Once, not too many years ago, everyone in the country “knew” Will Rogers. “Our Will Rogers” they said. The one who brings a chuckle to us over the morning coffee with his droll and wise comments in the daily newspaper. “He speaks to us . . . for us . . . so said politicians, businessmen, housewives, pilots, show people, the famous and infamous, both celebrities and little people totally unknown.

“He’s the best actor in Hollywood,” said young Spencer Tracy, who recognized the genius in “just being yourself” on the silver screen. “He’s an inspiration to us all,” said Joel McCrea who credits his friend Will with helping him develop his values, as well as his acting.

“He’s the most generous man alive,” said leaders of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and dozens of other groups who help the down-and-out, the victims of tragedies. Rogers was always the first to volunteer, to raise funds, and give generously, in money as well as time and talent.

“He’s the most dangerous man in America,” accused H. L. Mencken, caustic writer who knew the influence his friend Will could have through the media, that Will was listened to by leaders on Capitol Hill as well as the man in the street. Rogers hooted at the idea that a humorist could carry any clout. If it was power, it was wrapped in laughter, and likely hidden from Will himself.

“Rogers knows more about the international situation than any diplomat we have,” said President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a close personal friend who once addressed a handwritten letter to “Wyll” Rogers in justful retaliation for Will’s use of “Franklyn” in writing about the President.

He was America’s Ambassador to the World, who was loved and understood by many who could not speak his native tongue. As one said, “Mr. Rogers speaks with his heart, and you don’t have to understand the words.”

But what has happened in the forty-four years since the plane crash took the life of Oklahoma’s, and America’s, favorite son? Is he remembered by those who were youngsters at the time of his death? Do the children and grandchildren of those who knew him so well have any idea what makes the older generation speak of him with a mixture of gentle laughter and reverence?

“What is he, Daddy?” the little ones ask, as they come to the Will Rogers Memorial and stop—as they always do—to look up at the large statue of the man in the foyer, the larger than life bronze with toes rubbed shiney gold from having been touched by some 20 million visitors since the Memorial opened in 1938.

As they tour the Memorial, they watch the film that tells his life story, view the hundreds of photos on display that show him with some of the best known pilots, politicians, actors and business tycoons. They see the saddle collection, his boots and chaps, the polo equipment, well worn, and hear his voice . . .

In growing up they see his name on many places. On airports, theatres, streets, boulevards, highways, schools, churches, government buildings monuments . . .

Almost immediately after the crash, there was an outpouring of plans for various “memorials” to Will Rogers. Everyone wanted to “do something for Will.” Hundreds of clubs, towns, schools and individuals came up with ideas and started raising funds.

Realizing the deep emotional need of the people, President Roosevelt appointed Vice-President John Nance Garner to head up a National Committee to provide a fitting monument, a lasting memorial, something that would honor Will and unite those who felt such loss into a positive, restorative venture. The 300 member National Committee is a who’s who of big names in America.
Two views of the Will Rogers Ranch Home in California, showing the main house, and Will's oft used (and still used) polo field. Color Photos by Bill Burchardt.
Newspapers across the nation pledged to support the drive that began in November, 1935. Banks volunteered to handle money as it was collected in each town. Fund-raising ranged from auctions to bridge parties to rodeos, from collections at ball games, in movie theatres, and air shows. Many contributed a thousand dollars or more but no one seemed to know exactly how the funds should be used and no one group could decide. Some suggested flight schools, gyms and athletic programs for youngsters, relief funds and programs for the needy. President Roosevelt wanted a hospital for polio victims.

Finally, after many months of indecision, the fund was split three ways—for California, Oklahoma, and Texas—where it went to the universities in these states to furnish scholarships for those who worked with handicapped children. The invested funds have helped educate hundreds.

Friends of Rogers still worried that there would be no monument to keep him before the public. Amon Carter, Ft. Worth publisher-oilman, commissioned an equestrian statue to be placed at the Ft. Worth Coliseum, which was re-named for Rogers. Later he donated two more castings, to Texas and Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma legislature appropriated $30,000 for a statue in Statuary Hall at the National Capitol; the state’s second such son to be so honored; the first was Sequoyah—also a Cherokee.

Spencer Penrose, wealthy owner of the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, was then constructing an observation tower, halfway up Cheyenne Mountain that rose above his famous hotel. He decided to name it for his friend, and it remains to this day the “Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun.” A bust of Rogers greets visitors, and pictures depict his life. Penrose himself is buried in the chapel-tomb on the lower level, but many visitors there will argue that it is the burial site of their beloved Will Rogers.

Oklomans were determined that a lasting monument should be placed in Will’s native state. During the national fund-raising drive numerous Oklahoma groups pressed to have the funds used to construct a Memorial in Oklahoma; but to no avail.

They went to Congress. Led by Oklahoma business and professional men they worked toward getting a bill passed for a Memorial to be placed at Claremore. The bill passed Congress without a dissenting vote. But Will’s old friend “Franklyn” ved

Will Rogers Historic Park, 15 miles west of Los Angeles, includes Will’s ranch house, stable, corals, riding ring, roping arena, polo field, and riding trails through the surrounding hills. Photos by BB.
tions of pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, all the things that poured in from fans across the country. In 1944, shortly before her own death, Mrs. Will Rogers arranged to have his body moved back to Oklahoma and a suitable crypt and garden were designed for that purpose. Thousands daily walk by the simple marker and the sarcophagus that mark the burial site of Will and Betty Rogers and their infant son, Freddie, whose body was also brought back to Claremore for burial beside his parents.

Before Mrs. Rogers' death, she made a decision that would provide another living monument to her famous husband. After discussions with her three children and close friends, she deeded the beautiful Santa Monica ranch home to the State of California—to be kept as it was when the Rogers family lived there—and to provide space for polo games, riding trails, and other activities on the Santa Monica ranch. Maintained as the Will Rogers Historical Park in what is now Pacific Palisades, the facilities are enjoyed by thousands of Californians and out-of-state visitors each day.

Even though Will began life in the days of Indian Territory, he entered fields of communication where much of his humor and philosophy is recorded and younger generations will be able to "know" him too. Most of the films he made—over 48 silent films and 20 talkies—are on file at the Memorial in Claremore. Some are shown to visitors via video-tape even now, and plans for a theatre are on the drawing board. Records and tapes of his radio broadcasts are available.

His writings—some two million words—are being re-published by Oklahoma State University. To date, his six books are back in print, as well as four volumes of his daily "Will Rogers Says" newspaper columns. Work is progressing on six volumes of his weekly articles, plus more volumes for his magazine articles and speeches. Thousands of articles have been written about him in newspapers and magazines. Many books have been written about him in the past, and new books are still being produced.

Will Rogers can still speak for himself better than anyone else. When it was a fad to ask celebrities what they would like for their own epitaph, he jokingly told a reporter, "I never met a man I didn't like." It was a feeling he had expressed many times, in one way or another. He didn't mean he approved of what everyone did. No milk-toast, he knew about human weakness and frailty; he abhorred meanness or cruelty, to man or beast; and he could get angry. But he looked for the best in everyone, and the best is what he usually found. He hoped the world would be as tolerant and understanding of him after he was gone.

Too modest to recognize his own greatness, Will Rogers never expected to be immortalized. He wished only to be loved...like everyman and everywoman. The best he expected at the end of his life is found in his own...
words, when he wrote about the death of his sister, Maude, in 1925:

Today, as I write this, I am not in the Follies, the carefree comedian who jokes about everything. I am out in Oklahoma, among my people, my Cherokee people, who don’t expect a laugh for everything I say . . . Back home at the funeral of my sister . . . I have just today witnessed a funeral that for real sorrow and real affection I don’t think will ever be surpassed anywhere.

They came in every mode of conveyance, on foot, in buggies, horseback, wagons, cars and trains, and there wasn’t a soul that came that she hadn’t helped or favored at one time or another . . .

Some uniformed newspapers printed: “Mrs. C. L. Lane, sister of the famous comedian, Will Rogers.”

They were greatly misinformed. It’s the other way around. I am the brother of Mrs. C. L. Lane, “The friend of humanity.” And I want to tell you, all these people who were there to pay tribute to her memory, it was the proudest moment of my life that I was her brother. And all the honors that I could ever in my wildest dreams hope to reach, would never equal the honor paid on a little western prairie hilltop, among her people, to Maude Lane.

If they will love me like that at the finish, my life will not have been in vain.
All I knew was what I saw in the old movies, where desk clerks read newspapers endlessly, occasionally handing out a room key, usually without looking up from the newspaper. I can do that I thought, while waiting for a job with real challenge. After all, Hollywood should know.

"I don't have specific motel experience," I told the agreeable, mustachioed manager, "but I can bring a lot of basic intelligence to the job."

Then I held my breath. Once before when using that "basic intelligence" routine, the would-be employer turned me down. "Do that!" he'd exclaimed "and you'll ruin everything!"

But this young man brushed his bristles and told me to show up at 7 AM Sunday morning; a slow morning, ideal for breaking in new people.

And so, as it came to pass, there were two Sunday morning surprises for people who expect no surprises.
E'S NEW HERE

One was a storm that rained ice on the Interstate all night, and the other was—me. I was greeted by a swiftly moving professional lady desk clerk and a milling crowd of stranded travelers all trying to get in or out of the place. My teacher assigned me to the switchboard and swiftly went through some instructional preliminaries. I pitied my basic intelligence against the intricacies of the beast. It hated my touch and reminded me of a crotchety patient furious with a student nurse who'd caught his gouty foot in the elevator door. It was mean and venomous with miles of spines and vines and ropy plugs and, for my purposes, 300 wrong numbers.

My job, when a little pin-sized light lit, was to take a ropy plug with a metal tip and stick it in a hole below the light. After chirping a cheery, "Good Morning, Highway Inn South," I was to look at a revolving rack containing wees slips of paper alphabetizing the hotel guests and their room numbers. I was then to take another ropy plug and stick it in the hole beneath the desired room number.

Maybe, under conditions of peace and quiet, basic intelligence might have got me through. One pin-sized light, one plug-in, a cheery "good morning," a quick look at a revolving rack, and one happy connection.

But it didn't work that way. I couldn't find the numbers and groped over the board mumbling. "Eighty-two? One ninety-three? Two eighty-three? Oh! There you are!" The world couldn't wait and suddenly the board got the crazies and went wild.

Twenty-four snakey, ropy, metal-tipped, nerve-jangling tenacles went for my throat. I got rope burn plugging and unplugging, seeking and rarely finding, and cut off three wives and a girl friend my first shot out of the box.

I had always fantasized that if I ever had a job speaking to the public I would never put them on hold. I would speak with such exquisite courtesy that butter would slither in my mouth and my beautifully inflected voice would radiate graciousness and helpfulness. Now here I was snapping into the phone, "Whadda you want?" pulling and plugging frantically. Basic intelligence at that point became my worst enemy for a monkey could have done a better job. People who didn't get answered hung up and provoked the switchboard to sprout more lights which pulsed in concert with a flap-flap, slap-slap, blap-blapping urgency that was worse than a child having to go to the bathroom NOW.

Rattled, beside myself, my private mutterings and exclamations went from surprised ear to surprised ear all over the motel. "This miserable machine," I wept, simultaneously yanking and plugging. I was on the fast lane of the highway to oblivion. "Good Morning, Travelers' Lodge, I mean Highway Inn I mean, Oh! You've called four times? Yeah, yeah, I'll send you towels! Keep your pants on."

An alarm clock beside me clanged forth to remind me it was time to make wake-up calls from a list at my shaking elbow. I couldn't get the alarm to stop ringing. I summoned the old basic intelligence out of the pits and began making wake-up calls anyway.

"Get up!" I told them, wishing I could advise them which part of the

BY HILARY HEMINGWAY

AUTUMN 1979
well, and laughed a lot when he thought I wasn’t looking. Three people were now training me for my new job and I felt like a dog with three masters trying to respond to three different whistles. No matter how hard I tried to remember the millions of detailed procedures which accompanied every small transaction (and I had notes stuffed down my neck and in all my pockets), each of the three had a different style, and, despite kind encouragement, I began to doubt my own basic intelligence.

One trainer taught me to flip a red switch left which signalled housekeeping to clean a room, another taught me to flip a green switch right and activate the blinking red light on a guest’s phone that indicated he was to call the desk. The maids and the messages had quite a time of it. I always got it backwards. I thought of putting on red and green mittens the way they do in kindergarten to teach left and right!

By the third day, I could at least check people in and out on their merry ways if the fools didn’t give me a new form, slip, exception, qualification, VIP card or some other new mystery. They often did, and I’d had a few brief encounters of the worst kind with the posting-machine/cash register. That machine had buttons that didn’t work, and a code that would have defied an espionage agent.

A nice looking gentleman approached the desk. I found his bill, then nearly fainted. It wasn’t going to be a simple transaction. He’d charged booze, food, long-distance calls, laundry, and heaven knows what else. Everything was in code. But I would try. I hit a button or two, sweating and silently praying that my co-worker wouldn’t fly over and say, “Sorry, sir, she’s new,” when the bottom drawer vomited open and hit me in the stomach, splashing change all over the floor. I retrieved it. Another gentleman began to tap his key on the counter impatiently. Another guest pressed a grim penetrating gaze down on me.

He wanted his laundry. He had a plane to catch. He wanted it fast! I flew to the back room and nearly asphyxiated myself in plastic bags searching for his duds. The original agreeable gentleman was now juggling in place waiting for his freedom from my inept machinations at the posting machine. My teacher glided to my side as if she wore wings and with a waft of her hand completed the transactions. “Sorry, sir, she’s new here.”

A man handed me some letters and I dejectedly passed them through the mail slot on the back wall. Another asked for a newspaper. How could I miss on this? They were on the floor right in back of me. Leaning over for the newspaper my nose started bleeding again, making red headlines. I ran for the tissue and squeezed my nose shut. A guest who must have been from the planet Ork asked me if I would get on the computer and make reservations for him.

“Are you kidding?” I gulped sarcastically. That reservation machine was one thing I was steering clear of. I knew if I touched it I could conceivably cancel the state of California. A pouty guest approached the counter to report he’d lost his nickel in the vending machine. Without asking I knew that multiple sets of forms lurked somewhere to care for this problem. The nickel came out of my pocket. At last I spied a cheerful guest with no problems, I rejoiced, seeing a robust, red-shirted man triumphantly approaching the counter. He drew in a great proud breath and exhaled triumphantly, handing me his income tax return to mail. I mailed it and leapt for the bleep, blapping, flip-flapping switchboard.

“No! No! No!” someone yelled.

My heart stopped and I turned to see my serene, unflappable teacher jumping up and down and screaming. What had I done wrong this time?

She jerked open the slotted door and withdrew the wastebasket into which I’d been mailing letters for two days. The red-shirted gentleman came slowly back to his normal pink as we retrieved his tax return.

“Sorry, sir, she’s new here,” the red-head explained. But it was getting harder for her. The man clamped his hand to his forehead and reeled out the door.

It took guts to show up for work each day. But then I had. Each day I prayed the dawn would break permitting me to do things easily, efficiently, collectively, the way the others did. But each day was worse. I felt irredeemably stupid, with three patient teachers waiting for me to improve.

Then, I noticed something about them. They did not seem to mind making customers wait and never got rattled (until I came). They completed each transaction before moving on to another. I’d heard them take lengthy reservations on the phone, while ten people were on hold and half the motel mobbed the desk.

It was then I realized it wasn’t my basic intelligence that was at fault, but my basic training. For, had I, as the mother of small children completed each transaction before leaping to another, no child would have survived. If my two-year-old decided to give the chicken I bought for dinner a nice bath in the toilet, I did not go placidly on finishing ironing the sleeve of a shirt. Sometimes I got back to the shirt and sometimes my husband had to keep his coat on all day.

I wasn’t sure I could change. I had cracked under pressure. Sweat beaded, I was once observed to beg a customer to reach in the cash drawer and make change for his own nickel.

The news of my resignation didn’t cause any basic sorrow, although we had all become rather fond of one another. I had been useful as a horrible example.

I even heard that one of the regular guests asked about me after I’d gone. “What happened to the lady who was new here?” he’d inquired.

My teacher-on-duty replied, “She went out to lunch—permanently.”
It comes as a shock to many that history is sometimes slanted or omits things, due to the viewpoint of the times, or the historian. Viewpoint often colors the account. The Battle of Little Big Horn did not look the same to a Souix warrior as it did to a soldier of the 7th Cavalry. My grandfather, a young German emigrant who could hardly speak English, saw the Cherokee Strip Run of 1893 in a far different light than did a member of the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association who ran cattle in the Strip, or a partisan member of the Cherokee Tribe who felt that the land belonged to his people in perpetuity.

We should observe the past through the eyes of as many witnesses as possible, that we may gain a better perspective of the present, and hope to base our decisions on a broadened understanding of the problems confronted by all humans.

We present here a few excerpts from a remarkable book, BLACK HISTORY IN OKLAHOMA: A Resource Book; edited by Kaye M. Teall.

It is not a book of opinion. It reproduces the words of those who lived the experiences; slavery in Oklahoma, fighting at Honey Springs, the varying acceptance by Indian people of their own slaves and freedmen; the Buffalo Soldier, and the great Land Runs. BB.

From: Ex-Slave Narratives
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
Person Interviewed:
Chaney Richardson
I was born in the old Caney settlement southeast of Tahlequah on the banks of Caney Creek. Off to the north we could see the big old ridge of Sugar Mountain when the sun shone on it first thing in the morning when we all were getting up.

My master and all the rest of the folks were Cherokees, and they'd been killing each other off in the feud ever since long before I was born. We children were always afraid to go any place unless some of the grown folks were along. We didn't know what we were afraid of, but we heard the master and mistress keep talking about "another Party killing" and we stuck close to the place . . .

When I was about 10 years old that feud got so bad the Indians were always talking about getting their horses and cattle killed and their slaves harmed. I was too little to know how bad it was until one morning my own mammy went off somewhere down the road to get some stuff to dye clothes and she didn't come back.

Lots of the young Indians on both sides of the feud would ride around the woods at night, and old master got powerful uneasy about my mammy and had all the neighbors and slaves out looking for her, but nobody find her.

It was about a week later that two Indian men rode up and asked old master wasn't his Ruth gone. He said yes, and they took one of the slaves along with a wagon. They'd found her in some bushes where she'd been getting bark to set her dyes. Somebody had hit her in the head with a club and shot her through and through . . .

Old master nearly go mad, and the young Cherokee men rode the woods every night for about a month, but they never caught on to who did it.

I think old master sold the children or give them out to somebody then, because I never saw my sisters and brothers for a long time after the Civil War, and for me, I had to go live with a new mistress that was a Cherokee neighbor . . .

I've been a church-goer all my life until I got too feeble and I still understand and talk Cherokee language and love to hear songs and parts of the Bible in it because it makes me think about the time I was a little girl before my mammy and pappy leave me.

Black people came to Oklahoma with the first European explorer, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, with Bernard de la Harpe, with Washington Irving, virtually every major early exploratory party into these lands included black members in the expedition. The first large numbers of those destined to become black Oklahomans accompanied the Five Civilized Tribes over the tragic Trail of Tears. It is estimated that by 1845 almost 75,000 Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Creeks had been removed to Oklahoma. With them came about 8,000 slaves, freedmen and women, some intermarried or adopted citizens of the tribes.

From: Relations of Negroes and Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians
by Wyatt F. Jeltz
Journal of Negro History
January, 1948

The removal of the Indians from their home in the South by the United States Government is one of the most tragic chapters of American history. It was a harsh fate for a people who had occupied their rich lands in perfect freedom to relinquish all their rights to them. Pressure from white pioneers, however, forced the issue.

In October, 1831, the first of the large parties began to move. Each Indian owner was allowed traveling expense for his slaves. Some of the leaders, having received special land grants under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, sold these lands and purchased slaves with the proceeds.
One such party was made by Peter P. Pitchlynn and Samuel Garland, and consisted of about fifty, most of whom were slaves who had been thus purchased.

Negro slaves removed to the Indian Territory by the first Indian emigrants, as a rule, were owned by those of mixed white and Indian blood, though some of the full bloods came to own slaves in a course of time. Sarah Harlan, mixed blood Choctaw woman in her reminiscences of the days of removal recounts her journey to the West with her father in care of her trusted loyal slaves, who left nothing undone to assure her comfort and safety. By 1833 nearly 12,500 Choctaws and 1,000 slaves had been removed.

THE CIVIL WAR (in Indian Territory)


Colonel:

I have the honor to submit the following report of the First Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers at the battle of Honey Springs, July 17, 1863:

Previous to forming a line of battle, Colonel Williams said to the men, “I want you all to keep cool, and not fire until you receive the command; in all cases aim deliberately and below the waist. I want every man to do his whole duty, and obey strictly the orders of his officers.”

We then moved in column, by company, to the position assigned us and formed in line of battle. The engagement was opened by the battery. After a lapse of ten minutes during which time the fire from the battery was incessant, Gen. Bunt came in person to Colonel Williams and said, “I wish you to move your regiment to the front. I wish you to keep an eye to those guns of the enemy, and take them at the point of the bayonet, if an opportunity offers.”

Colonel Williams remarked to his men, “We have work to do,” and ordered them, “Fix bayonets.”

We then moved to the front and center, forming to the right of a section of Smith’s battery, consisting of two 12-pound field pieces that had already taken position within 300 yards of the enemy’s line, which was only apparent by the smoke from the frequent firing of their battery, so completely were they concealed by the brush in their position. Quite a number of rounds of shell and canister had been fired from our guns, when our gallant colonel gave the command, “Forward,” and every man stepped promptly and firmly in his place, advancing in good order until within 40 paces of the concealed foe, where we halted on the right of the Second Colorado. Colonel Williams then gave the command, “Ready, aim, fire,” and immediately there went forth two long lines of smoke and flame.

We advanced in line for a distance of 3 miles, skirmishing occasionally with the enemy from the high bluffs in front and to the left. The enemy then being completely routed and defeated, we were ordered to fall back to the Springs, rest the men, and cook supper. At 7 p.m. we were ordered to take position on the battlefield, near the ford on Elk Creek, and bivouac for the night.

I feel it but justice and my duty to state that the officers and men throughout the entire regiment behaved nobly, and with the coolness of veterans. Each seemed to vie with the other in the performance of his duty, and it was with greatest gratification that I witnessed their gallant and determined resistance under the most galling fire. Where all performed their duty so well it would be hard to particularize.

J. Bowles
Lieut. Col., Comdg.
First Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers

Headquarters Trans-Mississippi Dept.
Shreveport, La. Sept. 4, 1863

To: Major Gen. Sterling Price
General:

The policy of the enemy in arming and organizing negro regiments is being pushed to formidable proportions. Unless some check can be devised, a strong and powerful force will be formed. When we fall back, able-bodied male negroes should be carried back. Every sound male black left for the enemy becomes a soldier, whom we have afterward to fight.

E. Kirby Smith
Lieutenant-General, Commanding

POST CIVIL WAR CELEBRATIONS
From: Indian-Pioneer Papers
Indian Archives
Oklahoma Historical Society
Person Interviewed: Aaron Grayson

There was an annual celebration each year from 1870 on up until the early part of 1900 which was held by Negroes and freedmen. The white people observed Independence Day on July 4th, while the colored people observed the Emancipation Day on August 4th. The observance of this emancipation proclamation was mainly for and by Negroes and freedmen yet the Indians and whites were welcome to attend the celebrations...

An American flag was set up and a cannon placed nearby. When the day of the celebration drew near, the best and most highly spirited horses were well groomed to have them in fine shape to ride that day. The saddles were decorated with ornaments and fringes which were draped down on both sides of the horse.

The Indian men who rode horses wore what seemed to be fancy costumes but they were the clothes they wore in the everyday life. There was a coat which was made of fancy printed calico, trimmed by bright and varicolored material, with a large collar...
Black History in Oklahoma

lared cape, heavily trimmed. The sleeves just above the elbow were ornamented with colored ribbons which hung in streamers. The trouser legs were gathered above the knees with ribbons tied into a bow.

When the day of the great celebration arrived, the people did not come poking along one by one. They came in by bands, such as the Tokpaffka band, etc. They had assembled at their tribal town and came on horses at a gallop, laughing, joking and could be heard miles away before they finally came to the place of the event. Then they would circle around the flag pole and the cannon was fired off.

A queen was often chosen by majority vote of the people. My sister was once selected queen. The queen was crowned with a crown of silk material. The best decorated horse with saddle and other accessories was donated to the queen to ride that day. She was free to ride anywhere she wished and there were two mounted attendants always at her side whose duties were to help her mount or dismount, and assist in any way, even when a runaway occurred...

Everyone felt that this was a day well-spent in good fellowship, and the different groups left for their homes with as much banter as they had gathered. These celebrations have been held in Wetumka and Wewoka. The last event was held in Tuskegee, a county trading store north of Okemah, in 1902.

Prior to the Civil War in the slave states the general education of black people was forbidden by law. Millions were kept in ignorance, under penalty of severe punishment if they attempted to secure any education or knowledge.

From: National Archives
Washington, D.C.
Written at Boggy Depot,
April 14, 1882
Hon. Secretary of Interior and
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

We, the undersigned colored citizens of Choctaw Nation Indian Territory, respectfully represent that there are now near 2,000 colored children between 8 and 21 years of age residing within the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations who are almost entirely deprived of the advantages of school. Not more than 300 can have any benefits from the schools now established.

We ask that Rev. J. Allen Ball, a minister of the M. E. Church, who has labored as a teacher of Colored Schools in Stringtown, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, receive support in continuing his work as teacher and that we be allowed other schools conducted through U.S. Government support.

From: Frank Root Collection
Oklahoma Historical Society
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
From an eastern missionary paper

AMONG SEMI-SAVAGES

To people living in the East a description of a school in the wilderness cannot fail to be of interest. The Tullahassee Manual Labor School is an educational institution in which pupils are expected to work; and during a part of each day each boy and girl has a task to perform. The Tullahassee Mission under the superintendence of Professor E. H. Roashel has become one of the most successful enterprises of the kind.

The pupils are treated with consideration, and receive three regular meals everyday. For breakfast, tea or coffee, cornbread, meat, and occasionally cereal; for dinner, meat, potatoes or some other vegetable, cornbread, tea or coffee; for supper hot biscuits, fruit sauce or corn, and sometimes rice soup, tea or coffee. The teachers eat in the same dining room and at the same time as the pupils. Their food does not differ, except perhaps in indulgence in butter and light-bread. For Sunday dinner each inmate at the mission is treated to a piece of pie and at suppertime a piece of cake adds extra enjoyment to the meal. At rare intervals eggs are served for supper, presumably only at the time of year when hen fruit does not represent its weight in silver. Cooking is done by one of the former students of the school, who is assisted by one of the pupils.

The cooks have to arise at 4:00 in the morning. The general arising bell rings at 5:45, breakfast bell at 6:30. Dinner is served at noon, and supper at 5:30.

Evening instructions are given from 6:45 to 8:15. At 8:45 the retiring bell is rung. At 9:00 all pupils must be in bed and go to sleep. If anyone is inclined to laugh or cut-up after the lights are extinguished suitable punishment is meted out to the offender. Contrary to common usage, school is in session on Saturdays but not on Mondays, which day is devoted to general clean-up operations. All female scholars are under the direct superintendence of the matron, Mrs. E. H. Roashel, wife of the superintendent of the mission.

The boys occupy a separate building at night, which they are required to keep in apple-pie order. They have to do their own scrubbing and house-cleaning, and take considerable pride in keeping their quarters in neat condition. The girls and boys are not allowed to play together or to associate in any way whatever. They may exchange a few words relating to work, but a general conversation would be considered an offense.

The rooms occupied by the scholars are plainly furnished, containing nothing but the beds, a chair, a homemade table and a washtub. The only attempts at ornamentation are calico curtains and small lithographed cards which are given to the children.
for good behavior.

The mission is about nine miles from the prosperous town of Muskogee, on the Arkansas River, which is crossed on a ferry propelled by means of long poles. The river mission building is located in the center of a beautiful forest. An appropriation has been made by the Muskogee Nation for the erection of a new building. By next year the next will be able to board 100 pupils, 60 being the limit at the present time.

In 1883, when a school was opened on the old Union Agency grounds, as the freedmen had requested, it was operated with help from the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

According to printed stationery used by the school, it was “Founded for Orphan and Friendless Indian and Colored Children, and for the Normal, Christian, and Theological Instruction of the 12,000 Freedmen of Indian Territory once Slaves to the Indians.”

The Museum of the Five Civilized Tribes now occupies this same building in Honor Heights Park, Muskogee.

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THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

On July 28, 1866, the Congress of the United States passed an act which provided for six black regiments in the regular U.S. Army. Two were to be cavalry regiments and were designated the 9th and 10th United States Cavalry.

The two officers finally chosen to command the new cavalry units were Colonel Edward Hatch and Colonel Benjamin Grierson. One of the white officers who refused to serve with the new regiments was George A. Custer, who managed to get an appointment with the new 7th Cavalry instead and started on his ten-year road to Little Big Horn.

Both regiments received frontier duty in the spring and summer of 1867. During the Civil War, the Plains Indians had seized the chance to drive intruders from the lands the Indians believed belonged to them. When the war was over, the government attempted to get the Indians onto reservations, but was not success-

ful. Many Indians objected to giving up their old ways of life. Bands of Plains Indians were raiding all along the frontier, even into Indian Territory. Kiowas and Comanches were raiding the herds of Chickasaws and Choctaws. Bootleggers, horse thieves, and cattle rustlers were increasing. Mail carriers riding between Forts Gibson and Arbuckle were murdered.

This was the situation into which the 9th and 10th were sent, protecting railroad crews, escorting stages and trains, scouting. Frontier duty was full of hazards. At Fort Larned, a rabid wolf came into the post hospital, bit a finger off one patient and bit the foot of another. Hostile Indians, frostbite and cholera, were common perils for frontier troops.

The 10th lost its first man in combat in August, 1867, in a battle with the Cheyennes in Kansas. More battles followed, in Kansas, Indian Territory, Texas, New Mexico. Somewhere along the way, the men of the 9th and 10th earned the name “Buffalo Soldiers.” It wasn’t their first nickname — white troops had called them “brunettes” and occasionally less complimentary titles — but this one stuck. It was given to them by the Indians they fought.

Both regiments were plagued with problems which came, their commanding officers believed, because of the fact that they were black. Often they were given broken-down horses; their supplies were frequently not equal to those given white troopers. Grierson, commander of the 10th, was particularly enraged over the discrimination against the men of his regiment. He ordered his company commanders not to use the word “colored” in the reports, telling them that the regiment was “simply the 10th Regiment of Cavalry, United States Army.” He wrote angry letters to officers above him, insisting upon equal treatment.

While the 10th was trying to protect white Texans from Indians and themselves from white Texans, the 9th was busy protecting Indian lands from David Payne and his settlers. Many weary hours and days were spent in the saddle, arresting would-be settlers and escorting them back to the borders, only to go through it all again when the trespassers returned. Buffalo Soldiers regulated the opening of old Oklahoma, the “Run of ’89.”

The Buffalo Soldiers left their own memorial in Oklahoma. They built the original Fort Sill, on a site chosen by Grierson. They dismantled a saw mill at Fort Arbuckle and brought it across the mountains to Sill; cut logs in the Wichita mountains; opened a rock quarry. When supplies from Arbuckle were held up because of the poor condition of the road, they built a new road.

There were many notable men among them. One of these was Henry O. Flipper (see Oklahoma Today, Summer ’78). Twelve Buffalo Soldiers won the Congressional Medal of Honor between 1870 and 1890; five more
Black History in Oklahoma

in the Spanish-American War of 1898. The desertion rate of the 10th was the lowest of any regiment in the army.

As they were admired by the Indians (who had named them after an animal they considered sacred), the Buffalo Soldiers were respected by the settlers they regulated.

From: Indian-Pioneer Papers
Indian Archives
Oklahoma Historical Society
Person interviewed:
George Conrad

They sent us here to keep the immigrants from settling up Oklahoma. I was assigned to Troop G, 9th Cavalry. We stayed and drilled at Ft. Sill six months, then we were assigned to duty. We received orders to Stillwater to move 500 immigrants.

We landed there on the 23rd day of January, Saturday evening, and Sunday was the 24. We had general inspection Monday, Jan. 25, 1885. We fell in line of battle, sixteen companies of soldiers to move 500 immigrants to the Kansas line.

Captain Couch, of the settlers, sent word, "If you don't fire on me, I'll leave tomorrow." Troop L, Troop D, and Troop B took the immigrants and put them over the line of Kansas. Then we were ordered back to Camp Russell, on the Cimarron.

BLACK SETTLERS
From: Indian-Pioneer Papers
Indian Archives
Oklahoma Historical Society
Person interviewed:
Mack McClellen

I wanted to come out to Oklahoma and get a home of my own. I took my family and came on the first train that came into Kingfisher before the run. We came from Shelby County, Tennessee. I got a claim of thirty acres. There was some timber on this place and some bare places where I farmed without having to clear the blackjacks.

I had to work to make a living for my family. I came to Kingfisher and worked for a man named Smith who had a lumber company, and also worked for Mack McCarty who had a claim east of Kingfisher. I broke sod for him. In 1893 I moved my family out on the claim. We had a time trying to get enough to eat. There were plenty of wild turkeys and quail, prairie chickens and deer. We had meat when we had loads for the gun, but how to get corn meal and flour was the question . . .

A Dutch family named Julius Ersmenaier lived near us. He is the oldest settler except some of the other colored folk out there. He managed to get hold of one old horse and I got one. We would put these together and have a team. We would get a load of wood cut, and take it to El Reno. There we would trade it for two sacks of corn meal.

Lack of space prevents us from continuing beyond the great Land Runs. We urge you to secure a copy of the book from which our excerpts came, and pursue it for your own edification; it is BLACK HISTORY IN OKLAHOMA: A Resource Book, edited by Kaye M. Teall; $1.50 by mail from the Graphics Department, Oklahoma City Public Schools, 900 N. Klein, Oklahoma City, Ok., 73106. More than 300 pages of coverage of the historic spectrum, black cowboys, trail drivers, lawmen, the black towns, the struggle for enfranchisement and equality, in much greater detail than we have been able to present here.
The Museum of the Seminole Nation in Wewoka is a treasure trove, preserving the folk ways and customs of one of Oklahoma's finest and least known groups—the Seminole people. Driving these hardy people out of Florida cost our federal government $6,500 and the life of a U.S. soldier for every Seminole removed to the Indian Territory. Yet every Seminole I've ever known is a gentle, soft-spoken, kindly individual who would do nothing to hurt you and anything to help you. It is a commentary on the brutal attitude of some century ago whites toward Indians who were superior to them, and the blundering ineptness of the bureaucracy of that time.

The museum in Wewoka displays inspiring art of the Seminoles, their ways of life and dress, a chickee reconstructed by the talented hands of curator Tuskahoma Miller, old time photos galore, colorful exhibits of arts and crafts, all designed to simultaneously entertain and inform you about some folks most Sooners don't know very well.

A fine time to visit the Museum would be on Oct. 20, when Wewoka's Fall Festival will be celebrated, with sorghum making on an oldtime mule-powered sorghum press, and fresh, cold apple cider crushed by a pioneer cider press. BB
OKLAHOMA SCRAPBOOK

The Oklahoma Air National Guard has eight brand new Lockheed C-130H transport planes. The Air Guard usually flies hand-me-downs, and our 137th Tactical Airlift Wing is the very first to receive factory new transports.

PHILBROOK'S RENAISSANCE PERSPECTIVE

"Gloria Dell' Arte: A Renaissance Perspective" will bring to the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, a vast and stunning exhibition of Italian Renaissance art objects from the Louvre in Paris, the British Museum in London, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In connection with the visiting Exhibition, October 28-January 27, Philbrook will schedule an evening lecture series featuring John Mallet of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and David Alan Brown of the National Gallery of Art; Washington, D.C.; Sunday afternoon presentations of the music, drama, poetry, and dance of the Renaissance; Romeo and Juliet, Taming of the Shrew, and Brother Sun, Sister Moon, a Zeffirelli Film Festival, in Tulsa's First Place Auditorium; Renaissance on Rye, lunch hour programs on the Tulsa Junior College campuses; and daily conducted tours of the Art Exhibition, with commentaries by Philbrook's docents, many of whom recently toured Rome, Florence, Padua, Venice, and Milan.

BUFFALO ROBE

My father spread a Buffalo Robe Across my mother's knees In courting days, behind a team Of spanning black fillies.

My father did his courting To the tune of an old violin, And the creak of saddle leather, And the wail of the Western Wind.

A Legend of love and lineage, A Chronicle of pride I'll give to someone that I love When she becomes my bride.

... Robert Bressie

10 YEARS AGO IN OKLAHOMA TODAY

One of our favorite issues; Tsa-la-gi village, Tahlequah, on the cover. Oilfield heritage: a color scenic of the oldtime cable tool rig with poetic recollections of the oilrush by Drumright's Eileen Coffield; a scription of how the cable tool drilling rig worked, as contrasted to modern rotary tools, by geologist Ty Dahlgren;
SPIRO-TULA

Our last issue article on the similarity between Oklahoma’s Spiro culture and the ancient Tula of Mexico inspired results.

Mexico City’s major newspaper The Mexico City News called attention to the article in an editorial and, in their next Sunday Magazine, reprinted our article in full, with illustrations. Mexico City News editor Joe Nash reports that he has received phone calls and letters expressing interest in the presentation.

Dr. Joseph Mahan, author of our Spiro-Tula article, is holding a symposium at Columbus College, Columbus, Georgia, on Oct. 18-20. Evidence of ancient peoples in America during the millennia B.C. will be studied; a comparison of Indian music with that of the ancients; ships and intercontinental voyages B.C.; a Sumerian tablet in Georgia; ancient Egyptians and Libyans in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma’s Dr. Cyclone Covey, now of Wake Forest University, will bring A Message from the Ancient Chinese. Dr. Mahan will speak on Yuchi Symbols Related to Minoan Linear A and the Semitic Alphabet. The Yuchis now live in Oklahoma. Heavener’s Gloria Farley will lecture.

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on How to Find and Identify Ancient Writings which have been, and are now, being found across America.

OUR SCENERY
Three of our gorgeous scenics, on pages 13, 15, and 19, were made by master photographer David Fitzgerald. Dave has taught photography at the Quartz Mountains Music and Arts Camp, and at Oklahoma City University. A stunning coffee table book filled with his spectacular Oklahoma scenics will be published next March by the Graphic Arts Press of Portland, Oregon. Watch for it!

NEW BOOKS
JIM THORPE: WORLD’S GREATEST ATHLETE by Robert W. Wheeler; Univ. of Okla. Press; $12.50. This fascinating book brings the whole Thorpe story together. Gripping reading. Yale’s Beth and Homer Ray and many other Oklahomans cooperated with the author in the preparation of this splendid narrative.

LITTLE LION OF THE SOUTHWEST by Marc Simmons; The Swallow Press, Chicago; $8.95. Minority races are winning their place in history as well as the present. Spanish-Mexican hero Manuel Chavez was a contemporary of Kit Carson, and his equal in valor.

TRICKSTER TALES FROM PRAIRIE LODGEFIRES by Bernice G. Anderson; Abingdon Press, Nashville; $5.95. Kiowa Sainday and his counterparts in other tribes have their equivalents in every ethnic culture—but in Indian tales always with a special twist.

FOOLS CROW by Thomas E. Mails; Doubleday & Co., New York; $12.95. Mystic, philosopher, Ceremonial Chief of the Sioux, Frank Fools Crow again proves that white people have much to learn from Indian people.

THE COYOTE by Francois Leydet; Univ. of Okla. Press; $5.95. More than a portrait of this wily one, here is presented the dichotomy that confronts our whole environment. The author provides not answers, but thoughtful consideration. Are there answers?

OKLAHOMA WALTZ
When I think Oklahoma I think Choctaw,
I think whippoorwills and locust trees;
I remember moonlight on the willows,
I think Red Clay Hills and memories.

When I think Oklahoma I think dark eyes;
I think first love is a snow white dress;
I remember golden sand and water,
I think innocence and happiness.

When I think Oklahoma I think Indian,
I think the deep, resounding boom
Of Pow Wows held beneath the weeping willows
Whippoorwills and locust trees in bloom.

. . . Robert Breesie
I bow to your partners, to your corners all

Circle to the left, go 'round that hall.

If you don't know what those calls mean, then obviously you aren't a square dancer.

It's fun. If you don't believe it ask any couple in any Square Dance Club. There are at least 500 clubs in Oklahoma and that's a bunch of dancers.

The sixty-four clubs of the Northeast Oklahoma Square Dance Association celebrated their 32nd annual festival in April and there were 2,500 people in the grand march. It was held in the Tulsa Civic Center arena, where all the rodeos and circuses and anything requiring a lot of space is held, and to say that the floor was crowded is an understatement. It was so crowded you couldn't tell where one square stopped and another began.

But you should see the state festival, or a national festival. Imagine, if you can, all the Oklahoma dancers, those from the other 49 states, plus clubs from Great Britain and Europe, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Canada, just about every country where Americans have been for any length of time.

Circle to the left and don't you stop
And all get set to go red hot.

Square dancing is for squares. And for rounds and shorts and tall. It's for anyone who is interested in fun and fellowship and activity. Many clubs count doctors, lawyers, school teachers, and engineers among their membership of professional people, white collar workers, blue collar workers and laborers, farmers and ranchers. It's entertainment. It's therapy, because you just can't square dance and think about your troubles. If you try you're sure to spoil a set and then you're going to feel clumsy, and get dirty looks.

It is good, clean fun. There are rules to be followed in this game. Like bathe often, use deodorant, don't use loud smelling perfume, don't eat onions or garlic before a dance, do brush your teeth, don't walk out of a set just because you don't like someone in it . . .

One of the most strictly observed rules in square dancing is "No alcoholic beverages before or during a dance." Anyone who breaks this rule can be, and usually is, asked to leave.

Not only are they offensive but they can't follow the calls.

Another good thing about being square dancers is that people with children can take them along. Most clubs welcome the small fry as long as they don't out-yell the caller, run out on the floor, or interrupt the sets dancing. Most people who have children take them to save the cost of a sitter, and enjoy a low cost evening out.

There are a number of teen clubs throughout the state and they often join with the adults for an evening of gaiety. No generation gap here. If you can learn the calls you can dance, no matter what your age. In our club, The Bixby Corn Huskers, we gave lessons to a seven year old boy and he did better than some of the adults. But you should have seen him try to swing some of the long, tall gals.

Turn the right hand lady halfway 'round.
Back to your partner, go all the way 'round.
Back to your corner for an allemand
Back to your partner and there you stand.

When I was growing up there was

BY

ROBBIE
BOMAN
a stigma-to-end-all-stigmas attached to square dancing. It had to do with the idea that square dances involved drunks and fights.

Of course there were the old time barn dances where people like the Waltons and my grandparents and yours went, but I grew up after the old time barn dances and before the organization of clubs with their rules. All I ever heard about were the drunken brawls. And then there were all those, er—ladies showing off their legs and every once-in-a-while the tiniest glimpse of panties.

That stigma still applies. Maybe it's just the connotation of the word "dance."

Maybe if we called it square hopping? Or square skipping?

Circle left and round you go.
Now break it all up with a do paso.

That's her by the left, corner by the right,
Men swing in and star by the right.

Once our closest neighbors had a square dance at least once a week but my sister Jimmie and I were never, never allowed to go. It wasn't so much the showing off of the legs that Mom and Dad objected to, it was that "Old Devil Drink" they wanted to shield us from.

And I'll have to admit that things got a bit hairy many times when a fight that started at their house ended up in our front yard. We lived a long half-block from them.

But one of my best friends lived there and she didn't think it was very neighborly of us not to attend their parties. So, one night, after much begging and a lot of tears, Dad finally gave in and took us to watch.

I had never seen a square dance before and my eyes were as big as saucers and my ears felt as big as Dumbo's from all the sounds. There was a man playing a fiddle and a man playing a guitar, and another man—the caller but I didn't know that then—trying his best to be heard above the noise of the musicians, the shouting of a multitude of urchins running in and out of the house, and the stomping and yelling of the would-be dancers.

Since drinking was almost as much a way of life as eating to this neighbor man, and most of his cronies, it didn't take many trips to the kitchen, where refreshments were being served, for things to liven up and voices to become loud and unfriendly. That's when Dad took us by the hands and led us, kicking and screaming, home.

I had never seen a square dance and I was fascinated. Spellbound. I wanted to know if that man ever got anyone to do what he was telling them to do. I wanted to find out if it was as much fun as my friend had said it was and had I really missed the best enjoyment of my life. But, alas, I just went home and wondered.

The head two couples now listen to me.
The head two couples, where are you be,
Down that center, gonna cut it short.
Down that center, gonna rip and snort.

After that, everytime I heard that solid 4-4 beat, that special kind of music, I would throw down whatever I was doing to run and watch. How did they do it? Then, about 14 years ago, we moved next door to Jo and Harold Hartley. For a long time they were just the people next door. Friendly and nice to chat with over the back yard fence or to have a cup of coffee with, but that was all.

Until one night I heard a noise under our window and pulled the drape back to see who was there. An odd thing was going on over in the Hartley's garage. I couldn't hear a thing (it was Debbie and Sandy Hartley sitting inside their fence by our window that I heard) but while I watched I saw faces passing by the garage window. First they would go one way and then turn and go back the other way.

I watched for a while and couldn't figure it out so I called husband Jay to see if he could. He couldn't either.

I could hardly wait until I could talk with Jo again and ask her, tactfully of course, what was going on that night. The answer? The obvious. Harold was a square dance caller and he was giving some lessons.

So that's how you learned to do that. You took lessons!

As the new year rolled in Jay and I resolved to do something new, get out and meet new people, add some spice to our lives. Jo told me they were going to start a new set of lessons and asked if we would be interested. I didn't even have to think about it, I was ready. Jay wasn't so sure. He thought maybe he meant a different kind of spice so he made me wait a few days before giving me a "yes" answer.

He finally said okay, we would do it, so I ran over right that minute (I think I took time to put on a robe) and told her, lest he back out. Lessons were to begin the following Monday night.

Heads to the middle and back with you.
Heads to the middle, do a right and left through.

Now we had watched square dancing on television and knew what a left allemand was, but Harold didn't say do a left allemand, he told us to do a right and left grand. I just stood there. Jay did too. Thank goodness he had a lot of patience and he needed every bit of it because three lessons later I not only couldn't do a right and left grand, I couldn't even do a left allemand.

On the way home one night I told Jay if he was ready to quit that nonsense I was.

"We got into this, now we're going to stick it out," he growled.

Okay, we stuck. I put my mind to it and eventually began to learn to follow the caller. By the time our 10 lessons were over we not only could do that left allemand and right and left grand, we were enjoying it.
We were both hooked.
In the 14 years we have been dancing—we took a couple of years out for Jay to have a heart attack which was pretty inconsiderate of him—we have missed only one N.E.O.S.D.A. festival. We get there for the grand march, which starts at 7 p.m., and by midnight, even if the spirit is still willing, the feet say no. We go home, worn out but exalted.

Ah, that grand march! I don’t know if I would rather be in it or watch it. Each club has different costumes and there are dresses of every hue and color, made every way a square dance dress can be made. The men wear matching shirts and they are all decked out in western ties and vests. One day I was crossing a downtown street during business hours and heard a familiar voice call to me. I looked around for a face to go with it. When I finally put the face and the voice together they belonged to a man we danced with almost every week but he had on a business suit and I had not recognized him. I was embarrassed to hear myself say, “Gee, I didn’t know you with your clothes on.”

Two thousand people dressed in all those multi-colored dresses and shirts; the grand march alone is worth more than the admission you have to pay to see the whole thing. Square dancers are a different breed of people. They are among the friendliest on earth and are always holding a benefit dance for a member of their vast family who has had some misfortune. If you belong to a square dance club and are still lonely then something is wrong because if you are friendly with them they will be friendly back.

Most clubs are for married couples but there are a number of single clubs, as well as teen clubs. There are usually more girls than boys and I’m not sure why unless it’s just harder to get boys started. Once they do they’re the last to quit. Sometime when you’re feeling friendless and a little lonely join us. You’ll forget your troubles for a while, I’ll guarantee.

Now bow to your partner,
To your corners all,
And wave to the pretty girl
Across the hall,
Now keeno kids, that’s it,
That’s all.
wouldn’t. General Sheridan agreed and determined to soundly whip the Indians, hang their leaders, kill their ponies, and cause “such destruction of their property as will make them very poor.” He determined to accomplish this war “on the families and stock of these” by means of a two pronged sweep: under Major Forsythe and General Alfred Sully.

Now Sully was an infantry officer. The son of the artist Thomas Sully, he had seen service in the Seminole and Mexican wars, garrison duty in the west before the Civil War, and action during the Civil War itself. He had been part of a successful expedition against the Santee Sioux in Minnesota in 1863, but had failed to get started during General P.E. Connor’s Powder River Campaign of 1865. All in all, he had a good record, compared to everyone else, and so, in spite of the fact that he was infantry, Sheridan gave him Custer’s 7th Cavalry and sent him off after the Dog Soldiers.

On September 7, 1868, Sully marched out of Fort Dodge with nine companies of the 7th Cavalry and one company of the 3rd Infantry. Traditionally, he was supplied with food, forage, and ammunition from a large slow-moving wagon train. The officers and men of the 7th Cavalry probably thought something was wrong when they couldn’t find Sully at the head of the formation. He was, in fact, there — but not on horseback. He hated horses and chose to lead his expeditionary force against some of the best light cavalry in the world from the front seat of an army ambulance.

The column negotiated the Arkansas River at Cimarron Crossing that night and headed for the Cimarron River to the south. Progress was slow and became slower still when, after nightfall, foot soldiers quietly slipped into the supply wagons for a free ride. No hostiles were seen for three days. Sully reached the Cimarron and began heading west along it. On the 10th a war party hit the advance detail of scouts and fled. Convinced he was on the right track, Sully marched his men to the confluence of the Cimarron River and Crooked Creek, where he made camp.

As the column was pulling away from camp the next morning a war party appeared and captured two stragglers. The horrified soldiers yelled loudly enough to attract the attention of the column’s rear guard. Captains Smith and Hamilton pulled their men out of line and gave chase. They were gaining on the shouting captives when the Indians shot one of the captives and threw him down. This slowed the pursuers. Sully stopped the pursuit altogether.

Enraged that his formation had been broken up, the general dispatched a staff officer to bring the wayward units back. Both Hamilton and Smith were placed under temporary arrest. The remaining captive was abandoned to his fate.

Sully continued east along the Cimarron and then turned south into Indian Territory. The further south he moved the more Dog Soldiers he encountered. They were part of Grey Beard’s band preparing to winter in the south. They did not stand and fight, but dashed in and out, constantly stinging the column as it lumbered along. Sully reached Beaver Creek, but when he continued on the next day he ran into more Dog Soldiers, coming ever nearer and staying for longer and longer periods of time.

Sully pushed south across Wolf Creek and the warriors disappeared. The soldiers were by this time in the area of the last great battle between the Cheyennes and the Kiowas, where Porcupine Bear had started the outlaw Dog Soldiers on their road to glory. Near the mouth of Wolf Creek, Sully found what was to him clear evidence of a fleeing village: a large number of lodge pole travois marks. The column, wagons and all, set off after them. The trail led the 7th Cavalry into the sand hills, where the northern allies had dropped off their women and children before attacking their southern enemies thirty-one years before. Sully plunged into this area only to have his column grind to a halt in the sand. His wagons had become mired to their axles. The trail he had followed had been a ruse designed to lure him to this fate. The women of Grey Beard’s village had built travois, but instead of using them to transport their tepees they had simply weighted the poles with heavy stones.

It quickly became apparent to Sully that his situation, while not hopeless, was futile. He outnumbered and outgunned the Dog Soldiers and so was in no danger of annihilation, but his cavalry could not drive the Dog Soldiers away from their sniping positions unless it pursued in force. If it did, the wagon train would then be left to the care of the infantry company which meant the mounted Indians would very likely elude the cavalry, return, and destroy Sully’s only source of supplies. The general’s subordinate officers argued heatedly for pressing on. Custer, for all his faults, would never let a little thing like a lack of food and ammunition keep him from pursuing the Indians. But Sully was adamant. Galling as it was to retreat in the face of the Indians’ audible taunts, Sully turned his column around and headed for home.

Naturally he reported to his superiors what they wanted to hear; that he had killed scores of Indians and ponies. In reality he had led an entire regiment against a handful of Dog Soldiers; consumed supplies, exhausted good horses; and wasted ammunition; only to turn back when he got sand in his shoes. As it had failed in western Kansas, the army again failed in western Oklahoma to catch and defeat the Dog Soldiers. Custer’s 7th Cavalry would face Dog Soldiers just once more; on the Little Bighorn River in Montana.
CALENDER OF EVENTS

AUTUMN 1979

THIRTY-THREE
SAILING

OKLAHOMA'S "GREAT LAKES"

Some two thousand square miles of water surface invite the cruising sailor to launch and explore . . . on our large Oklahoma lakes alone. Smaller lakes, still large enough for the maneuvering of small craft, would vastly increase that. One can choose to home-port afloat in a delightful marina on a favorite lake or the decision might be made to explore them all!

Oklahoma's "Great Lakes" provide a combined shoreline longer than the Atlantic seaboard. While our "coasts" are divided among approximately forty lakes of variable sizes, some are plainly "sealike" such as Eufaula, the "gentle giant" (102,200 acres of water), and Texoma (89,000). These two lakes are the largest between the Gulf of Mexico and the "other" Great Lakes of our nation's north central area. While not inherently dangerous, larger lakes are sometimes intolerant of carelessness or neglect on the part of those who might ply their waters. Thus we need to consider safety in the context of seamanship training and skills.

Some of the criteria involved in lake selection have to do with geography. If pristine water is an absolute must, one's best bets are those lakes feeding into the Arkansas and Red River systems east of a north-south line through Tulsa. West of this line, many lakes may have seasonal concentrations of dissolved solids during times of heavy overland runoff, such as spring rains.

Another consideration has to do with variability in lake levels. This relates to a lake's position within an integrated reservoir system, the size of the drainage basin, the function of the lake, and others. From the standpoint of position, for example, Keystone (near Tulsa) used to vary over an annual range of thirty feet or so when it was the upstream lake on the Arkansas. Now, with the Kaw Reservoir above it as a flood-control facility, the range should be somewhat
The length of the launch ramp remaining underwater is also a critical consideration because lake bottom erosion from the swirling waters created by powerboat propellers often leaves a pronounced lip at the end of the hard surface. Trailers will go over the lip in a lake-bound direction easily enough, but getting them back ashore is something else again!

Current lake information is available from several sources. Major newspapers routinely report lake elevations in contrast to those considered "normal." Lake Patrol officials are experts on the status of the lakes and launch ramps assigned to their supervision and should be contacted for safety information. Valuable tips regarding those lakes most amenable to cruising under sail can be obtained from sailboat dealers.

For those lakes under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (and there are many of them in Oklahoma), special marine hazard charts usually can be obtained from the Tulsa District Office. Note should be taken that these charts are concerned with hazards rather than navigation but still they might save the visiting sailor the crunch of collision with an underwater obstacle or loss of an expensive anchor on a fouled lake bottom.

Finally, television and radio stations are quick to report "lake wind warnings" when in effect. These correspond to the "small craft warnings" (and more serious storm classifications) provided by coastal weather alerting services. With "lake wind warnings" in effect, it is a very good idea to stay in port and do some of the little boatkeeping chores so often deferred.

Other considerations in lake-choosing have to do with personal cruising requirements. If one wants extended cruising over a large lake, it becomes necessary to figure out whether or not the lake is effectively divided into parts by low bridges. This, of course, would not be a problem in limited sector cruising but it might be important when choosing a launch site.

With respect to bridge heights, we would quickly add that one must know exactly how high the mast-top is above the water-line and how high the lake is above normal. We've made it a rule to never go under a bridge unless there is a four-foot minimum clearance from the structure overhead. This minimum allows us to rise safely on the wake of a motorboat (which might be going under at the same time) without spearing the bottom of the bridge.

Another "desire factor" in lake selection has to do with the availability of shore attractions. This, to some extent, relates to how long the lake has been in existence. The dramatically attractive Grand Lake O' the Cherokees, one of the oldest of Oklahoma's "Great Lakes", has a shoreline fleckled with more than one hundred resorts, for instance. If, on the other hand, the quiet beauty of an unspoiled shoreline is desired, one might wish to consider a newer lake such as the Kaw Reservoir (near Ponca City). We would be definitely remiss if we failed to mention that many of Oklahoma's scenic state parks and full-resort-facility state lodges can become fabulous ports-of-call! In the latter category are Arrowhead and Fountainhead (Eufaula), Texoma Lodge, Western Hills (Lake Fort Gibson), Quartz Mountain (Lake Altus), and Lake Murray Lodge.

There are many descriptive words applicable to sailboats of the cruising variety, such as "graceful, majestic, and swan-like." The very design seems to blend in with the pattern of sky, wind, and water. Indeed, such harmony is essential, for sailing craft operate at the interface of different environments, gaining power from the atmosphere and beguiling the hydrosphere as necessary to achieve smooth and effortless passage on a permissive basis.

For the casual non-sailing spectator, two statements of concern usually arise. The first is the notion that "it must be difficult to learn to sail." It really isn't. Anyone with a bit of agility can do it easily; willingness to learn is the main ingredient for success. Second, observing the "tilt" or "heel" of sailboats, some are convinced that sailing must be dangerous. This also is a misconception. One must respect the potential hazards of the water environment but these impact the power boater with as much emphasis as the sailor. With regard to "tilt" modern cruising sailboats are most efficient when they are "kept on their feet" and heeling at only slight angles such as fifteen to twenty degrees. "Rail-down" sailing isn't necessary for greatest speed and there is no reason to frighten people either.

The design of sailing vessels generally leads to greater heavy-weather safety than that prevailing for small

BY TOM BRYANT
SAILING

power boats. Sailing craft are specifically built to handle wind and, for the most part, their hulls cut through the water rather than planing on top of it. The power of wave action was allowed for from the start. Keel boats have a lot of stability-producing weight at the bottom of the hull and retractable keel (centerboard) boats will continue to float even when upside down!

One can admire the beauty of a sailboat and operate it in smiling weather without appreciating the notion that it might have a distinctive personality (and maybe even a soul). But time and the accumulation of things, the minor headaches involved in keeping the little lady shipshape, suffering through the heartache of the first tiny scratch on the hull, cause the realization to grow. The personalities of the vessel and its crew tend to merge. Hardly anyone deliberately searches out troublesome weather to "find himself" but sometimes it happens anyway. After the tumult, during which one has cooperated with the elements perhaps more than fighting them, there is a resulting feeling of accomplishment that is hard to find in other ways. The new bond of shared experience causes one to recognize and admire the stubborn courage of a small boat with a tall mast when the situation is a little difficult.

There is widespread recognition that the water environment is a last bastion of personal freedom. Pleasure craft skippers require neither licenses nor evidence of training (at least for the time being). While we would not buy an airplane and "teach ourselves to fly," we tend to do this often in boating, whether power or sail. From the standpoint of responsibility to those who come aboard our vessels, the boating public sharing the water with us, and ourselves, this is not very wise. There is no scarcity of published materials pertaining to small boat handling, and "materials-cost-only" instruction. The United States Power Squadrons, American Red Cross, and Coast Guard Auxiliary routinely offer public education courses designed to help one enjoy the world of small boats more. They provide the peace-of-mind that training can bring. The latter two organizations have courses specific to sailing and the Auxiliary has one, "Sailing and Seamanship," directly pertinent to cruising under sail. Information concerning the various educational programs of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary can be obtained from Division XVI, 519 West Southpark, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 74102. Like any other worthwhile sport, one quickly finds that sailing requires "continuing education" and that one never "knows it all."

One great advantage of sailing in these energy-short times is its remarkably fuel-efficient nature. Although we normally use a low horsepower outboard aboard our sloop Dulcinea to maneuver through crowded anchorages and on those rare occasions when becalmed, she only needed a total of six gallons of gasoline the last full year in the water. Some say "the wind is free" and it is a nice phrase which is not completely accurate. That tall aluminum mast, its stainless steel cable supports and fittings, and the sails themselves add up to at least one-third of the total value of the boat. After that expense, and the cost of safety equipment, then we can say "the wind is nearly free." We might add that the "Great Lakes" of Oklahoma rarely lack that propulsive commodity.

Sailing is tied to the idea of freedom rather than to a place, to different values and sensations, and provides the exhilaration of speed in the toss of wind-blown spray without the reality of it. The serenity provided by watching a white triangle of sail weaving gently across a painted sky is that of the philosopher, sometimes the dreamer, but never that of the indolent. At night, the shoreline recedes into obscurity and water-bounced reflections of the running lights create sparkles of fiery rubies on the port side and the cool glitter of emeralds to starboard. The cruising sailboat becomes the ultimate island in a wide sea of darkness.

For the cruising sailor in Oklahoma, the "season" doesn't end on Labor Day; the best is yet to come. One glides from the smiling warmth of summer into the crystal air of autumn. Shoreside greenery changes into the splendorous colors of a maturing year. Water-borne traffic subsides as skiers, swimmers, and the crews of open boats seek the warmth of home; the sense of freedom grows and it is the time for Oklahoma's "tall ships" to play. Swimsuits are traded for sweaters and evening activity on the deck is replaced for the coziness of the cabin whose lights glow and flicker through the little strands of fog rising wispily from the water. Overhead, a silver moon traces a slow arc across the sky and reminds one that the hours are moving on even though the pace of life aboard slows to a timeless quality.

Cruise Oklahoma's "Great Lakes" with us. You'll see what we mean!
The Will Rogers Centennial Year

The Will Rogers Centennial, with Gov. George Nigh and Joel McCrea as National Chairmen, and State Chairmen like Bartlesville publisher J. L. Jennings in Oklahoma and TV star Steve Allen in California, has produced activity nationwide.

Dr. Reba and Delmar Collins traveled to New York to assist Will Rogers, Jr., in his GOOD MORNING AMERICA appearance (ABC-TV) concerning the Centennial. They made a later broadcast over New York's WOR radio. With Will Rogers Memorial Commission Chairman James Leake, Muskogee, they were then interviewed at the Tulsa sponsored luncheon for press and media, and were impressed that people, especially the common people, do remember Will and ask where they can find things by him and about him.

Will Rogers Day, Washington, D.C., celebrated in the Senate Chambers, brought remembrance and recognition from members of Congress.

Events in California have included An Afternoon with the Ziegfeld Girls, the girls being introduced by Patty Ziegfeld Stephensen, and Fifi D'Orsay relating her "Memories of Will Rogers."

The theme of the Pacific Palisades July 4th Parade was Will Rogers. Film retrospectives, events at the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, an Evening of Reminiscence at the Sam Goldwyn Theatre, NBC's Sunday Show, a tennis tournament, an exhibit exploring Will's influence on aviation, roping and riding events organized by Montie Montana, polo at Santa Monica Ranch, all of California's events have been outstanding.

Tulsan Ken Greenwood has edited radio productions of Will Rogers' voice, Oklahoma Citian Pendleton Woods has prepared reproductions of Will's daily columns, both made available nationwide. The "Museum on Wheels" has toured Oklahoma.

The original portrait of Will by Charles Banks Wilson, on this year's telephone books, is on display at the Memorial in Claremore.

Band Concerts; Polo Games; Lectures; Arts and Crafts Fairs; Essay Contests; Horse Shows; Rodeos; Tsala-gi's The Cherokee Kid; other plays and dramas; Guthrie's 89er's Day; Air Shows; Will Rogers' U.S.A. starring James Whitmore; a variety of Will Rogers Days, Weeks, and Months, in Missouri, at Kemper Military Academy, Kentucky University, San Antonio College, etc. Roping, Trick Roping and Cutting Horse Contests; Elks and Masonic recognitions; Film Festivals, Book Autographing Parties; high school and college Graduations and Convocations, the Oklahoma Press Association Convention dedicated to Will; all of these and others would more than fill this entire magazine.

See our Calendar of Events for some of the events yet upcoming; and column one on this page for festivities in Rogers County Nov. 1 through Will Rogers' Birthday on Nov. 4. The National Finals Rodeo Dec. 1 to 9, with national television coverage, will be dedicated to Will from Oklahoma City's Myriad.
IN THIS ISSUE

WILL ROGERS: Part IV
  by DR. REBA COLLINS ...... 3

SHE'S NEW HERE
  by HILARY HEMMINGWAY ...... 8

BLACK HISTORY IN OKLAHOMA
  edited by KAYE M. TEALL .. 11

THE SEMINOLE MUSEUM ...... 20

OKLAHOMA SCRAPBOOK ...... 22

SQUARE DANCING
  by ROBBIE BOMAN ...... 29

SECOND BATTLE OF WOLFCREEK
  by MICHAEL L. STARR ...... 31

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
  by PAM RAY ...... 33

SAILING OKLAHOMA'S "GREAT LAKES"
  by TOM L. BRYANT ...... 34

WILL ROGERS ALBUM ...... 38