Alumni

The Hansons Like California

BY ROY STEWART, '31BA

It's a good thing that a couple of the O.U. Sooner Hanson boys went to San Gabriel before the countryside got all cluttered up with houses and people, so that the rest of the family had space to live in when they got there, because by now the family has more than doubled in size.

The big white house on south Rock Island in El Reno, the Hanson home for many years, was never a quiet place. If the four big sons were not teasing the two daughters, or arguing with Harry W. Hanson, their father, they were entertaining other fellows who liked to sample the Hanson hospitality and eat Mrs. Hanson's cooking.

The University of Oklahoma had from one to three Hansons from the mid-1920's to about 1936. All four sons, O. H. "Bill," Dan, Tom and Paul, were there, three at a time. When O. H. got out of medical school there was young Paul ready to start, so the continuity was kept up. In between times, sister Helen got her degree from O.U. All the boys were members of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity.

Now the whole family is in California except for the family of Tom and Patsy Hanson. Tom recently was made head of the Oklahoma City secret service office and moved back near his native habitat, following some 12 years of secret service work, broken by a tour as a naval intelligence officer.

O. H. and Paul both are doctors with an excellent practice in San Marino, which for the uninitiated is the suburban Los Angeles city that separates San Gabriel from Pasadena. Dan has become quite a house builder and puts them up on a commercial basis when the continuously expanding family will let him take a breather from increasing the size and numbers of their own houses. Harry W., a retired Rock Island conductor, has more fun than anyone poking around flower beds. Helen is a supervisor in the Arcadia school system.

When Orsina moved over to San Marino his eyes liked a spot of a few acres in adjoining San Gabriel. He bought it and Dan, who had decided on the eve of entering medical school, that he did not want to be a doctor, went out and joined him while the rest of the family still were in El Reno. For several years, while O. H. was a doctor and Dan was night sergeant of the San Marino police force, they spent all their odd time fixing up the acreage until it became one of the area's garden spots. It is one of the places visited annually on the Southern California Council of Garden Clubs tours. The rose garden, one of Dr. O. H. Hanson's first en-
Thusiams, is one of the sights. A seemingly natural pond, into which water tumbles from a rock spring, sends water on down into a lower pool where large boulders, covered with moss, give the impression of a pool hidden deep in some primeval forest. But it is all man—or men—made.

The first house, in which Orsina and Dan lived, has grown to more than double its original size. Another house by a swimming pool and outdoor barbecue pit was built for O. H. and his wife, Zora; the house in which Paul lived as a bachelor on the farm, has been made into the home in which Paul and "Liz." It is a good end of the "L" shaped acreage now has expanded to be the home for Paul and "Liz." It is a good impression of a pool hidden deep in some primeval forest. But it is all man—or men—made.

During the war it was a peaceful weekend haven for Oklahomans stationed in that area or who were passing through on leave. Even for "unusual" Californians it is really unusual in setting and the family which made it so adds to enjoyment of visiting the place.

O. U. Family Hold Homecoming

The date of April 12 marked a homecoming for an O. U. family of Norman. The occasion was the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Hal Muldrow, Sr., of Norman.

Their children gathered here from various sections of the country, Gen. Hal Muldrow, Jr., '28bus, was unable to attend the family reunion due to being on active Army duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. However, Alvan Muldrow, '30Law and family of Brownfield, Texas, as well as Mrs. Mattie Muldrow Reistle, '22, Houston, Texas, Fisher Muldrow, '22, Seminole, and families, all visited with their parents on this anniversary day.

Hal Muldrow, Sr., has been prominent in University of Oklahoma affairs for more than a quarter of a century. He was a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma from 1919 to 1924 and served as president of the Board of Regents in 1921-22-23.

Britton Authors Geography Text

Robert L. Britton, '29ba, is co-author of a recent book, Geography of West Virginia. He is now a member of the geography department at Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia.

Britton was commissioned by Rand, McNally and Company to write the book as one of a series to be used in elementary schools. His collaborator was Dr. Leslie M. Davis, also of the Marshall College geography department.

After graduation from the University, he received a M. S. degree from the University of Chicago in 1930. He has also done graduate work at Ohio State University. He joined the Marshall College faculty in 1930.

Geography of West Virginia includes a general introduction, "Getting Acquainted with West Virginia." Other sections deal with West Virginia's fuels, manufacturing, agricultural industries, forests and conservation programs.

Roy Heffner Dies

Roy Heffner, '18ba, '19eng, long-time Norman resident and member of the engineering faculty at the University, died recently in Ethiopia. Cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage. He was 54.

Heffner was a member of the 13 Oklahoma instructors who volunteered for teaching assignments in the African kingdom last September. At the time of his death he was instructing in Haile Selassie's public schools.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Edna Spencer Heffner, '47ba, who was with her husband in Ethiopia, his father, one brother, and one sister.

The Noble Foundation: A Success Story

When Lloyd Noble, '23, was a boy living near Berwyn in the northeast part of Carter county, that section of Oklahoma was a land of plenty for its inhabitants.

The bluestem grass grew knee-high in the pastures; some corn crops in the Washita bottomland made 100 bushels to the acre; the cotton on the first uplands was big-bolled and fleecy; the farmers were secure and independent.

Then as Noble grew older and began to teach at a country school, he saw production declining. The yields were not as heavy as before.

People talked it over, worried about it, but they didn't know why crops failed more frequently or why yields went down steadily. They blamed "nature." When Samuel Noble's customers could not pay accounts

Through misuse and erosion, farm land fertility continually dropped and as crops failed owners became laborers or some of the tenants who till 65 percent of Carter county land.

Decline in land fertility had its reaction in decreased physical and moral standards of the people. Some of them joined the west-
ern migration to California and others remained, trying to scratch a living out of marginal farm land.

Noble was disturbed by this disintegration of his native region and of its once prosperous farmers. He decided to put some of the money his oil enterprises had earned into the setting up of a foundation for farmers to draw upon—not to lean upon—in their quest for personal betterment.

So three years ago the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, named for Noble’s father, was established.

A complete soils laboratory was equipped at Ardmore. Graduate specialists in chemistry, zoology, botany, horticulture and animal husbandry were employed for work among test tubes, and in the still greater laboratory, the farms and fields. The foundation has so far concentrated on the soil but it can go into medical or other research under its charter.

But Noble feels that the foundation’s technical services alone are not the complete answer to stopping the drain on natural resources, or to inspire corrective measures which will restore them to their old place.

So, to arouse interest through competitive actions, he set up $7,700 in prizes for gardens, crops and pastures in Carter and Love counties which follow a recommended improvement pattern, because experience has shown the premium method best to arouse interest. The contest itself then does the preaching visually.

Noble believes that this rebuilding of the land and farms will have a meritorious effect on the people as well.

“It seems to me that for the past 15 or 20 years there has been a quickening of fear in the hearts of our people—the fear of their own future,” the husky blond oilman said recently.

“There are two great groups that have the greatest freedom from that fear,” he continued. “There is the man who can do more than one thing and make a livelihood. For that reason he can leave something which puzzles him. Then there are the men and women who really know and understand the land. They know its needs, its strength and its weaknesses. They know that it is alive and can bring forth living things, but only so long as it is nurtured and its essential elements replenished.”

“These are the most independent folk we have on the earth,” Noble said, “and it was to increase the number of people in this group that the foundation was established. Of course, the extreme conditions of erosion and man’s neglect of the remaining soil also gave me a desire to improve our area economically, but that was only secondary.”

“So we’re trying to help. We give every technical assistance that a land owner requests. We tell him what his land needs to restore its fertility, how to rebuild that which he has lost and how to keep from losing what he has left. We help him plan it and there we stop. We offer recommendations but we do not make his decisions. Too many decisions made for a person will one day undermine his moral character and his faith in his own judgment,” Noble concluded.

In addition to Noble himself, and his mother, Mrs. Samuel R. Noble, the foundation trustees are P. G. Rawdon, Oklahoma City; C. C. Forbes and Jerome Westheimer, Ardmore; A. A. Kennitz, Hobbs, New Mexico; and Francis J. Wilson, Ardmore, the director.

Wilson is a former colonel in the U. S. Army corps of engineers. A graduate in the upper 10 percent of the West Point class of 1922, he was the army district engineer at Tulsa when retired for disability in 1946 after 24 years service. He heads the staff and handles administrative affairs.

How has the plan worked? What actually has the Samuel Robert Noble Foundation done in the overall conservation picture?

In the laboratory the foundation makes tests on soil samples, determining what crops it will support and what it needs to grow more. In the field it gives technical assistance on the farm.

It has operated various contests for the past two years which focus attention to its routine services. Here is the only place where people must follow rules and the only place where they must keep accurate record books of improvement. They sign formal agreements to set aside plots for specific contests in the same field, using one with no benefit of fertilization or extra care, fertilizing and handling the other according to foundation plans.

Contestants in these contests have increased in two years from none to 537 entries and the scope from the original two counties to four with the addition of Marshall and Johnston counties, in all except the upland and bottomland crop contests.

And the effect of these contests? The Brannon brothers of Marietta, winners of the first pasture improvement contest, exemplified the results of better pasture.

At the Herford Heaven feeder cattle sale in Ardmore this summer, the Brannon entry of 30 steers, just under two years old, won first place and sold for 30 cents a pound. With an average weight of 797 pounds, they brought the brothers $7,413.

Results like these have justified Lloyd Noble’s faith in the land and the people of Oklahoma.