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

## **SPIKE NAIL — FAMILY MAN**

— by Dee Ann Ray

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

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

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

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*Spike's parents — Eli (Tom) and Vera*

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

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

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

After moving to Rosedale, Tom sharecropped with



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Both parents were active Baptists; and a few years

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

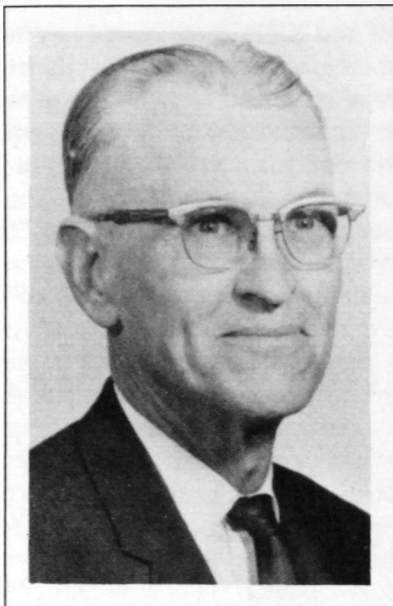


*Spike and Lee Ann: September 19, 1948*

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

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





*Lowell Thomas (Spike) Nail*

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

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

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

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

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

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



## WESTVIEW

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