

the deaf. Kastner Hall honors August C. Kastner, a product of the school, who was the boys' supervisor for nearly half a century. The athletic field is named for Frederick J. Neesam, a graduate of the school and Gallaudet College, who instituted the boys' athletic program and was coach for 41 years. The Neesam Sportsmanship Award, given annually, is also named for him. The school has a Wisconsin State historical marker which was financed by the school's chapter of the Jr. National Association of the Deaf.

The fence in front of the school campus once encircled the governor's mansion in Madison. It was made in 1872 and moved to the WSD campus in 1899.

Edith Fitzgerald, inventor of the Fitzgerald Key, Lars M. Larson, founder of the New Mexico School and the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf; J. Schuyler Long, a noted educator of the deaf and author of *The Sign Language*, *A Manual of Signs*, and Herbert

C. Larson, an administrator at California State University in Northridge were former teachers at the school.

Boyce R. Williams, Wilson H. Grabbill, Edmund Waterstreet, John Kubis, Robert Horgen and the Rev. Arthur G. Leisman are graduates of WSD.

### **Louisiana State School for the Deaf**

Baton Rouge

**Opened:** 1852

**Founder:** State Legislature

The State Legislature passed a bill in 1852 founding the school. It was named the Louisiana Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and the Dumb and the Blind. J. S. Brown, the first superintendent, introduced vocational training in 1858.

Every two years the children and their blackboards were taken before the State Legislature where they performed classroom work "for the edifi-

cation of the legislators."

When the Civil War occurred, their learning was interrupted and all the children except the orphans were sent home. When fighting reached Baton Rouge, Federal gunboats steaming up the Mississippi River on their way from New Orleans, mistook the school buildings for Confederate Army headquarters and started bombarding them. One legend has it that one cannon ball fired at the school sailed through the wide hall without doing any damage. When the attack began the principal and the matron ran to the river and rowed to the flagship to inform the commander that the building was a school for the deaf and the blind. Firing immediately ceased. The school was later occupied and used as a hospital.

In the late 1860s fire destroyed an academy for men and the superintendent of the school for the deaf offered them temporary use of the school. This little academy grew into the Louisiana

*Boys performing wood chopping and stacking chores at the Michigan School in Flint.*



*Courtesy of Eleanor Bancroft and Michigan School*