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WESTVIEW

A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA
VOLUME 7 NUMBER 4 SUMMER 1988 \$3.00



WESTERN OKLAHOMA STARS

FOREWORD

The numbers that appear on the front cover of our journal always seem like an elusive dream. This time, we see *Volume 7, No. 4*, which means that our next numbers will be *Volume 8, No. 1*. Is it possible that we are going into our eighth year with our Fall, 1988 issue? As the trite saying has it, "Time passes fast when you're having fun."

Most of the time, being Editor of WESTVIEW is fun. Some issues, of course, like this one, are put together under trying circumstances (on which no elaboration is presently needed). Nevertheless, it's a good feeling to be finished and to have the notion that what you have prepared for the Art Director will be of interest to many readers.

After all, we have found some interesting stars this time, some of whom a few of us would never have known about. That's one reason we continue to want most of our writers to be free-lance contributors. Thus, we can get a greater variety of topics.

We are happy that interest in WESTVIEW continues to build and that writers whom we have and haven't known previously fill our files with their offerings.

LOOKING AHEAD,

Leroy Thomas

LEROY THOMAS
Editor

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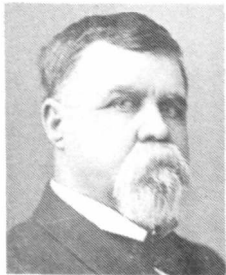
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VOLUME 7
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COMMERCIAL ART STUDENT,
SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Stonewall, Nettie, and the Land

By Darryl Tippens



Angeanette and Stonewall Jackson Tippens in 1937.

Drive west of Clinton twenty-five miles, beyond Foss Lake, and you come to a land that is hard but attractive. You see low, red hills, sometimes barren, but resting among them are fertile wheat fields and rich pastures where the Blue Stem grass used to grow shoulder high, and where the buffalo resting spots can still be seen a hundred years after the great herds vanished. When I survey this familiar land, I sense the past and the ways this soil has given my family more than sustenance. In many ways it has made us what we are.

The Tippens family came to Custer County in 1898 from Alabama, by way of Texas. Two hardy people — Stonewall Jackson Tippens (also known as Uncle Jack or S. J.) and his wife Angeanette Pendleton Tippens (or Nettie) — traveled to Oklahoma Territory where they faced the usual lot of settlers: hardship, sacrifice, and loss, but also success. More than most, they took to the land and it took to them.

I have often wondered about the connection between “character” and “place,” between a family and the land that nourishes it. As I consider my family roots in Custer County, I am certain there is a mysterious connection between the land and my people. The story of Uncle Jack and Nettie confirms this for me. Their record is a parable of the mysterious tie between the land and its inhabitants.

Stonewall or Uncle Jack possessed considerable talent. He was enterprising, tenacious, and inventive; and his gifts were matched by Nettie’s energy, versatility, and hard work. And both

had an uncommon portion of stoic endurance. While many settlers came and went — driven out by drought, flood, blight, and cycles of economic disaster — Uncle Jack and Nettie endured, living out their last years on the beloved homestead. Nettie died in 1939 from the ravages of diabetes, and Uncle Jack was almost 101 years old when he passed away in 1963.

“Stonewall” was an appropriate name for the man who came from Athens, Alabama, to settle 160 acres in this untamed land. As a youth, I used to wonder at his great age, and I was thrilled by the story of the scar on the back of his head sustained during the Civil War when he was thrown out of the path of Union horsemen. He was born August 2, 1862, in the throes of the war. His father, Alcy, a soldier under General Stonewall Jackson, named his son in honor of the brilliant Confederate commander. In many ways the name was appropriate, for both men were known to be resourceful, religious, and sternly disciplined.

Like many single young men after the Civil War, Stonewall struck out for freedom, first settling in north central Texas, at Celeste and Farmersville. In 1889, perhaps at a church “singing school” where he taught harmony and sight-singing, he met his lovely bride Angeanette. Eight years later and with two daughters (two sons having died in infancy), the couple decided prospects would be better in the lands about to be opened in Oklahoma Territory. Uncle Jack filed on the land in 1897. The following year, the family came to El Reno by train and then

traveled by wagon to the new homeplace where they built a dugout and a separate outbuilding which served as a kitchen.

Nettie eventually bore nine children. Mabel, Ruth, Esther, Thomas Edison, and Riley were the five who survived infancy. Mabel perished in the great flood of the Washita River on April 4, 1934. Ruth died in 1974, Esther in 1983. Riley still lives on the homeplace where he was born 84 years ago, and Thomas Edison (my grandfather) still owns land nearby, though he resides in Oklahoma City.

What enabled them to survive those early days? It was a careful mix of several qualities: an enterprising and inventive spirit, a willingness to change with the new environment, diverse approaches to making a living, the total involvement of all family members (men, women and children), and an unselfish community spirit.

Uncle Jack was unusually ready for the changing circumstances of the prairie. To save labor costs when harvesting cotton, he invented his own cotton-stripping machine which consisted of a sled pulled by two horses. The sled had v-shaped heads which were positioned to pop the bolls into a trough as the machine was pulled down the rows. Stonewall read up on farming practices and was quick to implement new techniques even though they were sometimes scorned by the neighbors. Before government conservation programs were established, Stonewall terraced his own farmland. When agents from Oklahoma A & M came to see what he was doing, he said he was “stopping the wash.”

Uncle Jack's inventiveness showed in other ways too. Before modern methods of combining wheat, he developed his own method of harvesting by converting a binding machine into a header. Because the wheat stalks were so short in one poor harvest, he decided there was no point to making shocks. Instead, he cut the wheat with his newly improvised header and piled the stalks in large ricks, 50 or 60 feet long. Later, the threshing machine was brought into the fields to winnow the grain. Other farmers followed his example. Uncle Jack also introduced Hereford cattle to the area and was the first to raise sheep (Shropshire breed) along with cattle. He also saw the need for blacksmith work, and so operated his own blacksmith shop to serve area farmers.

His enterprising nature was not confined to agriculture. In about 1911 he and a neighbor, Jodie Moad, strung the first telephone line from Elk City to Hammon, and while doing so, he and Jodie ran a line to the Tippens farm house making them first in the area to have telephone service.

Uncle Jack and Nettie recognized the need for education in order to do well in life. It is a theme that became ever more pronounced in succeeding generations. After being farmers and businessmen, the Tippens descendants most often have been educators. Stonewall received some college education while in Texas, and he continued to teach in singing schools in Texas and Oklahoma. While reading was his principal method of keeping abreast, he required his children to receive formal instruction.

Thomas Edison (or T. E.), was enrolled in the academies of two church-related colleges. In 1906 Nettie took the children to Cordell to attend the grammar school at Cordell Christian College. They lived in Cordell and attended the school for two years. In 1917 T. E. and his sister Ruth were sent to Thorp Spring Christian College, near Granbury, Texas. After completing his high-school studies at Hammon, T. E. attended the college in Weatherford where he excelled in wrestling, football, baseball, and basketball. Upon completing a two-year certificate at Southwestern in 1922, T. E. began a twenty-nine-year career of teaching and coaching. T. E. has fond memories of winning many district and regional athletic championships (including 82 trophies) for schools like Gracemont, Hammon, Pie Flat, Three Corners, Herring, and

Midway.

Uncle Jack and Nettie were more than rugged individualists. Without a strong willingness to share their resources, life would not have been possible. Uncle Jack and Nettie were helped out by neighbors in hard times, and they reciprocated. Nettie always kept extra food and blankets on hand to help out neighbors who had fallen on hard times. Nettie and Uncle Jack were devoted members of the Church of Christ and helped to establish new congregations in Hammon, Butler, Elk City, Canute, and Foss. An old-timer in Hammon recently told me that Stonewall had a beautiful tenor voice and that he loved to lead congregational singing. Stonewall's concern for the community could also be seen when he brought the first medical doctor to Hammon by soliciting one through the Tennessee Medical Society. He helped found the first Anti-Horse Thief Association, and he was always interested in the success of the Democratic Party.

While Uncle Jack and his boys worked hard in the fields, it is certain the family could not have survived without the women. Nettie, despite a severe diabetic condition, always worked to sustain the family with the abundant help of daughters, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and maids. Nettie and her daughters-in-law Ruth Rector (married to T. E.) and Nancy (married to Riley) maintained large gardens and orchards, annually canning hundreds of quarts of fruits and vegetables. They raised chickens, preserved meat, sewed, quilted, crocheted, helped in the fields, and cooked for armies of harvest hands. In the lean years, when the crops failed, it was the women's enterprises — the canning, the chickens, and egg money — that kept the family on the land, alive and healthy.

Nettie and her helpers brought some beauty to the land as well. While Uncle Jack was solidly utilitarian when it came to the home place, Nettie loved flowers. So, despite the burdens of cooking, sewing, canning, and a hundred other duties, she insisted on her flowers: rows of lilacs and other colorful plants lovingly maintained in front of the house.

Of the families who homesteaded southeast of Hammon in 1898, none has remained except the Tippens clan. The Dunlaps, the Clymers, and the Witts have long vanished. Quietly, almost elegiacally, T. E. who just turned 88, remarked to me, "I don't know of a one that's left. . . not one.

That's something."

Though today the descendants of Stonewall are numerous, men and women who are successful in law, medicine, business, banking, teaching, the ministry, government service, and of course farming and ranching, and though they reside in many places, most still feel the lure of this land. I, who am perhaps the least agriculturally bent of any of them, still love to return to the family place just north of Elk City, where my father T. E. Jr. farms 1800 acres. Those low hills and the fertile bottom land along Panther Creek and the Washita River contain a strange attraction. Perhaps it is because the landmarks constantly remind me of what went before me, of the labors and the love that made my life possible. The courage of Nettie, Stonewall, and their children to brave the unknown, test the elements, and make something of this red loam surprises and humbles me. It is not idle sentimentality to say that Stonewall and Angeannette founded a tradition. The traces of it are still visible in the bright eyes and the weathered faces of my parents and grandparents, my aunts and uncles.

But it's not just in the people. I fancy that it's also in the soil and in the breezes that sweep over the grazing land and the alfalfa fields. Though it's not the Rockies or a New England forest, it is remarkably attractive, when the buttercups blossom in the spring, or the teal skies yield to the fiery orange of an October sunset, or the emerald-green winter wheat is streaked with a February snow.

Behind this beauty is a land of many moods and voices. . . harshness, solitude, and trial, but also stoic tranquility and a special sense of community with the earth and your neighbors, of hard-fought battles, and success that comes only through determined labor. Here in the land of my fathers and mothers, Stonewall, Nettie, and the rest, I find the shadows of my own past whose contours are hard work, perseverance, fearlessness, courage, and faith. ■

DR. DARRYL TIPPENS, a 1965 graduate of Weatherford High School, is Professor of English at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. He writes essays and book reviews on 17th-century literature and modern culture. He was chairman of the Department of English at Oklahoma Christian College from 1979-1987.

humility cloaked with integrity



Dr. Angie Debo with author, Gladys Toler Burris.

A Great Lady Passed Our Way: Angie Debo

By Gladys Toler Burris

Our purpose is not to record her accomplishments for those have been told by the media. We write to celebrate the friendship we shared when she was an active member of Stillwater Writers during her years with OSU, a friendship kept alive through letters, visits, and an occasional club meeting at her home in Marshall, to which Charles Dutreau would chauffeur us in his roomy Winnebago.

Many of us recall the last time she appeared before an OWFI Conference, speaking on "Ethics in Writing," a subject close to her heart. She and I rode to the Conference with Geneva Wise, the three of us chatting; and although we never knew that someday she would receive the Award for Scholarly Distinction from the American Historical Association, she made clear her First Commandment: spare no effort to be true to facts and exact details.

So we admired Angie for her integrity, but loved her for the humility so evident in her concern for others. She never failed to encourage, with constructive comments, our club members' writing. "Keep on. You have a bright future," she often added. On one occasion, this amateur had received a second-place award for a biographical article in the OWFI

Contest. Angie, sitting beside me — she, whose portrait hangs in the State Capitol as the First Lady of Oklahoma History — said, as proudly as though she were my mother, "See how successful your writing is."

Only the great can be unassuming. I once asked, looking around her small home, "Where do you write, Angie?" She smiled. "In my bedroom. You see, I have the filing cabinet on my left, and the bed on my right, so I spread out my files on the bed. It's quite handy."

Oblivious to her towering shadow, she took delight in simple things, such as showing her rose garden, one time saying, as she clipped a rose, "You in your pretty pink dress should have this one."

We doubt there will ever be another Angie Debo. We celebrate her: a great lady who passed our way, reaching out as a warm loving friend. ■

GLADYS TOLER BURRIS, a longtime resident of Stillwater, is a free-lance writer and retired Language Arts teacher.

Photo compliments of G. H. Wise.

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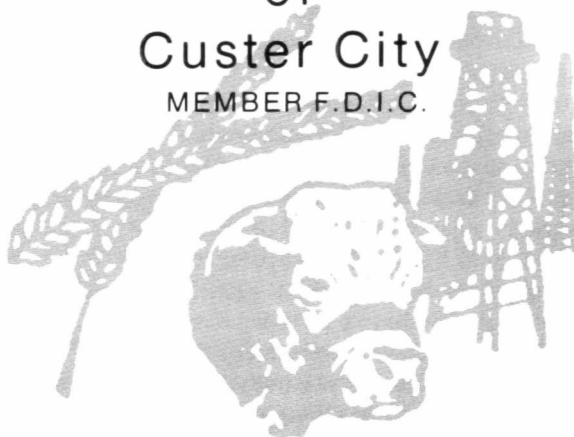


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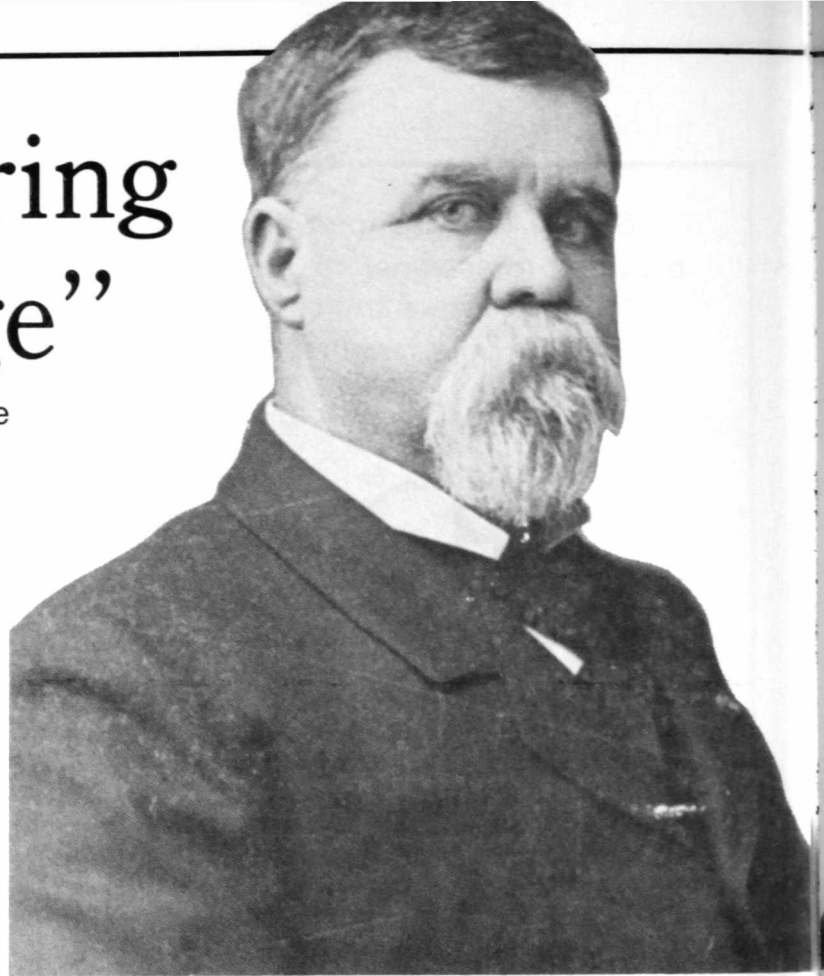
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Remembering "Old Sage"

By Glen V. McIntyre



In the days before movies, radio and television, the local newspaper was one of the primary sources of news, gossip, entertainment and information. The standards set by a newspaper influenced the entire town and these standards were set by the editor who was often-times the owner as well. Such a man was Jacob Veatch (J. V.) Admire, owner and editor of the KINGFISHER FREE PRESS from 1891 until 1906. His editorials spread his influence not only throughout the community of Kingfisher but throughout Western Oklahoma.

J. V. Admire had already led a full life when he came to Kingfisher on April 21, 1899 to take up his duties as first receiver of monies for the land office at Kingfisher.

Admire had been born in 1842 in Indiana. In 1862 he volunteered as a private in Company E, Sixty-Fifth Indiana Infantry. He rose to the rank of Captain and was a part of the march to the sea.

After the war he quickly left Indiana, moving to Kansas with his wife, Emma Lewis, whom he had married in 1867. In Kansas he bought a farm near Topeka, the first of a long line of unsuccessful attempts at farming. From 1872 to 1878 he was postmaster of North Topeka, Kansas. He also ran the NORTH TOPEKA TIMES.

The entire generation was restless. In 1878 he moved to Osage City, Kansas where he purchased the newspaper OSAGE FREE PRESS. During his stay at Osage City he continued his pattern of involvement with public affairs by serving as Postmaster for four and a half years. He was elected to the state legislature in 1887 and 1888 as a Republican.

Then, suddenly, his life took an unexpected turn. He had been attempting to secure another political post in Kansas when he learned that he had been appointed receiver of monies at the land office in the as yet nonexistent town of Kingfisher.

President Benjamin Harrison declared that the Unassigned lands would be opened to white settlement by a land run at high noon, April 22, 1889. The settlers who attempted to lay a claim would have to process their claims, and this paperwork involved fees which Admire would collect and send on to the Federal Government.

So it was with some reluctance that Admire rode over from Guthrie to Kingfisher to find the town consisting of one stage station and one newly erected land office, all guarded by a troop of soldiers sent to keep the peace.

On April 22, 1889 Kingfisher went from this tiny beginning to a city of over two thousand people in a single afternoon. Soon the town was prospering and contending with Guthrie for the title of Territorial capital.

Admire was soon back to his old love, politics. The majority of settlers in the Unassigned Lands, or Old Oklahoma as it came to be called, were from Kansas and tended to be Republicans. Admire had achieved considerable success in Kansas in party politics, and at first it looked as if he would go on to even greater accomplishments in that field in Oklahoma as in January of 1890 the first territorial Republican convention met and selected Admire as the

man they wanted president Harrison to select as the first Territorial Governor. Unfortunately, Harrison chose an Indiana man, George W. Steele, as Territorial Governor. Steele remained as Governor a little over a year before he returned home. When Harrison chose again, again it would go to another man — A. J. Seay. J. V. Admire would never come that close again to becoming Governor.

His greatest success and most lasting influence upon Kingfisher would come in another old love, the newspaper business.

Kingfisher's first newspaper, THE NEW WORLD, had started publication in Wichita, Kansas long before April 22, 1889. After a couple of years Admire purchased the paper and combined it with another pioneer publication, THE JOURNAL, and gave the paper the name THE KINGFISHER FREE PRESS.

For the next fifteen years Admire managed to run both his newspapers, a farm some five miles west of town, and be receiver of monies at the land office. There was a brief period, from 1893 to 1897, when a Democratic administration was in office and the receiver of monies was a Democrat.

Admire soon established himself as

an authentic voice in the editorial columns. His editorials became famous both because of his honesty and also because of his wisdom.

He came firmly down on the Progressive side of the Republicanism of the day, attacking monopolies, trusts and big business with a sometimes vitriolic pen. He supported the cause of the farmers against that of the manufacturers and was often complaining that no real prosperity could come when farm prices were as low as they were and manufactured prices as high as they were.

The Black citizens of Kingfisher liked and respected him. They declared "Admire has shown himself a good friend of the colored people of Kingfisher Community. No colored man ever sought his counsel and was turned away unadvised."

One of the most precious legacies left by Admire was a day-by-day diary of the year 1900. In it he discloses a private face not so different from the public one. It is full of concern for his three children — James L., Eli L., and Mina —, who by 1900 had grown and matured and started lives of their own. His son Eli was a Second Lieutenant in the Phillipines during the Phillipine

insurrection led by Aguinaldo. The diary is full of concern over his son's safety in a situation which has uncanny echoes of the later conflict in Vietnam.

Also in his diary his public interest in Republican policies is echoed with references to McKinley as "an unscrupulous, not very honest politician" and McKinley's close associate Mark Hanna as a "dictator."

In another entry he described the mayor as "ignorant, bigoted, a tool of the worst element," and the "so-called city government about the weakest, most trifling body I ever met."

Many of these concerns were echoed in his editorials. He attacked hypocrisy, dishonesty, and graft in words that seem extreme in this supposedly less civilized age.

In 1906 he sold the newspaper and moved to Enid, though keeping up some duties at the land office until it was dissolved in 1908.

However, the desire to be involved in the newspaper business had not left his blood, and he bought half interest in the ENID DAILY EAGLE which he edited for about a year and a half when he had to retire because of his health.

He died on March 3, 1911, in Enid and was brought to Kingfisher for

burial. The service was held in the home of Pat Nagle, the Socialist, who had been a good friend of his.

Newspapers across Western Oklahoma editorialized on the death of "Old Sage" as they called him, commenting on his influence on the development of early-day Oklahoma.

The KINGFISHER FREE PRESS survives to this day in Kingfisher, though now combined with its arch-enemy THE KINGFISHER TIMES as the KINGFISHER TIMES AND FREE PRESS. It is a proper monument to Old Sage, pioneer publisher and one of the prime movers of early-day Oklahoma Territory. ■

GLEN V. MCINTYRE, curator of the Chisholm Trail Museum in Kingfisher, writes poetry and non-fiction articles.



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Agnes Aaron at age 83.

Time of Change and Challenge

By Agnes Aaron

My husband and I moved from our farm in the Texas Panhandle near Wellington to the northwestern area of Greer County, Oklahoma on January 11, 1957.

Our 320 acres were situated in a small valley known in the area as "Booger Hollow." Its boundary on the north and east was the shallow Salt Fork of Red River. We were nine miles from a paved road. Mangum, our county seat, was 30 miles east. The little community of Reed was between us and Mangum. Hollis, the county seat of Harmon, was 25 miles south. Vinson, another small community, was between us and Hollis.

Even though our farm was isolated, the neighbors said that in the early days Booger Hollow had been a great place for "rip roaring dances."

At the time of our move, only two of our eight children were still at home. Lyda, the youngest of 7 girls, was 13, and our only son, John, Jr. was 15. Another son, Jerry Paul, had died when he was three.

In 1964, my husband's health began to fail. Our son had just graduated from Southwestern State University, and Lyda was a junior there, so my husband and I were all alone. John's doctor was in Hollis; thus, we decided to move into Vinson to be closer to him. Since I was pastor of the Methodist church in Vinson, we moved into the parsonage.

I had been serving as a licensed minister for the Methodist church

since back during the Depression years. My father-in-law, John Selby Aaron, was a Methodist minister when John and I married. In 1932, my father-in-law asked me to help with the preaching in a revival he was conducting in a little community near Wellington. He thought I might be able to reach the young people. It worked out so well I was asked to finish the revival.

Not everyone liked having a woman preacher. Sometimes some of the men would gather in the back, and as soon as I started to preach, they would all walk out. But most of them would eventually come back. In a way all my pastorates were pushed on me; I never actually sought any of them. It was just that we always lived in small communities, and there was often no one else to fill the office. My husband was proud of me, saying I was the best preacher he'd ever heard. He often led the singing when there was no one else to do it.

Not long after we left the farm and moved into Vinson, our daughter, Ann, moved home with her two little boys, Danny and Paul. It was decided that Ann would begin college at Southwestern State, and the boys would stay with me during the week with their mother driving home on weekends.

My husband died from complications following surgery on June 14, 1966. We had been married for 44 years.

Having my grandsons to take care of helped fill the emptiness of this period of time. They gave me a reason for

going on.

My life was quickly forced to change following John's death. For one thing, I had never learned to drive. John and I had always gone everywhere together, and I guess I never saw the need. And other than church, I had been too busy at home to go anywhere very much.

So in the late summer of 1966, I started learning to drive. To put it mildly, it was difficult. My attention span was too short; I couldn't seem to keep my mind on what I was doing. To always have to keep my eyes on the road and miss seeing the sunlight dancing on the sunflowers in a nearby field didn't seem like much fun to me.

I especially had trouble driving in town. I soon got a permit to drive as long as there was a licensed driver in the front seat. The trouble was, I scared everyone so badly, no one would ride with me when we reached town.

After many tear-filled weeks, I still had not passed the driving test. One day I told the patrolman, "I want you to know how much I appreciate your kindness and patience. And I don't want you to be discouraged because each time you take me for my driving test, I feel I am learning just a little more." He didn't answer, just gave me a weak little smile.

One day I could tell I was doing really well. This time I just knew I was going to pass. Just then the patrolman yelled, "Watch out for that truck." I said, "What truck?" He said, "The truck you almost hit." To this day I have not figured out where he saw that truck.

Needless to say, I didn't pass my driving test. When he told me I had

failed again, I laid my head on the steering wheel and cried like a baby. I just couldn't help it.

Several weeks later, I did finally pass my driving test and received my first driver's license. I don't know who was happier — the patrolman or me. That happy day was 21 years ago and now I am 83 and still driving. I have a good driving record.

In the summer of 1967, my mother came to live with me. She had become disabled from a recent stroke and needed me to take care of her. A year and a half later, she died.

Once again there was a great emptiness in my life. Having my grandsons helped me through the difficult time following her death. Taking care of them helped to give my life stability.

In the spring of 1969, Ann graduated from college and she and the boys moved away. It had always been understood that when Ann started teaching, the boys would again live with her. But it was still very painful to give them up.

Now I was alone. The house was so quiet — so empty. My heart seemed empty too. I kept thinking about what direction my life should go.

In a few weeks, I knew what it was I wanted to do. I wanted to go to college. My husband and I had put five of our eight children through college. Now, it was my turn.

Altus Junior College was only 60 miles from Vinson, close enough to drive back and forth. I called Dean Chesser and asked if I could come to school. He said I could, but enrollment was still two weeks away. If I waited that long, I might change my mind so I asked if I could come right then. He said okay.

I drove to Altus that afternoon and

enrolled as a college freshman for the fall term. I was 65 years old. I had graduated from high school in 1922.

I entered college with anticipation and hope. But that was before I knew about Freshman Composition. What a jolt! I had taken many correspondence courses from Methodist colleges during my time as a Methodist minister, always making **A's** and **B's**. Only occasionally did I see a red pencil mark.

That was before I met Mrs. Emma Madden, my English teacher. Mrs. Madden expected perfection and would not settle for less. She had two grades for a composition: one for content and the other for mechanics. It was mechanics that sold me down the river. At first I prayed to make **A's**, then **B's**, then **C's**, then finally I just prayed that I would pass. God heard my prayers. I not only passed, but I learned a lot in the process. Before the semester was over, I had come to love Mrs. Madden. She is a great teacher.

I completed three semesters at Altus and then transferred to Southwestern State University at Weatherford. I graduated May 18, 1973 with a major in English. My grade point was 3.33. It would have been higher except for Math and German. They were both foreign languages to me.

After graduation, I left Oklahoma and moved to my present home in Matador, Texas, a small town 70 miles east of Lubbock. I am still quite active. I no longer pastor a church, but still teach Sunday School and Bible classes. I raise a large garden each year, freezing and canning huge quantities of food to give to my children and friends. I still enjoy reading, sewing, and watching sports on television.

My college years stand out as a rewarding experience in my life. My



Agnes Aaron, SOSU student, on graduation day.

teachers were dedicated professionals. They were also kind and compassionate individuals. I hold them in my memory as friends who guided me through the wonderland of poetry and literature; friends who taught me a better way to speak and write; those who led me through the great struggles of history. I graduated from college with more than a degree — I graduated with a deeper understanding and a greater appreciation of the human endeavor to respond to all the complexities of life.

The greatest wealth of Western Oklahoma is not found in her oil wells, wheat fields, or cattle. Her greatest wealth is her people. I shall always remember with pleasure the people that make up Western Oklahoma: friends that I laughed and cried with; friends that I prayed and worshipped with. ■

AGNES AARON, a former Western Oklahoma Methodist preacher and a SOSU alumna, now lives in retirement in Matador, Texas.

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STELLA HOOD RAINS, age 2.

Etched In Memory

By Rita Rains

She lives now in a retirement home in Texas, a lifetime away from her Western Oklahoma roots. At the age of 88, she sits before an easel, staring intently at her first attempt at art, a painting of the half dugout that was once her home. She can still remember those early years as vividly as if it were yesterday.

Born in Texas in the fall of 1899, Stella Hood Rains was just a toddler when her family crossed the Red River into Oklahoma Territory. Her recollection of those years is indelible as only childhood memories can be. She remembers the three covered wagons filled with family and friends and the days of impatient waiting at Oxbow Crossing for the rain-swollen river to subside so they could safely cross.

Every day, the men attired only in their "long johns" would wade the muddy, red waters to test the crossing. When the time finally came, Stella found herself perched, along with her mother and several brothers and sisters, on top of the feather bed inside their wagon. Outside, she could hear her father shouting instructions to her older sister, "Whip 'em, Karen. Whip 'em," he yelled as they guided the horses and wagon through the rough waters to their new home in Western Oklahoma.

Isaac Parker Hood, his wife Eleanor Elizabeth Spencer, and their five children homesteaded a quarter section one-fourth mile wide and one mile long near Jester in the Plainview Community, in what is now Greer County. There they would add five more youngsters to

the family. Stella's most vivid childhood memories are of their half dugout home. It was dug back into the hillside, made of sod, tree poles, and buffalo grass. There were only two small rooms with dirt floors. She recalls that they lined the walls with white gypsum and newspaper and hung a cloth across the ceiling "so the bugs and snakes couldn't just drop in unannounced." She laughs when I ask about the outhouse. "Honey," she says, "the canyon was our outhouse."

As crowded as they were, there was always room for more. Visitors were a rare treat in those days and warmly welcomed. She remembers the excitement which always accompanied travelers, whether they stopped just for a meal or paused overnight in their journey. A trip into town was an occasion, "especially if we got to stay overnight at the wagon yard," she recalls. "When we got to town, we'd head straight for the yard and stake out our bunks for the night. Then Papa would give each of us kids a dime to spend in town. You wouldn't believe what all you could get for a dime back then."

The toys she played with as a girl were simple creations: buffalo bones and skulls bleached white in the plains sun, arrowheads dug from the canyon walls and floor, and corn silk dolls made from the husks of immature ears of corn. Her aunt, Annie Spencer, taught her how to quilt and crochet, skills she has honed to a fine art today.

Stella carried her lunch to school in a syrup bucket and recalls it was a pretty good weapon with which to fend off pesky little boys. She smiles and her eyes sparkle as she recalls another girlhood memory. In those days the classroom had a water bucket and dipper from which the teacher and students drank. It usually sat on an

empty desk in the back of the room. In Stella's case, it just so happened it sat on the desk between her and her best friend. One day they decided to see if they could tip the bucket over without being caught by the teacher. Quietly they rocked their chairs back and forth until the bucket fell spilling the water. After the giggles died down, the teacher's voice broke the silence, "Accidents will happen," she said, "but I don't think that was one." "I guess it goes without saying we stayed after school that day," Stella laughs.

A hailstorm in 1904 is graphically etched in her memory. "The hail was the size of baseballs," she remembers; "it was still on the ground two days later. We lost our livestock and our garden, but thank God, none of us were hurt." She doesn't recall seeing many Indians while growing up in Western Oklahoma but does remember the thundering cattle drives and cowboys who crossed Oklahoma from Texas into Kansas. She still can recall their neighbors of many years, the Andrew McBrides, the church camp meetings and Sunday singings, and the barn dances.

She saw the coming of statehood to Oklahoma in 1907, and in her mind's eye, she can see the brightly colored ribbons and badges the men wore and the jubilant parades and picnics. If you had told her then that in this same red carpet country she helped pioneer, her grandson would one day drill for oil and gas, she wouldn't have believed it possible. ■

RITA RAINS, a 1971 graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington, makes her first appearance in WESTVIEW. A resident of Western Oklahoma since 1978, she is a free-lance writer and also works as a Claims Representative for the Social Security Administration in Clinton.



an example to follow

Mama Signed The Pledge

By Inez S. Whitney



At the age of eight in the year 1885 Mama signed a solemn pledge never to allow one drop of alcoholic beverage to pass her lips. She kept this promise for eighty-nine years until her death at the age of ninety-seven.

The commitment was made in a one room country school near Auburn, Indiana. This came about as part of a nationwide crusade of the W.C.T.U. against drinking. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was founded in 1874 and was an outgrowth of the Woman's Temperance Crusade in 1873.

Temperance meant moderation in eating and drinking, in work and play, and all other activities of life. The W.C.T.U. had a different interpretation. They believed in total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. After its organization in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1874, it grew rapidly and worked through schools, churches, and other organized groups.

Mama had many opportunities to break the pledge, especially as a young bride in the Oklahoma Territory. Here, as the expression went, "everything was wide open."

Liquor in every form could be purchased legally anywhere in the Territory. The nearest town was Weatherford, twenty miles away. From far and near, people traveled by wagon to buy groceries, clothing, and other necessary supplies. Although the population was less than two thousand, Weatherford boasted twenty-two saloons.

I have heard my mother say, "Every other door is a den of iniquity." Many a farmer sold his wheat, entered a saloon, and after a few hours of entertainment, left for home penniless.

Of course no LADY ever set foot in one of these establishments and Mama prevailed upon my father to stay away also.

Mama had strong convictions about right and wrong. I am certain the thought of breaking the pledge never entered her mind. During her lifetime she made quite a collection of temperance poems. Some were pasted in a scrapbook. Others were copied in a tablet. I have all of them. Her favorite, which she read over and over to me, was "The Two Glasses."

THE TWO GLASSES

THERE SAT TWO GLASSES FILLED TO THE BRIM,
ON A RICH MAN'S TABLE, RIM TO RIM;
ONE WAS RUDDY AND RED AS BLOOD.
AND ONE WAS CLEAR AS THE CRYSTAL FLOOD.
SAID THE GLASS OF WINE TO THE PALER BROTHER,
"LET US TELL OF THE TALES OF THE PAST TO EACH OTHER.
I CAN TELL OF A BANQUET OF REVEL AND MIRTH,
AND THE PROUDEST AND GRANDEST SOULS ON EARTH
FELL UNDER MY TOUCH AS THOUGH STRUCK BY BLIGHT;
THEN I WAS KING FOR I RULED IN MIGHT;
FROM THE HEADS OF KINGS I HAVE TORN THE CROWN;
FROM THE HEIGHT OF FAME HAVE HURLED MEN DOWN.
I HAVE BLASTED MANY AN HONORED NAME;
I HAVE TAKEN VIRTUE AND GIVEN SHAME;
I HAVE TEMPTED THE YOUTH WITH A SIP, A TASTE,
THAT HAS MADE HIS FUTURE A BARREN WASTE.
FAR GREATER THAN ANY KING AM I.
OR ANY ARMY BENEATH THE SKY.
I HAVE MADE THE ARM OF THE DRIVER FAIL
AND SENT THE TRAIN FROM THE IRON RAIL:
I HAVE MADE GOOD SHIPS GO DOWN AT SEA,
AND THE SHRIEKS OF THE LOST WERE SWEET TO ME;
FOR THEY SAID: 'BEHOLD, HOW GREAT YOU BE!
FAME, WEALTH, GENIUS, BEFORE YOU FALL,
AND YOUR MIGHT AND POWER ARE OVER ALL'.
HO! HO! PALE BROTHER!" LAUGHED THE WINE;
"CAN YOU BOAST OF DEEDS AS GREAT AS MINE?"
SAID THE WATER GLASS: "I CANNOT BOAST
OF A KING DETHRONED OR A MURDERED HOST:
BUT I CAN TELL OF A HEART ONCE SAD.
BY MY CRYSTAL DROPS MADE BRIGHT AND GLAD:
OF THIRST I'VE QUENCHED AND BROWS I'VE LAVED:
OF HANDS I HAVE COOLED AND SOULS I HAVE SAVED.
I HAVE SLEPT IN THE SUNSHINE AND DROPPED FROM THE SKY

AND EVERYWHERE GLADDENED THE LANDSCAPE AND EYE.
 I HAVE EASED THE HOT FOREHEAD OF FEVER AND PAIN:
 I HAVE MADE THE PARCHED MEADOWS GROW FERTILE WITH GRAIN.
 I CAN TELL OF THE POWERFUL WHEELS OF THE MILL
 THAT GROUND OUT THE FLOUR AND TURNED AT MY WILL.
 I CAN TELL OF MANHOOD, DEBASED BY YOU.
 THAT I HAVE LIFTED AND CROWNED ANEW.
 I CHEER, I HELP, I STRENGTHEN AND AID:
 I GLADDEN THE HEART OF MAN AND MAID:
 I SET THE CHAINED WINE-CAPTIVE TREE
 AND ALL ARE BETTER FOR KNOWING ME."
 THESE ARE THE TALES THEY TOLD EACH OTHER.
 THE GLASS OF WINE AND ITS PALER BROTHER.
 AS THEY SAT TOGETHER, FILLED TO THE BRIM.
 ON THE RICH MAN'S TABLE, RIM TO RIM.■



INEZ SCHNEIDER WHITNEY, a resident of Arlington, Virginia, is a member of a writers group which oversees the publication of SENIOR SCRIBES. She is an alumna of Custer City High School and a former student at SOSU. Her Master's degree is from Georgetown University.

provider

Bread-Maker

By Margie Snowden North

Mama made bread
 in a dishpan,
 a bulbous mound of dough
 in a bed of flour,
 hands adroit, sure,
 kneading, punching, molding,
 (this artist)
 her face flushed with heat from the stove.
 Melting hoglard in the breadpans
 she worked,
 shaping loaves and buns,
 letting them rise in the warmth
 until all the house was filled
 with lovely fragrances
 of bread and security.

MARGIE SNOWDEN NORTH, Erick writer, adds to her many WESTVIEW credits in this issue.



feeder

The Scissortail

By Margie Snowden North

The Scissortail
 hovers,
 touches down,
 intercepts the grasshopper
 midair
 and hurries home
 to fill empty stomachs.

loyal servant to five generations



Dr. & Mrs. Cunningham with Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Haggart.

Dr. Cunningham Retires With Honors

By Margaret Wilson Friedrich

Dr. Cunningham is one man who has found honor in his own country and in his own house. At the end of 1987, Dr. Curtis B. Cunningham retired in Clinton after 51 years in medical practice. He was almost 83 years old and had never had a permanent address outside Custer County.

"Of all the honors that have come to you, what are some of the most memorable?" He thought a moment.

"I was the first graduate of the Oklahoma University School of Medicine to be elected by his peers to receive the Outstanding Alumnus Award." Near that honor stands his election to Life Membership in the American Medical Association and the Oklahoma Medical Association and especially membership in the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. He has been on the Board of Clinton Regional Hospital for 51 years and six months.

He stated, "I would not ever ask people for their confidence; I would not ask people to vote for me." But perhaps closest of all to his heart is the loving appreciation of those families he has

treated for 50 years, sometimes through the fourth and fifth generations. He brought out a letter recently received from one of those patients, now living in Mississippi.

She wrote, "I was not the first of those 5,500 babies you delivered, but I must have been among the early ones. You were called away from your wife's birthday dinner to bring me into the world. Afterward, it seems I always had my accidents and illnesses on a holiday or family gathering — Easter, Fourth of July." She expressed her love and appreciation for all those times. Dr. Cunningham was obviously pleased. One of his most rewarding honors must be the genuine love and confidence of his people.

Dr. Cunningham seemed a bit surprised when asked if the underlying support of his family gave stability to his career. Apparently no doubt of that support had ever crossed his mind. "Of course." Bess Webb and Curtis B. Cunningham were married on December 19, 1930. He told how his wife had given him support during the early days in Medical School. Those were

also the days of the Great Depression. Just out of college at Oklahoma City University, Bess took a teaching position in 1931 at \$50 per month. She gave him \$10; it took a \$2.50 discount to cash her check. That left her \$37.50 to maintain herself, but she had to save enough to live through the summer. He finished Medical School and a year of internship in 1935. The new Dr. Cunningham began practice in Custer City in 1936. Never again was it necessary to offer financial assistance. But with understanding, flexibility, and devotion Bess has been supporting her doctor husband for 57 years.

As the years went by, Dr. Cunningham acquired his father's homestead and that of his grandfather, as well as the homesteads of three other early-day relatives. Oil production on those farms made him wealthy, but that was not the chief reason for his pleasure in ownership. He loved the land and the pioneer ancestors who tamed it from the prairie. "When I am gone, our children will inherit five homesteads. I am holding the land in trust for them."

Future plans include some travel and some work — "work for my church and for anything to benefit my community." Among those benefits is the proposed Heart and Cancer Clinic in Clinton. As vice-president of the Western Oklahoma Health Care Foundation, Dr. Cunningham plans to be an active promoter of the project.

Will this remarkable couple move to a warmer climate? "No!" They both answered together. She continued, "This is our home; this is where our friends are. This is where our children grew up. We'll stay here."

The doctor added, "The best people in the world live in Western Oklahoma. When I am gone, she will stay here."

Both Dr. and Mrs. Cunningham have lived every day of their lives by the Golden Rule. With the qualities of character they both display, it is not surprising that, at 83, Dr. Cunningham can retire with honor among the people who know him best. That is success in the truest sense of the word. ■

MARGARET WILSON FRIEDRICH, in addition to WESTVIEW, contributes to several periodicals, including HOME LIFE and the OKLAHOMA ENGLISH JOURNAL. Her second book, THROUGH TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS, was published in 1987.

trips to remember

HISTORY DAY IN REVIEW

By David Klaassen

I first became interested in the History Day contest through my history teacher, Mr. Randy Beutler. I had heard of it before, but I never seriously thought of entering it. Mr. Beutler approached two other students, Ray Harris and Steve Seigler, and me about History Day in late November of 1985. He told us all about the contest and the theme of it, which was, "Conflicts and/or Compromise." It sounded interesting to Ray, Steve, and me, so we decided to enter the contest and try our best at it.

There were several different categories in the contest. They were Historical Paper, Individual Project, Group Project, Individual Performance, Group Performance, and Media Presentation, from which we had to choose one. We decided upon the Media Presentation because we figured that it was one of the harder categories and not very

many people would enter it.

The next step was deciding on a topic for our project. We considered many different subjects before choosing the conflict between Clinton and Arapaho over who should have the county seat of Custer County. We chose this particular topic because it was local and would be easier to research and gather information. We also thought that the judges would appeal more to local history, to which they could relate, rather than national or world history. We decided to make our project a slide projection with the narration on a cassette tape.

We started our research soon after we got back from Christmas Break. The District Contest was to be on March 26, so we didn't have much time.

We obtained most of our information from old newspapers contemporary

with the time of the conflict. We used the microfiche at the Al Harris Library on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the Clinton Public Library.

Many long hours were spent after school and into the evenings doing research. Along with the microfiche, we used books, files, and old documents. We took pictures of many of the newspapers to use in our slide presentation. We also used some old pictures of the towns of Clinton and Arapaho during the time of the conflict.

Mr. Beutler knew of two elderly ladies who lived during the time of the conflict. Helen Gossman of Arapaho and Vesta Cassady of Clinton were both involved in the heated disputes over the county seat. We traveled to Arapaho and Clinton to interview these two ladies to get a primary source of information. The women were

History Day Winners: (Left to right) David Klaassen, Cathy Dunn, Jennifer Dew and Tim Kerley.



friendly and eager to recall their stories of the dispute. They gave us good, detailed information.

We even went to the Custer County Courthouse one evening to look at old court records about a case that involved two judges from the respective towns. We also took pictures of the courthouse while we were there to use in our presentation.

We found out some interesting information during all of our research, which helped add some excitement to our work.

After we had gathered all of the information and taken all the pictures we thought we needed, it was time to write the narration for the presentation.

We tried to write it so that it contained all of the needed information and still sounded interesting and not boring and dull. After we completed the script, we chose the slides to use in the program.

For the contest, a short report had to accompany the presentation telling how we obtained our information and how it helped us in putting together our project. We also had to type a full-length bibliography along with our narration. We presented all of this to the judges in the contest. Our bibliography ended up being over two pages long.

After we had the narration typed, we had to figure out some way to clearly record it on a cassette. A conventional tape recorder would not provide a clean enough recording to use in the contest. So we contacted radio station KBXR of Weatherford to see if they would help us make the recording. They readily agreed, so since we had decided to use my voice, Mr. Beutler and I went to the radio station one day during school to make the reproduction. Billy Shell, a disc jockey at the station, helped us make a quality recording.

Now that we finally had everything together, we were ready for the District competition. It was to take place at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

The day finally arrived, and we were ready and eager to show off the result of all our hard work. Everything ran smoothly, and to our surprise, we walked away with First Place. Both the First and Second Place winners were able to move on to the state competition, so we eagerly awaited the contest which was to be held on May 8.

We made a few improvisations on our project before the state competition to better our chances of winning. We

traveled to the State Capitol Building on May 8 and did our best to place in the contest. The First and Second Place winners here got to move on to the National Competition in Washington, D.C. We could hardly believe it when they called our names and announced us as First Place winners.

So we were off to D.C., something we had only joked about a few months earlier. We didn't change our project any because we really didn't expect to win. After all, there were projects from all over the United States competing with us. We were just going along to have a good time, and a good time was just what we had. It was also an educational experience.

We left on May 15, 1986, for the eight-day trip. We stayed in the dorms on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park. That is also where the competition was held.

We were able to see all the sights including the White House, the Vietnam Memorial, the Capitol, and the Lincoln Memorial, just to name a few. We also heard Ted Kennedy speak at the Awards Assembly on our last day in Washington, D.C. We didn't place in the competition, but the vacation was a very memorable experience, and all our hard work seemed to pay off.

Well, the 1986-1987 school year started in August, and already Mr. Beutler told his classes that if they didn't do a History Day Project this year, they would have to write a big research paper. I opted to do another project because we had so much fun at Washington, D.C. last year and I wanted to go again.

This time I had to find some new group members because Steve had temporarily moved to Florida, and Ray was taking a different history class. So fellow Juniors Jennifer Dew, Cathie Dunn, Tim Kerley, and I decided to team up and see if we could do better than our group last year.

The theme for 1986-1987 was "Freedom: Rights and Responsibilities." We decided to do our slide presentation over the desegregation of the University of Oklahoma in the 1950's, particularly involving two blacks: Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher and George McLaurin.

We did many hours of extensive research and put much more time and effort into this project than we did the previous year because we were determined to win that trip to Washington, D.C.

Our research was much the same as

the year before; only this year we traveled to Oklahoma City to interview Mrs. Fisher and to Norman to interview George Cross, who was President of OU at the time we were dealing with.

When we had finally completed the project, we felt good about it and were ready to face the competition. At the District Contest on March 25, we placed first somewhat easily. Another group from Weatherford placed second behind us.

We changed our presentation quite a bit for the State Competition because we wanted to go to D.C. really bad. We thought we had a decent chance of winning, but placed second in the contest. Still, second place was good enough for the trip to Washington, D.C., so we were very excited.

The trip this year was just as much fun as the first, except this year the payoff was a little more. We didn't really expect to place at the National Competition this year because the competition at the national level is so stiff.

Everything ran smoothly during our presentation, but we saw some of the other projects and they seemed much better than ours. But to our surprise, our presentation was chosen to be in the eight-group runoff. So we presented our project again to the judges and eagerly awaited to hear the results at the Awards Assembly on the last day.

It finally arrived, and we were quite optimistic about the whole thing. During the assembly we were as nervous as ever. Finally the time came and we heard the speaker announce our names as second place winners. I could not believe what I was hearing, but it was true. We had the second-best project in the whole United States. What a payoff for all the hard work we had done!

We haven't yet decided if we are going to do another project this year, but who knows, we may just end up winning first place this time. ■

DAVID KLAASSEN is a 1988 graduate of Weatherford High School where he maintained a 4.00 grade average, spoke at Commencement as co-Valedictorian, served as president of the Student Council, and enjoyed playing varsity tennis.

Western Oklahoma has a reputation for its ability to turn out the best basketball teams in the state — teams such as Leedey, Arnett, Elk City, and Sayre. But, when basketball and Western Oklahoma are mentioned, my mind turns to a group of girls from Cheyenne, Oklahoma, called the Lady Bears.

In March 1985, the Cheyenne Lady Bears took reign as the Class A state champs after defeating Lookeba-Sickles by three points (45-42). It wasn't as easy getting to state and winning the final game as they made it look when they were on the court. It took the girls three long years of hard work and determination to become such a well-balanced team. They practiced long hours and worked tediously on imperfections, to be able to display such precision in their moves on the court. And, precision moves were Jenny Shockey's specialty. Jenny could dribble her way through a brick wall. She dazzled crowds with ball-handling abilities comparable with those of the Globetrotters.

Basketball skills, however, weren't the only things developed by these long hours. The girls gained much self-discipline which they displayed both on and off the court. Bonds of friendship were made among the girls. Most of all, the girls developed self-confidence. They believed they had the ability to get what they wanted, and they went after it. All in all, the Lady Bears gained every quality needed to become winners and most definitely knew how to put them to use.

After the 1984-85 winning season, the team hated to say good-bye to senior Julie Barton who was a big asset to the team. But with five returning starters, the prospects for the Lady Bears returning to state the next year were looking good.

Following a short summer off from regular season — not practice — the girls went back to school and back to the hours of practice under the supervision of Coach David Sanders. Finally their long-awaited first game of the season had arrived, and the Lady Bears were off like a rocket. Their season seemed to flow like river rapids, quickening as they barreled over team after team. They dribbled, shot, and rebounded their way through the season leaving only a few teams with just a taste of victory. Then, when the first day of District play-offs arrived, the

Bears Climb Stairs To Success

By Jo Hagerman



The 1986-87 State-winning Cheyenne Lady Bears.

girls were determined to bring home that gold ball once again. Although some skeptics didn't think the girls could win state without the leadership of Julie Barton, in mid-March they proved those skeptics wrong. The Lady Bears had defended their reign and had once again played an excellent game that led to an easy victory over Amber-Pocasset (class AA state champs in 1984). Final score read Cheyenne 61 and Amber-Pocasset 49.

Once again the Lady Bears said farewell to an outstanding senior, Melinda Cavazos. As starting guard and All-Stater, Melinda had the ability to annoy and intimidate any forward. The Cheyenne team, however, retained five of its six starters, and with Lori Sanders, who always seemed to have more hustle and determination to get a loose ball than anyone on the court replacing Melinda, they were almost assured a ticket to the state tournament in the year 1987.

The 1986-1987 season flew by game after game. From their first game to their last, the girls always played as a team and never as selfish individuals.

They were like a clock; separated, they were just spare parts, but when placed together in the correct way, they were an instrument working toward a purpose. One of those spare parts stands up above the rest, in both abilities and height. Jodi Fisher, 6' 1", was almost unstoppable, and she later went on to play at OSU.

On March 7, 1987, the final game of the season had arrived. The girls had fought their way through District, Regional, and Area. Now, they had reached the time of true triumph and defeat. They had prepared for this game all year. As the team emerged from the locker room, fans of all ages were chanting "Cheyenne (clap, clap) Lady Bears (clap, clap)" over and over. I remember searching through the hundreds of orange and black clothes to try to find my cousins. I had never seen so many people at a high-school ballgame in my life. The question "Can they do it a third time," intensely hung in the air, but was quickly swept away by the Lady Bears' outstanding first-half performance. At the end of the game the girls had upheld their status in an

easy victory over Thomas. The final score was Thomas 42 and Cheyenne, defending state champs, 65. Winning for the third time in a row, the Lady Bears tied the record set by Byng girls in the 1930's for winning three consecutive state tournaments.

At the end of 1987, the team lost some valuable girls. Jodi Fisher, Cindy Smith, Sherry Hillman, Leana Burrows, Penny Sanderford, Dyan Carter, Julie Bowan, and Cindy Hay were the seniors who graduated on to bigger and better things. The team had to say good-bye to Coach Sanders, who moved to Stigler to continue his coaching career.

Although many teams would be content with winning the state tournament once, the Cheyenne girls weren't content until they had won the gold ball at least three times. The Lady Bears, however, did have other accomplishments. For instance, they compiled a record of 88 wins and 4 losses. All of the forwards had outstanding free-throw percentages and scoring averages. They filled the trophy cases at the Cheyenne Gym. They lost only one game on their home court in four ball seasons, and the list goes on and on. They were also winners in the academic field. Cindy Smith, starting forward,

held a 4 point average, and so did many other girls on the team. The biggest and most lasting attainment these girls made, however, was helping instill a "desire to win" into the younger generation of basketball stars to come. ■

JO HAGERMAN of Sweetwater is classified as a Junior at SOSU. She enjoys writing, being with friends, and watching DAYS OF OUR LIVES on TV. She hopes to be a mother and career woman someday with a perfect balance in her life.

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Athletic "front"

The Cheyenne Athlete

By Glenn Hays

Victor could almost put his hand on the tension, pluck it and hear the music. The day of a game was a volatile time. Harmless though, to root for the White Horse Warriors in the last basketball game of their season; and the school activities were bonding agents for the community spirit, said Mayor Arthur Boole. The game would be played in the hole, a pit eight feet deep, with its bottom of tongue-in-groove boards and painted stripes and circles. Standing two feet outside the south end of the court was a black fat stove, its pipe running unbraced up through the high ceiling. The stove would hold no fire during play; it would nevertheless be guarded by a strong volunteer, who might well receive many congratulations for heading off a lost and frenzied player dashing for the basket. At the other end was the stage with its donated curtain covered by merchants' advertising. The curtain would be rolled up tight tonight and the tiny floor covered by chairs.

Lester Spyrene had the deal, but he didn't pick up the cards. He didn't want to play anymore. "Get me a pint, Red," he said. "Gotta be ready to celebrate tonight." Lester Spyrene was one of the town's independent businessmen. He didn't own a store. He was a trader, a swapper the townsmen called him. Mainly he listened. He'd learn what a man wanted, and then he'd learn who had it. He could arrange the swap or the sale so that neither the buyer nor the seller knew about the other. Sometimes he was more of an arranger than a trader. He was engaged in a wholesale, retail, cash and credit business that didn't require high capital outlays. Lester didn't hire a bookkeeper; he kept the books in his head and his pocket. Lester was gifted. Sometimes he'd put a deal together

that involved a whiskey still, a car, and a horse, and four or five men. He was friendly, and he had a reputation for honesty. Lester supported the basketball team. He'd bet five dollars on every game. His nephew, Sugar Spyrene, played on the team.

When he was away from his family, Victor was accustomed to the name Lester had called him. In his travels west nobody had ever asked his real name, just looked at his hair and called him Red. Its color was not far from blood bay, somebody had said one time, and kind of pretty. But it wouldn't cling to the contours of Victor's head in shapely waves like the hair of other men. It sprouted tough and springy like wild wire and blew about in the faintest wind.

Luther and Comfort Miles, whose back yard bordered the railroad right-of-way, operated a warehouse for the product of the Sandon stills. It was Comfort as usual, wearing a flesh-pink silken thing around her, who answered the door. She stepped back, struck a posture on her high heels, and gestured Victor inside, holding her red lips loosely parted like a voluptuary about to surrender to a ferment of passion. Comfort was an older woman, forty maybe, whose charms made Victor dream of nestling against her motherly flesh, then waiting while she instructed him what to do next.

"Mornin', Comfort," he said. "Three pints to start with, I reckon. Got one sold already."

Comfort disappeared into the kitchen, made some clinking sounds, and brought the flat amber bottles to Victor. He slipped each bottle under the bib of his overalls and fitted it into a tight pocket of his whiskey belt. Then he made sure the tail of his blue shirt would hide it all. Some folks knew what was there,

but they'd never tell. Not if they wanted to keep on drinking good Sandon whiskey.

Victor stood as wide as he could among the jostlers on the narrow balcony. They took no notice of him, neither the scholars of White Horse High nor the dry-mouthed parents of the players. In sweaty and emulous agitation they screamed against his eardrums and stepped on his feet. He had soon been separated from sisters Melody, Maissie, and Trina. They now stood pinned against the safety rail, cheering the warriors in their mad sprints down the floor and their fights for the round leather ball.

Victor, whose education had ended with the sixth grade reader, never had touched a basketball. It was only with a detached and tolerant approval that he watched the players in their furious exercise. He approved the behavior of the spectators not at all; often in fact he wanted to kick some sense into them, especially when they cursed the ball for not falling through the circle. And poor Asa Peterman, who was running frantically after the boys and blowing desperately on his whistle — these feverish people were always yelling out how blind, unfair, and insane Asa was. But Victor attended these public gatherings to sell whiskey, and it wouldn't do to kick his customers. The anxious antics of Lester Spyrene, Victor could comprehend. As usual, Lester had placed a five-dollar bet on the White Horse Warriors.

Even as a spectator of basketball, Melody Sandon went her own way. She watched only one player, crying her agony if he pushed up a ball that didn't swish through the net, screaming a passionate jubilation when he succeeded in some heroic effort. One time she appeared not to draw enough

breath. She placed the back of her hand on her brow, fell back against a support post, and closed her eyes. Maisie and Trina went to her. When Melody could talk again, she repeated what she had already said a dozen times: "Oh, Damon my prince, be resolute!"

Damon was a lithe, long-muscled Cheyenne with spring steel in his bowed legs. He was the only Indian in the twelfth grade. He could jump higher, run faster, and shoot straighter than any other boy on the team. Mister Perth, given a sports book when he arrived in town and told he had to teach basketball in addition to mathematics and geography, had been telling around that Damon was the greatest player he ever coached. Even betting men such as Lester Spyrene, when they could quit lamenting the diminishing skills of white players, said if Damon's pigeon feet could be pointed straight ahead, he would be greater than Jim Thorpe. Damon bought his haircuts from a white barber. He wore Khaki pants and real shoes. He was a long distance down the white man's road. He was the grandson of Chief Crow Talking.

Asa Peterman blew his whistle. Both coaches jumped up swinging their closed fists above their heads. The players on the benches swept onto the court. Lester Spyrene swore several times in a single breath. A dozen men from Canadian City, huddled for protection at the north end of the balcony, were protesting the violence done to their player by number five. Their faces grew splotchy with indignant rage as they predicted an unfair ruling by the no-account referee.

What Victor had seen was a vigorous disagreement over the ball and the risen ire of Sugar Spyrene. Sugar plastered his fist on the Canadian City player's nose, causing him to fall down bleeding. The problem for Asa was dreadful. The score was now twenty-two to twenty-one, and playing time was shrinking so rapidly that Professor Galsby was keeping anxious eyes on his stop watch all the time.

Asa pulled his handkerchief and swabbed the fallen player's face, and when he had reduced the blood to red smears, he held up two fingers. The injured boy made a correct count. Asa held off the visiting coach and encircled each player with an arm. The peace council began, and it lasted so long that somebody yelled at last, "Play ball, else we goin' ahead without no referee."

Sugar shook hands with his victim. Both players stayed in the game. Wonderful sportsmanship, said Lester and all the White Horse folks. A plain evasion of the game's rules, screamed the visitors in their tantrum, and they questioned Asa's parentage in several harsh but colorful ways. Professor Galsby got his watch in position.

The teams exchanged a rush of field goals in the game's ebbing time. Canadian City led the boys in green twenty-six to twenty-five. "Oh, Damon my prince," cried Melody with shallow breathing, "rally your warriors!" Lester clenched his fists and pleaded with Sugar to "do somethin'!" The floors creaked under stomping feet. The shrieking pleas rebounded off the walls, charging the space with chest-wrenching moans of impending defeat. Even Victor, uneasy in the presence of all that suffering, was breathing through a parched and open mouth. He said, "Do somethin', Damon, do somethin'!"

Professor Galsby was on his feet, the whistle in his mouth; his face revealed the distress of a man who all next week must command a school defeated in its last game.

Damon lunged, body horizontal, and clawed the ball, clung, and flung his tenacious opponent to the floor. Asa leaped forward blowing his whistle and held his arms high. The two players must jump for possession of the ball.

Asa tossed up. Damon sprang out of his crouch, followed the ball to the summit, and touched it with his fingers. He hung there treading air and flicked the ball spinning on a lofty arc. It fell to the bottom of the net, whapping the woven cords and whipping them upward through the hoop where they tangled into a knot.

Struck mute, the people were. The ball slapping down on the floor and dribbling itself to a roll occupied them altogether. The players became a tableau of stilled motion. Damon turned his head away from the basket, looked at the balcony, back at the basket, and on to the scoring table. The boy with the chalk wouldn't write down the new score. The professor wouldn't take his eyes off the watch. Damon peered with suspicion from under his brows. Maybe he was wondering what the people wanted him to do next. But maybe he suspected these whites were going to do something crazy. Professor Galsby blew his whistle and then fell back on his chair, sprawled, breathing.

Then came the roar of voices that would be forever beyond the descriptive powers of witnesses to that game. Victor did hear somebody swear he saw the walls of the building move. Mysteriously, Melody brought such intensity to her own shrieks that Victor heard her above all other sound, and yet she didn't rupture anything. She was climbing over the rail all the while, her skirt flung so high on her that someone might well have seen her white underwear. She hung down and dropped into the pit. She sprinted for Damon, who now stood hands on knees, sucking air into his heaving chest. She straightened him, embraced him, and soaked up the sweat on him. Damon braced himself for Melody's assault and peered this way and that. Then his teammates, unable to expend their sudden charge of jubilation, cornered into delirium, dragged him away, pounding and pulling. Damon wrapped his arms around his head.

Five shirts were torn off the backs of their owners that night. The board members went into emergency session right there in the pit, re-elected Coach Perth to his job for the following year and raised his annual salary fifty dollars. Then they re-hired Professor Galsby, raised him seventy-five dollars, and instructed him to see to renewal contracts for all the other teachers.

The Indians who attended the game, though grinning pleasantly when they realized that Damon had covered himself with glory, couldn't equal the enthusiasm of their white friends. Some of them might not have known who won the victory. They had observed the spectators and their agonies with more pleasure than they had watched the players. Chief Crow Talking had sat in a chair on the stage, and after the game he received many congratulatory handshakes. His heart was glad, he said. He had smiled through the whole game.

Leo Trant, city marshal for the past thirteen months, saw to the safety of the visitors from Canadian City. He escorted them to their cars and gravely shook their hands. He tried to make them feel welcome to come for another visit; but their departure was solemn, even morose, he later told the mayor and all who would listen. Leo declined to take full credit for the escape operation. He was helped considerably by the White Horse men, who in their charity had volunteered not to start a fight. Having an official escort to their cars made a strong impression on the

visitors from Canadian City, Leo said. Lester Spyrene pumped the water used by Damon and his teammates to slosh off their sweat. Victor sold thirteen pints of whiskey. He never did hear how many the other salesmen sold.

Victor delivered the first seven bottles across the road from the schoolhouse, now dark inside but still the place of magic echoes for the young folks in the school yard. They couldn't leave, couldn't let their greatest victory escape into the past, couldn't go home to dim lamplight and crawl between their blankets, not with this new glow of legendary still on their skins.

Stuffing the seven dollars into his pocket, Victor crossed over to the school yard. He could hear the excited babble of players and girls, his sisters among them. Off by themselves were the boys from last year and the year before, waiting, then leaping in to spin their own tales of courage and acrobatics in the pit. Melody stood close to Damon straightening his collar. She moved to his other side and brushed something from his jumper. Even now Damon was peeking one way and another from under his brows. Not likely would he ever again receive so many blows and scratches and dangerous embraces, no matter what valorous deed he might perform.

Victor invited his sisters to meet him later in the drugstore where he would treat them to Coca Colas. "Bring Damon," he added.

Dell Sandon must have spent the whole evening with Luther and Comfort. He had been there when Victor went after the first seven bottles, and here he was, still visiting with them. Victor got his whiskey, and Dell opened the door for his exit and followed him outside. "Victor, you're doin' real good tonight," he said.

"I guess Damon Crow Talking had somethin' to do with it," Victor answered, and told him how the game had ended. "You know. The old chief's grandson."

"I might've sold some myself," Dell said, "but Luther had a fit of coughin'. I thought I ought to stay and help. My, but that poor man does suffer!"

Luther Miles was a war hero. He had been a soldier against the Huns, had volunteered in fact, and had sailed across the ocean in a big ship. It was while the Americans were helping out the French in one of those killing battles that Luther found three Germans out of their trench. He killed them with

his rifle. In a ceremony with other heroes he received a medal for bravery under fire and a kiss from a French general with a mustachio.

Luther would show his medals to anybody, but he wore them only when he attended his veterans' conventions.

Not long after Luther got his medal, his division was the target for a mustard gas attack. Luther's gas mask didn't fit his face. Temporarily blinded, he had a long stay in the hospital, and the army sent him home a disabled veteran. He lived on his pension and the little commissions he got for warehousing the whiskey. Luther considered himself a retired man of means, and except for his occasional day in bed he dressed in his brown suit and matching tie. Lately, though, the suit had begun to look almost like an unfilled sack on him. Luther was losing weight.

"Business gonna pick up soon," Dell was saying. "What we need, I reckon, is a corner on the Indian trade." He put his hand on the door knob. "Anyhow, soon as I git caught up on my sugar bill, I'm gonna start payin' you some money."

"All right, Papa." "Some money" would be a start, and welcome. As matters were now, Victor could make more money milking cows for a farmer than he could selling whiskey for Dell. He went directly through Kendall's Castle and delivered the whiskey in the darkness behind the building. Then he headed toward the drugstore.

All the notions and edibles in the White Horse Drugstore had their elegant smells. The dominant smell, though, was of vanilla, the sweet currents of vanilla drifting into his nostrils. He took a long breath and went where Damon, Melody and her sisters were gathered in their wire-backed chairs at the little round table. In motion around them were basketball players living their game again, each telling the others of his own clash with his opponents from Canadian City. When they walked behind Damon, they let their hands rest on his shoulder. Then Damon would lift his face of light bronze and golden glints, let them see his tentative grin, and peek from under his brows. But most of his attention he gave to Melody.

When the drinks came, Damon tilted his glass, drained it, and took a mouthful of ice. Victor went to the fountain for another, and while he was waiting for it to be concocted, he thought again about their business problem, how to advertise their illegal merchandise.

Greedy men with small thoughts about immediate profits might not even consider what Victor had thought of doing.

First, Papa had said, they must distill a superior product. No maggots nor snakes in the mash. Neither lead nor lye nor tobacco juice in the whiskey. Made by a tender recipe, aged in oak, and bottled by Dell Sandon, whose word was his bond. Quality was to the good, certainly. But now they had to find a way to tell all the drinkers how good the Sandon whiskey really was.

Leo Trant came by on his last inspection of the town, looking for drunk men lying in doorways, assuring himself that the town's merchandise lay secure behind locked doors. He peered through the glass, entered smiling, went directly to Damon and made a congratulatory slap on his back. "You done a good job out there tonight," said Leo. "We're mighty proud of you and the boys here." Leo stayed in touch with the folks in his town. He bragged on them when they did good deeds. He told Mayor Boole every once in a while that he was not the town's boss, after all, but the town's friend. Leo pulled his shoulders back, and his little paunch went forward. He looked at Victor, nodded curtly, and left the drugstore.

Midnight came. Maisie and Trina were nodding off. The drugstore was about to be closed. If Victor didn't get these girls home now, Mama would be in a sulk with them all day tomorrow, and at the table he'd be barely welcome.

Worked hard by excessive juices and terrible tensions during the game, they were drained now, ready to lie down. They shambled yawning west past Greasy Dean's and then turned south. They had taken from their special night all that it could give them. Now it was a memory. Now it was a story to tell.

They strolled to the beginning of the curve where the narrow driveway diverged on its way up the Sandon hill. Melody took Damon's hand and brushed her cheek against his. "Remember what all we talked about tonight, my true friend, and thank you for the most thrilling game we'll ever, ever see."

His face a puzzled quirk still, Damon affirmed his agreeableness with a quick nod. He watched as Melody swung away with all her grace, and strode with diverting motions up the hill.

"I'll walk around the curve with

you," Victor said. "Start you home." They strolled on, stepping wide, their wobbles the kind that little boys mimic when they strut like grown men. "You don't talk much, Damon."

"White people like quiet Ind'ns."

"And basketball players. Your grandpa left the school-house laughin' tonight. He was proud."

"Grandfather remembers you, Sandon. Your knots wus hard."

"Reckon you like school pretty good," Victor said.

"Melody reads th' stories to me. I draw pitchers of th' animals and people and houses. Th' teachers give hunnerds on all my pitchers."

Fifty steps past the graveyard Victor said, "Wait here. I'll just be a few minutes." He went into the timber, found the cache, and was soon on the road again. "Here," he said holding the whiskey bottle forward. "A present for your grandpa." Damon took the bottle, nodded, and walked away. Victor watched until he couldn't see the pigeon-footed stride in the darkness; then he turned and walked back past the graveyard. ■

GLENN HAYS is a free-lance short-story writer and novelist from Bend, Oregon.

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**FIRST
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Camargo's internationally known son

James Milford Zornes

"Internationally Known Western Oklahoma Artist"

By Geneva Holcomb Wise

Milford Zornes, internationally known watercolorist brought a one-man exhibition of his paintings to the Plains Indians and Pioneer Museum in Woodward, Oklahoma. His show which opened September 17, 1987, was the result of an invitation sent to him, August 1986, by Sarah Taylor, Project Director, for the museum. She wrote:

"Since you were born at Camargo near Woodward, we thought it would be convenient for you to show in our gallery during the month of your workshop at Oklahoma City."

"You were born here!" Others said. "You are one of us."

As he traveled northeast across the Panhandle to Woodward in his van, he viewed the land of his birth. He was born on his grandfather's farm at

Camargo, January 25, 1908, where his grandfather settled just after 1889, and where he stayed even during the terrible dust storms of the 1930's.

As he drove he observed the red rolling prairie lands he describes as "red gashes of erosion with a few trees, mostly black jack oaks in the draws and shallow canyons." Sagebrush was here and there and jackrabbits bounded from cover when disturbed, and an occasional rattle snake slithered by. Hawks, crows and blackbirds circled overhead. Roadrunners scurried across the road in front of his car.

When asked what made him become an artist, he said:

"Memories of my early childhood made me realize that in those days there was little communication. Travel

and transportation was limited. There was a longing for something beyond the far rim of that windswept world."

As he returned he found that he wanted to recapture something of the kind of bleak beauty that even a child could sense.

Milford's father, James Francis Zornes came from Kansas. His mother, Clara Delphine Lindsay Zornes came from Iowa to teach school. His parents met and married at Camargo.

Zornes remembers the primitive life his family led at Camargo. His father worked the land, enduring the extreme cold of winter and dusty heat of summer. Milford remarks that in his travels to foreign lands, he has seen this same experience in the life of a father who ekes out a bare existence working for



Milford and Pat Zornes with his painting, "Cimarron River."



Milford Zornes painting a watercolor for students at the Cimarron River.

his family, and even young children working in the fields.

Later his family moved to Boise, Idaho where he finished his junior year of high school. He has one sister, Virginia, three years younger than he, now Virginia Tognazzini, who lives in Santa Maria, California, and has five children and grandchildren.

Zornes speaks of the wonderful reception Lois Malin, Curator at Woodward, and others held for the opening of his one-man show. He visited with relatives and old friends he had not seen for a long time. They talked of the cattle drives and loads of wheat shipped from Woodward to Kansas City to market, and remembered the Indians dressed in their blankets and black hats. He saw his first airplane and rode in an automobile for the first time in Woodward when he was three years old.

Zornes and his family moved to California in 1925. His development as an artist and painter was in Southern California. He studied art at Pomona at the Claremont College and at the Otis Art Institute where he later taught art.

An interesting sidelight was that Zornes' father heard a professional violinist perform and wanted Milford to be a violinist. He bought him a 3/4 size violin when he was at Camargo and hired a barber to teach him. Later

he had lessons with a young girl and a nun in Idaho. In California, his father hired a professional violinist to teach him, who told his father he was not talented in violin so Milford was "off the hook."

Milford's father was in construction work in California, and wanted his son to go in with him, but Milford persevered in his desire to be an artist. His father was disappointed and was never much interested in his career as an artist although he did support him in his struggling years.

Zornes is identified with the California School of Watercolor painting. The April, 1987 issue of AMERICAN ARTIST is devoted to several artists of the California School including Milford. He is a past president of the California National Watercolor Society.

He was elected as an Associate of the National Academy of Design in 1964. He is a member of the American Watercolor Society, the Southwestern Watercolor Society (honorary member), Dallas, Watercolor West and the Utah Watercolor Society.

He has had numerous honors. He is in the World Biography, Who's Who in American Art, the California State Library and the California Register, and others.

He was the official artist for the U.S. Army in China, Burma and India,

1943-1945. He was Art Director for the Padua Hills Theatre, Claremont, California, 1955-1957.

Eighteen years ago Milford and Pat (his wife was the former Patricia Palmer) bought the studio home of Maynard Dixon, another California painter. This home at Mt. Carmel, Utah, is in a dramatic and colorful southern region just north of the Grand Canyon.

It is here, he says, that he views his life and work with a perspective that is now his own.

Milford Zornes is very much a family man, even though he is away from them conducting his workshops. He and Pat have a daughter, Maria Baker, Sacramento, who is Assistant Director of a zoo there. His son, Franz, by a former wife, Gloria Codd, is a computer expert for the Honeywell Corporation. He lives in Arizona and travels as a trouble shooter for the company. The Zornes have six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The Zornes have a second home, an apartment in an early-day restored home of a friend at Pomona.

Milford Zornes is a great artist, but he is equally great as a teacher of art. It is gratifying to see him striding along, carrying his portfolio and supplies, a slender athletic 6', 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " in height, his gray hair smoothly clipped and his blue eyes scanning the landscape for interesting sites for his class to paint. Or he is seated in the town square at Colima, Mexico, painting the facade across the street where the natives are shopping. Or he could be at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, with his class hopping over the rocks and painting the landscape below or the statues on the Acropolis itself. Or as in 1987, painting in the Green Isles of Ireland. He goes most often to Mexico where he conducts workshops for the International Training Programs at the University of Oklahoma for the past 17 years.

January 1988, he has already had a workshop at the Hacienda el Cobano, Colima, and another in the southern state of Chaipan in Mexico near Guatemala. A favorite site for a workshop is at Manzanillo, where freighters, yachts and passenger ships come into the Manzanillo Bay.

AMERICAN ARTIST published an article written by him in November, 1963, which was headed by a repro-

duction of his painting, "Beach Party," a watercolor which won the American Artist medal of Honor, at the American Watercolor Society National Exhibition.

A crowning achievement was a book published by the International Training Programs at the University of Oklahoma, entitled, "A Journey to Nicaragua" for which Zornes wrote the text, and 24 paintings produced by him in Nicaragua were reproduced in color in it.

Dr. Chilton Powell, Bishop Emeritus of the Oklahoma Diocese of the Episcopal Church, says in a foreword in the book:

"There he (Zornes) sits dipping his brushes in mixed colors catching and putting on paper a feel of humid atmosphere and of diffused bright lights. He is down along the shore looking toward headlands and toward the intense turquoise blue of the shallow water off the reef."

Dr. H. H. Hancock was a director of the International Training Programs at OU and President of the Volunteer Oklahoma Overseas Mission of the Oklahoma Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. The Milford Zornes trip was sponsored by the VOOM. Nicaragua has many Episcopalians on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, whereas the Pacific Coast on the other side, has a Spanish-Mestizo environment. Bluefields, Atlantic side, Dr. Hancock believed has a charm composed of British-American ancestry, and historic old buildings. Their lives are lived much as in 1920. Dr. Hancock urged Zornes to write the Nicaragua book.

When at Manzanillo as part of a workshop at Colima, this writer urged Milford to write a book on his technique. The book A JOURNEY TO NICARAGUA with its 24 beautiful paintings he produced on location in Nicaragua far exceeds expectations.

In the December, 1968 issue of SCENE (Southwestern Watercolor Society) he describes (in an article written by him) very well how he works, and still works in 1988.

Zornes believes that design is very important in art. His definition is as follows: "Design is a means to an end, a presentation of a thought graphically through an organization of space and color relationships." His paintings also have a contemporary feeling. He stays away from a strict, realistic presentation. He says:

"I let forms in Nature dictate my

style."

"If an artist is honest to the influences which have shaped his work and honest in his interpretations, personal style will emerge."

He uses quality papers such as 300 weight D'Arches which do not require stretching. He uses 4 or 5 brushes including a fine pointed long haired Japanese brush, a wide flat oxhair, a one inch flat sable wash brush and a number sixteen round ox hair. These are the most used.

His palette consists of warm and cool colors, whether one or a dozen, and black. Unlike many artists who do not use black he uses it to make a neutral color but says it must be used sparingly. He is fond of Naples yellow and very little white.

He is represented in many permanent collections including the San Diego Museum, Los Angeles County Museum, Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Pentagon Building, White House Collection, Library of Congress, and the Corcoran Gallery all of Washington, D.C. — also the Butler Museum, Youngstown, Ohio, The National Academy of Design, New York, Utah State University, and others.

He is represented in numerous private collections such as Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Washington, D.C., Senator

Elmer Halseth, Rock Springs, Wyoming; Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Rockefeller, New York; Mr. Gene Crain, Newport Beach, California; Dr. and Mrs. Peter Otis, Santa Ana, California; and many others.

In Oklahoma, collectors include: Dr. and Mrs. Joe Warriner, Oklahoma City; Mr. Eugene Atkins, Tulsa; Mr. Jack Allred (artist), Stillwater. Also Mrs. Evelyn Barthelemy, New Orleans and others.

Zornes spoke of his teaching and workshops:

"Teaching painting is relating to people through the language of art. One tries to create a student much as one would create a picture." (From SCENE, SW Watercolor Society, Dallas)

Many of Zornes' students have become very successful artists, who are accepted in juried regional and national shows.

Truly he is a great artist and effective teacher of art who was born at Camargo, Oklahoma, but has been nurtured by California and the world. ■

GENEVA HOLCOMB WISE, Stillwater, has been a free-lance writer for over fifty years and a free-lance artist for over thirty years. She has attended workshops conducted by Zornes, the subject of her article.



Milford Zornes with a painting showing his contemporary approach.



The Artist's Responsibility

By Claude D. Kezer

THE PERFORMING ARTIST IS IN A POWER POSITION. THE POWER IS SOCIAL INFLUENCE.

WHAT MESSAGE DOES THE ARTIST WISH TO CONVEY THROUGH THE ART HE CREATES?

IN ORDER TO KNOW THE ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING QUESTION, THE ARTIST MUST UNDERSTAND HIMSELF AND HAVE A GRASP OF HIS PURPOSE FOR BEING IN THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE AT THIS TIME.

THE IDEA HELD BY THIS WRITER IS THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME ORIGINAL GOALS — TO BE HAPPY, TO BE PERSONALLY SUCCESSFUL, AND TO BE CONTRIBUTORS TO ALL THE POSITIVE FORCES IN LIFE. IF ALL SHARED IN THESE SAME GOALS, THERE WOULD BE FEW WORRIES ABOUT NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON OUR GENERAL PUBLIC AND ESPECIALLY OUR YOUTH. AN ARTIST WOULD NEVER ACCEPT A ROLE THAT MAKES EVIL APPEAR GOOD, WRONG-DOING APPEAR FUN, HARMFUL ACTS APPEAR HARMLESS.

YES, THE ARTIST REFLECTS LIFE, BUT A LESSON SHOULD BE LEARNED IN EACH LIFE EXPERIENCE.

YES, THE ACTOR DIDN'T WRITE THE SCRIPT AND HAS NO RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SCRIPT. HOWEVER, IF THE SHOW OFFERS NO OPPORTUNITY FOR A POSITIVE INFLUENCE TO BE EXPRESSED, THE ACTOR CAN TURN DOWN THE ROLE.

KNOWING THESE TO BE DRASTIC STEPS IN THE COMPETITIVE RAT RACE FOR JOBS IN THEATRE, IF THE ACTORS FOLLOWED THEM, THEN THE WRITERS WOULD PROBABLY BEGIN TO TURN OUT QUALITY SHOWS.

TOO MANY SHOWS TODAY HAVE NO REDEEMING GRACES. WITH "FREEDOM OF SPEECH" ALLOWING TOO MUCH FREEDOM FOR RADICAL AFFRONTERY OF GOOD-TASTE, THERE HAS BEEN LOST ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF THE THEATRE...THE AUDIENCE'S OPPORTUNITY TO THINK AND TO USE ITS IMAGINATION. THE WRITING AND THE ACTING

HAVE DROPPED TO A THIRD-CLASS MENTALITY AND MORALITY.

SHAKESPEARE SAID, "BE THOU FAMILIAR BUT BY NO MEANS VULGAR." THE CONTEMPORARY ACTORS AND AUTHORS SHOULD LEARN FROM THE BARD. JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING IS OLD DOESN'T MEAN IT IS OUT OF STYLE. LIFE, WATER, REPRODUCTION, AND GOOD TASTE ARE ALL OLD, BUT WILL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE. I DON'T SUGGEST TAKING THE SPICE OUT OF THE MEAL. INNUENDO, INSINUATION, DOUBLE ENTENDE — ALL ARE USUALLY HARMLESS AND REQUIRE MATURITY AND THOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE.

ONLY WHEN WIT AND IMAGINATION ARE FAILING MUST THE DESPERATE ARTIST TURN TO FILTH.

ONLY WHEN THE SOCIETY IS FAILING IS IT ENTERTAINED BY FILTH.

AUTHORS AND ACTORS CAN, NO, MUST TURN THE CURRENT TREND AROUND. AS THE OLD SONG SAYS, ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE AND ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE.

THIS DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THE NEGATIVE BE IGNORED AND ONE ONLY LOOK AT LIFE THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES; RATHER IT SUGGESTS THAT BENEFICIAL AND DETRIMENTAL FORCES BE DEALT WITH HONESTLY, WITH COMMON SENSE, AND GOOD TASTE.

TOO MANY PEOPLE IN POWER POSITIONS — SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE IMPRESSED WITH THEIR POWER — WOULD HAVE THE PUBLIC BELIEVE THAT BLACK IS WHITE AND WHITE IS BLACK.

I BELIEVE THAT A POSITIVE, GOOD, BENEFICIAL DIRECTION SHOULD BE TAKEN THROUGH THE ARTS, AND THAT ANY SUBJECT DEALING WITH THE CRASS, MUNDANE SIDES OF LIFE OFFER SOLUTIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF POSITIVE FULFILLMENT RATHER THAN MAKING THE CRASS AND MUNDANE SEEM DESIRABLE.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT MANY OF OUR WRITERS AND PERFORMERS OF TODAY HAVE EITHER

NEVER READ THE GREAT ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHERS; OR IF THEY HAVE READ THEM SUFFER FROM THE SAME AFFLICTION SO MANY OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAVE — FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY, READING WITHOUT COMPREHENSION.

IF OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD CANNOT LEARN FROM THE PAST AND APPLY THE BEST OF THE LESSONS TO CONTEMPORARY BEHAVIOR, THEN HUMANITY IS DOOMED TO REPEAT ITS MISTAKES AND FAIL AGAIN.

ALL THE ARTS — POINTED IN THE PROPER DIRECTION OF SELF-DISCIPLINE AND PROGRESS, AS OPPOSED TO A FREE SWINGING FALL TO THE MUNDANE — IN A CONCERTED EFFORT FOR SOCIAL PROGRESSION CAN MOVE THE WORLD TOWARD PEACE, COMPASSION, UNDERSTANDING, FORGIVENESS, TOLERANCE, PATIENCE, ALL OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF LOVE.

THE ARTIST'S OBLIGATION IS TO BE THE BENEFICIENT EXAMPLE, THE LEADER OF THE WORLD TO EXCELLENCE.

WHERE WE HAVE FAILED OR ARE FAILING IN THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF EDUCATION — ESTABLISHING PERSONAL DISCIPLINE, BUILDING PERSONAL CHARACTER, AND TEACHING THE VITAL ART OF THINKING — OUR PERFORMING ARTS, DUE TO THEIR UNIQUE POWER POSITION, CAN SUCCEED IN THIS VITAL AREA OF CONCERN TO OUR NATION AND THE WORLD.

THE ARTIST HAS BEEN GIVEN A MARVELOUS GIFT. HOWEVER, WITH THE GIFT COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. THE RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE FULFILLED ONLY BY USING THE GIFT POSITIVELY — NOT JUST FOR ITS ENTERTAINMENT VALUE BUT IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT MOVES MANKIND TOWARD BENEFICIAL PROGRESS.

IT'S YOUR ART. USE IT; DON'T ABUSE IT. ■

CLAUDE D. KEZER, SOSU Speech-Theater professor, is a performing artist, director, and writer.

changes

Fences Losing Rustic Charm

By Margie Snowden North

When American pioneers settled the prairies and plains, wood for fence posts was usually scarce, if not nonexistent. They sometimes solved this dilemma by planting thorny shrubs such as Osage orange, which grew thick enough to fence in animals.

It was this thorned shrub that inspired the invention of barbed wire by Joseph Glidden, an Illinois inventor, in 1873.

Glidden first demonstrated his unorthodox idea of fencing ranges with this new-fangled, treacherous-looking wire in the Texas Panhandle. Along with his sales agent, H. B. Sanborn, he bought a large tract of land, comprising some 143 sections, in Potter and Randall Counties.

He enclosed this land with his unlikely invention at a cost of \$39,000, using cedar posts procured mainly from Palo Duro Canyon.

Stapled to the posts were four rows of this barbed and twisted wire that would quickly prove indispensable to farmers and ranchers nationwide.

The demonstration fence measured 120 miles, and was without doubt a huge success.

It wasn't until a decade later that barbed wire fences with hand-cut posts began making their appearance in Oklahoma Territory.

Because wells and windmills had made their appearance in the meantime, it was now possible to isolate herds anywhere on the range where there was an adequate water supply.

Other advantages soon became obvious. With enclosed pastures, settlers found they could upgrade the quality of their cattle by placing certain types of bulls with particular kinds of cows.

Barbed wire reduced the number of men needed to patrol cattle or to keep out neighboring brands. Strays were seldom a problem.

Glidden's invention had caught on like wildfire by the 80s, and today, more than a century later, literally thousands upon thousands of miles of fences have sectioned off pastures, separated farms and ranches, or enclosed roadways.

When my interest in fences began a few years ago, I would find myself riding along studying the posts, watching them express themselves. Each one has a story to tell, a personality trait inherent, a marked 'distingue', a presence.

Some of them are particularly outspoken, freely voicing opinions to passersby, some deep in conversation with the post nearby. Others are tired, sagging a little, ready and willing to bow out and make room for the new generation.

A few of them are withdrawn, thinkers. Some are frazzled and hassled, but hanging in there with little more than raw determination and sheer intestinal fortitude.

Not surprisingly, others are somewhat bitter. They have done their duty, have sacrificed a lifetime — now many will be tossed into the scrap heap or bulldozed ruthlessly and buried. Some will burn.

On our ranch we have both old and new fences. The old will one day be replaced, just as they are all across Oklahoma. The exchange will be out of expediency and practicality, not due to a lack of hospitality.

They've served us well. We're grateful, but progress is logical and necessary, if sometimes cold, and the lack of finances is all that stands between our seasoned fences and their replacements.

The old fences can't last much longer. Even today, if we are to see the ones with personality, we usually must turn off the super highways and take to the side roads. It's well worth the effort.

Take your camera! Take your time! Listen to the fence posts speak! ■

First appeared in OKLAHOMA RURAL NEWS — September, 1986



Many of today's fences, while totally utilitarian, lack the rustic charm and character of those of yesteryear.

One day all the old fence posts — sometimes gnarled, usually bent or otherwise flawed, but always distinctive — will be replaced by modern, straight, stark, sterile ones. It will be a sad day.

SAGA OF THE COTTONWOOD

By Ernestine Gravley

Illustration by Paul Stone

Hardship was an accepted part of daily life as the early settlers of Western Oklahoma wrested themselves a living from the land, enduring the rigors of extreme heat and cold and the dust storms of the plains. Many were among the hordes of Easterners who pushed forward to settle the entire American West. Surprisingly, one native tree growing along the trails played a significant role in that settlement.

Cottonwood windbreaks were a welcome sight to many a weary traveler in the early days. The large handsome tree is now so commonplace that today, we may sometimes take it for granted. Not so the cattlemen, farmers, the sodbusters and town builders. They found it almost as vital to the westward trek as the streams along which it flourished.

Campfires of its branches roasted buffalo and wild game for many a hungry settler. Horses that might otherwise have starved survived on cottonwood bark.

The lightweight logs were sometimes lashed together with rawhide to form a raft for carrying belongings across swollen streams and rivers.

Easterners leaving the dense shade of their hardwood forests welcomed our tall stands of cottonwood promising relief from the flat, endless wastes, and rest for weary eyes nearly blinded by the shimmering heat of western plains.

Beneath its rustling, "rainy sounding" bright green leaves, the pioneer held protracted meetings to praise the Almighty for His care and keeping. Here he buried his dead, pronounced his marriage rites, camped with his sick, repaired his wagons. With good reason, he called the cottonwood by the name of a near relative, "balm of Gilead."

Chuckwagon cooks and dugout dwellers alike gathered the small, brittle branches swept off by strong winds across the flat plains. Twisted, knotted and dry as bleached bones, these cottonwood fragments burned brightly against the chill of bleak northers.

A cottonwood windbreak was often the difference between desolation and snug comfort on the wide prairies. One old timer tells of dragging about a bushel basket when he was a small boy, and of filling it with fallen cottonwood twigs for the wood stove in their prairie shanty. "I cracked sticks across my knee," he said. "The larger branches were propped against the tree trunks and battered to stove size with the heel of my hightops."

Gertie Stephens, who lived across the South Canadian from Shattuck in the small town of Durham, remembered the cottonwoods fondly. "I recall the cottonwood grove along a creek where we dragged the fallen limbs to our woodlot to be cut into stove lengths. All winter long, our indoor activity centered about that cozy little metal stove, studying our lessons by lamplight, visiting with neighbors and reading the Bible.

"The old stove heated bath water for the Saturday night scrubs before we climbed into long-handled underwear for the week. It burned mostly fallen cottonwood limbs or 'driftwood' washed up from the river. There we cooked great iron pots of beans, homemade hominy, bouncing popcorn, fresh pork backbones. It was where the diapers were boiled to a sanitary white brightness. It dried the laundry strung across makeshift lines from corner to corner and draped over the backs of cane-bottom straight chairs."

This too was a part of settling the wide spaces of Western Oklahoma. Children used the forked limbs of the cottonwood for "peashooters," and attached swings to the spreading branches of the tree. Pods of the cottonwood flowers made peashooter ammunition. Small girls found a variety of uses in their playhouses for the bright green cottonwood pod.

The cottonwood benefitted the Indians before the white man arrived. Plains tribes often structured their tipis upon cottonwood poles. Adobe hogans farther west sometimes had frameworks

of cottonwood...about the only type of tree to be found. The inner bark was shredded to make Mojave skirts, and buckskin dresses were decorated with dyes made from cottonwood buds.

One historian recorded how Jedediah Smith, in 1827, built a breastwork of fallen cottonwood against the Mojaves on the Colorado River. "We made a weapon thus," Smith wrote. "We fastened our butcher knives with cords to the ends of the lightweight cottonwood poles to make a tolerable lance."

Army issue mules and Indian horses of George Custer lived on cottonwood bark during a clash with the savages along the Arkansas River in the winter war of 1868-69. "The pony," Custer wrote, "Accustomed to this kind of long forage, would place one forefoot on the limb...as a dog secures a bone...and gnaw bark from it."

Horse thieves and cattle rustlers frequently swung from cottonwood limbs in the early days, paying their debts to society. Ellie Watson, alias Cattle Kate, met her Maker one hot summer day in 1889 when a mob of masked homesteaders hanged her from a cottonwood near Steamboat Rock, along with her sidekick, Jim Averill.

The cottonwood (*Populus canadensis*) grows quickly and matures early. Its ease of propagation and rapid growth caused it to spring up all over the plains. Homesteaders once launched small prairie lumber businesses based on the cottonwood, but the tree is poor for lumber. It is soft, warps easily and becomes brittle when dry. Though poor for sawn lumber, cottonwood lent itself well to log construction.

A cottonwood ridge pole hauled from the bank of some nearby stream supported the roofs of most homestead sod houses. A less hardy tree might have been wiped out, but the prolific cottonwood grows from stumps and even fence posts. It grows more rapidly than does any other American tree.

Several generations who, in the pioneering drama, trekked across the

country and settled in Western Oklahoma followed the trail of the humble cottonwood. Without this tree the history of this state and nation might have been different. Beckoning the settler westward, it made a cool shade for the weary traveler. It supported his sod house, provided fodder for his animals, wood for his fires, logs for his dwellings, a windbreak against the cold...and beauty on the face of the land. ■

ERNESTINE GRAVLEY, co-founder of the OWFI and founder-director of Shawnee Writers, is a devoted supporter of and contributor to WESTVIEW.



praise

Driving to Kingfisher on a Summer's Morning

By Glen V. McIntyre

Wheatfields bow to the west wind,
two white cranes cross the trickling stream,
a single meadowlark sits and sings for its breakfast and
all the while,
shining on the horizon,
drenched in azure
the city wakes to golden sunlight,
towers of alabaster indefinite
in early morning light;
"We have often sung your praises
but we have not told the half."

Note: Last two lines taken from "Oklahoma A Toast," the first Oklahoma state song.

Western Oklahoma beauty

Cumulus Clouds

By Sheryl L. Nelms

a gallon of
rich
country cream

hand-whipped
into stiff
peaks

flung
from the beater

into dollops
across the blue oilcloth

SHERYL L. NELMS, now of Tucson, has roots in Kansas and South Dakota. She has the distinction of being the most prolific published poet of the OWFI.

surprise probate

Marthey's Choice

By Lu Spurlock

When Marthey Wentworth breathed her last, I told Stephen he'd done all he could; he should go on to work. Then I called Marthey's high-falutin' sister, Viola Fetherspoon in New York City, and her brother, J. Fredrick.

Viola Fetherspoon and J. Fredrick didn't know Marthey had cancer, but I guess they can't be blamed for that. She wasn't much on words, and she didn't have any use for Viola and J. Fredrick after they wouldn't help her take care of their mamma.

Viola said her mamma wouldn't fit in New York City and I think J. Fredrick was ashamed of her, him bein' bank president up in Willowsap, Oklahoma.

Viola and J. Fredrick said they were too busy to come to Fort Worth for their mamma's funeral, but Marthey said that wasn't the reason they didn't come. She said they knew their mamma willed her all she had. That old lady lived with Marthey for over twenty years.

Viola and J. Fredrick showed up for Marthey's funeral. They knew Marthey set great store by insurance, and as her only survivin' kin, I think they figgered Marthey left them a bundle.

They sent right respectable bouquets to the funeral home. 'Course Stephen's was the biggest, but mine was the prettiest. Me and Marthey's been friends ever since we started to school together in Shilo Springs.

Marthey studied nights and got her teachin' certificate pretty quick after we moved to Fort Worth. I never liked school much, so when Josh Peterson proposed I got married and started raisin' kids.

Marthey was pretty enough to find herself a husband, but she never had nothin' to do with men 'til after her mamma died. Then Marthey went wild. I talked to her about it once, but she just smiled and said she was sewin' her wild oats 40 years late.

I guess it was wild oats that made Marthey giggle because she never did before. It was a high tinkly sound, like she didn't want to laugh but was so happy

it popped out.

Marthey was 55 when she started going to see those male strippers. She tried to get me to go with her, but I told her Josh wouldn't like it. Truth of the matter is, I went once by myself. Those nekkid young men didn't appeal to me.

It wasn't that way with Marthey. She liked them all. She had pictures of them hanging in her living room, some of them with nothin' on, too.

The teachers at that Baptist college where Marthey worked thought it was sinful, her with cancer spending money on kisses from male strippers. They said it was their bounden duty to go with her one night to point out how sinful it was. Two of them went back three or four times trying to convince her.

Marthey just smiled and kept going to "He Bare" every Friday night. Stephen was her favorite; she said she loved him. I guess he liked Marthey pretty well too; leastways he liked those silk shirts she bought him.

I'll say this for Stephen; he spent Marthey's last days with her at the hospital. He told those nurses he was Marthey's son so they wouldn't run him out of her room.

Marthey smiled and held on to Stephen's hand. She smiled more those days than I'd ever seen her smile before. That last night layin' there in her pink ruffled nightgown she was better lookin' than when she was young.

I was at the funeral home when J. Fredrick and Viola saw her body, and I could tell they were surprised she looked so pretty. Another surprise was me bein' executor of the estate. They expected it to be Josh's brother Sam since he was a lawyer, but Marthey wanted me to do it. She did have Sam write the will so it would be good and legal.

Viola and J. Fredrick said they had to leave town right after the funeral, and they wanted me to read the will that day; but that wasn't what Marthey wanted. I made them cool their heels in Fort Worth for three days.

On Tuesday, September 14th at ten o'clock in the morning, I went down to Josh's brother's conference room to read the will good and proper. Stephen got there right after I did and waited, polite like always.

The surprise on J. Fredrick's and Viola's faces when they opened the door and saw Stephen was somethin' to see. Viola turned white and her lips pinched together in a thin red line. "What's he doing here," she demanded, in that New York accent she fakes.

I said, "Mrs. Fetherspoon, shake hands with Stephen Sontag. You too, Mr. Wentworth. You might as well get acquainted."

Stephen held out his hand, but Viola didn't touch it. Well, I never," she said and marched over to a high-backed chair where she sat stiffer'n a poker.

J. Fredrick nodded. With gray eyes that looked like bullets, he stared at Stephen, muttered "Sontag," and walked over to the head of the table where I sat. He tried to pick up the will. "I'm sure you want me to read this for you."

"Oh, no you don't." I picked up a paperweight and tapped his fingers a mite harder than necessary. He didn't say nothin' more, just sat down on the only leather chair in the room.

"Let's get on with it," Viola hissed, and the wart on her nose seemed to grow.

Stephen sat quiet, his biceps bulging against the sleeves of his white silk shirt.

Viola sucked in her breath when I unfolded the will. "State of Texas, County of Tarrant," I read.

"We know what state and county it is. Just read what she left us," J. Fredrick said.

"Of course, Mr. Wentworth."

Viola squirmed, then sat straight and imposin', staring at me.

I cleared my throat a couple of times. J. Fredrick turned steely eyes on me and I decided it'd be best not to delay the will readin' any longer. I read: "To my brother, J. Fredrick Wentworth, who always likes to make a good impression, I leave ten crisp one dollar bills."

"Surely, that's not all," he gasped.

"It is for you."

Breathing hard, J. Fredrick wilted.

"Quiet, please," I said in my business voice.

Ignoring Stephen, Viola chortled, "Big brother, you didn't win this time. She left it all to me."

I cleared my throat again and read: "To my sister, Viola Featherspoon, I bequeath my most valued possessions, the pictures hanging in my living room."

A smile spread across Viola's face. "I didn't know my little sister collected art. Good paintings are valuable. What else did she leave me?"

"That's all," I said. "But those pictures aren't paintings. They're beefcake."

Her mouth dropped open. "Beefcake? I don't understand."

"Posters," I said, "pictures of nekkid men."

Viola stood up looking like she was going to wring my neck. "The insurance, tell me about the insurance."

"There are two policies," I said, "one made out to

me to cover her bills and burial."

"And the other?"

"It's for a hundred thousand dollars. Stephen's the beneficiary."

"No!" she screamed.

J. Fredrick jumped up, and the way he clenched his fists those manicured fingernails of his must'a bit his palms. "She was crazy. We'll go to court."

Stephen rose. "I'm leaving. You know where to reach me."

I nodded.

When Viola and J. Fredrick went to court that winter, I had a ring-side seat.

Stephen's lawyer picked a jury of little old ladies. Then he put Stephen on the witness stand dressed in a good lookin' three-piece suit that fit him just right. Sitting there with his wavy blond hair brushed back nice and neat, he looked better'n one of those Greek gods.

I could tell those ladies liked jury duty, 'specially when Stephen's lawyer told them they had to study the posters he subpoenaed. They got all red faced and giggley, but it didn't take them long to decide Marthey was of sound mind when she made her choice.

And when that judge read the verdict, I'd swear on a stack of Bibles I heard Marthey giggle. ■

LU SPURLOCK publishes short fiction, poetry, and articles. A resident of Bedford, Texas, she teaches workshop classes in Dallas and Fort Worth and Continuing Education classes at Texas Christian University.

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well-directed energy

field hand

By Sheryl L. Nelms

working
day after day
in the heat
and dust

it was not the feel
of grasping green vines
clinging
to my skin
as I reached
through to the red

and it was not
that itchy yellow stain
on my arms

and it was not the taste
because there was never
time to eat
any

and it was not the sound
of the tractor
pushing us
along

the essence is there in
that nippy vine odor
one whiff puts me
back into
that hot
Kansas field

on hands and knees
sweating
back aching

picking

filling endless peck baskets
with red tomatoes

memories

North Elm Christian

By Sheryl L. Nelms

squared
solid beside
a meander of Mission Creek

it stood through a century

white steepled
stately pointing
the way

Mother and Father
married there
in lace and rice
in '39

Thanksgiving potlucks
I spent there
under the
kissings and pattings
and "my how tall you've grows"

then in '62
the year it was leveled
the Smiths convened
for Gram and Gramp's
golden celebration

seven tiers of angel food high

five generations caught
in one quick
click

forever
there



standing to serve

standing behind every farmhouse in Western Oklahoma

By Sheryl L. Nelms

porches
perch
on top
of limestone steps

wait

with their cistern pumps
white enameled sinks
and bars of Lava
to pumice corn planting
from calloused skin

five gallon buckets full
of sweet well water
ask to be sipped
from tin
dippers
to wash down
field dust

overalls
and flannel shirts
back the doors
beg for tired
bodies
to settle in

waiting

for the chance
to soften the edge
of farm
life

dream to reality

Splendor in the Pasture

By Margie Snowden North

Once I was a ballerina
twirling on bare toes in the sand,
gliding through pasture-shinnery and ox-eye daisies
kicking my leg high in the late afternoon sun.

The music in my head
was beautiful
and so was I
and the invisible crowds gasped and cheered
as I pirouetted on a corner post,
enveloped in a splendor
as tangible as the hot sun
on my back.

In the sand and shinnery my finale
was the dead-swan act
and the world stopped
and time hang suspended
and the crowds were stunned into silence
at so awesome a performance.

Then ole Daisy lowed,
questioning,
and the magic went in a poof
and I picked my way
barefoot through the hot sand and long shadows
and headed the cows toward home
for milking time.

outhouse blues

By Sheryl L. Nelms

so much of my early
life was spent
suspended

above that black
and gargoyled
pit

hanging there
in the cold
ammonia draft

remembering the horror
stories of a cousin
who disappeared
forever

when he was
grabbed
from

below

Seeing The Light A Sonnet for My Sons

By Sandra Soli

Who is to say the sun is not a fire
Made up of moons, old stones and tigereyes,
Bright coals to warm a chilled celestial choir?
Collected, burned, then hurled throughout the skies
By that Omnipotence who dwells past Mars,
Deciding, at the dawn of leisure games,
"As marbles these won't do — I'll call them stars,
A festival of lanterns, each with names!"
Whichever explanation suits you best,
Imagine, if you can, the wondrous light!
For even antic errors meant in jest
May lead to future miracles outright;
Exploding from a spark of perfect mind,
Most glorious stars and suns of every kind.

First Place — PSO — 1985

SANDRA SOLI, originally of England, is a prize-winning poet from Oklahoma City.

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 name) at the end of a do
 cument, or approval; c
 to certain measures/ 3.
 4. give, a sum of money, thea
 periodical, service, thea

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Watonga quackers

Just Ducky

By Rachele Stevins

Every day, every hour, every minute someone is being entertained. Everybody enjoys entertainment, especially if it makes them laugh. Anyone who has been entertained in the last fifty years has seen or at least heard of Donald Duck. Clarence Nash, the original voice of Donald, was a star from Western Oklahoma who had many likable qualities.

First of all there was the man, Clarence Nash. Born in Watonga on December 7, 1904, he attended grade school in Watonga and then moved to Independence, Missouri. In spite of the move, he still called Watonga his hometown. Many of Watonga's older townspeople remember how Clarence could pick up bird calls easily, or any other animal call for that matter. One man, Les Tompson, remembers Clarence making sparrow calls in class, and how the teacher soon had the whole class looking for the sparrow that must have been trapped in the room after flying in the window. He was brought up Catholic and attended the Catholic Church in Watonga on his last visit home. He has one relative still living in Watonga, his cousin, Mrs. Agnes Jacoby Tompson.

Another aspect of him is the Duck. Clarence played Donald for fifty years, and sometimes he said Donald just seemed to take over. For instance, Clarence and Donald (a hand puppet) would travel to many children's hospitals all over the country. One time when Clarence got to the part of the show where he imitated bird calls, one child asked him to do an eagle; well, Clarence wasn't sure what an eagle sounded like. Suddenly the puppet let out an enormous shriek — an authentic eagle's cry — blowing the sound system and short circuiting the lights. Clarence once said it scared the heck out of him.

Clarence started as the "Whistling Bird Man"; however, doing bird calls as a means of steady work did not seem too realistic, so he moved to San Francisco and went to work for Postal Telegraph. To supplement his income, he took to performing fifteen minutes



Clarence Nash with his friend, the duck.

of birdcalls for the Rotary and Kiwanis luncheons in return for a free meal. He and his wife, Margaret, moved to Los Angeles, and he got a job with the Adohr Milk Company. He was to be the Adohr Whistling Birdman. His job was to go from school to school telling kids to drink milk for healthy bodies and sound minds. His salary was thirty-five dollars a week, plus, all the milk, eggs, and cheese he and Mrs. Birdman could consume.

On his way to the Adohr Milk Company each day, he had to pass Walt Disney's studio there in Los Angeles. One day he walked into the studio and presented his card to the receptionist. His card proclaimed him as a "one man aviary who did bird concerts for the greater glories of milk." A director from Disney interviewed him, and after he performed "Mary had a Little Lamb" in Duckspeak, the man asked him to "please do that again; I'm putting Walt on intercom." Well, Clarence did it again and Walt said that "That's just the duck we're looking for." So on June 9, 1934, the quacking character, Donald, premiered in *THE WISE LITTLE HEN*.

During World War II, Disney turned to making films for the armed services. But Clarence and Donald were not washed up. There was still a place for them, making comedy shorts to help keep up the spirit and the country's sense of humor. It was during this time that *DER FUEHRER'S FACE* was made. This was nominated and won an Academy Award for Best Comedy Short in 1942. There were many characters added to Donald's family, but none so special as Donald himself.

A third aspect is the legend. Donald

Duck has been in 125 films and has comic strips in over one hundred foreign newspapers running today. There are comic books from back when Donald first appeared up to the present. Many countries including the Republic of San Marino and Bhutan have issued commemorative stamps in his honor. Besides winning an Academy Award in 1942, he has been nominated eight other times. Today the library of films on Donald is still presented to the estimated eight hundred thousand subscribers to the Disney Channel.

Clarence Nash made his last film in 1983, as Scrooge McDuck, Donald's ill-mannered old uncle in *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*. He came back to Watonga on December 7, 1984, when the celebrated Donald's fifty year birthday was observed. He visited old friends and family and then went to a dedication where they pronounced Hook Street with a new name, "Clarence Nash Boulevard." Clarence Nash died in the spring of 1985 from pneumonia, although he was suffering with cancer. All who knew him or had met him at the celebration were saddened, but they smile when they see Donald.

Yes, there were many wonderful characteristics about Clarence Nash. Probably everyone for years to come will enjoy the ill-mannered duck. Many will never know the man behind the voice of Donald Duck, but they will enjoy what he left behind, entertainment. For entertainment lives forever ■

RACHELLE STEBBINS, Watonga, is a SOSU Speech-Theater Junior. "Just Ducky" is her first work published in WESTVIEW.

Western Oklahoma success

Oklahoma Charlie

By Ruth Tittle

The old man sat in his wheel chair staring out in the stormy night. The wind blew the rain drops hard against the window causing a loud roar, but in his mind he heard applause. "That was great, Fred" shouted Morty, the short stocky man who had opened and closed the curtain of the Washita County Community Theater ever since its beginning ten years before, in 1914.

"Well, thank you, Morty," Fred said, "Pretty good if I do say so myself. In fact I think I'll go out an' bow for 'em one more time."

Fred, enjoying the loud applause, was unaware of the tall slender stranger who had appeared in the wings. With his left foot propped against the wall, match stick in his mouth and hat pulled down over one eye, the stranger looked more like the gansters on the silver screen down at the theater than a vaudeville entertainer. "Hey kid, you're good, but you could be better," the stranger said to Fred, as he was returning from his glorious triumph.

"Oh yea, mister? Who do you think you are?" Did you hear that applause?" Fred asked.

"Yea, kid I did, but that doesn't change what I said. You need a partner," the stranger said as he stood up straight, pushing his hat to the back of his head, "and tonight is your lucky night because I'm in the market for one."

"Look man, I don't know what makes you think I'd want a partner. I'm doing okay by myself, thanks," Fred said.

"Tell me kid, have you ever been to Broadway? Let me buy you a cup of coffee and I'll tell you how to get there."

All the way to the diner Fred wondered if he was crazy for even considering the idea. That kind of thing doesn't happen to just anybody, much less a country boy.

As they sat there in the diner, the stranger told of experiences and tri-

umphs that he had lived and that Fred had only dreamed of. There were endless stories of towns and people; Fred could not believe it when he looked up at the clock above the counter. It seemed like only five minutes, but it had been two hours. He knew it would soon be closing time, and the waitress who had been waiting for them to leave voluntarily would soon be demanding it. He had listened intently and eagerly to the stranger's fantastic stories despite his first misgivings. He now found himself dreading to ask the question that a few minutes ago he would have asked enthusiastically. Before he knew it, the words had spilled out of his mouth, "If you know all these people and played all these places, then what are you doing here?"

"Well kid, I guess you could say some bad luck came my way and I decided to come home for a while."

"You mean to tell me you're from,"

Before Fred could get the words out, the patient waitress had lost her patience and was standing over them holding the check, "Look, gents, it's 12:35, and I got off five minutes ago, so would you mind takin' your party elsewhere?" She glared.

"Well, I guess we'd better call it a night. She does look a bit tired," the stranger observed. He stood up and walked over to the register and paid the check. He smiled at the waitress and pushed open the door.

The two men walked out onto the deserted street: they walked in silence to the corner. "Well it's been nice talking to you. I think I'll turn in," the stranger said, turning to walk away.

"Hey, wait a minute. I don't even know your name," Fred interrupted.

"Oh yea, I don't believe I did mention that. It's Charlie or they used to call me "Oklahoma Charlie." Fred was amazed he knew that name. He'd read about him in VARIETY. Before Fred could

recover from his surprise, he heard Charlie saying, "Get a good night's sleep, kid. I'll come by for breakfast and tell you my plan." He turned into the dark and was gone.

"Hey," Fred shouted after him, "You don't know where I live. And what plan? Plan for what?"

All the way home Fred wondered if he was dreaming or if he was crazy. By the time he had walked the five blocks to his upstairs apartment, he decided he wasn't dreaming and it wasn't him who was crazy — it had to be this Charlie guy. He told himself nobody leaves Broadway to come back here. Do they? He decided to put this out of his mind and get some sleep; tomorrow was a busy day.

It seemed to Fred he had just gone to sleep and was in the middle of a good dream, his favorite. He was doing an Al Jolson imitation for a packed house at the Adolfo theater on Broadway when he was startled by loud knocking at his door. "Hey, kid, get up. We got things to do." Fred realized it was Charlie yelling at the door. "Would you hurry up? It's cold out here."

Fred grabbed his tattered bathrobe and tumbled to the door. "How'd you find me? I didn't tell you where I lived," Fred mumbled as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes.

"Don't you know this is a small town? People know what your school marm does on her Sundays out of town, and you expect your whereabouts to be a secret. Look, I've got something on my mind besides town gossip. I want to talk to you about an opportunity we've got to make some money to get us on our way to New York," Charlie said as he walked through the door past Fred. "And I haven't got all day, so do you want to put some clothes on?"

"Look Charlie, I'm just an amateur performer. I have a job at the Thompson's Feed and Seed that pays the rent,

and they expect me to be at the store after a while. I can't run around with you."

"Oh, I realize that you'll have to go by and let them know and all that, but the Sullivan family circus has agreed to let us audition for them and we've not got very much time for me to teach you a routine," Charlie continued undaunted by Fred's objection.

"Are you kidding?" Fred squeaked. "You mean you want me to quit my job for an audition for a rinky dink circus job that we might not get and if we did, travel around Southwest Oklahoma and parts of Texas? That's your idea of preparing for Broadway? And what would you have to teach me that I don't already know to perform for some greasy circus travelers? What do they know about vaudeville?" Fred demanded.

"Nothing, kid, not a thing. They want something to draw a crowd, a little razzle dazzle. The Sullivans wouldn't know professionals if they came up and sat down beside 'em," Charlie answered. "True, it's not a traveling Broadway show, but it's a good way for you to gain some experience and make money at the same time; Besides, I've seen the competition and we can handle Billie Bob's musical spoons. So why don't we get on down to the store and get this chore over with?"

Fred tried to prepare something to say to Mr. Brundy, the manager, as he and Charlie walked to the store. He decided to just come out and tell him. Mr. Brundy took the news about as Fred had expected he would. "Are you crazy? No respectable man quits his job without proper notice," He yelled after Fred as he turned around towards the door. Fred was feeling a little sick inside and decided it would be best not to try to explain anything to Mr. Brundy. Charlie was standing in his old familiar pose, one leg bent behind him propped up against the post outside, chewing on his match stick waiting as calmly as if he were just relaxing and enjoying the sun. As the screen door shut behind him, Fred heard Mr. Brundy shout, "And don't come runnin' back here when this stupid business about makin' it big with some ol' has-been flops in your face, cause I won't take you back. Do you hear?"

Charlie began to talk as though everything had gone great. "Hey kid, I've got a new gimmick: parrots—talking parrots. What do you think, huh? We can train 'em to answer questions, and one can be the straight man and the other the comedian," Charlie exclaimed.

"Where are we going to get our hands on some parrots?" Fred grunted.

"Well, this friend of mine asked me if I'd take these two crates to his restaurant. He's got a couple of parrots and he's going to let me have them for my trouble," Charlie explained. "Why don't you ride with me over there? He's going to let me use his brand new Model T and we can drop by and pick up the birds when we're through. We'll have plenty of time to work them into an act for the audition tomorrow afternoon."

Fred looked as though he had received the final blow. "Tomorrow?" he gasped. "You mean we've got to train birds, put together an act, and be ready to perform by tomorrow."

"Don't worry about it. I've worked with birds in a couple of shows. There's nothing to it, and you're already good enough to impress the Sullivans," Charlie answered.

The ride to the restaurant was mostly silent. The Model T's clanking and rumbling kept there from being total quiet. Fred broke the silence as they pulled up in front of Franz's cafe. "What are we doing here?" Fred squawked. "This is the restaurant? Charlie, everybody knows this is a speakeasy. Oklahoma's dry. If we get caught here,"

"We're not doing anything illegal," Charlie interrupted. "My friend has assured me this is only seltzer water." Fred was not reassured. This dream was turning into a nightmare. What could go wrong next? No sooner had Charlie's smiling face disappeared behind the huge door than his question was answered. The sheriff's car whizzed past the Model T so quickly the officers didn't see the car parked in the shadow of the big oak tree. Fred tried to keep from going into a panic. "What do I do?" he said aloud. "I knew this would happen." He began to debate whether to try to drive away the car while the sheriff's men were inside. Charlie

would just have to get himself out of this mess. Fred was so deeply engrossed in his thoughts he didn't see the car door open. "Are you ready to go get those birds?" Charlie asked.

"What?" screamed Fred. "I didn't see you coming. I told you this would happen. What are we going to do now? We're going to jail. My life is over," Fred rambled.

"Here, here, calm down," Charlie chided, "You're forgetting, I'm from around here. This is no problem; they haven't spotted us yet. Get out and help me push the car down the lane. We'll cut through and come out on the old farm road and no one will ever know we were here."

Fred's heart was beating so fast he didn't think he would be able to move, much less push a car. When they had successfully slipped through the lane and were pattering down the old farm road, the sheriff's siren screamed. As the car roared around the corner, Fred's face took on a panic again. He was sure they had been discovered. When the car sped around them, Charlie could no longer hold his laughter. "You don't get around much do you?" Charlie laughed.

The next morning Fred was hoping it had all been a nightmare. He kept his eyes closed until he heard one of the parrots squawk in the kitchen "Beautiful morning, beautiful morning." The whole night began to come back to him, the speakeasy, the sheriff's car, and the old man with greasy overalls, who stood out on the front porch with two bird cages in his hands. Fred wasn't any more thrilled about it now than he was when Charlie came striding back to the car with a grin from ear to ear and full of anticipation.

Breakfast was the only thing Fred could think of that had gone right this morning. Charlie had promised him that five hours of practice would be enough for the Sullivans. They each carried a cage to the community hall where they could put together the birds and some music for an act. Charlie was the most talented man Fred could ever remember seeing. He had his parrot talking in no time and had spent the remainder of the morning playing the piano, violin, and mandolin, working them up a quick routine. Fred

had struggled all morning to teach his bird his lines, but the bird wouldn't say a thing. He tried everything Charlie suggested, but nothing, not a word. It was only thirty more minutes until time for the audition, and Charlie would be back from the drugstore any minute. He had gone to get some black shoe polish for their faces. Fred couldn't stand the frustration any longer. He called the bird every name he could think of and used language he had not used since his mother washed his mouth with homemade soap when he was seven years old. Charlie walked in just in time to hear his bird repeat everything Fred had called his muted bird. "Fred, oh no, what have you done?" Charlie gasped.

"I couldn't help myself," Fred answered.

"Well, yours won't say anything and mine says too much. I guess we're going to have to abandon the parrots. We can't use them in the act now." Charlie shrugged. "Let's get going." He continued, "It'll be time to start by the time we get over to the carnival grounds and the Sullivans may not be classy, but they're on time. We'll just have to rely on talent, not props."

It was the first thing that had gone without event in two days in Fred's life. The reason for this was probably that the only Sullivan brother that showed up to audition them was drunk and probably wouldn't have noticed any mistakes if he'd been sober. He was too busy guzzling down a beer and playing with the bleached blond on his lap. He glanced up periodically to say, "Yea, yea, that's fine." He didn't even notice when Charlie played the last note on the piano. Fred with his arms spread out thought he was going to collapse before he noticed they were through. The blond on his lap almost fell to the floor when he stood up. "Okay, you guys can have the job," he said biting his cigar, "The spoons didn't show up. We leave tomorrow at 7:00 a.m.; be here or we'll leave ya." He turned, grabbed his blond by the waist, and walked out of the tent. Charlie laughed until he shook. Can you believe it, kid?" Fred dropped down on both knees and began to laugh as hard as Charlie.

Everything Fred owned was outside in boxes when Charlie got there at 6:30 a.m. "Franz was glad to get his birds back," Charlie said as he walked up the steps. "He said he missed 'em at the cafe. He told me he hoped you didn't mind dodgin' the law the other night, but he'd would have rather parted with his birds than lose his place."

"No, why should I mind?" Fred answered sarcastically.

"We'd better get down to the grounds before the Sullivans think I stole their truck," Charlie said.

Everything from animals to clowns was loaded and rolling down the road in twenty minutes after Fred and Charlie got there. They reached the next town by morning and were unloaded at about the same speed as they had loaded.

After three months of loading and unloading at record speeds, doing two shows a day for three days and then on to the next town, Fred wasn't quite sure when Charlie had really taught him all the things he had promised to teach him that night at the diner. They worked together so smoothly now that everywhere they went crowds showed up to see them. They put everything back they had made for the three months they were on the road. Saving their money had paid off; by the time they had reached Amarillo in November, the cigar box finally contained bus fare to New York. Charlie had told him that things got very slow for the circus during the winter months and it would be the best time to try their luck.

Charlie didn't say much during the long bus ride. It was the first time since Fred had known him that he had seen Charlie quiet. He wondered if it was the bad luck that he had spoken of before that was on his mind. Charlie had never seemed to want to talk about it, and Fred thought it best to leave it alone. The sun was coming up over the high rises when the bus pulled into Manhattan station. Fred was awe struck. "What a place. It's better than pictures," Fred said.

"Come on, kid," Charlie chided, "before someone spots you as a tourist. Before we left Amarillo I wrote one of the only friends I had left in town that we were coming. He told me to give him

a call when we got here and he'd see if he could set up an audition for us."

"Well, go call him," Fred said.

The smile on Charlie's face as he walked from the phone booth was the first one Fred had seen in two days. "We go this afternoon at three," Charlie said. "Let's go find us a place to stay and leave off our things."

It was 2:25 p.m. when they got to the theater. Charlie had wanted to be early so they could go completely through one time before the producer of the show got there. The rehearsal went without flaw, but didn't seem to calm Charlie's nerves much. Fred couldn't believe it; Charlie was actually more nervous than he was. The lights went out in the auditorium, and Fred couldn't see who shouted "Okay fellas, let's see your act." Fred felt as though he and Charlie were being smiled down on; they had never done better. Charlie looked over at Fred and smiled his old familiar smile. He felt it too. The voice in the audience shouted "Okay, thanks. We'll let you know tomorrow."

"Why don't we go back to the hotel and wait it out?" Charlie sighed.

Fred tossed and turned. He couldn't relax and go to sleep. He looked over at the other bed; Charlie was so still he decided he was sleeping.

"Hey, Fred, are you asleep?" Charlie asked.

"No, I'm still up."

"I wanted to tell you why I came home. I didn't tell you before because I didn't think you knew me well enough to believe me; but it's the truth. Two years ago my partner became involved with some gangsters who take welching on gambling debts pretty seriously. He stole \$12,000 from our show's producers. When they arrested him, my name was ruined too. Everyone in town thought I knew about it, even though there was no evidence to make me a part of it. Nobody would hire me. It didn't take me long to run through my savings and when I was broke I didn't know where else to go but home to Washita. When I saw you there, you had more talent than I had ever seen and I knew you could give me the spark I needed to make it back. I just wanted you to know if we don't get the job tomorrow, it's not because of lack of talent. You'll

make it big someday, kid. You've got what it takes. Goodnight."

Fred thought it best not to say anything but goodnight in return. He knew Charlie well enough now to have no doubts about what he had told him. He knew Charlie was right; last August he probably would have had his doubts.

Fred was so tired he didn't appreciate the beautiful sunrise. He wished only that the shade was down to block the sunlight out, so he could drift back to sleep. "Okay sleepy head, you stay in bed for a few more winks. I'll go across the street to the coffee shop and wait for the phone call," Charlie said as he pulled down the shade. "But if we get the job you'll have to get up." Charlie teased. Fred appreciated the chance to go back to sleep. He hadn't realized how long Charlie had been gone, but it

was nearly eleven o'clock when he looked at his pocket watch. There surely must be some news by now, he thought. Fred hurried out of bed and into his clothes. He took the stairs two at a time and bounded out onto the sidewalk. Charlie was walking out of the coffee shop waving his arms and shouting across the street at Fred.

"We got it!"

Fred screamed at Charlie as he stepped down onto the street. The car came roaring around the corner going the wrong way down the street. Charlie never saw it coming. Fred rushed through the crowd to Charlie as the car sped away. "Hang on," Fred pleaded.

"You can make it without me," Charlie whispered. "It's just a little bad luck, and I always go home when I have bad luck."

The thunder clapped again and the old man was startled back to the present. He gazed out at the rain. It must have been the first time Charlie had crossed his mind in years. Charlie had opened the door for him that summer and changed his life. "Fred," one of the nurses called; "The reporter from TIME magazine telephoned. He was wondering if it would be okay to come by at 3:00 tomorrow afternoon to interview you for his article on the ten most famous individuals in show business and how they got their start."

"Sure," Fred said as he turned his chair around. "I'd like to tell somebody that story." ■

RUTH TITTLE of Rocky is a member of the SOSU Senior class. She will graduate with a B.S. in Education degree in December, 1988.

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Ethel McClain, Star

By Imogene Barger

Some people may not consider a teacher as a star, but in my opinion, a good teacher can be counted among the most important stars when you consider how many young lives teachers influence. A child, after he becomes school age, spends far more prime time with teachers than with parents, so teachers become an important part of a person's life. A teacher need not be brilliant, but he must really care what happens to the students he teaches and be able to instill in them the desire to acquire knowledge.

Ethel McClain of Lookeba, Oklahoma, was not only a knowledgeable teacher; she also had the power in her quiet way to gain the love and respect of her students and bring out the best of their ability. I have yet to hear any of her former students (and I have known many) have anything but praise for her. They will say "Oh! she made us behave in class and get our lessons, but she never yelled and always treated us as equals so we wanted to do the things she asked," or "I loved her so and she helped me when I needed it most."

At her retirement program, Mr. Leist, Lookeba-Sickles school superintendent, pretty well summed up everyone's feelings when he said, "She is first of all an excellent teacher; a kind person who places others ahead of herself; a generous person who gives of herself and the best she has; a loving person who holds the respect of all who know her; a firm person in her ethical beliefs and in her teaching. A Christian person who believes in God and illustrates this belief in her everyday living, a perfect example of human humbleness."

Ethel was born on October 8, 1899 in Everitt, Missouri, the oldest of eleven children born to Bill and Clara Grant. She graduated from Everitt High School with four years of Latin, three of math, English, history, and science. High school wasn't all study because she participated in glee club, basketball, held class offices, to say nothing of the parties, horseback riding, ice skating, buggy rides, and other fun things.

The family moved to Arkansas the year she graduated, and she saw her first cotton and peanuts growing. Cotton was still king in that area, and Ethel could hardly wait for the bolls to open and the fields turn white as she had visions of getting rich picking cotton. So much for those visions — the first day she picked fifty-six pounds and was paid fifty-six cents; on top of that she had a sore back, sore hands, and a sunburned face. She didn't get much better as a cotton picker and soon decided there must surely be an easier way to make money. She decided to take the examination for a teaching certificate. She passed it easily and received her second-grade certificate. Two years later she passed an algebra test and received her first-grade certificate.

But who knows? Perhaps she did get rich in that



Ethel McClain, 1987.

cotton field. That is where she met Joe McClain; and when he asked her if she would like to take three rows together, she was quite willing as she was very much impressed by that strapping, six-foot young man. From picking cotton together they started courting in a rubber-tired buggy and on March 31, 1918, they were married at Dover, Arkansas. To this union were born two sons, Jack and Ben. They also kept a foster daughter, Mae, for five years. Ethel has been blessed with three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, but Joe no longer enjoys them with her as he died in 1980.

Ethel began teaching in 1922 in a little one-room school on an Arkansas mountain called Hickory Glade. She made the grand sum of sixty-five dollars per month and did all of the janitor work. During the depression years the pay warrants were not worth face value if they could be cashed at all. The school districts were broke and buses couldn't run. It was during this time that she taught at a subscription school. A number of area high-school students were not going to be able to graduate because they had no way to get to a high-school. So a subscription school was set up, and Ethel was issued an emergency high-school certificate and helped the students finish school. She said everyone was so broke that she was paid in hams and other foodstuffs more than in money.

Ethel's first school in Western Oklahoma was in Caddo County at Southview, a small country school near Cement. It was her first time to be around Neidians, so it turned into a learning experience for her.

Ethel and Joe lived on a farm in the Sickles area, so



Mrs. McClain, seated at table, with Driver's Ed Class, 1952.

she wanted very much to teach there so she could be at home with her family more but there was a bit of trouble getting hired. It seems one of the leading board members was dead set against hiring a married woman to teach, and this was in 1938. Perhaps the deciding factor in her favor was that then, as well as now, basketball was deemed very important at the Sickles school and her foster daughter was an excellent player and was needed for the team so they took Ethel to get the daughter —one of the best decisions a school board has ever been forced into. Ethel moved to the Lookeba school in 1945 as her husband managed the Lookeba Farmers Co-op Gin at that time. Then it was back to Sickles when the two schools consolidated in 1960 where she taught until her retirement in 1974.

Ethel was a grade teacher until World War II when qualified teachers were hard to find and the school needed a high-school math teacher. She was more or less drafted for the job because she had more college hours of math than any of the other teachers and was quite good at it. During her many years of teaching, besides her regular classroom work she at various times coached basketball, was 4-H sponsor, grade principal, and even filled in as superintendent for a time.

Forty hours of Ethel's college work was done at the Arkansas Technical College at Russellville, Arkansas, and the remainder was done at Southwestern in Weatherford, Oklahoma. She received her B.A. in 1942 and her Master's in 1957. She said that she never did get to go to college a full semester; all her hours were done in night classes and summer school.

Ethel was the kind of teacher that had that special feeling for her students, and living in a small farming

community where she taught she knew all of the parents of her students well enough to know any problems that both the parents and students might have and was always ready to help anywhere that she could. She was always proud of students who went on to do well in life and hoped she had influenced them for the good in some small way. When one went bad she always wondered, "Did I fail him in some way?" Whatever happened Ethel cared for the person as a whole.

Ethel was and still is loved and respected by all who know her, and that is many. When Lookeba-Sickles built its new gym, it was named the Ethel McClain Gymnasium in her honor.

Ethel had a busy life through the years; for besides teaching and being a housewife and mother, she is a Rebekah, belonged to a Home Demonstration club, was clerk and a Sunday School teacher in her church and belonged to the OEA and NEA. Now that she is retired, she is still busy. She is not the type to just sit and rock her life away, so she works in her yard, makes quilts and pillows, works crossword puzzles, reads books that there wasn't time for before, belongs to the retired teachers organization, has taken several tours and best of all, she visits with her many friends.

So — Congratulations — to one teacher among many who has been a great star; who at 88 years of age (she will never be old because she is too interested in enjoying life) after fifty-two years (thirty-seven of those were in Caddo County, under the critical eyes of parents, students, and school personnel) can still inspire our love and trust. ■

IMOGENE BARGER, Lookeba, once again gives WESTVIEW some significant background on her home community.

Summer 1988

Western Oklahoma "Stars"

FALL, 1988 (Western Oklahoma Politicians; deadline: 7-1-88)

FALL, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Cemeteries; deadline: 7-1-89)

WINTER, 1988 (Western Oklahoma Landmarks; deadline: 9-15-88)

WINTER, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Artisans; deadline: 9-15-89)

SPRING, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Festivals; deadline: 12-15-88)

SPRING, 1990 (Western Oklahoma's Children; (deadline: 12-15-89)

SUMMER, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Celebrations; deadline: 2-15-89)

SUMMER, 1990 (Western Oklahoma's Diverse Voices; deadline: 2-15-90)

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