

February 1969

### History of the Ithaca Summer Speech Clinic.

In the spring of 1939, Mr. Mortimer Sweeney, an associate in the State Education Department of the Handicapped, came to the writer and asked if he would consider opening a summer school for Speech and Hearing Therapy. Mr. Sweeney and Mr. Joe Endries, the Director of the Department of the Handicapped in the State Education Department had known of our work in the Ithaca City Schools in speech and hearing therapy (which started in 1929) and thus they picked me to be the one to start such a program.

Mr. Endries and Mr. Sweeney wanted a place which they could recommend when inquiries came to them, but they were not in a position to have the State Education Dept. set up such a special school. But they would send me all inquiries and recommend the school all over the state. They did, by sending out a special notice to all schools etc. In fact, they continued this all of the years that I ran the special summer school!

Accordingly, the Ithaca Summer Speech Clinic was born summer of 1940, with an enrollment of 12 students and two half time staff in addition to Mr. Jones, full time, for a six weeks' period.

The first two years the children lived in selected private homes as close by the downtown Ithaca College buildings as possible. Our classroom was sub-let from Ithaca College for the summer, and we had classes from 9 - 11.30 and 2:30-5:00 P.M. It soon became apparent that this was not a good system - the children were "out from under our influence and supervision" too much of the time.

So, in 1942 we sub-let an Ithaca College dorm which was vacant in the summer, first at 311 N. Tioga St, and the following summer at 404 E. Buffalo Street. Here we could have complete supervision 169 hours a week, and thus work for more carry-over in the rehabilitation of speech, and handle our own recreation, etc. (This was during the war years and cooking utensils etc. were difficult to procure, even though we had a fairly well equipped kitchen at 404 E. Buffalo St. So we took care of the cooking of our breakfast at the dorm and had the other two meals brought in from a local restaurant. Just one of the many compromises and adjustments we had to make over the years.)

It is difficult to believe now, what with all of the speech and hearing programs in public schools, college clinics, etc. etc. that thirty years ago there was practically nothing. Just the beginnings of awareness of the needs and a few college clinics and some school systems which had very partial coverage of the total needs.

Thus we did a real service at this time in helping to "educate" the State Department of Education, the State Health Department, the Mental Hygiene Department, the various commissioners of welfare in the counties, and other public and private agencies, - all of whom were quite steady "customers" of the summer speech clinic - in that they sent us clients, and had representatives of their groups visit our camp, etc.; not only to "follow" their children through the program, but also to see for themselves this new development. We even had a hand in setting up the programs at Geneseo where Miss Agnes Rigney, Director of Speech, came to visit us and learn how we handled the work, and Prof. Harry Heltman, one of the earlier directors of the School of Speech at Syracuse University came down to learn how we developed our program in the summer speech clinic as well as in the school system.

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It is interesting to note that in the early forties there was a traveling psychiatrist, working out of the office of the State Department of Mental Hygiene: she (Dr. Rena Bigelow) covered many of the smaller cities and villages in the entire area. She sent many children to us, and we had much helpful correspondence with her, as well as with many others whose program related to ours. For example, one of those who early sent us children is now the Director of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped U.S. Office of Education, - Mr. Mike Marge, who at the time was a young therapist just starting out in Glens Falls, N.Y. So it went all over the state!

About 1943 we instituted the idea of Parents' Sunday, the fourth Sunday of the six weeks session. (Before that too many parents came as they wished, upset the various schedules, brought too much candy, etc. as well as infections of colds, etc., and occasionally made their children homesick for a few hours. In contrast to this we would also have several children for whom there would be no visitors or even a post card for the entire summer. Accordingly, "Necessity being the mother of ...." as well as for our own protection, we devised this special Parents' Sunday. It has been an extremely successful technique. The parents arrive around noon that Sunday. (Hopefully leaving behind their other children). They have Sunday dinner with their child, and then they receive a lecture on the total program and the problems of the group, etc. while their children keep on regular schedule which is a rest period after lunch, as usual). Then the parents come down and observe a couple of class sessions, and then, while the children are in recreation, they are free to observe that and/or visits with counsellors, etc. They also receive individual counselling as may be indicated. Then, when general swim time is called about 4:30 P.M. that Sunday, the parents watch and leave. It is a most beneficial day for all concerned!

Summer of 1944 we moved to the Ithaca College camp - we sub-let from Ithaca College-, which in turn had sub-let 600 acres with fine camping facilities from the Federal Government. Thus we could fully control all of the hours of our pupils offer them a fine camping experience and at the same time have plenty of equipment for all sorts of summer activities, including swimming, hikes, etc. Our Program is intensive, classes every morning, afternoon and evenings and on Saturday A.M. and Sunday afternoon. (I had more than 30 hours of classes weekly!)

Mr. Ed. Badger, the present director of the camp, joined our staff in the summer of 1947; and Dr. T. Walter Carlin received his first experience in speech and hearing therapy when he joined our staff in the summer of 1951. (A year or two later, George Burns Smith came for his first experience in the field, both he and his wife were valuable to us.

The growth of the camp was, as might be expected, great, - from the handful with which we started in 1940, by 1955 we were averaging about 75 students and a staff of 15-20. (Right now it is well over a hundred and the staff may reach closer to 45 or so). It seems that a greater awareness of the needs has more than off-set the many new clinics and school programs which are springing up.) We are, I think, the 2nd oldest institution of its kind in the country, (the U. of Michigan started one in 1932 which was larger than ours, for a time, but now we are larger)- their facilities limit them to 112 (all boys.)

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About the staff ratio to pupils: at the Ithaca Speech Clinic- when we say about one staffer to three pupils, we mean full-time live-in staff members working directly and only with the children. (Camp maintenance, cook, dishwashers, life guard, resident nurse etc. are extra). Also we do not include- as I think many other similar camps might as staff, those who come to the camp a few hours weekly as consultants etc. (if we added all of these in, I guess we would have closer to one staff for every two pupils!)

There are probably 20 practicing speech and hearing therapists in and around the state who received their initial training at our camp. There are also some 200, perhaps 300, who received a part of it and the first real practical experience they have had. (When you stop to think of it what a rich field for young therapists!) About 75 clients aged 6-18 for the most part with all varieties of problems. Moreover, with an opportunity to see the total therapeutic program, and not merely one segment. It is not any wonder that young therapists are increasingly coming from many other states for the opportunity to work here for the summer.

Also there were many- when I was both teaching at the college and running the summer clinic- who received their practicum with me at the camp. Thus benefiting the college- (perhaps more than it ever realized), but also, of course, being of help to us as well as a great experience for them.

The organization and running of such a venture is great, almost impossible. I was chief therapist, public relations officer, personnel director, camp organizer, and "general handyman", etc. I was most fortunate to secure some of the wonderful assistants which I had, noted above. Then, too, I most always had a school principal and his wife (usually a school teacher or crafts specialist) on the staff and they could help a great deal in the discipline and internal organization). Just planning the Sunday sets of services, or the crafts program, or even taking care of getting the laundry into town, back, sorted, etc. was quite a chore! Then there was meal planning and such, not to mention the increasing number and types of evaluations which were essential - a part-time psychologist, a medical examiner (all children first day in camp), audiologist, etc. etc.

So, in 1955 I had a heart attack. While still under the oxygen tent, I completed arrangements, called in a lawyer, etc., to turn the camp and all of its equipment, good will, and the materials which we had developed, etc. over to Mr. Edward B. Badger. He has since had full responsibility.

I remained as part-time consultant thru the summer of 1968 when it was necessary to sever all ties. Besides, I knew at that time that my influence was not essential to the management or the teaching.

Just the writing of this summary itself leads me to be even more proud of these developments & programs. The influence which this summer clinic has had on thousands of speech & hearing handicapped as well as hundreds of young speech therapists is great. Not to mention its part in the statewide education of various other disciplines in the need & techniques for such work. We have to add, however that we did just happen to be ready at the right time to set up such a program, & as someone has said- "There is nothing as powerful as an idea when its time has come".

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