



March 1, 1996

A young lady who grew up in Perry is among nine who were recognized recently by the Red Lands Council of Girl Scouts as "distinguished women" for their outstanding contributions in areas of the arts, business, education, homemaking, media, philanthropy, science and volunteerism. Cynthia Cope, daughter of Christine Trussel and the late Alfred Trussel of Perry, was selected as the outstanding woman, and therefore a role model, in business.

Cynthia, a 1966 graduate of Perry high school, is regional manager for external affairs for Southwestern Bell, with offices in Oklahoma City. She has been with the company since 1972 and has been in the Oklahoma City office about 17 years. She has had an interesting career while climbing the phone company's corporate ladder.

The Red Lands Council, which covers the greater Oklahoma City area, has chosen outstanding Oklahoma women for these awards the past six years. Among those sharing the honor with Cynthia this year is First Lady Cathy Keating, the first to be chosen for the field of leadership. Shirley Bellmon, a former first lady, received the business award in 1993, so you can see Cynthia is in pretty good company. This year's nine honorees were introduced to the Girl Scouts of Red Lands Council at a formal tea.

Speaking of Cynthia reminds me that Southwestern Bell's offices in Oklahoma City are located in the former Central high school building. The school had a proud history but was closed several years ago due to its age and a shifting population core in Oklahoma City. Fortunately a good corporate citizen like the phone company purchased the building and converted it into an outstanding example of historic preservation. With dozens of other company executives and office employees, Cynthia was in the building last April 19 when a bomb demolished the Murrah Federal Building some six blocks away. The old school escaped with only minor damage and no serious injuries among its employees there.

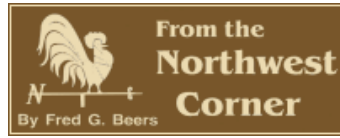
Wade and Marilyn Voise are flabbergasted by the generosity being demonstrated on their behalf after that recent fire which consumed their home and all their belongings. The Morrison and Perry communities, along with many others, have just opened their hearts to the Voises. They moved into a rented home this week but had to decline offers to help with the job. "We didn't have anything to move," Wade explained.

Morrison folks are sponsoring a big benefit event for the family Saturday night. Gifts of appliances and other utilitarian articles will be received at the Morrison high school cafeteria starting at 7 p.m. and a public dance will start at 8 p.m. in the Morrison Community Building. I understand the group known as "the Men of Note" will be among the musicians taking part. This combo also plays for the monthly big band dances sponsored by a Stillwater radio station, and the Voise family provides a lot of the talent for the Men of Note. Wade plays bass guitar and drums, his son Russell plays saxophone and drums, and Wade's dad, Henry, plays piano. The Men of Note are big favorites in this area. Hank's sister, Bernice Schieffer, also sat in as pianist with the combo on one occasion, so they should have been known then as the Men AND Women of Note.

That Stillwater station recently resumed its series of monthly dances at a Stillwater hotel. The events were temporarily shelved after the recent death of Dr. Carl Anderson, the station's music director, and Mrs. Anderson.

Along that line, I feel it is my duty to remind you that the 20th annual Glenn Miller Festival is scheduled for June 6-9 at his birthplace in Clarinda, Iowa. This also is the state of Iowa's 150th birthday anniversary and the Miller festival is an official part of the sesquicentennial program there. Clarinda, about the same size as Perry, will be a great place to visit for all

Glenn Miller music aficionados in June. For information, write to GMBS Festival Tickets, P.O. Box 61, Clarinda, Iowa 51632; telephone & Fax number is 712-542-2461.



March 2, 1996

That photograph of the lake in Perry CCC Park which adorns the cover of the 1996 city telephone directory was taken by Nevilyn Throckmorton, one of our fine Perry middle school teachers who also dabbles in photography as a serious hobby. The CCC Park is one of the city's treasures, but sometimes I think we fail to appreciate all of its picturesque beauty. With her artist's eye, Nevilyn has captured a lovely view that will help remind us what we have out there. The new phone books are expected any day now.

Speaking of overlooked treasures in our midst, how long has it been since you visited the Perry Carnegie Library or the Cherokee Strip Museum? Well, as the commercial says, that's too long! I fear there are quite a few among us who have never been inside either place and that really is a shame. Both of them are outstanding cultural features, the sort that many communities larger than Perry would love to have. And don't forget the YMCA and Stagecoach Theatre productions, when they're being presented. Our little city has an abundance of such good things and this barely scratches the surface. Indulge yourself and take advantage of what they have to offer. Enjoy them!

The YMCA is getting ready for a major fund-raising effort so this is a good time to acquaint yourself with what we have down there on south Seventh street. Perry is still the smallest city in the U.S.A. with a full-service YMCA. Young or old, we can all share in the benefits it offers. Regular use of the Y facilities will make you feel good physically and help you trim up. We all need to work at staying healthy.

And Stagecoach is in the midst of its annual membership enrollment campaign. If you didn't get a letter in the mail about that, refer to the articles on the front page of the Feb. 13 issue of *The Perry Daily Journal* for details. Donations of more than \$10 are tax deductible. Send yours to Stagecoach at P.O. Box 82, Perry. Our community theatre has been around since 1975. It deserves your support to enable continued presentation of wholesome family entertainment. Buying a membership alone won't pay the bills, but it will indicate you appreciate what our hometown thespians are trying to provide for the rest of us.

The *Reader's Digest* is still the world's most widely read magazine, so it doesn't need my endorsement, but the March issue just seems to have more good stuff than usual. Your attention is called to "The Verbal Edge" on page 145, demonstrating eight common word usage blunders, plus the usual bounty of worthwhile articles on a broad variety of topics.

I understand the two-story brick building at the south end of the west side of the square has been sold and that the ground floor level will soon become the home of a vintage and classic car collection. Another business is contemplated for the second floor. Work has started to renovate the building. You may remember it as the former home of Georgia Curtis' used furniture store. In previous years it housed the pioneer Christoph & Newton Furniture and Undertaking establishment. Other similar businesses, including a moving and storage company, have been occupants through the years.

The recent death of Wilbur Mouser calls to mind the fact that now, for the first time since Perry was born on Sept. 16, 1893, our community has no members of the Mouser family as residents. Wilbur's father, George, came here at the opening and was one of the prominent figures in the development of this area. For a time he was among the Strip's leading stock buyers. Wilbur's daughter, Joan Stinnett, lives in the Dallas area and his son, James, lives in Norman. One by one, the remnants of true Cherokee Strip pioneer families are slipping away. It's a sad fact, but worthy of noting.



March 5, 1996

Last year at about this time I brought you an update on Ferol Mornhinweg's grandsons, Marty and Shannon Mornhinweg, sons of Larry and Darla Mornhinweg of San Jose, Calif. Shannon had just been signed by a professional team in Cannes, on the French Riviera, and Marty had been hired as an offensive coach by the Green Bay Packers. You may have noticed that the Packers recently climaxed a sensational season by beating the defending world champion San Francisco '49ers and advancing to the National Conference playoff finals against the Dallas Cowboys.

The Cowboys defeated the Packers in a classic contest and then went on to win Super Bowl XXX by downing the American Conference's Pittsburgh Pirates.

Marty and the Packers covered themselves with glory during the regular season and the playoffs by recapturing some of the team's former magic, dating back to the Vince Lombardi era when they ruled the National Football League. After the Super Bowl in January, many of the league's big name players were chosen for the annual Pro Bowl game in Honolulu. Marty coached the National Conference's All Star quarterbacks, Brett Favre of the Packers, Steve Young of the '49ers and Warren Moon of the Minnesota Vikings. The National All Stars defeated the American Conference All Stars in the Pro Bowl.

The Packer coaches, including Marty, were selected to guide the National All Stars after completing their most successful season since 1972. They were Central Division champs and runnersup to the eventual world champion Cowboys in the National Football Conference.

Brett Favre, the Packers' stellar quarterback, was coached by Marty during the regular season and was named the most valuable player in the NFL. Ferol, while visiting Larry, Darla and family in San Jose at Christmas, attended the Packers-'49ers game in San Francisco and saw her grandson's team win, 27-17. It was a major upset; San Francisco had been widely expected to win that game and go on to another showdown with the Cowboys before returning to the Super Bowl. Favre was given much of the credit for engineering the Packers victory. Some of his achievements are due to the excellent coaching he received from Marty.

Just this week it was announced in the newspaper USA Today that Marty has been promoted by the Packers to head the quarterback coaching staff.

Shannon completed a season with the Cannes team last summer then returned to the U.S. and enrolled in a California college to complete the last few hours remaining toward earning his degree. Before signing with the European professional team, he had been a sensational college quarterback in California and was so greatly admired that they asked him to run for mayor. But, that was not what he wanted to do, so Shannon declined. Now he has been hired as a football coach at the Redlands, CA, Junior College.

Neither Marty or Shannon is a Perry product but their parents and grandparents have close ties locally so we're entitled to claim at least a piece of them, and certainly we all share Ferol's pride in what they have achieved in the rough and tumble world of both professional and collegiate football.

While we're discussing things athletic, how about a nice round of applause for the Frontier high school Mustangs up at Red Rock, winners of the state class A boys championship in basketball. Coach Bob Weckstein's team sailed almost unmolested through the state tournament, winning all games by whopping margins. In the finals Saturday, they defeated Ketchum, the No. 1 seed, by 22 points. Three Noble county teams had a shot at state high school sports titles this year, but only the Mustangs were able to capture one. Frontier had just one senior starter, J. W. Buxton, of Marland. That should mean another good season next year. Congratulations on a great record (29-2) this year.



March 7, 1996

The outcome of next Tuesday's election will be eagerly awaited by virtually all Oklahomans. State question 669 is a hot and controversial topic but many voters still do not have a clear understanding of its ramifications despite a plethora of public debates on the issue here in Perry and elsewhere, plus extensive coverage in all the media. How do local folks feel about it? Depends on who you ask. It's hard to say.

Republican voters also will express their feelings Tuesday in a presidential primary, which I believe is the state's first. So far all I have detected is a great groundswell of indifference among my GOP friends, but supporters of Sen. Dole and one or two of the others have been trying to stir up some excitement. There must be a lot more interest than I thought. Minnie Welch, secretary of the county election board, has been swamped with requests for absentee ballots and she expects a big turnout Tuesday.

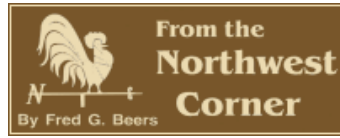
As a matter of fact, based on early indications, Minnie believes the total vote may be as great as in a presidential election. All elections are important in our free society. Whatever your feelings about the issues, go to the polls and do your duty as a good citizen next Tuesday.

Speaking of Minnie Welch, she is looking bright and chipper these days despite a long-running series of health problems, including major surgery. Her latest problem has been an allergic reaction in her right hand after, some sort of sticker lodged there in December. At one time it was feared she might lose the entire hand but the infection is improving with treatment and the surgery apparently will not be necessary. That condition plus two heart attacks, a broken back, broken wrist, foot surgery, staph infection and assorted other problems have dealt Minnie some severe blows during the past two and a half years. Through it all she has maintained a positive outlook, and she gratefully acknowledges all the prayers that have been said on her behalf.

In addition to Minnie; members of our county election board are Bill Haynes of Perry, Republican representative and chairman; and Ernest Shyrock of Sumner, Democrat representative and vice chairman. All three deserve our thanks for the time they spend making sure elections are carried out in strict accordance with the statutes. They'll be busier than usual this year because of the major races to be settled next November. Say "thanks" next time you see one of them.

In the meantime, be thinking about State Question 669 and decide how you'll vote. If you're a Republican, give serious consideration to the qualifications of all the candidates and select the one you believe can best lead this nation in the

troubled times ahead. Our Oklahoma preferential primary won't determine the eventual party nominee, but at least we can let the rest of the country know how we feel at this stage of the campaign.



March 9, 1996

By the time you're reading this I'll be with a bunch of Perry folks on a Colorado skiing trip. I will not be among those testing the slopes, however. Laura and I are going along to enjoy the winter scenery and play with our granddaughters while their folks strap on the equipment and glide down the glistening snow around Glenwood, Colorado. About 50 of us will be on this jaunt, which was timed to coincide with spring break in the Perry schools. Ron Motley, director of Christian education at the Presbyterian church, made all the arrangements for the rest of us and I have to admire his attention to details. Hopefully we'll be back in Perry in just a few days with no broken bones or shattered egos.

Some of the group took advantage of a special advance program at the YMCA to get themselves physically ready for skiing. Even though some of them already were in great condition, they quickly found out that skiing puts stress on some muscles that are not normally used, and they probably will get the most enjoyment from this trip.

Personally, I get most of my exercise these days just by retracing my steps around the house looking for things that have been temporarily mislaid. However, I know the YMCA is the logical place to get fit, so I fully support its program. If you go there too, you know that you get your money's worth and a whole lot more, whatever your level of participation. We're so lucky to have the YMCA, its staff and facilities.

A lot of us were saddened this week by the death of comedienne Minnie Pearl, the venerable star of country music who entertained for decades on TV's Grand Old Opry and Hee Haw. How many others remember when she came to Perry as the star attraction of one of our giant Cherokee Strip celebrations several years ago? I hope someone does remember, because I have been unable to pinpoint the year. Seems like it I was in the early 1950s. Can someone help me out on this? Eleanor Yahn remembers Minnie Pearl very vividly. They became acquainted when they attended the Ward Belmont school for young ladies in Nashville, Tenn. A few years ago, Minnie Pearl headlined the entertainment for a convention of the Oklahoma Lumbermen's Association in Oklahoma City, and she invited Eleanor to join her on stage. It was a memorable moment.

From all indications, the Perry Bridal Fair the other day has to be considered a resounding success. A steady stream, of people milled about the armory last Saturday admiring the offerings of many service companies who assist families in planning weddings. A fashion show featuring some 100 wedding gowns climaxed the afternoon and helped some potential brides choose their attire.

Ted and Glenda Riddle had a booth at the fair to promote their new bed and breakfast enterprise, the Homestead, north of Perry near the intersection of U.S. 77 and SH 15. Glenda told me they are shooting for a formal opening on April 1. This will be the first bed and breakfast in Noble county and it has several unique characteristics. It is a log house in the purest sense. The logs came from southeastern Oklahoma, not a pre-cut kit.

The Homestead name honors the pioneers who settled this territory at the opening of the Cherokee Strip on Sept. 16, 1893. Ted's great-grandparents were ready to make the run but the death of their infant the previous day made that

impossible. Today the Riddles operate a large Texas Longhorn ranch, and those animals will be one of the focal points of a tour to be offered guests staying at the Homestead.

Accommodations will be chosen from among Miss Mary's Room, decorated with the real Miss Mary's (Glenda's mother) belongings; the Bunkhouse, a room with twin beds, an upper deck, library and sitting room; the Cherokee, featuring a queen-sized log bed and Native American art; and the Homestead, decorated with hand-made quilt, king-size cannon ball and a pastoral view of the longhorns. This one is ideal for honeymooners, Glenda says.

Watch for an announcement about the opening. The Homestead seems destined to become an important tourist attraction for this area. On I-35 exit at marker 203 and go three miles east. It is the first house south of the U.S. '77 junction.

Another welcome addition to our local features is Carol Steichen's Antiques on the Square mall in the historic Nicewander building on the north side of the square. At the opening last week Carol proudly showed off a well-lighted, spacious room with several spaces already taken by local vendors. One of the principal features is a small display room given over to Tamac pottery, the line that was manufactured here for several years after World War II. We'll have more information on Tamac in due time. Meantime, go visit Carol's new shop. It has lots of things to interest every age.



March 12, 1996

A nationally distributed newspaper, "The Antique Traveler," is helping a lot of people learn about Perry, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Roy Kendrick at the Cherokee Strip Antique Mall. The paper is avidly read by folks who travel around looking for authentic antiques with unique ties to the area where they are sold.

Roy has contributed several articles to the paper dealing with Perry's interesting history and pointing out some of the special features this town has to offer. The paper is found at antique and collectible shops throughout this area and in many parts of the U.S. It is mailed from Mineola, Texas, to a list of subscribers in a broad area. The pages contain numerous ads placed by the shop owners telling collectors where they can browse or buy.

A recent issue, for example, contained a story written by Roy entitled "Perry, Oklahoma, Full of History." It describes the strategic location of his mall in the downtown area, then branches into a bit of history about the Kumback, Shady Lady Steak House, Hell's Half Acre (from the era of the 1893 land run), and some of the fascinating characters who called Perry home in the days before statehood -- Marshal Bill Tilghman, Heck Thomas and Buster Keaton, among others -- plus the old Grand Opera House, our present-day Cherokee Strip Museum, and Perry's ideal location.

In another issue, Roy provided a story about the history of the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association, the Cherokee Outlet, the 101 Ranch and some of the lore of the September 16, 1893 land run when Perry was born. Also included was a rundown on our annual Cherokee Strip celebration. No telling how many people learned about us for the first time through that medium. Perhaps many of them were here for the big event. A diagram of Perry's location on I-35 was provided and several of Perry's antique and collectible shops had listings in the paper.

Perry's fame also was spread in a recent Sunday issue of the Edmond Evening Sun. John Steichen passed along a clipping of that article which was written by Elaine Warner for the Sun's Sunday Travel section. Let me quote a portion of Ms. Warner's story:

"Perry is another of Oklahoma's famous overnight cities. It was settled on September 16, 1893, in the Cherokee Strip run. From that opening day high of 25,000, the population has dwindled to about 5,000. Still, Perry's citizens retain a hardy pioneer spirit, a pride in the past and an open-hearted welcome for visitors.

"If you subscribe to the adage, 'Life is uncertain, eat dessert first' you may want to start your visit at the Shady Lady Restaurant on the east side of town. The entrees are fine, but the pie is really something else! Order your pie before you order your dinner; favorites go fast ... (The restaurant) is located just north of the site that was known as 'Hell's Half Acre.' This area was once the home of close to 100 saloons and gambling halls -- a suitable neighborhood for a shady lady.

"Take time to drive around the square in downtown Perry. In front, of the 1915 Noble county Courthouse is a new addition, the Cherokee Strip Memorial Statue. Perched atop a stone pedestal is a buckboard seat with two eager home-seekers. You can almost see the ends of the reins whipping in the wind as the driver leans forward urging speed from his invisible team."

Ms. Warner continues in that vein with mentions of the Foucart building where the Chamber of Commerce is now located, the renovated 1909 Carnegie Library and its problems with the city administration when first opened, architectural features on downtown business buildings, and instructions on the correct, (Perry) way to pronounce the name of the Elite Hotel (eee-light), plus a promise to continue the column in one week with a story of her visit to the Elite (eee-light) Hotel and Cherokee Strip Museum.

Thanks to Roy Kendrick and John Steichen for providing these examples of the kind of publicity that delights the people of this city.



March 14, 1996

You think it's expensive to run for office in 1996? It's always been that way, even before TV sucked up most of the big bucks. I recently came across a clipping from a turn of the century Perry newspaper that sheds a little light on a candidate's expenses 'way back then. Under the heading "Running for Office In Texas," here's what the article says:

"A defeated Texas Democrat published the following expense account which shows that Democrats even down in Texas don't have fair sailing.

"Lost four months, 33 days canvassing; 1,340 hours thinking about the election; five acres of cotton; 25 acres of corn; four sheep; four shoats and one beef to barbecue; two front teeth and considerable amount of hair in a personal skirmish.

"Gave 97 plugs of tobacco; seven Sunday school books; two pair of suspenders; two calico dresses, six dolls and 13 rattlers.

"Told 2,888 lies; shook hands 23,477 times; talked enough to have made in print 1,000 large volumes size of patent office reports; kissed 126 babies; kindled 15 kitchen fires; cut two cords of wood; picked 740 pounds of cotton; helped to pull

seven wagon loads of corn; dug 15 bushels of potatoes; toted 28 buckets of water; put up eight stoves; was dog bit five times; watch broken by baby which cost \$3 to have repaired.

"Loaned out eight barrels of flour, 20 bushels of meal, 151 pounds of bacon, 56 pounds of butter, 43 dozen eggs, three umbrellas, 13 lead pencils, one Bible dictionary, one mowing blade, three hoes, one overcoat, two boxes of paper collars, none of which have ever been returned.

"Called my opponent a perambulating liar -- doctor's bill \$22; had five arguments with my wife -- results, one flower vase smashed, one broom handle broken, one dish of hash knocked off the table, one shirt bosom ruined, one handful of whiskers pulled out, ten cents' worth of sticking plaster bought. Besides spending \$1,698."

Lucky for him this campaign occurred in that rather innocent age some 100 years ago. Today the candidate also would have to add considerably more for TV ads, not to mention something for a makeup artist and barber to repair the damage from the hair and whiskers being pulled out.



March 16, 1996

I noticed in Carolyn Chopp's "Mirrors of Yesterday" column the other day an item under the Forty Years Ago heading about plans to close the Kraemer's Store in Perry in 1956. Perhaps many of you are too young or too new here to remember that business, but let me assure, it was a great clothing emporium in its day:

For starters, it was founded on September 16, 1893, the day Perry was born when the Cherokee Strip land run took place. Mr. A. Kraemer, a journeyman shoemaker, came here at the opening and quickly established his business. People who made history in Perry wore Kraemer's shoes, and shoes from his store were still being worn by Perry citizens when the firm closed in 1956, although they bore names like Florsheim and Jarman. By then, Kraemer's had become a full line clothing store with wearing apparel for every member of the family, but even so most folks still thought of it as "Kraemer's Shoe Store."

Mr. Kraemer's original store was at the northwest corner of the square in a small frame building, where the Albright Title & Trust office is now located. The business later moved a half-block east, where Powers Abstract Co. is now located, in the old Exchange Bank building. Four years later Kraemer's relocated to a small frame building on the east side of the square in the space now occupied by Mel's Clothing. Mr. Kraemer liked that spot and decided to build a sturdy new two-story building there to replace the rickety frame store. That's where his business remained until the closing in 1956, and his building is still standing today.

By the time 1940 arrived, we had these businesses on the east side of the square, starting at the north end with Ralph Foster's Corner Drug Store; the Roxy Theatre operated by Pearl and Charlie Wolleson; the elegant Kraemer Store operated by Mr. Kraemer's descendants; Shaw's Beauty Shop operated by Bert and Ethel Shaw; H. L. Winger's Grocery; Henry Loeffelholz' Barber Shop; Billy and Lucille Reckert's Palace Cafe and Union Bus Depot; the Annex Theatre operated by Henry and Zoma Tate; the H. L. Johnson Grocery; Jack Smith's Variety Store; Louis Stanislav's Grocery; Wm. Stopp's East Side Boot & Shoe Repair Shop; Tom McLiman's Arcade Billiard Parlor; Guy Babcock's Cafe; and the First National Bank in the Foucart Building.

Some of the upstairs offices in those buildings were occupied by Jean and Kenneth Reed, attorneys; Carl Bittman and the Perry Business Men's Credit Exchange; offices for Joe McClellan and Merle Allen; Dr. A. M. Evans MD; G. A. Ley; Dr. O. W. Boyer and Dr. W. C. Marshall, dentists; John E Tate's photo studio; and Anna Doggett's Hotel Doggett and Anna Marsh's Marsh Hotel, across the hall from each other above Foster's and the Roxy. Carl McGill operated a taxi, stand from Foster's.

That's a pretty impressive lineup of businesses and professional services, and all of them were on the east side of the square. How many do you remember? The gap now existing on the east side is where everything between Kraemer's and Louis Stanislaw's Grocery was located. The missing buildings were torn down years ago when an east side renovation was undertaken, only to be aborted.

Mr. Kraemer died in 1932, but his widow, Lillian, was still living here in 1940 at 801 Delaware street. She was a staunch supporter of the Church of Jesus Christ, Scientist, which was located on a corner lot diagonally across the street from her, on a site now occupied by the fire department. Marguerite Edson, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kraemer, and her husband, E. O. (Ott) Edson, operated the Kraemer store after Mr. Kraemer died. Another daughter was Florence Crowder, wife of Dr. A. M. Crowder, dentist. The Kraemer sons included Dick, a tailor; Forrest and Harry. Only Dick followed his father into the business. Ott and Marguerite raised three nephews and a niece, but had no children of their own. Debbie Dotts Gilliam, Florence's granddaughter, is the only Kraemer family member now living here.

Ott Edson came to Perry in 1924, and he also was the offspring of Cherokee Strip pioneers, though not from the Perry area. He was a graduate of Oklahoma A.&M. College (now OSU) and once served as an instructor in the poultry department at Michigan State University and a poultry specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., before marrying Marguerite in 1919. He later was a poultry specialist at Texas A.&M. College before the couple returned here to live in 1924. Ott was an ardent baseball fan. He supported the semi-pro Perry Merchants during their heyday, and he and banker G. T. Webber frequently attended the Cowboys' home baseball games in Stillwater.

Marguerite had died by the time the store celebrated its 60th birthday on September 16, 1953. In addition to Ott, salespersons at the store then were Ethel Koch, Melba Martinez, Lavonne Seat and Margaret Norman. Partially because of the nephews he helped rear, Edson was active in the Boy Scout program and Kraemer's was an official Boy Scout store.

Display windows at the front of the store were among the most tastefully decorated in the business community. They were well lighted for the benefit of after-hours visitors who roamed the square admiring such things. Other special features at the store in 1940 were air-conditioned dressing rooms where customers could try on articles of clothing in comfort and privacy; free gift-wrapping service throughout the year; and of course many mainline name brands. Some of these were Koret of California, Junior Miss, Nancy Lee, Demitasse and Forever Young fashions, Carnival and Van Raalte undergarments for women, Arrow and Tru Val dress and sport shirts for men, Field & Stream outdoor clothing, Dobbs hats for men, Florsheim, Jarman, Red Wing and Justin shoes, and, of course, tailor-made apparel from a wide selection of swatch samples. Dick Kraemer measured me for a wool suit after I returned from Army duty in World War II, and it was great, the first I had owned that was not off the rack. Cost me about \$35, I think.

All of that is from another age but it's interesting to look back at the way things were when Kraemer's Store was one of the kingpins of the Perry business community. Those days are gone forever, but in my mind's eye they are still very visible.



March 19, 1996

I suspect Hector Tovar is feeling a little overwhelmed these days by the vast amount of recognition he's receiving. The rest of us believe it's little enough for the man's 40 years of dedicated service to the young people of this community. Why aren't there more Hector Tovars? We could use a few, but, in the final analysis, the reality is that there are no others quite like him to be found.

Right now Hector is fighting a serious illness. As word of his problem spreads, he has received a great outpouring of love and support from perhaps hundreds of young people and adults whose lives he has touched.

Still more honors are being heaped on the 69-year-old retired coach and Safety meat cutter. The complex of five ball fields (two baseball, three softball) east of Perry Stadium will be named in Hector's honor. Henceforth it is to be known as the "Hector Tovar Ballpark Complex." All of this is to reward a man who has had a positive influence on perhaps more Perry youngsters than any other private citizen in this city's almost 103 years of existence. His former players, their parents and coaches in the Perry school system will readily attest to that assessment.

And you will have a chance to show your own appreciation of Hector's labors next Saturday afternoon. The Perry school board voted earlier this month to accept the Perry Diamond Club's recommendation that Perry's annual spring high school baseball tournament be known officially as the "Hector Tovar Invitational Tournament." This year's tournament starts next Thursday at Ripley Field, which was dedicated last year to Joe Ripley, another sports icon in this community.

At 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, prior to the final game of the tournament, a special ceremony will be held to honor Hector. Many former players and out of town visitors are expected. All of us are invited to be there and join in this tribute to a very deserving person, a real pillar of our little prairie city.

John Klein has written a fitting tribute to Hector, and , you probably read it in a *Perry Journal* article earlier this month. John is associated sports editor and a columnist with the Tulsa World and a 1972 graduate of Perry high school. He played baseball as one of "Hector's kids." I'll not try to repeat John's very interesting account, but there are a-few more things to say.

Baseball was not Hector's only love. According to former PHS wrestling coach Leonard Shelton, Tovar is largely responsible for maintaining the successful continuity in Perry's highly regarded championship wrestling program. "Hector worked with pee-wee wrestlers in the early 1960s when Rex Edgar was the head coach," Shelton recalls. "He had to use makeshift facilities in the old high school basement because there was no room for his kids. No person has had as much to do with the success of Perry athletes as Hector Tovar," Shelton says. Tovar also coached youngsters in the Perry grade school football program. His successful record as a coach in three major sports is unparalleled.

Hector and his wife, the former Virginia Terronez, have three sons, David, Mark and Roger, and two daughters, Gloria and Rita. Tovar had the unique pleasure of coaching the three boys but Gloria and Rita also got in the act, serving as scorekeepers. He also coached two grandsons, Desi and Randall Stoops, in little league baseball.

Hector grew up in a gritty district of El Paso, Texas, and played shortstop on a semi-pro team that competed in the Double-A league across the border in Mexico. When he and Virginia settled in Perry to begin raising a family, he took a job as meat cutter in the Safeway store and spent 32 years there before retiring in December 1985. Even in that job Hector found a way to help young people. For 25 years he assisted many Noble county 4-H meat judging teams to get them ready for district and state competition. He spent 18 years in the Perry national guard unit of the 45th Infantry, including service with the 179th regiment in Korea.

One of Hector's former baseball players is Verl Brorsen. "Hector is a fiery competitor who doesn't like to lose," Verl says. "Even though he was hard on his players, nothing made a boy's chest stick out further than praise from him for doing it right."

Hector himself sums it up this way: "The kids gave a lot of respect. They called me 'coach' or 'Mr. Tovar.' You teach kids discipline, they will do anything for you. We made the players run -- exercising those legs. I told them, 'When you hit a single, I want a double.' When you run, everything gets lubricated. When the kids step on the field, they're mine."

Tovar, an avid fan of the New York Yankees, began coaching pee-wee baseball in 1958 as an assistant to Lloyd Grim with the 10-&-under DX team. As a head coach he told the youngsters it was "my way or the highway," and he often spoke of "turning in your uniform." However, he remembers that only one player ever quit. He came back, but not until his teammates gave him permission. Hector taught his players valuable lessons for life and he is proud that his players are now good family men, still respect him, and still check on him.

His 1965 10-&-under Jersey Queen Tigers were perhaps his best team. They finished the year with an incredible unblemished 64-0 record and a state championship at the AAU tournament in Enid. Keith Henry pitched a no-hitter to beat Ponca City in the finals. Arkansas City, the Kansas state champions, challenged the Perry team to a game in Ponca City. Hector recalls that Steve Lloyd pitched a no-hitter and hit a homerun to score the game's only run for a 1-0 Perry victory, even with a cast on one foot.

So thanks, Hector, for a lifetime of service to the young people of this community, your adopted hometown. You are definitely one of the good guys.



March 21, 1996

The photograph that appeared with last Saturday's column about the Kraemer Shoe Store was from the immense collection assembled over a period of several years by Brace Smith, retired state highway department engineer and a man with eclectic tastes in hobbies. Brace was the unofficial "town photographer" for many years, shooting portraits, weddings, anniversaries, Cherokee Strip celebrations, and just about anything that came along. He still has hundreds of negatives and slide prints, all neatly indexed and cross-referenced for retrieval when needed.

Last Saturday's picture with the Kraemer Store column showed the north end of the east side of the square as it looked in 1956, when the Kraemer store went out of business after 63 years of operation. Anchoring the north end was Foster's Corner Drug, still there but now operated by Mike and Janet Shannon; then the Roxy Theatre, once operated by Charlie and Pearl Wolleson but closed when the Chief Drive-In was opened north of Perry; then came Kraemer's Store. The photo shows empty display windows at Kraemer's and the Roxy's marquee read: "Drive-In Open North of Town." The theatre's box office was empty and there were no pictures or posters listing coming attractions. Of course, the much larger Perry Theatre, operated by Gene McKenna, was showing first-run features nightly just up the street, where the Exchange Bank's drive-up windows are now located.

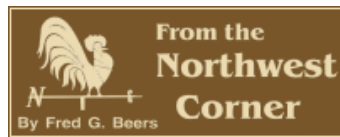
I am much obliged to Brace for providing that excellent photo. I spent an interesting afternoon with him recently, admiring his workshop, darkroom and his impressive collection of handmade jewelry, his rock hound trophies, his travel photos and

a sampling of some other Perry pictures. You'll be hearing more about a few of those in due time.

I am also indebted to Millie Highfill for answering my recent question about the year Minnie Pearl of the Grand Old Opry headlined Perry's Cherokee Strip celebration. It was in September of 1956, when an estimated 1,500 people attended her rollicking stage show at Daniels Field in Perry stadium. Millie is a local history authority and one of the Noble County Genealogical Society's hardest workers. She says Minnie Pearl's appearance here will be highlighted in the society's 1997 calendar, "God willing and if the creek don't rise," as Minnie would have put it.

I have to take just a few minutes here to tell you about that ski trip to Glenwood Springs, Colorado, last week. It was great fun, even for the few of us who didn't ski. There is something positively spiritual about the awesome grandeur of the Rocky Mountains and their rugged majesty. Just gazing upon that marvelous example of God's handiwork will give you a lift. Most of our group spent each day on the slopes, then returned to Glenwood's fabulous 103-year-old Colorado Hotel for the evening meal in our own private dining hall. Games and a devotional followed.

Entertainment one night was a contest open to all ages in which we attempted to hang an ordinary teaspoon on the tip of our nose. The winner was the one whose nose, unassisted, could keep the spoon in place the longest. Each table had its individual champ, then all of those competed in a "spoonoff" to choose the grand prize winner. Our three-year-old granddaughter, Jill Bieberdorf, won the ultimate championship by posting the longest hang time with her spoon. Her sister, Amy, 6, also was in the finals and placed third. Their folks are John and Susan Bieberdorf. Just had to report all this in the name of accurate and thorough coverage, you know.



March 23, 1996

Another sure sign of spring is the swarm of starlings circling the city's north side. Hundreds of the unwelcome little flying critters assemble in giant flocks each morning and descend on our parched lawns and fields in search of insects and other protein and water for sustenance. Meanwhile, the more genteel and badly outnumbered robins, sparrows, orioles, cardinals and other feathered friends stand back in dismay while awaiting their shot at the food supply, most of which is disappearing down those starling gullets.

This year's crop of starlings appears to be more numerous, sassier, noisier and fatter, not to mention messier, than usual. Conversely the others seem to be fewer. I hate to keep harping on this subject because I fear the foe is secretly reading this and plotting some terrible vengeance on your humble correspondent. But, that probably only happens in Alfred Hitchcock movies or Daphne du Maurier's fiction, so I rant on undaunted. No offense, starlings, but I wish you'd look for some new place to mess up.

The calendar says spring is officially here, so before long we should be able to enjoy more outdoor activities like picnics, baseball and other things with family values. In that connection, a friend down the street remarked the other day about the increasing amount of broken bottles and other glass shards she's observed in numerous Perry parks and other areas where adults and young people will be spending leisure hours shortly. Glass bottles of all kinds appear to have been shattered and left lurking there in the grass where some unsuspecting person could step on them. Don't you be guilty of that offense. Let's keep your public areas clean and free of such dangerous debris.

My friend also has a suggestion for eliminating the downtown traffic mess by installing four-way stop signs at each corner of the square. That would eliminate the need and consequent expense of repairing our present malfunctioning traffic lights. And, if all motorists behaved like law-abiding ladies and gentlemen, traffic should flow smoothly. But it would still create hazardous crossings for pedestrians. Would motorists accept the need for making a complete stop at each corner? Would the four-way signs simply be those unsightly dilapidated barrels which are now rolled out when the traffic lights fail? What do YOU think should be done?

Sometimes we get a little goofy in our attempts to be politically correct. A case in point is the *Courier-Times*, a newspaper in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which paraphrased the remarks made at a local anti-violence conference by Arun Gandhi, grandson of India's great social and spiritual leader, the late Mahatma. The newspaper told its readers that, "Growing up in South Africa during apartheid, Gandhi was beaten up twice when he was 10 years old. The first time his attackers were white children, a few months later they were African Americans." In South Africa? *The Columbia Journalism Review* cites this example for one of its monthly "darts" aimed at slipups in presenting the news.



March 26, 1996

Other towns give us examples of what can be done with aging but historically important structures. Renovation and restoration work such as that is going on all around us. As Perry delves deeper into the Main Street program which was initiated here last year, we are finding more specimens of various architectural styles that should be saved if at all possible. The Foucart building on the east side of the square, once the home of the First National Bank, is being restored to the elegance of the pre-statehood era when Joseph Foucart designed it. Now it is the home of the Perry Chamber of Commerce, Perry Development Coalition and Perry Main Street and thus it serves as a hub of community improvement.

A group of senior students in the University of Oklahoma school of architecture recently chose to study downtown Perry as a major part of their graduation program. We should be flattered to have been chosen. The students spent a weekend here touring business buildings around the square with Perry Main Street representatives and selected five well-known two-story buildings for this project. They were most complimentary about the range of styles and quality of workmanship evident in our downtown area. It excited them to think of the possibilities for restoration.

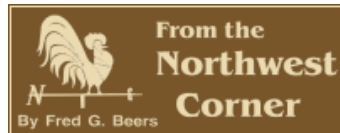
Working in teams of three students each, they spoke with owners of the five buildings to learn about future hopes and aspirations for utilization of the upper and lower levels of the structures. Now they are working on scale drawings to incorporate those plans and soon will offer them without charge to the landlords involved.

Time will tell whether the plans become reality or remain only a dream. That will be up to the property owners. They are under no obligation to take any action, but the students' drawings will show them what can be done with the interiors and exteriors of the buildings. In some cases the owners have in mind residential apartments upstairs but in others the plan is to use the lofts as offices for business and professional purposes.

Buildings chosen by the students, after much anguishing over the possibilities, were the former Elite Hotel on the north side of the square, now owned by Clyde Speer and occupied by Georgia Curtis' Used Furniture Store; the former Christoph & Newton Furniture Store and Undertaking Parlor at the south end of the west side of the square; Fat Tuesday's Restaurant building midway on the west side; Treasure Chest Jewelry Store toward the east end of the south side; and the

former Monroe-Lang Hardware Store, most recently occupied by the Inch-By-Inch Salon, midway on the south side. The old Christoph & Newton building and the old Monroe-Lang building are now vacant but are being readied for occupancy.

When the students and their instructor are ready to reveal the finished plans, an announcement will be made and a public meeting may be called here to allow all of us to take a peek at the vision these young people have for the future development of the Perry business community. Who knows what might happen after that? It will be an interesting and exciting time. Watch for the announcement.



March 28, 1996

The 70th anniversary observance of the Perry Lions club, as described in this newspaper recently, was noted with interest by former cityan Gertrude Hartung Norman Lockett, now of Houston. Many of you will remember her from the days she taught school here some 40 years ago. I'm indebted to Mrs. Lockett's daughter, Margaret Norman Froebel, also of Houston, for relaying some pertinent information.

Margaret graduated from Perry high school in 1954 and entered Oklahoma A.&M. College, now OSU, that fall. She also was a clerk at Kraemer's Store and was listed among their employees in the Northwest Corner feature on that business the other day.

A clipping from *The Perry Daily Journal* of June 19, 1958, shows that Mrs. Lockett's father, John Adam Hartung, was the first Noble county resident to donate his eyes to the newly organized Oklahoma Lions eye bank. Mr. Hartung died at the age of 75 on June 18 that year. Two unidentified patients received corneal transplants two days later at University hospital in Oklahoma City. Mr. Hartung's eyes were taken from Perry to the hospital by the Oklahoma highway patrol in relays. Trooper Bob Justus delivered them from Perry to Edmond and another patrol officer took them on to University hospital.

Mr. Hartung provided for this procedure in his living will at a time when the Oklahoma eye bank was brand new. The Perry Lions club, with Bill Parker and A. J. Bontrager providing the chief impetus, steered the project until it was formally adopted by the state Lions organization.

Mr. Hartung died at his home, 722 Birch street, at the age of 75. He had been a resident of Noble county since 1907 and farmed near Morrison before moving to Perry. He left two daughters, including Mrs. Lockett; two sons, including Clarence Hartung of Morrison; a brother, Ed Hartung of Perry; a sister; and 16 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Of those adult survivors, only Mrs. Lockett is still living. Of the younger survivors, there are now 15 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren.

Margaret, one of the surviving grandchildren, writes this footnote: "At the time of his death, the family of John Hartung was comforted to know that a part of him lived on and brought sight to two individuals. I don't remember the source of my information, but I was led to believe that one of the corneas was used to restore the failing eyesight of Carlos Calderon. He was an engineering student from South America, who was also a cartoonist for the Oklahoma A.&M. College magazine when I attended there in 1957. Do you have any way of determining whether or not this is true?"

Perhaps another reader can answer that question. I have no information on it, but it would provide still another interesting aspect to this story. Since Mr. Hartung's death, other Noble countyans have willed their eyes to the Lions eye bank and

countless numbers of sight-impaired individuals -- including some of our neighbors right here in this county -- have been the beneficiaries. The Perry Lions club is proud of its role in establishing this humanitarian project, and rightfully so.

It was good to hear from Margaret with news of herself and her mother. I hope they'll find a reason to return here for a visit one of these days.



March 30, 1996

My thanks to TCI, our cable television provider, for their decision to add the long-awaited American Movie Classics (AMC) channel to our expanded basic service in Perry as well as five more channels -- Cartoon, ESPN 2, the Learning Channel, Country Music Television and the TV! channel. All six are now part of our expanded basic package, along with a modest increase in monthly charges. AMC certainly will be warmly welcomed here. Several Perry viewers have been urging our cable provider to offer it for two years or more. AMC features some great films from the movies' golden decades.

I don't know what type of programming the TV! channel provides. It's not included in any of the listings we now receive. I also can't find listings for Cartoon, ESPN 2 or the Country Music Television channel, but their names are self-explanatory. Wonder how we'll learn about their schedules? Reruns already have started on the major networks, so perhaps the new additions will give us something interesting to watch once in a while.

City council members will discuss immediate, short range and long range plans at their meeting next Monday night, and Mayor Hollingsworth has given them a list of ideas in each category for suggestions as a starter. I read through the lists and was disappointed to find no mention anywhere of a remedy for our downtown traffic signal situation. Signals on the east side of the square have been blinking only red for months and now the west side lights also have been converted to that confusing pattern.

I have witnessed or been part of minor traffic jams at each corner of the square in recent days as motorists move tentatively into the intersection, only to be halted by someone else moving toward them simultaneously. And the poor pedestrian never knows when to scurry across the street.

Surely the current system of blinking lights is not the best that's available for motorists and pedestrians in the downtown area. It is perplexing, easy to misunderstand, and an invitation to multiple car pileups, personal injuries and worse. Out of town visitors chuckle at our traffic lights. Come on, city council members, this seems like a problem that can be solved with something better than blinking red lights. It should be on your list of things to do immediately.

The recent complaint in this column about the ongoing problem of starlings in the city drew comments of support from some of you. This is not a new matter here by any means. A feature on page one of *The Perry Daily Journal* on October 2, 1937, estimated that 25,000 to 35,000 blackbirds and cowbirds roosted each night in the courthouse park trees. I believe that was the year county commissioners authorized the use of shotgun blasts to frighten the birds out of the trees. They seem to be very sensitive to loud noises (especially issuing from loaded shotguns), but that didn't solve the problem back then. The pesky birds just migrated to another part of town, although many remained in the courthouse park nests. Nowadays you can find them about anywhere, but one of the heaviest concentrations is on the north side of town.

