



**March 3, 1998**

Laura and I are just back from one of our periodic visits with my cousin, Fred W. Beers, at his home in West Palm Beach, Florida. He and I like to kid each other that we are the last leaves on the family tree. Neither of us had any male children to carry on the Beers name, and as far as we know there are no other masculine Beerses in our family. Fred will be 89 on his next birthday and as for me, I have no plans for adding to the little family tree that has already sprouted through Kathy and Susan. Cousin Fred and I have no serious regrets along this line. Life has been good to both of us.

When my Dad died in 1931, Cousin Fred came to Perry from Oklahoma A.&M. (OSU) where he was a student. He lived with my family and helped my mother run the City Drug Store on the north side of the square. I grew up thinking he was my brother, and I so regard him today. My Dad's name also was Fred W. Beers. Cousin Fred was named for him. His own dad was Irving Beers, my dad's brother. Irving and his family lived in Kansas City, Missouri. After Cousin Fred graduated from high school there, he chose to become an Oklahoma Aggie. He was familiar with the school through frequent visits here during his childhood.

Before Dad passed away, Fred visited our home quite often. Someone would call and ask for "Fred." "Which one do you want, big Fred, little Fred or middle-size Fred?" was the usual response. We thought that was pretty funny.

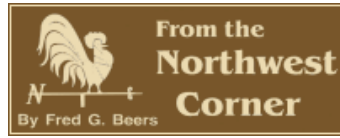
Fred was a truly gifted singer, a robust bass, and he was a member of the Aggie Men's Glee Club. Here he did solos and sang in the Presbyterian choir and with various ensembles that appeared on the scene from time to time. He also was a fine pianist. The Rotary club and the Poor Boys both made him their pianist. The slide trombone was another instrument he mastered. Back then the Poor Boys used to sponsor an annual milk and ice fund benefit in the high school auditorium to assist needy families, and Fred was usually on the program at least once or twice to showcase his talents.

When he left here in 1940, Fred became a traveling representative for Western Auto Stores in the Kentucky area. One of his accounts was a gentleman in LaGrange, Kentucky, who had a beautiful, single daughter, Jane, a true Southern belle. Fred and Jane were married shortly before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, and Fred soon joined the newly formed Army Air Corps. He became a licensed pilot while living in Perry, taking lessons with 10-12 other young guys who strained to pool their resources and buy shares in a Piper Cub. The club was dissolved after one of the members did a pancake landing on their flying field at Fifteenth and Fir. Jane died a few years ago after a long spell as an invalid, and Fred was at her bedside all the way. They had no children.

Although Fred has been away from Perry nearly 60 years, you would be surprised at the number of things, people and events that he remembers from his time here. He knows the street address of dozens of folks and asks me questions about people that I had all but forgotten. For me he is an excellent source of Perry information dating from the 1930s. He can't drive any more -- he's legally blind -- and he won't fly because "you can't see the countryside from an airplane," so the chances of another visit here don't seem to be too good.

While Laura and I were with him last week in his lovely home, he developed a dizziness and other symptoms that concerned us enough that we took him to see his doctor, and he was admitted to a hospital in West Palm Beach for a battery of tests. Yesterday morning he had surgery to clean out the 90+ plus blockage in his right carotid artery. The results of that procedure will be known in due time. Besides having already lost his vision for all intents and purposes, he has survived a stroke and abdominal cancer, which seems to indicate that he's about as tough as he was when he was a

young man living in our little city, the way I always think of him. But even if you've never met him, I'll appreciate your prayers for him, and so will he.



## **March 6, 1998**

A friend passes along some funny stuff from the Internet, that peculiar new media tool that is engulfing more homes and businesses each day. I'm a newcomer to the system myself and have not yet delved deeply enough into the multitude of possibilities it offers, so I can't tell you exactly where the following samples originated. What I do know is, the Washington Post newspaper evidently has a feature in which readers, or Internet users, can take part. In this particular one, readers are asked to tell Gen-Xers (Generation X persons) how much harder it was in the old days. Each morsel begins with something like, "In my day,..." Here are some of the entries:

In my day, we couldn't afford shoes, so we went barefoot. In the winter we had to wrap our feet with barbed wire for traction. (That received second runner-up honors in the voting by judges.)

In my day, we didn't have MTV or in-line skates, or any of that stuff. No, it was 45s and regular old metal-wheeled roller skates, and the 45s always skipped, so to get them to play right you'd weigh the needle down with something like quarters, which we never had because our allowances were 'way too small, so we'd use our skate keys instead and end up forgetting they were taped to the record player arm so we couldn't adjust our skates, which didn't really matter because those crummy metal wheels would kill you if you hit a pebble anyway, and in those days roads had real pebbles on them, not like today. (That was first runner-up.)

First place winner was this: In my day, we didn't have no rocks. We had to go down to the creek and wash our clothes by beating them with our heads. (For that, Barry Blyveis received a velour bicentennial poster as a prize.)

Here are some honorable mentions:

In my day, we didn't have dogs or cats. All I had was Silver Beauty, my beloved paper clip.

When I was your age, we didn't have fake doggie-do. We only had real doggie-do, and no one thought it was even a little bit funny.

Back in the 1970s we didn't have the space shuttle to get all excited about. We had to settle for men walking on the crummy moon.

In my day, we didn't have days. There was only time for work, time for prayer and time for sleep. The sheriff would go around and tell everyone when to change.

In my day, people could only dream of hitchhiking a ride on a comet.

In my day, we didn't have fancy health-food restaurants. Every day we ate lots of easily recognizable animal parts, along with potatoes drenched in melted fat from those animals. And we're all as strong as AAGGKKGAKK Urrgh. Thud.

In my day, we didn't have hand-held calculators. We had to do addition on our fingers. To subtract, we had to have some fingers amputated.

In my day, we didn't get that disembodied, slightly ticked-off voice saying, "Door closing." We got on the train, the doors closed, and if your hand was sticking out it scraped along the tunnel all the way to the next station, and it was a bloody stump at the end. But the fare was only a dollar.

In my day, we didn't have water. We had to smash together our own hydrogen and oxygen atoms.

In my day, we didn't have Strom Thurmond. Oh, wait. Yes we did.

Kids today think that the world revolves around them. In my day, the sun revolved around the world, and the world was perched on the back of a giant tortoise.

Back in my day, "60 Minutes" wasn't just a bunch of gray-haired liberal 80-year-old guys. It was a bunch of gray-haired liberal 60-year-old guys.

Thanks to Don Sikes for sharing these witty tidbits. Hope you enjoyed them, too.



## ***March 10, 1998***

If while reading printed material of some kind you've ever come across a mysterious combination of letters such as ETAOIN, followed by SHRDLU, you've probably wondered what happened. Were those accidents of typesetting, gross typographical errors that somehow escaped the proof reader's attention? What could have brought about such an unlikely juxtaposition of vowels and consonants, producing unpronounceable mouthfuls?

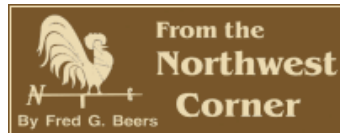
That particular assemblage of letters used to appear in newspapers and other forms of commercially produced literature much more often than it does nowadays. In truth the cryptic message is the work, sometimes accidental, of the operators of machines known as Linotypes and Intertypes, great hulks of equipment that once occupied important space in virtually every print shop, large and small, throughout the land. ETAOIN SHRDLU! They look like a typesetter's oath, perhaps uttered on a bad Monday morning when the usual things went wrong at his or her workplace. Or could they have been spewed out because illegible handwritten copy was placed on the operator's spindle? Both are possibilities, but, more likely, neither of those is really the case.

In the days before offset printing and desktop publishing invaded the office of industry as well as commercial composing rooms, type was, universally set on Linotypes or their clones. These machines work with attached pots of molten lead, kept in liquid state by gas burners. The keyboard is similar to those found on typewriters, but with a notable exception: Letters on a Linotype keyboard appear in a radically different sequence than they do on a typewriter. So typing skills are of no value to young apprentices interested in becoming ace typesetters. They have to unlearn anything acquired previously in the use of a typewriter.

The first row of letters on the Linotype keyboard, reading vertically from top to bottom, were arranged in this sequence: E T A O I N. On the next row it was S H R D L U. When a Linotype operator realized an inadvertent error had been made in the composition of a line of type, he had to fill out the faulty line with some meaningless gibberish and then throw out that

line when it appeared in the moving tray at his left hand. He did that by dragging his left index finger down those first two rows of keys. You can guess what often happened. The bad line would not be tossed out but would appear in print along with the rest of the text, leaving readers mystified.

In these days of computer typesetting. Linotypes have all but disappeared from most print shops. Some are still in use and those who have preserved the art believe they are still following the only "true" form of producing type for printed matter. Electronic systems have nearly eliminated the ancient guild practices, and I can just imagine that some of those crusty old-timers are not happy about the current state of their craft. Can't you hear them muttering "ETAOIN SHRDLU!" when the thought crosses their mind? And it doesn't require an interpreter to understand what they're thinking.



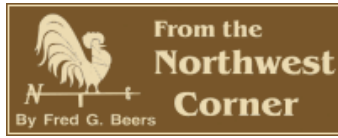
## ***March 13, 1998***

My fascination with mementos from Perry's past has been nourished through the years by unexpected treasures offered by thoughtful friends. Sifting through some of these articles the other evening, I remarked to Laura that I would someday have enough to start my own museum, whereupon she chided that we have already reached, if not passed, that point. She is long suffering, thank goodness, so the collection goes on. Uncataloged, of course, and for the most part not even stored in a logical manner for retrieval. Thumbing through them from time to time brings back memories of another age in my hometown, of memorable characters you and I have known and others we've only heard about, while simultaneously giving rise to great admiration and respect for the original settlers in this blessed part of the Cherokee Outlet. They brought a new order to a largely untamed land and made it possible for this generation to enjoy a lifestyle that induced admiration from visitors who stray here from overcrowded urban areas far away.

Often the priceless souvenirs handed to me are undated articles or photos of groups and individuals with no identification attached, and that makes them enigmatic indeed. But even with that information missing, they offer clues to earlier generations. By studying the clothing worn by those in the fading sepia photos, or vintage automobiles, or hair styles, or perhaps a building that still exists, one can arrive at an approximation of when the camera's shutter was snapped. Newspaper clippings with no dates can sometimes be placed in a general time period if the accompanying ads offer a hint or two. You've been through this with your own family albums so you know the problem. But there's a great reward of self-satisfaction when somehow you track down that missing data.

In recent weeks several additions have been made to my ever-growing pile of memorabilia and I derive great pleasure from thumbing through them, trying to imagine what life was like in Perry in another time. What were the concerns of local folks in, say, the 1920s? Were they sharing the euphoria of the nation's booming economy? Were they troubled by the moralism of that era when prohibition was adopted as a national standard and bootlegging became a reality in large and small cities throughout the land? What did they think about in their idle time? Were teen-agers restless? If only we could read the minds of those smiling, anonymous figures in the photographic keepsakes that now are jammed into boxes in our closets and under our beds. Perhaps someday that will be possible.

I'll have more on this subject in a subsequent column.



**March 17, 1998**

In the process of compiling information recently for a series of columns about the construction of Perry Stadium in 1938-39, I came across several unrelated matters which made me realize that the year 1938 was one of those watershed times of major news events in this community. Most of the information was found, of course, in the microfilm files of *The Perry Daily Journal*, but where else would you expect to find that type of historical data in a complete and reliable form?

The overriding, oppressive mood of that year was a result of the Great Depression in Perry and throughout the land. We were not yet close enough to World War II to realize that such a terrible conflict was also going to bring back good economic times, so we reeled numbly with the punches and listened hopefully to President Franklin D. Roosevelt as he tried patiently to comfort our fears and re-invent the American dream. "Good news" was welcome in any form, and our local newspaper placed emphasis each day on all the positive aspects it could find to celebrate. The stadium project, a \$100,000 WPA bonanza secured for us by dedicated local civic leaders, certainly was just such a story. The community received news of that project with great joy and anticipation.

But other things were happening in 1938 to make the residents of this little city aware that others knew we existed and that folk in Perry were recognized elsewhere for their competence, achievements and various other abilities. It was a matter of civic pride, a necessary part of the fabric of self-esteem even if most of us only share vicariously in the tributes. This is not intended to convey cynicism.

Three stories caught my eye. The first had to do with the selection of Howard R. Cress, the former Perry chief of police, to become head of the newly organized Oklahoma Highway Patrol. On March 5, 1938, *The Journal* announced that Cress, then a captain in the patrol, had been tapped by J. M. Gentry, state safety commissioner, to succeed Jack Hitch, who had been chief since the patrol was organized. All of this was part of a political struggle that plagued the patrol from its inception.

Hitch had been credited, or blamed, with being one of the prime movers in an attempt to remove H. E. Bailey, also of Perry, as deputy safety commissioner. The newspaper said, "(Hitch's) own removal as patrol chief is said to be the result (of that attempt), although he claimed to have resigned without being asked to do so."

Cress, a nephew of colorful Perry attorney P. W. Cress, left the police chiefs job here to join the patrol when it was created just a few months earlier in 1937. His wife, son and daughter remained here while he commuted to Oklahoma City, keeping the comfortable family bungalow open in the 900 block of Jackson street. Before joining the patrol Cress was a popular police chief in this community. He was friendly with youngsters and adults alike, and his nickname, "Howdy," was appropriate for a man who never failed to greet friend and stranger alike with a wave of the hand and a smile spread generously across his face. Later he was a familiar figure on the streets of Perry in his new patrol uniform, featuring a hard-brimmed military style cap in place of the broad-brimmed headgear now favored by troopers. Capt. Cress had commanded the highway patrol headquarters troop since its organization. Of him the local paper said: "...He has been recognized throughout the state as the crack executive of the patrol and it has been known for months that he eventually would be named commander of the organization."

Cress was the top ranking student at the first patrol school and as a result, he was named to command the second school. Most of the men who comprised the patrol at that time were trained by him and he inaugurated most of the system used by the organization.

*The Journal* noted: "Aside from Commissioner Gentry, most of the top positions in the state safety department are now filled by Perry men. H. E. Bailey is deputy commissioner, Cress is patrol chief, Bud Warren is purchasing agent and Frank Marshall, chief clerk. However, Bailey, who has been executive officer of the department since last July (1937) and who is given credit for putting efficiency and system into the layout, is expected to ask for an extended leave of absence in a short time. He is considering a number of attractive offers from other sources and probably will not return to the state department," the article concluded.

Such news gave us fodder for coffee-shop conversation and curbside comments in Perry as we viewed the eminence achieved by some of our local folks. It brought welcome relief from the grinding anguish of the depression, a release from futility, a sense of progress and pride despite the status of our bank account. More about 1938 in Perry in the next Northwest Corner.



## ***March 20, 1998***

Perry swelled perceptibly with new pride in the spring of 1938 when some of its citizens found recognition at or near the highest levels of power and influence in state government. Our former police chief, Howard R. Cress, was named chief of the newly formed Oklahoma Highway Patrol on March 4, 1938, after approximately one year as commander of the patrol's headquarters troop in Oklahoma City. The appointment of "Howdy" Cress to the chief's position meant that Perry men held most of the top jobs in the state safety department. Already in place were H.E. Bailey, deputy safety commissioner; Bud Warren, purchasing agent; and Frank Marshall, chief clerk.

In later years, Bud Warren returned to Perry and opened a successful whole milk plant which later was purchased by the Borden Co., after which he became a quarter horse breeder. His No. 1 stud, Leo, was an almost legendary equine marvel before dying under mysterious circumstances. Our Leo East Park is named for him. Bud is now deceased but Mrs. Warren still lives in the couple's comfortable ranch home southeast of Perry and their son, George, oversees a ranching operation from his home east of town. Shirley Williams is Warren's step-daughter.

Frank Marshall was a member of a pioneer Perry family. His father was the dentist, Dr. W .C. Marshall, who had offices on the second floor of the Foucart building. "Doc", Marshall probably used dentistry to make a living for his family, but it always seemed his real interest was music. For years he organized and directed a Perry community band composed of young people and adults who shared his enthusiasm for the martial airs of John Philip Sousa, widely known U.S. composer and bandmaster. Sousa brought his famed band to the Grand Opera House in Perry early in this century and it is safe to assume that Doc Marshall was in the audience for every performance. The Perry community band concerts remained a popular summertime feature in the courthouse park until Doc Marshall was no longer able to conduct them. His wife, Evelyn Marshall, survived her husband at his death and she lived well beyond the age of 100, a spry and sharp-witted lady to the very end.

Frank Marshall, like all his sisters and brothers, also loved music. He spent some time as a trombonist with the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show, which traveled internationally, and I believe he also had a turn with the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus band. At one point he was married to Prudye Wade, the sister of my former brother-in-law, Syd Wade, but I only came to know him after they were divorced. Frank was active in local Democratic politics and he came to the attention of state party leaders because of his ability to organize precinct workers and attract them to his point of view.

After his stint as chief clerk of the highway patrol, Frank became an inspector for the state highway department, but he always considered Perry to be his home.

H.E. Bailey came to Perry in the 1930s as head of the division office of the state highway department and quickly found local folks to be friendly. He adopted this as his home and although he later moved easily into positions of power at the capitol in Oklahoma City, he chose Perry friends as his closest associates and never lost his fondness for this community. He became executive officer of the state safety department as assistant state director in July 1937 and was credited with installing an efficient operating system in the new branch of government. He was granted an indefinite leave of absence from the department in March 1938 so that he could become general managing engineer for the Oklahoma Concrete Pipe Association. In later years he served as city manager of Oklahoma City during a turbulent time of growth in the metropolis. And of course the H.E. Bailey Turnpike is named to honor him for his later leadership as director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. A closer look at the real Harry Bailey is offered in Henry Bellmon's autobiography, something you should read anyway.

At about the same time those important changes involving Perry men were taking place in the state safety department, another newsworthy event with local implications occurred in the federal district court of Judge Edgar Vaught in Oklahoma City. Ray Loyd Barker, 24, was sentenced by Judge Vaught to 20 years in prison for the August 19, 1937, armed holdup of the Exchange Bank in Perry. The sentencing, in February 1938, brought to a close the case which began when Mr. Barker obtained \$11,192 in a one-man mid-day robbery of the Perry bank. He made good his escape until officers traced a burned car to him some four months after the robbery. During that four month interim, Mr. Barker had resumed his job with the state highway department in Perry. Unsuspecting co-workers were not aware of his venture into crime, a step he said was necessary to provide for his wife and their young child.

Those were some of the events and the people that provided topics for conversation in Perry homes and businesses during the depression year of 1938. They created a welcome diversion from the bad economic news of the time.



## **March 24, 1998**

A brief item in Darlene Roads' "Perry Past" column the other day read like this: "During this week in 1929 – The Roxy Theatre in Perry featured the first talking picture in Noble county."

If you're interested, the title of that film was "The Voice of the City," starring Willard Macks. It was advertised in *The Perry Daily Journal* as "the first 100 percent all-talking film" shown in Noble county. Although the ad appeared in March, the film actually ran on April 8-9, 1929 . That takes you back to an era when movies were still in their infancy but their influence on America and the rest of the world was just becoming understood. Most of us in Perry were not too concerned about the social significance and the changes being wrought. Going to the movies was a wonderful treat, an occasion of the highest order, even before they provided a sound track. It was ENTERTAINMENT! It was clean comedy and honest drama without the explicit language and naked bodies so obnoxiously prominent in today's film fare. There were make-you-want-to-dance musicals and pretty showgirls doing Busby Berkley numbers. Handsome leading men, wholesome and fresh-faced leading ladies and tousle-haired juveniles with winning smiles. It was the kind of pleasure you couldn't get from listening to the radio or the Victrola. Moving pictures on the silver screen were sheer magic. When they added voices and actual dialogue, it put them in the realm of mysticism.

Today we must travel to Stillwater, Ponca City or some other larger nearby community to see a movie, but once upon a time Perry had two, sometimes three theatres offering the latest feature films from Hollywood. Those days are long gone. The old Roxy, Annex, Perry, Chief drive-in and other earlier motion picture palaces have vanished and are merely something to talk about, thoughts to conjure up mental images of another time in Perry.

During the 1930s and 1940s, movies enjoyed their golden age of popularity. For most of those decades Perry had two theatres and both of them were on the east side of the square. The Roxy was operated by Charlie and Pearl Wolleson right next door to Foster's Corner Drug in a building now occupied by a dance studio. Just down the street was the Annex, operated by Henry and Zoma Tate, on the ground floor level of the storied old Grand Opera House which was demolished, perhaps prematurely, in the 1960s. Far from being bitter rivals in the business, the Tates and Wollesons were close friends. They socialized together when work schedules permitted, went fishing together, and just generally enjoyed the lives they led.

Film programs were changed three times each week at the Roxy and the Annex. On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, first-run features from Hollywood's major studios were shown. On Wednesday, a newly-released B-film at the Roxy or a Western at the Annex were the usual attractions for one night only. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, first-run major films returned. Matinees were shown only on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. In the 1940s, after John B. Terry purchased the Roxy and the Annex and opened the sumptuous Perry Theatre down the street at 412 Sixth, "previews" were added each Saturday night at 11 for those able to stay up that late. More about the John Terry theatre properties in a later column.

The Annex showed more Westerns than the Roxy, for some reason. All programs ran continuously beginning with the first feature at 7 p.m. Included would be a newsreel about 10 minutes in length, a cartoon for the kiddos, perhaps a funny short subject with Chaz Chase, Laurel & Hardy, Wheeler & Woolsey or one of the other comedy kings of the day, a few film commercials for local businesses, coming attractions and then the feature movie, usually running about 90 minutes. If you arrived after the film started, it was not a problem. You just waited for the cycle to start all over again for the "second show" at about 9:45 p.m., and then watched until the film returned to the place where you originally came in. A lot of kids routinely stayed for both programs in their entirety, and some even came back the next night for another dose of double features.

We'll have more notes on the old Perry movie theatres in the next installment of this column.



## ***March 27, 1998***

As you may have deduced, I am an unabashed movie fan. That does not necessarily mean that I enjoy the graphic carnage, gutter language and gratuitous sexuality of today's offerings from Hollywoodland. No, it is hard in our modern society to find a film that is even a little bit wholesome, and I have mistakenly quite often bought tickets to some really bad movies without reading a reliable review in advance. I don't regard myself as prudish but when I find myself wincing painfully and blinking in disgust at some of the images on our contemporary wide screens, I have to wonder why I paid to get in. Still, I love the movies, probably because I was partly raised in the Roxy and Annex Theatres on the east side of the Perry square. My teachers were Mickey Rooney and Lewis Stone, of the Andy Hardy films; Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper; Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald; Johnny Weismuller and Maureen O'Sullivan; Fred & Ginger; William Powell

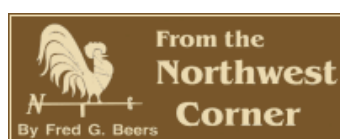
and Myrna Loy; Gene Autry, Hoot Gibson, Ronald Colman, Rin-Tin-Tin and dozens of others who ruled the film world as authentic stars in the 1930s. Gloria Stuart, the 87-year-old actress who is now being acclaimed for her role in "Titanic," was several years too old for me back then but I remember her as a beautiful blond star with a wistful smile. I was in love with her for a while, but it was a sort of May-December thing and to this day she does not know that I had that enormous crush on her.

In my growing up years, my sisters Jeanice and Gloria, my cousin Fred, my mother and I all worked at the family business, the City Drug Store. Jeanice left when she married Syd Wade and Gloria found other employment, but I had so much fun jerking sodas and car-hopping that I stayed with it all through high school. We didn't have any money to spend on most of the things available for entertainment because it was the Great Depression era, when everyone was more or less broke, but our drug store had a huge magazine rack where the selection of literature included a number of monthly movie fan magazines. Photoplay and Screen Stories are examples. These I studied as soon as they arrived at our store, along with a broadening assortment of other publications. I kept up with the latest gossip about Betty Grable, Lana Turner, Loretta Young, Tyrone Power, Robert Taylor, Warner Baxter and, of course, Clark Gable, who was everyone's image of the perfect American male. Reading the columns written by Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons, Jimmy Fiddler and other less well-known byliners, I knew who was dating whom and what they had to say when caught by reporters at the Mocambo, Coconut Grove, the Brown Derby or other night spots they habituated. It was almost like being there. It prepared me for the fullest possible enjoyment of those glamorous people when I actually saw them on the screen. They were friends of mine.

Times and society have changed since then. Small town movie houses like the Roxy and the Annex have virtually disappeared. Perry folks must go to Stillwater, Ponca City, Enid, Oklahoma City or some other metropolis to shell out \$7.50 for a ticket to the movies. The actors are unknown to most of us, except for a few legitimate stars. We know little of their background, contrary to the old days. Or perhaps we know more about them now than we want to know. Movie production styles have changed greatly; stories are not told the same way they were a few decades ago, and quite often that makes it hard to figure out the plot lines. The dialogue and visual qualities are supposedly more "real," but are they?

My basis for appreciating or recoiling from the movies is grounded in the early years described above, but I must tell you that I was once the film critic for this newspaper. In the 1940s, *The Perry Daily Journal's* publisher, W.K. Leatherock, converted the paper's format temporarily to tabloid, and he wanted to do some innovative things in the news department, which is where I labored. We had some new theatre owners in town at the time, and Mr. Leatherock decided that his paper should have a reviewer to write about the major films when they appeared here. The news department consisted of managing editor Francis Thetford, women's page editor Jane Schneider, and your humble servant, who was being introduced to the Fourth Estate as sports writer, general assignment reporter, city editor, relief wire editor, makeup editor in training, and an apprentice in the advertising department. Mr. Leatherock chose me for the paper's movie reviewer, and it was fun while the tabloid format lasted. I even got on the mailing list of some major film studios and received ballots each year for voting in the film critics' awards for best actor, actress, movie, and so on. It was good fun, but mighty heady for a green adolescent. There was a sense of power with each ballot I filled out.

But now I'm rambling. I'll pick up the thread of this column again in a few days.



**March 31, 1998**

Let me interrupt the series on Perry's movie theatres to offer a few words about the death of Bill Haynes, a leader in so many of our community's finest civic efforts. Bill was a personal friend of mine but aside from that he was a key player in nearly every worthwhile project that has been undertaken in this city in recent years.

One of the most visible results of his organizational and leadership skills is the heroic Hopes and Dreams statue on the east lawn of the Noble county courthouse park. When Perry was gearing up for the centennial celebration of the Cherokee Strip land run in 1993, Bill accepted the job of raising around \$250,000 to underwrite the entire cost of this marvelous piece of art. That's a quarter of a million dollars, all from popular subscriptions. No grants, no endowments. Just gifts from folk like you and me, and he succeeded admirably.

Bill would be the first to point out that he didn't do the job alone. He put together a committee and lined up solicitors to call on prospective donors. That is where his skills as a leader were of enormous help. He could persuade people to join in the project without resorting to unseemly cajolery. He knew where to look to find the right people for each task.

Bill was one of the negotiators with Bill Bennett, the sculptor who grew up in Perry and who designed this masterpiece. From the artist's concept to the final work, Bill Haynes was deeply involved. He found an Oklahoma firm to cast the bronze from a clay model. He located an Oklahoma source for the massive granite base and launched a separate program to raise funds for a memorial brick plaza surrounding the statue and the main walkway leading up to it.

The statue was unveiled at high noon on September 16, 1993, the exact moment of the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Cherokee Outlet. It was a dramatic moment and Bill was justifiably pleased with the public reception of this focal point of Perry's greatest celebration.

Perry was Bill's adopted hometown. He came here originally nearly 60 years ago from Lindsay with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Haynes Sr., his sister, Dorothy June, and a younger brother, Richard. Another brother, James Allen, arrived later, on Pearl Harbor Sunday, December 7, 1941. Bill's father was the local Stillwater Milling Co. representative and the family moved to Stillwater before Bill graduated from high school, but he always considered this his hometown. After a stint of Air Force service during World War II, Bill returned to Stillwater and earned a degree from Oklahoma A.&M. (OSU), then began a career in business, primarily with an oil company, located mostly in the Atlantic coastal states. During this time he met and married Beverly, one of the belles of Fort Smith, Arkansas. In the 1960s he returned to Perry with Beverly to join the marketing team at the Charles Machine Works, Inc., and it truly felt like coming home. He retired from the Ditch Witch company a few years ago as sales manager, but there was no letdown in his energetic leadership. Bill headed the Republican party in this county for several years and was a leader in the establishment of the Perry Development Coalition. He served on the Perry Memorial Hospital advisory board and was a faithful member of Christ Lutheran church. In all of these roles, and in others too numerous to recount, Bill was a working member and not just the occupant of one of the seats.

His passing poses a challenge for those of us who remain behind. Who will step up to replace people like Bill Haynes? His death robs us of a decent man, one who adequately meets the definition of a pillar of the community. He'll be sorely missed because Perry can ill afford to lose folk like Bill Haynes. He would vigorously dispute this, but the Hopes and Dreams statue in the courthouse park could also serve as his theme and an appropriate memorial tribute to the quality of civic leadership he brought to this community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Beverly and to their son, Rusty, and family, who now make their home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and to the other members of Bill's family.