OKLAHOMA TODAY

FIFTY CENTS

AUTUMN '62
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Here is Will Rogers' last, unfinished newspaper column, which he was writing during the fatal Alaskan flight with Wiley Post. It is reproduced here just as Will roughed it out on the portable typewriter he had on board the plane. Homer Croy, Will's biographer, in *Our Will Rogers* (pub. by Duell, Sloan & Pearce), reports that Will's manuscript was found, wrinkled and water-soaked, among the wreckage at Point Barrow. The pages were ironed out and a photostat made.

Will was writing about dogs, an Alaskan dog race that received much publicity, and later about a dog named Mickey that had tangled with a bear. Account for it as you will, as prophecy, preoccupation, or sheer coincidence, it is remarkable to note that the last word Will Rogers wrote, just before the crash, was "death."

**WELL ALL I KNOW ABOUT DOGS IS NOT MUCH, BUT WHEN I WAS UP IN ALASKA THERE IS AN AWFUL LOT OF DEPENDENCE PUT IN DOGS, NOT ENOUGH TO UNTIE ONE FROM A CHAIN, BUT THEIRS WHOLE EXISTENCE TANGLES AROUND DOGS, OF COURSE IN THE PLANE HAS DIMINISHED THE DOG TRAVEL A LOT BUT STILL THERE IS THE BACKBONE OF THE ARCTIC IS A DOGS BACKBONE, I MET UP THERE JUST AS I WAS LEAVING FAIRBANKS THAT FAMOUS MUSHER AND DOG RACE WINNER, "SEPPALA", HE BECAME IMMORTAL ON THAT FAMOUS DRIVE WITH THE INFANTILE PARALYSIS SERUM TO NOME, WELL I DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO TALK TO HIM THAT MORNING, AS WE WAS TRYING TO GET OFF, AND THE RIVER WAS SORT OF NARROW AND MANY BENDS AND WILEY WAS AFRAID THAT IN IT WITH A FULL LOAD OF GAS THAT WE MIGHT HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN TAKING OFF, SO WE HAD SOME GAS SENT OUT TO A LAKE ABOUT 50 MILES OUT, AND THEN FLEW THERE AND TOWED UP AND TOOK OFF, WE WERE HEADED AT THE TIME FOR POINT BARROW, THE FURTHEST NORTH OF ANY PIECE OF LAND ON THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT, THERE IS ISLAND IN THE ARCTIC, BUT NO LAND ON THE MAINLAND FURTHER NORTH, IT WAS OVER AN ENTIRELY UNINHABITED COUNTRY, ONLY WE DID GET OVER THAT LITTLE VILLAGE OF WISEMAN, DID YOU EVER READ THE BOOK "THE ARCTIC VILLAGE", WELL I MUST TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOME TIME, IT WAS VERY POPULAR AND BEST SELLER, AND THE AUTHOR LIVED THERE A YEAR OR MORE AND USES ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE TOWN AND THEIR NAMES RIGHT IN THE BOOK, I GOT IT AND AM READING IT AND WILL TELL YOU ABOUT IT, BUT TO GET BACK TO SEPPALA AND TOO DOGS, FOR SEPPALA IS AS IDENTIFIED WITH DOGS AS MAY WEST IS WITH BUXTOWNES, HE HAS A SPLENDID BOOK WRITTEN WITH HIM BY ELIZABETH RICKER WHO HERSELF IS A GREAT DOG FANCIER AND DOG DRIVER. WELL NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT IT, I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE DOG BALTO" THAT THERE IS NOW A STATUE TOO IN CENTRAL PARK NEW YORK IN HONOR OF MUSK THIS GREAT RACE, AND HE TOLD ME. BALTO WAS NOT THE DOG, THE REAL HERO OF THE RACE WAS "TOYO" MY LEAD DOG, BALTO WAS NOT IN MY TEAM, HE WAS IN THE TEAM OF THE DRIVER LAP OR WHO MADE THE LAST ENTRY INTO NOME, AND HENCE HE RECEIVED ALL THE CREDIT, AND BALTO WAS NOT EVEN THE LEAD DOG, THE NEWSPAPER MEN ASKED HIM THE NAMES OF THE DOGS AND THE DRIVER TOLD THEM THE LEADER WAS "FOX", WELL HALF THE DOG TEAMS IN THE NORTH THEY SAID WAS NAMED FOX, SO THEY KEPT AS NO OTHER DOGS NAMES IN THE TEAM, AND FINALLY HE MENTIONED "BALTO" SO THEY HOPPED ON THAT RIGHT AWAY IT HAD HEADLINE POSSIBILITIES, AND TODAY I GUESS ALL OVER THE WORLD YOU FIND IT ON DOG FOOD BOXES, THE RUN OUT TO**
MEET THE SERUM COMING IN WASSENT ORIGINALLY TO BE DONE IN RELAYS
BY DIFFERENT TEAMS, THEY HAD ASKED HIM TO GO OUT SOME 288 MILES
OUT AND THEN BACK, TO GET IT, AND HE PICKED HIS BEST DOGS, 20 OF THEM FOR THE TRIP,
MEANING TO LEAVE SOME ALONG THE LINE TO USE ON HIS WAY IN BACK
AFTER HE HAD GOTTEN THE SERUM, BUT AFTER HE LEFT THE DISEASE
SPREAD AND THEY HAD IT STARTED FROM THE OTHER END, AND HE MET IT
170 MILES OUT INSTEAD OF THE 300, THEN HE MADE THE RUN WITH
IT THROUGH A TERRIBLE STORM BUT A RELAY TEAM MET HIM,
BUT IN ALL HE HAD COVERED OVER 300 MILES GOING OR COMING FOR THE
SERUM, AND NO OTHER DRIVER HAD MADE OVER 50 MILES, HE SAID
HE DIDN'T MIND IT FOR HIMSELF BUT THAT IT WAS HIS WONDERFUL
LEAD DOG "FOX" THAT DID SUCH GREAT WORK AND THEN LOST THE
CREDIT, BALTO HE HAD RASED AS WELL AS FOX, AND HE HAD LEFT
BALTO AT HOME AS HE WAS A DOG THAT HE USED ON JUST HIS "F"IGHT YEAR
HE USED TO WIN MOST ALL THOSE BIG DOG RACES, THE BIGGEST OF WHICH
WAS THE "ALASKAN SLED DOG RACES", WHICH HAD PRIZES AS HIGH AS $20,000
HE IS A LITTLE BIT OF A FELLOW, BUT MIGHTY HUSKY, HE WORKS FOR
XX1 A BIG MINING COMPANY IN FAIRBANKS, HE HAS CHARGE OF A
SECTION OF BIG WATER LINE, A PIPE LINE ABOUT SIX FEET IN DIAMETER
THAT RUNS OVER A 100 MILES, IT HAS BURST WHEN WE WERE THERE
AND WE HAD DROVE OUT TO S-X IT, HE SAID HE MIGHT GET BACK IN THE
RACING GAME, BUT THAT HE WAS I BELIEVE HE SAID 56 YEARS OLD,
KINDER SAID IT LIKE HE THOUGHT A MAN THAT AGE BETTER BE DYING OFF,
AND IT DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL ANY TOO CHIPPER, ONE OF THE HARDEST
THINGS HE SAID IS TO THAT DOG TEAM TO PASS ON THE TRAIL AND
NOT GO TO WAR WITH EACH OTHER, THEN YOU ARE ALL XXXXXXX
WINTER SEPARATING EM, TO SAY NOTHING OF HOW LONG IT TAKES TO
SEPARATE THE DRIVERS, THEY DON'T DRIVE THE BIG LONG TEAMS AS MUCH
AS THEY USED TO, FOR THEY DON'T HAVE THE BIG LOADS, THEY USED TO
HITCH 18 OR 20, NOW 4 OR 5 OR 6. JOE CHOSIN THE ACE PILOT THAT WE
WERE WITH SO MUCH IN FAIRBANKS AN OLD FRIEND OF WILEYS, HE HAS A
MINE AND WE WENT THERE, AND HE HAS A PARTNER A SWEDISH FELLOW
THAT RUNS IT AND HE HAD JUST KILLED A BEAR RIGHT AT HIS HOUSE
DOOR, AND THE SWEDISH FELLOW TELLS HOW MICKEY WENT OUT ONE
NIGHT AND RUN THE BEAR IN, WELL AS A MATE-OF-FACT MICKEY WENT
OUT AND THE BEAR CHASED HIM IN, AND EARNEST HAD TO SHOOT THE
BEAR TO KEEP HIM FROM RUNNING MICKEY UNNEK THE BED, THEY SAY THERE
IS MORE FELLows BEEN CAUGHT BY A BEAR JUST THAT WAY, AN OLD PET
DOG. (MICKEY IS A WIRE-HAIRED FOX TERRIER) JUMPS THE BEAR AND
THEN THEY HIKE STRAIGHT TO YOU, AND THE BEAR AFTER EM, AND THE
FIRST THING YOU KNOW YOU GOT A BEAR IN YOUR LAP, AND A DOG
BETWEEN YOUR FEET. SO "MICKEY" IS A GREAT BLACK BEAR, SO
THE 6 IS TWO KINDS OF BEAR DOGS THE ONES THAT DRIVE KI AWAY AND
THE ONES THAT BRING EM IN. LITTLE MICKEY THOUGHT HE HAD DONE IT,
AS EARNEST SAID HE CHEWED ALL THE HAIR OFF THE BEAR, AFTER DEATH,
OKLAHOMA is generously blessed with wild berries and seeding fruits. Not all of them are to be found in the fall, many may be found in spring and summer, shortly after the blooming time is over. Those that persist on the plants until after the leaves have fallen, such as the haw, the deciduous holly and the chinaberry, are of course most commonly noticed.

Chinaberry (*Sapindus Drummondii*)

The flowers occur in terminal panicles in June. The berries, when ripe, are amber in color and the black seed can be seen within. Ripe chinaberries make a pretty sight against the blue sky.

The Indians and early settlers called this tree the Soapberry Tree for the berries contain the soapy glucoside *saponin* producing a lather when whipped up in water. Our grandmothers often preferred suds from the chinaberries to soap for washing the hair (some of their granddaughters still do).

Bittersweet (*Celastrus Scandens*)

The berries of this vine ripen the latter part of October. They are highly decorative. This plant has been abundant in Oklahoma but with so much changing of river bottom land and the clearing of thickets it is difficult to find now.

No other fruit of our wayside is more brilliant than the bittersweet. The vines are strong and often coil so tightly around a tree that they cut through the bark until the tree is girdled and dies.

Passion Flower (*Passiflora Incarnata*)

The flower of this plant is fantastical, complete with nectar threads and rainguard threads, as well as the essential parts of the flower. The ripe fruit is about the size of a hen's egg, is sweetish and mildly acid. In parts of the south where the vines are abundant, the fruit is made into jelly of excellent quality.

The rind of the fruit is airtight and when stepped upon suddenly, will pop like a blown up paper sack—hence the plant's popular name, the maypop. The pas- Continued
Jimson Weed  Aniil Seed

China Berry  Passion Flower
Persimmon (*Diospyros Virginiana*)

The persimmon is the only native American tree belonging to the Ebony family. Our persimmon tree grows about thirty feet high, and from twelve inches to eighteen inches in diameter. During the early stages of ripening, the fruit is astringent in taste, owing to the presence of tannic acid. This is replaced by invert sugars as ripening progresses, and when the fruit is fully ripened it is delicious to eat from the tree, in bread, or in puddings. Birds, as well as squirrel, opossum, raccoon, and fox love to eat this delicious fruit.

Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus Florida*)

Of all the trees, the dogwood is the most gracious. In early spring its large paper-white bracts delight the eye. The small greenish-white flowers (in center of bracts) give delicate perfume to the air. The berries, when ripe, are a brilliant scarlet. The birds eat them ravenously. The foliage of this tree turns red in the fall. The dogwood gives pleasure to the spectator in every season.

Magnolia (*Magnolia Grandiflora*)

The burr of the magnolia measures from three to five inches in length. When mature the conelike mass turns reddish and the scarlet seeds split out. The seeds, sometimes half dozen of them at the same time, hang from their receptacle by long white mucilaginous threads before dropping. The seeds are slightly bitter, but are avidly eaten by birds.

Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos Orbiculatus*)

This plant is called buckbrush and also Indian currant. The fruit varies greatly in color when ripe—sometimes red, sometimes purple. The stems of the plant are uniformly slender and supple. The Cherokee Indians use these stems for making baskets, characteristic of their tribe. The flowers of this plant are an important source of honey where the plants are abundant.

Carolina Snailseed (*Cocculus Carolinus*)

The snailseed is so called because the stone of the fruit resembles the form of a curved snail.

Our song birds love to eat this berry. The author has for several years brought snailseed vines in from the

Milkweed—Silk of the seeds was frequently gathered and made into pillows in pioneer days.

Dogwood—Handsome in all seasons, especially spring and autumn.

Virginia Nightshade—The potato and tomato are the best known members of this large family of plants.

Persimmon—New England colonists considered this to be a variety of the wild plum.
Milkweed  Dogwood

Virginia Nightshade  Persimmon
woods during Christmas week and placed them on the hedge as a special Christmas treat for the birds about her neighborhood.

Cherokee Rose (Rosa Suffulta)
This species is the most widely distributed in Oklahoma. It blooms from late May through July and is the loveliest flower in meadows and along roadsides. The fruit is called a hip and is a fleshy, hollow cup packed full of seeds. A jam, with a delicate rose flavor and perfume, can be made from the fruits after the seeds have been taken out. The rose hips are food for many birds during fall and winter.

Virginia Nightshade (Physalis Virginiana)
There are about 1000 different species of the nightshade family. In Oklahoma there are nine native species. The Irish potato and eggplant belong to this family.
The Japanese lantern shaped fruit holds within it one seed with the appearance and size of a pea. The plant has a remarkable ability to resist drought.

Jimson Weed (Datura Stramonium)
The flowers open with a sweet narcotic odor in the evening. The nectar is eagerly sought by hawk moths. These are often mistaken for humming birds as they pause momentarily before the flowers, never seeming to alight. The fruit of this plant remains intact all winter.

Milkweed (Asclepias Syriaca)
Although milkweed is a very common plant, it stands out with rare distinction in regard to its unique method of pollination. The seeds are efficiently carried by the wind on the fine strands of silk.
This plant is poisonous even to sheep, however its poisonous principle is destroyed by boiling in water. The Plains Indians prepared young stems and pods for greens by boiling, a method still employed in some places by the country folks.

Spanish Mulberry (Callicarpa Americana)
In the southern states this plant goes by the name of beauty-berry. This is a very apt name, for the berries are a rich amethyst in color. Many are clustered together on the axils of the leaves. In Oklahoma it grows near our eastern border. It is very attractive to the eye and is often used in parks as an ornamental plant.
COULD no more forget the tawny sunrise of Oklahoma’s Statehood Day than I could forget my own name.

Vian, near the Cookson Hills, always became a magnetic center the week of the picnic, drawing people from everywhere. To a child it was both crazy and full of wonder.

We rode through the thick of the choking dust in the family hack, on towards the biggest bonanza celebration a tot could hope for. We arrived amid sounds—forsaken, almost human wails of small balloon whistles, dying as the air escaped, the reedy music of “Over the Waves” on the merry-go-round. And the smells were there—gasoline engine smoke and fried onions.

Thick, cool shade formed a living room for elderly men and women in rattan settees, who sat serene, enjoying the bustling morning around them. The bandstand was in the center of the shade, draped with glorious bunting, where the pride of Vian would later perform. And there were other attractions: the barbecue, the rodeo and the balloon ascension.

The picnic was always held at Thornton’s Park, a grassy prairie, fringed to the south with sassafras trees. Here the ropings were held, while to the north lay a dense green of black jacks which made a leafy canopy for the food stands, bazaar booths and the main picnic ground. The hitching place for the hacks, buggies and wagons was to the extreme northeast entrance into the picnic ground. Over to the west were the barbecue pits and picnic tables.

In the center of the park, clear of trees, the mammoth balloon was being readied for its uncertain venture into the speckless blue. From a pit fire, heated air was conducted into the lank mastodon lying limp on the ground, looking much the same as any other piece of canvas. Volunteer men always stood about, ready to help launch the inflated bag as it swayed back and forth. A swing, with a man in a parachute, was attached to the balloon’s bottom awaiting the ominous climb as soon as the bag was light enough to rise from the earth.

“Take me out to the ball game, take me out with the crowd. . . .”—as the old merry-go-round organ played, the fat balloon weaved back and forth like a trained elephant keeping time.

PEOPLE! They seemed to sprout out of the balloon ascension — cowboys — baked ham — fried ch
earth, tier upon tier of crowding, curious onlookers.

Suddenly, the tense ropes strained, the man in the parachute and the swing were deftly loosened and away went the balloon and they, veering crookedly as it climbed into the heavens, leaving a black, smoky trail. Over pond and meadow this big, inverted sack-like thing would drift, growing tinier by the instant, while we stood, scarcely daring to breathe, waiting for the parachutist to jump.

A fast-falling speck separated itself from the balloon with a jerk—he came hurtling down! “What if it doesn’t open?” some foreboding soul would always ask. But before he could get the words out, the white parachute would unfurl, catch the parachutist quickly in the air and float him down as gracefully as a dandelion seed.

The deflated balloon, which had been sucked up into the blue abyss, would fold together like a dirty tow sack and come slowly tumbling down from the sky.

Once a foolhardy parachutist took his wife up with him. And a pet monkey! When the final lurch of power snatched them upward and they had barely skirted the blackjack trees—“rip . . . crash”—and down they came, bumping like sacks of potatoes.

No monkey, however old and domesticated, could resist grabbing a handful of tree in passing. All this toying with death luckily preferred only a broken collarbone.

For the remainder of the year, after the celebration, one sight was certain: there’d be backyard balloon ascensions when and wherever boys and girls could scrape up enough old canvas to make them. Midges they were, by comparison, and only the most successful ones would zoom up to the treetops and tumble back down, or get hung among the branches.

For days before the picnic, women would begin preparation of foodstuffs. Pickled eggs, relishes, salads, layer cakes and stacks of pies, to say nothing of baked ham, chicken and turkey. Not that anyone needed to insure himself against hunger. Heaped up on the picnic tables were brown savory mounds of barbecued beef and pork with all the light bread and pickles a visitor could eat.

Rodeos we just called ropings, but that didn’t keep cowboys away. From across the Illinois, the Arkansas and Grand Rivers they came with eyes upon the pretty girls and top money, which was one hundred dollars. A hundred dollars to them meant romance and lasting fame. The winners were pictured on postal cards sold by the local drugstore the remainder of the year, until another winner could wave his ten gallon hat at the next roping.

At one picnic, when Mama pushed my little sister Lillian in her baby buggy, the wheels locked and wouldn’t turn. A long piece of bailing wire had wrapped itself around the wheel. As we puzzled over the problem and had about decided to look for Papa, who was helping on the barbecue committee, a fine looking gentleman came up and removed his hat.

“Perhaps I could help you, Ma’am,” he said with a smile.

“Oh, if you could, I’d appreciate it,” Mama said, taking Lillian in her arms.

The man turned the carriage on its side and started untangling wire. At one point he took out his handkerchief and mopped his face. He worked on, and for some reason, he was attracting quite a crowd. As he was finishing, my grandfather walked up.

“Governor Haskell! Did this girl of mine put you to work?” And our first state governor laughed and began shaking hands with everybody.

Every house was full of guests. In the morning they’d rise hungry from bed, pallet, or hay-loft. It would take a half dollar to buy meat for such a houseful.

The five-day picnic didn’t actually end on the last day; we went on reliving it while planning for the next one, as scene after scene passed in mental review—cowboys who had roped our hearts; felt streamers with such slogans as “Let George Do It”; women in merry-widow hats; bevies of teenage girls all dressed alike in white middy blouses and skirts, with hair ribbons perched on their heads like tropical butterflies; full-blooded Indians from the hills; old women smoking long stemmed pipes with tiny clay bowls; five-strapped slippers and blistered heels.

Yes, this was a cross-section of young Oklahoma, of a young America, outgoing and full of joy.

(Reprinted from American Mercury)
Autumn is such a splendid time to tour...

NORTHWEST

BY ERIC ALLEN

GREAT SALT PLAINS
BOILING SPRINGS
CHIMNEY ROCK
HIDDEN CANYON COUNTRY

GLASS MOUNTAINS
ALABASTER CAVERNS
CIMARRON SAND DUNES
CHEROKEE STRIP
EARLY this year, when OKLAHOMA TODAY suggested a tour Northwest, we began casting about for a sequence of scenes or events that would give us a theme. We started out about the first of June, and immediately hit a dead-end.

It was sudden and jolting, and left us feeling like the eager homesteader must have felt back in the land rush days, with his wagon hung on an upthrust shaft of gyp-rock, and his team broken away and headed yonder across a Great Plains gulch.

We found out that this Northwest area is too big and varied. Its abundance of scenery and history defies the bounds of any one certain theme.

Yet, we found it's possible, in a leisurely two-day journey, to sample this region of contrasts and know a sense of discovery that would be hard to equal in any other area its size in the United States.

We decided to approach the tour as strangers, not overburdened with brochures and travel folders, but looking at and enjoying thoroughly what the versatile land had to offer. In a 200 mile loop that began and ended at Alva, our tour spanned the Great Salt Plains near Cherokee, the Glass Mountains, Boiling Springs at Woodward, the fabulous Alabaster Caverns near Freedom, Chimney Rock and the Little Sahara desert along the Cimarron near Waynoka and the hidden canyon-country in between. In the tour and the contacts with friendly people we got a pretty comprehensive look at both scenery and history of this "Old Cherokee Strip".

In our book it stands unique in the nation. People in this area came from everywhere when the "Strip" was opened in 1893, and the courage, independence and fortitude of a pioneering generation is still much in evidence. People give help when asked in this country, but they don't interfere in the affairs of others until requests come. This marks what is truly termed "the gateway to the west."

Alva, the home of Northwestern State College, was in its beginnings essentially a cattle and farming town. It still is, but the college, established in the 1890's, has spurred a broader sense of culture and civic appeal. A pleasant little city of seven thousand, nestled in the valley of the historic Nescatunga (Big Salt Water), Alva is currently enjoying a building boom. Situated precisely where the great wheat plains break off into the gyp-hills cattle country to the west, the city is beginning to spread across a new addition called Indian Hills, and also southward above the college.

Northwestern State College itself gave us a lesson in contrasts. Here on the sloping, beautiful elm-shaded campus ultra-modern buildings stand shoulder-to-shoulder with quaint old ivy-covered structures dating back to territorial times. Surprisingly, this comparatively small institution of learning houses one of the greatest Natural History Museums in the world. Included in a vast array of
exhibits in Carter Hall are the lower jaw bones of several mastodons unearthed in Oklahoma, a nine-foot-long tusk, and a cock and hen of the almost extinct whooping crane family.

Alva and Northwestern State College share the national limelight every fall when the annual Homecoming Celebration is staged. Top New York and Hollywood stars are contracted every year for a performance in the college fieldhouse, and the stage show, football game and parade draws leading figures across the nation. The late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Senator Estes Kefauver have been guests here. Brooks H. Bicknell, president of the Alva Chamber of Commerce and tireless civic leader known as “Mr. Homecoming” has been shaping up the annual celebration for 34 years. He told us that thirty thousand people across the nation swarmed into Alva for the homecoming last year.

Heading east out of Alva on U. S. 64, we crossed about twenty miles of rippling green wheat country and pulled into the conventional store-lined main street of Cherokee. This is the county seat of Alfalfa county, one of the richest oil-wise and wheat-wise in Oklahoma. Three miles to the east on a gravel road is the entrance to the Great Salt Plains.

We stood on the tower for a long time, visualizing the days when Coronado, searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola, crossed the gigantic salt flats. Indians once gathered in conclave here, smoking the pipes of weighty council or sending the young men in games of war or the chase on the smooth surface of the salt plains area. Later, driving in by way of Jet, we topped a ridge on a graveled road and saw the ruffled brown wall of the Salt Plains Lake.

Fishing, boating and water-skiing are tops here. Roads run in every direction, but all wind up on the shore of the lake or near the dam. History of the area throbs with color and drama. In the adjoining wildlife refuge, over 250 known species of birds have been sighted, including pelicans, egrets, and whooping cranes. The Great Salt Plains lake, wildlife refuge and surrounding area annually attract about 175,000 visitors.

We headed out of the Great Salt Plains reluctantly and took SH No. 8 through Cleo Springs and across the Cimarron to Orienta. Out of the gray sage flats began to emerge high tablelands and mesas. The highway dipped and rose, and suddenly we were in the heart of the Glass Mountains.

“That’s isinglass in those hills . . . whole scads of it,” the woman service station operator at Bouse Junction said.

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Eric Allen’s article THE BEST OF OKLAHOMA in a recent issue of the national travel magazine HOLIDAY caught our interest so sharply that we were impelled to seek out this nationally known travel writer with such a rare understanding of Oklahoma, and invite him to do an article for OKLAHOMA TODAY. Here it is . . . Ed.
said. "You better watch out for rattlesnakes, too."

This was after we had toured the glittering Glass Mountains, a series of high buttes and tablelands edging the highway. Long ranges of mountain ramparts rose against the summer sky, pock-marked with tiny caverns, channeled with erosion gashes and all shining in the sun with silver. We had stood amazed, drinking in the accumulated reflected silvery hoard that might well have been transplanted from the moon.

West of Bouse Junction the highway dips and climbs through a belt of shinnery as dense as the Cross Timbers in the eastern section of Oklahoma. Then the plains come out again, with occasional red-ribbed canyons, and before you know it you're in one of the cleanest little cities in the whole Northwest. This is Mooreland, bearing too the throes of a building boom and awareness of the potential of modern living. A new high school modern as tomorrow lines the highway along the route through town.

At Woodward, where we spent the night with friends, we had several hours to visit cafes and local business houses. Few people are inclined to boast here, but if they were they would have substantial reason for telling the current status of the town. It's a lovely city, with new schools, churches and parks offering facilities for local folks as well as touring strangers.

Daybreak is usually an unholy time when folks that happen to wake at that hour promptly turn over and go back to sleep. Not so in Woodward. If you get up early enough to see the streets vacant you're doing good. The people buzzing along the street are ranchers and wheat growers headed out of town to do their chores.

We joined them, but we were headed for recreation. We were drawn by the mecca of the Great Plains, where trails skirt the edges of cool swimming pools, and trees grow tall for shade along the road leading to Boiling Springs.

Right here is a reprieve from the vastness of the rolling prairie: an amazing growth of trees, jungle-like, siding the entrance road. We parked at the huge stone lodge and had a look at the gem-like lake behind it. We relaxed there a while, letting our two sons take a swim, reveling in the peace and serenity of this belt of timber in a land that is almost devoid of trees.

We headed out of Woodward at a leisurely pace, burdened with a faint nostalgia. It didn't last long. Soon we were turning right on a circular drive past riding stables and heading into the entrance building of Alabaster Caverns State Park.

Alabaster State Park has many things to offer besides the tour of the fabulous cave. You can take a walk down-canyon, or a horseback ride, either of which is worth your time. But the tour of the caverns proper is the kicker. As long as you live, you will remember it: the vast maw of the entrance, the steps down into the pit; the side rooms which the guide points out, and the bats overhead in the dark.
A great thing about Northwest Oklahoma is that it’s a land of elbow room. Stand almost any place on the open range, and the same cheery notes of bird song will greet you that greeted the pioneers of 90-odd years ago. It was that way with us in the canyon country east of the main Alabaster Caverns road.

Wear your boots for this trek, because it’s rattlesnake country. Don’t go reaching for a beautiful blossom before you’ve taken a good look at the terrain. Waynoka across the Cimarron is becoming the rattlesnake capital. If you turn off the main highway a few miles northeast of Alabaster, and head toward the famed Chimney Rock, you’re in a beautiful and intriguing canyon country few tourists have ever seen. Spires and cathedral domes of strange pre-historic cities will greet you here if you’re a person of imagination. You can look at the peaks and the doors and windows made by erosion and know a depth of feeling for the Great God of Creation who has spawned such sights and allowed man to view them. It’s humbling, stilling, a whole lesson laid out before your eyes.

We rounded a curve and saw Chimney Rock. It looked a bit lonely, stretching its height toward the surrounding buttes. We wheeled through a gap in the pasture fence to view it closer. It’s big and imposing, all right. It’s good to look up at in the stillness, with mourning doves calling now and then. In your mind it may be a giant chimney of an abandoned homestead...something constructed in olden time by a Paul Bunyan of the plains.

This Chimney Rock, and the canyon country surrounding it, are one of the most outstanding features, scenic-wise, in the whole Northwest. It’s a very good road. More people should drive this mute.

All along the route through the picturesque cattle country we had been taking periodic glimpses of undulating expanses of sand on the Cimarron. A few minutes later we were at Little Sahara near Waynoka, looking at spindrifts of sand.

Thousands of visitors come here annually for the Christmas pageant. Camels used in the yearly affair are kept at the park and make an interesting attraction for spring and summer visitors. Little Ikey, a camel-colt born this spring, is a constant source of amusement for children. He’s a frisky little dromedary, and basks in the distinction of being the only camel in Oklahoma born in captivity.

NORTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

The sun was a ball of fire on the western horizon when we pulled through Waynoka, one of the largest railroad centers in the Northwest. Later, crossing Eagle Chief Creek in Woods county, nearing Alva and our starting point, my wife said quietly, “Too many Oklahomans don’t know their own home state.”

She was right. This Northwest area has a feel and personality all its own. More of us need to get acquainted with it.
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<td>Sept. 29</td>
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<td>Dave Brubeck Quartet, O.S.U.</td>
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<td>Oct. 4-7</td>
<td>Midwest City's 20th Annual Celebration</td>
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It was in 1887, July 28, that the first Santa Fe train steamed north out of Texas into Indian Territory, and Ardmore was born. The area was Indian and outlaw country, including the Arbuckle Mountains on the north and bounded by Red River on the south, part of Pickens County, Chickasaw Indian Nation. The Ardmore site was occupied by a log house belonging to the Roff Brothers' 700 Ranch.

The new town was a success. Stores, homes, offices, and churches were founded and built. In only three years there were 2500 residents. With the market and outlet for products provided by the new railroad, ranchers and farmers swarmed into the area. The old-timers tell that five years later, Ardmore was the market for more than 10,000 bales of cotton a year, and corn was ricked in fence rows. Two newspapers were established.

In 1895 disaster struck. Fire broke out in a livery stable and quickly destroyed almost every building in town. But everything was built back—this time mostly of brick and stone, instead of cottonwood and pine.

It was a cotton, cattle, and Indian business town until a new break came in 1905. Oil was discovered at Oil Springs, a few miles northwest of Ardmore. The new industry developed slowly until 1912-13, when the great Healdton fields, west of Ardmore, were discovered. Ardmore became an oil town.

Continued on page 20

Drumright's 50 years nothing has been so talked about as its main street. Steepest and best known of the three hills comprising Broadway is Tiger Hill. You don't trespass it often before it challenges you to some kind of duel. Everybody has his own story.

The town librarian, treading lightly one icy morning, slipped in front of Bishop's and slid three houses before coming to a halt. . . . A truck driver unable to chug past Miller's rolled back into Campbell's retaining wall. After unloading half his cargo and tying up traffic, the sweating driver sat down on the curb and ate his lunch while the crowd gathered to watch the outcome.

Drumright's history reads like a fairy tale with a wild west setting.

In 1911 Tom Slick was traveling from farm to farm buying oil leases. One night he arrived at the Frank Wheeler farm, about 10 miles east of the Cushing crossroads. Here in the jack oaks and rocks Wheeler, with a wife and nine children, was struggling for existence. Slick wasn't welcome, but it was dark and the road back was a mere trail, so they "put him up for the night". By morning Slick had an oil lease for Wheeler's 160 acre tract.

A year later a well was started three miles east of the Wheeler farm. Bristow bankers furnished the money and when at 2,000 feet there was no show of...
In October, 1942, strange things began happening in two wheat fields southeast of Oklahoma City.

You should see them now, for in October, 1962, Midwest City, population 40,000, and Tinker Air Force Base, the largest maintenance installation in the United States Air Force, are holding a birthday party to show Oklahoma and the world what they've made of those wheat fields.

Since the 1960 census alone, home building permits have averaged $1,000,000 a month. To show off this booming growth, the Midwest City 20th Anniversary Celebration Club was formed by civic leaders to plan the October 4-5-6-7 events.

Pointing up the excitement are the Homecoming activities of the Midwest City Alumni Association and parades galore. Frank McGee, internationally famous NBC news commentator will be on hand for the big doings, accompanied by his daughter, who was the first baby born in Midwest City.

Tours of schools, flower shows in residential sections, art exhibits, sales downtown, a state-wide bridge tournament, a golf tournament on the Municipal course, and parties at the city’s unique and model Teen Club will stress the theme of modern living in Midwest City.

The celebration will feature the opening of Midwest City's newest high school—Carl Albert—scheduled to join the school system at the opening of the fall term. Continued on page 21

It is quite possible that anyone who happened to be visiting the city of Sand Springs in the first week of July this year may have encountered the name of Charles Page.

This could have occurred as a result of riding on a thoroughfare known as Charles Page Boulevard. It could have come while inspecting Charles Page High School or Charles Page Memorial Library. Or perhaps the visitor chanced to wonder at the identity of a stocky figure cast in a bronze statue overlooking the downtown district. Guess who!

As a matter of fact, all a person had to do was read the papers or look at store windows or listen in on some of the local chinning, and he couldn't miss learning about Charles Page. During this particular week Sand Springs was celebrating its 50th anniversary—and any time Sand Springs has an anniversary Charles Page has one too.

You might judge from all this that Charles Page had something to do with Sand Springs. And you would not be wrong. He just happens to be the man who founded the community, named it, nursed it, pushed it along, developed its character and provided for it after his death.

Sand Springs is a busy, rarin'-to-go city at the western edge of Tulsa. It has been called variously “Tulsa's Kid Sister,” “Tulsa's Breadbasket” and the greatest industrial center per capita in Oklahoma. Continued on page 21
ARDMORE  Continued from page 18
In the meantime, Oklahoma became a state and Ardmore became the county seat of Carter County, one of several counties carved out of Pickens County.

In 1915 disaster struck again. A gasoline tank car exploded in the Santa Fe yards, flattening most of the downtown area. Forty-nine were killed; hundreds injured. But the rebuilding again was quick.

Many stories are told of the late teens and through the 1920's when all of western Carter County was wild and wooly oil field country. Oil millionaires rubbed elbows with farmers, cowboys, and Indians on the streets. Many fine homes were built; thousands of more modest ones.

As of July 28, 1962, Ardmore’s 75th birthday, the old-timers looked around their town in wonderment. New offices and business buildings, square miles of comfortable homes, modern schools all over town, three new hospitals, the Noble Research Foundation, tourists flocking in by the thousands to the big lakes and parks, more than fifty modern churches, industrial plants, new four-lane highways, cotton gone but more oil wells than ever, more cattle and cowboys than ever, more than 20,000 people in the city and 44,000 in the county. The day wasn’t long enough for the telling of stories and seeing everything.

DRUMRIGHT  Continued from page 18
But Slick had smelled oil. With the confidence of a wildcatter and the nose of a geologist, he picked his next site. This well would be on the Wheeler farm near a little creek. But where was the money? The bankers said no more for them. He contacted a group of Cushing business men but they too weren’t interested.

In desperation Slick borrowed money for a trip to Chicago. Here he found his man. C. B. Shaffer, who already had a fortune from the Pennsylvania oil fields, was interested in the deal.

The well was drilled and on March 17, 1912, it came in a gusher. They succeeded in capping the well, and covered the oil on the ground with fresh dirt to remove all traces of a producer. But even in an isolated spot like this news leaked out.

Shaffer and lease buyer J. K. Gano arrived from Chicago. They immediately rented all available transportation in the area. All rigs and horses not used by their men were placed under guard while they scoured the countryside purchasing leases.

Another gusher was brought in on the Aaron Drumright farm. News spread like a prairie fire. Old timers called it a “50 million dollar prairie fire” for it set off one of the most fabulous oil booms in history.

People poured in, pitching tents, building shacks and lean-to’s. Overnight Drumright became a city of 10,000 working, milling, boisterous people who didn’t know day from night. Living was reckless and dangerous.

Then came the Jackson Barnett well. Barnett became known as the richest Indian in the world, for this was the first well ever to produce a million barrels of oil.

Oil ran like water down Tiger Creek, right across main street, before crews could get the big gushers shut in. By 1919 the area 32 square miles around Drumright was producing 3% of all the oil in the world.

After 50 years things have calmed down some. Oil remains king. The old Wheeler Number 1 and the Jackson Barnett are still producing. They’ve been given new, modern attire to wear and each fall the Oil Progress Committee honors them both.

As for Drumright’s main street, it still has three humps in its back and dares you to make light of its capabilities.
MIDWEST CITY  Continued from page 19
The new Municipal Hospital will be dedicated and hold open house, along with open house of the Tinker YMCA. St. Philip Neri Catholic School will also dedicate a new building.

While the celebration is aimed at stressing the growth and progress of Midwest City, the just plain fun side won’t be neglected.

A carnival and exhibit area will operate, fair fashion, for three days. The Battle of the Bands, annual statewide high school and junior high school marching band competition, will be held in Midwest City during the celebration.

Homecoming football will pit Midwest City High School against Douglass of Oklahoma City and new Carl Albert High School also has a game scheduled.

Tinker Air Force Base is planning an air show on Saturday, featuring 100 Sky-divers. All of Tinker AFB’s former commanding officers have been invited to return for the festivities. A bicycle rodeo will give the younger set an opportunity to show their skill, and a demonstration of the National Physical Fitness Program now being stressed in Midwest City schools will be staged to show progress here.

“Too many persons away from Midwest City seem to have an image of a jerry-built temporary town when I tell them where I live,” Milt Heartsill, president of the Midwest City Chamber of Commerce, says. “We want to show our solid progress, our modern schools, our business centers, our comfortable residential areas.

“We want people to know that Midwest City is a permanent and growing community, a good place to live to raise a family, and to enjoy life.”

SAND SPRINGS  Continued from page 19
Probably it’s all these—and whatever it is, it owes to Charles Page.

Page was born in Wisconsin in 1861. His father died when he was 10, leaving a wife and eight children. Young Charles started working as a messenger boy and later held a succession of jobs, but his ambition remained the same through them all: To make money and devote it to the care of widows and orphans.

He tried the oil business, and after a series of dry holes found his fortune in the Taneha Field south of Tulsa. In 1908 he bought 160 acres of land from some Creek Indians seven miles west of Tulsa, where cold water bubbled up from a sandy soil. Sand Springs, of course.

Page built a home for widows and orphans on this site—and literally constructed a town around it. He built or promoted a refinery, glass plant, textile mill, railroad, steel plant and a host of other industries. When he died in 1926 the bulk of his estate of nearly $20 million was left to the Sand Springs Home Interests in the hands of five trustees, the income earmarked for the Home.

The anniversary celebration this year was marked by parades, speeches, fireworks, pioneer displays, men in chin-whiskers and women in long calico dresses; by Indian dances, gunslinger duels, picnics and a nightly pageant, Sand Springs Saga.

It was a glorious, exhausting birthday party, pulling together the story of the past, the evidence of the present, and the promise of the future. And Charles Page was there—everywhere.
For fear the title of this article may create confusion, let's get that straightened out first off. What we mean is not that Troy Gordon's writing here is second-best. We mean that this is the second time we have published some of the best of Troy's quips and sallies. You see we ran "The Best of Troy Gordon" in the Spring, '58 issue of Oklahoma Today. So we had to find a new title for these latest samplings from the deep well of Gordon wit. We tried several word combinations but know that Troy will feel this one we finally picked is peachy-keen.

Troy is a native Kansan who got right. Now a loyal Okie, he writes his daily column "Round the Clock" for the Tulsa World, making life bearable for all his loyal readers—which includes us. As Alexander King might say, he is an erudite man... Ed.

Morgan Powell and his son, Kip, were having a comparatively mild argument recently and the father told his son:

"Kip, I'm not nearly as big an ogre as you think I am."

"OK," said Kip, "so you're just a mediogre."

An evangelist walking in the country saw a farmer working in a field. He walked over to the fence and asked:

"Are you Christian?"

"No sir," the farmer replied. "He lives two and a half miles down the road."

"You misunderstand," the evangelist persisted. "Are you lost?"

"Nope. I've lived here all my life and I know exactly where I am."

"You still don't understand. Are you ready for the day of judgment?"

"That depends. When is it going to be?"

"I'm not sure," said the preacher. "It could be this week and it could be next week."

"Well, if you find out be sure to let me know," the farmer requested. "The old lady'll want to go both times."

The University of Houston fired its football coach, Hal Lahar, at mid-season and a few weeks later the alumni gave him a new car.

Do you get the idea the message is "Hit the road!"?

Julie Blakely came up with the information that a beagle belonging to Dolph Bridgewater climbed up on a bed, knocked a case containing his wife's contact lenses off a table and ate them.

"Does this make him a seeing eye dog?" Julie wonders.
The University of Miami has announced that the great Baltimore quarterback, Johnny Unitas, will work with George Mira and other Hurricane quarterbacks in spring football training. I can't help but feel this inevitably will lead to a hairoil commercial.

A woman who runs a Tulsa nursery school was having trouble with a 5-year-old who wouldn't take a nap. She suggested that he think “happy thoughts” to help him relax. It worked like a charm. At the end of the rest period, she awakened the boy and asked “What happy thoughts did you think?” “I thought I was pregnant,” the boy replied. “Pregnant?” she answered. “Why would you think that?” “Well,” said the boy, “the other day my mother said ‘I think I’m pregnant,’ and dad said, ‘That’s a happy thought.’”

I have a sneaking hunch that the first TV shot from one of our electronic satellites in outer space will show a wide-angle shot of the people of the United States huddled in front of their TV sets watching “Wagon Train”.

Joe C. West suggests that the old Oklahoma play on names of towns actually is the best description yet of the twist: “Sallisaw Henryetta Wagoner Catoosa.”

A Kansas legislator named Wunch is spearheading a bill to increase state aid to schools. So when you hear a Jayhawker discussing the school Wunch program, he isn’t talking baby talk.

Although I once was a 7-year-old boy, I looked at life from the other side of the eyeballs, and now I find boys my son’s age most baffling.

I observed a few of them at play during the lunch hour at school the other day. It had snowed and they were in hog heaven.

When the bell rang, one of the boys reached down, got a double-handful of snow, placed it on top of his head and walked into school.

Every boy on the school grounds followed suit. I suspect they would have done the same even if it had been molten lava.

Ken Neal tells of a friend who commented: “With my cigarette tax, gambling losses, liquor tax, alimony, child support and tithe, I’m in pretty good shape on income tax deductions.”

Roscoe Willey tells about the man who was deeply in debt who received the following letter:

“Dear Sir, Unless you take immediate steps to pay your account with us, we will have to repossess your furniture. This could prove quite embarrassing, especially when you consider what your neighbors would think.”

A few days later the creditor received this note from the man:

“Dear Sirs, I have canvassed all my neighbors and they agree unanimously that it would be a damned dirty deal.”

We didn’t have weather like the hot spell of this past summer before David fired his slingshot at Goliath.

Near the end of one of President Kennedy’s televised press conferences a hand came on-screen handing a note to Mr. Kennedy. I couldn’t help but hope it said “Call your wife right away.”

Isn’t anyone going to speak up and say a few words in behalf of the extreme middle-of-the-readers?

Sister Marcella teaches religion to first and second graders at St. John’s school in Bartlesville. Sometimes she asks the children to illustrate a Bible story.

One child depicted God driving Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden by drawing an automobile, with Adam and Eve in the back seat and God at the wheel.

Even more spectacular was the drawing illustrating the flight into Egypt. This one featured an airplane seating four persons.

“I know these three are Jesus, Mary and Joseph,” Sister Marcella told the artist, “but who is the fourth person?”

“Well, Sister,” the student replied, “haven’t you ever heard of Pontius the Pilate?”
Oklahoma Communities, in their industrial development programs, have many allies. But in the final analysis it is John Q. Citizen who sells, or fails to sell, his home town.

An out-of-state car pulled into the service station. As the gas tank was being filled, the driver commented, "I've been here two days looking over your town. I'm interested in starting a branch plant for my factory. This place seems to have a lot of things I need. What do you think of this town?"

"Well, I could hardly recommend it," the service station operator said. "Business has been bad here and people are moving out. I'm even thinking of moving myself. If I were you, I'd look over that town about 50 miles down the highway."

The driver paid him, thanked him, and drove 50 miles down the highway. Two months later he announced construction of a branch factory employing 150 people, 50 miles down the highway from the town he originally considered.

This may sound like fiction, but it is true. It was told by the man who selected the plant site to one of Oklahoma's industrial salesmen.

A visit with an industrial salesman reveals much about why an industry accepts or rejects a town, but nearly all agree that a most important reason is the attitude of the people.

Oklahoma's industry salesmen have a unique job. Their products are the cities and towns of Oklahoma. Their prospects are industries, now located elsewhere, ranging from industrial giants to small garment or assembly plants.

Usually we think of Chambers of Commerce or the Department of Commerce and Industry when we consider industry salesmen. However, many are employed by privately owned companies—electric and gas companies, railways, banks, etc.

These companies have a civic interest in the development of Oklahoma. They have a commercial interest as
well. Industrial development means new customers for utilities, new depositors for banks, new passengers and shippers for railways.

Selling a plant location to an industry is no quick easy job. Sometimes it takes years to convince a manager that a given town in Oklahoma is the right place for his next plant expansion. Even then, the prospect must wait until he is ready to expand. Meanwhile, he must be kept sold on the location, because other towns continue trying to sell him on their benefits.

When a prospect begins to sound interested, every effort is made to bring him to Oklahoma. Here, the sales responsibility shifts sharply to the community itself. The industrialist has already studied the brochures on the community. He understands the market, the utility and transportation facilities and costs, the labor potential. He has trimmed his list of prospective plant locations to 15 or 20 towns—and your town is one of them. Your problem is to prove to the prospect that your town is best. That's no easy task.

"A housewife always cleans her home before she has company," says one industry salesman, "but often we invite industrial prospects to visit a town which needs a 'housecleaning.' This may sound trivial, but to the industrialist it is very important." The same industry seeker once drove a carload of industrialists into a community.

"Why don't we go on to the next town?" one of the industrialists said.

"But surely you'll want to talk with the Chamber of Commerce first. The mayor and others will be looking for you," his host answered.

"We would be wasting our time and yours stopping here," was the reply. "Look for yourself. There's a junk yard, right off the highway. Look at main street. It is badly in need of repairs and looks as if it hasn't been cleaned in a month. We are investing several hundred thousand dollars in the town. We have learned that people who live like this work like this."'

Housecleaning means more than getting the town in physical shape. The mental attitude of its citizens is equally important. But most often one follows the other naturally, for it's easy to have pride in a well-kept community.

What is a prospective industry looking for?

In many cases, market and raw materials rank first. It is normal that a sawmill will locate in timber country or a cannery where vegetables and fruits are raised. But there are notable exceptions—Fansteel of Muskogee, for example. Fansteel gets its raw material, a rare metal, in Australia, and sells only a small fraction of its product to an Oklahoma market. This company credited water, fuel, electric power and the high educational level of the people for its decision to settle in Muskogee.

Availability of labor is another important consideration. This is not determined simply by the number of unemployed. The number of skilled and unskilled workers, types of skills available, in some cases even the number of people with master's and doctor's degrees enter into the picture.

Just as important, is the attitude of the local working force. Is the production rate good? What are absentee rates in existing industries? Do labor and management work in harmony?

Most industries today recognize that a happy working force is the most productive. They realize they cannot transfer workers into a town with poor schools, rundown community services and poor recreational and cultural facilities and expect them to be satisfied workers. Neither can they expect to bring workers into a town where their neighbors have a negative community attitude and expect their workers' attitudes be any different.

A community may be limited in its ability to control raw materials, markets, even availability of labor. But much can be done about services, facilities, and attitudes. Near-miracles can sometimes be performed without a large expenditure of money.

When an industry finally decides to expand into an Oklahoma community, it is difficult to say who made the sale. Perhaps it was accomplished by the Chamber of Commerce, a utility company, a railway, a bank, the State Department of Commerce and Industry, or the State Chamber of Commerce and Development Council. Perhaps it was the delegation from the home town which made the trip to the factory and talked to the firm's president. Or it might have been the school superintendent, who pointed out the fine educational system, the banker, who brought together the leading citizens of the town in a dinner session, or an insurance executive who spent two days giving the prospect a detailed tour of the town. It could have been a taxi driver or a filling station attendant, who quickly responded to questions by pointing out the good things about the town.

No salesman can sell a town which is unwilling to sell itself. The final, and most important salesman, are the town's own citizens.
SUBTLETY OF CONTOUR is his mark of mastery—the essence of grace is the element of each form,” said a noted art critic recently, as he stood and examined a collection of wood sculpture being displayed at a large art show in Oklahoma.

This prominent critic was examining the work of a sculptor, who with pocketknife and chisel turns a raw chunk of wood into a rare, delicate thing of beauty, which has trapped the fancy of art enthusiasts and critics across the nation.

Willard Stone: age, 44 years—home, Locust Grove, Oklahoma—status, married, eight chil-

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dren—occupation, sculptor of wood—rating, one of the nation's outstanding talents.

International recognition in the competitive field of art is said to be one of the hardest goals for any one person to obtain. It was twice as hard for Stone. He was a member of a large family, born at Oktaha, near Muskogee, Okla., and work was often much more important than school, because it helped supply the necessary food and clothes for himself and the others.

His natural talents did, however, show at an early age, because when he played, it was often with a pile of red clay, and he sculptured toys for himself and others—animals, dolls, people, sometimes in wood.

When he was about fifteen, friends persuaded him to enter some of his models in the state fair at Muskogee. Officials there were immediately impressed with the shy, handsome, part-Cherokee youngster's work. They urged him to begin for-

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mal training in art. After winning honors in several more fairs, and with continued urging of friends, Stone entered Bacone College at Muskogee, in 1936.

Under the guidance of Acee Blue Eagle and Woody Crumbo, the young artist began to believe in himself—and before the second year passed he began developing his own style of sculpturing, began searching for the exact piece of wood which would portray, with color, grain and mass, the image he strove to produce. Soon more confidence came his way, because he read a letter, which said:

"Dear Willard Stone: This is to inform you that your work has been awarded second place in our annual contest . . ."

The congenial, reserved sculptor says today: "I can still see that letter, remembering well, entering my first national sculpture competition in 1938—praying that I might finish in the first fifty of the several hundred entered, because it would be a rare honor."

During the next two years at Bacone, Stone
studied harder, earning other awards. But after he finished his last course in 1940, he soon discovered that a knife and chisel earned little money for food. For the next six years he slowly lost the little amount of confidence others had helped him build into his head and hands. He worked at any job he could find near Locust Grove.

Then one day in 1946, he received a letter, the first regarding his sculpture in several years—it offered him a scholarship grant for three years to serve as artist in residence at Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa—it was signed “Thomas Gilcrease.”

Before the next two years passed, an art critic wrote about his work at Gilcrease: “This young artist shows promise of becoming the finest wood sculptor in the United States... any subject seems to lend itself to his individual effulgent style.”

Three years passed, his scholarship ended, and his confidence in his own ability was restored. Gilcrease Institute now owned 42 pieces of his sculpture, many plaster models for re-

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They asked me "What's a wowser?"... Well, a wowser is the critter
That the nester's little daughter is afraid will come and git her
In case she fails to wash her neck and mind her Pa and Ma,
For what the ring-tailed wowser likes is little gals to chaw.
At least she's heard the cowboys thus describe this wondrous beast,
With one green eye a-lookin' west, a red eye lookin' east.

But speaking scientifically, the wowser is a cross
Between the cattywampus and the dry land albatross.
With parts of grizzly bear threwed in, and just enough of coon
To give him rings around his tail, like storm rings round the moon.
His granpaw was a minnywoo from Matagorda Bay,
His granmaw was a cyclone like they have up Kansas way.
He's cousin to the coyotes and akin to hooty owls—
That's why he just don't give a hoot how wild he squalls and howls.

In color he's a bluish pink with spots of reddish green;
Two purple stripes run down his back, which cactus grows between.
His hosshair mane is midnight black, and feathers from his head
Are plucked by Pecos Bill, I've heard, to stuff his Sunday bed.
His ears are rawhide horns' nests some thirty-six feet wide;
The alkali on western flats is wowser slobbers, dried.

In size the wowser varies, for no matter where he's at,
He takes up all the room there is, just like a cowboy's hat.
His teeth are rusty staples that he steals from bobwire fence—
That's why maintainin' fences costs the cowman such expense.

He's built so squatty-legged that his feet don't reach the ground—
That's why you never find no tracks of wowisers layin' round.
What critter does he look like most? The best that I can do
Is say that he resembles both the wulp and minnywoo,
Which, though I've never seen 'em and I maybe never will,
Are pets just like the wowser on the ranch of Pecos Bill.

They asked me "What's a wowser?"... One more line will get it skinned:
He's the cowboy's dream of dragons—and he's mostly made of wind!
WOOD SCULPTOR continued from page 32
production in bronze, some paintings and drawings, which they said ranked among the finest in any museum in the nation.

But, after leaving Gilcrease, Stone soon discovered that it was difficult to support a wife and growing family with "critic's praises." People would search him out in Locust Grove to buy his work, but it was not enough, so he soon had to find a job, and he did, as a pattern maker with an iron firm, later as a die finisher with Douglas Aircraft Company in Tulsa. Still, he worked in woods late into each night.

Experts, slowly, one by one, across the country began to "discover" this "rare genius" that resided in an unknown community, somewhere in Oklahoma. Galleries soon began to respond—newspapers, as time moved on, began reporting more regularly: "Willard Stone's work takes first place in sculpture."

Now, after many hungry years, Stone sits in the same work shop, attempting to produce the "perfect piece of sculpture in wood." But now he has another problem, his carvings have become so popular with collectors across the country, he can barely retain enough of his own to honor the requests received to exhibit his work.

Pieces of his art are now owned by private collectors in 38 states, France and Canada, museums both here and abroad. Last year he was the only "outsider" invited to show his work with Washington, D. C. artists in their annual Sculpture and Graphic Art Show at Georgetown—where an official viewed one of his five pieces, a full bust, "Portrait of Lincoln," and had it placed in the Lincoln Museum, located in the old Ford Theater.

Following this, he was asked to display his work there in Tregaron Center, to be viewed by foreign nationals in the United States under U. S. Government auspices. In recent months, his work has been shown in seven galleries, from Tulsa to Washington, D. C., Bureau of Arts and Crafts, Department of the Interior, to the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.

Only Grant Foreman, dean of Oklahoma historians, knew in 1935 that a famous art periodical would write in 1961: "Willard Stone is the first sculptor in many decades to show fresh originality and amazing versatility, ranging from traditional and naturalistic motifs, to modern-modern ideas." He knew, because he discovered some carvings at a state fair in Muskogee, and told the bashful youngster: "You show brilliant, potential talent—you must get some formal art training—it will help you enroll at Bacone."

The historian's widow, Mrs. Foreman, a famous personality on her own, says today, "Willard's work continues to grow in beauty with each new creation!"

CENTRAL STATE ON NATIONAL TV
The Central State College debate squad has been chosen as Oklahoma's representative on the NBC television series CHAMPIONSHIP DEBATES for this autumn. Central's debaters won the state championship this past year, and were Pi Kappa Delta regional Champions.

NEW YORK EXHIBITION FOR STONE
Sculptor Willard Stone, featured in this issue of Oklahoma Today, will present a one-man show in New York's Kennedy Galleries during October. Dean

OKLAHOMA SCRAPBOOK

Krakel, Director of Tulsa's Gilcrease Institute, describes this as the acme of national recognition. The Kennedy Galleries are internationally known. Showings there draw great public attendance and wide press notice.

NEW BOOKS
VOYAGE TO SANTA FE by Janice Holt Giles (Houghton Mifflin Co.) Johnny Osage's journey across Indian Territory with his new bride, from Arkansas to Santa Fe, is the story of a marriage strengthened through danger and adversity. The New York Herald Tribune credits this novel with "warmth and charm," the Saturday Review as "skillfully told," the Library Journal with "sustained interest." We'll just add that Janice Holt Giles has spun out another fine yarn. We enjoyed reading it.

CHIEF JOSEPH by Russell Davis and Brent Ashabranner (McGraw-Hill) Oklahoman Brent Ashabranner, now residing in Lagos, Nigeria, has been turning out some splendid writing with co-author Russell Davis. This time they have chosen the heroic epic of tragedy and defeat that befell the Nez Perce at the hands of the empire builders. The fighting flight of
these invincible people is a tale to amaze anyone with even the slightest interest in our nation’s history. Courage like theirs seems deserving of a far better fate than that of the Nez Perce.

SOCIETY OF BLACK LEGGINGS

On Veterans’ Day, November 11, the famed Ton-Kon-Ko (Raven Soldiers) the Kiowa Society of the Black Leggings, will hold its annual ceremonial at Indian City, Anadarko. The origin of this ancient order of Kiowa warriors is lost antiquity. A principal warrior society of the Kiowa people, it was al-

ready in existence at the time of earliest recorded Kiowa history. The main qualification for membership is proven bravery. These are the men who in the face of any danger, however great, are committed never to turn back. The Society was disbanded by army order after the subjugation of the Kiowa people in the late 1800’s. Reorganized in recent years, its membership now consists of warriors who proved their bravery, as American service men, in World War II, Korea, etc. The list of military decorations won by these men is long and impressive. You can honor these men, and all American veterans, in a unique and colorful way by attending the Veterans’ Day Ceremonial at Anadarko.

NOSTALGIA

My vacation was just about over
When a traveler friend gripped my arm,
And while sailing the white Straits of Dover
We talked of an Old World charm;
“I hate to leave it,” She said with a sigh—
I pondered her sadness of face,
For I cherished a land with a turquoise sky—

My home—by a Provident grace.
For Oklahoma seems as much mine
As it was the Red Man’s of old—
A heritage from the run of ’89.
This land of the treasured black gold.
A place where rare friendships tug at your heart
And you are never alone in the throng,
Where at dawn there is always a task to start,
And the night sends you home with a song.
Set me down in her beautiful mountains
For my walk toward life’s setting sun,
Let me drink of her health-flowing fountains
And hear the song of the Travertine Run.

—GERTRUDE NOEL

Black Leggings Society members Gus Palmer, president of the Kiowa War Veterans, and James Auchiah, grandson of the great Kiowa war chief Satanta.

The Creek Council in regular quarterly session, with Hon. W. E. McIntosh of Tulsa, Principal Chief; Council House Museum of historic Creek items.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The Capitol of the Creek Nation has officially become a National Historic Landmark. Erected by the Creeks in 1878, of native stone and timbers from surrounding forests, the Capitol housed the Creek legislature (the House of Warriors and the House of Kings), their Supreme Court, offices of the Principal Chief, and the Secretary of State.

Officers of the Light Horse, who enforced Creek law, headquartered there, but there was no jail. Creek law did not require jail confinement as punishment for any crime. The Indian code of behavior and jurisprudence was made much more simple and direct.

The capital crime was murder, punishable by a rifle bullet fired through the heart. The convicts chose his own executioner. After being sentenced, he was freed to appear for execution on a certain day. When the day came, he was there. To have failed to appear would have disgraced his family for all time.

The old Creek Nation consisted of what is now Wagoner, Muskogee, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Creek, Tulsa, and Okmulgee counties. The present day Creek Council will continue to meet regularly in the Council House to transact modern tribal affairs.
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOONERLAND??

?? IT'S ALL IN OUR 1963 CALENDAR!!