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The Highway the Never Was

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he would say, "and I knew right then that Mr. Ghost was approaching the inside." Papa lay rigid, and sure enough the next sounds came one by one slowly but surely, winding their way through all the rooms downstairs and then the creaking stairsteps gave vent to the abominable. Upon reaching the top, it winded its way down the hallway through all the rooms and back again toward the only one left, "Dear Ole' Dad's." It was the beginning of the crucial moment. Papa knew it had to show and sure enough there it stood, erect and motionless in the open doorway. It was the image of a perfect ghost, clothed in a white robe. "I was paralyzed beyond words," said he, "and though I could not see the features of its face too good, I could truly sense its eyes fixed upon me."

"It then began moving toward me slowly, and behold, it actually laid itself down there beside me! Oh, what a moment of desperation it was! 'What is to happen next?' says I to myself, and it did. Lo and behold, Mr. Ghost laid its hand upon my bosom, bless you me, and this hand had a ring on its finger easily seen from the moon's bright light beaming across our bodies. Of course, I was darsin' to move, but yet I did. For I thought, says I to myself, 'If, and I know for sure it is the ghost, that by capturing the ring I can at least prove to the boys that I, although not producing the whole ghost, can at least show its ring.'"

"So gently I moved my hand across this hand and my fingers found that the ring could be removed without effort, which I did with no conflictions. Time was a big element to me, and after a short time, which couldn't have been too short for me, it arose and in its same stalkerly fashion disappeared through the doorway, down the creaking stairs, onto the porch, and made its final round in the crunching

gravel and then disappeared into where, only God would ever know."

Nothing else happened and at the break of dawn Papa made up his bedroll and struck out to reunite with the living, "mission accomplished." He made it back for breakfast and they were all present at the table intently awaiting his story of the outcome. Then Mr. Cole spoke with a chuckle. "Well, Dave, how did you survive the night and did you bring me back my ghost?" "No, I didn't, Mr. Cole," said Papa, "Not the ghost, but I **did** bring back the ghost's ring," and threw it into the center of the table for all to see. Immediately the whole bunch was startled by the sudden outcry of Mr. Cole's eighteen year old daughter, Mary, as she reached across the table for it. She had missed her ring that morning and assumed that she had thoughtlessly laid it down and consequently had not mentioned it to anyone.

And so there it was! The mystery had been solved. Mary Cole was the sleepwalker, unbeknown to anyone, and had been making occasional jaunts to the old haunted house, her once favorite playground. All of the Cole family and the rest of the threshold were deeply grateful to Dave for solving the mystic happenings. Mary was broken of her bad habit and the Ole' Haunted House once more became the lighted harbor for those seeking lasting happiness and protection from the ravages of the Wild and Wooly West.

ELMER M. MILLS, a 1925 graduate of Weatherford High School, now lives on a farm near Seneca, Missouri. He is happily surrounded by his wife, Betty, their four children, eleven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. One granddaughter, Lori LeBahn, is responsible for submitting Mr. Mills' manuscripts to WESTVIEW. ■

NOVELTY

cooperative spirit

The Highway That Never Was

By Maxine Wilhelm

The 100th Meridian had just been surveyed for the last time. Highway 66, crossing the country east and west, was being constructed. Feeder roads were needed to intersect the new highway, connecting the rural towns together.

The Chamber of Commerce of Erick met with Chamber members and business people in Hollis, May 9, 1929. The object of the conference was to formulate a plan for a State road from Hollis to Erick on north to Shattuck. Everyone was enthusiastic about the road and plans were made to meet with other towns along the route to Shattuck.

A highway sign 12" by 12" reading, "OK Meridian 100 Highway," was designed. This sign was similar to the signs used on state roads at the time. The Erick Chamber of Commerce ordered 50 signs to be made by the State Penitentiary at McAlester.

O. R. Wilhelm made many trips with fence posts, posthole diggers and the signs loaded in his 1927 Chevy. He nailed the signs on posts or set posts at strategic points along section lines generally used for north and south travel. There were lots of square

corners on the route at that time. The signs were displayed from Hollis to Durham.

It was hoped that a bridge might be built on the South Canadian River west of the Antelope Hills, then on to Shattuck. The members of the Chambers thought that a main highway along the 100th Meridian would help the State finances through the gasoline tax paid by users of the road.

However, boosters for a highway connecting all the county seat towns, Arnett, Cheyenne, Sayre, Mangum and Altus had more political influence, so highway 283 got the bridge across the South Canadian at Packsaddle crossing. A bridge was never built north of Durham. A team of mules pulled vehicles across the channel.

Two of the original signs posted on the proposed highway that never was, are now in the 100th Meridian Museum in Erick. ■

Other Erick Chamber committee members were J. W. Gillum, J. A. Ivester, L. E. Thomas, Neal Stewart, R. S. Rowland and Dr. R. C. McCreery.