

A HISTORY OF THE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM IN
THE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS AT
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
VIOLET CHARLOTTE FEE

1967

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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF THE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

by Violet Charlotte Fee

This study attempts to recreate the history of the pre-school program at Michigan State University since early records, particularly of the Laboratory Pre-school, were often misplaced or lost in frequent moves.

The investigator makes use of published and microfilm reports and minutes of the State Board of Agriculture from 1922 to 1965, microfilm files of the University's newspapers and periodicals, the Lansing State Journal and the Detroit Free Press for much of the same period. Accounts of events and incidents were obtained in interviews with a number of people who had had some connections with either or both of the schools. Letters, photographs and scrapbooks were also used.

The study begins with a short history of Child Development and the pre-school movement in the United States. Merrill-Palmer School (now Merrill-Palmer Institute) opened its nursery school in 1922. Since its opening, Michigan State University students majoring in Child Development have had the opportunity for special training in that school. The

Laboratory Pre-school, or College Nursery School as it was first called, opened in 1927.

A second pre-school was begun in 1948. This was the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School established to meet the needs of the young children of married students and to give the young parents new ideas and new insights into parent-child relationships. This school received national recognition as an outstanding example of parent, teacher and community cooperation. The school continues to operate in this tradition.

Both the Michigan State University schools were designed to serve the needs of college students and the community. Both serve as centers for student research and the training of pre-school teachers. A brief account is given of the present program with groups of community children and the role of the schools and the staff in the teacher training program for Head Start.

Emphasized are the services given local, state and national groups by the schools and individual teachers. The four-fold ideal of service to child, parent, community and nation is seen as the underlying principle of the schools, in the past and at the present time.

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OF HOME ECONOMICS AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

by

Violet Charlotte Fee

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that Michigan State University is the first of the Land-Grant colleges to be established under the Morrill Act. Often overlooked, however, is the fact that the actual founding of the University goes back to February 12, 1855 when Governor Kingsley Bingham signed the law which created the Agricultural College of Michigan. The College was formally opened May 13, 1857. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided grants of land to institutions for agricultural education and the Agricultural College of Michigan was the first institution to meet the demands of the Morrill Act and to profit therefrom.

M.S.U., as it is known today, has therefore been a pioneer institution from its earliest days. However, it has not only pioneered in agriculture but it was also a pioneer in the area of Child Development.

Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit opened its Nursery School in January, 1922. The Home Economics Division of Michigan Agricultural College (as it came to be called) had a part in this new type of school from its opening days. As a result a nursery school was started at M.A.C. in 1927,

forty years ago. Since its opening in the summer of 1927 this nursery school has been moved from place to place on the campus, its records have been scattered, and another pre-school, Spartan Nursery School, has been established.

With the increase in enrollment at M.S.U., the rapid expansion of, and ensuing changes in, the campus and the ever-growing demand for pre-school experiences for children, it seemed desirable to attempt to recapture the almost forgotten past of our campus schools, their aims and purposes, and the character of their physical plants.

This study, then, is historical and descriptive in nature without hypotheses or assumptions.

Data were collected from a variety of sources. Much information was obtained from The Secretary's Annual Report to the President and the Minutes of the State Board of Agriculture from June 30, 1922 through June 30, 1965. The more important areas examined in this source included reports from the Dean of Home Economics, the Department of Buildings and Grounds and the Director of Married Housing (from August, 1946); Board action regarding appointments, resignations and changes in staff positions; action concerning building programs and miscellaneous business, and a list of gifts and grants received in the Comptroller's office.

Reports of the Head of the Department of Home Management and Child Development were available from 1955 and were a valuable source of information.

The files of the M.S.U., city and area newspapers for the period of the study were examined. Eighteen interviews ranging from twenty minutes to three hours in length were held. These were with persons who had had some contact with the schools at various times.

The material collected from these sources was incorporated in the following study.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS

The twentieth century is often referred to as "The Century of the Child." Lawrence K. Frank attributes this phrase to a Scandinavian woman philosopher, Ellen Key.¹ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Rousseau and Pestalozzi had dreamed about a new way of looking at the child and had tried to describe and make this way real to their contemporaries. Froebel, in his kindergarten, opened a new educational world for the young child. In the early years of the twentieth century John Dewey's progressive education philosophy began to be accepted by experimental schools throughout America. By the nineteen-twenties many schools were beginning to plan curricula based on children's interests and the idea of learning by doing. This period was characterized by intense interest in the pre-school child. Frank states that

In the early nineteen twenties there were only three Nursery Schools in the United States. In New York

¹Lawrence K. Frank, "The Beginnings of Child Development and Family Education in the Twentieth Century," The Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development, Vol. 8, No. 4 (October, 1962), Preprint, p. 7.

City the Harriet Johnson Nursery School, started by Lucy Sprague Mitchell, was the first step in an experimental educational program, that became the City and Country School, and a research program in the Bureau of Educational Experiments. In Boston, the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center was started in January, 1922 by Abigail Eliot . . . as a welfare agency for neglected children. . . . Also in January, 1922 the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School started as a center of child development, child rearing and early education, and for family education. At Iowa there was a pre-school unit, so called to distinguish from a nursery school, a term not used at Iowa for a number of years.²

There are some uncertainties about the above facts. It is a more commonly accepted fact that Caroline Pratt started the Play School, later known as the City and Country School, in 1913 or 1914. Lucy Sprague Mitchell published her Here and Now Story Book in 1921. In her Introduction, dated July, 1921 she pays tribute to both the City and Country School and the school run by the Bureau of Educational Experiments (Harriet Johnson's) and especially to Caroline Pratt ". . . without whom these stories would never have been dreamed of or written," and mentioned that the stories were read to the children in the laboratory school.³ It was at the Bureau of Educational Experiments where Harriet Johnson did the work which resulted in her book Children

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Here and Now Story Book (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1921), p. 71.

in the Nursery School which tells of nine years of experimental work there.⁴

John Dewey started his Laboratory School in 1896. This was incorporated into the University of Chicago in 1902. This University had a laboratory group of young children prior to 1920 but it was not called a nursery school. It would seem that there may have been a number of pre-school education groups whether designated as nursery schools or not, as early as 1920. To pinpoint exact dates and locations of nursery schools is not the purpose of this paper but these facts indicate that the "golden age of the child," those years of the nineteen-twenties, had begun.

The significant date, as far as the pre-school movement at Michigan State University is concerned, was the January, 1922 opening of the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School in Detroit. Edna Noble White, the school's first Director ". . . undertook to direct the recruitment and training of promising candidates of nursery school work, providing them with a variety of experiences at Merrill-Palmer and at other centers, which participated in this program. For many years Merrill-Palmer was the major center for preparing nursery school teachers, and continued this function until other

⁴Harriet M. Johnson, Children in the Nursery School (New York: The John Day Co., 1929).

centers became established and were ready to carry on such training."⁵

Miss White at first drew her student trainees largely from girls enrolled in home economics divisions of Michigan colleges.⁶ Michigan Agricultural College was one of the first colleges to be asked to participate in this program. This was probably due to the interest of Mary E. Sweeny who came to M.A.C. as Dean of Home Economics in December, 1920. Dean Sweeny was not only a woman of high scholastic quality ". . . other characteristics were soon evident. Enthusiasm became contagious and every department saw new lines of interest; her great energy and her insight into state and community possibilities increased the reach of M.A.C.'s facilities."⁷ Under her guidance, clinics were set up in local schools, and a cooperative arrangement between Sparrow Hospital and the College was worked out whereby staff and students were interchanged. Dean Sweeny also found time to give two lecture courses at the Detroit Teachers College.⁸

⁵Frank, "The Beginnings of Child Development," p. 26.

⁶Edna Noble White, et al., The Merrill-Palmer School, An Account of Its First Twenty Years (Detroit: Merrill-Palmer School, 1940), p. 22.

⁷Maude Gilchrist, The First Three Decades of Home Economics at Michigan State College, 1896-1926 (East Lansing, Mich.: School of Home Economics, Michigan State College, 1947), pp. 45, 46.

⁸Ibid., p. 46.

In her annual report to President David Friday on June 30, 1922, Dean Sweeny devoted much attention to the Merrill-Palmer School. In April, 1921, the State Board of Agriculture of M.A.C. and the Board of Trustees of Merrill-Palmer entered into a plan of cooperation by which six senior home economics students of high scholastic standing at M.A.C. were to study in residence at the Detroit school. Courses were to be intensive and special ones dealing with the care of young children between the ages of fifteen months and five years of age. Nutrition and feeding problems were to be studied and also the social agencies dealing with the home. For this work the Merrill-Palmer Institute furnished a residence and practice house for the girls and a staff of specialists for instructing them. Among these teachers was Dr. Helen T. Woolley. Miss Emma Henton of Gypsy Hill Training School in London was in charge of the Nursery School. (She had special permission from the English Education authorities for a leave of absence to start a nursery school in the United States.) Miss Lois Yerkes, Associate Professor of Home Economics at M.A.C., was to be sent with the girls. She was to teach home management practices and nutrition and assist in the care of the nursery school children. M.A.C. offered these courses: H.E. 31 and 32, 34 and 15. Home Care of the Child, H.E. 34, was offered Spring and Fall terms, 1921-22. It had been planned as a

cooperative course with the Merrill-Palmer School but the student demand for it was so great that it was given at Merrill-Palmer and on the College campus as well.

The girls were to help with daily health inspection, weekly weighing and measuring under a physician's direction and were to observe groups for three hours daily with special observations of specific children for various purposes, help plan and prepare the food and sit at table with the children. The report also mentioned special lectures by experts in field and laboratory work and sociology.⁹

During the first term six outstanding senior girls went to Merrill-Palmer. They were Maurine Dutt (Barkley), Dorothy Yakeley (Copland), Lillian Grimm (Frazer), Mary Ann Gilchrist, Belle Farley (Murray) and Mary Emily Ranny (White-law). These were the first girls to go to Merrill-Palmer from any college. Miss Mary Ann Gilchrist recalled that the girls thought it was a wonderful and worthwhile experience. They have kept up a "Round Robin Letter" since that time. She had received such a letter early in April, 1967. May 27, 1961, they held a reunion at Merrill-Palmer. She recalled that Edna Noble White and Helen T. Woolley were among their

⁹Mary E. Sweeny, "Annual Report to President David Friday," Sixty-first Annual Report of the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture of the State of Michigan (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan Agricultural College, Vol. 61, June 30, 1922), pp. 83 ff.

teachers. The house Merrill-Palmer provided for them was unfurnished and the girls helped to furnish it. Miss Henton was in charge of the practical work in the Nursery School. Professor Yerkes lived with them and supervised their work. Each week two girls served as cooks, two as hostesses and two worked in the Nursery School.¹⁰ Mrs. Margaret Plant Thorpe felt her time at Merrill-Palmer in 1925 was most rewarding.¹¹

Dean Sweeny resigned in the summer of 1922 to return for a time to the University of Kentucky. From there she went to Merrill-Palmer to become Assistant Director. Several girls from M.A.C. remember having her as a teacher there.

These events are important because they provide the background for M.A.C.'s nursery school program which was still in the future.

Louise H. Campbell, Acting Dean of Home Economics, gave other glimpses of the role the Merrill-Palmer training played at M.A.C. In her report for June 30, 1923 she stated, "The students [attending Merrill-Palmer] are beginning to

¹⁰ Interview with Miss Mary Ann Gilchrist, April 12, 1967.

¹¹ Interview with Mrs. Margaret Plant Thorpe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Plant, M.S.U. Librarian, April 11, 1967.

appreciate the real worth of such a course. Students express a desire for more psychology to better prepare them for the more advanced work at Merrill-Palmer." In this report the new Home Economics building was mentioned and the hope expressed that upon its completion, the course in Home Care of the Child, H.E. 34, might be developed so as to compare favorably with those courses at Merrill-Palmer. During this year Merrill-Palmer also took over Professor Yerkes' salary and her name was no longer on the M.A.C. faculty list.¹²

Miss Jean Krueger was appointed Dean of Home Economics in 1923. The Holcad (predecessor of The Michigan State News), for Tuesday, October 2, 1923 carried an item telling of a reception to be given in her honor by Mrs. H. H. Halladay, wife of the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture and Mrs. Robert S. Shaw, wife of the President.¹³

The new Home Economics building was formally opened on Tuesday evening, February 5, 1924 during Farmer's Week. It was called "a gay party with music by the college orchestra, punch and wafers in the Assembly Hall." Dean Krueger commented on this occasion that, "Columbia has a

¹²Louise H. Campbell, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 62 (June 30, 1923), p. 79.

¹³The Holcad (East Lansing, Mich.), October 2, 1923.

building nearly as good but with more expensive equipment but with that exception I do not think there is another building superior to the one we have in the United States."¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid., February 8, 1924.

CHAPTER III

THE LABORATORY PRE-SCHOOL

The fine new Home Economics building contained a suite of rooms on the third floor which had been planned as a Child Care unit. "It had a large playroom for the children, a kitchen for the preparation of their food and a medical examination room."¹ These rooms were at the southwest corner of the building. This Child Care unit may have been done with suggestions from Merrill-Palmer. When it was decided to add the suite, changes had to be made in the original plans during the summer. Mrs. Dora Stockman, a member of the State Board of Agriculture at the time may have helped in the planning of the suite. Since the building was already under construction, the suite was put near the elevator on the third floor.

It is also probable that the suite was not designed primarily as a nursery school but, as the name indicates, as a child care laboratory where girls training to become teachers of Home Economics and Family Life in high school

¹Gilchrist, First Three Decades of Home Economics, p. 55.

might get some actual experience in working with young children and observe their growth and behavior.² There had been very little research done in the areas of child development and nutrition. The term Child Development research was not used until 1924 or 1925 when the National Research Council changed the name of its committee on Child Psychology to the Committee on Child Development. The first University Child Development Center was started at Teachers College, Columbia University in 1925.³

The Smith-Hughes Act which furnished money for Home Economics teachers or supervisors in qualified high schools had increased the number of students majoring in Home Economics in colleges. The Home Economics Division at M.A.C. was a leader in this training program. However, no Smith-Hughes money was given for nursery school teachers in the schools. The child care suite at M.A.C. was to serve as a training center for the high school teachers but in the minds of many of the staff there was a second purpose, namely to provide surroundings and care which would ensure the proper development of the children involved.⁴

²Interview with Dr. Marie Dye, Dean Emeritus, School of Home Economics, Michigan State University, November 9, 1966.

³Frank, The Beginnings of Child Development, p. 10.

⁴Interview with Dr. Marie Dye, November 9, 1966.

Dean Krueger stressed the need for strong courses in Child Study and Parent Education and reaffirmed the value of the Merrill-Palmer experience to the students attending Merrill-Palmer. She said, "This [experience] is insufficient. The suite of rooms planned for this purpose should be equipped, instructors provided and courses in child care developed in the near future."⁵ Two years later she said, "The incorporation of a course in Child Study to include a nursery school laboratory, and an additional practice house space are greatly needed."⁶

The State Board of Agriculture apparently acted favorably on this request since the following year Dean Krueger reported, "Catherine Miller, a graduate student and Fellow of the Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit, was appointed to develop and teach the new course in Child Study."⁷ "In connection with the course in Child Study . . . a nursery school caring for eighteen children between the ages of eighteen months and five years was opened during the summer session. This course has been elected by every Senior Home

⁵Krueger, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 64 (June 30, 1925), p. 70.

⁶Ibid., Vol. 66, June 30, 1927, p. 83.

⁷Ibid., Vol. 67, June 30, 1928, p. 116.

Economics student and is considered one of the most valuable in the Division."⁸

The Nursery School opened in June, 1927 with sixteen children enrolled instead of the eighteen expected. The first child to be enrolled was Jack Stewart, the son of Mr. Glenn O. Stewart, the Director of Alumni Relations at M.S.C. (the name of the college had been changed in May, 1925) and Mrs. Stewart. Jack's aunt, Mabel Rogers (Huggins) was the supervising teacher of Home Economics at the high school at the time.

Jack was in the nursery school the first summer and all of the following year. In a letter written April 15, 1967, Mrs. Stewart wrote that Jack called himself the "Dean of the Nursery School." He was one of the children who had suits made for him in Anna Bayha's clothing class. At the close of the term the children modelled the garments made for them. His aunt remembered a time when Jack became frightened and came running to her.⁹

Before the opening day of the school Miss Miller made some changes in the rooms. She remembers that all

⁸Ibid., p. 120.

⁹Letter from Fanny L. Stewart, April 15, 1967. Enclosed was a snapshot of Jack taken on his fifth birthday. He was wearing a white sailor suit made for him by a student in Miss Bayha's class.

the lovely cupboard doors were closed by a catch knob with a tongue which had to be turned in a certain way before the doors could be opened. The doors were removed and gay printed percale curtains were hung in their place.

Although there was a kitchen in the Nursery School Suite, in the beginning the children's lunch was prepared in the Women's Building next door. It was the job of Mrs. Sever, for many years the maid in the Food Laboratory, to carry the food up to the Nursery School. Later the cooking was done in the kitchen in the suite. At the beginning of the World War II years, the early 1940's, the cook was the wife of an M.S.C. professor. She was a Merrill-Palmer and a Cornell University graduate. She had a daughter in the Nursery School and was soon to have another child. One day the daughter said, "My brother's bag is all packed." When asked, "Is he going away?" she replied, "No, he isn't going away. He hasn't come yet." This was Dorothy Davis.¹⁰ Dr. Madison Kuhn reports another amusing incident. It was told that one of the children from the Nursery School was having her hair cut by a barber who asked if she went to kindergarten. "No," she replied. "I go to college."¹¹ Catherine

¹⁰Interview with Catherine Miller Buell, first teacher in the College Nursery School, April 3, 1967.

¹¹Madison Kuhn, Michigan State--The First Hundred Years (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1955), p. 292.

Miller Buell thinks this may have been Katherine Cox.

The daily program included a play period which permitted free choice of dramatic play materials, a variety of art media, toys and games. There were stories and songs and whenever possible a period of outdoor play followed by a carefully planned lunch, after which the children napped on canvas cots. These were stored on the higher shelves and had to be set up during the lunch period. From the start students in Home Economics not only observed the children but assisted in the daily routine.

The college paper carried a small news item stating, "The Nursery School opened this summer has been very popular with the girls under the guidance of Miss Catherine Miller from Merrill-Palmer. The course consists of work in the laboratory with the children and lectures by Miss Miller."¹² The course was H.E. 437--a lecture series for Child Development Seniors only. The students were required to do four hours of observation at a time. An attempt was made to have them participate in the lunch hour and also to observe from three to four o'clock when the children had finished their naps.¹³

¹²The Michigan State News (formerly The Holcad), Friday, January 20, 1928.

¹³Interview with Mrs. Catherine Miller Buell, October 24, 1966.

An article in a local paper some months later gave an account of the day's program, some sample menus, an idea of the teaching techniques used at mealtime, "We eat everything on our plates at Nursery School," and described the playroom. Mention was made of the little rose colored tables, the tiny curtains of pretty colors and the pets, Oswald, the guinea pig; Patsy, the canary; Blackie and Whitie, the white rats and the goldfish. Excellent pictures of children and teachers were included.¹⁴

Originally it had been the plan that a nurse from the Health Service would come to examine the children and work with the students but this plan was not realized. Instead, Grace Harvey, now Mrs. G. Dewey MacDonald, assumed this responsibility. Miss Harvey was a graduate of the five year nursing course offered by the Home Economics Division in cooperation with Sparrow Hospital. She was an Instructor at Sparrow Hospital but she also came out to M.S.C. to teach some courses in the care of the sick in the Home Economics Department. Nurses in training in Pediatrics at Sparrow Hospital spent a month on the campus and did the morning inspection. In exchange Miss Miller went to Sparrow Hospital to give lectures in Pediatrics.¹⁵

¹⁴Lansing State Journal, Wednesday, February 6, 1929, p. 2.

¹⁵Interview with Mrs. Catherine Miller Buell, April 3, 1967.

Participation in the radio program given by the Home Economics Division, "The Home-maker's Hour" was expected of the teacher in charge of the nursery school. She assumed responsibility for at least six of these programs a year. In the early days the WKAR studios were in the "Tower" of the Home Economics building and the talks were given over a remote control microphone in one of the offices. The Home Economics staff chose topics without a coordinator for several years. After a time a coordinator did plan the programs with the staff.¹⁶ It is only in very recent years that these talks have been discontinued. When Mrs. Patricia Dorn Adams took over the radio program she did the talks herself but occasionally called on the staff to speak as specialists in their fields.¹⁷

From this job description it is quite evident that the Nursery School had been designed to serve several purposes: (1) to serve as a laboratory in which students in Home Economics at M.S.C. could observe young children, study their needs, watch their development and learn good techniques for working with the young child; (2) to provide a rich and varied educational experience for the children themselves under the guidance of well trained teachers; (3) to cooperate

¹⁶Interview with Mrs. Catherine Miller Buell, October 24, 1966.

¹⁷Interview with Mrs. Vera Borosage, April 11, 1967.

with the families of the children and with the community at large in a program of parental and adult education in the field of child rearing; and (4) in later years when a graduate program in Child Development had been started, to serve as a research laboratory for an increasing number of graduate students.

It is also evident that the Nursery School teacher carried a very heavy work load. For several years her only professional help was a one-half time graduate assistant or two quarter-time graduate assistants. The first person to be so designated in the State Board of Agriculture Reports was Annabelle McRae, a graduate of M.S.C. Home Economics Division who ". . . was appointed as Fellow to give half-time assistance to the Nursery School."¹⁸

There was no playground in the original building plans, so one had to be added. The only space which was available was at the northeast corner of the Home Economics building on the site of the present parking lot. This was not an ideal place. It was noisy and there was little sunshine. Toys had to be taken up and down on the elevator since they were stored on the third floor. Those who remember the old elevator will recall that it was often

¹⁸Krueger, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 68 (June 30, 1929), p. 120.

out-of-order. This meant long climbs for children and staff. Former Dean Mary Sweeny, back on campus for a program, sharply scolded Miss Miller for permitting such a playground to be constructed. When Miss Miller replied, "Dr. Sweeny, you should know that fences are not allowed to spoil the architectural effects," Dr. Sweeny "laughed merrily and forgave her."¹⁹

In 1939 the playground at the northeast corner of the Home Economics building was still being used. A graduate student who worked in the Nursery School remembers when an accident on Grand River Avenue made it impossible to use the playground for a time. A cattle truck overturned nearby and the cattle were penned in the play yard until other transportation could be found.²⁰

Dean Krueger left in September of 1929 and Dr. Dye, who had joined the staff in 1922 to organize a department of research and graduate study was appointed Dean, effective September 1, 1929. In her report to the President, June 30, 1934, Dean Dye wrote, "One of the greatest needs of the Division [Home Economics] is for additional work in Child Development. All students should receive more training

¹⁹Interview with Mrs. Catherine Miller Buell, April 3, 1967.

²⁰Interview with Dorothy Hopson Wells, a graduate of M.S.U., now a faculty wife, April 14, 1967.

in the field and a major should be offered in it. The Division should be training nursery school teachers."²¹

In January, 1935, the Department of Home Management and Child Development was formed and Dr. Irma Gross was appointed Head of the new department.²²

Enrollment continued to increase. Dean Dye, in her annual report to the State Board of Agriculture on June 30, 1936 said, "Three graduate students have been studying for the Master's degree this year. The work of the department is being curtailed because of lack of laboratory space. An additional home management house and a larger laboratory for the course in Child Development are urgent needs."²³ (It is possible that Helen Louise Ewing, one of the three students, was the first person to receive a Master's degree in Child Development. She received her degree August 1, 1941.)

"When enrollment [in the College of Home Economics] passed 700 in 1937 a wing was added to the Home Economics building and the Nursery School was moved to a separate

²¹Dean Marie E. Dye, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 73 (June 30, 1934), p. 112.

²²Ibid., Vol. 74, p. 26.

²³Ibid., Vol. 75, p. 150. On May 2, 1967 Dr. Dye reported that eighty-five Masters degrees in Child Development had been granted to date.

house to provide classrooms and laboratory space for the students."²⁴

Plans had been made to move the Nursery School into the brick house now known as Cowles House in 1937 but Governor Murphy was given permission to use that house as his official residence during his year as Governor. In the late spring or early summer of 1938 the Nursery School did move into the white frame house which stood between the Home Economics building and the Union building. This was the house formerly used by Secretary Addison Makepeace Brown as his residence but which had in more recent years been used as the headquarters of the Economics Department.

It was possible to accommodate two groups of children with twelve in each group. The older group used the second floor; the younger were on the first floor. Miss Miller taught the younger group, was over-all supervisor and taught classes in the Department of Child Development. Miss Ruth Wagner from Davenport, Iowa was the first full-time laboratory assistant. She came in 1937 and she was in charge of the older children. Miss Elsie Gabel from Hood College took her place in 1941-42.

Bathrooms in the Brown house were fitted with small

²⁴Fiftieth Anniversary--School of Home Economics--
1896-1946 (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College,
 n.d.) p. 5.

size plumbing fixtures and a fenced-in play yard was to be added later to the east side of the house. Furnishings, equipment and toys were moved from the Home Economics building suite. After a time one important new piece of equipment was added. This was a one-way vision screen built at the College Carpentry Shop to Miss Miller's specifications. This made it possible for college students and parents to observe the children without disrupting any activity.

To the rabbits and other pets which had been moved from the former suite, a kid was added. He was fed from a bottle in the play yard much to the amusement of college students passing by. He remained at the Nursery School until he grew up and his horns grew long enough to be a possible source of danger although he was a loving pet. One of the large bathtubs had been left in the downstairs bathroom and the teachers and children occasionally bathed the goat in that tub. At night he was locked inside the house. The school cook, who became very fond of him made him a hat and coat which he seemed to enjoy wearing. Early one morning Professor Mary Lewis was seen riding in a taxicab on campus accompanied by a goat wearing a hat and coat. They were on their way to visit the children at the Foster Street School in Lansing. When it was decided that he must "graduate" from school the cook took him to her home.

Soon after moving into the Brown house Miss Miller helped Architect Calder plan a nursery school unit which

it was estimated would cost approximately \$25,000 to build and which contained many good up-to-date ideas for a nursery school. This was in 1939 or 1940, perhaps. There is no record of any action by the State Board of Agriculture on such a plan.

During the World War II years the children in the Nursery School saw many groups of young soldiers marching to classes and "Hup! Two! Three! Four!" became a part of their play. Wartime brought serious problems to the Nursery School staff. With the great demand for workers in the war plants and the high wages offered there it became almost impossible to keep a cook for the Nursery School. Catherine Miller Buell recalls that for a time she cooked lunch for nearly fifty persons (children, college students and staff) and taught a late morning class in Child Development.

Wartime also brought additional community duties for the staff. In 1942 a Day Care Program for children of workers in the warplants was begun. The Child Development staff at M.S.C. not only helped in the planning of the program but also taught group refresher courses for volunteer nursery school teachers in the program. This writer had a graduate reading course with Mrs. Buell in preparation for such teaching. The staff gave lectures and demonstrations and Dean Dye, Amy Newberry and Catherine Miller Buell wrote a manual on nutrition for use in the

program. At some time during this period a training course was given for mothers who would be working in the newly organized Community Nursery in Lansing. There was always a six weeks summer nursery school session.²⁵

The last years of World War II were tense and anxious ones for the nation. They were also unsettling years for the Nursery School. Many changes in staff were made. Catherine Miller Buell resigned in September, 1944 after having been Head of the Nursery School for seventeen years. Elsie Gabel, teacher of the older group of children resigned December 31, 1944. Dr. Dorothy Mummery became the new head teacher in the fall of 1944 but she stayed only one year.

Dean Dye reported on June 30, 1946 that there had been an entirely new staff for the Nursery School that year with Assistant Professor Shirley Newsom in charge of the Nursery School and Miss Bernice Borgman and Miss Ruth Highberger as instructors. All had come in September, 1945.²⁶ The new instructors were in charge of an all-day nursery group and taught a freshman class in Child Development.

²⁵The above information was obtained in three interviews with Mrs. Catherine Miller Buell, October 24, 1966, April 3, 1967 and April 13, 1967.

²⁶Dye, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 85 (June 30, 1946), p. 114.

On the M.S.C. campus veterans began to return to college classes and a new building program was begun. A new wing was to be added to the Union building which would necessitate the razing of the Brown house. New quarters had to be found for the Nursery School. In the minutes of the meeting of the State Board of Agriculture for April 21, 1949 the wrecking of the old frame house between the Union and Home Economics building was approved.

In 1947 the Nursery School was moved to another white frame house, the Thomas Gunson house. Some people remember it as the house with the greenhouse near the lovely Beal Gardens. Once more plumbing fixtures had to be replaced and structural changes made. The writer had visited the Gunsons many times in earlier years. It was always a delightful place to visit but it did not seem to be a particularly desirable facility for a nursery school.

Dr. Borgman described the school here as having a playroom and bathroom facilities on each floor, a kitchen, staff room and storage space. Two groups of children were enrolled for all-day sessions.²⁷ The surrounding grounds provided exciting nature experiences any season of the year.²⁸

²⁷Interview with Dr. Bernice Borgman, Professor in Home Management and Child Development at M.S.U., April 3, 1967.

²⁸Miss Ruth Newman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chace Newman, gave the writer a picture of the Gunson house from the M.A.C. Heliostat for 1896.

The year 1947 brought another change which was to have an effect upon the pre-school program at M.S.C. This was the planning of what was first called the Veterans' Nursery School; this was to open early in 1948. This school received a great deal of publicity and during the next years the College Nursery School came to be an almost forgotten venture as far as the general public was concerned. However, for interested parents, the school was still a source of both anxiety and happiness. It had been said for years that a child had to be registered at birth in order to get in the College Nursery School. This continued to be true in the post-war period. One mother produced a copy of the "Application Card for Nursery School, Michigan State College." Her daughter had been born March 9, 1946, the date of the application was March 19, 1946 and the entrance date desired was Fall, 1948 and the child had been admitted in 1948. The mother recalled that there had been a program of home visiting in which college students came to the home to bathe the baby.²⁹

Another mother mentioned the lovely gardens, the big wooden puzzles and large wooden building blocks. She had three children in the Nursery School. After waiting

²⁹Interview with Mrs. Doris Fitzpatrick, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chace Newman, April 9, 1967.

a long time for the first one to be admitted she registered the second before his birth. She recalled that the school seemed to be too crowded and that parents did little visiting because students needed the space for class observation. Dr. Gross visited the school occasionally. Families were asked to bring menus of family meals for the week in order that the school lunch might be fitted to the children's food needs.³⁰

A student doing her practice teaching during the summer session of 1953 remembered a number of things about the house and the program. Many people were uncertain as to whether there had been a fenced play yard. She was certain there had been one. She remembered there were fine hardwood floors and that little round tables were used for eating. While there were two teaching units during the regular school year there was only one small group of perhaps eight children for this particular six week session. The children stayed for lunch but went home after lunch. There was a rest period on cots before lunch. The food was cooked in the school kitchen. The school cook did not like liver so whenever liver was on the menu the cook found an unusual or "fancy" way to prepare it. During the lunch

³⁰ Interview with Mrs. Joseph Evans, teacher and M.S.U. faculty wife, April 11, 1967.

period the students kept records of what each child ate.³¹

Professor Mary Lewis, a former staff member of the College of Home Economics sent a four page letter containing much information about the Gunson house days of the Nursery School. The text of this letter is given in full in Appendix B.

That this move to the Gunson house was considered a temporary one seems evident from statements made by Dean Dye in her annual report. She said, "A place for the Nursery School must be provided as the International Center is started."³² Apparently this was a building plan which was not realized and the school was not moved. On June 30, 1950 Dean Dye says, "The present old and inadequate Nursery School building is soon to be torn down to provide space for the new college library and thus a new one is essential. The new Nursery School should be planned for a larger number of children with ample play space both inside and out-of-doors, and also for the observation and participation of more college students."³³

³¹Interview with Mrs. Betty Tuttle, former graduate student, now on Laboratory Pre-School staff, April 13, 1967.

³²Dye, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 87 (June 30, 1948), p. 240.

³³Ibid., Vol. 89 (June 30, 1950), p. 221.

A year later the Dean says,

The present nursery school is located in an old house that is too small to provide a place for the children and at the same time observation space for the students. Larger, fireproof facilities planned to fit the needs of a good nursery school must be provided for the training of majors in child development and for experience for all home economics students. This additional space for nursery school, laboratory for research, graduate students, classes and offices can be met by a new Home Economics Building or a large addition to the present one.³⁴

Shirley Newsom resigned as Head of the Nursery School in 1952 and Assistant Professor Elmer Knowles, the first man to join the faculty of the School of Home Economics was put in charge of the Nursery School. "The old Nursery School is being torn down and, thus, a new building is urgently needed."³⁵

On September 18, 1953 the State Board of Agriculture approved "The moving of the nursery school for the balance of the year to one section of the Home Management Building [finished in the academic year of 1947-1948] where the cost will be the construction of the fence. This is necessary because of the construction of the new library." Minutes for November 20, 1953 note that the fencing had been done.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., Vol. 90 (June 30, 1951), p. 222.

³⁵Ibid., Vol. 92 (June 30, 1953), pp. 181, 183.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. 93 (June 30, 1954), pp. 97, 95.

On April 2, 1954 the State Board of Agriculture approved the following recommendations:

- a. the operation of all Nursery Schools shall be under the School of Home Economics and costs of such operation shall be charged to their budget. This relieves Married Housing of the charge for the operation of Spartan Nursery;
- b. the staff of Spartan Nursery School be put on a ten month basis at the appropriate time and if it is necessary to operate a Nursery School during the summer session for the training of teachers the cost shall be charged to the Summer School budget;
- c. the fees be increased as follows:
 - 1. College Nursery School morning sessions (with lunch) \$35 per term
 - 2. College Nursery School afternoon session (no lunch) \$25 per term
 - 3. Spartan Nursery School (no meals provided, also some assistance is provided by parents) \$12.50 per term
- d. in order to reduce the costs of the program the staff in the Spartan Nursery School should be reduced to two full-time members employed on a ten month basis.³⁷

On January 3, 1952 the State Board of Agriculture had approved a half-day program at the College Nursery School with fees at \$25 per term for the morning group and \$15 per term for the afternoon group.³⁸ When this action was put into effect the all-day sessions of the College Nursery School ended. This change had been requested by the College of Home Economics as a means of increasing the hours available for student observation.

³⁷Ibid., p. 92.

³⁸Ibid., Vol. 91 (June 30, 1952), p. 78.

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The actual moving of the Nursery School into Unit IV of the Home Management building took place in December, 1953. In the new quarters a Toddlers Group was added. Children from eighteen to twenty-four months came with their mothers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The mothers had a discussion group with a staff member in a room apart from the playroom while the children were observed as they played. This group was later discontinued because it required the time of two staff members and did not seem as useful with college classes as a program with older children might be.³⁹

A parent education course was taught in alternate years. This in time came to be combined with another course and developed into the course now known as Nursery School and Parent Education.

"In 1955 the name of the College Nursery School was changed to the Laboratory Pre-School."⁴⁰ The new name is attributed to Dr. Borgman.

The move into the Home Management Residence which had been considered temporary in 1953 proved to be a permanent one. Dean Thelma Porter said in her report to the President in 1956 that, "The present quarters of the Laboratory Pre-School are entirely inadequate. . . . Some

³⁹Interview with Dr. Borgman, April 3, 1957.

⁴⁰Dr. Irma Gross, "Report to the Dean for 1955-1956," in the files of the School of Home Economics, M.S.U.

planning has been done for an adequate pre-school facility by staff members."⁴¹

Dr. Gross retired as Head of the Department of Home Management and Child Development in 1958. Dr. Alice Thorpe became the new department head. In 1963 Dean (Assistant) Jeanette Lee's report to the President contained the statement that "Unit III of the Home Management Residence will be converted to a third Laboratory pre-school for the academic year of 1963-1964."⁴² This provided room for one more group of twelve to fifteen children.

The following year, 1964, Betty Garlick was made Director of both Spartan Nursery School and the Laboratory Pre-school. Mariella Aikman was made Associate Director of Spartan and Vera Borosage was made Associate Director of the Laboratory Pre-school. Dr. Thorpe in her report to the Dean described the many activities of the staff: serving on state and national Committees, giving talks to area groups, and acting as workshop and conference leaders, engaged in many worthwhile activities.⁴³

⁴¹Dean Thelma Porter, "Report to the President" in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 96 (June 30, 1956), pp. 220-221.

⁴²Dean Jeanette Lee, "Report to the President," in Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University. The minutes are no longer printed but are on microfilm, un-paged.

⁴³Dr. Alice Thorpe, "Annual Report to the Dean," 1964-1965, un-paged.

Since the starting of Spartan Nursery School the staff had worked in both of the nursery schools. Now with Miss Garlick as Director of the two nursery schools there was even a closer tie between them.

Dr. Thorpe reported to Dean Lee in 1966, "The staff has given outstanding leadership at both the state and national levels in programs of early childhood education."⁴⁴

In June, 1965, the Department of Home Management and Child Development became involved in two six-day training programs in cooperation with Continuing Education, received an Office of Economic Opportunity grant for an eight week Headstart program at Spartan Nursery School and held a special workshop on pre-school education for the culturally deprived. This was the beginning of a new program, the work of the future.

⁴⁴Ibid., 1965-1966.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPARTAN COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

"When the cold winds begin to sweep down the broad thumb of Michigan this fall they are going to blow some new ideas into the country. The ideas emanate from Michigan State College, East Lansing, where a remarkable experiment in community living is reaching fruition with the opening of the fall term."¹ The experiment referred to by Richard Wilcox and illustrated by beautiful colored photographs was destined to produce a considerable volume of newspaper and journal articles.

At the end of World War II in September, 1945 veterans began returning to campuses all over the nation. To meet the critical need for housing of these students many of whom were married and had young families, M.S.C. began constructing a temporary village of trailers, barrack type buildings and Quonset huts. Streets were laid out and given names, facilities such as water, light and heat were provided and a new Department of Married Housing was set up.

¹ Richard Wilcox, "Spartan Wives," Ladies Home Journal, Vol. 64 (October, 1947), pp. 43-49.

As the number of persons living in these temporary quarters continued to increase it became evident that some kind of a program had to be planned which would meet the educational needs of the mothers and pre-school age children who were living in these sometimes inadequate quarters.

In 1946 a group of the wives in Spartan City as the area was first called formed an organization known as Spartan Wives. The group began a program designed to make improvements in living quarters, to set up interest study groups and to provide for recreational needs of the citizens of this crowded area. In July, 1946 they began planning a cooperative nursery school for the children. Esther Anson, from the Department of Adult Education became interested in the activities of Spartan Wives, was made their sponsor and worked with them. She was very much interested in the idea of the nursery school. The Michigan State News commented that Miss Anson ". . . worked with the [Spartan] wives on policy, operation and practice. Columbia University has studied the project and is now using it as a model in their graduate course in Nursery Education."²

The Spartan Wives presented the idea to President Hannah and he sent it to the State Board of Agriculture for

²Michigan State News (East Lansing), January 15, 1948 (a clipping with day and page removed; date written in, in the files of Spartan Nursery School).

consideration. The project was approved after a time, a site decided upon and \$30,000 allocated for setting up the school. A Faculty Advisory Committee with Dean Lloyd C. Emmons as chairman was instrumental in getting a grant of \$8000 from the Kellogg Foundation with the understanding that local groups would assume much of the financial responsibility for the project. An appeal was made to local Posts of the American Legion since the Legion at the national level had drawn up what was considered to be an excellent program of child development and welfare. The local and area Legion groups became very much involved in the nursery school project.³

The Nursery School Committee reports listed Emery Foster as Chairman of the Faculty Nursery School operations committee and stated that he worked with the architects and nursery school specialists on building plans. In the early reports the site of the school was listed as one wing of the draft-horse barn. The building would be made available if the operating expenses for two years could be obtained. On December 1, 1947 the Kellogg Foundation gave the \$8000 mentioned above.⁴

³Richard C. Thompson, "Legion Sponsored Nursery School is Something for the Kids--and Parents," a typewritten paper, not dated, in the files of the Spartan Nursery School. It was not possible to locate a reference to the \$30,000 in the minutes of the State Board of Agriculture.

⁴Mrs. Robert Fisher, Reports of the Nursery School Committee, in the files of Spartan Nursery School

The Michigan State News for November 26, 1947 in a first page article said, "A former farm building will be remodeled." This same article mentioned that, "A spot survey made in December, 1946, showed that 99% of the mothers were eager to give time and energy to the project."

The barn location proved to be unsuitable and the State Board of Agriculture made available two Quonset huts which were set up as a single unit at the corner of Willow Lane and Birch Road. Jean Bowers wrote, "The arrival of the Quonset huts yesterday marks the beginning of the final stage in building operations on a new nursery for children of M.S.C. students."⁵

These early days were filled with doubts and disappointments and sometimes with despair when, for example, the basement in which toys and equipment had been stored was flooded and much refinishing had to be done. These days were also days of remarkable and dedicated involvement on the part of many families. There are, in the nursery school files, many newspaper clippings and photographs showing these work days.

Before the Quonsets were put in place parents had been collecting toys and equipment. Many work sessions in which old equipment was repaired or new equipment made were

⁵Michigan State News, Friday, February 27, 1948, p. 1.

held. Ray Lamphear, Director of Married Housing, was the chief resource and supplies person for the workshop groups. He has in his files lists of materials he turned over to the group. Emery Foster also helped to provide equipment. The College Nursery School staff served as consultants and furnished patterns for toys and equipment which could be made by the parents.

An article written by Gwen Matthew described these work sessions, many of which took place in the basement of the College Nursery School in the evenings under the guidance of Miss Ruth Highberger of the Home Management and Child Development staff and Miss Elizabeth Page who had been employed as the director of the nursery school and instructor in Home Management and Child Development. Equipment made before the school actually opened included ironing boards, a stove and cradle, twelve large wooden puzzles, four wooden trains each complete with engine, box cars and caboose, a barn and a toy garage. Aprons for the children to wear while painting or playing with clay, and doll layettes had been made by the mothers.⁶ Among the families who attended these first work shops were the George Bissetts, the Walter Carletons, the Robert Fishers, the Stanley Fredericksons, the Homer Higbees, the Greg Lills, the Orval Morrisons and the Robert Snyders.

⁶State Journal, Sunday, April 18, 1948, Second Section, p. 1.

Miss Page, with a B.S. degree from Cornell University, an M.A. degree from Columbia University, some additional work at the Merrill-Palmer Institute and five years of teaching experience, had been interviewed by the Spartan Wives before she was appointed by the State Board of Agriculture at its January 15th meeting. (Her appointment was effective as of February 1, 1948.) The Spartan Wives approval of her may have been a factor in their fine spirit of cooperation. Their confidence in her seems to have been warranted. Miss Page, whom the writer met on a rainy April 1, 1967, nineteen years later, was still a dedicated and deeply interested friend of the Spartan Nursery School.

Miss Page helped with the workshops, led Spartan Wives' interest group discussions, kept excellent records of activities, served as a liaison person between parents and area groups, attended many meetings, made a number of speeches, and taught nursery school children and supervised parent participation six days a week.⁷

Newspaper and journal articles written in the period from 1947 to 1949 give an interesting picture of the school. An unusual feature of the interior was the center room which served as a library for both parents and children, sewing corner and a social center for the mothers who brought their

⁷Interview with Miss Elizabeth Page, first Director of Spartan Cooperative Nursery School, April 1, 1967.

sewing machines and sewed together, discussed child training or personal problems, read, or worked on school projects.

Miss Esther Anson had arranged with the Michigan State Library to have a lending library and there was a weekly Library Day for parents and children. These are somewhat unique features but they tended to strengthen loyalty to the school.

There were two large playrooms, locker rooms, two observation areas equippped with one-way vision windows, storage space, a kitchenette, offices and both child-size and adult bathrooms. The decorative scheme was pink and green. There were low windows and an asphalt tile floor. Radiant heating had been installed which did not function properly in the beginning, making the rooms too warm. This was corrected later.

There was a home-made jungle gym, a sand box, other climbing equipment and swings. The play yard was enclosed by a white wide-picket fence. There was a storage garage for toys with a ramp for small drivers.⁸

The school officially opened on Monday, April 26, 1948. Only one-half of the building was used. There was not enough equipment available for the other half. The staff

⁸Esther Anson, "Report on Spartan Nursery School for Students' Children, M.S.C. 1946-1948." A type-written manuscript in the files of Spartan Nursery School.

consisted of Miss Page and two mothers, Mrs. Walter Carleton and Mrs. Robert Snyder as temporary assistants. An Open House was held on Sunday, May 30, 1948.⁹

Eligibility of children between two and one-half and five years to attend the new school was based upon whether at least one parent was enrolled at M.S.C. for twelve credits, or more, per term. Children were eligible to attend the summer terms if one parent had been at M.S.C. for three consecutive terms. By September, 1948, it was expected that 120 children, divided into eight groups could be enrolled for three half-day sessions per week. The hours were from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and the Michigan State News for Thursday, April 29, 1948 gave the fee as being twenty-five cents per morning for each child. In the spring term, 1948, there were two groups of fifteen or sixteen children each attending three days a week.

By that summer, according to a Spartan Village News letter, the Pre-Fab-Gab, three more groups had been added, including a two year old and a pre-kindergarten group. Also two new staff members had been added. "Mrs. Betty Poulton comes to East Lansing after a year of graduate work at Merrill-Palmer and Miss Virginia Atkinson has been a

⁹ Interview with Miss Page, April 1, 1967.

director of a nursery school in Aurora, Illinois."¹⁰ The minutes of the State Board of Agriculture confirmed these appointments and stated that their salary was to be paid by Kellogg Foundation funds.¹¹ By the fall quarter of 1948 six groups of children were enrolled.

The basic principles of the school, then, as now were : to provide a learning experience for parents and children in a rich and varied program, and to give the parents new ideas and new insights into their parent-child relationships. Fathers as well as mothers worked as assistants at the school.

Miss Page said in a news interview, "Special interests and abilities of the parents will be drawn upon to enrich the program of the school. There will be a fine opportunity for parents to make observations from rooms built especially for this purpose so that the children cannot see them. . . . Mothers who have secretarial experience may help with the school office work. Those with nursing experience may help Mrs. Lillie Ford, Public Health Nurse who will cooperate with the nursery in its health program."¹²

¹⁰Pre-Fab-Gab, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer of 1948). This was a mimeographed newsletter--in the files of Spartan Nursery School.

¹¹"Annual Report," State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 87 (June 30, 1948), p. 54.

¹²State Journal, Sunday, April 18, 1948, Second Section, p. 1.

The Spartan Village area was near many of the college barns and trips were often made to see the animals there. The first trip to be taken by the new school was one to the M.S.C. Piggery. Trips around the area were truly cooperative. Wheel toy equipment was scarce so neighborhood trips were planned with the parents well ahead of time. On trip days children who could do so brought tri-cycles, wagons and other rideable toys from home so that each child might have a "vehicle."¹³

The Kellogg Foundation grant of \$8000, mentioned above, had been given with the stipulation that local groups must be involved in the financing of this project. Miss Anson, through her extension work and great interest in the new school, succeeded in finding sponsoring groups. The Nursery School Committee also approached individuals and groups for financial aid, used equipment and even physical labor.

Since the school was first called the "Veteran's Nursery School" the American Legion became interested in it and over the first five years many Posts and Auxiliaries of the Legion contributed funds, toys (four wagons and a swing set were specifically mentioned), twenty-eight pairs of monk's cloth curtains and two pairs of printed draperies,

¹³ Interview with Miss Page, April 1, 1967.

and other items. Post No. 402 gave \$250 for paving a wheel-toy play area. The William Riker Johnson Post 205 provided the money for a new Cable-Nelson spinet piano. Other groups such as the Gold Star Mothers gave funds to be used for scholarships or materials. Individuals contributed money and materials. In May, 1947 Spartan Wives and the American Legion sold poppies on the M.S.C. campus and part of the proceeds (\$500) was donated to the Spartan Nursery School fund. In July, 1950 the M.S.C. Campus Chest gave \$400 to the school fund.

Spartan Wives and the mothers of the nursery school children carried out many money-making projects: magazine sales, bake sales, puppet shows, the making and selling of clothes trees, and managed a re-sale center for used clothing and furniture. This was known as "The Treasure Chest."¹⁴

In her report to the President in 1951 Dean Dye says, "The Spartan Nursery School has had a busy year because of the increased responsibility of the parents for raising funds for its support. The interest and contributions of the parents were unusually fine. . . . The school has served as an observation center for a larger group of college students."¹⁵ In 1955 Spartan Nursery School became a center

¹⁴This information was collected from many sources: the minutes of the State Board of Agriculture from 1946 through 1953, Michigan State News, Committee reports and school papers.

¹⁵Dye, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 90 (June 30, 1951), p. 221.

for student teaching as well as for observation.

Miss Page told a story illustrative of the cooperative aspects of the school. The William Riker Johnson Post of the American Legion offered funds to purchase a piano. Miss Page took several of the mothers and some of the children to a music store and together they chose a Cable-Nelson spinet piano. It cost \$495.¹⁶

The American Legion Posts gave the children and parents an exciting ride on the big black 40 and 8 engine on Sunday, October 3, 1948.¹⁷

This venture in cooperative living and cooperative education received national publicity. The previously mentioned article in the Ladies Home Journal, probably the most colorful of all the articles published, was only one of many. The Detroit Free Press featured the Spartan Nursery School in its Graphic Section on Sunday, December 12, 1948 in an article "College is a Family Affair."¹⁸ There was also an article in the Journal of Home Economics

¹⁶ Interview with Miss Page, April 1, 1967.

¹⁷ M.S.C. Staff Bulletin, October 1, 1948. Unpaged.

¹⁸ Detroit Free Press, Sunday, December 12, 1948, Graphic Section pp. 18-23.

which mentioned this project.¹⁹

Columbia University accepted a study of this project as a doctoral dissertation. This study was written by Esther Anson, the former Advisor of Spartan Wives. In her more than five hundred page report she described the project in detail. The first year summary report written by nursery staff and parents with the assistance of the director of housing and Miss Anson contained the following statement which tends to verify the \$30,000 cost figure cited above: "Michigan State College built, at a cost of \$26,000 the Nursery School starting with two Quonsets--a gift from the Federal Government. Actual construction started in January, 1948. The building was provided with radiant heat in the playrooms."²⁰

In the early years, important visitors came to spend some time at the Nursery School. Among them were Niilo Kotilainen, deputy director of child welfare in Finland and a representative of the Finnish United Nations delegation who spent a day in June, 1948 at Spartan Nursery School and

¹⁹Virginia Messenger, "Veterans' Families Go to School," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 42, No. 6 (1950), pp. 431-434.

²⁰Esther Anson, "'Spartan Wives' The Development of an Educational Program for the Wives and Children of Students at Michigan State College" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), p. 474.

made colored films and slides to be used in Finnish and United Nations child welfare work.²¹

Mrs. Mingsin Hsueh, United Nations representative, visited the school as part of her nation-wide tour of American child welfare institutions.²²

A visitor who was quite different was Carrol, one of the leading milk producing cows of M.S.C. She, too, went to nursery school.²³

In August, 1949 Miss Betty Garlick was appointed Instructor in Home Management and Child Development and teacher in the Spartan Nursery School. She replaced Virginia Atkinson who resigned on August 16, 1949.²⁴ Betty Poulton resigned as of July 19, 1950 to be married. Betty Lee Norris replaced her in September.²⁵ Betty Poulton later became the wife of Clark Moustakas.

²¹State Journal, Wednesday, September 29, 1948, a clipping with page number missing, in the Spartan Nursery School files.

²²Ibid., Tuesday, October 5, 1948, clipping with page number missing, in the Spartan Nursery School files.

²³Michigan State News, Wednesday, July 14, 1948, p. 1.

²⁴Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 89 (June 30, 1950), p. 54.

²⁵Ibid., Vol. 90 (June 30, 1950), p. 59.

As mentioned previously in this paper the State Board of Agriculture in 1954 placed all nursery schools under the School of Home Economics, the staff was put on a ten months basis and, as an economy measure, the staff was reduced from three to two teachers.²⁶

Dean Dye reported to the President on June 30, 1955, "It is with regret that the resignation of Miss Elizabeth Page, teacher in charge of Spartan Nursery School, was accepted. She started the school and was responsible for much of its success. Miss Betty Garlick, a member of the Spartan Nursery School staff will replace her."²⁷ Miss Page's resignation became effective August 31, 1955. It was fortunate that Miss Garlick, who had been a teacher at the school since 1949, was appointed teacher in charge. Continuity in the policies and program of the school was thereby made possible. Miss Mariella Aikman also joined the staff as teacher in 1955.

In 1964 Miss Garlick was made Director of both the Laboratory Pre-school and Spartan Nursery School with Miss Aikman as Associate Director at Spartan and Mrs. Borosage at the Laboratory Pre-school. Dr. Borgman continued to work closely with both schools.

²⁶Ibid., Vol. 93 (June 30, 1954), p. 92.

²⁷Dye, "Report to the President," in Annual Report--State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 94 (June 30, 1955), p. 200.

Under the new Director each school continued to operate as a separate unit but with close cooperation between the units. Staff was shared and programs were considered from a broader point of view.

The two schools have had many things in common over the years. The aim of each has been to provide an environment which offered rich and meaningful experiences to the individual child by means of which he might develop his own unique personality. A second shared aim has been to provide learning experiences for college students engaged in practice teaching and observation. A third aim has been to offer help to parents and to groups at the state and national levels.

There have been, perhaps, some differences in emphases in the program. Laboratory Pre-school was begun not primarily as a nursery school but, as its name suggests, as a laboratory in which college students might observe the behavior and development of children and have practical training in working with them. Spartan was set up to meet the needs of a group of young student parents. Its emphasis was on parent education through actual participation in all aspects of the school program. Today, it also serves as a laboratory for college students.

Both schools and the staff have made significant contributions in the area of childhood education. Dr. Thorpe, in her reports to the Dean of the College of Home

Economics, listed many activities of the staff. These included leadership in organizations and on committees-local, state and national, consultantships at other nursery schools and to the national government, article writing, parent and student counseling and many other services.²⁸

The Lansing Day Care Center had started in 1942 as a locally operated center under the Board of Social Agencies. In 1943, when Lanham Act funds were made available the Day Care Center was put under the Lansing Board of Education and Lanham Act funds were used for its operation. Staff members in Child Development and in the college nursery schools continued to act as consultants, program resource people, and leaders of teacher training sessions.²⁹

In 1965 when the need to train teachers for Head Start and Community Programs appeared, the staff, as on previous occasions, managed to assume responsibility for the additional work.

²⁸Dr. Alice Thorpe, "Report to the Dean of the College of Home Economics," 1958-1965.

²⁹Miss Eunice Winans of the Michigan Department of Social Services offered this information, April 30, 1967.

CHAPTER V

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

Taking part in pioneer movements is not new to M.S.U. It began as a pioneer of the Land-Grant colleges; its Home Economics students took part in a pioneer educational experiment with Merrill-Palmer in 1922; it had a unique cooperative nursery school in operation shortly after the end of World War II; and in 1964 the Department of Home Management and Child Development began a program of pre-school education which is part of a new pioneer movement in education in the United States.

The historian may not predict. Since this new chapter in the history of the pre-school program at M.S.U. is still being written one can only mention what has happened to date.

This new movement begins, perhaps, in the fall of 1964 when members of the Child Development staff were asked to serve on panels and planning sessions for a United States government sponsored program in pre-school education. From their work on these panels the staff members became much concerned about the programs being planned for children

from underprivileged homes.¹

In November, 1965 in an address before the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges at Minneapolis, President John A. Hannah had publicly stated that such universities must assume a part in the struggle to improve the conditions of American life. He stressed the need to train teachers for working in slum schools and not just for the suburbs as we have done in the past.

Some of us [Child Development staff] felt we should accept the challenge and at the end of fall term began to make plans to set up such a group of children so that we might better understand them. During the winter term 1965, staff members visited programs, read literature and, with the cooperation of the Dean of the College of Home Economics, Jeanette Lee, and our Department Chairman Dr. Alice Thorpe, as well as public school and community persons, planned for a group of 15 children to enter our Child Development laboratories in spring term, 1965. As the first message of plans for Project Head Start was made known to the public, our group of Community Children were ready to begin their first school experience.

Our interest in accepting this challenge was not alone unselfish. We felt that our students without a doubt would be working with children from these homes and, having had this experience,² might be better prepared for their future work.

Since 1965 M.S.U. has been carrying on a training program for teachers and aides for Head Start. Two-week orientation programs were offered in the summers. In the

¹ Interview with Miss Betty Garlick, Director of pre-schools at M.S.U., April 12, 1967.

² Ibid., April 12, 1967.



fall of 1966 M.S.U. was chosen as the Regional Training Center for Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. Eight-week training sessions were planned. The trainees come in groups of twenty-two to twenty-five. They attend lectures and discussions, visit homes, go on field trips, observe the children in the nursery schools and participate in the school program.³ The challenge has been accepted. New needs are being met.

³Both Miss Garlick and Dr. Borgman mentioned this program.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sites, and Dates, of the Laboratory Pre-School

Home Economics Building	June, 1927 to Summer, 1938
Secretary Brown's House	Summer, 1938 to Fall, 1947
Thomas Gunson House	Fall, 1947 to December, 1953
Home Management House, Unit IV	December, 1953 to present
Home Management House, Unit III (added)	Fall, 1963 to present

APPENDIX B

Letter from Professor Mary Lewis, April 12, 1967

MISS MARY LEWIS
8437 LA MESA BLVD., APT. B
LA MESA, CALIF. 92041

April 12, 1967.

Dear Mrs. Fee.

In response to your letter of April 7, concerning changes in the M.S.U. Nursery School program during the period the program was housed in the "Garrison House". My contact with the Nursery School program was limited to that of having responsibility for the students taking my course in the Physical Growth of Children. Prepare and observe the children eat one lunch weekly during the period of time they were taking my course. Therefore my contributions from memory only, will be limited. The period in the Garrison House was the first time there was provided for the children a reasonably adequate place for out-of-door play. Prior to that time the play area had been exclusively

limited. There was also a nice front porch ⁽²⁾
 where the children could play. The house
 was wooden, old, and with a narrow hall
 and stair to the second floor. The children
 had very small play rooms - one on the
 first floor and one on the second floor -
 The downstairs play room also served as
 the dining room - and when the tables
 were set up the children were moved to
 a small room for stories and a quiet
 period before lunch. A bathroom with
 a couple of low wash bowls and toilets
 was installed on both floors. All of
 the Nursery school staff were on the
 alert constantly for two safety hazards -
 one - the possibility of a fire - and the
 second - the possibility of a child straying
 down to the near-by river. The gardens
 were a source of joy to the children and
 they often took walks there and learned
 about the birds, the ducks and squirrels.
 In these respects the environment was much

③

MISS MARY LEWIS
8437 LA MESA BLVD., APT. B
LA MESA, CALIF. 92041

in experiences with nature than earlier. The teachers in charge at that time were Miss Shirley Newcomb, Miss Bernice Bergman and Miss Highberger. It was during this period that Miss Bergman went to Cornell University to study for her doctorate. She was replaced by Dr. Elmer Knowles. Miss Highberger went to Iowa City to study for her doctorate and a younger-less experienced teacher replaced her. I cannot recall her name.

Relative to the philosophy of the teachers concerning the educational value of the noon meal. The children were permitted to serve themselves at the serving table and carry their plates to their tables. Prior to this time the teachers had served the first plates and put them at the children's

plates - then the children helped themselves to second servings. Well, there were some skills as one would expect - and the amount of food insisted increased as the children were not good judges of amounts they would eat, also their coordination in dishing out portions caused them to sometimes spoon out very large or very small amounts of food on to their plates. The teacher also planned menus which included foods not served the nursery school children, at earlier periods in the program, such as highly seasoned baloney, minis, and also ham. Also hot-dogs and richer desserts. Their idea was that the children, when at home, ate with their parents who included these foods in their family meals and that these foods were no more indigestible for the pre-school age at nursery school than at home. In other words, there was emphasized the "social" experience of eating together.

I hope these few comments may be of some value to you. Sincerely,
Mary Levens

OCT 23 1978

FEB 08 1988

JUN 1 1988

JUN 11 1988

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EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

M.A. 1967--Problem

Fee, Violet Charlotte

A History of the Pre-School Program
in the College of Home Economics at
Michigan State University

Fee, Violet Charlotte

A History of the Pre-School Program
M.A. 1967 FCE

GARY FEE, VIOLET CHARLOTTE

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