

Governor Frank Murphy 1937



Groundbreaking ceremony for 1937 expansion of the school.

Christmas
1941



Goldwater
State Home

The contents of this 1941 Christmas program are available at the Heritage Room.
The booklet includes a listing of songs and performers.

1925

MANY VISIT NEW STATE SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Fine New Hospital and Nursery Open to the Public; Miss Ostrander Hostess

Close to two hundred visitors accepted the invitation of Miss Kathrin Ostrander, superintendent of the State School and availed themselves of the opportunity Wednesday of inspecting the new buildings which the state has erected in connection with the institution.

Visitors first made their call in the main building where the hostess cordially greeted all who came and assisted by Miss Leola Neuling, dietitian, and Mrs. H. J. McKnight one of the teachers, served a delicious orange punch and individual cakes. The round of sightseeing started with an inspection of the main dining halls, the culinary departments where dietitians prepare food for the children in the most modern way; the store rooms where row upon row of garments and supplies for the school are systematically arranged. Not the

State Public School Here Was 1st Of Its Kind 6-27-1961

One of the most unique educational ventures in the country was the State Public School of Coldwater, today known as the Coldwater State Home and Training School.

This institution was established in 1871 and was the first of its kind in the world. Governor Henry P. Baldwin and State Senator C. D. Randall were responsible for its founding.

The school, which opened its doors in 1874 provided a home and educational facilities for dependent children who had previously been consigned to a pauper's fate in the poorhouses.

The school's establishment marked a revolutionary step in society's attitude toward children who, as State wards, had been in deplorable social and educational surroundings.

The name was later changed to Michigan Children's Village and then to the name it has today, the Coldwater State Home and Training School. Here, mentally handicapped patients are housed in cottages and dormitories, with a hospital, school buildings and recreational facilities at their disposal.

In the News

1950

State Home Bidding Set For Apr. 20

Bids on the additional buildings at the Coldwater State Home and Training School, part of a program which will reach a total of \$1,800,000 through the coming four or five years, are to be opened April 20, and if acceptable, contracts will be awarded.

First on the program, at this time, will be a 300-bed nursery, the approximate cost of which is \$850,000, a 50-bed cottage for boys, a 50-bed cottage for girls, and a 60-bed cottage for the boys employed on the farm.

Sixteen hundred girls and boys are now wards of the state at the Coldwater State Home and Training School, but the expansion program will raise this figure to 2,800, with the added controlling personnel being increased to meet the additional responsibilities imposed.

One of the major projects, following the expansion now in motion, will be a modern administration building, replacing the existing official headquarters, and other building units, with the total reaching close to the two million dollar mark.



Local teams run for gold in Olympics on page 3
Bucs and Lions' home game streak on page 4

1992

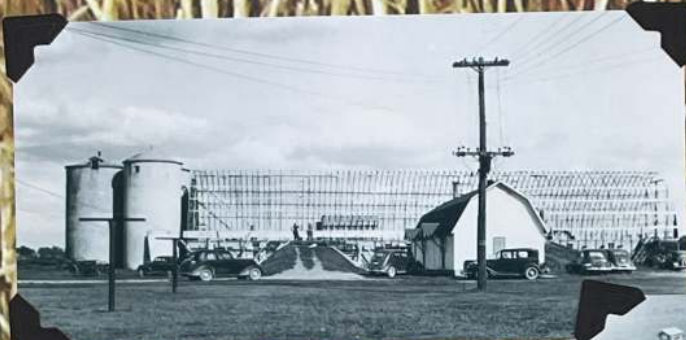
The Daily Reporter

Monday September 28, 1992 10 Pages A Page (Wednesday) 20¢ Annualized Price: \$10.00

Bugle sounds end to Coldwater Regional Center

By Staff Writer
COLDWATER — A bugle sounded the end of an era at the regional center for the mentally handicapped here today. The bugle sounded the end of the Coldwater Regional Center for the Mentally Handicapped, which has operated since 1961. The center, which was one of the largest of its kind in the state, was closed today by the Michigan Department of Corrections. The center, which was one of the largest of its kind in the state, was closed today by the Michigan Department of Corrections. The center, which was one of the largest of its kind in the state, was closed today by the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Barn Wind Damage – June, 1948



Girls' Dormitory at Michigan Children's Village, Coldwater, Michigan



STATE ORGAN'S HOME, COLDWATER, MICH - 1930

In the News

STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL.—At a meeting of the Commissioners last week a change was made in the style of the main building. As it was first planned the wings on either side of the central building were to be but one story in height. The Commissioners have now decided to mount the wings with a Mansard roof, which will make an addition of one story and increase the capacity of the building quite materially as well as add to its external appearance. This institution is, we believe, to be an ornament to our town, and any improvement in its construction we are happy to note. In order to meet this expense on the main building the Commissioners will probably not erect one of the cottages provided for by the Legislature.

1873/1874

Regulations for the State Public School

1. This institution is open for visitors every day between 2 and 5 P. M., except on Saturdays; and on Sundays will be positively closed to all excepting 40 attendants on Sunday school.

2. Visitors are requested to enter the building at the front door and when admitted will be escorted to the reception room and their presence announced by the door keeper.

3. Persons not employed in the institution will not be allowed in the dormitories, private rooms or work rooms except during reception hours, nor will they be allowed any time to stroll over the buildings untended.

4. Children are permitted to receive visitors and visit friends in the reception room.

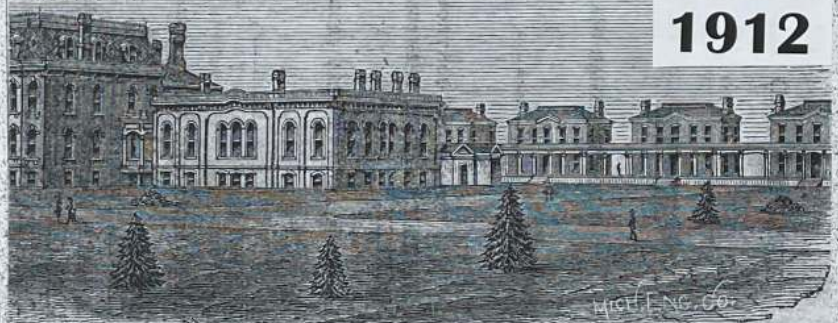
Z. TRUMBULL, Sup't.

1874

—About 30 scholars have arrived at the State Public School. New ones are arriving every day. The first received came a week ago to-day.

—They are constructing a 1000 barrel reservoir up at the State Public School.—We understand they intend to use filtered water for drinking purposes.

STATE SCHOOL GROUNDS ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE



1912

STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL AT COLDWATER.

During the past week more than the usual number of people have visited the grounds of the State Public School on account of the unusually neat and attractive appearance that they present.

There are fifty flower beds—a thousand plants in each bed—in and about the grounds. The tulip beds are now in full bloom and the green houses are overloaded with great quantities of plants and flowers of hundreds of different varieties. These botanical gardens—as they may be properly called—are in charge of Mr. Joseph Hermann and all the work upon them is done under his directions. The botanical gardens in Washington, in the charge of the government, do not show the results of any more intelligent or better care than those

of our State School in this city.

Mr. Hermann called the attention of The Courier's representative to a large vine nearly one hundred feet long at the end of the greenhouse that is rare in this part of the country, but quite common in California, where it often grows so that it covers the largest houses. The vine is covered with beautiful lavender blossoms and its name is bougainvilliers suprema rosea.

The vegetable gardens also come in for a large share of Mr. Hermann's attention; where several acres of lettuce, onions, peas, tomatoes and almost every other vegetable that one could mention are under cultivation for the children in the school.

Visitors to this institution, that has already made Michigan famous, can feel assured of the most courteous treatment and are made to feel that

they are always welcome. The gate hangs high at the State Public School to all interested visitors, and those who go there find much that interests them.

A large bouquet of fresh flowers is daily placed upon each table in the children's dining room—and that is not the least among the good uses to which the flowers are put.

Mr. Hermann expects to soon have fifty thousand plants, many of them in full bloom, about the grounds within a short time. He takes particular pride in a large bed of hundreds of red and yellow tulips near the entrance to the school grounds for it is extremely beautiful and certainly shows the hand of an artist. Mr. Hermann is of French descent and is 29 years of age. He came to this country a few years ago unable to speak English.

State Home – City Within A City

Coldwater Daily Reporter, By Geva Burkovskis

A city within a city, this is the Coldwater State Home and Training School. When first opened in 1874, just outside the city limits of Coldwater, the institution was a moderate-size home for dependent and neglected children. At the present time, the home has grown into a seemingly self-sufficient town with its own laundry, bakery, hospital, and residence buildings. Now, however, the patients are not entirely neglected or orphans, but are mostly people with mental deficiencies.

In 1935 the initial patients having mental retardation were admitted, and since then only the retarded are allowed to enter the state-operated institution.

Contrary to what some may believe, the term mental retardation is in no way synonymous with mental illness or the insane. Feeble-mindedness or mental defectiveness is a condition in which the mind has not reached complete or normal development.

Causes for mental retardation are many and include heredity (although two mentally deficient people can have a perfectly normal child); injury at time of birth or childhood; encephalitis of meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes of the spinal column or brain; and disorders of the endocrine glands.

In the beginning only patients with the higher types of retardation were admitted. This restriction continued for four years and then all degrees of the mentally retarded were accepted.

On the grounds there are 27 patient-care buildings including a 300 bed nursery that cares for children until they reach the age of six. Since 1950 many additions have been made at the school. A new laundry, a 150 bed hospital, a medical laboratory, a pharmacy and picnic grounds have made living and working easier for both the 2,900 patients and 900 employees.

In 1958 a vocational training building opened. This new addition contains a modern woodworking and machine shop. Also a complete unit of homemaking is located there. The latter unit includes bedroom space, living room area, dining alcove and three complete kitchens. A dressmaking and sewing area is also contained. Here a patient can learn and practice vocations.

A full time training program for the patients who have sufficient mentality to benefit from it is in effect. Through this program a patient is assigned to work in and about the institution. Vocational training is done in the nursery, bakery, laundry, repair shops and other services on the grounds. After a patient has established skills and good work habits he is referred for employment off the grounds.

An academic program for children is also offered. Here the youngsters are taught until they can make no further progress, or until they reach the age of 16 or 17, at which time they transfer to the vocational training department.

Many forms of therapy had also been quite recently added to the home. At present a full time speech and hearing therapist is employed, one occupational therapist and two psychotherapists. Hotter valve operations (for the hydrocephalus) have been issued and a chiropodist service provided.

Religious and recreational benefits are also offered to the patients. All kinds of athletic equipment are available and parties and picnics are held periodically. For Catholic patients, instruction in catechism and Mass is provided by the convent and priest. Protestant patients may attend services Sunday afternoons with the local pastors in charge of the services.

"I Grew Up in Coldwater" Facebook Page Comments

Candee Arnold

★ Rising contributor

It was a very sad place to visit. I remember volunteering there when I was young, and many children were just dropped off because they were handicapped mentally or physically or parents just didn't or couldn't take care of them. When the State Home and Training School was closed, many adults were relocated in the community and lived on their own (with assistance of course).

9y Like

2

Michelle O'Neill

Rebecca S Fraser..my dad was CEO of the state home for years...I wonder if your dad knew him...his name is Michael O'Neill.

9y Like

Barbara Carpenter

Both of my parents worked there

9y Like

1

Dave Kubasiak-Fix

My Dad grew up in the 'state homes', first in Saginaw, then in Coldwater.

3

12y Like

Terry Mulchahey

Author

My dad had an interesting history at the Coldwater facility. He was a Field Representative from 1927 to 1936 while it operated as the State Public School which was essentially an orphanage operating on what was called a cottage plan. Hence, the old postcards of infants and little children playing in front of "the baby cottages." In 1936, the facility transitioned to care of the developmentally disabled and my dad moved on to other social welfare work for the state. In 1952, we moved to Coldwater when he took the position of Director of Social Services for what was then the Coldwater State Home and Training School, a position he held until he became Director of Community Relations in 1960. He retired in 1969 from that position. The photo is one I found on the internet.

12y Like

4

Patricia Kilgore

Wow, Terry, I had no idea your Dad had such an interesting position. I didn't know it was an orphanage, either. What a fascinating post.

12y Like

Linda Waldron Gloudemans

I have a friend from Paw Paw whose brother was developmentally delayed aka mentally retarded; he lived there his whole life-- she and her family would go visit him, and she said it was the most depressing time of her life. Imagine it was what it was for the times.....

Mary Ann Man

Yes, I remember Mother telling me about your lab at the State Home before I started working for you.

12y Like

Penny Fenno Geishert

Very interesting story. I lived on Morse Street for most of my "growing up" years and we were always aware of the State Home being down the street. Our church youth group would go out there each Christmas season when we went carolling and I have very distinct memories of that.

12y Like

1

Gary Baker

Palamaki Park

12y Like

Scott Hodge

there were at least 2 pools - one has filled in to make warehouse space out of it and the other one in bldg 50 had a floor that raised (1/2 of the pool) so wheel chairs/ handicap could enter at an even level and drop down. years ago the parts of that one were removed and it just sits never to be used again.

On the bldgs, many are not safe anymore to enter as floors and ceilings/ roof crumble. to remove the asbestos is too costly and if they fall in then it is a cleanup that doesn't require the asbestos removal. the buildings were very well built so this process could take decades. once heat is removed from the buildings they quickly become unrecoverable as the decay makes it far too costly to ever rehabilitate them and they would also have to be brought up to code after being vacated. like too many of the states buildings around the state no funds are ever allocated to take care of the mess after they are done using them. maybe if the congress would pass a law that once a building is abandoned for 2 years it has to be destroyed and cleaned up more thought would go into reuse instead of building renting other structures. in some of the "prison buildings" they underwent millions of dollars of renovations in the mid 80's - now to be abandoned and left to rot

Memories

Looking East, Administration Building and Hospital



Coldwater State Home Plays A Major Role In County Economy

By SETON BOVEE

The Coldwater State Home and Training School continues to be the biggest single factor in this area's economic picture.

During 1961, the institution poured a record \$4,428,650 into the economy of Coldwater and Branch county.

Its some 900 employees received a total payroll of \$4,295,000. Most of this money was spent or invested in this area.

These and other enlightening figures were contained in a report issued this week by Ray Mulchahey, CSHT public relations director. This report confirmed that the State Home is the county's biggest "industry."

Patient Purchases High

One of the amounts which caused surprise, even among officials at State Home, was that spent by patients in making purchases in Coldwater. This total was \$84,800!

While the bulk of these expenditures were made by patients having daily or part time employment outside the institution, a considerable amount was spent by patients able to be taken on supervised shopping tours in the city.

It is also interesting to note that the \$4,428,650 (total area income) spent by relatives for meals, lodging, clothing, gasoline, oil and other items while visiting patients at the school.

Relatives Spend Here Too

There is, of course, no way to

estimate this amount but with State Home presently housing some 2,900 patients, it must be an important addition to the local economy.

And big as it is, the State Home is still growing.

During the calendar year of 1961 a total of 165 patients (60 female and 105 male) were admitted while during the same period 115 were discharged.

The waiting list as of January 1 last year was 270, while this January 1 it had grown to 429 in spite of the 165 admissions.

Of the 2,900 patients at State Home, some 450 are being trained by the school in a variety of jobs in the hope they can eventually take jobs and leave the institution.

There are 175 children in the academic program. These are receiving instruction from teachers who are certified in the area of special education.

Mulchahey's report notes there has been a decrease in the percentage of educable patients admitted in the past 10 years. In 1952, with a patient population of only 1,600, there were 140 educable residents. At present there are only 175.

This decrease, State Home officials point out, has been due largely to the special education programs that have been started in the public schools, and also the increase of parent-operated schools for the mentally retarded on a community level.

Capital Outlay Down

Last year was a slim one in the area of capital outlay for the local institution, only \$23,450 being expended for such items as repair of old hospital, reconditioning a well, repair of steam lines, improvement of sewage system, overhaul



SOME 900 EMPLOYEES, whose salaries last year totaled more than \$4,200,000, turn into this drive daily on their way to their work, which is taking care of the 2,900 patients at Coldwater State Home and Training School. (Daily Reporter photo).

Coldwater Daily Reporter, 1961

The Coldwater State Home and Training School continues as Branch County's largest employer. More than 900 persons are employed there with a payroll of \$3,916,863.

Book population of patients, including those under care, in family care, on vacation, and on a convalescent status totaled 3,231.

According to an economic base study compiled by the economic study committee of the Branch Planning Commission, in the last two decades, the most important factor in the growth of employment in the county has been the State Home.



Terry Mulchahey

Author

Ann, you're right. I'll quote from the history of the State Public School that my father wrote.

"The plan which evolved resulted in the establishment of a family cottage type plan institution, to which children were to be sent by Superintendents of the Poor of the various counties on proof of their dependency on the publick for support. The institution was to be a temporary home only, and during his stay at the school the child was to be trained to go into a foster home where he was to be supervised by a state agent in each county. The law was passed and signed April 17, 1871, creating the first governmental institution ever established for dependent children, where poverty was the only price of admission."

The School became a model copied by other states in the late 19th century.



State School (Main Building), Coldwater, Mich. 1909.

The Fountain

When the fountain was no longer needed, it was relocated to a home on West Pearl Street. It has since disappeared to time.



Downtown Coldwater



Boy Scout Troop #50 marching in downtown Coldwater, 1930.

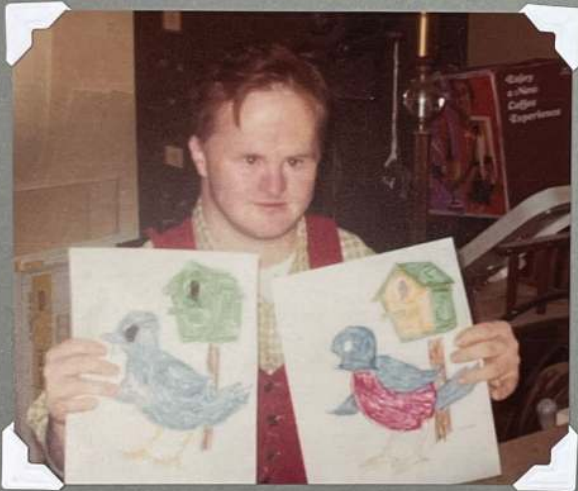
Spring Review 1948



Shown is Bonnie Fields and Frances Slovik.



Wagon Ride



Art Class



Richard Gallagher, born 1950



Hospital



Fire! - 1957



A devastating fire in 1957 destroyed the east wing of the Administration building.





Mrs. Lape, R. G. Mulchahey, and Mrs. Nichols presenting toys 10-31-52.





This school building opened in June, 1926. It housed classrooms, a library, beauty parlor, home economics, a gymnasium, Boy Scout room, Girl Scout room, a stage, and swimming pool.



Cottage Marble Tournament Winners May, 1931: G. Carlson, L. Mcauley, A. Fifer, M. Trosky

DUE TO GROW MORE TOO

Coldwater Daily Reporter

4/21/1950

State Home Is Largest Industry In Coldwater

Fifty years have changed the Coldwater State Home and Training School from a small institution for orphans and children of indigent parents, into Coldwater's largest industry.

The next few years, on the basis of funds already allocated and appropriations currently being sought in the legislature, will see an even more rapid expansion.

From the original plot of 27 acres and a few buildings, the State Home and Training School has grown during the past half century to the point where it now

has a patient population of 1,620 and occupies 55 buildings spread over 1,074 acres of land.

Starting New Construction

During the next year, under an expansion program for which funds have already been allocated, the institution is destined to add six new buildings at a cost of about \$2,000,000 to increase its capacity to 2,160 patients.

Additional funds for expansion are included in this year's budget request of Governor G. Mennen Williams, now being studied in special legislative session. If these

funds are approved and allocated, the patient capacity of the institution will jump to 2,700 or 2,800 within the next two years.

Included among the 55 buildings which now constitute the State Home and Training School are four large custodial buildings which accommodate a total of 900 patients, and 20 patient cottages (smaller dormitories), a hospital, administration building, school, huge service building which provides dining rooms, laundry service and food storage, eight residence buildings, power and sewage plants.

To Build New Nursery

The new construction program, on which bids are being taken at present, will provide a 300 - bed nursery, two special treatment (detention) buildings of 50 beds each, a 60-bed dormitory at the farm and two homes for resident physicians.

The additional program, now before the legislature, includes a proposed \$350,000 administration building to replace the present one, which was erected in 1874 and has been condemned as a fire hazard. The proposed building will be L-shaped and two stories high.

According to Dr. E. J. Rennell, medical superintendent, a new administration building is a pressing need with rapid expansion of the State Home making the old structure sadly inadequate.

Another big item in the proposed construction program now before the state legislature are two identical patients' buildings, one for

men and the other for women, expected to cost \$1,000,000.

Each of these proposed buildings, which together will increase the capacity of the institution by 240 beds, is a one-story structure, with a main section 295 feet long and 51 feet wide. Projecting from this section, on one side, are two dormitories and four play courts. On the other side is an L-shaped wing, one section of which is 30 by 112 feet, the other 44 by 50 feet. Since the building is designed to house patients who are physically handicapped there will be no steps and ramps will be provided at all exits. The building will have a light steel frame and its exterior walls will be of brick.

Employs 435 New

The State Home is Coldwater's largest industry in that it furnishes steady employment for more persons than any other local industry.

According to Dr. Rennell, a total of 450 positions are provided at the institution under civil service and legislative sanction at present. Only 435 of those positions are filled today; however, the 11 unfilled positions requiring either skilled workers or men and women of professional training.

This working staff will be enlarged by 125 persons to 575 as result of the expansion program already approved and scheduled for completion within the coming year. And when the institution reaches its ultimate 2,700 or 2,800 patient population, it will provide employment for about 750 persons, Dr. Rennell states.

The history of the State Home and Training school actually dates back more than a half - century to 1868 when Gov. Henry P. Baldwin became aroused over the fact that 212 orphans and children of indigent parents were being housed in county poor homes.

Pushed Bill's Passage

C. D. Randall, then state senator from this district, was a member of the legislative committee to which Gov. Baldwin referred the problem. Largely through his efforts, a bill creating a State Pub-

1954

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 1949

39 Attendant Nurses At State Home Finish In-Service Training; Will Graduate Friday

Thirty-nine attendant nurses, who have completed the in-service training program, will graduate Friday afternoon in a ceremony held at the State Home and Training School.

This program marks completion of a 92-hour course of instruction conducted here in a statewide attendant training program in the mental hospitals of Michigan.

Attendants graduating will be presented with diplomas and pins from the state, which will qualify them as trained aides for all mental hospitals in Michigan, both mental hospitals in Michigan. They will also be eligible to receive five points on any future promotional examination they take in Civil Service.

The training course is being conducted here by Ruth H. Houck, R.N. Attendant Instructor, who describes the program as "an effort made to stress to the attendants the importance of the role he plays in the care and training of the mentally defective child."

The entire course is designed to teach the attendants to give more

competent care and have better insight into patient problems through a better knowledge of their affiliation.

From a community viewpoint the course is also planned to prepare the attendants for their duties and responsibilities, not only as employees of the state, but as citizens—of the problems confronting the public regarding mental health, and to assure the public, whether parents, taxpayers or both, that the people engaged to care for these children have insight through knowledge of the problems of the mentally defective.

Alfonse Sootkoos, Nursing consultant of the Michigan Department of Mental Health will deliver the address to the graduates and discuss the statewide mental health attendant training program.

The following attendants have successfully completed this course: Vera E. Andrews, Celestia D. Blackman, Mary Alma Burke, Adeline E. Bennett, Robert E. Burritt, Char-lana A. Corless, John R. Craft, Donald O. Collins, Katherine B. Dalley, Frederick Dickensheets, Goldie M.

Frarey, Margaret Fredrickson, Beattie L. Grove, Hulda K. Globensky, George L. Gregory, Myra I. Gregory, Arthur D. Heifer, Helen E. Hammond, George Hoag, Jr., Pauline F. Johnson, Olive Kellogg, John W. Laurell, Wilma B. Lenz, Ruth L. Loveberry, Ocie B. McClish, Barbara A. Maggart, Glen G. Olmsted, Myra Potter, Granger Preston, Chauncey J. Robbins, Bradley P. Smith, Essie M. Stehlik, RuthAnn L. Sager, Myrtle L. Teachout, Olive M. Thomas, Phyllis Jean Worden, Evelyn Anita Warner, Audrey M. Waterbury, Mildred D. Waller.

STATE OF MICHIGAN

ICF/MR REMODELING—PHASE I
COLDWATER REGIONAL CENTER
FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TOTAL PROJECT COST \$20,441,000
BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN





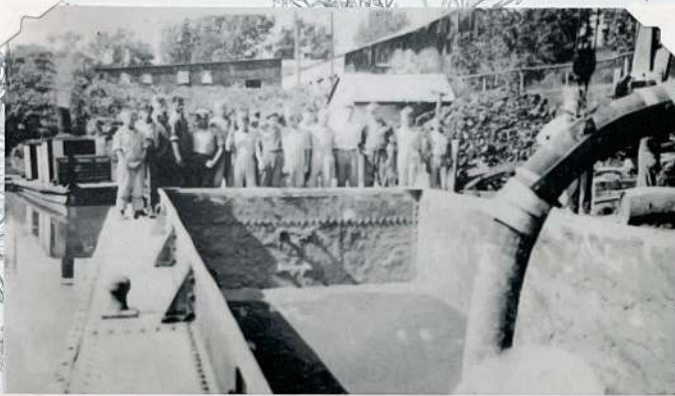
Mrs. Hardy and Thomas Walt



Wood Shop



Marble Competition



Field Trip to Cement Plant



Regional Center: Update Worth It

1981

By RICH PIATT

Can a \$22-million renovation project bring happiness to 483 residents at the Coldwater Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities?

The answers vary depending on who you talk to. Those who say 'no' have trouble justifying the cost of the project while those who say 'yes' ask 'what price can you place on a human life?'

Fact remains that the project, first introduced in 1976 and designed to bring local buildings in compliance with federal and state mandates, is now complete and the nine resident care facilities involved in the program are back in use.

The move has left seven resident care facilities, built between 1939 and 1963, vacant. Though structurally sound, the buildings are considered "primitive" in purpose and like statues, dot the eastern edge of the 600-acre Regional Center tract as a reminder of the past — more than 1,000 beds lie empty.

When the Regional Center opened in 1874 as the State Public School, it housed 150 residents. In 1960, the population swelled to a record high of 3,231. At that point, the trend reversed and by 1969, the population declined to 2,800. Today, there are less than 500 residents housed at the center with the decline attributed to community placement.

Because of marked improvement in day-to-day functioning, many residents have been placed in foster homes, group homes and others in independent living arrangements.

The forecast calls for further reductions with a target of 455 residents by September of this year, 399 by March of 1982 and 343 by September of 1982. Over the last several years, admissions have averaged less than one per month.

For residents for which no alternative living arrangements are yet available, they will remain at the Regional Center, housed in the nine renovated buildings — Pine, Sycamore, Oak, Applewood, Tamarack, Maple, Elm, Linden and Cedar.

Prior to renovation, each of the buildings, housed 72 residents, all of whom slept, bathed, ate and learned in common quarters. Cement block walls echoed the slightest of sounds. Tiled floors varied in temperature as drab window shades filtered the sunlight.

Today, these brightly appointed, exquisitely landscaped buildings are designed to house a maximum of 32 residents on two floors. There are four bedrooms at the opposite ends of each floor, capable of lodging two residents each. Each room contains two beds, nightstands and wardrobe. Wall coverings are colorful and practical (they can be taken down for cleaning.)

Colorful window panels replace shades in windows. Bathrooms are located across the hall. There is one bath for every four residents. The rooms are private but spacious. The bedroom and bath areas are sandwiched on both sides of living and dining rooms.

Facebook

Top comments -

- 

Scott Hodge
my grandfather, mother and me all worked on those grounds and mom pointed out we all started in April - my wife is still working on the grounds, lots of families from branch county have worked there!

6y Like Reply
- 

Barbara Carpenter
Both my parents worked there for years ❤️

5y Like Reply
- 

Tami Hoath
👑 All-star contributor
Really enjoy the state home pics. Worked there for 11 years. Thanks!

6y Like Reply
- 

Carla Boyer
My mother worked at the State Home

6y Like Reply
- 

Tonys Cleland
These buildings always grab my attention so many stories they hold so little information about them!!!

6y Like Reply

The Richard Prangle Story



THE RICHARD PRANGLE STORY

Waiting for Home

A TRUE STORY OF STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL

John Schneider

Journalist John Schneider chronicles the compelling true story of Richard Prangle, a man who was unjustly institutionalized for fifteen years yet has managed to become not only a productive citizen but also an effective advocate for the developmentally disabled.

Richard Prangle, whose story has been the focus of a documentary and wide national media coverage, including CBS's *Sunday Morning* with Charles Kuralt, is an inspirational figure whose life reflects the human spirit at its resilient, triumphant best. In *Waiting for Home* Schneider tells the complete story, from Prangle's commitment to the Coldwater State Home and Training School at age 6, to his struggles with socialization after being released at age 21, to his successful stand for the rights of the handicapped as a lobbyist in places like the Michigan State Capitol and the White House.



"Richard Prangle is a shining testimony to how one can overcome life's many obstacles through hope, determination, and hard work. Those who meet him through this book will be forever grateful and inspired."

— John Engler
governor of Michigan

"I remember Richard warmly. He overcame much, contributed much, and inspired many."

— William G. Milliken
former governor of Michigan

"Richard's life story holds important lessons for all of us. Through the force of his commitment, courage, and goodwill, Richard has turned adversity into a passion to help others by championing changes in the mental health system."

— C. Patrick Babcock
former director, Mich. Dept. of Mental Health

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John Schneider is a daily columnist for Michigan's *Lansing State Journal*.

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Richard Prangley



RICHARD PRANGLEY TOOK AN EMOTIONAL trip Wednesday to the building where he spent much of his time as a resident at the Coldwater Regional Center for 16 years. This time, however, he was accompanied by a film crew from CBS which is doing a personality profile on the man who was recently at guest at the White House to witness the President's proclamation of the "Decade of the Disabled." (Top) Prangley and

Regional Center Administrator Robert Rogan make their way to Building 41, once Richard's home, now scheduled for demolition. (Below) Prangley explains what life used to be like in his ward to reporter Marlene Sanderson. The cold, barren rooms and hallways bear a stark contrast to the modern facilities that house the Regional Center's 427 residents today. (Photos By Michael Morrissey)

CBS Films Personality Spot About Former CRC Patient

By MICHAEL MORRISSEY
Richard Prangley, who spent 16 years at the Coldwater Regional Center after being wrongly diagnosed as mentally retarded, made an emotional visit Wednesday to the very building where he spent much of his time. This time, however, his trip was

U.S. Health and Human Services Midwest Region, came to the attention of CBS recently when he was a guest at the White House to witness President Reagan proclaim the "Decade of the Disabled."

Reporter Marlene Sanderson and producer Bill Moran traveled to Lan-

the Coldwater State Home when he was six years old after doctors told his parents he would be permanently brain damaged. He was discharged from the Regional Center when he was 22. Recently, State Mental Health Director Patrick Babcock was seen reported saying that Prangley's pro-

1984



STATE MUSEUM? — This 1900 photograph, owned by Richard Prangley, shows the administration building located at the Coldwater Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities. Prangley, a 18-year resident at the center, is now a part of society and is striving to establish the building as a

museum depicting the history of the state center. The photo above shows the main building and south wing (which is no longer standing.) Prangley's efforts to establish a museum recently gained the added support of the Branch County Historical Society.

Ex-Resident Seeks To Establish State Museum

For 16-years Richard Prangley spent his life at the Coldwater State Home and Training Center adapting to modern day society. Today, Prangley is gaining recognition for himself and the mentally handicapped with a lot of hard work and determination.

Prangley was the subject of a four-part Reporter feature story last year explaining his life in the institution and his eventual acceptance into society. Determined to better educate the public about the mentally handicapped, Prangley now seeks a larger audience to listen to his story.

At the present time, Paul Magnuson, a writer with the Detroit Free Press is compiling a feature story on Prangley

and life in the institution which is expected to be released in July or August. Bob Hamlin, another Detroit, working for the Detroit Film Collectors, is also interested in Prangley's story and will shoot a movie about Richard as soon as funds are available for the project.

According to Prangley, who has spent a tremendous amount of time doing research and recording tapes, a Coldwater man, Bob Silver, has agreed to help Richard write a book beginning with his first days in the institution, at the age of five.

Prangley, since his dismissal from the State Home (now the Coldwater Regional Center) has secured em-

ployment with the Essex Corporation where he is employed on a regular basis.

The latest goal set forth by the Grand Rapids native, is to establish a museum at the Regional Center to preserve the heritage of the facility since its construction in Coldwater in the 1890's.

The bid to establish a museum has since gained the support of the Branch County Historical Society. Prangley said that, "Since the old administration building is not being used for housing or classes, it seems like it could be possible to have it remodeled into a museum depicting the growth and changes of the institution itself. It could also reflect the history of the community."

The Facility Expands





**The Hospital Site Empty –
Later Demolished**



As the facility expanded, the complete Fairview Dairy was purchased, including houses, barns, and out-buildings on Morse Street.



Fairview Dairy, Morse Street

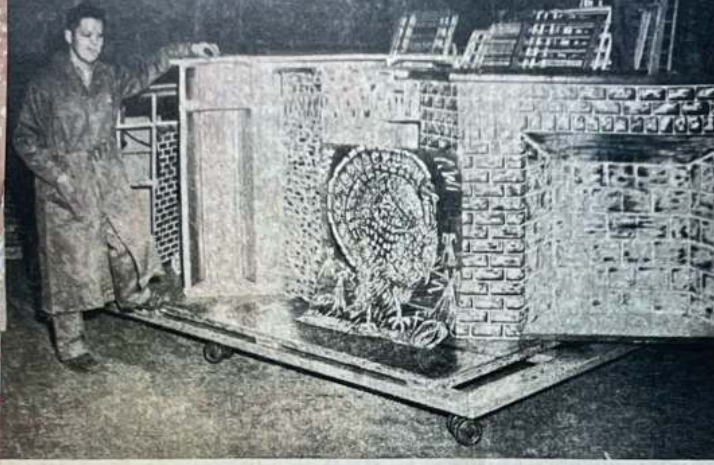




Fairview Dairy, Morse Street



George Palmaki



COLDWATER STATE HOME and Training school's year 'round Santa, George Palmaki, displays some of his artistic holiday projects. The multi-color decorator fireplaces are constructed with wood frame and aluminum, the bricks painted in with the aid of masking tape. A Thanksgiving turkey is shown painted on a sheet of aluminum. George provides holiday decorations for nearly all the cottages. (Daily Reporter photo).

DONATES SPARE TIME TO PATIENTS

He's Saint Nick The Year 'round At The State Home

By MARJI BEARSS

Folks at Coldwater State Home and Training school have a year 'round Santa Claus all their own.

No, he doesn't look like the typical Christmas Santa — he doesn't have a bushy white beard, he's not rotund and he doesn't wear a red and white suit.

But throughout the year, George Palmaki, furniture repair man at the institution, spends much of his own time, talent and money to

make the residents happy.

The State Home has become his complete interest in life during the 12 years he has been employed there. Now 53, George says he has no outside interests.

Makes Own Decorations

Every year he spreads the Christmas spirit by decorating all the smaller cottages, using his own unique and colorful decorations. These are not just the usual-holiday trimmings either, but include

items such as gaily colored decorator fireplaces. Another annual Christmas project carried out by George is the sound of Christmas carols heard all over the grounds from a loud speaker system which he installs in the old administration building during the pre-holiday season. The records he plays are from his own collection.

George's activities are not confined only to Christmas. He takes an active part in all holiday proceedings and even if there's no holi-

Gordon Miller

George P was an amazing man...Some may remember his Green Jeepster Station Wagon that he literally drove the wheels off... Many things that got accomplished around the School when I worked there from 1954 til 1966 were the result of efforts by George P...Yes many of Branch counties residents had ties the the State Home... It was a very big part of the Coldwater income source for some time before the additions of newer factories and businesses after WWII... My perspective because I was here pre WWII and remember what was as well as what is and saw the changes as they happened... Society is never stagnant but alive and vibrant and always changing. Not always for the better sadly!!!

8y Like Reply

2

Gordon Miller

do some of you remember when the State Home School was available to the public for functions and the local Boy Scout troop used to meet there and they had use of the swimming pool and groups could obtain use of it also... This was during the time that Dr Reynolds was the head out there...

George Palmaki was a fixture at the State Home; first as a resident, then hired by the State. He had a wonderful wood shop and taught classes making bird houses, wooden toys, shelving, etc.

Terry Mulchahey

George was a long time resident then employee at the institution. He may have been a resident when it was an orphanage who never left the area. In the 1950s he lived, for a period of time, in town but by the end of the fifties and on, he lived in one of the apartments in the old Administration building before it burned. He was a maintenance employee/supervisor at the State Home. He died in 1978 at the age of 57. He was a periodic holiday guest in our home when I was growing up.

12y Like

4



Coldwater Regional Mental Health Center
Employee Listing as of May 1, 1990

Accounting

Cheryl Bercaw
Martha Chartrand
Patricia Cox
Sharon Stimer
Velma Washburn

Administrative Services

Ina Whitney
Emma Hilyard

Clinical Services

Dr. W. Van Houten
Dr. Charles Vogler
Laura Murray

Data Processing

Rosalee Bater
Sharon Temples

Facility Administration

Wilma Schmidt
Brenda Fast

Finance Office

Richard Shanberger

Itemized Billing

Karen Hargreave

Medical Records

Monica Ross
Marge Butler
Trudie Truman

Personnel

Dale Beachnau
Kay Almond
Marcia Bloom
Deborah Cord
Sonia Esterline

Purchasing

Patricia Ross
Nancy Sharnas

Quality Assurance

MaryLou Ansari
Eileen Chamberlain
Bob Mann

Risk Management

Charlene Burch
Linda Graybill
Delores Alexander
Carolyn Schraeder

Reception Desk

Tillie Sullivan

Recipient Rights

Marilyn Mittleman

Reimbursement

Betty Thomas
Deanna Caswell
Sue Patch

Safety

Keith Gardner
Kim Kaechele

Snack Bar/Canteen

Judy Woolf

Social Services

Eunice McCants
Peggy Osborn
Lutifali Ansari

Social Workers

Jim Burns
Ann Gonzalez
Linda Hemker
Janet Herman
Augustinus Marakowitz
Walter Pascal
Arlene Scholfield
Sara Semmelroth

Staff Development

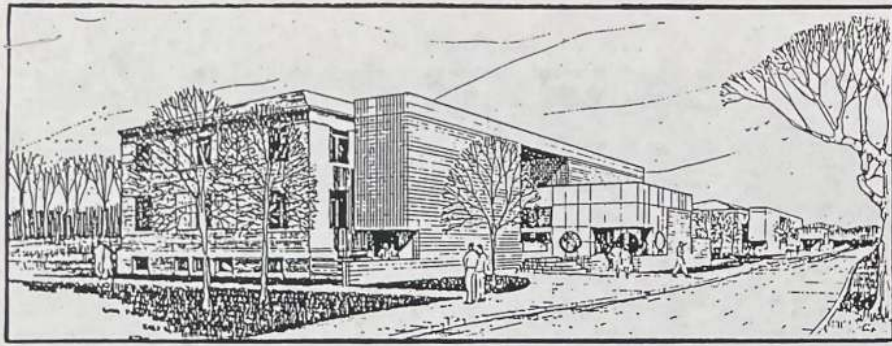
Elizabeth Howell
Karyl Boley

Activity Therapy

John Scott
Kerry Kurtz
Gwen Bass
Beverly Beier
Jeanne Chase
Jeff Cook
Dave Frederick
Reggie Horton
Angela Johnston
Rick King
Rudy Lawrence
Nicholas Lopez
Pam Parker
Tom Rebentisch
Brenda Tubbs
Amy Yancer

Psychology

Dr. Neal Davidson
Mike Barrett
Joyce Burns
Harry Marshall
Dr. Robert Niblette
Dr. Carl Semmelroth

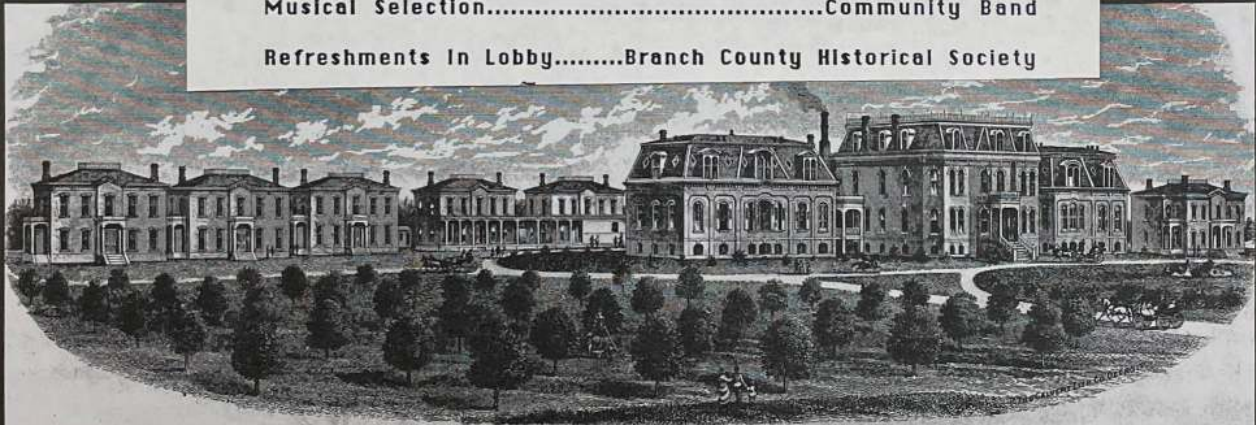


COLDWATER REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

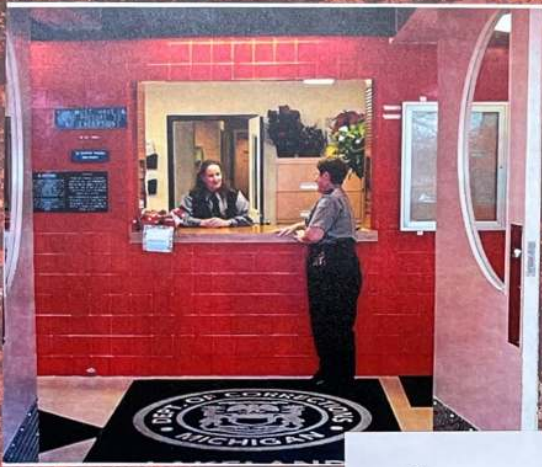
OFFICIAL CLOSING CEREMONY

10:00 A.M., September 26, 1992

Opening Remarks.....Ina Whitney
 "Nearer My God To Thee".....Community Band
 Transferral Of Keys To Corrections...Ina Whitney, Carol Howes
 Flag Lowering.....Dicky Crawford, Keith Gardner
 "Taps".....Community Band
 Official Flag Burning Ceremony.....American Legion Drill Team
 Musical Selection.....Community Band
 Refreshments In Lobby.....Branch County Historical Society



STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL.
COLDWATER, MICH.



Written Description of the Facility

The Lakeland Correctional Facility provides mainly dormitory-style housing with 12 units and some smaller rooms shared by prisoners who have behaved while incarcerated.

A **food service building and a school building** are available and have allowed the opportunity for expanded classes offered and an indoor activity area.

Programming

Education programs include Adult Basic Education, Special Education and General Education Development preparation. Vocational training is available in food service technology, office occupations and horticulture.

Legal, religious and general books are available, and staff and volunteers offer counseling.

Health, outpatient mental health and dental care services are available on a full time bases. as

The **business office staff, personnel staff and maintenance supervision** are provided on a shared-services basis with the Florence Crane Facility.

Security

The perimeter includes a double fence, electronic detection systems, razor-ribbon wire and patrol vehicles.

Demolition



I grew up in Coldwater, MI

Jordan Lopshire · Aug 4, 2019 · 📍

...

It looks like the State of Michigan is finally getting around to razing the dilapidated building on the state home campus. The building is a pile of rubble which can be seen from State St.. The sounds of the bulldozers and the wrecking ball can be heard from my house on Coombs.

👍👍👍 Tammy Fisher Lopshire and 11 others

12 comments



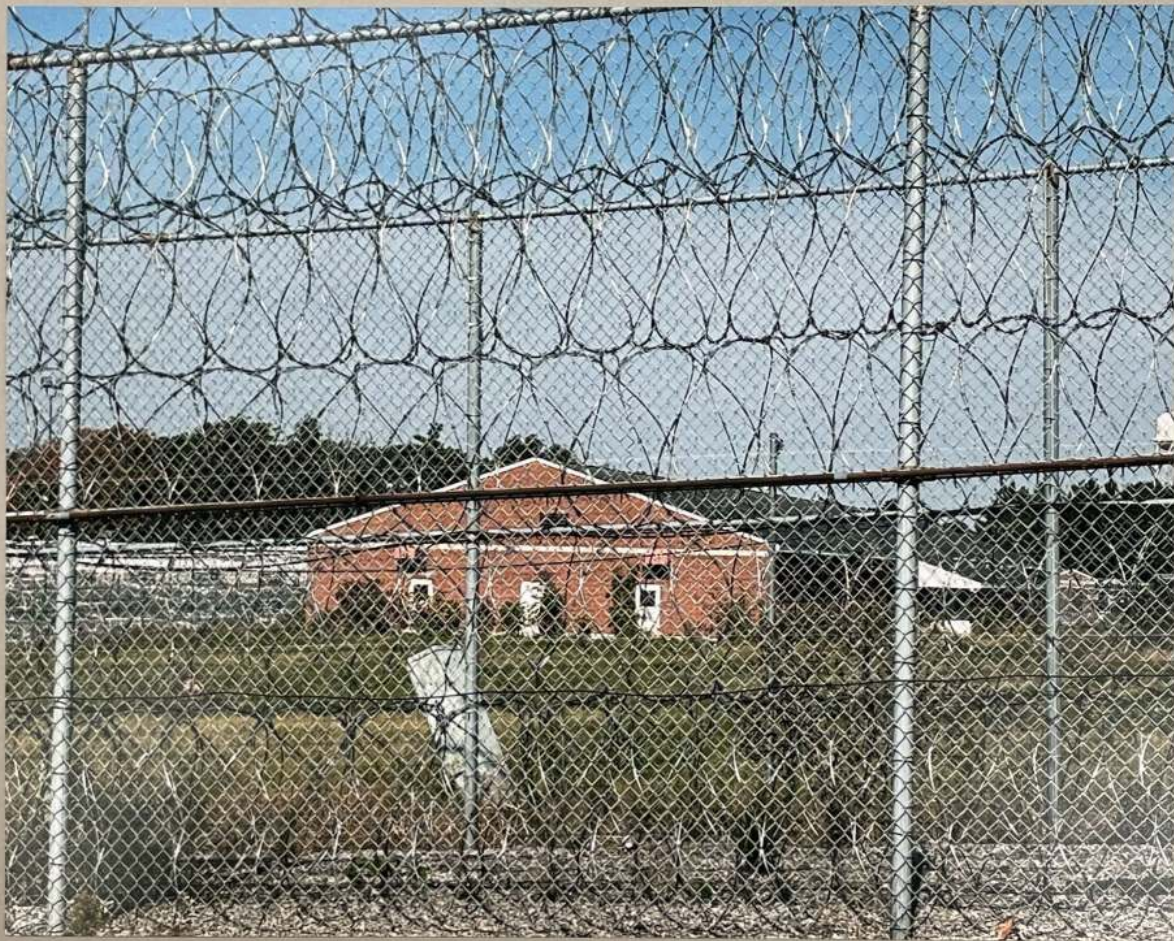
Like



Comment



Send



November 2024

Acknowledgements

I was approached by the Library Board with a project idea to assist the many people who visit the Heritage Room with questions concerning the history of “The State Home”. I accepted the challenge to gather my extensive collection of photographs, newspaper clippings and artifacts.

Special thanks to Kenneth Klein, former athletic director at the school, and the family of LeRoy Harris, former employee in the administration office, for their collection of memorabilia.

The late Charles Woodward donated funds to the Heritage Room of the Branch District Library to facilitate projects such as this scrapbook.
Enjoy!

Randall S. Hazelbaker