

Kentuckians and Civic Action



Kentucky School for the Deaf, Danville, KY, Kentucky Historical Society

Kentucky School for the Deaf Founded

In 1822, Lucy Barbee, the hearing-impaired daughter of Kentucky Senator Elias Barbee, helped inspire her father to propose an act for the establishment of what became the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). Founded in **Danville**, it became “the first state-supported school in the United States for the instruction of deaf children.”

Seventeen pupils, including Lucy, attended the first classes in November 1823. While most were in their late teens, students ranged in age from 12 to 30. Administered by Centre College in its early years, the school promised that no pupil would be turned away. Education focused on not only academics but also vocational training. It helped prepare deaf students to survive and thrive in a hearing world.

Today, KSD is administered by the Kentucky Department of Education and serves approximately 100 students in grades K-12.