

Vocational Shop (Industrial Building)

The Vocational Shop, also known as the Industrial Building, was constructed in 1887 at the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) as part of a major period of campus expansion during the administration of Superintendent James Simpson.

The vocational shop was built in 1887 as part of a \$28,000 appropriation by the Dakota Territorial legislature for campus improvements. Plans and specifications were prepared by Sioux Falls architect W. L. Dow, and construction was put out for bid that same year.

Constructed of Sioux Falls quartzite, the building was a one-and-one-half-story structure with a basement. It was designed to serve both educational and operational purposes. The basement housed the school's printing department and laundry facilities, while upper levels were used for vocational instruction.

The Vocational Shop became the center of SDSD's early industrial education program. Printing was among the first trades taught at the school, later expanding to include carpentry, woodworking, sewing, and other practical trades. These programs provided students with valuable skills and reflected a growing emphasis on vocational training alongside academic instruction.

By the early 20th century, the building was considered increasingly outdated. It lacked modern heating and adequate space, and its basement conditions were noted as poor. As the school continued to grow, newer facilities replaced many of its functions.



Pupils working in the vocational shop, c. early 1900s, demonstrating hands-on training in printing and industrial trades.

condemned and demolished after more than four decades of use. Much of its quartzite stone was salvaged and reused in the construction of a new gymnasium attached to the boiler house during the 1928–1930 campus improvements.

Although the building no longer stands, the Vocational Shop played a significant role in shaping SDSD's early identity by establishing one of its first structured vocational training programs.



Location:	Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Coordinates:	43° 32' 56.41" N 96° 42' 7.86" W
Name:	Vocational Shop
Built:	1887
Architect:	W.L. Dow (Likely)
Material:	Sioux Falls quartzite
Structure:	1 ½ stories with basement
Primary uses:	Printing department Laundry facilities Vocational training
Trades taught:	Printing Carpentry Woodworking Sewing
Years in use:	1887-1929
Fate:	Condemned and demolished in 1929
Legacy:	Stone reused in construction of gymnasium



Approximate location of the vocational shop on the SDSD Campus, with the red box indicating its former location near the infirmary site.