IN MEMORIAM

JOSEPH LINDSEY HENDERSON

Joseph Lindsey Henderson was born in Monongalia County, West Virginia, June 27, 1869, the son of James and Mahala (Inghram) Henderson. He died in Austin, Texas, December 8, 1965. His life span thus covered a period of 96 years, 5 months and 11 days. His marriage to Katherine Dorsey of Morgantown, West Virginia, took place July 24, 1695; this date marked the beginning of a mutually helpful and harmonious relationship that endured for more than 70 years. Survivors include nephews James and Milford Henderson of California, and David Henderson of Virginia, also nieces Mrs. Mabel Anderson and Mrs. Irene Neiman, both of New York State.

Early in life young Henderson began to learn how to deal successfully with difficulties. He began his schooling the hard way at the age of five, attending a one-room school bearing the name Mountain Tea. The term was a meager four months extending from November to February. Nearly every day over hill and stream he walked the rugged two miles from his home. He graduated from Mountain Tea School in 1887, having walked five miles to take the examination set by the county superintendent. Although Dr. Henderson had a part in many graduation exercises in later years, none stood out more vividly in his memory than did this first one.

After teaching one year in the rural school from which he graduated, he entered West Virginia University in the Fall of 1888, earning a Bachelor's degree by 1894 with a Phi Beta Kappa rating. His further education was continued as circumstances permitted. Included were a summer (1905) at the University of Chicago and long sessions (1905-06 and 1911-12) at Columbia University. His Master's degree was conferred in 1906 and the Doctorate in 1912, both by Columbia University.

From 1894 to 1906, Professor Henderson was successively elementary school teacher, elementary school principal, high school principal, and superintendent in the Tyler (Texas) Public School system. He left Tyler in 1906 and came to The University of Texas as "Associate Professor of Education and Visitor of Schools." He reached the rank of full Professor in 1912. In 1917 his
title -became officially "Professor of Education and Head of the Department of the Art of Teaching." He was on modified service at The University 1939-1947 and in the emeritus category 1947-1965. Thus he was for almost 60 years officially listed as a faculty member at The University of Texas.

In these days of rapid change it is easy to underestimate the work of the early educational statesmen who gave form and organization to educational policies and institutions. Dr. Henderson was one of these statesmen, essentially a pioneer. In the public schools of Texas and in The University of Texas he was an effective leader for more than a half century. The University claimed most of his professional life, and here his name must be inscribed with those of Sutton, Ellis, Eby, Gray and their contemporaries as early builders of the College of Education.

The services Dr. Henderson rendered to The University and to education in general were so many and so rich that it is possible to mention only those that seem to be most significant. His position as Visitor of Schools enabled him to make contacts and to work with school people at all levels. No one contributed more than he to the development of high schools in Texas and, especially to their coordination with colleges and universities. He helped materially in the expansion of the high school curriculum, he was a dynamic leader in the development of the junior high school, and he made perhaps his greatest contribution in the field of professional training for high school teachers and principals.

While Dr. Henderson's first efforts as department chairman were directed toward preparing teachers for high schools, he was always aware of a responsibility devolving upon the University for the preparation of teachers for the elementary schools. For several years, summer demonstration classes in the elementary grades were directed by specialists employed by The University under Dr. Henderson's direction; then in 1927 a specialist in the field of primary and elementary education was added to the staff. His encouragement had a part in the establishment of a program leading to a degree in elementary education.
Professor Henderson's interest brought him into the student-teaching program when this part of teacher training was in its infancy. All problems involved in establishing coordination with the Austin Public Schools were met with smoothness and harmony, a situation made possible by a fine spirit of cooperation on the part of Public School personnel. But important factors in this relationship were Dr. Henderson's unfailing consideration of the interest of the schools themselves, his well-balanced judgment and his capacity for detail. His insistence upon the need for facilities for student teaching was largely instrumental in securing the building known for more than 30 years as the University High School.

While Dr. Henderson was not a prolific writer, he did leave behind him writings that are typical of the man. He was a frequent contributor to periodicals dealing with state and national educational problems. He responded generously to invitation to address educational meetings ranging from local groups and teachers' institutes to state and national associations, and it is true that the contents such addresses were often published as parts of proceedings. High school commencements, club programs, and other special occasions often had the stimulus of his forceful addresses, always couched in vigorous language and spiced with his contagious enthusiasm, often rising to genuine eloquence. In public appearances, as elsewhere, Dr. Henderson was characterized by a certain courtliness of manner, which never deserted him.

As early as 1912 Dr. Henderson published a study entitled Admission to College by Certification, which competent authorities appraised as a the most significant treatise in that field which had appeared up to that time. In 1933 he contributed, as a member of the Committee on Relations, to the Eleventh Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence. His Educational Memoirs, in reality an educational autobiography, is in a sense a collection of appraisals of educational practices of a wide variety. In 1928 he published a text for teachers bearing the self-explanatory title Materials and Methods in Middle Grades, unique
for its exposition of method in the various fields by analyzing the practices revealed in leading textbooks from the early 19th century to the time of publication.

By way of extramural services, Dr. Henderson participated in the early phases of the Conference for Education in Texas, led the way in establishing joint teachers' institutes in Texas, and was the main consultant and guide in the 1920's for the sweeping reorganization of the San Antonio Public Schools to include the junior high school. For many years he was a highly esteemed member of the University Methodist Church congregation. On the campus he found time and energy to give valuable aid to a social fraternity, which he had joined as an undergraduate. He was active in the Scholia Club, Phi Delta Kappa, and the University Club. During the First World War, he was Captain of a Faculty Company, which carried on military drill for several weeks. All of this was in addition to his work as a department chairman and as a member of other University faculties and of many University committees.

One mark of a teacher's success is the demand for his services in other institutions. Dr. Henderson had more than an ordinary share of offers of leading positions elsewhere, which his devotion to Texas and his faith in the future of its University led him to decline.

In summers, however, he taught in ten of the leading universities in the United States. These included the Universities of West Virginia, Columbia, Cornell, Chicago, California at Los Angeles, Virginia, California at Berkley, and Southern California. On semester was spent as visiting professor at the University of Illinois.

In the later years of his professional career, Dr. Henderson had opportunity to devote his energies to the congenial if arduous task of book collecting -- exploring libraries and bookshops in the older states, checking the shelves of major textbook collections against his catalogue, and searching for books to fill the existing gaps. The results of all this are shown in the growing volume and importance of the textbook collection, which perpetuates his name. This library, at present housed in Sutton Hall at The University of
Texas, ranks among the best of its kind, and its existence is one of the finest monuments to
the spirit and determination of Joseph Lindsey Henderson. His portrait now hanging on the
wall of the library will further signify to those who come later the high honor in which his
life and works were held by his contemporaries, particularly by those who, in their study
of educational problems, felt the stimulus of his personal guidance and uncompromising
standards and knew first-hand the quality of his leadership and the simple greatness of his
character.

Finally, it is fitting to end this memorial statement, which seems to be all too fragmentary
and inadequate, by referring to a certain provision in Dr. Henderson's last will and testament.
Those who knew him best often heard him say: "The University of Texas has been good to me,
and I want to show my appreciation in a tangible way." He did just that. He left to The University
the sum of two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000), the income from which is to be used to
provide "aid and assistance to worthy young men and women who would otherwise find it
difficult financially to attend The University of Texas." It is not unreasonable to assume that the
use, which he prescribed for his generous gift to The University, was related to his own
experience as a student. In his Memoirs he records his deep and abiding gratitude to a beloved
Aunt who provided the means for his college education.

Respectfully submitted

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