On the Sooner Scene

Oklahoma: Youth's University

By G. B. Parker, '08ba

I think sometimes that Oklahomans do not realize the peculiar individuality of their own state. They are too much engrossed in its distracting details. A man must get away from his office now and then to get a clear sight of his business. Or he may lose the sense of his wife's romantic attractions, not because his wife has changed but because he sees her every day and takes those attractions as a matter of course. What he needs is perspective, and some sort of misty, glamorous drop-curtain that will soften the outlines of the commonplace into the seductiveness of the unfamiliar.

I think I have that perspective on Oklahoma; and perhaps time and distance, and Oklahoma itself, have furnished the drop-curtain too.

Oklahoma is different from other commonwealths. Most other states can be summed up in one word: Texas, big; Kansas, farms; Colorado, Rockies; Iowa, corn; California, climate; Vermont, Coolidge; Massachusetts, history—and so on. But Oklahoma cannot be caught in one word. Not even the word oil. To an outsider this might seem the key word. To an Oklahoman it is maddeningly inadequate.

Of all expressions of the state's entity I like John Cowper Powys' best: "In Oklahoma anything might happen." Literally anything. From poor farmer to millionaire overnight, of course. From riches to rags sometimes, yes. But other and even stranger things than those are going on all the time in Oklahoma.

It is highly improbable that the best of scientific wizards would ever find oil under the rockless prairies of Oklahoma City. Yet a young undergraduate figured that out, and another wild dream came true. It is likewise improbable that of all the limber pens in the country the one that writes the purest poetry should come from this young state. That happened too. If any American landed a play with the Theatre Guild in New York he would be no less than Eugene O'Neill, or by some rare chance he might be the graduate of a great Eastern center of culture. But no, it was Lynn Riggs ('23) of Oklahoma, and not only one play but two for the same season.

It is improbable too that so young a commonwealth should find time for art. But one of Oscar Jacobson's students, Olinka Hrdy ('28a), has surpassed her fellow modernists in putting across ideas, at the same time obeying and using the laws of rhythm and harmony. Others—Indians—of his group, have put their own people into permanent records, and in their pictures have created a source-book for designers and students of design for years to come.

Other high improbabilities that turned out to be true were that Everett DeGolyer ('11b) should find the biggest oil well in the world the first time he pricked the breast of mother earth, and that he should continue in the advance of his profession by founding a school of research which aims to revolutionize the methods of locating oil and other minerals.

That a nationally known writer on the affairs of mothers and wives should be a continued page 28
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successful mother and wife to begin with—Mrs. Walter Ferguson ('07) is turning that little trick. It was not to be expected that George Milburn ('31), while still an undergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw George Milburn ('31), while still an undergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary dergraduate by describing what he saw about him in clear, close-fitting words, should have earned for himself a literary...
Charles E. Marsh ('08ba). He came to Oklahoma from the east. I think he believed what Horace Greeley said about going west, young man. Anyway, in this day of “chains” he is the chief owner one of the most virile group newspaper operations in these United States. Texas, quite some state, hasn’t been able to hold him, and recently he has been stepping forth into New Jersey and all points east. Scripps-Howard lost a lot of talent when Charley, who was one of our editors, decided to go into newspaper publishing for himself.

Then we have those who departed from the strait and narrow path of editorial work—Walter Ferguson, for example. Before Will Rogers was ever heard of, Walter was getting the “same reader-reactions” that Will now gets from the same sort of salty comment on news and affairs, on the great and the near-great. Walter went into the banking business, and that was journalism’s loss.

Seward Sheldon ('15ba) played the same sort of trick when oil lured him into the marts of trade and finance.

In the business side of newspaper work we have Ray Haun ('12ba), advertising manager of the Ladies Home Journal, one of the important executives of the Curtis Publications; Ralph B. (Inky) Campbell ('06ba, deceased), of the Batten, Barten, Durstine and Osborne organization, which ranks among the first few of the great advertising agencies; Charles E. (Chuck) Newell ('07), an editor who decided to go into the business end and who proved that such a move could succeed, despite a strong tradition to the contrary.

Further, I may cite publishers like Wesley Nunn, ('17); geologists like Frank Buttram ('10ba, '12ma), Ben Belt ('10ba), and Edgar Hyde ('15ba), actors like Ernest Sharpe ('27ba); scientists like Chester Reeds ('05ba); poets like Jack McClure ('15ba), and Muna Lee ('14).

If I should go through the alumni directory I could print names until your eyes were tired, of graduates who went to success from that university, carrying with them the inspiration of institutional youth.

And the only thing that worries me today about my alma mater—a quarter of a century after I matriculated—is that a little too much ivy is growing on those college walls.

George B. Parker wrote the article printed above for the University of Oklahoma Bulletin in 1930. Two decades have brought many changes and “Deke” Parker is dead. He died in October of 1949.
Yet the obvious truism that what he wrote 20 years ago is as good today as it was yesterday holds firm.

Few Oklahomans in our era have wielded such a tremendous national influence as Parker. He was editor of the largest chain of newspapers in America, the Scripps-Howard chain, for many years.

The secret of "Deke" Parker's success was hard, intelligent work. His first job paid him fifty cents a day, carrying water for a gang hoeing beets on a farm in Michigan. He decided to go west for his education and enrolled in the University of Oklahoma when it was yet a small school with two buildings on its campus.

From that small start of fifty cents a day carrying water, his achievements rank among the finest in the annals of American journalism. After tiring of work in a tax office, he applied for a position on the Daily Oklahoman at Oklahoma City. He wasn't accepted. Undiscouraged, he applied next to the Oklahoma News and began work at ten dollars a week. From that beginning in the Scripps-Howard chain, he worked his way up to the position of editorial overseer of the entire network of newspapers.

When Parker died, editors everywhere searched for the right words to summarize his life. Perhaps the Washington, D.C. Evening Star came as close to finding the right phrases as anyone. The paper said: "American journalism is the better for having felt the influence of George B. Parker."

**Rogers' Murals**

back the scholarships when they become established in jobs.

The University of Texas and the University of California also share in the handicapped scholarship fund which amounts to $150,000, consisting of contributions by Will Rogers' friends.

Friends of Will Rogers also are responsible for another campus program. They have contributed items to the University archives which is building a Will Rogers collection.

Important items in the collection so far are letters written by Will and Mrs. Rogers, newspaper clippings and scrapbooks.

Reliable sources indicate that Rogers was not a very good student and devoted much of his scholarly career to roping fellow students and teachers. But he left ripples of laughter in the sands of time and for that reason the University has thrown a rope around his memory and memorialized him for posterity.
As a Service to Former Students: Job Opportunities

(As a service to alumni, the Sooner Magazine is offering a list of job openings. The positions have been reported to the Sooner by University deans and department chairmen through the co-operation and direction of Frank A. Ives, director of the University Employment Service. Because of deadline problems, some of the jobs may have been filled by the time this magazine is in alumni hands.)

A large midwestern glass manufacturer has openings in the insulation division of the firm as follows:

(1) Project engineer with experience in quality control or combustion control in hot glass, hot metal or similar industry. Background in physics with training in metallurgy, heat and power machine design.

(2) Sales representative with engineering background in building materials and insulation fields.

(3) Sales manager with experience in the insulation business, and a knowledge of the technique of the building industry. Salary—$8,000 to $11,000—plus bonus.

(4) Industrial sales manager. Background in chemical engineering or an allied field that would indicate a knowledge of heat transfer in materials of all types.

(5) Project engineer with emphasis on oil refinery or chemical plant construction work. Must be willing to travel.

(6) A steel company has openings in St. Louis for mechanical engineers with rolling mill experience; electrical engineers with rolling mill or electrolytic tinning process experience and structural engineers with experience in reinforced steel and concrete for design and detail work.

(7) An Arkansas oil company is in need of experienced petroleum engineers with specialization work in well completions.

(8) A major rubber company has a number of openings for experienced mechanical engineers, chemical engineers and chemists in the following fields:

Organic Research, Tire design, tire compound development, mechanical goods compound development, fuel tank development, rubberized fabric product development, construction engineers, plant design and machine design.

Any inquiries concerning the positions listed above should be sent to the Sooner Magazine and must carry the number associated with each position. They will be submitted to the department or college holding the request. Sample Address: Sooner Magazine, Classified section 1, University of Oklahoma.

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