Dallas: An Opportunity To Relax!

By Ruth Foreman Updegraff, '28ba, '40ma

Many writers play up the annual O.U.-Texas game in Dallas as an invasion—the two teams with their followers likened to opposing armies—and the Cotton Bowl the battleground.

But, to me, in the middle of having two rooms built, a flower show school to run, a journalism class to meet and two children to corral, the weekend offered an opportunity to relax.

Friends of Paul's, (Updegraff, '30Law) the Briggs Todds, from navy days, furnished the backdrop—a well run house, children near enough the age of our two to play with, a couple with similar interests—and an Oklahoma team that had a chance. It looked good.

After sending acceptable excuses to school, we left Friday around eleven. An inking of what lay ahead came in Paul's school, although students and police were on their way.

We got it in the form of one of Mrs. Gomer Jones caught the next one. Mr. and Mrs. V. C. Bratton were in the crowd.

None of the reported rowdiness was in evidence at midnight in the downtown area when we found our car and drove to the Todds, although students and police were milling in the blocked off area around the Baker.

Next morning baby sitting trouble developed, so Mrs. Todd and I did a quick trade about. She was a College of Industrial Arts girl from Denton and had no interest in her husband's Texas University. I, being from O.U., had little interest in the Oklahoma Aggies, especially when they were doped to lose to SMU.

So Paul, Elizabeth and myself set out for the fair at ten o'clock. The Updegraff luck held; we parked outside the park within one block of the entrance.

Showing the fair to a youngsters is something you should try if you have feet that will hold up. The bright spot was the "Lost and Found Children" maintained by a Dallas department store. All kinds of toys, air conditioning, free television and kindly police officers were on hand. The lost kids were the smart ones at the fair, unless it was the 300 mothers who got lost on purpose. As one kid told the officer, "I'm not lost. It's my mother."

The try for entrance to the bowl at twelve.

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All-American honors—Leon Heath. There was much lamenting concerning the loss of backfield stars George Thomas, Darrell Royal and Lindell Pearson. Graduation managed to make a shambles of the 1949 line—something no opponent was able to do. So what happens. A new group of pigskin personalities make their pitch. And what a pitch it is. Names on the tongue of fans after three games would probably read something like this: Heath, Weatherall, Vessels, Arnold, Jones and Anderson. If the fans can handle tongue-twisters, other names like Clark, Catlin, Keller, Mayes, Janes, et al., would be banded about.

The first two names on the list will undoubtedly be on one or more All-American rosters. Leon Heath, the mule train from Hollis, is proving himself every bit as good as the dopesters figured. His running game has been nothing short of spectacular and his precision blocking is a marvel to behold as well. He catches passes like an end. In short, in a season where good fullbacks are throwing their weight around—two of the best seen hereabouts in a long time were Smith of Texas A&M. and Townsend of Texas—Heath will do to take along.

Then there's a boy by the name of Weatherall. He's played as many dramatic roles as John Barrymore. To begin with Jim boots the conversions. And he's been right successful in his first three encounters. He's kicked 10 extra points and missed one. But the one he missed was a lulu as mentioned earlier in the story. Again in the Texas game a win depended upon his toe in circumstances quite like the A&M. brush. This time he didn't miss. He was named lineman-of-the-week by the Associated Press following his brutal line play in the Texas A&M. game. Following his selection he said, "Gosh, am I surprised. But I don't think I really deserve it." The Texans have reason to rue the loss of the White Deer, Texas, highschool graduate. (See October 1950, Sooner.)

If Billy Vessels doesn't make the grade from an unknown freshman to All-American sophomore halfback this year, he must certainly be considered a top candidate for Sophomore-of-the-Year. "Curly" is from Cleveland, Oklahoma. He came of age as a member of the Big Red in Dallas when he scored two touchdowns and ripped off 76 yards rushing against a fine Texas line. He caught two passes for 22 additional yards. He looked good against Texas A&M. and Boston College and must be one of the players Bud meant when he spoke of his team improving each week.

The hero of the Texas A&M. get-together may have been Weatherall but he certainly shared honors with Claude Arnold, senior quarterback from Okmulgee. Arnold appeared as fit a replacement as anyone could hope for to fill the Mitchell and Royal title roles. With less than two minutes to go and trailing 27-28, Arnold moved his team down the field with as pretty a flurry of passing as you would care to see. With the clock running out he took his time and generated the team to a spot four yards away from a touchdown. That was all Heath needed.

The line offers more greats in the image of Burris, Walker, West, Dowell, etc. Dean Sm th, senior tackle from Tulsa, was a standout defensive performer against Texas. Clair Mayes, senior guard from Muskogee; Frankie Anderson, senior end from Oklahoma City, and Bert Clark, junior guard from Wichita Falls, Texas, add something extra to their work. Yes, the Wilkinsons sport many individual stand-outs but it is the team play that has played such large and beautiful dividends.

As this is being written, the Sooners are riding in the exact spot in national rankings as they completed the 1949 season—No. 2. Whether they can bypass Army or Southern Methodist for the top rung remains to be seen. This reporter has already had ample demonstration of what the Big Red can do. In the September issue of Sooner Magazine he wrote that if O.U. defeated Texas he would believe in miracles. Well he does. And just to show that one error in guessing has not dimmed the editor's ardor for sooth saying, check the following:

1. Leon Heath and Jim Weatherall will make more than one All-American selections. Heath should be on the AP first string and Weatherall on the second.
3. Wilkinson will not be coach-of-the-year. He'll be at the top of the balloting and might repeat except for the notable reluctance of the experts to let a coach keep the honor two years hand running. For the Sooner's money, Bud deserves the title even more this year than last.
4. A bowl game is certainly in the offing if the team wants it. What bowl they'll play in probably depends on who the opposition will be. If SMU should make it to the Cotton Bowl, sentiment would undoubtedly favor a match to see which is the best in the Southwest.

But enough speculation. In a sports season already spoiled by the Whiz Kids of Philadelphia, the Sooners are writing their own ticket. And they're doing it in much the same way as the youthful baseball team. With poise and heart—the stuff that champs are made of.

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forty-five resulted in the only casualty of the trip—the loss of Elizabeth's tartan weskit. But a kewpie doll on a stick made a good substitute and after twenty minutes or so we made it inside.

Jack Nossaman, another lawyer of the class of 1930 from Sherman, Texas, hailed Paul. Ned Hockman, '49ed, University motion picture producer, and Mrs. Hockman were eating lunch and Mrs. J. J. Truscott, Shawnee, O.U. booster and garden club enthusiast was entering the gate. Reuel Little, '27Law, Oklahoma City, was also there.

Charles Young, '40Law, Oklahoma City, supreme court marshall, expressed surprise at seeing Paul. He thought the University would cut off his ticket supply because of the suits Paul had been involved in.

In my opinion, someone had done pretty well by us. We caught a breath of air on the way up to section 102, row 32, one row removed from the top of the double-decker, and most of the spectators were former Oklahomans. At least you don't have to apologize when your team makes a good play.

Seated nearby were the Belknap—Harold, '25ba, Lucille, '43ba, '50ms, Hal and Kay—of Norman. Lawrence Wilson, '34, Tulsa, and Max Cook, '39ba, '41Law, Clinton, were within shouting distance. Crystal Risinger, '27ba, and sister Golda Risinger, '30ed, from Muskogee were down the row. Lloyd Swearingen, '20hs, '21ms, and wife and Ander Challenor, '27eng, '33ms.eng, and wife were over to the right. Joe Fred Gibson, '34ba, '36Law, Oklahoma City and Mrs. Gibson, (Marion Hauck, '35ba) were seated near the Joe McBrides who, like the Oklahoma Aggies and the law class of 1930, seemed to be everywhere.

Working my way through the crowd at the half to the student side, I found out how the five million dollars was being spent. Ice at twenty-five cents a cup available only through a retail dealer amounts up.

The closing whistle of the game, fans milling, bands marching, gave me a chance to catch my breath and realize that Bud Wilkinson's Big Red had done it again. I would not have to use my philosophy developed through twenty years of seeing the Sooners win six and tie one. I could let go and enjoy the game, the ride back home, and finally home which looked better than anything I had ever seen—dirt and carpenter's shavings notwithstanding.