QUARTER HORSE COUNTRY

A common denominator of friendship in Oklahoma is the love of a Quarter Horse. Admirers of the Quarter Horse believe that he is the best all-around horse that ever stood outdoors.

Ranch cowboys consider the Quarter Horse ideal for working cattle. Children respond to his docility. His cow savvy and quick get-away star him on the nation's rodeo circuits.

Quick get-away and high speed enables the Quarter Horse to take highest honors at Midway Downs, Stroud; Blue Ribbon Downs, Sallisaw; and Garfield Downs, Enid. Since 1959 seven horses from Oklahoma have won the All-American Futurity at Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico, "the world's richest horse race." Top purse in 1969 at the million dollar All-American Futurity was captured by Easy Jet. In 1975 the daughter of Easy Jet, Easy Date, took top money ($330,000) in the 16th running of the All-American. Both horses were owned by Walter Merrick of Sayre.

The versatility of the Quarter Horse is enviable. In colonial days he herded cattle, pulled stumps, and planted cotton six days a week. On the seventh he was raced. As the Thoroughbred turned the public eye to the distance race, the "short horse" went westward. Adventurers rode him. Gamblers raced him. In the brush country he raced in "lap-and-tap matches." The "short horse" was crossed with mustangs to build up ranch remudas.

The frontier Comanches were "Lords of the Plains" with their vast horse herds and highly developed horse breeding knowledge. Their superb horsemanship gave them control of the buffalo harvest, and superior ability to wage war. After 1720 the fabulous Comanche horses were the envy of all Plains Amerindians. The Comanches were inveterate gamblers. They enjoyed contesting their horses with white emigrants and soldiers and won many wagers before their opponents learned that the Indian ponies, progenitors of the southwestern Quarter Horse, could out-distance the finest blooded Kentucky stock over short courses. Settlers coming to Texas brought with them, from Kentucky and the eastern states, a new breed of horses. The Comanches coveted these horses for breeding with the Spanish mustangs, and with them developed a new stock of larger and heavier ponies.

The Quarter Horse is the oldest breed-type of horse bred on the North American continent. In the 1600s he was called a "Colonial Quarter of a Mile Running Horse" or a "Quarter Pather." He won match races across

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the village commons in the northern Colonies, and down the lanes of plantations in Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Because of the lack of race tracks or long straight stretches of road in those days, it became the habit to run short races of a quarter of a mile.

In intercolonial matches between horses of Virginia and Rhode Island it was noted that the Spanish horses were more successful. This encouraged the introduction of Spanish blood with Anglo-American bloodlines and began the existence of the Quarter Horse.

The Colonial short-distance horse was established in the American colonies at a date too early to allow the English Thoroughbreds to influence his breeding. Later, when he was raced against them, he would beat them at short distances because of his marvelous start.

Oklahoma has a tie with the early Spanish Barbs brought into Spanish Guale, or Florida, by Admiral Pedro Menendez de Áviles who established St. Augustine, the first permanent European settlement in the U.S., in 1565. Ancestors of Oklahoma's Chickasaw Indians traded horses with breeders on the royal ranches of the Carolina planters. These horses became known as "Chickasaw horses." Even then their virtues of maneuverability, ruggedness and willing endurance were recognized.

The early planters of the East, after trips to England, became interested in the English horses for distance racing. These so-called English horses were imported to Virginia as early as 1620. While they were described as thorough-breeds, England had no Thoroughbred breed until much later. It was not until 1793 that Volume One of their General Stud Book was issued, with an introduction published two years earlier. Until that time the
Colonial planters were well satisfied with the sport of breeding and match racing their Chickasaw ponies, frequently wagering fantastic stakes on the outcome of such competitions. The Thoroughbred that influenced the quarter-of-a-mile running horse was Janus, imported from England to Virginia in about 1752. Janus begat horses more noted for speed than for bottom (endurance). He was remarkable for power and strength, compactness of form, and for his ability to transmit these characteristics to his get.

Southwestern ranchers, realizing the value of the original bloodstrains of the Quarter Horse, infused the blood of the American Thoroughbred. The strain of the Colonial Racing Quarter Horse was revived on the semi-arid plains of the West and Southwest, and short racing flourished anew. Cowboys would contest with their Quarter Horses at roundups and use their favorite mounts in the arena events that eventually became a part of stock shows and fairs.

For a century or more prior to the American Quarter Horse Association, the name Quarter Horse was seldom, if ever, used to designate type or breed. Southwestern horsemen generally referred to them as “Steel Dusts,” “Billics,” “Rondos,” or “Copper Bottoms,” to describe their type, essentially referring to descendants of one of the famous sires.

Until the American Quarter Horse Association was formed in 1940 the Quarter Horse had no official name or breed registry. By November 8, 1974, the registry had reached one million.

There is a great deal of interest among young people in owning Quarter Horses. The AQHA sponsors the American Junior Quarter Horse Association, in which those 18-years-old or younger may improve and develop their capabilities, individually and collectively, through group participation in breeding, raising, and exhibiting.

The 1975 (fourth annual) American Junior Quarter Horse Association National Finals were hosted in Tulsa. A total of 993 entries competed in the show, representing thirty-nine states and British Columbia. The show was invitational, the top ten horses in each of the AQHA approved youth activities events being invited to participate.

These horses provide fine lessons for young owners, in sportsmanship, discipline, responsibility for the health and welfare of a valued dependent; plus the study of practical genetics, the science of breeding, and the study of performance in relation to bloodlines.

Oklahoma horses and their owners play a dominant role in the early registry of the American Quarter Horse Association. Of the first nine Quarter Horses registered five were Oklahoma owned. Joe Reed (P-3) was owned by J. J. Slankard of Elk City. Joe Reed (1921-47) sired Firebrand Reed, the father of Fire One, the Quarter Horse that made a name for himself in international jumping. Joe Reed’s registered get included 46 horses and 22 mares, and from his son and daughter came Leo, the sire of the largest family of performance and racing Quarter Horses.

Chief (P-5) was owned by W. Claud Stinson of Hammon. His sire was the famous Peter McCue, who stood at Cheyenne, Oklahoma, for a number of years. Stinson kept Chief (1917-46) throughout his life. Listed in the AQHA Registry are 66 mares and 27 horses sired by Chief.

Oklahoma Star (P-6, 1915-1942), bred by Tommy Moore of Laverne, was raced by him, and then sold at the age of eleven to Ronald Mason of Nowata, where he remained the rest of his life. Sixty mares and 19 horses represent him in the AQHA Stud Book. Many of his line became famous in rodeo, and he was a successful sire of sprint racers.

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THE RICH ONE—Easy Date, the richest time with earnings of $597,858, will be trying another big hunk of cash in the Rainbow Quarter Horse Ruidoso Downs, New MexicoClassic gets $119,177 of the $362,858 shown here. Winner, Walter Warren, after establishing 440 yard track record, was killed.

Sayre's Walter Merrick is considered by many to be the master Quarter Horseman of this era. When interviewed recently by telephone at Ruidoso, New Mexico, he predicted an optimistic future for Quarter Horse racing. The increasing number of race tracks, and larger purses, support his optimism.

Merrick enthusiastically anticipates the new International Sprint Horse Championship to be run this fall at Churchill Downs. This Louisville, Kentucky, race will include both Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses.

Questioned as to the reason for the large concentration of Quarter Horses in Oklahoma, Merrick credits our fine climate and environment as contributing factors, plus the long length of time the Quarter Horse has been established in Oklahoma.

Colonel (P-8, 1925-47), from the Peter McCue line, was owned by Allen Whitworth of Wewoka.

Old Red Buck (P-9, 1924-45), bred by John Dawson of Talala, was especially popular with rodeo cowboys. The far-famed Leo (P-1335, 1940-67), while foaled in Texas, was owned by John W. Tillman of Pawhuska. As a two-year-old colt, Leo was bought and became the pride of the breeding farm of Bud and Reba Warren at Perry.

The excellence of Oklahoma stallions was proved even before there was an American Quarter Horse Association. Badger, a son of Peter McCue, was brought to early Woodward races by his owner, Roy Cochran of Cordell. Badger ran in purse races, either 220 or 440 yard sprints, and was always the first off the score and first home. Although Badger's racing career was short, and his entire breeding career consisted of two foals, his place in Quarter Horse annals was assured by his remarkable son, Midnight, to whom he passed on the rare Peter McCue qualities of speed, fine conformation, and agreeable disposition.

Midnight raced on the brush tracks of western Oklahoma and Texas and sired ranch cowhorses. In his old age he sired his greatest son, Midnight, Jr. (P-210) who became a charter member of the Quarter Horse breed.

How many ways do Oklahoma love Quarter Horses? Some make a business of breeding them. Others buy, sell, and trade them. Others train Quarter Horses. Some are occupied with veterinarian care, nutrition. Many provide tack, western apparel, horse trailers. Others are involved in the pleasant pursuits of racing Quarter Horses, competing in rodeos, contesting in shows, in competitions of pole bending, barrel racing, reining, roping, western riding, western pleasure, working cowhorses, halter, racing and jumping. Virtually innumerable are the Oklahomans who, as spectators, enjoy Quarter Horses.

Cutting horse contests are so popular that in 1952 the American Quarter Horse Association devised an Honor Roll and a point system for registered competition. There is now a National Cutting Horse Association that approves championship cutting horse contests and keeps complete records of them. The cutting horse was essential in the early development of the livestock industry. It is still essential on today's ranches.

Oklahoma love the Quarter Horse for his characteristics: level headedness, quietness even after strenuous action, for his ability to gain speed from a standing start, standing still one moment and running at full speed the next.

A 1974 survey of American Quarterhorse Association subscribers in Oklahoma estimates that Oklahomans spent $200 million dollars that year in Quarter Horse operations, on horses, land, equipment, tack, etc., and, according to the same survey, were devoting more than 328,000 acres of land to Quarter Horse operations.

Revealing the impact of the Quarter Horse industry is the sale in May, 1976, of an Oklahoma Quarter Horse stallion, Ladybugg's Moon, for the record price of $1,276,000.
Ardmore was established in 1887 in the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, as an area center between the Arbuckle Mountains and Red River. No one could have foreseen the disasters in its future.

The new town grew fast as the marketing and trading center for Southern Oklahoma. It became the largest town in Indian Territory, but in restricted Indian country it had no city government and no fire department. This led to its first great disaster.

In early morning hours of April 19, 1895, fire broke out in a livery stable and in a few hours 82 buildings burned and the town was practically wiped out. The Ardmore pioneers built back.

The railroad was the artery of life for the town and the source of its second great disaster.

"ARDMORE: starting from scratch, no community has had harder blows, yet keeps right on growing and going."

In early afternoon of September 27, 1915, some tank cars of natural gasoline exploded in the railroad yards downtown, and disaster had struck again. The adjacent downtown area was wrecked. 42 people were killed and hundreds injured. Again, the pioneers rebuilt their town.

Another source of prosperity and growth was discovery of the fabulous Healdton oil field in 1913.

By the early 1920's, Ardmore was rebuilt and was again booming as an oil and agricultural center. Now, more substantial buildings were built to replace those destroyed in the great explosion, as others had been built after the holocaust of 1895.

The City of Ardmore in the 1970's shows no scars of the early disasters, and having survived the 1930's depression and the 1940's WWII years, it is a prosperous and growing area center. 

by Mac McGalliard, photos from the McGalliard Collection.
Melvin Tolson studied hard
Set his course — became a bard
Because he heard a personal drum,
With circumstance to overcome
His soul was in the music, and it made a certain sound
For in every line he uttered the philosophy he found:

A little bit of sadness
A little bit of joy
A little bit of man
A little bit of boy;
A little bit of ecstasy — a little bit of pain
A little bit of savagery, like a bloody stain;
A little bit of humor — a healthy dash of wit
A lump of level liking: an ounce or so of it
A heap of unforgetfulness — a hill of steady climb
A heartfelt of deep thoughts to sing
   A head to let them rhyme;
A wistful will — a jolting joke
All softly spoken — these were the cloak,
   the spur, the mask, the dagger sharp
When Tolson’s drum became a harp.

. . . Clarice Jackson

“He’s the queerest weirdo teacher you’ll ever meet,” said my new sophomore friend. She seemed an authority on all the college faculty members. As she talked on, I was sure glad there were two teachers scheduled to teach the class I needed. I planned to make sure my schedule would not include Professor Melvin B. Tolson, that so-called “weirdo.”

Of course, Lady Luck had ideas of her own. In spite of my objections, I finally had to settle for the class under Professor Tolson, or be short of Freshman requirements.

This discovery almost made me ill. It upset me so I could hardly sleep. I had heard so much about how difficult and strange this poetic genius was. I was scared stiff the first day I walked into his class. Being early, he greeted me with, “Young Lady, how is your world today?” This expression, I later learned, was his popular method of greeting.

My world, I thought! This man is sure nuts. I replied meekly, “Okay, I guess.” Then my eyes almost automatically moved downward to his feet. Before I could look up again (as though he had read my innermost thought) he shouted: “Yes, I’m wearing my shoes . . . just to please ‘your world’ and its invading-individual-privacy societal rules.”

Embarrassed, I hurried to a seat and fought back tears. From my sophomore friend, I had learned that he had once reported to class in his barefeet. Because of this incident, he was called in by the President who advised him that shoes were a definite part of professional attire.

The next few days were miserable ones for me because I felt my facial expressions gave vent to my feelings and he knew exactly what I was thinking.

It wasn’t long, however, before I, like some others, became spellbound by his exciting and highly descriptive information about the ways of “your world” . . . “the unjust and underhanded work of the majority race to keep the minority race in its place,” . . . his vivid picturesque descriptions of places he’d been, people he’d met, and interesting and unusual experiences he’d witnessed.

He was so great at acting, at reliving everything he’d experienced, I found myself looking forward to his classes, wondering what new adventure would be related to the class that day. Gradually my extreme fear of him disappeared. I’d work hard to prove I wasn’t the “lazy, good-for-nothing Negro” he couldn’t stand. On days when he was especially moody he would express deep-seated disgust for anyone who was incompetent, unknowledgeable, and unconcerned.
about bettering his lot. In real concern he would expound endlessly about this. He was impatient, shockingly embarrassing, cruel, to any lack of understanding or display of “I don’t care” attitudes. As certain members of my class got to know him better, we found ourselves taking turns at persuading him away from such despairing outbursts of disgust by encouraging other areas of discussion.

One of his pet subjects was MANKIND... ITS FRIVOLTIES, FRAILTIES AND FAILURES. He was a genius with words; he knew just how to put them together to say exactly what he needed to say to bring the type of reaction he wanted. He was most widely-read. He could talk fluently on any subject, any issue of the day. He sometimes shared his personal meditations about the future with us. He daily stressed reading and listening to the media to be aware of what was happening all around us “in your world.”

He believed in education, and that it should be well-rounded. He had an excellent background. He constantly encouraged “reading and learning the history of your world” if you expected to get anywhere in it. His skill in studying human nature made you feel he could almost read your mind. It kept you constantly on your guard for fear you’d think or say the “wrong thing.” At times you hated him; at times you enjoyed and loved him; but you always respected him.

Although he constantly pounced on the “wrongs” and “cruelties” of the world, most of us began to know him not as a rebel American, but one who truly loved America, yet also loved his ancestral African heritage. He believed we should be ever aware of the inequalities in our nation, that this knowledge, however, should not make us bitter: but should make us realize the necessity of being ever prepared mentally, physically, and academically to cope with these inequalities.

He stressed pride in accepting yourself, in bringing out the best you had to offer, be it small or great. I believe my acceptance of myself as a black woman with capabilities to go as far as my educational preparations, aspirations and physical endurance would permit in order to better my condition became more realistic as a result of my experiences in his class.

His rhetoric, his poetry, his versatile ability and wide range of knowledge was amazing. His superb flow of words and delivery sometimes made you completely forget the man you saw originally when he entered the classroom... from five to ten minutes late many days, sometimes untidy, many times his suit was torn, or parts of it did not match. Black-board chalk splotted its sleeves and pocket areas. His shirt might be half-ironed, unstarched; no tie, shoes unpolished, and many times he needed a haircut. (As we got to know him, we were able to get by with handclapping when he walked in displaying a fresh haircut.) This was the so-called “weirdo” teacher whom my sophomore friend described.

He was a teacher so involved in helping to correct the faults of mankind, in motivating higher values, in stimulating the desires of his own race to better itself in this world of inequalities. I found my acceptance of him, my growth from his expanding wisdom, was more important than the way he dressed. His sincere concern that we use our brains to pursue every opportunity available, that we became mentally alert and aware of what was happening all about us, that we prepare ourselves in such a way that we'd be able to combat life intelligently, made sense to me. I learned much more than mere facts: I learned about life, about myself, my fellowman, my own people. I learned to be concerned about others, that each human being, black or white, is unique and plays a part in the development of our great humanity.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have been challenged by such a man; small in physique, but tall in concern for human beings, and great in the poetic world.

... Minerva A. Sloss
Language Arts Consultant
Oklahoma City Schools
I have a rendezvous with America
At Plymouth Rock,
Where the Mayflower lies
Battered beam on beam
By titan-chested waves that heave and shock
And cold December winds
That in the riggings pound their fists and scream.

Here,
Now,
The Pilgrim Fathers draw
The New World's testament of faith and law:
A government of and by and for the People,
A pact of peers who share and bear and plan,
A government which leaves men free and equal
And yet knits men together as one man.

I have a rendezvous with America
At Valley Forge.
These are the times that try men's souls
And fetter cowards to their under goals.
Through yonder gorge
Hunger and Cold, Disease and Fear,
Advance with treasonous blows;
The bayonets of the wind stab through
Our winter soldiers' clothes,
And bloody footsteps stain the deep December snows.

Here,
Now,
Our winter soldiers keep the faith
And keep their powder dry . . .
To do or die!

I have a rendezvous with America
This Seventh of December
The maiden freshness of Pearl Harbor's dawn,
The peace of seas that thieve the breath,
I shall remember.

Then
Out of yonder Sunrise Land of Death
The fascist spawn
 Strikes like the talons of the mad harpoon,
 Strikes like the moccasin in the black lagoon,
 Strikes like the fury of the raw typhoon.

The traitor's ruse
And the traitor's lie,
Pearl Harbor's ruins
Of sea and sky,
Shall live with me
Till the day I die.

Here,
Now,

At Pearl Harbor, I remember
I have a rendezvous at Plymouth Rock and Valley Forge
This Seventh of December.

... Melvin B. Tolson
Each summer for ten years the National Parachute Jumping Finals have been held in Tahlequah. Here they are, as seen by an old-time paratrooper veteran of World War II and the Korean conflict.

ED.

GERONIMO WHO?

BY H.C. NEAL

Dot-like figures plummeted from the almost invisible airplane, then quickly flew together to form a wrist-locked ring of skydivers . . . . multi-colored parachutes blossomed simultaneously in the bright Oklahoma sky . . . . brilliant swaths of red, white, black, and yellow lacing the lapiz blue background as they drifted slowly downward . . . .

The old man watched intently, his blood stirring with memories of long-ago excitement . . . . the bone-jarring opening shock of the canopy hurtling out of the propblast . . . . the reassuring visual check with all panels intact . . . . and the brief, euphoric thrill of descent, swinging lazily back and forth in the saddle while the earth moved up purposefully to meet you . . . .

He turned and walked slowly in the hotness of the July morning toward the packing tent. The jumpers would be coming in soon and the old man wanted to talk.

They come to Tahlequah every summer, hundreds of them, converging on the small airstrip from all over America for the national parachuting championships. Youngsters, most of them. Bright and gutsy. Boots and chutes . . . . helmets in hand. A jauntiness in their walk and talk, tempered by a calm, hard confidence in the eyes.

Some are flyers, diving from near-invisible heights to perform various ballet-like maneuvers in timed sequence before opening their chutes. You’ve seen it on television, the free-hurtling spins and flips, diamonds, snowflakes, etc.

Others are target jumpers, accuracy freaks whose total purpose is guiding their chutes from high in the sky to a microscopic speck on the landing field, with the misses measured in centimeters.

Captain Hook’s Sky Pirates, a 10-man team from the greater Los Angeles area, won the Relative Work trophy last summer by executing their six prescribed jumps in a stunning total time of 97.3 seconds.

Relative work is the technical term for one form of skydiving. The jumpers leave the plane on radio command from ground-based judges, maneuver to catch each other and form a wrist-gripping circle in the sky, hold that free-falling formation for five seconds, then break apart for safe distance before opening their chutes.

“Captain Hook” is Bruce Krueger, a 29-year-old combat ex-paratrooper who left part of an arm in Viet Nam and wears a prosthetic hook. On their best jump, his unit executed the whole incredible drill in 14½ seconds — while hurtling earthward at 135 miles per hour.

The men range in age from 19 to 34 and include a college student, film technician, restaurant manager, plumber, cement mason, corrosion engineer, data processor, properties manager and a professional parachute rigger.

Earlier, the Pirates were practicing exits from a twin-engine Beechcraft parked on the ramp. They crowded sweatily into the plane, shouted a countdown, then hurtled from the
door two-abreast. Helpful bystanders caught them on the blacktop, breaking the stumbling falls of the heavily-laden men. After the third rehearsal, Krueger yelled in approval, "Let's go up and do it before someone gets hurt down here!"

The old man grinned, remembering Sukchon, Korea, in October, 1950. He was a sergeant then, with a squad of bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young troopers packing for their first combat jump behind enemy lines. It wasn't his first.

Three riflemen were arguing about putting field rations in their jump packs. The sergeant's "how-to" lessons, learned from an earlier deal in Germany, were solid and long-remembered. He quickly settled the rations argument with a classic bit of airborne advice—"If it won't shoot, cut, burn, or explode, leave it out."

One of the close runners-up for the accuracy trophy last summer was Mike Mythen, a 29-year-old student at Central State University who is majoring in elementary education. He won the Oklahoma championship in '73 and '74, but was slightly off his game last year.

"I got behind right away," Mythen explained. "I started out with a 14-cent jump, and that's hard to overcome."

The old man didn't know the term, so he asked about it.

"That means I missed the target by 14 centimeters," Mythen said. "You are penalized for each centimeter of miss, and the penalties are added to your total score for six jumps. If you hit the target each time you wind up with a big, fat beautiful zero. Low score wins."

The old man was fascinated. The closest he'd ever come to target jumping was once in France when he slipped his chute madly to miss a huge manure pile.

"You mean from 2500 feet up, they measure the misses in centimeters?"

"That's it," said Mythen, "you gotta cut it pretty thin."

They rose, and by unspoken agreement, walked toward the refreshment stand for coffee.

The smells are still the same, he thought . . . . the acrid, oily shimmer of hot metal in the aircraft engines . . . . the cool dry impersonal smell of nylon parachutes . . . . the musky, sweat odor of excited human bodies . . . . the rich warm fragrance of a new-cut pasture . . . . and here, the pungent, sliced-onions odor of an outdoor hamburger stand.

A small boy clutched a dollar bill as he waited impatiently for a hamburger and cold orange pop.

"How much is it?" he asked.

"Seventy-five cents," replied the hamburger lady.

"Is seventy-five cents more than a dollar?" the kid asked.

"No," said the lady, with a grin, "you'll get a quarter back."

"Oh, wow," said the kid, wide-eyed, "hurry it up!"

The old man smiled, remembering the Germany jump of March, 1945. To cross the Rhine on a bridge of silk, the troopers had taken off from the airstrip at Chalons-Sur-Marne shortly after noon. They'd had a very early breakfast and nobody knew when the next meal would be. They arrived at the airfield at 7 a.m. and spent a lot of bored time waiting around after load-up.

At 10:30 a Red Cross van appeared,
bringing coffee and doughnuts to each plane. The doughnuts were 10 cents each and the coffee, hot and good-smelling, was a nickel a cup. Although he was hungry, the old man—who was a gunner corporal then—had passed it up. He'd packed his pocket money in his duffle bag back at the marshalling area with other personal effects.

Following the jump, later that afternoon, he'd taken his first prisoner, a German officer. The captive indicated he had plenty of money, some $300 American, about $400 French, and a few worthless Reichsmarks. But there wasn't a doughnut shop within a hundred miles.

A fairly typical skydiver, Mike Mythen got into the sport at age 16, which is the youngest you can do it. He has more than 2,500 jumps, most of them made with a 10-year-old chute which cost him $300 new. It has about 20 small patches on it, stob holes from dragging across uncounted pastures. He's had to use his emergency chute 15 times, and incurred one bad injury, a spinal deal.

"We're not daredevils," he said thoughtfully, "and we're not a bunch of death-wish nuts, either. It's just that we're high on jumping. It's an exciting sport, maybe the most exciting of all.

Dusk-eyed and slender, Mythen has done a bunch of other things, too. He's a licensed pilot, an expert water skier, an adept snow skier, an un-injured motorcyclist, and was a parachute rigger during his four-year stint in the navy.

He once thought briefly of hang-gliding, but nixed the idea after deciding that the injury odds are simply too heavy to mess with.

"I guess I'll stick to parachuting," he said, "there's just something about the kind of people who are into this thing.... they're really great." He paused, then added earnestly, "What I mean about jumpers is this: there isn't a guy out here who wouldn't lend you his chute even if you were leading him on points. It's probably a good cross-section of the most utterly decent people in the world.

The jumpers have been coming to Tahlequah each year since 1966. Why Tahlequah?—where a bass tourny or canoe regatta or a Cherokee pow wow might be the expected thing?

"Because of its location," said a member of the sponsoring U. S. Parachute Association. "You are just about in the geographical center of America here. The airport is almost equi-distant for jumpers from Florida, Washington, New York, and California."

Many use their vacation time for the annual event, bringing along the wife and kids and even the family pooch. They lodge in local motels, dorm rooms at Northeastern State, or vans and campers parked at the airstrip.

"I hope we never change it," said a chutist from St. Louis. "The cafes and groceries have good food here, and it's reasonable. And the people are so darn nice.... if we start jumping like at 6:30 in the morning, they'll open up early for you, and they're real good about cashing checks or money orders. Nice town, nice people."

And the July skies are benignly warm and calm, he might have added.

The Pictorial Press of Tahlequah duly noted that the Sky Pirates captured the 10-man Relative Work trophy, and the four-manRW honors went to the Rainbow Fliers of Athens, Michigan, last year.

Overall individual trophy winners were Debby Schmidt, of Joliet, Illinois, and T-Sgt. Jimmy Davis of the army's Golden Knights, a parachute exhibition unit.


Women's accuracy honors went to Cheryl Stearns, Scottsdale, Arizona.

There were 125 jumpers in the accuracy division, hailing from some 40 states, including Alaska. The old man approached a cluster of women chutists, wondering aloud if any of them were from Oklahoma.

"I live in Oregon now, but I was raised in Muskogee," said a petite green-eyed blonde.

She turned out to be a speech therapist, 29-year-old Diana Leslie of Sheridan, Oregon. Standing 58 inches tall and weighing 92 pounds, Mrs. Leslie didn't look heavy enough to give her parachute a good opening snap, much less muscle it to a 4½-inch target disc. She had just turned an ankle on her fourth jump and was carefully repacking her chute for number five.

"I got into this when I was a kid here at Northeastern," Mrs. Leslie said. "It's really a great sport, and now I give jumping lessons in my off-time up at Sheridan."

Like most accuracy jumpers, whose landings are made in a pit of peaseized gravel, Diana wears tennis shoes rather than the sturdy boots favored by the divers who might land most anywhere.

"Maybe I should have borrowed some boots for that last jump," she mused, ruefully eyeing her swollen ankle. "And maybe all these freckles are actually beauty marks," she added with a smile. "How ya' gonna' know?"

Several days later, the old man thought of something else. He had tucked a question away in the back of his mind, and then forgotten to ask it of anyone he'd met at the jump field. So he got young Mythen on the phone.

"Tell me, Mike," he asked, "did you ever yell, or did you ever hear anybody yell 'Geronimo!' when they jumped?"

"Sure, I've heard fellows do that at times. But it's a put-on, you know. Strictly for laughs. Didn't you guys do that a lot in the army?"

"No, Mike," he said, "I never heard anyone yell 'Geronimo!' in my life. I guess it only happened in the movies."

After he hung up, the old one-eyed paratrooper walked out to his patio and sat, thinking long about all the fine young jumpers he'd met. They compared favorably, he decided, with the brave men he'd known during 10 years and two wars of wearing the shiny wings and boots.

"I'd like to have had some of those people in my squad in Korea," he thought. "Just about any of them, I guess. But especially that Mythen kid and the Krueger boy. They are the kind who'd go with you to the gates of hell, if need be," he decided.

"And if you wanted to go inside and inspect the place," he added with a silent chuckle, "they'd probably stand the devil at attention while you did it."
1776, in what became Oklahoma, heard no musketfire, saw no Minute-men, no Redcoats. Oklahoma’s famed 45th Infantry Division didn’t help win that war. There were no Thunderbirds among the patriots rallying ‘round the flag at Lexington, Valley Forge or Yorktown.

In fact, while the colonists were dumping England’s tea, it was Spain’s flag which flew over this part of the continent. At that time, the Plains Indians roamed the buffalo-rich prairies, and Woodlands tribes hunted the lush, forested mountains that later became national landmarks.

Yet anyone who says Oklahoma has no role in the American Revolution Bicentennial would be most mistaken. A major thrust of the Bicentennial observance is to focus on our nation’s heritage. In truth, we’re celebrating the American Evolution.

That American Evolution very much includes Oklahoma. Consider that a major incentive in Thomas Jefferson’s huge real estate transaction with Napoleon in 1803, the Louisiana Purchase, was to acquire Oklahoma’s “Great Salt” deposits northwest.

Other prime examples—the relocation of native American Indians to these lands beginning in the 1830s with the tragic Trail of Tears—the Chisholm and other major cattle trails which crossed Oklahoma and Indian Territories—the Butterfield Trail, first transcontinental mail route—emigrant trails—land runs and lotteries which opened Oklahoma lands to homesteaders from 1889 through the turn of the century—fountains of oil, drilled throughout Oklahoma, have for decades pumped precious petroleum to fuel the American Evolution. The list could continue.

Since Oklahoma has no Revolutionary War battles to re-enact, her Bicentennial celebrations focus on things which have made this an important area of the nation. They are a continuation of the American Evolution, providing incentive for thousands of Oklahomans to volunteer time, talent, and tribute: parades, plays, plaques, books, banners, brochures, fairs, festivals, red, white and blue everywhere.

There’s so much going on. A calendar, available from the Oklahoma
Bicentennial Commission or the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, lists more than 300 Bicentennial oriented activities. Some projects are ongoing, many would have taken place even if it were not the Bicentennial Year. But the Bicentennial brings new impetus, a catalyst to spark increased effort.

Youngsters took the lead in Allen and Tipton, relatively small towns among the 237 Oklahoma communities, colleges, tribes, or military installations earning Bicentennial status. Johny Oglesbee, 14, possibly the youngest Bicentennial chairman in the nation, organized Allen's Bicentennial Committee. The grade school 4-H Club organized the Bicentennial Committee in Tipton.

Perhaps to achieve independence—as in the Spirit of '76—Okmulgee's Bicentennial Committee did not seek funding grants for local projects. Folks in Hitchcock also felt they could fund their own Bicentennial activities.

Thomas DeFrange, Del City, transformed a childhood hobby of building scale models of Spanish galleons into a Bicentennial project. He and his wife, Rhonda, built a two-person replica of the Santa Maria, Christopher Columbus' flagship on his New World voyage. They'll launch their model of American history on Lake Texoma, July 4th.

Other forms of transportation are part of Oklahoma's celebration. "Horseshoes to Horsepower" was the theme of the Oklahoma City Corvette Club's Bicentennial Rally. Sleek sports cars paraded to historic landmarks and points of interest.

Oklahomans greeted the Bicentennial Wagon Train rolling toward Pennsylvania, reversing the route of the pioneers in America's westward expansion. The Freedom Train, an American history museum on rails, drew throngs at stops in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Many towns are restoring historic sites, such as Ada’s "Little Red Schoolhouse," typical of territorial and early statehood days schools. As the first state capital, Guthrie has a lot of history to preserve, including the magnificent 1902 printing house which will become a museum tracing newspaper history in Oklahoma, the Carnegie Library, and homes of three territorial governors.
relocation of a pioneer’s log cabin
and conversion to a museum in
Madill; and the restoration of Old Central,
built in 1894, first building on the campus of Oklahoma State
University, Stillwater.

Virtually every community is
organizing, marking, or publishing its
heritage. Tape recorders spin verbal
recollections; Marietta’s Living Library;
Oklahoma City’s Living History;
Tondawa’s Indian Oral History
Project; and the Talking History
books in Yukon.

Local historians write local histories in
Poncotoc County, Alfalfa County,
Beaver County, Stillwell, Grandfield,
Delaware County, Kingfisher,
Little Axe, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City
has published Roy Stewart’s Born
Grown.

Facts and Fantasies of the Okla-
homu Oil Patch sheds light on the
development of our oil fields. There
is Oklahoma’s Blending of Many Cul-
tures, and The Oklahoma Indian:
A Photo Essay. Emmy-award win-
ing telecast Through the Looking
Glass Darkly tells the story of black
people in Oklahoma; there is the
Plains Indian Cultural Center at
Chickasha’s University of Sciences
and Arts; all projects devoted to the
variety of cultures comprising the
character of Oklahoma.

Thespians reinforce the message.
At least three theatrical troupes tour the
state this summer. The Grandfield
Harvest Playhouse has copied
the Haverstock Shows which traveled
rural Oklahoma from 1911 through
1945. Tulsa’s American Theatre
Company is on tour for the second
year, this summer presenting Of, By
And For The People. Northwestern Oklahoma
State University, Alva, sends
a cast on tour with And They Called
It America. “1776” will be staged in
several locations, as will the popular
Oklahoma!

An original Oklahoma, U.S.A, will
be presented in Edmond; That Our
Eyes May See The Glory, in We-
woka, March of the Koonska People
in Hugo; A Paradise Made Into A
Purgatory in Guthrie; The Great Lot-
tery in El Reno; Apache will stage
its Pioneer Days Pageant. Nine per-
formances of Thunder Over the Wichi-
tas, a historical musical-drama, will
depict Fort Sill’s 100-plus years.

Programs commemorate the end of
the Trail of Tears, the Civil War, the
blazing of trails through the Okla-
hom and Indian Territories, land
openings, Statehood Day. Oklahoma
fares, festivals, and celebrations are
well known. Five of these were the
“top 200” in the nation, selected by
the Discover America Travel Organi-
zation Bicentennial News Service:
The Festival of Blooms in Ada,
Azalea Festival in Muskogee,
Cimarron Territory Celebration in Bea-
virg, 89ers Day in Guthrie, and the
Tulsa Indian Pow Wow.

Putting out the welcome mat and
encouraging folks to come see us is
a strong Oklahoma characteristic. Hos-
pitality extends beyond our national
borders. Two international events are
scheduled in Tulsa in 1976: the In-
ternational Petroleum Exposition, in
May, and the World Tumbling, Trom-
poline and Mini-Tramp Champion-
ships, in July.

To assist international visitors, the Oklahoma Language Bank lists multilingual Oklahomans volunteering to serve as interpreters.

Rodeos are too numerous to list here, but there are all kinds: amateur and professional, rodeos for kids, all-girl rodeos, all-black rodeos, rodeos for bull riders only; some of them are the biggest in the world.

Indian pow wows range from small ceremonial dances to the elaborate American Indian Exposition at Anadarko, one of the largest gatherings of native Americans anywhere.

Festival 76, on July 4th, will combine religion and art in a ceremony at the State Capitol Building. A sunrise religious service featuring a 1,000-voice youth chorus will begin the historic Sunday's activities. Performing arts groups and an art exhibition will fill the daytime hours. Vesper services, with vocal and symphonic music, close the ceremony.

The Stars and Stripes Show, a patriotic program with top entertainment and sports stars, will be taped in Oklahoma City June 20 for rebroadcast over national television.

Celebrations celebrate the Bicentennial!!! Art and crafts exhibits, festivals, expositions, trailrides, auto races, tractor pulls, fishing contests, bluegrass or folk music, huckleberry, strawberry, peach and watermelon festivals, a river raft race, raffles, roundups, steam threshing machines, brick and rolling pin hurling, muzzle loading firearms competition, gospel singing, symphony concerts, ice cream socials, harvest festivals, parades, carnivals, picnics, fireworks!!!

But after the fireworks... what's left???

Some bicentennial projects don't include fireworks, like Radio for the Blind, the Oklahoma Radio Talking Book Network, or the nature trail for blind and handicapped at the historic Murrell Home near Tahlequah; the Oklahoma City Indian Health Clinic’s free medical aid to Indians. The Bicentennial has sparked the drive for community projects, beautification: trees and flowers have been planted by thousands of volunteers—Yukon - Durant - Coyle - Elk City - Tatum - Blanchard - Lone Wolf - -

At Beaver's Bend State Park in McCurtain County, the Forest Heritage Center will focus attention on forest resources. At Tahlequah, Tsala-Gi, adds an aboretum and herb garden in a wooded area. Communities take inventory, then take steps—Henryetta - Grove - Boley - Pawnee - Wilburton - Langston - Shawnee - Leom - Quapaw - Gotebo - Stillwater - Watonga - Sallisaw - Snyder - - - Bartlesville offers the unique Pathfinder Parkway—four parks along the Caney River and Turkey Creek, linked by pedestrian and bike trails.

These for tomorrow—for the horizon—Bicentennial projects of cultural centers, lecture series, television programs, town halls, religious programs, educational seminars, essay contests, projects to stimulate individual goal setting, subliminal messages from the pages and the patriotism.

Preserving our heritage.
Sharing our culture.
Seeking a better life.

(For a detailed listing of many Bicentennial oriented events during July, August, and September, peruse the accompanying Calendar of Events.)
The purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics at Oklahoma University is to teach students how to analyze a previously unknown and unwritten language. The analysis will then be used to create a written language from this previously only spoken language, and to translate the Bible into that language. As a bonus benefit, the users of that previously unknown and unwritten tongue will then know how to record in writing their own history and traditions, and will possess the key to the knowledge of the ages.

Find a small, remote tribal village in the mountains of Latin America or in the jungles of Africa where the spoken language is Mbembe, Teotitlan Zapotec, or Cakchique; make it accessible only by helicopter, jeep, motorcycle or by trampling through forest or trudging through mud swamps; look for someone intent on teaching the tribal members to read and write in their own language and you are likely to find a former student of the Summer Institute of Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma.

At the Institute, the student acquired the skills necessary for speaking, writing, and describing any language in the world. By analyzing the formation of the ninety sounds which the human vocal apparatus is capable of producing, the student is able to record and preserve the spoken language. He or she assists in the preparation of dictionaries, formation of alphabets, and introduction of primers.

Established in 1934 in Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, a sister organization of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, moved to the campus of the University of Oklahoma in 1942. Other branches have been founded in North Dakota, Washington, the University of Texas at Arlington, Massachusetts, Australia, England, Germany, and Japan. Courses have also been offered in Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, and the Philippines. Linguistics courses are especially designed for those who are preparing to serve preliterate people; to do some specific linguistic task such as Bible translation; or to study languages for which linguistics materials are inadequate or non-existent.
Before becoming a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, a student must undergo rigorous training in several areas. The first summer, comprised of eight weeks, the prospective member enrolls in phonology, which is the science of speech sounds, and grammar, consisting of theories and principles in the grammatical analysis of a language.

At the end of the summer, he or she applies to become a Member in Training (MIT) of the Institute. If accepted, the MIT enters phase two and goes to Mexico for four months of training in the jungle of Yaxoquin-tela, the SIL's main base.

To arrive at the main base, the MIT first flies to Mexico City. From there he is flown to the jungles of Tuxtla by members of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship. Tuxtla is only one hundred miles south east of Mexico City, but would require six days to reach by jeep.

At the main base, the Members in Training live in community groups of thirty and attend a four week session of classes in canoeing, swimming, carpentry, metal work, and survival in the jungle.

Hiking is also part of the intensive training. The length of the daily hike is extended until each member can walk twenty-six miles in one day.

At the end of four weeks, the MITs leave the main base, and, in the jungle, build their own house, called Tzeltal, which is of mud and wattle, a type of interlacing bamboo filled with mud and covered by a double pitch thatch roof. The MITs also make their own furniture. Here they continue their training for six weeks.

Toward the end of the six weeks, at a moment's notice, the MITs must be prepared to move in teams of four, with an instructor, deeper into the jungle for four days, carrying only what is on their person at the time of the summons. For that reason, the MITs learn always to have a machete secured to themselves. Every instructor also carries a rifle. This part of the training, Survival, is the final exam which concludes phase two.

During the last six weeks of the four-month training, the MIT goes into a surrounding village to live with a family who has agreed to house him or her. The MIT, ready to test his skill in learning and writing a language unknown to him, teaches his host family to read and write its native tongue. Permission to acquire a host family is obtained from the village chief. At no time do the members of the SIL enter a village without seeking the approval of its head. The members of the Institute, in cooperation with the Chief, then seek tribal members willing to host an MIT.

The following summer the MITs return to one of the Institute's schools for advanced courses in linguistics. The classes include further training in phonological and grammatical analysis; a language and culture seminar based on previous field experience; introduction to literacy, comprising orthography design, preparation of literacy materials, techniques of teaching reading, bilingual education, and culture change.

An important aspect of the SIL at the University of Oklahoma is the availability of Native American Indians who speak their native language. One of the advanced courses offered at O. U. includes work with a speaker of an American Indian language through the summer to give the student experience in actual linguistic analysis. Oklahoma Native Americans have been an integral part of the SIL ever since William Cameron Townsend, founder of the Institute, heard an official interpreter at a Cherokee Camp Meeting remark, "When missionaries go to a foreign land they learn the language that is spoken in that country, but when they come to us Cherokees, they don't even try to learn our language. Why?"

Therefore, at the end of the course, each student is assigned to an Oklahoma Native American who speaks his tribal language. After analyzing the sound, grammar, and structure of
the language, the student writes a description of his analysis to be discussed with the instructor.

Besides learning the linguistics aspect of a people whose language has never been studied, the student also receives introductory lectures in anthropology to prepare him for living and working with people in preliterate cultures. The lectures attempt to create a sympathetic approach to the culture, social organization, and religious and ethical concepts of other people.

Other courses include training in translation methods, theory and techniques of literacy, preparation of instructional materials, vernacular literature, and educational psychology.

Two summer sessions and one four month training period in Mexico will prepare a student to learn any language and help him understand the people he hopes to serve.

At the end of the second summer the prospective field worker decides whether or not he wants to seek membership in the Institute. To be accepted, the member must be deeply committed to the evangelical tradition. Becoming a member means making a fifteen year commitment. He will receive no salary other than living expenses paid by a church or religious organization that agrees to sponsor him.

Admission to the Institute depends not only on the prospective member's desires. Permission to belong is granted only after his background and motives are thoroughly investigated. If he is accepted, the member is free to select the country and tribe with which he wishes to work.

Couples who join SIL know that their children will grow up in the culture where they are working. Therefore, since the parents may be living and working with a tribe deep in the jungle, the Institute has established centrally located home bases where the children of elementary school age reside.

For that reason, not all the members of the Institute choose to receive the intensive two year training to become linguists. Members residing at the home base may be teachers, secretaries, administrators, medical personnel or construction and maintenance men. These missionaries teach and care for the children of the field workers who have radio contact with the base and also return from their jungle village every six to eight months to be with their families for a short period before returning to their mission.

School age children receive their primary education either close to the family's point of assignment and attend high school at the home base or they may be sent to established mission schools or government academies, perhaps thousands of miles away. Nymnan House in Oklahoma City is a mission house where some children of the missionaries live and attend the nearby Putnam City schools.

While the missionaries' children are learning advanced algebra, memorizing Shakespeare, and perhaps watching television, their jungle peers are learning to read and write their native language. To make learning easier, the missionaries will have prepared an alphabet, written grammars and primers, and recorded the village folklore.

Reading materials available to the native students may include the habits of Ocuilimeh (animals) in the Nahuatl language of Mexico. Since the introduction of the New Testament is of primary importance to the missionaries, the natives will learn to read the Nahuatl translation of Saint Mark's Gospel.

To assist the missionaries in translating the Bible or recording folklore, materials such as a Manual for Bilingual Dictionaries have been prepared by linguistics experts who are members of the Institute.

Grammars, primers, bilingual dictionaries, New Testament translations, and other materials prepared by the Institute are generally published in cooperation with the visited country's Ministry of Education.

Members of the Institute with aptitude and inclination may pursue a Master or Doctoral degree in linguistics. They develop new materials and...
become faculty members. Third and fourth summer courses are offered to prospective teachers who will assure the growth of the Institute.

Currently, the Institute's thirty-five hundred members are working in twenty-six countries, with approximately 650 languages. Every eleven days they enter a new language group. To assist in the teaching of reading, SIL teams train small groups in the village who in turn teach the other members. By relying on previous experience, some teams are able to set target dates for the completion of the task. Working with the Kanite people in New Guinea, an SIL member related that these village teachers “did a tremendous job. They went to and taught in ten different villages. At the end of a six-months period, 300 had learned how to read.”

Considering that the Kanite language is only one of approximately 700 different languages in New Guinea, the layman perceives the enormity of the Institute’s task. According to an SIL report, more than 3,000 languages are still without the Scriptures. The Institute's ultimate aim is to translate the Bible into every language.

The goal toward which the SIL is striving cannot be reached solely by training in linguistic analysis, translation techniques, and literacy methods. To attain success, every Institute of Linguistics member must be totally dedicated to principles that rise above a purely academic or literary level.

End
CALALUS by Cyclone Covey, Vantage Press, Inc., New York 10001, $7.50. Dr. Covey, Professor of History at Wake Forest University, is from Guthrie, an Oklahoman who has risen to high stature in the world of learning and letters. His Oklahoma Today article on the Chinese statue of Shu Shing Lao, which was found near Luther several years ago, was one of the very most interesting we've ever published. His new book Calalus lays out the facts about a Roman Jewish colony that evidently existed in the present U.S.A. about 775 A.D., some seven centuries before Columbus' "discovery" of America. It discusses, and pictures, an Athenian medallion minted in ancient Thurium, and found buried near Terral, Oklahoma, a couple decades ago. So evidence mounts that prehistoric people of Mediterranean origin were in our U.S. Southwest, in our Oklahoma panhandle and may have visited the ancient builders of our Spiro Mounds. Strongly recommended for those interested in the mystery of our antiquities.

GATE OF IVREL by C. J. Cherryh, Daw Books, Inc. 1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York 10019, $1.25. Andre Norton, who wrote the preface for this book says, "Never since reading the Lord of the Rings have I been so caught up in any tale as I have been in Gate of Ivrel." Our long time friend Donald A. Wollheim, publisher of the book, writes, "Believe me, when I tell you that C. J. Cherryh is talented and will be going places in the science fiction world!" We add our personal testimony, and do recommend the book to all readers of science fiction fantasy. The author's second book Brothers of Earth, to be published this summer, has been accepted by the Science Fiction Book Club of the Literary Guild. C. J. Cherryh is the pen name of Oklahoma City's Carolyn Cherry. She chairs the foreign language department at our John Marshall High School.

OKLAHOMA TREASURES AND TREASURE TALES by Steve Wilson, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, $15.95. The author is Director of the Institute (and Museum) of the Great Plains, also editor of the Great Plains Journal, Lawton. Steve's articles on ghost towns, gold mining, and guns have appeared in Oklahoma Today. He is one of our favorite authors. We'll guarantee that his new book will tell you many spell-binding yarns about Oklahoma that you've never heard before. Astonishing are his accounts of lost treasures that have been found in Oklahoma. Enticing and intriguing are his tales of treasures that have been lost in Oklahoma and never found. The one we find most alluring concerns the Frenchmen's gold, some 500 ingots of it, lost now for more than a century and a half, somewhere in our Cimarron County. Steve also relates the best research we've encountered on the alleged Sequoyah skeleton, found in Kiowa County.


Artyst Ralph Wall grew up in Ardmore. He attended Oklahoma City University, and Oklahoma University. His art encompasses aspects of Western and Indian life. He is one of the "twelve leading American Artists whose paintings were selected as 1974 winners of the Franklin Mint Gold Medal Award for Distinguished Western Art."

The Franklin Mint's biography states, "Self-discipline is the quality that shapes Ralph Wall's workday. If his morning is spent in research — digging in the archives and reading — his afternoon and evening is devoted to painting, most often in his preferred oils and acrylics. Other times Ralph works in pastels, charcoal or pen and ink — but always, in whatever medium he labors into the night, completely absorbed in his work. Some painters like to work on several paintings — as many as three or four at a time — but not Ralph. His method is to concentrate on one canvas alone, working and reworking it until he reaches his own pinnacle of satisfaction." The four paintings we reproduce here were made at Oklahoma Indian gatherings. They show Indian individuals of today. Their handsome dignity is typical. Indian people, equivalent in personality, warmth, and stature, are present at every pow wow one attends.

Ralph Wall points out the inconsistency of those artists who lament that they did not live in the days of Catlin, or Remington, or Russell — and still take no interest in painting today's Indian people. Every pow wow camp contains exciting portraits. "To me, the past and the present are inseparable," Ralph Wall says. He speaks of a contemporary Comanche who "paints his face and dances at the Comanche pow wow just like his grandfather did"... of a Sac and Fox family who "invite me to fry bread and beans with traditional Indian hospitality — a hospitality that has endured for generations"... of a Kiowa veteran of World War II "who wears his campaign ribbons on his Gourd Clan sash"... of a young Indian service man who "incorporated his Marine Corps emblem into his bead work." These latter are today's warriors and counting coup is important to them. They are true patriots, and love their country "as they always did — even before the white man came. They are a very special people. That's why I want to paint them."

OKLAHOMA TODAY
by a young poet of Osage heritage, born at Claremore, now working on a sheep ranch in Mendocino County, California. From it:

FOUR SONGS

Song of the Drowning Man—
I want to go

to a place where nothing can hurt me.

Song of the New Wife—
Everything I touch turns to dust,
his pleasure is a mystery to me.

Song of the Husband—
My arrows miss the heart of the deer,
hers desire is not equal to mine.

Song of the Newborn—
I come from the valley of endings,
there is no place to go but onward.

THE FILMING OF THE WEST by Jon Tuska, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 14.95. This book is dedicated to an Oklahoman; Tom Mix 1880-1940. It is filled with the Oklahoma people, places, and events, that contributed so much to the western motion picture; Buck Jones, who grew up on his father’s ranch near Red Rock; Ken Maynard, who rode for Pawnee Bill’s Wild West Show; Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Chill Wills; The Chisholm Trail, Cimarron, Red River; the Run of ’89, the Indian wars. This book is a celebration of a uniquely American art form. It is a great big book, interestingly written, well edited, lavishly illustrated. Behind-the-scenes narratives and nostalgic reminders of all the great westerns you’ve enjoyed. Mighty fine reading in a time when there is almost impossible to find a good western movie “Now Showing” anywhere for our enjoyment.

THE RHETORIC OF HISTORY by Savoie Lottinville, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, $9.95. It is our opinion that anyone who wishes to write history will succeed—given the talent to succeed—upon mastering the contents of this book. The writing of history is a specialized technique. Savoie Lottinville’s thirty years as Director of the University of Oklahoma Press, plus his own successful writings, earned for him the experience he passes on so fully. This book instructs the hopeful writer regarding: Openings: Scenes: Structures of Narrative: Analytical Historical Writing: Continuity: Character Portraiture, Management of Time, Place, and Cultural Milieu: Editing, and advice regarding Reviews, Pitfalls in Usage, and Publishing Considerations.

FROM SALT KETTLES TO NUCLEAR FUELS: CHEMISTRY IN OKLAHOMA by Wayne E. White, Ph.D.; with Otis C. Dermer, Ph.D.; Harold M. Smith, A.M.; and Bernard O. Heston, Ph.D., published by American Chemical Society, c/o Chemistry Department, Tulsa University, Tulsa, Ok. 74104, $2.95. Dr. White, and chapter authors Dermer, Smith, and Heston total among them more than 100 years of experience as chemistry professors at O.S.U., and O.U., and in industrial chemistry and research. Their account of the development and status of chemistry in Oklahoma is comprehensive. This soft-cover book is historical rather than technical in approach, and even the lay reader will find much of informative interest about petroleum chemistry, thermodynamics research, oil and gas recovery, the Noble Foundation, chemistry in agriculture, biomedicine, the timber industry, etc., and all Oklahoma oriented.

SCRIBES OF THE RED EARTH by Charles Campbell and Betty Brown, order from 1204 N.W. 42nd St., Oklahoma City 73118, $2.00. A soft-cover book listing Oklahoma authors, and authors who have written about Oklahoma. Compilers Campbell and Brown point out that this is a “temporary” book, prepared preparatory to a more extensive hardcover book, which they hope will be even more correct and complete. For their later hardcover publication, they solicit the names of other Oklahoma authors who should be included, and the names of additional works by the authors presently listed. It is a monumental effort that Campbell and Brown have undertaken. They fully merit our every possible help in achieving their goal.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

March ’76 marked the 100th anniversary of the issuing of U.S. patent 174,465 which covered a little invention that later evolved into the modern telephone, and began the largest corporation in the world. You might think that everyone would be clamoring to throw them a 100th birthday party, but nobody did. Nobody, that is, except for the community of Waurika.

Why, you ask, would a community of 2,000 people throw a party for a corporation with 939,100 employees and assets in excess of $80 billion, especially since it only employs three of the local residents.

“We feel that the telephone is one of the greatest inventions in the history of mankind, and even with recent rate increases, still the greatest bargain in the world,” was the way Willis Worley, Jr., president of Waurika’s Chamber of Commerce, explained it.

A January Chamber meeting, when members began discussing a Forbes magazine article about the growth of AT&T, gave birth to the party idea. Somebody said, “Why don’t we throw them a party?” Somebody else said, “What have we got to lose?” “The whole idea took off like a shot,” Worley said.

The party attracted celebrities including Lt. Gov. George Nigh, State Representatives Bill Bradley and Bob Wilson, and Mrs. Wayne Holden, wife of the State Senator from Duncan.

There was also an impressive selection of executives from the Bell System, headed by Jim Brunson, assistant vice president of American Telephone and Telegraph from the New York corporate office, and numerous state and local officials including John Parsons, vice president and general manager of Oklahoma’s Southwestern Bell, Jim Woods, Duncan district manager, and an estimated 100 other employees.

Parsons, who was featured speaker at the event, praised the people of Waurika for their progressive spirit. The stage contained risers that were filled with the 50-voice Ma Bell Centennial Choir, which was put together by Waurika band director Frank Rickard, especially for the event. Several hundred cakes and scores of freezers of homemade ice cream were served to the crowd following the official portion of the program. Every store window in town was decorated to wish Ma Bell a happy birthday.

... Bob Bonebrake, Duncan Banner

Oklahoma Today congratulates Waurika for her thoughtfulness. It is quite a challenge for a community of 2000 people to put on a birthday party for the largest corporation in the world!
Foreign air control students prefer to be assigned to the Oklahoma F.A.A. Our host family program, through which these men from Egypt, Japan, etc. are invited into the home of an Oklahoma City family as occasional dinner guests, or to attend a symphony concert, perhaps to go to church on Sunday, and for other such family activities, forms an especially close emotional tie. Our host families are often invited, after the F.A.A. student has returned to his home abroad, to visit there. This across the seas visiting, over the years, has formed deep international friendships.

Foreign F.A.A. students also appreciate the extra efforts of the Oklahoma F.A.A. staff. They appreciate Fred Marks, who has often searched out proper medical attention for students who became ill, provided some other assistance, or just truly sympathetic listening to the problems and concerns of one of these men from abroad. These foreign students appreciate the dedication of instructor Bob Fry, so much that he has become internationally known—in a curious way. It is not easy for an Asiatic tongue to pronounce “Bob Fry.” The Asians have pronounced his name “Boob Fly” so often that the mispronunciation has become international. Bob Fry is known as “Boob Fly” in airports around the world.

Interestingly, our F.A.A. instructors would rather work with foreign students than with U.S. students. Foreign students are so courteous, so appreciative, so attentive and eager to learn while U.S. students are so frequently cynical, unappreciative, and inattentive. It gives us something to think about.

TEN YEARS AGO IN OKLAHOMA TODAY

The Summer '66 Anniversary Issue of Oklahoma Today focuses on Wiley Post. “There is a little bit of Wiley in everything that now flies through the skies.” Post was the forerunner of the astronauts; he made the first extensive use of the automatic pilot, the variable pitch propeller, and the radio direction finder. His experimentation with the jet stream made high altitude cross country commercial air travel possible. He was the first to understand our “biological clock,” the endurance factor which limits pilots. His pressurized suit for stratospheric flight was the prototype of our astronauts’ space suits. Wiley Post contributed more than any other individual to modern jet age flight.

For the same issue, sports writer Nick Seitz put together an all-time all-Oklahoma baseball team; its pitching staff Allie Reynolds, Warren Spahn, and Carl Hubbell; first base, Dale Mitchell; second base, Jerry Adair; shortstop, Alvin Dark; third base, Pepper Martin, outfield, Lloyd Waner, Paul Waner, and Mickey Mantle; catcher John Bateman had no competition for his position then because Johnny Bench was not yet playing major league baseball.

Platt National Park, now part of the larger Chickasaw Recreation Area, was featured in that Summer '66 issue in an article by Kent Ruth. David Craighead tells the story of the “forgotten men” who discovered The Treasure of the Redbeds—oil, at Newkirk, Blackwell, Billings, Burbank, and Tonkawa.

Katharine Privett's vivid poetry about the Pawnee people is displayed on two pages illustrated by Pawnee artist Brunnett Echohawk. Gala Day in Okmulgee by Marcel Lefebvre describes the ceremony which made the Creek Council House a National Historic Landmark. Spur Award winner Fred Grove's The Big Pasture tells about these last, vast lands in southwestern Oklahoma to be opened to public settlement.

The Rose Oklahoma, developed by Stillwater's Herbert C. Swim, All-America Rose Selection for 1963, provides the magazine's cover, and there are eight more gorgeous pages of scenic full color. You can secure a copy of this collector's item Anniversary Issue by sending $2.00 to Oklahoma Today, Will Rogers Mem. Bldg., Oklahoma City 73105.
Kokopelli, the humpbacked flute player, has roamed western North America for a thousand years. The imprints of his rest stops are found on rock walls from Utah to Chihuahua. His appearance in Oklahoma has now been noted. We encountered Kokopelli on the back wall of a pillared sandstone cave overlooking the Cimarron River near Kenton. The wistful little spirit was marching upstream, traveling at a brisk pace with hair flying. Despite the encumbrance of a cane, he plays the flute with his free hand. His flute relieves the tedium of the journey and announces his passage. Accompanying him are mountain sheep, his traditional companions.

His humpback is readily noted. The hump is a bit low in the Oklahoma depiction, similar to the symmetrical curvature of Camelback, or Beganskiddi, his Navajo counterpart. Beganskiddi marches through New Mexico's Gobernador Canyon, near the Colorado border, playing his flute, thus ensured of safe conduct through that rather dangerous territory.

Poor Kokopelli, crippled by Ankosing Spondylitis in his vigorous adolescence. Forever looking straight ahead, prevented by his kyphosis from hunting or agrarian activity. Hardly marriageable, he gravitated to the lonely life of a wandering minstrel, magician, and purveyor of news, forever on the move. He played his flute for the pleasure of all, the wild sheep, and to induce the favorable elements of nature. His reputation as a fertility symbol still persists among Pueblo Indians.

Our fearless little crooked-back minstrel knew no enemies, yet was a man without a country, living by his wits and the enigmatic mystique that surrounded him. He evoked the protective instincts of even the most suspicious of hostiles and there was always a bowl of food for him wherever he appeared, in consideration of his suffering and to bribe his best magic. The mark of Kokopelli on a shelter wall or at a lookout point brought warm feelings that one was not alone, and in the long hours of the night a weary traveler might even hear the lingering soft tones of Kokopelli's flute.

Occasionally Kokopelli would draw his self portrait to impart advice to the traveler. His flute might point out the most favorable direction of travel, or perhaps toward the nearest spring. He might show himself happily fluting while lying down to indicate a particularly desirable campsite; or moving at a fast pace signaling the need for haste. Occasionally, he points his feet backward, advising retreat.

Legends say that Kokopelli carried seeds, babies, or an assortment of gifts in his hump. He brought fertility to man, beast, and field, as well as good luck and favorable weather. In order to protect his reputation, he had to be careful not to overstay, for notoriously, good luck can be of short duration.

When his arthritis exacerbated he used a cane, as when he visited Oklahoma about 500 years ago. Perhaps he sought this better climate for his painful joints, or favorable grazing for his wild sheep; perhaps he had heard of the pretty Indian maidens or the beauty of our delightful Black Mesa area.

It is noteworthy to record his visit to our state. We wish him the best of luck and a comfortable ankylosis as he continues to carry on his good works.

Dr. Richard Payne and Eula (Mrs.) Payne are devoted to their extensive collection of flutes — it is one of the finest — from modern ones back through the European history of the instrument, and ancient primitive flutes. They report that "searching for Kokopelli provides a pleasant motive for travel." They have found his image in many remote places in western America and northern Mexico, but "our greatest pleasure has been finding him in our native state, Oklahoma."
AT SPIRO MOUNDS

What is the wind singing over them?
All that it remembers, long remembering.

morning and evening and at noon, the meadowlarks,
thunder far off,
rustle of maize,
cadence of candlewood burning,
bells fashioned of mussel-shells,
strung like rainbows on baby boards,
rosy fruit falling and spread out to dry,
night river calling,
old women whispering together in the dark,
rhythm of hooves and the flying of flint.

Of what is the wind reminding them?
They are still a part of its unwearied song.

Katharine Privett
WALK
through the valley
across the horizon
IN ALL KINDS OF WEATHER, WALK
the green fields
deep woods
wild grass pastures
and along the flowing river
WALK ALONG A COUNTRY ROAD
Snap a twig of sassafras and sniff the
captured north wind
Heal yourself with the scent of tangy mint,
the taste of dewy berries

WALK EARLY, WALK LATE
Tangle yourself in nature’s wild grape
arbor among tall trees
Stoop to marvel at lichens on an old
tree stump
Among curled ferns in a deep ravine
savor earth’s fragrant leaf mold.
In meadow lanes where quail run,
be nature’s guest for this
priceless giveaway.

...Frances Baker