WILL ROGERS PART III
THE MYSTERIOUS SPIRO MOUNDS
WESTERN ART OF OLAF SELTZER
CALENDAR OF OKLAHOMA EVENTS

SUMMER 1979 VOL. 29-3 QUARTERLY — $5.00 PER YEAR — WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL BUILDING — SECOND CLASS POSTAGE 407140 PAID AT OKLAHOMA CITY
Having made more than seventy movies . . . Hollywood's top box office star . . . writing books and popular magazine articles . . . a Broadway celebrity . . . his column appearing in 350 newspapers daily . . . earning $500 a minute for his radio broadcasts . . . America's Ambassador to the World, Will Rogers, flew off to Alaska with Wiley Post.

Why? How did these men get together? Were they childhood friends as many people thought? Had Wiley piloted Will on his fund-raising trips around the country? Why were they lost in the wilds of Alaska? Did they really plan to go on to Siberia as the newspapers speculated?

News stories in the days following the crash gave many different versions and some of the same questions are still asked today by the thousands of visitors to the Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore. One way to seek answers is to read what Will had to say about his pilot-friend. In the process, you get to taste the famed Rogers humor, as well as his enthusiasm for flying.

Wiley Post, born just across the Red River near Denison, Texas, in 1898, claimed Oklahoma as his home. He grew up near Maysville, Rush Springs, and Chickasha, tinkering with motors to stay out of the cotton patch, and became one of the great aviation pioneers of all time. He and Will met for the first time in 1931, after Wiley Post and Harold Gatty had made their record-breaking, round-the-world flight in eight days. But Will was well acquainted with the aviator by reputation long before that.

Flying fascinated Will from the time he took his first short flight in Atlantic City in 1915. He made heroes out of all the pilots he knew. He always loved excitement and speed—as a Wild West show performer, playing polo, and in the air. Will never learned to fly. But he admired those who did. He kept up with all experimental flying, including the exploits of Wiley Post. On June 29, 1931, Will wrote in his syndicated column:

“No news today as big as this Post and Gatty that are making this world of ours look the size of a watermelon. This pilot, Post, is an old one-eyed Oklahoma boy. He's just got that good eye glued on the horizon if it meets the earth anywhere. And Gatty, this reformed Australian . . . just give him a compass and one peek at the giant dipper and he can tell you where you are, even if you ain’t there. This is one trip I would have loved to have been a stowaway on.”

Post made the trip to promote commercial aviation, and hoped to set a new record. At that time, only three 'round-the-world flights had been made—two by the Army’s “World Fliers” in 1924 (they took six months), and one by a German airship, the Graf Zeppelin, which circled the globe in 32 days. Wiley hoped to make it in 10 days.

On June 23, 1931, Post and Gatty took off from New York in the “Winnie Mae.” They headed for Newfoundland, then over the Atlantic to Liverpool, across Germany, Moscow, the Orient, the Pacific, to Alaska, then New York, where they landed July 1—time: eight days, 15 hours and 51 minutes.

Will poured on the compliments in his columns.

“Those boys did a great job didn’t they?” he wrote. “Such a navigator, and such a flyer, and they can’t get any better ship. Just think! Clear around the world with one motor.”

He wondered what they did for sleep: “I would have gone to sleep right in some Russian Reception Committee’s whiskers, and when it would have come time to get up and take off again, I would have left the record remain with Jules Verne . . . Poor old Jules, he must have had a relapse when he heard them flying over his grave . . .”

Continuing, “Just think of those boys flying away up in Siberia. That’s where we used to see the pictures of the wolves jumping up at those
sleights . . . Well, these old boys got enough altitude that no wolf couldn't jump at them. You know, too, the Russians were mighty nice to those boys, when you consider that we don't give them much the best of it. We think they are running their country cockeyed, and I guess it's mutual . . ."

The returning heroes were paraded, ticker-taped, wined and dined all over the country. Will Rogers was tied up in Hollywood and still hadn't met them, much as he wanted to. Finally, he got his chance. Bruce Quisenberry, son of Mrs. Rogers' sister, was managing the tour for Post and Gatty. He took them to Santa Monica to meet his Uncle Will.

Will wrote a news column complimenting Oklahoma oilman F. C. Hall, of Chickasha, who had put up funds for the flight. Hall wrote to thank Will, and commented that he planned to take Post and Gatty to Claremore, by auto, for a reception there.

Will suspected that being aviators they would never go unless they could fly, so "the old town (Claremore) got busy and in five days built the dandiest little airport you ever saw."

Then Will decided he wanted to be there for the occasion, so he caught the "east bound plane" from Santa Monica. He arrived at the banquet, in Tulsa, "too late to eat" but not too late to be drafted to make a speech. There he met Post and Gatty, extolled their praises, and they took him for a ride in the Winnie Mae.

"I was in the back compartment with Gatty," Will wrote, "and he was explaining all the different gadgets that he used to tell where he was. He was about eight or ten feet back of the pilot Post, and there was gas tanks in between. They talked by a head ear phone tube. They couldn't even see each other. They had no parachutes, they would have taken up too much room. They carried nothing at all of any precautionary nature. It was make it or else . . ."

Kidding the home folks, he wrote in his column for July 14, "Well, this was a great day for Gatty and Post. It was just an ordinary day for Claremore, but it was a big thing for those boys. They never saw a town like ours . . ."

"I flew (to Claremore) in the Winnie Mae with them today. It's the combination of the two that makes 'em so great. I'd bet on 'em going around the world endways and cross both poles. In all the excitement and rushing about, you know when they sleep? At the banquet. They said if it wasn't for banquets they wouldn't have any time to sleep at all."

Rogers had been in his element when he spoke at the banquet honoring them. He was speaking to the "homefolks," and on his favorite subject. Parts of his talk became the introduction to a book about the flight, Around the World in Eight Days, published in 1931.

It was fitting that they should come to Claremore, Will said, the town that had "furnished more air to the World through one Native Son than was her share."

Describing Post, Will said: "He did live in Texas as a child, but even Texas children grow up. Post used to be on a Cotton farm, it wasn't ambition that drove him to the air, it was the bo-weevil."

"He got his mechanical knowledge from working in a Garage, when people who had learned their chauffering on a Cultivator or a Mule transferred their knowledge to the Model T. He had no ambition about going around the world, but he could take a wrench and go round the bolts on a Ford in record time . . ."

". . . he used to work in cahoots with a fellow down at the next town. They both learned just how to fix one of 'em so it would fall entirely to pieces by the time it reached the other fellow's place . . ."

". . . a Plane crashed near the Garage one day . . . all that was left intact was the propeller. Post put it on an old Model T, then took off and Solo-ed it in. Why, away up in Siberia when the Winnie Mae hit in the mud and tipped over on her nose . . . it did enough damage to have sent most pilots back on the train . . . Wiley just took some bob wire and fixed it so it would go ten miles faster. He was raised on a Texas 'Norther' and weaned on an Oklahoma 'Cyclone.'"

"So a little thing like fog looks like a clear day to him. The Government, on account of what they thought was a physical infliction, the loss of one eye, dident want to give him a license. Now they got men looking for One-Eyed Pilots. You see, the eye he lost saw the bad weather and the bad landing fields. This one just see's the good. When he says quit, you can bet there's no more Gas, or no more Air."

Will never hesitated to mention Post's black eye patch. To him, it was a mark of distinction. Post had lost his eye in an oilfield accident. It was money from compensation for the accident that bought his first airplane motor. The cold at high altitudes caused his glass eye to give him headaches, so he wore the black eye patch instead.

Post made another globe-circling flight in 1933—this time alone. Amidst jubilant Will Rogers wrote, "What
did I tell you about that one-eyed Oklahoma boy. He is a hawk ain't he? He holds the doubles and singles championship now. If he ever decides to make up a foursome to go 'round, I will take out a ticket with him.”

With that statement, Rogers may have taken the first step toward the fatal flight of 1935.

During the next two years Post made aviation history; developing a pressure or space suit for high altitude flying; searching for, and using, the “high winds” now known as the jet stream, that would enable man to fly at much faster speeds. He still used the little “Winnie Mae” which he struggled to support, repairing and modifying it as he went along.

Will kept up with his pilot friend and frequently mentioned him in his “little piece for the papers.” When Post had an offer to go on stage to tell of his flights and some people criticized him for it, Will came to his defense; “Say, after what that little guy went through with, nobody should criticize him even if he turned banker or took a seat on the stock exchange.”

In April, 1935, Will again wrote of the pilot:

“Last summer when the family and I were days and days by train crossing Siberia we would come to towns with great long names and they would remind us of places where we remembered Wiley landed in his crossing of Russia. All alone, couldn't speak a word of Russian, land at a field, and he couldn't tell 'em a thing in the world. What ever he wanted done in the way of some minor work on his ship he couldn't tell 'em. He would have to do it when he hadn't been asleep for a couple of days.

“One place he wanted a drink of water. Said he never was as thirsty in his life, but they couldn't understand, and from his motions and actions, they thought he wanted liquor, or vodka. Well they had the welfare of his trip at heart; and the soldier kept saying and motioning “No, No!” Finally the soldier seemed to get so mad that he left . . . it must have been miles to town, but finally he came back with two quart bottles. Well Vodka looks like water, and naturally thinking it was water Wiley grabbed one and started in on it. It was vodka. Wiley warmed his plane up and took off, and flew 1800 miles on to another place. I tell you I think the W.C.T.U. or some other good temperance society ought to take that true story and make something out of it. Left two bottles of vodka and flew 1800 miles for a drink of water. The Russian got sore naturally, after walking all that distance to get 'em for him. Course I guess when Wiley was gone and the Russian got good and settled down into about the second bottle he didn't cuss Wiley so much.”

Working out of Bartlesville, with the support of Frank Phillips and the Phillips Petroleum Company, Wiley continued to try new flights into the stratosphere, work on his space suit, and set new records. By February, 1935, he was made an official air mail pilot. On February 22, Will wrote: “Was out at daylight to see Wiley Post take off. Was in the camera plane and we flew along with him for about 30 miles. We left him at eight thousand feet right over the mountains. He soon after had to land. He brought her down on her stomach, that guy don't need wheels.”

Although Will didn't (and probably couldn't) go into details, this was a near disastrous flight for Wiley. Someone, later thought to be a disgruntled pilot who was jealous of Post, had sabotaged the “Winnie Mae” by putting emery dust in the engine. Only with the greatest skill did he manage to bring the fully loaded plane to a safe landing in the Mojave desert.

By July of that year, Wiley was making plans for another long flight and someone linked his friend with Will's earlier comments about wanting to fly to Siberia with Post. Betty (Mrs. Will) Rogers later recalled he was considering the trip at that point, but Will had not made up his mind.

Post had given up on the well worn “Winnie Mae” and had offered it to the Smithsonian Institution for $25,000. He had assembled a secon plane, a “hybrid” made of a body from a damaged Lockheed Orion and the wings from a Lockheed Special. He used a propeller from another plane and some of the flight instruments from the “Winnie Mae.” At least he had a plane to work with, though he was able to obtain only restricted rating from the Commerce Department—for experimental work—it was not approved to carry paying passengers.

Post wanted to check out the possibility of an airmail passenger route between Alaska and Russia. An air line was to finance the survey, but they backed out and Post approached Rogers to help finance the trip. In July, 1935, Wiley, Mrs. Mae Post and Will made a test flight from Los Angeles to Albuquerque to visit the mutual friend, Waite Phillips, the on to Colorado. Will had made two movies in a row. He needed a rest and new inspiration for his column.
Flying always gave him plenty to write about. On July 28, he telephoned from Durango, Colorado:

“Today Wiley is flying over Brice Canyon, Zion Canyon, over, down, and through the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, New Lake. No wonder American people are filling roads, trains, and air. There is so much to see.”

He said they could fly around Alaska; then, if all went well, they would probably go on to Moscow. Although they might be out of touch with civilized people, Wiley said the trip was to go as far as Russia. Perhaps Wiley worried a little about publicity, for he had ordered pontoons for the plane; as there is left a world of space, as there is this comfortable double seat, it could be possible to be a six-passenger job. He has got a rubber boat and a canoe paddle, some life vests, and his gun case. I don’t know what kind it is. I don’t hunt or shoot; it’s a long looking thing. I expect there is a Springfield rifle in there. Oh yes, and his fishing rod and 80 reels. Oh yes! and two or three coils of rope. They are to tie the ship up and pull it up to the banks. That will be my job to get out first and tie the rope and then vault ashore and haul it in. I will have to have a card from the ‘Longshoremen’s Union.’”

After the strenuous chore of completing two pictures before he left California, Will added with relief, “What, no camera? No that’s what we are going on this trip for to get away from cameras, then too I don’t know nothing about ‘em and can’t work ‘em. We may see some fine sights but you always have to explain that ‘This picture don’t near do the scene justice.’”

They were interviewed by a “girl newspaper photographer, very efficient and pleasant, in fact all of ‘em are. They seem to know we don’t know where we are going ourselves and they don’t insist on us telling ‘em.”

“Well, there ‘bout got the gas in: Wiley is getting nervous. I am anxious to get going too. I think we are going to have a great trip, see lots of country that not too many have seen. But you can’t tell. You could go to the northernmost part of Hudson bay, and expect there would be a pack of folks there in Fords having a picnic, or maybe some holding company stockholder sending telegrams to Roosevelt.”

As yet, no announcement was made that the trip was to go as far as Russia. Perhaps Wiley worried about the restricted license on the plane and feared publicity might prevent his going. Possibly, too, he worried about the plane, even though he told reporters that it was running great. Will had not yet wired Mrs. Rogers that he would go further than Alaska,
so there were still doubts.

On August 7, Will’s daily column finally notified his readers that he was on the trip to Alaska; “Thousand-mile hop from Seattle to Juneau. Was going to stop at Ketchikan for lunch, but mist and rain and we just breezed through never over 100 feet off the water. And talk about navigating. There is millions of channels and islands and bays and all look alike (to me) but this old boy (Wiley Post) turns up the right alley all the time. Nothing that I have ever seen is more beautiful than this inland passage (by either boat or plane) to Alaska.”

According to news reports, they landed at Juneau at 5:30 p.m. after an 8½ hour flight. They were greeted by Alaskan pilot Joe Crosson and went to the Governor’s mansion as overnight guests. Bad weather continued to plague them. Will dropped in at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon, bought a pair of boots, sent off his daily telegram and visited with author Rex Beach.

Joe Crosson said later that he discouraged them from continuing the trip, especially with reports of bad weather between them and Point Barrow, where Will wanted to go visit Charlie Brower, a trader and whaler who would be good for some stories. But Friday, August 9, they left Juneau and flew 475 miles to Dawson.

Will’s “piece for the papers” said he was busy buying raincoats. On August 11, he wrote from Aklavik, Northwest Territory; “Get your map out and look this up. The mouth of the McKenzie River, right on the Arctic Ocean, Esquimo are thicker than rich men at a save-the-Constitution Convention. We are headed for famous Herschel Island in the Arctic. Old Wiley had to duck his head to keep from bumping it as we flew under the Arctic Circle. What, no night? It’s all day up here.”

Records show Will wrote a substantial check to a boy at All Saints Hospital that day. August 12, they landed in Fairbanks. Will spent the next morning typing his articles. From the tone of them he was having a great time. Away from the usual crowds and the movie studios, and with the men he most admired—the rugged bush pilots. On August 14, he wrote from Anchorage;

“Well, we had a day off today and nothing to do so we went flying with friends—with Joe Crosson, Alaska’s crack pilot, who is a great friend of Wiley’s and helped him on his difficulties up here on his record trips, and Joe Barrows, another fine pilot. In a Lockheed Electra we scaled Mt. McKinley, the highest on the American continent. A bright, sunny day, and the most beautiful sight I ever saw. Crosson has landed on a glacier over half way up in a plane and took off. Flew right by hundreds of mountain sheep and flew low over moose and bear, down in the valley.”

Will may have forgotten his worries, but Post had not. He was concerned about the way the plane handled, plus the bad weather.

The veteran pilot had survived many mishaps without serious injury. And Will was always ready to “get again.” So they flew again to Fairbanks, then toward Point Barrow. It was August 15, 1935. By pre-arrangement they landed on Lake Harding, 40 miles away to take on a full load of fuel, then took off for Point Barrow 510 miles further on.

Several hours later, when they were within 15-16 miles of Point Barrow, Wiley put the plane down to ask directions from Clair (or Clare) Okpeaha, an Eskimo who ran a sealing camp. He and his English speaking wife told them the way, then Okpeaha watched as Wiley steered the nose-heavy, pontooned plane through the water for a takeoff. The plane lifted off, probably with a roar as Wiley gave her the gas, started to bank, then only a little way in the air (from 50-200 feet, depending on who does the telling), it sputtered, quit, nosed straight down, and flipped on its back, shattered in the shallow lagoon. The two Oklahomans had made their last trip. Both men were killed instantly.

Exact cause of the sudden engine failure — the brief “cough” — is not known to this day. Authorities agree that the hybrid craft was so nose heavy that it would be impossible to handle without the motor running. The crash has been investigated, discussed, and varied theories advanced through the years. All that mattered, really, was the tragic loss . . . of the quiet, daring pilot with the inquiring mind, and the humorist loved by the world.

They have not been forgotten. (To be concluded in our next issue)
THE SOUTHERN CHEYENNE WARRIOR SOCIETIES
BY DICK WEST
FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF THE PHILBROOK ART CENTER, TULSA
THE FIRST BATTLE

In the summer of 1838, about nine miles south of Beaver Creek, one member of a Kiowa hunting party looked north, thought he saw something moving, and pointed it out. "What is that which shines white there? It looks like a number of lodges, and are not those horses about them?"

"No," a companion answered. "Those things that you see are the white sand hills on the other side of the Beaver, and on this side of the next hill there are a lot of buffalo. That is what you see."

"But are there not white horses there?"

"No. That is the white of the sand hills, which you see beyond the buffalo when they move apart."

What the hunters saw was probably all or part of the allied encampment of Cheyennes and Arapahoes who were marching south to "wipe out" the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches who were camped together on Wolf Creek in what is today northwestern Oklahoma.

For years the Cheyennes and Arapahoes had raided, and been raided by, the Kiowas and Comanches. Usually the raids occurred in late summer, but in 1837 a party of Bow String Soldiers decided to start a little earlier than usual and put pressure on the Arrow Priest Chief to immediately renew the Sacred Medicine Arrows which would ensure their success. When the medicine man refused, the Bow String Soldiers beat him with their quirts until he gave in. The warriors then ignored his warning that no good would come of their efforts and set out on their raid. They never returned. All forty-two Bow String Warriors were killed.

The wives and relatives of the slain warriors petitioned the Cheyenne Council of Forty-Four for revenge. After a period of deliberation the Council Chiefs referred the matter to the Red Shield Warriors who in turn handed the war pipe to the Dog Man Warriors' Chief.

Porcupine Bear accepted the war pipe, but said he would wait one winter before moving against the Kiowas. No one knows why he put off the revenge raid. Perhaps it was because this would be the first time the Dog Soldiers would take the lead in tribal affairs and he wanted to make his preparations as sure as possible. In the spring of 1838 Porcupine Bear carried the war pipe from band to band on the Arkansas River. After all of the Southern Cheyennes had agreed to follow him, he headed north to the South Platte River where the other bands, the Northern Cheyennes were camped. All of them, and even their Arapaho allies, smoked the pipe.

But while among the Northern Cheyennes, Porcupine Bear got drunk on trader's whiskey, brawled with two of his cousins, and killed one of them. The ancient teachings of Sweet Medicine, prophet of The-All-Father, were explicit;
murder polluted the Medicine Arrows making victory in battle impossible, and caused the murderer to decay within himself a stench which warned all animals to flee and avoid the hunters. Therefore, Porcupine Bear and all his relatives were exiled from the Cheyenne circle of the clans. Porcupine Bear was also deposed as Chief of the Dog Soldiers and expelled from the soldier society.

No further action was taken. Ordinarily this would have been enough to disgrace the criminal, his family, and his military society. Instead of sinking into oblivion, however, Porcupine Bear and his relatives simply moved a mile or so away from the circle, set up their own camp, and continued to follow the movements and activities of the tribe. As the Cheyennes and Arapahoes moved south to avenge the slain Bow String Soldiers they were shadowed by Porcupine Bear and his outlaws.

The day after the hunters returned from Beaver Creek a larger hunting party of thirty Kiowa men and women left their village in search of game reported to the north. They had ridden eight miles by daybreak when one of the hunters noticed a man alone on horseback signaling that he had found buffalo. The Kiowas did not recognize him, but they assumed that anyone this far south was friendly. He did not appear to be armed.

Leaving the women to follow apace the Kiowa hunters galloped their mules toward the man. They pulled their buffalo horses close and were preparing to switch mounts when they heard a scream. They could only stare as the man picked up a lance hidden in the grass and charged.

It was Porcupine Bear. His yell brought six more Cheyennes out of concealment and into the fight. The outlaw chief reached the hunters before anyone could react. He lanced the first Kiowa and impaled him on the ground. Without pause, Porcupine Bear ripped the lance out of the man’s heart and screamed into the remaining twenty-nine Kiowas. Porcupine Bear struck twenty of the enemy single handed, killing twelve. His relatives wiped out the rest. Not even a horse escaped.

The rest of the Cheyennes were not as fortunate as the outlaws. They got lost and while stumbling around alerted their enemies. The ensuing battle was a frustrating standoff which cost the Cheyennes the lives of the Arrow Priest Chief, a Council Chief, and the Elk Soldier Chief. But worse than this, the outlaw had counted the first coup and accounted for half the sixty casualties inflicted upon the enemy.

Porcupine Bear’s resultant prestige transformed the Dog Soldiers and altered the course of history for the Cheyenne Nation. By 1840 every Dog Soldier in the traditional circle had left the Cheyennes and joined the outlaw camp. The outlaws moved into western Kansas, contracted alliances with the Sioux, and developed their own political organization distinct from the Council of Forty-Four.

In 1849, after cholera had wiped out half the Cheyenne Nation, the Dog Soldiers were invited to rejoin the tribal circle by the survivors. The Dog Soldiers did return, but as allies not as subjects. From then until 1864 the Dog Soldiers grew larger in numbers and prestige. In fact so powerful did they become that the Council Chiefs were powerless without Dog Soldier support. In 1864 when Sand Creek proved that white settlers in Colorado would not coexist with the Cheyennes, the survivors of that massacre looked to the Dog Soldiers to uphold the national honor and gain revenge.

By this time four distinct bands under Tall Bull, White Horse, Bull Bear, and Gray Beard (Porcupine Bear having since been retired by a Shawnee bullet); the Dog Soldiers cut a swath of terror from Julesburg to the Platte Bridge. In 1865 they isolated California from the nation’s capital and brought Denver to the brink of starvation. In 1866, they defeated General Connor and 3,000 men. In 1867 they battled Generals Hancock and Custer across central and western Kansas with such effectiveness that the latter was prompted to call the Dog Soldiers “the most mischievous, blood thirsty, and barbarous band of Indians that infest the plains.” In 1868, they defeated General Sully in Oklahoma and Major Forsythe in Colorado. The Dog Man Warriors were finally beaten in 1869 at the Battle of Summit Springs, in Colorado, though not before they had succeeded in costing the U.S. Government one million dollars and twenty-four lives for every one of them the soldiers killed.

According to tribal tradition the Dog Soldiers had their origin several centuries ago near the dawn of Cheyenne history. Perhaps that is so, but their fame as “the most cohesive Indian military organization on the plains” dates from the Battle of Wolf Creek, a fight that Porcupine Bear thought would be too good to miss.

(To be concluded in our next issue)
LUIS HERRERA DE LA FUENTE
AND THE OKLAHOMA SYMPHONY

We have often felt that Oklahoma is the state that was born with an inferiority complex. We tend to believe that what we do is inferior—unless something like a national football poll comes along to rate us first. Confronted with a testimonial we can hardly dispute, then and then only will we believe that something out of Oklahoma can hold its own with the best in the world.

The symphony in Oklahoma City can hold its own with the best in the world; in individual musicianship, in creative, clarity of performance, in summoning forth from its hearers the emotional response the composer sought.

Listeners who have heard recent concerts of the Oklahoma Symphony have frequently heard an orchestra musically equal to the Boston under Seiji Ozawa, the Detroit under the baton of Antal Dorati, or the Chicago conducted by Sir Georg Solti.

Precision of attack, release, intonation, dynamic contrast, emotional drive, by any standard of musical judgment is, at its peak, the equal of the great orchestras of the world.

The Oklahomans are brilliantly talented musicians, equal in technique and interpretive depth to their counterparts in any professional orchestra, and the element which has freed them to exhibit these qualities has been the baton of Maestro Luis Herrera de la Fuente.

Almost invariably, he has memorized the score and interprets music fixed in head and heart.

From the unmistakable announcement of Maestro Herrera’s opening beat, both orchestra and audience are made a part of the composer’s emotional intent. Each musician is cued by Herrera’s baton and expressive hands; the dynamic and mood of each
LUI S HERRERA DE LA FUEN T E

entry is telegraphed to the musician an instant prior to the part's entry. Optimum crescendos and diminuendos, however subdued or magnified, are perfectly attained.

No theme or melodic line is ever lost. Each is brought forth, to speak its meaning clearly, from the accompanying orchestral patterns.

All combines to build together, stimulating, inspiring, satisfying, as the composer purposed, becoming whole music, for whole musicians, whether players or listeners. Oklahoma now has conducting the symphony in Oklahoma City one of the world's superlative musicians; a virtuoso of the orchestral instrument, as Isaac Stern is the master of the violin, Pablo Casals the cello, Artur Rubinstein the piano. This is the verdict of critics around the world.
Maestro de la Fuente Brilliant

- sensitive and ardent
- firm
- a great harmony (between orchestra and conductor)

- Herrara de la Fuente internationally recognized
- His every gesture is full of music

- Magic from Mexico
- played with elan

- authoritative stature
- active in all parts of the world . . . also as a composer
- perfection
- brilliant

- excellent musical instinct
- warm and sensitive

- a passionate musician replete with inspiration and imagination

Philharmonic Guest Scores

- Maestro de la Fuente left the audience applauding convincingly
- intense musical drive
- profound music
- the maestro conducted from memory
- particularly striking under De la Fuente’s interpretation

De La Fuente Brings New Program for Concert

- solid and satisfying
- De la Fuente is an active illustrator of the music.
- he does not use the printed score
- the playing was bright and clean
- graceful atmosphere
- artful

Königlicher Glanz

- kingly glitter
- brilliant performance
- sensational
- dotting each note
- most outstanding
- deep musicality
- beauty, nobility of expression
- played magnificently
- a brilliant conductor
It all began innocently enough a few years ago when our neighbors to the north (hereinafter referred to as the Norths) gave their kids baby rabbits for Easter. The black-and-white Lepus bunnies grew up to become female hares with frustrated nesting instincts, there being a dearth of gentlemen hares hereabouts. It was kinda sad, if you took the time to think about it.

But then about three years ago one of the old maid rabbits, or hares (I'll try to straighten that out later on), either ran away from home long enough to share a brief romantic idyll with a native cottontail over along Normandy Creek, or else the bucolic lothario ventured into the city and found his way to the Norths' backyard. Whatever the facts, there was definitely a collaboration between an indigenous male rabbit and one of the Norths' nubile domestic hares, resulting in a litter of unusual crossbreed offspring, some black-and-white and the rest sort of oversized versions of their papa. They were all cute as the dickens.

The kind-hearted Norths would never dream of harming a hare of those unique harebits, or rabbit, or whatever, but some kind of attrition thinned them out until they became a threatened subspecies, even endangered. It could have been an evil yellow semi-stray tomcat notorious in those days for mugging our neighborhood robins and mockingbirds. Finally there were only three of the hybrids left, but they survived, and time passed, and something had happened to the tomcat, which was good. The local ecology healed itself, robins and mockingbirds made a welcome comeback, and the balance of nature was restored. Temporarily. For awhile there.

Then last summer our neighbors to the south brought home a large black Belgian hare named Thumper. (I'm not positive about his nationality but he didn't strike me as being, say, British. More like Gallic, or Latin.) The Souths operate a pawn brokerage and I surmised that they had taken Thumper as collateral for a small loan, which was never repaid. Old Thump had obviously been somebody's pet. He would come hopping when South called him, and that is a conditioned response, not a normal rabbit habit.

One evening while chatting across the fence South said, "I believe Thumper thinks he's a dog. Every morning when I let him out he heads for the fence by your Butch's pen and the rest sort of oversized versions of their papa. They were all cute as the dickens.

The kind-hearted Norths would
never dream of harming a hare of those unique harebits, or rabbit, or whatever, but some kind of attrition thinned them out until they became a threatened subspecies, even endangered. It could have been an evil yellow semi-stray tomcat notorious in those days for mugging our neighborhood robins and mockingbirds. Finally there were only three of the hybrids left, but they survived, and time passed, and something had happened to the tomcat, which was good. The local ecology healed itself, robins and mockingbirds made a welcome comeback, and the balance of nature was restored. Temporarily. For awhile there.

Then last summer our neighbors to the south brought home a large black Belgian hare named Thumper. (I'm not positive about his nationality but he didn't strike me as being, say, British. More like Gallic, or Latin.) The Souths operate a pawn brokerage and I surmised that they had taken Thumper as collateral for a small loan, which was never repaid. Old Thump had obviously been somebody's pet. He would come hopping when South called him, and that is a conditioned response, not a normal rabbit habit.

One evening while chatting across the fence South said, "I believe Thumper thinks he's a dog. Every morning when I let him out he heads for the fence by your Butch's pen and they seem to hold a friendly conversation. Then he hops across to the south fence and apparently relays the latest canine news to those two dogs over there. I'm almost convinced he runs a sort of messenger service."

Be that as it may, it's true Thumper didn't fit the traditional timid, nervous, introverted hare image at all. For instance he took charge of a crippled pigeon South brought home (it couldn't have been collateral for a loan), protecting it from real and imagined predators and generally keeping it shooed back behind the air-conditioner unit out of harm's way. Rabbits don't ordinarily do that sort of thing. (Nine times out of ten your average rabbit will just ignore a pigeon, and vice versa. They have very little in common.)

But despite his suave exterior Thumper was still basically a Lagomorph, with all of the atavistic instincts and yearnings that implies, and along in late July or early August he found out somehow about the Norths' permuted hare-rabbit does.* Maybe Butch finally got around to telling him. Anyway he got the word, and immediately began excavating under fences—cutting across Butch's pen—and headed for the Norths' backyard and his destiny. Which obviously was—as now seems abundantly clear—to overpopulate this part of Norman with his ravenous, chisel-toothed, delinquent posterity.

*Rabbits and hares are close kin, both being members of the Lagomorphs.
pha order of the Lepus family, only hares have longer ears and legs and are considerably larger. Cottontails are rabbits but jackrabbits are hares. The original black-and-white Easter Bunnies were nominally Dutch Rabbits, but in all physiological aspects they were unmistakably hares. It can get confusing sometimes. Like: Snowshoe Rabbits are also Varying Hares. Well, what the heck. By any name they are all vegetarian rodents, and total strangers to civilized restraint when it comes to family planning. At best they make very irresponsible parents.

When the first crop of Thumper's mix-and-match children (half jet black like old Dad, the rest sort of brindled replications of their wild maternal grandfather) were a couple of weeks old, the cuddly-cute little rascals began to sift through the chainlink fence from the Norths' backyard into my burgeoning vegetable and flower garden. Mostly they gourmandized indiscriminately, but showed a marked partiality to chrysanthemum buds. They didn't seem to care much for marigolds or zucchini squash. Not at first, anyway.

After we chased the glutinous little devils back through the fence for the umpteenth day in a row my wife said firmly, "It is high time we did something about those destructive little pests."

Well, I had already lodged a plaintive complaint with the Norths, who had expressed sincere distress and regret, and apologized profusely. "We know it's a terrible situation," Mrs. North said, "but we simply do not know how to cope with it. Please feel free to take whatever drastic measures you think may be necessary."

Lobbing the old ball back into our court, as it were. Actually I had a non-drastic solution of sorts, and told my wife: "Before much longer those fast-growing dudes will be too durn big to come through the fence, and will be effectively corralled over there."

I was right, and I was wrong. When the rascals finally outgrew the interstitial dimensions of the chainlink fence they were tarrying on our turf, stranded in hostile country. But they wasted no time pining for home, quickly constructing winter quarters under our woodpile—except for a less-enterprising few that set up housekeeping in the tool shed, under and behind and amongst the interlocking clutter of boxes and barrels, lawn furniture, water hoses, prized antique junk, garden implements, stepladders and old bicycle wheels, flower pots, etcetera.

"Sorry about that," the Norths apologized as they began putting boards and boxes and pieces of plywood and other scenic stuff like that along their side of the fence, ostensibly to keep any more of their livestock from trespassing on our property, but probably mostly to make durn sure the ones already here didn't go back. Then they washed their hands of the whole sordid thing, insofar as that was any longer possible. They still had Thumper to reckon with.
Lagomorphs

“Okay, optimist, what now?” my wife asked cynically, and I replied philosophically: “Oh, well, they’ve already eaten everything edible, and now face ultimate famine. They have two choices, stay here and starve or slip through our gates and seek more hospitable terrain. They have enough cottontail genes to heed the call of the wild and go find a more hospitable environment. You’ll see.”

“I won’t hold my breath,” she said. Good thing she didn’t, too.

Once more I had been, sequentially, both wrong and right. Wrong because there was something left in our backyard for rabbits to devour—the bark of our young trees and shrubs. Right because they did start venturing forth to explore other people’s yards around the neighborhood in search of a more varied diet—only they always came home again before broad daylight. I guess they had become accustomed to our place.

Somebody told us to spray our trees and shrubs with insecticide, which we did, and it worked: the disgruntled rabbits realized they had been barking the wrong trees up. But they had one tract minds, and showed no inclination to move their base of operations.

Winter came, and also stayed. Thumper continued to dwell in the North’s backyard and sire bunnies, although the supply had long since exceeded the demand. The Norths offered free baby rabbits to anybody and everybody—except a kid from Lindsay Street who had a pet python, and a boy on West Boyd who was studying taxidermy by correspondence. Just before Christmas I heard a rumor that mystified residents in other sections of town had reported that poor old Thumper was dead and she had personally identified what remained of his remains.

“Old Thump was one of a kind,” I eulogized. “I’ll miss that old rascal.” Not really, of course. But, still, sort of . . .

So a few gloamings later I saw an ebony ghost in the Norths’ driveway, and exclaimed: “Hey, Thump! Is it really you?”

He took a few tentative hops toward me, and I knew he was no apparition. That mess in the street had been one of his clones.

During the Christmas break our collegiate son Randy had built a hatch of sorts, and managed to capture four of the tool shed gang one night, ending their depredations, but institutionalizing their situation. Also during the Yule season the Norths did some constructive thinking, and hauled Thumper to a vet for the animal equivalent of a vasectomy—which would have been a truly brilliant notion back in August but came a trifle too late to solve the on-going Lepus-Lagomorpha plague. By then the old prolificat had progeny mature enough to carry on with his carrying-on and advance his sinister scheme to lay waste all the world’s gardens. As soon became apparent.

One morning in early February I looked out the kitchen window at the growing glacier in our backyard and beheld an alarming sight: half a dozen little bitty new recruits in the rabbit army. So when Randy came down to breakfast I said grimly: “Start building more cages.” Then, suddenly rabbited beyond human tolerance limits, I went out there and released Butch from his pen. Aside from his inherent canine tendency to chase rabbits he also had a personal grudge because the furry hooligans had taken to stealing his Pooch pellets. (So do grackles, which dunk them in his water pan to soften them.) He spent a frantic, yipping few minutes chasing a confusion of artful dodgers around and around the tool shed before they eventually vanished under the woodpile and into camouflage tunnels. A dog, clearly, was not the answer. Besides Butch is too old for that kind of excitement and acceleration, he might have a coronary occlusion or die of frustration or something.

Randy built two more cages and with the help of his brother Dave managed to catch five more of the larger rabbits by ingenious and humane methods. And my wife said patiently: “Okay, let’s assume you can eventually catch all of them and place them in containers. What happens after that, or have you thought that far ahead?”

Well, naturally I had given it considerable thought. Recently I had come across several magazine and newspaper articles recommending backyard rabbit ranching as a practical way to beat the soaring prices of beef and pork. They touted rabbit meat as highly nutritious, inexpensive, cholesterol-free, and quick producing.

“The logical way to solve our rabbit infestation problem,” I said, “is to eat it.”

“Hah!” she replied. “I can see you maybe shooting a wild rabbit, but I just can’t picture you giving the coup de gras to a tame one.”

Okay, I couldn’t picture me doing that, either. She had put her finger unerringly on my Achilles heel. Cottontails are game! It is morally acceptable to shoot your limit, although
it isn't likely. Backyard domestic hare-rabbits are something else again. For one thing they are Thumper's kids and grandkids. And you can't shoot a rifle in town, even if your home is threatened by an avalanche of rabbits.

"I would have no qualms about skinning and cleaning them," I said, "if someone else handled phase one."

"Don't look at me, boy," Randy shrugged. "All I do is design and build the cages, and catch the what-chacallems."

And Dave said: "I'm not even that involved. See you around."

"I'm just the cook," my wife said, over-simplifying her role.

The situation needed more thought, which I have been giving it ever since, especially while rummaging through grocery store garbage bins in search of discarded vegetables and fruit so the darn rabbits would have a properly balanced diet. But here it is garden time again and I'm still procrastinating, although I have narrowed the quandary down to three choices:

1. I can import a hit man from a local abattoir when we want hassenpfeffer on the menu, or even just fried hassen, or
2. I can go on scavenging grocery store garbage for the rest of my life in order to feed the sonofaguns, or
3. I could haul them out into the boondocks and let them ravage the countryside like locusts while starting a whole new sub-species of ecologically unsound hybrid game animal.

Whatever I finally decide to do, it will probably come too late. Meanwhile any alternative suggestions will be greatly appreciated.
We can think of no study more fascinating for Oklahomans than a comparison between the artifacts unearthed from our Spiro Mounds and the Tula influenced cultures of Mexico.

As you will recall, the Spiro Mounds were dynamited in their excavation, shattering many of the treasures not ritually broken upon burial. The unearthed artifacts were further broken apart by the pot hunters so that they could be sold in bits and pieces to increase their profits from selling these treasures. The bits and pieces became scattered far and wide, in museums and private collections throughout the world.

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University has just completed the publication of three huge volumes, bringing together, from all over the world, the existent conch shell cup carvings that were unearthed at Spiro. The Harvard Museum accomplished a monumental chore in seeking out these bits and pieces, making charcoal rubbings of them, assembling and publishing the rubbings, with interpretative sketches, and comments by authors Philip Phillips and James A. Brown. This is the only way the artifacts could possibly have been brought together again for collective study.

The volumes are valuable, were extremely expensive to produce, and are priced at $180.00 per set. Our Oklahoma Historical Society has a complete set of the volumes, as does the Kerr Museum at Poteau, the Stovall Museum at Oklahoma University, and the Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa. The first of the volumes has also been published in a splendid soft-cover edition, 9 x 11 1/2 inches in size (pictured here). It may be purchased from the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, for $25.00. The series is to be continued, focusing on more of the Spiro artifacts. These volumes will without doubt be the ultimate authority on the incredible contents of the Spiro Mounds.

Thus we come to Dr. Joseph Mahan's intriguing theory that the Spiro people were a branch growing from the same ancestral trunk as the Tula people. Upon visiting the Tula-built and-influenced cities of Mexico, especially Tula itself, near Pachuca in the state of Hidalgo, Teotihuacan near Mexico City, and Chichén Itzá on the Yucatan Peninsula, similarities between the Spiro-Tula cultures become inescapably apparent.

This life-long scholar of our mound builder culture projects his conclusions . . .

SPIRO-TULA

BY DR. JOSEPH B. MAHAN
The people who built and occupied the Spiro Mounds were worshippers of the "Plumed Serpent," the personification of the religion of the earth and sky. Their kings, who resided atop some of these mounds and were buried in them when they died, were "Sons of the Sun." These were the kings who were entombed in the chamber inside the Craig Mound, one of the Spiro group, which was opened and looted of its contents in a much-lamented episode of the early 1930s.

Evidence of the presence of the earth-sky religion is abundant in the numerous drawings of serpents with wings on the engraved objects of sea-shell found in the chamber and with the burials in the mound which covered it. Presence of this composite bird-serpent in their ceremonial art means that members of the ruling class—the priests and kings—were the Shawano, the "people of Sha."

The name Sha means both "bird" and "serpent" in the language still spoken by Oklahoma's Yuchis. In another place I have identified this as the language of the Shawano as well.1

There was a separate ruling class at Spiro with a culture which differed extensively from that of the people over whom they ruled. It is the consensus of archaeologists who have worked there that the approximately 725 men, women, and children buried in the Craig Mound were members of an elite group who were distinct from the general population around them.2 These elite people had been accepted by an older population, as was done by the Upper Creeks and other tribes of the Southeastern United States.

It appears from historical and archaeological evidence that the aboriginal population was a people called the Tula, who were part of the family of tribes called the Caddo. As the Tula, they were one of the people reported in my article in the Autumn '77 issue of Oklahoma Today as having representatives living both in the eastern United States and in India-Pakistan. The Tula were also an important segment of the people known in Mexican history as the Toltecs. This fact assumes added significance when we note that these were the people who introduced their deity Quetzalcoatl the "Plumed Serpent," to the Aztecs and other peoples of Central Mexico.

The Tula living in Arkansas and Oklahoma in 1542 were part of a larger group, the Caddoan tribes, which included the Wichita, the Nachitoches, and the Teyas (Texas). There seems to be general agreement among the archaeologists who have worked in the area that the Caddo were direct descendants of nomadic hunters who
SPIRO-TULA

gathered wild-growing seeds and berries for food before they began growing domesticated plants not long before 500 A.D.3 This being true, we can assume that it was Caddoan people who, in 1542, met the Spanish expedition led by Hernando DeSoto, perhaps the first Europeans to enter the area since those who a few centuries earlier left inscribed messages at Heavener and other places in the Arkansas River drainage. The Spanish soon learned that the Tula were powerful and war-like and intended to defend their homeland, so they retreated eastward in the direction from which they had come.4

The Tula (Tulu) people in India were, and are, earth worshippers. So were the Caddo. Evidence is present in the extensive use of the spiral design in their art which represents a serpent as the symbol of Mother Earth. The fact that sky worship existed in both Asia and America is shown by the step motif used on pottery and other mediums in combination with the spiral. This symbolizes the union of the earth and sky, which is also represented by the composite bird-serpent.

My research in Pakistan and India in 1977 convinces me that the Yuchis and several other North American tribes had common origins with ancient peoples of southwest and central Asia. At least eight different peoples who have maintained their identities in both areas still have the same names for themselves.

The name Sha has great significance in comparing the histories of the two distant regions. The literal meanings of this word make it possible to understand much of the symbolism in the art from Spiro and the other temple mounds of North America. In the ancient Sanscrit language of India, and in several modern languages descended from it, Sha has meanings that are identical in the Yuchi-Shawano language. In both languages it means “king” or “leader.” In Yuchean it means both “eagle” and “reptile” and is the stem of the name for the moon (shafa). The same is true in Sanscrit except that it denotes “any of several large birds” rather than specifically the eagle. Also, in Sanscrit there are additional usages as a word-stem which are significant in that they clearly apply to artistic and ceremonial elements from the American mounds. For example, it refers in Sanscrit to a shell or anything hatched from a shell—birds, reptiles and fishes. It also denotes a conch shell, and its close approximation the whelk shell, which is of especial interest in light of the prevailing use of this particular shell in the Shawano religion.

If there were no other proof of relationship, the identical nature of the meanings of Sha in both hemispheres allows us to assume that it is associated in America, as it was in Ancient India and Egypt, with a religion concerned with the union of the earth and sky. In mythologies throughout the world, the serpent represents Mother Earth, and birds are known as messengers from the deity in the sky. In America and in Asia, Sha was both.

Riding to the sky in a boat is another significant element of religious belief the Spiro people shared with the Shawano and other “people from the sky,” notably the ancient Egyptians.

In the traditions of the Upper Creek town of Tuckabahchee, their priests first came to them from the sky. Early in this century Jackson Lewis, an elderly Tuckabahchee, gave this account of the way the Ispokogi5 came to his people:

About this time two Ispokogis came down from above, approached the ball ground and saw that there were people there and that it was good, so they remained with the people. One of these Ispokogis made a dugout canoe, and, when it was completed, he got in and began floating up into the air. But when it was some distance off, he looked back and saw all of the people standing still gazing after him. Then he said, “I cannot leave them.” So he came back and, when he landed, the other Ispokogi lay down and died. The surviving Ispokogi remained with the people after that, and with reference to this event, the word was, “There shall be a link of brothers, life without ending.” This meant that when one...
Another account from Tuckabah- chee stated, "A long time ago, Is- poke-o-goes persons came from Esar- kee-tum-mee-see, the Life Controller, the Source of Life, and brought the vessels to us." 7

Stories of boats as a means of transporting the spirits of dead leaders are found in many different cultures which shared the tradition of sun king leaders from the sky. Two stories from Mexico and Middle America tell of a visit by a white, bearded teacher—Kukulcan according to the Mayas, Quetzalcoatl in the Aztec version—who arrived in a boat in which he later went away, promising to return. Some say that he came from the sky, others that he came from across the sea to the east.

The Egyptian Pharaohs were believed to go west with the sun in a boat when they died. In order to make this journey "sun boats," either miniatures or full-sized, were buried with the dead king. Such a boat is represented on one of the shell carvings from the burial vault beneath Spiro's Craig Mound. It is a "sun boat" clearly indicated by the solar disk which adorns the top of its mast. This symbol for the sun is known throughout world art, and is identical to solar disks which adorn the "sun boats" in Egyptian art.

Knowing this, the information that a "copper canoe" some ten feet or more in length was among the items removed from the vault in the Craig Mound has special meaning. On a visit to Oklahoma in August, 1978, Dr. James Sullivan and I accompanied Heavener's Gloria Farley to talk with William Clay Beach, of Carterville, Oklahoma. Mr. Beach is one of the few people still living who were actually inside the Craig Mound vault before it was destroyed. He crawled into it several times, through the tunnel the pot hunters dug from the exterior of the mound. A science teacher at a nearby school, Beach became interested in the mound when one of his young students who had visited the site brought back engraved shell on which was the drawing of the "sun boat."

Replying to my questions, Mr. Beach described in considerable detail the vault he entered. He said it was "really a room, more like a dome-shaped room, fifteen feet across," inside the mound. He continued giving intriguing information about a copper boat which had been found in the tomb. As he told the story;

"There was a man at Dardanelle who had a shop with relics to sell. He had a kind of copper canoe. He called it a canoe. It was smashed up like an old copper pot."

Asked if the ends were shaped like a canoe, Beach said they were mashed flat when he saw the object, but that the man who had it said they "had been shaped that way," and that it had been "long enough to be a small canoe. It would have reached almost across this room." He indicated a distance which I estimated to be at least ten feet in length, and described the walls of the boat as "about as thick as an old-time cooking pot."

As he talked, I lost whatever doubts I may ever have had concerning the identity of the Spiro people. I was convinced that they were Shawano, that they had kings who belonged to the people known as the Zoyaha, "Sun-descended people," and that this item had been a copper boat prepared for one of these kings to use in his journey to the west with the setting sun.

2 Mary Ann Holmes and Marsha Hill, The Spiro Mounds Site. (Stoval Museum, The University of Oklahoma, 1976), passim.
3 Holmes and Hill, loc.cit.
5 One of the four names for individual groups of the Shawano identified by Chief Samuel W. Brown, Jr., of the Yuchi Tribe. Mahan, op. cit., 254-57.
7 Ibid., 250.
FROM THIS YEAR'S ALL-INDIAN COMPETITION AT CONCHO

We congratulate Mrs. Carol Soatikee, Apache great-granddaughter of Mangas Coloradas, who founded these fine competitive events in Creative Writing, Arts, Crafts, and Music, and is the moving spirit in their continuation.

TEN YEARS AGO IN OKLAHOMA TODAY

We made an effort to persuade people toward a proper respect for our colorful Indian ceremonials. The coming months are filled with them; Green Corn Dances on the Square Grounds in Eastern Oklahoma; the Osage In-lon-Schka in Northern Oklahoma; Pow Wow Club gatherings in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, many state communities; the Tiapiah in Lawton; the Gourd Clan in Carnegie; the Tonkongo in Anadarko. Each of these ceremonials deserves to be honored and respected by all who are present to observe.

Pendleton Woods pointed out how practical a VACATION BY AIR is in Oklahoma. Our state parks, lodges, recreational areas, and historic sites are well served by nearly 250 airports. By commercial flight and rent-a-car you can see Oklahoma from the air and enjoy your vacation on the ground. Sports car clubs occupy the interest of many and our Anniversary Issue brought you up-to-date on rallies to attend and rules to observe. Our Quarter Horse royalty receives extensive recognition from George Gurley of Ada. Ann Tacker’s MEANNDERING gave us a charming fun-filled narrative of getting the family 4th-grader prepared for the grade school’s dramatic presentation, and, among many other things, this verse;

Adults who view with trepidation all the younger generation don’t despair, it’s just a stage.

The only cure is called old age.

George Wright’s narrative about the talking crow he owned as a boy is warmly nostalgic. Nell Ives’ article NESCATUNGA: BIG SALT WATER is filled with interesting facts. We’ll bet most Oklahomans didn’t know that one of the reasons Thomas Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase was to acquire the salt deposits in Oklahoma; and that the very first commercial oil well in the world was brought in by Cherokee chief John Ross’ brother, who was drilling for salt. The Oklahoma Scrapbook section contains one of our favorite people-stories; that of the reunion at Rainy Mountain of the Kiowa people who had attended school there as youngsters. We spent a delightful day there. It was remarkable to hear them singing their old school song, to the tune of Boola Boola, in the Kiowa language;

Sate-yil-dah,
Sate-yil-dah ...

We brought you up to the minute on the newest museums that had been opened; at Dewey, the Tom Mix Museum; at Swink, the Chief’s house; at Cleo Springs, the Settlers sod House; at Waurika, the Chisholm Trail Museum; at Pawhuska, the Osage County Historical Museum; and at Poteau, the Kerr Foundation Museum. Oklahoman N. Scott Moma-day had just won the Pulitzer Prize for his book House Made of Dawn. Jessie Daniels contributed a national prize winning essay about a 1903 picnic along the Cimarron.

We pictured in full color the tremendous stageband then going strong at Edison High School, Tulsa, “The Screaming Eagles,” under the direction of Ashley Alexander, Jr. You can purchase a copy of this collector’s item Anniversary Issue by sending $2.00 to Oklahoma Today, Will Rogers Memorial Building, Oklahoma City 73105. Pictured in full color are the Apache Mountain Spirit Dancers, the Osage In-lon-Schka, the clear beauty of Jack Fork Creek near Ada, the spring-fed stream which bisects the Blaine Escarpment near Watonga, and a beautifully blue canyon lake in Caddo County. The wing-like sails of graceful boats ply Fort Gibson Lake, Lake Tenkiller, and Lake Wister, and Dr. Phil Lindsey’s photo of sun rays pouring through dark clouds over the Nesca-tunga River creates another Oklahoma summer sky equal to those pictured in this issue.
HAVEN

Today my heart staked claim
Upon a lonely Oklahoma hill,
Where sturdy crooked blackjacks
Are jagged shadows
Against the flaming sky.

An Oklahoma hill where purple
shadows fall
Andcurve with the soaring crow's
wings,
Curving and returning over new
plowed fields
Red as mortal wounds
Bordering green suede of winter
wheat.

An Oklahoma hill where bright
clouds,
Sharp against a turquoise sky,
Labor slowly up the slope
Like burdened women climbing.

Nothing soft here,
Nothing blended.
Shadows here are sharp.
Sudden scarlet burns the banks
of rivers
Beneath white trunks of cottonwoods
And the arching Indian turquoise
And the beaten bronze of sky.

My heart has staked its claim
On an Oklahoma hill.

... Betty Hatcher

A new sculpture of Will Rogers,
executed by artist-sculptor Fred Olds,
curator of the Territorial Museum,
was unveiled by Gov. George Nigh
on 89er's Day, April 22nd, in front
of Guthrie's historic old Carnegie
Library.

The Memorial Traveling Exhibit of
Will Rogers Memorabilia, housed in
a kingsize truck-trailer van, made its
inaugural appearance at the Azalea
Festival in Muskogee this spring. It
will be traveling in Oklahoma through-
out the remainder of the year. Watch
for its appearance in a community
near you.
In the alcove beside the south entrance of the Will Rogers Memorial, Claremore, are permanently mounted plaques. Memorial visitors often pass them by. Drawn by the heroic statue of Will in the foyer, they eagerly enter the inviting front doors. The exhibits encountered inside so seize their interest that however much time they spend they find they still can't see everything, and at last depart through the north doors toward the parking lot. The plaques in the loggia remain unseen. Have you ever paused to examine them? If not, you should on your next trip to the Memorial. Here are a few words from several of them;

I

“To the memory of Will Rogers, the world's most beloved showman . . .”
Variety Clubs International
presented by: Bob Hope
date: 1947

II

“We honor the memory of Oklahoma's beloved native son . . . whose homely philosophy . . . brought laughter and tears to prince and commoner alike.”
The Cherokee Nation
presented by: Judge O.H.P. Brewer
date: 1946

III

“He saw in air transport . . . endless possibilities. Through his vision, courage and perseverance, the cause of air transport received physical encouragement, moral assistance and guiding genius at a time when such support was most needed.”
Air Transport Association
presented by: Earl D. Johnson, president
date: 1954

IV

“Dedicated to one of the greatest promoters of air exploration, who by words and deeds helped aviation through its most trying period in the 1930's.”
Pilot Command Crew of Apollo 14
presented by: Stuart Roosa
date: 1971

V

“One who loved his fellow man.”
Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks
presented by: Judge J. S. McClellan
date: 1942

VI

“. . . to the memory of our beloved noble Will Rogers.”
Akdar Shrine: Masonic Lodge
presented by: Galloway Calhoun
date: 1948

VII

“Friend of the boy . . . who contributed so much to the development of youth throughout the world.”
Optimist International
presented by: Dr. Walter A. Reiling
date: 1953

VIII

“Will Rogers, a man who possessed a great depth of human understanding . . .”
International Assn. of Lions Clubs
presented by: Dr. Robert McCullough
date: 1970

IX

“In tribute to Will Rogers, native son and world citizen.”
The People of the State of Oklahoma,
dedicated on Nov. 4, 1938, the Anniversary of his birth.

X

“Will Rogers, a great American who brought a little peace of mind to a troubled world.”
The Oklahoma Press Association
date: 1948

A new plaque will soon be mounted at the memorial. Actor Jimmy Stewart, as master of ceremonies, presented it when Will Rogers was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame (see Oklahoma Today, Autumn '77).
At the Gilcrease Institute of American History

THE OLAF SELTZER CO.

by Mildred D. Ladner
The black and white enlargement of Smoke Boat covering these two pages illustrates an aspect of the magic of Olaf Seltzer; his skilled technique in presenting the illusion of detail. View the color reproduction here. Compare its brush strokes with the easily visible ones in the enlargement. Put a magnifying glass on the color reproduction. Now you begin to see this facet of Seltzer's artistry. How much he suggests with each stroke he sketches! How much the viewer, imagination set in motion, is led to collaborate by the persuasive hints of Seltzer's brush. The result is the satisfying fulfillment of viewing a full sized, detailed painting.
Olaf Seltzer's pictures are surprisingly fitting to the Oklahoma frontier experience. Steamboats on the Arkansas in Indian Territory were viewed from concealment by curious aboriginal eyes (page 31). Cowman challenged sheeplman. Sodbusters in Kiowa-Comanche-Cheyenne country, turning their first furrows, encountered Indian scrutiny that must have seemed as threatening as it was curious. Cowboys on night herd watched the Herder's Clock, telling the time from the slow wheeling of stars in the sky overhead, and rising puffs of Indian smoke talk from the heights often alerted travelers in the Wichita Mountains that they were not alone, however empty and lonesome the rugged surroundings seemed. Every medicine man who sought a place apart in which to pray and sing and seek the way would be reminiscent of Sitting Bull in Seltzer's portrayal. The Oklahoma Frontier knew the Bead Worker, the Ranch Foreman, the River Rat, the Barkeeper, the Circuit Judge, the Horse Wrangler, the Roundup Cook, the Blacksmith, and the Buffalo Hunter (see page 35). It can be fairly said that Seltzer's graphic work, though executed in Montana, applies to the American West as a whole.

Because a New York art collector ran out of space on the walls of his home 50 years ago, the Gilcrease Institute today displays a unique series of miniature oil paintings depicting frontier America.

The artist was Olaf Carl Seltzer, Danish-born railroad machinist who emigrated to Montana in 1892 and worked the night shift in the Great Northern shops for 29 years so that he could paint in strong morning light. During most of this time, his greatest enjoyment, apart from his family, was in the sketching expeditions he made with his friend, Charles Marion Russell.

By 1926, Seltzer's association with Charlie Russell and the New York artists who visited Russell convinced him that he could make good in the East. He decided to head for Manhattan.

Shortly after making this decision, Seltzer met Dr. Philip Gillett Cole in Helena, Montana. Cole was a physician whose father's investment in the Schrader tire valve brought such fabulous wealth (and heavy responsibility) to the family that he was forced to give up his plan to return to his Montana practice after World War I to become a New Yorker instead. He never totally adjusted to city life. Living in the East, he yearned to be riding across the wide plains on his favorite horse, and to relive the scenes of his youth.

As a means of bringing the Old West closer, Cole collected western art and historical documents. He, too, was a friend of Charlie Russell's, and the cowboy artist's death late in 1926 cemented the friendship between the physician-turned-industrialist and the machinist-artist. Seltzer's work was added to Cole's expanding collection.

By 1927, it was apparent that frontier ways had disappeared. The New York collector and his western painter friend, depleting this loss, began to lay plans to perpetuate the Old West in a series of paintings. Eventually, there were several series.

First came the 79 Western Character watercolors representing such colorful types as the Trapper, Prospector, Headworker, Cattle Ruster, Sheriff, Horse Wrangler, River Rat and Pioneer Mother. Each bears a tea-cup sized scene symbolic of the subject in the lower right hand corner of the matting. Beneath the weary Circuit Judge is a hack drawn by a patient gray, tied to a hitching post. The cocky Horse Wrangler is complemented by a grazing herd; the Round-Up Cook by his chuck wagon; the Foreman by the lone range boss hunkered down by his horse, watching a herd in the distance.

Planning the accoutrements and deciding on colors for the mats was a joint project, with letters flying back and forth between Cole's Fifth Avenue office and Montana, for Seltzer returned to the source of his inspiration after a season in the metropolis. Sometimes his patron disagreed with the concept held by the artist, and the patient Olaf would take back the original and substitute a more rough-hewn version, as in the Barkeep and the Dance Hall Girl.

Enthralled by the vignettes, Cole in 1928 began urging Seltzer to paint in smaller dimensions. Discussing plans for an oil to include Lewis and Clark with Clark's black aide, York, and the Indian guide, Sacajawea, Cole wrote:

I... honestly like your smaller pictures so much better than your big canvasses. Also you know space is a big item with me. Why don't you work up one for me as small as you can? As you know, this picture is very close to my heart...

Delighted with some newly-arrived Western Characters, Cole made his point again a few weeks later:

The more I see of your work the... more sincerely I urge upon you the advisability of concentrating on small size things of historical nature. That is where you are in a class by yourself—I am positive of that.

Before the Western Characters series was completed, Cole was corresponding with the painter about an ambitious undertaking—to depict in oil the development of the West through a series of small scenes memorializing events in Montana's history.

By the time the miniatures got under way in 1933, the Coles were in residence at Zeeview, a Hudson River estate the doctor purchased to have
more wall space for his paintings. (Since renamed Bellevue, the estate is now the headquarters for Dr. Sun Myung Moon.) Cole hung western paintings from ceiling to chair rail level in his study, displayed his large Russells in the high-ceiling stairwell and lined the hallways with groupings of Seltzer's work. Space continued to be a problem.

In the next three-and-a-half years, Seltzer painted 110 miniature oils within 4 1/2” x 6” limits, basing his scenes on long hours of research in the Great Falls Public Library. Dr. Cole also researched, using historic documents from his personal library, many of them connected with Custer's massacre. During lengthy visits to Zeeview, Seltzer painted happily in a split-level studio Cole had built on the grounds for his wife, a sculptor.

The historical paintings fall within 10 general categories: early explorers and trappers, Lewis and Clark milestones, Indian customs, range practices, wild animal herds, Indian wars, mining techniques, outlaws, vigilantes, and those who left their mark on the frontier for various other reasons.

So intriguing is the historical detail that viewers sometimes overlook the delicate beauty of the paintings. Many have a pastoral feeling. The detail is fantastic. In *The Parley*, playing cards are recognizable. In *The Faro Layout—Mint Saloon*, one can recognize the prints of famous prizefighters on the wall. *The Buffalo Dance* contains an incredible amount of beaded trappings on costumes and fine tipi decorations.

By the time the last miniature was delivered, the nation was in the throes of the Depression. Cole wrote to Seltzer:

> I am going very easy on paintings from now on and really only going to pick up a new one when a real gem comes along at a real bargain . . . to add a painting means removing one from the walls of the house for the walls are not elastic and as you know every inch of space is already filled.

On June 29, 1941, Philip Cole died of a massive stroke at the age of 57. He had collected for his own pleasure, and left no instructions concerning disposition of his prized collection.

When the collection, numbering 560 paintings (more than half by Seltzer), 62 bronzes and a mass of historical material, was offered for sale, Tulsa oilman Tom Gilcrease purchased it for $250,000—the art bargain of the era. It was absorbed into his fabulous collection which was opened to the public in 1949 in the Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, located on the fringe of Tulsa and now operated by the city.

Here in a Seltzer gallery are dozens of miniatures hung along with Western Characters, a series of transportation oils and larger paintings. Their soft color, enamel-like texture and the realism exhibited have created a following for the miniatures in particular, drawing visitors back again and again.

By the time the miniatures were completed, Olaf Seltzer, nearing 60, was wearing thick glasses. His eyes had been put under a constant strain as he painted with the use of a magnifying glass, employing a brush from which all but one sable hair had been pulled to achieve infinitely fine detail. During his latter years, he painted for short periods of time only during the morning hours. He died in 1957 at the age of 80.

Was the result worth the sacrifice? It is likely that had this machinist whose strong hands worked on locomotives never painted another picture, he would be remembered for these gems of western history. So sharp and clear are the minute brush strokes that the little paintings can be enlarged without distortion; so rich and glowing their color that they are frequently compared to jewels, for light seems to reflect from them.

That they will remain forever in Oklahoma is due to the farsightedness of Tom Gilcrease, whose object was to leave behind something of value which could be enjoyed by his fellow Oklahomans and by all those who treasure the sacrifices that went into the development of the West.

The miniatures are a priceless documentary in oil. They are the crown jewels of O. C. Seltzer's work, created for a collector with nostalgic memories of his western childhood—and walls that couldn't be stretched.

THE SUMMER SKIES OF OKLAHOMA - From Quartz Mountain Crest, the ridges continue to lift toward the rising sun far as far as the eye can see, and beyond, until they merge with the Wichita Range.
While Desiderio Xochitiotzin, towering giant of mural artists in Mexico, was lecturing at Central State University we took him to visit the Oklahoma Theater Center. That he was impressed would be to say it too mildly. He was overwhelmed! By the practicality and adaptability of what he called "the most perfectly conceived structure for the presentation of drama I've seen in any country I've visited." And he tours Europe, the U.S., Asia . . .

Children's theater was being presented on the Arena Stage, a rehearsal was in progress on the Thrust Stage, and he toured the extensive complex of prop rooms, stage set storage, stored costumes for every human age and condition, the sewing department, the scenery shop, all so handily integrated. He concluded by circumnavigating the Theater Center's modernistic exterior.

"It is an architectural jewel!" declared Xochitiotzin, for architecture is a part of his art as a muralist. "In time you will be presenting the best drama in America here."

That time may have arrived.

Following Man of La Mancha, at the Theater Center last spring, Dr. Clara Chávez commented, "I saw the Broadway production of La Mancha. And the original Spanish company in Madrid. Also the New York road company which went on tour, and, of course, the movie. The Theater Center's La Mancha was better than any of them! Darrel Goss, who played Quixote here, had the deepest understanding of the part, and the most musical voice for the role. Sancho, Carrasco, Maria, the instrumental music, the solo and group singing, all were splendid. Cervantes would have been proud to see his work so effectively and sensitively performed."

If today's sensation-oriented movies and tv leave you unfulfilled, try a Theater Center show. A reserved seat for a Theater Center production costs no more than a movie ticket. Next year's productions will include A CHRISTMAS CAROL, THE OLDEST LIVING GRADUATE, DARK OF THE MOON, SHERLOCK HOLMES, the musical SHE LOVES ME, and either SAME TIME NEXT YEAR, ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR, PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE, or VANITIES. For further information and/or tickets drop a note to the Theater Center, 400 W. Sheridan, Oklahoma City, Ok. 73102, or telephone 405-239-7333.
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