



January 2, 1996

The community owes a debt of thanks to all those citizens who took the time, trouble and expense of putting up elaborate, lighted Christmas decorations for all of us to enjoy. Virtually every neighborhood throughout the residential area had many attractive displays that helped make the holiday even brighter than usual. And the business district had its own collection of seasonal baubles and lights to go with this. Many churches also contributed meaningful Christmas decorations. Special thanks to the folks at the First Christian church for continuing with their traditional living nativity scene despite the best efforts of those unthinking hooligans who tried more than once to destroy the setting. Why do you suppose anyone would try something like that in this proud little city where we care so much about one another? It has to be an aberration.

I did hear some disappointment expressed by local families who drove their visitors around town to show off the decorations this past week, only to discover that most of the displays were not turned on after Christmas day. Don't the contest rules require that they remain lighted until Dec. 31? Oh well, enough of the bah humbug. Our town was beautiful at Christmastime.

Gen. Colin Powell says he doesn't have "the fire in the belly" for a run at the presidency next year. I have a friend with a chili recipe that could light a flame for him, if he would like to give it a try.

OU made a popular choice when it hired John Blake as the Sooners' next football coach. At the televised press conference when the announcement was made official Sunday afternoon, Blake came across as a very likable, appreciative and emotional young man. He'll have a handicap in recruiting because of his commitment as a defensive coach of the Dallas Cowboys in their playoff quest for a Super Bowl berth. Coach Blake has a lot going for him as he starts this new phase of his career, so we wish him luck. Perhaps he will get better treatment from the print and electronic media representatives than did his predecessor, Howard Schnellenberger. As I recall, the old Kentucky Colonel enjoyed a very brief honeymoon after his hiring one year ago, then the sportswriters and broadcasters began fanning the flames of discontent that ultimately helped clear the way for his dismissal, or resignation, whichever came first. Of course, his 5-5-1 record helped in that respect, too. But no one was interested in giving him more time to prove himself.

Glenn Yahn used the letter accompanying his clever Christmas card to make note of the fact that OSU beat the Sooners 12-0 this past season. That was in about the first paragraph. Then he commented that since his recent "early retirement" he keeps hearing that one of the signs of growing older is a tendency to repeat one's self. "And by the way," he adds, repeating himself, "did I mention that OSU beat the Sooners 12-0 this season?"

At the risk of also repeating myself, let me again take this opportunity to wish all of you a bright and peaceful new year in 1996.



January 4, 1996

Whenever the first snowflakes appear tumbling in the air, I always think of Ethel L. Johnston. She was a lady with eclectic interests, and one of them was the welfare of the many birds nesting in this area during wintertime. If a snowfall seemed imminent, she would call us at *The Journal* office pleading for a short notice on the front page to remind everyone to put out bread crumbs or birdseed for our feathered friends. It was a ritual we expected and knew quite well. It was just one of this dear lady's many passions.

Her life story was filled with enough drama, wit, charm and pathos to provide the script for a wonderful TV miniseries or a sweeping panoramic movie biography, with no artificial embellishment needed. I would cast Meryl Streep in the leading role. Ethel L., as most people called her, was a charming first lady of the state of Oklahoma while her husband, Henry S. Johnston, was governor in the 1920s. She was a career woman ahead of her time, before that term was even coined and before most women found the courage to take up causes close to their hearts.

She spent most of her life in this little city on the prairie and many of us were fortunate enough to consider ourselves her friends. Her circle of acquaintances, however, was not limited to our community. She was pro-active in many organizations which reached the borders of this state and beyond and as a result she was well known to countless people living miles from Perry.

She loved the outdoors and passed this enthusiasm on to the many young people whose lives she touched. Nancy Coyle Hasenfratz of Kingfisher, who was reared in Perry on Holly street across from Ethel L.'s house, remembers the Saturdays when Mrs. Johnston would gather up the neighborhood children and take them "exploring" in the country. Nancy adds, "This was when Cherie Jean Jensen (Ethel L.'s granddaughter) lived with the Johnstons. The Evans kids, Hayden Mugler and I learned from her the different wild flowers and burrows of the animals. Ethel L. was an expert on birds, wild flowers, even mushrooms. I wouldn't be surprised if she could talk to the animals."

"Some summer nights," Nancy remembers, "Ethel L. laid blankets on the ground by her house. We all gathered and she taught us about the constellations and stars. One summer it was my goal to catch this beautiful oriole; it was quite a feat! We put the delicate creature in a bird cage outside and took loving care of it. Ethel L. came over and had a sweet visit with me – telling me that the bird, like me, needed to be free. So, together, we opened the cage and watched the bird spread its wings and fly."

Because of her great interest in the outdoors, Ethel L. started the Camp Fire Girls organization here. It was a movement she believed in and through it she shared an enjoyment of nature with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of young women who, like Nancy, carried that pleasure into their adult lives.

There was virtually no limit to the number of humanitarian and genteel subjects which benefitted from her interest. During the Great Depression of the 1930s she ran a one-woman soup kitchen. She cooked each morning at her home, then took the food downtown to feed the hungry. She also baked fresh bread daily because that was the only kind of bread Henry S., a vegetarian, would eat. Ethel L. was the first chairman of the Noble county American Red Cross chapter. She worked with that organization through two World Wars, many disasters and numerous service projects. She recognized the need for a Perry museum early in this century and her persistence led to the establishment of the Cherokee Strip Museum now gracing West Fir Avenue. Part of the museum's collection comes from makeshift display cases Mrs. Johnston secured for a crowded corner of the Carnegie Library basement. That nook, formerly known as the Heritage Room, was our first museum.

She was a longtime member of Chapter BH, PEO, a past president of the Perry Progress Club and a serious artist who studied with the late Jacques Gallrein of Coyle. Today many of her lovely landscapes and still lifes adorn the walls of Perry homes. She was a physical fitness advocate and power walking was her favorite mode of exercise. Her erect, determined figure was familiar all over this city as she took her daily strolls. No one knows how many miles she logged.

Ethel L. and Henry S. had no children of their own but they adopted three daughters and a son. Those youngsters could not have had more loving parents. They provided the Johnstons with four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

She spent 25 years as grand secretary of the Oklahoma Order of the Eastern Star, a full-time job requiring meticulous maintenance of detailed records covering the activities of dozens of chapters and hundreds of Oklahoma OES members. Her work earned plaudits. She had no computers for assistance, but Mrs. Bessie Edwards was her faithful and efficient helper. Mrs. Johnston retired from the office in 1969, not long before her death.

While Henry S. was governor in the late 1920s, the governor's mansion was completed in a residential area just east of the capitol and Mrs. Johnston assisted with decorating the new home. Her husband's tenure as governor was a rough and tumble affair, but she stood staunchly by him in the face of many foolish and unfounded stories circulated by political enemies. After he was impeached and forced from office, the Johnstons were warmly greeted by a crowd of hundreds upon their return to Perry and the nature of that welcome from their friends here served to lift both of them.

Henry S. died in 1965 at the age of 97 and Ethel L. followed him some five years later when she was 82. She had been his life's companion since their marriage in 1909 when he was president pro tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate and she was an attractive 20-year-old brunette legislative reporter. Their deaths closed the books on an interesting chapter in the history of this city and the state of Oklahoma.

Along with the birds of the air, the hungry, the Camp Fire Girls and countless others, we all owe a great debt of gratitude to Ethel L. Johnston for the incredible life she lived and the example she left for us to emulate.



January 6, 1996

Many longtime local residents remember when a shrill whistle emanating from the water and light plant in southeast Perry was the unofficial signal for the start of another workday, lunch time and quitting time. The old plant, though still standing as a reminder that we once generated our own electricity, has been closed for years but the whistle was silenced by mechanical problems long before that.

Vern Moore, now retired, and Art Deken, now a Ditch Witch employee, both worked at the plant and have reason to remember the whistle. It was also used each New Year's Eve to announce the arrival of a brand new year. Their recollection is that the last time it was blown for that purpose was on January 1, 1963, or 33 years ago. By 1968 all generating equipment at the plant had been shut down, but the whistle was silenced before that because of a problem in finding parts. Vern, Art and Charlie Bezdicek, retired Perry water and light department superintendent, all agree on that point.

The regular weekday schedule for the whistle was at 6 a.m., 8 a.m., 12 noon, 1 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Folks set their' clocks by it, and it was considered the official starting or quitting time for many businesses. Just how precisely correct it was might be questioned; the whistle was manually operated. Vern pushed the button to blow it many times. So did Dick Foster, Richard Witter, Bill Edwards and probably others through the years.

Our city power plant began operating in 1895. Vern went to work there in 1948, retired in 1974, but went back for part-time duty even after that.

The whistle was given to the city by General Mills when the historic old Perry Mill was closed. Orie Nida worked at the Perry Mill. He says the steam whistle there was sounded daily at 6 a.m., 7 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m. Orie also remembers when the mill's 100-foot tall brick smokestack was demolished with a single charge of dynamite on February 8, 1938. Other parts of the mill already had been torn down or removed. Orie believes General Mills gave the whistle to the city sometime before 1938.

Sam Schwieger, managing editor of *The Perry Daily Journal* in the 1930s when the city whistle was familiar to all residents, once wrote a whimsical piece in his daily column, Semi Serious, about how many strides he could take when the 8 a.m. whistle was blowing as he hustled to get to work on time. He walked to *The Journal* each morning from the home of Mrs. Estella Yahn, at 1102 Fir avenue, where he rented a sleeping room.

In addition to the time whistle at the Perry Mill and later at the water and light plant, our city has had another well-known signal. In December 1954 the Santa Fe Railroad Co. donated an air-driven whistle to the police station. It was used as a fire alarm signal, not a time signal. One of its primary functions was to notify members of the volunteer fire department that they were needed. Hearing the signal, volunteers would call the fire station for instructions. Problems frequently developed when other citizens, who knew the system, also would call the station just to learn where the fire was located.

This subject was suggested for a column by Verl Brorsen, relaying inquiries from Carol Schwartz and Sandy Hentges. All three had heard various references to the old whistle but they were curious about details. Thanks to them for bringing this up. The old time whistle was part of our routine in this city for many years.

A couple of former Perry residents are having major health problems right now, and I thought you'd want to know about them. Richard Eaton, who used to head up the data processing department at the Charles Machine Works, Inc., had most of his stomach removed by surgery the day after Christmas. Richard is now a Ditch Witch equipment dealer in South Carolina. His mailing address during recuperation is Room 801, Lexington Medical Center, 2720 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, S.C., 29619. The other I wanted to mention is Milford Castrodale, former minister of the First Presbyterian church here. He recently suffered a major stroke at his home in North Carolina. Milford's mailing address is 8913 Hunting Trail, Raleigh, N.C. 27613.

The Pizza Hut out at Perry Plaza has reopened for business now after the completion of a serious expansion and renovation job which nearly doubled the size of the dining room. Judging from the number of pizza emporiums here, there's a lot of demand for Italian cuisine in this city. Most folks have their favorite place. Which one is yours?



January 9, 1996

Rummaging through some of my disorganized files the other day, I came across a four-page section of *The Perry Daily Journal* dated Thursday, July 7, 1938. The reason it was still in my file in the first place is not clear, but I found it interesting and hopefully you will, too.

The pages were numbered three, four, five and six. In those days page three was the Women's Page, same as now. The principal story there in this issue was about a miscellaneous shower that had been held the previous day in the Presbyterian church honoring Miss Lucille Ritthaler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Al Ritthaler. Miss Ritthaler and William Clarence Graham were to be married on July 11 in the home of her parents at 609 Ivanhoe street. Rev. David Thomas of the

Presbyterian church was to read the marriage vows. Hostesses for the shower were Mrs. Nina Bowman, Mrs. J. H. Vandenberg, Mrs. S. E. Laird, Mrs. W. H. Kirchner, Mrs. T. O. Munger, Mrs. Harry Donaldson, Mrs. R. W. Treeman and Mrs. C. E. Edgar.

A column of news from Red Rock community was on the same page, written by Mrs. Lillie Wieland, and her phone number was given as 64-F-55 for the benefit of area residents who had news to call in. Mrs. Wieland also wrote up the Red Rock news for the Ponca City News. One of her items in *The Journal* that day stated that Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Dickson had been shopping and visiting in Perry the previous Saturday.

Page four that day was the editorial page, or features page. The masthead listed W. K. Leatherock as editor and publisher, but no other staff members were named. A small box beneath the masthead contained the quotation: "If you would avoid criticism, say nothing, do nothing and be nothing." Sound familiar? It's at the top of page one on each of today's *Journals* and has been for years. Also on page four were two local editorials, one claiming that patches of Noble county's corn crop reached from 8 to 15 feet high. The All American Corn Processing Co. will be glad to know that we used to raise a lot of corn in this county.

The other editorial that day focused on Perry's good fortune in having an ample supply of good water. A two-column editorial cartoon related to congressional approval of a \$12 billion farm appropriations measure. Also on the page was a two-column sports cartoon about the Poughkeepsie Regatta (always followed with great interest in Perry); also, a story about the semi-pro Perry Merchants' 15-4 victory over the Enid Eason Oilers and their upcoming game with the Stillwater Boomers (Roy Winkler was expected to pitch for Perry). A column of baseball standings showed the Merchants to be in third place in the Northern Oklahoma league, trailing first place Fairfax and the second place Boomers. Enid, Crescent and Blackwell rounded out the league.

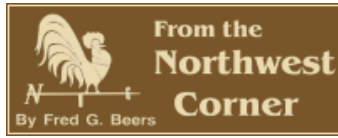
Page five contained general news and page six had a column of news from Billings, written by Mrs. A. L. Herde (telephone 919-F251). She reported that the wheat harvest there was nearly finished and that most fields made from 6 to 14 bushels per acre, although some reported 20 bushels. Mrs. Herde also announced that Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kasper had sold their grocery store to Mr. and Mrs. Mack Lewis and that the Kaspers planned to do some traveling.

Those were all interesting to me, but the thing that really struck me was the turnover in advertising accounts that has occurred in the 57-year interval since then.

A state-wide election was coming up so there were a few political ads, such as: W. S. Key, Democratic candidate for governor, with a quarter-page ad; Henry S. Johnston and, Judge W. M. Bowles were to speak that night in the public square, with music by "the Perry Band," according to a small ad; Robert L. Smith, Democrat for secretary of state, and Will Rogers (not the comedian), seeking reelection as congressman at large, each had a small ad.

These were the big advertisers: The Famous Department Store, more than a half-page ad; Safeway, less than a half page; smaller ads from Barge's Grocery, Galaway's Grocery, Johnson's Grocery, Wilson's Cash Grocery; Dotts Appliance Co., Hamous & Hopper Pharmacy, Monroe-Lang Hardware, Marcy Furniture Exchange, Brownie Drug, Marie Catherine Beauty Shop, Smith's Variety Store, Donaldson & Yahn Lumber Dealers, First National Bank, Frisco Railway, Col. Sherm Trussel and Col. Otto Hirschman, auctioneers, and Dr. O. W. Boyer, Dr. F. C. Seids and Dr. A. M. Crowder, dentists. I'm sure you noticed right away, as I did, that of that group, the only advertisers still in existence today are Donaldson & Yahn, with new ownership, and the First Bank, which is no longer a national bank.

Yes, that is quite a turnover, but come to think of it, 57 years is a pretty big time span. Our town's merchants have changed and so have we. Time marches on!



January 11, 1996

Information about Perry can pop up in the most unexpected places. While waiting to keep an appointment in a Stillwater office the other day, I noticed a copy of the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority's annual report on a table in the foyer. The name of our town on the cover was the first thing that caught my eye. Perry was listed as one of the 34 participants in OMPA's power supply program. Even though it was the report covering 1993, issued in 1994, I flipped it open.

The next surprise was on the first page where the smiling visage of Mayor G. L. (Bud) Hollingsworth appeared in a photo with OMPA Board Chairman William Charles Martin and General Manager Roland Dawson. The occasion was the Dec. 20, 1993, signing of a power sales agreement between this city and the OMPA.

The text for the report was titled "The Pioneering Spirit Continues...." and it was, of course, pegged to the 1993 Centennial celebration of the Cherokee Strip land run. Along with the other picture on page one was a shot of the unveiling of Perry's "Hopes and Dreams" statue on Sept. 16, 1993, in the courthouse park, and a small inset showing the heroic bronze piece after the shroud was removed.

The report devotes a portion of its text to the addition of Perry as OMPA's 34th participant. That addition "will make a substantive contribution to the Authority's fixed charges for the remainder of this decade," the report states. "OMPA looks forward to working with Perry." All of this has been covered in detail previously, of course, but I had never seen this particular report.

Another surprise, to me at least, was discovering that former Perry school superintendent Gene Gower was among the OMPA's board of directors in 1993. He has been on the board since July 20, 1987, representing the city of Tecumseh, where he was a city council member. Also listed as a board member was Charles Lamb, son of the late Mrs. Virginia Malzahn Lamb of Edmond, who was a native of Perry. Charles was a member of the Edmond city council when chosen for the OMPA board on Aug. 12, 1993. Charles owns the Greystone Restaurant property east of Edmond and still serves on the Edmond city council. He is a nephew of Ed and Mary Malzahn.

Here's a bit more from the report concerning Perry: "OMPA anticipates an even greater increase in energy sales in 1994 when the City of Perry begins taking service under a five-year power sales contract. In addition to supplying power, the Authority will provide distribution planning services, cost-of-service rate reviews and facilities engineering assistance. Field work on an analysis of their distribution system has started. Through an agreement with Perry's previous supplier, Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E), OMPA modified and extended its current contract with OG&E by four years. This agreement incrementally increases the amount of power purchased from OG&E and allows the Perry electric system to become the 34th participant of OMPA's power supply program. This additional capacity delays the need for the Authority to build additional generating plants."

On the "System Data" page, the report contains this paragraph: "The City of Perry, a community of 5,000 residents, became a participant of OMPA in 1993. Located in north-central Oklahoma in Noble County, Perry is surrounded by wheat farms and cattle ranches. The Charles Machine Works, Inc., manufacturer of the internationally known Ditch Witch construction equipment, is the city's largest employer with 800 employees." That was in 1993, remember. The number is substantially larger now.

Other towns and cities in this area served by OMPA are Blackwell, Edmond, Fairview, Hominy, Kingfisher, Newkirk, Pawhuska, Ponca City, Pond Creek, Tonkawa and Yale. That's only a partial list, but it does include most of the OMPA participants in this vicinity. You can see from that list that Perry is not exactly pioneering this system. It has been tested and proved by many of our neighbors.

OMPA has transmission agreements with the Grand River Dam Authority, OG&E, Public Service Co. of Oklahoma, Southwestern Electric Power Col., Southwestern Power Administration, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, Western Resources, Inc., and West Texas Utilities.

Even if I was a little late in coming across it, this report does contain some interesting information. Thought I'd pass it along.



January 13, 1996

It's good to know that Mayor Bud Hollingsworth is feeling better these days. He just recently had major lung surgery and the recuperative period is well underway. Not much strength yet but the prognosis is good and he's convinced he'll be able to regain the old vigor by the time bass fishing begins. No doubt he also is eager to dive into the usual mountain of municipal problems which have to be dealt with. Hizzoner and I shared a work space at the Charles Machine Works, Inc., a few years back and we got to know each other pretty well. Part of our bonding was through a common affection for the music of Glenn Miller and other big bands of the 1940s.

Entrepreneur Etsell Emde is getting ready to expand his storage building empire. The first units, located on the grounds of the former Southwest Salvage Co. on Cedar street hard by the Cow Creek bridge, are rented most of the time. A new area with larger storage capability soon will be built on East Fir avenue across the street from Terry and Judi Leonard's Cattle Baron Restaurant. The new units will be for boats, trailers, automobiles and the like, Etsell says. He's also planning to cover the old Southwest Salvage metal building with an attractive veneer much like his rental buildings in that area.

Perry's Expo '96 already is well into the planning stage for next March 29-30 at the fairgrounds. This thing has been getting bigger each year as its popularity grows with local merchants and service providers. The petting zoo and the health fair, sponsored by Perry Memorial Hospital, will be two of the principal features again this year.

Perry's Ed Kelley, managing editor of the *Daily Oklahoman*, is the recipient of a prestigious award from the National Press Foundation for directing his paper's coverage of the Murrah Federal Building bombing last April 19 in Oklahoma City. Everyone I've talked to in the news business feels the same way - Ed and the *Oklahoman* did an exceptionally thorough, professional job in the face of a terrible tragedy when chaos reigned and intelligent communication was difficult, if not impossible. As I said before, Ed and the *Oklahoman* also should win a Pulitzer prize this year for that achievement.

Glad to see Larry Fry is coming back for another year as Perry school superintendent. He's doing a good job in a position that requires him to fill many roles - educator, administrator, human resources manager, public relations, budget planner, counselor, disciplinarian, cultural leader, and on and on. For the most part, Perry always has been blessed with good people in its public school faculty and administrative slots. We're fortunate to have Mr. Fry.

Don't know about you, but I'm enjoying the First Bank & Trust Co.'s series of ads in which the 1920 Peroma is being reproduced bit by bit each week. Incidentally, if you have any old Perry high school yearbooks gathering dust in a closet or the attic, the Perry Alumni Association would probably like to have them. The association has a desk at the Chamber of Commerce office in the Foucart Building, or you could call Carolyn Chopp for information.



January 16, 1996

See where the Country Club folks are planning to replace their club house with a new metal building before long. Presumably the present multi-level frame club house will be demolished to make way for the new structure. I know the old building has been a problem to maintain and it is not exactly well suited for the needs of today's Country Club members, but a lot of memories are stored there.

The club house once had a shady screened-in porch on the east front where parents could relax and visit while their youngsters enjoyed swimming in the lake below. When T. B. Wilson was president of the club in the 1950s, the porch was enclosed as you see it today to make it usable in winter as well as summer months. The lake water was the brownish color of cafe au lait and swimmers shared it with crappie, turtles and an occasional water moccasin. A narrow wooden pier, perhaps 30 feet long, extended out over the water from the west edge of the lake. The pier was lined on either side by long, narrow planks, probably lengths of 2 x 10's, where swimmers' could lounge when not diving off the board at the end of the pier.

Some 40-50 yards to the northeast of the pier was a very small sanded beach with a wading area for the younger ones. A short distance off the little beach, just beyond a cable marking the edge of the wading area, was a wooden raft floating on 50-gallon drums. Directly east across the lake was a hazardous looking area where gnarled limbs and blackened stumps from ancient trees poked above the water surface, providing habitat for various denizens of the deep. Braver hearts showed their daring by swimming across the lake to that wet wilderness, but they also had to swim back to the raft or the diving pier because there was no decent place to exit the water on the east side.

A wooden walkway also extended from the pier to the children's beach. Slats in the walk were 2 x 4's spaced about a half-inch apart. One time Mrs. Bert Byerley lost a diamond ring between the slats and many people, adults and children alike, spent countless hours that summer peering into the vegetation beneath the boards in search of the lost article. Far as I know, it was never found, even when the old wooden walk was taken out years ago.

Each spring the entire walkway was painted white, as was, the diving pier, by the County Club caretaker. Arthur Clark filled that role for many years in the 1930s. He also was groundskeeper for the club's nine-hole course, which at that time had sand greens -- now replaced by well-tended grass greens. Mr. Clark was not a golf pro, and I don't think he even played the game, but he did a fine job of keeping all of the club's facilities in first class shape.

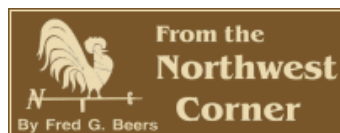
There was no pro shop for the golfers but you could buy a candy bar and a Coke from Mrs. Clark at the northwest corner of the club building, where the kitchen was located. The kitchen was little more than a gas burner and a small icebox. Family dinners were frequently held on weekends but they were mostly pot-luck affairs provided by the members, featuring mountains of home fried chicken, potato salad and various savory desserts.

Mr. and Mrs. Clark and their daughter, Margaret, lived south of the club house in a small frame home at what is now the corner of Ninth street and Wakefield drive, where Gene and Joan Breshears have an attractive brick residence. Mr. Clark also stored his groundskeeping equipment in the backyard. Ninth street at that time did not even exist between Wakefield and Locust street; the land was pasture. Wakefield did not exist west of the Ninth street corner or east of the Seventh street corner. It also was farm land. And Wakefield itself was an unnamed narrow dirt street with ruts of varying depths from Seventh street all the way out to the Country Club.

Windows on all sides of the club house were kept open most summer days to catch any stray breezes. A juke box with popular tunes of the day sat along the north wall of the main upper room, next to the brick fireplace, and young people enjoyed dancing there before or after a swim in the lake. Occasionally a band would be engaged by adults for a Saturday night dance. Rainbow Girls and DeMolay Boys also had wellchaperoned formal dances from time to time.

Lockers, showers and dressing areas were at the basement level, reached by a few steps at the east front beneath the screened-in porch. Many club members stored their clubs, bags and other paraphernalia in the lockers. Golf carts hadn't been invented and caddies could pick up a quarter or half-dollar by toting the gear around for the club's linksmen. When not engaged in caddying, enterprising young men could earn Coke money by diving for golf balls in some of the water hazards on the course.

The club house has undergone numerous cosmetic changes through the years. Additions have been made to accommodate the needs of each generation of membership. Facilities have been upgraded with a swimming pool to replace the muddy lake, tennis courts, a pro shop and other niceties. We'll miss the old club house because of the pleasant memories associated with it. The old building wasn't plush, but hey, it was the best place in Perry for many social and athletic endeavors. Soon, apparently, we'll be bidding farewell to it. I hope someone takes a good photo portrait of the old club house before it's torn down.



January 18, 1996

Now that I have survived a few days of battling (1) a touch of the flu, (2) a heavy cold, (3) a sinus attack or (4) some mysterious allergy manifestation, you can expect a much more sympathetic ear from me when describing your own mid-winter complaints. I feel your pain more acutely now.

Yes, I had my annual Asian flu shot so this malaise was not caused by that particular virus. But of course there are so many strains floating around out there that a body can hardly escape them all. Any of them can induce aching joints, coughing, sneezing, slightly elevated body temperature – all those wonderful symptoms that quickly drag you down to the misery level.

I'm all better now, not totally healthy, but hanging tough. Hope you're doing better, too.

Those recent days with temperatures in the 60s helped us to remember what it is that we like so much about other seasons of the year. According to Mike, Gary and the rest of our merry band of TV weather guys, we'll be on a roller coaster temperature ride for a while. So what else is new in Oklahoma? Consolation comes with realizing that each bad

day is just one day closer to spring! My Uncle R. C. in Oklahoma City says all the bulbs in his yard are so confused, they don't know what to do. Welcome to the club.

A note from longtime acquaintance Harley Clark, now a resident of Hendersonville, N.C., was prompted by the story about David Thomas in "Perry Tales." Harley played basketball and football and sang in the boys quartet at Perry high school before graduating in 1940. He married Virginia Lee Magee, known as Ginny to all of us in the PHS graduating class of 1941.

You may recall that in the "Perry Tales" story about David I mentioned that he and I both were in the Army Specialized Training Program before that particular program was scrapped by the military manpower crisis that was created by the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. Harley also was in the ASTP. He writes:

"I was assigned to Providence College in August 1943. Inasmuch as we could see a couple of years of educational training, Ginny hopped on a bus and we got married in October. How well I remember the night we learned that the program was closing. I slipped out long enough to tell Ginny I was leaving the next morning and I would call her as soon as possible. This took a while because I was joining the 26th Infantry Division on maneuvers in Tennessee preparatory for becoming a part of (Gen. George) Patton's Third Army in Europe.

Patton's command was involved in some of the heaviest fighting experienced by Allied troops in the war. The colorful general, distinguished by his polished helmet, riding boots and the pearl-handled pistols holstered on his hips, was nicknamed "Old Blood and Guts" for good reason. His men were instrumental in shortening the war in Europe and in chasing Hitler's Wehrmacht back to Berlin.

Harley continues: "One plus I received from ASTP was 32 hours of credit which enabled me to go through Oklahoma A. & M. College in two and a half years after the war. Without that, I probably would not have decided to pursue a college education. It proved to be a good decision."

Very true. Harley is now retired following a successful career with IBM, the company he joined after leaving OSU just as "Big Blue" was capturing Wall Street's attention. He and Ginny are frequent visitors here with family and friends. Sybil Scholz is his sister and Lois Severe is Ginny's sister. It was good to hear from Harley.



January 20, 1996

We were lucky enough to wangle an invitation to the Lions club's 70th anniversary party the other night at the Catholic parish hall, and it was quite an affair. Those Catholic ladies are deservedly famous for the family-style meals they serve. All the out-of-town visitors were amazed, not only at how quickly the tables were served with those great heaping quantities of food, but also at its marvelous quality.

The Lions club has about 80 members now and they had invited a number of guests from neighboring clubs plus their district governor, Pat Shurley of Oklahoma City, and other dignitaries. The weather that day was bad enough that all schools in this area were closed and many other activities were called off. Despite that, the parish hall was nearly full for this auspicious occasion, and the Lions should be proud of that. I belong to several minority groups (Rotary, Presbyterian church, the Republican party) and it is not unusual to see only a handful of people at some of our meetings, even when the weather is good. So congratulations to the Lions on their Dedication.

W. R. Fry of Guthrie, who may be the only surviving charter member of the Perry club, had planned to be here but could not make it because of illness. He sent his regrets through the Guthrie club president. The Fry family operated a well known meat market in this city years ago.

A story in this paper the other day told about many of the Lions club's accomplishments. They are widely known as the instigators of the Oklahoma Lions Eye Bank in 1956. Former Perryman Bill Parker was the main force behind the effort and A. J. Bontrager was president of the Perry club that year. Bill, now a resident of Arkansas, is in Florida this month and just had back surgery or he would have been here for the anniversary party. A. J. and his wife, Frances, who now live in Oklahoma City, did drive up for the celebration.

The eye bank has made a significant contribution to hundreds of people in this state and today's Perry Lions can be rightfully proud of what their club has brought about in that regard. They continue to look for and find areas where they can be of service to this community. Perry is the richer for what they have done, and we all owe them a tip of the hat. This city's Lions are known for their willingness to work hard at any project they undertake.

Hal Long of Garber, a past district governor, set the tone for the meeting with his enthusiasm for the brand of civic service typified by Lions clubs everywhere. He urged his audience to continue their search for the needs of their own community and to find solutions to those problems.

If you read the summary of what the Perry Lions have done in the 70 years since their charter was granted, I think you'll agree that Perry is a better community because of them. Here's wishing the Perry Lions club many more happy anniversaries and thanks for all you've done to make Perry the special community it is.



January 23, 1996

Edna Frueh raised a question the other day that's been on the minds of many Perry people for some time -- what can we do with our old newspapers? Boy Scouts used to collect them and haul them off to recycling centers as a fund-raising project a few years ago, then folks at Christ Lutheran church took it on. The market got so bad, however, that the work became impractical. Now we hear that the price of newsprint is soaring which makes us wonder if the demand for old papers is correspondingly greater.

At one time a Stillwater recycling firm had a pickup point in Perry for glass bottles, plastic soft drink containers, aluminum and tin cans. They didn't accept newspapers. That service was discontinued some time ago. The city of Stillwater has two collection points within its city limits for recyclables, including newspapers, but it's not always convenient for Perry people to haul this stuff over to the Payne county capital.

I understand the cost of starting up a municipal recycling center in Perry is prohibitive, when the expense of equipment, personnel and all other factors is added up, so we probably cannot hope to see such a service locally. But almost every family in town subscribes to at least two daily newspapers and that generates tons of scrap paper weekly. Wish we had a good recycling place to receive it. Many Perryans are trying to be environmentally sensitive by separating their recyclable trash from the other kind, but the problem is what to do with it after it's separated.

My recent recollection of Ethel L. Johnston jogged the memories of June Ream and Elizabeth Willems with more happy thoughts of that special lady. June recalls that on her daily walks around town, Mrs. Johnston would keep an eye out for what appeared to be needy families.

Spotting one, she would knock at the front door and smilingly ask permission to come in and catch her breath, or to warm herself if it was wintertime. No one would refuse her, and she used those opportunities to look around and make mental notes about special needs – clothes for the children, perhaps food, even furniture.

She had an arrangement with Jack and Hazel Smith who operated Smith's Variety Store on the east side of the square. Jack would call Mrs. Johnston any time he had extra candy for Christmas, Valentine's Day, Halloween or other occasions, and she would go down to the store to claim it, bringing along several Boy Scouts. She divided up the goodies for each of the families she knew about and instructed the Scouts to deliver them as gifts from Smith's Variety Store. Clothing, furniture and other needs were secured from the Red Cross or others who had them. It was one of the many ways she served the needs of deserving Perry citizens.

Elizabeth remembers going on nature walks with Mrs. Johnston. "We would turn over every rock we came across in search of centipedes, snakes or scorpions, whatever happened to be there," Elizabeth recalls. "Ethel L. told about each species as we came across them, and to this day I give her credit for the fact that I have no fear of those creepy little things."

Because of those explanations, Ethel L.'s youthful nature hikers lost their dread of such creatures and learned to appreciate the wonders and the marvels of the world about them. "She was indeed one of a kind," Elizabeth says.



January 25, 1996

Phil Albertson, as a Ditch Witch engineer, devoted a lot of years to the development of machines that are used for installing material beneath the ground's surface and to methods of doing the job as well. Some examples of material involved in this would be gas lines, phone lines, water lines or cables for electrical service and TV, but his primary interest for some time has been in flexible lines used with ground source heat pumps. This type of home heating and cooling systems relies primarily on water circulated through underground storage lines at a constant temperature. The use has been spreading rapidly for several years now, and Phil was involved virtually from the beginning.

Albertson retired a few years ago from the Ditch Witch company, where he was heavily involved in the concept and design of several pieces of equipment that became standard parts of the company's product line. His responsibilities at different times also included manufacturing engineering, tooling design, production scheduling, purchasing and research and development. He came to the Charles Machine Works, Inc., manufacturer of Ditch Witch equipment, in 1959 after graduating from OSU with a degree in industrial engineering. A native of Norman, he was the son of an OU professor of economics and a nephew of the founder of Albertson's Food Store. He entered OSU in 1955 upon leaving the Air Force following service as a jet fighter pilot in Korea. Although now retired from Ditch Witch, he is still on the cutting edge of its technology.

In 1978 Phil attended one of the first ground source heat pump workshops at Oklahoma State University and became acquainted with Dr. Jim Bose of the OSU staff. There he learned that the greatest problem with water source heat pump installations was placing pipe in the ground to circulate the water, so he brought the group to the Ditch Witch proving

grounds here and demonstrated how much faster and easier it can be done with one of the Perry-built chain trenchers. That also served to draw him into the new industry as a major player.

Recognizing a potentially large market segment for Ditch Witch equipment, he worked with the OSU group on different applications, including vertical systems. Phil designed two vertical drilling machines. One could trench and backfill, the other was more compact with a unique mud pump design that minimized wear. Art Deken and Fred Nichols, two Ditch Witch colleagues, contributed a great deal to the design and utilization methods study at that stage, Phil adds.

In 1981 Phil designed and installed a ground source heat pump, or GSHP, system for his own home on Skyline Drive. Compared to propane heat and air-conditioning systems, he estimates a 60 percent saving in operating costs alone, or approximately \$1,000 a year. Partly as a result of the on-the-job training of burying pipes and subsequent installation projects at their home, three of the Albertsons' four children, Mike, Phillip and a daughter, Sarah Beth Wilcox, are now carving out their own careers in the business. Their other daughter, Amy, is an international sales representative for American Airlines. All four children used Phil's notes from the home installation job on school project papers while they were students at OSU. And Phil freely credits his wife, Mona, with supplying support and encouragement to the entire family along the way.

A profile of Phil, headlined "IGSHPA Who's Who - Phil Albertson," appeared in a recent issue of "The Source," the official newsletter for the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association which has headquarters at OSU. The center spread in the same issue illustrates the use of high-pressure water in compacting the soil after installation of water lines to improve thermal conductivity. All machines used in the two-page photo layout are Ditch Witch products, another indication of the Perry company's dominant role in the underground field.

The newsletter contains quite a bit of interesting information about Phil and his pioneering efforts in ground source heat pump work. He has been a tub-thumper for the industry since his initial exposure to the idea. As a result of his efforts, Fortune magazine in 1981 published a feature story about the first installation of a four-pipe horizontal configuration at OSU.

Phil is still working on designs for new types of GSHP systems. He does consulting work at Ditch Witch regularly on equipment used in the installations and represents the company to the ground source heat pump industry. Phil sees a great future for the GSHP, but with a lot of work still to be done in promotional activities, training, better quality of installations and improved installation productivity. With his personal ingenuity and love of innovative ideas helping to lead the way, the ground source heat pump business may just be about to blossom.



January 27, 1996

What does it mean when you dream about katydids or feather? Perhaps you've never experienced either one, but in case it should happen, there's an explanation. Dreaming of feathers means burdens are going to be eased; katydids in your dreams mean misfortune and dependence on others are at hand. Dreaming of lawyers means unfavorable circumstances for change are about to occur. (Some will say that's reality, not dreaming.)

The source of all this interpretation is contained in a little advertising brochure from Plough's Inc., entitled "Black and White Birthday and Dream Book." Lois Moore, a former colleague at *The Journal*, recently handed me a copy of this piece of

literature which she found in going through some of her mother's things. She knew I'd be interested because it came from my dad's City Drug Store, probably back in the mid-1920s

Plough's was the manufacturer of a line of cosmetics which they called Black and White Beauty Creations, and their products are generously described throughout the little book. My dad handled Plough's products at his store on the north side of the square, and his business imprint is on the back cover. (Plough's is still very much in business with a line of health and beauty aids.)

Birthdays also are covered, including general characteristics of those born in any given month. For instance, if your birthday is in January, you love to travel; you're restless and dissatisfied if you stay long in one place. Women born under this sign are inclined to be supersensitive and self-conscious, and lack confidence in their own powers. (The book says this, not I.) In August, my month, folks are said to have a lofty mind, are firm, and have great will power. Men born under this sign are good businessmen and are very proud and somewhat inclined to think too well of themselves and their ability. Hmmm.

Those celebrating September birthdays will reap great honors by reason of their originality and genius. Women born under this sign have a liking for calm and peaceful country life. If you were born in December, you have an honest, generous nature and a kindly heart. Friends and associates should be chosen from among those born in the same month; you probably will marry twice. Your eldest child will be a source of worry.

Astrology is not mentioned anywhere in the little book, but that's what the birthday analyses sound like. The portion on dream interpretations contains some serious, some whimsical, some mind-boggling ideas. Here are a few subjects and what they mean:

Acrobat -- Slander and scandal will be heaped upon you.

Apricot -- Calamity and sad future.

Baby carriage -- Pleasant surprise from a friend.

Bachelor--Loss of honor, possibly through a woman.

Bees -- Pleasant pastimes (really?).

Camel -- Terrible anguish.

Chicken -- Good news from business and love.

Church -- Domestic quarrels.

Kiss -- Satisfaction; joy;love.

Lemons -- You are jealous of your lover.

Lizard -- Attack by enemies.

Olives -- Delightful surprise.

Perfume -- Pleasure.

Pig -- Success in business affairs.

Quail -- Good omen.

Rhinoceros -- Loss and secret trouble.

Vineyard -- Much love making.

Worms -- Intrigue against you is on foot.

Zebra -- Failure in your enterprise.

Some of the Plough advertisements also are interesting. A tube of their Black and White toothpaste sold for 10 cents and 25 cents. Beauty Bleach (to get rid of freckles and discolorations) was 50 cents a jar. A cake of skin soap was 25 cents. Generous jars of cold cream sold for 50 cents and 25 cents. All these are interesting for one reason or another, and

thanks to Lois for letting me see them. Next time I dream about a covey of quail, I'll be waiting for that good omen to appear.

The piece the other day about "What Is a Senior Citizen?" struck a responsive chord in several readers. Since then, I've come across the following piece which relates to the same subject. Here it is:

LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHTY

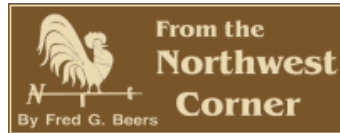
I have good news for you! The first 80 years are the hardest. Now, everyone wants to help carry your baggage and help you up the steps.

If you forget your name or anybody's name, forget to fulfill an appointment, or promise to be at two or three parties at the same time, or spell words incorrectly, you need only explain that you are EIGHTY. At that age, you can relax with no misgivings. You have a perfect alibi for everything. Nobody expects much of you. If you act silly, it's your second childhood. Everybody is looking for symptoms of softening of the brain.

It is a great deal better than being 65 or 70. At that time they expect you to retire to a house in Palm Springs and become a discontented, grumbling, limping has-been.

But, if you survive until you're 80, everybody is surprised that you're alive – that you can walk – that you can reveal lucid intervals.

At 70, people are mad at you for everything. At 80, they forgive you for anything. If you ask me – life begins at 80.



January 30, 1996

Congratulations to the Perry Ministerial Alliance for making a positive response to the wave of vandalism, violence and other crimes now rocking our normally quiet little community. At least 20 Perry preachers spoke Sunday morning on the subject of peacemaking in a program coordinated by the Alliance to address the recent lawlessness here. Let's hope efforts such as this can be broadened before the problem overwhelms us. And thanks to our local police and sheriffs officers for their diligence in pursuing the perpetrators.

Perry and Noble county received some welcome recognition in editions of the *Daily Oklahoman* and the *Tulsa World* the past few days. *The Sunday Oklahoman* business section profiled Randy and Cindy Rupp in a lengthy and interesting article by staff writer Jim Stafford. The piece detailed Randy's recent decision to abandon farming as his chosen career because of the difficult economic conditions now confronting young farm families. Randy gave up running his farm east of Perry last year and took a position with Ditch Witch as a factory representative. Cindy had assisted with the farm operation but had her own career underway as a curriculum writer for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. Today she has taken over management of the farm and continues with her writing, but plans to become a full-time farmer soon with all of its day-to-day aspects. Read the whole article if you missed it in last Sunday's paper.

Then in the sports section of Monday's *Oklahoman* was a feature story about the Perry Maroon wrestling program and coach Scott Chenoweth. Perry is again the defending state champion team and is ranked No. 1 in class 2A. Mac Bentley, the *Oklahoman's* wrestling writer, tells how Scott returned to PHS, where he was a three-time state champ, after a

splendid career with the Nebraska Cornhuskers. He was a three-time All-American during his time with the Huskers and he now has the Maroons poised for a run at the Dual State tournament Feb. 9-10. Incidentally, the *Oklahoman's* weekly rankings show Blackwell advancing to No. 2 from No. 7 in class 3A last week after posting a win over the Perry Maroons. Perry has headed the 2A rankings all season.

Monday's *Oklahoman* sports section also ranks the Frontier girls basketball team No. 12 in class A. The Frontier lassies are 18-3 so far this season.

Monday's *Tulsa World* had a salute to one of that city's citizens, King Kirchner, a native of Perry and son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Kirchner. More on this article later.

I can't let the 1996 Super Bowl disappear over the horizon without at least one little comment. Here's a thought for future consideration: How about barring the media from the site of all future Super Bowls prior to game time? As they proved this year, they add absolutely nothing to the game and in fact take considerably away from it.

With some 3,000 of them straining to outdo each other by asking mostly ridiculous pre-game questions of the players and coaches, they merely managed to create a bizarre atmosphere last week. Remember folks, those alleged newsmen (and women) are scrounging for any hint of controversy and if they don't find it, they fabricate it. Their object is to sell papers and persuade you to watch or hear them on radio and TV, thereby justifying their expense accounts. The competition for your time is fierce. The guilty parties last week were from electronic as well as print media, so ban 'em all, I say.

Besides, the Super Bowl needs no hyperbole from broadcasters and writers. It is a unique sports attraction, the beneficiary of a season-long process of televised games each weekend leading up to the final playoffs. By Super Bowl time we should already know more than we want or need to know about the players and coaches, some of them being weirdos and some straight-arrows.

Just turn the boys loose on Super Bowl Sunday and aim the TV cameras right at them. Forget the phony preliminary froth and carnival atmosphere. Let's just hope for more games as exciting as last Sunday's.