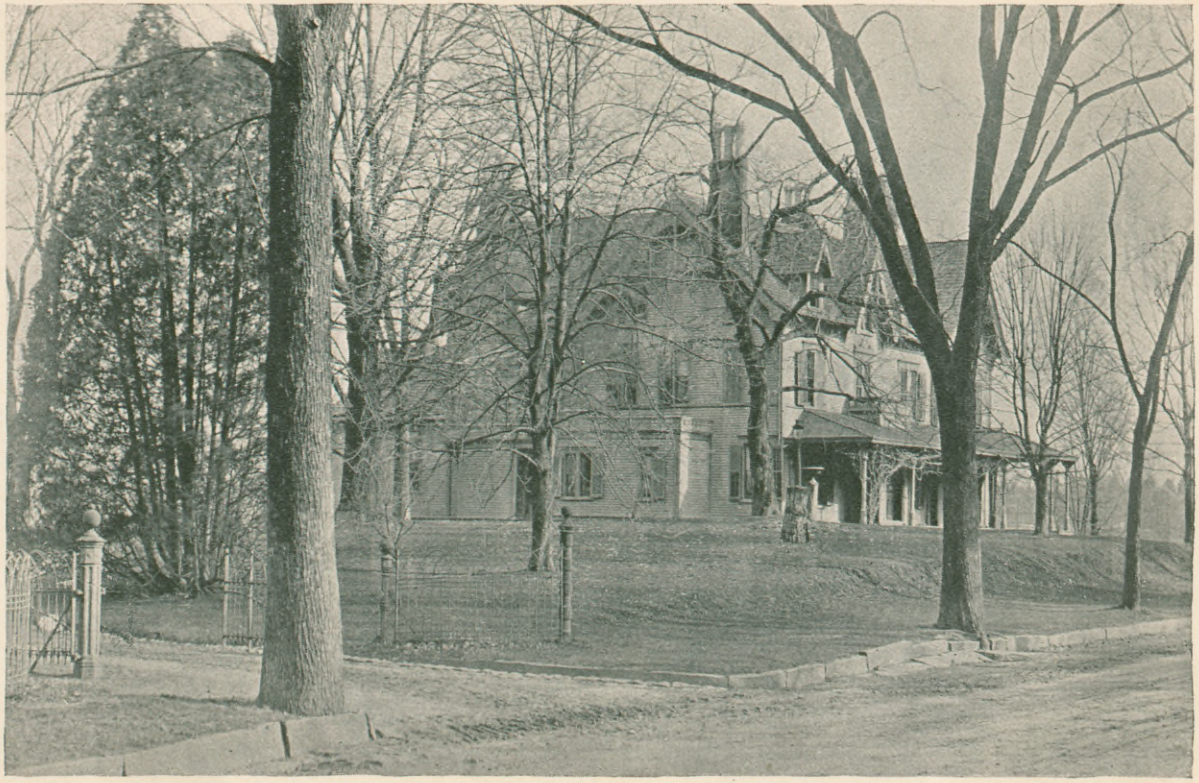
Seventeenth Year---1894, 1895

The Sequin Physiological School

For the Training of Children of

Arrested Mental or Physical Development

370 Centre St., Orange, N. J.



THE SEGUIN

PHYSIOLOGICAL SCHOOL

FOR THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN OF
ARRESTED MENTAL OR PHYSICAL
DEVELOPMENT . . . . .

THE SEGUIN PHYSIOLOGICAL SCHOOL

WITH this issue of my annual circular I beg to announce the removal of my school from New York, where it has been carried on since its commencement in the year 1878 up to the present time, to a most favorable location in the suburbs of Orange, New Jersey, in April of the present year (1894).

Late in 1893 a happy combination of circumstances brought to my attention an opportunity to secure a property which seemed almost to have been by a kind providence fitted up for the especial requirements of my school and then held in reserve till the proper time arrived for it to be turned over to me, so exactly did the arrangement of the house, the grounds, and the location coincide with my necessities; and all the terms and conditions of purchase and possession coincided in like manner with my ability to fulfill them.

The advisability of such a change had often been discussed and always decided in the affirmative, but no suitable and altogether satisfactory location had been found, though diligently sought for. Under these circumstances it did not require any great amount of deliberation to decide upon the purchase of this property, and the school is now permanently established here.

The property is No. 370 Centre Street, Orange, N.J., and is situated about a mile from the railroad station.

The frontispiece is a view taken from the north-west corner of the property, showing the house with front piazza and lawn, and terrace sloping down to the street. Another view, taken from the east side of the house, shows green-house, cottage, barn and carriage-house, and other outbuildings, shade and fruit trees.

The grounds comprise about four acres, sloping gently away to the rear, the house standing at an elevation of over two hundred feet above the level of the sea.

On the grounds are two cottages (one not shown in photograph). One of these is to be reserved for isolating any case of sickness that may occur among the pupils, thereby removing all danger to the other children from contagion, while securing perfect treatment to the sick.

The house was built by a wealthy gentleman in the most thorough and substantial manner for his own occupancy, and great attention was given to the heating and plumbing systems, which have recently been inspected and overhauled under the supervision of a sanitary expert. The Baker & Smith steam system of heating with conveyed air is employed, insuring an equitable temperature and perfect ventilation throughout the entire house.

The climate of this section of country is justly renowned for its mildness and salubrity, and many persons unable to withstand the strong salt air of New York and Brooklyn have become satisfied residents of Orange, the advantages gained in this short distance being remarkable, especially in cases involving catarrhal and throat troubles.

Before deciding to locate here I took the advice of expert medical authorities, who united in unreservedly commending the change from a medical standpoint.

In order that our pupils might as far as possible enjoy the advantages from contact with nature the school has heretofore been located near to Central Park, New York. The children were taken to walk there daily under the care of the teachers. But the desired result was but partially attained. Walks along the same paths and under restrictions became monotonous. The more advanced pupils shrank from it, and seemed to regard an outing in the Park as something to be endured rather than enjoyed.

But here in our new location the natural advantages impossible in the city are fully secured. Here we have the pure air and quiet of the country—shady trees under which the children can sit and play, broad stretches of grassy lawns with facilities for

croquet and all out-door games, and many pleasant walks and drives in the vicinity and the outlying valleys and mountains, furnishing healthful and restorative influences which cannot fail to be incalculably beneficial. All children are fond of flowers, and in our green-house they can see them grow and blossom.

The extent of the grounds admit of the keeping of cows and fowls, and thus we secure perfectly pure milk and fresh eggs. From these varied sources we believe superior mental and physical forces will be derived for the development of the pupils placed in our charge.

One other consideration has largely influenced me in deciding upon this change. The work of teaching these unfortunate little ones is peculiarly exhausting, and their teachers, to maintain their strength and courage and not lapse into that listlessness and perfunctory performance of their duties which is fatal to improvement in the child, must be within reach of diversions, amusements, recreations such as only the large cities can afford, and no location could be considered which would isolate them from the outside world, leaving them to depend upon themselves for that relief which cannot be successfully dispensed with. No obstacles of this kind exist in the present case, as Orange is but forty minutes from New York, and there are over forty trains daily each way.

This accessibility is also equally advantageous to parents wishing to visit the school in relation to placing children in our care, and for those wishing to visit their children already here.

Orange is on the line of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, with stations at Christopher and Barclay Street ferries in New York.

Though the building devoted to school purposes is large we are still obliged, as heretofore, to limit to a comparatively small number the pupils we can accept, for reasons that will be apparent to all who read this circular.

* * *

I deem it proper at this time to make some statements concerning the school—how it originated, how I became identified with it, how it has been carried on, and how I have fulfilled the trust reposed in me by its worthy founder.

In October, 1880, my husband the late Dr. Edouard Seguin died. He was acknowledged by those interested in this line of study and inquiry to have been the first successful teacher of children suffering from arrested development, and all efforts by others that have proved in any degree successful have been made upon the lines laid down by him in his published works and lectures.

Although at the time of his death I had borne the name of this great philanthropist but a few short months, I had had the advantage of his precepts and instructions for two and a half years. When he died the school contained but three children and these came for only three hours daily.

Dr. Seguin's conviction that as far as possible the influence of the system of which he was the originator and exponent should be unbroken was very strong. In the last days of his life, when it was apparent his own work was nearly finished, I proposed closing the school for a few days that my care might be fully given to him.

With all his remaining energy he cried: "No, no! Never loosen your hold on the child for one hour. This is of the first importance."

These words, almost the last he uttered, I have never forgotten.

So I had the children come, and I tried to teach them, until the day before he died, when he became unconscious. The day following his burial I reopened the school, as I had promised.

His devotion to the work of his life continued even to his dying hours, and while suffering the most intense pain his thoughts were busy with plans for my future and the methods by which his mantle might fall upon me when he should no longer be with me to guide and direct.

He knew of the discouragements with which I would meet, and his confidence in my ability to surmount those difficulties inspired me with courage to go on.

For two years I continued the day-school, but the results did not satisfy me. I wanted the children under my own constant supervision. One boarding pupil being promised I took a small house; slowly others followed, and twice since that time I have been obliged to remove to larger quarters.

In the eleven years that have elapsed since I have made a home for the children they have been the object of my greatest solicitude, and so closely under my personal supervision that in that time I have been absent from the school but four nights.

* * *

An article entitled "The Education of Feeble-Minded Children" was published in the *Independent* of October 18, 1888. It was written by a physician who had been intimately associated with Dr. Seguin for years, and was himself deeply interested in this work.

I have deemed it desirable to retain in the present circular the greater portion of this article, as embodying not only the life history of Dr. Seguin, but the principles on which the most successful training of children of arrested development must be based.

It is fifty-one years the present year [1888] since Edouard Seguin, a young French physician, decided to step aside from the brilliant career which had opened before him and devote himself for life to the attempt to rescue from degradation and misery the lowest, most forlorn, and abject of God's creatures. Descended from a long line of eminent physicians in Burgundy, and himself the most gifted of his line, he was possessed of such analytical power and such patience of research that he had become a great favorite of the venerable Itard and of Esquirol, then the most eminent psychologists of France.

He had been entrusted two or three years before with a very delicate investigation into the mental status and possibilities of cure of some idiotic children at the Bicêtre, and was still engaged in these investigations.

He was an eloquent writer, one whose contributions to the best literature of the day, both in poetry and prose, attracted great attention. He was also a brilliant conversationist, and one of that coterie of young philosophers, all of whom afterward attained distinction—Ledru Rollin, Pierre Leroux, Louis Blanc, Michel Chevalier, the elder Flourens, the brothers Pereire, Jean Reynaud, and Victor Hugo. Among them all none was more brilliant or more beloved than Edouard Seguin.

The young brotherhood had all embraced the philanthropic views of St. Simon, and were zealous for the elevation and advancement of humanity; but to none of them had the cry of the suffering and utterly helpless come with such overpowering intensity as to the young physician who had already been for two years endeavoring, with Esquirol's aid, to rend the veil which had hidden the mental perceptions of the idiot children of the

Hospice de Bicêtre from the eyes of the philosophers of the time. At length, in 1839, there appeared a modest pamphlet entitled "*Resumé of What We Have Done During Fourteen Months Past*—Esquirol and Seguin." In simple language it told of the success which had attended their efforts to illumine these darkened intellects.

The year before, Dr. Seguin had definitely determined that he had found his mission. From this time he went on alone, patiently treading and re-treading his beaten paths, trying a thousand experiments to awaken these slumbering, lethargic intellects, and formulating from observation and induction his theories of the causes and possible cure of idiocy. After six years of self-denying labor, conducted wholly at his own expense, he ventured to ask the Academy of Sciences to appoint a commission to examine and report upon his methods and work. This commission, consisting of Messieurs Serres, Flourens, and Pariset, some of its most eminent members, examined, critically and thoroughly, his method of training and educating idiotic children, and reported to the Academy, giving it the highest commendation, and declaring that up to the time when he commenced his labors (1837) idiots could not be educated or cured by any means previously known or practiced, but that he had solved the problem.

This report called attention to his school, which was henceforward almost constantly visited by teachers and philanthropists of his own and other nations, and as his methods were thus made known schools for idiots were soon established in England and several countries of the Continent. Two years later (in 1846) he prepared and published his great treatise, "*Traitement Moral, Hygiène et Education des Idiots, et des Autres Enfants Arriérés*," which was crowned by the Academy and had a wide circulation. The work is a masterpiece. All its methods, instructions, and rules are perfectly defined. It has been for forty-two years the text-book for all institutions for the instruction of idiots in Europe, Asia, and America. There have been some additions of processes, but none of principles.

These principles may be briefly stated as follows: Idiocy is *not* the result of deficiency or malformation of the brain or nervous system, nor, in general, is it accompanied by any serious deformity of the body; these ideas formerly, and to some extent yet, very generally entertained, have no foundation in fact; but idiocy is simply an arrest of mental development, occurring either before, at, or after birth, induced in a variety of ways, and by different causes; where there is an accompaniment of physical deformity or defect, as deaf mutism, blindness, insanity, or epilepsy, etc., etc., the cure is more difficult, but in a majority of ordinary cases the arrest of development may be overcome and the idiotic child be restored to society and life, if not to the highest intelligence, by a careful, patient, and long-continued system of physiological training.

The method seems simple enough, and in Dr. Seguin's hands was very generally successful, though in many cases from three to five years were

required for complete restoration; but in the hands of those who have attempted it without his patience, perseverance, and tact, the success has not always been so complete. There are now in Europe, Asia, the United States, and Canada about fifty of these institutions, all of them owing their existence, directly or indirectly, to his personal effort, or the instructions laid down in his books, the "*Treatise*" already mentioned, and "*Idiocy, and Its Treatment by the Physiological Method*," which supplemented the former in 1866. Since 1850 he has resided in the United States, though with occasional visits to Europe, and while at times practicing his profession, his heart was always with the idiot children, and his efforts on their behalf were incessant.

He differed from Haüy, de l'Epee, and Sicard, the founders of blind and deaf mute instructions, not only in his more profound attainments in psychology but in the fact that while they received remuneration for their labors, to which they were justly entitled, his were always rendered gratuitously, and in many instances his scanty means were expended in feeding as well as teaching his helpless pupils.

He kept himself constantly informed in regard to the progress of the institutions for the training of idiots, watching over them with the greatest of care, and suggesting, either in his public addresses or his pamphlets, new processes, and discussing physiological and psychological questions. He was gratified to find that the American institutions were more successful than those in Europe; yet it distressed him, in his later years, that the restoration to a normal development was so seldom complete. In his earlier schools his success had been so great that he believed it possible that seventy-five or eighty per cent. could be restored to society and life so far as to become respectable citizens, while a few might be found to be endowed with exceptional abilities. He found that there were no such results now. Even in the American schools, where the best results were being obtained, when there were no complications of insanity or epilepsy, and the general health of the pupils was good, there were none in which fifty per cent. were restored to a normal condition, even by many years of training.

He visited these institutions, examined carefully all their processes, saw much to praise, but somewhat also to grieve over, and returned home convinced that the highest success was only attainable by *individual* instruction and training, accompanied by the association of a few pupils with each other. He had suspected this from the date of his earliest efforts to instruct these poor children. The power of giving continued attention for a long time is so weak and the mental grasp so slight that class instruction, even in matters wholly mechanical, failed to interest or improve them.

"Why do you make that child try the same motions a hundred times a day?" asked the writer of the Doctor one day. "Because she does not make them right in ninty-nine times trying," was the gentle but characteristic answer. This constant repetition in a large class is impossible, and if

it were possible would not produce the desired result. Some of the pupils would not work. In *individual* instruction there is more of the personality of the teacher infused into the child; and its ambition is roused, feebly at first, perhaps, but in a larger degree after a time. But the teacher must be one of a thousand, perfect in courage, in tact, in patience, in perseverance. The great expense is also a serious objection, as is the length of time necessary to effect a complete restoration.

If, now, some rich man or woman would endow such a school liberally, the experiment might be made, and prove amply successful. Such is the way most teachers, even with large hearts would have reasoned; but this was never Dr. Seguin's way. If he wanted a thing done he did it himself. True, he had very little means, and his first pupils must be those who could or would pay little or nothing; but he had faith in the principles he had laid down, and he had the patience and perseverance to try it.

So he began with one pupil, and that one of no great promise. His success was wonderful. Soon he had two; then three. He needed a teacher and found it difficult to find one thoroughly adapted to the work out of the many who applied. At last a young teacher came whose tact, patience, skill in teaching, perseverance, and faith were all that could be desired. Two years later she became his wife. The Seguin Physiological School prospered under their joint efforts, and though not yet paying its way bade fair to do so ere long. But six months later Dr. Seguin died, after two weeks' illness. On his death-bed he bequeathed the school to her—he had little else to bequeath. She took up the burden and has borne it for eleven years. It is now a success, not only in the restoration of many of its pupils to a normal mental condition, but in its thorough organization and maintenance.

* * *

The following points seem to have been settled in regard to the instruction and training of children suffering from arrested physical and mental development:

The best age for the beginning of a course of training and instruction is from six to ten years. At a later age progress is much slower, and recovery less complete.

Individual instruction is necessary for the best results, because of the different phases of this condition, both mental and physical, and the numerous complications of it, such as mutism, want of coördinate action of the muscles, difficulty of articulation, habits and automatic actions acquired, tendencies to epilepsy, the difficulty of fixing the attention, etc.

At the same time, association with others similarly afflicted is, to a certain extent, necessary, in order to arouse emulation and fix attention. The progress of the pupils is greatly accelerated if they observe that those whom they instinctively recognize as unfortunate like themselves, are acquiring knowledge which they have not yet attained. This is particularly true in gymnastic and kindergarten exercises.

The large institutions though excellent in their way, cannot, in the nature of the case, accomplish as good results, nor those which will prove as satisfactory to the friends of the pupils, as individual instruction and a limited association with other pupils, because the teaching in these institutions is wholly by classes, and the dullest and least advanced pupil measures the progress of the whole class.

Private home training and the isolation of the child is still more prejudicial to its best interests, and is exceedingly wearisome and discouraging to the teacher. I speak of this from abundant observation of the cases in which it has been tried. The monotonous repetition of the same word or the same idea, often many hundreds of times, is tiresome to the child and the teacher, and the former, unaccustomed to fix the attention long on a single subject which does not interest, soon tires, becomes inattentive, and perhaps stubbornly refuses to attempt to master it.

In the Physiological School the attention is not long fixed on one topic, and when the child recurs to it it is presented in a new light; emulation, imitation, and observation are brought to his aid, and he accomplishes in two or three days what, with a private teacher, he would not have learned so well in two or three months.

The effort to develop in these children the mental, moral, and physical powers which have so long lain dormant can only prove successful when love—the love of the teacher for the child and the love awakened in the heart of the child for the teacher—is in active exercise. While nothing short of the highest qualifications of special study and general intelligence, combined with remarkable quickness and tact, and an almost infinite patience and perseverance, are indispensable to success, without this love,

with its power over both natures, the teaching will be perfunctory and there will be little progress.

In justice to the child and the instructor, *a course* of not less than *three years* should be insisted upon at the outset. Let us remember that these children are suffering from prolonged infancy, forget their physical growth, and *train them as infants.* The progress will be slow the first year—it is *necessarily so*, and should be *no cause for discouragement*—but the rapid strides subsequently made will repay the patient waiting.

* * *

During these years I have subjected every process of instruction and training to the most rigid tests before its final adoption, and now have confidence in going forward and extending such methods as have borne successfully this careful and protracted scrutiny.

Articulation receives the greatest possible attention, and the child's *personnel* is carefully improved where there is need of it.

Pupils are taught to sew, knit, crochet, use the typewriter, tell the time, make change with money, etc., etc.

Instruction in wood-work by special teacher.

While it may be too soon to determine what are the ultimate limits of possible improvement in these cases of arrested development, and whether many of them can be restored, even under these exceptionally favorable methods of instruction and training, to a condition of normal development, yet the progress made in the Seguin Physiological School during the last few years warrants the hope that in some cases at least such a consummation may be attained.

* * *

Nine years ago a boy then four and a half years of age was entered for a three-year course at this school.

He could not talk, but through the medium of a few inarticulate sounds endeavored to make his wants known to those about him. He could not comprehend any language addressed to him. He was very restless, and his only desire in life was to make a horse of everything portable. This was his sole amuse-

ment and occupation. He would have nothing to do with other children, and did not care for pictures or toys.

He had been in charge of a kindergarten teacher for several months previous to entering this school, but the teacher, unable to secure his attention or interest him, was obliged to abandon the effort to instruct him.

Though so unpromising at the outset he proved to be a most interesting pupil. Gradually an interest in objects about him was awakened, and finally he learned to read, write, tell the time, count money, play dominoes and other simple games, dress himself, cut his meat and butter his bread at table, etc.

He is now, at the age of thirteen, attending a military school where he is, in every particular, as entirely thrown upon his own resources as any pupil in the school.

I am informed by his aunt that it is difficult to puzzle him in United States history, and that he is doing well in all his studies, including Latin.

When he left this school there was still a great deal of individual training necessary to prepare him for class work; but his three-year course in this school had so thoroughly awakened the faculties that had long lain dormant—and seemed destined to remain so—that it was a comparatively easy task for a competent teacher to continue his education.

* * *

Not long ago I had the pleasure of calling upon a young woman of nineteen who commenced her training in this school at eight years of age. Until that time her mother had not thought that she could be taught to do anything. She was cared for as a baby—dressed and undressed; her food prepared at the table, after which she was able to feed herself with a spoon. She was late in walking and talking. She spoke in sentences, but her articulation was so defective that it was extremely difficult for a stranger to understand her. She was, however, ambitious to take care of herself, and to read and write as her sister did, keenly realizing her own deficiencies.

After two years of preparatory work she was taught to read and write; at the end of the third year she could sew, knit, and

crochet without assistance, though her movements were slow and somewhat awkward, while her faulty articulation had been entirely overcome.

She never attended any other school, her lessons being successfully continued at home.

This year I found her studying French and English literature. She is fond of reading, preferring books of the class her mother and sister read. By her gracious manner and unselfish disposition she has become a comfort and blessing to her family.

* * *

Still, it is to be remembered that no two cases of arrested development are alike, and that each one must be treated by itself, after a careful study of its peculiarities. Some make rapid progress at first, and having reached a certain point can go no farther, at least for a long time; others—a majority of the whole, indeed—make very little perceptible progress the first year, give greater promise the second, and eventually make such improvement as to become a comfort to their parents.

I would, then, respectfully ask the patronage of such families as have in their care any of these unfortunate children, referring them to the results of my past labors, and the thorough training I have received in this difficult but interesting department of psychology from the noble friend of humanity whose name I am proud to bear, and to the testimony of those eminent experts in psychological science to whom I am permitted to refer.

REFERENCES

(BY PERMISSION)

Lewis A. Sayre, M.D.	New York City.
E. C. Seguin, M.D.	"
E. C. Spitzka, M.D.	"
A. E. Macdonald, M.D.	"
Abraham Jacobi, M.D.	"
M. Allen Starr, M.D.	"
Landon Carter Gray, M.D.	"
Charles L. Dana, M.D.	"
Frederick Peterson, M.D.	"
Charles Jewett, M.D.	Brooklyn, N.Y.
Wm. A. Hammond, M.D.	Washington, D.C.
Rev. Wm. Lloyd,	New York City.
Rev. Robert Collyer, D.D.	"
Rev. John Hall, D.D.	"
Rev. R. S. MacArthur, D.D.	"
Rev. R. Heber Newton, D.D.	"
Rev. Gustav Gottheil, D.D.	"
Right Rev. Henry C. Potter, D.D.	"
Rev. R. S. Storrs, D.D.	Brooklyn, N.Y.

DIOCESAN HOUSE,
29 LAFAYETTE PLACE,
NEW YORK.

JUNE 15, 1891.

My Dear Madam:

I know of your work from testimonies of those whose children have been your pupils, and am glad to express my confidence that for the delicate and difficult task you have undertaken you have peculiar and preëminent qualifications; and I am, dear madam,

Sincerely yours,

H. C. POTTER.

MRS. E. M. SEGUIN.

17TH YEAR 1894-95

THE SEGUIN PHYSIOLOGICAL SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL YEAR

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 5, 1894

ENDS JUNE 23, 1895

NOTE—If the pupil is withdrawn before the close of the school year, full payment for the year will be required. Parents or guardians unwilling to agree to this requirement will kindly withdraw their applications, leaving to others any vacancies that remain.

Number of pupils limited to twenty-five.

Insane or epileptic children not admitted.

Board and Tuition, . . per annum, $1,200

Day Pupils, ... " 500

Bills payable every three months, IN ADVANCE.

Charge will be made from DATE OF ENTRANCE to END of school year.

The School remains open during the entire year. Special arrangements may be made by parents desiring to have the training of their children continued during the summer months.

ELSIE M. SEGUIN

370 CENTRE ST. ORANGE, N.J.