

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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Seventeenth Biennial Report

OF THE

Superintendent

OF THE

Nebraska Institution for Feeble-  
Minded Youth

BEATRICE, NEBRASKA

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To the Governor and the Board of Commissioners  
of State Institutions

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For the Biennium Ending  
November 30, 1918

## NEBRASKA INSTITUTION FOR FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH

## RESIDENT OFFICERS

D. G. GRIFFITHS, M. D.....Superintendent  
 J. A. BURFORD, M. D.....Assistant Superintendent and Physician  
 LOUIS WERNER.....Steward  
 SUSAN H. RALEY.....Matron  
 C. P. UNDERWOOD.....Bookkeeper  
 BLANCHE WATERMAN.....Stenographer

## SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

RUTH MITTELSTEAD, *Principal*

GERTRUDE GALLMAN                      CLARA HOLLINGSWORTH  
 JACK O'DONNELL                      MARGARET APPEGET

## DEPARTMENT HEADS

WILLIAM POLLOCK.....Boys' Supervisor  
 EADA POLLOCK.....Girls' Supervisor  
 W. C. ALVORD.....Supervisor of Boys' Hospital  
 NELLIE ALVORD.....Supervisor of Girls' Hospital  
 LAURIE M. L. VANCE.....Sewing Department  
 EFFIE HUNT.....In Charge of Laundry  
 C. A. BUCKNELL.....Chief Engineer  
 D. J. DENNEHY.....Carpenter  
 A. J. KAMINSKI.....Painter

NEBRASKA INSTITUTION FOR FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH,  
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA

*To his Excellency, Honorable Keith Neville, Governor, and  
to the Honorable Members of the Board of Commis-  
sioners of State Institutions, Henry Gerdes, Silas  
A. Holcomb, and Eugene O. Mayfield.*

*Gentlemen:*

I have the honor, as well as the privilege, to submit herewith the seventeenth biennial report of the Nebraska Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth, covering the period from December 1, 1916, to December 1, 1918.

During this period we have made but one change in our official family. Dr. Emma Lawrence resigned and Dr. J. A. Burford was appointed by the Board as assistant superintendent and physician. During this period we passed through the greatest crisis the world has ever known and have been confronted by many difficulties. I wish here to thank the Board of Commissioners for its kind consideration at all times and to thank the officers and employees for their loyal support.

We have a new building under course of construction at this time. It was the intention of the legislature to have a building costing \$40,000 and an addition to our hospital building, which was badly needed, costing \$10,000. However, on account of the high cost of material, labor, etc., it was found that the building could not be erected for \$40,000. It was, therefore, decided by the Board that the money appropriated for the addition to the hospital be used in addition to that appropriated for the new girls' cottage and erect a new cottage for girls.

We have endeavored to keep the institution in a good state of repair, having painted the interior of several wards and rooms, and the exterior of the stone cottage, also, repaired the floors. We have equipped with window strips, the windows and doors in the administration building, boys' cot-

tage No. 1, and the girls' brick cottage. The grounds and roads have been continually improved. New tables have been made for part of the dining rooms. A flag pole was erected. A new steam main was laid from the engine room to the girls' stone cottage. New fences have been erected and a new hog house with cement base built with old material already at hand. A new porch has been erected on the south of the administration building, also, a top to the front porch on the west of the administration building. We have kept everything at least up to standard and improved the condition in many instances where it could be done without too much expense.

✓ Regarding our school work there is a great diversity of opinion as to why this can be called a school and whether or not every child committed to us goes to school. We endeavor at this time to manage the institution in such a way as to have some school work for each child. For the boys we have our occupational pursuits,—farming, garden work, work in the greenhouse, laundry, carpenter shop, brush making, shoe making and mattress making; and for the girls, laundry work, sewing, dining room, kitchen and all domestic arts. Besides these, we have a school building which is devoted entirely to special school work.

The number of pupils doing grade work is thirty-five, the number in the industrial department is forty-five, the number in the gymnasium is forty, and the number in the music department is twenty-five. The average attendance in all departments is eighty-five. The ages of the school children are from seven to twenty-five. The children in the grade rooms spend two-thirds of their time at reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography and history. Those in the kindergarten department do paper cutting, drawing, and construction work, such as paper weaving and paper folding, and learn to read and write. Those who are able to read use the books from the library and report on them to their teacher, who uses every possible means to encourage the reading of good books. A great deal of time is spent with music, both vocal and instrumental, as the school chil-

dren provide the entertainment for the other children at the institution. The orchestra, consisting of nine pieces, rehearses for one hour four days a week to provide music for the dance held on Monday night, the picture show on Thursday night, and for all special occasions, such as Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. The choir of twenty-five voices leads the singing for the chapel service. The music is rehearsed during school time. Special programs are given at Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's Birthday, Easter and the closing day of school. These programs consist of singing, folk and aesthetic dancing, and recitations, which are very often in the form of a cantata. Private lessons are given in dancing and in vocal and instrumental music for solo work.

The work carried on in the gymnasium is drilling and dancing, that is, the children learn the steps of the dances. Aside from this, they play basket ball, captain ball, arch ball, and many bean bag games. Indian clubs and dumb bells are used for drilling and the children are able to give exercises to the accompaniment of music.

The work of the industrial department consists of art embroidery, crocheting of all kinds, basketry, knitting, handloom work, and common sewing stitches. There are forty industrial students this year. Fifteen girls who are not skilful in hand work, spend one-half hour each day hemming tea-towels, which are used in the institution. Twenty-five girls have learned to crochet and half of that number embroider well. About ten girls have been taught to do basketweaving, but because of the high price of all materials used in basketry, that work has been discontinued for the present. Five girls, who knit well, were allowed to take part of their time knitting sweaters for the local Red Cross Society. A number of the girls in this department work in the sewing room part of the day, making garments for the other children. The girls also help in the making of the costumes used in the programs given by the school children. The industrial room supplies the institution with all the necessary scarfs, tray cloths, center pieces, pillows, etc. The articles

made during the year are taken, first, to the State Fair and later, to the County Fair, with the school exhibit. The bulk of the articles is sold at these places.

The State Library Commission furnishes the books and magazines for the institution. At present the library contains over nine hundred and fifty books. Over one hundred and fifty of that number are adult books, one hundred and seventy-five are boys' books, one hundred and fifty are girls' books, one hundred and twenty-five are books concerning history and nature study, two hundred are children's books, and one hundred are picture books. In addition to the books, we are furnished the following magazines: American Boy, American Magazine, Bird Lore, Country Gentleman, Garden Magazine, Everybody's, Independent, Ladies' Home Journal, Literary Digest, Modern Priscilla, Needlecraft, Pictorial Review, Popular Mechanics, Primary Education, St. Nicholas, Saturday Evening Post, Woman's Home Companion, and Youth's Companion.

Every Saturday books are issued to the children who care to read. The average number of books issued during the month is two hundred. Of that number about fifty are read by employees, seventy-five by inmates, who read adult books, thirty-five by those who read children's books, and forty picture books are taken out by those who cannot read.

The school children make use of the library in connection with their grade work. About every two weeks, some of the boys who do not go to school spend an evening reading in the library. The children realize the value of the books and are careful in using them. They consider it a privilege to be permitted to have access to the library.

As stated in my last biennial report, I would again bring to your minds that it is imperative for the state to enter into a building program at this institution, in order to take care of all of this class of unfortunates and have them properly segregated. It is an economical procedure on the part of the state, as it has been well shown that a great number of our crimes are caused by the irresponsibility of the individuals committing them.

It is true that some of the states are taking up extensively the matter of social and juvenile research work, Ohio being one of the foremost at this time. They have what they term the bureau of Juvenile Research and its director, H. H. Goddard, says, "States have wasted untold wealth trying to reform its hardened criminal and to cure the chronic diseases." It is a fact that a very high percentage of the troublesome children of our communities are actually lacking in mentality and most of them are truly feeble-minded, the rest dull and backward. Feeble-mindedness, as you know, becomes a very vital problem to everyone engaged in sociological and reformatory work, and institutions of all kinds, such as our public schools, are becoming more and more interested in this subject and are demanding that they have trained teachers, who are able to sort out those who are the most feeble-minded and see that they are placed in their proper environment and protected from themselves as well as protect society at the same time.

I do not want to be termed a dreamer, but I believe the time is fast approaching when everyone of our progressive schools in the state will have what might be termed an opportunity room where the children, who are backward and show lack of mentality, may be sought out and specially trained. Then, in turn, when they are found to be truly feeble-minded, they should be committed to an institution for the feeble-minded. It is necessary to have teachers who have had special training along these lines for these special rooms.

It must be remembered that our inmates are all irresponsible and must be watched and cared for. They must be continually guided from paths of temptation into paths of right living and thought. The feeble-minded, with very few exceptions, are the most contented, the most easily managed, and the happiest persons imaginable. They are easily led in the right path, but also just as easily led in the wrong. They cannot be reformed because they do not have the mentality to overcome temptation.