

STATE SCHOOL FOR DEAF [SSD]

A school for the Deaf/Blind children of the Negro race was established by Legislative Act No. 159, 1920. The Blind division was put into operation in 1922. The Deaf division did not operate as a separate unit, with separate faculty and buildings, until the session, 1938-1939. This deaf institution was known as the Louisiana State School for Deaf [LSSD] Negroes.

This residential school was located about 5 miles north of Baton Rouge on the grounds of Southern University and A&M College. It was open to all Negro deaf children of the state between the ages of 6 and 21 whose hearing impairment or deficiencies could not be addressed in the public schools.

The principal of the school was E. L. Gordon. Since the school was housed on the campus of Southern University, President, Dr. Joseph S. Clark served as Superintendent. Despite the fact that legislation which established School for Negro Blind concurrently authorized a State supported institution for Negro deaf children, funds to erect a physical plant for such a school were unavailable. Nevertheless Dr. Joseph S. Clark worked closely with State Superintendent of Education Thomas H. Harris, devised means of securing needed funds for construction purposes. By the beginning of the fiscal year for 1937-1938 he was successful, even "without legislative appropriation for capital outlay" in amassing the funds for constructing a physical plant for the Louisiana School for Deaf Children. And so in the last year of his administration as President of Southern University and Superintendent of Schools for the Negro Blind and the Negro Deaf a substantial brick building situated west of and close by School for Negro Blind was built to house State School for Negro Deaf. It consisted of a modern one story brick structure that included two separate wings used for boys' and girls' dormitories, two sick rooms, two bathrooms, seven classrooms, two reading rooms and four other rooms, the Secretary's office and Principal's office. Superintendent J. S. Clark's selection for first principal of this institution was E. L. Gordon who remained only one year. The first session of this