

PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOLUME II

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SPRING 1982

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PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**The PAYNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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When Radio Came To Ripley

by Alvan L. Mitchell

The youth of Ripley seemed never to be bored when I grew up there in the early twenties. There was always something to do and look forward to such as the usual holidays, the first good snow, the first day we could go barefoot, or the first night for 'Possum hunting. One of our greatest thrills was to awaken to see the round, soft lines of the snow which seemed like a painting, as compared with the harshness of a photograph.

Then too, there were exciting man made things such as the Chautauqua, tent shows or plays, even prize fights. One such show was "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and another, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." It would seem everyone in Ripley was starved for entertainment. A very popular event was a school play.

Once the McGinty boys built an entire car from cast off parts found in junk heaps behind garages, and at many of the surrounding farms where old cars had been abandoned as useless. Not one thin dime was paid for anything on that hybrid car. Even the gasoline to run it was Casing Head. Jammed with every kid who could possibly cling on to something of the car, we would parade the streets of Ripley, especially on a Sunday afternoon, dispelling the peace and quiet with squeals from the girls and whoops from the boys, as well as the cheers from those who came out of their homes to watch the car pass, and wave and shout at us. One Fourth of July, loaded to the gunnels, and followed by smaller children on foot, the car went out the the Ball Diamond. This was a great day for Ripley because Lloyd Williamson won the annual game with the Tryon Tigers.

The score was six to seven in our favor in the last inning and the last Tiger, with two strikes on him, was ready. Earl Messecar threw a very wicked fast ball at the plate and the batter hit it as wickedly. The ball hurtled to just inside first base, and Lloyd, who was playing that

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alvan L. Mitchell grew up in Ripley, Oklahoma and later became the pianist for the Billy McGinty Cowboy Band. Now a resident of Hayward, California, Mr. Mitchell is a member of the Payne County Historical Society.

position, in a futile show-off gesture threw up his right bare hand and caught that burner literally winning that game single-handedly. The most surprised person there was Lloyd.

But the really very exciting thing which came along one spring was the invitation to Ripley to put on a broadcast at the new radio station, KFRU, at Bristow. To that moment radio had merely dribbled in Ripley. Most of us had built crystal sets from oatmeal boxes, shot-up twenty-two cartridges for switch points, and number nine fence wire for aerials. Some, like Guy and Gene Messecar, were building tube sets which powered loud speakers, but others were purchasing 'store-boughten' radios, which gave rise to radio parties all over town, given by the owners. But this invitation from the Etherial Radio Company brought radio in with a bang, so for awhile no one talked of anything else.

It was decided the program would be given under the auspices of the high school, and there began a series of rehearsals during school hours, after school, and into the night which took up all of the preparation time. My mother, who had been a concert pianist in Missouri and Oklahoma City prior to our moving to Ripley, was recruited to take a leading part in the entire procedure and programming.

On the day of the broadcast a caravan of cars, loaded with performers and their families, as well as hampers full of picnic goodies, made its way to Bristow by way of Cushing. At Bristow the picnic was held on the lawn of a park. But, all too quickly the time to "go on the air" came.

The broadcast studio, while reasonably large, seemed small because of the huge Chickering grand piano it contained. Since there was such a large entourage of performers, last minute advisors, parents and instructors, most of us had to wait our turn in the large reception room of the building which was connected by a hallway. Loud speakers were in the reception room and we could monitor all the program as it progressed. As our turn neared, each time, we would have to squeeze through the hallway to be in the studio to go on.

Most of us didn't mind too much when we performed in a group such as the quartette, but when we had to do a solo we discovered a new threat to our peace of mind: 'Mike Fright!' There was a great deal of "dead air" after the announcement of a solo that day. My normally unflappable friend, Howard Straughn told me: "I was never so scared in my life." In my case the first few lines of my first solo were more or less squeaked or whispered. The radio station manager told me later it

was the first time he'd heard "Whispering Croon" and added that he wanted me to develop it as a new style of singing. I followed his advice and later did manage it, but only at radio stations. When on a stage later with the Cowboy Band I had to belt it out to reach the last row of the balcony of the theatre.

We finally got through with the whole nerve wracking experience. When we had returned to Ripley we found we were something on the order of conquering heroes because everybody of the town and most of the surrounding farms were there to welcome us. They said all sorts of flattering things.

Herewith is the program presented that great day in the history of Ripley, as reported by the *Ripley Record*, my grandfather's newspaper.

RIPLEY "HI" PROGRAM

Broadcast by KFRU at Bristow Oklahoma

The following is the program that was broadcasted by KFRU "The Voice Of Oklahoma" from Bristow last Thursday under the auspices of the Ripley Hi School.

Ripley High School Boys Quartette. Personnel: Alvan Mitchell, 1st tenor, Clarence Broyles, 2nd tenor, Ralph Williamson, baritone and Howard Straughn, bass.

H. S. Quartette: "How Do You Do." Miss Marjorie Bowers at the piano.

Solo "Blue Eyed Sally." Howard Straughn, Mrs. Marie Mitchell at the piano.

Violin and piano: "Hold Up Rag" and "Red Bird" by Bert Bevins. Mrs. Bevins at the piano.

Piano solo: "Bonnie Briar Medley." Mrs. Mitchell.

Musical Reading: "Dreaming In the Twilight." Mrs. Sue Messecar, Mrs. Mitchell at the piano.

Piano solo: "Minuet in G." Mrs. Mitchell.

Violin and piano: "Tophouse Rag." Bert Bevins and Mrs. Bevins.

Quartette: "Brudder Brown." Mrs. Mitchell at the piano.

Piano solo: "Evening Chimes." Mrs. Mitchell.

Solo: "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Bill Harris. 4 years old.

Quartette: "Land Of Sunset Dreams." High School boys. Mrs. Mitchell, pianist.

Duet: "The Old Rugged Cross." Mrs. S. V. Williamson and Mrs. W. O. Sharum. Mrs. Mitchell at the piano.

Piano solo: "On The Lake." Miss Marjorie Bowers.

Quartette: "When Moses Was." High School boys.

Solo: "The Haunted Pool." by Alvan Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell at the piano.

Violin and Piano: Bert and Mrs. Bevins.

Bass solo: "Many The Wreck Below." Howard Straughn. Mrs. Mitchell at the piano.

Piano solo: "Flower Belles." Miss Marjorie Bowers.

Solo: "Too Tired." by Alvan Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell, pianist.

Solo: "Old Black Joe." Ray Harris, 7 years old.

Piano solo: "Comedy King." Mrs. Mitchell.

Violin and piano. Bert and Mrs. Bevins.

A large number of phone messages, telegrams and letters from Texas, Illinois, Missouri and other states came and points in Oklahoma represented are Stillwater, Cushing, Ripley, Shawnee, Muscogee, Hillsdale, Oklahoma City, Slick, Guthrie, Drummond, Tulsa, Cromwell and others.

But, this was just the beginning. Out of this small start developed the one time famous Billy McGinty's Cowboy Band, which as far as can be determined was the first country music band of record. There may have been others, but there was never a more enthusiastic nor a more successful country music band for its time.

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Early Day Passenger Trains Solve Stillwater and Area Residents Recreational Problems

by Ward Hays

It was a beautiful sight to see when train number 410 pulled into Stillwater at 8:00 a.m. headed south.

All through the winter months people living in Stillwater had but little chance to get out of town for any type of recreation. So when spring came with the first warm Sunday morning, dozens of town and country folks would be headed for the depot and the train we called Fogarty. Fogarty was the conductor on train number 410. Fogarty, a small man, barely standing 5 feet 8 inches and weighing around 130 pounds, had a heart that was larger than an ox.

In warm weather an extra coach would be added to the train because an extra 100 people would be boarding Fogarty's train. Whole families with filled picnic baskets, table clothes, and blankets as well as babes in arms were waiting for Fogarty's train when it rolled into the depot.

Fogarty with his colored porter was off the train in a minute to help his passengers on the train. Some rode no further than Ripley Bluffs where the day was spent fishing and picnicing. Others went all the way into Ripley to visit friends. The next main stop was at Horse Thief Canyon, a big attraction in those days for people that wanted to spend a day in the shade and have lunch on the high cliff on the canyon and drink of the springs cool clear pure waters.

But many went on to Guthrie. Drinking from the mineral well and boat riding on the Cottonwood river and visiting the state capital.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ward Hays is a life time resident of Stillwater and a charter member of the Payne County Historical Society. He was an editor of the *Cimmarron Family Legends* and at 86 still writes for the *Perkins Journal* and the *Central Rural News*.

About noon time if you were standing on the high bluff at the horse thief canyon one could look up and down the Cimarron river and see blue smoke rising for miles up and down the river.

I and my two older brothers made this Sunday morning trip often as my grandmother lived just across the river north of Horse Thief Canyon. My Uncle Roy Hays always had a row boat on the Cimarron River and would come across the river and pick we three boys up, then of a evening would take us back across the river in time to catch the evening train back to Stillwater.

On the return trip the people that was so happy when they got on the train that morning were rather gloom that evening as the kids were scratched and sun burned and in no way in a pleasant mood. The husband and wife were spating at each other, and saying if you had of did this or that it would not of happened. And the wife saying that was going to be the last trip she would ever take if they had to take all the kids. But come next Sunday morning the same bunch of people would be at the train all smiles again.

On Easter Sunday, 1907, I attended the first Easter Pageant that was ever held in Oklahoma. Some 500 people were at the Canyon. It was that day that I first met Frank Pistol Pete Eaton and his daughter Ethel. We remained friends the rest of their lives. On the 20th of this past June I called Ethel who lived here in Stillwater and wished her a happy birthday on her 88th birthday. A week later she was buried. Other life time friends I met that day were Billy McGinty of Ripley, Zack Mulhall and his daughter Lucile. The Mulhalls were with Buffalo Bill's and Pawnee Bill's wild west show for many years. Miss Mulhall was a trick rider and roper. I have been to the Mulhall Ranch at Mulhall, Oklahoma, many times.

Maggie Montgomery was another great lady that all the old timers will remember. I also met Maggie that day at the pageant. Miss Montgomery made a world of her own as well as her own dress style. Maggie was the best cotton picker in the country. Wolf hunter and bronk buster.

In the spring of the year when Fogarty's train came into Stillwater at about 6:30 Saturday evening there would be a dozen of Stillwater sporting class of people with fishing gear, lunch pails and buckets to boil their coffee in headed for Yost Lake. Some set up tents to sleep in in case of rain; some rode the train as far as black bear and fished near Pawnee.

Yost Lake was the biggest body of water near, beside the Cimarron River. The lake was built by the railroad company to furnish water for the train engines. Many 4th of July celebrations were held at the lake. It was many years before any cabins were built there.

Many Stillwater people did much shopping in Oklahoma City. They could leave on the south bound train at 8:10 of a morning, ride to Guthrie, catch the street car to the city. The street car ran on the hour. They could get the car a 4:00 p.m. at the city, arrive back to Guthrie in time for the train to Stillwater.

The story is that one time a big tall country girl was at the street car depot. She was looking things over pretty carefully. She said to the street car conductor. If I put my foot on the street car track will it shock me. No the conductor said. If I should put my foot on the cable up there would it shock me. No, said the conductor. The young studied a bit then asked, If I put one foot on the track and the other one on that cable up there would it shock me. The conductor smiled and said, I don't know about you, but it would sure shock the rest of us.

I first met the Conductor of the train 410, John Fogarty, the morning of June 14th, 1906. The train had only been running a few months at that time. I with my two older brothers rode the train to Goodnight to attend my grandmothers birthday party. Fogarty told us he had a daughter and two sons near our age. When we got on the train that



Picture Above This picture of Fogarty's train was taken about 1907 or 1908 as the train headed north out of Glencoe, Oklahoma

Photo Courtesy of Ward Hays

evening we brought Mr. Fogarty some of the goodies from my grandmothers party. About eight years ago I wrote a story of Mr. Fogarty and many of the kind things he had done for his riders, like stopping the train and letting them off the closest to home. Many times women would send by Mr. Fogarty for yard goods that they could not get in the small towns like Ripley, Coyle, Glencoe, or Mehan. Fogarty would bring it to them. I have seen Fogarty stop the train to drive a cow or horse off the track then with hammer and staple he carried on the train, staple the wire back on the post. Two days after my story came out I received three letters from Fogarty's children. The oldest child, the daughter, lived in Ponca City. I still have the letter. She really praised me for writing such a nice letter in the paper of her father. Said I had to know him well to be able to write the things I did. The two brothers lived in Guthrie. One was a retired Colonel of World War I. The other was Postmaster in Guthrie. The Colonel Fogarty came to see me.

One time Fogarty was sick and was not on his run for several weeks. The first day he was back on his run everwhere along the line people turned out to welcome him. Stillwater had its brass band to greet Fogarty.

One Christmas ever I think it was 1919 I was come from Hobart, Oklahoma, to spend Christmas with my folks. I got on Fogartys train at Guthrie. It had been a few years since I had rode the tain. Fogarty came to me with out stretched hand. At every stop from Guthrie, people were there with presents for Fogarty. John F. Fogarty passed on in late 1923. A school in Guthrie is named after him. In all my years I never met a more loveable person. I believe the oldest son passed away a few years ago. When I was helping write volume two of the *Cimarron Family Legends* I called the Colonel Fogarty. He was not able to talk and a friend said the brother had died. The sister at Ponca City as far as I know is living at this time. She is a year older than I.

Many people have asked me how I remember all the details of happenings. It is as easy as ABC. In an upcoming issue I will tell you where all of Payne Countys 30 early day Post offices were and who the Post Masters were, when the office and began and when they ended. Until then, so long.

Memories of Mrs. Josh A. Brock

by Marjorie Moore

Josh Brock and his wife, Edna A. Brock, came to Oklahoma in July, 1889, just three months after the run was made.

Mr. Brock had come for the run and laid out his claim--section 31, township 19 north, range three east. His brother accompanied him, and claimed the farm immediately south. Claiming a farm consisted of placing a post in one corner with one's name on it and filing the claim at the nearest land office. Naturally some disputes arose because the acreage was so large that it was next to impossible to tell whether or not anyone had settled on the land earlier. Mr. Brock had no disputes over his location, but his brother paid a small sum to someone to release all title to his claim.

Mr. Brock stayed in Oklahoma for three months, sleeping under the stars, while he planned the new home, then went for his family in July. Prior to moving, the family lived in Cawley County Flint Hills of Kansas, away from everything and everybody, and it was this more than anything else that made Mrs. Brock fear none of the terrors that the wilds of unsettled Oklahoma could hold.

There were no buffalo on the prairie by that time. White men from the east had killed a majority of them but deer and prairie chickens could always be found. There were very few Indians. In Cawley County, the Brock's former home, the Indians occasionally came to town to sell their wild plums, but Mrs. Brock, then only a child, was intensely afraid of them. When they appeared, she and her friends would run to the shelter of their homes.

ABOUT THE ARTICLE

The original Payne County Historical Society preserved historical information and left a collection deposited in the Stillwater Public Library. In that collection is a series of articles compiled July, 1938, by the Journalism Class. One series is entitled *The Pioneer Families of Stillwater*. This article from Volume II by Marjorie Moore features the remembrances of Mrs. Josh A. Brock, an early settler of Stillwater.

The trio, Mr. and Mrs. Brock and their little boy, made the journey and lived in a wagon, until their small cabin, twelve by fourteen with a tiny sleeping room upstairs, was built.

The cooking was done on a stove brought from Kansas. The Brocks were lucky in that there was plenty of fire wood on the farm south of theirs. Some of the farms were out on the true prairie land where there were no trees for several miles.

On the way to the settlement the couple passed through Stillwater. Mrs. Brock's first impression of the town was that it was a wide place in the road, very few buildings, one or two houses, several crude stores, and wild lawlessness everywhere.

The first summer came, cabbage, turnips, and a few other things were planted in the garden. When it came time for the crops to be harvested, Mr. Brock discovered that the cane was planted so thinly they would be able to make sorghum of it. The following winter a majority of the grocery bills were paid with sorghum.

The Brocks traded with John Clark's grocery, paying a majority of the bills with sorghum. A year after the opening of the store the building was burned down, but someone built it up again and trade went on as usual.

The only child, Roy, then an infant, created a difficult problem how to obtain his milk. No cow could be brought from Kansas until after the first frost. At last Mr. Brock discovered a family from whom they could rent a cow, and one more problem was solved.

As to the amount of food, Mrs. Brock says, "There was never any scarcity. We had plenty to eat." They made regular trips to the Cimarron river bank to gather wild plums, but the only serious difficulty was in getting meat and lard. After acquiring a cow, of course, this was no longer such a problem.

At first, the family got water at the schoolhouse pump, carrying it the mile and a half to their home. But after a few weeks, the first well was dug. It was only twenty-four feet deep and provided the water for only a few months. Later Mr. Brock dug one a hundred feet deep that gave them water as long as they lived on the farm.

The regular mail service within the city was established as soon as the country was opened for the run. Doc Murphy and Robert A. Lowry were the first postmen. Prior to this, the mail was brought in in great bunches and placed on the back of a trailer. A line would form for

blocks back and each person was given a small chance to get any incoming mail. The one behind was always so impatient to go forward that doubtlessly many letters were lost or not delivered for some reason.

The Townsite Construction Company was organized to decide upon the location of Stillwater. Bob Lowry, Doc Murphy, and the Shively brothers were some of the members. They laid out the streets and arranged for the appropriations for Main Street. Neighboring land owners were asked to contribute land for Main Street, and in return were given shares in lots that were to be used later for business buildings.

There was a heated dispute between Payne Center and Stillwater as to which would be the county seat. At last Stillwater was selected and the town began to grow.

Mrs. Brock's brother worked at Red Fork, Oklahoma, for a time and became acquainted with Bill Doolin, the outlaw, then only a young boy. Some time later Doolin stayed in the home of Mrs. Brock's mother for the night and Mrs. Brock will always be grateful that they were not accused of harbouring a criminal.

Their social life was very full. They attended literary meetings in Payne Center, the town not very far from their farm. The meetings were held in the community playhouse--a large round building in the center of town. "No," says Mrs. Brock, "We didn't have husking bees and barn dances. Occasionally some one had a quilting party, but most of our social life revolved around the literary meetings at Payne Center."

The Brock's always had a great deal of company. Mr. Brock made friends easily, and there was always some one stopping by to see him. Often Mrs. Brock would have beds made up on every available inch of floor space.

Christmas holidays were always a gala time. All of the members of the family would come for dinner. They served all of the usual Christmas delicacies, turkey, chicken, or duck, with all the trimmings.

There was usually a blanket of snow on the ground and everyone for miles around went to the schoolhouse for the big Christmas tree. Their house was much too small to have a tree in if they had wanted one. Somehow they managed to get a few presents and the holidays were gay times.

Mr. Brock gathered up wild cattle and sold them to buyers sent by

his brother from Kansas City. He received a commission from the transactions, and the family income was greatly increased.

The family moved into Stillwater proper when the children were old enough to attend the higher grades of school. They lived in a large stone house on the edge of Stillwater creek.

Of her adventures in Oklahoma, Mrs. Brock says, "When people think that the early times were much different, they are entirely wrong. It was much the same as the life we live now. Possibly not all of the conveniences we have now were in use then, but we were happy, and that's all that really matters."

Grandfather's Tales

by *Ralph Pearson*

The Family

It was October 17, 1897 when I came to Stillwater. My memory of the event is rather hazy, being rather young at the time so I will have to rely upon hear-say for an account of the times. I have been informed that I stopped with a family that lived in a sixteen-by-sixteen house on a lot that is now designated 1006 South Main.

Since that family is associated with my later fortunes and misfortunes, I shall describe them with detail, both as individuals, and as to their later dealings with myself.

The youngest of the family was a girl named Kate, whose fourth birthday did not occur until the next day. She had been expecting a new doll for the event, but the adults of the family, after looking me over and deciding to let me continue to live with them, told her that she could have me as a baby brother instead of a new doll. Since there was nothing she could do about the decisions of the elders, she accepted. Throughout succeeding years she looked upon me as such, a personal possession, be to put in place whenever I strayed from her doll house.

This relationship, the ties of a big sister and little brother, continued until she married and had a man to look after, and to put into place. I found another girl to look after me, and give me the close supervision which I had been educated to receive.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ralph Pearson, a native of Stillwater and member of the Payne County Historical Society, wrote a series of stories for his daughter, her children, and the children of his brothers and sister. These stories remind the young generation that there is a great difference in most every feature of the contrasted times. The entire collection spans 23 years of life in Stillwater from 1893 to 1915-16. An earlier story on Lincoln School, "School Days" was printed in volume II, number 2 of the *Review*.

There was a boy, Fred, who was my senior by six years. That gave him an advantage whenever there was a conflict with the two younger ones of the family. But he, too, had learned to be on the receiving end of big brother supervision. For there were Jim and Charlie, whose redundancy of years gave them authority to criticise and correct their younger brothers, when the order of hen-peck was threatened.

When I was less than four years old, there was another baby brother came to stay at our house, to wear the cast-off clothing of his older brothers, and receive the combined attention of four brothers and one sister, each of which was desirous of having him as a ally and as a pawn. After due consideration, he was named Glen. The rest of the name which his mother desired for him, Dale, got lost in its flowerlyness, and he bore as a second name, that of a current newspaper hero.

This was the family which I lived with, and with whom I had a happy childhood.

The adults of the family, Dad and Mother Pearson, had lived in California, before coming to Oklahoma, and Jim was a denizen of that jungle, the proud bearer of the title, Native Son. Charlie had preceded the California trect, and acknowledged Kansas as his birthplace. But the rest of us did not have personal knowledge of the "Lost Paradises" of the past and have considered Oklahoma as their home and country. "Pater Pat Riae."

Mother Pearson was born in Kansas. Grandchild of ones who had left the civilization of Pennsylvania, and had taken up new land in "Bleeding Kansas." Her family was intimately identified with the "Free Kansas" War, that spawned John Brown to fame or infamy, according to the view of the beholder.

She was born in 1862, while the Great War raged, and her father was a soldier in the Kansas volunteers.

Dad Pearson was born in Ohio in 1858, and his childhood was overshadowed by the Great War.

His mother died when he was five and his father when he was seven. He was at an age too old to be a baby, and too young to be an adult. His rebellious spirit kept him from accepting "charity" from unwilling relations, and finally led him to follow the advice current at the time, "go west, young man." He came to Colorado when he was twenty-two. After roaming Colorado and New Mexico for six years as

baker, railroad man and amateur mining man, he located in Ottawa, Kansas where he met up with Mother Pearson.

They started (or bought out) a bakery and confectionary, (candy store) but only for a short time. the golden age of the real-estate agent flowered in California, and my susceptible relations arrived in that "eden" just as the boom bust. The next three years were difficult, but Dad continued in the baking trade, sometimes for himself and sometimes for others.

Granpa and Granma Moore, had run for "freeland" in Oklahoma, and had a quarter-section homestead. They were pressuring their families to settle around them. When Dad Pearson's doctor told him that because of a case of blood-poisoning on his hand, he would have to stay out of a bake-shop for two years, They decided to try their fortunes in Oklahoma. A homestead relinquishment was obtained which bordered upon Granpa's acres, and mother began the five-year task of "proving up." This has been described by others as "betting five dollars against 160 acres of land that you could live there five years without starving to death."

Dad Pearson tried the bakery business in several towns before he settled permanently in Stillwater. He lived to see three of his boys run food stores in the town.

In time, Mother Pearson's five-year sentence was completed. The homestead was "proved up" and a deed was received from Washington. The Pearsons were free-holders. the possessers of 160 acres of blackjacks and sandstone, with several plots of comparative good land. Plots big enough to permit a team to be turned around upon them without danger of running into standing boulders on the one edge or falling off into a ravine on the other. But with the judicious use of its mortgage value, other properties were acquired. A country estate on the western edge of Stillwater was bought about the time I arrived to be received into the family. Plans were made, and carried out for an ancestral castle to house the growing family and give us boys the advantage of country air and room to yell. A seven room mansion whose total cost was held to \$700.00. While I did not take part in the active planning, it did affect my succeeding years. We lived there until I was eleven years old. And the livestock, particularly of Fritz and Molly, were the constant companions of my youth, as will be stated in the later episodes of my life.

Gran'ma had her own room, to which us kids came only by invitation. To take part in a safari to capture or kill some adventuresome mouse, who in some way, had gained entrance to Gran'ma's room, and whose presence was a threat to the well-being of gran'ma's hoard of hand made quilts, and the other handyworks of my industrious ancestor. The house was tightly plastered and the mouse would soon be run to earth.

I remember this small-game hunt as occurring but a few times in those years, but the childhood memories are vivid. First, the big build-up, then the let-down after the quest was over. Gran'ma was a compulsive sewer. Her thimble was different from other peoples in that it had no metal over the end of her finger. Her straight-box spectacles were of silvered steel, and were fastened with a cord string. These, with her needle set her apart, a devotee to the art of fine stitching. Gran'ma did not read magazines, papers and books held no enchantment for her unless they were read aloud by others. Even her grandchildren gave her little pleasure. As a widow of a union soldier, she received a small pension, but she could only sign it with an X. Her devotion to the art of the needle was exemplified in the neighborhood "quilting bees." She was co-hostess with Ma Pearson several times in my memory, so I will reduce those memories to writings. Just how the invitations were conveyed is beyond me. Were they sent by some of the older children? Or was it a blanket invitation, carried by everyone who heard it? This information will probably be forthcoming as this story is read by the older ones of the family. But as of now, it is enough to say that the requirements were you had to live close enough to get there. All others were barred.

The arrangements for the "jaw-session" were not extensive. The covers, linings, and cotton batts were ready for three different quilts. Since gran'ma enjoyed quilting and worked at it at different times, the inventive minds of the family had furnished her with a folding X frame, in which a quilt could be fastened and rolled up as the exposed parts were stitched. And the X frame permitted it to be closed and leaned against the wall when it was not being worked upon. With this item, there was no need for chairs to hold up the corners. And, spread out, it was self-supporting. I have never seen another frame like it. This frame made one, and others could easily be borrowed for the time.

The preliminaries were always completed after an early breakfast, and one by one the guests came, each with their favorite thimble and needle and as juicy a piece of gossip as they could corral. And with some sort of a covered dish because this was an all-day affair. The

gossip, of course, must not concern anyone of those present.

But Gran'ma's labors did not cease when the stitching was done, the lunch consumed, the gossip exchanged, and the guests given a good speed. As I have said, Gran'ma was a devotee to the art, and worshiped only in the company of those who could sew a fine seam. The offerings of inferiors must not remain on the altars of the Goddess, lest she take offense at all. The next week or so must be used in removing the stitches of those of the not-so fine quilters, and replacing the work of drudges with the handiwork of artists.

Gran'ma, too, was chief supervisor of the four of us "younguns" during the day-light hours, as mother Pearson busied herself in each new business venture of the family. Gran'ma needed a ready rope and a running iron for we were all Mavricks. Each day was different, and the mere fact that you had been roped and branded yesterday, did not mean that you would stand patiently and be haltered today.

The Barn

For weeks I had been a prisoner in my own home, confined to the house all those long hours, while the spirit of enchantment was becoming, "come and see" not the works of darkness, but of broad daylight. I must keep to the house, while outside there were measured rappings, squeaks and squeals. All the noises that accompany the carpenters when they are building a barn. Busy they were, without my seeing or overseeing them. Busy, less than one hundred feet from the place of my confinement.

There were windows through which I could gaze, but they faced the wrong direction. All but the kitchen panes. But they faced too high for me to look through. With more experience, I might have viewed the panorama from the advantage of the upstairs back windows. But I was small; much too small to have the run of the staircase. So that delightful vista was off-bounds, too perhaps there would never be another barn like it. And me not knowing how it was made.

Surely Gran'ma should know how much I could help the carpenters. And how important it was that I should do so. Friendly fellows who would be delighted with my help, whose broad faces would beam with friendship, if only I could escape the all-seeing of Grandma, and reach the equivalent of the "isle of the blest" to finger the various inventions in that big tool box.

Uncle Joe Vore, with his white hair and mustache and one eye

PEARSON FAMILY AND HOMESTEAD

AUGUST 1 1886



FRED

JIM. MA. KATE. DAD. CHARLIE



Picture at Left

**Ralph Pearson
at age 5**
*Photo Courtesy
of R. Pearson*

completely missing. Slightly on the shady side of life, and living in his own bachelor apartment in the midst of the growing town of Stillwater. His helper, too, was well past middle age, who wore steel rimmed spectacles. And with a walrus mustache of indeterminate hue, but with high saturation of the extract of the weed; *Nicotiana Tabacum*.

Surely these men were counting the minutes until I could escape my jailor, and hurry to to their presence, to give them the advantage of the knowledge that I had accumulated in my near four years upon this turbulent earth.

Carpenters of those ancient days did not drive their stint of nails, and then hurry to a golf course to get their exercise. They worked as long as they could see, to be on the job when the sun came up and still be there when dusk turns to dark. So I never got a chance to examine their handiwork by day-light hours.

With such devotion to duty, it was only natural that the job would be ended, sometime, and that time came. The barn was completed, even

to the set of miniature eaves and gables that crowned the hay-mow.

I was told that the rooms in that doll-house were pigeon-holes. True; they resembled the spaces of that name in the desk part of the bookcase where letters, check-books and stamps were kept. But how would they put letters way up on the barn-top. I learned, in time, that pigeons were also kept in pigeon holes.

After the carpenters ceased coming, my liberty of action was not so restricted. I could climb around the new building, and crawl along side of its underpinning. I was set to collecting the board ends, which is the main product of the carpenter profession, for Gran'ma to burn as kindling. Meals for ten needed a lot of homefires. Everything combustible was burned in the kitchen range, instead of the being carted off to the city dump, by the garbage corps. Everyone in Stillwater burned wood, except the upper-crust and they burned coal.

Corn-cobs, used ones, from the horses feed-boxes were also a thing to be gathered, as fuel for the range. Sometimes the horses would drop an almost empty ear, to the ground, where scratching chickens would propel under the floored part of the barn. It was for such small emergencies that I was trained. I could crawl around under the grain-bins with ease, and the building, being new, the spider webs and wind-blown material had not dimmed the bright new undersurface of the boards, where nothing but the flies could wipe their dirty feet.

There was an enclosed cow-shed, running along the north side of the barn, with an upper deck in one corner, where many things of the past, were stored. There were the trunks, that had made the California journey, to a chunk of refined parafine, ten pounds or more, a relic of dad Pearson's candy making days, and was an excellent substitute for store-bought gum.

Soon it was noised about by the old biddies, in their gossip sessions, that this deck was a super place for nest, and to keep the place from overflowing with eggs, I was on daily patrol. Proud was I when I would report that there was a nest up there with that many eggs, and partake in the recovery.

In the spate of years to come, the barn was the playground of the Pearson boys, Fred, Ralph and Glen, and of their playmates from surrounding territory, chief of whom, in remembrance, were our cousins, Eddie and Harry Moore. The presence of others were in inverse proportion to the square of the distance, and as many as ten were at some sessions.

One year, Uncle John Moore stored the grain separator of his threshing rig, just to the west of the barn. It was covered with canvas, and was an excellent place to hide, in our games of hide and seek. The wind stacker was folded over the top, as was the custom of those machines, and many times I have backed down the tube to the wind-paddles, and in the gloom, explored the shakers. In the later years, when it became my lot to feed bundles to a like machine, I had some knowledge of what was happening before the "golden wheat poured forth." I often wondered where the steam-engine of the rig was stored. Uncle John told me once, in his old age, of the mechanical part of the A & M College, borrowing the engine, during the winter months, and of the necessity of going over the engine and tightening every bolt, before he could start the year's threshing season. "They must have taken out every bolt and measured it," was his comment.

Sometimes Kate and her satellites would shoulder the broom and march on our strong-hold, having some dark design of their own against the settled law and order of the day, which in its completeness was disorder. And we would find, next day, that the barn had been subtly changed, there were places where the floor had been swept.

In this barn, there were chutes to convey the hay directly to the horse's stall. The lower end was in the manger, while the upper end was a few feet high, above the hay mow floor. Evening chores were to fill the chutes, apportioning to each horse its daily hay. There were holes on each side of the chutes, where the horses could get their hay, a mouthful at a time.

The holes were of ample size for a small boy to get in or out. By careful bracing you could slide from top to bottom, in the manner of dagwood and the laundry chute. And in barefoot season you could climb to the top, for the insides were polished each day by the hay that went through it.

One of the most exciting times were when we played hide and seek games, when "it" climbs the ladder stairs, to hunt for hiders in the hay mow, "hid" would drop to the bottom of the chutes, and while "it" searched the mow, "hid" would be waiting to proclaim their presence at base when "it" came back from a fruitless search.

For several years, 1907-09(?) John Hubbard, our cousin, and his tribe of traveling thespians, mostly sage-struck youths, went broke while performing at Stillwater, and four or five trunks, theatrical trunks, would be stored in the hay mow, waiting for the day when lady luck smiled, and they could be sent for. I never learned what they con-

tained, but their presence suggested that we make a theater of our haymow. In the spring the hay, which had been piled to near the roof at the beginning of winter, was mostly gone. The stumps of the chutes made a proper division between the "sitz" and the "stage", although the division between troupe and audience could not be made as sharp.

Was there ever an audience that did not think that they could stage a better play than the troupe? In our hay-mow theater, they had a chance to prove it. Each one was portraying a script coming from their own heads, portraying a character newly invented, and clashing with the products of similar rules in other players. Confusing? You said it.

But the worst tragedy of our barn, was not the product of make-believe. It was real. Old Red was wise in the ways of horses. He could slip his halter when occasion permitted. One night he did so, expecting to help himself to old Molly's feed. But he was met back side by a fusillade of heels, one of which landed on his own legs. A broken-legged horse has only one end, and that not happy. Finis Red.

1970 The barn is gone these many years. The house had been made over to suit the ideas of a succession of owners. Another house has been built in the plot where rhubarb and gooseberries flourished. Other houses have been added where peach and apples bloomed, so that four houses now face Adams street from the west. The property has never been subdivided into town-lots. Its acres have been used to contain cloth green houses, which its owner uses to raise plants and vegetables for the Stillwater market. The Stillwater of that time was much smaller than at present. The McFarland pasture, where I earned money driving cows from town to pasture, and back each day, is now complete with town-lots and nice houses, and the inhabitants get their milk and cream, not from their own cows, as it was in the good old days, but from the shelves of the supermarkets, or from super-salesmen who leave it all washed and sanitary on your front door steps. Each owner of these many houses and lots have more horse power concentrated "under the hood" than ever ate grass at one time in a Payne County township.

The War Seemed Very Far Away

Mary Margaret Sylvester Remembers WWII

by Paula Waldowski

For many, the war years were a time of tragedy and deprivation. But for Mary Margaret Sylvester, the war years were filled with fun and excitement. When the war began, she was a senior in high school. In September 1942, she came to Oklahoma A & M as a freshman. "It was the best time of my life," Mrs. Sylvester claimed.

Upon receiving her degree in sociology and psychology in 1946, Mrs. Sylvester worked for a time as a caseworker in Osage County, Oklahoma. She married David Sylvester in 1949, and settled down to being a housewife and mother. Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester moved back to Stillwater three years ago, where he is now involved in the construction business. Mrs. Sylvester remains interested in the activities on campus, where she spent so many happy years.

I vaguely remember Pearl Harbor Day. I was a senior in high school, at home on the ranch in Pawhuska. Of course, we had a radio. It was Sunday, and I remember hearing about it, but I think most of all, I remember going to school the next day. And all we talked about was how soon the war was going to be over, and we were going to win it. We were very positive that the war would be over soon.

I went ahead and graduated from high school in May and came down here to school in September of '42. There was still lots of civilian men on the campus in '42. I was assigned a room in Willard Hall, and I had a roommate, and we lived in Willard, I don't know, maybe two months. Then the first group of WAVES came, and all the girls in Willard had to move to Murray Hall and North Murray Hall. I lived three in a room. Some girls had four. We had bunk beds, of course, two closets, maybe a couple of desks. But it all worked out, and it was lots of fun.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

While a student at Oklahoma State University, Paula Waldowski completed an oral history project entitled *Stillwater: The War Years, 1941-1945*. This article, the third in a series, features her interview with Mrs. Mary Margaret Sylvester.

Then when I came back for my sophomore year, the fraternities were closed, because all the men were in service. And more WAVES had come, and they were living in Murray Hall. So the university leased fraternity houses, and this is where the girls lived. And we *had* to live on campus. No apartments. Well, there were some exceptions, but almost everybody had to have campus housing. And I lived at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house at 1308 West Third. And it was fun! I guess we had maybe forty, forty-five girls at the SAE house. Virginia Polk was our housemother. Everybody was close; we knew everybody in our house. Each of these fraternity houses that we lived in were called "victory halls," or "V-Halls." Mine was V-4.

By today's standards, the rules for dormitory living were pretty strict. But then, I didn't think they were. Freshman and sophomores had to be in the dorm at 7:45 Monday through Thursday nights. Juniors and seniors were allowed to be out until 10:00. On Friday and Saturday, everyone stayed out until midnight. And Sunday nights, I don't remember, possibly 11:00. But the rules were strictly enforced. And I don't recall that there was much trouble in enforcing them. It was just taken for granted that these were the rules, and you followed them.

But I do remember that once in a while a girl would come in late, and this caused lots of conversation and speculation. Virginia Polk, my housemother, met you at the door when you came in, and if you were late, you had a talk! But I was one of the ones who obeyed the rules and never came in late. And I never wanted to come in late, because I knew that this was what I was supposed to do. But each victory hall had a counselor, and I'm not going to call the girl's name, because I suppose that she's still around, but one Monday morning, when the cook came, our counselor was sitting on the back steps of V-4, waiting for the cook to come so she could get in the house. She didn't come in all Sunday night! And the story was that she met these two sailors from Norman (where a large Navy unit was stationed at the University of Oklahoma), and she decided that she'd ride the bus back to Norman with them, so this was why she didn't come in Sunday! And it really caused some talk, raised some eyebrows. But this was the only incident of that sort that I remember.

Were college students more innocent then? I was. I was *so* innocent! I didn't have my seventeenth birthday until I had been here a couple of weeks. And I grew up on a ranch 16 miles from town. And I think most of my friends were as innocent as I was. And I think it was a better time, in ways. We had a good time in Stillwater, and we did not

drink, we didn't have cars, we had our fun in Stillwater. We didn't feel it necessary to go to Oklahoma City or Tulsa to spend the weekend. It was just an easy, fun time. I probably was not as intent on getting an education as I should have been, and I do regret that. Of course, when I grew up, you got a college education and you got married. You didn't pursue a career.

At that time, Stillwater was, naturally, small. I suppose there were probably only three thousand students at the university, civilian students. And I'm sure there were that many more service people. But it was a quiet town. I was thinking last night, there were three movie theaters downtown, and the Campus theater, which was up on the corner of Knoblock and University, and they were always packed on weekends, because there wasn't an awful lot to do in Stillwater.

No one had a car, but I don't remember that we missed having one, because no one had one before we got to school. It was nothing to walk downtown and shop, and walk back, a couple of times a day. But taxis were available. As I remember, taxis were a dime per person anywhere in town. But also, it wasn't uncommon for a cab driver to take eight or ten people in his cab. And if you had a date, you sat on his lap!

Each victory hall had what we called dance hour, Monday through Thursday, from about 6:30 until 7:30, and at that time, boys were allowed to come over. And we had parties at Christmas, and dances. And I think the service people had their dances. I remember going to a dance at Cordell Hall, where the sailors lived. And we used to have a good Allied Arts program, too. I remember one time, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra came here one summer when I was going to summer school. I remember seeing Harry James on this campus. Spike Jones. Sammy Kaye came here. I remember seeing Nat King Cole on this campus. Tommy Dorsey, who was my very favorite.

We had one party; every time I talk about it, my daughter gets hysterical! But it was called the "Coed Prom" and it was for girls only. And each living group would present a skit, and (this is the part my daughter always laughs at), I guess the girls danced together, since there were no boys to dance with. Of course, the police were always at the door to keep the boys out. And one year, I went dressed as a man. I wore a felt hat and trousers and sport coat and shirt. I had my hair put up under my hat. And I remember very well, the policeman stopped me at the door! And I had to take off my hat and prove that I was a girl!

And I guess we had a "Sadie Hawkins" week. You know Sadie

Hawkins in "Li'l Abner?" That was an institution before I came here, and it was carried on, I don't know how long. Well, this was strictly the girls' time to ask the boys out. You were free to ask any boy for a date, and you footed the bills. They liked it, because most of these people were servicemen, and salaries were small.

And of course, there was the Rock Castle Inn. I can't really tell you what it was like; it was pretty dark, so I never saw very much! But you had to take a taxi out there, and it was on the side of a creek. And it was just hidden back there in a grove of trees. And it was real racy back then, but I'm sure today that it was very, very mild. There was a dance floor, with a juke box, and you could not sell beer within a hundred yards or a hundred feet of a place where there was dancing, so you had to go a hundred yards out back to get the beer!

The classes at the university were small. You pretty well knew your instructor, and they were small enough that he knew your name; if not your name, then he remembered your face. Of course, the young men went to war. They had gone by the time I started my sophomore year in '43. And at the time, I didn't realize, but on looking back, I feel like that I was short-changed in my college education. I was a major in sociology, with a psychology minor, and all of my professors were old. I have always had respect for age, but they had been teaching thirty and forty years, I'm sure, and should have been retired.

I remember there were some sociology classes I had from a woman who probably had no more business teaching on the college level that I do right now. But I'm sure that she was the best that they could find under the circumstances. I think all the other women professors were in English. No, I took phys. ed. classes almost every semester I was here, and all our phys. ed. teachers were women. I remember with fondness Valerie Colvin.

And I had Miss Ellis, who was a character! At that time, no female student was allowed to graduate from this university until she had passed a beginning swimming class or until she could pass a swimming test. I was not a swimmer. I was afraid of the water. I took swimming my first semester, got an "incomplete," and did not work off the "incomplete" until my senior year, because I had to do it to graduate! And Miss Ellis was my swimming teacher *again!* And our swimming pool was in the old gym (what is the architecture building, now). It was kind of a crummy, ratty place. We had to have this standard, medium-blue tank suit. Ugh!

The campus probably was still segregated, but I probably didn't know it, because nobody went to school with blacks. Not in high

school, not in grade school. And I guess there wasn't any blacks on this campus. I do not remember any black servicemen on this campus. There were black people in the service, but in the Navy, blacks were relegated to the kitchen, or to being busboys, or valets to the officers, maybe.

The war seemed very far away. We knew that the war was going on, because we saw the movies, and we read the papers. But we were not deprived of anything. Of course, during the war, everybody had ration books for sugar, meat, some canned goods, and shoes. And when the students came to college, we had to bring our ration book with us, and the dietitians or cooks kept them and used them. And in the summer, we took them back home with us. But of course, I like to eat, and I remember the food as being good. I don't remember that I ever lacked for anything, except nylon hose. There were none! Nylon was used for parachutes, as I remember. And I guess our rubber supply came from overseas, and rubber, or elastic, practically disappeared. So any thought of having a rubber band in your slippers or underwear was out of the question. So we had to do without! But we did not make any sacrifices, at least, I didn't.

I always liked clothes, and I had pretty clothes. We wore high heel sling pumps then, which I love to this day. We wore, for dress up, crepe dresses; I had a black crepe. We wore velvet dresses, for dress up, church, and parties. We wore hats and gloves. We liked to wear them. When we went to school, we wore saddle oxfords, loafers; the shoes that are popular now, called "deck shoes," these were popular. We wore ankle socks, wool skirts, wool sweaters, blouses, and a string of pearls. The only real clothing fad that I remember came along when I was about a sophomore or junior. It was very fashionable to wear blue jeans rolled up about four inches, wear thick, heavy socks with them, and a man's flannel work shirt, which was *never* tucked in. And if it hung down to your knees, this was even more fashionable. Very sloppy and very sloven. Mrs. Polk despised 'em!

I remember one time I appeared on campus in shorts, and Dean Stout caught me. And she told me to go home and put on a dress! Yes, I never liked her after that, because they were modest Bermuda shorts. But she was incensed! But we did not wear slacks. We might have worn the jeans with the rolled cuffs to class, but mostly it was skirts and sweaters and blouses. And girls were neat. We always had a beauty section in the *Redskin*. The girls were pretty then, and they are pretty now. They don't look old-fashioned. Beautiful, beautiful girls. And a formal dance was just that. We always wore long, pretty



Picture at Left

The craze in dress was rolled up jeans and men's flannel work shirts as Helen Basey, Mary M. Culver, Kathy Kerr and Margaret Frommel wore in 1942.

*Photo Courtesy of
M. M. Sylvester*

formal dresses. Strapless, which I love. And gloves above the elbow! But that was an accepted thing. People just dressed up more then. Never, never, never, never a pair of slacks in a church, not even to a dinner or a party! You always wore a dress.

As far as makeup, the girls used some mascara. No eyeshadow, that I remember. No frosted hair. No bleached hair. But lipstick was dark. That was the only heavy makeup we wore, I guess.

Since we couldn't get nylons, they had leg makeup. I used it, but I was never successful. And if you had on leg makeup and you had to sit on your boyfriend's lap, and he was a sailor wearing his dress whites, it was a disaster! And fuzzy angora sweaters were popular. I loved them; they were very pretty. But they did shed, and if your sailor had on his wool dress blues, it was usually angora-covered.

I had no close family in the war. Some of my friends had brothers, fiances, and later husbands in the war, and I'm sure that they were more aware than I was. But it just really had no emotional or physical

effect on me. And I remember D-Day very well. I was going to summer school. (This was the summer of '44). And I really didn't know what D-Day was until the day it started. And there were two girls in our house that summer, and they were going to school, and they had husbands in service in Europe. And I remember very well those two girls staying by the radio all day, listening. And probably the war was brought home to me more that day, because of their part in it, and how concerned they were.

We were talking about people never regretting what we did without. I think people were interested in winning that war, and they knew it had to be done. And a lot of people made a lot of money. And a lot of people who were without jobs when the war started got jobs when the war started. There were military plants everywhere, a huge plant in Tulsa, working 24 hours a day. But nobody minded, because they had a job. My father being a rancher, he was glad the cattle prices were up, because of the demand for beef for the men in the service. And these were good years. But my father was a patriotic man. We did without tires when we had to. And he worked hard, 12 to 14 hours a day on that ranch. But I don't remember anyone griping. Did anyone ever tell you about the "V for victory honk?" Do you know the Morse code for V is "dot dot dot dash?" Da da da da. Now if anyone passed you going faster than 35 miles an hour, you honked "dot dot dot dash." 35 miles an hour was your maximum speed, hopefully, to conserve gas.



Picture Above A. and M. College campus as it appeared in 1944.

Photo Courtesy of M. M. Sylvester

We wanted to win the war. How many servicemen did we have? That was a lot of men, and it affected a lot of families. And everyone had an interest in getting it over with. I graduated in '42, and a lot of my classmates enlisted immediately. They could have waited until after they graduated, but they just went ahead. And I guess there was a tremendous amount of patriotism and a rush to enlist. And I remember a few boys who I knew were killed.

People were definitely more patriotic then. I went to a county school in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, and the first thing we did in the morning was salute the flag. Armistice Day, November eleventh, was a holiday, and everybody had a parade. And I regret very much that these holidays slide by now.

Maybe we had too many wars in too short a time. There wasn't much of a feeling of patriotism during the Korean War or the Vietnam War, because the wars went on too long, and it was too hopeless, and we had such poor leadership. But I think Roosevelt and Churchill were able to inspire people, and they were strong leaders. When the Iranian hostage business came up, I was very, very surprised at the amount of patriotism shown. I think maybe if the threat is serious enough, we may be willing to make the sacrifices.

News and Notes

June 3 Historical Society Meeting

The next general meeting of the Payne County Historical Society will be Thursday, June 3, at the Citizens Bank Building, 9th Street between Lewis and Main, at 7:30 p.m.

Election of officers will be held. Suggestions for officers should be sent to Dr. LeRoy Fischer, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Payne County Historical Society, P. O. Box 194, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076.

Life Members will be recognized with the presentation of a plaque.

Perkins Field Trip

Sunday, May 30, the Payne County Historical Society will take a spring field trip to Perkins. Mr. H. L. Donnelly will be the guide of this historic area. Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the First National Bank parking lot on Main Street.

Preservation of Photographs and Documents

At the March Meeting of the Payne County Historical Society Mr. Mike Everman spoke on the preservation of photographs and documents. In conjunction with this meeting, Mr. Jimm Showalter, member of the Society and curator of the Museum of Higher Education in Oklahoma (Old Central), has agreed to answer questions and help any

person interested in preserving document and photographs. He may be contacted at Old Central, (405) 624-3220.

Monthly Board Meetings

Every month that the entire Payne County Historical Society does not meet, a Board Meeting is held at 12:00 p.m. on the second Monday of the month. These meetings are held in the back room of Holland House Restaurant, 9th and Main Stillwater. All members of the Society are urged to come and take advantage of this opportunity to discuss the current issues of the society.

Journalism Class of 1938

This issue of the *REVIEW* contains an article on Mrs. Josh A. Brock which was written by Marjorie Moore, a member of the Journalism Class of 1938. This article is one of a series of collections done by that class on Stillwater and its early settlers. While the previous Payne County Historical Society preserved these collections there is little information about the Journalism Class of 1938 and these articles. The *REVIEW* would appreciate any information that its readers might have on the class or these articles.

Letters to the Editor

Sorry to have missed the Society meeting devoted to the "Old Opera House." The earliest event I attended there was "Peck's Bad Boy" put on by a small traveling group about 1920. A later event was a district re-union of Civil War Veterans (G.A.R.) when my Boy Scout Troop looked after the needs of the old soldiers, a story in itself.

Yours truly,
John Melton

I truly like the format of the current *Review*. Keep up the good work!

Cordially,
LeRoy H. Fischer
Oppenheim Professor of
History

The enclosed account of the origin of the Payne County Historical Society, by Clarence S. Bassler, is the most accurate available. Those first paragraphs should be preserved in the records of the society—because the ORIGINS OF THE SOCIETY always will be important.

Bassler's account should not be left on a desk, laid aside, mixed up in papers and lost.

Dr. B. B. Chapman

RESOLUTIONS OF APPRECIATION

The Payne County Historical Society was organized on April 21, 1940, by a group of interested people meeting together to lay plans for the preservation of historical facts that were being lost because of the passing of many early residents of the county. The meeting was presided over by Mr. J. W. Moffitt, Secretary of the State Historical Society, with Mrs. Mabel D. Holt as acting secretary. The first board of directors consisted of six members who drew lots for

length of terms of office. They elected Freeman E. Miller as Chairman of the Board, and

WHEREAS, On May 1, 1940, the Board of Directors met and elected its officers from that group, Freeman E. Miller as President, C. S. Bassler, as Vice Pres., and Mabel D. Holt as Secretary. Miller ruled that the officers of the Board would serve as officers of the Society, and

WHEREAS, Regular officers were elected and changed each year following until April 28, 1946, when Dr. B. B. Chapman of the History Department at Oklahoma State University was elected President, and by his use of students from his classes he has created so much interest in the work that he has been reelected each succeeding year to date, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Chapman has stimulated hundreds of young people of the state and other states to see the benefit of securing and preserving historical facts, both locally and statewide, and

WHEREAS, Through his efforts we see many valuable markers around Stillwater that will preserve early events for posterity, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By Payne County Historical Society at its regular meeting, held in Stillwater, Okla., this 21st, day of November, 1965, that we express to Dr. Chapman our sincere thanks for the fine work he has done for the Society and for the great enthusiasm he has instilled in the younger generation, and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be made a part of the minutes of this meeting—That a copy of it be sent to the State Historical Society, and that a copy be given to Dr. Chapman with our sincere appreciation for a big job well done.

*C. S. Bassler
John Hinkel
John H. Melton*

*Stillwater, Okla.
November 21, 1965*

Minutes

March 5, 1982

The PCHS met in the Citizen's Bank Building at 7:30 p.m. with David Baird presiding. Ann Carlson presented the certificate that will be given to Angie Debo, citing her as an honorary life member.

The minutes of the former meeting were read and approved with one minor correction of the spelling of a name.

It was reported that the *Review* is late, but it will be typeset. A request was made for a variety of articles for future publication.

Sunday, April 18 is the opening at the Sheerar Center for the Old Photo Contest. It was mentioned that the photos are to be before 1940 and in Payne County.

Plans were made for the April 24 Run for the Arts booth and tour of historical houses. Julie Couch is to be in charge of both.

Our spring field trip will be led by Mr. H. F. Donnelly on Sunday, May 23 to the Perkins area.

Bob Donaldson and Doris Scott are now in charge of committee assignments for the coming year, and LeRoy Fischer is heading the nominating committee.

The program for the evening was presented by Mike Everman, who is a student at OSU and is employed by the Oklahoma Historical Society, in the Archives and Manuscripts Division. He gave a detailed discussion on preservation of photos and documents.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15. Twenty one members were present.

Respectfully submitted,
Alvena Bieri,
Secretary

PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS

W. David Baird, *President*
Doris Scott, *Vice-President*
Alvena Bieri, *Secretary*
Ray H. Burley, *Treasurer*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Julie Couch, *term expiring 1982*
Mrs. Gerald Bilyeu, *term expiring 1982*
Jana Howell, *term expiring 1983*
Bob Simon, *term expiring 1983*
Robert H. Donaldson, *term expiring 1984*

Payne County Historical Society is organized in order to bring together people interested in history, and especially in the history of Payne County, Oklahoma. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any materials which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area.

Membership in the Payne County Historical Society is open to anyone interested in the collection and preservation of Payne County history.

All members receive copies of the *Review* free. In addition, the Society sponsors informative meetings four times a year, the second Thursday in March, June, September, and December. Two outings; one in the fall and the other in the spring, are taken to historical sites in the area.

Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month that a regular meeting is not scheduled. These luncheons are held at 12:30 pm in the meeting room at the Holland House Restaurant, 9th and Main, Stillwater. All members are encouraged to attend.

Payne County Historical Society
P. O. Box 194
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076