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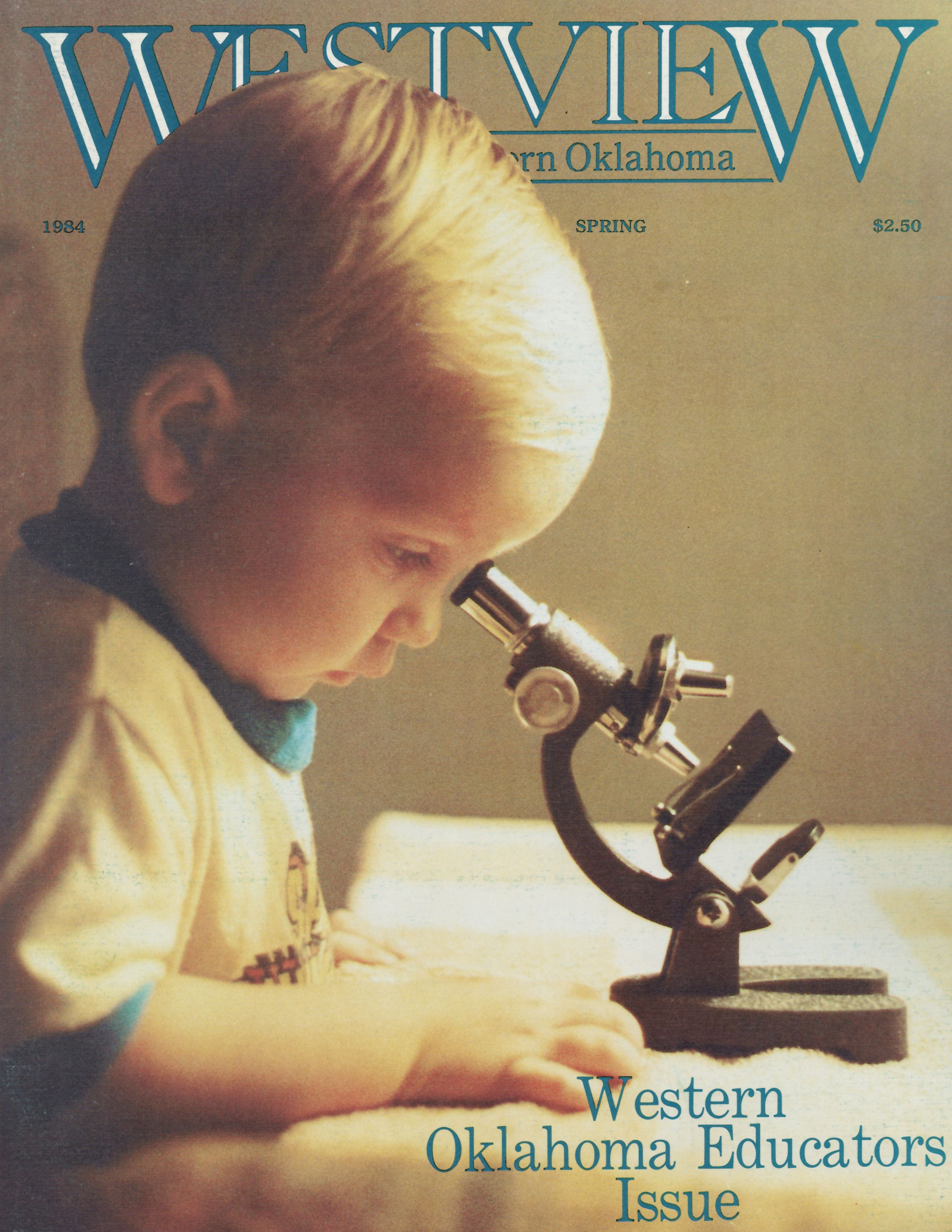
WESTVIEW

Western Oklahoma

1984

SPRING

\$2.50



Western
Oklahoma Educators
Issue

FOREWORD

This issue on the theme "Western Oklahoma Educators" was exciting to collect. All of us have been touched and influenced by both good and bad teachers, and it was interesting to review memories. Our submissions weren't as complete as we wanted them to be because some of our favorite teachers were left out, but we hopefully have a future. Maybe one of these years ahead we can do another issue on educators and do a better job of soliciting articles than we did this time.

We thank all of you who have called attention to our new look as seen first in the Fall, 1983 issue and then again in the Winter, 1983 issue. Not only is Art Director David Oldham a *rara avis*; we also have many good off-campus WESTVIEW friends. We sing the praises of G. E. Jones, Weatherford businessman who owns the Overholser Mansion painting which appeared on our front cover of the Oklahoma Pride issue, and Greg Burns, the Oklahoma City artist who did the painting with his unique brush-in-teeth technique.

We also have debts to pay in this issue. Our front cover is from a color photo by Dale Evans; we're calling it "Formative years." Mr. Evans is a Quality Control Technician at 3-M in Weatherford. "Formative Years" had already received acclaim before its appearance here. In a 3-M MEGAPHONE contest, it was awarded Third Grand Prize; and at the Hydro Free Fair, it received a Second in the Portrait Division. We thank Mr. Evans for sharing his photo with us.

Our rejection rate always attests to "heart" and to "tempering justice with mercy." Try submitting something to us. Even if we reject your work, we'll always tell you why; besides, you're special to us because you're one of our readers.

Leroy Thomas

— Leroy Thomas
Editor

The Secret

by Diane Holcomb

To teach is to learn to teach
Learning, to teach and learn.
Teaching learning to teach,
Teachers learn.

WESTVIEW

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COVER

"Formative Years" by Mr. Dale Evans

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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**a reference to Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma; not to be confused with Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma.*

by Walter Crouch

*(one of the many hats he wore
was that of Director of Student
Employment--a role that gave
him many opportunities to be a
student defender)*

Ivan Dean Cates Student Defender

When Ruby Rogers, a freshman from Burns Flat, enrolled at Southwestern in the fall of 1947, she was employed as secretary to the new director of audio-visual education, extension, correspondence, and innumerable student-oriented programs. Her boss was Ivan Dean Cates.

Now Dr. Ruby Robertson, professor in the School of Business at Southwestern, she recalls that the office equipment consisted mainly of an antiquated mimeograph machine--the same kind she later found in her first year as a high-school business teacher.

"During my college career at Southwestern," Ruby remembers, "I worked every hour I wasn't in class and earned enough to finance all tuition, books, and living costs and in the process learned as much as from my college classes.

"Ivan Cates taught me responsibility, hard work, and the patience to overcome difficulties. By any standard, he was a great educator. I owe much of my personal professional success to his influence."

Ivan's empathy for students and his understanding of their problems led him often to the defense of those he thought were being mistreated by his faculty colleagues. More often than not, he won his little undeclared wars.

Like Dr. Robertson, there are other distinguished Southwestern State educators who had their indoctrination into Higher Education while employed by I. D. Cates. There was a young man from rural Custer County, a graduate of Stafford High School, who worked one year in the audio-visual-extension office. He majored in English and later succeeded Dr. Gladys Bellamy as chairman of the Language Arts Department at Southwestern. Dr. Eugene Hughes resigned his chairmanship four years ago because of a desire to return to fulltime classroom teaching. "I know it's a cliché," he explained, but I volun-

teered to teach remedial English classes because those students needed help most." Ivan Cates would have been proud of him.

Then there was another young farm boy, this one from Greer County; he came to Southwestern as an English and Business student. He stayed on to work for Cates and to earn a Bachelor's Degree in English and Business Education with a minor in Speech-Theater and then went on to OU and OSU for graduate study. Today he is Dr. Leroy Thomas, editor of WESTVIEW, distinguished English scholar, and author in his own right.

One of the last secretaries in the office was Bill Wilmeth, a

Thomas High School graduate, who worked for Ivan from 1958 to 1962. He remembers most the great patience his employer had for students: "He had a way of putting them at ease and giving them confidence." Wilmeth returned to Southwestern as registrar in 1972. His tenure in that office, second only to that of Millie Alexander Thomas, has tested that quality of patience his mentor taught him.

Ivan was born in 1912 on the family farm about two miles south and east of the Weatherford city limits but much less than that by the route young Cates followed across fields and over Little Deer Creek enroute to graduation from the city's public schools and from Southwestern State Teachers College.

He often related a story, undocumented but generally accepted by his friends, that his mother entered him and his twin sister, Vivian, in the baby beauty contest at the Custer County Fair in Clinton and they placed first and second. Vivian, he said, was second.

I began a long, very close friendship with Ivan when he was a bachelor teacher at the Arnett consolidated school in Harmon County when I was the county superin-

Ivan Dean Cates



tendent at Hollis. His superintendent was Henry A. Vaughan, now a retired State Department of Education official; and his roommate was Perry K. Jones, a retired Southwestern State physics professor. These men were all very young and enjoyed life to its fullest.

Ivan was employed to succeed me when I resigned as county superintendent in 1939 to join the Southwestern staff. In 1941, with his wife, the former Zola Kelly, and their infant daughter, Carol, he moved to Calumet, where he served five years as superintendent of schools before he resigned to accept the post of assistant to W. R. Fulton in the Audio-Visual Department. Shortly afterwards, he succeeded his boss when Fulton moved on to OU.

Dr. Harris chuckles today when he recalls how Ivan put him down when he was president at Southwestern. The president's daughter, Ruth, was enrolled in one of Ivan's Driver Education classes. Dr. Al was briefing her on what she should do when her instructor interrupted. "Dr. Harris," he said, "leave her alone. She's already a better driver than you are."

"I still miss him," the retired president said recently.

Ivan had little tolerance for people who were insensitive toward students, for the arrogant, and for the superegotists. He responded to them with his sometimes mild-and occasionally not so mild-chiding. To the professor from California who complained that Weatherford mechanics "had no respect for us doctors," the Cates quip was that "they don't have to. They make more money than you do."

For an aging, hypercritical professor who fed his own ego by nitpicking notices and bulletin board announcements by other faculty members, Ivan retaliated by redlining the self-appointed critic's creative efforts and mailing them back to him.

He never lost his love for fun and was a part of many now almost legendary practical jokes he shared with intimate companions.

Above everything else, Ivan was a devoted husband and father and during the final tragic years of his life remained the same patient, caring head of his household.

A son, David, born in 1954, suffered brain damage at birth. After weeks in an Oklahoma City hospital, attending physicians gave the parents no hope for the child's survival and for all practical purposes sent him home to die; but his father and mother pulled him through, and David outlived Ivan by a few years.

Ivan's health began to break down in 1955 when he was hospitalized by a severe attack of pancreatitis. That was followed by shingles, diabetes, and leukemia. Yet no one heard him complain, and only his family and a few close friends knew how much he was suffering. He remained cheerful, patient with his students, and always good for a laugh with his old cronies.

Late in May, 1964, Ivan Dean Cates taught his last class at Southwestern, lay down on a couch at his home, and lapsed into a coma. He was rushed to Saint Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. Bill Ward and I were there as we had always been before until our vigil ended. Ivan died surrounded by his peers from Southwestern while George Baker, his longtime friend and former pastor, consoled the family.

On Memorial Day he was laid to rest in Weatherford's Greenwood Cemetery. He was only 52 years old.

Perhaps Talbert Brown, Carol's grieving husband and a faculty member at Southwestern, said it best: "He was like a father to me. I couldn't have made it without him."



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The subject of this article, A. H. Burris, became president of SOSU in 1921.

KEEP GOIN' LAD

by Gladys Toler Burris

Alfred's mind skidded. He had no answer.

"Speak up, lad," the School Board Chairman squinted across the table at him. "What makes you think you're *ready* t' be a teacher?"

Something about big, gruff Mr. Callahan, with his booming voice and bushy eyebrows, flustered him. He glanced at the other two Board members and took heart from Mr. Hoyt's friendly nod.

"I have my certificate with me, sir," fumbling in his jacket pocket. "It says I'm ready to teach."

"H'm. Let's have a look at it," he turned up the wick in the lamp, and Alfred listened tremulously as the booming voice read:

"I hereby declare Alfred Henry Burris certified to teach any grade in Lincoln County Schools during the years, 1898-1901.

Signed, this 1st day of November, 1898,
H. W. Hayes, Superintendent, Lincoln County Schools, Oklahoma Territory"

With a grunt, he tossed it aside. "That paper just says you've got enough book-learnin' t' teach. Takes more 'n that to be a teacher. H-m-m." Bushy eyebrows drawn together, he tugged at his red beard. "You've been livin' in Lincoln County quite a spell, accordin' to my Mike."

"Yes, sir," moistening his dry lips. "Over southwest of Chandler. Since I was a kid, 15 or 16. Almost four years."

"Then you otta *know* the kind o' teacher we need," the sudden bang of his fist on the table was like a clap of thunder before a storm. "I'm askin' you, straight-out: have y' got guts? D' you use your head or your heels when the goin' 's rough?" He leaned so close his booming voice was a roar in the boy's ears. "'n can y' hold your own -when

someone's tryin' to put y' down? *Can you?*"

Windmills seemed to be whirling inside Alfred's chest. "*Can you?*" He didn't know. "Always has his nose in a book," folks said. He'd just wanted to learn-- and be a teacher. But book-learning--wasn't enough--

"You fellows got anything t' say t' the lad?"

And then he heard Mr. Armstrong's slow, easy drawl. "Cal's just trying to warn you, son. We've got a bunch o' rowdies at Old Forest School. They'll bully anyone they can. You gotta think fast and call their bluff. Takes guts."

The quiet words slowed the windmills in his chest. This, he could understand.

"I'll bet you can hold your own, big strong fellow like you," that friendly nod again from Mr. Hoyt. "Your Pa says you played football at the University."

"That's right, sir." He drew a deep breath. "Yes, I think I can - hold my own," and in a sudden surge of boldness, added, "I can outwrestly my older brother, Oliver. He's smart as a whip, and weighs 210. I don't scare easily."

If Mr. Callahan heard, he gave no sign. In the silence, he sat tugging at his beard and staring down at the table, and then, as though talking to himself, mumbled something about Oliver and Mike out coon hunting. It made no sense.

The man was ignoring him. Prickly heat crawled from his neck to the roots of his hair. In the lamplight, he saw his certificate still open on the table "... just a paper that says you've got book-learning. . ."

A chair scraped against the floor. Startled, he looked up as Mr. Callahan rose, looming over them.

"Time t' wind up business," he boomed. "Gettin' late, and the lad has a long walk home."

A harvest moon lighted his way as Alfred strode down the road, whistling. They'd hired him, by jiminy. A four-month term at \$25.00 a month. What would Father say to that! Cash, too, not cows or chickens. He could save enough for another term at the University.

The trail grew rough and dark, shadowed by trees. He noticed a clearing at the side of the road, an open field flooded by moonlight. Let's see--would that be the Cansler farm? If he cut through there, he'd be home in half the time. Sure, he'd have to cross Old Deep Fork Creek, but that shouldn't be any problem. Not much rain this fall.

Still whistling, he struck across the field. Mr. Callahan wasn't such an old curmudgeon, after all. He'd shaken his hand and boomed, "Keep goin', lad." And Mr. Hoyt had told him big news. Governor Barnes was all for education — putting a new school up north in Tonkawa, and a South-western Normal at either Weatherford or Granite. Made him proud he'd be a teacher here in the Territory. His whistle grew high and clear.

Must be getting near Deep Fork. Trees all around. Not much light here. He made his way slowly, crunching leaves with every step.

Was it an echo? He stood still, listening. No sound. Maybe the wind in the branches. He moved on. The sound again. He stopped. The sound stopped. Someone or something was moving when he moved, stopping when he stopped.

He waited, motionless, every sense alert, his eyes searching the shadowy underbrush, and saw--yes, he was sure of it--the outline of a long powerful body crouching close to the bushes.

He almost stopped breathing. Father had said they still roved the timbered regions. A panther!

The animal had him cornered. No way to reach home without crossing Deep Fork. The minute he'd start down the creek bed, he'd be *below* the panther. Perfect position for it to spring on him.

Quietly, he edged on toward the creek, the great cat gliding in the same direction.

NOW!

In a swift sudden motion, he jerked his jacket high over his head and ran *toward* the panther, flapping the coat madly and screaming like a banshee.

Caught off guard, the animal crouched--- then turned and fled.

"Come on. I'll show you just where it was," he dared his brother next morning, and led three men to the tall trees that bordered Deep Fork: Father, skeptical Oliver, and his hunting buddy, Mike Callahan, who'd spent the night.

"Aw, phooey," Oliver had scoffed. "No *panther's* gonna take tail and run from a kid that flaps his coattails at him. Some other critter, maybe a *rabbit*."

Even when Father said, "It's Old Kickapoo Country. Still wild," his brother had just shrugged.

All night, Alfred had tossed. He had to prove his story. No, that wasn't it... he had to prove...

Wincing there in the dark, he'd remembered that booming voice, "Can you?" He'd held his own with the panther, but that wasn't enough. Oliver had put him down — in front of Mr. Callahan's son, too. "Keep goin', lad."

He'd sat up in bed, then... By jiminy, he'd give it a try.

So in early morning, with the ground still moist from dew, he was down on hands and knees, crawling through the underbrush, ploughing aside dead leaves, trying to line up

the place where he'd run at the animal. It had to show — somewhere--

"Come here!" at last, he gave a triumphant yell.

"See those claw prints? See how deep they are? When I ran at him, he dug in.

"Now, look over here. Same claw prints — **HEAD-ED THE OTHER WAY.**"

Oliver and Mike, by this time flat on their stomachs, were measuring their own broad hands in the huge imprints.

"Well, I'll be doggoned!" he heard Oliver mutter, as Mike scrambled to his feet.

"I'd sure hate to be huntin' *that rabbit*."



A. H. Burris, SOSU President 1921

Color Jubilee

by Joanna Thurston Roper

ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGE HEJNA

New spring is a slash of color
across sere and winter-barren fields.
The mountain is fuchsiaed with red bud,
and forsythia gilds the flatland.
Under it all, dormant grass crinkles into life.
The trees puff emerald buds
onto ends of spiky little twigs
and made a multigreen filigree
that trims the seam of earth
where brown and blue set the horizon.
Spring is a jubilation of promise.



MEMORIES

by Mrs. Dick Dudley

The Sisters Gillentine

Miss Sallie and Miss Mary Gillentine taught many years in Hollis, but students all over the Southwest knew them by reputation.

Miss Sallie Gillentine was born in Spencer, Tennessee September 6, 1887 and later graduated there from Burritt College where her grandfather had been one of the founders. She also attended and graduated from the University of Oklahoma.

She studied at the University of Colorado, the University of Florida, and did special work in children's literature and art at Tulane University.

With this background, Miss Sallie came to Harmon County in 1907 and began a teaching career that spanned 49 years. She taught in Olustee, Fairview school

1907-1908; Lincoln Consolidated school near Eldorado in 1908-1909 and 1911-1912; and in New Orleans, Louisiana 1909-1910. In 1912, she began teaching in Hollis and retired here in 1956 after having been a primary principal and teacher. In this long time, Miss Sallie was never late and absent only once, during the flu epidemic of 1918. Few can equal this life of service. Twice, Miss Sallie was called to Oklahoma City to be honored at the State Fair. In 1956, the grade school was named the Sallie Gillentine School in her honor. Most of her pupils held a "standing room only" celebration on this

occasion. During all this time, Miss Sallie was faithfully serving as a teacher of small children in her church. It would be hard to estimate how many little hands she has so carefully guided in the making of the A, B, C's. She disciplined with love and kindness. Many a child can remember and often mentions how she cupped her kind hand under his chin and corrected his ways with gentle words while he looked into her eyes. Usually children walked away with the resolve never to do that again.

It was not at all unusual during World War II to see some young man in uniform come in at 4:00 o'clock to see Miss Sallie. Nearly always it was the desire to express appreciation for some kindness or special training that brought him there.

She has left a legacy of beauty to Hollis schools in the form of large murals on the walls of both Sallie Gillentine School and Hollis High School. The High School Alumni Association honored her by placing an oil portrait in the hall of the school that bears her name. Many local residents will long cherish bits of her art work in their homes. Miss Sallie often said "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away. But old teachers live on in the lives of their students."

Miss Mary taught in college for five years before coming to Hollis in 1919, where she taught literature and Latin. In all, she rounded out fifty years of teaching. Constantly accused of being partial to boys she halfway admitted it, while at the same time denying it. The girls said, "Oh! we don't mind, she's good to us, too." Anyway, she could spend hours showing letters, cards, and gifts she had received from all over the world. Wherever her boys were scattered during the war, came scenic folders, gifts, and remembrances. She received a Japanese Primer, German Classic, and "The Lady of the Lake," done up in Scottish plaid from that eerie land. Of an ash tray from Stratford-on-Avon, she said, "Just what am I supposed to do with an ash tray?" Plainly she was pleased to be remembered by a serviceman who was thinking of an English class and an inspiring teacher back in the USA.

When called upon to write a college freshman theme on "My Favorite Teacher," many came up with a "Miss Mary theme." It was bound to happen sooner or later that three Hollis girls turned in "Miss Mary" themes, all in the same class. They were called into the professor's office concerning the incident; one girl explained "Well after all, we just

continued on page 34

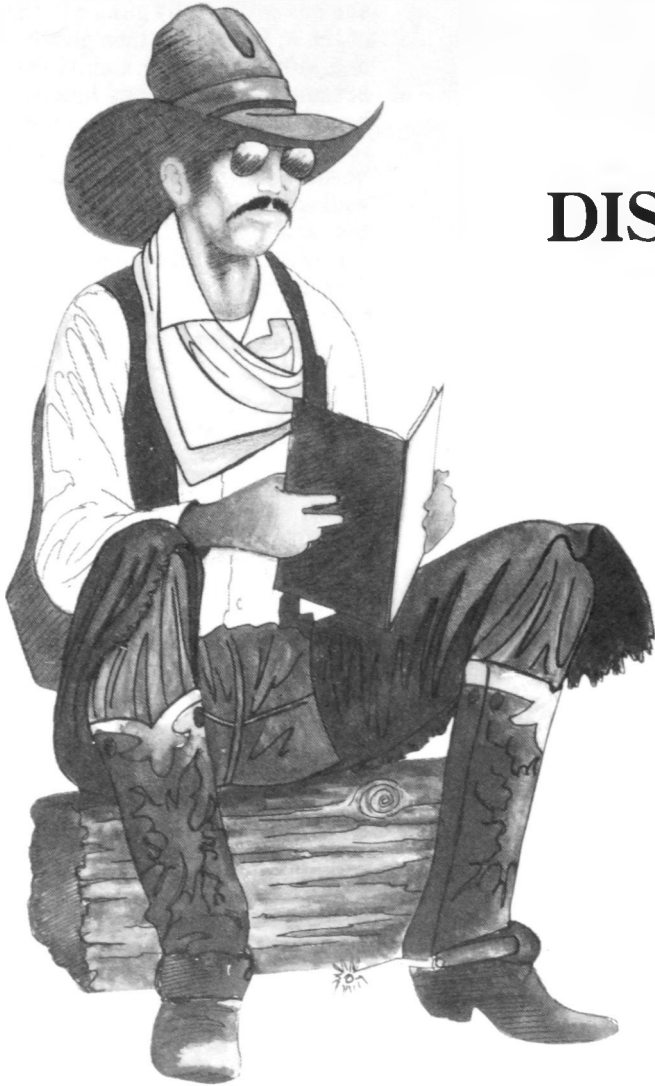


Miss Mary Gillentine



Miss Sallie Gillentine

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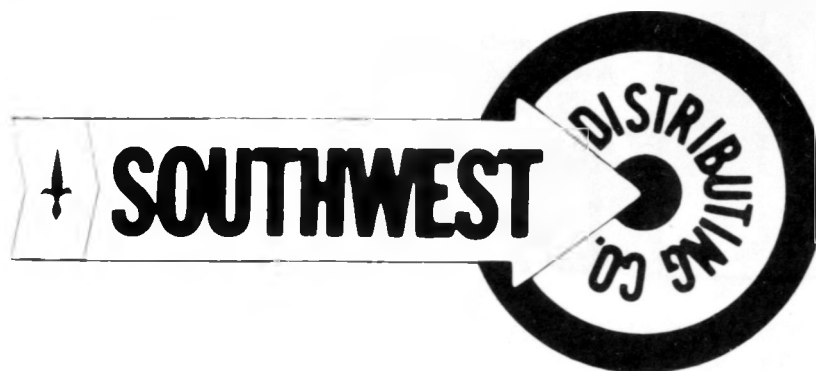
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(many myths and legends, none of which will be repeated here because of their familiarity, have developed around the subject of this article)

GRAND LITTLE LADY —

Dr. Dora Ann Stewart

by H. H. Risinger

She was an institution. Records in the SOSU Vice-President's office show that she was born in 1877, no month or day of month given, at Commerce, Texas. These records also show that she finished high school with 16 units in 1894 in Commerce. She began teaching that same year in a rural school in that vicinity and continued until the year 1896 at the salary of from \$50.00 to \$75.00 a month for eight months; in 1901, she moved to Duke, Jackson County, Oklahoma and stayed until 1904. Then she moved to Mangum, Greer County, Oklahoma and stayed until 1906. From Mangum, she went to Hollis, Harmon County, Oklahoma and taught there in the public schools until 1909. Her next move was to Southwestern State Normal in Weatherford, now Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where she became chairman of the History Department in the 1909-1910 school year at a salary of \$1250. She remained chairman of the department until her retirement in 1948, serving approximately forty years.

While she was teaching in these various places, she was continuing work on the higher-education level. She attended Belle Plain College, Texas, Fort Worth University, and Oklahoma City University, where she received the B.A. degree in 1920.

She took a nine-month sabbatical leave from Southwestern and earned a master's degree from OU in 1921. The title of her Master's thesis was HISTORY-GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORIES IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

Miss Stewart took another leave of absence in 1929-1930 to complete the requirements for the doctor's degree at OU. She received the Ph.D. in June, 1931. She then returned to Southwestern to continue her teaching career until retirement.

It has been mentioned that her beginning salary for 1909-1910 was \$1250; in 1911 she received a raise to \$1400 a year; from 1912-1931, she received an annual salary of \$1600.

Upon receiving her doctorate, she received a salary increase to \$3720. Records do not indicate any additional increases from that time to retirement. The title of her doctoral dissertation was HISTORY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OKLAHOMA TERRITORY.

Dr. Stewart did other research and publications. Among them are A COURSE OF STUDY ON LATIN AMERICA FOR HIGH SCHOOLS, A HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WEATHERFORD FROM 1899 TO 1944, and UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS IN TRANSITION, 1935 to 1945. She also spent much time in the Congressional Library, Washington, D.C. doing research on these and other publications. So with this review of her academic achievements, one is surely impressed with her scholastic background.

Somewhere along the line, Dr. Stewart came to own a large home at the corner of Broadway and Kee streets in Weatherford, just a block off the campus. It is somewhat a mystery as to how she managed to own such valuable property and it well furnished on such meagre salaries.

Dr. Stewart loved people, especially young people. Her home had a full basement divided into rooms where she kept boys. Her rentals may have enhanced her income.

Since she like to have people around her, she did much entertaining and opened her home to special groups. In fact, the SOSU Baptist Student Union, still flourishing today in a beautiful, modern center on the corner of College and Bradley, was founded in her home in 1928.

Her home was well furnished. A wood-burning fireplace was in one end of her spacious living room and enhanced the coziness of the setting. She had lovely furniture, including a grand piano. She also had sterling silver, servers, china, and fine linens. She had all that it took to entertain, and she did so

unstintingly.

I was in her home on numerous occasions; she was sponsor of the International Relations Club in which I participated. So I had the joy more than once of experiencing her hospitality and at the same time profiting from discussions on international affairs of that time.

Dr. Stewart was small of stature, plain in dress and general appearance. But in character, she was sterling-genuine. There was no put-on, no facade; she was what she was, and in her classroom appearances she told it as it was. At times she became dramatic, and to some extent she would lecture with gusto. And interestingly enough, she knew her subject matter in the fields of history, government, economics, and related subjects.

Any student who had the temerity to challenge her on factual information, or her ideology, was likely to be taken aback at once. She had strong convictions on thoughts presented and was quick on repartee and rebuttal to defend herself. One need not be in her class long until noticeably her political party affiliation emerged. She was what I would term a "rock-ribbed Democrat." And she was unabashedly a devout and unswerving Baptist. She taught Sunday School for years at the old site of the First Baptist Church at the corner of Custer and Franklin streets downtown. And she managed to get 1/4 hour's college credit for those who enrolled and stayed for one semester.

A good many jokes emerged from time to time from students in Dr. Stewart's classes, centering around some unusual happening; and it's doubtful that any student responsible for such intended any disrespect. I feel certain that most, if not all who had her classes, adored and respected her.

Dr. Stewart, in her approximately forty years at Southwestern, served with at least ten presidents beginning with Dr. Campbell, the first president (of the Old Normal), to R. H. Burton, who was president when she retired. As to deans, there were too many to mention.

So presidents and deans came and went; Dr. Stewart stayed. Another interesting facet of her tenure was that she taught under four different institution names—Southwestern State Normal, a two-year institution; Southwestern State Teachers College; Southwestern State College of Diversified Occupations; and Southwestern Institute of Technology. Could she have stayed a few more years, there would have been two more names.

The grand little lady was never married; and so far as is known, she never owned an automobile; but she managed to get about wherever she needed to go. Reference has been made to her hospitality and generosity. Upon her retirement, she donated her grand piano to the First Baptist Church where it is still in use.

I think that no finer tribute could be paid to Dr. Stewart than that included in remarks made by the editorial staff of the 1948 yearbook which was dedicated to her. Some of the statements were:

No other person in the history of Southwestern has spent so many years of continual and unselfish service to this Western Oklahoma college. During Dr. Stewart's forty years of service to our school, she has not only interpreted history *par excellence*, but she has been an inspiration to thousands of young men and women by virtue of her Christian living, her ideals of good citizenship, and her upholding of the American way of life.

This is a most fitting and deserving tribute to an unusual and valuable person.

After her retirement, Dr. Stewart taught for a while at Oklahoma Baptist University but later returned to her familiar surroundings in Weatherford. The last few months of her life, she lived in a nursing center in Alva, where she died on January 2, 1971 at the age of 94.



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Miss Elsie Shoemaker

She Cared

by Margie Cooke Porteus

What did my parents, my siblings, my high-school home economics teacher Lela O'Toole, and Southwestern instructor Elsie Shoemaker have in common? They all cared enough about my education not only to encourage me morally, but in varying degrees to help me materially to get four years of college.

Although the depression was about over in 1939 when I graduated from Thomas High School, it wasn't over for my family because Dad had had a bad heart attack which kept him from working. I was too naive to realize that it was impossible for me to attend college, so off I went to school.

I don't remember much about that first year, but among some memories is the disappointment I felt because Elsie Shoemaker was on leave. An older brother had worked under her supervision as a drama major and thought her wonderful, so I thought I would have it made as far as she was concerned. Later I was to discover students had to make their own way with her.

Many Southwestern alumni may remember Elsie Irene which we called her behind her back--as a journalism teacher, but many of us also knew her as a speech-drama instructor and a director. Since my major was in the latter, I was enrolled in many of her classes and worked under her direction in several plays. As a teacher and a director, she influenced my teaching and directing more than any other person.

In my mind I see snapshot-like glimpses of Elsie Irene: in a dark box-pleated skirt with feet firmly planted, lecturing; in the auditorium a shadowy figure commanding, "Do that scene again!"; with a sarcastic voice "You're not getting into character enough. Be feminine," while I was attempting to be a Merry Wife; after casting me in several important roles, bringing me down to earth with, "You might make a director, but you'll never go far as an actress"; in an Oklahoma City theater, sitting next to her and watching Ethel Barrymore in *THE CORN IS GREEN*, a feat which she had made

possible; after I had ironed her huge stack of ironing, seeing her gratitude and surprise. The latter needs some clarification because it shows how concerned she was.

One summer to save money I commuted to school with a neighbor. The Advanced Drama class I was taking was to present a Shakespearean play, and since my parents had no car I would have had to stay in town some nights, which I couldn't afford. I guess she knew how I was trying to stretch my pennies because Shoemaker invited me to stay with her. As a thank-you I decided to do her huge stack of ironing, which included at least a hundred pretty handkerchiefs, several which had been made by Verle Jones (an English instructor at Southwestern who made and sold beautiful handkerchiefs before the time of paper throwaways). Those hours of ironing are what caused the gratitude.

Another time she paid me to do some typing. Since my typing wasn't the greatest, I later decided she had made some work for me to do so that I could by my Alpha Psi Omega pin.

I stayed in her home, worked in her office, was in many of her productions, but I remember seeing her upset only twice. Once was when the president of QP, our drama club, resigned. He was active in sports as well as in dramatics, and it seems that a coach was giving him a bad time because of his interest in acting, so he resigned as our president. Shoemaker was incensed that a coach would put this kind of pressure on a person. Another time she was hurt and angry when an instructor who shared her tiny office made some snide remarks comparing their

respective private lives.

Those who worked under her guidance soon learned that she seldom gave oral compliments. There was never a "good job" or "you're improving." If she said nothing, people knew they were doing OK. She could be biting in her criticism as the time she told me to stop being the shrew that I had worked so hard on developing for a previous play and to start being a feminine flirt for the current one.

Although oral compliments were few, she gave written ones. I remember after I had done a detailed prop book for a class assignment she put me on cloud nine when she wrote, "Your plans are so interesting you make me want to produce this." She seldom gave an "A" in her classes because "No one is perfect."

She didn't always cast drama majors in plays; she sometimes made them do the dirty backstage work like rebuilding or sizing flats. She knew they probably wouldn't end up on Broadway, but would be attempting to instill a love of theater to Western Oklahoma high-school students while directing plays in combination auditorium-gyms.

It would be difficult to say Elsie Shoemaker was my favorite Southwestern instructor--after all there were Edna Muldrow and Walter Crouch--but she certainly was at the top and certainly influenced me more than any other, and I adored her.

I wonder how many more persons she helped along the way, helped to get them through school and helped them to gain a bit of pride and confidence.

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J. R. Pratt

PATRIOT DREAMER TEACHER

by Dr. Benny Hill



J. R. Pratt

Would you believe that a faculty member would have the commitment to contribute part of his meager salary to keep the college operating? How many college professors were predicting in 1937 that men would one day go to the moon? Are you aware of the contributions which were made by early pioneers in higher education to the development of Oklahoma? Mr. J. R. Pratt, a former teacher of physics and mathematics at Southwestern in Weatherford, was one of those pioneers. He was a man of strong convictions who made many contributions to many Oklahomans.

Jesse Richard Pratt was born on March 22, 1896 at Westville, Oklahoma and was reared in rural Arkansas. He completed high school at the Baptist Academy in Maynard, Arkansas in 1916. After serving his country in the military during the World War I period, Mr. Pratt entered college study at Texas A&M and finished a Bachelor of Science degree at Central State Teachers College in Edmond, Oklahoma in 1924. He then took a Master of Arts degree in mathematics at the University of Missouri. In subsequent years Pratt studied physics and mathematics at Indiana University and the University of Chicago. During the periods 1913-1919 and 1925-1927 Mr. Pratt was a public school teacher. He gained teaching experience in the small rural elementary and secondary schools of those days.

With this experience and education J. R. Pratt joined the faculty of Southwestern State Teachers College in 1927 as acting chairman of the Mathematics Department while Clarence McCormick was on leave to complete his doctorate at Columbia University in New York. Mr. Pratt soon moved over to head the Physics Department. In fact, until 1955 he was the Physics Department. From the beginning Pratt added his character and principles to the faculty of Southwestern and became a legend on campus and in

Weatherford and surrounding communities. And this legend developed for thirty-seven years at Southwestern.

What kind of man was this J. R. Pratt? He was a devoted husband to his wife Phayetta, father to his two daughters, and grandfather. He was a religious man and a patriot whose faith in the United States of America was unwavering. He loved fishing, hunting, and gardening. He was futuristic, a dreamer and young at heart. He was comfortable with the great and the not so great. But most significantly he was one who molded lives, who stimulated young men and women to be their best.

There are almost as many "Mr. Pratt" stories as there were students between 1927 and 1964, as well as other acquaintances — like the "F Club" with a full slate of officers which Mr. Pratt formed in his classes when some students were sloppy in their studies. He would scold students who came to class with a pencil behind the ear while informing each that he was supporting a weak spot. Mr. Pratt also had appropriate nicknames for students such as "Falstaff" for the one he caught drinking beer. He also checked the pool halls regularly. Some of his stories may have been a little tall like the one about the dust devil turning his car around on a country road. However, one group of fellow Kiwanians learned the hard way to believe some of Mr. Pratt's stories. He called them from Arkansas to report that he had caught an 80-pound catfish and had it tied to a tree with a plowline. When they called him the biggest liar in Arkansas, he iced the 80 pounder down and shipped it C.O.D. to them in Weatherford. Ever after he was known as "Catfish" Pratt.

In a more serious vein, Mr. Jesse R. Pratt made tremendous contribution to his beloved Southwestern, which is now Southwestern Oklahoma State University. He had a particularly strong influence on

the intellectual skills and values of those who pursued a major in physics under him. He was rather like the schoolmaster of old whom many fully appreciated only in later years. Beginning in 1929, Mr. Pratt became the faculty Critic of The Senate, a student organization to give training in parliamentary procedure. The Senate thrived under his sponsorship until 1954. In hard financial times of the early forties, he was among those faculty members who contributed money to keep the doors of Southwestern open. During World War II, Mr. Pratt was instrumental in developing several programs for assisting the War Department in training U.S. Army Air Corps personnel at Southwestern. He was always respectful of the war veterans of our country. After overseeing the progress of the Physics Department and its baccalaureate degree in education for some twenty years, Mr. Pratt saw the establishment of a Bachelor of Science degree in 1948. Neither a serious automobile accident in 1933 nor a severe heart attack was sufficient to dampen the spirit of this outstanding Oklahoma educator.

The Bachelor of Science in Physics prospered with some one hundred graduates before Mr. J. R. Pratt's retirement in 1964. About thirty of these Oklahomans had roles in the early developments of the NASA space program in Huntsville, Alabama and Houston, Texas. Two had positions at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. A half dozen went to work for aircraft companies, one of whom is now a senior engineer for North American Aircraft on the Space Shuttle Project.

One is now among the top management of SW Bell Telephone in Oklahoma. Several are in lead positions with the oil and gas industry, including the Vice-President for Research with Haliburton Services in Duncan, Oklahoma. One is a senior engineer with the State Department of Transportation. At least six are now university professors. Some are employed in the high-technology electronics industry. And others are in management or research and development with some of the nation's major companies. Still others became successful teachers and businessmen. Quite a legacy, and that legacy continues to this day with now over three hundred alumni of the Department of Physics at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Mr. J. R. Pratt built well. His high ideals live on in the lives of many of us. You see, this author was one who had the privilege of knowing and studying physics under this great man. It is a high honor to be in a long line of people who were his students. Oklahoma and Southwestern in particular have been blessed to have some fine scholars and educators, and Jesse Richard Pratt was one of them. Upon his retirement one of the gifts from his friends and colleagues was a nice hunting jacket. On November 18, 1970 Mr. Pratt and his annual hunting buddy, E. E. Sherman from Florida, went out to find the ducks and when they started to return E. E. looked back for J. R. He was sitting down and had gone to meet his maker. He would have chosen this simple setting to end the trail from his beginning at Westville.

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Dr. Gladys C. Bellamy

Feminine Individualist

by Dr. Leroy Thomas

The first time I saw her, she scared me speechless; but somehow I knew that underneath that distant, assuming exterior lay a person to be cherished.

At the time we first met, I was a transfer student from Oklahoma Baptist University. I had gone to her office on the campus of Southwestern State College (now Southwestern Oklahoma State University) in Weatherford to talk about the program to be followed by an English Education major. It's only natural, then, that I remember Dr. Gladys C. Bellamy foremost as a teacher.

I'll never forget the first day of English Composition class when she came in and painstakingly taught us that in French her name (*belle amie*) meant "beautiful friend." And then followed that sparkling smile that exposed all her front teeth--a definite Bellamy trademark.

No one was allowed to retain his anonymity in one of Beautiful Friend's classes; she had her own ways of involving all of her students if by no more than a casual "How do you feel about that?" I have more than once in my time been the object of one of her withering glances that told me that I wasn't Top

Dog in her sight. But it was always done in a way not to offend, and the next minute the whole group could be engrossed in another Bellamy Production.

Many students of my vintage remember the day that Dr. Bellamy, when Elvis Presley was in his prime, hopped onto her desk in class and started belting out -- while strumming an imaginary guitar-- "You ain't nothin' but a hound dawg, cryin' all the time," followed by a calmer crooning of "Love me tender, love me true, never let me go." Why? To show the relationship between music of the day and the study of poetry, of course. Much could be said about her modernity and her aliveness--only two good reasons for the tremendous effect she had on her students.

Gladys Bellamy wasn't a teacher of a dead subject, and she surely was anything but dead in her classroom presentations. Most of the time she also had infinite patience with her students; the first subject she taught me was Freshman English. Although at the time she was a published Ph.D. with a book (MARK TWAIN AS A LITERARY ARTIST) that had survived several weeks on the na-

tional best-seller list, she was vitally interested in teaching her students the proper research methods. The things she taught me then have seen me through three degrees in English. A lesser woman wouldn't have bothered.

If I'm a successful teacher, I attribute some of my success to Dr. Bellamy the Boss--another area in which I knew her. She was never one to mince words. When in my early years at Southwestern she was required to do yearly reports on my progress, there were never any secrets. She always called me into her office and wrote the reports in my presence. One time she wrote, "Someday he will be one of our best teachers when he has had time to mellow a little bit." Another time she reported that I wasn't well-rounded enough--that I spent too much time on church activities and not enough time on civic duties. We disagreed on that, but she didn't seem to care.

Almost daily I recognize my debt to Dr. Bellamy because she was the one who gave me my first college teaching job and continued to encourage me to become better prepared degree-wise. But still she never in her life referred to me as anything but "Leeeeeeeeroy" (even in the presence of my students, whom I, as a young teacher, was trying so intensely to impress).

It was very fitting that when she died on August 2, 1973 there was a great deal of drama surrounding her death; she never did anything without a flourish. I remember her too, as a character among characters. The faculty at Southwestern always looked forward to her appearances on programs at Christmastime. None of us will ever forget her "Jingle Bell Rock" or her hoola-hoop performance.

Dr. Bellamy, who always had good excuses for her dilatoriness ("I was out looking for Tigger. . . my ride was late picking me up. . . I couldn't find a parking place. . . I had to go over to the nurse's office to get my shot of B-12. . ." etc. . . etc. . . etc.) often said that she would be late for her own funeral. Knowing the difficulty involved in getting her remains out of Mexico where she died and realizing the type of character she was, I wouldn't have been surprised if there had been no coffin at her funeral service. But her remains were there, and it was a memorial service befitting the type of person she was--punctuated by the hushed, somewhat embarrassed, titters of laughter that kept spilling out. She

wouldn't have wanted a gloomy service. In fact, she would have condoned hearty laughter.

Beautiful Friend's followers have had a great deal of entertainment from the tales of *Woman vs Machine*. It was late in her life that she bought an old blue Ford and learned--pardon the expression--to drive. To be more precise, all of us learned to stay out of her way. A favorite story involves the time that she stepped on the accelerator instead of the brake and ended up in her little blue Ford sitting atop another car that was legally parked in a driveway.

When she retired in 1967 as chairperson of the Division of Language Arts, we gave her a big party. We knew, however, that we could never bill it as the "Bellamy Retirement Dinner," so we decided to call it the "Bellamy Blast."

There were no airs about the woman. She was as common as Mark Twain, the man whose writing she loved--and at the

same time uncommon. She knew the English language better than anyone I ever knew, but she received intense delight from misusing it. She exuded self-confidence, but she was as helpless as a baby in the hands of anything mechanical; she would as soon fight a bull as change a typewriter ribbon. She was a Women's Libber long before the time of Women's Liberation, but I never met a man or woman who disliked her for it.

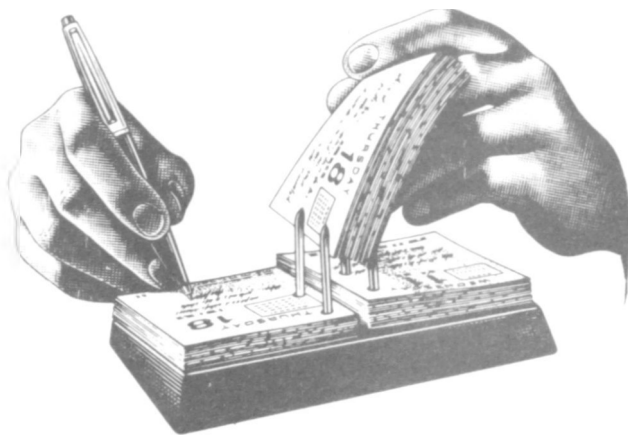
She was loved or liked and respected by great scores of people. But what were her loves? A few special friends--a group to which all of her acquaintances wanted to belong. Herself--a love that anyone who knew her could never consider a sin because "that was just Dr. B." Tigger, her favorite cat which she regretted "depriving of his manhood." Canasta, which she played with the intensity of a Kansas City Bomber. Detective stories, which she sometimes read far into the night and on into the morning. The St.

Louis Cardinals, whom she supported through their ups and downs over the years. Televised professional football and golf, a late interest since she purchased her first TV set only a few years before her death. Mark Twain, to whom she gave more attention and analysis than any other writer.

I thought of Dr. Bellamy again today, remembering that beautiful memorial service and her life. I realized then that the person who lives on is the Gladys Bellamy who taught her subject fervently in any crowd, imprinting it all on our minds from the overflow of a merry heart.

At the end I am in as much a dilemma as at the beginning. Where do I begin? Where do I end? Her life was a captivating poem that all of us who knew her will continue to read. She must have been an original "legend in her own time."

(previously published in BROADSIDE and OKLAHOMA WOMAN)



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A Woman Inspired -- Edna Muldrow

by Betty Jo Jenkins Denton

She had a unique approach to teaching and challenged students to work or depart.

The first time I saw Edna Muldrow was in 1949. I was a student in the School of Cosmetology at Southwestern Tech in Weatherford.

Mrs. Ross, director and instructor of the beauty college, tiptoed quietly into the training area to tell us we had some VIPs waiting to be coiffured. She obviously was concerned that these "important persons" have the very BEST. To add to her dilemma, she had only two BESTS among her trainees. She chose me as her third emissary because, according to her, "You aren't the best hairdresser by any means, but you could sell gunnysacks for formals." What she wanted was a sales job. She wanted the three visitors from the college staff to be impressed with our School of Cosmetology.

This was my introduction to Edna Muldrow. She knew what she wanted in a hair-do and *how* she expected this to be accomplished. I must have pleased her because she returned the following week. In addition to fixing Mrs. Muldrow's hair, I gave a permanent to her eighteen-month-old granddaughter. It was a new adventure for the child, and Grandmother Edna playfully entertained her throughout the procedure.

The next time I became associated with Mrs. Muldrow was when my husband and I were students in the School of Education. We were enrolled in her

English Composition class.

I was a wife, working as a hairdresser, and the mother of a baby girl. To make up for the semester I had been out of school, I enrolled in eighteen hours and had three hours out by correspondence! This busy schedule took its toll on me, and my work suffered. I went from making A's and B's to C's. Mrs. Muldrow called me in to her office. I weepingly told her I missed class many times because my husband couldn't get to the house in time to take over the care of our baby so that I could make it to her class.

She questioned me about getting a babysitter but understood that on the \$135.00 a month G.I. payment we were getting, babysitting expenses must be kept to a minimum.

Mrs. Muldrow then made a suggestion that enabled me to stay in college. Perhaps it even altered the course of my life. I was to bring the baby to her office in the Education Building, leave her there, and go to my class. My husband, having class in the same building, was able to pick her up right away. This necessitated no longer than a ten-minute stay, but what a difference it made! Fellow classmates never knew that the English professor was sometimes five minutes late because she was babysitting.

Professor Muldrow's office continued to be the "pick-up place" long after we

weren't in her class. Our small daughter referred to her as the "college granny."

Edna Muldrow did much more for me than babysit. Those snapping black eyes and sharp tongue wouldn't allow me to quit. She encouraged me, she challenged me, but most of all she DARED me. She dared me to be the best I could be--to believe in myself, explore new horizons--yes, even to try writing.

The last time I visited with Mrs. Muldrow, she had been very ill, but the black eyes still sparkled. She referred to her diminished thinking capacity. I assured her that even if that were true, she was still ahead of most of us.

I admired Edna Muldrow because she never sought sympathy for her lot in life. She accepted, evaluated, and forged ahead. Her two fine sons and their families are testimony to her successful strategy.

True, Mrs. Muldrow was an exacting taskmaster. She was a perfectionist, but she asked nothing of others that she did not expect from herself. She was a teacher in the fullest sense. She imparted knowledge and inspiration through challenge. Her students had confidence because they knew they were well taught.

Mrs. Muldrow earned a special place in the lives and education of many, but to me she occupies an even more special place--in my heart!



A Lady & A Scholar

by Della Barnwell Whisenhunt

It was my privilege and my pleasure to be closely associated with Grace Elizabeth Jencke both in a professional way and as a good friend. I admired her for many qualities, especially her intellectualism, sincerity, generosity, and taste.

She was an 89er, not, however, as most Oklahomans construe the term; the fact is that 1889 was the year of her birth.

Dr. Jencke was head of the English Department at Southwestern for thirty-six years.

She had been educated in Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, Sedalia College in Sedalia, Missouri, Washington University in St. Louis, and Columbia University in New York City.

She spoke and wrote perfect English; she was an excellent professor; she was a lady. Everyone who knew her appreciated her fastidiousness, her ability at playing bridge and canasta—and her hats. These chapeaus she loved; it was my pleasure on many occasions to go with her to shop for them at which times she would try on many in different styles and ask me how I liked them. On a few occasions I noted that the back treatments were extremely chic and unusual; she then informed me she was not at all interested in the way the hats looked in the back; thus, I ceased calling attention to back interests. On many shopping sprees she would buy as many as four hats from one shop with perhaps one or two from another one.

She enjoyed the compliments people paid her hats. She especially liked what the minister of the Federated Church said to her on one occasion. The Reverend W. D. Welburn told her he could hardly keep his mind on his sermon because of looking at and thinking about the particular chapeau she was wearing on that Sunday morning.

Being prim and proper was perhaps the characteristic for which Grace Jencke was best known—so much that a story which was brought to Weatherford from Lubbock, Texas, in the fifties, soon became associated with her; and to this day many persons believe the story was true.

The story is about a fastidious lady who went to Neiman-Marcus in Dallas, Texas, to shop for some gifts. At the handkerchief bar the Neiman-Marcus saleslady, who was as neatly and stylishly dressed and well groomed as her customer, was showing various dainty and exquisite ladies' handkerchiefs to her customer who said, "I like these very much, but I prefer not to pay as much as five dollars each; I think the price is too high." Responding to her prospective buyer's remark, the well-groomed, well-manicured, well-coiffed saleslady said, "Hell, Kid, they're hand did." When Grace Jencke heard that the story was being told using her as the customer, she was pleased, and to this day the expression, "Hell, Kid, they're hand did" is still heard in this area and associated with her shopping in Neiman-Marcus.

Many other stories are associated with Grace Jencke, who was proud of her German heritage. Her conversation was spiced with a variety of German words. Once on a trip by car which she and I took to California, we stopped to look around in a gift shop which turned out to be a junk shop somewhere in Arizona; she glanced around and came to a sudden conclusion by saying, "I have never seen so many things I do not want." For the word "things" she used a German word.

Her fastidiousness showed when at one time at her house she asked me if I would please handwash her lingerie for her as her "helper" had such large and rough hands.

On another occasion she did not want to go to a book review because she did not like the reviewer's voice.

She enjoyed using the word "precarious," as in playing bridge and canasta she frequently found herself in "precarious" situations.

She disliked show-offs and on a few occasions commented on someone given to pretentious display, exhibitionism, or ostentation.

She spent hours each day with her daily newspaper. Besides reading both a morning and an evening paper from the front page to the last,

she made the working of the crossword puzzles and the cryptoquotes part of her daily ritual.

She could pull out of the hat, as it were, appropriate poetry to quote on any occasion. She quoted mostly from her favorite author Robert Browning, the most recited being "Rabbi Ben Ezra." A. E. Robinson's "Richard Cory" was another oft-quoted poem; she usually said this poem in its entirety.

As to hymns she preferred to stay with well-known authors. She chose as her favorite hymn "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," the words of which were written by John Greenleaf Whittier.

Before she started driving Cadillacs, she drove Oldsmobiles. One of her favorite stories was about the little McReynolds boy's prayer in which he thanked God for the "automobiles and the Oldsmobiles"; so far as the child's parents knew, her Olds was the only one their child had ever seen.

In my own teaching which continued a few years after Dr. Jencke's retirement in 1957, I tried to instill in my students, as she did, the power of the English sentence.

In addition to her perfect prose, she wrote doggered verse for special occasions. I imitate her style to an extent when I write my own "Paul Revere" rhythms, also for special occasions.

She herself said that most of her students turned out well; some became outstanding in the business-and-professional world. In the field of education, Dr. Donald Hamm, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Southwestern State University, is one such former student. Needless to say, there are many others—including SOSU professors Dr. Eugene Hughes, Dr. Don Prock, and Dr. Leroy Thomas.

At age eighty-two she died in 1971. I continue to miss her and realize more and more that the world is a better and a more interesting place because of her.

When I think of a truly great lady, I think of Grace Jencke.

Virtuous Woman

R. R. Chapman

At home on the prairie where the short grass grows,
The wind moves freely and the clouds are few
The white and blue daisies grow bravely in the scanty den —
Small but lovely in a plowless land
Were there to welcome the home-seek man.

Low but lonely in its purple shade of blue
As beautiful a floweret as ever grew
The winsome violet on lower ground
As sweet a posie as child ever found
And shouted with glee for all to behold
A treasure as great as a pot of gold.

And over all this in a land that's free,
There's a being that's more glorious
Than flower or tree, and it belongs
In this realm of land and sky —
A companion to man either young or old
Worthy of love, even love that's blind.
My toast goes up to womankind.



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A Colorful Hullabaloo

When the travel agency for my annual spring excursion informed me that this year's tour had to be canceled, I convinced myself it would be best to stay at home and enjoy points of interest that are not far away.

In fact, staying at home seemed the common-sense thing to do. The money I planned to spend for an expensive long-distance tour would serve its small part in bolstering our area's faltering economy—a wise move during these declining times, I thought.

Being a typical female, my first excursion near home was, of course, to my favorite fashion center. As I entered the store, I imagined myself surrounded by a Caribbean island garden filled with fragrant bougainvillea blossoms, sugar-white beaches, and sapphire seas.

Longtime friends greeted me as I joined them amid tropical brilliance and coral outcroppings that contrasted with touches of muted beauty usually found in succulent rain forests. Soft music floated through the serene atmosphere, and a steaming cup of black coffee materialized instantly to relax my travel-weary bones.

I let hospitality engulf me while enjoying the country folk chatter about local happenings and the all-important weather. Everyone seemed to deliberately avoid mentioning catastrophic events that are ejected constantly from modern communication devices.

For years the store has been a placid retreat from outside calamities. The place is indeed a sanctuary that overflows with warmth and security. Our lively conversation gradually turned to the purpose of my expedition—namely spring fashions.

According to the knowledgeable, this is the year for the palest pales, the pinkest pinks, the brightest brights, and

the softest stripes. Designers must have anticipated hundreds of stay-at-homes who would discover that this spring's color palette is an exquisite substitute for faraway tropical allure.

What delighted me most of all was the fashion experts' apt slogan, "Collectible Components in the Clearest Gelati Hues Imaginable." Being more or less an amateur linguist, the word *gelati* intrigued me. I had never heard the term. It sounded foreign, perhaps of Latin origin. I promised myself to consult with dependable Old Webster when I got home.

For the moment, I felt content with "Collectible Components". . . I have always been an avid collector. The genre I collect has never mattered. Collectible components in the fashion world sounded like a fun way to create a dashing spring and summer wardrobe that would enhance my future excursions.

The friendly guides of that tropical paradise started our sightseeing tour among the blues that have always been my favorites. I turned on my mental tape recorder so I would not miss a thing.

This season's blues are known by every name except blue. For the birdwatchers there is peacock. A lover of flowers could choose periwinkle. The outdoor woman can anticipate herself in cerulean and lagoon. A sophisticate would be charming in fashions of Bahama and French bleu.

Throughout the shoppe, yellow apparel blazed in every conceivable tropical rendition. Saffron is nothing new; it has always been a tradition and an old standby. Anyone who enjoys delectable salads and the South Sea Islands can visualize herself wearing mango, banana, and coconut. Nature lovers would naturally be lured toward cane and mimosa.

by Donita Lucas Shields

Being the outdoor type of female, I continued my fashion expedition exploring among the greens. My imagination ran wild. I went rockhounding through the malachites; I galloped across the prairie, breathing sweet sagebrush. I climbed mountains wearing Alpine and the most delicate shades of moss. I relived my tours of the Deep South dressed in frothy creme de menthe and mint julep.

Next came the rainbow of reds. Paprika made me think of picnics, potato salad, and deviled eggs. Raspberry, strawberry, and cherry took my thoughts to a favorite ice cream store. With sandstone came memories of freshly plowed fields and steep canyon bluffs. I imagined myself draped in filmy Chianti or Burgundy. I laughed at the idea of painting the town persimmon and poppy.

To me, purple has always been the royal color of kings and queens. Evidently fashion colorists have never attempted to play word games with this particular color. It is still labeled with ordinary grape, plum, mulberry, eggplant, violet, orchid, and lilac. The nearest purple comes to regality is found in a soft shade of amethyst, one of the many delightful newcomers this season.

I could have spent hours among the brown tones. One new shade most confusing to me was tagged with "Malt." I expected malt to be my old favorite, a conservative beige. The color turned out to be a dark brown. Specialists inventing malt must have been referring to the outside of a malted milk ball instead of the inner part.

As I continued browsing through the browns, I associated everything with edibles: toast, caramel, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, chocolate, and cocoa. In addition to all these taste-tingling flavors were quaint hues of adobe, hickory, and khaki. Last of all, I

discovered exotic shades of suede, mink, and sable. Colorists must have designated these hues for the suavest of fashions because prestigious names do sell merchandise.

Color consultants have created 1,100 shades, and I must have savored at least half of them. When my fashion excursion came to an end, I realized it was decision-making time. Choosing a few take-home souvenirs from the myriad of colors seemed an impossible dream.

I admitted my confusion to the faithful guides. Of course they emphasized and sympathized. Finally I made selections which seemed in keeping with the new spring slogan.

"What could be more collectible than ordinary black and white?" I asked as I selected a simple white suit and a few black components.

Bidding farewell to everyone in that tropical paradise, I promised to return soon. Before returning, though, I planned to know the meaning of that foreign word *gelati* as well as other colorful expressions such as *Anjou pear*, *shredded wheat*, and *mist*.

I also intended to do a bit of detective work concerning the label attached to my beautiful white suit. Not even those expert guides could think of a reasonable explanation as to why white-white would carry the spring color label of "Winter Wheat."

Using our farmspun logic, we conjured that the suit must have been christened on a cold, frosty morning. Stranger things than this are happening in the fashionable color world. Who knows but what the favorite color this fall will be "Hulla Blue" or even "Color Ba-Loo"?

One-Room-School Teacher: Louise E. Latimer

by Wenona L. Dunn



She was just past nine years old when she came to Oklahoma Territory from Kansas in a covered wagon with her parents and five brothers and sisters. Actually, there were two wagons — one driven by her father and the other by her mother.

Her father had bought a farm in Cleveland County, sight unseen, from an enterprising land agent. Those unsavory characters sometimes sold the same piece of land to several people, and the first to arrive took possession — not knowing that others had also bought the place. This family of Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Latimer was more fortunate than some of the others. When they arrived at the 80-acre farm southeast of Lexington, they found the two-room frame house unoccupied and moved in. The year was 1896.

Too small for a family of six? Yes indeed, but in the yard was a small one-room log cabin with a sleeping loft. This became quarters for the children, ranging in age from nineteen down to three years of age. When the oldest daughter married in 1900, the lower floor became the home for her and her husband for a time, and the others slept in the loft.

The older children helped around the

farm and the younger children attended the small two-room country school nearby. It was a two-room school by virtue of having a curtain hanging from a wire stretched across the middle of the one large room. At one time, about a hundred pupils attended this school.

When Louise E. Latimer completed this school, which went only to the eighth grade, she attended a State Normal School and obtained a certificate to teach the lower grades. She was about seventeen years old at the time.

In the early spring of 1906, the family moved to a farm in far Western Custer County — located four miles north of Foss. Louise stayed in Cleveland County to finish out the school term, along with her oldest brother who stayed to farm the old home place until it could be sold.

As it happened, school closed early that year because the principal and teacher of the upper grades became ill. Louise caught the train to Foss and joined her family there. Just across the road from their farm was a small one-room school which had lost its teacher, a young man, because some of the "tough boys," who delighted in tormenting the teacher, whoever it happened to be, had "run him off."

The School Board came to Louise and

asked her if she would take the school and finish the term. She accepted, and the young toughs had met their match! That little woman, weighing barely one hundred pounds and standing a mere five feet tall, took the school and finished the term. Those boys knew they had a teacher!

Over the years, Louise taught in several small country schools in Washita County after her parents moved to that county. She usually boarded with a family in the district in those early years, but in 1929 she bought a Model A Ford and she was a familiar figure as she drove to and from her schools. During the summer months, she attended Southwestern State Teachers College in Weatherford and obtained her high-school diploma and a lifetime teachers' certificate.

She retired, after some thirty years of teaching in one- and two-room schools, in order to help care for her aged parents. At 96 years of age, she has outlived many of those children whom she taught. Many others continue to be productive citizens of communities throughout Oklahoma. She lives now in a nursing home in Elk City, Oklahoma and loves to relate stories of those early years of teaching in Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory, and in the great state of Oklahoma.

A Time to Wait

Not all education occurs within the walls of a classroom!

by Joanna Thurston Roper

How long have I known Andy Collier? Why, I worked for him from the time I was thirteen 'till I was out of high school. My brother always worked down at the Co-Op while he was in high school, but not me. As soon as I was old enough to do something besides run errands for Mom, I worked for Andy.

That whole time coincides pretty well with the time Dad was so durned dumb and backward--at that time he hadn't learned all he knows now!

Andy had a cleaning shop called the Keep-U-Neet. But people usually just called it Colliers' Cleaners. He really gave me a job before I was old enough to be of much real help--I guess it was because our families were such good friends--and partly that I was a Sweetwood kid. But whatever his reasons were then, I have to say that outside my own family, Andy Collier did more for me than almost anyone I know.

We talked a lot. I've got volumes stored up in me from the hours Andy and I spent talking--even the special rhythm of it. In a cleaning shop you tend to space your conversation around the swoosh and whistle of the steam press.

Speaking of Dad being so backward--I'm about that age now to my boys. I sure wish they could work for someone like Andy. I had it so much better, growing up

in a little town like Sweetwood. In the city every job is fast and automated--no Andy to talk to on long afternoons. Down at MacDonald's the most exciting thing my oldest boy has to talk about is whether or not the bun has sesame seeds.

And then Andy and I got to know each other slow, too. At first I was just a go-fer. Monty, get this, Monty, get that. Then when I got my license, I made the afternoon deliveries. That old Dodge van with Collier Cleaners on the side made many a mile with me. But it was Andy that I really looked up to. "Norma was a great gal, but you sure learned to step lively or tread softly around the shop--depending on the mood Norma was in."

During those years I learned a lot about the Colliers that wasn't generally known. Even as little a place as Sweetwood is, not many people really knew as much as they

thought they did about Andy and Norma.

They got married in 1938--seemed kind of funny to me to have such a good friend who got married the same year I was born. Norma wasn't but sixteen when they were married, and Andy was nineteen. Norma's dad, Old Man Lloyd Russell had a little hamburger joint that he let them run for awhile, and they lived in a one-bedroom apartment over the ice plant. Times were hard for everyone, especially a couple of kids like that.

The hamburger joint didn't last long--or at least they didn't. Andy was ambitious, and he went to work for this guy who had come to Sweetwood from Missouri and put in a cleaning shop. Andy learned the business from top to bottom, and when the guy got tired and wanted to go back to Missouri, Andy got a loan from the bank and bought him out. *cont.*

So it seems like Andy and Norma would have had it made, doesn't it? That's what everyone thought--including me--until I got to know Andy so well. Not many people really knew what kind of marriage they had. Norma was kind and sweet and polite to everyone. She was good natured, and people really *liked* her--I mean she was a *lady*. That's what Mom said one time when I was talking about Norma, and Mom was hard to fool.

One time Andy told me about something that happened not long after they

"Norma was a great gal, but you sure learned to step lively or tread softly around the shop--depending on the mood Norma was in."

got married. Of course, he didn't tell me about it until after I had worked at the Cleaners for several years. He wouldn't have told me about it right off the bat--I wouldn't have believed it if he had. We'd been talking about an argument I'd had with my girl friend, and I'd made some stupid remark about how I wouldn't allow my wife to do something or other. Andy laughed.

"Did I ever tell you about the time I spanked Norma?"

I was astonished. "You actually spanked her?" I even remember I was holding the pants to the banker's blue serge suit.

"Yeah. We closed up the cafe one night and stopped by the grocery store on the way home. While we were walking home, we got to teasing each other--acting silly--running part of the way--it was late, and almost no one was on Main Street. The stairway up the back of the ice house was long and steep, and I was going up first to unlock the door. While I was bent over getting the key in the lock, I made some smart-aleck remark. I raised up, and a can of tomato soup went by my head--just grazed my ear. It went through that oval glass in the door like a--seemed like glass fell for ten minutes.

"I grabbed her by the arm and jerked her inside--she was twisting and fighting to get away, and of course, she dropped the rest of the groceries. Eggs were dripping off every step. I thought I never would find that light string in the middle of the room. When I did, I jerked out a chair and flipped Norma over my knees. I spanked her bottom like she was an ugly stepchild."

Andy put down the press, and there was a long whistle of steam. I looked at him--a strong, handsome, gentle man--

and marveled that he, Andy Collier, had actually paddled the polished, elegant Norma. Of course, they were kids at the time, and kids do crazy things. But I'd seen pictures of Norma when she was young, and she sure didn't look like the kind of girl a guy would paddle--young and sweet, her hair in those blonde waves and all.

"What happened then?" I asked when the steam went off.

"I slept on the kitchen floor." Andy didn't seem inclined to go on with the story. But just before the steam went on again, he added, "That was the first time."

It was also the first time I even suspected that their marriage was anything but perfect--or ever had been. Looking back now, I realize that I was about the only person in Sweetwood who did. But at the time--when I was just a brash high school kid myself--I disregarded the signs. Maybe it went deeper than that. Maybe I knew the signs were there--I just didn't want to recognize them.

Norma and Andy had one kid, a girl named Suzanne. Her full name was Norma Suzanne, but they called her Susie. She was a sort of shy kid--but cute as a button. It seemed to me that Norma was too protective of her, especially after she got to junior high and high school. I don't mean she should have been allowed to run loose or anything like that.

But--well, like the cheerleading deal when she was in the eighth grade. Susie came to the shop one day after school, and she was just bubbling over with some news. The student body had elected her to be one of the cheerleaders. It was her first attempt at that sort of thing, so it was pretty important to her.

Andy cut down the steam, and the three of us sat around drinking Cokes and talking about it. Norma came in, and Susie told her. Norma didn't say much--she didn't even react very much. I remember thinking that if I had a sister and she made cheerleader, Mom would have made a big deal over it, too--especially if the kid were as excited as Susie. But Norma just looked kind of tight around the lips. Then she looked at the racks and asked me, "Monty, have you made today's deliveries yet?"

"I was fixing to go," I told her. There aren't many."

She looked at the Coke bottle in my hand and said, "Well, aren't you about fixed?"

"Sure, sure," I said. I could see this was one of Norma's huffy days. In that case I figured I'd manage to make the route a long one. Norma and Susie were gone when I got back, and Andy left me to close up. That wasn't unusual, so I didn't think anything about it.

When I got to work the next day, the steam was off, and Andy was sitting in the back office with his feet propped up on

the old roll top desk.

"Monty, get a Coke and come on back."

Wonder what broke down I thought. There were clothes piled on the work table, so it was obvious Andy hadn't kept up. Then I saw he hadn't even shaved. He had a five o'clock shadow by noon every day anyway, and if he skipped shaving, his beard was really dark.

"What broke loose this time?" I asked.

"All hell." He didn't even look at me when he said it. I waited, thinking that this must be a breakdown that would be unusually expensive. I was on the right track, in a way--but totally off in another. Finally Andy turned the squeaky chair around. He looked haggard.

"I spent the night down here."

"Why?" I had closed up the night before. Nothing was wrong then, so why would he come back.

"It beat the hell out of the kitchen floor."

Realization dawned on me. Things had been pretty tense the night before. But to spend the night here and then do nothing during the day--I still couldn't grasp that.

"Well," I began, "was there a fight about Susie being a cheerleader?"

"I would have to say this one began about sixteen years ago."

"Oh." Obviously this one was more than the junior high cheerleaders. "I see." I was trying to sound noncommittal because I didn't "see" anything.

"But Susie was a good starting place last night. Norma told Susie she could stay on the squad but only for in-town games. She can't go out of town for any game. And she has to be home by nine o'clock whether the game is over or not."

I whistled. The junior high games didn't last much longer than that, but the kids always went to Sam's for a malt after the game and waited for the team to show up. I remembered when Mom used to park outside Sam's--lined up with all the other moms picking up their kids. I usually had two or three friends with me for Mom to take home. Andy broke into my thoughts.

"I've spent the day down here thinking about the situation--trying to figure out what to do."

"About the ball games--the curfew?"

"That's pretty well cut and dried. I'm to pick her up at the gym at nine. That is unless Susie quits. That wouldn't surprise me, either. It's embarrassing to a kid to be that different. Oh, she's also barred from going to Sam's."

"Why--that's the best place in town for a kid to go."

"The only place, you mean." Then a sarcastic expression came over his face. "Maybe we could encourage her to go down to Mutt's Bar."

That was just barely funny, but I laughed. "Well," I asked, "What else are you going to do?"

"Get a divorce."

My shock and disbelief must have

shown on my face.

"Not right now," he said. "I'll give her exactly four more years. Four more. Then Susie will be out of high school, and she'll go to college or get married--or whatever Norma decides for her to do."

"Well--gosh, Andy, that's too bad. I never realized--I never even thought..." I was almost reduced to babbling.

"Now listen here, Montgomery Riley, I don't want a word of this breathed anywhere. I mean *anywhere*." Andy looked fierce.

"No--no. Why, no, of course no."

"And in the meantime--in those four years--" The front door opened. "Oh, hell. Go tell them we're broke down today."

I started to the front and met Norma. I was, in a word, astonished. Norma was always pretty, but that day she was extraordinary--a pink and white suit, a frilly blouse, perfect makeup and hair do.

"Well, hello! Good Looking!" I said. I was trying frantically to think of a way to keep her out of the back room. Knowing how Andy looked, her angelic appearance could evaporate like fog.

"Hi, Monty. I brought you all some cake and punch I had left over from Garden Club today. Would you run out to the car and bring it in? We'll have a little party."

I rushed out, not wanting to hear the explosion when she learned there had been no cleaning done all day. But when I returned, Norma wasn't upset, and Andy was just looking at her. She said as I came in, "Andy doesn't look well, does he, Monty?"

"Well, no," I said. "In fact, he looks rotten." Andy didn't say anything to either of us. He just sat there looking glum while Norma bustled around fixing the punch and cake. Norma did this sort of thing quite often because she entertained a lot. And it was usually fun, but today things seemed awfully tense. In fact, I decided not to wait around long. I was confused--Andy swearing "four more years" just minutes before Norma came sashaying in with refreshments. Of course, there had been other days similar to this one, but the difference hadn't been so obvious to me. As it turned out, that was the day I pegged as the one when I saw Andy's and Norma's marriage finished.

After that things definitely changed. Andy talked a lot to me about his upcoming freedom, and he talked about their fights at home. Most of them were turning into arguments over Susie and her social activities. One of those was a big on-going one that eventually involved me and Paula Hampton.

Paula and I went together--off and on--from the time we were in the seventh grade. We were perfect for each other--neither one of us ever got much on the other. Like the time of the Junior-Senior prom the year I was a junior. The theme of the thing was the Stork Club, and we'd

gone all out to make it a ritzy affair. Well, just for a lark, I borrowed Buddy Guthrie's old '41 Dodge pickup and went to get Paula. That pickup was rusty green and absolutely falling apart; it sounded like every rod and bearing in it was fixing to fly loose. It had belonged to Dutch Clayton down at the Shamrock, and it used to have SHAMROCK SERVICE STATION on the side. All the lettering was gone except SHAM VICE, and somebody had scratched TRUCK in the paint.

Well, I pulled up in the Hampton drive--I left the truck running--and Mrs. Hampton met me at the door. Paula must have heard it, but she didn't say anything while I was getting her corsage pinned on. Paula's mom kept glancing out, but she didn't say anything, either. Paula and I got out on the front porch, and she stopped and, just cool as a cucumber, said, "Wait a minute, Monty."

I sat on the porch swing thinking how funny it was going to be to go to the prom in Buddy's old Vice Truck with Paula in all that lace and chiffon and stuff. I had put a quilt over the springs that were busting through the upholstery.

Then Paula came out, and durned if she wasn't wearing an old pair of striped overalls with one strap hanging loose and my corsage stuck on the end of it. We had a good laugh. Then we rode by the cafeteria and waved at everyone--me in a tux and Paula in overalls. She whooped and hollered and beat on the side of the truck. Then I took her back, and while she changed clothes again, I rushed home to borrow Dad's Chrysler. Dad would let me have the Chrysler if I was dating a girl he liked, and Paula was one he definitely liked.

Well, anyway, when Susie started dating, Norma made a rule that if Susie had a date with anyone older than she was, they couldn't go out of town unless they went with Paula and me. Of course, there wasn't anything to do in Sweetwood but go to the show or go skating. So when Susie and Benny Morris started dating, Paula and I were stuck. And on top of that, Susie's curfew was 10:30. We couldn't get any further away than Allis and make it back.

But I felt too sorry for Andy to put up much resistance. I never will forget the look in his eyes when he watched Norma give me orders on Saturday night--pain, shame, anger--I guess he was feeling more desperate than anything. He started that day giving me an extra ten bucks because he knew Paula and I would go on somewhere else after we brought Susie and Benny home.

By then his four years were down to two. And he still talked about it to me. It seemed so strange--he was making plans to leave, and Norma was going right on--no change. She even still threw things. One day I got to work after school, and his car was parked in front of the shop with

the back window busted out. I stopped and looked in. There was a hand mirror lying on the back seat, and broken glass and mirror were scattered all over the inside.

"What happened to the car, Andy?"

"Norma did it."

"Oh."

"The van wouldn't start, so I took the car. Norma got mad because she wanted to go to Allis today. She just happened to be holding a mirror when I left."

"Well, lucky it wasn't a skillet," I said.

Andy laughed. "I was figuring today. It's a year and ten months now. That's the short end of the sentence."

As it turned out, that was the last time I heard an actual countdown. In the spring of '56 I graduated and went to college, but at the end of the first semester I decided to join the Marines and went off to Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina. By the time I was out, so much had happened, it took me awhile to grasp it. Of course, Mom had written me about it, but you need to be in town and hear it all, too.

Susie had graduated in 1958 and got married in June to Benny Morris. Seems almost as soon as Andy escorted her to the altar, he went over to Allis and filed for divorce. Norma was so surprised and shocked that she went into the hospital for awhile.

Andy sold the Cleaners and gave her the house and moved to Livingston. Then Norma did the worst possible thing--and probably the most out of character. As soon as the divorce was final, she got married. Mom said she wanted it to look like the divorce was her idea. I don't know.

Of all people in Sweetwood, she married Conrad Newton. Conrad had enough trouble of his own without taking on Norma. His wife Gloria had been an alcoholic, and she had died about a year before. He also had two married daughters and two younger ones at home. It was common knowledge that the Newton girls fought a lot--one younger one and one older one always ganged up against Conrad and the other two. Mom told me that Norma had told her she believed she could help them all get together. What rot!

They stayed married just about long enough for Sweetwood to simmer down again. Then Norma divorced Conrad, got his house, sold it and her own and moved to California. Never been back. I wonder if she knows about Andy--surely Susie's let her know. I talked to Susie at the funeral home this morning, but I didn't want to ask about Norma since all kinds of kinfolks were there.

Just before I got out of the Marines, Andy got married again. He married a widow in Livingston--in fact, it was Jack Price's mother. Jack used to preach here in Sweetwood--great guy, but he got too modern for Sweetwood when he introduced that teen center. Anyway, when Mr.

Price died, Jack's mother Bobbie Jean moved to Livingston. I don't know exactly how Andy and Bobbie Jean met, but I do know they've had a good marriage. Twenty years--think of it--married to her the same number of years he was married to Norma. But the quality of those years must have made it seem twice as long--or half--who knows?

Actually there was about a nine-year gap when I wasn't around Andy a lot--to talk to him every day, you know. We kept in touch, of course, and Mom was good at keeping me posted. After I got out of the Marines, I went to college down at SSU. That's where I met Connie--no, she wasn't from Sweetwood. You'd never know the difference, though. We got married while we were in college. Man! Talk about lean years--I was making better money in Andy's cleaning shop!

Anyway, I graduated in '65, and Connie and I moved to Livingston--been there fifteen years now working for the Regency Advertising Corporation. Having

Andy and Bobbie Jean there was the next best thing to having my own parents in town.

Connie and I went over there a lot with the boys. But what I really liked to do was stop by his Cleaners in the afternoon and talk. This one's bigger and fancier than the one here in Sweetwood was, but there's some things about a cleaning shop that don't change. The quiet and the noics--the rhythm. While the steam's whistling out, a fellow has time to think. Then when that old press thunks up, you know whether it's worth saying--or whether to keep your mouth shut.

Yes. It's a fact--my life's been influenced pretty much by Andy Collier--the first half when I was just a punk kid not really paying much attention to anything that wasn't directly related to me having a good time or plenty of money to spend on girls--Paula Hampton mostly. After high school we all drifted apart--even Paula and me--everyone thought we'd get married--everybody but us, I guess. Andy in

his quiet way was showing me something about marriage--about living and accepting and waiting.

Then there was the second half--Connie and me and then the boys. And who was still there? You durned right! Andy. And Bobbie Jean the second time around. That doesn't in any way discredit Mom and Dad, of course. Maybe they saw to it a long time ago I'd have his influence--I wouldn't have believed back then they were so smart! I hope I'm doing something smart for my boys now--something they'll recognize in about twenty years. That'd make me about sixty--like Andy. I'd like to think I could do as much good in sixty years as Andy did in his sixty. Yep, I've known Andy a long time, and in my book, he was a great man.

Well, fellows, it's time to go the the church--looks like they're getting the family in the cars now. I think we pallbearers are supposed to ride in the cars in front of the hearse. I guess you might say this is my last delivery for Andy.

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TEACHER'S PET

by

Yvonne Carpenter

The inside of a cat's ear, I remember thinking; Darrell had the greasy, unwashed look of the interior of a cat's ear as Mrs. Sluggs led him into the kindergarten room. She firmly held his limp arm as if it were an animal's lead rope. He carefully avoided contact with the woman; the arm was limp; he had disowned it. Its limpness contrasted with the excited jerking motions of his head. With his dirty jeans torn at the knee and untucked plaid shirt short a button, Darrell looked as if he belonged in a basement rather than my sunny new classroom.

Darrell looked at me out of the corner of his left eye and grinned foolishly. His eyes were so badly coordinated that this was the only angle from which he could focus them. One year ago the old Mrs. Sluggs had insisted that Darrell's optometrist wanted him to stay out of school another year for his eyes to mature. His eyes were no better; he wore no glasses; I realized he had seen no doctor.

"Don't think he is ready but I don't want trouble with the law." Food spots marked the largest rise of her double knit dress. Her dark hair was thick but flat to her head. Her knuckles and dimpled elbows were darker than the rest of her skin.

Darrell broke from her hold. He ran to the toy shelf and cleared it with one sweep. He picked up a blue wooden man with a red hat and held it to his nose as if to eat it.

"Here, please, complete this enrollment form. Did Darrell's doctor think he could be helped by glasses?" I saw Darrell push down another student but decided to deal first with the woman. I wanted her out of the room.

"I'm a poor woman, barely getting by. But I try to do the best that I can by Darrell and our foster children, sharing

what I have."

"Will you pick Darrell up, or is he to ride the bus?" The other twelve students gathered in the center to watch Darrell as he explored the perimeters of the room. They had arrived only minutes before this erratic sprite.

"I'll be at work. I'm an aide at the hospital to make enough money for food. That and our garden keep food on the table. Put him on the bus."

By the time Mrs. Sluggs was out the door, Darrell had dismantled all of the displays carefully set up for this opening school day and was pulling on the cabinet doors.

"Darrell, this is our fish tank. You may look at them all you wish. We do not put anything in the fish's tank." I removed the wooden block from the tank. "Can you see the big yellow fish?" I touched Darrell's arm to direct his attention to the fish. He jerked as if I had hit him. Both of Darrell's eyes were crossed; the left one looked to the right and the right eye to the left. To see the fish he turned his head and looked out of the corner of one eye. His dark oily hair stuck to his head; it looked like spikes on his forehead. His dark, unscrubbed skin had an underlying pallor

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which I attributed to malnourishment.

The fish entertained and calmed him as it was to do many times during that semester.

"Each of us will have a special desk, a place where we can keep our things. Darrell, this will be your desk." I directed each of the thirteen kindergarteners to a desk. I showed them their prereading workbook and we were looking through it.

"Mrs. Johnson, I believe you have lost something." Mr. Bradley, the principal, was at the door. He held Darrell, twisting and snarling, by the arm. "He just opened the door and walked in my office. See if you can't keep up with your students."

At playtime, I pulled Darrell off another student whom he was choking. As class ended he came to me and said, "I think I am going to like it here."

This pattern remained for the first three weeks. At the good times Darrell watched the class's activity from the corner of his eye while he sat before the fish tank or puttered in the playhouse. He could not see the work sheets; I gave him a wooden puzzle or a quiet activity to do while the other students worked with pencil and paper. He was fascinated by the books. He would slowly study each page of the large Childcraft books, his nose touching each picture. At the bad times he smashed toys and attacked his fellow students.

At all times he had to be watched constantly or he would slip out of my door and open any other in the building. Walking to the bus after school or to the playground at recess, I held his hand to keep him from wandering into other rooms. His violence lessened as he developed a transition pattern. He would come into the room and go to a corner. He

would sit there and observe, quietly and prepare for the academic world.

He came eagerly to school and he enjoyed talking to me. He told me how fast he rode the horse, about the ducks he saw at the creek or when his cousins were coming. It was as if he had not been allowed to say anything. He once told me his dogs liked for him to talk to them.

"Mrs. Johnson, I believe you have lost something." Mr. Bradley, the principal, was at the door. He held Darrell, twisting and snarling, by the arm.

Darrell's erratic head motions, lack of personal hygiene, and violence toward the other students led me to suspect some retardation as well as neglect. I had little hope of doing any more than taming this wild animal. He seemed to have experienced little contact with people and that little was negative. I resolved to give Darrell as much as I could during each 2½ hour session to help him to cope with his life. At the same time I had twelve other students, more civilized students, to prepare for first grade. I promised myself I would not take Darrell's problems home with me.

During the third week of school I began to doubt my first impression. I commented on the oil derrick being constructed in the field close to the school. Using technical words which I still do not comprehend, he told how his brothers put up an oil rig. He explained how they broke it down to add more pipe and how they prepared the completed hole for production. I knelt beside him to listen, not touching. His explanation did not fit the picture of retardation.

Using the resources available in a small town, I asked my neighbor about the Sluggs family. "They are bad ones, right out of the hills," she said as we shared a Saturday morning cup of coffee. "They brought a lot of hill ways with them. Nothing wrong with hard work for kids. But they treat those foster kids like slave labor. That garden she is so proud of, those kids work in it all day every day. Three acres of stoop labor under the summer sun. And that fat ole man, story is, he ain't no better than he ought to be with girls that get sent there."

"What about Darrell?"

"Nobody knows where he came from. He just appeared with the Sluggs woman, looked to be about 2½ years old, first time anybody saw him. Said they adopted him. Don't know where they got ahold of him, but I know it wouldn't bear too close a look into."

We had a daily milk break. I made sure Darrell got all of the chocolate milk that he could drink. He saw it pleased me when he drank the milk, and he liked to please me.

I talked with the County Health Department people about Darrell's eyes. Children's Hospital in the state capitol agreed to fix them free of cost.

I called Mrs. Sluggs. "We are poor people. We can't afford any doctor bills."

"I know. This is free. Just sign these forms. They can fix Darrell's eyes."

"This is all I have to do, sign these papers?"

"Yes, fill it out and sign it."

She worked through the statistics: Darrell's age, address, her name. She left blank his date and place of birth. Reaching the line to sign as legal guardian, she laid down the pen.

"I don't trust those doctors in the charity hospital. If we do something, we want to use the doctors in Amarillo."

"But they are very good doctors, the best children's specialists in the state."

"I don't trust state doctors. We will just wait until we can afford to pay our own doctor." She was adamant.

When I voiced my frustration in the teacher's lounge, Lydia Wrightman, the seventh-grade math teacher spoke up.

"Don't you remember? The state took a foster child from the Sluggs family. She will be very leery of any state programs. It was two years ago. Were you here then?"

That had been my first year to teach at Anthon. I recalled the story.

"Are you ready?" the teacher had asked the seventh-grade boy. It was a day in late December.

"I can't take it any more. I have to get out."

"Did he beat you?"

"Yes."

"Will you say that when I ask you again?"

"Yes."

She took him to the local doctor. The boy repeated his statement and his wounds were photographed. He told the welfare worker he had been beaten.

"If I leave, I will get a Christmas present. I just know I will," he said as they waited in the hall outside the doctor's office.

"What would you like, if you got a present?" his teacher asked.

"Some socks. I would like some new socks."

The boy did not return to his foster home or Anthon School. The State Welfare Department placed him in another home in another community. Remaining in the Sluggs home were another foster child, Carla, age twelve, and a preschool boy, Darrell, rumored to be adopted.

One of the activities I sent home for the students to do with their parents was an interest inventory. Knowing Darrell would not receive help, I called him to my

desk.

"And what is your favorite book?"

With no hesitation, he replied, "The Three Pigs."

"And why is it your favorite?" I asked expecting to hear how this violent child liked the wolf who huffed and puffed.

"Because it is the only one I have."

Shamed and shaken, I went on, "What is the thing you like to do best?"

"I like to get on Babe, the old horse, and ride as fast as I can. Butch and Pup, the dogs, run with us."

"What is your favorite time of day?"

"When I wake up beside Butch and Pup and before I go into the house for breakfast."

"You don't sleep with the dogs" I said in disbelief.

"Yeah, I do," he assured me while grinning his silly, cross-eyed grin. Was he teasing me?

I twice questioned Darrell's niece who had been in my class the year before. Both times she replied, "Oh silly! No, he don't. Nobody sleeps with dogs."

I dropped the subject but Darrell looked and smelled like he slept with the dogs.

Darrell came to my desk complaining of something in his hair. I looked and saw a fat, gray tick attached to his scalp. A tick is black until it has fed on its host and becomes bloated with blood. I soaked the tick with alcohol on a cotton ball and pulled the parasite off carefully to avoid leaving the head in his skin. To kill it, I stepped on it. The tick exploded with a sickening pop. Darrell's blood made a circle on the paper which had held the tick. He saw the tick upset me. So daily he would inspect himself on the way to school. He always proudly told me when he found ticks and killed them as I had shown him.

One December day, talk turned to Christmas and Santa. When someone finally asked "Do you believe in Santa?" instead of "is there a Santa?" I answered truthfully, "yes, I believe in Santa." I avoided the other question.

"That's how I am going to do it! Bang!" he said excited and pleased with himself. "That's how I am going to kill myself."

As Darrell watched and listened he became restless. The next morning, his transition did not work. He did not make the change from his outside world to the world of academics. He became increasingly agitated. He grabbed the girl beside him by the neck and shook her. He raced around the room as if he had never been here before.

At recess he refused to move. He lay on the ground beside me. At break time he would not drink his milk. He put his face at table level, his nose to the milk. Suddenly his arm shot out, index finger extended. "Bang" he said as the milk spilled on the table.

"Darrell, what is wrong? Why are you angry with me? Why are you trying to make me mad?"

"That's how I am going to do it! Bang!" he said excited and pleased with himself. "That's how I am going to kill myself."

"What!"

"I am gonna get the rifle from the closet and kill myself."

"But Darrell, we need you. We need you to help take care of the fish."

"I'll get the shell out of the drawer. I'll put the shell in the chamber, put the gun between my eyes and pull the trigger."

"Darrell, we would miss you so much. We love you and want you to be with us."

"You lied. There is no Santa Claus. He is not bringing you nothing. And he is not bringing me nothing. There is no Santa!"

Twelve pairs of young eyes watched us.

"It's like a game. Oh, Darrell, pretend. If you could have a present from Santa, what would it be?"

"A truck. The truck in Cassidy's window. With a little trailer and a boat behind."

"Let me dry your eyes. Let's clean this up and go back to class."

Darrell got his truck. He knew where it came from and I knew he knew. It was a silent joke between us.

Darrell's brothers, the Sluggs' natural sons, were arrested on drug charges. They were tall, swarthy men who resembled their mother. They had children the age of Darrell. A farmer saw them slashing the tires on the witness' car. He found his show pigs with their throats cut the day of the hearing.

I went to the local Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, and my father to finance the operation for Darrell's eyes. People were reluctant to donate when they heard who the needy child was. I explained the assistance would go only to the child, not the family. I secured pledges for Darrell's operation with the out-of-state doctor.

I told Mrs. Sluggs the money was available. She was to bring me the bills and they would be paid.

Mrs. Sluggs brought Darrell in after his stay in the hospital. He was the cleanest I had seen him. He was wearing glasses.

"You know, they said he was seeing two of everything. Can you imagine that?" I could.

The Sluggs family did not use the funds to pay for the operation; they took care of it themselves. Not long after the operation, Darrell came to school one day with his glasses held together with tape. He was very upset. He had tried to repair with tape the damage done in his fall from the horse. Mrs. Sluggs asked for assistance replacing the glasses. That was all of the financial aid they utilized.

Coloring became Darrell's favorite activity. He scribbled like a child half his age, delighted at the visual process. He had to acquaint himself with a world he had felt and heard but not see.

I asked the students what was the smallest thing they could imagine. After seven years of teaching kindergarten, I expected answers like a mouse or a kitten. Darrell answered, "An atom." I asked what was the largest thing he could imagine. He replied, "The universe."

The service center psychologist tried to test Darrell. He scored too low to rank. He would chatter about where he was or what he saw but he would not answer the questions. Next year, first grade, he would be with an older, less patient, teacher and 25 students at once. I introduced him to the special education teacher.

Two afternoons a week he went to her room. He liked that. She gave him candy and he got to find out what was behind one more closed door.

In addition to seeing physical objects, Darrell now seemed to see clearly his social position. Before he had defended himself by seeming retarded. But it was a general defense. He didn't realize there was any life except the rough one he lived. With better vision and contact with other children, he knew for the first time that everyone did not live as he lived. He became angry.

In April Darrell developed sores around his mouth. I purchased impetigo medicine. When he arrived I would disinfect and medicate his sores. The lesions did not clear; they spread over his body. I called Mrs. Sluggs every other day until she saw I was as determined about this as I had been about his eyes. She took Darrell to the doctor.

Darrell was in the hospital for a week. Vague talk circulated of cancer, high blood count, and blood disease. He attended little school for the rest of the year.

I transferred to another school at the end of the school year. When I visited with my former colleagues during the next year, they commented how much they missed me. "We had to hire an extra teacher just to keep Darrell in class. That is a fulltime job." Darrell had taken up room inspection again, and the first grade teacher did not see it as a sign of curiosity and intelligence.

At the tri-county speech contest, a year and a half after I left Anthon, I heard of his death. Darrell was killed by a shot from a pellet gun. He and a ten-year-old nephew were said to be alone at the time.

He suffered no more abuse; he did not die slowly of cancer; he did not die of rot lying in the dog pen. Did he carry out his early plan? Or did his hospitalization finally raise too many questions about his condition? Details of the death, as of his birth, are very sketchy, but he knows is beyond one more door.

* * * * *

I now teach in a private preschool. All of the students are present on tuition basis; kids like Darrell don't attend. It is an unreal world, a sterile environment. Some of my students suffer from receiving too many things and not enough affection. Some of them have been roughly handled. But all of them have someone to look after their physical needs; they each have enough to eat and a place to sleep. Seldom do I go to bed worrying about one of them, and I do not dream about any of them.

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happen to love her best." Miss Mary said, "It may be apple sauce, but it keeps things clipping."

Miss Mary was known over the state for her leadership in the English Council which she served as Secretary. She was featured speaker at O.E.A. meetings, banquets, and graduation exercises. Among her other responsibilities were Latin council representatives and Harmon County O.E.A. President.

Oklahoma honored her Teacher of the

Year. Writing poetry was one of Miss Mary's hobbies. She was a member of several groups in this field. At a meeting of Burritt College alumni one of her poems about mountains was read as a surprise to her. "That received more applause than did Riley's 'That Old Sweet-heart of Mine'," Miss Mary laughingly said. In fact she always laughed when she spoke of her poems.

A portrait of Miss Mary hangs in the Hollis High School hall as a gift from the Hollis Alumni Association.

A community-wide event was held in Miss Mary's honor upon retirement; there was standing room only. This was honoring Miss Mary and Miss Sallie; they were presented a silver service from the Sallie Gillentine faculty and pupils. Whether teachers are born, not made, or vice versa, the Gillentine sisters qualified on either score, pupils agreed.

(adapted from PLANNING THE ROUTE, publication of the Harmon County Historical Society.)

Powell Boyd was in Altus from 1928 - 1933. He taught Latin in high school and French and English Composition in Altus Junior College, which was at that time located in the High School Building. He was also for a time Dean of the present Western Oklahoma State College.

Powell Boyd In Altus

by Idena McFadin Clark

The windows of your highschool-college classroom
Wore wine-red velvet draperies.
The low black book shelves underneath
Were crammed with colorful and exciting books.
In those dark Depression times of little hope
You brought us joy. You gave us beauty, too.
In your classes, we discovered the best
Of music, poetry, drama, and art.

Spellbound, we sat, six or eight to a table,
While you strode around the room
Throwing knowledge and ideas at us.
We held up our hearts and minds to you
And tried our best to learn.

Sometimes you were rattling off French conversation.
Other times, it was Latin. Or the best of English poets.
In your room, even in those poor days,
There were magazines and newspapers to read
(Some of them from across the sea,
And all of them paid for by you).
You made us welcome to read them,
Or any of the books, whenever we wished.
Your room was an oasis for us
Of all that was true and beautiful and good.

For a moment, sometimes, our eyes would stray past
Those wine velvet draperies, and we saw
More than the pink and blue mountains
At the edge of the plain. We saw the world.
We saw all the places we wanted someday to go.
We saw the people we hoped to meet.
And forever after, all our lives through,
You have been with us.

THE TWINNS

by Mildred Weston Gable

*Editor's note: Miss Ima Foster died on
March 20, 1984 — after this
issue had already gone to press.*



"Ima and Ura Foster"

In Greer County, most people fondly called them "The Twins." Their names were Ima and Ura Foster, and they were Greer County teachers for a combined total of 89 years. Ima taught First Grade, and Ura taught Sixth Grade.

Their energies weren't given solely to the classroom, however. They were active in Mangum's Church of Christ, and they helped organize the Girl Scouts program in Southwest Oklahoma. They also were instrumental in establishing Camp Kate Portwood, a beautiful Girl Scouts camp located at the foot of the Granite Mountains northwest of Granite, Oklahoma.

Both twins were also charter members of the Mangum Business and Professional Women's Club, and each served a term as president. Ura died in 1976, but Ima at age 75 is the only living charter member.

Always recreation enthusiasts, they were for a time advisors for Greer County 4-H club members who were preparing an entry for the State Share-the-Fun-Festival. Dr. Leroy Thomas, leader of the 1952 Share-the-Fun team coached by the Foster sisters, said, "Anyone who never saw the Twins lead the 'Hokey Pokey' missed a great deal!"

There may be some who try, but no one will ever be able to take the place of the Twins in the hearts and thoughts of Greer County youth who came under their influence.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Evidently Miss M had her own brand of effectiveness.

MISS M

by Elsie Lang

Have you ever heard of anyone who didn't worship his/her first-grade teacher? It seems that no matter how old, how ugly, or how mean she might have been, we all, at age six, thought she was terrific. As I look back on this year from an adult perspective, however, I see a slightly different picture of my first-grade teacher.

Miss M was rather plump and motherly looking. She was an old maid, as female teachers usually were in those days, but being a spinster was not her idea. In fact, rumor had it that she had followed the bachelor coach to our town with matrimony in mind. But the two of them never married—at least not during the six years they taught together in our school.

Our school was a small rural one, and discipline was not a problem, especially in the lower grades, for our parents taught us to respect our elders and to obey orders without questioning their fairness. In fact, I, for one, was promised another spanking at home if I got one at school, and this promise was made good the one time it happened.

But just in case our parents hadn't frightened us into submission, Miss M finished the job. I remember her telling us that if we were bad, she would send us to the "Office." This threat alone was chilling, for we were terrified of our superintendent. When he visited our classroom, the first hint of his presence was his long black slippers turning in at our door. Then we looked up into a face that wore a perpetual frown. This frown always convinced me that I had done something wrong and he had come after me. Furthermore, Miss M told us that if we were really bad, we would be put in a big box that was kept in the "Office" for this express purpose, and there we would stay without food or water for several days. It never occurred to me that this might be cruel and unusual punishment or that my parents might quiet my fears if I but told them of these threats.

This fear served, in my case anyway, as a deterrent to any planned misbehavior, but the sins that were punishable, according to Miss M, were legion. For

example, one day I found a gypsum rock on the playground, and since we had little playground equipment with which to amuse ourselves, I began to draw a hopscotch game on the sidewalk with the rock. My creative endeavor was labeled as willful defacement of school property, and my knuckles were soundly rapped with Miss M's ruler. Needless to say, this episode ended hopscotch games on our playground.

Not only did Miss M rule our conduct with her fear tactics; she also used threats as an incentive to learning. For example, we "learned" our reading lesson for the next day by taking our book home each afternoon, and with the help of a parent or older sibling, we memorized the assignment. This arrangement worked beautifully until the afternoon I left my reader on the school bus by mistake. I begged my parents to take me to the bus driver's house so I could get my book and learn my lesson, but they, not knowing how worried I was about being put in that pine box in the "Office," told me that my cousin, who rode the same bus, could help me during the ride to school the next morning. That night I promised God perpetual perfection if He would make sure that Clara, my cousin, would be on the bus the next day. Fortunately, she was, and with her help and my fear of failure, I read my page to Miss M without pausing or stumbling over a word. I even received rare words of praise from Miss M, but I had truly learned my lesson. I never left another book on the school bus.

Even though Miss M's teaching methods seem unorthodox by today's standards, they were effective. We all respected our teacher, and we all learned to read. Recently we celebrated our thirtieth class reunion, and out of the original class of twenty-two, there are several successful farmers and ranchers; a Wichita, Kansas, Police Chief; a United Airlines executive; an air traffic controller; a university professor; and an Atomic Energy research scientist. Perhaps we should give Miss M some credit for our successes.

Depression Teacher



by Kate Jackson Lewis

"What's your name, son?" I inquired. The startled 6-year old looked up, his big blue eyes spilling over with tears. "I-I forgot now," he stammered, and started wailing. "I wanta' go home."

College professors and textbooks had failed to prepare me for a crisis such as this. Overjoyed at first that I was getting a job during the thirties depression, I was now having my doubts.

Later I found out that the child had always been called "Judge," a nickname. Trying to remember "Bedford," his real name, was too much for a frightened child.

It still seems like a miracle when I think how I procured my first teaching position. The depression had begun. Jobs were scarce, and I was not quite 17. By fibbing a little, I had secured a two-year state certificate. My age necessitated the pre-variation, and at the time, it seemed of vital importance that I start earning my own livelihood.

Feet dangling from the side of a flatbed truck, I rode 20 miles into one of the poorest counties of southeastern Oklahoma, seeking employment. Needing to know of any existing vacancies, I went to see the county superintendent. He recommended me because we had been members of the same singing class. Had he stood near me, where he could hear me sing, he would have been more reluctant to recommend me.

Contract held securely in one hand, I pulled off my shoes and waded the creek to put in my application to the school board clerk, who was plowing in a nearby

field. Without much hesitation, he gave me his stamp of approval, then directed me to the homes of the two other board members. They, too, signed my contract. None of them bothered to tell me that after Christmas my warrants could not be cashed without a discount because the county never had enough funds for the entire term. I sold one warrant at 50 per cent of its face value. Needless to say, these circumstances didn't help me pay off my debts or raise my standard of living.

These were trying times for my patrons too. Many of them relied on making a living from the sale of moonshine whiskey. It was not unusual to see smoke emanating from the many stills scattered throughout the woods and hills.

Once in a social studies class discussion on ways of making a living, a small lad held up his hand and lisped. "My daddy makth whithkey."

Children came to school barefoot all winter, bringing poor rations for their noon meals. Many of the children's parents had pellagra because their diets lacked B-vitamins. Then the big blow came. Federal officers raided the whiskey stills and took the distillers to Muskogee federal jail. After that, the mothers and children became desperate for the necessities of life. Many children stopped attending school.

My \$90 monthly salary would have been a fortune had I been able to cash warrants at face value. Still, I couldn't help sharing the paltry sum with the poorer children. One third-grader stayed

away from school because he had no coat. I bought a second-hand mackinaw for 74 cents. Another time, I ordered six pairs of canvas shoes at 33 cents each from the Sears Roebuck sale catalog for my basketball team to wear to Coalgate to the county basketball tournament.

The children shared with me, too, often giving me a baked sweet potato from a syrup bucket lunch pail. Once a child gave me some roasted 'possum. That was too much! My stomach rebelled. Not wanting to offend the child I took the meat home with me. One first grader saw me put part of a leftover sandwich into the pot-bellied stove. His response shamed me.

"Miss Jackson, didn't you know it's a sin to burn bread?" he reproached. To this day I've fed my scraps to birds or animals.

In the summer of '33, I became principal of the school. Instead of gaining financially, my plight grew worse. For some reason, Coal County received no state aid. In the spring all county schools closed to await further developments in the crisis. Soon, help was promised through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Each Saturday thereafter I hitched a ride into Coalgate and stood in line wondering if I would get a check. The weekly checks (if available) ranged from \$10 or less to \$35. One time after failing to get a check, I met my brother-in-law as he waited to take me home.

As he counted his few left-over coins, I heard him say, "If I had four cents more, I'd buy a sack of Bull Durham." Counting my last pennies, I handed him what he needed to buy his 10 cent bag of tobacco.

I've often wondered what my net income was for the four years I taught at Parker. Not enough to pay income tax on, I'm sure.

**(Appeared in "And Gladly Teach," a collection of retired teachers' early experiences, edited by Smallwood)*

Grima taught only a few hours in Western Oklahoma, but who can deny her the appellation
WESTERN OKLAHOMAN?



Ima Ramsey Howard

Saint Peter's Chief Harpist — A Eulogy

Uninhibited native Texan; transplanted Oklahoman. Genteel Southern lady. Sensitive poet and artist. Interesting conversationalist.

The first time I was to meet Ima Howard, the woman described above, I didn't know what to expect. One of my students in a Literature of the American South class, Jim Hill, had said to me: "My grandmother is really a character—a Southern lady of sorts. She's an artist and a musician who does programs all over the Southwest. Would you like for me to bring her to class someday to talk and show her Southern artifacts?" Thinking my students that summer would enjoy a change, I asked, "When can she be here?"

Finally, the day arrived. When I walked into my classroom, Ima Howard was already there. The room was gaily decorated with china dolls bought during the speaker's frequent tours of the South, oil paintings of Southern plantations that she herself had done, and numerous brochures that were mementoes of Southern travels. In the midst of all this

atmosphere was a most charming lady in her late seventies.

Jim introduced us and I was about to introduce our visitor to the class; but being a pro and a ham to boot, she swept over to the piano, sat down, and began to play a ragtime tune. After finishing the first piece, she modulated lavishly into "How Great Thou Art."

Continuing to play chords, she turned to us and said,

You can't know how happy I am to be back in an English classroom. I was just tickled to death when my grandson, Jimmy, asked me to come up here.

Teaching has been my life. I began in Terral, Oklahoma, in 1918. I taught altogether 42 wonderful years. I began in the first grade and ended up in high-school English. I retired from teaching four times before I finally made it stick. The

last time I retired was 1967. Since then I've been staying at home, doing church work, and going anywhere anybody would ask me to give a program. For the past ten or fifteen years, I've put on at least sixty musical programs for various clubs, high schools, banquets, and social affairs.

But the main thing that makes my life is that I'm a Christian. I love people, and I enjoy entertaining them. As far as I'm concerned, real Christianity is to love God and to love your fellow man. In all those 42 years of teaching, I never met a student I couldn't learn to love.

My life has been SO FULL! God has, indeed, blessed me in so many ways, and I give Him the credit for all my talents, but most of all for the wonderful friends I have met and loved over the years.

After that rousing beginning, she conducted us on an armchair tour of the South, using slides and all the other

by Dr. Leroy Thomas

effects already mentioned. Later she invited questions; and at the end of her program, she said,

Everytime I give a program, I always tell this little story, and I don't mean anything sacrilegious by it. When I finally get to Heaven, I'm going to ask Saint Peter for his largest golden harp. When I get it, I'm going to play "The St. Louis Blues" on it.

With another flourish she began "The St. Louis Blues" and then modulated into a softened version, which she sang, of the first verse of "How Great Thou Art."

But the best was yet to be. Ima, her son, James Donald, and Jim met my wife and me at a local restaurant for lunch.

I had already decided that she was refreshingly uninhibited; but as I walked into the dining room, she looked at me, a victim a year before of an arterial occlusion, and said,

Well, I see you're crippled too. Look at my old stiff leg. I got this back on Sunday afternoon, October 5, 1908, because of a runaway accident in a buggy. Both of my legs were badly cut when I was thrown into a barbed-wire fence near the Brazos River. I would have died if my wonderful mother hadn't nursed me through all those frightening nights that I ran high fevers. I was in a wheelchair and on crutches for almost a year--missed a whole year of school in Terral--but the only bad effect is this stiff leg. How'd you get yours? Jimmy hasn't told me a thing about that.

During lunch that day I learned many things about Ima and her family: most important, I had the feeling that here was the blossoming of a friendship that would last forever because of the spiritual hope that drew us to each other.

Over the next five years we corresponded and visited regularly. As a result I became a part of her family; and I called her Grima, just as her grandchildren did. Two years after her first visit, she came again to speak to another of my Southern Literature classes and even stayed over an extra day to be honored at a Southern Picnic in my backyard. My students, family, and I enjoyed a leisurely meal with Grima followed by an informal singalong around the piano. Typically, Grima asked all the students to sign a "roll sheet" before they departed; she wanted to be sure to have an accurate record of the event to add to her scrapbook.

Her life story she told at a slight bidding, and the details were at once delightful as well as captivating.

She was born Ima Ramsey on January 3, 1896, in Mineral Wells, Texas--ninth and last child of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Joseph Ramsey, formerly of McConnells, Alabama.

The family lived in Mineral Wells, where they owned and managed two large hotels, until late 1909. They moved to Terral when Ima lacked three months being 14 years old.

She completed four years of high school and received a diploma from Terral High School in 1915.

Ima and her mother had a difficult time financially after Mr. Ramsey died in 1914, but through pioneer perseverance they survived.

After high-school graduation, Ima went to Central State College at Edmond and earned a lifetime teaching certificate; later she finished a Bachelor's degree at Midwestern University in Wichita Falls. In 1918 she went back to teach first grade in Terral, her hometown.

Music, which Ima began studying at the age of 9, was always an integral part of her life. She continued a study of piano and voice and was a member of chorus throughout her college years.

She was even pianist for silent movies and for some vaudeville acts in Mineral Wells, Terral, and Drumright.

Although her favorites were ragtime, blues, and Dixieland Jazz, she also appreciated and played classical music.

And hanging in my Family Room is a painting that Grima did for me of William Faulkner's home "Rowan Oak," which attests to her artistic ability.

Grima had two husbands. Her first husband was James Green Hill, a registered pharmacist. He operated Hill's Drugstore in Terral; it was formerly owned by his father (William Hill), who was also a registered pharmacist. Green's grandfather was Dr. Hill of Springtown, Texas, near Fort Worth. Although she knew nothing about operating a drugstore, Grima kept Hill's Drug after Green died in September of 1955 until November of 1956.

Pharmacy has continued to be a family profession; her son and his wife, Irene, are both graduates of the O.U. School of Pharmacy. James Donald is a district manager for Parke-Davis, and Irene is a practicing pharmacist.

Following Green's death Grima lived alone for almost four years; she then married Frank Howard, a childhood sweetheart, on July 19, 1959. From that time on, Grima always relished telling with a twinkle in her eyes: "My full name is Ima Ramsey Hill Howard. Can you top that?"

Throughout their marriage, Frank and Grima lived in the home Grima's mother

deeded to her, which meant that Grima had lived in the same house since 1918.

They lived there peacefully enjoying the produce of a huge vegetable garden which Frank always worked and the beauty of a flower garden containing roses, a lily pond, crepe myrtle, hollyhock, hydrangea, iris, althea, phlox, honeysuckle, numerous bird baths, and two bricked patios--supervised by both of them.

In her time, Grima received various honors. She was chosen Jefferson County "Teacher of the Year" in 1964; she was presented a certificate of award from the Oklahoma state legislature in 1967 for her civic service; and she was awarded an engraved wall plaque in 1971 by the Denton, Texas, Lions Club for programs presented.

Throughout her life she was involved with people, and she received personal letters from many outstanding individuals whom she admired: Mamie Eisenhower, Eddie Rickenbacker, Winston Churchill, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Alexander Dolgun.

Even after her own serious stroke and Frank's death in 1979, a letter from Grima was still full of hope:

Well, I've lived on this earth 83 years, and God has been so good to me. I taught in the public schools 42 years, and I never met a student I couldn't learn to love. God has been good to me. He has given me two good husbands; a good son; a kind, thoughtful daughter-in-law; and four remarkable grandchildren. If He allows me no more time here, I have already had a deep, intensely fulfilling life. With the psalmist I declare, "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?" I'm thankful that I can still do paintings and play the piano, although I can't walk. My friends are wonderful to me; they come in and do whatever I need done and take me anywhere I need to go. I do miss Frank so much; he was such a wonderful man. But I know he's with God, so I know he's happy.

At 6:30 a.m. on April 4, 1980, I received word that Grima had died on April 3. I felt the same sense of loss I'm sure I would have felt if she had been my own grandmother; she was surely a wonderful surrogate.

But as long as life lasts, someone will see Grima's works of art in their various forms--including these four representative poems:

cont.

"The One-Horse Town"

I'm glad I live in a one-horse town,
In a little old one-horse town,
For the folk down there are the finest folks
You can find for miles around!
When you walk down the street, it's a "howdy-do,"
With a smile or a pat on the back,
And it's fun we have just sittin' around
Listening to some guy's "wisecrack."

The folks down there aren't famous folks,
Not rich, too smart, nor grand,
But they stand by a fellow when he needs it most,
And they lend a helping hand.
Your troubles are never your own, down there.
In that little old one-horse town,
There's always someone willing to share
And to give you a lift when you're down.

If I should die in some faraway place
Many miles from the home I know,
Please send me back o'er the long, long road,
To my one-horse town let me go,
For my old friends there will mourn over me
And sort of miss my being around.
Let me rest by the side of my loved ones there
In that little old one-horse town.

(written at age 41)

"Prayer at Night"

God must have known and planned just when
To send a peaceful night to end
A toilsome day.

Then weary hearts are made at ease
And daily worries such as these
Are wiped away.

Our tired heads are laid to rest
And sweet contentment comes to bless
All cares away.

'Tis then our thoughts are turned to God
With thankfulness that steps we've trod
Were turned His way.

Lord, grant our faltering feet may be
On pathways leading straight to Thee,
For'er we pray!

(age 41)

"Mother's Money"

At last she had the money saved
To buy those curtains that she craved;
But daughter saw a petty hat,
So all the money went for *that*.

"Oh, that's all right," thought Mother then,
"I'll save my money up again."
And when she had the sum she sought,
'Twas *Junior's sweater* that it bought!

But being a Mother is so much fun!
And-after all is said and done,
The way the money went was right,
Besides-----

Curtains keep out too much light!!!

(age 41)

"My Scrapbook"

Every morning God gives me
A new and perfect day.

He tells me I may use it
In my own kind of way.

But when my day is ended
And the light begins to dim,

I must check my record over
And give it back to Him.

He is making me a scrapbook
Of all the things I do.
Each page records one day of life
And how I've lived it through.
But when my days are finished
He'll show my book to me.
I hope it is good enough
For Him and me to see!

(age 71)

What's that I hear--"The St. Louis
Blues" being played on Saint Peter's best
golden harp by his chief harpist?

ON HORSEBACK IN OVERALLS

by Pat Kourt

If a list of world records in education were compiled, Kenneth K. Sweeney of Thomas just might be at the top! Imagine these statistics:

- 1) A man taught or headed a school for 45 years, never missed a day of work, and never even went home early because of personal illness!
- 2) From 1929-1983, he attended every senior-high commencement program of the same school.
- 3) The same man never missed a senior class play for more than 50 years in the Thomas School.
- 4) Also, he attended every Southwest Oklahoma teachers' convention between 1923-1981.

This educator's lifestyle message to his co-workers and his community seems to be patterned after the familiar words of Proverbs 3:13. "Happy is the man that findest wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

Mr. Sweeney's remarkable dedication to gaining wisdom began at age twenty in the rural Bear Creek School District southeast of Thomas. There he became the teacher of eight pupils. Ironically, though, he himself had not graduated from high school--he still lacked one year. "I didn't see the inside of a high school until I was seventeen," he reflects.

"My first job was inspired by an older teacher of mine, Mr. W. H. Smith. He asked me what I was going to do about my education. He suggested I try teaching. I

remember I went by horseback in overalls to visit the board of education to see if they thought I might possibly teach for them. All I had was hope. With encouragement from them, I began studying night and day. I was rather a nervous young man when I reported to Arapaho to take a two-day county teacher's exam. I recall (and this is certainly nothing to brag about) that as that exam was finished, I got sick and almost fainted from exhaustion. But my whole future depended on that test."

Passing that exam meant receiving a "third-grade" certificate. The young Mr. Sweeney earned \$70 per month for his first term of seven months at Bear Creek. "At the end of the term I borrowed money to go to summer school at Weatherford. I hitchhiked from home and studied psychology and pedagogy (the art of science of teaching)."

Next, Kenneth became employed at the Mulberry School where he claims to have learned his greatest respect for all types of people. "Mulberry was an Amish school. I had thirty-nine students of all grade levels. It was quite a change from having only eight youngsters. I spent three years at Mulberry. I enjoyed eating at those folks' tables even though they seldom spoke anything but German. They were marvelous to me. Also, it was at Mulberry that I taught my first Indian students. It's been my privilege to learn many cultural ways during my career."



Ageless at eighty, Mr. Kenneth Sweeney reflects on his years as an educator.

Bear Creek School, southeast of Thomas

His third position was at the Swan School where he and his family had received their grammar school education. Its location was five miles south and five miles east of Thomas. The school term was lengthened to eight months. Because Swan School was not accredited, the young instructor drove students to Thomas High School for their graduation exam. "I became known at the Thomas School, and in 1929, the superintendent asked me to teach eighth grade."

One early reminiscence about those earlier school days is graduating from Thomas High School on his twenty-second birthday. Already he had taught in rural schools for two years at that time!

Mr. Sweeney's career at Thomas Schools continued with his receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree at Southwestern in 1935. "Interestingly, I attended only summer classes and night school or did correspondence work. I never attended a regular semester of classes. I was always just one step ahead of the state requirements, and it took hard work in those days. But I enjoyed the studying. My mother had taught me to enjoy reading. That love of books grew into a boyhood ambition to graduate from the University of Oklahoma. It was there that I received my master's degree in city-school administration."

The years passed quickly for Mr. Sweeney — forty-five of them with Thomas area schools. Thirty of those years

were as superintendent.

In 1968, Kenneth's active career in education slowed a bit with his retirement. In fact, as he laughingly observes, "I was totally surprised at the end of my last day at school because I'd been so busy with working on last minute details in the office. George Nigh was our commencement speaker that evening, and it was a pleasure to share the platform with him. The next thing I knew, Kenneth Roof, a teacher and spokesman for the Thomas community, presented my wife Lorene and me with a \$2,000 check for a 22-day European trip. It was a wonderful evening. I realized even more what a great community I lived in. I've had the same address since 1910—I've never had a desire to leave."

Since that occasion in 1968, a large black and white formal portrait of a dignified, almost-ageless man has adorned the entryway of Thomas High School. It is a contrast from the overall-clad young man of nineteen who sought his first teaching position. However, the picture displays the same sincerity, warmth, and self-assurance of the youth. It is a reminder of accomplishment to area schools, classes, and educators of several past decades.

Yes, records are made to be broken, but few if any careers have equalled the dedication of Kenneth Sweeney, who at age eighty, remains a true friend of education in Western Oklahoma.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TEACHER - FRIEND

by
R. R. Chapman

In the fall of 1900 when I was thirteen plus years of age, I started to school at Union School District #3 in Custer County Oklahoma Territory. This was the second term of school I had attended in the territory, and next to the last I attended anywhere.

The teacher was Mr. John Kroth, a fine looking man of nearly thirty years of age and of Dutch ancestry, well educated for those territorial days and well suited for the job of teaching and training a houseful of fully alive boys and girls who were from adjoining states, and some from much farther away.

There were no standard school books in the territory at that time. Each scholar brought whatever school books he had, and the teacher made use of the books of the scholars who came from the states which were

represented by the most scholars — Texas, Missouri, and Kansas.

John Kroth was a bachelor — a farmer who had come to the territory from Holten, Kansas.

The pupils' ages ranged from six to eighteen years. The number in school any day was from forty to fifty youngsters in a one-room schoolhouse, and the subjects taught were from the primer to bookkeeping.

One young man by the name of Leo Sweringen quit school and went to work in a cotton gin where he got an arm crushed in the press. He soon returned to school and took up bookkeeping and shorthand.

There was never any trouble at school that the teacher couldn't handle: he was liked and respected by pupils and parents alike, and many of his flock went on to higher learning and responsible positions even to the University of Oklahoma; many became successful farmers and ranchers.

Mr. Kroth received \$35.00 per month as teacher and janitor. Through the school months he boarded out from Monday until Friday, for which he paid three dollars a week.

John Kroth was a fine man, and a worker. He taught only one term of school at Union. He went back to Kansas and married a Kansas girl; he brought her to Oklahoma where they lived and farmed for several years before going back to Kansas to stay.

John Kroth died and was buried in Kansas some twenty years ago.



November 25, 1900. John Kroth, middle left second row from back. Author, R. R. Chapman is pictured second boy from right with legs crossed.

The Lesson

by James Beaty

A sweaty schoolroom —
1967 in Western Oklahoma.
One lonesome sparrow
Drifted by the open window.
I drifted through Keats and Browning.
Then she said,
“Today we’ll listen to a modern American poet,
Woody Guthrie.”

One day the girls spoke of soulful things.
“How do you know you have a soul?”
She asked the blonde one.
Rampant outrage
At our teacher’s godless question.

I sat in the back row grinning
And whispered to my friend
What no one else knew:
“She’s spent the last five years
A missionary in Africa.”

Breaking Barriers to Share Culture

by
Kate Jackson Lewis

“**P**an!” “Mantequilla!” “Leche!” Hungry voices rang out across the school lunchroom. One six-year-old child elbowed his classmate, asking, “Hey, how do you say potatoes?”

The near bedlam was a trial effort to bring about a sharing of languages between Mexican-American and Anglo children in a Western Oklahoma school.

My three years work with migrant children were the most rewarding of 39 spent teaching in Oklahoma classrooms. The idea of teaching 19 non-English speaking pupils overwhelmed me at first. Totally unprepared for the task, I started

visiting neighboring schools hoping to find veteran teachers who would supply me with needed techniques. The resulting responses were almost identical: “Play it by ear,” “Do the best you can—they’ll soon move on anyway,” “Don’t let them speak Spanish.” Pondering the last suggestion, I objected. It seemed unfair to tell a child to refrain from speaking the only language he knew.

Added to the language barrier were health and sanitation problems. While the majority were basically a healthy group, a dentist found cavities and the county health nurse found heavy infestations of head lice. Starting the scalp examinations, the tactful lady instructed, “Bend over, so we can see if you have snow in your hair.” Terrified at the thought that I, too could become a victim of the pests, I reluctantly bent over. This procedure calmed the children’s fears.

Following the nurse’s instructions, I bought a gallon of Boronate. The solution was poured into six-ounce bottles to send home with children who needed treatment. Older bilingual children helped in distributing the medicine—interpreting instructions to parents. Two treatments eliminated the pests but due to unsanitary home conditions and to several families residing in each house, the process had to be repeated as soon as the parasites were discovered again.

My school-superintendent-husband sought and procured federal funds to be used for bettering health conditions in the school and community. He employed a former practical nurse to assist in the challenge to bring about a cleaner, more healthful student body. Soon all pupils owned toothbrushes, shoeshine kits, soap, and towels. These articles were stored in individual tote-trays in the shower room. The pupils were taught to take showers, to brush teeth, and to keep their shoes shined. Community people donated clothing (usually hand-me-downs) but often community women would ask to take children into nearby Altus to have shoes fitted on them. In addition, federal funds were set aside to buy clothing for larger boys and girls for whom articles were not available in community donations.

Children with dental problems were taken to the county health department’s dentist. Vaccinations usually took place at school. Blood and uranalysis tests were done by county nurses. Routine examinations requiring a physical were set up at school. Eye glasses were provided by the local Lions’ Club.

Most of the migrants were from one to three years behind their age-groups. Some overage pupils had never been to school before. Once, I enrolled five chil-

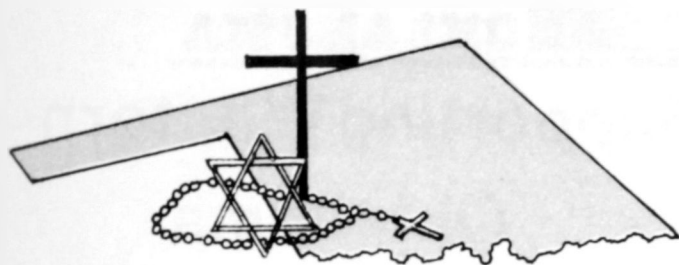
dren from one family in the first grade. One lad, Jesus, was 12 years old and weighed 158 pounds. We called him “Big Jess.” He became an eager learner. His eyes sparkled when he received his first hardbacked book. A book was a treasure to most—a special privilege to take home a magazine or an old dog-eared, discolored book.

Parents of these underprivileged Mexican-Americans were anxious for their children to learn. Wanting to give something in return, they humbled me at holiday time with their generous gifts. I was always aware that each gift necessitated a sacrifice of their needs at home. Many times the pupils brought colorful, handmade gifts of paper or ribbon—some were pinatas filled with goodies.

When summer came, I was eager to start a head-start program. After a two-week’s training at Oklahoma University, a new venture challenged me. Admittedly, I was a bit apprehensive about so much pupil freedom as the program recommended. Strangely, my fears were soon eradicated by the interest that the pupils showed in the many group activities provided. Free play, painting, a variety of crafts, excursions, picnics, puppet shows, and stage shows performed by groups of Oklahoma University students spellbound both teacher and pupils.

The progress made by Linda, a shy 7-year-old, more than repaid me for the time and energy expended each day. Linda spent her entire first-grade year without uttering one word aloud. One day during the summer program, I heard the reserved child boldly declare, “That’s my doll! Give it to me.” My joy was beyond bounds. At last Linda emerged from her cocoon. A highly intelligent child, she had learned to read, write, and do sums as well as any of the pupils. Showing no fear of me whispering her reading lesson daily without missing a word—left me puzzled about the cause of her reticence. I do not know the reason for her silence yet. It was enough to know that a transformation took place in Linda that day.

When we terminated our stay at Martha, I looked back over my shoulder tearfully. Then I saw a migrant mother, and her children, coming into the backyard brushing their teeth. This sight gave me a needed lift. Not only had the children learned good health habits but they had also educated their parents. I was reminded of a quote from a lad we called Little Joe. One day after reading exceptionally well, he beamed as I complimented his performance. His response was, “I want to learn to read and write so I can show my ‘fodder’ how.”



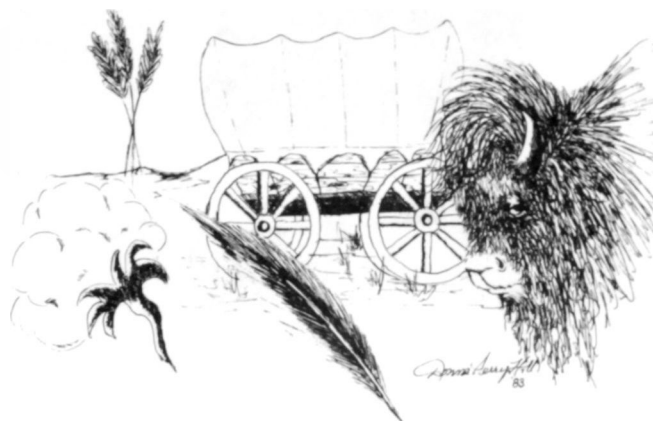
SUMMER, 1984. "Western Oklahoma Religion" is a theme that should draw many interesting submissions. Deadline: April 1, 1984.



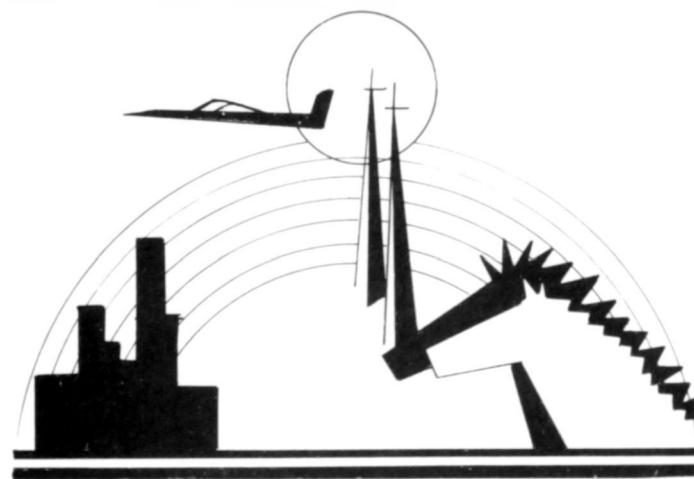
WINTER, 1984. WESTERN OKLAHOMA POLITICS. This theme could breed some controversial issues, but good taste will be insisted upon. Articles on political theories as well as Western Oklahoma politicians may be submitted. Deadline: October 1, 1984.



SUMMER, 1985. "Frontier Western Oklahoma." This issue offers opportunities for writers of family histories and biographies. We need Frontier Western Oklahoma material. Deadline: April 1, 1985.



FALL, 1984. "Western Oklahoma's Colorful Past." Surely there are some interesting tales that have never been told in written form. Deadline: July 1, 1984.



SPRING, 1985. "Western Oklahoma's Promise." This issue is a promising possibility for contributors. Theme interpretation allows much creative flexibility. Deadline: January 1, 1985.



Projected future themes are "Western Oklahoma Artists and Writers" (Fall, 1985), "Famous Western Oklahomans" (Winter, 1985), and "Western Oklahoma Firsts" (Spring, 1986).

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