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# WESTVIEW

A Journal of Western Oklahoma

VOLUME 7  
NUMBER 1  
FALL 1987  
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WESTERN OKLAHOMA  
MEMORIES



# Foreword

*Seven* is a magic number, and with this issue we begin our seventh year of publication. We are expecting at least seven more good years. This, our "Western Oklahoma Memories" issue, has been one of our easier ones to fill. Maybe that's an indication that writers are beginning to see us in a favorable light. Or maybe it means that more people are becoming memories-oriented.

We hope, since some of our themes haven't enjoyed a great deal of interest, that our contributors will rally to the cause and submit some works. In particular, we need submissions for "Western Oklahoma Politicians" (deadline: 7-1-88), "Western Oklahoma Festivals" (deadline: 12-15-88), "Western Oklahoma Celebrations" (deadline: 2-15-89), "Western Oklahoma Cemeteries" (deadline: 7-1-89), and "Western Oklahoma Artisans" (deadline: 9-15-89).

From now on, we will be without the help of Donita Lucas Shields, our Staff Writer and Advertising Representative. Because of her family's needs, Mrs. Shields has moved from Western Oklahoma — to Wagoner. Her dedication to WESTVIEW has been exemplary; we will miss her.

We therefore seek the active assistance of our many other WESTVIEW supporters.



STILL ENCOURAGED

*Leroy Thomas*

Leroy Thomas  
Editor

WESTVIEW, FALL 1987



## WESTERN OKLAHOMA MEMORIES

### FALL, 1987

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memories from the sixties

# A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY TO A PLACE I'VE BEEN BEFORE

By Rick Plant



*The author, age 6, and friend, "Horsie."*

We played the games that children typically play on car trips. Some of the games were public ones: the alphabet game, twenty questions. Some of them, some of those that I played, were private. My finger was a scythe, a sword, a gun, with which I methodically mowed down the telephone poles that, like the animated broomsticks in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," marched past the car window in a precise and insidious, endless line. Another private game: In this house — this white farmhouse two hundred yards beyond the highway — there lives... Who? Quick! Hiram B. Abernathy, his wife and three daughters. I shall marry the oldest, Cynthia, who is eight (like me) and lives in that second-story room that looks upon the highway, and I shall be a brilliant lawyer, author, ex-President, living in whatever tiny

farm town is nearby, a conveniently rustic refuge for one so internationally famous as I. Then the house is gone, no longer visible through the rear window of the Ford station wagon, and my fabricated future is as suddenly unravelled.

And when the sun had set and the night discovered us still hurtling westward, I played another game. The baby — Drew, then in later years, Susan — would eventually fall asleep in Mom's arms, and somewhere Dad would pull off the highway and fold down the back seats to make a bed for Ray and me. And once I could identify the deep, slow breaths of the baby in the front seat and of Ray in the back, the game was to convince them, the two adults, that I was asleep as well. There was a science to imitating sleep. To breathe in unison with these others

would be too artificial, so I forced my breaths to fit between the audible exhalations of my older, sleeping brother, our breaths trading off like the meshing of gears. Fine points of deception included the occasional long, wet sniff; a sigh; a shifting of position every twenty minutes or so. When you concentrated this hard on *seeming* to be asleep, it was, I believed, quite impossible to actually fall asleep. It was a lie that required stamina, patience, as I suppose swimming the English Channel must. I tried to relax between sighs and squirms by watching whatever stars appeared through the foot-or-so of glass I could see from my prone position. I doubt I could pull it off today, this make-believe sleep. I've lost the discipline. But then, some twenty years ago, I could do it for miles and miles, keeping one ear open for the



sounds of "Are the boys asleep?" "Yes, I think so," which signaled victory. Best of all was to arrive. Then I'd hear the station wagon tires trade the rhythmic drone of the highway for the more dramatic crunch and pitch of the motel's gravel parking lot. The car would stop. Doors would open. I would hear my grandmother's voice, the throaty bark of my grandfather. When my turn came, my father would slide his hand beneath me, pull my limp form from the car, and only then would I open my eyes wide and say, "Surprise! I'm not asleep!"

As far back as I can remember, recognizing relatives and the places where they lived, my mother's mother and stepfather, Bob, lived in a motel in Erick, Oklahoma, a town of 1500 fifteen minutes from the Texas Panhandle. Three or four times a year we would make the trek down Highway 66 from Oklahoma City to visit them. There were, as I recall, about twenty-six units to the motel. Behind the office, which doubled as a living room, my grandparents had a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and finally an almost hidden boy-sized second bedroom, with a window from which, at night, one could hear coyotes, train whistles, the whine of semis out on the highway. With the help of one or two maids, who were always replaced before I could learn their names or faces, my grandparents cleaned the rooms, did the laundry, tended the swimming pool, registered guests. I realize now that managing the motel was not my grandparents' idea of "the good life." (Today, Grandmother lives in Oklahoma City where, at seventy-two, she still works fulltime as a secretary-bookkeeper for a city councilman and real estate investor, who finds her so indispensable that he gives her thousand-dollar bonuses and embarrasses her with praise at formal banquets held in her honor.) My grandmother's memories of the motel — the drudgery of the chores, the inconvenience of waking up at 1:00 a.m. to register a sleepy trucker, the distance between Erick and her children's homes — are her own. My memories, I suspect, are quite different. To me, the motel was a palace, a place of luxury and adventure.

We boys could, if Mom and Dad would condone such extravagance, sleep in a different room every night and watch T.V. in bed. Summers, we swam every day in the pool, sometimes

both morning and night. Town kids, I knew, had to pay fifty cents in order to swim. And although we were the strangers, the out-of-towners, we were also the privileged, the elect. We swam free. Once I was dunked in the deep end by one of these town kids, an older boy with the wicked leer of a bully. I crossed the gravel parking lot in my bare feet, coughing, crying, and sputtering, to squeal to my uncle, who was also staying at the motel then. I got a child's vindictive pleasure by watching my uncle pull the bully out of the water by one arm and send him home on his bike, a dirty blue bike, the kid protesting "I didn't do nothin'!" while he pedaled away, his hair still dripping on the gravel and a towel flapping around his waist. A ridiculously skinny child, wet and goose-pimpled, choking on tears, I probably felt a warm sense of justice.

My brother Ray and I went exploring. Behind the motel was a cotton field, in which the lucky detective might discover a rabbit bone or rotted piece of leather harness. (We were city kids, remember.) An ancient wooden structure, The Old Barn, stood like an oasis in the center of the field. Year after year we'd hike to the barn, muster our courage to go inside — it was haunted, of course — to inspect the rusted tools that hung on the walls, the spilled, mouse-ridden grain that covered the floor. Year after year we'd gauge the holes in the roof, the number of sideboards gone, patiently following the progress of this Acropolis on its slow but steady topple to horizontal.

There were other adventures. Across the highway, early in June, the fireworks stand would open. In the city we could not even shoot fireworks, much less walk to a fireworks stand, where we could lean across and discuss at leisure the relative value of lady fingers, black cats, popbottle rockets, Roman candles, booby-traps, spinners, and whistlers. A certain amount always had to be spent on sparklers and snakes, which we would ignite when Mom and Dad were around to convince them that our tastes in explosives were safe and pedestrian. The rest we lit out back, chucking the firecrackers down ant hills and exploding whatever trash we might retrieve from the black, cast-iron trash barrel behind the laundry room.

In Erick, while hunting quail with my father and grandfather, I shot a rifle for the first time. Notwithstanding those hours spent on the black stallion

with the red, flared nostrils, who galloped beside the swingset, his springs swaying and creaking to the bounce of a five-year-old cowboy or the pull of a strong prairie wind, at the motel I rode a real horse for the first time — or at least it's my first vivid memory of a horse ride, my grandfather placing me between the saddlehorn and himself on a borrowed mare, then galloping the length of the motel and back while I waited for the ride's end, when I would be able to draw, at last, a breath. It was here that I learned to tie my shoes. It was here that I was sent, alone, for a glorious week-long "vacation" from the pesty girl who lived behind us in the city, after the summer morning when I had in desperation painted her hands bright yellow. It was here, in that little back room which in my memory is nothing more than a bed and a window, that I heard a Voice.

At the motel I held my first job. If a guest buzzed the switchboard for a bucket of ice or a newspaper, and I was awake, I would carry it to his room. Even this was an adventure, confronting strange people in the room where they would sleep. At first I didn't know about tipping. A man in bare feet gave me a quarter for bringing the bucket of ice. I tried to give it back. One could get paid for *this*? In the morning I would accompany Grandmother on her cleaning rounds, helping her to strip each room of dirty linens and towels, throwing these into a white wooden cart we wheeled from room to room. Waste-baskets had to be emptied, ashtrays wiped, dirty glasses replaced with clean ones wrapped in crinkly protective paper. Meanwhile my grandfather would be vacuuming the swimming pool. And at mid-morning our room-cleaning crew would meet the pool-cleaning crew for a bottle of Dr. Pepper and a sit in the metal lawn chairs that lined the walk between rooms.

Permit me now two final musings, self-indulgent as all of these have been, but which — if I'm lucky — may pull these kaleidoscopic fragments into some sort of pattern.

One is a final memory, of a night when riding back to Oklahoma City from Erick the sleeping game backfired. There I lay, curled beside my brother in the bed of the station wagon, carefully regulating my breaths and gazing out the window, when suddenly I saw lights — a brightly lit house upon a hill. I begged my parents to stop the car. A




red neon across the front of the three-storied farmhouse flashed "Haunted House." We woke my brothers, paid our admission fees, and went inside. We saw ghosts, real ghosts, flitting from room to room, passing us on the stairs. I must have been at that age when one is no longer enamored by dinosaurs, not yet enamored by girls, but fascinated instead by *monsters*. These ghosts were not scary — they were a tourist attraction, after all, convincingly other-worldly, ethereal, but no more threatening than the glass-enclosed rattlesnakes one might find in the "Reptile Zoo" advertised farther down the highway. (Years later, when I took a trip to Disneyland with some college friends, I felt a sense of *deja vu* riding through Disney's specter-crammed Haunted Mansion.) I was asleep, of course. The house was a dream. The next morning I awoke in my own bed in the city, and couldn't wait to talk about the haunted house we'd toured the night before. I asked everyone: Mom, Dad, Ray, Drew — nobody remembered it. I could still describe it, the lights that had attracted us from the highway, the layout of the individual rooms. They said I must have dreamed it. Dreamed it? How could I have dreamed it when I had been feigning sleep? I had only been pretending, I explained; I had been awake all the while; they could go ahead and admit the house was real.

They wouldn't. For nearly a week I held my conviction that the haunted house had actually existed. In fact, I may still be unconvinced that it did not. If it was only a dream, why do I remember it so clearly, more vividly, in fact, than I remember real places like Cal's Cafe or the Erick Library? (I can remember a book I read there, a book about pirates, more vividly than I recall the building itself.) Perhaps any day now my parents will call me up and confess. "Rick," they'll say, "we've been meaning to tell you about that haunted house out on Route 66." This confusion between the dream and reality is a little like what happens when you write, it seems to me. Hereafter, now that I've seen some of these memories transformed into the bright color and concrete shape of language, I may have trouble separating the memory itself, the memory pure and chaotic and divorced from language, from these careful, word-bound renderings of it. Perhaps I lose these memories, or at least transform them, even as I struggle to preserve them.

*(First published in the July 27, 1987 issue of the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR)*

RICK PLANT, WESTVIEW Assistant Editor, is in his third year as an instructor of English Composition in the SOSU Language Arts Department. His B.A. is from OSU (Stillwater), and he has an M.A. as well as an M.F.A. from Washington University (St. Louis).

My final thought is not so elegiac. I am twenty-eight years old, in my third year as a fulltime college instructor. After spending four years in St. Louis, Missouri, I now live in Weatherford, which is halfway between Oklahoma City to the east, and Erick to the west. I am content fulfilling the duties of a position to which I was, both literally and figuratively, called. It is a job I enjoy. (One can get paid for *this*?) I am content living in a town which for years I knew only as a slowing of speed and a procession of storefronts on the way to somewhere else, a brief interruption on the way to a place of luxury, love, and adventure. And while I have not yet met Cynthia, the girl of that upstairs farmhouse room, nor practice law, nor have any pretensions of a fame worth hiding under a bushel basket on the anonymous plains of Rural Somewhere, I cannot help but wonder if some forgotten episode of that childhood travel game of point-the-finger-and-define-the-future has at last, like the sleeping game, backfired and come true. 

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# DEAR BO

*When I was nigh on seventeen,  
And bashful as a doe,  
I roamed the mountains with my love,  
A gentle boy named Bo.*

*His misty eyes were smokey gray,  
His hair was black as night,  
His voice flowed like a quiet stream,  
At break of morning light.*

*Said Bo to me, "You are my life,  
Alone, you'll never be,  
For on the peaks I'll build a home,  
Designed for you and me."*

*Said I to Bo, "I love you so,  
That I will stay with you,  
And share the house upon the peaks,  
That you designed for two."*

*On one fine day Bo worked away,  
A-chopping at a tree;  
The axe did slip and catch his hip;  
Then body set soul free.*

*When I was told about dear Bo,  
The room began to spin.  
My tears did flow — I'd loved him so  
I decided to join him then.*

*Now lay me in the gentle earth,  
And lay me close to Bo,  
That we may reach from grave to grave,  
For a chilled hand to hold.*

*Though we may lie in deep, dark graves,  
Our love is still aglow.  
And all about as life goes on,  
So does my love for Bo.*

**By Pam Daugherty**  
*remembrance of young love*

PAM DAUGHERTY, a SOSU Junior English major, is from Watonga.

Illustration by Janie Dodd

when Weatherford was young and full of promise

# LETTER — NOVEMBER 20, 1898

By Emma D. Miller

THE CITY DRUG STORE  
WEATHERFORD, OKLA.  
DAVIS & MILLER, Proprietors

Miss Lola Miller  
Ramsey, Ill.

My dear Lola,

We received your letter yesterday afternoon, and we were quite glad to hear from you. I have been wishing to write you for some time but have delayed in doing so until now. I would like so much to see you, for Dr. Miller has talked so much of you that I feel as if I know you already.

Dr. Miller and I like Oklahoma very much, although the sand and wind are terrible, but the drug store is paying well and he has already a good practice so we are well satisfied and expect to make this our permanent home. I expect to go to housekeeping tomorrow. I suppose you have no idea of how people have to live in a new town. This has been a town only since August and when we came everybody lived in tents or little shanties. Fortunately out of the few residences here, we secured a nice room and as we brought with us some furniture we have been living very comfortably. I don't like to board, however, and am quite anxious to go to housekeeping. Papa is now in Texas and will bring Mother back with him. The children will not come before May. There are no schools or churches here yet, so they will remain in Vernon till this school term is over. You wanted to know if I have any brothers or sisters. I have three sisters and one brother and Mother and Father are still living.

Dr. Miller tells me you are almost eighteen though from the way he speaks of you I can't imagine you in any way but as a little girl. I have a sister about your age, but she imagines she is quite a young lady. If you would like it, I have a picture of myself and two of my sisters that I will send you. You must have your picture taken. I am very fond of keeping the pictures of friends and relatives and I have oh so many, but yours will be quite welcome to my collection.

I have been to church but once since I have been here. I will certainly be glad when we can have services for I miss them so much. They are erecting a small house now which will be used for church services. The railroad has just been completed; the first passenger train came in last Monday. Two or three hundred people came in on it. There are about fourteen hundred here now. This is the terminus of the road and will be for two years. It is almost wonderful how rapidly the business houses are being built.

I am going to have my piano shipped in a few days and I will be so glad to get it for we miss that more than anything. Do you like music or do you play any? We are hoping that Mother and Papa will get here in time for a Thanksgiving turkey.

Well, I will not trouble you any longer today. Write to me soon for I enjoy your letters. Dr. M and I send love to all the family.

Yours lovingly  
Emma D. Miller

*MRS. EMMA D. MILLER-HARRIS, a cousin of Neoma R. Dickey's, taught English for eighteen years at Southwestern Normal. When she died in 1927, she was Dean of Women. The letter from Mrs. Miller to her sister in law, Lola Miller, was provided by Mrs. Miller's daughter, Mrs. Addie Miller Patterson, who was born in Weatherford in 1899 and who earned the first degree from Southwestern after its status was changed from Normal School to four year college. Mrs. Patterson is now a resident of Sullivan, Illinois, but still considers herself an Oklahoman.*





## Living In The Burris House — 1921-1923

By George Burris

My father, A. H. Burris, was president of Southwestern for two years — 1921-1923. He was a farm boy, born in Northern Missouri, near Bethany. His father, George W. Burris, moved the family by covered wagon to Lincoln County, Oklahoma, in 1892. Father, then 14, and his older brother, Oliver, drove the family cows and walked the entire distance, about 600 miles!

During that time, Dad told his mother, "I don't want to be a farmer! I want an education!"

After teaching in country and town schools, he worked on his degrees at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, by correspondence courses and summer attendance. He earned three degrees — B.A. and B.S. in Education and M.A. in History.

I was six years old when he became Southwestern president in 1921; he was then 43.

One of my strongest memories is of the President's house on the Southwestern campus — a two-story structure containing a large living room, library, kitchen, and dining room on the first floor and four bedrooms, a hallway, and a bathroom on the second floor.

Probably my next most important memory is of the day in July, 1922 when the Southwestern students joined in presenting Father with a 1922 Buick touring car, a 6-cylinder machine. He came home excited and told my mother, "Change into a nice dress. We're going downtown in our new Buick, and I'm going to make a speech!"

My younger sister, Alfreda, then five years old, sat in what they called a "jump seat," a little seat that unfolded from the rear of the front seat. That Buick was a seven-passenger car.

Mother had been ironing and forgot to turn off the iron. A hole was burned in the cloth covering, but the metal board prevented a dangerous fire.

Behind the President's home was a brick garage that contained a small apartment. My father allowed young men to occupy this apartment free of charge, and they also ate at the family table. Two men I recall were Ted Burris, no relation, though he claimed to be a distant cousin, and Everett Phillips. Ted later became a high-school inspector for the State Department of Education, and Everett became a professor of mathematics at OU in Norman. The building in which they lived is now the quarters of the Campus Police Department.

One day, Mother cooked a chocolate pie and set it in the kitchen window to cool. Phillips seized it and rushed to the

rear of the garage to eat it. My older brother, Edward, chased Phillips; and I chased Edward. Phillips had to divide the pie with both of us. Mother never figured out what happened to her pie.

One noon, I was walking barefoot in the yard in front of the house when I stepped on the jagged rim of a broken fruit jar. I cried out, and Dad came running, carried me into the house, emptied a sack of sugar into a bowl, and plunged my foot into the sugar. It stopped the bleeding.

At that time, there were only two buildings on the Southwestern campus — the Administration Building and the Science Hall. I was in the second grade at the Science Hall, and my teacher was a Miss Vrooman, a kindly, white-haired lady.

How I loved the Southwestern basketball team! I recall watching them beat Oklahoma City College 71-31, an enormous score in those days of defensive basketball! I was devastated in 1923 when Southwestern lost in a tournament at Durant to Southeastern 36-33. Our boys were said to be suffering from flu; otherwise, they were invincible to my young mind! "Doc" Williams was a star of that team. I would gladly give the school yell — "Rah, rah, rah for white and blue!"

My brother Edward was editor-in-chief of the school yearbook, *THE ORACLE*, during the 1922-1923 school year. My sister Clara May was in the QP Club (forerunner of Masquers and Alpha Psi Omega); my older sister, Crystal, was also a Southwestern student.

It was a wonderful two years for a little boy.

In the summer of 1983, I visited the Southwestern campus. The old brick home looked dilapidated (no wonder; it was sixty years later!). A sign indicated that the building was being used by the Division of Nursing.

I went to the new college library. On one wall was a row of pictures of former Southwestern presidents. Father looked natural. He was a loving father, a man of learning, with a prodigious memory and an eternal faith in education. ♡

*GEORGE BURRIS is a retired Civil Service instructor and technical writer for the U.S. Air Force. He lives in Terrell, Texas. Earlier WESTVIEW articles about his father ("A. H. Burris, Early Day SOSU President" — Fall, 1983 — and "Keep Goin', Lad" — Spring, 1984) were by George's sister-in-law (Edward's widow), Gladys Toler Burris of Stillwater.*

# Thoughts On World War II

By Margie Cooke Porteus



*Weatherford residents, students and G.I.'s, Summer 1942.*

Not long ago, Random House published a collection of news dispatches that Ernie Pyle wrote from the front during World War II. Reading the reviews brought back memories.

His stories were the first reports many families read when the daily paper came — all those families that displayed stars in the windows of their homes, stars that symbolized each person in service from that home. Pyle's articles helped all of us understand how and where our armies were living. But those stories came later — after the G.I.'s had trained and gone to England or Africa or Italy or wherever.

First there was Pearl Harbor.

Pearl Harbor? I was a student at Southwestern living in Stewart Hall, the women's dormitory. I can still remember the details of a friend's room where I was when the announcement

came over the radio that the Japanese had bombed our fleet at some place called Pearl Harbor.

Most of us had no idea where Pearl Harbor was; but one student, Ruth Heath, had lived in Hawaii when her dad, then retired from the army, had been stationed there. She filled us in.

Several of our classmates had gone from Southwestern's flight program to more detailed flight training. We wondered what would happen to them. The coming war was all we talked about.

The day after Pearl Harbor, December 8, 1941, there was an assembly in the college auditorium. We heard President Roosevelt give his now-famous "declaration of war" speech. We listened as Dr. Wild talked briefly, giving a background on modern Japan. We listened as though we had never heard

him say those same things in class.

The following weeks were a blur. The war and its effects dominated everyone's conversations. Several faculty members left to add their knowledge to the war effort where it was needed. I learned that Clarence Sellers from my hometown, Thomas, had been killed at Pearl Harbor. It seemed that everyone knew someone who had been killed during those first weeks.

Our lives changed. Travel plans were cancelled. Gas, tires, meat, sugar, and even shoes were to be rationed; each family was issued a ration book so that each would get only its share. Because of gas rationing, the easiest way to get from Weatherford to Thomas was to ride the train from Weatherford to Clinton, change trains, and go to



Thomas.

When Army Air Force supply clerks and airplane engine mechanics were moved onto campus to receive specialized training, they moved into Neff Hall, the men's dormitory; it had become emptier and emptier as its residents joined the various branches of service. The soldiers also used classrooms on campus. Seeing them march to the college cafeteria changed from exciting to the ordinary.

We, the girls on campus, received a new education as many of us met for the first time men from such places as New York and Pennsylvania and Florida and even many from the Aleutian Islands. We even dated those new-found acquaintances with strange dialects. At least two girls from Stewart Hall — Betty Milligan and a small girl whose name eludes me — married their soldiers. There may have been more who married, but I graduated in 1945 and left. About that time, residents of Stewart Hall also moved out of their dorms to make room for still more GI's.

I visited Doris Stockwell, a college friend living and working in Oklahoma City (it was small, compared with its size today). The streets were filled with servicemen from Tinker Field, small bases around the state, and the two Navy bases at Norman. Who would have guessed at the time that I would marry a New Yorker stationed at Norman!

Because of the war, there was a shortage of teachers, so there was no problem getting a job. I discovered that the classroom was no stranger to the war. Large maps were on the walls and with colored pins we kept track of our troops. Students talked of their fathers, brothers, and friends and checked the map to follow their travels. We even knew of some adventurous women who joined the women's auxiliary of their favorite branch of service. Always

there was the fear that someone we knew would be killed or wounded or taken prisoner. Many were.

Schools sponsored patriotism. They held scrap drives in which the students helped haul scrap iron to a central location where it could then be sent to steel mills and reused in the war effort. Professors sold victory stamps for as little as ten cents. When a student filled a book, he could trade it for a twenty-five-dollar war bond. There were posters showing the silhouettes of enemy planes so we could tell if any flew over. It was surprising how many people learned these shapes.

We sang songs from each branch of service: "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli we'll fight...", "Over hill, over dale, we will hit the dusty trail as those...", "Anchors aweigh my boys, anchors aweigh...", "Off we go over the wild blue yonder...", Many popular songs had at least an indirect reference to the war: "Boogie

Woogie Bugle Boy," "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else But Me," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," "Missed the Saturday Dance," "There'll Be Blue Birds over the White Cliffs of Dover," etc.

We learned to wear ugly hose — often with darned runners, use rice water for starch, cook with honey instead of sugar, travel less, stand in lines for goods of limited supply when they became available, let service personnel on public transportation before anyone else, and wait and wait for news from the front.

When a letter from overseas did arrive, it was often censored and was often brief, having been sent V mail. V mail was a photograph of a one-page letter, decreased in size to 4 x 5 inches.

It was an exciting, terrible time. I think we all became numb as a result of the worldwide happenings and the effect those happenings had on all of us. ☹

*Southwestern coeds and G.I.'s stationed on campus in Weatherford. Author at far left*



*MARGIE COOKE PORTEUS, former Thomas resident and SOSU alumna, is one of WESTVIEW's earliest and*

*most appreciated contributors. After an extended teaching career, she now lives in retirement in Paonia, Colorado.*

# WESTVIEW

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# Reunion — Class of '35

By Sylvia L. Camp

An aura of excitement filled the air as the town of Tipton, Oklahoma, began to fill with people.

It was the fifty-eighth consecutive year for the Alumni Association of Tipton High School to meet. Annually, graduates of THS have gathered for a business session, banquet, and entertainment on Saturday night before Easter Sunday in Tipton, an attractive little town in a fertile valley located in Tillman County in Southwestern Oklahoma.

On this latest occasion, agendas were filled with activities. There were luncheons, an open house, a banquet, and parties. Class reunions were planned for separate classes.

This was a special time for the Class of '35. It was the fiftieth reunion for Robert ("Hass"), LaVera, Earl, Marion, Mildred, Doris, Alan, Libby, Audra, Norma, Lorene, Juanita, Frank, Margaret, Opal Don, Sylvia, and Robert.

The class met for a luncheon in a special room provided by a utility company. Each new arrival was surrounded at once by those already there. They were called by name as they were warmly greeted and embraced. LaVera had lettered name tags for each one.

There were such exclamations as: "Oh, it's been too long!" "I would know you anywhere!" "You look just like your mother." "Are you really the boy who tap-danced at the banquet?" "How do you do it? You haven't aged."

Sylvia brought a scrapbook which she prepared from mementoes. There were pictures, programs of school plays and banquets, newspaper clippings of various school activities, a receipt for \$2.00 (rental on her cap and gown), and passes signed by the teachers, which permitted readmittance to classes after absence.

The scrapbook provoked many to ask, "Do you remember...?" as it circulated back and forth among the

guests. It served as a reminder of memories which might not have surfaced otherwise.

"Whose old car was that? We hardly got out of Tipton in it," Marion said.

"Didn't Mildred make a great flapper?" Opal Don said.

Back during those high-school days, it was tradition on April 1 for the Senior Class to play hookey. It was called "Hobo Day." The students were a motley lot! Some were dressed as hoboes, others as a little boy or girl, still others as storybook characters, and some as "tacky."



*Illustration by Kelley Doyle*

All seniors attended the morning classes but left the school campus at night for a jaunt to a neighboring town — quite a relief for the teachers. The whole morning was bedlam. All the classes picked up on the excitement, so

there was no semblance of a teaching situation.

Even though it was expected that the seniors play hookey, the rules held. Each one had to go to the office to obtain a readmittance slip. Time also had to be spent in detention hall.

Several snapshots made on Hobo Day were in the scrapbook. Alan probably deserved the prize for the unique costume. He looked like a model of the well-dressed man except he forgot his pants! His mom "proofed" some "long handles" by sewing them together in strategic places so he took no chances on being embarrassed by "gaposis." The pictures showed the approval of the girls. Each one wanted to have her photograph made with him.

There was a typed note from Juanita. In eleven short lines, there were sixteen typing errors.

"Well," she said, "I was just a first-semester typing student. What do you expect?"

The menu listed in the Junior-Senior Banquet program was a source of much amusement. No one could remember what was served but agreed it was different. The bill of fare included Spring Spirits, Pet Birds, Eggs in a Nest, Poppies, Roses, Snowballs, Buttercups, Frozen Faces, and Breath of Spring.

The program for the Senior Class play, *THRU THE KEYHOLE*, was also in the scrapbook. Libby, Frank, Audra, Juanita, Alan, Norma, and "Hass" had roles in the play. Not a single one remembered the character each played. They decided it must have been some production.

In the scrapbook, Audra found two notes which she had written to Sylvia while in high school.

"Why did I want you to loan Frank a handkerchief?" she asked after reading one of the notes.

"Because he had the sniffles, and it was bugging you" was the reply.

Later, Audra found Sylvia again.

"No one but you would have kept such a note," she laughed.

This note read, "I present you with one of my dear fingernails. Now don't lose it." Inside that note was the ragged nail.

It was interesting to see how the guests seated themselves at the delicious luncheon hosted by Doris, LaVera, and "Hass." The "best friends" in high school were side by side. Audra and Libby talked and giggled as they sat together. Norma, Juanita, Frank, and Alan formed a foursome. Earl, Marion, Robert, and "Hass" talked football. Mildred, Margaret, and Doris chatted as they ate. Everyone moved about for a visit with each group.

At the banquet, seating for the guests was designated by a sign showing a graduation year. Each class was publicly introduced as a group. When the year was called, members of that class stood and gave a big yell. When the class of '17 was called, one sweet, tiny lady slowly and carefully got to her feet, raised her arthritic arms as high as she could and gave a weak little "yea."

The program for '85 was a pep rally, complete with a band and cheerleaders. The band was made up of former members. Pep squad leaders of years past were crowded onto the stage and overflowed into the balcony. They led all who were present in a giant pep rally. Yells and the band must have been heard all over Tipton. Noisy? Yes, but each one present must have been filled with nostalgia, especially when the band burst into the familiar school

fight song.

The climax of the reunion was in the early hours of Sunday morning. After the banquet, most of the class drove out to Norma's "Farm House." This was the home where she was reared and which she inherited at the death of her parents. For the class of '35, it was the icing on the cake. Many happy hours had been spent there at class activities, dinners, and slumber parties for the girls. The "Farm House" held happy memories for the group.

There was casual visiting for a while. Then Lorene said, "You're taller than I remember, Opal Don." "Yes, I grew even in college." Then Opal Don added, "The men aren't as tall as I thought they were." Lorene agreed.

Since Margaret attended THS only her senior year, her presence at the reunion was evidence that she was a vital part of the class.

Norma and her daughter, Linda, had prepared a huge table loaded with refreshments. Soon, everyone gathered into the large dining room. Sitting in a circle, they began to reminisce.

Juanita suggested a Christmas card exchange each year to keep in touch. The idea met with instant approval.

The fourteen who had died weren't forgotten either. Woodrow had been a favorite with everyone. He was a leader — usually the class president and captain of the football team. Faye and Iva were victims of cancer. Milton was thought to be the first one from the class to die. He had suffered several years from rheumatoid arthritis. Clyde was missed, too. He and Robert, brothers, were inseparable. It was sad that no one there knew about the deaths of the rest of the fourteen.

The closeness and love for one another in the Class of '35 was manifested over and over throughout the celebration. Each one had a private visit with the others. Genuine interest was shown in their families and in their lives after graduation.


It was hard to leave when the time came. Those fifteen glorious hours spent together did much to bridge the fifty-year separation. The alumni were grateful for the rich heritage Tipton had provided. They also felt that their classmates had made a definite impact for good on their lives.

Some people from elsewhere won't attend class reunions. They say they don't enjoy them. They feel no particular friendship with their class members. They can't recall the name of a single one.

The Class of '35 is different. Why? Is it the bonding of relationships begun in the first years? Most of them were born in the Tipton community. They started to school together and graduated together. Such ties bind for a lifetime.

Two — Four — Six — Eight.

Who do we appreciate?

Tigers! Tigers! Tigers! 

*SYLVIA (MRS. CURTIS) CAMP, wife of a retired minister, was reared in Southwestern Oklahoma. She is author of two soft-cover books, I WONDER? FROM JOB and WELCOME TO MY WORLD. Sylvia is a member of Pan-handle Pen Women and ASCA, writing clubs in Amarillo, where she and her husband live.*

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By Maydelle Smith Meier

8213 Dellwood, N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM  
December 8, 1986

Dear Dr. Thomas,

Your article on Union School, District 77, touched me deeply and brought a flood of memories as you wrote of the early days when my parents, Ben and Deborah Smith, were teaching there. I want to share a few thoughts about Union, too, as I myself attended there.

Mother and I moved to Union in 1927, while my dad moved to Portales, New Mexico, to set up a Magnolia Petroleum Company (Mobil) wholesale business, with C. D. Patterson, also of Weatherford. My parents felt that I should continue my education in the fourth grade in Weatherford, rather than risk the unfounded feeling that teacher's daughter would be teacher's pet. So every day, I walked the half mile from the teacherage to catch the bus to Weatherford, while others came to Union School. Until...

It started on April 7, 1938, and snowed heavily through April 8. When the storm was over, roads were completely blocked. I could walk over fences without catching on one barb and could walk right up on the roof of the horse barn. There was no way I could go to Weatherford, and at that point I became a Union student and remained so for two more years.

There were five of us in my class: Cleda Gail Weese, Margaret Leonard, Lorene Winter, Dwayne Perkins, and I, with Shirley Leonard the only student in the grade just below us. Other names come to mind, too, like Jimmy Weese, Betty Horst, Claudette Morton, and I'm sure I'd remember more if given a little prompting, as we were a close-knit group. In all, there were 19 students in the school, all in one room, all helping one another and concerned about one another. There was also much learning going on.

Dwayne rode a paint horse to school, rain or shine (and how I envied him!). He came early to help my mother build a fire in the big coal stove, sweep the floor, and get things ready for school each day. There were advantages to living on the school grounds. I could play on the swings at any time, even though it was lonely swinging alone. My imagination knew no bounds as I daydreamed about Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, imagining they would be touring Oklahoma, and their car would break down right in front of our school, so I had playmates for a time. The present Queen of England would be surprised to learn of this, I'm sure.

Comforts and conveniences were not among the advantages of living in the teacherage. The cistern water was delicious but had to be carried in by the bucket full. The coal cookstove had to be fed constantly. Ours had a twenty-gallon reservoir on the side, providing warm water for a washtub full on Saturday nights. The telephone would speak and crack during an electrical storm. We listened to a battery-run radio very sparingly, and I remember how eerie it was to hear "The shadow knows..."

Life was harder. Life was simpler. Life was happy, even with my dad so far away, as Union had a happy spirit. And I'll never forget my last sight of the school that day in late May, 1940, when we drove away in a truck, filled with our possessions, headed for Portales. I was riding in the back, all alone, and as we crested the small rise just south of the school, I took one last look, with tears in my eyes, as I said to no one in particular, "Goodbye, Union. I love you."

Sincerely yours,  
**Maydelle Smith Meier**

MAYDELLE SMITH MEIER, as a result of being a part of the Union 77 experience, has provided WESTVIEW readers with a new perspective. Mrs. Meier now lives and teaches in Albuquerque.

# MAMA'S BUTTER

By Inez Schneider Whitney

When I have hot biscuits, I often long for some of the good butter Mama used to make. She not only made it for the family but took it to the small pioneer town of Custer three miles from our Oklahoma farm. There at the general store run by Jeff Wilson and his two sons, Devert and Bus, she traded the butter for groceries. The Wilsons always had requests for Mama's butter from many of the town folks.

The first churn I remember was the dasher type. The churn was a tall wooden cylinder, larger at the bottom, encircled by several metal bands to hold it together. The dasher was a wooden stick with a round blunt end like a wooden potato masher. It went through a hole in the lid. Mama would fill the churn half full of cream she had skimmed off the milk that Papa had brought in from our cows. Then the dasher was plunged up and down until the butter came. I was too small to help very much, but I used to watch Mama, Papa, or one of my grandpas at the task.

In Mama's scrapbook, there's a poem titled "The Old Dash Churn," whose content is very true:

*"'Twas a lesson of patience I had to learn  
To pound for an hour that old dash churn.  
An hour I said — 'twas sometimes near three  
E'er the white butter specks round the dash I'd see."*



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Then came the rotary churn. What excitement when Papa brought it home. We were the only family in the neighborhood that had one, and friends were always dropping by to have a look.

It was a large wooden barrel with metal bands. It fitted on a frame and was operated by a crank that turned the churn end over end. By then, I was old enough to help; it was fun at first, but the novelty soon wore off and the task turned into drudgery. It would seem hours before I would hear the cloppity-clop of the butter.

A verse from "The Rotary Churn," another poem in Mama's scrapbook, describes exactly the way I felt:

*"It's the strangest contraption that I've ever seen,  
An' they call it a great labor-savin' machine.  
But I'm tired of workin' the dasted old thing  
That just keeps my hand goin' round in a ring  
An' I'm willin' to trade off its turnity-turn  
For the up-and-down dash of the old-fashioned churn."*

What memories I have of Mama's butter making! 

INEZ SCHNEIDER WHITNEY, during these WESTVIEW years, has enriched our journal and our lives by sharing pioneer memories. Mrs. Whitney, whose formative years were spent near Custer City, has lived in Arlington, Virginia, since 1943.

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## BOVINELY THANKLESS

Jerze, you're still in my software.  
 All I have to do to  
 Access you is push a button or two,  
 And there you are on my screen.

Ours was a strange relationship.  
 You always seemed to be against me,  
 Although no one on the farm did more for you than I did.  
 Why did you hate me, Jerze? You would have starved in summertime  
 If I hadn't staked you in the grass beside the highway  
 (And how I secretly grumbled at Dad for making me do such a thing).  
 I couldn't count with solar calculator the number of  
 Buckets of water I have drawn for you only to be  
 Sprayed with a chilly shower from your snuzzle.

And, Jerze, why did you always kick over  
 The milk bucket and swish me with your cockleburred tail?

## FARM POETRY

By Leroy Thomas

## LINES TO A MR. PIGGY

I saw you again today a-choking a tree  
 And then bad thoughts came gushing over me  
 Of all the times of childhood days my dad would glibly say,  
 "Now, Son, it's time for you to feed the pigs again today."

And then I'd go out to fields a-grumbling all the way,  
 Not really caring if pigs were fed or starved to death that day.  
 I'd pull those weeds and take them to the pen  
 'Til I'd begin to ache and wish that someone else could feed the piggies then.

So now, Weed, you say you have a new name — *amaranthus retroflexus*, indeed!  
 To me, you'll always be no more than pigroot or careless weed!

FARMHOOD JOYS  
1940'S

When I was a child, I played with butterflies,  
 Field rabbits, squirrels, woolly worms, fruit-jar rings,  
 Bottle caps, tin cans, grasshoppers, frogs, and pieces of coal.  
 Butterflies and crickets and all those things were free then  
 And still are in some places!

"Good day, Mr. Grasshopper," I'd say;  
 "Spit tobacco juice, and I'll turn you loose!"  
 I had my own "acting rod" out behind the barn.  
 I could pretend I was a man on a flying trapeze  
 Or a gymnast in a circus on late spring days.

I could read about the Bobbsey twins and the Hardy boys  
 And then go out and try all the things they had done.  
 There was no TV to interrupt those vicarious joys.  
 Sometimes on the hot nights of summer, I would strip naked at the well  
 And pour gallon after gallon of cold water over my body.  
 And in wintertime after an ice storm,  
 I could ride my bike over every field on our sandyland farm.

Today I live in an asphalt jungle,  
 And my children's joys are artificially produced.

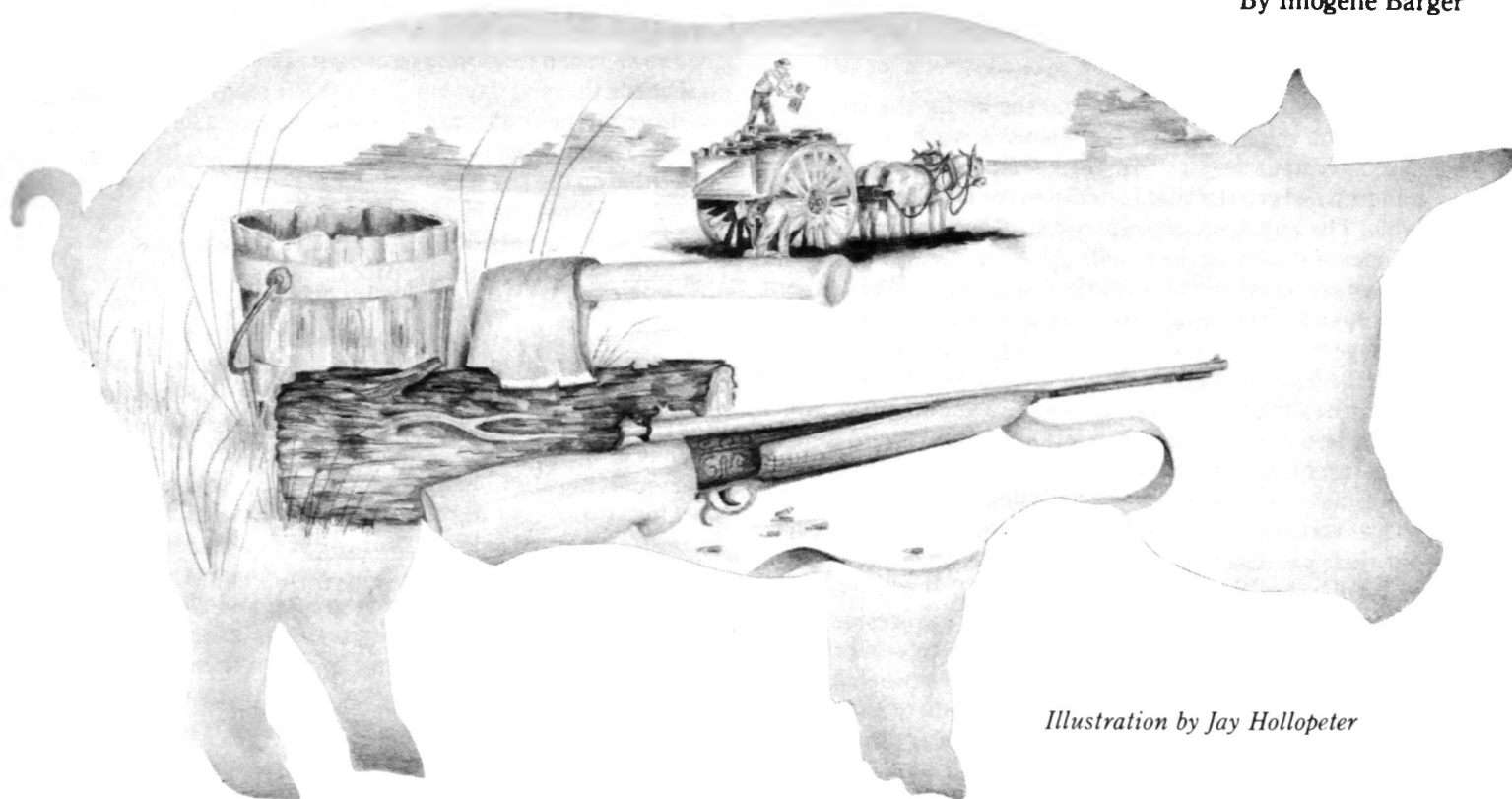
DR. LEROY THOMAS, a SOSU English teacher for  
 almost thirty-one years, is WESTVIEW's Editor.



# Cold-Weather Event — Butchering Day

an essential activity

By Imogene Barger



*Illustration by Jay Hollopeter*

I guess I could write forever and never get down all my memories. Although none of my memories are anything earthshaking, they make up the happy whole of over sixty years of living in Western Oklahoma.

I was born and grew up in those red rock hills east of Binger in Caddo County where modernization was slow to arrive and everything was done in the same old-fashioned way of our forefathers for many years.

Butchering time is high on my list of memories. All of the frying chickens had been long gone; and since there were no freezers in our part of the country (we didn't even have electricity), all the meat the family had eaten for some time had been an occasional old hen that had quit laying or some squirrel or rabbit. Therefore, everyone was looking forward to hog-killing time and having enough fresh pork to eat.

The rule of thumb was to fatten out one hog for each member of the family, the fatter and bigger the better. Some of them weighed up to six hundred pounds when they were killed. They were supposed to furnish meat for the winter and up into the spring and enough lard and soap for the whole year.

Late fall arrived and everyone was set on "go" just waiting for the weather to get cold enough so the meat wouldn't spoil. All the wood to heat the water to scalding had been cut with an axe and a crosscut saw and hauled in on a wagon pulled by a team of horses or mules. If there wasn't a suitable tree limb, a tripod of poles had been made and a pulley attached so the hogs could be pulled up to gut and split in half.

Finally the weather was just right, and hopefully the day dawned cold and clear. Butchering day had arrived at last. Early in the morning, several neighbors would gather in to help and perhaps butcher some hogs for their families. The

big butcher knives were made razor sharp, and the hard work would begin. The water was carried from the well where it had been hand pumped or drawn out with a pulley and rope with a bucket attached to it. The vat or barrel was filled, and a fire was started under them to heat the water for scalding the hogs.

The hogs would be killed one at a time, usually with a well-placed bullet from a twenty-two rifle just behind the ear. Then the throat was cut so the hog could bleed out good. Then the hog was placed on a sled or in a wagon by the men and hauled to the vat or barrel to be scalded. The vat worked better because it was larger, and a fire was kept going all the time in a trench under it so the water could be kept at the correct scalding temperature. Next, all the hair was scraped off; then the hog was hung up and its front cut open as the entrails were caught in a large wash tub. The melt was usually given to us kids, and we would put pieces of it on a stick and cook it over the open fire. By the time it was done, we had dropped it in the fire a time or two and had ashes all over it; although parts of it were charred, we ate it anyway and thought it was good. Now the hog was washed inside and out until spotlessly clean, split in half, and put on the cutting table. It was cut up and trimmed of any excess fat and bloody places. The hams, shoulders, sides, etc. were taken to the smokehouse to begin the curing process. Each family had its own particular recipe, but everyone used salt and plenty of it. Most people used brown sugar, black and red pepper, and smoke flavor. Many actually smoked the meat for several days after it had drained well. Again, each person had his own method and favorite type of wood to use, but no matter how it was done the end product was delicious.

Most of us past fifty can remember how good it was to go to the smokehouse and cut off a big slice of ham and fry it in an old iron skillet on a wood stove — also how deprived we felt when we had to take that old ham and homemade light bread to school for lunch and our wealthier classmates had “boughten” bread and bologna.

The trimmings for sausage and the fat for the lard were taken into the house, and the women's work started. The sausage meat was cut in thin strips and ground in a hand-turned grinder that fastened to the big wooden kitchen table. The kids were often put to feeding the meat into the grinder and turning the handle. After the meat was ground, it was seasoned to taste (again, each family had its own recipe, and amounts of sage, salt, and pepper varied). The sausage was either stuffed into casings made from muslin, usually flour or salt sacks, or into casings made from intestines that had been cleaned, washed, and scraped inside and out with a dull knife until they were almost translucent. It took someone with a strong stomach to clean them, but they were very clean when finished. A special gadget was required for stuffing the casings, so most people put their sausage in the cloth bags. Later in the year if the sausage began to get strong, it was canned. It was fried, put in fruit jars, covered with melted lard, and processed.

The lard was cut in to little squares to be rendered the next day. It was done outside in the old iron kettle that was a must for every household. It was cooked slowly and stirred often to keep it from burning. It was finished when all the grease had cooked out of the fat squares and nothing was left of them but little crispy golden-brown cracklings. It was strained in to lard cans, allowed to cool and then stored in a cool place. If it had been cooked right, it was snow white.

Some of the cracklings were saved to make crackling cornbread or munchies for the kids. The rest were used to make soap. There were several kinds of lye soap; some of it was so strong and yellow that it nearly ate holes in a person's skin. Some was so white and mild that it was as good as any soap that could be bought. The soap didn't have to be made the next day; but if it was left many weeks, bugs would get in the cracklings. The soap was used for washing clothes, shampooing hair, and sometimes even as bath soap.

Nothing on the hog was wasted. For example, the feet and tail were cleaned and pickled. The jowl was cut off the head to cure, and the rest of the head, after the eyes had been removed, was boiled and souse meat (sometimes called head cheese) was made from the meat after it was taken from the bones.

Dinner (town people's lunch) on butchering day always consisted of fresh tenderloin and liver, mashed potatoes, gravy, hot biscuits, some kind of dessert, and whatever else the lady of the house brought out of her well-stocked cellar. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the meal because besides working all morning and being tired, it had been a long time since everyone had enjoyed the taste of fresh pork.

By the time everything was done, everyone was sick of the smell of wet hog hair, blood, hot grease, and all the other smells of butchering day. Everyone was exhausted, but there was a contented feeling because there was the assurance that the family would eat well that winter. ❶

*IMOGENE BARGER, a farm wife, lives near Lookeba in Caddo County not many miles from the place she was born. Her interests, in addition to her family, include writing, local history, genealogy, reading, sewing, and crocheting.*

## not for the lazy and sluggish

# COUNTRY PEOPLE

By Fanny Dodgen

*FANNY DODGEN has lived in Weatherford most of her life. A former teacher, she now does free-lance writing and photography and keeps busy with a variety of avocations — including the distribution of a popular weight-loss product.*

Greet the rosy haze of light  
Eat hearty breakfasts of biscuits, eggs,  
sausage  
Unlatch barn doors at dawn  
Harness a palamino for a jaunt  
Cross cool streams in spring  
Walk tree-lined lanes in early morn  
Seek purple violets on creek banks  
Crumble soft, brown earth for planting  
Spread thorny berry vines to grasp dark juicy  
fruit  
Break ice on ponds at winter daybreak  
Squirt streams of warm milk into the mouth of  
a waiting cat  
Peel hulls from frosted pecans  
Gather around the fireplace for devotions in  
evenings  
Climb into bed for a restful night.

back-breaking work

# BOLL PULLIN'

By Margie Berry Fowler

On the twelfth of January in '52,  
We finished pullin' bolls,  
And I was glad, too.  
For four months we worked  
And on the job I never shirked.  
Then I headed to the beauty shop  
Saying, "Please give me the works."

We butchered two hogs,  
Bought a hundred pounds of beans,  
So I'll throw away my sack  
And hang up my old jeans.  
I've spent my money.  
Boy, that was fun.  
Now I'm just waiting  
For next fall to come.

*MARGIE BERRY SNOWDEN FOWLER, mother of loyal WESTVIEW writers Ava Sailors and Margie North, spent a good deal of her life in the cotton fields of Western Oklahoma, mainly around Erick and Reydon. She now lives in Elk City. This is her first appearance in print.*

a happy sight

# LABOR'S REWARD

By Bessie Holland Heck

Golden grain waving in sunlight,  
Planted on a wind-swept prairie  
By men and women of vision,  
Sustenance for body and soul

*BESSIE HOLLAND HECK of Tulsa has published seven books for young readers. Her eighth, DANGER ON THE HOMESTEAD, is about a nine-year-old boy who went with his father on the 1899 run. Set near Kingfisher, it is scheduled for release in Spring, 1988.*

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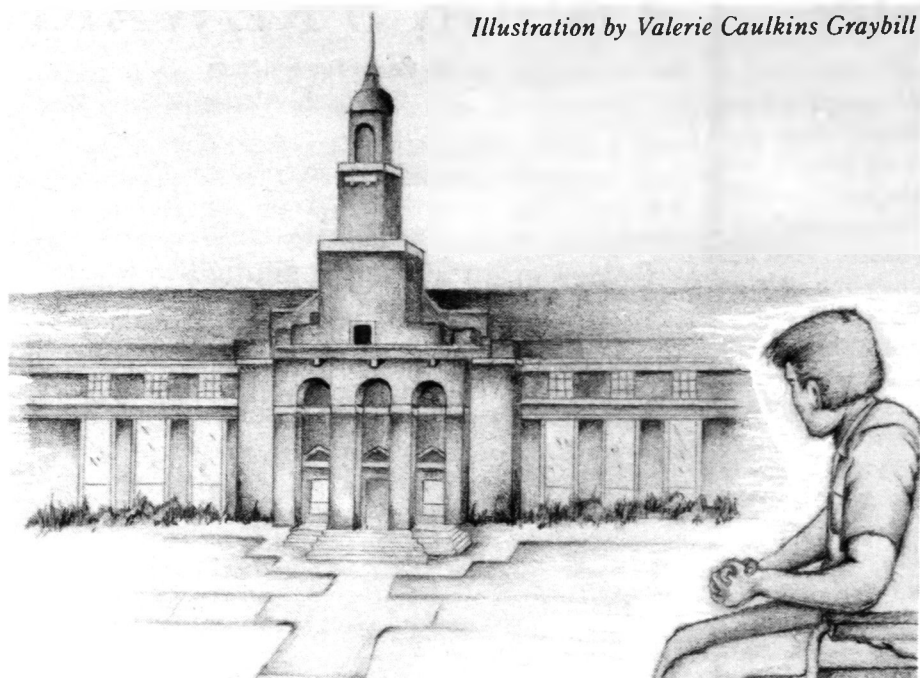
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Illustration by Valerie Caulkins Graybill



# The Blaylocks of Nine Mile Creek

By Mabry G. Blaylock

Charles (Charlie J. Blaylock — 1890-1951), the third son of Jefferson Davis Blaylock and Nancy Ray Blaylock, farmed practically all his life. He married Dollie (Doll) Blaylock (1906-), eldest daughter of Isom Fletcher Blaylock and Clifford Hyde Blaylock, all from Gilmer County, Georgia, on December 31, 1921. Survival and conservation were the dominant themes of Charlie's life. Neighborliness and a desire for an education for herself and her two sons have characterized the life of Dollie, a talented and resourceful workaholic. The couple spent all but three years of their married life on land crossed by the Nine Mile Creek in Section 19-17-21 in Roger Mills County, where their son Dallin Morris was born February 15, 1923, and their son Mabry Gene was born April 17, 1927.

Charlie grew up in Northwestern Georgia when survival skills were passed on primarily from father to son and from mother to daughter. From his father he learned how to farm, to work cattle, to butcher, to make sorghum molasses, to carpenter, and to do other jobs on the farm. With the guidance of their father, he and his brother Newton Dell Blaylock acquired adjoining farms on the Nine Mile Creek, where they produced alfalfa and Johnson grass hay, corn, cotton, broomcorn, and sorghum and raised cattle and hogs and kept cows for milk and cream.

Before marriage, Charlie served briefly in the Army at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, where he almost died of

influenza during the flu epidemic of 1918-1919. The years immediately following World War I were relatively prosperous for agriculture; but the late 20's and 30's were disastrous for farm owners, though less so than for sharecroppers and even less so for most urban workers. So Nine Mile Creek families were reluctant to leave during the period and some new ones moved in. With his efforts and Dollie's resourcefulness, the family not only survived on the farm but added to it more land that relatives and neighbors wanted to sell, seeding most of the small fields back to grass and grazing the rest with care. To better farm the expanded acreage, Charlie purchased a two-row Ferguson Ford tractor, the first in the county, about 1938 and switched from plowing with a team to plowing with a tractor.

After suffering a light stroke in 1949, he relied more and more on Dollie's work on and help in managing the farm. His sons, Morris and Mabry, continued to help as much as school would allow until Mabry was accidentally shot in the spine in December 1941 and Morris joined the Naval Air Corps in 1943. After the difficult years of World War II, Charlie and Dollie sold most of their livestock and bought a house in Norman so that Mabry could attend the University of Oklahoma in a wheelchair. Charlie loved the farm so much that he spent much of his last three years on the farm, then rented by Mack Mullins, his brother-in-law.

Charlie died in 1951 of a heart attack, his life probably shortened by flu, which damaged his heart during his Army days.

In the years before 1941, especially in addition to the usual household duties, Dollie had a large garden, canned hundreds of jars of vegetables and fruits on a Home Comfort wood-burning stove each summer, cooked for hired hands, raised hundreds of chickens and turkeys, produced pedigreed White Leghorn eggs for a hatchery in Elk City, hatched eggs for neighbors, sewed for family and relatives, cured pork for the winter, and plowed with the tractor after Charlie had a stroke, and even found time to paint some pictures. She was indeed the key to the financial survival of the Blaylock farm when many families felt forced to leave because of drought and the Depression.

In spite of the arduous work at home, Dollie managed to participate in community affairs. She was one of only three women to serve on the Nine Mile School Board during the years 1916-1947, elected at the age of 26 for a three-year term — not because she sought the position but because she was willing and the voters thought she was able to serve. She also served a number of years as president of the Nine Mile Home Demonstration Club, at whose meetings neighbor women learned about nutrition, gardening, sewing, and other aspects of homemaking taught by the Roger Mills County



home demonstration agent and also shared with one another homemaking experiences. Placing a high value on education, she encouraged her sons to excel in school and to aspire to attend college; and in 1940 Morris was chosen as salutatorian of his high-school graduation class, and Mabry was chosen valedictorian of his three-member Nine Mile eighth grade class! During this period, Dollie's home was often the meeting place for relatives and neighbors to share holiday meals and to spend Sunday afternoons.

After Mabry became paralyzed in 1941, Dollie had to add nursing skills to her other abilities. Eight weeks after his injury, one of Mabry's physicians at Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City had dismissed him from the hospital, commenting that he thought Mabry didn't have long to live and felt that he would be happier at home. Without his and his mother's strong religious faith, the doctor would have been right. Dollie obtained nutrition and medical books and nursed him back to reasonably good health with the help of Cheyenne Chiropractor G. A. Reimer. Three years after his injury, although his neurosurgeon said that Mabry would never walk again except possibly with crutches, Dollie strongly encouraged Mabry to finish his high-school education by correspondence study.

Mabry did so and received his diploma with the Hammon High School Class of 1947. After spending most of the following year in Crippled Children's Hospital for surgery and rehabilitation, he enrolled in the University of Oklahoma. His parents had, at a considerable sacrifice, sold most of their livestock, retaining the land, and moved to Norman. Bolstered with scholarship funds and income from his mother's boarding students and cooking at a University kitchen, he was elected to the honorary fraternity of Phi Beta Kappa as a junior. He graduated third among some fifteen hundred Arts and Sciences students in 1952 with a B.A. in Letters; and hoping to teach in college, he received his M.A. in Spanish in 1953. One of the first wheelchair students to attend O.U., he helped prove that such students could succeed in college, especially with an extensive reading background of books from the Carnegie Library in Elk City and self-disciplining correspondence study!

Encountering a prejudice toward

hiring teachers bound to a wheelchair, a prejudice since greatly diminished, he gave up plans to seek a doctorate and accepted a coveted University of Oklahoma Press fellowship for a year of work and training in editing and publishing. During the year he worked nine hours a week at night as a tutor for the O.U. Athletic Department. Unable to find employment either in teaching or publishing in the summer of 1954, he continued working for the Department another year at night and started tutoring college and high-school students at home. In 1955, he began tutoring almost exclusively at home. He has been recognized as a professional tutor in articles in the NORMAN TRANSCRIPT, the O.U. student paper, the OKLAHOMA DAILY, and in articles in the SUNDAY OKLAHOMAN in 1977 and 1983. Perhaps the only career professional tutor (he knows of no other), he was a subject of biographical record in the 1986-1987 edition of WHO'S WHO IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST and was named in the 1986-1987 edition of WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA. Having tutored over three thousand students thus far, he has proved that sometimes at least where there's the will, there's a way—provided there's a great deal of help and encouragement from others.

Without the help of his mother, in particular, his honors would never have been achieved. To help Mabry get through college and get started tutoring, she not only kept students and worked at the University but also worked nine years as a civilian employee of the Norman Naval Training Center. After they moved in 1959 to a house especially designed for his tutoring and his handicap, she did nearly all the work to establish a beautiful yard. Beginning in the middle 60's, she worked some twelve years as general contractor to build houses while serving as nurse, cook, housekeeper, shopper, yard person, and good neighbor. Talented, resourceful, optimistic, a woman of great faith, a believer in the seemingly impossible!

Morris, in the meantime, after training in the Naval Air Corps, served as a radar bombardier with a patrol-bomber squad in the Atlantic and Caribbean, enrolled in Panhandle A & M at Goodwell, and graduated from Oklahoma A & M (now OSU) in 1950. He had been active in a number of agricultural clubs, including the Flying Aggies, and was listed in WHO'S WHO



*Morris's graduation day. January 1950.*

#### AMONG STUDENTS IN AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

After graduation, he became an agriculture instructor for veterans in McCook, Nebraska. Later he worked for the Soil Conservation Service in Norman and for three years for Swift and Company in Fort Worth grading and marketing meat products. Then he joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs in land management in Durant and worked later for the Bureau in Lindsay and Nowata.

In January, 1965, a few months after the devastating earthquake in Anchorage, he drove to Haines, Alaska, and shipped his car to Juneau to help the Bureau increase Eskimo income from reindeer products, having been chosen because of his background in agronomy and meats. During his five years in Alaska, he repeatedly checked the reindeer herds and slaughter facilities on Nunivak Island, helped establish the first reindeer herd on Hagemester Island, increased the marketing of reindeer products, particularly to the Japanese, in large part by helping to bring about the first federally inspected slaughter facilities for reindeer, initiated the first palatability and nutritional

studies of reindeer meat, and, not least, met his future wife, Elizabeth Blunn, in Juneau.

Elizabeth, daughter of Mrs. and Dr. Cecil Blunn, then a professor of animal genetics at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, had obtained degrees in English and Social Work, had worked as a social worker in Nebraska, as a School Social Worker for the Colorado Jefferson County Public Schools, and as a School Social Worker for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Juneau. She continued to work for the Bureau for six months after marrying Morris in Lincoln, Nebraska, on December 27, 1969.

She resigned when Morris transferred to Oregon to work with the Warm Springs Indians' Tribal Council as a range conservationist. There he helped to establish range units to control more effectively stocking rates. In part to get closer to Oklahoma, he accepted in 1977 a position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Flagstaff, Arizona, out of which office he worked with the Navajos and Hopis on grass seeding and grazing problems. In 1980 he took early retirement from the

Bureau and moved to Weatherford, Oklahoma, so that his daughters Amy Marie (Jody — b. January 3, 1973) and Myra Louise (b. November 17, 1975) could attend excellent schools and he could work on and manage the Blaylock farm on Nine Mile Creek. In the meantime, Elizabeth has busied herself with rearing her two daughters, volunteering for school and community affairs, serving the local Episcopal Church, playing the cello with the college symphony, and occasionally helping Morris work cattle.

Morris is still active in the Society for Range Management, an international organization. The Society in its magazines has published his articles on 4-H activities of Warm Springs youth, an article translated into Spanish by Mabry, on reindeer in Alaska, on buffalo, on "The First Hundred Years of the Alexander Ranch," a ranch on the Upper Washita, near Allison, Texas, well known for its show Herefords and as a source for quality bulls, and "The Then and Now of Cheyenne-Arapaho Country," an article on conservation on the Blaylock land. Both Jody and Myra have begun to take an active

interest in the land whose stewardship responsibility will one day be theirs. Morris teaches them, out on the farm, conservation, respect for the land, and the care of cattle and horses. Both have taken private music lessons. Interested in reading from an early age, they reflect the Blaylock and Blunn emphasis on learning and school and perform in school well above their age levels.

Thus, our land heritage, abused or cherished, becomes the responsibility of the survivors. Our cultural heritage, neglected or enhanced, will continue in the minds and hands of those whom we teach and influence. Values and principles learned in the rural schools and neighborhoods of Western Oklahoma live on. ●

*MABRY G. BLAYLOCK grew up on a farm near Hammon, Oklahoma. Subject of biographical record in Marquis' WHO'S WHO IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST (Twentieth Edition, 1986-1987), he has a B.A. in Letters and an M.A. in Spanish from OU. A paraplegic since he was fourteen, he tutors in Norman.*



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The house of my childhood stands  
empty, forlorn.  
Large rooms seem smaller now  
that I am grown.

Curtained windows once  
brightly shining  
are covered with cataracts  
staring blankly  
at the street.

Empty rooms echo with familiar  
voices, secrets, laughter  
and sorrow  
as in a mirrored glass.  
The paint and paper are  
dingy and peeling;  
yellowed squares, blank circles  
where pictures ought to be.

Memories hide in  
dusty corners  
with no glow of lamp to  
chase shadows  
away.

Flower bed and garden hold  
skeletal  
remains of plants and blossoms  
reclaimed by the earth.

As an old person dying, best years  
become as dust;  
and, now, comes time for reflection —  
to find a design  
for the past.

The house whispers its  
lesson —  
love, life, and  
people;  
ingredients that make it  
a home.

# THE HOUSE

By Sharon Rae Philpott

*SHARON RAE PHILPOTT is the Postmaster in Sperry, OK. She has two children — one in college and the other a junior in high school. Sharon is active in the Postmasters' organization, local civic activities, and the Tulsa Tuesday Writers. "The House" is her first submission for publication.*

*Illustration by Darleta Floyd Coward*



1910 wedding photograph of Roy and Mollie Adams.

## THE COMMON MAN

By Rulissa B. Minton

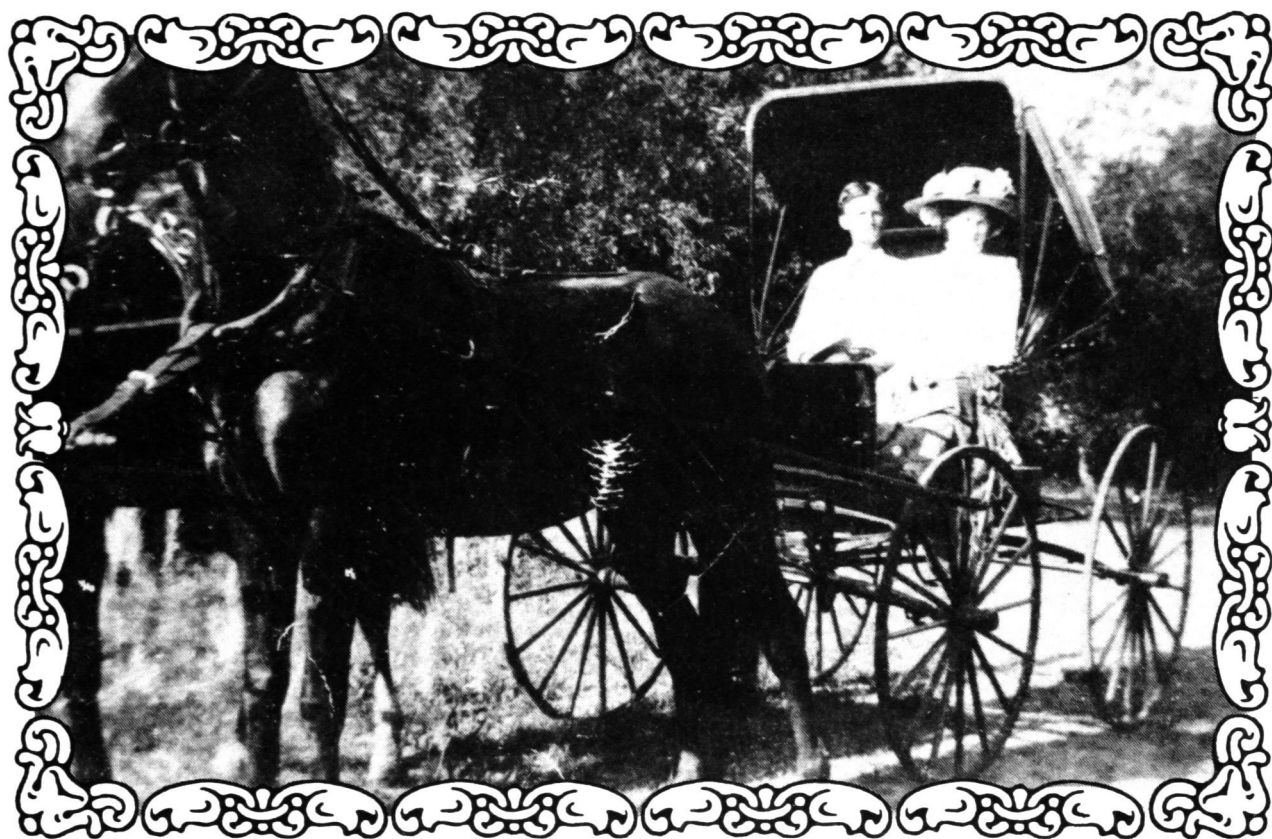
Memories are an important part of everyone's life, but apparently the most vivid and special memories my grandmother has are of her father, my great-grandfather, Roy Edward Adams. All my life, I've heard, from different members of my family, quotations from Roy on his philosophy and events he has told from his life. I guess now to me he seems like the most perfect, wonderful, honest, and extremely respected man that has ever lived. Roy, at the age of 81, finally decided to sit down and begin to put the events of his life down on paper. The summer after I graduated from high school, my

mother and grandmother suggested that I read Roy's book. Apparently, before, I had several unanswered questions floating around about his life, my ancestors, and my grandmother's life. After reading Roy's life story, I realized what a truly wonderful person Roy was just by being an honest, hard-working common man.

It's very evident in his autobiography that Roy's most important possession was his family — from the very beginning of his life in Western Oklahoma, when he, at the age of twelve, moved his widowed mother 240 miles to their new home 3½ miles north-

west of present Walters, Oklahoma. All his life he took care of his youngest sister, Myrtle, and his mother until he had his own family. Trouble and hardship seemed to follow our family, but Roy gave the much-needed emotional and financial support. Roy also loved everyone else and was the first to offer a stranger support. It's evident in his philosophy: "Charity begins at home. The most needed of all things is peace on earth and good will toward men. Live for those who love you and the good that you can do. It matters not how poor you are; give every man your good will."





His ideas were good, but he also showed in many ways all the time how much fun he had with his family. I can remember my uncle, Johnny Friels, telling me about the time Roy played a trick on him and Butch, his cousin. Both boys were always looking for lost treasure out on Cache Creek near Roy's farm. One time Roy fixed up an old army shell, colored some sand gold, put in some Indian beads, some confederate and Mexican money, two or three Indian arrowheads, wrote Davy Crockett's name on a little rock, and used a welding torch to seal it. Roy then hid the "treasure" at the creek and took the boys to guide them until they found it. Johnny still says to this day that it's one of his favorite memories of Roy.

Roy also had some beautiful ideas about Christ. The one that seems to give the most to people is this one: "If you find a little greener pasture, share it with the man coming after you. Just remember that Christ blazed a trail all the way through life, leaving a candle in every darkened place. Go straight ahead until you find His trail. It will be much easier from

there on to the end. Keep in mind there's no place like home and at the end of your trail, you will find an eternal home not made with hands."

Besides being a family man all his life, Roy was the all-time "Wheat" Adams. Farming was his life. He never knew anything but hard work. His parents before him knew nothing but farming and hard work, and all the other members of the family were farmers at least one time in their lives; but in times of need, they always came to "Wheat" Adams for financial help and some experience-filled advice.

"Wheat" Adams, then, was in addition to being a farmer and family man, a common man who wanted only happiness and comfort for his entire family throughout their lives. His attitudes toward both World Wars weren't of much consequence in his life except for the change in wheat prices. He remembered everything that happened in history and how it affected him. He said nothing about the Great Depression except that farmers were lucky because they could provide their own food from

a small garden, a few chickens, and a calf or two.

Roy Edward "Wheat" Adams lived a happy, full life from March 2, 1889 to May 4, 1971. He had no more than a sixth-grade education and lived his entire life from the age of twelve in and around Walters. By working hard and keeping his family around him, he led a happy, prosperous life and did the one important thing for his children by leaving his remaining family with all he had and by making their lives as easy as he could while he was alive. A statement by Roy's father, Watson Alexander Adams, is appropriate because it's one of the philosophies that Roy lived by: "The Bible tells us 'Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work, the seventh thou shalt rest.' The command is to labor six days as well as to rest one. It is just as great a sin not to work the six days as it is not to rest the seventh." ❧

*RULISSA B. MINTON is a student at SOSU from Waltes. She is undecided on a major, but in her spare time she enjoys reading and writing.*

# I Remember Mama In 1951

The seven of us live in a little two-room shack  
Where the Oklahoma wind blows sand in through the knotholes.  
We carry aluminum buckets of water up the hill from the well;  
Burn shinnery roots in an old iron stove when northers hit.  
Mama sews our clothes from chicken feed sacks,  
Then washes them on a washboard,  
Her hands are red and chapped, never resting from endless chores.  
She is pretty and young — only thirty-six, and  
Though there's no money for a new dress or a lipstick,  
She never complains and is always cheerful.  
Sometimes she sits on Papa's lap  
While we listen to the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday night.  
She can be counted on to laugh at Minnie Pearl  
Or at something one of us might say or do,  
And make popcorn or peanut brittle  
When Naomi, my best friend, spends the night.  
Naomi squeezes my hand, says, "I love to come to your house.  
Your mom is so much fun, and your dad is so handsome!"  
Then I don't mind, as much, the knotholes in our walls  
Or the sand on the faded linoleum floors and in our beds  
Because Mama, with her patience, laughter, and love,  
Has transformed the little shack into our HOME.



*The author's mother and granddaughter, 1977.*

\*While growing up, I couldn't appreciate the many sacrifices Mama made for her family and the way, even without much money, she still gave us a good feeling of security. Now a mother and grandmother myself, I admire her — not only for being the kind of mother she was and is — but as one woman admires another. I love you, Mama.

*AVA SNOWDEN SAILORS spent her formative years near Erick. Now a resident of North Richland Hills, Texas, she previously lived for several years in Pueblo, Colorado.*

winter warmth

## Picking Up Shinnery Roots

By Margie Snowden North

Clearing the land and piling up  
winter's fuel  
for the round-bellied stove.  
Sun glares, white-hot,  
and not a cloud in sight.  
Even Mama's slat-bonnet flaps are  
still in the windless day.  
Sweat pours,  
trickles down backs and faces,  
M-Farmall crawls  
across sea of sand

pulling the root-wagon,  
leaving ruts a foot deep.  
Think it'll ever be cold enough  
To use these old roots anyway?  
Papa's sweatin' too.  
Sun beats,  
burning backs and faces and ambitions.  
Us kids waiting (casting side-long glances)  
for magic words  
that'll take us back to the house.

This weather ain't fit for man nor beast.  
I'm spittin' cotton already.  
How 'bout you kids?

And in ten minutes we're home  
layin' on cool, quiet floors  
with wet towels draped over our backs  
and dreaming of places where  
no one ever even hears of a shinnery root.

# MEMORIES OF GRANDMA — GENIA BERRY

By Ava Snowden Sailors

We celebrated my grandmother's hundredth birthday in November of 1978, and on Valentine's Day she was gone. Her goal had been to reach the century mark; and as with other goals in her life, she not only reached it but also surpassed it.

Grandma had never been in a hospital until a few days before she died. Her eyes were still keen, though she had become quite deaf. We wrote notes to her on a tablet, and she would read eagerly, then answer us.

She had outlived her husband, several children, and most of her friends. Yet through all the tragedies she endured, she remained serene and optimistic — always able to look ahead and believe that things would get better.

My grandfather had deserted her for another woman, leaving her to struggle alone to feed all the children she had brought into the grim world. Undaunted, she made a home in a dugout in the red Western Oklahoma soil near the Washita River. She went to work in a laundry, arising at 4:00 in the morning in order to have time to kill, dress, and cook chickens for her children's breakfast.

In the early part of the twentieth century, a woman alone had a mighty struggle for survival, yet Grandma could always take time to nurse a sick neighbor, help another neighbor give birth, or take one of her famous cakes and some jelly to a family no needier than she herself was.

Grandma had to watch her son go to prison after he killed the woman for whom my grandfather had left his family. She saw that son, so tormented by guilt and by the loss of his family while he was in prison, that he spent most of his remaining years in a mental institution, dying broken and lonely.

Grandma was a forgiving and loyal person. When my grandfather came to

see her to ask her to take him back, she did so immediately, telling well-meaning but objecting friends, "I loved Henry when I married him years ago, and I still love him." He lived only about six weeks after coming home and then died of a heart attack. But Grandma had made his last days on earth happy ones.

Grandma's youngest son, crippled by a bout of what was then called infantile paralysis, died an untimely death from a blow to the head.

Another son had to be institutionalized and is living out his life in a mental institution. Grandma underwent the agony of seeing him committed several years before she died.

She also lived through watching a daughter suffer from terminal cancer. The daughter's death came not long after Grandma's.

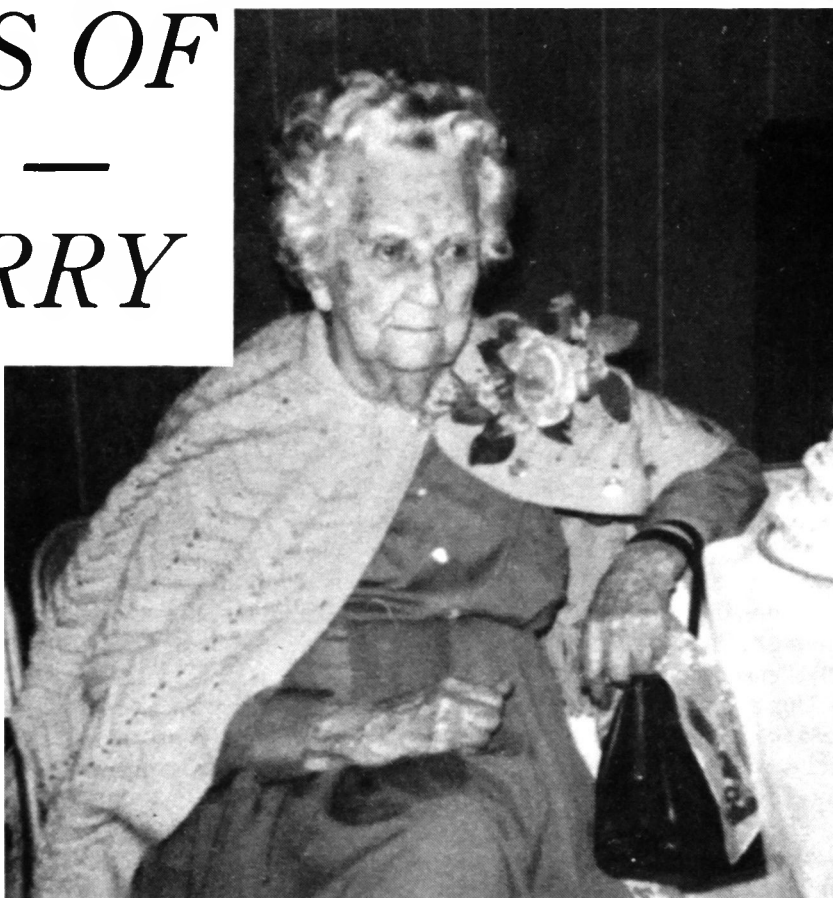
Surely she must have thought sometimes that life was too unjust to go on any longer. But she never complained about her hardships. She could always smile and say, "I'll be one hundred years old if I live until November of

1978."

From an early age, I was very impressed with the way she cared about her appearance — always keeping herself neat, a little make-up on, and a fresh apron, while she made her jelly, baked her cakes, and embroidered dresser scarves. Grandma was never idle.

In courage and faith, she shines as an example for us, her family, and for all who knew and loved her. The thirty-first chapter of PROVERBS describing the "worthy" woman was never more appropriately applied to any woman.

The passage from PROVERBS was read at her funeral service nine years ago, and all of us there could truly "rise up and call her blessed." We could be thankful for having her as an inspiration to our family and for being her descendants. Hopefully, some of her strength and many virtues will be passed on by us to our children and to our children's children. Perhaps in that way, Grandma will live forever. ❧



The author's grandma, age 100, November '78



# On A Midwinter Night

By Margie Snowden North

The day has been a long one — from dawn to dusk dragging cotton sacks and shivering in a Western Oklahoma wind. Home is a two-room shanty: 1 x 12's covered with tarpaper on the outside and a brown, heavy-duty wallpaper boasting dull pink flowers on the inside. When we arrive there, we are greeted by more cold. It's a different kind of cold than that projected by outside elements. It glares off the kerosene cook stove, the oil cloth covered table, the bare, blackened linoleums.

Our breath makes little fog clouds. Papa shakes the grate and scoops ashes that sift upward in the frigid room. "You children get some kindlin' and shinnery roots." (Papa calls us *childern*.)

The fire roars and the sound warms us. We peel off part of our outdoor garb, hang it on nails or on the backs of chairs to be worn the next day. In the kitchen Mama is peeling potatoes for soup and giving directions — "Ava Jean, skim the milk, Donna Mae start the churnin', Alvinita (my middle name, which I was known by at home since Mama's name was also Margie) and Rose Marie, set the table." Little Ransom putters with a toy, not yet having been initiated into the world of everyday realities. Papa lights a kerosene lamp.

We eat hot cornbread and steaming soup (Grandma Snowden's special — potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cow-cream, and cow-butter). From the oven emanates the aroma of roasting peanuts. Warmth and food have always made homes, and we are secure.

Amidst the clatter of spoons against bowls, we girls chatter nonsensically or giggle. Papa and Mama discuss the rankness of the cotton, the disagreeableness of the weather, and Truman's handling of the Korean situation. Afterward, Papa goes outside to tend to chores in the dark and Mama begins cooking the beans for next day's meal. We girls do dishes in two dishpans set on the table and filled with hot water from the tea kettle.

Someone announces, "AMOS AND ANDY's on."

From the front room, the scratched brown plastic radio erupts in static and dialogue. We pull up slat-backed, rope-bottomed chairs and strain to hear above the static.

Peanuts are consumed almost absently, hot tea warms us inside, and the monstrous black wood-stove sings the closest half of our bodies while the other half is covered with a rash of chill bumps. Laughter is restrained, even the snap of breaking peanuts muffled carefully, but much of the banter issuing from the brown box is indistinguishable. Static prevails before the program is over.

But — wait. A backless prose and poetry book (discarded by the school) is in Ava Jean's hands. We sit expectantly in the semi-dark of the lamp-lit room. We have relished the words in this magic book before. She begins in a measured, mysterious voice:

"The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door."

We see the ghostly galleon and the gusty trees, forget to eat peanuts. The tea grows cold in our cups. Outside, the wind is a torrent of darkness — a night that would please any highwayman. The mood swings sharply:

"The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;

The score stood four to two, with but one more inning to play;

And so, when Cooney died at first, and Burrows did the same,

A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game."

We hear the air shattered by the force of mighty Casey's bat. We hear the cry of maddened thousands and the echo that answered, "Fraud!" The crushing stike-out is sighed over once more while the shinnery wood in the fire crackles cozily. It's the perfect setting for Sam McGhee's creation:

"There are strange things done in the midnight sun

By the men who toil for gold;

The Arctic trails have their secret tales

That would make your blood run cold. . ."

We are seeing Sam's smile that you could see a mile, hear him say, "Please close that door. It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm. Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm."

The cracking and crunching of peanuts have resumed in the interim. We sip fresh tea while little Ransom sleeps unheeding on a nearby bed. Mama, ever-busy, calls from the kitchen, "You kids better get in bed. Mornin' comes early."

We stir reluctantly. Stretch and yawn. The day has been a long one, but good.

*MARGIE SNOWDEN NORTH, who resides near Erick, has been writing most of her life. Her freelance work has been published by denominational houses and local newspapers, and for about a year she did a weekly column for the OKLAHOMAN called "Something to Think About."*



Master of beauty

# FOR US

By Ruth Rector Farrar

God had a million little paintbrushes.  
He had a trillion minutes to paint the  
Beautiful trees and grass and flowers.

But He didn't need so long  
To brush the gorgeous colors on and spray perfume.  
He triggered a billion-billion raindrops to freshen  
The rivers and flowers and trees and all His other plants.  
God lighted a million-million comets and planets  
The sun and moon and all the other stars.  
He formed many rivers rushing to the seas  
Making homes for billions of fishes and crabs and turtles.  
God dressed many many birds in spectacular colors.  
God raised great mountains for us to climb.  
And food for sheep and goats and cows and all of us.  
He made billions of seeds to grow for us  
If we will only use them wisely.  
God whispered a trillion words for us  
To show the safe path we can always tread.  
God inspired a million songs for us  
So we would feel good and worship Him.  
The things He has done for us are innumerable.  
Do we praise Him and thank Him every day?  
And a million-million more?  
We see God's handiwork everywhere.  
He uses His lightning-fast fingers for us.  
Let us use our ten little ones for Him.

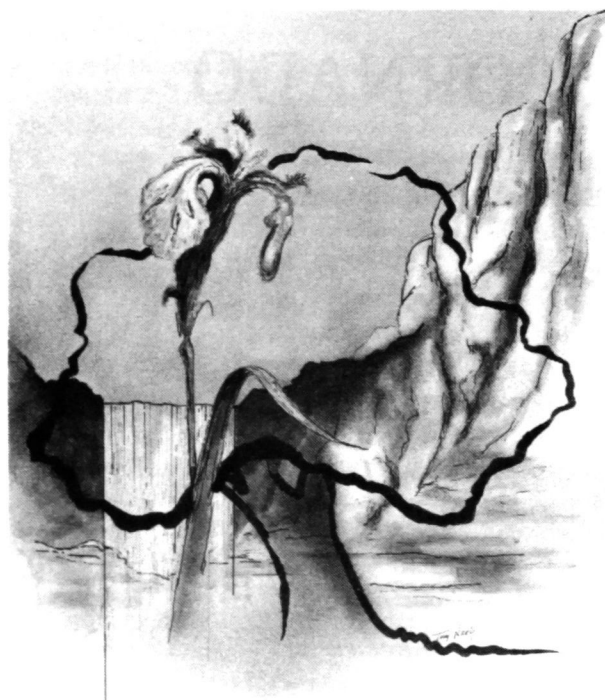


Illustration by Tony Neely

RUTH RECTOR FARRAR was born August 31, 1903, southeast of Clinton, Oklahoma Territory. She graduated from Hammon High School in 1921 and from Southwestern State Teacher's College in 1953 with a Bachelor's degree after her three children were grown and married. She taught elementary grades fifteen years, some on the Life Certificate.



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# TORNADO

By Pat Kourt

*Edmond. . . Union City. . . Clinton  
ideal Oklahoma Communities until the  
magnificent, but deadly, Wind God  
appears in unpredictable rage  
twisting, gyrating, pulling. . .  
taking what he desires  
in a growl of power. . .  
creating an aerial  
display of homes,  
trees, and cars. . .  
changing life  
to meet his  
ominous  
unknown  
urges. . .*

*now!*

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*PAT KOURT — despite her busy life as mother, wife, and teacher in Thomas — continues to give WESTVIEW much of her time. As is borne out in the high quality of her works, she teaches creative writing.*

# The Orange Tree

By Kristi Hill

It stands there majestically  
Its huge strong arms outspread.  
The warming sun peeks between  
The branches.  
The cool wind gently rustles  
The broad green leaves.  
The limbs cradle us with  
Loving care.  
As we peel the big bright  
Oranges, our eyes burn  
From the acid being  
Squirted in them.  
We are overcome by the  
Glorious smell of fresh citrus.  
As we bite the large, perfectly  
Shaped pieces, the juice  
Slowly rolls down our chins  
And onto our shirts.  
The cool taste of orange is  
As sweet as honey.  
We think of the many times  
We've been here before and  
Say, "This will always be  
Our orange tree."

*KRISTI HILL, a basketball player and writer, is a junior in Weatherford High School. Her parents are Dr. Benny and Jo Hill.*



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# Staying Alive

By Dick Chapman

Over the low hill or ridge that separated the rough ground from the plain ridges, a canyon thrust its peak high above any points in sight. On its small round top, a bush grew and clung fast waving in the wind but never turning loose of its hold on the gravelly peak.

There was grass — just God's green grass, or perhaps it was tall brown grass that was more yellow than brown. Somewhere on a flat plain a spot of several acres was taken over by short curly grass, and here was where the little barking dogs with the twitching tail had settled in.

They scampered from one hole in a mound to another hole in a mound and kept the tops of the mounds round and clean. These den-holes made a bad place for a horse or cow to step in and break a leg.

A rider coming toward the dog-town half a mile away was

unseen by the small animals, but he was spotted by a larger gray animal as soon as he came over the ridge far away, but the coyote wasn't surprised or startled. And it made no move as the rider might change his course before coming to the dog town; anyhow, he wasn't carrying anything in his hand, and the little wolf was sure he could beat the rider to the nearest canyon. And he didn't want to move since the warm sun felt good on his woolly back where the hair hadn't yet shed off, and he stood a good chance to nab a young prairie dog that got too far from its den. The coyote wasn't really hungry, but he was tired of chewing on a tough old winter-killed cow that the buzzards had already worked on, and a fat young dog always tasted good in the spring.

The rider had turned away to avoid riding through the dog town or perhaps had sighted cattle that should be counted, so danger was over from that direction. The puppies were getting closer and more careless in their play, so there was nothing to do except stay quiet and watch and wait. But then a high-wheeling hawk made a dive over the town, which sent the little dogs diving underground at a warning bark from the old ones.

No use hanging around there today as it was getting late, so unless he could catch a jack rabbit, it seemed that he would have to be satisfied with more dried beef. Oh well. Tomorrow would be sunny, and the young dogs would just be a day older and a day bigger. ❧

DICK CHAPMAN, "Uncle Dick" to some of our readers, late "Poet Laureate of Arapaho," continues to entertain us with his homey viewpoint

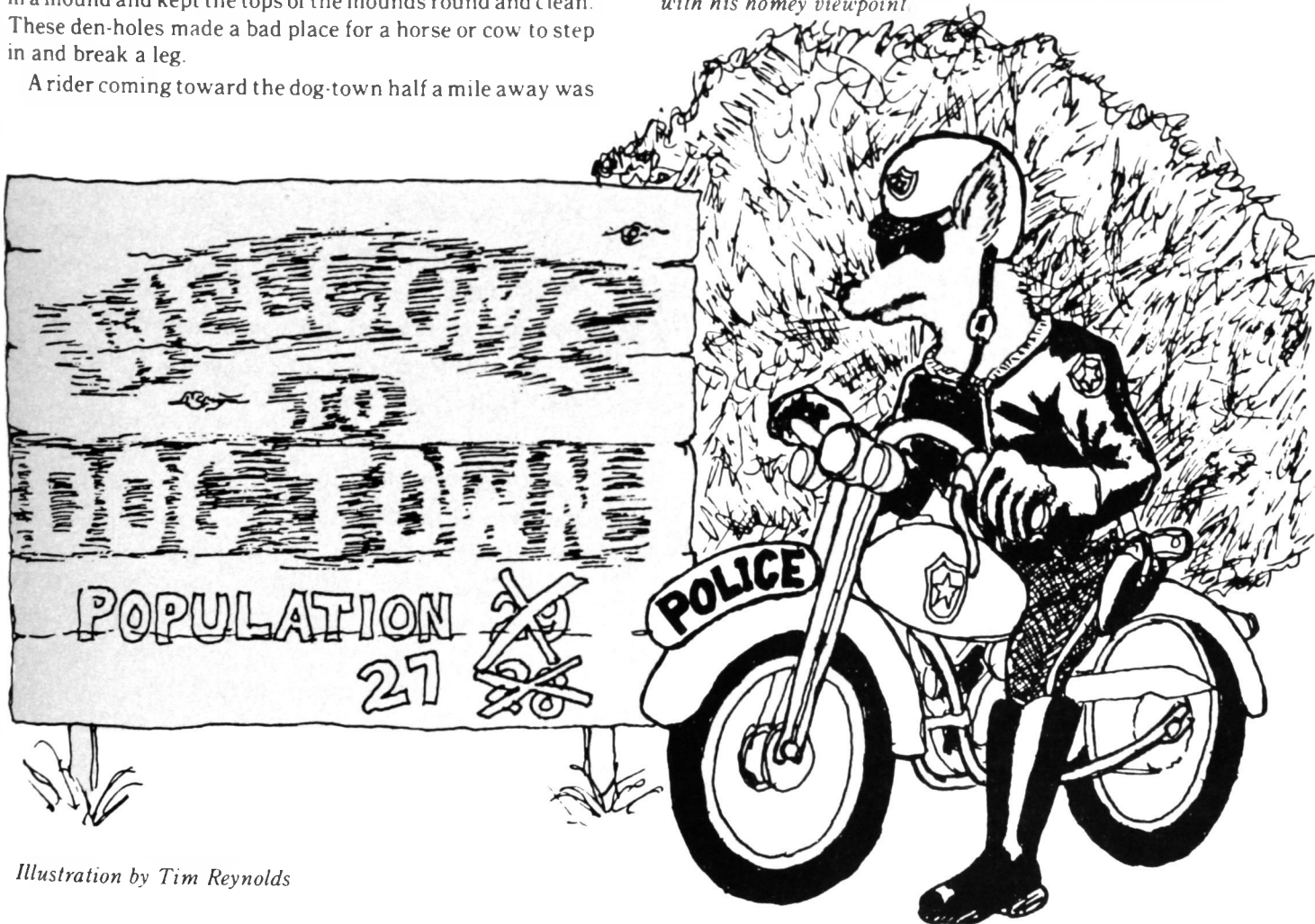


Illustration by Tim Reynolds

# Bobwhite

By Dona Maddux Cooper

*each and all are needed*

The friendly bobwhite  
Kept introducing himself  
To sunrise joggers.

*DONA MADDUX COOPER is a member of the Stillwater Writers. Her book PATCHWORK IN POETRY AND VERSE is in its third printing. She is wife of one, mother of four, and grandmother of seven.*

## MISCELLANY

# Haiku

By Inez Schneider Whitney

past-life panavision

Fields of golden wheat  
Cut down by Papa's binder  
Shocked by harvest hands.

Suddenly they start  
Hailstones pounding on the roof  
An Oklahoma storm.

Blue and white daisies  
Blooming in our big pasture  
At our prairie home.

Barefoot boys and girls  
Playing at Prairie View School  
In the hot sunshine.

Mt. Hope, our small church,  
The old-fashioned M.E. South  
On a country road.

# VISIONS

By Glen McIntyre

hopeful haunts

We saw the earth our Mother  
carrying  
vast green seas of grass, wind caressed, great piles of  
mountains which  
the clouds scraped by,  
the rivers dancing in fall sun;  
We saw the buffalo our brother,  
earth covering until the ground thundered,  
though we slew him with  
deep veneration  
many prayers;  
Blue sky was our hunting lodge,  
golden sun our fire  
and each gift each day brought  
was enough;  
Long gone those times, high and far away  
so that memory now is like a faint breeze  
rustling in dry grass;  
Yet still, at night  
under the secret black sky  
memories come back to us  
and we have visions.

*GLEN McINTYRE, a free-lance writer living in Kingfisher, is curator of the Chisholm Trails Museum.*



# Poetry Potpourri

By Margie Snowden North

## DEATH DOWN THE ROAD

*There's been a death, Mama said.  
So she killed two chickens  
and cleaned them and fried them  
and opened a jar of peaches,  
for food and Death always went together.*

*We put on our Sunday best,  
Mama in her good gabardine skirt  
with seamed hose  
and black and white wing-tip pumps,  
and we drove to the neighbors  
where cars were parked haphazardly,  
without order.*

*Other people with food and sympathy  
were streaming in and out the door.  
Stay out here and play, Mama said.*

*Men were gathered  
on the porch and around the cars  
and talked about crops and Truman  
and how good a neighbor the Archers had been.  
We stayed far back,  
away from death.*

*The sunshine filtered down  
through the elm leaves  
making patterns on our quiet faces.  
We sat stiffly in a swing  
or walked to the hog-wire fence  
and looked out across the small field  
where we had played long ago,  
and playing was the last thing on our minds.  
Mrs. Archer was ancient, we agreed solemnly.  
Probably 60.  
Old age and Death went together.*

*At last we drove away,  
back into sunshine and Life  
and got into everyday clothes  
that moved when you did  
and it was time for chores  
and no one minded a bit.*

*It was good to laugh again  
and lean your face against Daisy  
while you milked  
and smell her cow-warmth  
and feed a foaming pan of milk to the kittens  
and forget for a while how close to Death  
you were down at the neighbors today.*

Illustration by Paul Stone

## ■ ONE TIME IN ERICK

*When Tex Ritter came to town that time,  
he talked to my little brother!*

*Oh, it was a good day.  
We had heard ole Tex on the radio  
and now here he was up on a flat-bed trailer  
right down on Main Street  
sittin' there holdin' that guitar  
and singin' his heart out about boll-weevils  
and rye whiskey.*

*The sweat was pourin' off all of us,  
even ole Tex.*

*His hair was long in front and  
combed straight back and  
he had to keep flingin' it back out of his eyes,  
cause when he really got into singin'  
he forgot everybody  
except the words and pickin'  
that guitar.*

*Little Ransom was takin' it all in,  
right up on the edge of that trailer,  
starin right up into Tex's eyes,  
wishin' he could get hold of that guitar.  
And that's when Tex Ritter —  
famous singer and personality that he was,  
in all his awe-inspiring regality  
and right in front of half the people in Erick —  
talked to my little brother.*

*He said,  
Move back just a little, sonny.*

## ■ APRIL 9, 1947

*We went to the cellar that night  
in winds that almost blew us  
to the ground.*

*We tugged the wooden door shut  
and Mama lit the kerosene lamp  
and set it in its own circle of light  
on the dusty shelf.*

*Hushed, groggy,  
we sat on the mildewy cot,  
wary of spiders and centipedes,  
listened to the shriek outside  
and Papa's reassurance on the inside.  
After a while he had us girls giggling, and  
we almost forgot there was a storm.*

*Didn't know till later  
that while we laughed,  
sleepy, secure, safe,  
a house up by Sweetwater was raised  
off its foundation  
and set down again,  
a man near Grimes lost his life,  
and worst of all  
a town called Woodward  
up there by the panhandle  
(or somewhere)  
was being flattened  
and lives snuffed out  
like candles  
in a southwest wind.*

## **MAY 16, 1957**

*Come and see the river  
they were saying in town,  
and in cars we flocked out there  
five miles to the Northfork of Red River.  
We stood on the Tittle Bridge  
(dedicated with speeches and free barbecue  
only six years before) and  
watched dislodged trees and a rolling current  
lapping at undergirdings and at the bridge floor itself.*

*We were not concerned.  
The Tittle Bridge can take it, we said.  
Bridges in times past had crumpled in such waters,  
wooden bridges that sounded like washboards  
rolling up behind as you drove over them.  
The Tittle Bridge  
was built to withstand headrises and flood currents,  
so we stood on her strength  
and watched the angry waters,  
never dreaming the currents could be stronger  
than concrete or steel.*

*Not one of us was prepared  
for the incredible buckling,  
the sound of twisting steel,  
the screams and frenzied scurrying,  
bodies being pitched like rag dolls  
headlong into raging waters.  
Panic came, disbelief, and a scream:  
My children are gone!*

*Afterward there was the ceaseless searching  
of numbed but caring friends  
and standers-by and even the National Guard —  
with one body found and one not —  
until common sense at last dictated  
the futility of it.  
Even then there remained a father  
who searched for weeks and months,  
yet who returned home each time,  
empty-handed.*

*The repaired Tittle Bridge  
stands strong and firm today, unmarred.  
But the hearts of a mom and dad  
will bear marks forever,  
caused by a flood one spring  
when the bridge went  
and took with it two young lives.*

# THE OLD MAN'S FIDDLE

By Randy Morrison

The dull brass buckles creak and unlatch;

The old leather case is slowly opened wide.

Grandchildren, nieces, nephews —

All gather around.

Their eyes growing round,

They don't make a sound.

"It's no 'Stradiveros', but it gets the job done,"

Barks the old man as he lifts the old fiddle

From its dustless resting place.

The stain is worn through in spots on the neck,

And the old horse-hair bow is growing thinner

each day.

With thin, crooked fingers, he raises

It slowly to his chin.

With some unseen power, he is able to hold it there.

Then the old horse-hair bow starts to dance on the strings.

The pale, crooked fingers march proudly from note to note.

Then the weather-tuned strings start to sing all

their songs.

First they sing glad songs,

Joyous and free.

The old man's deep eyes grow deeper but brighter,

Remembering the good times from the past of his life.

Then they sing sad songs,

Hollow and cold.

The old man's deep eyes grow deeper and dim,

Remembering the bad times from the past of his life.

The teary-eyed man takes the bow from the strings,

The last solemn note escapes from the room.

The old wooden fiddle grows silent again.

The old man looks older than he did before.



*RANDY MORRISON — sometimes a speaker, sometimes an athlete, and sometimes a writer — is a junior at Weatherford High School. The subject of his poem is Louis Morrison, his deceased grandfather.*



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# VISTAS

By Marianne McFarland McNeil

## NEW LANDMARK

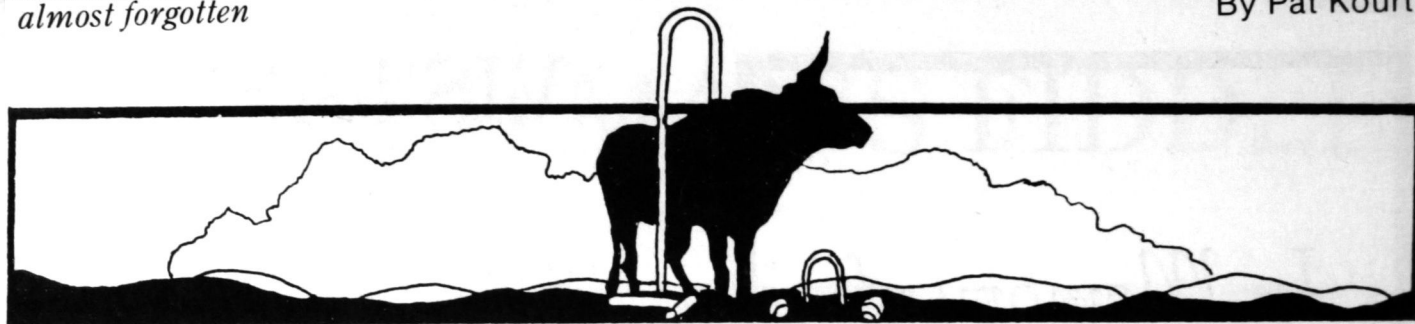
High modern building  
glassy-eyed  
stands tall  
to needle skies  
and mirrored walls  
reflect facades  
of heritage  
we prize.

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

Our nation has great treasures stored  
in mountains, dales, and streams;  
We've oil and gas, huge watersheds,  
and lodes where metal gleams.

One wonders which resource will be  
despoiled and ravaged worst,  
will water, oil — or taxpayer —  
become depleted first?

*MARIANNE McFARLAND McNEIL, now of Amarillo, came from the Black Hills. She's a "poet's poet" who is deeply involved in various writing activities. Both of her poems published here are from her book WINDS OF THE PANHANDLE.*



# The “Wicket”-est Game In The West

Just nineteen miles north of WESTVIEW's publishing home lies the farming community of Thomas. Better known for its high-school sports, however, it has been publicized frequently as “home of girls’ basketball teams” as well as “home of number 1 ranked boys’ football squads.” What most Western Oklahomans and many Thomas citizens do *not* know is that the National Croquet championship was held in downtown Thomas for several years.

In the early 1940's men, women, and children clustered around the croquet courts located on the corner of Main and Orient streets. Kenneth Roof, then a young man, recalls that there were “two excellent courts and one good one. They were among the nicest in the United States.” The father-son team of Bruce and Clyde McNeill played often on the courts for which they helped to provide money.

Great pains were taken to keep the courts manicured. Strained sand was watered; then drags and a broom sweeper were used to level the playing area. Wickets, through which the balls were hit, were imbedded in cement. The court was protected by short cement walls. Ultimately, a “perfect” court was expected by all of the croquet participants. Too, Roof remembered the game as “very scientific; a dime would wedge the ball.”

John Jones, who drove to the matches from Weatherford, was an especially good player of the area. His wife, Ruby, remarks that she never cared to watch the competitions. Women just didn't seem to have the necessary amount of patience to see their men through hours of the tournaments. Since there was no real physical danger involved in croquet, most wives and daughters preferred to stay at home.

Patience? Yes. During the three-day national tournament, coin-operated lights kept the action going twenty-four hours a day. Many players and spectators played and watched all night. A three-hour game wasn't uncommon at all. None of the players, however, were women. Most were older or middle-aged men.

Like today's professional golfers, local croquet competitors traveled around the states of Oklahoma and Texas. Because they, too, had city croquet courts, players from Loyal, Anadarko, Weatherford, Lawton, and Oklahoma City played annually in the Thomas competitions.

With an entry fee of approximately \$10, costs for lights, court upkeep, and large trophies were maintained.

Playing techniques varied among the men. Several players shot by holding the croquet mallet down between their knees. On the other hand, a few “showy” players shot backwards mainly with wrist action. As in golf tournaments, silence lingered throughout the matches to insure total concentration. Most tense moments involved players hitting the ball through the “basket” of two crossed wickets in the center of the court. The ball was declared “dead” until a player made a wicket, but it was “live” while in play. There were ten wickets in all.

Most players seemed quite possessive of their croquet equipment. R. L. Cline remembers his uncle, Arthur Lawter, as an avid player who might have “fudged” a bit while he played and who was handy in wielding his ball and mallet. Lawter's equipment is still considered among “prized possessions” of his family today.

Also, Cline laughs about another veteran player, Jake Fender, whose car was stolen one day. No, he didn't grieve for his car — but for his lost ball and mallet!

Who were the champion players? Most recollections include the names of John Scott, Charlie Gardner, Herbert Hansen, Raymond Williams, Milt Herring, Fred Foust, Earl Glazier, and many others. Kenneth Roof declares that Merle Spain was “the best I ever saw!”

Few recorded statistics have been kept of the croquet mania in Thomas, which helped to lessen the seriousness of wartime. Unlike other sports, croquet wasn't seasonal. It was played year round unless the weather was too wet or too cold.

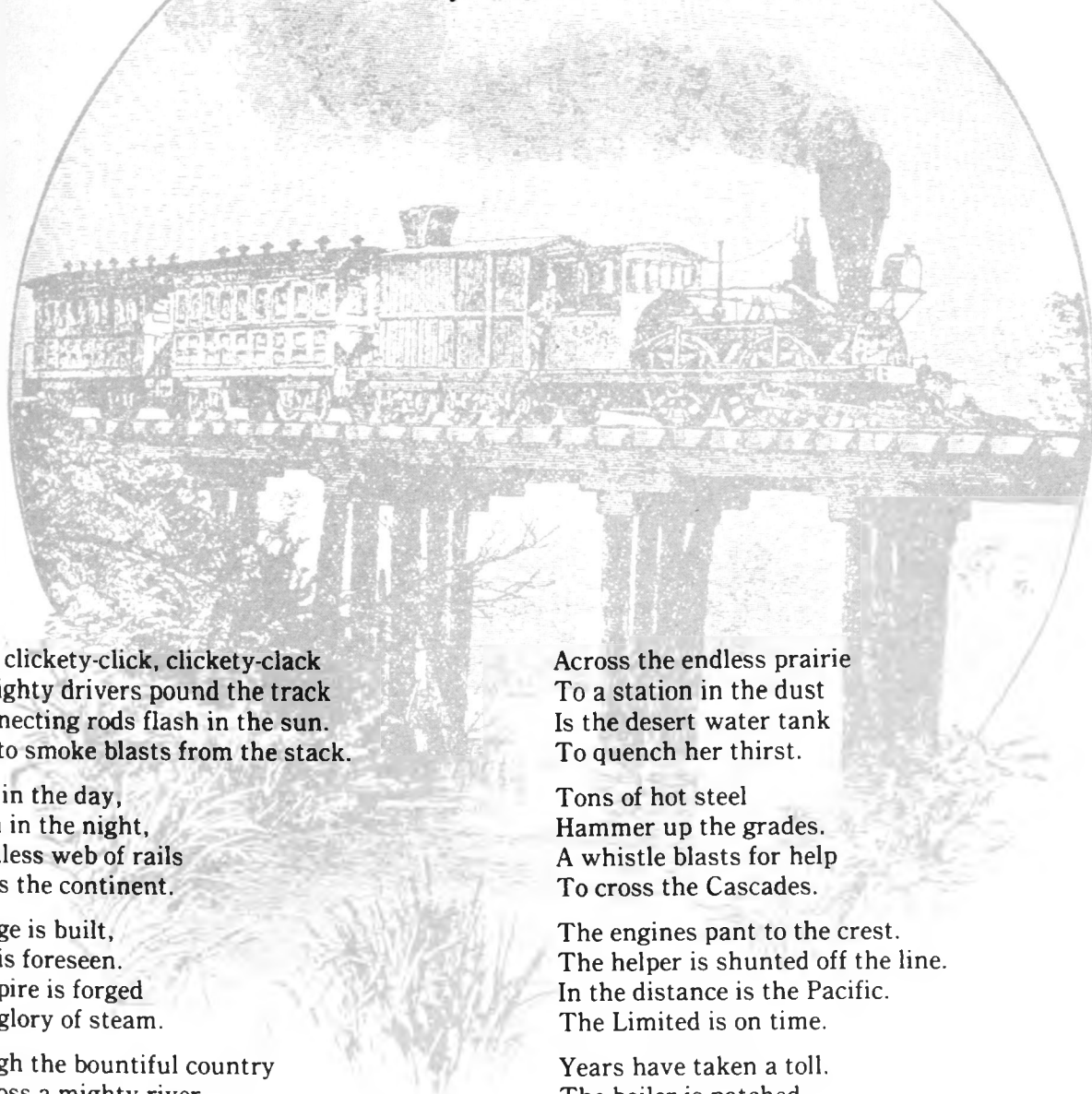
Like many activities that reach their peak of excitement, interest in competitive croquet declined; a Masonic lodge was built on the site of the courts. Even though the courts were moved two blocks east to the city park in Thomas, the enthusiasm was gone. Only memories remain.

In 1986, however, sports enthusiasts, according to CURRENT CONSUMER AND LIFESTYLES STUDIES magazine, predicted that the “gentle sport of croquet” may be rebounding as a popular sport. But it will be more than a picnic pastime. There are already croquet coaches instructing country club members in several Eastern cities. Mallets cost up to \$300 each, and balls cost \$160 a set.

Yes, history does repeat itself. Who knows? Western Oklahoma may see a revival of croquet — the “wicket”-est game in the West! ♣

# The Glory Of Steam

By Richard Garrity



With a clickety-click, clickety-clack  
The mighty drivers pound the track  
As connecting rods flash in the sun.  
Staccato smoke blasts from the stack.

Bright in the day,  
Hidden in the night,  
An endless web of rails  
Crosses the continent.

A village is built,  
A city is foreseen.  
An empire is forged  
In the glory of steam.

Through the bountiful country  
Or across a mighty river  
Speeds the iron horse,  
A taker and a giver.

The harvest of the land is moved;  
Passengers cross the nation.  
It has a schedule to keep  
At a distant destination.

Against the driven snow,  
Into the pelting rain,  
Or heat, cold, and fog,  
Hurtles the Number Nine.

The journals are hot;  
The water is low.  
Stoke that fire  
To make her go!

Across the endless prairie  
To a station in the dust  
Is the desert water tank  
To quench her thirst.

Tons of hot steel  
Hammer up the grades.  
A whistle blasts for help  
To cross the Cascades.

The engines pant to the crest.  
The helper is shunted off the line.  
In the distance is the Pacific.  
The Limited is on time.

Years have taken a toll.  
The boiler is patched  
And the fiery breath is feeble.  
Faceless diesels carry the manifest.

The relic shudders to a halt  
With a final exhaust of steam.  
This is the end of the line:  
This is the requiem.

*RICHARD GARRITY, of Oklahoma City, is a free-lance writer and photographer who continues to share his expertise with WESTVIEW.*



# A Century Of Progress

By Inez Schneider Whitney

While I was in my attic recently, I ran across one of my treasured possessions, an old scrapbook. Pasted on the first page is a folder advertising a tour to "A Century of Progress Exposition," a World's Fair held in Chicago in 1933.

For three years, I had been an elementary art teacher in Oklahoma City, but that summer — 1933 — I was teaching art at Southwestern State Teachers College in Weatherford. Miss Myrle Kelly, head of the Art Department, had called me that spring.

"I need another art teacher this summer. I'm calling to find out if you'd be interested. You'll be paid only fifty dollars for the nine weeks; but if there are any courses at the college you'd like to take, you won't have to pay. Would you want to do it?"

I knew that my living expenses would be quite a bit more than fifty dollars, but I accepted. I thought it was an honor to be asked. Besides I could pursue my interest in watercolor by taking another course.

John Whitney, a young attorney I had been dating, came out one weekend. He handed me the very folder I have pasted in the scrapbook and said, "This trip is being sponsored by our Chamber of Commerce. Look it over."

Here is what I read:

"Round-trip railroad fare with meals in the dining car. Lodging in first-class hotels — two to a room. Three admission tickets to the World's Fair. A boat trip to Michigan City and return. A fifty-mile motor-coach tour of Chicago."

"What a marvelous trip," I exclaimed. "I've never been to Chicago."

"We're taking reservations," John said. "Why don't you go? Tell some of your friends about it. If I get four more to sign, Rock Island will give me my trip free. I already have my friend, Paul Powers."

It was during the Depression, and money was scarce. My salary was

small, but at least I got it every month. Often John's clients didn't pay him and he had office rent, a secretary, and other expenses.

"How can I leave when I'm teaching every day?" I asked.

"Ask Miss Kelly. She seems like a good old girl. Since she's head of the Art Department, I'll wager she could arrange it."

And she did. I showed her the folder the next morning.

"What an opportunity!" she exclaimed. "There's a fabulous exhibit at the fair. Do you know that WHISTLER'S MOTHER has been brought here from the Louvre? I'll see what I can do."

She called me in to her office the next day.

"It's all arranged and surprise! I'll be going too. Tell John to get me a ticket."

Miss Kelly had gone to the president. She told him that she had been asked to go on the tour as a guide who would lecture to the group about masterpieces on display at the fair. Also, she needed me as her assistant. The president gave his permission. He thought it would be good publicity for the college.

How excited I was! I wondered a little if her exaggeration of the need for our services was justified, but I dismissed it from my mind. After all, what an opportunity to spend some time with my young attorney friend. I contacted two teachers at my school in Oklahoma City. When I called John and told him to get tickets for them as well as for Miss Kelly and me, he said, "I can't believe it! My ticket won't cost me a cent!"

At last the day of departure arrived. Miss Kelly and I took a train to Oklahoma City. And then on Sunday, July 16, 1933, at 10:30 a.m., the Rock Island "Golden State Limited" left Oklahoma City with five hundred passengers bound for Chicago.

Miss Kelly began making short trips from car to car to get acquainted with the passengers. She'd tell a little group of three or four about the masterpieces



to be seen at the fair. She was really rendering the services she had told the president she had been asked to do.

"For purposes of economy, sleeping cars have been omitted in connection with this particular tour," the folder indicated, but no one seemed to mind. They were young and were anticipating a wonderful time at the Century of Progress. Twenty-four hours later the train arrived in Chicago, and we were taken to our hotels. John and his friend Paul were only a few blocks from the one where I was staying with Miss Kelly and my Oklahoma City friends.

The days went all too fast. Now and then John and I managed to steal a few hours to sightsee on our own. One day, Miss Kelly organized a small group for a tour of the Chicago Art Gallery. Afterward John said, "That was great. I really enjoyed it. Miss Kelly's a smart lady; she really knows her art and makes it interesting too."

That pleased me. Miss Kelly had been my favorite instructor. I had spent hours in her department painting oil and watercolor pictures as well as learning from her in the many regular art courses I had taken.

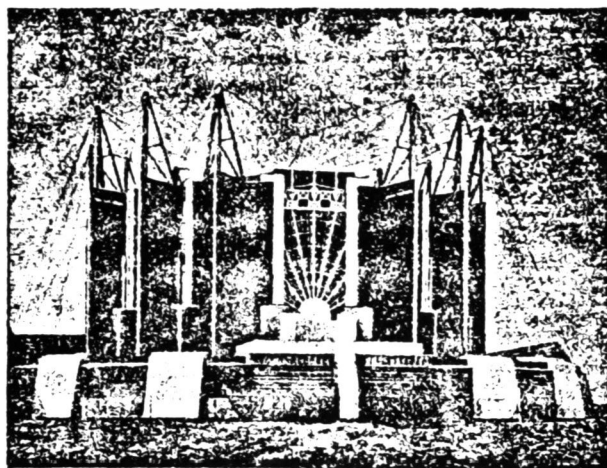
July 22 came and we left for home. Miss Kelly and I were back in the classroom. A clipping in the scrapbook from the local Weatherford paper has these headlines: "Art Teacher Is Back from Excursion to fair in Chicago" and "Miss Myrle Kelly Acts as Official Art Guide for Chamber of Commerce from Oklahoma City."

It didn't make any difference that I wasn't mentioned. Miss Kelly had made it possible for me to have one of the most enjoyable trips of my life.

I almost forgot to mention the cost of this memorable trip, which included every necessary except meals during the stay in Chicago — \$36.95.

The trip to Chicago was only the first of many trips John and I enjoyed together since two years later we said "I do" and had a happy marriage that lasted over fifty years. 🍷

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ROUTE OF THE GOLDEN STATE LIMITED

# Ponca City, Oklahoma: 1984

By Nuala Archer

*Good as old-timey barn-raising, corn-shuckings and apple-squeezings are community cannings. Come blackberry season Denny and Ken, Chris and Karla, Myrtle and Marybeth spill out of their VW RABBITS onto ripening brambles — with buckets, hats, gloves, bug repellent, and bubble gum. When bees hum uncomfortably close, the group breaks off and heads (past the Drive-In where "Bo Lero" is playing) for pot-luck and a swim. Then the serious jelling begins. Dark berries are boiled in assorted pans. Jelly-jar washers, dryers, ladlers, and sealers are kept busy. Ken quotes THE TULSA TRIBUNE: "Eskimos in Nicaragua are curious about how Poloroids will work in Primary Reading and Poetry Programs." As the sun sets, jelly jars fill, and talk turns to Bo Derek and chandeliers.*

DR. NUALA ARCHER, born of Irish parents in Rochester, New York, has lived in Central America, Milwaukee, and Dublin. In 1980, she won the Irish Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award for a manuscript that was published as *WHALE ON THE LINE*. Dr. Archer is an Assistant Professor at OSU, where she edits *MIDLAND REVIEW* and is poetry Co-Editor of *CIMARRON REVIEW*.



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## Winter 1987

### Western Oklahoma Success Stories

SPRING, 1988 (Western Oklahoma's  
Pacesetters; deadline: 12-15-87)

SUMMER, 1988 (Western Oklahoma  
"Stars"; deadline: 2-15-88)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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