A university for tiny tots

BY INEZ BALLARD '31

Every year, the University of Oklahoma passes another milestone along the educational highway. For many years after its founding, the state school plodded along the educational byways of the state, switching off into detours and struggling along until it reached the end of the state's highway. Then it branched out into the great educational highway of the nation.

In recent years, the University of Oklahoma has passed many of the milestones along this great highway. The year 1928 saw the installation of the University Press, the only one in the southwest. Last year brought the new half-million-dollar library and the founding of the library science school authorized by the American Library Association, the organization of the four-year college of education offering work toward a doctor of education degree, and the four-year college of business administration. This year, the university has passed another milestone, one which has been passed by very few state schools—the organization of the university pre-school, a branch of the university high school, which will specialize in the education of the pre-school child.

Mrs. Henry Rinsland, '23 ed., '26 M. A., wife of Henry D. Rinsland, associate professor of education in the university, has been named director of the new department, and in cooperation with university officials, plans to open the school about September 20. Membership will be limited to fifteen pupils from three to five years of age, due to the fact that the school will be housed in the small cottage formerly used as a practice house for home economics students on the northeastern part of the Soonerland campus. The organization of the pre-school is especially important to the university since it will serve as a training school for students in various university departments—the college of education, the school of home economics, the department of psychology, the college of fine arts—these students will have an opportunity to combine observation work with practical experience in the pre-school.

Faced by the problem of finding experienced teachers for children of pre-school age, the university has long relied upon private pre-schools or kindergartens. Mrs. Rinsland, who combines a natural love for children with extensive training in educational methods, has been engaged in pre-school work for several years, holding classes for the small children in her own home. In recent years, she has talked and planned with university officials, hoping some day to establish the university pre-school—a school which would solve three major problems which educators face. These problems may be stated in the following questions. "What is to be done with the pre-school child?" "How can teachers be trained in pre-school work?" and "How can parents of pre-school children be helped with the problems which they face in rearing their children?"

The university pre-school, while it is not actually supported by the state and is a tuition school, answers these questions. The first is automatically answered by the organization of morning classes for pre-school children, by providing capable teachers to train them in the most impressive age, and by combining practical teaching with modern play direction which children of this age need.

The pre-school will serve as a training school for teachers, since students in other departments, especially in the college of education, will be required to observe the work of the pre-school, and may do practical teaching in its classes. Psychology students, home economics students, fine arts students—students in child leadership classes will have an opportunity of learning from actual experience how to teach smaller children.

The last problem—that of helping the parents of pre-school children successfully train their children—is solved by a bi-monthly "class for parents" which Mrs. Rinsland will conduct. In these classes, the parents of the children taking the pre-school course will meet to discuss children's problems, to learn new educational methods, and to find out what other parents are doing for their children.

Although no "cut and dried" curriculum has been planned for the pre-school, Mrs. Rinsland has outlined an elastic course which may be easily expanded to fit the needs of the growing child. Naturally, equipment assumes a greater importance in a school for very small children, and thus the cottage is furnished with small chairs and tables, sand tables, wooden blocks, small stools, complete kitchen equipment, while outside workmen have put up swings, see-saws, slides—even a trapeze. A large sand pile has been placed in the back yard. The smaller children, from three to four years of age, will spend most of their time at organized play, learning the fundamentals of painting and music, and learning how to adapt their stories for dramatization. The older children, besides following the usual pre-school program of painting, story telling, rhythm classes, clay modeling, paper cutting and dramatization, will be enrolled in a weekly cooking class. Advanced students in the school of home economics, who are also taking education classes, probably will teach this class.

VALUE OF BOOKS

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The establishment and preservation of value from the facts as presented.

libraries is the highest point to which civil-  
ization has yet reached. The public press, the church, the public school, and the library, form the four great educational forces of the modern world; standing on the frontier of progress, "they advance through seas of knowledge discovering as they go still newer continents of ignorance."

We begin today where yesterday's work ended. Banting discovers insulin and arrests the progress of a dread disease; to-  
morrow some scientist will take up the work from that point and perhaps discover a final cure. Franklin's kite string and key was the starting point of a tremen-  
dous industrial exploitation of electric-  
ity harnessed by the intelligence of men. We improve on the ideas handed down from the past; now and then a genius improves the original idea.

An author transmits to paper a series of symbols expressing emotion, or thought, or feeling which we call music; a Kreisler with a violin changes those by magic touch into something far more marvelous than ever the author had conceived.

A man who is now a great industrialist known the world over invents a horseless carriage, but suddenly discovers he has no motive power to propel it. In a peri-  
odical in the Detroit Public Library he finds a cut explaining the design of a newly discovered combustion engine. The two ideas combined represent the motor car of thirty years later.

A mere collection of books is not a library; having acquired the books and a well planned building something more is needed. The books must be made access-  
ible to the public by a skilled and highly trained staff.

With a keen appreciation of the impor-  
tance of this event to the University of Tulsa, and to the state of Oklahoma, we dedicate this building with all of its re-  
sources to the service of mankind.