

ON JULY 1, Joseph A. Brandt, '21, assumed the directorship of Princeton University Press.

Ten years ago, Brandt, then fresh from the news room and city editorship of the *Tulsa Tribune*, came to the University of Oklahoma to direct the operations of what was then known as the "Print Shop." He was to serve also as first editor of *The Sooner Magazine*. President W.B. Bizzell had given much thought to the inauguration of a scholarly press on the campus, and within the year Brandt had, with the president's encouragement, embarked upon a publishing program which automatically resulted in the demise of the "Print Shop" and brought into being the University of Oklahoma Press.

Young, energetic, and able, Brandt had been accustomed to the extensive duties of a newspaperman, and it was not unnatural that he should find himself engaged in a half dozen activities, any one of which might have required full-time attention.

He supervised the operations of the Printing Division of the Press, edited *The Sooner Magazine*, shaped and started publishing the first list of books ever issued under the auspices of the University, lent encouragement to a host of eager young writers (including George Milburn and John Joseph Mathews), and still had time to indulge his hobby of rose gardening.

Brandt's first essay in book publishing at the Press was appropriately enough the initial volume in the *Folk-Say* Series, which was edited by B.A. Botkin of the English faculty and sponsored by the Oklahoma Folklore Society. He had recognized the importance of a regional press in the Southwest, and *Folk-Say* was, by coincidence, the first broad approach to the new regionalism.

Quite aside from the fact that there was then no other institutional press in this area, there lay at hand an abundance of rich materials for a new undertaking with a regional purpose. Oklahoma, particularly, presented an opportunity and a challenge, for in its past it had been a confluence of civilizations—of Indians, early Spaniards, pioneering whites—and in its present it was witnessing the growth of a lusty new industrialism, rapid social and economic change, and the appearance of a society curious about itself and its past.

IN ORDER to relate the Oklahoma and Southwestern public more intimately to its historical and social environment, Brandt projected studies in history, folklore, the civilization of the American Indian, the Spanish Southwest, and the oil industry. And authors were ready with manuscripts, for Oklahomans had already established a reputation for literary productiveness.

The Press was yet young and in formative stage when in 1932 the Book-of-the-Month club selected John Joseph Mathews' *Wah'Kon-Tah: The Osage and the White Man's Road*, which quickly sold 50,000

Portrait of a Sooner-- Joe Brandt



Joseph A. Brandt, '21, whose brilliant ten-year record of building the University of Oklahoma Press has led him to new responsibilities and greater opportunities as director of the Princeton University Press.

copies and placed the Publishing Division of the University in the national spotlight. It was the first book published by a university press to be chosen by a major book club, a distinction which holds even today, as neither the Book-of-the-Month Club nor the Literary Guild has since selected an institutional publication.

Gradually, the objectives which Brandt had set in the beginning became realities as more and more regional books were issued by the Press and a national audience received them, somewhat curiously at first but later with enthusiasm and appreciation. The regional idea was new and it was vital.

Today there are 85 titles in the Press list, covering a wide area of scholarship and appealing not only to specialists but to general readers throughout the country. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the Oklahoma list is its reception outside the area for which it was primarily intended. Readers elsewhere have now a new perspective of the Southwest and a better conception of its place in historical and social America. The *Civilization of the*

American Indian Series, now numbering seventeen volumes, forms the largest division of the Press list. It is perhaps the most ambitious undertaking of its kind in the country, and it has brought an unusual amount of attention to Oklahoma and to the University.

The vitality of the regional publishing approach is an established fact. What of the man who conceived it and saw it through its first ten years?

Brandt has always had remarkable ability in getting things done. Nothing seems to fall outside his field of interest. As an undergraduate, between 1917 and 1921, he organized the University's first Young Republicans Club, established a local fraternity along literary lines (it later became a chapter of Delta Tau Delta), drilled with the O.T.C. during the war years, edited the *Oklahoma Daily*, gained membership in Phi Beta Kappa, and won a Rhodes Scholarship.

At Oxford he took three degrees and made a study of the political and constitutional history of Modern Spain from which he later developed the book, *Toward the New Spain*, published in 1932 by the University of Chicago Press. Always more attracted to books and conversation than to outdoor sports, Brandt characteristically discovered the possibilities of rowing in his freshman year at Oxford and saw two full seasons as a member of the Lincoln College crew.

He is ceaselessly active. Ideas fly out from him like sparks from a fast-spinning emery wheel. He is seen to best advantage as he works at a typewriter, which he hammers furiously, like a city editor two minutes before deadline. He is inseparable from his pipes, of which he has several dozens.

BRANDT writes notably well, in a style as different as everything else about him. What he has to say takes flight, avoiding ground travel and its detours in favor of the swiftest and most direct route. His writing reveals his reading habits, which include the literatures of German, French, and Spanish as well as English. Brandt's favorite among writers is Arnold Bennett, although he only recently encountered his work. Once the discovery was made, he read everything Bennett had written.

He has a contagious enthusiasm which has a way of projecting people into work they had never before considered, not infrequently raising them above their usual capabilities. He is interested in all kinds of problems, which he solves in clouds of pipe smoke. It is curious but true that he has never been able to recognize an obstacle—which is another way of saying that he is an idealist.

When all of this has been told, the final truth may as well be out of the bag. Joe Brandt is not a Sooner, but a Hoosier, born in Seymour, Indiana, July 26, 1899. He has been Oklahoma's adopted son since 1911.

By Savoie Lottinville