

- C. May Cutler
1. We are a Nation of Pioneers
  2. I am of the Old West
  3. I came to know & respect these early settlers
  4. Saw the history of this state in its making
  5. Witnessed the thundering thousands
  6. Saw and experience the hardships
  7. I saw a government formed
  8. Every one of these early day sons & daughters contribute
  9. The keen eyed gambler
  10. The gun man of the early day - with his shifty eyes
  11. I learned there to respect these early day men
  12. ~~And~~ learned to know and respect the glorious women
  13. Knew and respected their resourcefulness -
  14. I saw them come in their covered wagons
  15. They came in covered wagons drawn by mules & patients
  16. Their teams gave out - pressed onward
  17. That mass of men & women
  18. Some remembered with saddened hearts
  19. Those thousands who came into the far found
  20. Found the virgin forests and silver streams
  21. But they found no friends awaiting them - no homes to go to

22. But they builded a home & settled down
23. Their family doctor was the medicine chest
24. They build a log house in the forest & a sod house on plains
25. The pioneer women of these days were filled with hope
26. Showed qualities of daring -
27. Inspired <sup>at home</sup> by an eager desire for victory ~~built~~
28. ~~Had~~ in making a home - crowning career
29. They recognized the first duty within the home
30. Felted & lived in favor of cleanliness -
31. Turned from ease & illness - with unfaltering steps
32. They made mistakes
33. Had no time for idle gossip
34. Portray of right living - many sided as clouds
35. Did not seek ease nor avoid hardships
36. There was no room for the stunts -
37. ~~Performed~~ ever task - shirked no duty  
That was the true womanhood
38. No prosperity and no glory could save or preserve
39. They were resourceful, meager education - wisdom
40. They could turn a hand to any useful purpose

41. Parson a personal reference, exemplification
42. They every one painted a picture for the future
43. Had I the talent to paint a scene
44. Proud spirit no power could conquer
45. A fine manly citizen of this state
46. Needed no statue - The usage of her soul
47. Not all the marble nor all the bronze
48. She carved her own - statue - built her own
49. Marble nor bronze cannot tell the tale of hardships
50. Her soul was an architect -
51. Many of them lived in dens & caves
52. They were the titlers in the ranks -
53. God Bless them - we owe them a debt -
54. They were silent partners in a great adventure
55. They are gone - these mothers of 40 years ago
56. Gone with western frontier - their like will never
57. Gone with the Antelope, the prairie - dug out, and hence  
Buffalo and wild Indian.
58. Strong people
59. Tribute to the workers in the ranks -

The Pioneer Woman; delivered at Federation of Women's Clubs' Banquet at Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City, April 19th, 1932.

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I am happy to be honored by your invitation to speak on this occasion. I feel it was more a compliment to my wife, who is an officer among you, than to any ability I may possess to interest or entertain you. It is a distinct honor to be allowed to address so distinguished an audience of intellectual women, banded together from every organization that has for its purpose the advancement of learning and practical knowledge. Women of experience, women of the home with minds skilled and trained in a diversity of practical understanding and information. Such organizations as this brings a brighter hope for the future generations, for the future of our civilization, for more efficiency and economy in our government.

I am particularly gratified to be here on this occasion because my mother, who is long since dead, was a pioneer in the club work of this state. She was instrumental in organizing the first woman's study club in Pottawatomie county more than thirty five years ago. Your work is so broadening, so calculated to bring advantages to the coming generations, to your sex and to your state. I commend you heartily and may your great work go forward in ever increasing worth, freed from the turmoil of internal strife, minds free of self seeking and with hearts distinctly loyal to the beneficent influences of a worthy organization.

I am particularly happy in your designation of my subject "The Pioneers of Oklahoma" for I revere the memory of those fine, good men and women who settled and made possible this magnificent <sup>state</sup> ~~empire~~ of ours. We are a nation of pioneers, those old Pilgrim fathers who landed on the rugged, barren coast of Massachusetts were pioneers, those hardy adventurers who came into the West and laid the foundation for a vast empire were the true pioneers, the self sacrificing unselfishness of those men and women made the prairies bloom and the forests a beautiful place <sup>in which</sup> to live.

I am of the old West, having been born and spent my life there. I travelled the old Santa Fe Trail in a covered wagon when it was still one of the main thoroughfares of the West. Born of pioneer parents who were not content to submit to the humdrum sameness of the more thickly settled communities of the east, my father coming from West Virginia in the confidence of his young manhood in the early '70s to seek the

freedom and liberty of life among the forstests and plains of the West and my mother coming with her parents from Tennessee.

I knew and respected the early settlers of this section of the United States, saw the history of this state in its making and witnessed the thundering thousands sweep into Oklahoma Territory to find homes on the wind swept wastes. Witnessed the hardships trials and tribulations that were theirs in 1889, 90 and 91. Knew and respected these hardy pioneers of the first days.

I saw a government formed and the foundation laid upon which to build the superstructure of a great state. All the early day sons and daughters contributed their part to the development of the commonwealth. Even the keen eyed gambler, with his black mustache, his long tailed coat and his gaudy vest served a good turn, for he taught men that life is a game of chance, after all. The gun man of the early day, with his shifty eyes, carrying his law on his hip, or maybe one on either hip; he, too, contributed his part for he taught men to be couregeous, to stand up for their rights, and endowed them with a fortitude and a self reliance for the most trying occasion. I learned there to respect those early day men; their courage, rugged honesty of purpose, patience, perserverence and kindness of heart. Learned to love and respect the glorious womanhood of those early days; women who were content to leave kindred and friends, the conveniences and comforts of a more civilized life, and journey with their husbands, their fathers and their brothers into the unknown and uncertain environment of the frontier.

Knew and respected their resourcefulness in times of danger and stress, their unswerving loyalty, their patient toil and their ceaseless anxiety and care to raise a family of good men and good women. I saw them come into the state in their covered wagons, with cooking utensils hanging down behind, a water cask on one side and a turning plow on the other and cast their lot in the forsts of Eastern Oklahoma and hew themselves a log cabin from the timber, or moving on to the prairies further west, unsling the old plow, run a few furrows from the tight knit soil and build themselves a mansion of sod.

They came into the state in covered wagons drawn by mules and patient oxen measuring their weary steps- men and women with mingled hope and care upon their faces peeping out from under the flaps of the canvas covering. Teams gave out, wagons broke down- unbridged streams and rugged ascents were met and overcome and heroically they pressed on. What manner of men and women were these who knew no defeat? What courage, what fortitude, what perseverance. Some looked back with saddened hearts, remembering where they left the wild winds to chant a funeral requiem over a lonely and deserted grave.

When the countless thousands swept into old Oklahoma they found a land of marvelous beauty. In the spring of the year, they found extended prairies rich with the colorful daisy; blue and white heads nodding in the constant breeze. They found the virgin forest and the silver streams, teeming with fish. They found the deer, the antelope, the wild turkey and the prairie chicken. The prairie dog barked a dare from the rim of his earthen abode and the rattlesnake sounded his warning from the shade of the sage brush clump. The wild curlew shrilled his clarion note as the dusk went down to meet the night, and the coyote and the wolf howled a protest in the gloom. But they found no friends awaiting them, no homes to go to; nothing but the genial heavens and the generous earth. But they builded a home in the forest or on the plain and their family doctor was the medicine chest, their smoke house the prairie and forest and their grocery store a little wind swept garden on the plains. They builded a log house in the forest or a sod house on the plains and they planted a wild goard vine to run over the door and they filled the interior with the warmth of mother's love.

The pioneer woman was filled with hope and expectation, endowed with enterprise and energy. They showed the qualities of daring, endurance and farsightedness- inspired by eager desire for victory and a stubborn refusal to accept defeat, they builded a home. and in making the homes and carving out careers for themselves and their children, they built up this state. They recognized their first duty within the home; they did not merely talk but they acted in favor of cleanliness, decency and morality. They turned scornfully aside from ease and idleness and with unfaltering steps pursued the rough road of endeavor- smiting down wrong, upholding right, developing character.

They made mistakes but they did not allow their mistakes to frighten them from their work. They had no time for idle gossip and a slanderous tongue, theirs was a higher ideal a more practical purpose. The poetry of real living was in their souls. They were as many sided as clouds are many formed. They did not seek ease but they found hardship. There was no room in those early days for the timid- the weaklings never started and if they started they never arrived. They performed every task that lay before them- they never shirked a duty because it was difficult- theirs was true womanhood,. No prosperity or glory can save or preserve a nation that is rotten at heart and the heart of a nation is its womanhood- its mothers, and these women of early days brought to the state a heart of gold.

They were resourceful and <sup>l</sup>wife of meager education, they had wisdom. They could turn a hand at any practical purpose and in their liesure improve the mind and glorify the soul. Pardon a personal reference but it points an exemplification; there hangs over the mantle in one of the rooms in our home at Wewoka, an oil painting executed by my mother. It is rather good, and yet accomplished under such trying circumstances and without adequate materials and equipment. Painted more than forty years ago it is bright and fresh to-day. She made the <sup>o</sup>wooden frame on which the canvas was stretched, she sawed the lengths and fastened them together at the corners with heavy tin, triangular strips cut with her old time scissors from a convenient bucket and she nailed them into place with tacks drawn from the cabin walls. She purchased the heavy canvas in the store and prepared it with white lead and shillac. She mixed her own paints from the tubes I was sent to get- the crome, the virmillion, the blue and the black. Patient, toilsome perservering she accomplished her purpose and it hangs there to-day the dearest relic of her work. Such were the women of the early day, not one, but all. They all painted their picture for the future by rearing a fine group of boys and girls, teaching them to speak the truth, to pay their debts, to honor their parents and be true to themselves. Teaching them to honor their God and be loyal to their flag and live as nearly as is humanly possible by the Golden Rule. What greater picture can there be than this?

Had I the talent to paint a scene I would make the canvas eloquent with deeds of the bravest, kindest people who ever lived-- whose proud spirit no power could conquer and whose loyalty and hopes no trial or difficulty, toil or hardship could stay, and I would write under that picture "The Pioneers of Oklahoma."

A fine, manly citizen of this state has left to <sup>posterity</sup> ~~prosperity~~, out of his wealth and his efforts, a bronze statue of The Pioneer Woman at Ponca City. It was a noble gesture, a thoughtful act; but the pioneer woman needed no statue, they desired none. The image of their soul- the memory of their worth- has been stamped in lines of flame upon the character of their children. Not all the marble nor all the bronze, fashioned by the chisel and the mould into the picture of breathless life, could depict the faithfulness, the hardy fortitude, the courage and hope and trust, left as a heritage <sup>by them</sup> to the memory of man. They carved their own statue, they built their own monument. Marble and bronze cannot tell the tale of the hardships withstood, of the patient toil, the courageous fight and the well earned success. <sup>Her</sup> ~~Their~~ soul was an architect that built a habitation for itself. Some lived in dens and caves, some in "little sod shanties on the claim", but they were all made rich with the warmth <sup>and sunshine</sup> of love and over run with vine and flower. They were the toilers in the ranks, the unnoticed in the background, they sought no prominence in the forefront- were content to modestly serve their time in the ranks.

God bless them! We owe them a debt of gratitude that cannot be paid. But we can pay tribute to their sacrifice and suffering. They were the silent partners of a great adventure, they served in the ranks, they did their work faithfully and well. They are gone, most of <sup>those mothers</sup> ~~them~~ of some forty odd years ago. They have gone with the western frontier, their like will never be seen again, gone with the coyote, the antelope and the prairie dog, gone with the dug-out and the little sod shanty, gone with the buffalos and the wild Indian- gone forever. They came out of a time that demanded strong people and they gallantly rose to the occasion.

And so to-night in closing, I want to pay tribute to those among you who have served in the ranks- who have been content to do their work unseen and ~~unheralded~~ unheralded amidst the rank and file of your organization.



Without their aid the officers would have been helpless, without their faithful work the organization would have languished and died. Theirs was a labor unselfishly given, without hope or demand for place; their steadfastness made the work of the officers worth while. They carried the load and they received no reward. I pay tribute therefore to the rank and file, may they find reward in the accomplishment of their purpose in the unselfishness of their zeal. Good night.