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WESTVIEW

A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

VOLUME II

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"GOLDFINCHES" BY WANDA MUMM



FOREWORD

One of my favorite condolences for a suffering student or other friend is, "Don't worry about it. You won't even remember this twenty thousand years from now."

Although many people don't think in terms of twenty thousand years, all of us understand what a wonderful, sanative effect the passing of time can have. So it is with WESTVIEW. After six issues, we're beginning to learn a few things about magazine publication. Those bad memories of seven issues ago are almost eclipsed by our present feeling of happiness. In fact, they're remembered only to remind us of where we came from (yes, Miss Grumby, it is all right to end a sentence with a preposition now — if the preposition is needed). In other words, to paraphrase a great American writer, how can we possibly appreciate success unless we have experienced failure?

Why should the word **success** be applied to a fledgling journal that isn't yet self-supporting? Surely because we have the good will of our readers, the support of our advertisers, the cooperation of our illustrators and photographers, the quality submissions of our writers. We extend a big "thank you" to all of you and plead that you keep on keeping on.

Speaking of keeping on, all of you writers, artists, and photographers out there should study our future-issue projections and prepare something for submission. Remember to use a coversheet and to provide a SASE. Upward, onward, inward!

— Leroy Thomas
Managing Editor



PHOTO BY RICK FELTY

In times past, children were taught here at home.

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PROPERTY OF HELEN THAMES RALEY



PHOTO BY OBU PHOTO DEPARTMENT

Dr. John Wesley Raley
(1902-1968)

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ON THE COVERS: both by Wanda Mumm, Weatherford artist and teacher. Front: Goldfinches." Back: "Waterfall."

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; Managing 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.

AT THE END OF THE COTTON ROW — OBU

— by Ernestine Gravley



Dr. John Wesley Raley
(1902-1968)

(Managing Editor's Note: The subject of Mrs. Gravley's article, Dr. John Wesley Raley, lived a bit too far east to be considered a Western Oklahoman; however, his influence and appeal are universal. Raley and Gravley's professional association extends back to 1968 when Dr. Raley wrote the Foreword for the Memorial Edition of Mrs. Gravley's second published book, *HANG ONTO THE WINDMILLS*, a work about Dr. Haskell Newman of Shattuck. And now Gravley has written an article about this man, Raley, who really cannot be contained in a column of print. Mrs. Gravley is grateful to Mrs. Helen Thomas Raley for her book *AN UNCOMMON MAN* and for her help in gathering materials for this article.)



PROPERTY OF ERNESTINE GRAVLEY

PHOTO BY ED BLOCHOWIAK

Author Gravley at her desk, her favorite spot —

Oklahoma Baptist University stands on the "Kickapoo site," sixty acres of high land in northwest Shawnee, Pottawatomie County, overlooking a plot known in earlier days as a bison wallow. Along Indian trails as early as 1832, Baptist education was brought into the wilderness of Oklahoma by Eastern and Northern missionaries. OBU was incorporated in the first capitol building at Guthrie in 1910.

Today, Oklahoma Baptist University, an accredited four-year college supported by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, is the fulfilled dream of one man, John Wesley Raley. Alumni of OBU are proud of the name "Bison," and Dr. Raley was the greatest Bison of them all. He was a short, stockily built redhead, a controversial giant of state education who, at 31, became the youngest college president in the nation. Son of a Texas cotton farmer, for Raley the university was his dream "at the end of the cotton row."

Though Dr. Raley died in 1968, the name John Wesley Raley is synonymous with Oklahoma Baptist University and vice versa. He was born one of nine children on August 15, 1902 at Briary, Texas to Leonidas and Margaret Raley, devout Methodists.

"And that's why I, a Baptist preacher, bear the greatest name in Methodism," Raley often said.

The children went to the Baptist Sunday School available in their community and young Wesley knew from age nine that he wanted to be a preacher. He graduated from high school at Rosebud in 1918, a 16-year-old, five feet tall, and weighing 86 pounds.

That summer, he walked some 35 miles to Waco and Baylor University with \$14.67 in his pocket. "I'll do any kind of work," he told the president, Samuel Palmer Brooks. "But I've come to school and I'm determined to go." Dr. Brooks gave him odd jobs, washing dishes in the cafeteria, mowing and weeding flower beds around Carroll Library, never dreaming that the boy, variously called "Red" and "Runt" would himself become a college presi-

dent in just fifteen years.

That term, he suffered pneumonia after upperclassmen threw him into an icy creek. He developed strong feelings against college hazing and later dealt strongly with offenders at OBU.

Wesley became half-time pastor at Briary. In the midst of a revival, the regular pastor fell ill and Raley finished it. On his nineteenth birthday, he baptized 19 people without either license or ordination. At one point, he had to drop out of school to help his brother, Leroy, get started at Baylor. Wesley was hired as principal of North Prairie school at Chilton, Texas but he managed to get back and graduate from Baylor in 1923 at the age of twenty.

He enrolled that fall at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary where he reported to the president, Dr. L. R. Scarbrough, in the way he had done earlier at Baylor. The two became fast friends. Raley was invited to be assistant to the pastor of one of the Fort Worth churches; and though he needed the money, he decided against being anybody's assistant, a positive trait evident the rest of his life. Thirty years after asking Baylor's president for a job, he returned there to accept an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. His address was titled "Moment of Destiny." Red Raley kept remembering how he stretched his \$14.67 into the future — into his dream.

Jack Reese, an Oklahoma newsman and editor, said: "Dr. Raley was a kind, stubborn, quick-tempered, thoughtful, sometimes smart-alecky, tolerant, impatient, soft-hearted, hard as nails, frustrating, delightful man of small stature and gigantic purpose." His biographer said he never made the mistake of trying to please everybody. "Pragmatic in many aspects of his life, he yet had an almost childlike faith in his fellow man. He saw his life as one great partnership with many people. Not surprisingly, he made enemies as well as friends. He had victories but he had bitter defeats. Through it all, there was his unconquerable spirit."

While pastor of First Baptist Church at Smithville, Texas, Wesley met Helen Thames, whose father was chairman of the Board of Deacons. Later, Helen remarked that the short red-haired preacher came to their quiet little town and changed things. Including her life, for they were married.

In 1930, in a little Chevy coupe with his wife, Raley drove to Philadelphia and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. When he announced to the graduate committee that he intended to finish his residency requirement for his Th.D. degree in just one year, the professors were stunned by the audacity of this brash young man who said he "just had to get back to Texas!" These were world-renowned theologians, specialists in their fields of exegesis. No student had ever presumed to set both course of study and timetable before this august body. They told him it would require three years.

But they didn't know Wesley Raley.

He and Helen set up a rigid, one-year schedule for themselves. She completed work for a music degree. He read and outlined 146 volumes of higher criticism. His thesis was on the theme that "proof shall be presented toward the conclusion that the Epistles are genuine letters of the Apostle Paul to the persons addressed and that they are now extant in their original form."

Home to the South they went where the Depression touched even preachers needing a job. He was called to the pastorate at Bartlesville, Oklahoma in August, 1931. The following month, the faculty of Eastern Seminary voted that Raley's further graduate work would be done in absentia, but he would have to receive the degree in person. A baby was expected any day and Wesley had to make a choice to go to Philadelphia or stay at home. He stayed in Bartlesville with Helen. The newspaper read: "John Wesley Raley, Jr. is an Irish baby with a Jewish next-door godmother, born in a room furnished by the Catholics, son of a Baptist preacher with a Methodist name."

Dr. Raley's Doctor of Theology degree was awarded in May, 1933, and Wesley was there.

He was inaugurated president of OBU in 1934. Raley could never resist a challenge. For the next 30 years, Oklahomans and Baptists watched the little red-haired Irishman charge through every obstacle. Deeply in debt, having run through eight presidents in twenty years, Oklahoma Baptist University did not have a bright future, except in the eyes and the heart of John Wesley Raley. Despite depression, debt, war, and apathy, this spirited dynamo built a great school — debt-free, accredited, worth many millions.

In the beginning there were only four buildings, one not yet completed. OBU would be another Baylor, the youthful president declared as he went about raising money, selling bonds, recruiting students. He coped with the inevitable denominational politics. He and Helen kept alive a few elms struggling in summer drought around the Oval. They did it by bucket brigade. OBU was "standing in the need of prayer and endowment."

Raley dreamed. He drew blueprints. One day, there would be many buildings and a great chapel with a twenty-story-high spire and chimes.

A Shawnee banker, Frank Buck, told of Raley's approaching him for an OBU loan. The banker called him an upstart and a young fool. Raley replied: "I'm young and inexperienced. I may even be a fool, but I've come here to take charge of this school. Furthermore, you are going to help me build a university." He left with a check for \$25,000, a sizable amount in that day. The first bill he paid was OBU's overdue water bill, \$797.95. Mr. Buck helped him build his university.

The SHAWNEE NEWS-STAR kept a close watch on Raley. One day, Jack Spencer, dynamic editorialist, rose from his typewriter. From his six-foot-four height, he looked all the way down on short Mr. President and said he felt sorry for such a little guy with such a big job.

Of the almost 400, only 38 students had been able to pay their bills. Raley asked the hundreds of others to strive to pay \$5 a month for the next year. He knew everyone by name. He sent notes to prospects saying "We might assure you board and room if you can get enough money for tuition and fees. Could your church help you?"

To those who could pay but neglected to do so, he wrote, "It seems absurd for me to go around the state begging for money while you go into debt and go off and laugh about it." Occasionally, he filed suit. Students pled for work at ten cents an hour. Most letters said, "My father is out of work." Important posts were filled on campus for \$5 a week. Faculty applicants with Ph.D's were available at \$225 a month, part to be taken in script, or in board and room. Raley worried about ministerial students with families. He solicited food boxes from the churches and rationed to students as needed.

Dr. Raley knew how to raise funds. His friend, Marvin Cole, went along and people never forgot him. Dr. Raley would make a scholarly speech and close with a denominational challenge. Marvin then put on what he called "rousements," glorifying OBU, creating zeal in the congregation, finally raising his arms in "something like a pontifical blessing." At this point, he reverted to his Eastern Oklahoma hill country grammar. "Everybody, everybody now must have a part in this campaign. Get your checks wrote, boys. Get your checks wrote!" Dr. Raley told this warm story many times.

Pennies were important and Raley often corresponded with penny postcards. Sugar bowl savings by Oklahoma Baptist women built Memorial Hall. Dr. George W. Truett came from Dallas to exhort state Baptists to rally and build their school. The first "large" gift of \$1,000 came in and the building program never stopped. It was said that during Dr. Raley's administration, the sound of the hammer was always heard on campus.

Dr. Adams, his major professor at Eastern, wrote: "Raley, my heart is filled to overflowing. You have ever been determined to go as fast as could be done in your work. I congratulate you and the people of Oklahoma." Austen K. DeBlois, president of Eastern, said: "No alumni in the history of Eastern has more strongly impressed this faculty."

The second child, Helen Thames Raley, was born in 1936. Her father was a warm family man. Mrs. Raley tells how he hardly slept the three weeks while their small son had typhoid fever, the only case reported in Oklahoma and Texas. "Just a sip of water for Daddy, John-Boy — a spoonful of tomato juice. It will make you feel better." He nursed little Helen through illness and during the war, he managed extra rationed red meat for her, often giving her his portion. She said, "I get cold in the night and scared, and I run to Daddy. He makes me warm."

He 'fathered' students as well, telling graduates: "You will be better off if you use your sheepskin to mop perspiration rather than use it for a cushion."

The Oval was paved. The stolid little Bison statue stood in the center, representing the school spirit.

With his staunch friend, Dr. Andrew Potter, the crusade was always going on. They went before the legislature and stumped the state for building funds for OBU. Raley was a "politician of the first order and Oklahoma gave him room." He once told an AP reporter: "I travel more miles than a salesman, deliver more addresses than a candidate for office, conduct more church services than a local pastor, write as many articles as a magazine writer, handle more money than a merchant, make more decisions than a court justice. And besides, I attend more luncheons than many society matrons."

"I like my job," he added puckishly.

No worthwhile person can long avoid libelous criticism. Conservatives looked him over. Were his views too liberal? Oklahoma Baptists had just come through a modernist fight. One crank letter was directed against the "young,

LANDMARKS

smart-aleck promoter who is not only a heretic and an agent of the devil, but also an embezzler, a subversive dictator and a perpetrator of tyrannical schemes."

Dr. Raley flicked off such criticism as he would an insect. He never forgot how his Texas farmer father said, "Son, when you start to town, pay no attention to every barking dog."

He hated pacificism and he joined the National Guard, Thunderbird 45th Division. When Pearl Harbor came, he reported for duty but was sent back to his essential post at OBU. He went to Washington and got a contract with the Air Force Flying Training Command for a pre-aviation school. He spoke at patriotic rallies and became known for the line: "This country was built by pioneers who had a Bible, axe, and a gun."

The war finally ended. The building continued.

The city of Shawnee gave a new gymnasium to OBU. Now he could ask Baptist men to build a new dormitory for boys. He could concentrate on the library and the Arts center. Under his administration, new buildings came to the campus: Brittain Library, Ford Hall, Brotherhood Hall, Watts Hall, Short Hall, Kerr Dorm, Clark Craig Fieldhouse, Thurmond Hall, Raley Chapel. Only once did he not ask the cost of a building — when the Baptist General Convention made a gift of the president's official mansion. Back of this residence, OBU - owned pasture land stretched to meet the fence which marked the margin of extensive land owned by St. Gregory's College. Both had grazing cattle and horses. Sometimes, Dr. Raley and the Catholic college president met and "rode the range together."

He was content. He had been offered, in 1948, the presidency of his alma mater, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. The Northern Baptist Convention needed a strong voice. It would have meant an enormous salary at a heavily endowed school, a luxurious home, private schools for the children. Everything that Oklahoma was not at that time. But OBU was here and he never once considered leaving.

Raley worked many years on the coordinating board for the Regents of Higher Education in Oklahoma. He was sent to the Baptist World Alliance in Copenhagen. He observed a session of Parliament in London, visited the House of Lords, and was a guest of Prime Minister Mac-Millan. In Hong Kong, he took the OBU message to Dr. Lam Chi Fung, president of the Foreign Missions Board and Hong Kong Baptist College. He often represented the university to heads of state.

He knew how to handle people. At one point, the almost-new mansion was vandalized by egg-throwing boys. Dozens of eggs splattered the entrance, the walls and windows, the stately columns. He called in no suspects but spoke in chapel and watched faces. Several sons of prominent citizens rang the doorbell that night and confessed to the destructive prank. Helen served refreshments. The secret was never told. Some of these students are among the best-known religious leaders of the state today.

Dr. Raley was adamant about creating the best impression for visitors. He fought for proper street markers and adequate fire protection and insisted on everyone's picking up trash, turning off lights, keeping uniform the level of venetian blinds in the classrooms for a more attractive appearance.

The Chapel was his dream for many years, and he lived to see it a reality. He delivered his annual address, "The Projection of Our Faith," at the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention in November, 1956 in which he challenged the Baptists of Oklahoma to build The Spire of Faith. By convention action, he was instructed to proceed to prepare blueprints and raise funds.

Raley Chapel is 248 by 188 feet — 4,000 feet larger than a football playing field. Groundbreaking was done on February 20, 1959. The chapel seats 2,000, has a choir and stage arrangement to accommodate 300, a recital hall for 250, a rehearsal hall, twenty teaching studios, offices, lounges, memorial windows and a spire reaching twenty stories high with a four-sided clock and chimes. It can be seen from many miles around.

Mrs. Raley found where he had underlined a sentence in *FLIGHT TO ARRAS* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery: "He who bears in his heart a cathedral to be built is already victorious."

In her fine book *AN UNCOMMON MAN*, Helen Raley asked, did he imagine himself another Thomas Jefferson, who supervised the building of the University of Virginia from the top of Monticello with his telescope? Wesley stood in the window of his Thurmond Hall office and landscaped a mall toward the west, toward the spire. He planned the "Flying Bison Trails" — sidewalks to arch out in every direction toward other buildings.

The John Wesley Raley Chapel was "on the horizon" when Governor Raymond Gary and the convention and university directors announced the plans. It was dedicated in February, 1962.

Dr. Raley chuckled about what people would say a century from now — "a Baptist chapel with a Methodist name!"

The children, John and Helen, who were educated "where they used to park their tricycles," spoke at the chapel dedication. Small grandchildren were about. Dr. Raley, who had at last resigned the presidency because of ill health, was now chancellor. He was hoisted by crane to the top of the spire where he saw, literally, his life's work spread below. He had set out to build OBU from a debt-ridden little church college of four buildings to a university of note and distinction. No Oklahoma prexy had held a like post over a quarter century as did "the little giant of Bison Hill." It was a long way from the end of the cotton row.

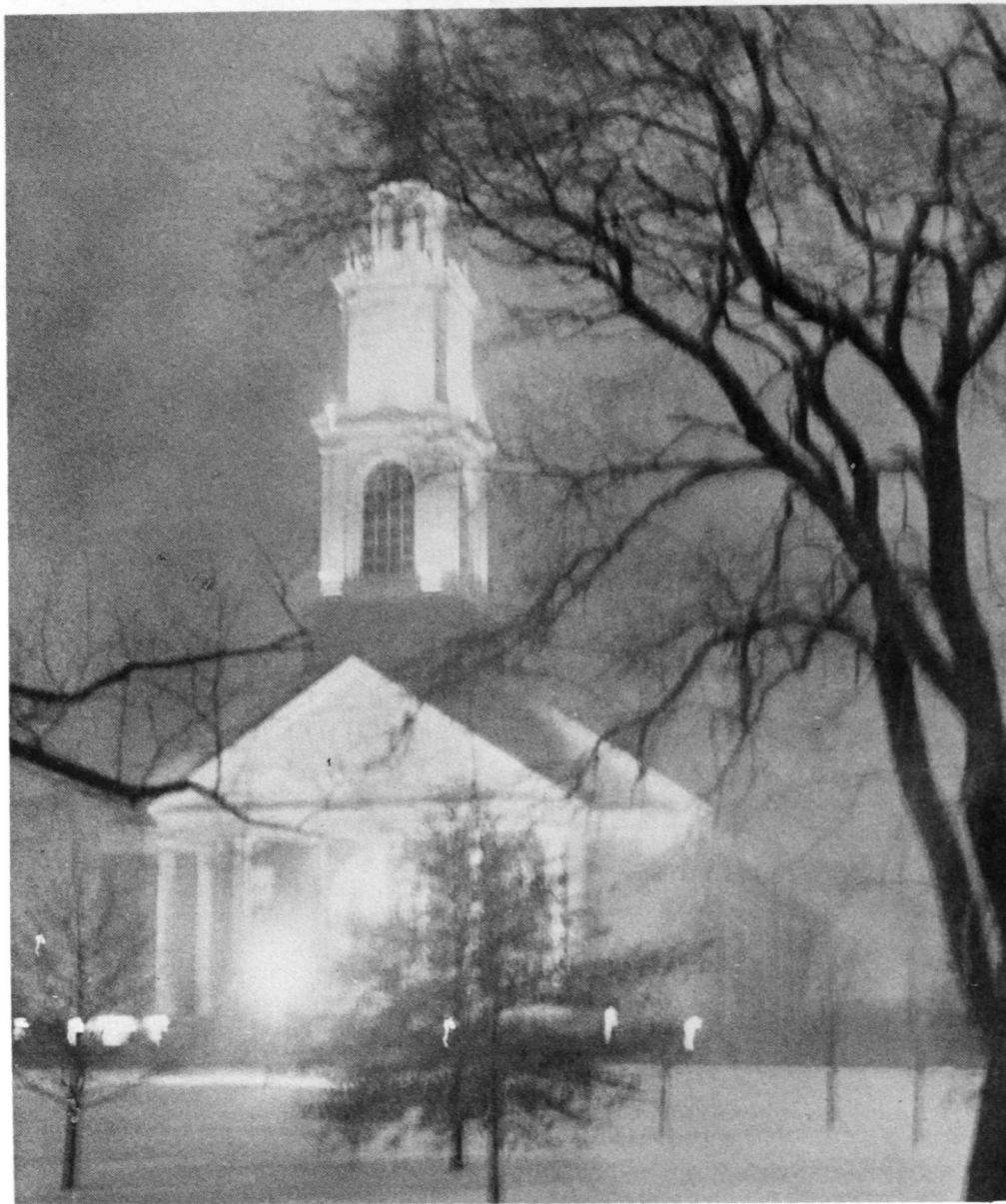
Sen. Robert S. Kerr provided a home on campus for the Raleys when they left the official residence. OBU had never had a chancellor, and there were no precedents. The transition seemed perfectly natural.

Dr. Raley suffered a heart attack in 1965. "Something was happening at OBU, too, and we were out of it," Mrs. Raley said. Candidates for an office of chaplain were being examined. An added inducement was the chancellor's home and his office in the great chapel. Dr. Raley was notified that the chancellorship was being abolished and he would become President Emeritus.

Except to clean out his desk, his files and memorabilia, Wesley Raley never again set foot in the chapel of his dreams. Even the memorial bricks from their ancestral homes in Texas were removed from the chapel lectern. Years later, Helen Raley said in a book about his life, "I daresay less than 25 people have ever known the whole story."

Dr. Raley survived this blow. He had a home office with his treasured things. His philosophy continued in magazine articles and lectures. He wrote weekly Sunday School lessons for 13 newspapers in the Southwest. He continued his love for building as chairman of the Shawnee Hospital Authority which built a multi-million dollar facility just a stone's throw from the campus. He had coffee with "the boys" in the construction trailer office and was given an "Honorary Superintendent" hardhat in green and gold OBU colors.

When the city of Shawnee had years earlier voted down his plans for a Baptist hospital here, Oklahoma Baptists built their gigantic hospital complex in Oklahoma City. He gave up his dream of an OBU School of Nursing and



PROPERTY OF SHAWNEE NEWS-STAR

PHOTO BY TRACY FARLEY

Dr. Raley's dream fulfilled — Raley Chapel during a 1983 snowfall —

Hospital Administration. Now he was dreaming again. Maybe he could teach a chaplain's program. The meditation-conference room would be called the Little Chapel. Memorial gifts would go into this haven, just as he had placed them in the great chapel across the highway.

There wasn't time enough to complete his plans.

He wrote, read, and preached. He worried about the "new breed" of student — the irresponsibility, the far-out philosophies, the permissive relaxation of social behavior, campus revolution, and insubordination.

He recalled writing his heart out on the memorial tribute he gave for his friend Sen. Kerr in Oklahoma City while young John F. Kennedy, not so tall as he had pictured the president to be, sat straight, motionless, his eyes meeting Dr. Raley's over the great mound of red roses. He taped sermons for television and was for four years a TV panelist with Rabbi Joseph Levenson of B'nai Israel and Father Richard Sneed, president of St. Gregory's College.

Raley's keen interest in and curiosity about people kept him alert. On a train from Detroit to Akron, he struck up a conversation with a black man whose uniform identified him as "Porter Instructor" for the Pullman company. What stories he could tell! He had been personal porter on the presidential trains for Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower. He was on President Truman's funeral train and

accompanied Nixon on campaigns. After Dr. Raley's death, his widow found a note in the pocket of the suit he wore that day on the train. It was a reminder to himself to "send chapel brochure and postcards" to his new friend, the porter, whose address he had scribbled.

His last days and hours were spent in Room 210 of the hospital he had so proudly seen erected. He could no longer stand at the window and see their house and watch Dixie, his riding horse, nibble grass near the fence dividing this pasture and the hospital grounds. Across the highway, the majestic Raley Chapel rose above the freshly greening trees. Helen placed a bright red rose on the pillow beside his head. The Paul Scarlets he had set along their white fence were just beginning to bloom. He died a few hours later.

He was taken back to the John Wesley Raley Chapel. Dean Warren Angell's Bison Glee Club sang the dean's happy song: "My Lord, What a Morning!" Once, Wesley Raley had told the freshman voice student, Jo Ann Shelton: "Joe Ann, I'm going to erect a building big enough for your voice."

And he did. She sang for him that morning and her rich voice filled the vast chapel and floated across the campus he loved.

LANDMARKS

PORTRAITURE — TED

— by Leroy Thomas

(Managing Editor's note: Professor Ted Pyle, an Assistant Editor on WESTVIEW's staff, died on Wednesday, January 26 in Oklahoma City following heart-bypass surgery. Memorial services were held on Saturday morning, January 29, 1983 in the Pine Acres Mennonite Brethren Church of Weatherford; interment was in Rush Springs. The following is a tribute to the SOSU Language Arts Department's most colorful member.)



Departmental ray of light — stolen by subtle thief Death.
Leaving happy memories of a
Giggler, hee-hawer, overcome with his own laughter
Over a private joke or a student faux pas.
A trick-player but also a sport when the trick was on him.
No one's rubber stamp — a man of his own —
Even among the Big Boys —
Self-styled complainer
Willing to fight for something considered right.
Crusty exterior almost concealing sensitive nature —
With a Christian heart and soul.
Happy memories of an inspired
Teacher, scholar, and devoted friend.

Death — an empty word
For
Ted.



9

26 January 1983

— by Elsie Lang

Our Teddy Roosevelt died today:
Our mini Telly Savalas,
Our court jester,
Our peacemaker,
Our heart.
We'll miss you, Mr. Pyle.

(Managing Editor's note: Ms. Lang has taught at SOSU since 1971. She teaches Composition, Introduction to Fiction, the Methods course for Elementary Education majors, and Women's Literature. One of the first participants in the Oklahoma Writing Project [OWP] at OU, she enjoys experimenting with words.)

TEDDY



SOSU PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Reminiscence Of Early Days Teaching In The Little Red School House.



ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING

— by Thelma O. Brandly

Editor's note: Probably most of our readers who are teachers will agree that Brandly in her one-room schoolhouse had life a great deal harder than most teachers nowadays.

MEMORIES

This article is dedicated to all teachers who taught the one-room country schools.

To me, a retired veteran of forty years of school teaching in all levels, from primary through college, learning to "teach school" is not entirely the result of studying college education courses.

I began my teaching career in the autumn of 1928, after I had graduated from high school the preceding spring (thanks to my mother who obtained my first teaching job for me — she was determined that I was to be a school teacher). I began this illustrious career in a two-teacher country school at Leonel; part of the district was in Blaine County and part in Dewey County. I had all of eight hours of college credit, obtained that summer from Southwestern in Weatherford.

At Leonel, Iona Chain, who later married Mike Stephenson, taught the four upper grades and I "kept" the four lower ones. We boarded and roomed with Paul Wills and his three children — Elsie Wills Chain and the twins, Dale and Delbert. He had a housekeeper, Edna Bolster, who now lives in Seiling, Oklahoma. Iona and I had the upstairs room on the north side of the house. During blizzards for which Western Oklahoma was famous, we awoke many a morning to find sprinkles of snow on the quilts which were piled heavily on top of us. As Will Rogers said of Amarillo, Texas, there was nothing but a barbed-wire fence between that Wills house and the North Pole.

That first year, one very mischievous fourth grader I had piled too much soft coal into the "pot-bellied" stove and smothered the fire. When it "came to life," the explosion blew the stove lid to the ceiling!! And, that ceiling was "darn high."

Another thing I remember about that first year — an idea which then was quite common, but which today is seldom heard about — was that one of the men who was on the school board asked me to paddle his son who was too stubborn to do his arithmetic problems.

The next year Iona went to Oakwood to teach, and Bea Martin from Canton, Oklahoma, taught the upper grades. She drove from Canton. I continued to live with the Wills family. I enjoyed every minute of my stay with them. Many lively and provocative events happened — one being the twins setting Paul's big barn on fire when they were smoking in the hay loft.

Also that was the year of the "Big Snow"; the drifts covered fences, filled roads, and generally brought travel to a complete standstill. When the storm subsided somewhat, Bea tried to drive her car to school. She became stuck in a big drift, and Paul Wills had to wade through huge drifts to rescue her and her dog, Fifi, who went everywhere she went. Her students loved to have the dog in the school room. At the time of the Big Snow, I was "keeping company" with a young man who lived close enough to the Wills to walk or to ride his horse; so my "Love Life" did not suffer much except, of course, that there was always an audience in the living room — what with Mr. Wills, Elsie, Dale, Delbert, and Edna there also.

From Leonel, I went to West Point, sometimes referred to as "Pig Hill" school. The nickname "Pig Hill" came from the fact that a farmer who lived nearby let his pigs run loose and somehow they, the pigs, always found their way to "school." Here I had all eight grades. Pearl Wilson was the county superintendent at the time. At that time, the county superintendent came to each of the country schools to evaluate it. During the inspection, which usually lasted a couple of hours, the superintendent would question the students in the different classes, testing them in what they were supposed to be learning. Alvin McGinnis was my eighth grader; so, of course, Mrs. Wilson called upon him to "show his skill" in arithmetic. I don't know who was more nervous and scared — Alvin or I.

At West Point, I also taught Cleo and Lavern Hart, Dorothy Hutton Fauchier, the McVay children, Willadean McGinnis, Verna Joy, and others.

This was the year my sister, Clara, and I bought a new car. It was a Model A Coupe. We were really becoming "big time." Clara taught a school over on the South Canadian River, southwest of Seiling. Thus, she drove the car most of the time. I either walked the three or four miles through the woods or rode horseback from the "Mansion on a hill" about eight miles northwest of Oakwood.

I remember one incident that happened that year; now after many years, I can laugh at it, but at that time I was very upset about it. For some reason, I had taken my pre-school brother, Harvey Dean, to school with me that day. Clara had dropped us off that morning and was to pick us up that evening. Well, something happened and she did not come for us. So, after waiting until nearly sundown, we started walking the five miles home, by way of the Dean Hutton place because I reasoned that Clara would eventually overtake us. But we kept on walking; the sun went down, and dark hovered over us. Poor little Harve became so tired — I was half dragging and half carrying him. By the time we reached the Joe Hajny place, dark had really caught us. The Hajnys had two big dogs which always came tearing out to the road. We lost no time sneaking by and for once the dogs remained at the house. Our biggest fright came when we reached the big bridge over the deep canyon east of home. There had been wild tales told about the mountain lion, bobcat, or some other ferocious animal that was supposed to be in the canyon. Some had heard it scream, and others had even claimed that they had seen it. Well, after getting by the cemetery — this was also an eerie area after dark — Harve and I were not wasting any time when we hit the bridge! I think I was carrying Harve; at least his short legs were not hitting the ground every step. When we reached the top of the hill on the other side of the bridge, both of us breathed a sigh of relief.

From West Point, I went to Harvard, a lovely little country school, northeast of Fay, Oklahoma. My students were some of the best I have ever known; the Deweys, the Stanleys, the Humphreys, Ann Conner and her brothers, the Kennedys, and many others, including Glen Widney, who started to school that term. I roomed and boarded with Glen's parents, Will and Elsie Widney, until I married. Glen liked to play around outside until I had done the janitor work (oh, yes, the teacher then did her own janitoring, etc.); then he would walk home with me.

Another "learning experience" I met with this term had to do with my changing my name. I married in January. I then drove from Oakwood, where John and I were living, and on the way I picked up one of my second graders. Several mornings I noticed she was very quiet and seemed disturbed. Finally, she asked me whether or not she could call me "Miss Brandly as before; she said Miss Brandly sounded much better than Mrs. Butts. Her mother told me later that the child didn't want to say the word "butts." Oh, the joy of a child's innocence!

Time passed; and before I finished my six years of teaching in the country schools (usually all eight grades), I do believe I had learned, at least, "to keep order" in a school room; and generally, if there is order, there is some learning going on. I was never bothered much with the discipline problem. I was usually on the playground with the kids, and they liked this. We played ball; sometimes we had only a string ball and a board for a bat, but we had "FUN."

I remember one incident when I was teaching at Fairmont School, west of Oakwood. When we played ball, I was usually the "pitcher" for both sides. One day, Laurence Barber, an eighth grader, hit the ball. It came straight at me, making perfect contact with my eye! What

a sight I was for several days! A teacher with a swollen face and a closed black eye — everyone teased Laurence about his giving his teacher a black eye.

My teaching all grades ended when in 1935, I left Fairmont and entered the Oakwood School System. The first year, I taught the fifth grade; the next year the seventh-eighth grade teacher quit, and I took her place until 1939.

During my stay in Oakwood, I taught many wonderful students, who now have children and grandchildren. And, of course, some of the boys and girls have now "gone away"; I feel sad when I remember these, but I am sure the Lord knows best. I think I have taught nearly all of the younger people in and around Oakwood.

I remember one, Earl Wills, who I feel I helped by persuading him to return to school and finish the eighth grade. Earl had become discouraged the year before and had quit. My husband and I persuaded him to complete the eighth grade. No one was ever prouder of a student than I on graduation night when Earl received his diploma.

From Oakwood, I went to Longdale, then to Purcell and in 1954 to Clinton. In 1962, I joined the faculty of Southwestern State College. I retired from the college in 1971 as Associate Professor. Thus, I ended a teaching career of forty years.

I truly believe that although I studied the necessary education courses and I do realize these are important, the experiences I had working in the country schools, teaching all grades, and being not only teacher but also disciplinarian, mother, judge, nurse, doctor, confessor, janitor, etc. really gave me the understanding and patience that enabled me to help my students with their problems, disappointments, fears, desires, hopes, and aspirations.

Someone has said that "Experience is a dear school, but a fool will learn in no other." Thus, when I remember that in 1928, just out of high school, I began my teaching career with only eight hours of college credit, I have to admit that I surely was that proverbial fool to undertake such responsibilities. Be that as it may, I have received many values from and have garnered such great and lasting memories of my forty years. During such a long span, naturally one can recall many times when he thrilled to a student's learning. However, I believe that my greatest moments came when one of my "little people" remembered a word, learned to write his name, or perhaps added his numbers correctly. A little innocent child can truly "bless one's heart" by looking up with eager surprise when he remembers something one has taught him.

Over two-thirds of my life has been spent in "going to school" and in "teaching school"; I do recognize that all the learning did give me direction. But those early years which I spent in the "little red school house" really gave me the solid foundation which I needed for teaching and for "keeping" school.

I feel that I have had a full and rewarding life because I have had the privilege of sharing so many pleasant and great experiences with the young. ■



ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICIA SHERMAN



PHOTOS BY THE BIELEY BROTHERS OF SENTINEL; PROPERTY OF RUBY LUCAS



Ruby Leonard's graduation pictures



Editor's note: Port, now a ghost town of sorts, had its days of vigorous glory as Shields develops here.

NOT REALLY A PIONEER . . .

— by Donita Lucas Shields

Known by her many students as Miss Ruby, Ruby Leonard Lucas is one of the few remaining pioneers who can relate vivid memories of early-day Western Oklahoma schools.

"I'm not really a pioneer," she emphasizes, "because by the time we moved to Port there wasn't a family living in dugouts. The true pioneers had already built good homes, a town, and a fine three-room school with a belfry and bell."

No doubt she is right about not being a pioneer. She missed out on controversies that raged for several years after the Run in 1892. Two settlements, called East Wood and West Wood, were located one mile apart. Both desired the post office and school.

At gunpoint West Wood stole the post office from East Wood. The community's dugout school remained at East Wood, but West Wood families stubbornly did not allow their children to attend it. Washita County officials settled this dispute by designating that another school be placed between the two rival villages. Both factions were required to send their children to this new school.

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When West Wood's post office was officially named Port after its postmistress in 1901, East Wood gradually faded away. By 1902, the second dugout school overflowed with children. Before the fall term opened, innovative families took time out from field work to build a three-room frame structure across the road from the dugout. Being situated one-half mile east of Port town, it was also named Port.

By the time eleven-year-old Miss Ruby and her family moved from Shawnee to Port in 1909, all hard feelings had apparently been forgotten. At that time the school provided primary, intermediate, and advanced levels of learning for a least eighty students.

Miss Ruby joined the intermediate group taught by Janie Lucas. Miss Janie was several years older than Miss Ruby, but the two became lifetime friends. Years later they became sisters-in-law after Miss Ruby married Miss Janie's younger brother Ralph.

In addition to instant rapport with her first teacher at Port, Miss Ruby was also surrounded at home by others she admired. Her mother ran a boarding house where various teachers stayed during the school year. It was no wonder that Miss Ruby decided at an early age that she too would become a teacher.

She studied her lessons in McGuffey readers and grammars and solved her arithmetic in Big Chief tablets. She did her work accurately so as not to wear out the small, pointed eraser on her penny pencil. Sewell's Merchantile in Port sold school supplies, but prairie people learned frugality.

"If I used up my eraser, I did without until the pencil was gone. No one ever had extra erasers," she reminisced.

The country school then held seven-month terms so children could help with field work. Fertile soil in Port area flourished with cotton, corn, and alfalfa. Crops were planted, tended, and harvested by mule, man, and child power.

"I was fortunate in having older brothers so I did not have to work in the crops," she stated. "I could go to school both winter and summer. Back then there were subscription schools during the summer which were actually enrichment classes. Each family paid a small tuition for their children's enrollment. These subscription schools also provided year-around income for some of the teachers."

"Mr. George Coffey was one of my favorite teachers. Everyone liked his son John, too. John became president of Cameron College in Lawton," Miss Ruby remembered.

"We admired Mr. Coffey, but we were afraid of him. He always held an opened pen knife as he walked up and down the aisles checking our work. Mr. Coffey used it to sharpen our pencils when they became dubby. Sometimes he tapped the tip of the blade on top of a student's hand if he daydreamed or dawdled. I kept busy when he walked near my desk."

Mr. Coffey might leave Port for a term, but the school board always called him back to restore order and progress. Port parents demanded good education for their children and were proud of the academic program. They expected the best because the prosperous area usually paid teachers extra bonuses.

"During my school years Mr. Coffey taught a few high-school classes, but there were not enough courses for accreditation. Port was accredited for eighth-grade work, though," Miss Ruby explained.

She continued, "In those early years eighth-grade graduation was very important because most young people ended their schooling after eighth grade. The State Board of Education required that every student pass an achievement test. Those who failed it didn't graduate. Mr. Coffey allowed two days for these exams. I remember taking tests in arithmetic, U. S. history, grammar, physiology, reading, geography, domestic science, agriculture, music, and penmanship."

Miss Ruby passed her exams as did her eleven classmates. Port's first graduation exercise on May 28, 1913, was a memorable occasion. To commemorate the celebration, the class selected orange and black colors which were retained throughout the remaining fifty-three years of the school's existence.

After graduation Miss Ruby began her high-school education at a subscription school held at West Springcreek where Mr. Coffey offered a six-week course. Next she attended a county normal school at Sentinel while living with family friends.

In the spring of 1915, Miss Ruby felt prepared to take the teacher's qualification examination at Washita County Court House in Cordell. The State Board of Education required any aspiring teacher to pass this difficult battery of tests before awarding the teaching certificate.

Miss Ruby received a rare honor for a sixteen-year-old when the State Board deemed her qualified to teach grades one through eight. Her childhood ambition was fulfilled—or would be as soon as she found a school needing a teacher.

Her teaching career began that fall in a school near Port Independence, an attractive one-room school that had twenty-five youngsters in grades one through eight. Their former teacher suffered from nervous exhaustion and had resigned. Miss Ruby found her days filled with hard work, but she was young, determined, and inspired. She loved teaching, and her students loved her.

"My biggest problem was with the school clock," she laughingly recalled. "It wouldn't run after the room got cold at night. I had no watch to set it by when it warmed up next morning. I carried my mother's alarm clock back and forth so we had correct time both at school and at home."

First graduation class at Port — 1913

PHOTO BY THE BIELEY BROTHERS OF SENTINEL PROPERTY OF RUBY LUCAS



Back Row (left to right) Bessie England, Ruby Leonard (salutatorian), Elmer Gold, Bob Lucas, Raymond Maddox, Mary Bowie, Lena England. Front Row (left to right) Les Armitage, Bess Harper, Will Percy, Lillie Harper (valedictorian), Ella Mae Tyner, Tom Lucas.

Next she taught grades one through four at Springcreek, also near Port. This was a larger school with two rooms downstairs and one room upstairs. A folding partition between the downstairs rooms could be opened for community affairs, school programs, and political meetings.

Miss Ruby continued, "My third school was called Pink. It was also a one-room school, but it was one of the last to annex with Port as Independence and Springcreek had done previously. I taught fewer students there, and they were all eager to learn. It was difficult to keep them busy and out of mischief, but they were enjoyable because they always did their school work quickly, accurately, and neatly."

With her own money, she bought WORLD BOOK encyclopedias and several volumes of WORLD BOOK STORIES FOR CHILDREN. These became the school's library when she gave the two sets to the district.

Miss Ruby added, "Each day we opened school with a Bible story. On the board I wrote questions about it requiring short answers. As someone answered the question, another wrote its answer on the board. Every student learned all the answers during the day after they studied their regular lessons. When parents visited school, they always asked to hear the Bible drill. Those children knew answers to more than 400 Biblical questions."

During high school and her early years of teaching, Miss Ruby's usual mode of transportation was Beauty, her trusted mare. In fact, the entire Leonard family treasured her. Long before they moved to Port, Beauty served them as both buggy horse and riding pony. As years passed, she grew old and feeble. It was a sad time for all when she died.

Miss Ruby could not bear the thought of replacing the beloved animal with another. Instead, she bought a used 1916 Model "T" with fancy wooden wheels and a wooden steering wheel. A car was a lavish investment in those days for a maiden school teacher, but even then some type of conveyance was a necessity.

Miss Ruby felt chic and modern as she chugged along the dusty roads. A brother-in-law taught her how to drive. "At least he told me that it was not proper to travel in the bar ditches," she quipped. "About all he ever told me was 'Keep 'er on the road, Sister!'"

Port, Oklahoma, School,

announces its

Commencement Exercises

Wednesday Evening, May Twenty-Eighth,

at the

Port School House.

Program

of Closing Exercises of

Port, Okla., School,

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 1913,

8:30 P.M.

Music,	Port Band.
Invocation,	Rev. R. E. Smith.
Reading, (Selected)	Bessie Harper.
Music,	Port Band.
Oration, Geographical Unity,	Raymond Maddox.
Trio, Take Me Home, Leslie Armitage,	Bessie England and Ella Mae Tyner.
Music,	Port Band.
Oration, the Great American Nation,	Elmer Gold.
Class Prophecy,	Bessie England.
Music,	Port Band.
Presentation of Diplomas,	G. A. Coffey.
Music,	Port Band.
Commencement Address,	J. M. Terry.
Music,	Port Band.
Valedictory,	Lillian Harper.
Benediction,	Rev. W. H. Weatherby.

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"I could fold the top down convertible-style when the weather was nice. If it was cold or rainy, I raised the top and snapped the side curtains shut," she beamed.

"That car was such a bother during the winter," she explained. "The only way I could crank it by myself on cold mornings was by draining the oil and water and take both into the house at night to keep warm. Next morning I poured everything back in. When I got to school on bad days, I draped a heavy quilt over the hood. That kept the engine warm until time to go home."

During summer months when she was not teaching, Miss Ruby continued her own education at Southwestern Teacher's College in Weatherford.

"The only structures on the Hill then were the Old Science Building and a three-story frame administration building which burned. All the old records were destroyed in that fire," she recalled.

"Back in those days there were no dormitories. I stayed with family friends who lived at our boarding house in Port. One summer I stayed at Duvall Hotel and also

MEMORIES

worked there to help pay my lodging. I found that I preferred teaching to cleaning rooms."

When Miss Ruby attended her first term at summer school at Southwestern, she left her car at home. A relative or friend always met her at the depot in Canute on Friday and then took her back on Sunday afternoon to catch the Rock Island train.

Later she drove to Weatherford but stored the car in a garage during the week. She thought nothing of walking from town to the Hill.

"It was easier to walk than to crank that car. Besides, it was too hard on its engine to pull that steep hill," she joked.

However, she enjoyed driving it on weekends. Sometimes she returned to Port or visited with friends in other towns.

"Many Sunday afternoons found the college crowd

heading for a favorite resort area at Dripping Springs near Thomas. How we loved picnicking, swimming, and boating! I have heard that lovely little park has since been fenced off and closed to the public. By now it may have completely succumbed to Nature's forces."

One tangible symbol of Miss Ruby's school days has remained intact throughout ensuing years. A copper classroom handbell with its wooden handle, a family heirloom from her mother's boarding house at Port, has its special spot on her bedside table. That bell, like Miss Ruby's brown eyes and quick wit, glows brightly and speaks clearly of its happy times at Port with aspiring students and wise teachers.

Of that first graduation class of 1913, only Miss Ruby and one classmate remain to describe adventures of early-day scholars and teachers. Miss Ruby presently lives at her home in Elk City.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE EXAMINATION OF APPLICANTS FOR COMMON SCHOOL DIPLOMAS — MAY 8th, and 9th, 1913 Second Day

READING.

1. Name three books that you have read in addition to your regular school books. Tell something about one of these and its author.
2. Give a brief biography of the author of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."
3. Describe the personal appearance of Ichabod Crane.
5. What is good reading? Explain fully.
6. What lesson is taught by "The Vision of Sir Launfal"?

PENMANSHIP.

1. Name the four movements used in writing.
2. What system of writing is recognized as a standard by most of our schools?
3. Describe correct position of body at desk, holding pen, etc.
4. Write a letter to some publishing house ordering a list of books for the library.
5. Make the small and capital letters.

AGRICULTURE.

Required by boys only.

1. Give the function of root and stem and leaves.
4. Tell minutely how to prepare ground for a crop of corn.
5. Explain all the purposes served by cultivation.
6. What are the most valuable crops in your commun-

ity? Why?

9. What is mulching? When and to what crops is it valuable?

GEOGRAPHY.

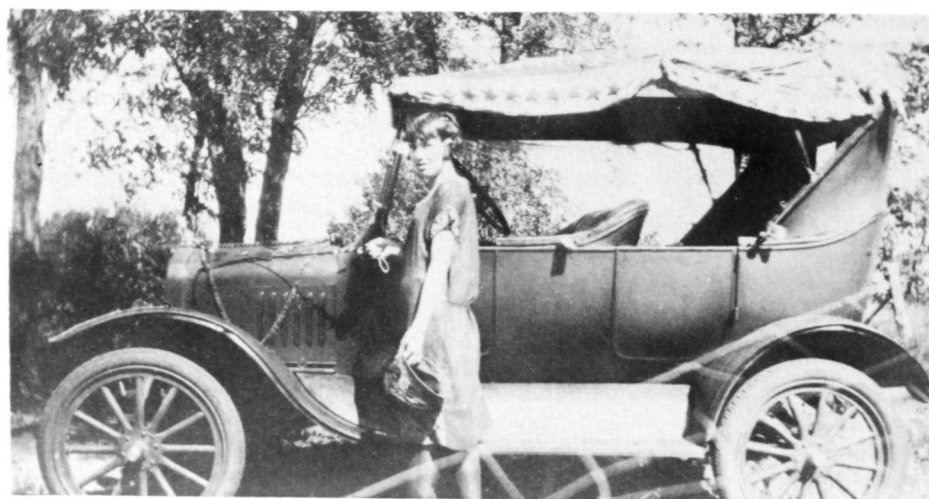
1. Name five large and five small countries of Europe and the capital of each.
3. What are the products of these islands? Name a city on each?
4. Locate the great cotton regions of the world. the wheat regions. The coffee regions.
7. Name the leading commercial nations of the world. Why do they lead?
9. What physical features influence the commerce of a country?

MUSIC.

(Answer Five.)

2. Place key signature and "do" in nine major keys.
3. How is a major scale constructed? "Build" the G and F major.
4. How many minor scales have we? Name two. What is a triad?
5. Write relative minor scale to C major.
8. Fill five measures in $\frac{3}{4}$ time using quarter, beat and half note, unequally divided beat, after beat note and quarter rest.

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Miss Ruby's 1916 Model T

PROPERTY OF RUBY LUCAS.

WESTVIEW



ILLUSTRATION BY NORETTA WILLIAMS

I TOLD THE TRUTH

-by Inez S. Whitney

PHOTO — PROPERTY OF INEZ SCHNEIDER WHITNEY.



Red Rock School — Grades 1-4, 1924-1925; Teacher — Inez Schneider

Editor's note: The formal preparation of teachers has become much more intense, as this article reminds us.

It was the spring of 1924. I was seventeen and finishing my first year at Southwestern State Teachers College in Weatherford, Oklahoma, twenty miles from my parents' farm.

I was home for the weekend. Mama said, "Your papa has been asking around, and he wants to take you to apply for a school tomorrow."

Papa said, "I think your best chance is at Red Rock. Henry Hays is a friend of mine and he's chairman of the schoolboard. Neither teacher is coming back and he said to bring you down to see him."

Red Rock was in the country only seven miles away. It was near the little town of Indianapolis, and we passed it every time we went from Custer to Clinton. I could remember the first school. It was one room made out of red rock dug up from the countryside. Now there was a neat two-room frame building painted white. It even had a belfrey with a big school bell.

According to Oklahoma law, a high-school graduate could teach after passing an examination but had to be eighteen, and when I graduated I was only sixteen.

It was hard times and though it cost very little to send me to Southwestern, it had been difficult for my parents to find the money and I really needed to get a job.

We got up early the next morning. I was excited but a little apprehensive. Mama looked me over with a critical eye and then picked out a dress she thought would be suitable.

"You look so young," she sighed. "You need to look older or you'll never get the job. I know," and she brought out her only hat. It had a deep crown.

She pulled it down on my head as far as it would go. "This hat comes well below your ears. Maybe Henry Hays won't notice your hair is bobbed."

Bobbed hair was a new fashion, and most

people looked on it with disfavor. Nice girls just didn't do it, but Mama had insisted that mine be bobbed the summer before.

Papa objected and had been quite upset. "I like her long curls, and her pretty red hair reminds me of Maw's. It's the very same color. I wish you wouldn't do it."

Mama looked at him with disgust. "Her hair is so long and thick and it takes forever to dry. In the summer it is so hot." She picked up her shears and whacked it off.

When I was ready, Papa cranked up the Model T and away we went. We were soon at the Hays farm. Mr. Hays was in the yard.

"Hello! Hello! Get out and come in, Edd. How are you, young lady?"

We met his wife and their two little children. "Now let's see. So you think you want to be a teacher, do you?" He asked more questions. What kind of grades had I made in high school and how was I doing this year at Southwestern and did I think I could keep order. Then he added, "Can you play the organ?"

"Yes," I answered. We had had an organ before Papa bought the piano.

"Good. We want a teacher that can play the organ for programs like at Christmas and the last day of school."

When we were ready to leave, he said, "I'll let your dad know about the job after I talk to the other two members."

The first thing Mama said when they came after me the next weekend was, "Henry Hays called. He wants you to come and sign a contract tomorrow."

Papa took me the next morning.

Mr. Hays smiled as he handed me the contract. "Sign this if you want the job. Eighty-five dollars a month for eight months. Oh, by the way, how old are you? The other members wanted to know."

I was taken aback. Everything had gone so well. What answer could I give him? I didn't want to tell him I was just seventeen. I thought a minute and then I said, "I'll be eighteen when school starts."

And I was. School started September eighth on my eighteenth birthday.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOANN MEDDERS



Editor's note: Here's a good bit of nostalgia. The pie (or box) supper was an important educational institution for many years.

The announcement of an upcoming pie supper started a rash of excited preparation among the young ladies in my community. The general store sold enough crepe paper to decorate a small town's Main Street.

"What design will I use? What colors? How much paper do I need?" All required tough decisions. Each must be an unusual and "eye-catching box." It was supposed to be kept hidden from prospective buyers — but somehow a girl's beau managed to find out which box to bid on. His bidding prompted all the other fellows to bid — making him pay the highest price possible. Often a whole summer's wages went for one pie. The young lady's pride was injured if her suitor didn't pay whatever it took to get her pie. She just might find it convenient to let another swain walk her home that night.

The construction of a beautiful box required many hours and all the skill and ingenuity a girl could muster. Hers must be the most gorgeous of the lot. First, a basic crepe-paper covering was glued to a hat box. Then, hand-gathered ruffles were basted around the edges and flowers enough for a Rose Bowl parade arranged attractively around the sides.

Before baking the pie, the damsel did considerable sleuthing to learn what kind her lover liked best. The crust must be tender and flaky — yet stay intact until it reached the mouth. Such a pie required the greatest finesse from start to finish. Anything short of perfection would bring its maker embarrassment.

The day of the big event finally rolled around. Young ladies spent the entire day pressing their ruffled dresses, curling one another's hair, and applying makeup to their faces.

By pooling their money, local boys contrived to make lovers pay dear for their lady-loves' boxes. The pranksters kept quiet until one of their intended victims showed interest in a box. The auctioneer enjoyed the wild bidding that took place until the "fall-guy" retired from the race. Then the jokester's spokesman bought the pie and gave it to some "goof" who was sure to embarrass the young lady.

Numerous chicaneries were perpetrated behind stage curtains, too. Sometimes a lover claimed his box, escorted his companion to a desk, and sliced the pie — never thinking of mischievous "goings-on." His miss was first to be suspicious as she noted that her pie appeared to be chocolate instead of the coconut she had baked. To her chagrin and her date's dismay, one bite revealed that it was a mud pie — flavored with vanilla and topped with brownish meringue. Guffaws filled the room as the joke-victim rushed outside to expel the gritty mess.

The main event — the prettiest girl contest — was decided by collecting a penny for each vote. With nominees' names chalked on the blackboard, solicitors passed hats for money to put on candidates. Every lassie yearned and half-expected to get the prized box of chocolates — except me. I knew that prize was a thousand miles beyond my reach. Throughout

my childhood, I had been told that I was homely. Red-haired, splotted with oversized freckles and a bit overweight, I knew that I was unattractive. Once an unkind man said, "Did you know you're the ugliest kid I ever saw?"

By bleaching my freckles, applying facial make-up, and curling my hair, I improved my appearance. A neat fitting dress helped my figure, but my self-image score remained low.

For secrecy's sake, the boxes were wrapped in goods paper obtained at the local store. They were unwrapped when safely behind a stage curtain, numbers were placed in each box, and a corresponding one given to the buyer of the box.

Every young miss volunteered to work on the stage where her feminine pulchritude could best be seen. Some even contrived business as near the stage-front as possible and tried to appear busy at all times.

Content that men's pockets were near-empty, the chairman closed the contest and announced the winner. I was slow to believe what my ears registered so remained seated until a friend prodded me to my feet.

As I walked forward to claim the coveted prize, my image did an "about-face." No longer was I an uncomely lass — I was Cinderella, glass slippers and all, dancing with the handsome prince. ■

early April

by Sheryl L. Nelms

this morning the
sky over Oklahoma is
a translucent wash
of cobalt
blue

splotched by
a wet brush
fling

— of titanium white

that ran
just so
into swirls

over

the western horizon

ILLUSTRATION BY JANICE HIX





THE UNCONVENTIONAL UNIVERSITY BOSS

— by Kate Jackson Lewis

(Managing Editor's note: This article is about an unusual Western Oklahoman who has now been transplanted in Southeastern Oklahoma. Mrs. Lewis' article first appeared in THE OKLAHOMANS on November 18, 1979 and has not been updated for inclusion here.)

ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICIA SHERMAN

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It was no surprise to Durant townspeople when Dr. Leon Hibbs, Southeastern Oklahoma State University's president, donned a white Stetson hat and took over the reins of the university's rodeo team. Hibbs has shown a penchant for the unconventional since he became president in 1967.

Durant Attorney Dean Spears said he'd never forget the first time he saw the new president. "I was used to former President A. E. Shearer, very stately and poised. The first I see of Hibbs, he's wearing a green and gold freshman beanie and sporting a crew-cut. I got used to that and what happens? The next I know, he's riding a four-legged critter and wearing a ten-gallon hat."

Spears' remark, made at a Hibbs' "Roasting," was fundamentally true.

Hibbs told the group that he was wearing the cowboy hat long before he got the beanie. "My dad runs a sale barn in Western Oklahoma and I was in a saddle almost before I walked."

Hibbs came to Durant from his post as Dean of Education at Oklahoma City University. He received his Bachelor's degree from Northwestern State College at Alva, a Master's in Education from the University of Oklahoma, and a Master's in science and a Doctorate in Education from Oklahoma State University.

At Southeastern, Hibbs has tried everything from teaching horsemanship classes and coaching rodeo to passing out Green Stamps to fill a dorm.

"If it sounds like a good idea, he'll try it, and just about everything he takes a crack at has a way of working," DURANT DAILY DEMOCRAT Editor Bob Peterson says.

Newsman Doug Hicks said, "Hibbs calls his ventures 'calculated risks' and figures he's ahead if 20 percent pan out. The Board of Regents for Oklahoma Colleges liken him to a 'Riverboat Gambler.'"

Call him what you will, his gambling days date back to childhood in Beaver, where townspeople knew him as a lad who made money by buying a used article, working it over, then selling it for a 50 percent profit.

A boyhood friend recalled that when Leon was 17, he borrowed money to buy a service station. The deal was so tight the loan included enough cash to make change for his first day's sales. Four months later, Hibbs sold the place at enough profit to pay for his first semester in college.

When the 36-year-old president (one of the youngest at the school) took his first stroll across the "campus of 1,000 magnolias" 12 years ago, everything was quiet and peaceful. But not for long. Within a short time, a student shooting occurred; a venereal disease outbreak threatened to reach epidemic proportions; and student protests were growing louder about poor housing, untasty cafeteria food, and inadequate parking space.

Hibbs took one of his "calculated risks," bringing a storm of protest from the "Old Guard." He ordered the mass trimming of venerated magnolias. Put to test for an answer, Hibbs responded, "I was cleaning up the campus and wiping out a mugger's paradise."

A less daring man may have sought another job. (Hibbs admitted considering a number of attractive job offers, but he made no plans to leave and said so.)

"This is a tough job. I'm responsible for all of the people who work or attend classes here. If I make a mistake — if any of them make a mistake — ultimately I get blamed for it," Hibbs explained.

"My family is rooted here. It's the first time the four children, from toddler stage to college age, have ever lived under the same roof for four years."

One of his children expressed the consensus of all when he said, "You can go if you want to, but I'm not."

Another child said, "Well, I'm not either, but I'm not big enough to tell you that."

The skilled mathematician looked for a formula to solve his problems. "Since schools exist for, and because of, the students," he reasoned, "why not let them have a voice in finding the solution?"

He began by throwing open doors in order to make himself an available listener. He started eating in the student cafeteria, playing intramural sports, and hobnobbing in dorms and the snack bar. An outgoing man by nature, the administrator let it be known that he wanted to listen to their complaints. He even listed his home phone number in the student directory.

When an audience at a student talent show listened to an off-key rendition of "Blood on the Moon," sung by a bear-costumed figure, they were delighted to see their president remove his mask and reveal himself as the guest of honor.

When Durant citizens began to celebrate the Centennial, Hibbs entered the beard-growing contest. The genial Doctor won the prize — a sousing in the campus fountain. The tricky Hibbs managed to pull his sophomore competitor into the pond.

Hibbs knew that playful antics wouldn't find money for building dorms. Neither was it a cure for campus dissension. But the fun and association brought students and faculty together and broke down communication barriers.

Hibbs said, "I have a great faith in people. My philosophy has to be that if you keep everything you possibly can right out on top of the table where everyone knows the truth — all of it — those same people will make the right decisions."

Soon Hibbs' ventures paid off. Students rolled up their sleeves and helped out when it was announced that new twin dorms were soon to grace the campus. A student-faculty forum began to function. Two collegians were invited to serve on all college committees. They helped to formulate rules for the twin dorms, and women students had the same freedom to come and go that men did. Keys to outside doors were issued to all students.

When the new dorms were ready for occupancy, reports came that other colleges were having trouble keeping their dorms filled. Hibbs pulled another lucky card by promising Green Stamps to students paying for room and board in advance for the first semester. Students' mothers furnished the impetus, and the dorms were filled brimfull. Hibbs paid for the stamps himself, and the dorms are still paying their own way.

Hibbs is reluctant to take credit for the many changes

and additions to the university since he came. "Most of the ideas that worked here came from students, faculty, and off-campus people."

"The ten new buildings and the new curricular ideas I have helped initiate are important, as are the campus infirmary, the radio station, the off-street driver-education range, and degree programs in professional aviation, recreation and conservation."

"We have the most unique food service in the nation — a French sidewalk cafe and an all-French menu. Our dormitories are full, and we have very little indebtedness."

"The one improvement I prize most," Hibbs said, "is the soon-to-be-realized Industrial Arts Technological Center. The architect has the plans and construction will begin soon."

How did he get involved in rodeo?

"Four years ago, I began teaching horsemanship classes to provide weekend recreation for campus-bound students. Though the program started without horses or money, friends of the college donated a motley assortment of steeds, some good — others worthless. I rode every horse to determine its worth. One of the regents managed to get both hay and oats contributed."

Through stud fees and Hibbs' management, the program became self-supporting. Equine studies are now offered for credit, and courses may be applied toward a degree in recreation.

Rodeo-minded riders started roping, tying, and bulldogging; so Hibbs took on another task — coaching rodeo. His teams were winners from the start. "With four consecutive National Championships to their credit, the men's team hopes to win a fifth time to set an all-time record. We have a team of sophomore women who should win a national title next year."

Though Hibbs enjoyed working to get rodeo started, he considers it of little consequence among the other accomplishments at the college. "Now that I have a champion performer, Betty Gayle, helping with rodeo, I can spend more time implementing new projects and ideas."

"No, I won't give up riding. I've been with it too long. I came to love horses and cattle when I lived on a ranch. We did it all, then: cutting cattle, tying calves, bulldogging for branding. Only we didn't call it rodeo — it was called work," he grinned.

"My family likes horses. My wife, Maxine, started to school with me at Elmwood, south of Beaver. We finished high school there and got married 29 years ago. Max, 24, is a mathematician for Conoco and lives in Stillwater. Gaye, 23, teaches kindergarten at Denison, Texas. Craig, 18, is a freshman at Southeastern, and LeAn is a fifth-grader."

"Gaye has been a barrel racer and a teacher of horsemanship; Craig is a champion roper, and LeAn is a fine recreational horsewoman. Max is interested in horse and cattle breeding."

Hibbs even enters performance events. "I perform regularly in cow cutting. In fact, I have a horse entered in the National Cutting Horse Association Futurity in December. I once roped steers, but not as a college performer."

What would Hibbs change if he could relive his 48 years?

"I don't know whether I would change anything if I had my life to live over. Everything fits together so well that any one change might have altered my life so drastically, that I wouldn't be me."

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING



OUTSIDE EVALUATION OF THE NEW HORIZONS PROGRAM

— by Eugene Hughes

From the beginning and throughout its presentation, "The Oil Patch and the Community — Contrast in Relations" revealed careful and thoughtful planning. The result was a graceful, tactful examination of emotional and controversial issues. Only the most sensitive perceptions could have produced a

program which confronted all the issues without being offensive or chauvinistic. One of the most remarkable aspects of the presentation was its judicious balance of control and spontaneity. The format was designed to insure the relevance and focus necessary without discouraging free discussion. Indeed, the extemporaneous scenes presented by "Rapid

Editor's note: One innovative educational tool is the improvisational theater group. On October 21, 1982, in Weatherford's Blair Hall a seminar-workshop was co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Humanities Council, New Horizons, and Rapid Reactions. Published here is Dr. Hughes' evaluation of the program.

PERSPECTIVES

Reactions," a major part of the program, were themselves examples of the pervasive "planned spontaneity" of the entire program. The planned — but not "canned" — responses from humanists and other community figures planted throughout the audience contributed to this sense of audience participation rather than passive reception of rehearsed scripts. The effect was that of having shared in a genuine exchange of real views, of a sincere "town meeting" without the irrelevance and lack of focus typical of such occasions.

The confrontation between the small, conservative community which had changed little in the past decade and the boom town resulting from the town's finding itself suddenly in the middle of the "oil patch" was a dramatic one. The presentation reflected the drama in its "time travel" format, in which members of the audience recalled their apprehensions and anticipations of the coming boom in 1980. For the most part, the community feared and resented the bustling, unfamiliar intrusions of oil patch economy and culture into its placid, rural, unlocked-doors atmosphere. People worried about rapid changes, about rising crime rates, about erosion of traditional values. There was concern that the community could not absorb the numbers of new citizens by providing adequate housing, education, and social services.

Some people, it is true, welcomed the changes, but their motives sometimes suggested other problems. There were inevitable signs of greed, of selfishness at the prospect of new riches around the corner. Priorities often became warped; the "let me get mine" attitude at times led to a narrow "everybody for himself" attitude toward social problems.

As the oil boom grew, some of the fears became realities. Increased traffic brought frustrations, noise, and road damage. Schools and churches did, indeed, find themselves poorly equipped to meet the greatly increased burdens placed upon them. All social service institutions were confronted with new problems in addition to the sheer numbers of people. Much of the new population was transient. Families were separated and/or uprooted, leading to insecurities, anxieties, and the absence of stable and traditional norms. The result was unprecedented social upheaval: high divorce rates, indigence, child neglect and abuse, and other forms of crime and social displacement. Mental health organizations, churches, charities, social service organizations, etc. found themselves challenged with the number and varieties of demands upon their services.

Not only were the new members of the community uneasy because of their own sudden rootlessness, but their problems were increased by the frequent stereotype rejection they encountered of all "oilies." Mutual suspicion, even contempt, prevailed. The community felt itself threatened by "oil field trash," and the newcomers saw themselves exploited by greedy landowners and businesses.

One particularly poignant problem was expressed by a representative of the Native Americans in the area. Many Indians, accustomed to a lifetime of need, of inadequate lives supported mostly by public welfare, suddenly

find themselves wealthy. Unable to cope with these new riches, they abandon traditional values with devastating personal and family results. There were no suggestions for improving this sad situation.

The strife was not limited to conflict between different cultures, however. Within the established community there arose new tensions and frustrations. Sometimes local farmers and business persons resented each other, suspecting that one profited more than another from the new riches. Unrealistic expectations of what the new wealth would achieve in improved roads and other governmental services led to suspicions of graft, misappropriations of funds, etc.

But the program also looked ahead, after taking stock of the results of all these disturbances. As one speaker put it, "The oil crisis has been a mirror to the community, showing us our weaknesses and strengths." The consensus seems to be that the experience was a useful one. (After all, the community shortcomings were articulated by members of the community itself.) The members of the community now perceive that they emphasized short-term goals too much. They now see that the "oilies" are not essentially different from them. They have been exposed to "outsiders" and survived, perhaps even grown. They now recognize some of their fears as having been narrow provincialism. Having been through this change, the community perceives itself better able to handle future changes by proceeding from sounder values with more concern for long-range effects.

That this new confidence will soon be tested is already clear. As the oil boom wanes, new problems are developing: unemployment with all its social implications; a rapid exodus of population, with concomitant economic shocks throughout the community. But it was clear from the responses that the new challenges are being faced positively, confidently, without the resentment and suspicion that heralded the oil boom in 1980. The community has found that it can adjust and adapt; that the oilies can become a part of existing order with profit to both; that while any change brings spectacular problems, it also promotes a great many quiet improvements. Women, in particular, are seen to play a significant role in this adaptation, and examples were given which demonstrated how women have risen above the frustrations of cultural changes to sustain the traditional values of established society.

As one speaker said, the community can now "risk loving." It has been shown its weaknesses and its strengths, and the experience has been a healthy one.

To the extent that humanism is an examination of human values in crisis, of community mores, of human motives and psychology, of human beings studying themselves as interacting creatures, this program was thoroughly and fundamentally humanistic. In view of the subject, the program necessarily emphasized sociological and psychological concerns. An effort was made to place the issues in historical perspective and to indicate their implications for the future. Two humanistic concerns which the program called for

— literature and philosophy — were almost entirely omitted. The academic philosopher was ill and the literature representative was unable to participate, thus accounting for these last minute omissions, presumably. In one sense, however, the arts — particularly the performing arts and the literature associated with them — dominated the program in a subtle manner. The dramatizations of the issues by "Rapid Reactions" were as interesting as art as they were relevant social commentary. The actors were skillful and knowledgeable, insuring that their performances were both entertaining and relevant. (Only once did it seem that relevance was briefly sacrificed for effect.) The "scenes" dramatized the issues which had been identified by the humanists and other members of the audience, giving them a pertinence and a feeling of expressing the immediate concerns of those present. Indeed, often the situations, characters, and attitudes were generated directly from the audience, which was necessarily involved. As the audience was informed at the beginning of the program, the extemporaneous performances by "Rapid Reactions" are in the distinguished tradition of the Italian *Commedia dell'arte*. It was obvious from the program and from conversations with those involved that the goals of the Oklahoma Humanities Committee shaped the content of the program.

In retrospect, the entire evening seems to have been carefully orchestrated. But the orchestration was so subtle that there was no sense of artificiality or manipulation. This effect can only have resulted from long and intelligent preparation on the part of the director, the consultants, and the participants. It was a program that the Oklahoma Humanities Committee and the members of the project can all be proud of.



WICHITA FORSYTHIA

— by Joanna Thurston Roper

Today I saw the first forsythia,
Branches willow yellow and bright.
A sudden sliver of homesickness
Made a wistful pain ripple through my being.

I saw again the pasture road
Curling through the new green grass
Across the brow of a stubby hill,
Skirting the wiry branches of mesquite.
And in my memory there floated
The earthy smell of clear bright evenings
With the mountain outlining the space
Between here and the road.
We walked to the gate before the land grew dim,
And listened to soft voices tell of other times —
But we knew no better time than Now.
The little black dog chased rabbits
And returned, laughing in cheerful futility.
When we reached the pasture gate, we stood
Memorizing again the familiar purple mountain
Before retracing our pasture route
Toward the spot where the sun goes down.

Today in one searing warp of time —
In forsythia's yellow harbinger of spring —
I saw again that curling pasture road.

ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGE HEJNA

PANHANDLE ALUMNI MEETING IS HELD AT ROMAN NOSE

— by Della Barnwell Whisenhunt

They came from Woodward, Rosston, Beaver, Weatherford, Stillwater, and Bartlesville, Oklahoma; they came from Midland, Texas; they came from Ashland, Kansas. In the late twenties, they had attended Panhandle A & M College (now Panhandle State University); and most of them had graduated from that institution. They had gotten together a few times since leaving PAMC; but this reunion at Roman Nose State Lodge in November 1982 was to be something special, and so it was.

These alumni reminisced; they looked at pictures; they thumbed through yearbooks of PAMC published when they were there more than fifty years before; they told jokes; they told tall tales; they toasted one another; some read Mrs. Robert Sexton's history of the Oklahoma Panhandle; some drove into Watonga to see the restored mansion of Thompson B. Ferguson, Oklahoma's sixth territorial governor; all accepted the invitation of Harold C. Groendyke, their former classmate, and spent a half day touring his ranch southwest of Watonga.

Groendyke had played football at PAMC; other former PAMC football players attending the reunion were Allen Williams, Henry White, Bus Gieck, and Floyd Whisenhunt.

I was the maverick of the group — a Sooner, yes, but one from the foothills of the Kiamichis in Southeast Oklahoma. Fortunately for me, all those Panhandle alumni graciously took me in; as I had lived since 1940 in Weatherford, I did not feel much like a foreigner. When I left the reunion at Roman Nose, I felt I had made many new friends.

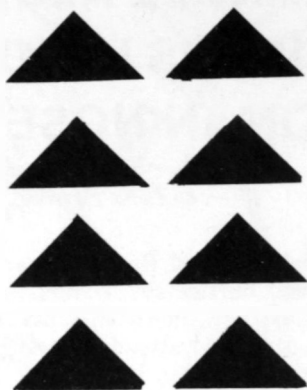
My thoughts concerning them were also that they had been ready and willing to learn when years ago they had committed themselves to that Panhandle institution of higher learning; thus, that institution had much to work with; and it did a good job using its potential. Within this group, PAMC turned out the creator of what is now the largest tank-truck common carriers in the U.S., a county agent, a vo-ag teacher, a politician, a teacher of distributive education and shop, an English teacher, a medical doctor, a public-relations person, a soil-conservation-services worker, a rural mail carrier, and an ASCS official.

One of the presidents of PAMC in the twenties said, "A diploma from this college is a badge of excellence." By all appearances, his statement was correct.

The persons attending the Roman Nose Reunion were: Bert and Margaret (Manuel) Larason, Guymon and Flora Mae (Raines) Casey, Allen and Maxine (Settles) Williams, Henry and Ruth (Harrison) White, Floyd and Della (Barnwell) Whisenhunt, Ralph and Clarice (Coots) Gieck, Hazel (Etter) Snodgrass, Carrie (Powell) Roberts, Mike Dongan, Roy Etter, and Harold C. Groendyke. ■

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ILLUSTRATION BY MARK SHERMAN



FUTURE ISSUES

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ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING



FALL, 1983. The theme to be developed in this issue is "Oklahoma Pride," and the deadline for submissions is August 1, 1983.

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING



SPRING, 1984. This issue — "Oklahoma Teachers" — will give our readers a chance to give deserved honor to outstanding Western Oklahoma educators.

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING



SUMMER, 1983. "Ranching in Oklahoma" will be the general theme of this edition, and it will no doubt prompt many good submissions. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 1983.

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING



WINTER, 1983. This issue will have the theme "Oklahoma Athletics." Submissions may deal with athletes and athletic events. Deadline: November 1, 1983.



ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA FICKLING

SUMMER, 1984. "Western Oklahoma Religion" is a theme that should draw many interesting submissions from our readers. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 1984.

garden tips

Artichokes and Armadillos

by

*Donita
Lucas
Shields*

Editor's note: The time is upon us to start fighting the yard game again. This can be taken as a how-to or how-not-to piece.

ILLUSTRATION BY DONNA AND KEVIN HILL



Getting and keeping a good yard man throughout a season abounds with uncertainties. I felt fortunate this spring when a temperamental fellow who tends most of the yards along my street accepted my patches of bermuda with their many obstacles.

However, at any time he could throw up his hands in exasperation and never return. Already he has balked on eight of his twenty lawns. Mine may be next, and then who knows where to find another to take his place.

Yard men refuse lawns for ridiculous excuses, and my grounds flourish with serious offenses. Four o'clocks drape beyond their beds with rocks underlying the droop. Limitless English ivy intertwine trumpet vines, and artichokes bow with exhaustion from over-stimulated growth.

Then frequent rains brought another serious offender. Strange holes with little tufts of grass and dirt around them grew overnight all over my back yard. Thinking of aggressive robins and grackles, I disregarded any thoughts of major blight.

While mowing one humid, hot morning, the yard man stopped for a rest and drawled, "Lady, you got armadillos."

My only experience with armadillos and armadillo holes was back in the days when I hauled round bales of alfalfa hay on the farm. Sometimes my pickup truck and transporter wheels disappeared into unknown depths. I learned to keep a shovel handy. Those soft mounds of dirt signaled either an underhanded job or a detour.

Even though this city armadillo seemed a dainty eater, it could be reason for losing a good yard man. After his complaint, next dawn I began hunting for the creature. I had no idea what to do if I found it. Maybe catch and take it to a country home.

My search began on the shady side of my house under the artichokes. They were six feet tall, healthy, thick, and succulent. While I was crawling around and probing under them, a sophisticated neighbor strolled by, taking her morning walk. She is one of those lovely elderly people who always have lovelier yards.

Since we first met years ago, I have felt a complex coming on every time we visit. Her yard is perfectly manicured, and mine is filled with procrastination. I always find more important things to do than pull weeds and snip vines.

I explained to her, "I'm trying to find my armadillo. He might be resting in these artichokes."

Being both petite and polite, she gazed up at the gallant growth. She whispered, "Oh? Those are artichokes?" She turned toward me and stared in a peculiar manner. The armadillo appeared not to worry her at all.

I wanted to tell her the armadillo might get into her yard, and she would have no one to mow her lawn either. But of course the armored thing would not dare. She probably had few worms and insects anyway.

I explained to her that artichokes are considered a valuable source of levulose sugars which diabetic persons can safely eat. No one in my family has diabetes, but artichoke tubers are a tasty potato substitute. Best of all, they make excellent shade for the sunny side of a home.

It was my big-city son who told me of artichokes. The Jerusalem variety is related to sunflowers and is recommended as nutritious cattle feed. My son knows all about them and grows them profusely, too. He started his with tubers from an exclusive garden shop.

No telling where mine came from. They have always been part of the wildlife in my yard. The 30-foot wall of exotic plants with their yellow blossoms is something to behold. Truthfully, my son said they look like Jerusalem artichokes.

With evasive looks, the neighbor left me crawling and probing with my yardstick. I continued searching through all the artichokes and then under four o'clocks, vines, and shrubs.

The day turned to gloom with no armadillos to be found. I had offended my best neighbor, and it was destiny to lose a yard man. No doubt, as that neighbor thought, the artichokes would turn out to be weeds and do nothing but choke my sewer line.



ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICIA AND MARK SHERMAN

PAT
AND
MARK

BANOWSKY AND DECAZES' WESTERN OKLAHOMA

— by Chris Gould

This photographic essay, accompanied by a short historical introduction by William S. Banowsky, is one of several titles issued by the University of Oklahoma Press in recognition of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Oklahoma statehood. It is an impressive tribute to our region.

The technical quality of the more than seventy color photographs is beyond criticism, at least by this reviewer, and their reproduction on fine-quality 8½ x 11-inch paper provides an appropriate showcase for the talents of Daisy Decazes, a young French photographer whose work has been exhibited internationally. Bringing to her subject the fresh perspectives of a newcomer, the photographer has shunned both the glamorous and the stereotypic.

Some of Decazes's most imposing photographs capture the awesomeness of our natural setting: immense slate-colored cloud banks, the vivid contrast of primary colors in earth and sky set against the sparse vegetation of the plains, the jagged protrusion of a "lone tree" or a "burnished hill." Photographs with evocative titles like "Prairie Gothic" and "Panhandle Faces" depict, without sentimentality or condescension, the rugged character of ordinary men and women engaged in timeless routines of work and leisure. We see the unpretentious monuments and revered institutions of Western Oklahoma: the small church, the country store, the rodeo, the parade down Main Street. Finally, there is a series of photographs devoted to the occupations of farming, ranching, and oil excavation.

A four-page introduction by William Banowsky provides a brief historical overview; it commences, almost abruptly, with a forthright claim: "Western Oklahoma demands heroes." Banowsky carries his thesis through a history of conquistadors, acquisitive settlers, and defiant Indians, down to the present generation of deep-gas drillers in the Anadarko Basin — men and women who "instead of standing hip-deep in dust . . . stand hip-deep in debt, gambling on their skill and expertise and instinct to . . . enrich themselves, their state, and their country."

A 1982 publication, *WESTERN OKLAHOMA* is available at the OU Press in Norman.



TRAVIS ANTHONY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

— by Leroy Thomas

Travis Anthony is an iconoclast. He smartly breaks the impression that by the time a person reaches retirement age he has nothing else to offer. After thirty years in the education field as teacher, coach, counselor, principal, and college professor, Mr. Anthony set himself to writing books. So far, he has published two and has at least two more coming out soon.

For Travis, retirement hasn't been quitting time. So let it be with me.

His first book was *CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN*, and the second was *SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS*. Both books tell of Travis' personal experiences of growing up in Oklahoma during the Depression and the years that followed during his teaching career.

The imprints of his three favorite authors — Twain, Tarkington, and Dickens — are upon his writing. There's a great deal of sorrow in his accounts, but it's not all heavy reading. There's also a great deal of laughter.

In a typical ironic manner, Travis has said of his new vocation, "I'll never be able to quit writing now. I think I'm getting the hang of it."

Reading the two books is a joyful as well as poignant experience, but the books should never be separated from the man. Travis is available for personal promotional appearances, and he's a speaker who appeals to all ages. His listener is so engrossed in the man and the speaker that \$21.95 seems a small price to pay for *CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN* and *SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS* in order to have the charming 68-year-old around all the time.

Anyone interested in setting up a delightful program may call Travis at 405-476-2211 or write to him at home: P.O. Box 646; Rush Springs, OK 73082.

SONGS OF THE WEST

— by Leroy Thomas

Art Cuelho of Seven Buffaloes Press has made available another literary work — *HAWK FLIGHTS: VISIONS OF THE WEST* (short stories by Gerald Haslam).

There's even one story in the fourteen-story collection specifically for Western Oklahomans. The title is "Hey, Okie!" It's a compliment to Haslam that the technique of this story and the others is reminiscent of Sherwood Anderson with the conversational style, false starts, repetition for effect, vivid language, and *in medias res* beginning. I consider that an achievement.

HAWK FLIGHT illustrates Haslam's continued expansion of the range of material and style, and his messages are universal. Lawrence Clayton has rightly observed, "Haslam sings a song of the West, but it isn't a traditional ballad. Instead it is the howl of the wind fraying the nerves of the complacent, the slap that awakens the dreamer."

For the person who wants an awakening, *HAWK FLIGHTS* isn't a sleeper. It's a good buy for \$5.00 — available from Seven Buffaloes Press (Box 249 — Big Timber, MT 59011).

CLINTORA BYRNE-HARRIS

October 24, 1925 — January 24, 1983



Clintora Byrne-Harris

(Managing Editor's note: Clintora Byrne-Harris was an active WESTVIEW contributor. Following is a loving tribute from a good friend.)

RICHES IN HER TOUCH

— by Margaret Friedrich

(Margaret Friedrich is a retired teacher who lives in Clinton. Her days are filled with useful service to her church, Trinity Lutheran, and to other organizations such as the Weatherford Wordhandlers and the Custer County Retired Teachers Association.)

She first touched my life almost four years ago. I did not see her often during those years; but every time we were together, her philosophy made a deep impact upon me. Her smile sparkled and danced as if it came from a sunlit center somewhere within her being. Yet her life was not one of sunshine. Her heartaches were many. What then, I wondered, was the source of the sun within her? Very quickly I learned. She revealed it by her every act and word.

Her faith emerged as a deep and unshakable knowledge that, despite any vicissitude life might hand her, she could always draw on a fountain of strength. Once at dinner she remarked that she had prayed for the steak to be just right. I was amused by her seemingly casual use of prayer. To this she replied, "Oh, I always pray about everything." It was true. Her mind was continuously receptive to prayer.

She prayed for strength to endure her heartaches but was quick to point out her blessings as well. She loved her four sons and five daughters and all her grandchildren. They were her great treasures. She appreciated her many loyal friends; she felt blessed among her church family where she could turn to others for comfort and support. Each day's gifts brought a spontaneous prayer of thanksgiving.

She loved poetry and had a talent for writing it. Published numerous times, her poems usually dealt with the magnificence of nature and

its inner meaning. She loved nature and was happy when pursuing it with her camera. She had developed a careful eye for shapes, colors, perspectives. Sunsets were of special significance to her. She gloried in the soft rose, the blazing red, the delicate pink, the mauve, the deep purple.

Hope lived in her every breath. She looked forward to adventures never yet experienced. She delighted in people. She could see and appreciate their good qualities almost instantly; still, she was aware of human shortcomings. But whether they were good or bad, she could and did love the people who touched her life. She knew her own inadequacies, but she did not let them depress her. She had the ability to ask God's forgiveness and then to forgive herself. She lived abundantly with faith, hope, and love.

When cancer struck, another quality surfaced — courage. Gradually, as the months went by, she came to accept the fact that death was drawing close for her. She did not recognize her own calm courage in facing it.

She added so much richness to my life in the short time I knew her. I shall always be grateful because she touched me with her own particular quality of wealth.

Yesterday we gathered to say goodbye to her. The funeral was for us. The beauty of the music, the loveliness of the flowers, the profound simplicity of the words spoken by the eminent clergyman — all were for us who survive. They all soften our inevitable loneliness and encourage us to live as she did with faith, hope, and love.

Margaret Friedrich
427 South 15 St.
Clinton, OK 73601
of

Weatherford Wordhandlers



Margaret Friedrich

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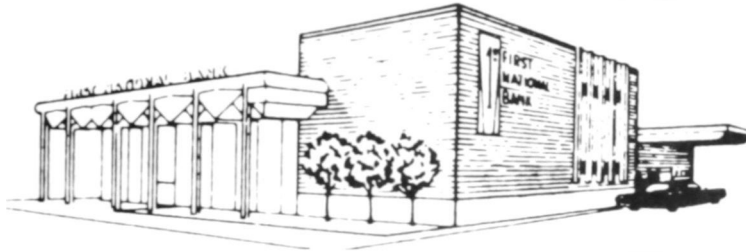
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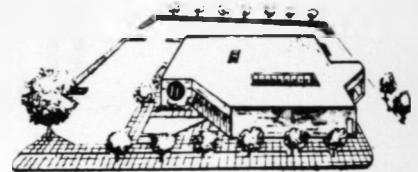


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*SOSU — The abbreviation SOSU is always used in WESTVIEW to mean Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford and is not to be confused with Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant.



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