



9-1-1986

Westview: Vol. 6, Iss. 1 (Fall 1986)

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(1986) "Westview: Vol. 6, Iss. 1 (Fall 1986)," *Westview*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol6/iss1/1>

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WESTVIEW

A Journal of Western Oklahoma

VOLUME 6

NUMBER 1

FALL 1986

\$3.00



WESTERN
OKLAHOMA SCHOOLS

FOREWORD

In our Foreword for the Summer, 1986 issue, we halfway promised to throw some bouquets to living WESTVIEW supporters. But before we do that, we extend our apologies to all poets who were offended by our request that they start writing prose or start querying us about prose submissions. Our problem is that we're overstocked on poetry up through every projected issue. Maybe that's over--now to the bouquets.

Donita Lucas Shields of Elk City gets the first one. Donita has been interested in our publishing effort since the beginning. Since September, 1981, she has shown her concern for our project in a variety of ways, although she didn't become a member of the staff until 1983. Like the SOSU faculty members who work for WESTVIEW, she has received no pay for her work; and in her positions as staff writer and advertising representative, she has provided her own funds for extensive travel and research. We know of no other SOSU alumna who has shown such dedication.

The second bouquet goes to Dr. Christopher Gould, former Assistant Editor who is now Associate Professor of English at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington. Dr. Gould, since 1981, has ably assisted WESTVIEW as both writer and critic. We depended on his impartial, scholarly assessment of each manuscript; we were astounded that he never kept a manuscript more than a day. Dr. Gould was with us during the early days of our planning for the publication of this regional magazine, and we depended on his expertise. We know that his post can be filled, but we doubt that he can be replaced.

We have our usual dilemma in this issue: lack of coverage. We are hopeful that those readers who would have liked to see something about their schools will understand that there's one clear way to have control over WESTVIEW entries: submit something. If a submission is acceptable, we'll publish it.

Our gratitude is extended to Dorothy Leonard Forbis for being the type of WESTVIEW reader who likes to make things happen. Without Dorothy, there would have been no article on Union School 77, which was located six miles northwest of Weatherford. Union is significant to us not only because of a loyal supporter such as Dorothy, who attended school there for eight years; it was also the school that played a prominent role in the education of SOSU benefactress Margaret Renz Replogle, who provided funds for the Music Wing of our Fine Arts Center.

We have tried to be objective, and we think that our copy will be of interest to all of our readers.

Happy reading,



Leroy Thomas
Editor

Fall WESTVIEW 1986

Weatherford, Oklahoma

Published by Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Volume 6

Western Oklahoma Schools

Number 1

MEMORIES

The Glory That Was Port	Donita Lucas Shields	4
The Grandeur That Was Union 77	Leroy Thomas	8
All-Purpose Facility	Mona Jean Taff Suter	11
A Glimpse at Carter	Byron Clancy	12
A School Not to Doubt	Ross F. Cooke	12

PERSPECTIVES

On Colleges, Asylums, Reformatories, and Racetracks	Donald Hamm	14
Fairview	Klina Potter Casady	16
Hammon	Glen Crane	17
I Don't Understand	David Klaassen	17

NOSTALGIA

Fond Memories	Maria Beckham	18
First Day	Margie Snowden North	20
Picture Day	Marsha J. Crouch	21

FEATURES

The Lady	Tommy Torres	22
After Ralph Waldo	Leroy Thomas	24

NATURE

My Enchanted Canyon	Phyllis C. Kippenberger	27
Master Artist at Work Painting Fall Landscape	Ruth Blackketter	28

INSPIRATION

Have I Told You My Bean Story?	Maxine Wilhelm	29
Defeating Loneliness	Tal D. Bonham	30
After School	Diane Glancy	31
A Few Lines	Dick Chapman	31

MISCELLANY (selections written during a Junior-High Creative Writing Workshop in 1984)

Equipment for Learning	Stacie Dunson	32
Martian	Russell Brown	32
Out of Step	Katharine Rogers	32
Emotions	Jeffrey Dibler	32
Friendship	Melissa Kirkland	33
Imagination	Randy Morrison	33
Appetite	Denise Dick	33
Creativity	Kelly Camden	33

FUTURE ISSUES	Staff	35
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COVER LAYOUT by David A. Millwee

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WESTVIEW is the official quarterly of the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies. To be published in the journal are scholarly articles, local history sketches, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, graphic arts, book reviews, and creative writing. Submissions along with SASE, are to be sent to: Dr. Leroy Thomas, Editor, WESTVIEW, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096. All works appearing herein are copyrighted by the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies of Weatherford, Oklahoma.

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Klina Potter Casady is a retired newspaperwoman of Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

Dick Chapman, late Poet Laureate of Arapaho, continues to live in the pages of WESTVIEW.

Byron Clancy, now deceased, was a rural mail carrier in Plaster, Dewey, and Carter during the years 1909-1955.

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David Klaassen, whose poetry has previously been published in CHAPBOOK 86, is a Weatherford High School junior.

Margie Snowden North of Erick has a book titled CHASE A DREAM to be published soon. Her first work was published over twenty years ago, and she has about six hundred published stories, articles, and poems to her credit.

Donita Lucas Shields, who was recently elected to a second five-year term as president of the Port Alumni Association, will still devote much of her recreation time to traveling and to WESTVIEW staff writing and advertising.

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Maxine Wilhelm, for the past twenty-four years, has helped her husband, Olin, operate the Wilhelm Honey Farm near Erick. She's a mother of two and grandmother of five. She has been doing free-lance writing most of her life.

The Glory That Was Port

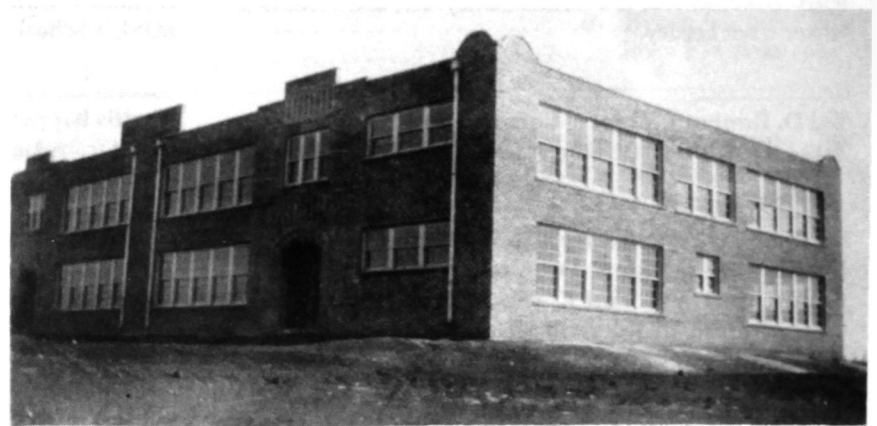
By Donita Lucas Shields

As soon as homesteaders staked their quarter-section claims in Oklahoma Territory after the Cheyenne-Arapaho Land Run, they started building their homes and schools. By the time the 1892-1893 winter school term began, 31 districts had been organized in County "H" (Washita County). The first schools were established along the fertile lowlands of Big Elk Creek: Barton (Sentinel) District #1, Combs District #2, and Wood (Port) District #3.

At first, there were two Woods--East Wood and West Wood, which developed one mile apart. Rivalry broke out when West Wood became the official post office. East Wood residents stole the post office at gunpoint and hauled it to their settlement. East Wood also wanted the school and actually started one in a dugout home, but West Wood folks didn't allow their children to attend. To settle the fracas, County "H" officials demanded that the post office be returned to West Wood and the school be situated halfway between the two rivals.

The Wood School dugout was constructed in the southeast corner of Section 34, Township 8, Range 20. Its district included 10.25 square miles, the nucleus of what would become the largest consolidated school in Oklahoma and possibly in the nation. Mr. Albert Peachy promoted construction, and he and Mr. Nick Bowie were the first teachers. Fewer than 25 children attended the brief winter terms. These children belonged to the community's first pioneers: James Wood, T. J. Hampton, Hugh Misenhimer, T. L. Lucas, A. L. Maddox, Nick Bowie, and R. E. Smith.

In 1902, both the school and the post office were named Port, honoring Andrew J. Port, the first postmaster. East Wood faded away, but the town of Port retained its post office until 1940. The dugout school was abandoned in 1902, and a frame three-room structure was built in Section 3, Township 8, Range 20 on the south side of the road east of Port Cemetery. In 1902-1903, 75 local children enrolled in primary, intermediate, and advanced classes.



Probably the best-remembered teacher was Mr. George A. Coffey, father of John Coffey, who later became president of Cameron University in Lawton. Mr. Coffey began his teaching career in 1901 at the nearby school of Hog Eye (Taylor District #89). He became widely known for his fine educational ideals and for organizing the district's first basketball team.

When settlers continued moving into Port Community to farm the rich, productive soil, the three-room school could no longer contain its increasing enrollment. During the summer of 1915, patrons took time out from their field work to tear down the old building and build another one before the fall term began. The two-story wooden building contained four classrooms downstairs and an auditorium on the second level. In the fall of 1915, the school enrolled 125 students.

Port School District #3 became Port Consolidated District #5 when West Spring Creek District #32 combined with it in 1921. Additional dissolves, consolidations, and annexations followed during the next three decades. These included the districts of Independence (#5), Portland (#65), Combs, Rock Front (#4), West Bethel (#63), Pleasant Grove (#93), Taylor, Herd Law (#33), Pink (#79), South Burns (#102), and Retrop (#66). Sentinel and

Port also exchanged portions of their districts. Before Port closed its doors in 1966, the district contained 88 square miles which included two districts in Kiowa County and a small area in Beckham County.

Anticipating the numerous mergings of surrounding one- and two-room schools, Port School District built its third facility in 1923, two miles east of its original schools, where it would be more centrally located. This two-story red-brick structure contained eleven classrooms and a combination auditorium-gymnasium--the school's first indoor basketball court. In 1926, Port became widely known not only for its powerful football, basketball, and track teams but also for being the largest and most modern consolidated school in Oklahoma.

Then in October, 1927, embarrassing headlines in THE SENTINEL LEADER reported, "Port School May Lose Credit Standing." The article stated that there were as many as 70 children in one classroom with one teacher. The state school inspector had previously recommended the need for more classrooms and additional teachers.

Not wanting the expense of building more classrooms, the Port Board of Education didn't heed the first warning from the State Department of Education. With danger of being stricken from the



First trucks and drivers for Port School, 1922 - 23

state's accredited list, the Board immediately called for an election to vote an \$11,500 bond issue for a separate elementary building. Many patrons failed to vote, and the issue carried by a small majority (three affirmative votes). Nevertheless, the elementary building was completed, and additional teachers were hired before the beginning of the 1928-1929 term.

In addition to Port School's excellent school system, its administrative and teaching staff, and its student body, the Parents-Teachers Association played an active role in providing extra-curricular activities. According to a 1928 news item, Port PTA held a drive to pay off the indebtedness on new auditorium seats. Every family in the district donated one hen or a dozen eggs or one dollar in cash.

Port patrons and students were as receptive to a strong fine arts program as they were to athletic prowess. In 1929-1930, the Lyceum arts calendar contained three evenings of entertainment presented by the Redpath Horner Chautauqua circuit, one faculty production, and one operetta provided by the students. In addition to the Lyceum, Port took pride in its band and vocal groups, and in 1929 Mrs. Rosa Fields taught the first art classes.

Mr. S. P. "Puny" Blevins organized the first pep club with Roy Umbach serving as sponsor. Zelma Brack and Olin Wright were the first elected cheerleaders. Coach Blevins also developed the school's first wrestling team. During the 1929-1930 term, every boy in high school enrolled in Blevins'

athletic program—a first in the coach's career.

During 1930, Port School enrolled more than 600 students and held an average daily attendance of 585. At this time Mr. J. W. Ensey served as superintendent with assistance from Principal W. W. French. There were nine elementary and six high-school teachers. The school district built a modern brick home for the superintendent and his family. Several homes for its teachers were constructed later.

One of the biggest problems of any rural school was the transporting of its students. Port's difficulties were at times almost insurmountable. Spring deluges and thawing winter snows made bottomless quagmires with deep ruts and dangerous bar ditches. Big Elk, Trail Elk, and Spring Creek and their numerous tributaries traversed the entire district. Their rampaging flood waters often wiped out roads and bridges. (hence the old community expression, "We'll be there if Big Elk don't rise")

At one time there were seventeen "trucks" to pick up nearly 700 students in the morning and return them to their homes in the evening. Students sat on overcrowded narrow board seats, and the routes were long. The trucks became deep freezers in the winter and ovens during the summer terms. (School started in late July or early August so students could have "Cotton Pickin' Vacations" to help with cotton harvest during September, October, and November.)

Mr. Kirk Farris, transportation

supervisor, designed and constructed peculiar-looking round bodies for the school's trucks. Mr. Farris was also in charge of drivers and maintenance. He chose his drivers carefully—high-school boys who were levelheaded and responsible.

Drivers received a \$20 monthly salary, and Farris placed them on an honor and competitive system. At the end of designated periods after he evaluated both their driving and school behavior, Mr. Farris gave monetary awards to the best all-around Ford and Chevrolet drivers.

Kirk Farris was a strict supervisor who fired speeding drivers. Fast and reckless driving endangered lives on the treacherous roads and bridges and caused mechanical and maintenance problems. (Back then, the federal speed limit was 45 mph, but in 1927 Oklahoma's 11th Legislature set the state's limit at 35 mph. Even this speed was too fast for the district's narrow, rough roads.)

When Mr. Coffey returned to Port as superintendent in 1931, he chose Jess M. Welch, his son-in-law, to serve as principal. Mr. Welch held this position for two years and became superintendent in 1933, the office he held for 18 consecutive years. Being trained by his father-in-law and holding similar educational standards, J. M. Welch developed a school program that was second to none. One of his innovative ideas concerned the development of Senior Class trips.

As a modern educator, Mr. Welch realized the importance of visual edu-



Senior Trip 1939

cation and learning by doing. In his own words, "Why not teach students to plan and to do, to earn and to budget? Wouldn't a definite goal, an attractive one, keep students' minds on accomplishments and prevent lapses ending in disciplinary trips to the office?" (from "Seniors Return from 4500-mile Tour," by Ida V. Robertson, *THE SENTINEL LEADER*, July 6, 1939.)

The Class of 1936 was the first group to spread its wings after graduation on a school bus tour to Carlsbad Caverns. The week-long holiday proved to be a success, and the Port senior trip tradition was born. The school's travel program evolved into a lengthier project when the Class of 1939 became the first to attempt a cross-country "Washington or Bust."

In order to raise the necessary \$900 for their trip, students sold newspaper and magazine subscriptions, pulled cotton, and held benefit shows and carnivals. They sponsored annual class plays, basketball tournaments, and auction sales. Students planned their itinerary by writing letters to Chamber of Commerce organizations, State Parks, and Tourism Bureaus in cities in twenty states. Before leaving the school campus, they made campsite reservations for every night. Each student budgeted himself \$15. for personal expenses.

For twenty-five days, twenty-five seniors, nine teachers and a twelve-year-old boy, five parents, one driver, and one mechanic lived in two buses and four tents while traveling across the nation. In addition to a comprehensive tour of Washington, D.C., other highlights of their vacation included deep-sea fishing near Breille, New Jersey, New York City, the World's Fair, the Canadian Niagara Falls, and a tour of the Ford plant in Detroit.

Mr. Welch and eight boys rode in the lead truck containing luggage, U.S. Army tents, cots, bedrolls, cooking utensils and dishes, and other camping gear. The remaining thirty-two members of the group rode in the second bus, driven by Mr. Raymond Farris, the school mechanic. They sat on four board benches running the length of the bus. To have equal time for scenic viewing, the group rotated frequently from inside to outside seats.

The Class of 1940 altered its "Washington or Bust" trip and took a 24-day, 4,000-mile tour through Texas and the Southern states. The group also eliminated much of the heavy camping equipment which consumed so much space and had taken so much time to load and unload in 1939. Special highlights of the 1940 tour included deep-sea fishing in Galveston, a historical tour of the Deep South, Stone Mountain, Georgia, Endless Caverns and Natural Bridge, Virginia, and Lookout Mountain, Tennessee.

One of the biggest thrills of the 1940 trip was Mr. Welch's new movie camera. He made an educational color movie beginning with the group's preliminary activities and ending with the final unloading at the end of the trail. He later showed the film to all Washita County schools. (The movie continues to be a vital part of Port Reunions that are held in Sentinel every five years.)

When the Class of 1940 returned to Port campus, the sad occasion brought tears to the eyes of everyone. At the time the group left on May 29, crews were in the process of tearing down the school's two brick buildings. When they returned on June 21, nothing remained but stacks of salvaged bricks and piles of rubble.

Port's enrollment had again outgrown the available classrooms. This time,

the district overwhelmingly approved a \$23,000 bond to construct a larger facility. This funding was added to a \$52,000 Work Projects Administration grant and the \$15,000 salvage evaluation of the two old buildings. The Board of Education, which included Jim Corcorran, Allan Dawson, Allen Harper, and Mr. Welch, designed a native limestone, 74,520-square-foot, "U"-shaped structure that became the largest school plant in Western Oklahoma.

In order to have temporary classrooms as well as to provide a permanent storm facility, construction crews completed a \$19,512 WPA project, containing a storm shelter beneath a full-sized tennis court, before school started. This underground area was divided into four classrooms. The bus maintenance building provided another classroom, and band classes were held in the bus barn. The boys' basketball team practiced on the tennis court and played all games on opponents' courts until completion of the gymnasium. The girls didn't have an organized team in 1940-1941.

Since the school cafeteria wasn't finished that term, student workers prepared hot soup in a partially completed room in the new building. Workers carried the meal in huge covered cans and ladled out soup to pupils in the cellar and elementary classrooms. Others delivered the bowls, spoons, and crackers. After lunch, they took everything back to the temporary kitchen for washing, drying, and storing.

Of course, some students carried lunches from home. Others, especially high-school boys, preferred eating hamburgers at a nearby country store on the campus. Mr. Marvin Bowie, the rural mail carrier, delivered three or four pounds of freshly ground meat each morning from a grocery store in Sentinel. Mr. Horace Williams, proprietor of the store, made three or four dozen hamburgers, which were purchased by the boys who ran fastest. When those burgers were gone, there were none to purchase by the less fleet of foot.

During that year in the cellar, rural electricity was in its infancy, and outages were commonplace. Instead of practicing fire and storm drills, a student learned to evacuate a pitch-dark classroom by placing his hand on a shoulder in front of him and shuffling toward a sliver of light in the doorway. On one occasion, a prankster created the electrical failure by removing a



First team to go to state, 1923 - 24 (runner-up winners).

vital fuse. After classes enjoyed an hour of freedom in the sunshine, someone discovered the cause. A strong padlock prevented any such repeated "outage."

Another infraction of school rules was never eliminated that year. Since the makeshift walls that divided the classrooms didn't connect with the ceiling and floor of the cellar, paper wad missiles were forever soaring through openings above. Ground volleys also whizzed across the floor below. (Those who were high-school students then still remember the 1940-1941 term as "the year we went to school in the storm cave.")

When the fourth and final Port School was completed, it contained 18 classrooms; a high-school library; numerous administrative offices, work rooms, and storage rooms; a darkroom for audio-visual education; a school store where snacks, school supplies, and textbooks were available; a sick bay equipped with a hospital bed; a recreation room containing six ping-pong tables; and a cafeteria that contained a large kitchen, pantry, and two dining areas. The gymnasium had four dressing rooms and a seating capacity of 1,000. The auditorium contained a large stage and two dressing rooms. Its seating capacity was 800 to 1,000.


Almost as soon as the last Port School building was finished, the

United States entered World War II, and the exodus from the rural area began. The community's young men enlisted in military services; many never returned. Entire families and young adults left to work at plentiful, good-paying wartime jobs and never moved back. When Port annexed with Sentinel School in 1966, 106 students enrolled there; twenty transferred to other districts.

A few attempts were made to utilize the abandoned school building for commercial purposes, but none proved successful. The structure finally sold for salvage in the 1970's. Its native stone, steel girders, wood flooring, and other lumber vanished. Today little remains except portions of a few walls, the concrete bleachers of the gymnasium, the superintendent's brick home, and the memorable storm cellar. One small sign fifteen miles west of Cordell points the direction to Port School, but a person won't see it unless he knows it's there.

From 1923 when Port was approved as an accredited high school until its final graduating class of 1966, 713 seniors received Port High School diplomas. This isn't an impressive total when compared with urban schools, but it must be remembered that Port was a country school containing the one tiny hamlet for which it was named.

During the Dust Bowl Days and the Great Depression, Port's enrollment actually increased. It took a world war with resulting social and economic changes to weaken the basic core of Port Community. For two decades following World War II, its people valiantly combatted these social forces, but their efforts couldn't overcome the mechanized-agriculture trend. Parents could no longer keep their children down on the farm.

Author's terminal note: Twenty years ago when Port citizens voted to merge with Sentinel School District I-1, they realized that their children would receive better educational opportunities than their declining population could provide. A few years later, Rocky School District #6 made the same decision and also joined with Sentinel. The three combined 94-year-old pioneer schools now form a 253.5 square-mile district with a 1968 enrollment of 331 students and an evaluation of \$8,317,036. These impressive figures prove that Washita County continues to hold the honor of having the largest rural school in Oklahoma--and possibly the nation.) 

*A recollection of a demonstration and teacher-training school
of Southwestern State Teachers' College*

The Grandeur That Was Union 77

By Leroy Thomas



Union School 77 and teacherage, built in 1895.

There's a Union in the past of each of us; it's that place of grandeur—that place where school was the noblest, where the cups of learning were on display simply for the taking, where the teachers were the best ever, where competition was uncomplicated because it was with trusted friends. And although there may have been students who wished that the schoolhouse would burn down or blow away, it was only a fleeting thought. At least today it's a sad realization that nothing visible is left of that Grove of Academe, and former inmates of the school feel a twinge of sadness because their school grounds are now a wheatfield or are otherwise unidentifiable.

So it is with Union 77. It had its years of grandeur, but all that glory now resides in the memories of those who attended or taught there. No longer will anyone go there for school programs, and an Alumni Association can hold no sessions in the building.

Although some of the details are vague, there's a great deal of information to draw from because anyone who was

ever associated with Union 77 has a smiling awareness of the experience; for example, the glow on Dorothy Leonard Forbis' countenance as she shares her Union memorabilia is ample documentation. So the story unfolds.

James Robertson filed on the quarter and gave an acre of land for the school. Using lumber freighted from Minco, parents of the district constructed the Union School building in 1895. Later on in the 1920's, two more acres were purchased from Len and Lena Kaiser. The school was first staked in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of 27/13-15 but was moved into Sec. 34/13-15 because it was too close to Bellevue School.

During the grandest years of Union, there was a family living on nearly every quarter of land in the district. All were owned by the family living there with very few exceptions. The highlights of each year were the box suppers held in the fall, the Christmas program, and the all-day picnics held the last day of school. Some picnics were held on the school grounds, and some were on Horse Creek north of the school.

School memories include innovations that occurred along the way. A most notable one was the instigation of a school lunch program. Hot meals were first served students—three times a week—during the tenure of the James LeRoy Crossmans in the 1920's.

Along the way, favorite teachers were remembered. Some early-day teachers at Union were Murray McConkie, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs, Lillie Fisher, Bess Chism, and Margaret Anderson (whose husband was a Weatherford banker). Some teachers before the early 1920's were Ethel Brooker and Susan Kaiser McComb. Between 1920 and 1927, teachers who served Union were Ben and Deborah Smith, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Wyatt, Mr. and Mrs. James LeRoy Crossman, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest (Minnie) Crain, and Ila Mae Lunday. After the late thirties came Deborah Smith (1937-1940) and Opal Griffin (who was at Union when the one-room school closed in 1954).

A vital part of any rural school system was the Board of Education. Serving faithfully for many years were Sam Roesler (member), E. A. Walsh (secretary), and H. R. (Bob) Leonard (president). Others were Earl Weese and Wade Leonard. Serving as Board members when the school closed, and finishing several years of service, were Edgar Thomas, Rex Gates, and Wade Leonard.

The history of Union 77 comes alive—even for an outsider—in the notes and letters of two former teachers and one former student. One of those, the student, was Oscar Renz, who died on March 18, 1986. In a tribute to Union, he wrote:

Union 77 wasn't just an ordinary country school to my memory. Two loving and dedicated teachers by name of Benjamin (fondly known as Ben) and Deborah Smith left a feeling of deep appreciation from every family represented at Union 77. Their sound educational skills, to this day, reach out as benefit to every child fortunate enough to have come under their supervision. This also includes their devoted efforts in teaching proper manners to be employed in every phase of living.

As nearly as I can recall, my first attendance at Union School was in the year 1924. We lived on a farm five miles west of Weatherford. Distance to Union School was three miles northeast of our home. Most of the time I, along with my sisters Margaret [now Replogle] and Elinor, walked or ran to school. Driving to school with horse and buggy, or sleigh during snowy winters, was definitely a treat.

The school consisted of two rooms. One was for grades one through four, as I recall, and taught by young, beautiful Deborah, who tolerated little or no monkey business during class sessions. We all learned discipline there that stayed with us through life's demands.

Room number two seated grades five through eight and was taught by Deborah's loving husband, Ben. There we got by with some tricks not tolerated in the lower grades. However, Ben had a fat paddle handy for needed occasions, but I'll always think it hurt him more to use it than it did us rascals who asked for it.

During Ben and Deborah Smith's tenure, Union School blossomed in many ways. Interesting programs were initiated in which participation was almost 100% of families. Deborah's skill at the piano taught us music appreciation. I clearly recall sister Elinor singing "Whispering Hope" to her accompaniment at one of the programs. Sister Margaret also joined in the singing along with reciting a poem while I listened to other talented students perform.

Arbor Day was dedicated to planting trees, bushes, and flowers which each year enhanced the beauty of the grounds. I

must admit that athletics perhaps held my greatest interest. Ben Smith had a fine athletic build and never seemed to tire of building good teams of boys for track, baseball, and basketball. We would compete with other country schools and rarely be defeated. I fully credit my later success in high-school and college athletics to the fine foundation provided by Ben Smith, whose untimely death from a heart attack was sincerely traumatic for me.

To further her education, Deborah attended Southwestern State Teacher's College in 1935 and graduated Magna Cum Laude. In 1940, she settled in Portales, New Mexico, and taught in the Portales schools until retirement in 1958. She was justly honored by being chosen for the Hall of Fame by the Eastern New Mexico Education Association.

Deborah, now 97 years old, is beautiful as ever and continues an active life that's an envy to all who are privileged to know her.

I shall never forget Deborah and Ben Smith nor Union 77. I thank God for their influence upon my life and upon our family.

One of the two former teachers who gave insights into Union 77 was Ernest Crain. After leaving this area, Mr. Crain was in the service about four years. Then he taught at Santa Ana College for twenty-five years before retiring in 1969. He wrote:

On May 30, 1930, my young bride, Minnie, of May 26, 1930, and I arrived at Union School District 77. We liked very much what we found.

The lighting system was a gasoline lantern in our new two-room house. The heating system was a large coal-burning cookstove. There were no kitchen cabinets, so we improvised some from wooden orange crates. Minnie made some attractive little curtains for nicer looking kitchen cabinets. Our water system was a cistern just outside the front door. Water was supplied by rain from the roof of the house. Our household water system consisted of a bucket of water on an improvised double shelf for bucket and washpan with dipper hanging nearby. Just to the left of the door was a party-line telephone. It had a crank for turning to call another person. Our phone number was 5-3, which meant one long ring and three short rings. The interesting thing was that when your number was rung, it rang on the other nineteen phones on the party line, and most of the receivers came down and everyone listened in on your conversation.

The school grounds were very clean and attractive. There was a row of bois-d-arc trees on the northern boundary. The rest of the grounds were enclosed with a board fence painted white. The two-room school building was painted, and it was attractive. A storm cellar joined onto the building to be used in case of a tornado or severe thunderstorm. There was a belfry on top of the building which housed a large bell for signaling students to line up for marching in to start school or to close a recess period. Later, the school bell sold at auction for \$12; the small handbell and some equipment of Board of Education record-keeping are still in a Union memorabilia collection kept by a former Board member.

Under the direction of the Rural School Supervisor, Maisie Shirey of Southwestern State Teachers' College, Union was used as a demonstration school and teacher-training school for college students whose intentions were to get credentials in order to teach in the public schools.

Minnie taught the first four grades, and I took care of grades 5-8. That first year, we had about forty-five students, with all the grades represented.

We signed contracts with the district to teach for a combined



First through eighth grade students (1927 - 1930).



Mrs. Deborah Smith, Union School Teacher, 1920's & 1930's.

total of \$125 a month. The chairman of the Board was Bob Leonard, and the clerk was Earl Weese. John Eckhardt was the third member. The clerk wrote the school warrants, as the paychecks were called. We were pleased with the pay situation; we received 100% cash on our warrants, while some teachers had to discount their warrants as much as 25 to 40% because of the great depression during the 1930's.

The people of Union District were good economists who somehow paid their taxes; therefore, our warrants were good for face value. The people of the district were interesting in another way in that the northern half of the district was made up of people of English and Irish descent, while the southern half was made up of basically German people.

The students won many trophies at county meets in academic subjects, dramatic readings, songs, and athletic events. Minnie was proficient at teaching readings, songs, and academic subjects; therefore, they were winners. Our basketball teams usually won because all the students enjoyed playing.

The bathrooms, toilets, were in the far corners of the school grounds. They were known as "two holers" usually with the sanitation system consisting of a sack of lime, some of which was dusted into the holes after use.

There was also a long stable for horses as about half of the students rode horses to school or came in buggies pulled by horses. An interesting event of the first day of class involved horse and/or buggy riders. They came early in order to get a good stall. That stall then belonged to that same horse throughout the school year.

The one modern thing on the school ground was a one-car garage with a large lean-to shed on the side of the garage for keeping a supply of coal for heating the school rooms and teacherage with coal-burning heaters. The school room heaters had metal jackets around them for the purpose of diverting some heat to the students who sat farther from the stove and to prevent roasting of students who sat near the heater which was located in the center of the room.

The annual Christmas program was very important to the community. There was community singing of Christmas carols, a program that involved all the students. A nice large Christmas tree beautifully decorated was enjoyed by all—Irish, English, German. It was all capped by everyone receiving a sack of goodies presented by a Santa Claus. Bob Leonard was in charge of the sacks of goodies, and each had to have exactly the same number of peanuts, other nuts, and pieces of candy. There was a big group of young people each year who came together to count the nuts and candy.

When Pearl Harbor came, Minnie, our two children, and I moved to California. I went into the military, and Minnie


finished her teaching career in Costa Mesa Schools in Orange County.

Dorothy Forbis has been corresponding with Deborah Smith and others in order to gather materials for the Union 77 tribute. Mrs. Smith gives some valuable insights:

Dorothy, the picture of Union 77 that you sent recalled so many things; I spent the whole afternoon trying to identify things with the magnifying glass, but I can't guess the date. We screened the porch, but it looks as if a room had been enclosed on the porch. That would be after 1940. There was no garage in 1920 when we first came. We lived there from 1920-1927, then again from 1937-1940. It still seems like home, more than this one where I have lived for forty years. . . . I'm happy to enclose a copy of the tribute that Oscar [Renz] wrote. I'm afraid it isn't what the magazine wants, but it's a treasure to us. I think they want more facts as to how, when, and why Union was started. Anyway, the magazine will have the last word. . . . Oscar used his poetic license, for if Ben or I ever used the paddle I don't remember.

I loved teaching and I, too, thank God for the beautiful ten years we spent at Union 77. We arrived there in September, 1920 to find six-year-old Wilbur Kaiser sitting on our doorstep. There never seemed to be any friction with families or Board, and I can still see Ben and your dad [Bob Leonard] sitting on the cistern platform settling the problems of the world.

I love the WESTVIEW magazine and even read the ads. . . . I'm fine except arthritis, and that makes me slow. My eyes give me trouble, and nothing more can be done. I still read with two contacts, glasses, and a wonderful lamp. I consider myself lucky.

By the time Union 77 closed in 1954, it was a one-room school. The last teacher was Opal Eads Griffin, who still lives in Weatherford. Edgar Thomas, who served on the Board the last ten years the school was in session, has many happy memories as a student, parent, and Board member of Union. He seems to be representative. Like other people familiar with the setting, he and Everett Hamburger can still identify the place the school was located because of a black locust tree located in the area, although the buildings are gone and the area is a wheatfield farmed by John Regier. The location is a mile east of the Thomas farm and 3/4 miles northeast of the Everett Hamburger farm (the old Roesler place). Although the exact place is vague to many onlookers, the spirit of Union 77—that grandiose citadel of education—continues to live in the hearts and minds of those whose lamps of learning were lighted there. 

Catharsis, school style

All-Purpose Facility

By Mona Jean Taff Suter

North Pleasant Valley*

A place of learning for students aged five to sixteen
Some who rode horses but many who walked to school
Some who had a single desk of their own;
But I was lucky; I shared a desk with a best friend.
I was lucky; I got to dust the erasers sometimes
and I won the ciphering match once or twice too.
I was lucky; I got my own nail in the cloakroom
and I escaped without head lice or the itch!

North Pleasant Valley

A place of employment for one teacher only
She who swept the floor, unlocked and locked the door
She who built the fire and carried out the ashes.
But she was smart too; she taught all eight grades.
She was also spunky; even the bullies liked her
and their parents did too.
She was lucky; she made almost \$70 a month!

North Pleasant Valley

A place the whole community gathered
Those who came to see the Christmas programs and collect
the annual sacks of treats.
Those who worshipped on Sundays and Wednesdays without
need of a particular denomination.
Some were lucky; they had 50 cents to pay for the
prettiest box at the box supper.
They were lucky; they had community spirit.
They were lucky; they painted a scene of country history.

*North Pleasant Valley: a one-room country school that was located one mile off Highway 58 approximately halfway between Hydro and Eakly.

A spectacle in rhyme time

A Glimpse At Carter

By Byron Clancy

Beulah, present Carter, was organized by a Holiness religious group and moved to its present location. Some early settlers were F. T. Alexander, William Stale, D. D. Hare, Jerry Osborn, and R. E. Winsett. In 1906, a college, Immanuel Bible School, was started in a three-story building located just west of the site of the present Carter Baptist Church. In the school were some fifty students and four or five instructors. They published a newspaper which was mailed on Route 2, Doxey, Oklahoma.

The town of Kempton was started in 1909 when the Wichita Falls and N.W. Railroad was being built through the Carter area. After a bitter fight between Carter and Kempton over Carter getting a depot, Kempton called it quits and was moved later in 1910 and 1911 to Carter.

In 1918, Carter had a population of about one thousand and was considered one of the best small towns in Oklahoma. The original town, usually called South Carter, was started about 1900 one mile south of the present Carter. The town was named for William G. Carter, an early-day resident. The post office was established March 5, 1900. Sometime later, a rural route was established.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This short filler is a sequel of sorts to Betty Jo Jenkins Denton's poem "My Town Carter," which appeared in the Summer 1986 issue of WESTVIEW. Although some of the Carter businesses have failed, education has always been a significant commodity in the town; and the school, which was started in early days, continues to flourish in K-12.

Provider of much Western Oklahoma talent

A School Not To Doubt

By Ross F. Cooke

The town, in and of itself, is uncomely enough--situated, as it is, nowhere. Oh, it can be located easily enough: Section 25, Township 15 North, Range 15 West, Custer County, Oklahoma; or more easily, 20 miles due north of Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford.

Thomas. Even its name fails to invoke interest. When once found, it doesn't take long to ascertain that the community isn't served by a major highway, railroad, bus, or airline. It's nowhere. Likewise, because of its size--or lack of size--it will soon be noted if the visitor has any reason to note that the town is laid out and developed on a plan common to almost all small towns in Western Kansas or Oklahoma.

Actually, Thomas was unremarkable until 1922. It was in 1922 that the people of Thomas constructed a school building that was to exert a remarkable influence on its youth from that day forward. The building--its design, placement, grounds, and maintenance--is worthy of making remarks about.

Prior to 1922, the Thomas Public School was quite modern in the sense that it was divided into a primary, elementary, junior high, and high school. Not only was there a division of the school into chronological learning blocks; each block or school met in its own building. The primary school, for a while, met in a church building. The elementary school had its own building in the east part of town, the junior high was in the south part of town, and the high school was in the west. The Home Economics Department was set up in an unoccupied residential structure; shop was taught in an empty store building downtown.

When the bond measure to construct a new school building was presented, it was with the understanding that it would be of a design to accommodate the entire school system. The result was a two-story red brick building.

The building, in and of itself, was attractive. In its design was the concept of unity and functionalism that was to become the architectural mode of a quarter century later.

Those who devised the plan gave the various school levels their own space; but all, in a sense, were together. The family was secure, comfortably at ease. All was well. Even a full-sized gymnasium, which could also be used as a lunchroom and auditorium, was provided. The electors had been given the privilege of choosing the location of the building, and they chose the highest point in the town, which they called "The Hill."

From this vantage point, the student could survey the entire town and the whole of the surrounding area. Indeed, the student sitting at a study table in the library had a panoramic view that extended from the Bear Creek bluffs to the top of the old Ad. Building at Southwestern, to the water tower at Custer City and beyond. He could watch storms form and vent their fury. Summer faded into autumn, autumn turned to barren winter, and from winter bloomed glorious spring--all under his supervision. The concept of education being a process of widening horizons became a reality to him--the building saw to that. The building saw to many things.

A lovely modern building set in an empty expanse demands comparable landscaping. The demands were met by the community in an outpouring of donations that included not only money but trees, plants, and labor. Teams of horses along with fresnos, graders, plows, and harrows were provided. Any Thomas High School boy of the 1920's could handle a team as well as most of the implements mentioned. Under expert adult supervision, they had soon graded terraces, sunk flower beds, built rock gardens, dug a fish pond; in short, they had converted what had been a nearly barren area given over to goatheads and sandburrs into a flowering, cool, green oasis. An oasis that was so well maintained that it became a place apart. A place sought after for relief during those dark, dreary dust-bowl days of the depressing 30's.

From the beginning, pride in, and maintenance of, the building and grounds of the school became an intrenched

characteristic of the community's discipline. This characteristic didn't come easily or naturally to the younger members of the student body, but beginning with Superintendent S. F. Babb the tradition was instilled into each individual with a vehemence that bordered on fanaticism.


As time passed and former students returned to the school as teachers and administrators, the pride felt for the school and its building was propagated to such a measure that the school as a society and the school as a building tended to become fused in the students' minds. We were all proud and loyal to our building.

How proud and how loyal can be physically, tangibly ascertained simply by going up and walking through the building. Here's a school building sixty-four years old that's housing all twelve grades. The visitor will find a building that is as new, as well maintained, as free from vandalism as it was a half century ago. It takes a disciplined pride to achieve that sort of maintenance.

The visitor will also find a trophy case, the contents of which will tell all that anyone in Oklahoma interested in athletics will have heard of Thomas football and basketball. Anyone in Oklahoma interested in fine arts will have heard of the Thomas Band. It takes disciplined pride to make these sorts of achievement.

More importantly, however, is the intangible something that the student carries with him throughout his life. The school--the building and grounds--has become an ensign, an icon about which the student has rallied a certain respect. The Thomas High School graduate, who has spent any time at all in the school, holds a deep innate respect for all public buildings: He is loyal to his community, state, nation. He has respect for authority--We're still almost afraid to walk on any public grass.

The good, but unremarkable, people of Thomas have somehow provided their children with a remarkable school.

We're loyal to you, Thomas High! 

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A colorful history that will surprise many readers

On Colleges, Asylums, Reformatories, & Racetracks

By Donald Hamm



SOUTHWESTERN'S "OLD SCIENCE" BUILDING

This is an account of how Southwestern--Southwestern Normal School; Southwestern State Teachers' College; Southwestern State College of Diversified Occupations; Southwestern Institute of Technology; Southwestern State College; Southwestern Oklahoma State University--came to be located in Weatherford. It's a two-part story. The first, a short story, has to do with name and purpose. The second, a not-so-short story, has to do with location.

"Southwestern" was established by an act of the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1901 as the Southwestern Normal School. (A decision on the location wasn't reached until October, 1902.) The school was authorized to offer two years of training for public-school teachers. Four years of preparatory work for

students not qualified to enter college was also provided. The first classes met in 1903.

In 1920, the preparatory classes were eliminated and four years of college work were offered, after the state legislature changed the name (and purpose) of the institution to Southwestern State Teachers' College. The first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1921.

In 1939, Southwestern became Southwestern State College of Diversified Occupations. In 1941, a School of Pharmacy, degree work in art and sciences, and trade schools were added, and the college became Southwestern Institute of Technology.

In 1949, Southwestern became Southwestern State College, a name it was to wear for 25 years. In 1974, the Oklahoma

state legislature changed the name of the institution again--to Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

The events which led to the location of Southwestern in Weatherford are considerably more interesting than the names the institution has worn. To a large extent, these events constitute an earlier version of a more recent Oklahoma drama, the location of parimutuel racetracks. How many racetracks shall we have? Shall we have some large ones and some small ones, or just one? Where shall they be located?

In the early days of Oklahoma, indeed even before Oklahoma came to be, every town and city wanted a railroad, and/or a college--or if not a college, then a prison would do. In 1890, people across Oklahoma Territory hoped to get a "territorial

plum." The rivalries for these plums were rarely displays of integrity.

In the competition for territorial plums in Southwestern Oklahoma, Weatherford placed first--and won Southwestern. Granite placed second--and won a reformatory. Mangum placed third--for which there was no prize.

The most interesting account of the competition for the Normal School of which I am aware is that found in *HISTORY OF SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE, 1903-1953*, by Melvin Frank Fiegel. Dr. Fiegel is a member of the faculty of the Southwestern Social Sciences Department. What follows is taken from Dr. Fiegel's account. It's a very brief summary. Readers interested in more detail should consult Dr. Fiegel's history.

The territorial legislature authorized the establishment of a Normal School in Southwestern Oklahoma in 1901 and appropriated the sum of \$52,000 to erect and equip an appropriate building. Since there was sure to be a competition for the school, just as there has been more recently for racetracks, certain requirements were imposed. The town in which the school would be located would be required to provide a forty-acre tract for the school and a sum of \$5,000 for fencing, planting of trees, and beautifying the campus of the proposed school.

Even before the passage of the legislation authorizing the Normal, lobbies were at work. Two Granite residents agreed to donate land in 1900. Early on, Greer County was thought to have an inside track for the location of the Normal. In February of 1901, a 27-man delegation from the legislature visited both Mangum and Granite. The Mangum newspaper, *THE MANGUM STAR*, was optimistic that the Normal would be located in Greer County--if not in Mangum, then in Granite.

Meanwhile, the Weatherford lobby was hard at work behind the scenes in the territorial capitol at Guthrie, hoping to help shape the legislation required. The law that was passed provided for a committee of five men to select the site for the Normal, and for the Governor to select the members of the committee. As it turned out, several Weatherford backers were appointed to the committee.

The location was to be designated within 90 days after the approval of the Act. But this was not to be. It takes time

to locate a college, just as it takes time to locate a racetrack. "Local politics, state politics, and intense competition," Dr. Fiegel's words, must run their course.

In May of 1901, Governor C. M. Barnes appointed the selection committee. Granite, Mangum, Weatherford, Cordell, and El Reno were among the contenders. By mid-July, the editor of *THE MANGUM STAR* complained that Weatherford appeared to have the inside track with the selection committee, even though Weatherford wasn't located in Southwestern Oklahoma.

As time passed, the plot thickened. President William McKinley replaced Governor Barnes with William H. Jenkins. In August, Governor Jenkins replaced the Barnes selection committee with a new selection committee, without notifying the former committee or asking for its resignation. Two selection committees now existed. The editor of the *CUSTER COUNTY REPUBLICAN* pointed out that Custer County was the only Republican county in the Southwest, and that Weatherford was entitled to the Normal School "under a Republican administration." The Weatherford lobby raised money for a possible court action, should such be needed.

Subsequently, the Jenkins committee visited Granite, and Granite appeared to be the favorite. Later, the Barnes committee visited Weatherford, and the editor of *THE CUSTER COUNTY REPUBLICAN* reported that Weatherford had been chosen for the Normal School.

In September, the Jenkins group selected Granite, as expected. The Barnes committee then selected Weatherford, as expected, a recommendation which Governor Jenkins ignored, as expected, and prepared to proceed with the choice of the committee which he had appointed. At this point, the Weatherford group sought and obtained a temporary injunction in the district court of Oklahoma County enjoining the Board of Education from awarding any contract for the construction of any building near Granite and from expending any funds for the Normal School at any place other than Weatherford. In April, 1902, the district court issued a permanent injunction prohibiting the building of the school in Granite. Granite then appealed the case to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which upheld the decision of the lower court, confirming the legality of the first

selection committee appointed, the Barnes committee.

It seemed that the matter was closed and that Weatherford had won. But Granite mounted a final effort to prevent this outcome. In February of 1903, a bill was introduced in the Territorial Council which would have repealed the Normal Act and have appropriated \$10,000 of the funds previously authorized for the proposed Normal school to other schools in the territory. If Granite was to lose, then Weatherford should lose as well. There were six who voted to repeal the law and seven to sustain it. Weatherford prevailed, by a single vote. The Normal School officially opened on September 15, 1903. Southwestern had found a home.

Perhaps two postscripts are in order. Colleges were subsequently established in Mangum, Cordell, and El Reno. Mangum became home to a junior college and to Southwestern Bible College. Cordell became home to Central Christian College, operated by the Churches of Christ. None of these institutions survived. A junior college was established in El Reno, and this institution has survived.

Oklahoma didn't invent politics, nor do Oklahomans have a monopoly on politics. The selection of locations for state institutions followed a predictable political pattern in most states, just as it did in Oklahoma--as the following excerpt indicates:

Frequently communities entered into bitter and even scandalous contests to secure the state university or agricultural college, and these institutions were distributed in the state, along with insane asylums, prisons, and reformatories, in response to the political and economic pressures that local communities could bring to bear. The educational institution was often a consolation prize for the community that had not been successful in securing the asylum or penitentiary. Similar sectional bargaining and influences within the state also account in part for the multiplication and distribution of normal schools, teachers' colleges, . . . colleges for women. . . which could be given to local communities that had failed to secure one of the given prizes (AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION STUDIES, April, 1938). ●

A Roger Mills training ground--a one-room school

Fairview

By Klina Potter Casady

The Fairview School District was formed in 1902 in what was then Day County Oklahoma. When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, Day County was dissolved. That portion in which the Fairview School was located added to Roger Mills County. In 1918, Fairview District became part of No. 1 Consolidated District and thereby lost its identity as a district.

The Fairview one-room schoolhouse was located on the highest point in Roger Mills County (altitude: 2520), one mile east and two miles north of Durham, the Antelope Hills nearby. It was named Fairview because of the wonderful view it overlooked. On a clear morning, looking westward, one could see the sand dunes of the South Canadian River and the foothills of the Palo Duro. To the northwest, one could see smoke from the town of Higgins, Texas. To the south was a vast area of prairie that sloped toward the Washita River. On the north were great breaks leading to the South Canadian River. To the northeast were the Antelope Hills, like a mighty sentinel, keeping watch over the entire scene.

The first school was taught by a Miss Edna Thomas. The pupils, about twenty in number, sat on long benches against the wall. If one desired a desk, he or she could sit on the floor and use the bench as a desk. A portion of the

back wall was painted black, thus creating a chalkboard. A small table was used as the teacher's desk. Heat was provided by a coal stove in the center of the room. Other teachers included Mrs. John Thomas, Mrs. W. W. Rakes, Mrs. Dee Hayes, and a Miss Moorehead.

Klina Potter was 11 years old when she attended her first term at Fairview. In 1907, she completed the eighth grade there at the age of 16. In 1912, she taught a six-month term of school there and also taught there in 1916, 1917, and 1918 before the district was dissolved. There was a great deal of learning and some excellent teaching in the one-room Fairview School.

By the second year, Fairview was equipped with furniture and was the activity center of the community. There church services, Sunday school, revivals, shows, political meetings, funerals, Christmas programs, and meetings of literary societies were held.

It was at Fairview that the first 4-H Club in Roger Mills County was formed and a 4-H garden produced.

Too much praise can't be given to the old one-room schools, the teachers who taught there, and the many pupils who obtained knowledge there.

(From Glen Crane's ONE HUNDRED ONE SCHOOLS REMEMBERED)

The logo for Westview, featuring the word "WESTVIEW" in a stylized, serif font. The letters are white and set against a dark rectangular background. The "W" and "V" are particularly large and prominent.

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Hammon

By Glen Crane

At the turn of the century, the town of Hammon was founded on the SE 1/4 of 36-14-21. The first school was established there in 1906.

In 1920, during the construction of the MKT railroad, the town was moved to its present site on the NE 1/4 1-13-21. The townsite was formerly owned by W. S. Creach.

After this move, school was held in a two-story building owned by J. D. Cobb. The smaller children's classes were held in a half-dugout located in the southeast part of town across the road south from the Leonard Wilder place. Miss Rula Woodruff was the teacher, according to Blanche Smith Parks, who was one of the pupils in the dugout school. Other early-day teachers, who taught in the temporary buildings, were Professor Moss, W. O. Carper, Flossie Keller Mangold, Nell Brady Harris, and Mamie Scott Eakins. Mrs. Eakins was the mother of another outstanding teacher, Miriam Eakins Walker. Mitchell and Miriam Walker taught in several schools in Roger Mills County before moving to Colorado Springs, where Mitchell was engaged in Military and Government work.

In 1908, when the county was divided into school districts, the schoolhouse known as Pleasant Hill was about one mile west and one-half mile south of the new site of

Hammon. It was called District No. 66. After a great deal of dissension in the community over the name of the school, it was changed from Pleasant Hill to Yankee Front and then back to Pleasant Hill but later was known as Yankee Front. It seems that School Board elections determined the name of the school.

In 1981, while in Hammon trying to get the exact location of the old schoolhouse, I was talking with two of the leading citizens--Orville "Fat" Morton and Lee Stephens. Lee's mother was the former Ruby Hiatt, who was an early-day teacher and former resident of the community.

Morton made the statement that he had attended Pleasant Hill School in 1914, and Stephens immediately countered, "You may have gone to Yankee Front, but you never did go to Pleasant Hill!"

It seemed strange to me that after 67 years, the heirs of the families were still fighting the battle over naming the school.

Sometime before 1916 the Pleasant Hill-Yankee Front School closed and merged into the Hammon School System.

(From Glen Crane's ONE HUNDRED ONE SCHOOLS REMEMBERED)

A student's questions

I Don't Understand

By David Klaassen

I don't understand

Why hotdogs come in packages of ten,

But the buns come in eights,

Why there are locks on the doors of places that are open 24 hours,

Why we have a Department of the Interior

That's in charge of everything outdoors.

Most of all, I don't understand

Why light switches have *on* and *off* on them

(When they are on, you can clearly see that they are on,

And when they are off, it's too dark to read it anyway.).

I do understand

Why salt shakers have more and/or larger holes than pepper shakers.

(David is Mr. and Mrs. Bob Klaassen's oldest child.)

An outing to Cherokee Strip Museum of Perry was a long-lasting field trip

Fond Memories

By Maria Beckham

Every time I drive past an elementary school, memories of freedom and absence of pressure flood over me. I think back to the days of playing at recess and doing fun projects in class. At the end of the year, my class would go on a class picnic. Each year we went to a different place, and the class picnic I remember as the best is the year we went to the Cherokee Strip Museum. One of the reasons our teacher took us there is the open space on the grounds for us to exhaust our energy supplies, but there are more reasons than that to visit the Cherokee Strip Museum.

The best reason that a person could have to visit the museum is the historical value. The history of Oklahoma is shown throughout the museum. The large murals, artistically created, portray the life of the Indians before the white man came. An Indian teepee is also set up on the grounds for visitors to see. Eating a picnic lunch in a real Indian teepee was exciting for a child. Pictures of outlaws are also shown in the museum. This type of person put a fear in the life of the settlers. Many of the types of weapons used in the early days are also on exhibit in an area of the museum. Part of an old jail has been added to the buildings on the grounds.

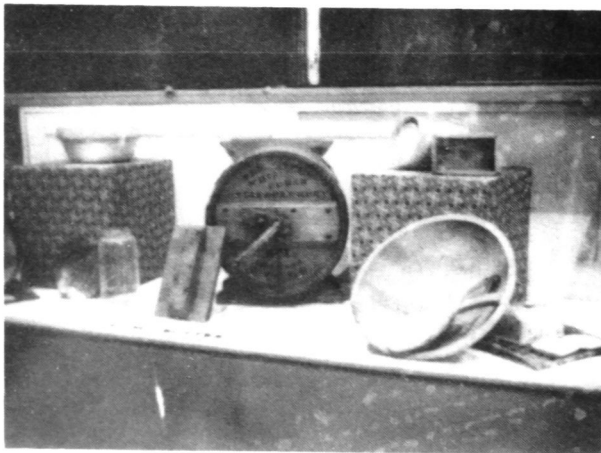
The one group of people that the Cherokee Strip Museum is most devoted to is the settlers of the area. There are many pictures and tintypes to show the hardships in the lives of the settlers. In different areas, the museum has set up an old-time doctor's office and an old-time dentist's office. All of the equipment for these displays was donated by the families of the men who practiced in Perry during the early days. Another exhibit is the first Ditch Witch trencher

manufactured at the plant in Perry. A one-room schoolhouse, which was moved to the museum grounds, is exhibited to demonstrate early-day school days. Another aspect of the settlers' lives is demonstrated in the implement barn, which houses the farm equipment from the early days.

Another reason to visit the museum is to see the wildlife housed on the grounds. The museum started out with one deer, which the school children fondly named Deer Delbert. After a year, Deer Delbert became lonely, and Deborah Doe was brought to the museum. In the spring of 1984, the deer added to the family with twin fawns. Birds are scattered throughout the grounds, too. There's a Chinese peacock that follows visitors wherever they go. Rabbits and squirrels also make their homes at the museum.

The beautiful scenery is another good reason to view the museum and its grounds. The area has many trees and a creek running through the grounds. The grounds are gorgeous as the sunlight breaks through the trees, and a picnic area is provided for the use of visitors to enjoy the museum. The scenery is so beautiful that some people have even gone back to hold their weddings there.

Every visitor to Perry should also make a visit to the Cherokee Strip Museum located just outside of town. The museum has many educational exhibits for everyone to view. The historical, biological, and ecological values play a large part in the education of a person. Therefore, it's very important for Western Oklahomans to further their education by visiting the Cherokee Strip Museum.



Samples of the many items on display.



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We can change the time and place and re-live our own "first day" at school: poetic cathartic

First Day

By Margie Snowden North

We board the bus warily
amidst the distinct scent
of white paste and newly sharpened pencils
and Crayolas bought at
Ben Franklin's ten-cent store.
Revel quietly--even in our uneasiness--
in the scholarly feel
of an armload of new workbooks
And a Big Chief tablet
purchased down at Hood Drug.

The bus groans to a halt,
feet clatter with both purpose and reluctance
down steps,
nervous voices chatter
then ebb into glaring silence.

We are greeted by
the smell of newly painted floors,
oiled rags that made chalkboards clean,
the fixed smile of a first-time teacher.
Desks set in rigid rows
awaiting occupants--
little girls in starched prints
and plain white petticoats,
fellows in unbending jeans and tight oxfords.
We sit stiffly.

Tomorrow we will get dirty on the playground,
giggle, rip a dress belt off on the slide,
or yell and play keep-away with a vengeance.
But today we are caught tight,
squeezed into properness
by that puzzling malaise
that always afflicted us once a year
on the first day of school.

Something to give

Picture Day

By Marsha J. Crouch



Ruby in the borrowed dress.

'Twas picture day for everyone;
They waited all in line.
They combed and primped to look just so
And then thought they were fine.

But then a friend of Ruby's said,
"I have one thing to say.
Could we exchange our dresses, please?
'Twould really make my day."

"You see, this plain old dress of mine
Was worn five times before
By every sister that I have;
It really does look poor!"

Oh, Ruby was the nicest girl;
Her friend would look so fine.
"Why sure I will; remember though
I need it back for mine."

Her friend then smiled and said "Of course,
You know I won't delay."
But I'm afraid that wasn't so;
For time just slipped away.

The time had come; it was her turn,
Now where was her new dress?
She had no choice, it's sad to say.
I'm sure you know the rest.

When Mother Hettie saw that pose
Of Ruby plain and black,
"Oh what a thing to do," she said
"You could have worn a sack!"

The years did pass, and Ruby had
Two daughters of her own.
'Twas picture day for my Aunt 'Bert,
And Mother Ruby said,

"Now listen close to what I say,
DO NOT EXCHANGE YOUR DRESS!
No matter what your friends may think,
You'll end up in MY mess!"

FEATURES

As The Lady was before school children caught a vision of what they could do to help out

The Lady

By Tommy Torres

She holds a great torch up high in the air;
We need someone who really does care.
A gust of wind is blowing the torch out
And all the money is being thrown about.

Don't let the ocean wash her away;
Let her be happy; let us all pray.
Pray for restoration; pray for her dream;
Calling to us all--let her stand with a gleam.

Let her stand for eternity,
And we'll never forget that we are free.
We need more contributions
So she'll be part of our institutions.

We need more people to give
So the Lady can live.



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Early school experiences of a Western Oklahoma eccentric

After Ralph Waldo

By Leroy Thomas

The main hall of Grimes Elementary School was very quiet during the noon hour because all the students knew that it was against the rules for anyone to be inside the building at that time.

Only the quiet jeering of two nine-year-old girls disturbed the calmness of the hour. "Do you know what I think, Birdie?" Myrtle Nelson asked her little friend.

"What, Myrtle?"

"I think those dirty little imps from Sleepy Hollow never should have been allowed to come to school here!"

"Well, I agree with that. Everything was just peachy-creamy in our room 'til this year. And then old Addie Harp and Marge Wade had to transfer here."

An onlooker would have thought that the two girls being discussed were on the playground somewhere, but that wasn't the case. Afraid of their new surroundings, Addie and Marge were hovering at that time near the door of the fourth-grade room where they had been run by the taunts of Myrtle Nelson and Birdie Blagg.

It wasn't that Birdie and Myrtle were the biggest girls in the fourth-grade class; they merely had the biggest mouths, and for some reason they wielded the most power over the other pupils.

Sleepy Hollow School was near the Wade and Harp farms, but recently so many people had moved away from the area that there were no longer enough pupils to hold school there. So Jonathan Harp and Morgan Wade had done the only logical thing they could do: they had made arrangements for their children to attend school in Grimes.

That had been a difficult decision for Wade because he had older children who had received all their schooling at Sleepy Hollow. To Jonathan Harp it was a wise move; he felt sure that his girls would get a better quality of education in Grimes. And if there was anything Harp was for, it was education. Besides, he owned Harp's Ready-to-Wear Store in town, and he had been consid-

ering the possibility of renting out his land and moving into Grimes anyway.

Content with their work for the time being, Myrtle and Birdie skipped joyfully to the playground. They had spotted the teacher, Miss Sedlow, and they wanted to be sure to be on her good side if trouble started.

"What's wrong with us, Marge?" Addie queried screechily.

"Maybe we have two heads?"

"Not the last time I checked."

"Is it our clothes?"

"I should hope not. We get our clothes from the same place most of the other kids do—from Poppa's store, except for the ones Momma makes."

"So what is it?"

"Do you think it's because we're too countryified?"

"My goodness, Girl! If that's it, I can put on the dog as well as anyone else."

"So can I!" giggled Addie, knowing that she would never do it as long as she was an Emerson devotee.

"But let's hold on, Addie. Let's just go back this afternoon and act our usual sweet, innocent selves and see what happens."

The two country girls had spent too much time talking; so when they went back into the room, Miss Sedlow had already started the spelling lesson. The teacher looked at the two girls askance, making both of them feel that perhaps she thought they had done something else wrong in addition to arriving late.

"Girls, did you hear the bell ring?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Who said 'yes ma'am'?" Miss Sedlow wanted to know.

"I did," answered Marge.

"I did," answered someone in falsetto.

"I did," answered someone else in falsetto.

"I did," answered still another child in falsetto.

By this time, Miss Sedlow was becoming flustered. Even when the girls arrived late, she was already unnerved by what Birdie and Myrtle

had told her during the lunch hour.

One of her supervising teachers had once told Miss Sedlow that there would be days like this one. She had said, "Now Ellen, the worst thing to do is to lose your patience in front of a whole roomful of children. Give yourself time to calm down. If there's a culprit, you'll find out who it is. Instead of trying to teach, let your students learn through game time."

A light bulb went on in Ellen Sedlow's mind. "That's it!" she thought. "We'll have a spelling bee. I'm going to see to it that the new girls are on one team with Birdie and Myrtle on the other."

With newly found composure, Miss Sedlow faced her class. "Class, we have worked very hard today. You're going to think that we never have any fun in my room. So now we're going to have a spelling bee. I've never known very many good spellers who weren't good students. So now I'm going to find out who my good students are!"

She had decided to choose the apparent non-leaders in the two factions as the captains. "All right, I want the captains to be Birdie Blagg and Marge Wade. Choose your teams, girls."

"Myrtle Nelson," Birdie began.

"Addie Harp," Marge followed.

The teams were soon chosen, and Miss Sedlow began the bee with easy words and advanced to harder ones.

Before long, everyone had gone down in defeat except Myrtle and Addie. Ellen Sedlow was coming close to the solution of her problem. Who were the troublemakers? Were they really the girls from Sleepy Hollow or the two town students? Throughout the bee, Myrtle and Birdie had been whispering taunts at Marge and Addie. They thought the teacher hadn't heard, but she had.

Thinking that she shouldn't, she had given out the word *pregnant*. It was Birdie's word, but Myrtle had guffawed and had taunted Addie quietly: "Pregnant! That's what your mother is—pregnant! So while I'm out playing,

you're going to be washing old dirty dummies!"

Miss Sedlow had noticed that Addie hadn't allowed Myrtle's tone to bother her. She had answered sweetly, "Yes. Isn't that nice? I'm so happy about the baby. I hope we have another girl. I just love babies. I hope I can have one of my own one of these days."

Birdie had giggled. "Addie Harp wants to have a baby! What man or boy in his right mind would take a second look at tall, lanky, ugly Addie Harp?"

Miss Sedlow interrupted. "Birdie! It's your word! How is it spelled--*pregnant*?"

Fidgeting, Birdie answered, *p-e-r-g-n-a-n-t-pregnant*."

Addie thought to herself victoriously, "Town dunce! Anyone should know that *preg* isn't *perg*!"

For once, Addie felt that a point had been scored for the country, especially when Marge spelled the word without a bobble.

But it was the word *tragedy* that tripped up Marge on Addie's side and Helene Glazer on Myrtle's team. Both girls made the mistake of spelling the first syllable *trad* instead of *trag*.

During the time she wasn't on the spot to spell a word, Addie began to look around for the possibilities of friendships. She knew that Marge would always be an ally; she and Marge had been close since the primer year. And then there was Helene Glazer. She hadn't been outwardly snooty on this first day of school. Maybe she was a possibility.

At least that was a start. And, looking around, she saw five or six more girls who hadn't stuck out their tongues at her or jeered at her on the playground.

She had made a mark for herself at Sleepy Hollow. Everyone--including the teachers--had considered her the smartest girl in the school. What she had lacked in beauty, she had made up in academic accomplishments. She had decided that her brains might help her make it through the rough times in Miss Sedlow's room too.

And now she had her chance. She was the only one left on Marge's team, and Myrtle was the only one left on Birdie's. Birdie! Even that frightened little duck would be easy to win away from Myrtle.

Miss Sedlow was speaking. "Addie, it's your time again. The word is *eternity-eternity*."

"E-t-e-r-n-i-t-y-eternity."

"Perfect, Addie! Now Myrtle, your word is *conformity, conformity*."

"C-o-m-f-o-r-m-i-t-y, conformity."

"Wrong, Myrtle!"

"Hummph!" screeched Myrtle.

"Now, Addie, you'll win the bee for your team if you can spell *conformity*."

"Oh, that's an easy one," Addie mused silently. "C-o-n-f-o-r-m-i-t-y, conformity."

"That's right, Addie. Your team wins. Now let's have a fifteen-minute recess before we start on math."

The victor was able to accept congratulations with finesse, but there were no good wishes from Myrtle Nelson.

On the playground Birdie Blagg slipped away from her group long enough to make an overture to Addie, "Addie, where did you learn to spell so good?"

"Oh, out on the farm sometime there's not much to do but read, and I think I learned to spell by reading." There was nothing snappy or flippant about Addie's answer.

But dragging her friend away, Myrtle snapped, "You don't have to take that from a country hick, Birdie. Let's go find Miss Sedlow."

Miss Sedlow already had plans of her own, however. Approaching Addie and Marge, she said casually, "Girls, may I see you in the room, please?"

The two girls from Sleepy Hollow obediently followed their new teacher into the classroom.

Once there, Miss Sedlow said, "Girls, I don't want us to be interrupted, so let's go into the cloakroom. There's sure to be no one coming in there on a hot day like this."

Inside the cloakroom, she asked the two girls to be seated.

"Now which one of you said that I have body odor?"

Marge looked at Addie, and Addie looked at Marge. Had Myrtle and Birdie actually sunk so low as to say something like that? Yes, it was entirely believable.

"Neither of you will own up to it?"

"No ma'am," the two answered almost inaudibly.

"Very well then. I guess I have my answer." But what does a teacher do about circumstantial evidence? Miss Sedlow's teacher hadn't told her that. She thought she knew who the culprits were--or maybe who the culprit was--but she had still another idea. She stood before her class after the brief recess and began to unfold still another plan.

"Class, the Master Teacher, the only sinless person who ever lived, said 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' We know that as the Golden Rule. We're wise if we try to live by that rule in all our dealings. Now that means in *all* areas of our lives--at home, at school, at play, at work. I wonder if some of you have some quotations that you think people should try to live by. After you give your quotation, why don't you tell why you think it's true."

Myrtle Nelson had grown up in school with the conviction that no matter how wrong she was, being first would make up for the error. As soon as Miss Sedlow finished the assignment, Myrtle began to wave her arms wildly at the teacher.

"Miss Sedlow. Miss Sedlow, pick me. I have one."

"All right, Myrtle. What is yours?"

"God is love."

"Why is that a true quotation, Myrtle?"

"Because it is!" Myrtle fumed.

"I have one, Miss Sedlow," Addie offered.

"What is yours, Addie?"

Myrtle Nelson hid her face behind her book, giggled, and stuck out her tongue.

"It'll be stupid since that country hick is giving it."

OK, Addie. Give it."

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds--adored by little statesmen, prophets, and divines."

"Good, Addie! Who said that?"

"It was Ralph Waldo Emerson, Miss Sedlow."

"That's right, Addie, and where did you find it?"

"Well, my poppa is the first one who gave me some of Emerson's essays and poetry to read. I think Poppa is just about the smartest man that ever lived. He's always giving me something to read or telling me about something he has read."

"And what does that quotation say to you, Addie?"

"It says to me what Poppa told me this morning before I came up here to start to school."

"And what was that, Addie?"

"It tells me that I could have come up here and just conformed to what everyone else was doing or saying or that I could try to be myself. Poppa said, 'Now, Addie, just be yourself. People may not like you at first, but it'll be better on you in the long run if you just act natural and just be Addie Harp.'"

"That sounds like good advice, Addie. It just proves that there is a whole new world waiting for us if we become readers. Good day, Class. I'll see you tomorrow."

As her fourth-graders trekked out, Miss Sedlow discerned that she knew who the sheep and goats were.

Marge and Addie walked to Mr. Harp's store that day in silence, which was uncommon for those two friends. They felt that they had scored a victory and that talking about it would ruin it. Bertie, Addie's older sister, and Marvin, Marge's younger brother, had walked on ahead. The four of them would be riding home with Poppa in his fine carriage later.

At supper that night, Poppa Harp asked, "How was your first day at your new school, Girls?"

"Fine, Poppa," answered Bertie. Bertie had an uncanny ability for tuning out the world around her. While everyone else--including Addie--was falling apart, Bertie could be oblivious.

"Not so fine, Poppa," answered Addie.

"Oh, and what was wrong about it, Miss Addie Elizabeth Harp?" mimicked his second child--the one who was supposed to have been a boy.

"Well, it all centered around Birdie Blagg and Myrtle Nelson. Do you know them, Poppa?"

"Oh, I've seen them in the store a few times, and I know their folks."

"Well, what's the problem, Poppa? Why are they so terrible?"

"Well, Honey, I think it all goes back to the home. I don't know much about the Blaggs, but I have a feeling that Birdie is just being led by Myrtle."

"So what's Myrtle's trouble, Poppa?"

"Well, Addie, tell me. How would you feel if you knew that I was a thief and that everything you had came from something I had stolen?"

"Is that the way it is with Mr. Nelson?"

"Yes, I'm afraid that's the way it is with Lige. For years he tried to hold his head up after he made his bad marriage."

"To Myrtle's mother, you mean?"

"Yes, he has been married just one time, and he had the misfortune of marrying a whiner and complainer. And now she has begun to dabble in some kind of offbeat religion."

"What is it, Poppa?"

"I don't know what it is, Honey. But Mrs. Nelson has always had a problem with overweight; and she went into it for help."

"Well, even with all those problems, Myrtle has no excuse to treat me the way she did today. She called me a country hick, and she announced to the fourth-grade class that my mother is pregnant."

The fulfilled-looking Mrs. Harp, aglow with her condition, had been silent but now she spoke: "And what did you say, Addie?"

"I said that I was glad because I am and that I hoped we had another girl."

"Good girl!" intoned Mrs. Harp. "Addie, do you suppose Myrtle feels cheated that she's an only child? Maybe she would like to have a nice sister like yours and know that she'll soon have another brother or sister."

"Yes," murmured Bertie, "Maybe she's jealous of you."

"Well, after all," clowned Addie, "who wouldn't be jealous of us beautiful, wealthy, charming Harps?"

"Feel better, Honey?"

"Yes, Poppa. Thanks."

The next day held more of the same, but there seemed to be some shifting in the camps. Even Myrtle's allies seemed to be tiring of Myrtle's innuendoes concerning country hicks.

The day ended with Myrtle walking home alone. Birdie and Helene had decided, along with four or five other town girls, to walk down to Harp's Ready-to-Wear Store and look around with Addie and Marge.

As she walked up to the front door, she could hear them--her parents, Lige and Nellie--quarrelling. And her mother was crying.

"Woman, my patience is just about worn thin! All I can make goes for food and clothing and now you do this, and we don't have any extra."

"Make, Lige? Did you say *make*?" Didn't you mean *steal*?"

"Living with you, woman, would drive any good man to stealing or drinking or fornicating or anything!"

"Blame me, Lige!"

"Yes, I'll blame you, Nellie! I didn't have all these problems before you came along, and now you've added to them!"

"You're not being fair, Lige! I'm just trying to find the Light!"

"Why don't you try to find the Light by being a wife to me and by being a mother to that child of yours?"

"You leave Myrtle out of this. She's all right."


"Sure, she's all right, Nellie, if it's all right to be a bully and a gossip spreader. I've seen how she operates."

Myrtle was completely unprepared for the scene that she encountered on walking into the kitchen. Her mother was seated at the table before a half-eaten chocolate cake. In her left hand, Nellie Nelson held a bloody butcher knife. All that remained at the bottom of her right arm was a stub.

"Mother, what happened? Why? Why, Mother?" The child was crying hysterically.

"Well, Myrtle, Honey, the Word says, 'If thy right hand offends thee, pluck it out.' You know I didn't need that chocolate cake!"

"Myrtle, run next door to the Russells' and call Dr. Gates. Tell him your mother has had a bad accident."

As the troubled child hurried next door, her thoughts were about everyone already knowing her father was a thief and now her mother had tried to kill herself. Anyway, that would be the story. 

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A free-agent classroom

The Enchanted Canyon

By Phyllis Kippenberger

My "Enchanted Canyon" lies approximately 2½ miles east of Thomas, Oklahoma. Dozens of young people enjoyed the peace and tranquillity of exploring it with my brothers, sisters, countless cousins, and me. I delight in sharing the memory with others.

Skimming past the wild plum thicket where thorns snatch at your clothes like pointed witches' fingers reaching to ensnare you, the air rang with "what if," "let's pretend," and "play like." The transformation was almost complete as we sat on the high shelf overlooking the creek to remove our shoes and stockings or socks.

The canyon was a special secret place to spend a hot summer afternoon lost in another world. Water sprayed our bare legs as we ran, giggling and shouting, across the top of the two-foot waterfall. A piercing shriek dangled on the air as a foot splashed into the cool water to land on smooth, hard pebbles momentarily before sinking into the soft bed of the creek. Mud squished between toes to plomp back into the stream as the foot lifted, the disturbed silt rushing up, swirling like a hoop out of control leaving a brown inky stain to mark our passage.

On the opposite bank we climbed the deep path that spliced through the hills, created over the years by farm cattle on their way to and from the barn lot and pasture. Fine dirt trailed off our heels, powdering down onto the packed earth behind us. Before us loomed "Pikes Peak" in all its glory—a smooth red sandstone hill topped by a large cedar tree. Countless afternoons had been spent chiseling steps and handholds into the surface of our mountain.

Straining and slipping, sweat beaded across our foreheads to trail along the hair line as we made the last lunge and grabbed a low-hanging branch of the old cedar tree to pull ourselves up to the summit. The thrill of swooshing down the steep, unobstructed bank side of the hill in a swirl of chalky, red dust was reward in itself. Wild flowers and weeds scented the air, a tangy, sweet fragrance intensified by summer's heat, as their stems were crushed beneath the thud of running, bare feet anxious to make the next ascent.



Photograph by O J Bailey

Much later, a slight breeze cooled our backs through thin cotton shirts as we stretched out on our stomachs across the damp sand to bury our faces in the cold creek water and drink deeply. Turning gingerly on tired, quivering muscles, we lay on our backs to rest before climbing out of the canyon. High above, through swaying tree branches, we caught sight of silently rolling white clouds in that time space we had so recently vacated. We watched as an unseen giant's hand ladled thick, whipped cream across the sky, forming figures for our entertainment. The aroma of cedar trees invited us to linger and quietly recall other summers and to dream of summers and adventures to come as we reflected on our enchanted canyon classroom.

Fall tribute to Mother Nature

Master Artist At Work Painting Fall Landscape

By Ruth Blackketter

Mother Nature has really been busy with her paint brush lately. The cottonwoods, elms, and sumac up and down the creeks and in the pastures are putting on an art show that has no equal.

I can imagine Mother Nature looking around the countryside and saying to herself, "Hmmmmm. I believe the trees are looking a bit faded. I think I'll get out my palette and brushes and see if I can brighten them up a bit." So she starts up the creeks and ravines, and I can hear her talking to herself as she goes: "Let's see, how about some of this gold on the cottonwoods?" and she starts to splash gold lavishly as she goes along.

Then as she stands back to appraise the result, she decides that perhaps she got a bit carried away, so she just sprinkles gold in spots, leaving the green that's already there for contrast. Now how about some rust and burnt umber on the elms, with scarlet, mulberry, burgundy, dusty plum, and orange in varying degrees on the sumac and Virginia creeper.

The weeds and grasses come in for some attention too. The light green of the broomweed she dusts with sunshine yellow, and with a flip of her wrist, she paints some daisy-like flowers on some of the roadside weeds. She dips her brush in purple and lavender and scatters some of this through the pastures.

Then, standing back and looking at the result, she decides that the sky needs a bit more color, so she deepens the blue to make a more vivid backdrop for her fantasy of color. She squeezes out her tube of green and fills in the bare spots in the fields of young wheat and whispering to the birds, she encourages them to add a few extra trills to their songs before they pack up and leave for the southland.

Now, looking at her handiwork, and very pleased with herself, she brushes her hands, and the trees bow in reply at her passing.

I hope you have been enjoying the autumn show she arranged for your benefit, and I'm sorry to say, the show may be closing very soon. Right now, Mother Nature is in seclusion, thinking up new numbers for her winter show, and we don't know what surprises she may have in store for us. So take your time to feast your eyes on the splendid array of harmonious colors and the striking contrasts of bright scarlet and crimson with the more subdued burnt sienna tones. File away in your memory the sight of the gold and the green masterfully mingled and enjoy the golden days that are a prelude to winter.

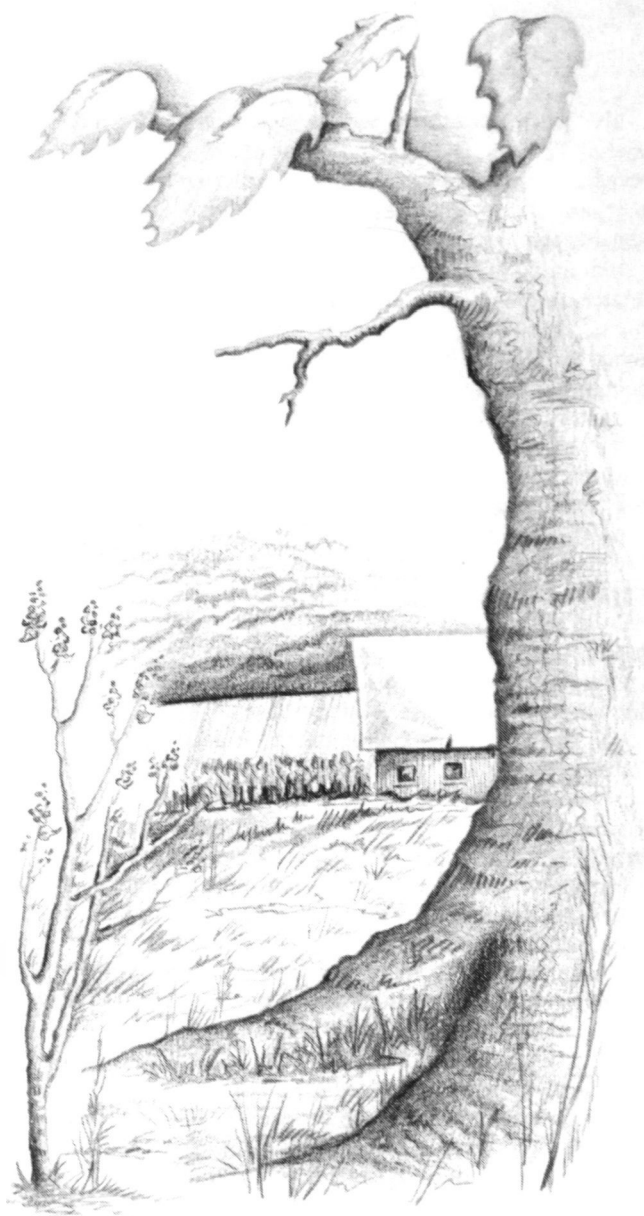


Illustration by Kevin Bennett

Have I Told You My Bean Story?

When someone talks about the hard times of these days or of other days in the past, my sister Lucille will ask, "Have I told you my bean story?" Over the years, my sisters and I have relived it with her so many times that it has become a part of our memories, too.

Lucille graduated at age 16 in 1932 from Bethel School southeast of Hollis. She wanted to go to what was then Southwestern State Teachers College in Weatherford in order to become a teacher. Times were so hard during the Depression on the farm that there just wasn't enough money to keep the family fed and clothed without the extra expense of going to college.

But Lucille was determined; she worked all summer chopping cotton, raising chickens, milking cows, and doing anything else respectable that she could to earn a few dollars. When she received a letter from a Southwestern college official saying she would be hired on the National Youth Administration Program, all of us knew that she could go to college. The Mitchell girls from our community were also accepted, so Lucille and her two friends were excited about going to Southwestern together.

That summer, Mama bought a bolt of pink sateen and began to sew Lucille's wardrobe. She made slips, panties, bras, gowns, pajamas, and a pink organdy dress.

The three girls rented a room in Weatherford and started classes at Southwestern in September. A hot plate was the only cooking equipment they had to use, and of course there was no refrigeration. After a while, the girls talked with the owner of a small grocery store nearby and got credit by the month. By being almost miserly with every penny, they were able to get by--with the extra home-canned food their mothers provided.

One winter day, the small grocery store burned, and the girls didn't know what to do. Only six quarts of green beans remained when all the rest of the food was gone. They had too much pride to write home, and it was two weeks until payday. They boiled the beans without seasoning and ate them twice a day.

Finally, Lucille wrote home: "This is my last stamp. If you want to hear from me again, please send a stamp." Right away, Mama sent a dollar bill, never realizing it meant food in their mouths.

Lucille said later that the dollar arrived the day the beans ran out. They bought bread for 5 cents a loaf and milk for 10 cents a quart to finish out until their NYA checks came. The kindly grocer rebuilt and helped them again.

Somehow they held on financially for two years and managed to get their teaching certificates. All three of them became well-known teachers in Harmon and Jackson counties.

The next time any of us think that our times can't get any worse, we need to think about my sister and her bean story. Then we'll know that we *can* survive and be somebody if we really want to badly enough.

An article about a rara avis of any era

By Maxine Wilhelm

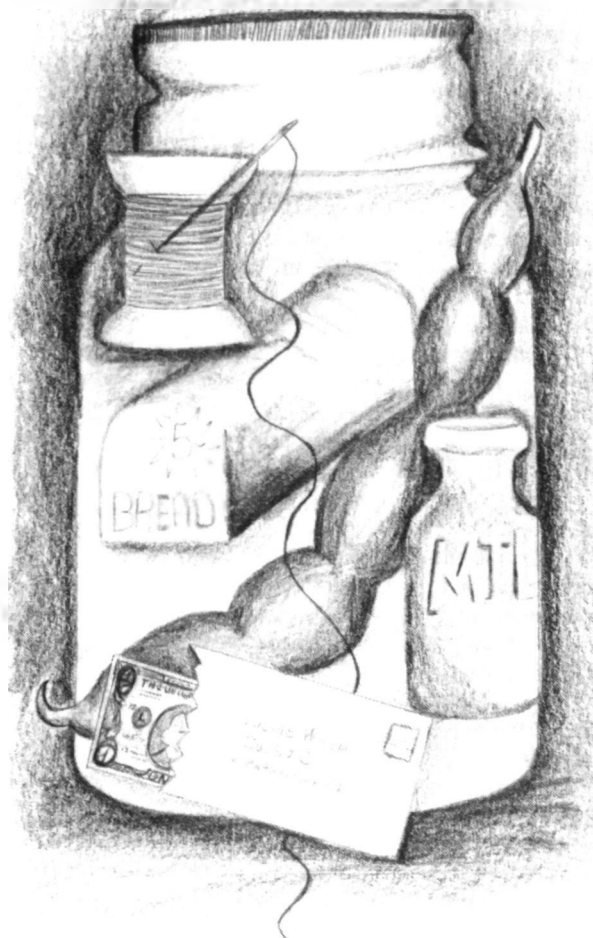


Illustration by Pat Kolb

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is based on the experiences of Lucille Martin Gunkel of Eldorado, Oklahoma.)

A universal school problem--and solution

Defeating Loneliness

By Tal D. Bonham

Loneliness has become an epidemic in our country. Everyone knows about this "absence of companionship or society." One doctor who defines *loneliness* as "pain turned inward" has concluded, "The rise of human loneliness may be one of the most serious sources of disease in the twentieth century."

A growing number of social scientists and mental-health professionals are now studying contemporary American loneliness. Some of the greatest contributing factors to loneliness in our country is the emphasis on the acquisition of material possessions and the desire for status. These materialistic goals discourage Americans from forming and maintaining relationships which tend to relieve loneliness.

More people live alone today than ever before--almost one-fourth of our population. In this group are a large number of people under 40 who, for a variety of reasons, have chosen not to marry. Others who live alone are divorced, separated, or widowed. Some experts estimate that, for every married couple in America, there's a single adult.

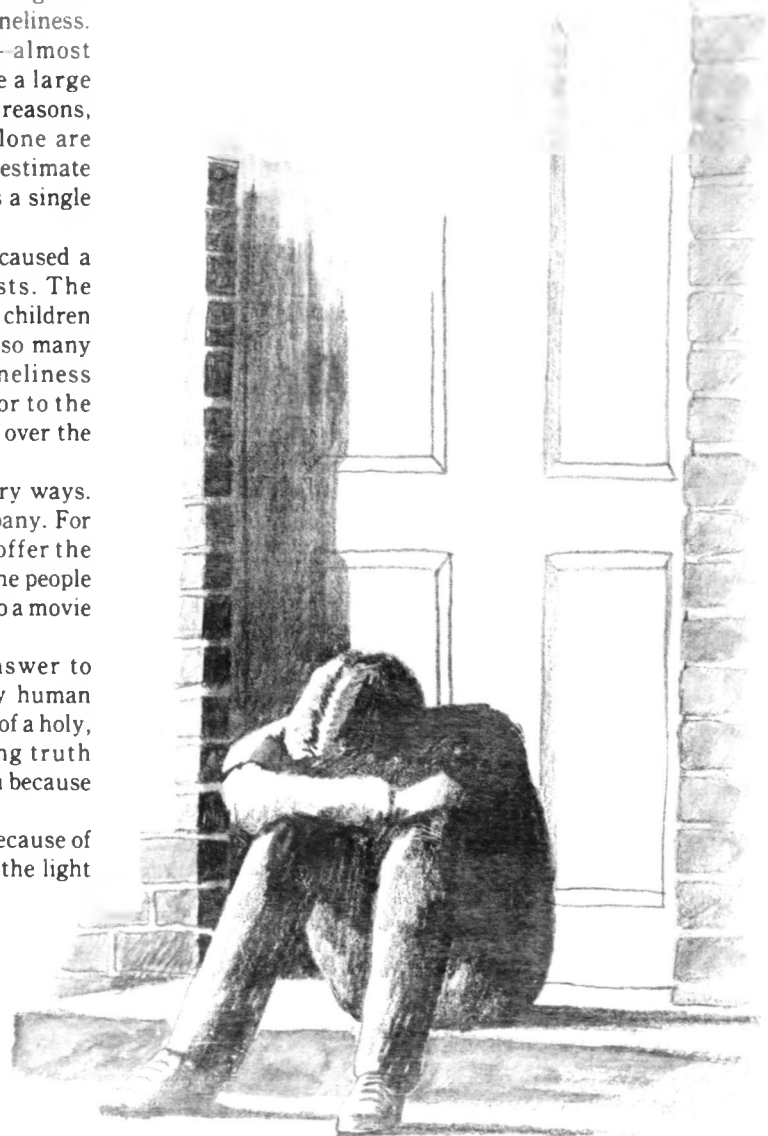
Loneliness among children and teenagers has caused a great deal of concern among child psychiatrists. The greatest contributing factor to loneliness among children and teenagers is the broken home, which causes so many children to be reared without both parents. Loneliness among youth is the greatest contributing factor to the increase of teenage suicide, which has risen 300% over the last 25 years.

Ordinary people cope with loneliness in ordinary ways. They depend on the radio and television for company. For companionship, they turn to soap operas that offer the illusion of involvement in other people's lives. Some people take tranquilizers and go to bed; others read or go to a movie or buy things they really don't need.

As a believer in Christ, I have found an answer to loneliness--practicing the presence of God. Every human being on the face of this earth lives in the presence of a holy, righteous, and loving God. This is a convicting truth because of our sins. But it's also a comforting truth because of our needs.

Life is full of shadows, but shadows are made because of the shining of the sun. In Christ, we have found the light that dispels the darkness of loneliness.

Illustration by Chris Swanda



After School

By Diane Glancy

If not for this, what then?
The years of school
I learned to read and make loops
with the pencil,
not knowing what it was for:
the silent years of classrooms,
enduring radiator hiss and
dryness in my throat.
The harsh toilet paper.
The smell of brown paper towels.
If not for this, what then?
I learned to read your letters
and I can write:
knot-grass twists around the fence;
trees touch above wet streets.
I can tell you of cracks
in the sidewalk
and locusts in trees.
Swallows fly over fields with
the stress and pitch
of your love.
Wind blows steady as it does
off the ocean.

Maybe a case of puppy love

A Few Lines

By Dick Chapman

Send me a letter, dear, if only to say you think of me often,
although I'm far away.
I remember you clearly tho the years have gone by--
the curve of your chin, the light of your eyes.

Send me a letter, dear; it need not be long.
Change sorrow to smiles and tears into songs.
Dreams that overcome me
And make my heart glad.

Send me a letter, dear; a few lines will do--
Lines that give life and hope of true love.

From The Junior-High Creative Writing Workshop

*A cameo by a freshman;
now a junior*

Martian

By Russell Brown

To you,
I am a dog of
a breed never known to the
human being.
I am the common martian--
Watch out!

*(Russ' parents are Dr. and Mrs.
Talbert Brown.)*

An adjecticrosti by a freshman; now a junior

Out Of Step

By Katharine Rogers

Red in the face from hurrying to beat the tardy bell,
Only Katharine was still in the school hall wrestling with the lock on her
Green locker, while the other students, always so
Early, reminded the teacher to wait for Katharine. So the
Reptilian monster of a teacher sent Katharine to the office to get her
Seventeenth tardy slip.

(Dr. and Mrs. Charles Rogers are Katharine's parents.)

*A descripto by an eighth-grader;
now a sophomore*

Equipment For Learning

By Stacie Dunson

I'm a chalkboard that hangs on a wall in a classroom.
I'm dark green in color, and white chalk lies beside me. I
enjoy summer vacation because no one writes on me
then. It's the fall that I dread. The kids and teachers
come back to school. I don't mind the teachers; they
write smoothly, gently.

It's the time before class begins that worries me the
most. Always, as the children come in, boys go to me
and scrape their fingernails down me--just to tease the
girls. When the teacher calls some of the class to the
board, they press hard on me with the chalk, almost
breaking me in half!

Although it's difficult, I do enjoy being a chalkboard. I
take it one day at a time, each day bringing me closer to
a vacation.

(Rev. and Mrs. Dave Dunson are Stacie's parents.)

A mema by a freshman--now a junior

Emotions

By Jeffrey Dibler

Feeling emotions of other people
Solving the mysteries of other times
Having adventures in far-off lands
Finding out about new inventions and methods of working:
The only way to get these thrills and bits of information
Is by reading.

(Jeffrey's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dibler.)

A cameo by a freshman--now a junior

Friendship

By Melissa Kirkland

Friends are
Special people that
Are there when you need them to share
Those moments;
They're kind, caring, and loving,
And will never let you down
In need.

(Dr. and Mrs. Henry Kirkland are Melissa's parents.)

*An acrostimi written by an eighth grader
who is now a sophomore*

Appetite

By Denise Dick

Denise
Eats
Nearly
anything
She
seEs.

(Denise is the daughter of

Dr. Roy and Dr./Mrs. Virginia Dick.)

A mema by a freshman; now a junior

Imagination

By Randy Morrison

Imagination is a gift
That fills my head with
Many thoughts that can
Be released only through
My hands.

(Rev. and Mrs. Jim Morrison are Randy's parents.)

*A cinquain written by a junior-high
freshman who is now a high-school junior*

Creativity

By Kelly Camden

Music:
Creative, Expressive
Communicating, Binding, Releasing.
A never-ending array of styles.
Form-fitting.

(Kelly's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Camden.)

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*Published quarterly by
Southwestern Center for Regional Studies
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Weatherford, Oklahoma*

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in 1986.