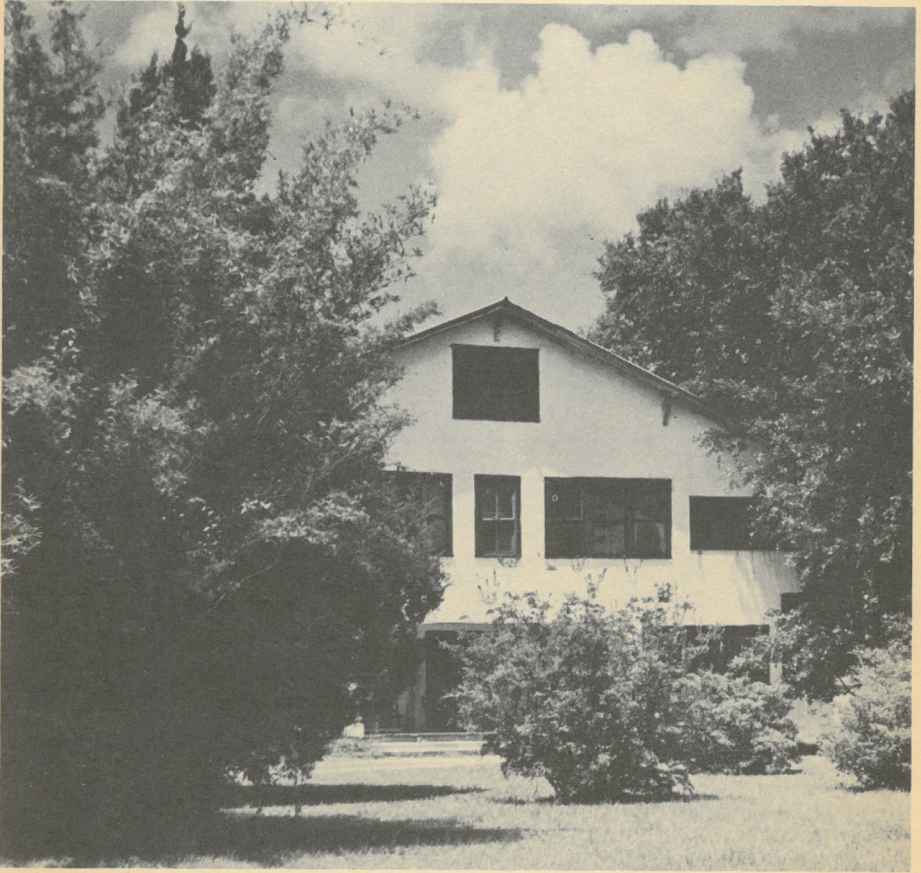


The Organic School



Where learning is living;

where living is learning

*Here is the story of a little school
with a big idea: a big idea, yet a
very simple one*



We grow.

The idea

Education, to be of greatest value---to result in
the best balanced adult---must be geared to the

physical

mental

spiritual

development of the child.



She led the way.

In the Beginning

Marietta Johnson saw the light that led to organic education while she was supervising grade school teaching in the public schools of Mankato, Minnesota. One of her colleagues gave her a copy of Nathan Oppenheim's book, "The Development of the Child." Suddenly, it dawned on Mrs. Johnson that she had been harming the children rather than helping them, that she had devoted her life to a system of education that was wrong.

With this conviction, Mrs. Johnson gave up teaching and moved to Fairhope, Alabama. Here, someone who knew she had been a teacher offered her \$25 a month to start a one-pupil kindergarten. Mrs. Johnson, who wanted to "teach the child for the fun of the thing, now," rented a cottage for \$15 a month, leaving \$10 a month for kindergarten supplies.

Thus the School of Organic Education began in 1907. And, as Marietta Johnson worked with her little school, "the idea" grew with her. In a few years she had built an institution that won the attention and acclaim of educators not only in this country, but in Europe as well.

In 1938, Mrs. Johnson died. But her school goes on, striving to use the information and techniques that she gave us, and dedicated to the work she started—the study of the nature and needs of the child; mental, physical and spiritual.

We Believe

Schools are engaged in "raising children." It is to the best interest of society to produce the finest type of child—a child who has a strong body, an intelligent mind, a sweet and sincere spirit. To do this requires constant study of the development of the child and of the nature and needs of childhood.

The stability of the nervous system must be preserved; the natural order of development must be studied and followed. Marietta Johnson was one of the first of an increasing group of educators who believe that the nervous system of the growing child is too delicate, too unformed to be subjected to the usual formal



Story hour.

work of the primary school. Our question is, why not postpone such work? Further, she observed that the young child is wearied, dulled, bored by constant direction. The obvious question—why not provide for self-prompted activity?

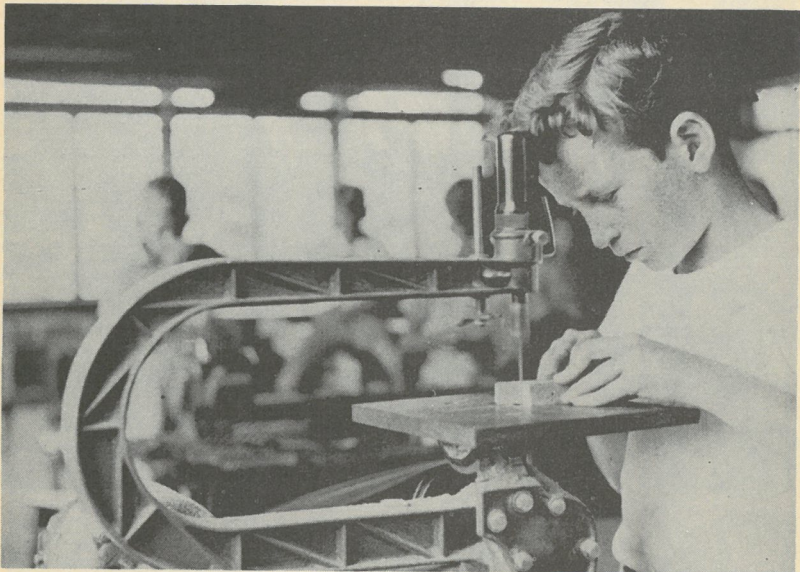
We answer the first question by postponing formal work until the individual child shows physical readiness and intellectual need for more advanced skills. We answer the second question by providing time and materials for spontaneous, creative activity, with help from the teacher, not direction. Results over a period of more than forty years justify our method.

Creativeness

The mind develops through interest. Therefore, the supreme question for the school to consider is, "*What are the interests of childhood?*"

In general, we know that children are interested in things of the senses, in creative use of the senses. They should be allowed free use of materials and be permitted to create things of their own choice. Using material to express his own thought is a demand of the child's nature which we dare not ignore.

Judgment and reason likewise are developed through spontaneous activity in concrete situations. Personal interest sharpens the intellect. Therefore, we must allow ample opportunity for the child to meet situations in which he is keenly interested. Acquiring information through conventional lesson and recitation gives little opportunity for the development of sound judgment.



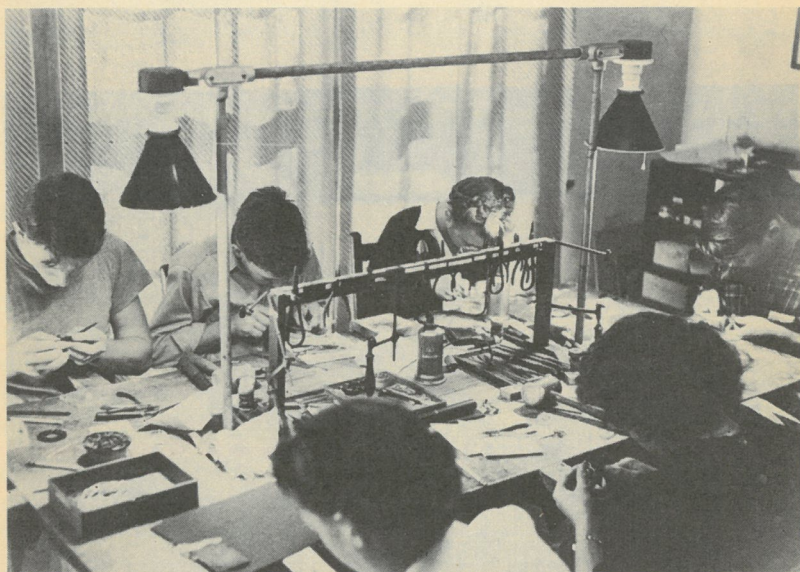
Important work.

The Real Reward

The moral development of the child requires a life of sincere, unselfconscious experience. To work for grades, marks and promotions tends to shift the emphasis from a real goal to a trivial reward. When a desire to know or a need for information is the motive for studying, true growth is taking place.

There is no need to minimize strong, fine, thorough intellectual work. This is quite as real a need of the child as is good food. However, the art of the mother and of the teacher is to provide the stimulus for this intellectual growth.

No external reward is necessary for studying, or learning or thinking. They are their own reward.



The pride and joy of our creative work—making our class rings.

Fearlessness

Fearlessness is a spiritual need. Self-consciousness is a kind of fear, a very common product of the conventional school system. The child who is constantly measured, marked and graded develops an inhibiting self-consciousness which kills initiative, and in later life may become paralyzing. Another type of child may come to depend entirely on outer suggestion; or, he may become arrogant and egotistical.

Fear has no place in organic education.

Discipline

Discipline is necessary for strong character. The ability to persevere for a desirable end, even under unpleasant conditions, is one of the most necessary elements of character. That he may acquire this moral power, every child must be allowed ample opportunity to work for an end which is to *him* of supreme importance. Working under constant direction, being allowed no freedom of choice, weakens his will and makes him dependent on external influence. Strong inner purpose is essential; it must not be destroyed by external requirements.

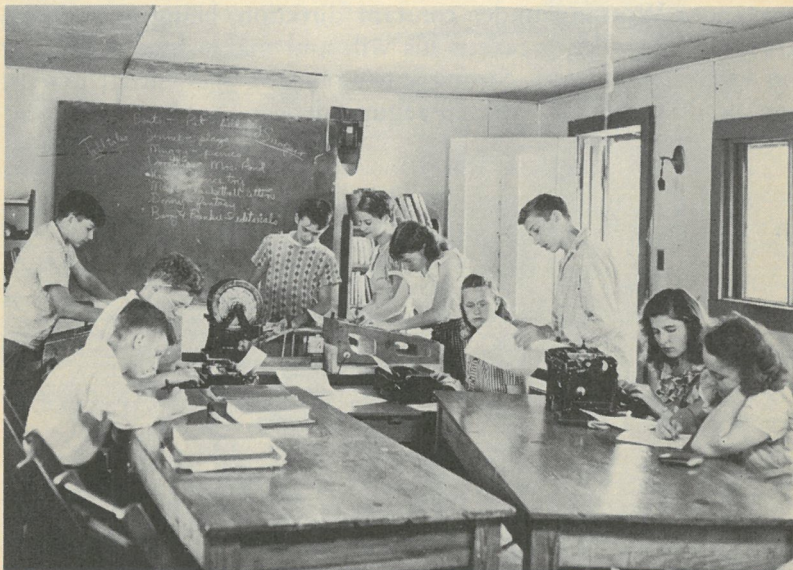


Classwork—you can see it's fun.

Not a "Do As You Please" School

In the Organic School, we endeavor to determine the needs of the body, the needs of the mind and the needs of the spirit. Having determined these needs, we make an effort to meet them. Education is not preparation for life; education *is* life. Education is not preparation for growth; education *is* growth.

In this matter of growth, however, the child is too lacking in experience to know what is best for him. He cannot be permitted to "do as he pleases." We, therefore, are not a "do as you please" school. We insist upon obedience, but in doing so we make every effort to require only those things that will contribute to the development of self-discipline. When this is done, resort to force is unnecessary with a normal child.

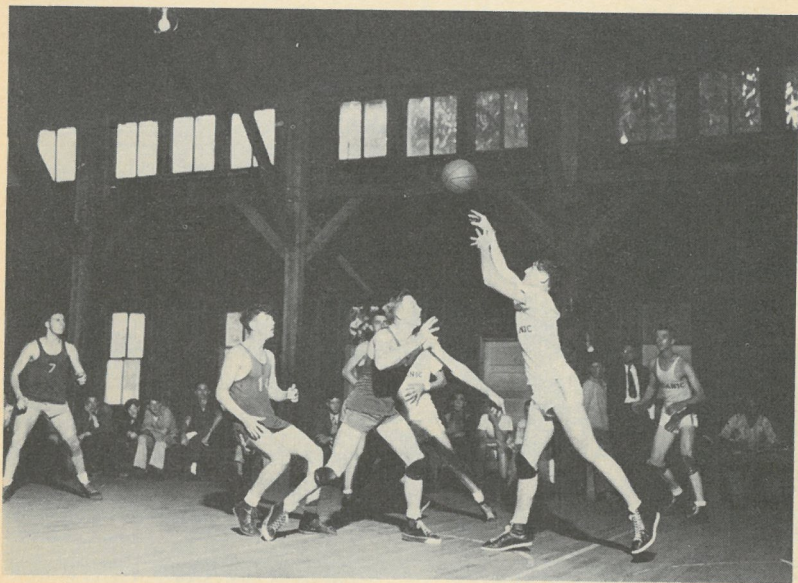


Learning by doing. Freshmen and sophomores printing the OMGR.

Why the Mark of Failure ?

No child should ever "fail" in getting an education. All should thrive and succeed. Our American school system, which aims to educate all children, must fit the needs of all children. A sound, accomplished body, an intelligent, sympathetic mind, and a reverent spirit—these are the immediate aims of education. The degree to which a school brings about these results for every child is a measure of its educational success. Insofar as it fails to achieve these results, it is not educational, however informational it may be.

America has far more than her share of children who are neuroathletic wrecks, their nervous systems bankrupt because of efforts to clear educational hurdles that never should have been in their paths. To use Mrs. Johnson's favorite illustration, "The system of passing-marks, of tests, is as unfair as demanding that every American jump over a bar seven feet high before he can vote."



Win or lose, we play for fun.



The Highland Schottische—at the Annual Spring Festival.



Whether in kindergarten or high school, dramatization plays an important part.

Others Say

Flora J. Cooke, Director of the Francis Parker School,
Chicago, Illinois,

"There is no one in the field of education who has with such unselfishness, self-sacrifice and unflinching courage devoted time and energy year after year to freeing children from traditional educational shackles. It would seem most fitting that in Fairhope, the site of her life work, her experiment could be made secure for the future."

Rockwell Kent, Artist, New York, New York.

"I hold that great honor is due Mrs. Johnson for what she has done in education, and I feel especially gratified for what she has done for my own children."

Dr. Frederick Archer, Department of Education, University of Alabama.

"I was wrapped in wonder, praise and awe of what I saw of harmony, eagerness for life, perfect sincerity, naturalness, respect and real education. I wish my own child could have had that. . . . If only one figure should be chosen as the moving spirit of better education, it should be Marietta Johnson."

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, novelist.

"The splendid creative work she has done for the children of our country is a contribution to American life of golden and lasting value."

John Dewey, educational philosopher.

From "Schools of Tomorrow."

"The Fairhope pupils compare favorably with pupils in the ordinary public schools. . . . they are apt to be stronger physically and are much more capable with their hands, while they have a real love of books and study that makes them equally strong on the purely cultural side of their work. . . . The school has provided conditions for wholesome, natural growth in small enough groups for the teacher, as a leader rather than an instructor, to become acquainted with the weaknesses of each child individually and then to adapt the

work to the individual needs. It has demonstrated that it is possible for children to lead the same natural lives in school that they lead in good homes outside of school hours; to progress bodily, mentally and morally in school without . . . pressure, rewards, examinations, grades or promotions . . ."

A. Gordon Melvin, School of Education, College of New York City.

"Mrs. Johnson is one of those people who pioneer so much advancing their times that when their ideas reach general adoption their origins are forgotten. Mrs. Johnson has had more effect on American education than many more publicized persons who followed her. I regard her personally as one of the most excellent sources that we have on the education of American children."



A frolic on the Gulf shore.

THE SCHOOL OF ORGANIC EDUCATION

Fairhope, Alabama

Dr. John R. Campbell, Principal

A beautiful ten-acre campus on historic Mobile Bay, where the mild climate affords abundant outdoor life and activity. Fairhope is a resort village, overlooking old Fort Bowyer, now Ft. Morgan, to the south; to the north the bayous of the Alabama river, and across the bay the port of Mobile, the city of five flags. A faculty of experienced teachers offers a complete school program, kindergarten through high school. High school is accredited. Distinctive curriculum features—arts, crafts and folk dancing—are required of all students because of their value in building body, mind and spirit.

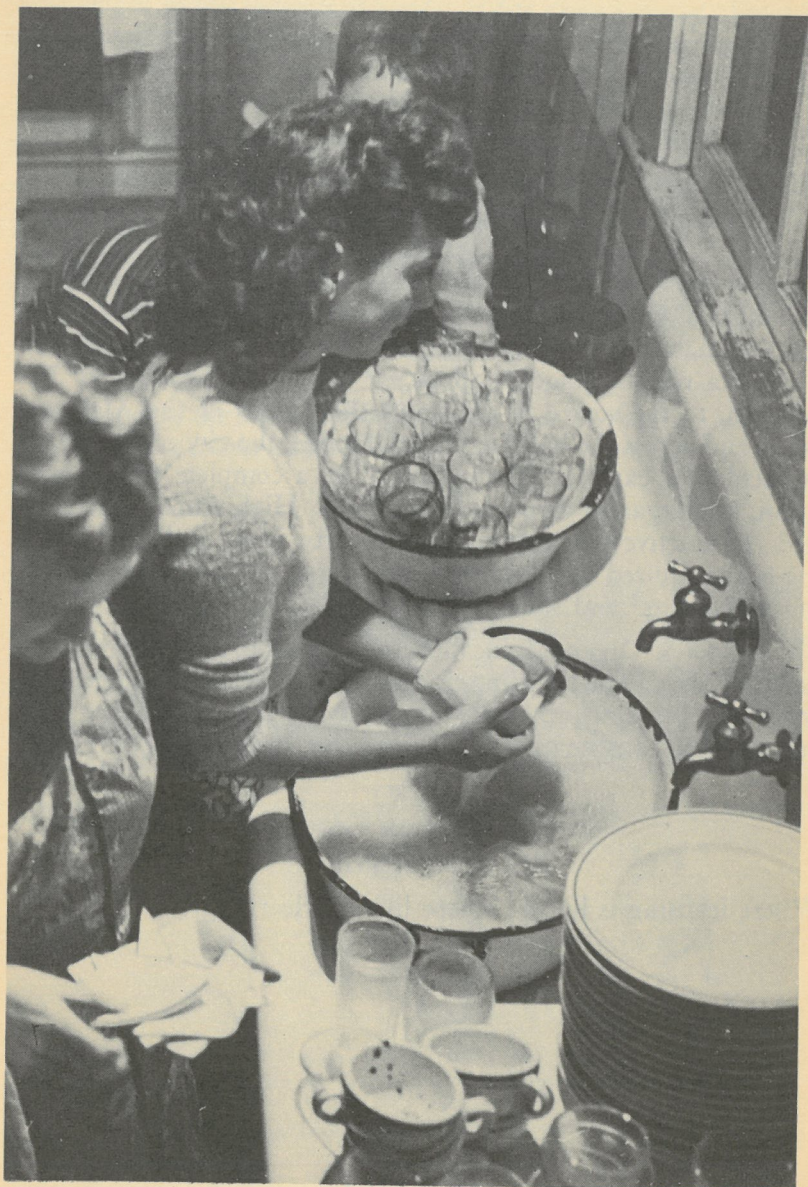
The School of Organic Education is equipped to take normal students, either day or boarding, for a nine-month term. In keeping with organic principles, our ways of living are very simple and our rates are consistently low. For further information, write:

Secretary

School of Organic Education

Fairhope, Alabama

Where learning is living; where living is learning.



Cooperation in the school home. Boarding students keep their rooms in order, and take turns doing the supper dishes.