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The Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 3, No. 3

Spring
1983



Nila Mack
Radio Personality
Arkansas City, Kansas

The
Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 3, No. 3



Janis DeChicchio, Music Editor
Gene DeGruson, Poetry Editor
Shelby Horn, Nonfiction Editor
Steve Robbins, Fiction Editor
Ted Watts, Art and Graphics Editor

All glory comes from daring to begin.—Eugene F. Ware

The Little Balkans Press, Inc.

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Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

Spring 1983

This issue is dedicated to Elizabeth Layton



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Nila Mack, ca. 1925

Preface

In her last book, **The Never-Ending Wrong**, Katherine Anne Porter stated, "It is my conviction that when events are forgotten, buried in the cellar of the page—they are no longer even history." This statement seems true of several articles in this issue. Our cover story, for example, began well over a year ago when Elaine Emmett returned from a meeting in Arkansas City. She phoned, asking if we knew that Nila Mack had been born there. We regretted to say that we had never heard of Miss Mack. But when Mrs. Emmett identified her as the "Let's Pretend" story lady of Saturday morning radio during the forties and early fifties, immediately the sponsor's song came to mind ("Cream of Wheat is so good to eat, That we have it every day....") and we were engulfed with memories of those wonderful tales.

Shortly thereafter one of the editors gave a talk to the Kansas Federated Women's Clubs, meeting in Parsons. Betty Sybrant came up afterwards, intrigued with the idea of investigating the lives of accomplished women of Southeast Kansas, and asked if there were anyone we would like her to research. Learning that her home was Arkansas City, we naturally suggested Nila Mack. The fruits of her research and her remarkable meeting with Nila Mack's best friend are recorded on the following pages—rescued from scrapbooks, yellowing magazines and newspapers, and an aged eyewitness who was to die shortly after being interviewed.

We are also pleased to print the story of the Bender family murders near Cherryvale, as collected from a ninety-three-year-old informant in 1933 by Jean McEwen. Although printed in the Parsons **Sun** in 1934 (and reprinted in 1962), the amazingly detailed account has largely been forgotten—until brought to our attention by Lois Hunter a few months ago. It will be serialized in the next several issues.

Zula Bennington Greene returns to our pages with a new chapter from her autobiography. (What a magnificent whole that is going to be!) Other old and new friends have joined us to write this issue. We sincerely hope you enjoy their work, will talk about it, use it, and thus keep it from becoming "not even history."

The Editors



CBS's Nila Mack

by Betty Sybrant



Let's pretend that you grew up in Arkansas City in the early years of this century. You might have played with the girl next door, pretending on hot summer afternoons that you were Cinderella or Princess Moonbeam.

Nila Mack, who gained fame as the writer, producer, director of the award-winning CBS children's program, "Let's Pretend," spent such a childhood. Her popular radio show was heard on Saturday mornings from 1934 to 1954 and featured classic stories and fairy tales acted by children.

Bonnie Nix was the girl next door who applauded her friend's successes and kept pictures and scrapbooks to document them. This strong friendship endured through separations of time, distance, and lifestyles. When Nila Mack died in January 1953, her will provided funds to help care for Bonnie's handicapped son. Bonnie's life ended on Christmas day 1981, at age eighty-nine. Just a few days before, she had visited with me about Nila Mack and shared her treasure of pictures and clippings. Bonnie's eyes sparkled as she related events from their childhood and she spoke proudly of visiting her friend years later at the CBS studios in New York.

Nila Mack was the only child of Margaret Bowen Mac and Don Carlos Mac. She was born October 24, 1891, in Arkansas City. Mr. Mac's ancestors were McLoughlins when they arrived in the United States from Scotland. Somewhere along the line, the name was shortened to Mac. I could find no record of why he was given the Spanish name Don Carlos, but he was always called Carl Mac in Arkansas City. Nila added the K to her name after she entered show business because she said it was often thought that Mac was a nickname.

Carl Mac came to Arkansas City in 1886 as a Santa Fe engineer and is credited with taking the first engine over the tracks to Guthrie in Indian Territory, April 22, 1889, and the first train to Perry when the Cherokee Strip was opened for settlement. He also was the engineer on a train which was held up in June 1892 at Red Rock, about fifty-five miles south of Arkansas City, by the famed outlaw Dalton brothers. This incident is described in detail in George Rainey's book on the Cherokee Strip. No one was hurt in this fracas, but in October of the same year the Daltons were shot to death in a bank robbery in Coffeyville, ninety miles east of Arkansas City.

No doubt this and other events made Mrs. Mac apprehensive for her husband's safety. He formed the habit of blowing his engine whistle, which he had attuned to the words "Goodbye Maggie," as he approached the Madison Avenue crossing close to his home on South C Street in Arkansas City. This would let her know he would soon be home. When Nila and Bonnie heard the whistle, they would race to the tracks and he would slow the train and lift the little girls up to the cab to ride the few blocks to the station. Then they would all walk home together.

Nila is remembered as a pretty, happy, vivacious child with precocious talents in music, dancing, and "elocution." Her parents were talented and lively and all of their attention as well as that of her mother's widowed and childless sister, Mrs. P. B. Hanway, was lavished on the child.

Mrs. Mac was an accomplished dancer who organized and taught classes in ballroom dancing. Nila played accompaniment for the classes which were often followed by "socials." The dances were held upstairs in Highland Hall (where the Burford Theater is now) and in the ballroom of the Fifth Avenue Hotel. On special occasions, Mrs. Mac gave balls at the hotel with music provided by Watt Sleeth at piano, William Stickler at violin, and George Bly at drums. Almost weekly, these events were mentioned in the *Arkansas City Daily Traveler*. Sometimes, W. D. MacAllister's orchestra, which the *Traveler* proclaimed the best in the Southwest, played for the dancing.

Nila also played piano for the Arkansas City open-air theater on East Fifth Avenue, where Fatty Arbuckle and Ozzie Nelson played in vaudeville. As a dancer, she won 208 cakes in local cakewalk contests and played, sang, and danced in many local programs. On May 18, 1907, the *Traveler* reported a program in which Nila Mac played a piano solo and gave a recitation. Dick Howard, editor of the *Arkansas City Tribune*, recalled in one of his columns a program in which Nila played a piano solo with her elbows instead of her nimble fingers. This number "brought down the house," he said.

But on June 20, 1907, the *Traveler* related with some consternation that Mr. Mac's run on the Santa Fe had been changed and that the family might move to Newton. Indeed, that week's dance might be the last one. The uncertainty lingered through July and came to an abrupt and tragic end on August 1.

Santa Fe No. 116, which was due in Arkansas City at noon, was running thirty minutes late between Otoe and Red Rock. On a downhill grade at a speed of sixty miles an hour, the engine left the tracks and turned completely

over. Live steam poured over engineer Mac and fireman Jack Kantzer as they tried to get out. All cars but one derailed and tipped over. Forty-seven people were injured.

The conductor, who was not hurt, ran three miles to Otoe and telephoned the news to Red Rock, whence it was then telegraphed to Arkansas City. The wrecker and emergency trains were ordered out immediately, and Nila and Mrs. Mac and local doctors accompanied them to the scene of the wreck.

The conductor returned from Otoe to the wreck with supplies to give emergency aid. The engineer and fireman had been seen to stand momentarily beside the wreck and clasp each other, but they then collapsed and, though Mac remained conscious and talked with his wife and daughter when they arrived, little hope was held that he would survive.

The first plan was to take the injured to Topeka to the Santa Fe Hospital, but the plans were changed enroute and the train returned to Arkansas City. Carl Mac passed away as they entered town, the first passenger engineer killed on the Oklahoma division. Everyone else survived, only the fireman having serious injuries.

Nearly five hundred shocked citizens met the train. Mac was well-known and well-liked. Funeral services were held at the Fifth Avenue Opera House and all three floors were packed. Delegations of Masons and railroaders from all over Oklahoma and Kansas attended.

Many adjustments followed for Nila and her mother. They moved to an upstairs apartment in the downtown area. Mrs. Mac continued to teach dancing, and her sister, Mrs. Hanway, a Christian Science reader, who shared the apartment, taught expression. Nila was pictured in black in the high school annual with the sophomore class of 1907-08. However, the story is told that she slid down the bannister of the high school stairs into the arms of the principal, who unknown to her was waiting below. Her spirits were still sprightly.

During the summer of 1908, while her young friends in Arkansas City were enjoying picnics along the Walnut River, dances, and parties, Mrs. Mac took Nila to New York, where they attended Chautauqua classes. She was determined that her talented daughter receive every advantage of training. In the fall Nila enrolled at Ferry Hall, a Presbyterian finishing school for girls at Lake Forest, Illinois. She studied dramatics and helped pay her school expenses by working in local entertainments.

The following year, Nila went to Boston for further training in dancing, voice, and French. While there, she was offered her first engagement as leading lady with a touring repertory company, at a salary of twenty-five dollars per week. Accompanied by her mother, she traveled with the group throughout the United States. Back home her friends were still in high school.

Knowles Entriiken, a noted director, commenting in *Variety* in later years on the life of Nila Mack, said that she learned her business in the lost world of



Nila Mack, ca. 1910

the theatrical road company. "Salaries were small, hardships were something you took in stride, and the performance you gave was what put meaning into your life," he said. He also commented that Miss Mack had a fine command of the salty language of that world and a brisk and friendly wit.

Not the least of the attractions the road company held for Nila was the leading man, Roy Briant, with whom she fell in love. Soon they were playing lead romantic roles opposite each other.

But, in the course of the tours, when the company ran out of bookings and funds, they were stranded at Metropolis, Illinois. Undaunted, Briant, Miss



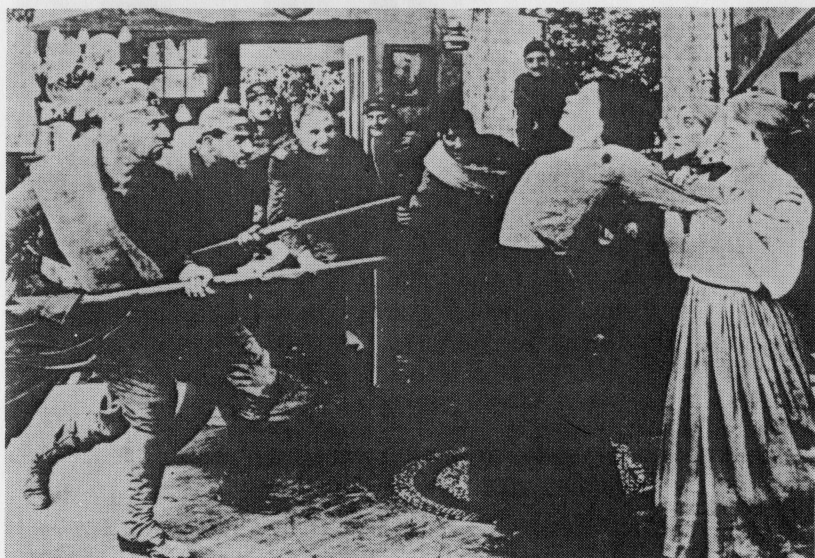
Nila Mack and Roy Briant, ca. 1912

Mack, and her mother decided to open a second theater in the town. Briant was to be manager, Nila would play the piano, and her mother would sell tickets.

It should probably be noted that the piano player was a very important part of the entertainment in shows at this time. He (or she) played before the curtain went up, at intermissions, and often accompanied the action in the play with appropriate music. I can remember attending shows when we went more to hear a particularly talented piano player than for the play.

The Mac-Briant theater venture in Illinois failed and, when another road company came to town, Nila Mack and Roy Briant signed on and began touring again as romantic leads. They were married March 20, 1913, in St. Anthony, Idaho.

Shortly before World War I, they decided to give up touring and settle in Chicago to collaborate in writing scripts for Paramount Pictures. It seems likely that this was Briant's forte, for he continued to write, but the high spirited Nila missed the action of the stage. When she was offered the second lead with a theatrical company organized by the famous actress, Alla Nazimova, she eagerly accepted. For six years she stayed with the company and became a close friend of Nazimova. Nila had a role in the movie, *War Brides*, in which Miss Nazimova starred.



Nazimova in War Brides [1916]

With Nila on tour, Roy Briant moved to Hollywood to be near the studios for which he continued to write. In 1927, he became ill and Nila left New York

where she was preparing for a role on Broadway and went to California to care for him. He died December 15, 1927, in Hollywood and was buried there. Nila Mack was a widow at age thirty-five and from then on her work was her life. She continued to keep in touch with her mother, aunt, and old friends in Arkansas City and made periodic visits there, but if she had any other romantic involvements, they were not known.

After Briant's death, Nila moved back to New York and returned to the stage as a vaudeville trouper, writing many of her own pieces. In 1927 and 1928 she played in the Broadway production of *Fair and Warmer* and was a member of the cast for Ibsen's *The Doll's House*. Also in 1928 she appeared in *Eva the Fifth* and the following year in *Buckaroo* with Tom Wise. During this time she was also writing scenarios for movie shorts.

Nila Mack's radio career began in 1929 when she joined Columbia Broadcasting System as an actress in the Radio Guild productions which became the basis for the program later known as the "Columbia Workshop." On the radio she also had roles in "Nit-Wits" and "Night Club Romances."

But once again Nila had to interrupt her climb to success and return to Arkansas City to be near her mother, who was now in failing health.

Not content to be idle in her home town, Nila became program director of the fledgling Arkansas City radio station which had studios in the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Her biographies say she learned many phases of radio production there. This causes local people to smile: they recall that she wrote the material, sold advertising, announced, performed, recruited talent, and in general did anything it took to get the show on the air.

Perhaps recollections of her own childhood performances for Arkansas City audiences influenced her, for she made the radio station a vehicle for many of the town's young talents. Lois Hinsey, now a grandmother, recalls how anxious she was when she played a piano solo "on the radio" at Nila's request.

After about eight months, CBS lured Nila back to New York to direct its children's program, "The Adventures of Helen and Mary." Arkansas City's radio station moved to Ponca City, Oklahoma, twenty-five miles to the south. It was August 18, 1930, and the nation was in the midst of the great depression. Children's entertainment was at a low ebb and only in fantasy could one escape the harsh realities of poverty.

Nila had reservations about accepting the job—not only because of her mother's health, but also because it involved child actors. She confided to friends that she really didn't like children. But a steady job in those troubled times was not to be taken lightly and she finally wired back to say "OK."

Helen and Mary were Patricia Ryan and Gwen Davies. Somewhere along the line they were joined by "Captain Bob," played by Harry Swan. The program soon became "Let's Pretend," which lasted for twenty-three years and was still a CBS Saturday favorite in 1953, when Nila died.



Inscribed photograph of Nila Mack to Bonnie Nix

Nila drew on all her resources of education and past experience as she adapted the classic stories of the brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Andrew Lang, and the Arabian Nights for her casts made up almost entirely of children. She also wrote the music and directed. She staunchly defended use of the fantasies as a vehicle and readily admitted they were favorites from her own childhood.

"I remembered fairy stories that filled me with wonder when I was very young," she once said in an interview. "I figured that if these lively pieces with a message at their hearts had meant so much to me, other children would like them, too."

That she believed that the "message" of these stories was important was often reiterated and reinforced by her adaptations. Working from the theory that fairy tales are children's guides to simple, eternal truths, Mack preached the triumph of goodness over evil. Her princes were charming, her dragons fiery and tough, courtesy and kindness counted, the good guys prevailed, and each story taught a lesson.

Nila modified scripts where necessary to emphasize honor and service to a good cause. Her plays plainly spoke against racial prejudice and she wrote an original allegorical drama, "Castles of Hatred," to dispel the idea that not all stepmothers are cruel. In 1946, she told NEA staff correspondent Rosellen Callahan, "The tales are candy-coated pills of principles of fair play, rules of courtesy, and lessons on generosity." In her own words, "The good are very good and the bad get just what they deserve."

Long before Disney adapted the story of the seven dwarfs, it was a Mack favorite. Rather than have her heroine, whom she persisted in calling *Snowdrop*, appear to be a heel who went off and left the little friends who had aided her, Nila's adaptation had her take them all to the palace with her where they all lived happily.

With the help of an imaginative sound man, who was often the only adult in the performance, she transported her listeners to long-ago and far-away lands of talking horses and enchanted forests. They developed some wonderful sizzling and steaming noises when oil was poured over Ali Baba's forty thieves hiding in jars. Bluebeard got his just deserts, too, but only by implication:

"The kids are tickled to death when Bluebeard's sword falls, klunk, closely followed by the thud of Bluebeard hitting the ground for the last time. They get the idea but not the horror," she said in a *Time* magazine interview, September 8, 1952.

Nila stood firm against new models in heroes. She didn't care for spacemen (Buck Rogers), cowboys (The Lone Ranger), or clear-eyed adolescent adventurers (Jack Armstrong). She stuck to her conviction that young radio listeners liked giants, witches, and fairy godmothers best. In the interview with *Time* magazine, she declared, "I'll back seven league boots and magic wands any time against six shooters and space ships."

Through the years, more than 250 stories were dramatized and the program was carried by more radio stations than any other program on the



Nila Mack, ca. 1937

air. Polls showed that adults as well as children were regular listeners. Most popular was the story of Cinderella, presented dozens of times. Runners-up were "Sleeping Beauty," "Rumpelstiltskin," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Snowdrop and the Seven Dwarfs."

Some shows became traditional seasonal presentations. During the Christmas season, "House of the World," an original script by Mack, presented the triumph of Good Will over Intolerance, Greed, Selfishness, and Poverty. "Heavenly Music" was performed at Easter, "The Leprechaun" for St. Patrick's Day, "Fairer Than a Fairy" at Halloween, and "The Little Lame Prince" during the annual March of Dimes campaign to combat infantile paralysis.

In the "Lame Prince" dramatization, Mack secured permission for actor Bill Adams to imitate the voice of then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, himself a polio victim. The permission was granted in a wire from Stephen T. Early, presidential secretary, which stipulated only that Adams be named in the cast announcements, so that listeners would not think the President was actually on the air. The appeal for dimes and dollars for the paralysis fund through this channel was, of course, most successful. Miss Mack, in a letter to her aunt, Mrs. P. B. Hanway of Arkansas City, said:

"I had a great kick out of doing the program and the executives here who heard it thought the program so fine that they had a record of it made and sent to President Roosevelt. I was pretty proud."

Nila Mack had many proud moments in the ensuing years and she frequently shared them enthusiastically with her aunt and friends in Arkansas City. In one letter, she said, "Well, darling Aunt, you can be pretty proud of me today. My program won a nationwide poll. And I am enclosing the account with my 'Map' (picture) in the paper! Isn't that swell, Potie? Along with it, I'm sending an interview by one of New York's most widely read radio columnists which has made me very happy, too. It all seems to be coming at once. It's pretty grand to know I'm still going strong and that after all of these years of hard work, I haven't lowered but increased my standards and output. Ain't it so!"

"Let's Pretend" won more than forty awards as the "best children's program in radio." These acclamations came from the poll of radio editors in the New York *World Telegram*, *Motion Picture Daily*, and *Radio Day*, from the Women's Press Club of New York City, the Women's National Radio Committee, and the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1943, "Let's Pretend" won the George Foster Peabody Award, sometimes called the Pulitzer Prize of radio; it was voted the "most effective commercial program developed by a national network" by the City College of New York and "the national program contributing most to education and public interest" by the American Schools and Colleges Association.

In another letter to her aunt, Nila commented: "Once more I won the coast-to-coast radio editors' poll for the best children's program on the air!"

What's more, of the six programs cited—that includes every station and all their programs—six were mentioned and three of them were mine; 'Let's Pretend' was 'tops' by a wide majority; 'American School of the Air' was third and 'March of Games' fifth—all my programs. Isn't that swell?"

Given a free hand by CBS, Nila experimented with other programs for children including "Childrens' Corner," "Tales from Far and Near," and "Sunday Morning at Aunt Susan's." In 1939 she took the "Let's Pretend" program to Columbia Playhouse for stage performances before live audiences. All tickets were sold out well in advance. She also once transported the entire show to the Monefiori hospital for the chronically ill, a monumental effort which she called "rewarding."

During World War II, she directed a governmental production for the Department of Interior. It was called "Let Freedom Ring," ran for thirteen weeks, and was accompanied by a symphony orchestra. Again she injected her own beliefs that there should be programs to help people to understand democracy as opposed to other political doctrines. She was resolute in her patriotism and wanted others to realize why they should be too.

Nila Mack wrote several children's stories for magazines, a book titled *Animal Allies* and a story book illustrated by Catherine Barnes, which was based on the popular radio dramas of "Let's Pretend."

In her forward to this 1948 book, Nila says: "One of the nicest things about happenings in the kingdom of Let's Pretend is the fact that you don't need to explain them—that is, if you don't want to. You simply believe or you don't. Personally, I enjoy being with those who do."

Nila's almost total involvement with children for a quarter of a century was something of a paradox. From thinking that she "disliked" children and feared working with them, she came to believe that fantasy and the elements needed to produce the effects of magic and unreality were best achieved through the use of child actors to transmit the childlike wonder of fairy tales to an audience of children.

She instituted auditions for talented boys and girls from six to sixteen, coached them in dramatics and microphone technique, and gradually built a repertory company of forty veteran actors who could rotate in starring, featured, and minor roles, with emphasis placed on the total production, rather than on the performances of individual actors.

Each of her auditions would draw many children from whom she would choose one or two with potential. (Roddy McDowell, of movie fame, auditioned for her just before he broke into the movies.) Nila believed that children who had had dramatic training were often no more successful than those without any. She preferred to teach them interpretation, enunciation, and other techniques from the beginning. She would sit down with her



Nila Mack, 1943

troupe, listening to their ideas on how a part should be played, reasoning with them, treating them with the same consideration as she would an adult group.

A new actor would be given a script to study at home. Rehearsal began early in the morning and continued to air time the same day. New players began in small parts. Many in her casts stayed with her for years. Others found it a good springboard to other radio shows, Broadway, and the movies.

Among her graduates were Nancy Kelley, Rosalyn Silber, Arthur Ross, Bobby and Billy Mauch, Don Hughes, Billy Hallop, Lester Jay, Jimmy McCallion, Sydney Lummet, Patricia Ryan, Jack Grimes, Kingsley Colton, Bobby Readick, Vivian Block, and Estelle Levy.

Dinty Doyle in the *New York Journal and American* said: "What counts with her is the knowledge that this or that youngster is maturing slowly—learning to act so well that it doesn't seem like acting."

Nila herself said, "My greatest joy is dealing with kids. You talk to them and you see them face out, not behind any false front. They are charmingly frank and so honest that it really gives you a thrill."

Arthur Anderson, one of the long-time "Let's Pretenders" gave some insight into Nila's relationship with her child actors in an article in *Variety* after her death. "Nila and her cast of child actors was something unusual in show business—a personal and continuing friendship and mutual dependence which, in the case of some of us, has lasted for 22 years.

"We formed one of the few real stock companies of radio. In those days our acting was only for fun, and so we were glad to accept \$3.50 per show, for the opportunity of breaking into radio. (Need I add that this was long before the days of AFTRA.)



Nila Mack, 1952

“The actors of ‘Let’s Pretend’ were, in her later years, Nila’s only immediate ‘family,’ except for her intimate friends, Howard Lindsay and Dorothy Stickney (famed husband and wife team of *Life with Father*), and it was inevitable that this close relationship (with the children) should grow. First, doing the show every week provided some stability in our lives, as we started to grow up, and found what fierce competition and quiet frustration the life of an actor could hold. Secondly, I sincerely believe that Nila made the actors out of many of us who would otherwise have been doomed to quick fadeouts, after brief careers as ‘cute kiddies’ whose lisping voices and talent for make-believe, possessed in some degree by all children, took the place of mature acting ability.

“She would work patiently with a new child—start him in small parts (2nd Fairy, 3rd Goblin, etc.) and gradually nurture the child’s talent until he was able to emote as confidently as the rest, and was, incidentally, launched on a lucrative career as juvenile heart-throb on other programs. Occasionally though, Nila’s theatre-wise, irreverent sense of humor would get the better of her, as when, for the sake of a yock, she cautioned a new snippet playing a French maid: ‘No dear—it’s not *Madame*, it’s *Ma dame*. Just remember—*Dame*, as in *God*.’

“If there was too much clowning during rehearsal, the talk-back would carry the admonition, ‘Now, cut that out, or I’ll come out there and sock you! And you know I can do it, too!’ But she wouldn’t have.

“The clowning, as we grew up, began to take the form of reading into some of the lines Rabelasian double meanings, which Nila enjoyed as much as

anyone, even when scolding us for them. But she could have topped any of them, and sometimes did. When, however, there was a new and innocent young child actor at rehearsal, discipline would prevail, and the fairies in the script would magically lose their Krafft-Ebing characteristics.

"Nila's interest in her cast of growing performers went far beyond that of most directors, however. We would frequently come to her with personal troubles or, in the past few years, give her first notification of impending marriages and blessed events. Our annual collective Christmas presents were sincere expressions of affection, and Nila, being sentimental, would go all to pieces at receiving them."

Nila Mack was described by *Newsweek* in 1943 as "large, plump, hard-boiled and shrewd." Her acquaintances described her as high-spirited, friendly, and humble. One kinder critic described her as "unspoiled as the dickens" and noted that she really appreciated any little attention.

She lived alone in a midtown Manhattan terrace apartment with two Siamese cats named Sapphire and Tsing Fooey. She gave parties there for her children which she referred to as "spontaneous combustion."

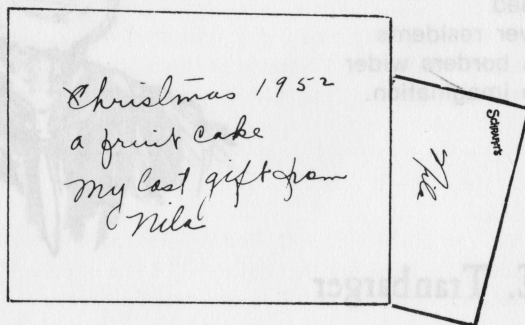
She worked most of her life in the hustle and bustle of New York City, but talked of returning to Arkansas City to build her dream house in Crestwood near the natural bridge, one of her favorite spots as a child.

She loved good food, especially sweets, and as her life became more sedentary, she added pounds. Before one visit to her home town, she spent four days at a health farm in New York state.

"At this resort," she said, "I practically go into training for a 15-round bout."

Nila Mack always enjoyed signing autographs and meeting fans, and loved attention showered on her when she returned to Arkansas City. For a bit of fun, she would call from New York and tell her friends to listen to the next program. Then she would give the characters in the play the same first names as those of her friends.

She was as loyal to her old friends as they were to her. Among Bonnie Nix's mementoes was a card which had accompanied a fruit cake from Schrafft's. Across it Bonnie had written:



Nila Mack died January 20, 1953, in her New York apartment, apparently from a heart attack. After memorial services in New York, Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay accompanied her body to Arkansas City where she was buried beside her parents. A simple stone bearing the inscription "Nila Mack Briant 1891-1953" marks the grave.

A last letter of instructions to Dorothy Stickney found with her will, contained this tag-line:

"And if at last you should get to the Pearly Gate,

Let me know you're coming, and I'll bake a cake!"

Dinty Doyle, New York radio columnist, summed up for us. He said: "This amazing metropolis of ours attracts people from all of the 48 states and the world's countries, but few of us knew that a little town in Kansas listed on the map as Arkansas City is responsible for one of the most famous people in radio.

"Someday, probably, the good citizens of Arkansas City—and there can't be very many of them—will realize that their town made a great contribution to the loudspeaker when Nila Mack was born."

The Same Name

Although the name
remains the same,
it is a different town
since that day when
with a sound like no other
a cloud dropped a tail
that tunneled the town up
above everything.

It returned
with fewer residents
but with borders wider
than the imagination.



Ossie E. Tranbarger

The House That Charley Built

by Ted Watts

Chris Forsyth, an eighteen-year-old Erie, Kansas, High School senior, wrote the following essay describing his home. "The Stations" was conceived, planned, and constructed under the supervision of Chris' father, the late Charles Forsyth [1921-1982], a highly notable and successful southeast Kansas attorney.

The primary structures for the Forsyth home are the Erie and St. Paul, Kansas, railroad depots. The two symbols of America's past probably would have been destroyed had it not been for Charles Forsyth.

Born in Valley Falls, Kansas, Forsyth admitted a lifelong fascination with trains. A collector of railroad memorabilia, he considered the acquisition of the two train structures, the Erie Santa Fe and St. Paul Katy depots, as his top prizes.

In 1976, he had the two buildings moved to an eighty-acre farmsite, three and one-half miles northeast of Erie, for construction into the unique home that he envisioned. "It will look pretty much like a depot on the outside but a good deal like an unusual home inside," he said at the time.

The twenty-by-fifty-two foot station from St. Paul runs east and west, intersecting the twenty-by-sixty-foot Erie station that runs north and south. Together they form a 4,600-square-foot L-shaped house.

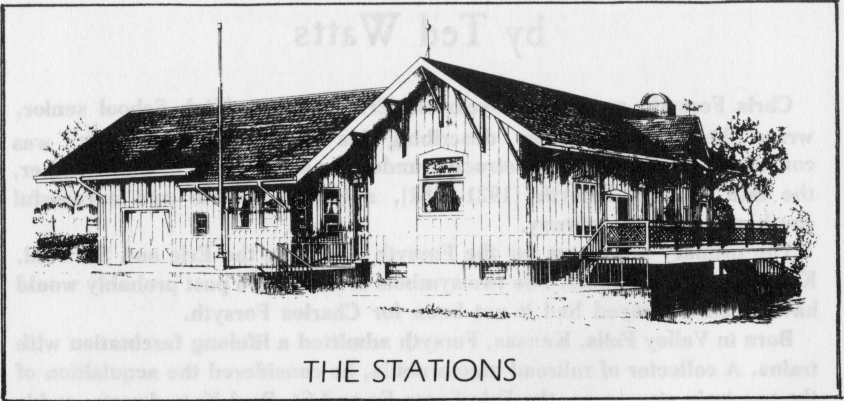
The three-year construction project of the Forsyth home included total use of native wood from southeast Kansas. Forsyth chose walnut, ash, elm, red locust, mulberry, cottonwood, coffee bean, and wild cherry for the interior construction. Although some of the native wood is scarce, Forsyth was able to obtain it all from Schoehofer Brothers Sawmill in St. Paul and Wilson Walnut Corp. in Parsons. More than twenty-five types of wood were eventually used. All was hand finished.

The primary carpenter-contractor for the building project was Roy B. Riffel, R. 2, Parsons. Riffel, a master craftsman, and Erie's Bernard Kennedy did most of the work, although the Forsyth family assisted.

On these pages we present a collection of family photographs and a drawing by Oren Olson, Lawrence, Kansas, to introduce you to one of the most unusual homes in southeast Kansas. Included are family snapshots of the moving of the two depots to the jobsite, a stained glass window from the Forsyth kitchen [created by Pat Bland of Parsons, based on a watercolor sketch by Iowa western artist Gary Hawk] and several views of the unique home that now exists.

Not shown, because of our reproduction limitations, is the exquisite grandeur of handcrafted wood in the myriad of color and grain textures that dominate the interior. Forsyth's railroad memorabilia enhance the effect he envisioned in a tasteful, pleasing manner. The well integrated decoration of the interior should be viewed to be totally appreciated.

The House That Charley Built



by Chris Forsyth

Picture a man, a man with a dream only he could make come true. The dream was to build a house different from any other. The plan of the house existed only in his imagination: it was never written out in full detail. He hired a carpenter who could interpret his dream and make it reality.

The dream began with two decaying railroad stations. Both were deserted, with not a person to care for them until this very special man made them part of his dream. He decided to put them together to make his dream house. People told him he was crazy because both depots had to be moved, one over ten miles. This may not sound far, but the depots were old and it was questionable that they could stand the trip. It was a feat just to get the two buildings to the site, but the hardest part was yet to come.

The interior was to be totally redone in lumber native to Southeast Kansas. The man selected the lumber himself, board by board. There wasn't a grain of wood that the man didn't see. After he selected the wood, it was taken to the site where the magic began. Carpenters shaped the wood very carefully, grooving each piece to overlap the next. Day by day, the man told the carpenters, where to put each piece of wood. Slowly but surely, the house began to shape up. The process took three years.

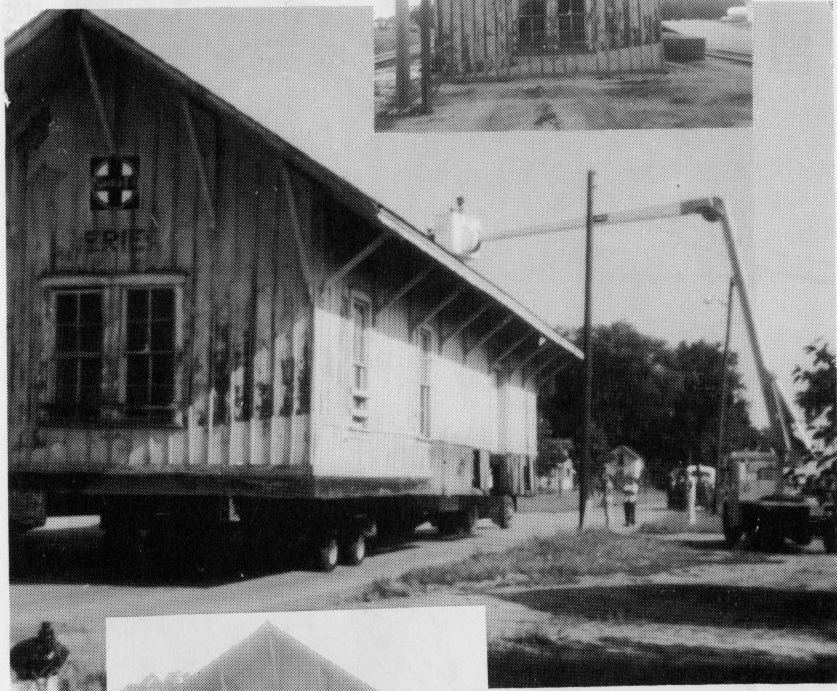
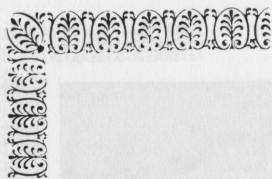
A massive brick platform forms the entry greeting visitors. The platform was carried brick by brick from the old depot site. The front door is a beautiful oak masterpiece, but behind it is the true work of art...a beautiful walnut entryway with a pitched burr elm ceiling. Hanging from the ceiling is a handcrafted chandelier. The top of the chandelier is wood, walnut and burr elm, placed in a geometric design. Hanging from it is a crown light off the top of an old gas-pump.

The next room is ablaze with light. The entire east wall is composed of windows. The room is sixty feet long with a fifteen-foot high-pitched ceiling. The walls and the ceilings are made of locust and cherry, two very beautiful

(Continued on page 26)



Charles Forsyth
(1921-1982)



CONSTRUCTION....The Erie, Kansas Santa Fe depot [top] was moved [center] from its original location to the Forsyth farm, three and one-half miles northeast of Erie, and set in place on a foundation [bottom] to begin the structure for Charles Forsyth's home, "The Stations".

The St. Paul Katy depot [right] was moved ten miles to join the Erie Depot, eventually forming a 4,600 square-foot L-shaped home.



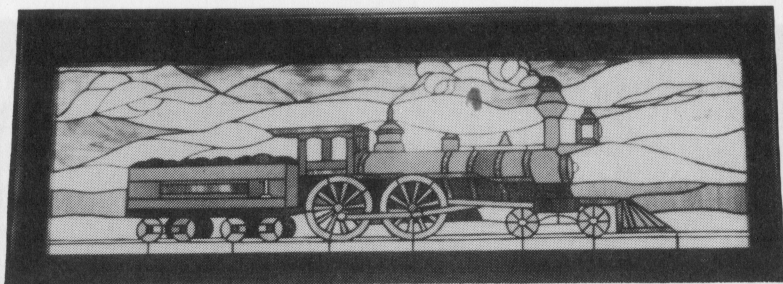
Photos on page 20 and 21 from the Forsyth family album.



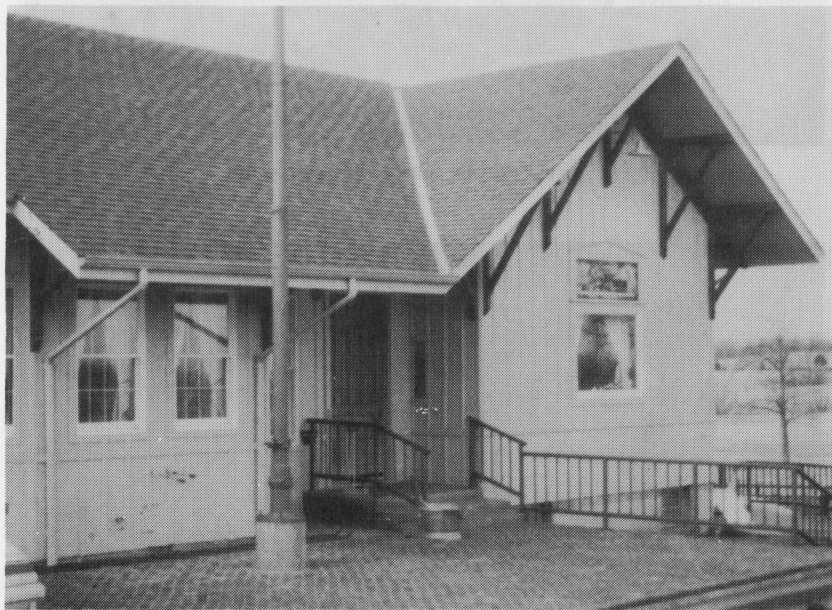
Roy B. Riffel, R. 2, Parsons [second from right] was the primary carpenter contracted by Charles Forsyth to form "The Stations" into the unusual home he envisioned. The Forsyth family was actively involved in the building project including one of Forsyth's seven children, son Jim [center].



Photo from the Forsyth family album.



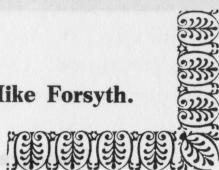
Pat Bland of Parsons created the stained glass window for the Forsyth kitchen. A likeness of Santa Fe Engine No. 1, Bland's work was developed from a water color painting by Gary Hawk, Iola artist.



A front yard view of "The Stations" shows the stained glass window in place, highlighting the south end of the Erie depot.

A finished view of the home, this photo can be compared with the construction picture on the page at left.

Photos by Mike Forsyth.





The Forsyth family living room.

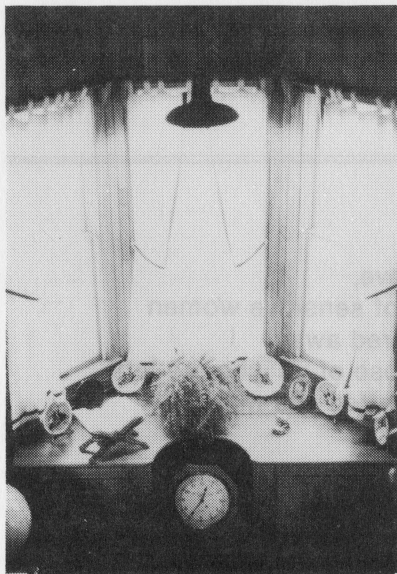


A view of the kitchen.

Photography on pages 24 and 25 by Mike Forsyth.



More than twenty-five native woods of southeast Kansas were used.



TELEGRAPHER'S AREA



TICKET WINDOW [UPPER LEFT]

Adding to the railroad atmosphere of "The Stations" is the integration of the original depots' architectural features, such as the ticket window and telegrapher's area.



A backyard view of "The Stations."

woods. Although the room is large, the warm color of the wood makes it very cozy. The south wall of the room is dominated by a gorgeous stained-glass window of a train. The north wall of the room is composed of each of the woods used to build the house. It is dominated by a huge five-foot-wide fireplace with a cottonwood mantel.

Bedrooms and bathrooms resemble railroad cars. Light fixtures throughout the house are from railroad cars or depots, adding to the railroad atmosphere of the house.

The man's dream came true. There is only one sad part to this story. The man did not get to enjoy his dream house for long because he died not long after its completion. His presence can be felt, however, in the house. In a way, the house is him.

What Is Left

When you go, my love,
Do not go the way of sensitive women
Who leave all withered away.
Leave and make those of us who are left
Feel we should have fed you more.

Go instead fat, healthy,
As if you lived life full
And milked it of all you could.
Leave, leaving us licking the crumbs
And touching each other's ribs
In sympathy for all you took.

Douglas Wolfire



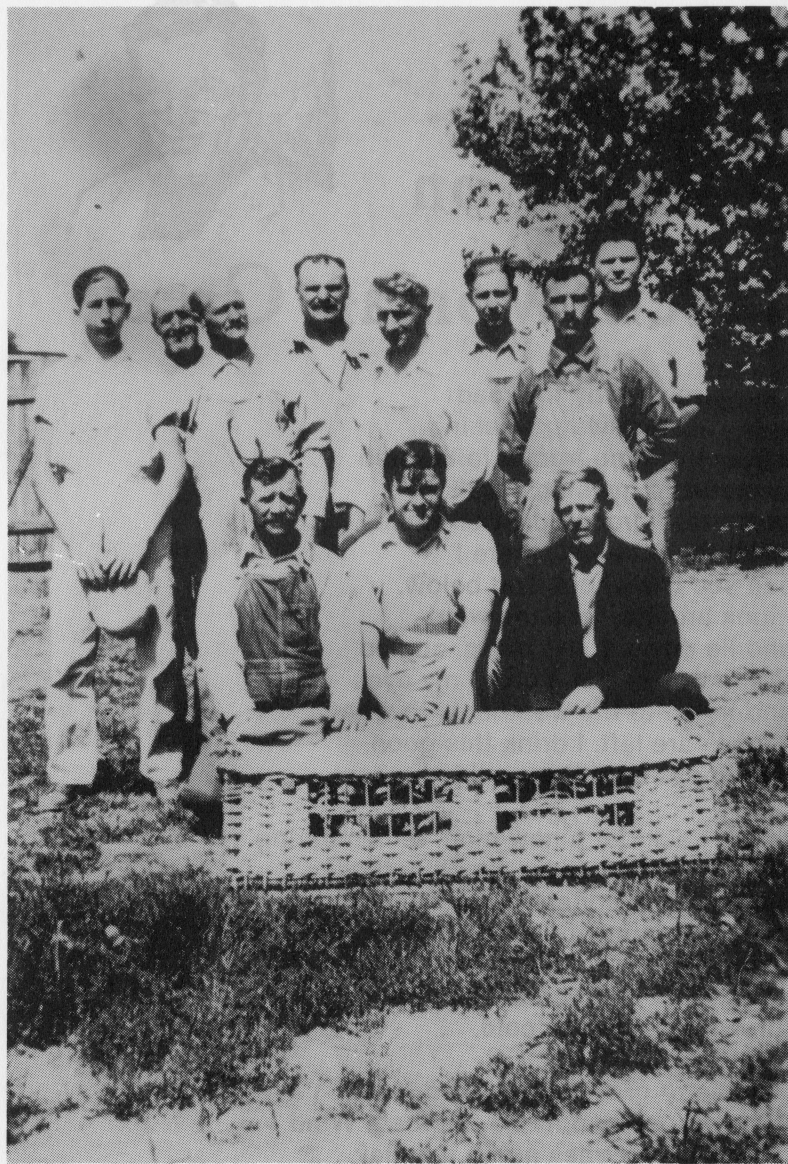
Walking on Raped Woman Creek

I leave my car by the road
and walk far away, breaking
a finger of limb from a fallen tree
to measure my steps, walking
over eaten ground past oil wells.
I find the little hill where I
can see the whole land below.
I look around, face the wind,
and lie down in the rocks, angled
to the winter sun. I close my eyes
and listen to the weather with what
senses are left. I drink this good
emptiness until the spell is broken.

I start back out a new man, remembering
what has been under my skin: those
pictures, the unnatural angles of her
legs, the sprawl of her body if she had
no money or friends, the dark blood
near her coat-covered skull, her wrist
thrown open to the cold.

Fringes of grass beyond the fence
sway and stream along the road. Wind
moans in the trees along a gulley.
Tire tracks stain the slope to a trapline
down in the creek. Discarded plastic jugs
bob in the sluggish water. I name this
small forgotten river. She fills my dreams.

Steven Hind



**Just Before the Pigeon Race
Edson, Kansas - 1925**

The Twelfth Kansas Poetry Contest



"Not for laggards doth a contest wait," observed Aeschylus the dramatist some twenty-five centuries ago. So when Ossie E. Tranbarger of Independence sounded the clarion for the twelfth annual Kansas Poetry Contest last March, some 263 poets answered from all over the United States, and Frederick A. Raborg had what he calls the pleasurable task of judging them. In the haiku category, Ossie was able to forward some 155 entries to Willene Nusbaum for judgment. Their selections are printed on the following pages for your enjoyment.

The lists are now open for the thirteenth annual contest. Poets may submit work to Mrs. Tranbarger at 619 W. Main, Independence, KS 67301, until October 15, 1983. Category one is optional in form and subject matter, poems to range anywhere from eight to thirty lines. The haiku of category two should be traditional. There is no limit on the number of entries per poet; each poem or haiku should be accompanied by a one-dollar entry fee.

The poems, which should be previously unpublished, are judged anonymously. Therefore, two copies of each poem should be submitted: a copy without identification, the other with the poet's name and address. Prizes in each category are \$50.00 for first prize, \$25.00 for second, \$15.00 for third, and \$5.00 for each of at least three honorable mentions. Nonwinning entries will be destroyed after judging; winning poems will be published in the Spring 1984 issue of the **LBR**, d.v.

Family Legacy

First Prize

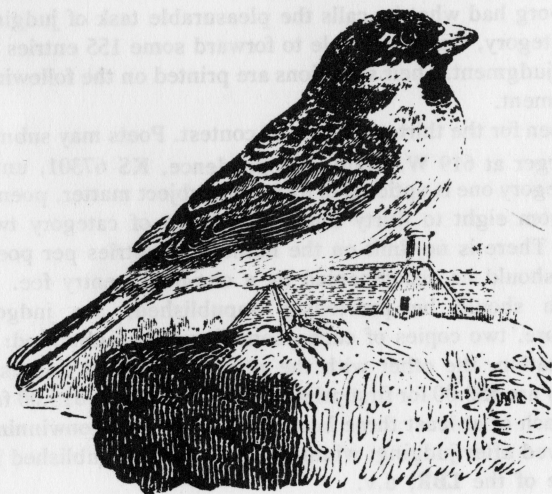
My brothers dig and pry at stubborn rock;
From shovel shift to crowbar, back again.
Our family comes of sturdy peasant stock
And we are muscled, country-bred young men.

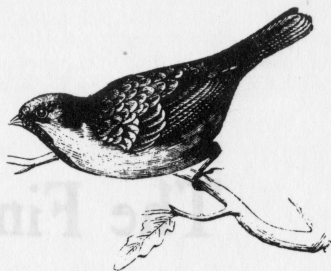
My job's to pile large stones that soon will be
Set cunningly to mend a boundary wall.
Here Grandpa struggled unsuccessfully;
Here Father had his heart attack last fall.

John Junior plans a factory job come spring;
Soon Joseph will be busy with high school,
While Paul throws hints out of his marrying.
Against failure's shade we each must duel.

Now parentless, united in shared need,
We win our manhood by inheritance:
I bend and lift: It is ourselves we seed
Within these wildling acres mountains fence.

Esther M. Leiper





Second Prize

New Pony on a Carousel

Somewhere in the night
a pony crosses the sky
with the force of thunder
in his legs, embers in his eyes.
He is a man, tempting and beautiful
as fireworks in the charcoal night.
Somewhere a woman yearns for a palomino,
something new for a journey outside
her tight town. She struggles
with an old harness: wagons that cut
her shoulders. The church on the hill
waits as bells swing like eyes
blinking yes then no, the somber bell
tolls, changes to love songs.
The lure of the music calls her to a carousel
whose painted horse snarls and rears
on strong legs like a thunder pony
exploding in the night.

Ann L. Zoller

The Final Conflict

a fable

An old man in a hidden room
lines wooden soldiers on a board.
Another floats a paper plane.
The third a gumdrop submarine.

Splinters, splinters, folded words
sugar tombs and burning
plastic flames, a puff of cloud
and deadly ashes raining.

Children singing summer fields
dancing circles in the sun.
Not one from all that laughing crowd
would play at such a foolish game.

Who will sing the castle down
make melody of paper words
wrap wooden dolls in joyous song
dance candy from an old man's hand?

Winter, winter, snow and fire
evil skies are building.
Faster, louder, swifter, sweeter
hurry, children, hurry.

Donna Thomas

First Honorable Mention



The Mockingbird

The murmuring hush at that midnight hour
trembled and broke in a cascading shower
of sound. A nocturnal earth was stirred
by the rapturous song of a mockingbird.

High in the tip of a sycamore tree
he tumbled and tossed in ecstasy.
As youth is forever, no hour is late
for a mockingbird to sing to his mate.

Gray as the shadows and white as the moon,
he is also the most delightful buffoon.
A jester, he mimics the catbird call.
All songs he knows: he mingles them all.

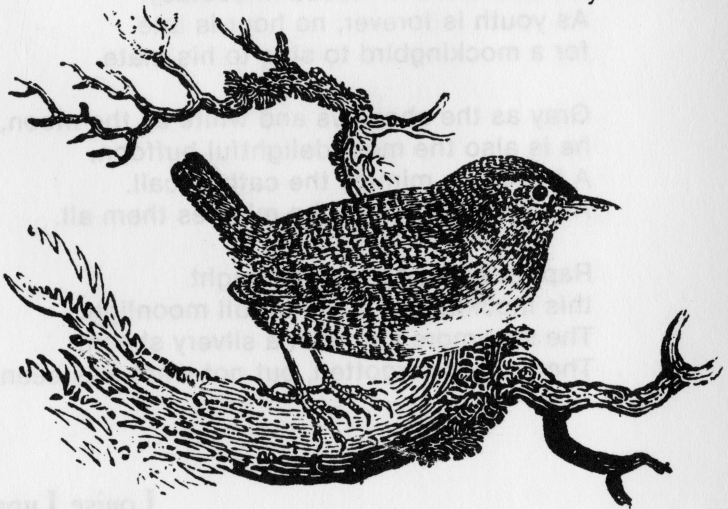
Rapt in aura of awesome night
this mockingbird sang in full moonlight.
The sycamore shone in a silvery sheen.
The song is forgotten, but not what was seen.

Louise Lupardus

The Runner

There was a man who wore a cunning smile
While jogging on the roadways every day.
Although his friends thought running infantile
He claimed it kept him young in every way.
The day he won the Boston Marathon,
Bestowed with ribbons, medals, loving cup,
He danced, he drank, he sang and carried on,
Elated, feted, petted like a pup.
Behind him stood his sweet, submissive wife
Who wondered why he never ran to her.
A careless slip committed changed his life:
He kissed a woman dressed in pearls and fur.
A rapid race increased his stride and health;
A slow divorce reduced his pride and wealth!

Beverly K. Fine



Third Honorable Mention

A Rare Breed

They, never the ones with high-piled hair,
No lip rougers nor cheek pinchers;
They, never the posers in tight satin pants,
Nor milady, encased in brocade and lace.

Mine, never the ones to adore heirlooms,
Grandpapa's bed or grandmama's china,
Nor silver of several seasoned ages,
No wedding dresses or perfumed gloves.

Mine never knew the velvet of carriage
Nor feel of pearls which warmed other throats;
Theirs not the finishing school debut,
Nor string quartets playing stately mazurkas,

Mine were the dreamers of home and land
Who threw horse reins across their backs,
Who worked like mules which they replaced,
Who followed covered wagon trails.

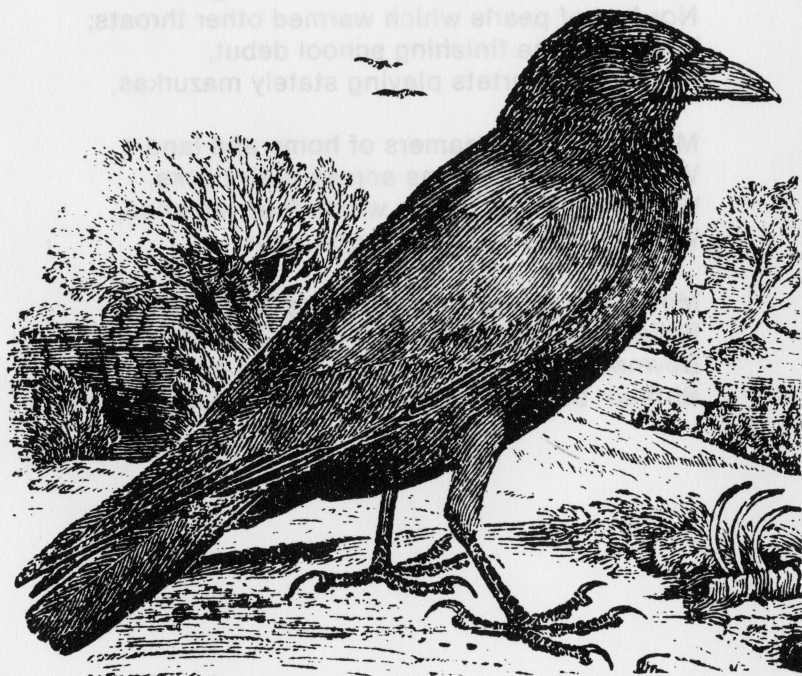
Mine, with sweat rolling in body crevasses,
Pulled crosscut saws from dawn to dark,
Downed cold cornbread and milk at end of day,
Birthed babies, buried love in handmade coffins.

Mine, buckboard travelers to camp-meeting singings,
All day preaching and dinner on the grounds;
The sermons long and loud and fiery,
Gnarled hand gripping the family Bible.

Mine knew well the cut of cold,
Stored against it in dirt-dug cellars,
Peeling, boiling their homegrown gardens,
Work in summer to stay the winter.

I see the graciousness of some
Who minuet through life to manor born;
I will keep my own and bless their being
Who gave me work, a fear-free life, a family Bible worn.

Mickey Huffstutler



Fourth Honorable Mention

Media Man

Never let go of video
Never too far from Atari
Never back down from Pac-man.

Say Media Man?—Do you remember how to talk?
Can you manage a quiet walk?
Can you hear nature over the game show moderator?
Do you talk to your lady as much as the telephone operator?

The media's the message
The media's your savior
I'm talkin' to you accumulator
Channel switching spectator
Floundering in nomenclature
You true believer
Of the four wheeler, faith healer, drug dealer
Wandering behind the screen, miming soap opera scenes,
In your designer jeans
While politicians melt your family in World War Three
After smashin' down your trees, droppin' nuclear waste in your
seas
They're throwin' everything anywhere
"I don't care
What'll I wear?
There's that edible dress that's in style
But it's too far under the pile
Maybe the cockroaches ate it."

Leigh Hunt



Haiku

First Prize

Soil turning to dust;
the wooden water bucket—
open at the seams

Louise Somers Winder

Second Prize

Moon-lit autumn pond—
A beaver drags its shadow
Across the water.

Nida E. Jones Ingram

Third Prize

Drought shrinks the old pond:
one big carp swims in circles . . .
circles and circles

Louise Somers Winder

First Honorable Mention

With only one hoot,
The owl flies toward the hills . . .
Leaving its echo.

Nida E. Jones Ingram

Second Honorable Mention

above the wheat fields
shifting elk shapes . . . beyond—
shadows of coyote

Rita Z. Mazur

Third Honorable Mention

Just a few red coals . . .
deep in the old easy chair
her lavender scent

Louise Somers Winder



“Play Ball!”

Gas, Kansas - 1907



The Rev. Carl W. Nau in front of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 18th and Washington Boulevard, Kansas City, Kansas, ca. 1944.

Carl Nau: Mary White's Friend

by Arthur F. McClure

Most Kansans are familiar with William Allen White's famous editorial of May 17, 1921, entitled "Mary White." White's heart-broken feelings were recorded as he immortalized his young daughter who died after a tragic horseback riding accident. His closing words describing her funeral have been read by generations of Americans since:

A rift in the clouds in a gray day threw a shaft of sunlight upon her coffin as her nervous, energetic little body sank to its last sleep. But the soul of her, the glowing, gorgeous, fervent soul of her, surely was flaming in eager joy upon some other dawn.

Earlier in the editorial White mentioned "a prayer sent down for her by her friend, Carl Nau. . . ." Just who was Carl Nau? The Reverend Carl W. Nau, an Episcopal priest, had apparently befriended Mary White in some of her spirited efforts to improve Emporia's community affairs. Born in England on July 20, 1882, the Reverend Mr. Nau came to the United States in 1905 to work in New York as an artist. He brought with him, and continued to use until his death in 1957, a pocket paint box his mother had given him on his fourteenth birthday. In New York City he worked briefly as an artist for Tiffany's, designing monograms, seals, and coats of arms.

A short time later he decided to go into the ministry and was graduated from the Kansas Theological Seminary in Topeka in 1909. He was ordained a deacon in 1909 and a priest of the Episcopal Church in 1911. He began his ministry at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church at Iola. Reverend Nau came to Emporia in 1913 and was rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church for nearly eight years, during which time, in 1915, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. The Emporia *Gazette* of December 6, 1920, reported the following:

He has increased the attendance at the Episcopal Church and has done much in local and state church work. He inaugurated the Sunday moving picture services in Emporia, and his pictures have drawn capacity crowds at the Emporia theaters. His movie services have attracted nation-wide attention and have been the subject of many newspaper stories.



Mary White [1904-1921] at fifteen.

It is not difficult to imagine that Mary White may have been an interested participant at these innovative services.

In addition to his church work, Mr. Nau took an active interest in community affairs. During World War I he was director of the Lyon County chapter of the American Red Cross, a job which apparently took up much of his time. He was elected to the local board of educa-



Postcard reproduction of one of Carl Nau's watercolors, postmarked Laguna Beach, California, August 11, 1944.

tion, served as chaplain of the local post of the American Legion, was a member of Masonic orders, was a member of the welfare board, and was director of the community Christmas festival. His activities with this festival most certainly must have brought him into Mary White's world. She was much involved with the Christmas Committee at the Congregational Church, which was a part of the community effort to feed the sick and elderly at Christmas. The kindnesses of Mary White and Carl Nau were probably allied at some point in this cause.

On January 1, 1921, he left Emporia to become rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Kansas City, Kansas, where he served for twenty-eight years before his retirement in 1948. Mr. Nau died at his home on November 1, 1957, at the age of seventy-five. His wife of forty-eight years, Margaret, survived him.

Throughout his ministerial career, Mr. Nau concentrated his efforts on youth programs. Friends and parishioners saw him as a mild mannered and kindly man with a natural dignity who believed most of the evils of the world could be erased by the spiritual education of the young.

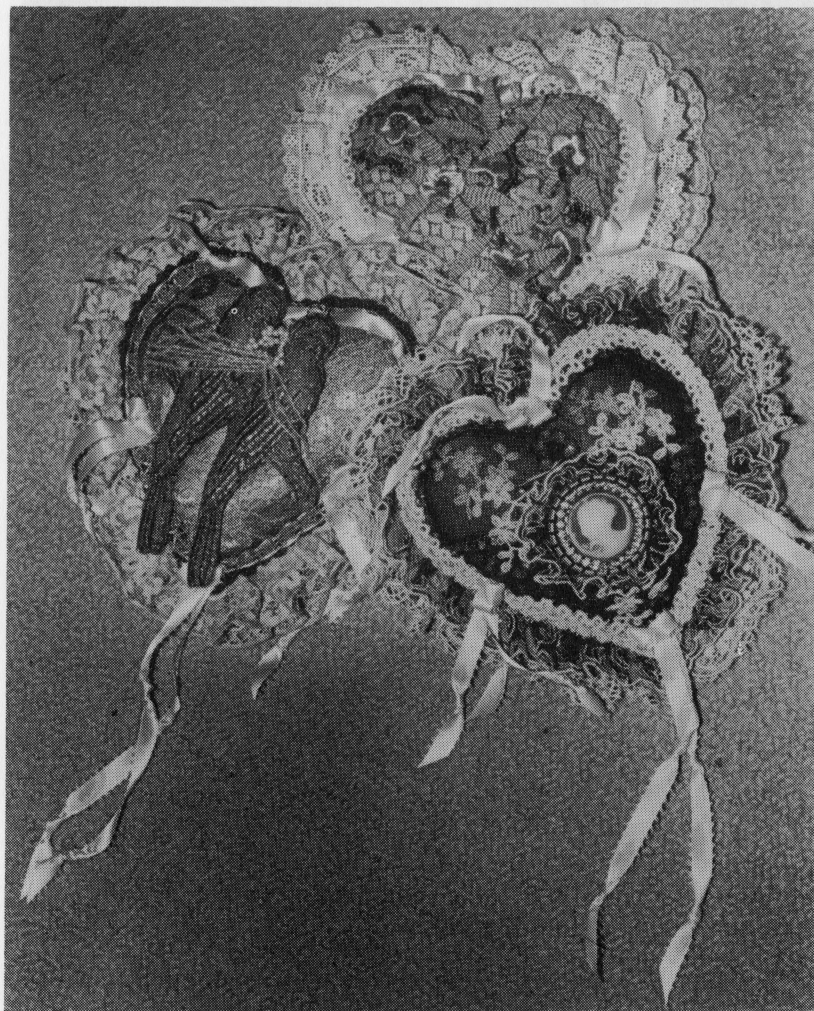
The editorial about Mary White remains a classic piece of American literature which symbolizes the innocence and courage of a nation slowly recovering from its first international war. And her friend Carl Nau became a lasting part of it because he celebrated her memory by sending down a prayer.



Kathleen Bender [left] as Mary White talks to Zula Bennington Greene [right] in the Old People's Home in Emporia [from the ABS Theatre television play, Mary White, 1977].

Soft Sculpture

by Rosemary Postai



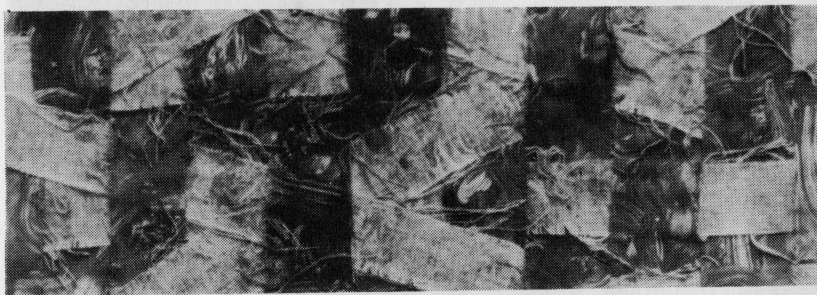
I first designed the heart as a Valentine token or keepsake. It was well received, but instead of using it as a conventional seasonal motif I have continued working on the heart until it has become a very personal art form. It and other soft sculptures I create are made entirely of old materials and laces combined with found objects, such as cameos, beading, and other mementoes of the past.



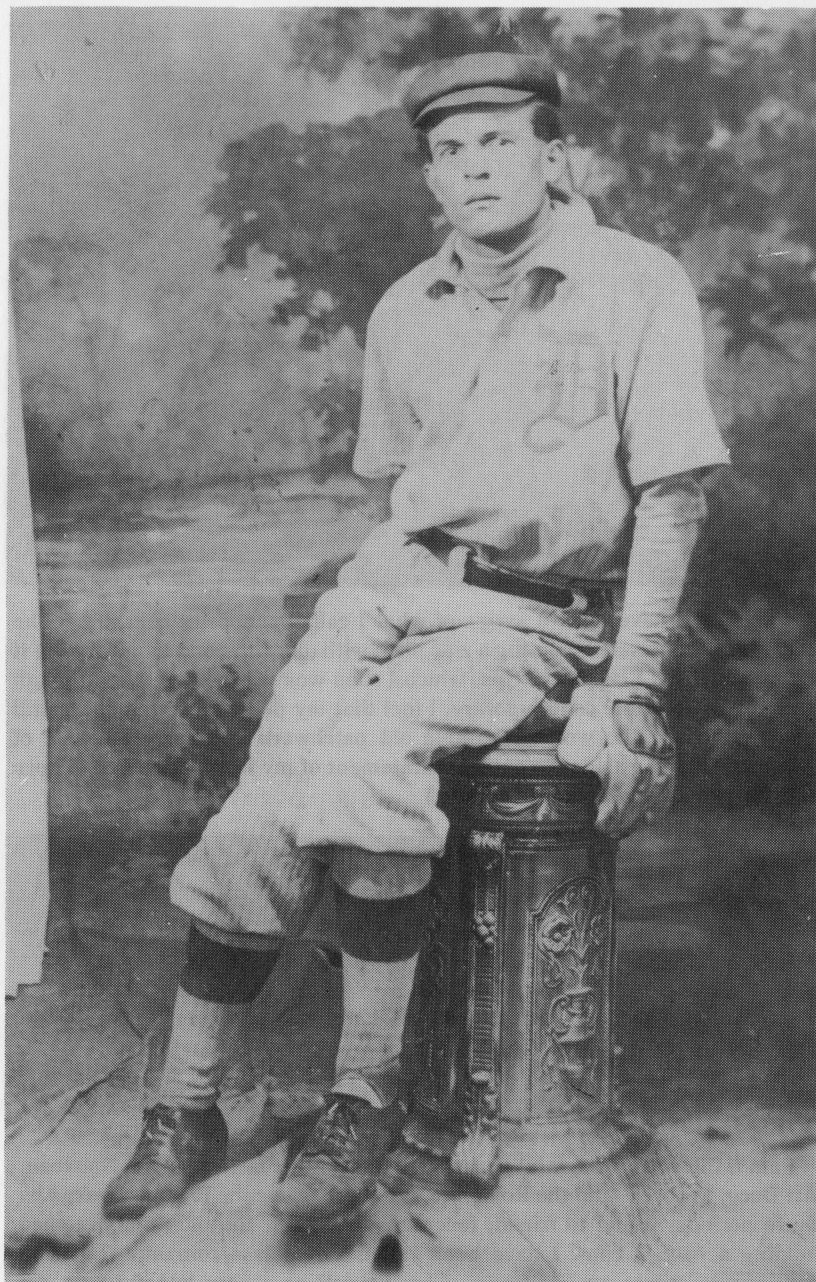
Sewing all my pieces by hand, I keep in constant touch with the feel of the materials and the image I am creating. I love working with the antique. The beautiful workmanship, design, and color I appreciate so much, as well as the mystery involved. Whose wedding dress was this? Why was this bit of lace preserved? Cutting, sewing, and piecing bits and pieces of the past into a new art form, I seek to preserve this mystery.



Recently, I have done a series of what I call "monoprnt collages." The technique consists of painting a zinc plate with oil paints and handprinting it on muslin. This I cut into strips, which I then weave together. Even though the results are quite contemporary, I feel that my personal statement is still conveyed since the works resemble old patchwork and carry an aura of mystery. (Putting aside the personal statement of my work, color and texture are its two most important details.)



I am influenced by several periods of history: the Victorian, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Rococo--and the Romantic, of course. I love the feelings evoked by these periods: friend to friend, lover to sweetheart, the hand outstretched holding a rose. I know I have been called a hopeless romantic, but as I continue to create my art forms, I see myself as a very hopeful one, for although I do not wish to bring back the "old days," I wish to convey the feelings and imagery of those times into my own.



W. B. Peck of Pittsburg with the Duluth team at Superior, Wisconsin, July 25, 1911.



From the Watertower

by Jared Carter

So this was what it meant: to fall
 From here would be the real thing,
 Not like getting clipped halfway
 Down the field, or stepping off
 The scaffold waving a paintbrush.
 That sort of fall was quick—
 The one-and-a-half gainer with a
 Full twist off the low board.

This would be gradual. A sort of
 Slide, at first, across the tank's
 Enormous curve, as though the mass
 Of water held that far from earth
 Would slow you down, then ease you
 Straight off into air, while
 Everything else stood still: stars
 In the black sky, streetlamps
 Glimmering through the trees.
 All that would start to smear
 On the way down, somebody said,
 Like the sparks of a cigarette
 Thrown out from the next car.

Such floating down through darkness
Seemed familiar. In our brief arcs
And cartwheels tumbling back and
Forth across that earth from which
We all had only recently emerged,
We learned the way to take the hit
And jump up for the following play,
To stretch out flat above the field
To get a glove on the line drive,
To come out of the tuck making no
Sound at all entering the water—
Each tackle, each fall or dive
Testing that bond, that pull between
Our bodies and the ground, exploring
What can be accomplished in
A moment's grace before the joining.

The watertower was a place where
Those who knew about such intervals
Would go. We went there after
Second shift at the can factory,
After the bars had closed—we
Who had mastered (or so we thought)
The quick kick, the jump shot,
The cutaway. And brought with us
Someone who was painting houses
For a dollar an hour that summer,
Who had a pickup truck with a rack
And the right kind of ladders
For getting over hurricane fences.

There would be bottles of beer
Clanking in our pockets, and matches
And cigarettes—supplies needed
For resting at the summit, after
Going hand over hand up the cold rungs.
It was the highest point in town;
Up there you could see everything.
There was no other reason, except
The quiet, and the wind's cool
At the very top. And the talk
About what it would be like to fall.

This was no idle conversation.
We gathered around the amber globe
Of the light that blinks on and off
To warn the planes. Having risen
Straight up out of those shadows—
Surefooted and swift, confident
In our knowledge of such balancing—
We looked down at that dark world
Presenting itself below, spread far
Beyond the reaches of the town, and knew
It was time for us to go. To fall.

Jared Carter

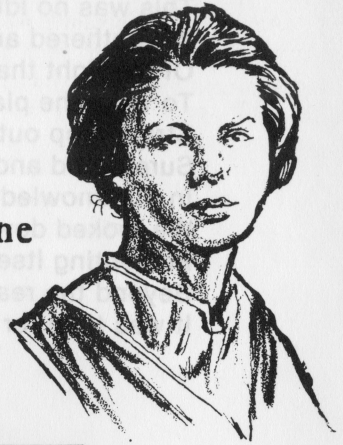


Armory Ball Team, Radley, Kansas - 1926

Front Row: Dorothy Thomas, Agnes Testen, Hazel Bruyere, Nida Cinotto and Ruse Frece. Back Row: Rosie Testen, Olga Canivez, Matilda Wersniak and Ida Preat.

Growth

by Zula Bennington Greene



The first years of a child's life are alive with hungers of the senses. He must see and touch and taste and smell and run and make noises, unaware that within him lies a great unexplored country of heart and mind. He approaches it from many directions, a journey that can be awkward, painful, pleasant or exciting.

Summer nights when the house was quiet with sleep I sat on the floor in my room, reading, and swooned with the sweetness of the moon-flooded night that came in through the window. I closed the book, my finger marking the place, and listened to the frogs in the pond adding their basses and cellos to the violins and violas of the cicadas. Garden, ripening fruit and new-cut hay blended their smells with the rambler rose outside the window. The night set my book to music.

Reading led me into new worlds. I read in the daytime when I should have been helping my mother, and at night when I should have been asleep, a coal oil lamp on a chair by the bed and a rug rolled against the opening under the door to keep a parent from seeing the light. I wept over the plight of poor orphans and brave young men who died nobly and rejoiced when true love won out and the villain got his just deserts. Most of the books to which I had access were sentimental fiction. Confusing myself with the heroines, I became the center of countless dramas. I snatched children from the feet of runaway horses, took food to helpless old ladies, nursed wounded soldiers back to health and found the missing will. But the high drama was falling in love with darkly handsome young men.

Ladies fainted, but only when a man was present to catch them. Nobody I knew had ever fainted, but then the people I knew had little in common with the people in the books. When Lena Rivers, the heroine of a book by that name, was shown a daguerrotype that had been found in the room of an older man, she said, "It is I, O heaven, but how came he by it?" Then she fell fainting to the floor at Durward's feet. The picture was of her mother and the man who had it turned out to be her long-lost father.

Against this romantic world the life of my parents seemed dull and grubbing, and I determined not to be like them when I grew up and married. Parents did not want to do anything but get up early, work all day, go to bed at dark and keep everybody's feet dry.

And worry. Papa worried about fire and mad dogs and wind and water. If a dark cloud came up blowing a heavy wind, he was out scanning the sky and if the signs were ominous, he hustled us all to the cave.

Standing in the entrance, he held the slanting door open to fend off any heavy object that might be hurled against the door and shut us in. If the storm did not come too suddenly, he ran to the woodpile for the axe, to chop ourselves out if such a calamity occurred. Through the partly open door we heard the wind and saw pieces of tree limbs flying past. One time we emerged to find the roof of the barn neatly picked up and set over a few notches and another time a tree was uprooted.

Perhaps these experiences and others contributed to the uneasy feeling I have in closed places. For punishment my mother sometimes shut me up for what must have been only seconds in a closet under the stairs. In the blackness I would scream and beat frantically on the door. I became so frightened by closed doors that when I was upstairs playing with my dolls I would keep looking down the stairway to be sure the door was open. George liked to tease me by closing it.

I am not afraid of tornadoes, but I am uncomfortable in elevators and in that moment after it stops and before the door opens, I am stricken with silent panic. I have walked up ten flights of stairs to avoid an elevator that had a habit of stalling between floors.

The word was not used by people I knew, but I had compulsions. I could not go to bed without giving my family of dolls three meals, moving them in and out of their chairs three times to touch imitation food to their mouths. At one time I must each evening touch my mother's side saddle which hung on the porch outside the door and I would not sleep without kissing my mother goodnight. If she had already gone to bed I lingered. Sometimes I would hear my father murmur, "She wants her goodnight kiss." In a different time and place my parents might have hustled me off to a child psychiatrist.

But the pervading memory of my childhood is play. We roamed woods and pastures from early spring to late summer, barefooted and free, wading branches, gathering flowers. We took them home, but they lost their shine on the way. We stepped into puddles of water with delicious shivers, for in their reflection of the sky, they seemed bottomless.

Across the woods north of the house ran four small waterways not important enough to have names. We called them hollows. The first hollow crossed the road between our house and Grandfather Bennington's and when it rained its water moistened the yellow clay to coral, flowed through the woods to a branch which took it to Hogle's Creek and started it on its way to the big rivers and the sea.

We had a playhouse in the first hollow, a split-level built on the exposed roots of a tree. Flat rocks made the floors, and other rocks which bore some resemblance to beds and chairs and tables, made the furniture. It was not a house built on sand and could withstand any ordinary rain with no more damage than washing away the moss carpet and upsetting the furniture.

As we grew older we ventured on to the second hollow, only a short distance away, then to the third, but the fourth hollow seemed distant and mysterious. There, we believed, the rocks must be bigger and smoother and whiter, the flowers more brightly colored, the water a silver cascade.

The time came that we did go to the fourth hollow, over the gentle rise to the second, over another rise to the third and on to the fourth. There it was, a shallow bed filled with leaves. No water cascaded through it. No gleaming stones waited to be made into palaces. The trees were smaller and through them we could see the clearing. We did not talk much on the way back. Julia and I sat down by the playhouse in the first hollow and built on another level.

We walked through woods and pastures, but one boundary line stopped us, a sweeping hedge row between our land and that of Fountain Gover, who was called Old Fount Gover. I had never seen him. One reason was that he had a dog that Papa said was mean. Another was that the Govers, an elderly couple, seldom left their home.

Mr. Gover was a legendary figure. It was told that when he was on the way to California in the gold rush of 1849 he was stricken with cholera and left behind while the rest of his party continued on to look for gold. But he recovered in time and joined his friends. A man who had practically been raised from the dead struck us with awe.

A time came when I did go to the Govers, with a granddaughter of theirs who was my age. As we opened the gate and walked into the yard, it seemed like entering a walled city, an impression heightened by a row of old lilacs along one side of the yard and a heavy growth of red honeysuckle covering the fence on an adjoining side. The dog stood by while Mrs. Gover opened the door and let us into a room that was cool and dark. On the floor were braided rugs of dark materials. A table and chairs and a kitchen "safe" were in the room. On one chair an old man sat bent over, looking into a fireplace where there was no fire.

"I've just got the bread out of the oven," Mrs. Gover said, "and you girls can have a piece while it's warm." She turned two big loaves out of a pan, sliced one, buttered two pieces and spread them with blackberry jam. Then she spoke to her husband, raising her voice, "It's Trean come to see us and Zula, one of Jake's girls." He spoke to his granddaughter and asked about the family, then turned to me, "And this is Jake's girl?" I would like to have asked him about the cholera and if he found gold, but all I said was "Yes, sir."

In those years of ripening senses, nothing was more enchanting than smells. They did not come in bottles labeled Irresistible or Sonata or My Sin or No. 5. No bottled scents were in our house or in the stores where we

traded, but scents rioted in kitchen and cave, in yard and garden, pastures and woods, bold and elemental scents.

There were mint and catnip and tomato vines and jimson weed that grew on the cave and in the barnlot, fresh hickory leaves and green walnut hulls, clover and timothy hay and orchards. I lay on the ground to smell the fat pink hyacinths and was transported into ecstasy. Stunningly sweet were the white mayapple blooms. There were roses and honeysuckle and iris, which we called flags, and marigolds and chrysanthemums. Fresh chopped wood was a good smell and so was the faint, far-off scent of a skunk.

I stood beside my father and caught the first whiffs of apples dug from their winter burial in the ground, and beside my mother as she lifted the rock and wooden disk that weighted down the kraut in the big stone jar. There were pickles and clabber milk, the sharp tang of vinegar and the strong smell of home-made soap. On wash day the clothes had one kind of smell when they were lifted from the soapy boiler and another kind when they were brought in fresh from the line.

But of all the smells, none could touch camphor. What chance would a sissy smell like Irresistible have against the racy pungency of camphor gum? It was worth being sick to be doctored with camphor.

Even toothache, mixed up with the smell of cloves, is remembered with more pleasure than pain. A small piece of cotton saturated with clove oil and pushed into or around the offending tooth was my mother's treatment for toothache. With the spice burning my mouth, I stood on my knees in the rocking chair, laid my face against the pieced cushion and moaned as I rocked, sucking in air to cool my mouth.

Whether it was the rocking or the air or the cloves, or whether the pain had run its course, presently the hurt was gone and nothing left but the sharp taste and smell of cloves and the quiet purging by pain. Chastened, I sat thinking about where pain came from and where it went and why anything that could not be seen could hurt so bad.

In serious sickness Aunt Martha Bird was sent for. She was present at most of the births and deaths in the community and brought comfort when she walked in the door. She was not the Aunt Martha who married my Grandfather Bennington, but Martha Harriman who married my mother's Uncle George Bird. Their farm joined ours.

She raised a large family of her own and when a daughter died, leaving two small girls, Della and Nell Harvey, she took them into her family. In the years I was growing up, her older children had married and gone, leaving four young ladies in the house, her two daughters, Artie and Laura, and her granddaughters, Della and Nell. It was a lively household. What seemed like loads of dresses were draped over a cord across an upstairs room and the girls would often let me put some of them on to play dress up. Their house was about like ours, but it had one thing that ours lacked, a parlor, almost an essential with four girls to marry off.

It was my great regret that we did not have a parlor. I loved to slip into theirs and look at the plush photograph album, read the autograph book and admire the crocheted doily fluffed around the base of the lamp. In one corner of the room stood a walnut bed with high headboard, a thick puffy featherbed, fringed white counterpane and starched pillow shams. Across another corner of the room was an organ, bearing doilies and song books, vases and a pink conch shell in which we were told we could hear the sound of the sea. Lace curtains covered the windows.

All week the parlor stood with closed doors and drawn shades, but on Sunday afternoons it came to life. From behind the big syringa bush I watched young men ride up on horseback, both man and horse slicked up, tie their mounts to the fence and go to the side door, and knock. One of the essentials of a parlor was a separate entrance, possibly so the young man would not be diverted from a romantic mood by a glimpse of other members of the family not in their Sunday best. In the meantime the young lady had been dressed and fidgeting on the organ stool for half an hour.

My mother seldom allowed me to visit Uncle George's family on Sunday afternoon and if she did, she told me not to go into the parlor. Young people, she said, did not like to be bothered by children. They wanted to be by themselves. It did no good to tell her that I never bothered them, but just sat in a chair turning through the album, nor that they didn't talk much anyway, but sat and looked at each other.

A young man did not have many places to take a girl he was courting — church once a month, the Shiloh camp meeting in summer, the Iconium picnic, a pie or box supper at the schoolhouse, a spelling match or Christmas tree. But when he began to call on Sunday afternoons, there was little doubt of his intentions.

In a few years, I reflected, I would be old enough to have a beau and sit dressed up in the parlor waiting to receive him at the side door. Then a heavy burden settled on me—we had no parlor. Would any young man come to see me and sit in the big room where all of us sat all the time? It did not seem likely. How then was I to get a husband? By that time I had sensed that getting a husband was a woman's prime project.

Our family made a start toward a parlor by acquiring one of its furnishings, an organ. Mamma kept talking about getting an organ, each fall thinking she might be able to spare enough of the turkey money after helping to pay the taxes and buy winter clothes. Whenever a Sears Roebuck catalog came, we turned to the organs and read every word of the descriptions, confident that some day one of them would be ours. Then one fall it was bought, a real beauty, the best one in the catalog. Most of the organs had five octaves. This was a six-octave Beckwith Grand, with little drawers and compartments all over, a mirror, lamp stands and places for music. It came by freight and Papa went to Osceola and brought it home in the wagon. Neighbors came to see it and help with the unloading and when it stood in a corner of the room, the southeast corner beside a window, nothing so fine had ever been in the house before.

Mamma taught me the notes — F A C E for the spaces on the treble clef and “Every Good Boy Does Finely” for the lines; “All Cows Eat Grass” for the spaces on the bass clef and “Good Boys Do Finely Always” for the lines. I wonder now where she learned to play, but at the time I did not question it, for no knowledge or skill of hers surprised me. I learned to play with my right hand, then with my left, and soon was playing with both hands and forgot about a parlor and a beau.

The last time I saw the organ, a good many years later, it stood in the same corner of the big room, and piled around it were bushels of wheat. The house had been abandoned, and the organ, which was falling apart, was left behind.

I was not a brave child, which was only one of my shortcomings. In addition to being alternately compulsive and stubborn, bashful and brash, I was afraid that a horse would step on my bare feet if I went into his stall, and afraid a strange cow would kick me if I tried to milk her. George called me, and with good reason, a coward. The one event in which I behaved with some fortitude hardly balances the many in which I did not, but it was at least an honest action and not a fantasy — in my day dreams I acted boldly and fearlessly.

Reading the paper one evening, Papa announced that a child who had swallowed a prune seed had died. To this I applied the simple logic that if a child had swallowed a prune seed and died, then any child who swallowed a prune seed would die.

Some weeks afterwards I swallowed a prune seed. I did not question that my fate was sealed and settled or expect that anything could be done to save me. I said nothing about my impending doom, but that evening I prolonged my usual rites. I combed Papa's hair long and sadly. I kissed my mother more lovingly. I was kind to Julia and George. I stood outside to look at the stars and find the Big Dipper, thought about heaven and hell and the Milky Way and my pink lawn dress and wondered how it felt to be dead.

But I uttered no word of farewell. The next morning I was still alive and felt no pain. That day Uncle Willie and Aunt Etta Bernard and their children came and we ran riotously playing Hide and Go Seek. When nothing happened in the days that followed, the dread of the prune seed faded and passed.

A growing child reaches out for knowledge of all kinds. The Bible, which I read faithfully, yielded up some facts of life which I pieced together with other facts, such as the almanac with its gestation table, after I looked up “gestation” in the dictionary. The girls at school passed on bits they had heard, and while they might not be biologically accurate, they provided clues.

From these sources and from observation I gradually picked up a few elementals. My parents volunteered nothing and I asked no questions. Nobody had told them anything, and the facts of life is not a subject on which parents are fluent.

One day Papa came home and said, “Guess who's got a new baby.” Without hesitation I said, “Aunt Mabel,” and felt my face flushing when he

laughed and asked, "Now how did you know?" I had seen Aunt Mabel within the month.

Watching the old year out was a ritual I observed alone, the lamp on the chair, the rug against the door. As midnight approached I read and copied my favorite poems as if they somehow needed to be preserved in the cornerstone of the old year. I wrote the names of our family—Jacob, Margaret, Julia, Zula, George—for what I thought was the last time in the year as I listened for the clock to strike, the exercise turning into an anticlimax as the old year hung on and refused to fade away because I had completed my copy. I would start again, hoping to be on the last dot as the hour struck. It was like waiting for a train to leave after you have bid travelers goodbye and seen them aboard.

If I moved around or dropped a book I would hear, "Is that you, Zula? Why aren't you in bed?"

"I'm just going," I would say.

When the new year came, it came silently. No radio or television brought shouts of celebrants into the house. There was no sound inside but the ticking of the clock, none outside but a breath of wind. The new year came silently, but it burst on me like the dawn of creation. Never since has it seemed so dramatic. Shouting and crowds and horns and whistles have never been as stirring as sitting alone in my room, writing words on paper, and listening for the clock to strike.

It Grows Dark

Trees reach across the road
with their shadows,
house and shed with blocks of shade.

Water of both sides of the road
from a former rain:

The moon rises, swollen,
from the field
but does not quaver like oncoming
car lights.

Diane Glancy

Granny Clayton



She died one winter.

Hung in the fence.

It wasn't the first time the Ledbetter boy
found her caught in the barbed wire.

It was the last.

The Ledbetter boy would stop

by her farm on the way home from school
just to check on the cows and chickens and
more than once he found Granny

in the fence trying to take

a shortcut across the back pasture to
count the cows. "It saves a lot of time"

said Granny. "Exceptin' when I get snagged."

So we took Granny to a nursing home and there
she found religion and Luke, the janitor.

Religion she left.

But Luke she brought home to the farm
when oil was discovered.

They added two rooms to the house and
an indoor toilet.

"For when we get old" Granny said.

But Luke never did.

At eighty Granny took up flying.

She got a biplane and

spent sunny afternoons circling cows like
an airborne Border Collie.

"Oh, I guess it runs weight off 'em" said

Granny "but it's a lot of fun and besides I got oil."

Robert Green

Two Poems by Joan Ritty

Electricity

Monday night he worked late.
 I settled for an egg salad sandwich
 and played with our two-year-old girl.
 Tuesday he took some clients
 to dinner and the ball game.
 I ate tuna. Wednesday he drove
 to the races in Omaha with his boss.
 She has a stunning figure.
 He didn't get back until late Thursday;
 car trouble at the Nebraska line.
 He was too exhausted Friday night to eat dinner.
 I had a bowl of clam chowder.
 He golfed Saturday morning. It rained
 in the afternoon and we watched TV.
 Sunday he slept late, then played tennis.
 It stormed. The electricity
 went off after he got home.
 We sat in the dark all evening.



Transference

I despise this man, my father-in-law;
 I despise his watery eyes,
 the brown spots on his face.
 They mock me.
 I despise him for rocking on my porch
 while I weed the garden.

I'm afraid to die, he says.
You were afraid to live, I murmur,
 admiring a daisy which has dared.
 I despise him for his son,
 my husband, lying in the hammock,
 who already has brown spots on his face.

Funeral by Streetcar



Collected from Carrie Pugh Klein by Wilma Hosman

In June 1917, when Mary Mildred Kennedy (Mrs. William) Pugh died in Dunkirk (17 Central Mining Camp), her husband decided to use Mt. Olive Cemetery in Pittsburg for her final resting place.

He had a good friend named Pogson (who had come from Osage City, Kansas, Mr. Pugh's hometown), whom he asked to prepare the body for burial. There was still a problem of transporting the casket from Dunkirk to Mt. Olive on East Quincy Street in Pittsburg, some twelve or fifteen miles away.

The Joplin and Pittsburg Railroad provided the answer: one of its streetcars was chartered by Mr. Pugh. After the funeral in Dunkirk, the whole group boarded the car and the casket was placed on board. At the gate of Mt. Olive, the pallbearers alighted, took a firm grip on the casket, and carried it to the grave some two hundred feet away. The services concluded, family and friends got back on board and returned to Dunkirk.

Haiku

Light travels into
and out of my mind, forming
rainbow-colored words.

Tiny violets
cling by the stream bed, listening
to its snow-fed music.

Swinging in the breeze,
bluebell adds a bee clapper
till he backs away.

Blue butterfly leads
the way, fluttering along
the path of my mind.

Stream of light aims through
the storm clouds, and birds free fall
down its golden length.

New bird nearby adds
his vespers to the songs we've
grown accustomed to.



Harriet Kimbro

Voice from the Valley

by Donald H. Burr

In the extreme southeastern corner of Cherokee County, Kansas, lies an area which has been known for years as Quaker Valley. This valley is bordered on the east and south by Spring River, which wends its way toward the southwest to meet the Neosho, where the two become the Grand River. On the west, Brush Creek roughly forms a boundary, aided by a group of low hills toward the north.

One might correctly guess from the name that Quaker Valley was once the home of the Quakers, the first settlers in that part of Cherokee County. Here, my grandmother and her people settled. Quakers, they (with others of like persuasion) came to begin a new community along Spring River. Later members of other denominations settled near the river with its resources of water, wood, and game. My grandfather and his people were of the latter group. Grandfather, a Methodist, clung to his mother church and, even after he and grandmother were married, remained a Methodist.

It is about this valley that I would like to write—but not a history. Only those who are old or who are historians would like to read Quaker Valley's history: the old because they use history to reinforce memories; the historians simply because it is history. Rather I would like to let history enter in only as it is reflected in the anecdotes and episodes from another day and time, and in the life styles of the people who once called Quaker Valley home. My life extends back far enough for me to have known personally some of the people of whom I will write; the rest of this "story" will consist of tales told by my grandparents and others—all people who helped establish a "new settlement of Quakers."

As recorded in any history of the Quakers, there are two branches of the church (or Society of Friends, as it is properly called). The Conservative Friends were called the "Slow Quakers" because of their deliberate manner of speech and action. This branch wore plain clothing and used "plain" speech. The men sat on one side of the meeting house with their hats on, and the women on the opposite side, wearing prayer bonnets. The meeting was presided over by a chairperson (women could serve in this capacity if elected by the Meeting), who opened and closed the Meeting. There was no minister, and after the Meeting was declared open, anyone who had something to share could rise and speak. Sometimes the Meeting was opened and closed with words spoken only by the chairperson. The other branch, known as the

Progressive Friends, held church service much like that of other denominations.

Quakers were not supposed to have a sense of humor, or at least were not supposed to show it to any degree. It was quite a chore for anyone cursed with a keen sense of humor to sit quietly when funny things happened and not show his feelings. The main method of relief was to remember funny episodes and relate them later, at a time when the likelihood of hurt feelings was past and when all could smile at them.

As I have mentioned, the Conservative Friends used "plain" talk in their everyday conversations with family and others of the Quaker community. However, with outsiders they did not. They were quite adept at changing speech patterns and could slip from one to the other without missing a word. I recall a Quaker woman who operated a grocery store; when her mother was helping in the store, she would always use "plain" speech, saying "thee" and "thou," but when helping a customer who was not a Quaker would change to "you" and "your." She never got confused, nor was it an apparent effort to change vocabularies in this manner.

My grandmother used to tell us of a good Quaker resident of the Valley in the "airy" days. He had a rather peppery disposition—more so than most of his fellow Quakers—and he devised methods of covering up slips into a more worldly way when his temper got the better of him. His horses were always only about half-broken and reflected his personality "to a T." This flaw in their character had to be dealt with from time to time if he was to reap their full cooperation in his farming. When he felt that the time had come to "labor with his horses" in order to win their cooperation (and when he was sufficiently filled with wrath), he said that he just laid his religion on a stump, punished his horses until they would do as he wanted, and returned to the stump to pick up his religion again. After this bit of "necessary action," he would go calmly through the day as any Quaker in good standing should.

He was also the one who, while teaching a calf to drink from a bucket, was reported to have said when the calf balked and butted the bucket, splattering milk all over him, "I'll not beat thee, and I'll not bang thee, but I'll pull thy tail, dang thee!"

That story was one of Grandmother's which brought us great delight and no little satisfaction, for we were farm children and had to teach stubborn calves to drink from a bucket. We could certainly identify.

(To be continued)



The Key

For Jared Carter

The first poem you read is the key:
don't lock it in the book.

Carry it with you
so you can start the car
and follow some county road
home.

The poet will grade the road.
The poet will shoot holes in the signs
making you find your own way.

When you see a house that looks empty
pull in the overgrown driveway and stop the car.

If the key fits the lock
bring in your suitcases
and feed the hungry dog.

You're home.
Your mail has been waiting for you
in the rusting mailbox out by the road.

The poet is watching you
from the cemetery at the top of a nearby hill

Too soon your mailbox will be empty.

Then you will find a poem
and pull out the key.

Be sure to give the dog an extra dish of food
and fill the gas tank.

The poet is already out shooting buckshot
at the stop signs.



Celia A. Daniels

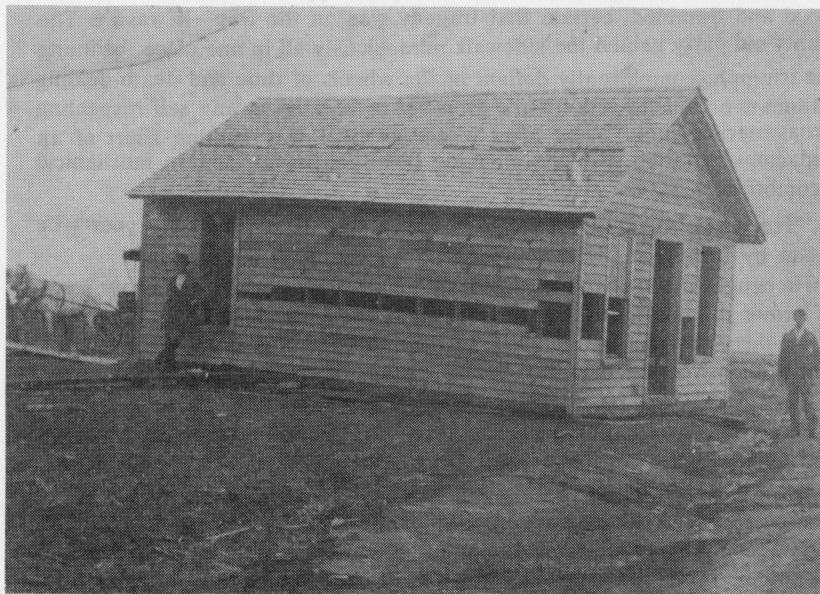
Theft

They hauled the house
right off the timber claim—
women numbered rocks
from crumbled walls,
preserved
a jigsaw puzzle
for the courthouse lawn,
robbed the prairie
of an honest past.

Barbara Shirk Parish



The Bender Hills Mystery



The Bender Place, photographed by Tresslar Bros., Fort Scott, Kansas.

by Leroy Dick, as told to Jean McEwen

I had not seen my good friend, Leroy Dick, for years. We used to chat often of pleasant evenings in the old neighborly days when he came to deliver my regular two quarts of milk. He was a good talker on most any timely topic. I was an appreciative listener. We had great times together.

He liked to keep a cow and a few chickens, to spade his own garden for early vegetables, mow his own lawn, chop a bit of firewood—in between elections, be it understood. One simply didn't expect to find him around home at election time. He was then patriotically engaged elsewhere, boosting his favorite candidates, or dilating on the specific merits of his party platform. Sometimes he even got elected to office himself.

He wasn't on the list of old-timers I most expected to see, however, when I barged into the hometown for a brief vacation last autumn. To the contrary, as I ambled down Main street on a busy Saturday afternoon, noting this improvement, commenting on that—for if you think these small American

cities don't continually change for the better, just drop back and visit 'em every few years—my eyes encountered a phenomenon that brought me up gasping. An engaging old gentleman was picking his way a bit gingerly, yet withal cheerfully, across the traffic-obsessed central square without even a Malacca stick to steady him. Involuntarily I stopped and stared. Worse, I stood and trembled, certain that tragedy was on the way—it wasn't. The jaunty old party gained the sidewalk miraculously all in one piece, beaming his triumph, complacently defiant of the wheels of time and death-dealing automative vehicles. He wasn't even out of breath, as any self-respecting nonagenarian ought to be after what—to me— was nothing short of an audacious flirtation with the crushing potentialities of modern mechanical locomotion.

"See here, Mr. Dick," I called out severely, "just what does your wife mean by turning a traffic-jammer like you loose on the streets?"

He caught the joke and chuckled, thus apprising me that his innate sense of humor still flourished. But the identity of the joker eluded him. He peered at me through heavy lensed glasses from under the brim of his black felt hat. Uncertainty rippled over his handsome old features. "Well, say, now, I—I—"

I laughed, encouraging his bafflement. "So you don't remember Mrs. Bill Smith?"

He brushed aside the fictitious name with "Mrs. Bill Smith, my eye!" though he stood stroking his short white beard in slight embarrassment. Then recognition functioned. Again that infectious chuckle as he pronounced my name. "Well, well, this is a surprise. Though you had me guessing for a minute....You know, I wasn't expecting to see you here." He was pumping my hand up and down, beaming his welcome. "Well, well, well, how are you? And the husband and youngsters....I say, it's good to see you, my dear."

It was good to see him. I told him so heartily, marveling at the alchemy that kept him so miraculously alert, physically and mentally.

"And when are you coming to see us?" he cordially wanted to know.

"Tomorrow evening," I announced promptly, quite to my own surprise. For I had suddenly received what seemed to me like a mighty good idea.

"Fine! Mrs. Dick will be delighted to see you, I'm sure....Good day, then, till tomorrow."

I toyed with that good idea all afternoon and throughout the next day. By the time I made my promised call next evening I was all set. I waited, highly entertained, through glowing reminiscences of the Civil War and pioneer days in the West. At last I piloted the conversation around to my point.

"Mr. Dick, have you finished writing your story of the Bender Hills?"

He sobered, shaking his head. "No...Fact is, I've hardly more than begun it...Y' know, I don't see so well as I once did. Hit so many wrong letters. I don't know....It's pretty slow work for me."

"Precisely," I conceded. He had guarded the story for years. I had long yearned to hear it as he alone could tell it. Now I knew I must choose my

words carefully. "Have you ever thought of narrating it to some writer, and letting him do the work?"

"Thought of it?" he bridled. "Say, that doesn't work. I've given sketches of it that way. But every writer yet had disfigured it so I didn't recognize it after he'd finished with it. They all want to make it sensational."

"Heavens, isn't it sensational enough?"

"That's just the point," he exploded. "Truth is often more amazing than the brain storms advertised as thrillers in the movies. But invariably the facts of my story have been twisted, and the characters distorted out of all semblance to themselves."

"I've been doing a bit of writing myself," I revealed modestly. "How about collaborating with me—making an honest to goodness narrative out of what actually happened?"

Being a gentleman of the old school, he was courteous about it, but he didn't exactly fall on my neck at the suggestion. He still hoped to set the story down in black and white himself, unadorned with fuss, feathers, or discrepancies. The stark tragedies of the Bender Hills were startling enough to raise the hair of the most morbid midnight peruser of sensational fiction, he always declared. And he should know. He lived through them.

He sat thinking my proposition over. "I might give you certain episodes of the affair," he at last conceded. "Though I've just about got things out of my way so I can go on with it now myself."

"Father," remonstrated his daughter Olive. "You've said that lots of time, but you never got down to writing. Why not give out the whole story now and have done with it? Then it will be off your mind."

"Now you're talking sense," Mrs. Dick, an amazingly youthful lady of ninety-four, backed her up. "I'm sure this good friend won't garble the facts."

"I'd be silly to do that," I pointed out. "The story is a natural—too good to spoil. I want it just as it happened."

"Fair enough," the old gentleman beamed upon me kindly, yet without over enthusiasm. Though when he said good night, "I'll think it over," he promised.

I did not press the matter further. I believe Olive did. All her life she had heard him express the hope that soon he'd get round to jotting down the tale, yet one hindrance or another had prevented it. Now, at ninety-three, his chances for recording his role in the dramatic history of the Osage Lands were far from a safe bet. At any rate he called on me a few days later to announce his decision to pour out the whole story into my willing ears. I was to be responsible for the consequences.

I was thoroughly delighted. I had heard as many conflicting versions of the Bender atrocities as there were wagging tongues to whisper their horrors...and confess in the end, "Of course, I'm not sure. Nobody but Leroy Dick knows the whole truth of the affair. And he has never told."

Now Leroy Dick himself was ready to turn the key and unlock the ancient chest of memory, revealing long hidden mystery and crime. To me, I felt honored.

He came by appointment at nine o'clock on a Monday morning. It was three in the afternoon before he finished his recital. Yet he suffered no great fatigue from the long narration. Not once did memory fail him in any minute detail of the amazing frontier drama.

CHAPTER 2

The baffling mystery of the Labette Hills really began during the winter of 1870, when newspapers of Kansas City, St. Louis and other cities published accounts of missing men. Men traveling alone, for the most part, from various points east with the known intention of homesteading in the Osage Ceded Lands in southeast Kansas. Some of these unlucky travelers were traced as far as Kansas City or Springfield, Missouri, or Fort Scott, Kansas, where they vanished completely. Evidently a clever trap was set for the unwary somewhere on one of the trails leading into our part of the state. But it couldn't be located.

The Osage Ceded Lands had been sold to the United States government and thrown open for white settlement in 1865, and the Indians moved onto the Osage Diminished Reserve, a strip of land thirty miles wide running west from the Ceded Lands to the Colorado line. Homesteaders drifted into "The Osage" pretty steadily after the war. There was already a community of fine upstanding citizens in Labette county when my father and I each filed a claim there in '69—and, of course, a few individuals not so desirable like Bradley down on the Drum Creek bottoms, and King, the drunkard-preacher. Yet our neighborhood was far from thickly populated. There was still plenty of good land for the new settlers who kept coming in.

On a day late in October of 1870 two strangers came driving down the trail that angled from Fort Scott to Independence. It was past noon when they drew up at Brockman and Ern's, an Indian trading post in the hill section of our county, hitched their team to the rack, and sauntered inside.

Their first words of broken English revealed their German nationality. And, since the proprietors of the post were also Germans, the four naturally fell into conversation in their native tongue beside the log fire in the rear, while the new arrivals devoured a late luncheon of crackers and cheese, purchased at the counter.

"We're looking for a location," the younger man explained. "We want to file on some claims."

"There's lot of fine unclaimed land around here," Brockman told them. "If you want to stay and look it over, Ern or I can show you around....Let's see—what is the name?"

"John Bender—my father," the boy indicated his companion with a clumsy gesture. "Me, I'm young John."

"It's pretty late to start looking for land today," August Ern objected.

"Why not drive your wagon around to our well and camp here for the night? We can get an early start in the morning."

They arranged it that way. The two men lounged about the store through the afternoon and evening and slept in the wagon that night. They had very little to say. In fact, the father's habitual taciturnity forbade friendly conversation.

He was stocky, broad-shouldered man of around sixty. He would have stood fully six feet high if he hadn't given way to a pronounced stoop. His big gnarled hands were set on powerful arms. His face was swarthy, his mouth surly, his jaws and chin were square—cut and stubbled with a few days' growth of heavy beard. His mop of wiry black hair curled slightly. His eyes, gloomy and morose, were deep-set behind shaggy overhanging brows that their color was more of a speculation than a certainty. They may have been slate gray, I'm not positive.

The boy did not greatly resemble him. Young John was slighter in build and height. His skin was fairer, his hair brown, his eyes a clear hazel. It was across his cheek bones that one caught his likeness to his father, though his mouth and jaws were not so coarsely molded, and he lacked the other's dour expression. His manner, too, was more pleasant. He flashed an occasional smile. He talked more freely.

Billy Toll was driving his cattle to the open range early next morning when he passed the trading post on the highway. August Ern was in the driver's seat with the two home seekers beside him. He was pointing out free homestead sites to his two prospects. When Billy returned to the Toll cabin for his noon meal he told his brother Silas, "Looks like Ern has located us some new neighbors." The Toll brothers had taken a claim jointly at the foot of Douglas Mound.

"Yes, I saw Ern pass here a while ago with a couple of strange men," Si said. "Have they lit already?"

"Yep, right down here on the Trail, about half way to the trading post—that is, I reckon they're stopping there. I saw 'em unhitch and start kindling a fire as I came in."

Billy was right. It had taken old John Bender and his son less than half a day to choose their homestead sites. The former decided on the northeast quarter of the section on which the trading post was located. Young Bender exhibited an unexpected peculiarity in his selection; for, instead of the usual rectangular 160 acres, he plotted a strip of land a mile long and an eighth of a mile wide just north of his father's claim.

Only three habitations could be seen from this site: the Tyke cabin a mile to the south, that of the Toll brothers three quarters of a mile northeast, and the trading post on the other side of a low hill with only the roofs of its buildings visible.

"We'll camp here on the place while we're building our house," young John told Ern. "Though we'll need some fire wood."

"That's easy enough," Ern assured him. "Drive through the first gap in the mounds, and on to the hewn-log house to the left. That is Father Dienst's.

They're Germans. They'll direct you where to go for wood."

Acting on this suggestion next day, the Benders bought a load of wood from Mr. Hill, and were back on their location before night. John went across to the post for a jug of drinking water, while the father watered the horses at a pool on John's claim at the head of Spill-Out Creek.

On their way for the wood they noticed many large slabs of sandstone near the gap in the mounds. As they returned that evening they stopped at the cabin of Mr. Hieronymus, who owned the mound claim, and bargained for such stone as they would need in building. They lost no time in commencing their improvements; for the very next morning they hauled a load of stone to their building site. In that load was one big smooth slab three inches thick and of dimensions to square seven feet.

Of course the next thing necessary was lumber. Again they lost no time. About sun-up next morning, young John set out for a load—to Fort Scott, I suppose, since that was the nearest point at which building lumber could be had....I might mention here that young John was always the teamster. Although both men were usually in the wagon, I never saw old John with the lines in his hands, nor driving about alone.

The boy was gone four days. Meantime his father laid the foundation for the house, and commenced digging the well. And when John got back the two finished the well and walled it up. Next they excavated for the cellar, which they made seven feet square by seven feet deep. At the northeast corner of the cellar they dug a twenty-two-inch passage. Through this it is surmised they manipulated the laying of the seven-foot-square slab, which they had hewn as flooring for the cellar.

Their next task was the erection of the house. This, when completed, was sixteen by twenty-four feet in dimension, with a good floor and a nine-foot ceiling. The roof was shingled and the frame sided up with the lumber John had bought. There were two doors, one in the south end of the structure, the other facing the highway to the north, with a window on either side of it. The house was never painted. Two doors, guarded the outside entrance to the cellar. These were always heavily padlocked.

All of their work, though rapid, was methodical and well directed. Both men were robust and evidently in good health, since the strength required in handling the seven-foot slab was little short of prodigious. And I'm sure they had no help in any of their improvements.

One more task remained for them. That was to provide shelter for their stock. After the custom of the early settlers, they erected a skeleton framework of stout poles and thatched the four sides and the roof poles heavily with hay or prairie grass. For this purpose they bought a stack of old hay from a farmer in the Drumm Creek bottoms. The construction of a large corral adjoining the stable, also built of poles, completed their work.

The home was now ready for occupancy. The men drove to Ottawa, where they wired the two women of the family to meet them. While awaiting their arrival, old John drove a sharp bargain in the purchase of a cook stove and a

heater, an eight-day clock, the fewest necessities possible in household furnishings and cooking utensils, a small stock of staple groceries, and a coop of chickens.

Immediately upon the arrival of the women, the family drove to their new domicile, placed their few pieces of furniture, ranged the groceries on shelving behind a counter which the old man had built in the large front room. And with these simple arrangements, what they were pleased to term "the Bender store" was ready for business.

This was a few days before Christmas. Young John and the girl, Kate, attended our Christmas exercises in Harmony Grove school house. Little did we realize that their residence in our midst was destined permanently to christen our prehistoric Indian mounds "The Bender Hills."

CHAPTER 3

Our section of the state continued to be agitated by reports of missing men all through the year 1871. Previous to that year there were only a few weekly newspapers in our community. We had to rely on the Kansas City weeklies for outside news, and mainly on grapevine telegraph for happenings in our immediate locality. But during '71 and '72 several enterprising editors began the publication of weekly sheets in various growing towns. Some of these soon developed into dailies. From that time news was dispensed pretty generally. Naturally enough, the items concerning lost men were printed and commented upon in every neighborhood in the Osage Ceded Lands.

First there was Joe Sowers, the easterner, who set out for Kansas in the fall of '79. The last letter his family received from him was mailed in Davenport, Iowa. Beyond there they could find no trace of him. A little later a man named Jones disappeared just as mysteriously. And that same winter Johnnie Boyle, an old bachelor around sixty years old, started on foot from Osage Mission with nearly \$1,900 on his person. He was never seen alive again.

In May of the following spring a big sensation swept our district. Two settlers were fishing in a water hole just below Drum Creek Crossing on the Bradley claim. And there, half-buried in the muddy floor of the hole, they found the body of a man. They notified Bradley and one of his neighbors, Mr. Mosely, and the four of them got the body out. It was Jones. His throat had been slashed from ear to ear, and his head mashed in by a severe blow.

Excitement ran pretty high when the word got out. Bradley wasn't popular in the neighborhood, and the discovery of one of the missing men on his place didn't add to his rating. It had been common talk for some time back that activities around his house were mysterious. Strange men came and went. Without doubt he was engaged in some secret enterprise. Various surmises were bandied about: that he was a horse thief, that he abetted renegade Indians in thievery against the whites. He was very against the whites. He was already under surveillance of the Osage District Protective Association as a character detrimental to a straightforward community.

There was a lot of talk when Jones was found. It wouldn't have surprised me if some of the hotheads had ganged together and strung Bradley up. But the only clue pointing to Jone's slayer was some faint wagon tracks on the bank above the hole, which soon faded out in grass and underbrush that fringed the stream. Officers searching for evidence jotted down the measurements of those tracks. They found one peculiarity about them. There were distinct depressions, showing that the gauge of the rear wheels was wider than that of the front wheels.

Jone's body was claimed by his relatives. Since there was no evidence warranting mob violence or even an arrest, feeling subsided and the mystery remained unsolved.

Still those baffling disappearances continued through '71. Early that fall a Mr. Brown, with a fine, well matched team of sorrel horses, new wagon and harness, and a tidy sum of money, was swallowed up in oblivion. Soon afterward Mr. Loncher and his little girl, driving overland, wandered innocently into the danger zone and vanished.

In February of '72 we had a tremendous blizzard. One of those blinding snow storms when you can't see thirty yards ahead, and the wind blowing a gale. The drifts along the highways were so deep that the whole region was practically locked in for more than a week.

As soon as the thaw set in a horrible rumor came that the bodies of two men had been found lying out on the prairie some four miles north of Oswego. They were practically naked. Their throats had been slashed and their heads crushed by smashing blows. Murdered....Although that prairie was fully twenty-five miles from the water hole where Jones was found, we were convinced that the same fiend perpetrated both crimes. The good people of that vicinity buried them, but their identity was never established.

Not long after this I looked out of our window one day and saw a man on foot just emerging from the woods to the north. I recognized him at once as a distant cousin of Mrs. Dick's, Henry B. McKenzie, from Strawtown, Indiana. I wasn't particularly pleased, as there was never very good feeling between Henry and me. He stayed to dinner, though he was really looking for his old buddy in the 75th Indiana, John Speary. He went over there that afternoon.

Henry—we called him Hank—was a restless, reckless sort of chap with a predilection for good clothes, good whiskey, and good-looking women. On this trip he was looking exceptionally prosperous in an expensive chinchilla coat, smart-fitting boots, a splashy cravat, and wide Stetson hat. He set out on foot from Speary's next day to visit his sister in Independence. He jingled his last forty cents in his pocket—which, incidentally, Speary had loaned him. He failed to show up at his sister's, but that didn't worry her. Hank was never expected to keep his appointments on the dot. He'd turn up sooner or later, we all said. He didn't this time.

In November of '72 another victim went to join that phantom company so completely obscured behind the curtain of mystery. He was Dr. William York, who lived on Fawn Creek, nine miles below Independence.

Later that winter Mr. McCrotty left his home near Osage Mission on some business, taking with him \$2,600 cash, his family reported. He too slipped out into the limbo of lost men.

Ten men and a baby girl, many of whom lived in or near our community, had disappeared within less than two and one-half years. No wonder we felt a grave apprehension. Nor were these all of the missing. Newspaper reports had been published of others from a greater distance whose feet had strayed onto the sands where all imprints are washed smooth—whose voices remained mute to the call of loved ones.

We settlers of the Ceded Lands had long been convinced that a secret den of human butchery was operating on one of the highways into our territory. Such meager clues as were unearthed seemed to point either to the main road from Fort Scott, or to the branch of the Santa Fe trail from Springfield, Missouri. It was even boldly asserted in some quarters that it was in Labette or Neosho County. This was pinning it down pretty close. The settlers in those counties became thoroughly aroused. They declared that something must be done to locate the actual Fort of Missing Men, and thus clear the names of these worthy districts.

The respected citizens of our township took the initial step toward an investigation on Sunday of the first of March of '73, when they announced that a mass meeting would be held in Harmony Grove schoolhouse on the following day.

That eventful Monday dawned with a lowering sky overhead, a foggy atmosphere saturated with a fine drizzle of rain, and a raw wind from the north. Despite the forbidding frown of Nature, between seventy-five and one hundred men appeared at that meeting: men whose indignation was running high because of the slanderous insinuations being circulated by outside communities against our neighborhood.

As soon as the meeting was called to order, Father Dick arose and talked over the unpleasant situation. He was followed by the heads of other good families: Father Dienst, Mr. Reed, Jim Mortimer, Mr. Burgess, and others. Several of us younger men vented our feelings, too, in more fiery language. We discussed the damning reports of men dropping out along the trail between Fort Scott and Independence, which passed right through our township. We mentioned the several camping sites along the streams crossed by the trail, each a likely rendezvous for outlaws: Walnut on the Walnut River; Osage Mission on the Neosho; Big and Little Labette Creeks; Big Hill crossing on the George Anderson claim at the entrance of the Mounds district; Drum Creek crossing on the Bradley place. All agreed that these sites should be searched and their waters dragged in an effort to locate the victims of foul play.

"You are welcome to examine every gully and pool on my claim," Father Dick offered freely.

"Or mine," agreed Father Dienst.

"Or mine. Or mine," echoed voices all around the room.

I can still see the serious, alert faces of those determined men: George Anderson, the twinkle in his eyes shadowed by worry; Mr. Tyke, the

Canadian; Ben Ferguson, his humorous lips stern that day, a top-knot of his hardy hair waving beligerently; wiry little Billy Toll, bobbing like an angler's cork excited by a nibble; his brother Silas, silent and composed; stoical old John Bender, appearing neither excited nor curious; young John, between Jim McLain, fidgeting occasionally....I could name almost every one of them and tell you his reaction to the dramatic situation confronting us.

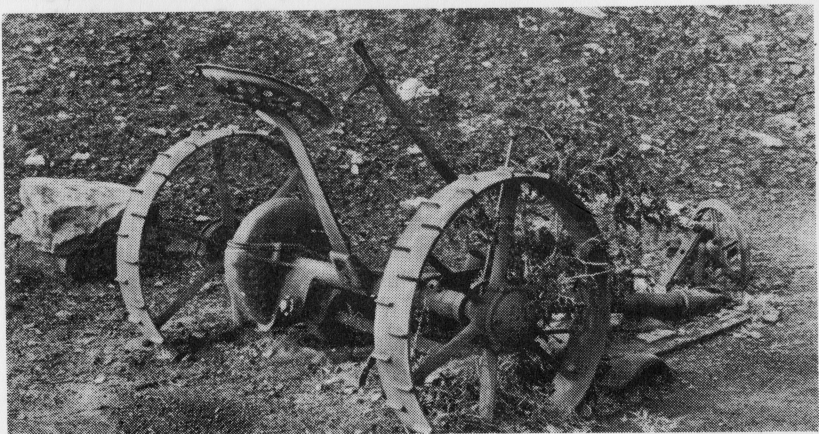
Jim McLain made quite a speech, blunt and to the point. He declared with some heat that the crossings in our county were no more suspicious than those in Cherokee County: from Chetopa to Baxter Springs, or at Coffeyville in the Verdigris. He even got a bit excited—we called him the "wild Irishman"—and in language honest but too forceful to be quoted in Sunday School denounced that "fiend in human shape who could commit such heinous crimes."

And all the while that fiend in human form sat among us hearing all, betraying nothing. Yet we, blind fools that we were, suspected nothing. Though why should we? The killer had left no clues.

We seriously discussed what action we might take. A thorough examination of every camping site in Labette County was suggested, but no definite organization was effected to carry it out. We repeated, however, that if county or state undertook a legal investigation, our premises would be open at any and all times to systematic search. Hope was expressed that all other communities under suspicion would as willingly invite investigation.

I have often wondered since what might have happened should we have initiated an immediate probe that morning. We good citizens had made the right start. Our mistake was our failure to instigate a speedy and drastic search for the dive that had spelled journey's end to so many ill-fated travelers.

(To be continued)



Forgotten Years

Bill Blair

Nights with the Legionnaires



Roy Hazlewood

I heard my father's fingernails
scratching at paper glued to glass
as he undressed the redheaded dancer
living next door
and pulled the rip cord
over Germany
during World War II.

He flew us back across the Alps,
across flat green pool tables,
and picked at Schlitz labels
in a booth
at the Thunderbird Lounge.

He took us joyriding up Pike's Peak
on a white Harley
in winter
with his high school girl friend
and we stood
in black leather jackets
in a cloud
over the ice-coated grave of my mother
holding up the imperishable roses

of Denver
tattooed in bracelets
around our wrists.

"Death," my father said,
"is a snowball
inside us at birth
no larger than a bb at first
but it rolls around inside
gaining speed downhill
and growing
until
you can feel it bulging up
under your skin
cold and hard
as a land mine
and when it explodes
you are frozen
in that moment of explosion forever."

Our booth is littered with torn pieces
of paper like shrapnel.
I hear a trigger click
as my father bites the neck
of a Schlitz bottle
and throws back his head
—no hands!—
to chug enough to celebrate
the end of the war,
enough to get him
out of the Lounge
to the redheaded dancer who lives next door.

Sestina

of the Terrestrial Rose

That olde terrestrial rose comes back!
That ephemeral rag soaking up mist
and dust comes back tough!

Just as I must from this bleeping yellow
valley town where I feel so weak
that breathing takes exertion of will!

Exposed nerves! A raw, soulless will!
Nothing on Earth braces a stooping back
Like healthy loathing for being weak!
Postwar shrouds of radioactive mist
smother sundowns thick, smoking yellow!
Survivors find that "life" means "tough"!

Means wearing mule hide too tough
to scar lashed by a Cosmic Will!
Means not sweating when piss-yellow
heat scathes Earth's whole back!
Means defiling tombstones in mist
throbbing radiant before the weak!

The so-called *fleeting* rose is not weak!
Green thorns make life too tough
to fear oncoming shrouds of mist!
Rose thorns project a rose's will!
Winning ground! Forcing marauders back!
Striping them a cowardly yellow!

And rose marauders *are* yellow
if mere roses can prove them weak!
Look at them! Hangdog! Peeking back
over a shoulder! Wishing some tough
glove had provided needed will
to pluck one red rose before the mist!

Strong, warlike beings absorb mist!
Young shoots suck old youths from yellow
flesh! Corpses take new ground for will!
"Mortality" does not mean "weak"!
Seizing—holding terrain is tough!
Rose after rose after rose comes back!

That moldering seed, yellow in the mist,
comes back! Breaking open despite weak
light! A tough, timeless, tireless will!

Roy Hazlewood



Photographer: J. F. Standiford, Muskogee, Indian Territory.

Hasp

Silence is the worst
of all our confrontations,
that disquieting still
between angry words.
From the bedroom, I hear
her muffled crying,
nearly as noiseless
as the snow's sifting
along the road.
My halting breath curses me,
for I know too often,
and with no large cause,
the ice in me cuts
from out my eyes,
that glare no pretty thing,
not even a squirrel's carcass
worthy as crow's bait.
Yet I cannot say I'm sorry.

Lord help me, the only way
I know to apologize is to touch
that which I have offended.
And that, I know, is not much,
considering. Considering.
Yet that alone provides
the thaw to do the work
I have invariably undone.
I watch out the window,
hesitant as a hasp.
The snow moves slowly,
looking like the long fingers
of a woman I saw once
in a dream, an unnatural
carnival act, tempting me
into that freezing mist.
I will not follow that cool advice.
Its sole purpose is to keep me
trapped in ice.



Mark Sanders

With Banana



AMARANTH the cereal box purples
MYSTICAL GRAIN OF THE AZTECS
AMARANTH WITH BANANA

RENEWING MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH A WORD

Amaranth the very sound

flower of immortality

Amaranthine light over today's Olympus

Amaranthine light suffusing Napoleon's tomb

I buy the mystical amaranth

skipping the banana

Emilie Glen

Mark's Mushroom

He had never seen the mushroom before. It had not been catalogued—he carried a text and made certain of that. It looked poisonous. It looked non-toxic. Which was it? If he reported the mushroom there might be a speck of fame for him. If he ate it he might have a pleasure that no one had possessed. He might die.

Mark examined the mushroom again and again. The roundness, dark brownness fascinated him, tantalized him.

If he made notes of it and photographed it there would be a record of the mushroom. If he ate a bit, a tiny bit, he might escape death. Mark put the mushroom in an envelope and went home.

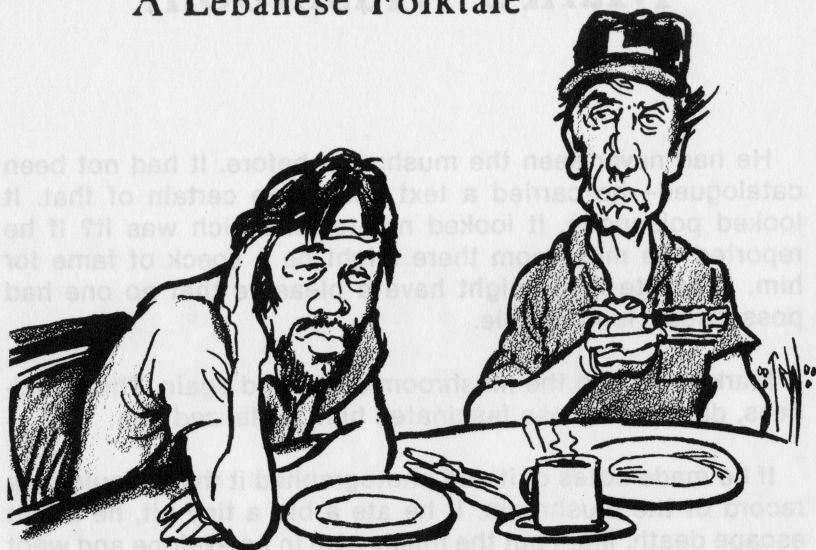
In an envelope on a dark brown table was a letter from his doctor informing him that it was necessary to make a series of tests. A series of tests. . . . It could be serious. It could be nothing. They never asked for tests unless it was serious. But if He was certain, why ask for tests? Sometimes the tests were negative and there was something wrong. Sometimes the tests were positive and something more serious was found.

Mark put the letter down and looked at the mushroom.

He looked at the text—No, the mushroom was not there.

Jerome Salzmänn

Apple Pie and Coffee: A Lebanese Folktale



Collected by Patty Kuhel from Marie Farris

Once there were two men from the Old Country, and they couldn't talk English. So all they knew what to do was what they saw or heard someone else do. So these two men went into a restaurant, and they listened closely, and they heard a man ask for apple pie and coffee. They saw the waitress bring it to the man, and it looked good, so they decided they would order the same thing. When the waitress came over, the two men said, "Apple pie and coffee," and the waitress brought it to them. They ate their pie, drank their coffee, paid for them, and left.

Since that was the only thing they knew how to order, they ordered apple pie and coffee every time they went into the restaurant. After a while they got so tired of eating apple pie and coffee, they didn't know what to do.

So one day, when they were in the restaurant, they heard a man say he wanted a ham and cheese sandwich, and the waitress brought it to him. Boy, did that sandwich look good! So the two men looked at each other and decided that they would say the same thing that the man had said. So when the waitress came, they said, "Ham and cheese sandwich."

The waitress wrote it down and then asked, "White or whole wheat bread?"

The two men looked at each other, and they didn't know what to do or say. So they shrugged their shoulders and said, "Apple pie and coffee."

Carson J. Robison Record Available



Carson J. Robison [left front] with the Pioneers: Bill, John, and Pearl Mitchell.

The Chetopa Chamber of Commerce has as a fund-raising project the sale of a new recording of Carson J. Robison songs, "Just a Melody." Proceeds are to be used to establish Robison in the Walkway of the Stars at the Country Music Foundation in Nashville. While the LBR eschews purely commercial endeavors, it does support recognition such as this.

Robison, a forthcoming cover subject of this magazine, was born in Oswego, Kansas, August 4, 1890. His family moved to Chetopa (eight miles away), where he spent his boyhood years. In 1920, he went to Kansas City, where for radio station WDAF he became the nation's first singing cowboy artist. In 1924 Robison moved to New York, where he teamed up with Kansan Frank Luther and Vernon Dalhart to make numerous recordings. He organized, in 1932, the popular Buckaroos, who performed in both the United States and Europe. He died on March 24, 1957.

The record, which contains eighteen Robison favorites such as "When It's Springtime in the Rockies," "When the Bloom Is on the Sage," and "Open Up Them Pearly Gates," may be obtained from Gary Allen, Chetopa State Bank, Box 226, Chetopa, KS 67336, for \$5.95. Add \$2.00 for packaging and mailing.

Contributors

BILL BLAIR (609 W. Quincy, Pittsburg, KS 66762) appeared in an earlier issue of the *LBR*. We hope to print a portfolio of his photographs • **DON BURR** (R. 1, Box 342, Galena, KS 66739), although retired from the public schools, teaches night classes in English for an area community college • **JARED CARTER** (1220 N. State Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46201) teaches in the Department of English, Purdue University. He was the recent recipient of the Walt Whitman Award • **CELIA A. DANIELS** (1521 College Ave., Topeka, KS 66604) is employed by Washburn University and is a student in museum studies at the University of Kansas • **BEVERLY K. FINE** (6531 Copperfield Rd., Baltimore, MD 21209) received second honorable mention in the Kansas Poetry Contest • **CHRIS FORSYTH** (R. 1, Erie, KS 66733) is a senior at Erie High School. His essay was previously published in the high school's literary magazine • **MIKE FORSYTH** (1321 Massachusetts, Lawrence, KS 66044) is a graduate of the William Allen White School of Journalism. He is currently marketing director for Kantronics • **DIANE GLANCY** (4323 E. 105th Pl., Tulsa, OK 74136) will appear in a future edition of the *LBR* • **EMILIE GLEN** (77 Barrow St., New York, NY 10014) joins our ranks as a former staff member of the *New Yorker*, an editor at Macmillan's, and a writer of many poems • **ROBERT GREEN** (607 W. Kansas, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is completing a nursing degree at Pittsburg State this spring • **ZULA BENNINGTON GREENE** (1205 Mulvane, Topeka, KS 66604) is familiar to all as one of the finest prose writers practicing today • **ROY HAZLEWOOD** (707 N. Joplin, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is compiling an anthology of one hundred sestinas • **STEVEN HIND** (503 Monterey Pl., Hutchinson, KS 67501) is about to see the second printing of his book, *Familiar Ground*, by the Cottonwood Review Press, Lawrence • **WILMA HOSMAN** (1109 E. 10th, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is currently working on a local history project sponsored by the Pittsburg Arts Council • **MICKEY HUFFSTUTLER** (602 W. Division, Edna, TX 77957) states that she often gets so busy with what she's saying that she can't see anything but the message of her poems • **LEIGH HUNT** (4708 Dunbar Drive, Big Harbor, WA 98335), formerly a professional stuntman in Hollywood, recently was accepted as a member of the Writer's Guild of America, West • **NIDA E. JONES INGRAM** (R. 1, Box 151, Salt Lick, KY 40371), an ex-school teacher, is director of the Kentucky State Poetry Society serving the Eastern Section • **HARRIET KIMBRO** (2128 Stonyvale, Tujunga, CA 91042) is also an outstanding photographer • **PATTY FARRIS KUHLE** (1150 E. 1st, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is working with Wilma Hosman and Dr. Juanita Laing on the Apple School oral history of Crawford County • **ESTHER M. LEIPER** (Box 96, Jefferson, NH 03583) is co-owner of a market, deli, five-bay repair garage, laundromat, and realty company. In her spare time she writes science fiction and fantasy, as well as poetry, works in her local library, and enters contests • **LOUISE LUPARDUS** (Apt. 502, 1101 Vermont, Lawrence, KS 66044) started off as a dramatist at a tender age, but turned to verse after her first production • **ARTHUR F. McCLURE** (304 Jones Ave., Warrensburg, MO 64093) is chairman of the Department of History and Anthropology at Central Missouri State University. By coincidence he was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church during the last six years of Carl Nau's ministry • **RITA ZANGAR MAZUR** (214 Torbett, Suite A, Richland, WA 99352), a former school teacher, now a real estate agent, has published in *Dragonfly* and numerous other haiku periodicals and anthologies • **BARBARA SHIRK PARISH** (4293 Beechcliff Lane, Memphis, TN

28128) will be the featured poet in a forthcoming issue of the *LBR* • **ROSEMARY POSTAI** (215 W. Jefferson, Pittsburg, KS 66762) will have a showing of her work in Pittsburg on May 1 as part of her master's degree work at Pittsburg State • **JOAN RITTY** (10070 Mission Rd., Overland Park, KS 66206) has appeared previously in our pages as a fiction writer as well as a poet • **JEROME SALZMANN** (41-42 Elbertson St., Elmhurst, NY 11373) has had stories, poems, and drawings published in over 250 magazines and anthologies • **MARK SANDERS** (521-A E. Downing, Springfield, MO 65807) has a volume of excellent poems ready for the publisher • **J. F. STANDIFORD**, who also had offices in Parsons as well as in the Indian Territory, was originally from Fort Scott, where he was the partner of Albert Bigelow Paine in the Photographic Supply Company • **BETTY SYBRANT** (225 S. 1st, Arkansas City, KS 67005) is a free lance writers and the wife of an attorney • **DONNA THOMAS** (1218 S.W. Lakeview, Sebring, FL 33870) is the third prize winner in the Kansas Poetry Contest • **OSSIE E. TRANBARGER** (619 W. Main, Independence, KS 67301) is founder and sponsor of the Kansas Poetry Contest • **TED WATTS** (Box 303, Oswego, KS 67356), art editor of the *LBR*, draws the portraits of our contributors and does the covers • **LOUISE SOMERS WINDER** (c/o Smith, Star Route Box P233, Hartfield, VA 3071) is a poet, homemaker, and public speaker. She was the recipient of the *Dragonfly* Haiku of the Year Award in 1981 • **DOUGLAS WOLFIRE** (426 Maple Ave., Edgewood, PA 15218), formerly worked as a newspaper reporter in Anthony, KS • **ANN L. ZOLLER** (6717 S. Evanston, Tulsa, OK 74136) is married to a physician and the mother of two teenage daughters. Her chapbook, *Artists in Residence*, was published by MyrtleWood Press in 1982.



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Invitation To Submit



The *Little Balkans Review* cordially solicits manuscripts, photographs, and art work for publication in forthcoming issues. Under our current editorial policy, each issue of the magazine will have approximately ten pages of poetry, ten of graphics, thirty of fiction, and thirty of nonfiction.

Prime consideration is given to works by Kansans and former Kansans, but not limited to such—except in the case of nonfiction, which we ask to be restricted to subjects related to the state. At least half of the poetry in each issue will be devoted to poets who have had limited previous publication. Prose manuscripts should not exceed thirty-five double-spaced typed pages. We attempt to adhere to the stylesheet of the Modern Language Association. Works of local and regional artists are desired, as well as vintage photographs depicting specifically the life and social customs of the Little Balkans. Black and white photographs of sculpture and oversize art are preferred.

Contributions should be accompanied by a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope, mailed to the appropriate editor:

ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND SCULPTURE: Ted Watts, P.O. Box 303, 807 W. 4th, Oswego, KS 67356

FICTION: Stephen Robbins, 2001 Arapaho, Garden City, KS 67846

MUSIC: Janis DeChicchio, 417 W. Magnolia, Girard, KS 66743

NONFICTION: Shelby Horn, 615 Kansas, Oswego, KS 67356

POETRY: Gene DeGruson, 601 Grandview Heights Terrace, Pittsburg, KS 66762



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