My days as first university president

Told By Dr. David Ross Boyd to Dr. Roy Hadsell '04, and Betty Kirk '29

III

THE FIRST BUILDING. Do you realize what it meant to us? Can you understand the promise which this mound of brick and mortar, uppreared on the flat red sand and clay, a mile south and west of the town of Norman, gave to us? I'm afraid you cannot. You with your splendid campus of today, your steam heated buildings, your clipped borders and flower beds, your steel framed gymnasiums, will never be able to appreciate the fact that such a building meant to us then comfortable quarters, class rooms which could hold our already increasing enrollment, a library which was a rarity in the territory, and always, the opportunity for learning and more learning.

Doctor Boyd nodded his head as he dreamed again the dreams of youth and enthusiasm and eagerness for knowledge which flowered in the first building.

"The building had been started during the first year when classes were being held on the second story of the old stone building. And true to the history of the usual state institution, we found that when it was partly done we had a deficit of $19,000 which would have to be supplied before the building could be finished.

"It may be hard to get your appropriations through the legislature now but it was worse then. The territorial legislature was constantly overdrawn. It was my first experience in raising money through a legislature and the only pleasant memory I have of it is that we got the nineteen thousand.

"One of the interesting contacts I had at the time of constructing the building was with Charles H. Holcraft who had contracted to finish the inside of the building. He was one of the most positive and colorful characters I have ever known. He loved to ridicule some of the architectural freaks of Norman in the '90s and could find outlandish comparisons for them. Holcraft knew how to do everything there was to be done in finishing a building. He proved this to his advantage once with a new carpenter. Holcraft had told the man how to finish a door when the workman challenged, 'Bet ten dollars you can't do it!' Holcraft took the bet, did the work and collected."

With the completion of the proud new building began the work for which Doctor Boyd is best known and for which others should be most grateful to him. But before we tell of his "planting a university" here his pioneer activities in this line in Arkansas City, Kansas, should be described.

Doctor Boyd became superintendent of schools in Arkansas City in 1888 and remained in that position until he came to the university. This city was one of the focal points from which the run was made into Oklahoma in April of '89. Accordingly, as the days grew nearer to the twenty-second when the run was to be made into Oklahoma, the city and its outskirts were filled with the adventurers and the land hungry of a nation. Twenty thousand was the number of these strangers, all restless and many already running out of funds. It was then that Doctor Boyd suggested that the city employ the idle men and
their teams at a dollar-fifty a day to grade the school grounds and plant the much needed trees. The school board was pessimistic. The members said that it would be all right to grade the grounds but that the children would destroy the trees. In answer to this Doctor Boyd appealed to the school children and each child pledged himself to care for the trees and act as a guard. Today Arkansas City is one of the pleasantest towns in Kansas.

Accordingly, in the spring of '94 Doctor Boyd began to plan for trees for the campus and in the fall and winter of '95 and '96 they were planted. The original plan was to have a lane of trees running down the center of the street and the drives on each side. This was changed however and the present handsome trees of the campus and adjoining streets are the realization of Doctor Boyd's dream.

The citizens of Norman and their properties were also included in Doctor Boyd's plans and he offered trees free to all who would plant them. If the trees died they must be paid for.

The Oklahoma drought was near disastrous to the first saplings however for during their first spring they did not leaf. With this dreary sight to look back upon Doctor Boyd left early in July for an educational conference in Denver. After he left a heavy rain fell and when he returned a month later he describes the sight of the young trees, sprouting with foliage in the August moonlight, as the happiest of his life.

After the young trees began to grow they were threatened with borers which began to feast upon them. The woodpecker is the natural enemy of the borer and it was good news to the Norman city beautiful promoters when two families of woodpeckers came and nested in a cottonwood tree. Woodpeckers are, however, as disastrous to telephone poles as they are to borers and Mr. Render, the manager of the local telephone company offered a reward of fifty cents to every boy killing a woodpecker. When Doctor Boyd found a youth bound for prosperity near gardens. A progressive minded boy decided to solve the difficulty by bringing a bull snake to eat the rabbits and one of the tragi-comedies of the early days was when Miss Grace King, an instructor in music, was frightened by the snake. Miss King is now Mrs. James D. Maguire of Norman.

Mater Admirabilis Chapel

BY ALTHA LEAH BASS, M. A. '21

THERE are pigeons on the roof of the little chapel
That belongs to the Mother of God;
White and purple and grey and dapple,
They preen their feathers and promenade.

Come out, come out, O Mother of God! 
Come out, for the sun is bright 
And radiant as God's own face, 
And the pigeons dance to do you grace; 
Come out into the light.

They wheel in the air and they turn in the light
And they walk in stately procession,
While the Virgin near God's altar white
Makes her endless intercession.

Come out, come out, O Mother of God!
Come out, for the sky is blue;
Yes, bluer than your painted robe
Is heaven's dome above this globe,
And the pigeons dance for you.

Yet a morning will come, so dewy and fair
That the Mater Admirabilis
Will leave her pale candles and her prayer
To watch the pigeons' holy bliss.

Come out, come out, O Mother of Christ!
Come out this very day,
For the pigeons pirouette for you;
On a golden roof, under heaven's deep blue,
They dance that cannot pray.

Gems for bibliophiles

Rare books in the Oklahoma library

OUT of the east, out of Elizabethan England, out of the age of Romanticism and the age of Classicism, even from the Italy of the fifteenth century, when the finest of printing was done by hand, have come books, folios and manuscripts to grace the handsome paneled walls of the university's proudest possession, its new library.

That the library in itself is magnificent, that it is a work of art and that it has already been called "Oklahoma's crown jewel," is familiar knowledge to Soonerland. That it is to hold books which are the gems of the writers' and printers' arts will be welcome news to the scholars, bibliophiles and lovers of art in the Southwest.

To understand this collection it is best first to understand its collectors. President Bizzell has long been known for his love of books and is one of the inspirational as well as active forces in obtaining the collection. Chief credit however is due to Jesse L. Rader, '08 arts-sc. (M. A. '13), the quiet, diligent librarian who is one of the university's finest and most modest scholars and who is a true lover of books. Mr. Rader handles his volumes with understanding, his eye is practiced as he notices binding, printing, dates, paper,