OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN MISSISSIPPI

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The department of occupational therapy was organized in the Mississippi State Insane Hospital at Jackson, October, 1920. So far as I know, this was the first attempt to establish such a department in Mississippi and in that part of the South. Great interest has been shown in this work by the people of this and nearby states. We have many visitors and our superintendent and medical director is often asked to speak on this subject before various organizations—not alone medical.

Work was started with the white female patients, classes being held on the wards only.

In December of that year work was started with the white male patients. In the year 1921, an occupational therapy centre was opened for white female patients and an industrial shop for white males, ward classes being continued. In February, 1921, classes were started for colored female patients. In September, 1921, we organized a playground therapy department under the direction of the occupational therapy department. This was in charge of a graduate of the Chicago Normal School of Physical Education. At 8:00 a.m. were held fifteen minutes setting up exercises on the porches for white patients, both male and female. Games were played on the lawns every morning, or on bad days in winter on the porches. There are few days in the year when the weather is too unpleasant for this. Then the assembly hall is used. The afternoon is given to special work, such as dancing classes, singing classes, games and story telling for feebleminded children, etc.

During most of the year about 400 patients take part daily, but the average will probably be higher this winter. During the

1 Read at the sixth annual meeting of the American Occupational Therapy Association, held at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 25 to 29, 1922.
summer, we have to stop much of this work because of the extremely hot weather. Last week the daily attendance was 319.

We have three occupational centres: White female, white male, colored female. Also an industrial shop for white males. There are 622 patients in daily occupational therapy classes; 274 white female, 146 white male, 202 colored female.

Beside the occupational therapy centres, we have ward classes for epileptics, mentally deficient, disturbed and untidy patients. We also use considerable kindergarten work, especially with the feebleminded.

At present we have a former manual training teacher with considerable practical experience in charge of the industrial shop; and a specially trained physical director in charge of playground work. Both are taking work in the occupational therapy school in their spare time. There are 2 teachers, 6 graduate aides—5 young ladies and 1 man (white), 4 graduate aides—5 young ladies (colored), 7 pupils of occupational therapy at present. We expect to have 10, all we are able to take care of now. These assist in classes all through their training, 5 patient assistants; 24 in all—25 with the director.

Because of the impossibility of securing trained assistants, we had to train our own. Later we received requests from other hospitals to train instructors for them, so last year we organized a school of occupational therapy in connection with the hospital and are just beginning our second year as a school.

At first we trained both white and colored, but, as we had to hold all classes separately we were forced to discontinue the colored classes because of a too crowded program. Four graduates (colored) are employed in our own department. One of our graduates (white) organized the occupational therapy department at East Mississippi Insane Hospital at Meridian July 1 of this year. Two other graduates have organized departments in southern hospitals. Three have gone out as assistants.