



June 2, 1998

Today we continue the story of the Shepherd family, including the sisters whose art work is on display through July 31 at the Oklahoma City Art Museum. Information related here is furnished by Dr. Mildred Shepherd Rodriguez, now of Stillwater.

Miram K. Shepherd, a pioneer settler in the Sumner community, and his wife, Elizabeth, had three children: Miram Jackson (Jack), born January 16, 1901; Juanita Lottie, born in April 1903; and Leslie, born in January 1909. Leslie died in infancy. Juanita graduated from Perry high school in 1921 and from OU four years later. She taught home economics in Maramec, and on July 20, 1930, she married Elmer White, an agriculture teacher. After living in Tulsa for a time, they moved to Golden City, Missouri. Elmer died in 1944 and Juanita passed away in 1974. Their son, William Bruce White, is a U.S. history professor at the University of Toronto, Canada.

The first years on the Shepherd homestead nine miles east and two and a half miles north of Perry were difficult. When M.K. and Elizabeth were first married and their firstborn, Jack, was a baby, they lived in the little house that M.K. had built. Later they built a large two-story home like those of other prosperous settlers – the Larsons, the Cranes and the Burgers. The windmill had beautiful trumpet vines on it, the east front porch had a big rambling rose, and on the west side of the south porch was a wall of honeysuckle. There was always a white linen damask tablecloth on the dining table and in the afternoon Elizabeth would go to Sumner for the mail at Joe Dawson's store.

M.K., a rancher/farmer, was a good provider. As he acquired more land, he needed more help and that meant Elizabeth had more hired hands to feed. She raised chickens and she canned food in large half-gallon jars. She was a woman of character and maintained her dignity. An excellent seamstress, she dressed exquisitely. She had a remarkable hat collection that her granddaughter adored, and she curled her fine blond hair with a curling iron that she heated in the globe of a kerosene lamp. In later years, she enjoyed driving her black Dodge coupe, which was her pride and joy.

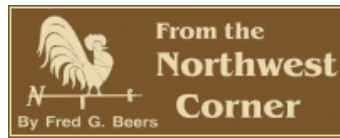
In 1904 the spirited and adventurous M.K. bought shares in the Blalock Mexico Colony. The company had purchased a large hacienda, called "El Chamal," in Mexico. The 80,000-acre plot of land was located in a fertile valley in the state of Tamaulipas, northwest of the port of Tampico. The colony was incorporated under the laws of Oklahoma and duly registered in Mexico. Early in 1905 the family went to Mexico and stayed most of the year. Many families from the Southwest participated in this venture. In 1910 there were 350 Americans living there. M.K. retained his property and in 1928 he made a return visit.

After the family returned from Mexico in late 1905, M.K. began buying grassland in the Otoe-Missouria territory – now Missouri township – and acreage along the railroad in Sumner for his expanding livestock business. In 1907 he bought 120 acres of ranch from Pearl Woolsey Faw Faw. And in 1908 he purchased 80 acres in Auburn township that adjoined the homestead on the west. During his lifetime M.K. had acquired more than 800 acres of ranch and farm land in the U.S., 640 acres in Mexico and two houses in Stillwater. M.K. had a great zest for life and he lived it to its fullest. He loved to reminisce and he looked forward to the roundups at the 101 Ranch. The family would get in his big Dodge and drive away across the prairie. There were no roads through Indian territory at the time.

M.K. and Elizabeth lived productive lives. Admired and respected by their friends and neighbors, they contributed to the strength, integrity and moral fiber of the Sumner community. Elizabeth taught Sunday school at the Sumner Christian church and was a member of the Ladies Aid, the Eastern Star and the Sumner farm women's club. M.K. was an active member of the Masons, Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers Association at the 101 Ranch, and the Anti-Horse Thief Association. At 77, still proud and erect, he was still riding his horse. After his death on March 19, 1946, Elizabeth sold the homestead

and moved to Stillwater. She enjoyed the cultural activities of a university community, but that was short-lived. She died November 25, 1947.

More of this profile of the Shepherd family will appear shortly.



June 5, 1998

Russell Chapin has been a good friend since he first arrived in Perry with his brand new law degree from OU and became a partner in the office of attorney Henry Dolezal. That was after World War II, in the late 1940s. Russell, a Red Rock boy, and I were bachelors, and we whiled away a few idle hours on the local tennis courts. Then George Howard Wilson of Enid was elected to represent this district in the U.S. House of Representatives and he chose Russell to join him in Washington as his chief administrative assistant. After Rep. Wilson's tenure ended, Russell was tapped for a position in the Justice Department and his career was focused on the nation's capitol from that point until he retired a couple of years ago. He and his wife, Helen, a former congressional administrative executive herself, left the icy winters and sweltering summers of the District of Columbia and moved to Amelia Island, a sun-kissed haven off the east coast of Florida.

Russell and Helen were in Perry on a recent Sunday for a brief visit after attending the 50th anniversary reunion of his law school class at the University of Oklahoma. After attending morning services at the First Christian church, where he formerly was a member, they joined a few friends for lunch at a local restaurant. Though unplanned, the event also turned out to be a mini-reunion of some folks from this area who once lived and worked in Washington during the same time period. All were loyal members of the Oklahoma Club while living in the D.C. area. It was just by coincidence they all happened to be here on the same day. Dropping by to visit the Chapins and others at their table were Bud and Abbie Johnson, who now live in Oklahoma City but spend as much time as possible here; former Governor and U.S. Senator Henry Bellmon and his wife, Shirley, who are now happily back on their farm east of Billings; and retired Lt. Gen. and Mrs. Lavern E. Weber, who now live on their farm west of Perry. They all saw each other frequently during the years they labored for the U.S. government in Washington but all of them are now retired. A lot of stories and greetings were exchanged during their unexpected get-together that day in Perry.

Speaking of General Weber, I've been meaning to write something about him for quite a while. The Perry community is glad to have the general and his wife as permanent residents here, although the couple still have to divide their time between Oklahoma and Washington. During his tenure, General Weber was chief of the National Guard Bureau with a desk in the Pentagon and quarters at Fort Myer, usually reserved for three and four-star generals of the regular Army. At that time, General Weber was responsible for all U.S. citizen soldiers. Prior to that, in 1955, he was appointed by Governor Bellmon to serve as adjutant general of Oklahoma with the rank of major general.

General Weber began his career in the military in 1942 when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He has been a teacher, coach, full-time National Guard administrator and a part-time farmer. He was appointed chief of the National Guard Bureau in 1974 by President Gerald Ford. In that position, he was promoted to the three-star grade of lieutenant general. After his tour in that office, he was named deputy commanding general of the U.S. Armed Forces Command, followed by an assignment as the military executive for the Defense Department's Reserve Forces Board.

It was good to have so many of our successful former Noble countyans together that Sunday for a brief reunion, and it is

good to have General and Mrs. Weber as residents of our community.



June 9, 1998

A friend has noticed that newly planted trees at Grace Hill Cemetery are doing well because "the girls who work there" were watering them regularly during the recent unseasonable heat wave by dragging heavy reels of hose from hydrant to hydrant. At that time the temperature was flirting with 100-degree readings earlier than usual. The heat has abated since then but the young trees still must be watered by that toilsome method. Many of us saw these saplings during the recent Memorial Day observance, and we know that in due time they will further enhance the cemetery's quiet beauty.

In the meantime, my friend is concerned that there is no better way to provide water for the new plantings. Hauling those cumbersome and heavy hose reels from one hydrant to another is brutally hard work. She suggests that perhaps a farmer or someone else in the Perry area may have a tank that could be filled with water and mounted on a pickup truck to help the cemetery caretakers with this essential chore. It would have to be a tank that had not been used with insecticides or other chemicals and large enough to serve the purpose. This sounds like a good suggestion to me. If you can help out, contact the sexton at the cemetery or someone at City Hall and let them know about it. Incidentally, I also have just learned that the cemetery crew has taken on the responsibility of decorating veterans' graves with small U.S. flags on special occasions. Thanks to them for taking care of that important service. In the past groups such as Boy Scouts and the American Legion have performed that chore. It's important that the tradition be continued.

Tim Boggess, the energetic young shepherd of our Presbyterian flock, took the plunge into home gardening for the first time this year because, as a newlywed, he couldn't justify paying \$3 for a pound of red bell peppers when he could grow them "better and cheaper" himself. So, he bought some "how to" books on the subject and began digging a garden in the backyard of the manse property on Lakeview Drive. He recently sat down to figure up his costs, including the books, seed, fertilizer, wheelbarrow, soil enriching material, chicken wire fence and a few more accessories. In this month's newsletter to the congregation, he reports an investment of about \$379. "For that kind of money," he notes, "I could have gone to the store and purchased 200 pounds of potatoes, 50 pounds of tomatoes, 150 green bell peppers, 100 medium yellow onions, 150 ears of corn, 56 pounds of green beans and 68 heads of iceberg lettuce. Now that's what I call cheap produce!" But, just look at the valuable experience he acquired.

I've had inquiries about the series of columns on the Shepherd family, Sumner area homesteaders in the Cherokee Strip run of 1893. Yes, there is more to come about these interesting folks and we will offer them to you shortly. Also, the series on Perry movie theatres has not been concluded and there soon will be more information on that subject to submit for your approval. Along that line, let me share some thoughts from Jo Wollard Garten of Ponca City, a native of this little town on the prairie.

Jo remembers the time around 1918 when her parents, Mr. and Mrs. G.C. Wollard, moved to their home at 1013 Elm street (now the residence of District Judge Dan Allen and family). A Mr. Shepherd lived next door west. As a very small child, Jo came home from Sunday school one day and her mother asked what the class had talked about. "I replied, 'about God and Mr. Shepherd,'" she relates. Later, the W.T. Donahoes moved from Red Rock into Mr. Shepherd's house. "Their daughter, Lorraine, had received some lovely Christmas toys," Jo tells. Shortly after Christmas their house caught fire during the night. All city fire hydrants were frozen and the house burned to the ground.

"A small water faucet in our yard did work and my daddy kept spraying our roof and the west side of our house. The wind must have been in the south because friends reported that debris from the fire had flown as far as a block north. My parents had sent me and all my beloved Christmas toys over to stay with the Enright family across the street south," Jo tells. "Mother spent her time sorting through heirlooms she loved in an upstairs bedroom. The home now west of my old home is the one the Donahoes built after the fire. It was called an airplane bungalow. Airplanes were new to all of us in those days. I was four years old when we moved there."

I remember the Donahoe and Wollard homes from my childhood. I grew up about two blocks east of them. They were regarded as two of Perry's grandest residences. Thanks to Mrs. Garten for adding to our memories of an earlier time in this little city.



June 12, 1998

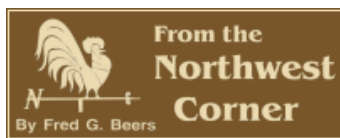
On a pleasant evening the other day, we sat in the courthouse park admiring the new lights around the square and thinking what a lovely asset we have in that grassy, well-cared for oasis in the middle of our compact little downtown area. We were relaxing in the vicinity of the bandstand when one of our group remarked that it must have been like that decades ago when Dr. W C. Marshall led the Perry Community Band in one of its weekly concerts. Someone asked if he correctly understood that the band played from the top of the square pump house a few feet southeast of the bandstand, and I had to disagree. My personal memory of the Perry Community Band places them on a small concrete stage that used to be located where the present stage, a much broader one, is located. Does anyone know if the band also used the top of the pump house for those memorable concerts?

Dr. Marshall also came to mind a few days ago when his daughter, Kitty Foster, passed away at the age of 101. Mrs. Foster was one of our last remaining links to the family that provided this community with a great deal of musical pleasure over a period of many years. The Community Band was one example. All the Marshalls were musical and they took part in various local ensembles. One of these was the American Legion post's Dutch Band, a group that I hope to write about in the future. The Dutch Band was more for fun than musical pleasure. They dressed in outlandish costumes, some wore wigs, and I seem to remember that at least one of them wore a clown suit complete with a fire engine wig and a bulbous red nose.

But Dr. Marshall's summer Community Band was more into serious music, most of it martial airs but also a few waltzes and popular tunes of the day. Early each spring Dr. Marshall, who was a dentist in real life, would announce in *The Perry Daily Journal* that it was time to assemble again and begin rehearsals for the summer concerts. Anyone of any age was welcome to join the band, but they at least had to read music. Quite a few high school musicians always played, but most of them were adults, and seniors at that, just folks who enjoyed tooting their horns for the enjoyment of the local citizenry. Dr. Marshall led the rehearsals and waved the baton for the concerts in a serious, professional manner.

The music floated on the occasional summer breeze that brought relief to the July and August heat in Perry and provided an excuse for families to come downtown for an evening of free entertainment. Youngsters played tag among the gracious old elm trees that had been thoughtfully planted years earlier by Will Little, and adults visited with friends as the evening went on. Some brought cold drinks and light snacks to share with anyone who stopped by their park bench.

Sousa marches and lilting melodies pleased the ears of listeners, and they were always generous with their applause after each number. We knew the band wasn't ready for Carnegie Hall, but no one cared. It was just an altogether happy time with street lights very much like our new ones providing illumination. The Great Depression may have been on people's minds during the week, but when those Friday night concerts filled the air with music, we were transported to a euphoric reverie accompanied by the brass, reeds, rhythm and percussion of Dr. W .C. Marshall's Perry Community Band. It was a time worth remembering.



June 16, 1998

A recent letter from a lady in Mobile, Alabama, concerns her fruitless efforts to turn up some information about a relative who is supposed to have lived in this area some years ago. Ann Wilkinson and her husband, Bill, are searching for news of his grandfather's family. The grandfather went by the name of John William Wilkinson. Mrs. Wilkinson has been able to track him to the Noble county area but she needs more about the family to complete her genealogy project. Here's a portion of Mrs. Wilkinson's letter:

"I have been searching for the James Wesley Wilkinson and Margaret E. Allen family and my search has led me to Seneca, Kansas (Nemaha county) and to Perry, Oklahoma (Noble county). On my Latter Day Saints descendancy printout I find George Albert Wilkinson, Dorothy Edith Watts and Wallace Bruce Wilkinson, born 11 March 1915 in Perry. They are the children of James Simon Wilkinson, born 8 February 1876, in Seneca, Nemaha county, Kansas, and Bertha Mae Hemstreet, born 20 June 1885 in Ames, Storey county, Iowa.. My husband's grandfather, John William Wilkinson, a twin, also is a child of James Wesley Wilkinson and Margaret E. Allen. He left home after a shooting incident. Never talked about his parents or siblings."

In summary, the Wilkinsons are searching for information about James Wesley Wilkinson, born in 1822 in Ely, England, and Margaret E. Allen, born in 1824 in Kentucky. During their marriage they had ten children. They were Sarah, born in 1860 in Kansas; John, born in 1862 in Kansas; Bill, born in 1864 in Ireland; Oliver, born in 1866 in Ireland; Emily, born in 1868 in Ireland; Albert Jackson, born in 1870 in Ireland; George, born in 1872 in Ireland; Noah, born in 1874 in Ireland; James Simon, born in 1876 in Seneca, Kansas; and Mabel, born in 1879 in Oneida, Kansas.

My only contribution to her search was locating the name of Oliver Wilkinson and his wife, Mary E., as residents of 721 11th street in Perry according to the 1910-11 City Directory published by Hoffines. Oliver's occupation is not given. If you can add to this, Mrs. Wilkinson would appreciate a note sent to her at 2404 Staples Road, Mobile, Alabama 36605.

Visiting with Sam Jerome the other day, I learned that one of his recent construction projects turned up a small prescription bottle from years past with a paper label still attached, showing that it came from the Orlando Drug Store. That business was operated in the 1930s on Orlando's main street, which also was the old U.S. 77 route south to Oklahoma City, and the proprietor was Forrest Elliott, who grew up in Perry. Forrest, now deceased, was the father of twin sons Gene and Glen and two daughters, Karen Grim of Perry and Roberta McCulloch of Wickenburg, Arizona. Forrest's wife, Georgianna, died only recently. Many may have forgotten that he once had that drug store in Orlando and that he also was a rural school teacher before joining his father, W.P. (Bill) Elliott Sr., and brothers, Bill and Bob, in a major construction company based in Perry. Sam tells me Orlando once had two drug stores, but Forrest had the only one located on the main drag. Bob is the only Elliott brother still surviving. He's a contractor living in Oklahoma City.



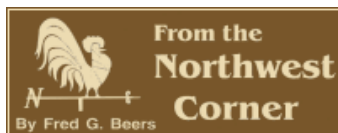
June 19, 1998

Most executive travelers crave a newspaper at the door when they register at hotels, according to a survey conducted by Lodging Hospitality, a nationally distributed monthly magazine read by many hotel managers. Newspapers were the surprising choice over amenities such as basic cable TV, in-room coffee makers, premium TV channels and pay-per-view TV. You can conclude from the survey's findings that print is not dead, as some would have you believe. Summing up information gleaned through the survey, the magazine lists these as the top five amenities hotels should feature within five years: 1. Newspaper at the door. 2. Exercise/fitness facility. 3. Iron/ironing board. 4. Room service. 5. Laundry/dry cleaning service.

J.L. Trammel, manager of the Best Western Cherokee Strip Motel here, provided me with a copy of the magazine containing this interesting information. I note that several newspapers, including *The Perry Daily Journal*, are available near the registration desk of Mr. Trammel's motel, so the local folks obviously are aware of travelers' hankering for information in print form. We're pretty up to date about most things here in Perry.

The other day, I saw a man doing something I thought was physically impossible in the front seat of a Volkswagen Beetle. He was wearing a five-gallon Western hat without having to duck his head in the cramped confines of that quaint little classic car. In the Bug I drove for 17 years a while back, there just didn't seem to be enough room for that.

My friend Marcia Moore of Severy, Kansas, continues to add to her collection of interesting mementos from Perry's early years. A recent note discloses that she has acquired more Perry souvenirs, purchased from a collection in Chanute, Kansas, and she sends photos to illustrate. A sugar and creamer set in one photo looks like delicate porcelain. Both bear likenesses of our Carnegie Library. They are hand-painted and were made around 1910 in Germany by the Jonroth Company for the Barton Book Store here. The other photo shows a small white glass container, possibly for holding talcum or something else for milady's toiletries table. The cover has a hand-painted floral design and the inscription: "Souvenir of Perry, Okla." No indication of the year it was made, but it probably was one of several such articles made by Jonroth and sold by the Barton Book Store here years ago.



June 23, 1998

I don't know how many of you remember Ed and Betty Klewer and their family. Ed traveled this area for Snap-On Tools and I always thought he behaved like someone who enjoyed his work. He was a jolly man, a little rotund. His face lit up with a bright smile at the least opportunity. Ed could tell a story to make you laugh or give his undivided attention to one of yours. He often had an interesting point of his own to add. Sometime ago I had a column about the Frisco Railroad Doodlebug that used to chug through Perry. Ed read that and sent me an interesting letter about his own recollection of

the Doodlebug and some of the Santa Fe locomotives that visited Perry frequently. Until then I was unaware of his background in that field. He was a train hobbyist.

Before coming here he had been a railroad man in various capacities and he never lost his love for the romance and adventure of those steam locomotives we used to see on every track. That was back in the age of real railroads, with passenger travel and everything, when every village's importance was judged by its proximity to the main lines of whatever steel tracks served their area. Perry was lucky; we had both east-west and north-south railroad service, and that put us ahead of Stillwater, for instance. The Aggies used to have to come to Perry to watch the passenger trains come and go.

Ed also spent some time working in the oil business in some exotic Mid-East countries and he had many interesting tales to tell about that period of his life. The Klewers were Methodists and were active members of the local church. I came to know him primarily because his daughter, Carolyn, was a friend of our Kathy. They graduated from PHS the same year and, although their paths parted about then, they stayed more or less in touch. The family also included two sons, Carl and Keith. All of them are grown up young adults now, gone from the nest. Ed and his wife moved from here to Stillwater a few years ago and operated their own business for a while, but we saw them from time to time, long enough to keep our families up to date on what our daughters were doing.

Laura and I were away from Perry on a business trip last week and we had just returned home when we heard the shocking news of the tragic automobile accident in Independence, Missouri, that took the lives of Ed, his wife and two others in their car. The driver of the other vehicle remains in critical condition. In our own life, we had just recently experience the trauma of being involved in a two-car collision. Both cars were totaled by the accident but none of the four people involved had any kind of injury. Thank God for that. We knew we were fortunate and we also found what it was like to go through the terror of an automobile collision in which serious bodily harm was certainly possible. In our relatively minor case, the potential victims were completely helpless to prevent the accident or forestall personal injury. It is a fearsome thing and it leaves an indelible impression.

The Klewers apparently were not at fault in their tragic accident, but they are gone from this life and the family's pain is not abated by that fact. Their parting leaves a void and a sadness for all who knew them, and we send our love and sympathy to the children who mourn them most.



June 26, 1998

Local students were dismissed for the summer several weeks ago, but flashing lights in some school zones still warn motorists to slow down during certain hours of the day despite the absence of students. Do we risk a traffic ticket by ignoring those lights or will they be changed sometime this summer, before the fall term begins perhaps?

It hurts to read those stories of senseless damage and abuse of property around Perry, apparently caused by vandals intent upon finding new ways of inflicting a form of terrorism on the rest of us. This community is working hard to provide a comfortable and safe place where young people and adults can truly enjoy life. We're dressing up the downtown business area and striving to clean up blighted spots in the residential area. The people you meet here are the salt of the earth, churches reach out with news of grace and redemption, teachers in all of our schools struggle to instill a sense of worth and responsibility, and attractive job opportunities abound. The environment is clean and healthy. How ironic that a small, misdirected group can inflict damage for the rest of us to clean up. Why do some cuckoos choose to lurk in the

shadows armed with cans of spray paint for scrawling filthy thoughts on public buildings, or hurl eggs as weapons at inanimate objects? It's not funny, and certainly not smart. A relative few are giving a bad name to one of the best small towns in America. We need to figure out why they're doing this before their sickening, foolish behavior gets completely out of hand. Some will say it has already gone too far.

Our Perry Carnegie Library is joining the nationwide trend of computerizing its list of books to replace the old index card files that have served for so many decades. Soon to disappear are the sturdy little-wooden cabinets filled with 3x5 cards that gave patrons summarized information about each book in the library's collection. In their place are bright computer screens that provide the same information, and more, but with the use of a mouse and cursor. It will take some getting used to and we'll have to learn some additions to our vocabulary to understand the instructions, but thank goodness the real, live library staff is still there to cheerfully provide help upon request.

The city's ambitious new street program this summer includes the complete rebuilding of a major portion of Wakefield Road on the north side of town. Right now several blocks of Wakefield have been ripped out and more will soon follow. New curbs and gutters are promised along with corrected elevations to eliminate drainage problems that have existed for years. Fly ash is being used to improve the stability, but until a new surface has been laid by the contractor, Evans & Associates, residents of that portion of Wakefield are living in a veritable Dust Bowl. Any traffic kicks up a stifling cloud of powdery dirt. Yes, it will be nice when completed. Wakefield now carries a heavy load of traffic, including freight haulers, farm trucks and school buses, in addition to the normal east-west vehicles throughout the day, and the old surface was rough, to say the least. The new street will be most welcome. We had just about worn out the old chug holes.

Here's a suggestion for our city street department. Wouldn't it be nice if Wakefield could be center-striped to finish the job? That might cure some of us of our habit of driving down the middle of the street.



June 30, 1998

To resume our look at the Shepherd family, pioneer homesteaders in Noble county, today we'll focus on Jack Shepherd and his wife, Pearl.

M.K. and Elizabeth Shepherd made the Cherokee Strip land run separately on September 16, 1893, and later were married. They had a son, Miram Jackson, born January 16, 1901, on the homestead. They also had two daughters. Juanita Lottie was born in April 1903, and Leslie, born in 1909, died in infancy. The son, Miram Jackson, was known simply as Jack throughout his life. Jack was only a youngster when the family moved temporarily to Mexico in 1905 but he retained fond memories of the experience and knew that he longed to return to the Sumner area in Noble county. In 1918 he joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed at San Diego, California.

In 1919, shortly after World War I ended, Jack's father broke his leg and asked that Jack come home to help manage the ranch. Later, Jack went to Bartletts' Automobile and Tractor School in Wichita and graduated in 1921. That fall his future bride, Rosette Pearl Jenkins, arrived in Sumner with her father, Henry Alexander Jenkins, and family.

Henry Jenkins was principal of the Sumner Consolidated School for the first full year of classes in the new school, 1921-22. Pearl, born in 1901 in Thayer, Missouri, was one of the teachers, and two of Jenkins' children, Anetta and Odie, were students. Wilburn, the eldest child, had already left the nest and Juanita, the youngest, was just a toddler. Henry, Pearl's

father, was born in Missouri in 1878 and her mother, Lena Josephine Aebischer, came to the U.S. from Switzerland when she was 18 months old. Pearl graduated from high school in Willow, Oklahoma, and later went to Southwestern Teachers College in Weatherford. She worked at a cotton gin to help defray expenses. After receiving her teaching certificate, she taught school for four years in Beckham, Greer and Noble counties.

Jack courted Pearl in his new model-T Ford and married her May 20, 1922. With the bank's help, the newlyweds bought 160 acres in Missouri township, 12 miles east and 3.5 north of Perry. They struggled through the first six years in the Otoe, farming, milking cows, separating the milk in a hand separator, and raising turkeys and chickens. But when their only child, Mildred (born March 31, 1923, in Sterling, OK), neared school age, they sold their isolated dwelling in 1928 to facilitate her education. For a year they lived in a two-room schoolhouse across Black Bear Creek from the home place of Jack's father, M.K. Shepherd. That winter the Bear went on one of its periodic rampages, coming within four inches of the family's door. The chickens were stranded on the roosts and Jack went in a boat to milk his cows at his father's place.

The final installment on the story of the Shepherd family will follow shortly.