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## Keep the Horses Up Tonight / From the High Plains

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## *Keep The Horses Up Tonight*

*a book review by Dr. Christopher Gould*

That is the summer we discovered that fried grasshopper legs were pretty good. . . There was a small plant which we called *sheep shire*--how come I don't know. Maybe it was sour-dock. Anyhow, it had a sour taste. We would crush it in a glass of water and put in a little sugar for sweetening--presto, lemonade. We rarely had boughten sody pop. . . .

Passages like this abound in this anecdotal account of youth in Western Oklahoma during the 1920's and 30's. M. F. ("Bo") Guest, a retired mail carrier from Hollis, has written an engagingly candid, yet relentlessly cheerful, memoir that should appeal to almost any reader.

A particular virtue of the book is Guest's keen eye for detail, especially the singular mannerisms of

speech and appearance that make individuals come alive for the reader. Similarly, the author's unconventional style--self-consciously, yet adroitly, colloquial--is suited ideally to the author's aims and adds to the reader's pleasure. Guest's reminiscences are fairly random--the book has no apparent organizational plan, nor is there much thematic continuity in its chapters. But this, too, seems in keeping with the writer's appealing persona.

As a historical document, *KEEP THE HORSES UP TONIGHT* chronicles the changing face of a particular community, but it has a much broader appeal as just plain good reading. The book is available (\$7.25 paper, \$10.40 cloth, tax and mailing included) from either the author, Box 507, Hollis, OK 73550; or Dakama Publishers, 1209 Magnolia, Norman, OK 73069.

## *From The High Plains*

*a book review by Opal Hartsell Brown*

*FROM THE HIGH PLAINS* by John Fischer, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1978, 181 pages. Although this book was published a few years ago, it is as poignant today as it was at birth.

Biographical in essence, it has many arms, bringing into focus the whole spectrum of life in Western Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle. It begins with the flint workers along the Canadian River and takes the reader through the eras of nomadic Indians, following the buffalo with their dogs and horses.

Next come the white hunters, who denuded the plains of some five million shaggy beasts in a decade. They are followed by the cattlemen, wire fences, and windmills, the "only establishment" of the Great Plains to that time; the oil boom and bust, wheat farmers, dust bowl and depression, and back to ranching and grain with deep wells.

Fischer predicts the next problem is developing from the "mining" of water.

Born in Texhoma, which straddles the border of Texas and Oklahoma, Fischer is not sure in which state his birth house stood. He tells of visiting his paternal grandparents between Ft. Sill and Apache when he was small and being introduced to the art of barbed wire building. Another time he was stationed with the army at Ft. Sill.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, he worked as a reporter on the *DAILY OKLAHOMAN* in 1933 and was a Rhodes Scholar in England. He served as European correspondent for the United Press, as a correspondent in Washington, and authored at least four other books.

His father, John S. Fischer, led the way to writing. Leaving the job as a \$10 a week reporter for the *KANSAS CITY STAR* in 1903, he homesteaded 160 acres between Ft. Sill and Apache. After building a house and fulfilling requirements for ownership, he sent for his parents in Ohio. They took over the homestead, leaving John S. Fischer to pursue his career.

He established newspapers at Carnegie and Beaver City. He went to Texhoma as land commissioner for the government and established a local weekly. He married Georgia Caperton, a teacher from the Texas Panhandle. They became the parents of John II.

*FROM THE HIGH PLAINS* was illustrated by another Oklahoman, the late Paul Laune, who grew up in Woodward. He did six murals on the history of Oklahoma and the Great Plains for the Woodward Museum.

This book would be a wonderful asset to any library for a cost of \$10.00.