

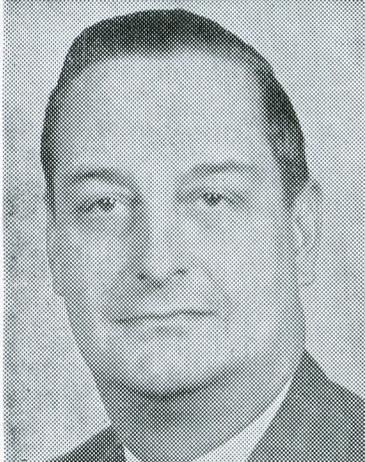
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Here's Story of Arizona Children's Colony

By **J. THOMAS McINTIRE**
Superintendent

The Arizona Children's Colony Board will recommend to the Nineteenth Legislature that an appropriation of approximately one and one-half million



J. THOMAS McINTIRE

dollars be provided with which to build and equip a colony for Arizona's mentally deficient children. The colony, as planned, will accommodate 450 children. This is a larger school than was originally anticipated, but one which is indicated by the intensive study of the problem during the last year.

It is estimated there are at least 7,000 mentally deficient individuals in Arizona. Over 2,000 of these are known to the Board. There are many of these children who would profit from a colony program and some who are in dire need of it.

The parents and guardians of 497 children have expressed a desire to place their child in a colony school and there are 249 others who "probably" want this type of training for their children.

It has been contended that Arizona is paying the costs of a colony without

receiving the benefits it could provide. This contention is borne out by the state wide study. It is now known that over 500 mentally defective individuals are being partially or entirely supported by tax money. Over two hundred of them are being cared for at the State Hospital for the Insane, others are to be found in the Home of the Good Shepherd and School for Boys at Fort Grant. Many more are on the county welfare rolls. One Graham county family of mentally defectives alone is costing over \$3,000 per year in tax money. The Arizona Children's Colony Board has 99 families with two or more mentally deficient members on their register.

Colony care of the mentally deficient is by no means an innovation. It is recognized as sound social practice. The first colony of this country, the Walter E. Fernald State School, Waverly, Mass., is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Since its founding 83 others have been established in 46 of the 48 states. Arizona and Nevada are the only states that do not make this provision. One of the best indications that such schools are considered necessary and are good social practice is that 36 states are in the process of expanding their existing facilities and eight of these are building additional schools of this type.

Colonies that have proven to be most successful are those of a cottage type built on a community plan. Such schools afford a greater amount of individual attention and facilitates the transition of the child from the home to the school and, following the training period, from the school back to the community. The Arizona Children's Colony Board is planning and is hoping to erect a colony of this type.

The Board favors a central location for the Colony. The principle criterion employed in reaching this decision were; does the location lend itself to the purpose, services and functions for

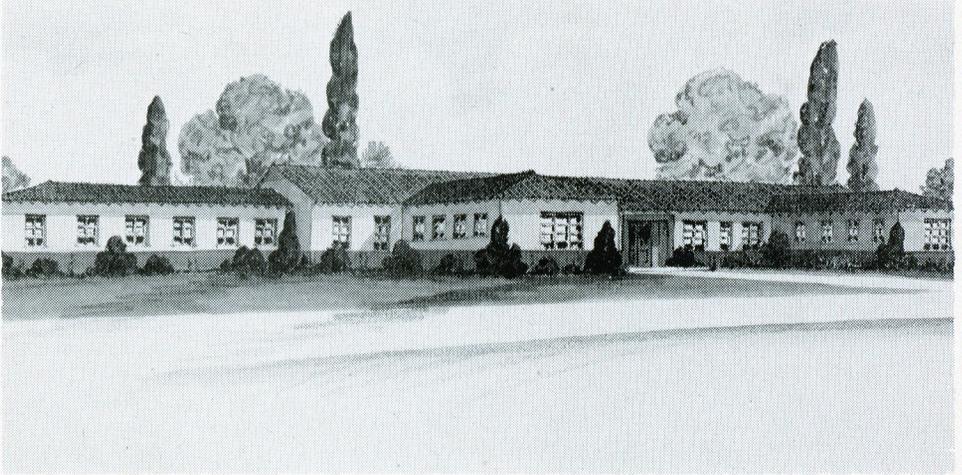
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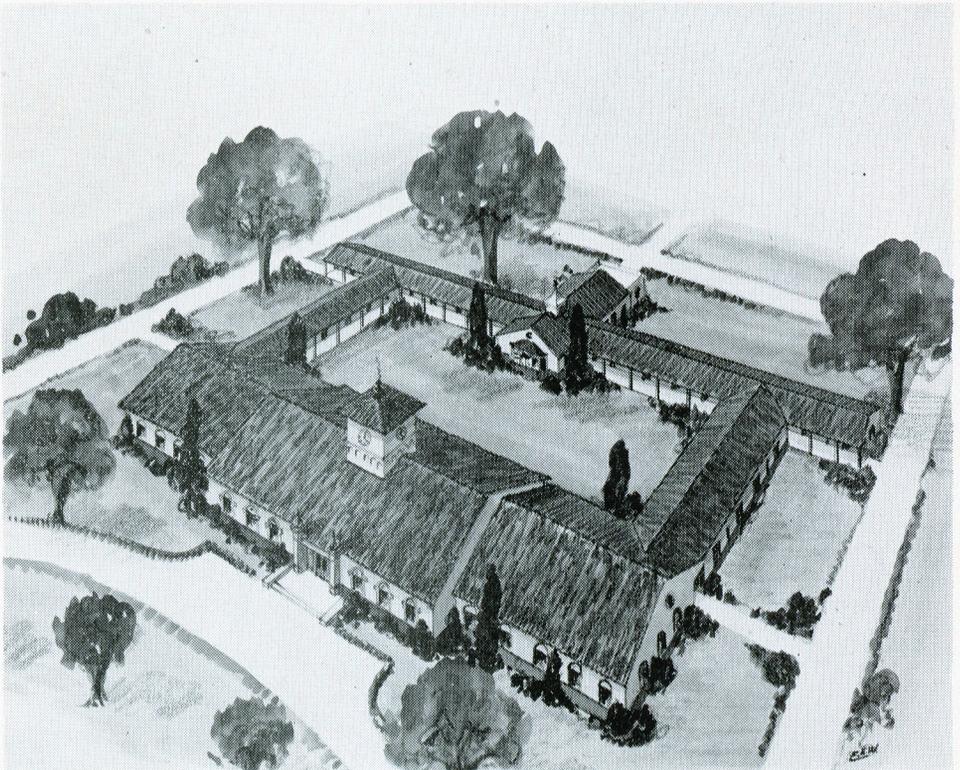
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which it is intended, and does it permit economy, both as to the initial cost of establishing the training center and its

ultimate operation. Approximately 4 of every 5 children registered to date live within 150 miles of Phoenix. A



Cottage "A"



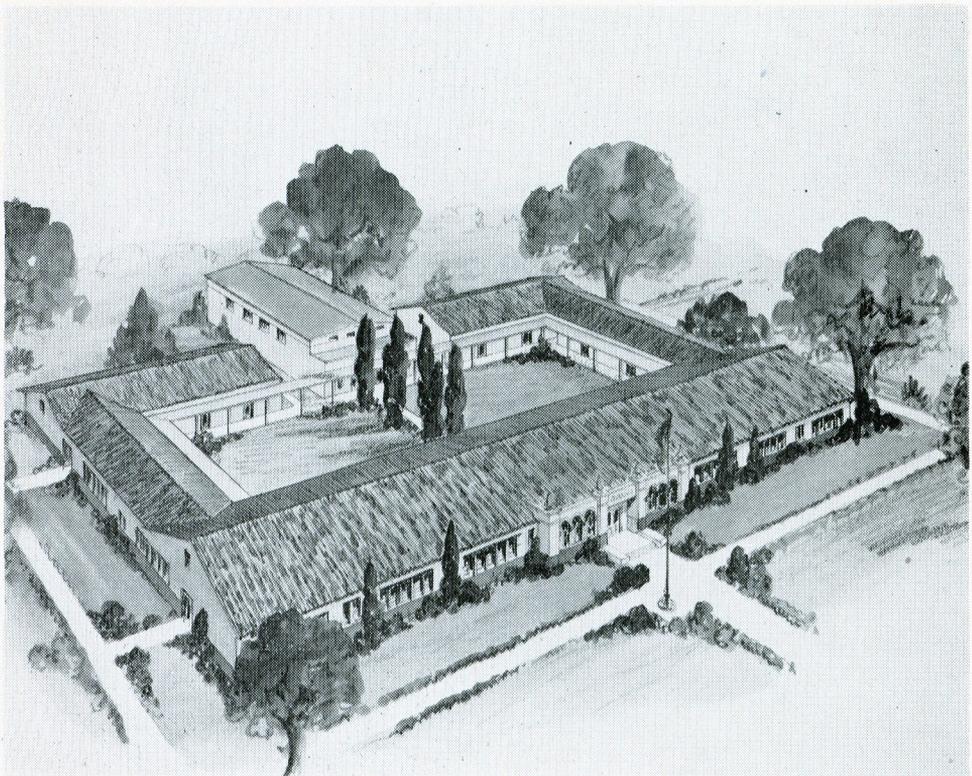
Personnel and Administration Building — Arizona Children's Colony

central location facilitates the transportation of children to and from home, and enables the parents to visit more

frequently, making for economy and better morale. A central site affords close proximity to the offices of spec-



Cottage "B"



The Classroom Building — Arizona Children's Colony

ialists whose service the colony will need, the advantage of nearness to those other state agencies in cooperation with which it must function and accessibility to the principle markets of the state for materials, supplies and provisions, which will afford a greater selection, a wider range of price and reduce the cost of transportation.

The Arizona Children's Colony project is a matter of long standing in Arizona. The first Colony Bill was introduced in the Legislature March 1, 1917. The first Colony legislation to be enacted was in 1927. Since that time repeated, but futile, attempts have been made to establish the program. The Arizona Children's Colony Board was created in October, 1945, by act of the Seventeenth Legislature and vested with all powers and duties with respect to the care and training of mentally deficient children. Programs in every state have been reviewed, the officials of the American Association on Mental Deficiency have been consulted, a careful and intensive study of the problem of mental deficiency as it is in Arizona has been made. From this wealth of material the facts and recommendations to be submitted for the consideration of the Nineteenth Legislature will be drawn.

The problem of mental deficiency in Arizona is becoming more pronounced. There are two principle reasons for this; first, because of the astounding increase in population that the state has experienced during the past few years and secondly, that the population is becoming more and more urban. Prior to 1940 there was never over 10,000 births in the state in any one year. Last year there were over 19,000.

Authorities claim that one child in every 50 will prove to be mentally deficient. Mentally retarded children get along much better and are happier in the simple environment of rural communities. During recent years Arizona's population has become more and more urbanized.

Too often mental deficiency is thought of as the other fellow's problem. Actually it is as close to you as the next born child in your family. Mental deficiency is no respecter of cultural or economic status, of color or creed. Over one-third of all retarded children are the result of "accidents", accidents that can occur in any family.

The effect of mental deficiency is not limited to the child himself, but is felt by all those he contacts, his brothers and sisters, his parents, and even the community in which he lives. Failure to understand him often destroys what would otherwise be a happy normal family life. Even with understanding he may prove too great a burden for the average home.

Many of our mentally deficient children are destined to a life of utter dependence because of our failure to provide proper training and guidance. Too often we see only the retarded child's defects and are blind to his abilities, which, if properly cultivated, can mean the difference between a dependent and a contributing adult.

A Children's Colony would provide training that is best suited to the child's mental capacity and abilities. Training of a type that he can make use of when he becomes an adult in years. It can give him a feeling of security and add to his happiness, which is the first right of every child, by establishing a sense of belonging. In many instances its program can develop him so that he can partially or completely maintain himself. In other instances, when the mental handicap is more severe, it can instill in him those social habits that will make him acceptable in his home and his community, even though he may remain dependent.

It has been said that the greatest handicap of the mentally deficient child is not his low mentality, but the public's lack of sympathy and understanding. Will you consider those who cannot speak for themselves—Arizona's Mentally Retarded.