

Transcript of 1867 June 21: Joseph Mount, Little Rock, to Governor Isaac Murphy, About establishment of school for deaf and dumb in Little Rock

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Joseph Mount
Deaf Mute
In respect to opening
a school for the
Mute etc

[Page break]

Little Rock, Ark., June 21st, '67.

Your Excellency, Isaac Murphy, Governor of Arkansas

I take the liberty of introducing myself to you by saying that I have been employed in teaching the deaf and dumb at Philadelphia for fifteen years, and in Kansas for two years - making a total of seventeen years. I left Kansas last May, on account of the difficulties in which the school was involved.

I went to Arkadelphia last week, to effect a conjunction with the Blind Institution in getting up a school for mutes; but, at a meeting of the citizens held last Saturday, the trustees of the Blind Institution and others expressed the fear that they might injure the interests of the Blind Institution by attempting the establishment of a mute school.

I visited the Blind Institution, and it was from Prof. Patten that I first heard of the charter of an Institution for the deaf and dumb at Fort Smith by the Legislature of Arkansas in 1860, and of the appointment of Directors. The Legislature appropriated to the said school the sum of \$2,000 the first year, and \$1,500 for each year thereafter. The school has not been in operation since the war. I conferred with Judge Watkins of this city, who was one of the Trustees of the Fort Smith school, on the subject of opening a school for deaf mutes here. He was anxious to have it opened here; but the poverty of the people, and the scarcity of money conspired to render it quite a difficult undertaking, even where one scholar was concerned.

I have in my hand the names of eight mutes, one of them a "very smart" black girl seven or eight years old. I saw one deaf girl near Rockport. I have heard of an uneducated deaf woman in Montgomery Co., about 22 years of age; and of another in Sevier Co., 30 years old. There are a good many mutes up the river.

It is certainly desirable that we should move immediately in the matter of opening a school for the reception of mutes.

Perhaps Gen. Ord can do something in the matter. In behalf of the deaf mutes of Arkansas, I urge upon you the necessity of taking early steps to cause the school to be

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re-opened. While the Blind Institution is in active operation, there is certainly no necessity For the closing of the Mute school. In the list of mutes heard of, the female element largely predominates. I need not picture the dreary condition of a deaf mute without education but what I want is your co-operation and that of Gen. Ord in the charity I solicit.

Most respectfully yours,
Joseph Mount

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[On letterhead]
Executive Office,
Little Rock, Ark., __, 1866.

Nothing can be done by the state until complete recognition. I presume that Gen Ord. has no power to act in relation there to -- He could not under the law appropriate money. Old appropriations have lapsed. They are dead—If any thing is done now it must be by private effort. I will when the proper time comes give to the education of mute my whole influence.

Judge Watkins intends to lay the matter before the city council next Tuesday, with a request of pecuniary aid. Little Rock would be the best place in the state for a mute school. I rejoice to know that you will pay attention to the charity when the proper time comes. I have just heard of a colored deaf woman eight miles down the river living with a Mr. Kates.

I hope the city will act liberally
I have no doubt the state will act liberally when organized.

Would you use your influence with the members of the city council?
Without the co-operation of the citizens, my efforts will avail nothing.

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I certainly will.

You had better see as many of the leading citizens as you can. Judge Walters, will introduce you and tell you who to see.

I have consulted many of the leading citizens. They seem disposed to act in the matter. Please accept my cordial thanks for your co-operation. I will most cheerfully act upon your suggestion.

You had better see Judge English. He is Grand Master of the Masonic Order in the State and they own the buildings of the late St. Johns College—they might be used.

I certainly will see Judge English tomorrow morning. I am under great obligation to you for your other suggestion. I will not detain you, Gov. Murphy.