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WESTVIEW

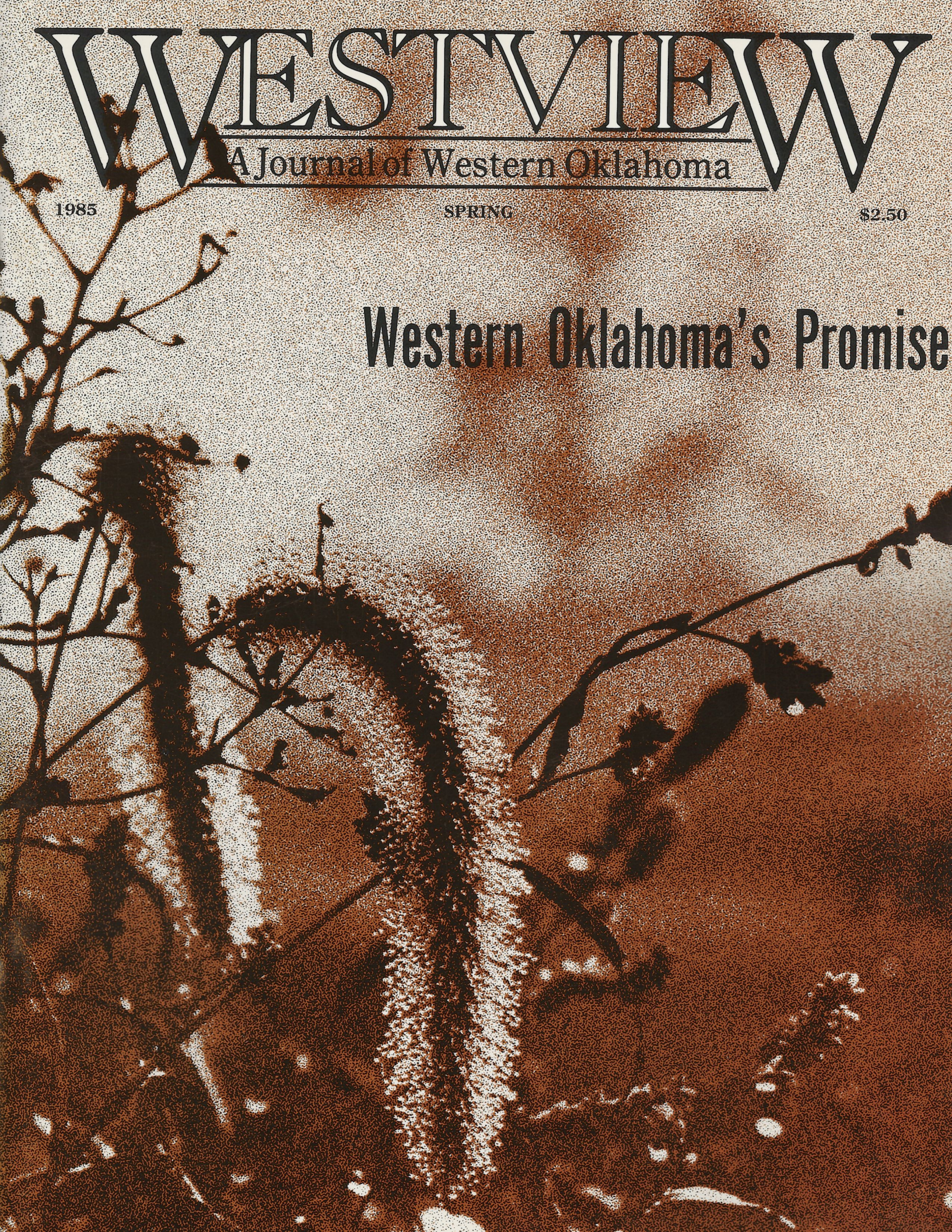
A Journal of Western Oklahoma

1985

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Western Oklahoma's Promise



FOREWORD

“W

estern Oklahoma's Promise," our present theme, evolved as a free-rein subject for our contributors. As a result, there's a great deal of variety in this issue. As trite as it may sound, variety is the spice of life, so sit back and completely enjoy WESTVIEW, Spring '85 issue.

WESTVIEW, Summer '85 will be another good issue because it's being prepared by the Oklahoma Historical Society under the direction of Marshall Gettys. Look forward to seeing that issue by the end of July.

Unless we get additional submissions for our Fall '85 issue ("Western Oklahoma Artists, Musicians, and Writers"), our Editorial Board may be doing a great deal of the writing. Unlike some publications, we prefer freelance submissions from our readers. At this writing, we're in need of articles on Western Oklahoma artists and musicians. The deadline is July 1, 1985.

As our readers know, we are, of course, accepting no outside submissions for the Summer '85 issue; but all contributors need to keep in mind that the new submissions deadline for future summer issues is March 1 instead of April 1.

Our contributors sometimes wonder if there's any way they can help us. Anyone who is interested should jot down these answers: When you submit something to us, tell us which issue and section it fits best; also, tell us we may keep the photographs you send. Finally, be satisfied with one or two complimentary copies until we become a wealthy journal.

Readers, thanks for keeping us alive and letting us know you are there. Without you and your responses, we would sometimes feel as if we were publishing into a vacuum.

Leroy Thomas

Leroy Thomas
Editor

Spring

Volume 4

Western Oklahoma's Promise

Number 3

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Yvonne Carpenter, a freelance writer, mother, and wife from Clinton, is a loyal WESTVIEW contributor who presently serves as secretary-treasurer of the Weatherford Wordhandlers.

Dick Chapman, who is only 97 years old, is nowadays sending more and more manuscripts from his writing headquarters in Arapaho.

Dona Maddux Cooper, whose works have been published in numerous magazines, is a member of Stillwater Writers; her husband, Dr. Donald L. Cooper, is the OSU Student Health Director and Team Physician.

Olive DeWitt, whose WESTVIEW readers remember her from previous issues, lives in Tecumseh.

Fanny Dodgen, a SOSU alumna, is a freelance writer and photographer. She has taught Reading and Special Education in Weatherford and the surrounding area and also in Sallisaw.

Anne Elver lives in Inola. She has been published in Christian and secular media. She won the 1983 Achievement Award from the Decision School of Christian Writing and has done curriculum work for the David C. Cook Publishing Company.

Maggie Culver Fry is our distinguished "poet laureate of Oklahoma." She lives in Claremore.

Ernestine Gravley is one of our leading goodwill ambassadors east of I-35. She is a winning author whose works appear in publications ranging from COSMOPOLITAN to the OZARK MOUNTAINEER.

Carol Rothhammer Lackey is a fulltime wife, mother, and Vocational Rehabilitation consultant who somehow finds time to write poetry and work on a doctorate in English Education.

Fran Merrill of Shawnee is an award-winning Christian poet.

Sheryl L. Nelms is undoubtedly the most prolific poet of the OWFI. A resident of Hurst, Texas, she is in demand as a poetry workshop leader.

Dee Ann Ray is director of the Western Plains Library System as well as a freelance writer and photographer.

Bessie Smith Spradling, who lives in the Mooreland Golden Age Nursing Home, has been writing verse for many years; she has also written several songs that have been used in churches and schools.

Fred Thurston, a native of Granite and a graduate of SOSU, is the general manager of Stroud Crop Insurance; he and his wife, Dee, reside in Weatherford.

Inez Schneider Whitney, formerly of Custer City, now lives in Arlington, Virginia. At least one of her works has appeared in every issue of WESTVIEW.

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THE SILENT WAY OF LEAVES

— by Ernestine Gravley

As spring began to stir, an old oak fell. . .
A noble man of eighty years and nine.
We left him near a sweet magnolia tree
Whose blossoms dropped and wept upon his bed
Of sacred soil. We gave to him a clutch
Of earth. . . farmer's earth. . . to lull his rest.
Embraced by elms, the ivy-smothered house
He left behind (and long we called it home)
Would fall to strangers. Yet our memories stayed:
The dogwood branch that tapped the windowpane,
The blazing stamp of sunlight on the wall,
The clay pots hanging in the balcony
Where violets bloomed and ever bloomed again.
We knew the creak of every darkened floor
The hiss and clank of steam heat from below.
The red flocked paper in the parlor hall.
Christmas, too, has closed its gate to us. . .
"You can't go home again" to Hatley Hill.
Last year we packed our bright and festive gifts,
Arrived at dusk through smoky, slumbering trees
And greeted by the waiting windows, ran
To find him, frail but stately, arms outstretched.
The tree was lit, the fireplace garlanded,
The amber candles flickered on the floor.
The turkey roasting smelled of sage and stuffing,
Traditional Christmas dinner for us all.
We still can see him out on Hatley Hill,
Familiar figure in the autumn's embers
Sitting, hushed upon a lonely bench. . .
The oak has gone, but still the heart remembers.

ILLUSTRATION BY: ROBIN BRIDWELL

(this poem has won prizes in five poetry contests - most recently the \$125 First Prize in the Fall, 1984 Poetry Contest sponsored by THE INKLING, a magazine for poets and other writers)

AG SYNTHESIZER

— BY SHERYL L. NELMS

cocooned in his combine cab

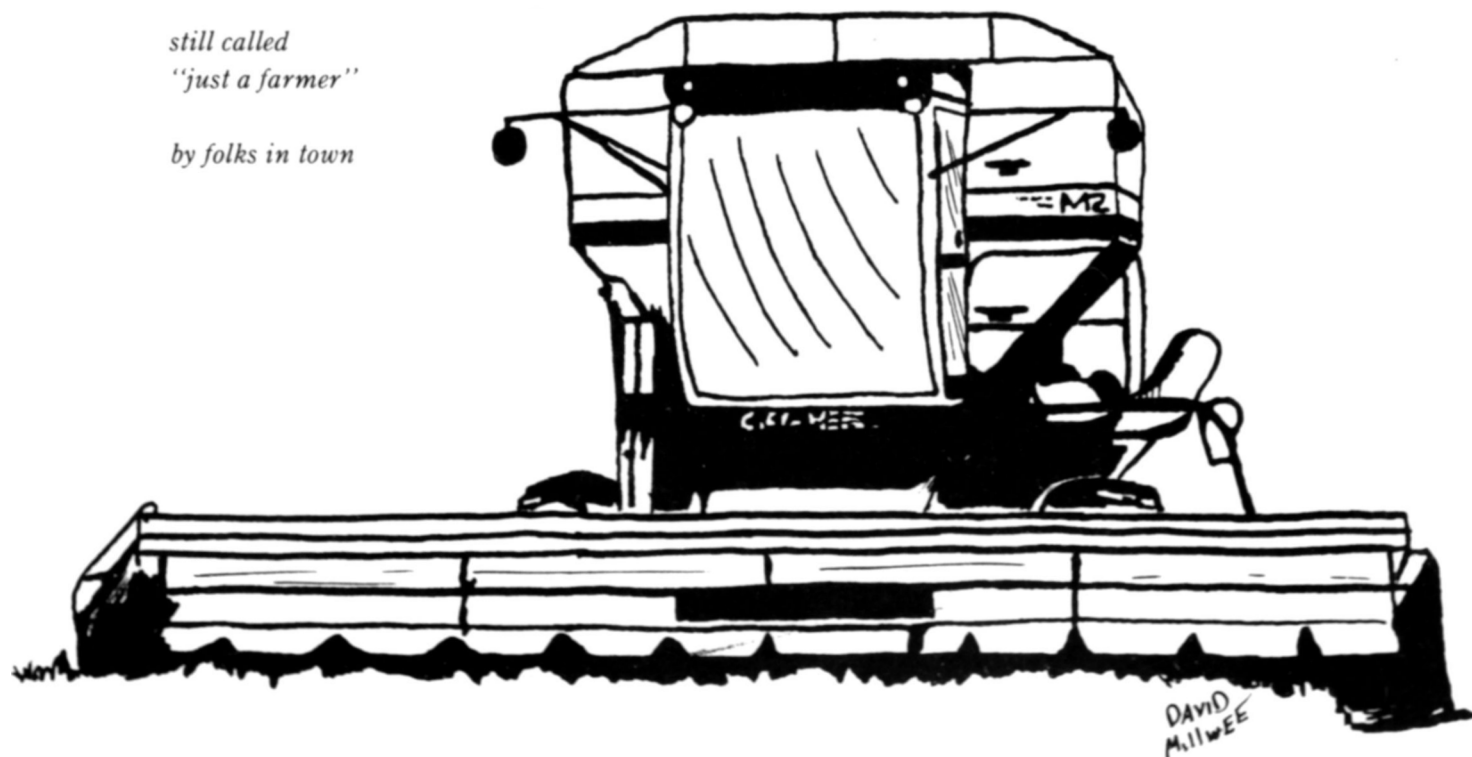
*headphones tuned to Bach
windshield tinted cool-ray
air filtered and conditioned*

*he moves
through the wheat field
free of the dust and itch
of the harvest*

crops and livestock completely computerized

*still called
"just a farmer"*

by folks in town



(previously published in POETRY NOW)

WESTVIEW, Spring 1985

Secrets Of Creation

— by Olive DeWitt

*Below
cold earth and snow*

*old death waits for new birth;
Life swells, stirring the soggy leaves,
Birth pangs.*

*New life
begins to grow
from tulip embryo;
one shoot reaches for air and light--
Beauty.*

KITE

— by Yvonne Carpenter

*My kite flies on unseen currents.
I soar and dive on holy winds
Anchored by life's thin string as
Gravity vies velocity.
But the cord limits me. I fly
Up and down but tied to the ground
And look, other kites share my sky
With colors to rival mine.
Looking from the wind, I fail
And see the hint of falling
Gave me the energy to fly.*

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Mary Henderson: A Super Woman Of Yesterday

— Donita Lucas Shields



One of the most interesting and accurate chronicles of Western Oklahoma pioneering can be found in *HOMESTEADING IN OKLAHOMA TERRITORY, DIARY OF MARY HENDERSON-VOL I*, edited by Gloria Bish Hetherington of Hobart, Oklahoma.

Mary Henderson, great-grandmother of Gloria Hetherington, kept a diary for forty years. She began her daily entries on November 12, 1901, when she, her husband, Alphie, and five of their nine children moved to a farm between Lone Wolf and Hobart. Mrs. Hetherington's first publication of her great-grandmother's diary contains an authentic, day-by-day history of how the Hendersons lived until December 31, 1906.

Saturday, October 7, 1905, might be described as a typical day in Mary Henderson's life. After getting breakfast for the family, Mary milked three of their seven cows, gathered vegetables and prepared some for lunch, scoured the kitchen and dining room, baked light bread and teacakes, washed for baby Marion, and finished the ironing.

After doing the housework, she cut a big lot of cane which she carried from the field to the cows and calves. She then watered the hogs and walked a half mile to a pasture where she drew water for 14 head of cattle. While there, she mended the fence where their calves had been getting out.

When Mary returned home, she made her husband a pair of work gloves and did some mending while she rested. Of course the other family members were as busy as she was. Alphie gathered three loads of corn, and the four older children picked cotton to take to the gin at Lone Wolf.

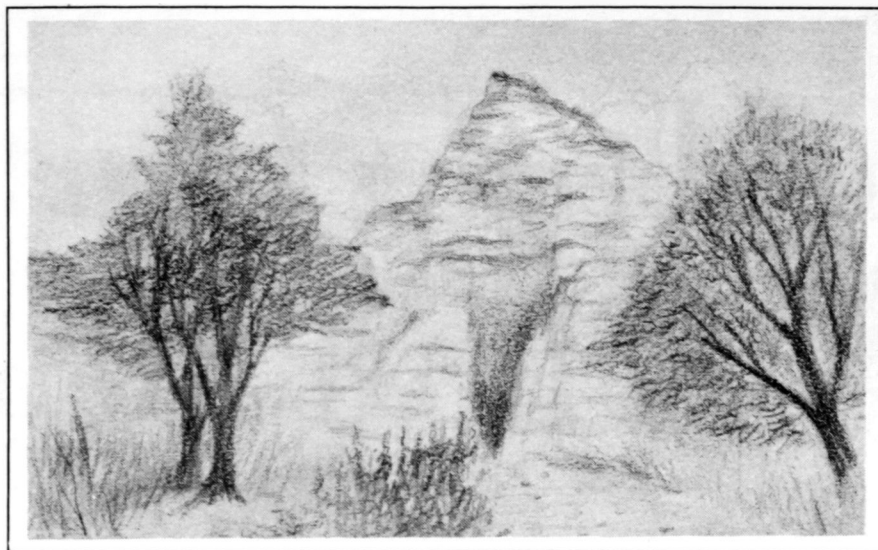
After reading Mary Henderson's diary, a person realizes that pioneer women had equal opportunities and equal rights in the male-oriented working world--be it mending fences, milking, or tending livestock. If Mary's chickens and turkeys became over-populated for their poultry houses, she capably built more shelters for them. If rats and rattlesnakes invaded her flocks, she was as handy with the shotgun as with the hammer and saw.

Mary supplemented their meager farm income with her buttermaking and egg sales. Her attractively molded butter and the week's supply of eggs were taken to Hobart every Saturday and delivered to the homes of her town customers. During the early 1900's, a pound of butter sold for twenty cents, and a dozen eggs brought eight cents. Mary's eggs and butter sales usually amounted to \$200 to \$300 annually. The Hendersons lived on this income if their crops failed.

Gloria Hetherington must be commended for her efforts in preserving and sharing these memories of her pioneer relative. From these records, it is readily

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WESTVIEW, Spring 1985



REDLANDS SPRING

— by Dick Chapman

*The wind undecided shifts about
And
The geese pointing north circle slowly
And
The bull-snake crawls back into cover
And
The prairie dog barks lazily at the westering sun
And
The short green grass is hiding under cover
And
The farmer shrugs in indecision and wonder
And
The coyote, as the sun sinks low and lower, decides it is time
For him to take over.
The only one with a decided mind lopes
Over the ridge to find one of his kind.*

ILLUSTRATION BY: BRYAN MILLER

Remembering Our Hired Hands



— by Inez Schneider Whitney

“Why do you have the hired hands stay through the winter?” Mama used to ask Papa. “None of the other farmers do. There’s no work for them except to help you a little with the chores--or talk politics or play cards. Besides, it makes a lot of extra work on me.”

Papa’s usual response was “Well, if I let them go, I might not be able to get help when I need someone for spring planting and later for the cultivating and harvesting.”

As far back as I remember, there was always a hired hand living with us. Besides wages, he got room and board. And what a good cook Mama was! She also did his laundry because he was just like a member of the family.

On long winter days, we sometimes played Rook--a popular game of the day. Often a neighbor or two would come in to play Pitch with Papa and the hired hand. They played just for fun and used matches instead of money. I didn’t know much about the game, but I remember hearing expressions like “High, low, jick, jack, and the game.” And then someone

was always saying “Bid ’em high and sleep in the street.” If Mama saw the preacher coming by to call, she made them get the cards out of sight in a hurry.

The time was the early days of the twentieth century. Postcards were often used for communication instead of letters. Money wasn’t plentiful, and the postcard required only a one-cent stamp. Besides, cards were more interesting. There were funny ones, sad ones, glad ones, pretty ones--all kinds. My mother saved in a huge postcard album every card that came. When one album was full, she bought another. I still have cards

sprinkled here and there, and many are from hired hands. Even after they left, the hands always kept in touch.

Quite a few of the cards in Mama’s collection are from George and Rye (Uriah) Pickens. They were teenagers; their father and stepmother operated a hotel in Custer City. Mama wished they would go the three miles to their home on weekends, but they seldom did because they didn’t like their stepmother. I was too young to remember those days, but I grew to know the Pickens boys well since over the years they returned for visits. George married Mabel Bruce, a neighbor girl, and Rye married a girl he met



Hello, inez.

How are you? I would
shore like taw see you. I
may come out there taw live
this winter. I gess you will
go taw school this winter.
your friend,
George Pickens

in Louisiana. George and Rye are gone, but I still hear from their widows at Christmastime.

Most of the boys' cards were from Arkansas and have dates from 1906 to 1918. George sent most of his cards to me--like this one:

"Hello, inez. How are you? I would shore like taw see you. I may come out there taw live this winter. I gess you will go taw school this winter. Your friend, George Pickens."

Rye's cards had a little more variety, as in this one written to Papa in 1908:

"Dear Sir, I will write you a few lines to let you know I am well and hope you are the same. how are all of you getting along? I haven't heard from you in a coon's age if he didn't live very long. I have been shucking corn. I got 60 bu. Monday. Do you need a hand? U.P.W."

A card postmarked Dallas, Texas, November 26, 1913, read: "Just arrived." One postmarked Fort Smith, Arkansas, six days later had this message: "I am back in the old berg again. Didn't like it in Dallas."

Evidently Papa didn't answer very soon as here came a card with printing on the front that said, "Get acquainted

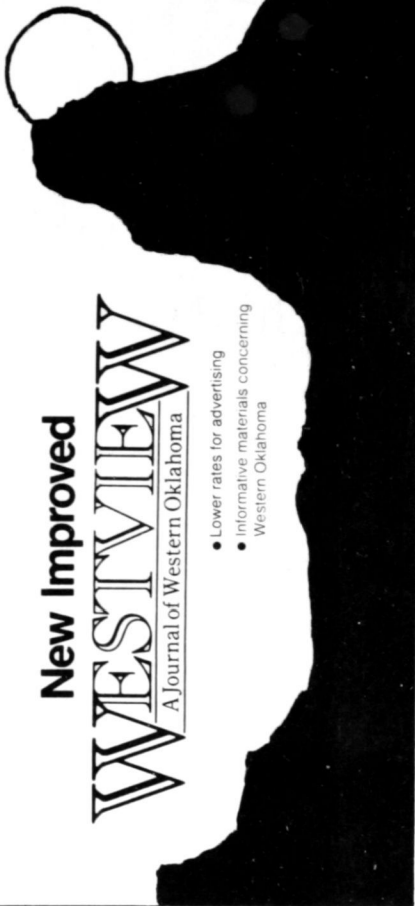
with a pen" and no message on the back except Rye's address.

Bill Daley was the most colorful character of Papa's hired hands. He was a real Irishman--short, heavyset, and thirsty for booze. His conversation flowed on like a cascading river. He hardly stopped to take a breath, and every remark was interspersed with profanity, which was upsetting to Mama.

The Socialist Party was gaining recognition in the political world, and Bill prided himself on being a member. He didn't understand the movement

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My Childhood

— by *Dona Maddux Cooper*

Wherever I walk,
My childhood still tags along
Stepping over cracks.

School Bell

— by *Olive DeWitt*

Far across the desert
over dry-wash and sagebrush
school bell sounds, resounds.



ILLUSTRATION BY: CHARLOTTE RAMOS



PHOTOGRAPH BY: CHARLOTTE RAMOS

The Wagon Yard

— by Dick Chapman

In the year 1908 in the month of July, I was riding to the west under a blue cloudless sky. We were making good time--just old Indian and I. We had an errand to do and no time to stop, so I kept old Indian at a mile-eating trot.

With home far behind us, hills and canyons ahead, the sun beaming down like fire on our hands. Water being scarce and our throats being dry, perhaps we didn't appreciate the blue cloudless sky.

Far to the north over prairies so raw, I could sometimes discern the old Washita made known from that distance in July's warm breeze by a line

of straggling cottonwood trees.

In the bank of a canyon not far to our left but almost out of sight was a dirt-covered dugout where Red Buck and Miller put up their last fight. I figured we'd make it just about night. To a hotel? Oh no--no hotel for me--too fancy fittin', beds too hard. I will just go with old Indian to the old wagon yard. Many a long day has come by and passed, but that wagon yard in Elk City for me was the last.

As darkness came on and freight wagons rolled in, freighters from the north and some from Berlin--two days they had come, two long days to go home.

Don't care if the Canadian is dry as a bone. As night closes down and stars show in the sky, horses munch at their grain and kick at the flies.

There's the scent of strong coffee made in a tin pail, sounds and voices in the night that never will pale.

Voices around the fire tell of miles on the trail from across the sage flats to the Antelope Hills. But where did I sleep after a long hot day?

Where else but on a mound of fresh prairie hay? To remember that night is easy; to forget would be hard--the last night I slept in an old wagon yard.

Foster's Girl

— by Fred Thurston

Long legs, brown eyes, and golden hair,
She's Foster's girl.
She recites "I'se bad I is" in church,
And a lady says, "I'll bet she is."
She goes to the cotton gin and hears things
And tells a man she lives
Out where the sun goes down.
She's Foster's girl.
She brings "poor" kids home
And worries about the "poor folks"
And tells someone in town
She's Sister Thurston's daughter,
And she's gonna vote for Clark.

She's Foster's girl.
She plays the piano and studies elocution;
She looks at things and wonders about nearly everything—
She's Foster's girl.

She goes to college and makes good grades;
She becomes a teacher and a good one, too.
She gets married and moves away.
She teaches in college and loves her kids.

She's still Foster's girl.

Where Did They Go?

— by Dick Chapman

I n the fall of 1898 when we arrived in the old Cheyenne-Arapaho country, after a four-hundred mile drive of twenty-two days, it was too late and the weather too cool for the short but vicious prairie rattler to be out, but it was not uncommon to see one or more buzzards circulating high in the air, covering many square miles of territory before gliding down to earth, perhaps behind a ridge or hill leaving the watcher to wonder whose dead critter it had located over there.

The big black squalid bird was never numerous as blackbirds or the pestiferous sparrows or even the well-known quail or prairie chicken, but it was not an unfamiliar sight to see by any means. Nor was it uncommon when riding over the prairie or driving along a wagon road to see two or more buzzards feeding on the carcass of a cow or calf which had died from an injury or possibly a screwworm infestation that had been neglected by the owner or cowhand, and sometimes a coyote would be there feeding on the opposite side or end from the buzzard. The buzzard did not look good or smell good, and the only time it was graceful was when it was riding the air-waves a mile high in the sky. I don't remember ever seeing a dead buzzard, and I never knew of one being shot; but at close range with their hooked beak, telescopic eyes, and droopy rusty black wings, they were the very symbol of death. I suppose they accomplished the job they were intended to do and then moved, but where did they go?

The prairie rattler at that time was quite common in the western part of the territory; but unlike the ugly buzzard, it was quite a good clean-looking chap--never very large, seldom measuring more than two feet in length. But what it lacked in size, it made up in viciousness. That fact was well known,

so people in rattler country were careful where they stepped when they were out in the grass. The rattler was not a noisy reptile, and when an intruder came close enough to cause the snake to sound off, the intruder was just too close for his own good; but relatively few people were struck by a rattlesnake anyway. Probably most settlers were more concerned about the danger of the scorpion than the rattlesnake, as the scorpion liked to stay in a warm dugout or sod house; and while its sting isn't deadly, the pain of the sting is terrible while it lasts. I should know because I have been stung by a scorpion twice. The first one was eighty years ago, and there's still a small red spot to mark the place. Many people have told how much more numerous rattlers were in prairie dog towns, but I never saw any greater numbers there than anywhere else.

I remember one time when I rode out to a small bunch of cattle to see about a two-year-old heifer that might have screwworms in a brand on her hip. I roped the heifer and she threw herself rather hard as she hit the end of the rope, and she lay still. I started up the rope to her with a piggin string in hand; but since she was making no effort to get up, I had a chance to inspect the brand without tying her down. As I neared the critter, I saw a rattlesnake lying near her with its head high and its tail quivering, ready for business. I circled around the heifer and took a quick look at the brand from the backside. It was scabbed over good, so I flipped the lariat from around her horns to let her up, then looked to see what about the rattler; but it had decided to run instead of fight and was streaking off through the bunch grass. No doubt the rattlesnakes had little love for the settler and his sod plow. Perhaps that's why they left, but where did they go?



THE HEATHEN

— by James Beaty

It sure didn't seem that Sunday morning was going to be any different than any other.

Me and Ma and Pa had rode in the buckboard to the church over by Fort Sill, Oklahoma Territory.

They had a new preacher over there and Ma had taken a liking to the way he would rave and pound his fists. He'd holler about drinking and carousing, and the women all seemed to enjoy this line of preaching. Bit it sure made all the men cough and squirm, and they didn't look too comfortable.

I didn't like him too much. Every time I was about to drift off into a quick cat-nap, he'd pound his fist against that old wooden podium and my head would jerk and my eyes would open wide and it'd be at least ten minutes before I had another chance at slipping off into sleep. I think it must've made him mad or something if he heard somebody snoring when he was talking because I twisted around so I could see all the folks in the church and none of us fellows was getting any sleep. I could see months of slow, itching Sundays

before me with no excitement at all.

Then Preacher Simpson crashed his hand down on that old wooden stand again. I think he must've hurt it this time because his face turned red and he gasped and looked at his hand funny, but he recovered real quick.

"And I tell you," he shouted, "the Lord wants to gather all His sheep into the fold, even the little lambs." He looked at the kids in the church; then he looked at me, and me being twelve and grown already! I tell you, I wouldn't mind being called a colt or a calf, but I didn't like being called no lamb.

"Yes," he said again, "the Lord wants to gather all His sheep." At that second exactly, I heard the doors open, creaking behind me and I knew that somebody was coming to church late. I figured they'd planned it that way so they'd miss half of Simpson's sermon. I looked up at Simpson and his face was red as if he'd hurt his hand again, only he hadn't.

I twisted around so I could see and my mouth fell open because I hadn't never seen anything like that before.

An old Comanche stood with the church doors open behind him. You could see the plains fading away in the light blue sky on both sides of him. He was old all right, but he stood straight like he had a pine board in his back. His long hair was streaked with gray and he wore a shirt with blue and red in it. He wore green trousers with a concho belt and buckskin boots. I'd never seen a man wear a shirt like that before. Daddy called them bawdy house shirts.

Everybody got real quiet because that old Comanche just stood there. I could tell he was a Comanche because civilized Indians didn't dress that way.

Finally Simpson cleared his throat and said, "Can I help you? Are you lost or something?"

The old Indian just stood there and he never blinked or nothing. I wondered if he understood American.

Simpson seemed to be getting mad. "This isn't a public place. This is the house of the Lord."

The old Indian nodded. "I come to see Him."

I reckon that was all Simpson could take.

"That is no way to dress in the house of the Lord," he bellowed.

The Indian didn't say a word. He gazed over at a painting of some of the disciples dressed in long flowing purple and red robes. It was hard to tell if he was trying to tell the preacher

"That is no way to dress in the house of the Lord," he bellowed.

something or if he was admiring the robes, maybe thinking how good they would go with his blue and red shirt. Anyway, Simpson didn't say nothing else about clothes.

My ma jumped up. She was always taking in homeless dogs and cats and such. "I believe he wants to hear the sermon," she said, and the old Indian nodded again.

Ma and a couple of other ladies took the Comanche by the arm and led him toward the pews. I glanced at Simpson. He looked like a horny toad right before it spits at you.

Ma led that Indian over and told him he could sit beside me. I don't think Pa liked it but Pa was a smart man and sometimes he could look at Ma and tell when to keep his mouth shut. I guess he figured this was one of them times.

I can't remember nothing else Simpson said. I got too excited. I wondered how many men that old Comanche had scalped, how many soldiers' throats he'd cut. And here he was, sitting right beside me in church! It was better than catching a ten-pound catfish.

The sermon ended and we all walked out and Simpson shook everybody's hand and asked them to come back next Sunday, everybody but the old Comanche. I think Simpson wanted to say something to Ma and some of the other ladies, but I guess he remembered the seventy-five cents

she put in the collection plate each Sunday. Or maybe he was a little bit smart in the way Pa was smart a whole lot.

After that, the old Indian came to church every Sunday. It didn't even bother him when Simpson would preach about the heathen. I guess the Comanche didn't know he was a heathen.

I could tell by the way old Simpson gave us the evil eye that he was figuring on some way of getting rid of the visitor. But I have to tell you true, that old Indian never once tried to sneak a cat-nap in all the Sundays he sat beside me.

After church I would talk to him. He wouldn't tell about battles or nothing like that. He told me some stories about Indian life before us whites became their neighbors. It sure sounded good, hunting and fishing and fighting and letting the women do stuff like skinning the game. It was hard to believe at first, but he said it was true. He'd been some kind of medicine man at one time.

Even though Pa had fought against the Comanche, I think he came to respect the Indian a little.

Summer came and it was fun for awhile until the drought hit. We kept looking for rain but we never did find it. Crops were dying; food was low and water lower.

"Hand me that jug," Mr. O'Casey said and my pa took a drink and so did all the other men.

The men were uneasy because if it didn't rain soon, the families would have a rough time this winter. (old Irish O'Casey seemed more worried than anyone).

We prayed every Sunday for rain but it still didn't rain. Simpson said this was because there were unbelievers in the congregation; then he'd stare at the Comanche. I don't know if the Indian knew old Simpson was

giving him the evil eye or not. He just stared straight ahead like there was a beautiful painting on the wall in front of him, only there wasn't no painting. Sometimes I wondered if he even heard what Simpson said. It was like he was listening to someone else.

It was at Bill O'Casey's barn raising that it started.

"I ain't saying the Injun can do it," Hawk said. "Only one medicine man in a hundred can do it."

The moon shone bright that night and some of the men gathered at the edge of the woods, close enough to hear the fiddle music but far enough away to keep a look out for their wives.

Me and some of the younger fellows stood around listening to the men talk. Sometimes you could hear real good stories that way, ones they wouldn't tell when the women were around.

"Hand me that jug," Mr. O'Casey said and my pa took a drink and so did all the other men.

After they swallowed a few drinks they told a couple of good stories but nobody was in too fine a mood that night.

"Men," Mr. O'Casey said, "I don't know what we'll do if we don't get some rain soon."

"There's not much water left for the cattle," Pa said. "My pond'll be dried up soon."

"Mine's nothing but a mudhole now," Jenson said. "If we don't get rain the crops'll be gone too."

Nobody said nothing. Even the fiddle music stopped. The men drank the whiskey, but I could tell it wasn't whiskey they were thirsty for.

Finally old Hawk Slaggard spit. We all looked at him because when Hawk spit it meant he was about to say something.

Hawk had been a scout for the

Continued

cavalry and he'd lived in the Rocky Mountains for years. Some folks said he'd lived with the Cheyenne, but old Hawk never talked about that.

"I seen it done once, 'bout twenty year ago. It was a drought worse than this. Buffalo bones was everywhere."

He stared at the ground. I thought he was through talking but he spit again.

"I seen a Cheyenne medicine man do it, some kind of a secret ceremony and dance the rascal did and I'll be dogged, it wasn't about four hours till there came a real gully water splashing down."

"You reckon you can fetch that old Cheyenne?" O'Casey said, kind of spiteful like.

"Nope, I sure can't. But there's a medicine man sits by this boy in church every Sunday."

The men all turned and stared at me.

"I ain't saying the Injun can do it," Hawk said. "Only one medicine man in a hundred can do it. But it seems like we ain't got nothing to lose."

"That old Indian's been going to church," O'Casey said. "What if he won't do those pagan ceremonies anymore?"

"Boys," Hawk said, "look at the sky--not a cloud in her. You'd better pray that heathen ain't been converted yet."

Three days later the men gathered in the woods. The old Indian appeared at the edge of the scrub oaks. My heart beat faster when I saw my friend.

He wore a buffalo headdress and his face and chest were covered with paint. He nodded to the men. He held a drum and a gourd that rattled. The ceremony began and his moccasined feet struck the ground in crazy rhythms. I must've went in some kind of trance or something because I don't remember nothing except my pa

shaking my shoulder and telling me it was time to go.

Later that evening Ma sent me to town in the buckboard to get some supplies. As the mules plodded to town I saw some clouds gathering in the west. Soon I felt the first drops hitting my nose. By the time I reached the general store, clouds had opened and I was soaked. The gully by O'Casey's farm had washed away.

I hopped from the buckboard and ran dripping into the general store. "Ain't it something?" Mr. Fleming asked. "And to think that heathen did it with a rain dance."

I nodded, but Mr. Fleming hadn't been at the ceremony. I guessed everyone around had heard the story by now.

I put the supplies in a small wooden barrel in the back of the buckboard, climbed back in the seat, and started home when I saw someone entering the church. Even in the driving rain, I recognized the blue and red shirt.

I pulled the mules to a stop and entered the church. The old Indian stood in front of the altar, his back to me, his head bowed. Finally he turned and smiled.

"My little friend," he said.

"You did it!" I said. "You really did it! You'll be famous around here!"

He smiled at me again.

The door swung open behind us and Simpson strode into the church, followed by several members of the congregation. I thought at first that they were going to thank the Indian. Then I saw their faces.

"I heard about your rain dance," Simpson said mockingly. "So now I suppose you'll try to take credit for this rain. It was my prayers that brought the rain, mine!" He shouted as if he were preaching a sermon.

He calmed himself. Enjoying each word, he said very slowly what he'd been wanting to say for months. "Yes,

we heard about your pagan ceremony. You had the ladies here fooled, thinking you'd been converted to our ways, but you didn't fool me. They finally see things my way. The congregation has agreed to tell you that you're not welcome in the church."

I knew that was a lie because my ma and pa were in the congregation and no one had asked them.

But the old Indian just nodded.

"I knew I wouldn't be welcome." He looked at me. "I was saying goodbye when you saw me, young friend."

We stepped out into the drenching rain. Raindrops mingled with my tears. "They shouldn't do this to you," I said.

"It doesn't matter. I don't have to be in the church to listen."

Thunder boomed and lightning slashed the sky.

"But you did the ceremony to help them."

He stopped walking. I didn't hear the rain.

"Young friend," he said, "that wasn't the ceremony you watched. I performed the real ceremony all alone in the woods."

Now I was really confused. "But you were praying in the church. I don't understand. Who made it rain? Was it the Indian God or was it our God?"

"Young friend," he smiled, "they are the same God."

He turned and walked away. I walked beside him.

"But why did you do the ceremony for the men? They've told everyone you caused the trouble. Why did you do it?"

It rained harder now. I could barely hear his soft voice over the roaring water.

"So they would believe," he said.



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The Old Man

— by *Fran Merrill*

Pressing against wind
the old man holds his hat fast.
(memories are made of this)

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The Nail Family in December, 1948: left to right: Spike and Lee Ann, Cleo and Wanda Walker, John and Doris Stanfield, Edwin and Mary Nail. Front: Tack Nail and Cookie

SPIKE NAIL — FAMILY MAN

— by Dee Ann Ray

(Editor's note — This article was first published in THE LEADER of Clinton on December 22, 1983. The text used here is basically unchanged except for the insertion of additional human-interest details.)

Lowell Thomas Nail, nicknamed "Spike," retires from his vice-presidency at the Security State Bank of Weatherford on December 31, 1983. Spike turned 70 on November 22 of this year; but his lean, trim figure and his rapid walk give no hint of a 1913 birthdate. Spike's current stint with Security State started in November of 1961, but he worked there earlier; therefore, his total number of years is 26.

Retirement holds some kind of adventure for Spike, but the exact nature has yet to reveal itself. He plans to continue playing golf and enjoying his gardening. His Kiwanis activities will continue and of course his assignments at the First Baptist Church. Four grandchildren already claim some time and perhaps

WESTVIEW, Spring 1985



Spike's parents — Eli (Tom) and Vera

will take up even more after January 1. Of course Spike has it made where one hobby is concerned. He loves to read, and his wife is the Weatherford librarian. Guess who gets to look at all the new books first?

Born at Rosedale, which is in McClain County east of Wayne, Spike has had a chance to get to know Oklahoma through the years as a result of family moves. It's a good thing he likes to travel.

Spike's parents were Eli Thomas (Tom) and Vera Lucretia Dawson Nail. Mrs. Nail was the oldest sister of the late L.R. Dawson, Weatherford banker. Both of the Nails were born in Sherman, Texas, but they didn't meet each other until they moved to Pottawatomie County in Oklahoma. They became acquainted when Tom worked for Grandpa Dawson on a farm south of Wanette. Tom and Vera married in 1911 and lived in a house on the Dawson farm.

After moving to Rosedale, Tom sharecropped with



Vera Nail with four of her five children: Spike, Doris, Edwin, and Wanda

Leonard Yokum for a couple of years. During that time he bought the telephone exchange in Rosedale.

In 1917, Tom sold the Rosedale phone exchange and moved to a farm northwest of Ada. The nearest school and post office were in Beebee. Spike attended his first school at Beebee, which was a two-mile walk from home.

In 1918, the family moved to Ada. Tom worked through one difficult winter with the Ada phone company and said that was all of that. He then went into a short-lived partnership in a music store. He had no musical background and soon realized his mistake.

After that, Tom sold life insurance for the Mid-Continent Life Insurance Company in the spring and summer and kept books for a cotton gin during the fall and winter. From that experience grew an interest in the cotton gin business.

In partnership with Uncle Charlie Dawson of Luther, Tom moved his family to Greenfield, which is between Geary and Watonga, and started the first



Spike, upper left; Wanda, upper right; Edwin, lower left; Doris, lower right.

cotton gin there. The year was 1924. **Spike** became L.T.'s nickname during the five-year residence in Greenfield. He explained, "I guess Lowell is a difficult name to remember or say. I was also tall and thin. Somehow the name Spike just stuck. I've been called that ever since."

When Spike was a sophomore in high school, the family moved to Jet to begin a cotton gin there. The year was 1929. In 1932, Spike graduated from high school, and the family began to think about another move. Jett was too far north in Oklahoma for good cotton crops.

In 1933, the Nails moved to Butler, a cotton center.

There were two gins — the Chickasha Cotton Oil Gin and the Farmer's Cooperative Gin. The Butler Gin was another partnership for Tom with Uncle Charlie Dawson. Tom managed it, and Spike worked there during the fall and winter of 1933 and 1934.

In March of 1934, Spike went to Hill's Business University in Oklahoma City and stayed in school through the summer — then back to Butler in the fall to work at the gin as bookkeeper. He followed the same



Spike and Lee Ann on their first out-of-town date. They went to the zoo in Oklahoma City.

routine during the spring and summer of 1935, and he finished the course at Hill's. He then went back to Butler to work at the gin as bookkeeper. During the summer of 1935, he worked at a service station in Butler and then worked as bookkeeper during the gin season.

On November 1, 1936, Spike started his banking career, going to work at the First State Bank of Butler, which was owned by Dolph Howenstein, the bank loan officer. Howenstein's wife, Alice, was the teller, and Spike was the bookkeeper.

In January of 1938, sadness came to the Nail family. Vera, Spike's mother, died of cancer. Spike, Wanda, and Tom were left to take care of the three younger children — Doris, Edwin, and Dawson.

In 1939, Tom became ill with what was diagnosed as sclerosis of the liver. "He never took a drink in his life, but he died of that liver problem anyway," Spike remarked. When his disease was diagnosed, Tom was in the Clinton hospital, where he remained and died in September of 1939.

Both parents were active Baptists; and a few years

ago when a new First Baptist Church building was constructed in Butler, Spike and his siblings donated a pulpit in memory of their parents.

Fortunately, both Tom and Vera had also been active in Eastern Star and Masonic work. They joined while at Greenfield and remained active through the years. Although Vera couldn't have known about her impending death, she must have felt some premonition because she instructed her family and friends that should she die and something happen to Tom, she wanted her children sent to the Masonic Home in Guthrie.

Masonic friends at Butler knew the situation when Tom became ill. They knew that Spike made \$40 a month at the Butler bank. The Nail house was rental property, and the business was a partnership with Charlie Dawson, who held most of the shares. After Tom died, some of the furniture and personal belongings had to be sold to pay debts. What remained was lost in subsequent moves or while in storage at relatives' homes.

Doris, at 16, was a senior; she was too old for the Masonic Home; but a Board decision based on the real need of the family swung in her favor, and she was accepted.

When Spike took Edwin and Dawson to live at the Masonic Home, a second cousin, Olive Plessinger, living in Guthrie told him about a possible job at the First National Bank. Mr. Holman, the banker, told Spike that the opening wasn't to be filled at the time but that he could file an application in case a job opened up. The day that his application arrived in Guthrie, another teller unexpectedly quit and Spike got his job. Two months after their father's death, four of the Nail children were united in Guthrie. Spike was grateful because he wanted to be able to keep an eye on his brothers and sister — one of Spike's happiest memories of the Guthrie years. They have always been a close family.

Another of Spike's good memories during those years is the way Jimmy and Olive Plessinger opened their home to him and took him in as a member of their own family.

From November 1, 1939, until April of 1942, Spike worked in the bank at Guthrie. During those years, Doris graduated from high school and went to business college in Oklahoma City. She went to work for Consolidated Gas Company, which was the forerunner of Arkla.

In 1942, Spike got a draft call. He joined the Navy and became a Pharmacist's Mate. He spent the entire time until December 24, 1945, at San Diego, assigned as secretary to the Senior Medical Officer of Marine Aviation. In that job, Spike was entitled to wear either a naval or Marine uniform and did.

Edwin and Dawson were still at the Masonic Home, and after leaving the service Spike returned to Guthrie to work at the Dodge-Plymouth agency. His bank job had been taken during the war.

On July 15, 1946, L.R. Dawson of the Security State Bank in Weatherford called Spike to ask him to fill a job, and Spike gladly accepted since he wanted to get back into banking. After his brother Dawson finished high school in Guthrie, he joined Spike in Weatherford where he attended college and worked for newspaper publisher Jimmy Craddock. While working for Craddock, Dawson acquired the nickname **Tack** and is still called that (imagine that! — in one Nail family a Tack and a Spike)

After Edwin finished high school at Guthrie, he went into the military so he could qualify for the educational benefits. He went through college on the G.I. Bill and later went to Law School. In 1950, Tack, who was in the National Guard, was activated and sent to Korea.

In February of 1948, Spike met Lee Ann Reid, whose parents operated the old Cain Hotel in Weatherford. Lee Ann worked in the coffee shop where Spike ate lunch. After a courtship of seven months, they were married on September 19, 1948 in the upper lobby of the Cain Hotel, which was Lee Ann's home. Being a family man was nothing new to Spike. The difference was that he now had a wife.

August of 1950 was an eventful month for Spike and Lee Ann. The first of that month, Spike took a job with the Roswell State Bank in New Mexico. On the thirty-first, Lee Ann gave birth to their first child, Cathy Marie, in Weatherford. The Roswell stay lasted for 2½ years.

Then Spike got a chance to work in a suburban Kansas City bank. He quickly learned that he didn't like the bank or the city, and one year was all he could take. One good thing did happen during 1952, the year the Nails were in Kansas City; Paul Reid Nail, their son, was born.

Back to Oklahoma and a job with the First State Bank and Trust Company of Oklahoma City. Their youngest child, Karen Ann, was born in 1954 during their time in Oklahoma City. From Oklahoma City, they went to Yale where Spike had a position with the First National Bank.

Finally they moved back to Weatherford in November, 1961. The twenty-two years since that time have gone quickly.

For many years before returning to Weatherford in 1961, Spike was a Rotarian. However, when he came back, there were too many Rotary members at Security State already, so he joined the Kiwanis Club. He has served as president of the Weatherford group and has been an active member throughout the years.

The rest of the Nails have been busy too. Edwin lives in Houston where he is an attorney for the Tenneco Company. He and his wife, Mary, who died in recent years, had one child. Doris married an Air Force man named John Stanfield. They have two children. The Stanfields spent busy military years until John received a medical discharge. They live in Midwest City, and Doris works at Tinker.

The oldest sister, Wanda, married Cleo Walker of Butler. He worked for Public Service of Arizona for many years. After he retired in 1982, he went as consultant to a Korean government power project. He and Wanda, parents of one child, spent a year in Korea and now live in retirement in Holbrook, Arizona.

Tack's life also had an interesting turn. While Edwin was on military assignment in Washington, D.C., Tack visited with him and got a job with a radio and television magazine. He is now Managing Editor of the TV DIGEST. Tack and his wife, Joan, who have reared six children, live in Falls Church, Virginia.

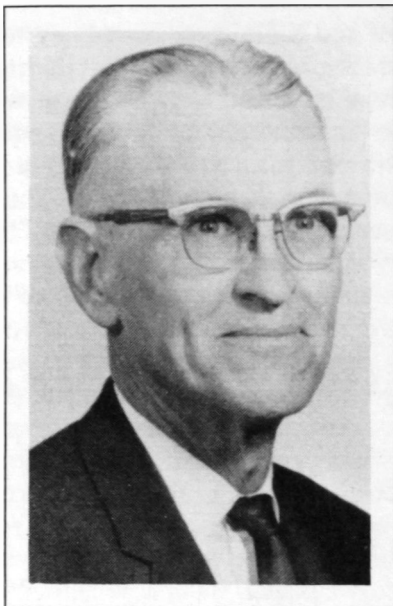
Spike is a 32nd Degree Mason and a member of the Eastern Star to which Lee Ann also belongs. He has been Worthy Patron of Eastern Star in both Yale and



Spike and Lee Ann: September 19, 1948

Weatherford. He has also served in the role of Worshipful Master of the Weatherford Masonic Lodge. He is a deacon at the First Baptist Church in Weatherford and has also served as Sunday School teacher and General Sunday School Director.

The three Nail children — Cathy, Paul, and Karen — are all married, and two of them have provided Spike and Lee Ann with grandchildren. Cathy married Michael May. Both of them are graduates of



Lowell Thomas (Spike) Nail

the SOSU School of Pharmacy, and they now work as pharmacists. Mike is a pharmacist at the Clinton Regional Hospital. Cathy works part-time at Clinton Regional and a few hours on call at Thomas Memorial. Paul married Jenifer Ellinger, and they live in Weatherford. Paul, who holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from TCU, teaches Psychology at SOSU. Karen finished a B.S. in Elementary Education at SOSU; both she and her husband, Milan Davis, work at 3-M in Weatherford. Cathy and Mike have three children — Chris, Jeff, and Heather. Karen and Milan have one son — Nicholas. Family get-togethers are joyful.

During his tenure at Security State, Spike has served in a number of capacities. At one time he was both cashier and vice-president and was in charge of

the note window. Presently he is in charge of oil and gas lease checks for collection. He also does much of the wire transfer of funds. Spike explained, "That's the big thing now — wire transfer. Banks want their money quickly, and they don't wait on the mail anymore. They use the wire to move money from certain banks to other banks."

"The biggest change I have seen during my years in banking is the switch to automation. We are rapidly moving toward a checkless society. Even the automated equipment can't handle all that paper. Soon, people will pay bills by an assigned bank number instead of by check. The bank will simply debit or credit the accounts via the number."

Lowell Thomas Nail is one of the fast-fading old school of employees. He is loyal and hard-working — never late to work and never late back from lunch. Spike learned early to shoulder the responsibilities that came his way — just as he took care of his younger brothers and sister until they were able to take care of themselves, so he cares about his fellow-employees and his fellow-man. He is one of those dependable men who can be counted upon to complete whatever job is assigned to him. Such men ask no special favors. They don't expect any.

Spike and Lee Ann are a unique combination. He was never spoiled as a child, but Lee Ann described herself as the spoiled daughter of a doting family. She doesn't remember an occasion in her life that wasn't lovingly remembered by her family. But many of her family members are gone now, and Spike has taken up where her parents left off. Together, they enjoy many events and take part in community activities. It's a blessing that they were brought together through Providence because each one got a winner.



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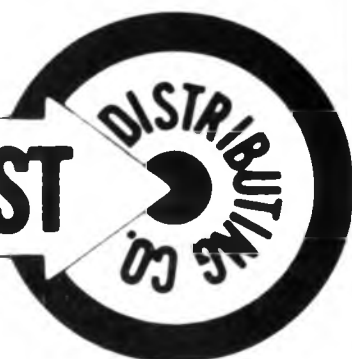
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Winnings Are Bonus Blessings

— by Anne Elver

One Western Oklahoma resident doesn't consider herself lucky, even if she did win a car, \$10,000, and become the mother of two beautiful daughters recently. Who did this? Jayniece Cornell of Ringwood, Oklahoma.

Jayniece is a contesting hobbyist who enjoys entering contests whose prizes interest her. She has done so for the past nine years. Does Jayniece have any special secrets or formulas for winning contests? No, she just follows directions and considers any winnings she gets as bonus blessings.

Jayniece received a pleasant surprise last spring when she received a letter announcing that she had won a 1983 Ford LTD and \$10,000. How did this come about? Jayniece says, "My parents had ordered a new pickup, and I went to Day Ford in Enid with them to get their truck.

"The Ford dealer had entry forms to the Picture Perfect Sweepstakes in his showroom; I picked up twelve and sent them in. The entry forms were shaped like a postal card. They wouldn't fit into my envelopes, so I folded the envelopes a bit differently so that I didn't have to wrinkle my entry forms. I mailed the forms in on two different days, six each time. And I forgot about the contest until I found out I had won something."

Jayniece welcomed her winning announcement since her husband, Richard, needed a new truck. Her winnings enabled him to trade their old car and his old truck in on a new pickup. Richard's new truck will come in handy for the Oklahoma weather when roads can be less than ideal to drive on.

Jayniece's winnings also came in handy with the beef cattle that she and Richard raise. She rounds up the cattle for her husband to treat when they need shots, doctoring, or other attention. Before she won her prize in the Picture Perfect Sweepstakes, she had to run through the pasture to gather the cattle, which was no easy task. She invested in a three-wheel vehicle with some of the money she won, saving the time and energy she needs with her growing family.

Jayniece and Richard adopted their son, William, in March of 1979, and they wanted to adopt at least one more child. William also wanted a sibling. They first contacted a social service agency sometime in 1981, seeking another child to adopt. The prospect of adding to their family wasn't encouraging, although the Cornells were willing to adopt an older child or some siblings. They hoped to get at least one girl but would have adopted any children available for them.

Jayniece says, "We contacted our social worker in September, just checking. She advised us to look into some other agencies since her agency didn't have any children and wasn't likely to. I had optimism and faith that if we were meant to have more children, we would. So I kept praying and thinking about getting more children. Sure enough, we got a call near the end of October, informing us that two sisters were available for adoption, ages five and six. We went to get Tonia and Liz a week later. I don't feel our daughters were sent by luck either."

Since Jayniece doesn't consider

herself lucky in the face of winning a car, \$10,000, and gaining two children shortly thereafter, what does she attribute her good fortune to? She says, "I consider myself blessed since I don't believe in luck. Our daughters are an answer to prayer and faith. I feel the car I won is a gift from the Lord since He knew that I would need it with two new children to care for. And it has been handy."

Jayniece also coupons and refunds as a hobby. She saves coupons only on products she uses, and she exchanges the ones she can't use with her sister, Carolyn, who lives in Bartlesville. Couponing and refunding help too. Jayniece estimates that she gets back about six dollars monthly on coupons and refund slips when she shops.

Her daughter Tonia celebrated her seventh birthday shortly after being placed with her new family, and Jayniece baked her cake with satisfaction. She used two Duncan Hines frostings on the cake, which she had purchased with two coupons for fifty cents off on each package. Then a refund slip enabled her to get the cake mix free for purchasing two frostings. So Tonia's cake ended up costing about a dollar, a bargain these days.

Jayniece has a good hobby—one that paid her \$10,000 and a new car valued at \$14,000 for a value of \$24,000. That's quite profitable for a hobby that also gives her pleasure. Her strong faith, optimism, and willingness to grab opportunities that present themselves to her make her an inspiration to her fellow Western Oklahomans.



SEASON IN TRAVAIL

— by Maggie Culver Fry



ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN R. WILLEMSEN

ANOTHER RUSSET SEASON,
CHOCTAW bold
Is on its way.
DEEP IN THE FEVERED
GROINS OF SUMMER. . .
CICADAS rasp, clacking
THEIR RUSTY CASTANETS,
THEY SERENADE
THE sick, dry birth.
INCESSANT WARRING. . .
WARRING AGAINST THEIR FATED INVOLVEMENT,
IN ONE LONG
UNBROKEN pain
of sound.

LIBERATION

— by Yvonne Carpenter

God said,
“You are free. Don’t do what you hate.”
Man said
“There’s nothing to do. I’m bored.”

The Crook of the Path

— by Carol Rothhammer Lackey

How old are you?
Have you seen the stars fall?
Have you felt the hurricane's blast?
Has the earthquake crushed your hopes?

What age do you call yours? Mine?
Have you walked with now and history?
Has the magic of a migrating word touched your soul?
Has your heart bled dry in silence?
I ask not idly but because I pray to know,
To touch a soul whose answers are my own
Symmetry of anguished times, mingled pain --
One who sees my tears and does not laugh.

Once upon a time an arrow came;
The shaft pierced my father's bones,
Catching his blood and veins by surprise,
There to dwell in all eternity's finality.

Since his going, I await my own departure
And view a sunset, a chickadee, a ripe plum, knowing
Now -- with awe/certainty -- that light will turn to dusk
Then pitch black; the light will come fast and sharp.

A peacock's shriek at sunset begs me come
To darkness. And screeching owls above
Have silenced the sun. Crystals of the plains,
Ice, lie wrecked and broken by the sharp wind.

How old are you? Am I? This land?
Silently I watch what a lifetime brings along,
A spidery path whose ultimate origin I know not,
Whose final turn I may only shriek at.

In the crook of the path, I watch: absorbant.
Magical words of searing sun and harsh wind, crickets.
Ascending stones of order, sorrow, full.
A dark green leaf to clutch as the last stars fall.

Sweet Sad Love

— by Fanny Dodgen

Sweet sad love
tugging at our soul
when a dear one is called away
to a land beyond
Bitter sweet memories
rush in like a flood
with chill that hurts so much
until time softens the blow
and it becomes part
of the pattern of our life.

Life In A Nursing Home

— by Bessie Smith Spradling

*Living in a nursing home
Is something to write about.
Some things one cannot believe
But others we dare not doubt.*

*Nurses are a helpful lot;
They do their very best
To give out medication
And see that we have our rest.*

*I wonder how the fish must feel
As they swim around their bowl.
Do they really mind our stares?
Would they rather be a mole?*

*At four o'clock in the morning
They begin to make their rounds;
They bring to us fresh water
With a minimum of sounds.*



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TWENTIETH CENTURY PIONEERS FOLLOW GREAT WESTERN CATTLE TRAIL

by
Donita Shields



Modern day "pioneers" retrace the path followed by cattle herders generations before.

Anyone with a hankering to spend a week's vacation doing something a bit out of the ordinary might join up with the Ridge Runners Trail Drive which takes place annually in May.

Seven years ago Leon Parker of Carter and Sam Vickery of Lone Wolf decided that they would become twentieth-century trail riders. The two men can be described as part-time cowboys and part-time history buffs who hold down fulltime jobs in the workaday world. Their dream is to follow the Great Western Cattle Trail from its origin in Bandero, Texas, to its destination at Dodge City, Kansas.

Today, Great Western Trail has been forgotten by most people and is obliterated by plowing and erosion except for a few deep cuts in pastures and creek banks. During their spare moments, Parker and Vickery studied the old trail map compiled in 1933 by the Oklahoma State Highway Commission.

Then they began re-blazing the 1866-1885 trail over which drovers herded more than six million Longhorns. Sam and Leon found so much enjoyment in the adventure that their families and friends joined them. A large group traveling in covered wagons and on horseback now follow the

original trail annually.

The First Annual Ridge Runners Trail Drive was held in 1977. In 1983 the trail drive started at Old Doan's Crossing near Frederick and ended in Lone Wolf. This year the 1984 wagon train rolled out of Lone Wolf at 11:00 A.M., Saturday, May 19th for a six-day journey that ended at an Ellis County lake on May 25th.

On the first morning of the drive, 15 families hitched up and boarded their covered wagons which they had previously filled with provisions and bedding. At least two horses, mules, or Shetlands pulled each of the attractive, white-topped replicas of prairie schooners and covered wagons. In keeping with the pioneer way, more than 30 cowboys and girls of all ages rode point, flank, and drag to symbolically protect and assist-but realistically to visit with friends and family and to enjoy the springtime beauty of the countryside.

The oldest Ridge Runner was W. L. "Bill" Allen of Granite. Participating in his third modern trail drive, Allen was rated as the most trailworthy and wise. Two-year-old Derrick Parker, grandson of the Leon Parkers, was the youngest Ridge Runner. One

compact, attractive wagon pulled by two tiny gray mules was manned by a dark-haired 14-year-old beauty named Misty.

Ben Benson, a professional trail driver from Cache, provided service with his 1890 ten-passenger stagecoach. Benson, who appeared in two movies, *MOONBEAM DRIVER* and *CHARGE OF THE MODEL T*, was also featured in an NBC television documentary "Life of Quannah Parker" filmed at Lawton.

"Doc" Ray Vickery took his position at the rear of the wagon train in his antique buggy which he had painstakingly restored. "Doc" agreed with other members of the group by having more faith in the Ridge Runner association's CB radios and first-aid kits for emergencies rather than his own expertise.

Having participated in previous drives, the Ridge Runners have learned how to make trail life more comfortable for themselves and their animals. One wagoneer furnished his iron-wheeler wagon with bucket seats. Others have made their antique spring seats more comfortable by padding them with fleece, foam, and carpeting. Beneath the gleaming white canvas coverings of each prairie schooner was a camouflaged sheeting of waterproofing in case of rain showers or cold winds.

Each family wagon contained ice chests, thermos bottles for coffee and juices, and a day's supply of water for themselves and their horses. Small mattresses, light-weight lawn chairs, and bedrolls provided comfortable sleeping facilities. Each wagon also carried full larders of chuck, dishes, cooking utensils, and a portable camp stove.

Several families shared a large four-burner cooking unit on wheels. While on the dusty trail, the burners were carefully wrapped and stored within the wagon. However, the unit's oven was welded intact to the stove base. During the entire drive, this mobile kitchen appliance was pulled behind one of the covered wagons.

Numerous cars, pickup trucks, stock and implement trailers follow behind or ahead of the actual Ridge Runner wagon train. Each participant is responsible for his own hay and grain for his horses. An unusual equipment trailer belonging to the organization contains a bright red sanitary facility and a 300-gallon water tank furnishing livestock water. This tank is filled daily by one of the wagon masters, but is not suitable for human consumption.

Following Charles Goodnight's rules of the range cattle era, the Ridge Runners prohibit alcoholic beverages, gambling, and stallions. The trail drive is organized for family outings and clean family fun. The organization's goal is to travel 16 to 20 miles

daily along quiet, peaceful country roads and then bed down for an early start the next morning.

The Ridge Runners avoid hard surface highways and fast traffic. Even though the wagon train route may parallel an asphalt farm-to-market road just a mile away, the group prefers well-graded dirt roads. However, they dread sandy spots and rickety wooden bridges.

When the group left Lone Wolf for their 1984 adventure, the wagon train set up its first night camp in Lawton Cothran's pasture located on Trail Elk Creek one mile west of Old Port School near Sentinel. The second night found them under the huge cottonwood trees in Canute's city park. The Ridge Runners reached M Bar T Ranch headquarters north of Elk City for their third night camp. They spent the fourth night at Cheyenne's rodeo grounds.

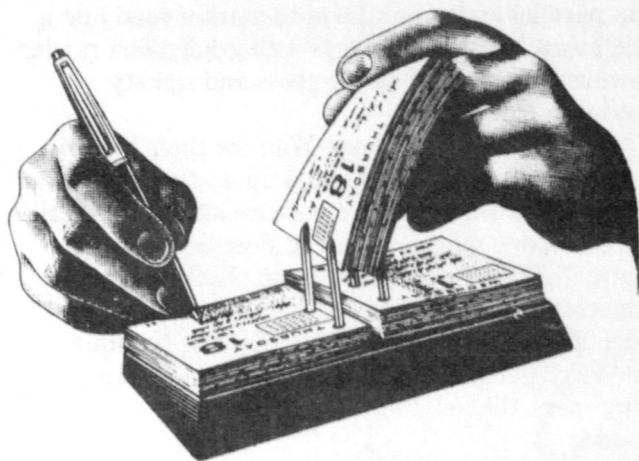
When leaving Cheyenne, they traveled northwest to Black Kettle Lake where they bedded down the fifth night. After making the low-water crossing one mile west of Packsaddle Bridge on the South Canadian River, they spent their last night at Lake Vincent south of Arnett. The final day of each Ridge Runners Great Western Trail Drive is always spent returning home in pickup trucks and cars that are used to haul or tow wagons and animals.

Wagon Master Sam Vickery and Leon Parker, president of the Ridge Runners, are already making plans for next year's larger and longer trail drive. They hope to commemorate the Range Cattle Industry era and the closing of the Great Western Cattle Trail that ended forever 100 years ago. During the 1985 Trail Drive, they anticipate a two-week trek that will begin at Old Doan's Crossing and end at Dodge City, Kansas--a 250-mile journey of fun and adventure.



Trail blazers of all ages participated in the Ridge Runners Trail Drive.

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Short Grass Flowers



— by Dick Chapman

Yucca growing on the hillside anywhere they claim their way -
April sees them pointing skyward
Caps of silver greet the day,
Scattered sentinels guarding grasslands,
Watching through the month of May tall and handsome at a distance
Closer daggers bar the way.

Cactus growing as though timid, keeps its spines and pink bloom low
Ever ready slow but sure, tender feet or lips to find the spines
A source of pain gets the message of disaster as a silent voice
Rings low but clear: "I am master of footspace and invasion costs
You dear."

Daisy blossom white or blue gives you welcome
Ever true on the prairie high and wide
In the springtime freshness rain or shine
I am yours and you are mine
Come again in rain or shine.

Mama's Square Doughnuts

— by Inez Schneider Whitney

What a good cook Mama was! So many things she made seemed so special. One of my favorites was her doughnuts. On a rainy day when Papa couldn't work in the field, he'd often say, "What about some doughnuts?"

"All right, if you'll turn them," Mama would answer.

Then she would get out her two-gallon black iron kettle, fill it half full of lard, and set it on the stove to heat while she mixed the dough.

I thought Mama's doughnuts tasted better than anyone else's. They also looked different. They weren't round with a hole in the middle. They were square or sometimes oblong with two long holes, really more like slits.

One time I asked, "Mama, why do you make your doughnuts square instead of round like everyone else does?" This is what she told me.

"I've told you that my ma died when I was fourteen. I was the oldest. There was Bertha, 12; Jim, 10; and Gertie, 8. I was the cook. We had a very kind neighbor on a nearby farm who often came over to help me. She showed me how to make these doughnuts. She said the way she cut them was best. All the dough was used and never had to be gathered up and used the second time, and so I always did it that way."

After I married, I asked Mama to send me the recipe. I still have it in her own handwriting. Here's a copy:

MAMA'S SQUARE DOUGHNUTS

3 eggs
1 cup sugar
½ cup sour cream
½ cup milk

½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon nutmeg
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon soda

Separate eggs. Beat whites until stiff. Beat egg yolks. Add sugar, sour cream, and milk. Beat again. Sift one cup of flour with baking powder, soda, salt, and nutmeg. Add to first mixture. Fold in egg whites. Continue adding more flour until you have as soft a dough as you can handle. I cut in squares with a knife and cut two slits in each square. Then there is no second rolling, which is usually not as nice. Good luck from Mama.

I roll the dough out on a floured pastry cloth. Make it about a half inch thick. Cut strips about three inches wide. Then cut strips in three-inch lengths. In each square, cut two slits, leaving about a half inch at each end. Drop the doughnuts in grease heated to 370 degrees. Immediately turn each doughnut over. This keeps it from absorbing grease. As the doughnut cooks, the slits pull apart, making long holes. When the under side is brown, turn it over to brown on the other side. When I take them out, I put them into a colander to drain. They can be left plain or put one or two at a time in a bag with confectioner's sugar and shake until evenly coated. And like Mama, I'll say, "Good Luck."



Editor's note: The author sent along a photocopy of a picture of one of her doughnuts as well as a human-interest note: "I took this picture on one of Mama's crocheted tablecloths, and that is a story too. I learned to crochet at noon and during recess on bad days at Prairie View. Then I taught my mother. And how many beautiful things she crocheted, especially tablecloths. She gave many to favorite nieces. My daughter and I also have two apiece. I can crochet and tat and knit a little, but only plain knitting. I knitted a scarf from khaki wool during World War I to send to a soldier. I must have been about 10 or 11 since I was only 12 when the war ended."



continued from page 11

too well and just kept talking about how the time would come when all property would be equally divided among the citizens. He had been married to a grass widow who had a little boy, but the marriage didn't work out.

The time came that Mama had her fill of Bill, and Papa had to protect him. As usual, we went to town one Saturday afternoon. After we got home, Mama started supper. She was making one of her favorite desserts--Floating Island. Really upset, she called Papa into the kitchen. She questioned, "Do you know what Bill did while we were gone? He drank my whole bottle of vanilla extract just like he did before!" Mama always bought vanilla in a pint bottle from

the man who came around peddling Watkins Products, and the flavoring was 80% alcohol. "I wish you'd let him go," Mama pleaded.

"You'll just have to keep it hid out," Papa said. "What else can we do? He's a good hand. I don't want to lose him."

"I'll tell you something else he's been doing. He's been eating my eggs. I thought the dogs were sucking them, but it's Bill. I saw him go into the henhouse several times and come out with eggs. He breaks out the end on the fence and then shakes the egg into his mouth. The hens aren't laying too well anyway, and I need the egg money to buy groceries."

Bill worked for Papa off and on for a good many years. His cards had short messages like a "greetin'": "Well, Ed, i have got hear all rite and doing

bisnes. your friend" and "i will be back soon, Ed." All were signed W. B. Daley. They were postmarked 1909 or 1910, but he worked for Papa long after that. I know he was there in 1919 when my little brother was three. One summer he went north with a threshing machine crew. He married a widow he met in Kansas. Later his sister went for a visit and came back exclaiming, "I can't believe it! That wife of Bill's sure leads him around by the nose. When she says frog, he jumps; he also doesn't use bad language anymore."

We never saw Bill again; but as was the case with our other hired hands, he brought some vitality into our lives. *(first published in the THOMAS TRIBUNE--June 2, 1982)*



continued from page 8

understood that the early-day woman in Western Oklahoma was truly a super woman--a human dynamo fueled with dogged determination which undoubtedly generated a personal frontier optimism that never failed her.

For without such inner strength and faith, the pioneer woman could never have had the endurance to survive the prairie's harshness and heartbreaks--the floods and droughts, the hail and dust storms, the scorching heat and numbing northers plus the added terrors of smallpox, typhoid fever, diphtheria, and pneumonia--while living in primitive dugouts and one-room box shanties.

It's because of people like Gloria Bish Hetherington who strive to keep these powerful memories alive that we today gain insight into Western Oklahoma's promise first illustrated in our colorful past. *(first appeared in the SENTINEL LEADER--August 30, 1984, in the column "The Farmer's Daughter")*



Homesteading in Oklahoma Territory, a diary of Mary Henderson, can be purchased by sending \$31.50 (includes postage) to

*Gloria Hetherington
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The West Wind Blows About Local Teacher

— by *Dee Ann Ray*

Southwestern Oklahoma's own Edward Everett Dale's autobiography, the second volume titled *THE WEST WIND BLOWS*, has just been published by the Oklahoma Historical Society. Dale died at age 93 in 1972, just before completing this second volume. His first volume covering his early years was published in 1965, under the title *CROSS TIMBERS*, and it is now out of print. However, it, like the new volume, is available through the Western Plains Library System.

Dale was a special man--an enlightened, brilliant teacher and a living link between the pioneer yesteryears and the contemporary society we know.

THE WEST WIND BLOWS is a wonderfully warm book that should be on every history buff's reading list. (first published in the *SENTINEL LEADER*--August 30, 1984)



Summer, 1985

"Western Oklahoma's Historic Resources." To be prepared by the Oklahoma Historical Society. No other submissions being solicited.

FALL, 1985. "Western Oklahoma Artists, Musicians, and Writers." Feature articles, poems, stories, and graphics are needed on people or activities related to the theme. Deadline: July 1, 1985.

SPRING, 1986. "Western Oklahoma Firsts." Western Oklahoma boasts the first quadruplets born in Oklahoma. Surely there are other "firsts." Deadline: January 1, 1986.

WINTER, 1985. "Famous Western Oklahomans." Oklahomans in all fields. Nominate your favorite famous person in a short story, poem, article, etc. Deadline: October 1, 1985.

WESTVIEW, Spring 1985

SUMMER, 1986. "Western Oklahoma's Uniqueness." A special opportunity for anyone who has never known what to submit. This is another potpourri issue. Deadline: March 1, 1986.

Projected future themes are "Western Oklahoma Schools" (Fall, 1986), "Western Oklahoma Events" (Winter, 1986), and "Western Oklahoma Settlers" (Spring, 1987).



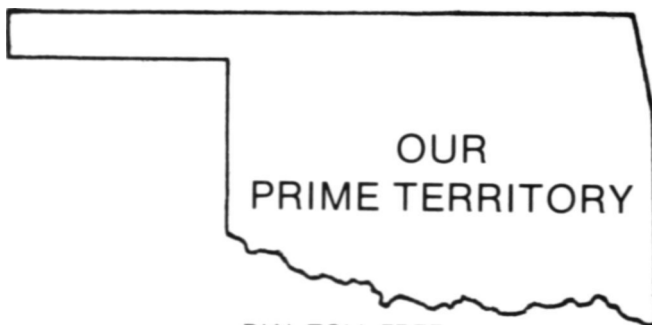
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