

The West Virginia Colored Orphans' Home

1899

Reverend Charles McGhee establishes the West Virginia Normal and Industrial School for Colored Children, providing a home, education, and vocational training for African American children under the age of 16.

1911

The facility is renamed the West Virginia Colored Orphans' Home after being purchased by the state.

1923

A new building (pictured, below) opens to replace an earlier structure that burned in 1920.

1951

Residents are bussed to segregated African American schools in Huntington.

1954

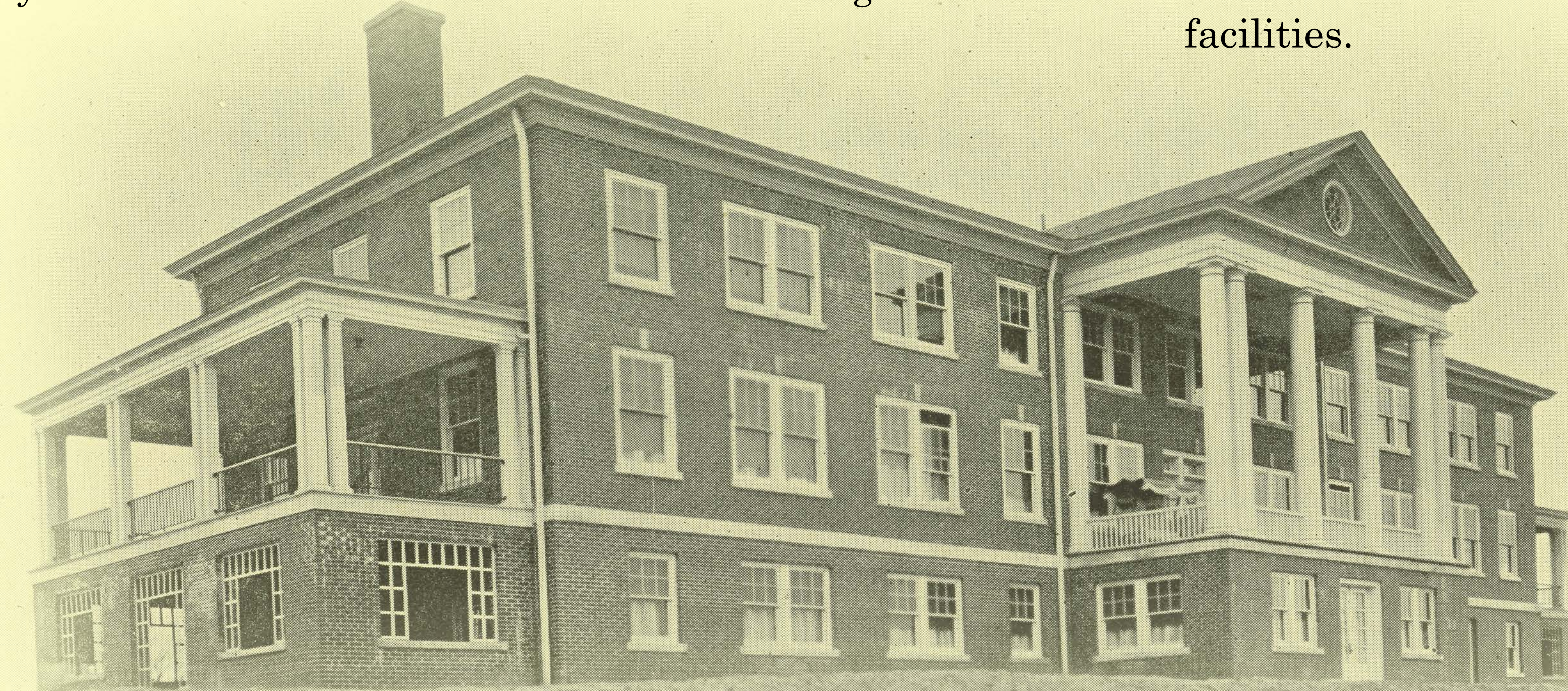
The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Brown vs. Board of Education legally ends segregated educational facilities.

1956

The home closes and residents move to the newly integrated Children's Home at Elkins.

2011

The building is demolished after being used for many years as a rest home, apartments, and student housing for Marshall University.



Girls were taught sewing, cooking, cleaning, and laundry skills to prepare them for the typical jobs available to African American women at the time.

This c.1914 photo shows the age range of girls at the school.



Boys were taught construction and agricultural skills. All children worked in the gardens and orchards on the grounds: boys worked with livestock, planting, and harvesting, while the girls focused on canning the orchard and garden produce. These agricultural products were used to supplement their meals.

In this c.1927 - 1930 photo, a group of younger boys gathers by the playground.



The school's band played at local African American churches and community events to raise funds for the school.

The founder of the home, Reverend Charles McGhee, is shown here (seated, #10).