



# Edward S. Tillinghast

October 1873 – June 5, 1946

Edward S. Tillinghast, eighth superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf, passed away in June 1946 at the home of his daughter in Takoma Park, Maryland, following a period of declining health.

He was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, on October 27, 1873, and graduated with honors from Davidson College in 1894. Soon afterward, he began a lifelong career in Deaf education, becoming part of one of the most prominent families in the field. The Tillinghast family would ultimately include at least twenty-five members who served as teachers, administrators, and leaders in schools for the deaf across the United States.

Before coming to South Dakota, Tillinghast served in leadership roles at schools for the deaf in Montana, Oregon, and Missouri. As superintendent of the Oregon State School for the Deaf, he helped oversee construction of a new campus near Salem and strengthened the academic program.



Primary Hall constructed in 1929

In 1925, he became superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf, serving until his retirement in 1939. His fourteen-year tenure marked a major period of campus development and modernization. Under his leadership, SDSD expanded and improved its facilities through installation of sewer and utility upgrades, campus landscaping improvements, modernization of heating systems, relocation and improvement of



Edward and Hilda Tillinghast at front of high pile of snow.

industrial and vocational work areas, and construction of new educational and recreational facilities, including Primary Hall for younger students and a new gymnasium and industrial building. During the Great Depression, he successfully utilized federal work programs to repair and modernize campus buildings, helping sustain improvements despite difficult economic conditions. Enrollment grew significantly, and vocational training opportunities expanded for students during this period.

Tillinghast was also active in civic life and church service and was respected within both educational and community circles.

His wife, Hilda B. Tillinghast, herself a dedicated supporter of Deaf education, preceded him in death earlier that year. He was survived by his daughter and by his son, Edward W. Tillinghast, who continued the family tradition as superintendent of a school for the deaf in Arizona.

Edward and Hilda Tillinghast are buried together at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood, Prince George's County, Maryland.

Edward S. Tillinghast's leadership left a lasting mark on the



South Dakota School for the Deaf, establishing improvements and foundations that supported future growth of the school and its programs for generations of Deaf students.



Supt. Tillinghast standing at the center back row of 1929 Boys Basketball team.