

The backyard of Ned Lowrey's home is a mile and a half wide and nearly six miles deep, with only one road crossing its middle to serve three little homes. On all sides now Ned is surrounded by the holdings of large Texas and Oklahoma ranchers. They do not live here, but their stout barbed wire fences and trespass warnings speak menacingly.

For over six decades Ned has watched time and progress race by in front of his humble home. These many years the elements have failed their mission to rot and wear away the rough oak siding on his house. The old door and hinges are worn beyond any sound of protest, and minus latch and knob opens easily as if on silent command of this kindly octogenarian. Ned welcomes the caller without inquiry, and offers a choice of a broken chair or a seat on the neatly made bed. Ned sits where he can expectorate in the ash hopper at the wood heating stove. He has no electrical equipment so has never had power run to his house. Two old hunting hounds push the door open, but he scolds them and closes the door.

The cloak of happiness and contentment comes in many styles, and Ned's satisfies him. From these humble surroundings he reflects on the many days he has seen and which seem to have had beautiful sunsets. He speaks proudly of having raised four boys and four girls. He looks out the west window to take notice of a granddaughter chopping wood at her home a short stone's throw away. Children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren come often to see about his needs.

Joining Johnson Prairie on the northeast is Lowrey Prairie. First settled long ago by his grandfather, Tsi-gi-ya Lowrey, he talks reverently of the little Cherokee burial ground where his grandfather and also of his father, Noah Lowrey, are at rest about a mile east