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Ann Carlson
Editor

Ward Hays
Contributing Editor

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Stillwater Pressed Brick Company

By Ann Carlson

Demolition and relocation of houses on the block between Husband and Main, 3rd and 4th Streets, prior to the construction of the Stillwater National Bank's Convenience Center, revealed a pressed brick with the marking Stillwater Pressed Brick Co. While this was not a completely new discovery of an old brick, it was a more numerous find of that brick than any local brick collector can remember. This discovery has rekindled interest in establishing the facts surrounding the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company.

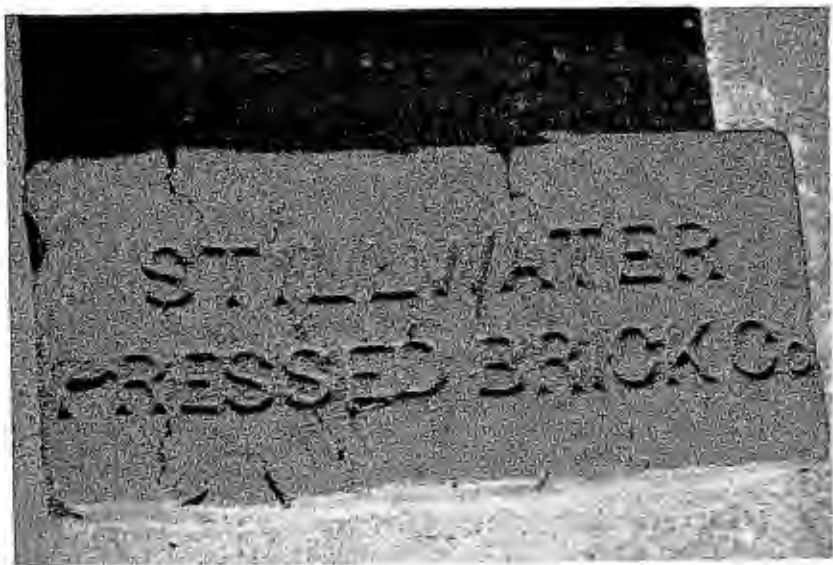
The Stillwater Pressed Brick Company spanned only a brief period of time in the history of this area. The time was 1900. Main Street in Stillwater was rebuilding; many older wooden structures were being replaced by brick edifices. Brick was in short supply and numerous accounts in the *Stillwater Gazette* report buildings delayed due to the shortage of brick. Stillwater was not, however, without brick factories. Sam Currier was probably the largest brick maker at the time. Lewis Shackelford owned a brick factory, but it was not in operation at the time. Louis Jardot also was a brick maker, although his largest operation did not begin until about 1910. The need for a good finished brick still existed.

In April of 1900, J. L. Palmour received some samples of brick made out of clay taken from along the Stillwater Creek in Sunnyside Addition. These sample bricks were made by a Chicago dry process brick machine manufacture. Newspaper reports indicated that they compared "with the best of pressed brick used for finishing front in cities...and the clay...appear[ed] to be better adopted for this work than any other found in the territory so far." A new brick plant was soon expected.

The Stillwater Pressed Brick Company received its charter toward the end of May. Its officers were: N. B. Easton, President; J. L. Pal-

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Carlson, a charter member of the Payne County Historical Society, became interested in brick making in Stillwater in the 1900s while researching her family history.



mour, Vice President; J. S. Hunt, Secretary; and Charles Kepner, Treasurer.

Who were these men? All were long time residents of the area. N. B. Easton was credited in *Portrait and Biographical Record* as having organized the company, and although a lengthy history of Easton's personal family history and civil war achievements was included, little information can be gleaned about the brick plant or his qualifications for brick making. J. L. Palmour was in the cotton ginning business and probably was a close friend of Kepner's since a street in Sunnyside Addition was named after him. J. S. Hunt had been in Stillwater since the earliest days. Charles Kepner owned the land upon which the brick factory would locate. In fact, he owned all of Sunnyside Addition and had it surveyed and plated in January, 1900.

The Stillwater Pressed Brick Company was located in Sunnyside Addition owning Block 3 (Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), Block 4 (south 250 feet), Block 5, Block 6 (Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), Block 12, Block 13, and Block 14. See Figure 1.

On May 4, 1900, Charles Kepner sold one half interest in the lots eventually to be owned by Stillwater Pressed Brick Company to N. B. Easton and J. S. Hunt for \$1500. On June 25, 1900, the same land was then sold to the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company for \$3000.

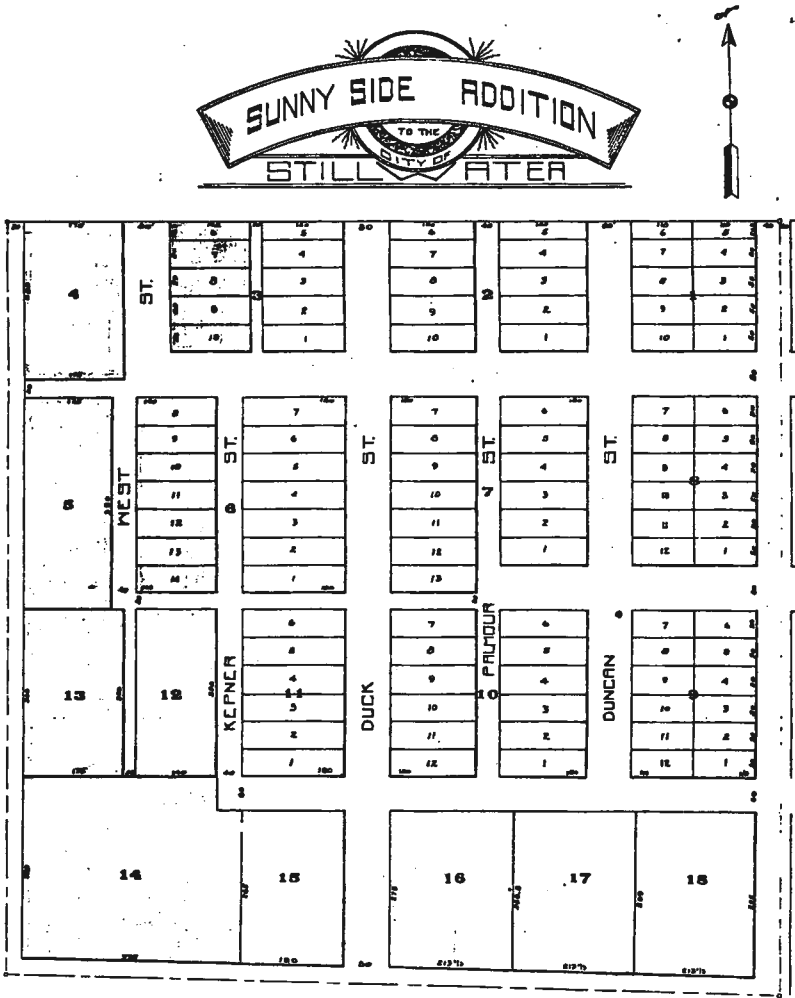


Figure 1. The Stillwater Pressed Brick Company owned all of the shaded area in Sunnyside Addition from 25 June 1900 when it was purchased for \$3000 until 25 March 1901 when it was sold for \$1.00 to S. W. Keiser.

Sunnyside Addition is bordered by Twelfth Street on the north. Fifteenth Street runs between Blocks 9, 10, and 11, and 15, 16, 17, and 18. Kepner Street has been renamed and is now South West Street.

Some delay was experienced in the receiving of the machinery for the pressed brick plant but by July 12, 1900, the new plant was ready to turn out bricks at the rate of 25,000 bricks a day. Interest in the brick plant ran high. Back orders aggregated nearly a million bricks ensuring that the plant could operate at capacity at least for the rest of the season. A new school building in the southern part of town (Lincoln School) was expected to be delayed since the school board was anxious to secure bricks from the new plant.

During the first weeks of operation of the brick plant delays were caused by wet weather. Pressed bricks must be made from dry clay and no sheds had been provided to cover the clay. Workmen removed the top layer of wet clay and the plant was back in operation. By July 20 the first kiln was ready to be fired and after two weeks the first kiln of bricks should have been ready for inspection.

By August 9, the first kiln of one hundred thousand bricks was burned and as soon as it cooled, it would be ready for delivery. But the brick plant was froth with difficulties as they reported that the big press broke down and a delay of ten or fifteen days was expected. At this time they had more back orders than they could fill in three months.

The foundation of the new school was complete and ready for the walls. The first kiln of bricks from the new brick plant was to go into the new school.

On August 13, 1900, the first kiln of brick made by the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company was opened and it was reported in the *Stillwater Gazette* that "inspection of the product revealed some of the finest brick ever seen in the territory." Unfortunately improper management through inexperience in handling resulted in 25 percent of the first kiln lost but the other 75 percent was "finer than silk."

August 14, repairs for the pressed brick machine arrived by freight and the plant was soon running again. Due to the great rush of business, the whole plant was reported in operation on Sunday, August 19.

While the success of the operation seemed certain with a good quality product and plenty of demand, the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company failed to materialize. On September 7, 1900, a loan of \$500 was recorded to H. H. Watkins of Enid and on September 28, a loan of \$1,184.50 to the Stillwater National Bank.

On September 12, the engine and boiler that had been used to run

the pressed brick plant was shipped to Pawnee to be put in a cotton gin. While the reason is unknown J. L. Palmour's connections with cotton ginning may be suspect. The brick company was left without power.

While waiting for a newly ordered engine to arrive, the second kiln of bricks was opened on September 17, and it too, was pronounced to be "fine as silk."

By September 27, the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company was still awaiting a new engine. Whether or not the new engine ever arrived is a mystery today. Interest in the Stillwater Pressed Brick Company declined; references in the *Stillwater Gazette*, which had been so faithful in its reports, disappeared.

On November 1, 1900, it was reported that the Shackelford brick plant was again in operation. The plant having been abandoned for some time. Shackelford, having severed his connection with the dry pressed plant, was again making bricks on his own.

Bricks continued to be in great demand, but on March 25, 1901, N. B. Easton, President, and J. S. Hunt, Secretary, sold all its property to S. W. Keiser for the sum of \$1.00. The two mortgages totaling \$1,684.50 had not been paid.

The Stillwater Pressed Brick Company had lived its short life of less than one year in the history of Stillwater.

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Interviews with Kenny Smith, supervisor, and Bill Thomas, owner of Thomasville, who moved several houses off the lots purchased by the Stillwater National Bank. 1980. A double row of Stillwater Pressed Brick Company bricks were found in the foundation of a house at 307 S. Husband. The house was first occupied in late February, 1901, by Mr. Andrew Monroe Harrison and family.

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A. J. Rutter

By Marguerite Downey

Forty-eight years ago, a young man of twenty-eight set out from Lawrence, Kansas, for Oklahoma, to secure a homestead in Oklahoma Territory. Four years previous in 1885, he had joined Captain William Couch's boomer party, but had been unsuccessful. In the opening run, however, he staked a homestead seven miles south-east of Stillwater. Today this man, 76 on his last birthday, November 16, lives in a comfortable home in Stillwater and boasts of his homestead which he still owns, and on which he has never placed a mortgage. His name is A. J. Rutter. He tells the following stories with such a force that one is carried back to the pioneer days.

"Old Captain Couch with nine acquaintances formed a townsite company in 1885 and in a party consisting of about 100 wagons, set out to 'boom' Oklahoma, somewhere near the present site of Guthrie.

"We traveled south from Wellington, Kansas, to the border of Oklahoma Territory. Fearing that the large number of wagons would attract the attention of the soldiers who were patrolling Oklahoma against 'boomers', we separated and went our respective ways. Our bank consisted of ten wagons.

"One evening we pitched camp near a river bank. Suddenly a loud crashing was heard approaching thru the thick underbrush. A man hanging on to a buckboard appeared suddenly and disappeared as quickly. The horse looked as though it were a run-a-way. But my friends were afraid that it was an outlaw's trick. I followed the trail through brush and vines.

"The thickness of plant growth retarded the progress of the horse somewhat and I was able to grab the bridle. When the man could speak he thanked me and told me his name. It was Ed Huen, one of

ABOUT THE ARTICLE

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

the greatest cattle ranchers in Oklahoma. He returned to camp and had supper. He then set out after thanking us again and giving us a message on a card which instructed his cowboys at a hut nearby to give us a fresh beef.

"We secured the beef and set out for a site near Guthrie, Oklahoma. After a few days journey our attention was called to a figure riding like fury toward us. We drew our guns, but when the rider come nearer we recognized him as one of the cowboys who gave us the beef. He said that a troop of Federal soldiers were coming our way and since his boss had instructed them to show us every kindness, he had ridden for many hours to tell us."

In this story, Rutter tells of his experiences with Bill Doolin, the outlaw, and his partner, "Red".

I met my partner, John R. Johnson, a few days drive coming to Arkansas City. He was traveling with his grandparents, both of whom were over seventy years old, to get a homestead in Oklahoma Territory. I was by myself and on the same mission, but at Arkansas City his grandparents became sick and took the train back home. Therefore, Johnson and I teamed up for the remainder of the journey.

"We were delayed in Arkansas City, and so we were there on the day of the opening, April 22, 1889. Arkansas City was left behind as soon as possible and we headed down the trail. Somehow, we lost our way and found ourselves at Pawnee far from the eastern part of Oklahoma where we wished to go. Johnson and I were directed by two strangers to this part of Oklahoma. These strangers were returning from Oklahoma because they could not find a satisfactory place in this country, but we were undaunted. Seven miles out of Pawnee, we made camp for night was coming on. After our supper was eaten and we had washed the dishes, a wagon passed going south. Johnson and I called to them, saying that it was time to camp since it was seven o'clock. After some time, I told Johnson that I would go talk to the drivers of the wagon which had stopped about 100 yards away. In the meantime the moon had risen and was shining quite brightly and as I approached the wagon I saw that they were the same strangers who had directed us. One of the men said that he and his partner had changed their minds and had decided to return.

"Johnson, the two strangers, and I chatted in a friendly manner about the campfire until nine o'clock. We then turned in as we wanted to get an early start.

"We slept soundly until twelve o'clock when we were awakened by the motion of the wagon. I looked out and saw that our horses had been frightened, but that they could not run away because they were clog-tied. Johnson found nothing that would scare them, so we returned to our beds.

"The next morning when we awoke we learned that the strangers had pulled out during the night. We also learned when we looked about us, that we were surrounded by Indians. Indians in war regalia were sitting their horses in stony silence, rifles laid across their ponys' necks. Johnson and I had only pistols and a shotgun to defend ourselves.

"An Indian soon rode down and sat on his horse without a word. With gestures and words we told him who we were, what we were doing and how our horses had been frightened that night. He said not a word.

"Another Indian came down with his rifle ready and his six-shooters fastened around his waist, and talked with this Indian in a very angry manner and then rode away.

"We asked the Indian, 'What is that man angry about?'

'He told us that a very valuable horse herd had been stampeded by persons in a wagon which had been trailed to our camping place. In a friendlier way he said that we would not be harmed because he knew who I was and that I had not stampeded the animals.

"I looked at him in amazement. 'You know me?' I said.

"I know you. You see me candy in Kansas. I go to school there little bit,' he answered.

"He turned to leave. I said, 'No, Indian ride in front of wagons.'

"He wheeled his horse without a word and led us safely out of Indian Territory. Our friends of the night had been the outlaws whom we were taken to be."

"It was the 27th day of April. Neighboring claim-holders gathered on the claim on P. H. Guthry to camp and talk. My partner and I had one claim between us and wanted to secure another. Guthry called me aside and said, 'I know of two claims that you can have if you give me \$5 for showing them to you.' I replied that it was a bargain.

“He took me to a claim that was already staked out. I pointed this out to him and refused to pay him. ‘You go file your claim and you’ll find that it is clear,’ he said to me. I took his word and returned to Johnson.

“Johnson and I drew match sticks to determine which claim he would file. I got the better one, because it had a spring on it and two patches of timber. My homestead was N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 27 Township 18 Range 3 East.

“We had staked it on April 23, and I was to file it at Guthrie. Johnson returned to Kansas to return a borrowed horse. I bid him good bye one May morning. After that, I never saw Johnson again. I do not know what happened to him. I filed my claim at Guthrie and lived on it until many years later, when my wife and I moved to Stillwater so that our two sons, Edgar and Earl, might go to A. and M.”

History of Payne County Historical Society

By Dr. B. B. Chapman

The Payne County Historical Society was organized on April 21, 1940, by a group interested in preserving historical facts being lost because of the passing of many elderly residents. The meeting was presided over by James W. Moffitt, Secretary of the Oklahoma Historical Society, with Mrs. Mabel D. Holt of the history department of Oklahoma A. and M. College acting as secretary. The first board of directors consisted of six members who drew lots for length of terms of service.

They elected Freeman E. Miller as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Miller had been a member of the first faculty of the college and taught English. The library was organized under his supervision. It was in the southeast room of Old Central, first floor. The best account of Miller's service is by Cora Miltimore who enrolled as a student in 1894, served as assistant and was librarian 1903-1914 (*Stillwater News Press*, December 13, 1967; September 7, 1980). Miller's room was in the southwest corner of Old Central, first floor. He was a member of the Council of Oklahoma Territory, Circuit Judge of Payne and Logan counties and was called Dean of Oklahoma Poets. To the tune of "America," he wrote lyrics of "Oklahoma," used in the Payne County Historical Society and elsewhere.

On May 1, 1940, the Board of Directors elected Miller as president, Clarence S. Bassler as vice president and Mrs. Holt as secretary. Miller ruled that officers of the board would serve as officers of the society. Regular officers were elected and changed annually.

I joined the history department of the college in 1927, went east during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl era, and returned to the college in 1941. Professor James H. Caldwell of the department

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Berlin B. Chapman, a charter member of the Payne County Historical Society and President of the original society, is Professor of History, Emeritus, Oklahoma State University. He is the author of *Founding of Stillwater*.

promptly invited me to accompany him on a Sunday afternoon to a meeting of the society. It was in the basement of the Stillwater Public Library, south room. Bassler, official in the local post office, was president and Mrs. Holt was secretary. I became a member of the society that day, was elected president on April 28, 1946 and was privileged to serve in that office until retirement in 1966.

Two characteristics marked the society. First, it never tried to prove anything. It welcomed all topics relative to local history, provided a forum for evidence, published widely factual information in local and metropolitan newspapers, and collected documents for depositories like the Stillwater Public Library, the college library, and the Oklahoma Historical Society. Probing deeply into local sources and into depositories like the National Archives, the society made available extensive information. This policy won respect of the public, the press and scholars everywhere.

Second, the Payne County Historical Society always welcomed the oldest residents and profited by their memoirs. This characteristic needs emphasis. The college retired faculty because of age. A few years before the society was organized Horse Chief Eagle of the Poncas wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: "The young men do not want the old men as tribal committees. They vote the old men out. I wish you would give Superintendent Snyder power to have all old men on the committees. The young men say the old men are too much bother." When the Payne County Historical Society was organized, the old men and senior ladies were not only "on the committees," they ran the show and did it well.

For a few years meetings of the society supplied opportunity for folks to relate how they came to Oklahoma in '89, what they experienced and observed, and always they included "Turnip Year." For variety, stories "covered the earth": sale and rivalry concerning town lots, homestead relinquishments, living accommodations, food, entertainment, travel by hacks, church and school facilities, mail service, proving up at the Guthrie Land Office --topics were endless. Religious services were held in Stillwater ("Sooner") Valley on Sunday, the day before the Land Run. For me, a meeting was a historian's paradise, "original sources" galore.

As narratives became more than twice-told tales and narrators became fewer, attention was given to research and addresses, followed by a forum. Paul Boone presented one of the first papers I heard. It related the establishment of a telephone system and, as I recall, part of

his study appeared in the local press.

Eventually, years demanded that a younger generation fill vacancies "on the committees" on which the old folks had performed well. It would require a volume to relate how the new era arrived with unlimited opportunity and responsibility.

To name a few who came forward to build a strong society is to disregard a vast majority who merit distinction. I cannot omit Bassler whose literary contribution was able and whose scrapbooks are the society's record. John H. Melton, a born historian who strayed into real estate business, served well as Director of Research. Mrs. A. W. Johnson, secretary, kept good records and placed them in our filing case in the Stillwater Public Library. Among leaders were Dr. Angie Debo, Dr. Haskell Pruett, Jim Wells, John W. Hinkel, Louis Martin of Cushing, Mrs. Clara Keiger of Oklahoma City, Frank Mater of Guthrie and Mrs. Henry S. Johnston of Perry.

The Payne County Historical Society was sort of a holding company and there was scarcely a civic club in the vicinity of Payne County that was not allied sometime with it in activity. The society, in cooperation with the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce and the college, sponsored the first annual meeting of the Oklahoma Society in Payne County. The program was in Old Central on May 26, 1949 and featured county history.

The Payne County Historical Society provided opportunity for my students, especially those in Oklahoma history, to use the subject in a variety of ways. The average student was about as competent to appear on a public program as the average boy was to play on the college football team. The best, energetic students were selected and trained for performance. To explain the homestead system before the PCHS at Jefferson School was different from giving a report to a captive audience in a classroom. I can shut my eyes and see the sober gaze on the faces of students as Mrs. McCoy exhibits a madstone taken from the stomach of a white deer in Minnesota. In girlhood she had seen the stone used effectively in treating wounds made by dogs and snakes. She remembered horsemen coming in haste to carry the stone to an injured person.

To announce meetings of the society, students prepared artistic programs featuring the event to be discussed. Always there was a group of students who could explain and present songs that characterized the west or the historical event under study. The largest program was at "Twin Mounds" battlefield on the centennial of 1961 when attendance was 4,000.

I was honored to be a charter member when the Payne County Historical Society was revived with the *Review*, April, 1981. Innumerable topics demand attention. I mentioned to the society the Joe Spurgeon house, four miles north of Stillwater, apparently once part of the Perry Land Office (*Perry Daily Journal*, September 18, 1966). The society collected impressive evidence that merits prompt attention. This well may be the last last of the land offices that served Oklahoma. The society needs vision in every direction. Store first issues of the *Review*. If it survives, late subscribers will want complete sets. If it folds up, copies become a collector's item.

A meeting in the auditorium of the Stillwater Public Library concerning geology of Payne County illustrates a program on November 18, 1951. The guest was the popular Professor Ray L. Six. In introducing him I stated that his specialty has limits, according to the Director of the Geological Survey. In the National Archives is a letter by an enterprising man who submitted data concerning the underworld of fire and brimstone and requesting a cooperative investigation. The director replied: "The Geological Survey can offer you no advice on the subject of your inquiry. If I did not wish to avoid the criticism of being facetious I would say that the Survey is not interested in either the discovery or the location of Hell."

Thereupon Six gave a talk, conducted a forum and closed with a poem he authored.

GEOLOGY IN PAYNE COUNTY

By Ray L. Six

If I were smart as I could be
Then I would study Geology.
I'd look at rocks and look at land
Then I could tell what God had planned.

A Geologist likes to walk all day
And listen to what the land has to say.
He considers the rocks a "Giant Book"
With lovely pictures at which to look.

Here are some of the things he like to know
About the earth and how it grows:
A space in rocks does not mean explosion,
Material was transferred by means of erosion.

If one studies rocks it can be found
Some are horizontal, some arched from the ground.
Fossils are relics of life of the past
And a "bed" is known by the fossils it has.

We have some mountains in our State
But mostly we're streams and plains so great.
We've Wichita, Arbuckle, and Spavinaw
And Volcanic ash from Arkansas.

Southeast of Morrison is a Bone Bed
And the remains of animals about which we've read.
Northwest of the State where lava has flown,
Now we find "Twin Mounds" have grown.

Stillwater Creek gets more wide and deep
And through the years it seems to creep.
The land gets higher from that place
As it is uplifted with terraced grace.

I now know that it is true to say
Things of yesterday determine what is today.
A subject of beauty and interest to me
Is this one of Geology.

History of Pleasant Valley School As I Know It

By Ward Hays

There was much hand shaking, back slapping, and rejoicing the day the 1910 Pleasant Valley School graduates gathered at Couch Park on the third Sunday of April, 1960 to celebrate their 50th class reunion. It was the first celebration for the 1910 graduates. They were very happy and proud. I was very happy to be one of them.

The graduates had another reason to be proud for to help them celebrate was Mrs. Daisy Hays Downey, the first one to graduate from the school in 1896. Mrs. Downey, then 81 years old, gave a history of the school beginning. Also at the reunion was the last graduate of the school, Mrs. Emma Nuss Petty, who graduated in 1940. She walked two and a half miles to school for eight years and was never absent or tardy. The first and last graduates were the speakers of the day. Many of my classmates that I had not seen since May of 1910 were at the reunion. Many at the reunion had their grandchildren or great grandchildren with them. Mrs. Downey, who now resides at the Stillwater Nursing Home, was 100 years old December 14, 1980, reaching 101 this past December.

I will give you the story that Mrs. Downey told of the school history. The school, first known as Lyons School, was built with native lumber sawed on the corner of where this first building was built north of 19th Street and west of Sangre Road. Neighbors built the building in October, 1889. A young sixteen year old lady by the name of Minnie Houston, whose father's homestead was a half mile west, was the school's first teacher. The school was a subscription school and a fee of one dollar a month was charged. Mrs. Downey said there were sixteen pupils the first year and that she built the fires, swept the floors, and carried the water for the school for her fee. Miss Houston was a

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

sister to Ham Houston, who was killed in the gun battle at Ingalls in 1893.

According to Mrs. Downey the school house remained on the Lyons farm until 1894 when Mr. and Mrs. John B. Zuck gave two acres to the school district. A new school was to be built and a regular teacher hired. The new school taught eight grades. The schoolhouse was used for many things: preaching, literary, box suppers, spellings bees, and just plain get together for picnics.

My family moved in the Pleasant Valley District in the spring of 1906. I, with my two older brothers and one younger brother started to school. We lived one mile south and on top of the hill now called fox lege. My older brother graduated the first year we were at the new school, but it was the first public school for myself and older and younger brothers. However, in our books we were up with those that had been going to school.

My first teachers name was Mattie Tift, a widow lady with two children. The three other teachers I went to were seventeen and eighteen year old girls who had finished the eighth grade. Those teachers were real good teachers and to my way of thinking more serious teachers than we have today. Even teaching eight grades with fifty or sixty students, they always seemed to have time to give a student special time if they needed it. Of course, we upper classmen helped teach. I started to school in the 5th grade at eleven years of age.

All the families in the district owned their farms. While there were no rich people there were none that could be called real poor. All the families had plenty to eat and wear at all times.

While I know of none of the Pleasant Valley children making any halls of fame, none of them were ever on welfare rolls or picket lines. The Pleasant Valley people were a solid bunch of people that loved fun and one another. And God.

I have the fondest memories of the families that lived in the Pleasant Valley school district. As we all worked together, played together, prayed together, cared for the sick, and buried the dead. There were no funeral homes in those days and when a person died the neighbors sat up with the corpse until the person was buried. Neighbors dug the grave. A neighbor said the last rites. Neighbors filled the grave, while kin folks stood by.

My father, Harvey J. Hays, Phil Leinger, and L. P. Fortner were on the school board for many years. Teachers drew a salary from 30 to 40



Picture At Right

Pleasant Valley School as is appears today at the corner of 19th and Sangre Road.

Picture At Left

This school picture of Pleasant Valley School children was taken in 1906 a year before Ward Hays started to school, but all were in school in 1907 except his brother, Jesse, the boy with the big hat at the top of the picture.

Bottom row, from left to right: Alpha Zuck, Carol Zuck, Eunice Zuck, Vera Moore, Eunice Fortner, Easter Moore, Paul Zuck, Otis Cooper.

Second row: Bryan Fortner, True Fortner, Wilber Worley, John Zuck, Horace Andrews. Ward Hays believes the two girls on the end are Crystal Nuss and Ellas Toper.

Third row: Ethel Sleigar, Vera Andrews or maybe Grace, Blanch Nichols, Nellie Moore, Edda Cooper, Verdie Flemings.

Fourth row: Edna Andrews, Edna Daily, Mae Suthard, Violet Sleigar, Edith Daily, Florance Worley.

Fifth row: Maggie Fortner, J. O. Snowden, George Leinger, Earnest Cooper, John Worley, William Zuck.

Top Row: Ruth Williams, Teacher Mattie B. Tift, Jessie Hays, Leonard Andrews.



dollars a month. Most of them boarded with Phil Leinger, who lived a half mile south of the school house, paying 40¢ a day for room and board.

At the time I went to school which was from 1907 to 1910 families living in the Pleasant Valley School District were: the Zuck family (children Willie, Johnie, Alpha, Paul, Eunice, and Carol), Fortner family (Maggie, Willie, True, Bryan, Eunice, and Leo), Worleys (Johnie and Wilber), Andrews (Lenor, Edna, Horace, Grace, and Vera), Dave Sleight (Sylster, Ethel, and Ruby), Nuss family (Cora, Fred, and Crystal), Wren Sliger (Violet, Mary, Albert, and Lewis), Hays family (Jesse, Lon, Ward, Wallace, Lewis, Charley, and Boneta), and Leinger (George).

On the third Sunday of April every year since 1960 the Pleasant Valley School children have met for a get together and picnic lunch.

Of the above names mentioned living today in Stillwater that I know of are Grace Andrews Glover, True Fortner Hillerman, Eunice Fortner Baker, Fred Flora, and myself and sister Boneta.

Museums In Stillwater, Oklahoma

By Stillwater Chamber of Commerce

Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center Museum

Located in the basement of Cultural Center, 7th and Duncan Streets

Contains historical items of Stillwater, Payne County, and Oklahoma State University

Open Monday through Saturday, 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Group tours by appointment, closed in August

Admission free

Telephone (405) 377-8175

Fred Pfeiffer Museum

Located at the Payne County Agricultural Center, Payne County Fairgrounds; 2 miles east of Stillwater on State Highway 51

Contains an outstanding collection of early day agricultural implements

Open by appointment, and for special events

Admission free

Telephone (405) 377-1275

Gardiner Art Gallery

Located on Oklahoma State University, east edge of Campus, Morrill Avenue at Knoblock Street

Contains exhibits of art, sculpture, graphics, crafts and photos. Exhibits change each month

Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Closed Saturday

Admission free

Telephone (405) 624-6016

Museum of Higher Education in Oklahoma

Located in Old Central, southeast corner of OSU Campus, University Avenue near Knoblock Street

Contains displays telling the story of higher education in all of Oklahoma. Located in the oldest collegiate building in Oklahoma devoted exclusively to higher education and still in its original configuration; restored classrooms and offices. Operated by the Oklahoma Historical Society

Open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Admission free

Telephone (405) 624-3220

Oklahoma State University Museum of Natural and Cultural History

Located in the Agriculture Center Building, northwest side of OSU Campus, Farm Avenue near McFarland Street. Exhibits in following OSU buildings: Life Sciences West, Physical Sciences, and Seretean Performing Arts Center.

Contains collections of biological and geological specimens; religious and historical artifacts; clothing and textiles; photographs and transparencies; and art pieces

Open regular campus hours, Monday through Friday

Admission free

Telephone (405) 624-6531

National Wrestling Hall of Fame

Located at 405 W. Hall of Fame Avenue, just east of OSU Athletic Complex

Contains memorabilia of Champion United States wrestlers and teams

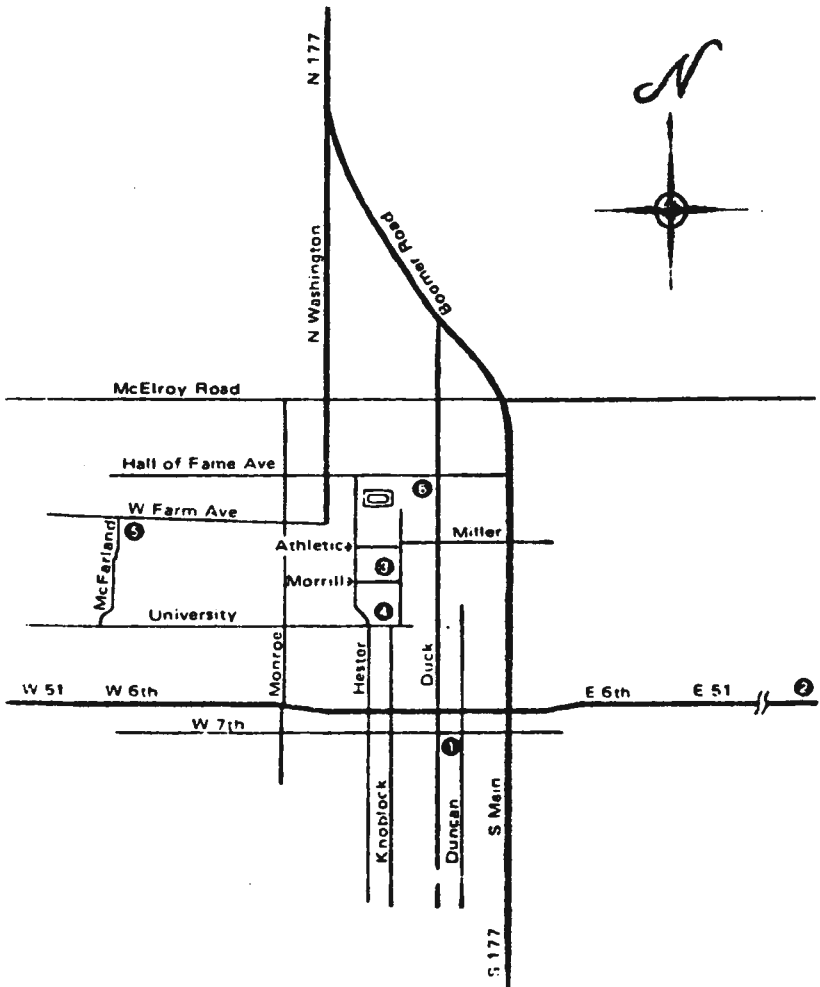
Open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekends and special occasions by appointment

Admission is \$1.00 for adults, \$.50 for high school and under and for senior citizens

Telephone (405) 377-5243

Location of Museums in Stillwater

- 1 Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center Museum
- 2 Fred Pfeiffer Museum
- 3 Gardiner Art Gallery
- 4 Museum of Higher Education in Oklahoma
- 5 Oklahoma State University Museum of Natural and Cultural History
- 6 National Wrestling Hall of Fame



The World Has Really Changed

June Webb Remembers WWII

By Paula Waldowski

Mrs. June Edmondson Webb was born and raised in Coyle, Oklahoma, not far from Stillwater. She grew up on her parents' farm during the Depression, hoed corn and cotton, helped her mother can vegetables from their garden, and got to come to Stillwater on Saturdays to sell their butter and cream. After graduating from high school, Mrs. Webb went to work for the government, first in the Agricultural Adjustment Agency in Logan County, Oklahoma, and later in Stillwater. During the war years, she worked not only for AAA, but for the county clerk as well, and even for a short while in Oklahoma City at what is now Tinker Air Force Base. Mrs. Webb is still working for the government, just two years away from retirement. She is secretary to the commander of the Air Force ROTC detachment at Oklahoma State University. A recent widow, Mrs. Webb says she is glad to be working, as it helps to keep her busy. The value of hard work is only one of the values she grew up with and continues to believe in. Her beliefs have helped her to weather the many changes which have occurred since the Second World War.

When the war started, I was working in the AAA office in Logan County, Oklahoma. (I had gone home for the weekend.) I was staying with my aunt, working there in Guthrie, and I had gone home to my parents, who lived over in Payne County, for the weekend. And I didn't know that war had been declared until I got back to Guthrie. That was the first I knew about it, because we didn't have a radio out in the country.

I don't think the news had the impact on me that it would have, had I been a little older. I was old enough that it should have, but somehow

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

While a student at Oklahoma State University, Paula Waldowski completed an oral history project entitled *Stillwater: The War Years, 1941-1945*. In the last issue of the *Review* was the introduction to that work. This article features her interview with Mrs. June Webb.

or other, I didn't really get the full impact right at that particular time. I knew that we were in war, and that war meant bad business.

This was really the beginning of my work career. I had just commenced to work in July of that year, so I was just out of school, and it was quite a change from a student status to a working girl status. And shortly thereafter, in April of the following year, (1942), I came to Stillwater and worked in the Payne County AAA office.

There was a considerable change in Stillwater after the war began, the hustle-bustle of the war and all of the fellows being drafted. The campus became quite a beehive. We had Army Air Corps, Army, Navy, WAVES that were sent here for training. And this went on for quite a few years then. So naturally, Stillwater was pretty active in the way of population. The population soared! And if you will note, on the campus we have a group of the old quonset huts still. Well, those were put up in a hurry to provide classrooms for all the military personnel that was brought in here for educational training. Then, of course, following the war, Vet Village was put up. I think there are a few remnants of the the old two-story wooden frame buildings that are there. In that area, they moved in little hutments that were, oh, I'd say, ten feet square. They'd put two of them together to provide housing. This was after the war, or at the closing of the war. Veterans were coming back to go to school, so Vet Village became quite a little village in itself. The veterans were moved into that type of housing because it was just moved in and hurriedly put up. Of course, they lasted here on campus for quite a long while. So eventually we'll have a beautiful campus again when we can get rid of all these old quansets and "temporary" buildings!

During the war, we did lots of things for fun. We managed somehow or other to get acquainted with some of the GIs here, and a great big group would maybe go down to Crystal Plunge, which was the swimming pool here in town. And adjacent to that swimming pool was a park area. A lot of time, picnic lunches were packed. And when the guys were off for Saturday night and Sunday, why, parties were held. And down where the Moose Lodge is now was Rock Castle Inn. It was kind of a little tavern, so to speak. It was really the only place you could go dancing and have a good time, so on Saturday nights, believe you me, it was breaking at the seams! And of course, when a group of girls would get acquainted with a group of guys, why, they would congregate at somebody's house or apartment or whatever, for games or dancing or eating or whatever. It seemed that mostly the group that I was in went as a group. It wasn't singled off in pairs, as far as that's



Picture at Left

Laveda Hajek and Billie Zimmerman poise in front of the Rock Castle Inn.

Picture Below

The Rock Castle Inn was a favorite spot during World War II. The names of the sailors are now forgotten, but the ladies are from left to right: Mildred Cunningham, Tink House, Laveda Prickett Hajek, Billie House Zimmerman, and Vera Carr Eby.

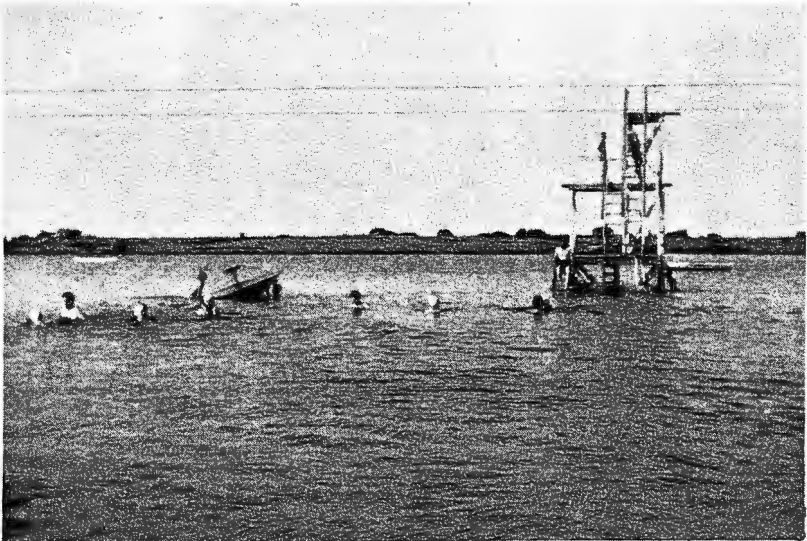


concerned. Maybe there'd be five or six boys and five or six girls, but no particular girl and no particular boy would be dating each other. Maybe a couple of them would, but the rest would just all come along. There was a bowling alley downtown, and there were three theaters downtown, maybe four, and there was one here on the campus. Showtime meant standing in line for along time to get in to go to a movie. Of course, when the movie was over, there would be a line maybe two or three blocks long for the next one. I don't remember what it cost to go to the movies then, seems to me like it was about 35¢ to 50¢.

Prices went up some right after the war, and of course, there was food rationing, gasoline rationing, which you had to have your stamps for and so forth. My roommates and I never had any difficulty getting plenty of food stamps to serve our needs. I didn't own an automobile, so of course, I didn't have a gas rationing stamp. My roommates and I would go home on the weekends, usually. Our parents all lived on farms, so naturally we would usually bring back milk and butter and

Picture Below

Yost Lake was another favorite spot to recreate during World War II in Stillwater.



eggs and things, which helped us in our grocery purchases. We didn't use the amount of sugar that we were allowed to buy, but we bought up that amount, and then we would give it to our respective parents, because they needed it in their canning and making jelly and so forth. Same way with other things. If we really didn't need them, but our parents did, why, we would buy them up and give them to them, because in return we were receiving things from the farm.

To get your ration stamps, it seems to me like we'd go sign up every so often, and get these little books, kind of like Green Stamp books. And it would have so many pages of stamps, and those stamps would be good through another period. So that was the reason we would always buy up and never let our stamps expire. I can't remember of too many things that were rationed in the way of food. There was a certain amount of meat that was rationed, and of course, sugar and coffee. There was even a ration stamp for a pair of shoes! But we always made sure that we didn't let any of these stamps go to waste, because our parents or somebody needed it! We didn't have that much excess. It wasn't that we were stashing.

I don't really know what the purpose was for rationing. I guess some things maybe were being used to send to soldiers and sailors. It was just a way of life. That's the way it was, so you just learned to adjust to it. It didn't bother me at all. It was a little bit of a nuisance, that you had to stop and think, "Oh, this stuff's rationed. Do I have enough stamps?" I don't really know why there was rationing, unless it was to keep people from hoarding. But I think a lot of people felt patriotic, using the ration stamps. With others, it was just a flat-out nuisance. But you will always have that type of people regardless of what kind of cycle of life you're going through. If you have to do it, some people take it in their stride, and some people, it really sticks in their craw to have to be told that they have to do certain things.

I don't ever remember any type of protest during the war or anything like that. People just sort of put their shoulder to the wheel and tried to help in any way they could. A lot of people here went to work at Tinker or various defense plants. The pay was good and times had been kind of hard so naturally, people, even the farmers, went to defense plants and went to work. It was better than farming. But them, of course, when the need for food became a little more critical, then the prices became better, so farmers were able to prosper a little better than they had all along.

It was kind of tough sledding before the war started, during the De-

pression. But after the war started, things changed. A lot of women went to work that wouldn't ever thought about going to work otherwise. I think the war changed women. I think it made women more independent. Before the war, most women were in the home. All they thought about was to provide the home and raise the children. They didn't give much thought to working out. A farm woman didn't have time to think about working outside of the home. She had all she could do to take care of her home and a garden, and help her husband in the crops and the chores, and help milk the cows and take care of the animals, so she had a full-time job at home. But the war made it more acceptable for women to leave the home. I think people just kind of thought that was the thing to do. Even the ones whose husbands made plenty, so that they didn't have to work out, they still went to work in the defense plants. And of course, people got accustomed to having more things by having two incomes, where if they'd never had but the one income, they'd have learned to live within those means. But once there was that opportunity for that other income, they got in the habit of it. And I think it's made women more independent. I feel like that I've been more independent than I would have had I never worked, because I feel like if I want to spend some money, well, I have contributed to earning it.

Things have changed an awful lot in the last forty years. I can think of lots of things that I didn't have back then. I didn't have a washer and a dryer, and I didn't have television. I didn't have the radio. All of the modern conveniences. Our home was not modern when I was at home. It was carry in wood and chips to burn, and we cooked and heated with wood. Once I moved to town in an apartment, then I became accustomed to cooking on either the electric or gas stoves, and I had inside plumbing that we didn't have when I was out on the farm. But even then, we didn't have automatic washers. We would go to a laundry, but it would be the old rub-type washers. Maybe they'd be electric washers, but not automatic. When my first child was born, I didn't have a washing machine. I washed my clothes on the rub board. And believe you me, that takes a lot out of you! Out on the farm, we had to heat our water in a big old cast iron kettle and wash on the rub board. We had no other way of having hot water. We didn't have gas to heat a hot water tank, no electricity.

We didn't even have a radio when I was at home because we didn't have any electricity. So people had to occupy themselves some way. And of course, the women did the sewing and they did all kinds of handiwork, but that was their relaxation, after cooking and cleaning and

washing and ironing. And with a large family, the washing and ironing were out of this world! They didn't have wash and wear and double knits and all that type of thing with no ironing required. Everything had to be ironed. My mother even ironed her tea towels and her sheets and things like that! I didn't, even before we got permanent press. I said I had other things I want to do besides stand and iron sheets! Besides, once it's put on the bed and slept on one time, who knows it's been ironed to begin with?

We had flat irons that was set on the wood cook stove, and when one iron cooled off, and you got a hot one, if you were ironing something that couldn't stand a very hot iron, well, you had to go to something that could use a hot iron and then go back to that one. I still have my mother's flat ironing board. It wasn't ironing boards like we have now, that you can slip the leg of a pair of trousers on. So after I married, I got an ironing board like that, and I thought I was in hog heaven to be able to iron my husband's trousers by pulling the leg over the end of the ironing board! And of course, your clothes had to be starched, and that meant dampen them down and then iron them dry. And if you didn't iron them dry, well then, that meant that they were all wrinkled. If I never see another garment to be ironed...of course, my wearing clothes are the type that do not have to be ironed, and I buy them or make them that way purposely.

But life wasn't only tougher for me back then, it was tougher for everybody. It wasn't that you felt so left out in the world. There were so many other people that were just like you. I've always fared as well as the average person. There's been a lot of things that I haven't had, because I just didn't have the money to buy them. But as far as food and clothes and a place to live, I've always had that that was adequate.

For instance, when I first started to work, I worked six days a week, eight hours a day, and I drew forty-eight dollars a month, but I had plenty! I lived with my aunt and uncle and for my room and two meals a day for three dollars a week. And I went to C. R. Anthony's (department store) and bought the best winter coat that they had for twenty-five dollars. I bought my mother and father a set of silverware that fall before the war broke out, and I thought, "My goodness, how on earth am I ever going to buy them a set of silverware for their twenty-fifth anniversary?" So I saved enough money from July to the first of November and went to Oklahoma City and bought them a set of William Rogers silverware for twenty-two fifty. And then that Christmas, I bought them a set of dishes, a service for eight, for ten dollars.

I was telling my daughter the other day, I said, "Really, it scares me to think of what it costs now to pay taxes and insurance and utilities." At noon yesterday, I went to the grocery store and I bought a half a sack of groceries, and it was almost twenty-four dollars! And I didn't buy much of anything, either. Back in the forties, my goodness, I couldn't have carried home twenty some dollars worth of groceries, you'd have about three sacks full. As my husband used to say, pork chops was two pounds for a quarter, but no one had the quarter! So you see, prices were cheap, but no one had the money.

I remember we used to go down to my mother's sister, who lived in Perkins. She had a family of seven children, and she baked bread. I always liked to get there on Saturday afternoon when she brought hot rolls out of the oven. And she used oleo that she bought for ten cents a pound. And she would buy baloney. That was the cheapest meat she could buy, ten cents a pound. Now what do you pay for a pound of baloney? Dollar and a half and up! So you can see how the prices have escalated in my generation. And yet, I don't believe people are as a happy as they were when I was a child.

Used to, fellow's word was his bond. He told you he would do so and so, then you could depend that he would do that. If a man wanted to borrow some money from another man, he would borrow it on his word that he'd pay it back. There wasn't nothing written down. And he would pay it back, because he gave his word that he would. And people's word is not what it used to be. I was raised that you kept your word. If you said that you were going to do something, well then, do it, or else there would be an awfully good reason wjhy you didn't do it. And I think that's one thing that I notice, that people cannot keep their word. I suppose part of that is the modern living, the faster pace of life, the larger population. Used to, you knew all of your neighbors; now you don't know your next door neighbor. So the world has really changed, and I don't think that I would like to go back to the "good ole days." There are some things that I think would be nice to go back to, like the leisurely pace, but I don't see how we can do it. We're accustomed to hurry up and cram too many things in and don't really enjoy. I think that's our problem, now, we don't enjoy. People are just in too much of a hurry.

News and Notes

Photograph Contest and Display

In recognition of Oklahoma's Diamond Jubilee, the Payne County Historical Society will sponsor an old photograph contest and display in April. Photographs of Payne County subjects taken before 1940 will be evaluated for historical content by a panel of three judges with prizes to be awarded in several categories.

- Categories are
1. Agricultural Themes;
 2. Architecture;
 3. Business;
 4. Education;
 5. Entertainment and Recreation;
 6. Ethnic Groups and Indians;
 7. Family Life;
 8. Health and Medicine;
 9. Law and Order;
 10. Religion;
 11. Travel and Transportation;
 12. Outstanding Portraits and Characters.

Rare historical photographs from outside Payne County may be submitted in a non competitive category. Anyone may submit photographs along with a brief identification of the subjects; they may be registered for judging at the Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center in Stillwater by March 15.

On Sunday, April 18, the Historical Society will host the opening of the exhibit, at which time the prizes will be awarded. The exhibit will remain on display at the Sheerar Center where it may be seen during the museum's regular hours, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m., through May 15. Look for articles in the county newspapers for further details.

Anyone wishing to volunteer his services may contact Mary Jane Warde (377-0412), coordinator; Lemuel Groom (372-8640), chairman for judging; Ray Burley (372-6134), chairman for publicity; or Doris Scott (372-3381), chairwoman for hospitality at the opening.

A second purpose of the contest is to encourage the preservation of photographs as a part of the historical record. We hope to copy the photographs submitted for the historical society files. In addition, we have invited Michael Everman of the Oklahoma Historical Society to speak at the March 4 general meeting on the preservation of old photographs and documents. As always, the public is invited.

Journalism Class of 1938

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

March 4th Meeting

Mr. Mike Everman, Archivist with the Archives and Manuscripts Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society will speak at the March 4th meeting of the Payne County Historical Society. He will discuss "How to Preserve Old Photographs and Documents." Meeting will be at the Old Citizens Bank Building from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Did You Miss?

Past issues of the *Payne County Historical Review* contain valuable information. In this current issue, B. B. Chapman's "History of Payne County Historical Society" mentioned Freeman Miller's "Oklahoma" which was printed in volume 1, number 3, of the *Review*. Paula Waldowski's first article "Stillwater: The War Years, 1941-1945," appeared in volume 2, number 2.

If you missed any back issues, a few are still available from the Payne County Historical Society, P. O. Box 194, Stillwater, OK 74076 at the cost of \$2.50 each. Don't delay. Order today and collect a complete set.

Payne County Historical Society

Life Members

Claude Bradshaw
 Bob Donaldson
 Kathleen Bird
 Edna Couch
 Leroy Fischer
 Bill Simank
 Bob Simon

Honorary Life Member

Angie Debo

Minutes

December 10, 1981

The regular meeting of the Payne County Historical Society was held December 10, 1981, at the Citizen's Bank Building. Doris Scott, vice president, presided. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read.

The treasurer reported \$608.30 in checking and \$707 in savings.

The members voted to raise the individual dues from \$5 to \$10 and establish a new membership category-family membership at \$15 a year.

Mary Jane Warde gave a brief report on plans for the old photo contest. A suggestion was made that Mark Everman from the State Historical Society speak to us at the March meeting.

Another suggestion for a program was James Melton. Ann Carlson said that members' interests growing out of articles in the *Review* would make good presentations.

The meeting place was discussed briefly; the \$25 charged the Society for the room also includes our storage space, it was pointed out. The Wrestling Hall of Fame was also offered as a meeting place.

The program was given by Doris Dellinger and Carol Borman, who presented a scale model of the Grand Opera House and told about their experience in constructing it based on present evidence.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 9 o'clock.

Respectfully submitted,
Alvena Bieri,
Secretary

PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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

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

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

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

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