A school for the Blind children of the Negro race was established by Legislative Act No. 159, on July 7, 1920 when Governor John M. Parker approved Act No. 159, Section 1 of which reads.

“Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana. . . . That there shall be established a state school for the benefit of deaf and blind children of the Negro race whose condition is such that they cannot profitably attend the regular public school.”

The Louisiana School for the Blind had been founded in 1852 (as the Asylum for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind). The State School for Blind Negroes opened in October, 1922. The responsibility of getting the institution started fell upon Dr. Joseph S. Clark, president of Southern University and A&M College and Superintendent of the school. The Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes [SSB] opened its doors with sixteen pupils and a faculty of three. Under the guidance of President Clark, Miss Naomi Rushing served as the first principal.

Before and after retirement, President-emeritus Joseph S. Clark continued to work for the black youth in Louisiana. His humanitarian spirit was instrumental in establishing the black State School for the Blind. Its first year was rocky: the school had no equipment, no books or other materials, and the two instructors read only New York Point, not braille. By 1945, however, the school comprised of four buildings, thirteen well-trained instructors, and fifty-five students. Older boys attended industrial classes at Southern University, while girls received their "vocational training" by sharing in the caretaking of the buildings.

The Louisiana State School for the Negro Blind and the Louisiana State School for the Blind merged in 1978, and the name was changed to the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired.

**PHILOSOPHY**
The philosophy of the State School for Blind was to attempt to make handicapped students mentally, morally, socially and physically fit to become a part of the world in which they live.

**CURRICULUM**
It is similar to that of the public schools in the state of Louisiana and included grades from elementary through high school. The school also had established a department for the purpose of sight conversations. This department takes care of all the pupils who qualified from the first through the sixth grade.
PRIMARY DEPARTMENT
The program of the primary grades should be flexible. It is sometimes necessary to change it to suit conditions within the classroom. Most of the instruction in the primary grades must be individualized.

ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT
The child comes to the elementary department from the primary department with a wealth of experience. In the primary department with a view toward aptitudes, students were presented with such activities as adventure story telling, writing, simple counting, rhythms, handwork and physical activities. These activities served as a firm foundation on which to build their preparation for high school work.

In the elementary department, many of the same activities as were carried on in the primary department make up the curriculum. The only difference in this regard, is an increase in the difficulties of these activities in terms of the child’s interest, initiative and both physical and mental development. During the intermediate stage the child is led to think in terms of human relationships and is taught what part the physical environment plays in his or her life and that of people in general.

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
The students will live in a social world upon leaving school, therefore, the university should attempt to fit them for this living through, American History, which gives a background of national struggles; World History, which shows our part in a modern world; Social Living and Civics, which paved the way for good citizenship; and Economics, which cultivates the methods of thrift and raises a much needed standard of living.

VOCATIONS
The State School for Blind Negroes offers full educational opportunity to visually handicapped boys and girls from the primary grades through high school, since it is the ultimate aim of education to help the individual to enjoy a fuller life; preparations for making an independent living are a must. All subjects taught, as nearly as possible, are the same as those taught in other schools of the state. The revised form of English Braille was used. Beside the regular subjects, the following vocations were taught:

For girls: sewing, mending, preparing and serving, cooking, crocheting and knitting and preservation of foods and home management. For boys: radio science, rabbitry, poultry, leather craft, simple forms of woodwork chair caning, broom, mattress and mop making. For both: typewriting, weaving, basketry and music. These vocations served to coordinate mind and muscle, all a factor which is so necessary to the handicapped.

After finishing high school at Southern, the students who were able to continue their education, entered Southern University for their college work. The State Rehabilitation Board provided blind college students with readers.
EXTRACURRICULA ACTIVITIES
To enable the students to develop their talents along the lines of music, dramatics, and leadership and other activities, various clubs and organizations were instituted at the university. The program tends to improve the students in every respect, as well as, aid him or her in making necessary adjustments in his complex society. The organization and their purposes at Southern University were:

1. **The Girl and Boy Scouts:** A program designed to build and develop those qualities which the students possess and those they should possess towards making better citizens.
2. **In an Interchange of Program:** The University established a relationship with other universities wherein travel visitations and ideas and talents are exchanged.

LOCATION
The **State School for Blind Negroes** was located on the grounds of Southern University, near Scotlandville, Louisiana. This was probably the best possible location for the school since it was located in a Negro community and near the state university for Negroes.

OBJECTIVES
1. To provide pupils with the opportunity of making normal progress
2. To create interest
3. To encourage initiative
4. To encourage creative ability
5. To develop finger dexterity
6. To coordinate mind and muscle
7. To promote poise and freedom of movement
8. To give proper guidance to the students in order that they may develop socially, morally, mentally, spiritually and physically

ACTIVITIES
1. Reading and dramatizing various stories
2. Planning and serving a simple meal
3. Writing a letter by dictation
4. Caning a chair
5. Repairing electric irons
6. Constructing frames for decorations
7. Feeding and carrying for rabbits.

DORMITORY LIFE
Since the students were in school for the greater part of the year, the university tried to make their dormitory life as homelike as possible. They were taken to the movies and were allowed to have social gatherings once a week. All the holidays were celebrated with parties or some form of entertainment.
They had duties to perform just as they would at home. Each student helped in making the dormitory as attractive as possible.

Besides having Sunday school at the university every Sunday, the children were allowed to attend church of their choice in the community; they also attended Vesper Services at Southern University. Prayer services were held on the campus every Wednesday evening.

The main purpose of those who supervised the daily life of the children; was to give them proper home training and to make their dormitory life an enjoyable one.

Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes [LSSB], [collection]. Archives and Manuscripts Department, John B. Cade Library, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.


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