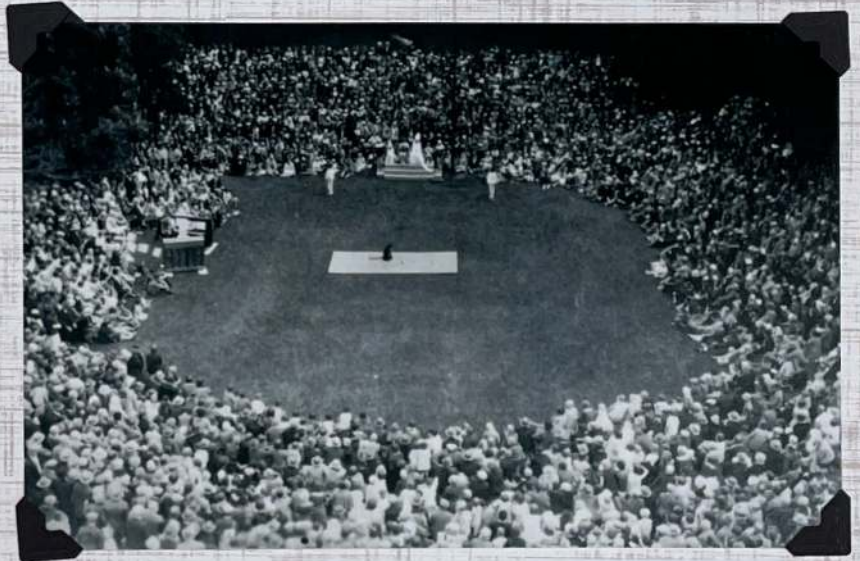
L. Carlson, C. Wymer, W. Freeman, H. Clark

**Ladies and Gentlemen...**



Ringmaster Wilbur Nichols (1932)

**Entertainment**



View of the crowd of 3100 people who attended the Pageant in the 1930's.



The Royal Party at the June 1931 Pageant.



The Cotton Town Minstrels presented a "Look for the Silver Lining" program on 5-25-47.  
Pictured left to right: Lavina Elliott, Clifford Blackman, Dorothy Dingman.





Front Row: Clifford Blackman, Frances Zyskowski, Lavina Elliott, Betty Edinger, Billy Pitzner, Dorothy Dingman, Donna Frit, Anna May Hudson.

Back Row: James Alexander, Eileen Ramburg, Frances Slowik, Della Hazzard, Clarissa VanHorn, Edward Stevens, Arlene King, Joe Freehorn, Ernestine Seals.



# CIRCUS DAYS

## State Public School

June 5, 1932

### PRELUDE

Bugle Corps of Legionaire fame;  
Coldwater's pride inhabitants claim.

### LADIES and GENTLEMEN!

The greatest show on this old earth will now perform for all its worth.

#### Event 1

Four trained black horses with their riders of skill open this act with unequalled drill  
A bippo, a lion, and a tall giraffe and you can't help it you're going to laugh,  
A tiger, a seal, an elephant too with a zebra unlike the one in the zoo.

#### Event 2

A Highland-Fling by lassies four; challenge old Ringling to offer more.

#### Event 3

A clown in a bath tub, clowns black and white, a clown looking down from tremendous height.

#### Event 4

Musical number of infinite worth, played by the tiniest band on earth.

#### Event 5

Juggling clowns and clowns who box and freaks so queer the grand-stand rocks.  
A butcher whose sausage meat sadly gives out, captures a dog as it wanders about.

#### Event 6

Six odd funny dancing men play a lively game, when they tumble in a heap they're very far from tame.

#### Event 7

Wm. Tell and searching clowns, a frog, a cop to chase the frowns.  
A boy who's lost his nice new clothes, will help you lose your ails and woes.





"The Court Jesters" 1932.

## Swim Team



The school's 1929-30 season Gymnastic Team: Clayton Edmondson, Forrest Roggow, Gunnard Carlson, Vernard Flowers, Kenneth Everetto, Billy Wheeler, Norvic Clark, Harry Edmondson



## The Pool

# Gymnastics



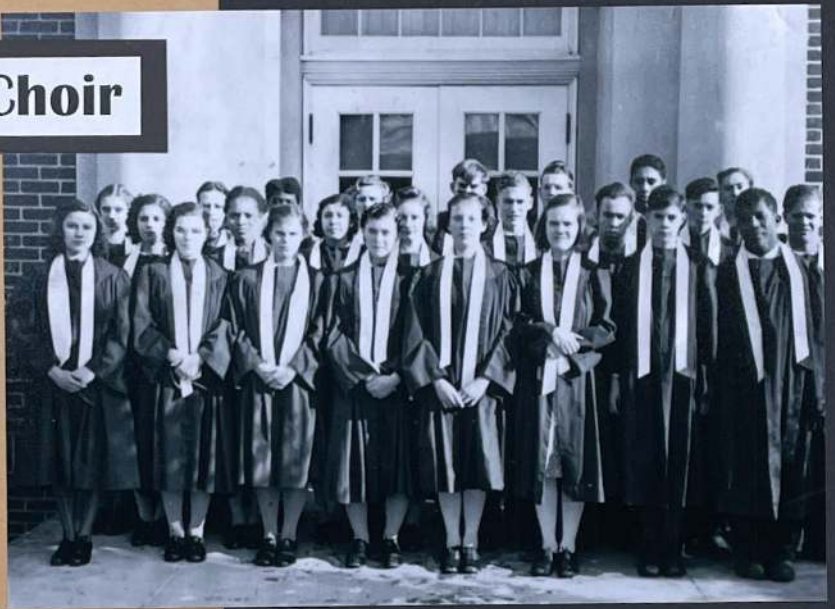
What a Friend  
What a Friend

# Music Class

1940



## Senior Choir



## Exercise Class



## The Cemetery



Residents place flowers on graves in the cemetery on Memorial Day 1930.

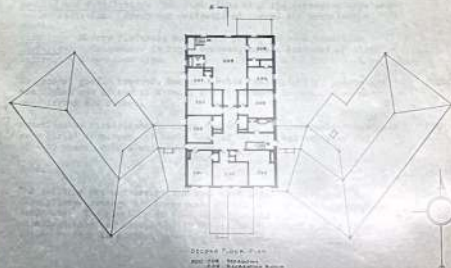
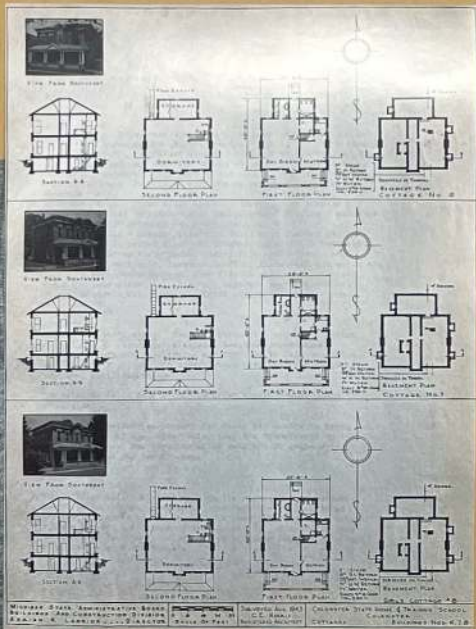


# COLDWATER STATE HOME & TRAINING SCHOOL

*A Conspectus  
of the  
Physical Plant*

MICHIGAN STATE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD  
BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION DIVISION  
ADRIAN N. LANGIUS - - DIRECTOR

1943





Football

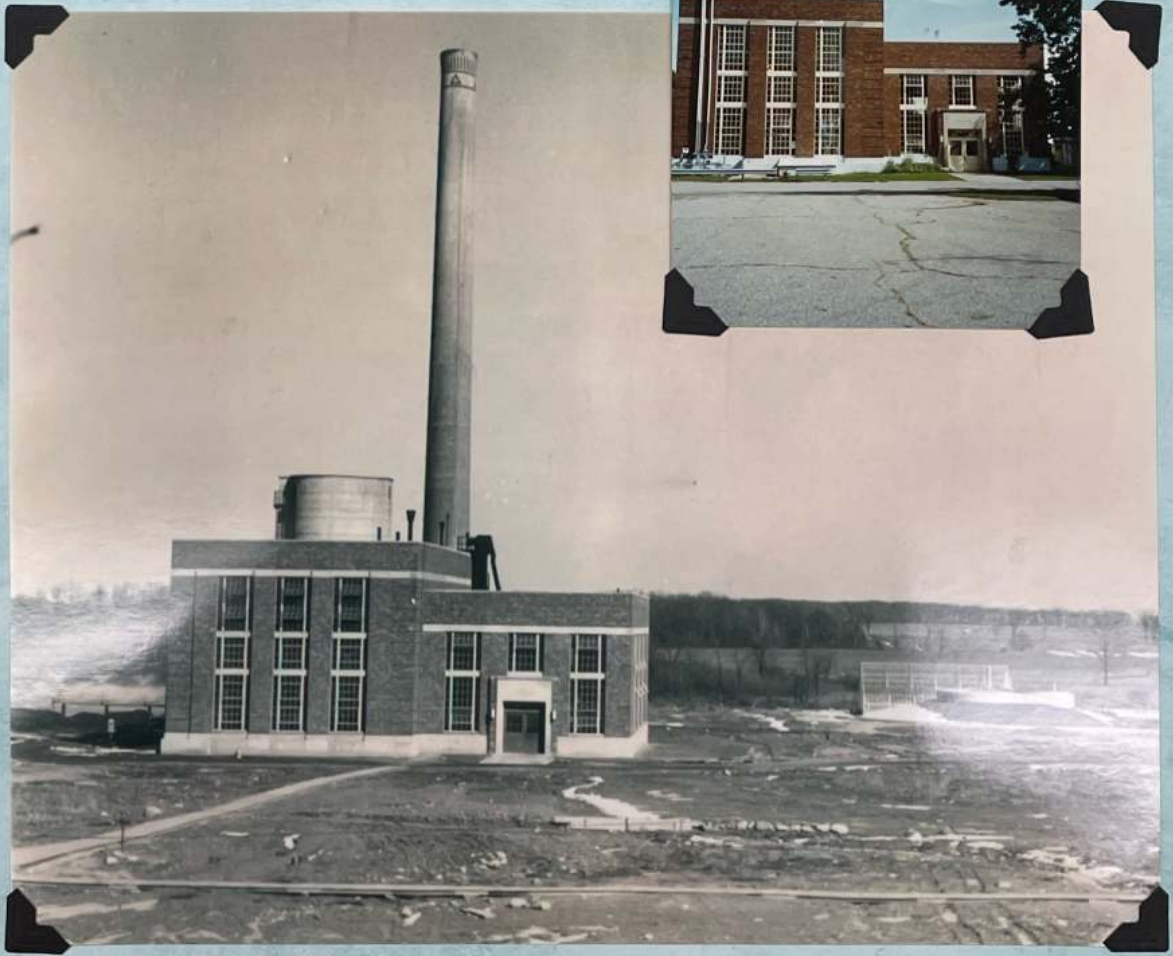


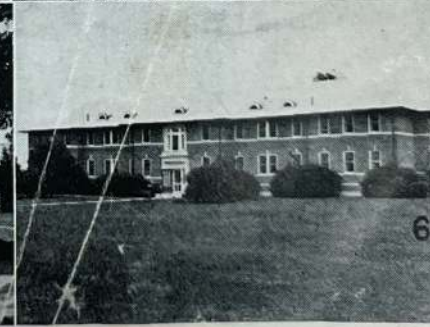
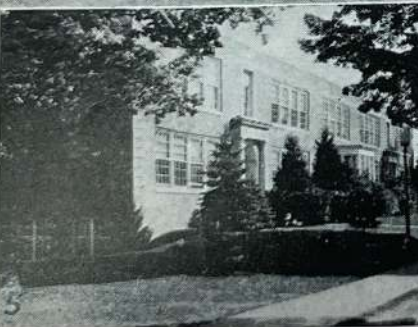
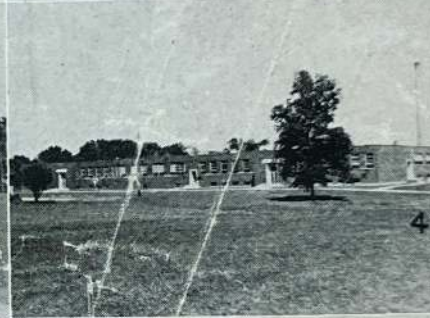
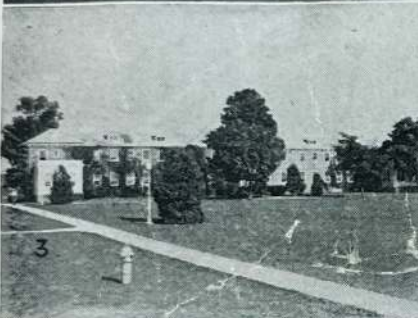
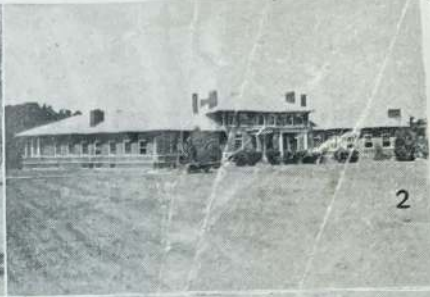


LeRoy Harris and his new Dodge car, with Randall Hall in the background.



**Power Plant**





**COLDWATER STATE HOME AND TRAINING SCHOOL**

No. 1—Main Buildings, Offices

No. 3—Hospital

No. 5—School Building

No. 2—Boys' Cottage

No. 4—Service Building

No. 6—Randall Hall, Girls' Cottage



Sunset over Marble Lake