

The University of Oklahoma was very young when Mrs Anna Stewart Crouch came to Norman at the beginning of the century. Her two boys were students in the university; she advised her students in the schools she taught to come to the university, but this is the first year she herself has been able to attend it. Her year is a «vacation» and she is enjoying working at the university, now twenty-second largest in the country. Active in many affairs for the betterment of Oklahoma, the new Chisholm trail marker, the beginning, let us hope, of rescuing from oblivion the historic trails that crossed Oklahoma years ago is the result of her activity

A «vacation» at Oklahoma

BY HERMIONE BARKER BRISCOE, '28

THE majority of students attending the university consists of young men and women just stepping over their 'teens. But the privilege of attending college is not confined to youth. Now, more than ever before, mature men and women, even those who have passed maturity, are taking advantage of academic training. White-haired women sit on the same row in the classroom with college queens, and they are no less intent upon the instruction than those who have the whole of living yet before them.

One of them, Mrs Anna Stewart Crouch, holds seniority of years over all the students at the University of Oklahoma. Perhaps she has a seniority of experience and service to the public, too, as she has been an Oklahoma teacher since 1900. She is sixty four years old and was a college graduate at the age of seventeen. She is in quest of knowledge, and a year in the university is to her what a pleasure trip would be to most people. She is enjoying her «vacation.»

She is the wife of W. E. Crouch, familiarly known to his friends in Tuttle, as «Judge» Crouch. The couple has lived in Tuttle twenty six years, and Mrs Crouch has taught nearly every business man there. She was the first city superintendent in Tuttle and built the first brick school building. Work was started on this under the school laws of Arkansas, and with the organization of statehood, it was finished under Oklahoma law.

Judge Crouch drives to Norman each week-end for his wife so that she might spend some time in her comfortable home in Tuttle. This home has never been without someone dependent upon it for an education. After the Crouch boys left home, many boys and girls received an education due to the kindness of Judge

and Mrs Crouch. Now Mrs Crouch is the student of the household.

Although this year is the first that Mrs Crouch has been able to spend in study at the university, she has been a constant supporter of the school. During her long tenure of service, she spent almost ten years in southwestern Oklahoma. Here she stimulated young boys and girls to go to the university for a higher education. By praising the state institution, she skillfully veered them away from Texas schools.

Mrs Crouch was teaching at Vinson in Harmon county just a few years before statehood. Teachers from Lone Wolf, Granite, Hollis and Altus would attend teachers' meetings at Mangum. And Dr James S. Buchanan would come out to make inspirational talks to the teachers. Dr E. E. Dale, head of the history department now, was teaching the Eldorado school and would attend these meetings.

«There was no one like Doctor Buchanan, we thought in those days,» Mrs Crouch remembers.

«Why we considered he was the most brilliant speaker we had ever heard. Each school would raise so much money to finance a trip from Uncle 'Buck.' Our school usually sent him ten dollars to come as far as Altus, then each school would pay his way on in relay form. He would stop and lecture at all the schools. Townspeople would turn out to hear the lecture. He would preach on Sunday in the Presbyterian church, in whatever town he happened to be in. He always spent the week-end in order to preach on Sunday before returning to Norman.»

Doctor Dale was a young chap then, with an eye toward college. No doubt it was due to the eloquent tongue of Uncle



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«Buchanan» and the encouraging persuasion of Mrs Crouch, that he selected the university as his alma mater.

Mrs Crouch is most interested in the rural schools. She has taught in rural districts and has been city superintendent in many small towns and communities of Oklahoma. She is studying in the school of education this year. If she continues her school work next year, she hopes to take her graduate work in the history department.

«Any teacher can teach town school if she applies herself, but it takes a good teacher to succeed in the rural districts,» Mrs Crouch says. Mrs Crouch has worked hard and has accomplished much for her schools. She was interested, first of all, in building good boys and girls. Next, she was interested in building good brick schools. It was not always easy to build schools. One time she had to rig up an orchestra to accomplish a brick school. She had a young teacher who possessed musical ability, so the orchestra was organized. It was accepted with enthusiasm by the patrons, and enough interest was stirred up among the townspeople that Mrs Crouch had her school built.

One reason Mrs Crouch is so interested in rural work may be because she received her early training in a rural community. Her great grandfather, James Trabue of Fontainebleau, France, was a commissary under George Rogers Clark when he took the northwest territory during the Revolutionary war, Trabue, with his wife and children, settled in Bourbon county, Kentucky. Mrs Crouch was born on a farm filed upon by her grandfather, one of Trabue's sons. Her father, Henry Clay Stewart and his wife Mary Trabue Stewart, were the parents of seven children of which Anna Stewart was the youngest.

She was born shortly after the civil war in which her father was a Confederate soldier.

When Anna Stewart was of school age there were no free schools. She has paid tuition for every year of school attended until she entered the university this fall.

When she was fourteen years old, Anna stood up in line for her examinations for a teaching license. The examinations were similar to an old spelling match in which the boys and girls turned each other down. Anna remained in the line with her correct answers until she was given her license.

Then she began to look for a school. The president of the board in her community had a small amount of money to be used for an extra teacher. He was an eccentric who believed that the world was flat. Anna decided to use a bit of strategy with him, so she called on the old gentleman and told him that she would teach the children the world was flat if he would pay her \$50 a month, or she would follow her own convictions and teach them that it was round for \$15 a month. She secured the job.

The teacher under whom she worked was a fatherly fellow who kept her money for her and would not give her more than one dollar at a time. He knew she was saving her money to go to college and he was afraid she would spend it too fast if she kept it.

After saving \$60, Anna entered Harrison Female college, Cynthiana, Kentucky, in 1882. At that time only a few of the very wealthy girls attended college, with a sprinkling here and there of girls in moderate circumstances, who possessed more than the ordinary foresight and ambition for those days. The curriculum contained very little mathematics as it was considered useless to teach mathematics to women. English and composition, languages and the fine arts composed the studies that were thought harmless for the girls. Music was stressed as a requirement for the A. B. degree, so Anna, not being proficient in piano, studied science and took her B. S. degree after three years of college work. She studied her normal work in summer terms since that study was not in demand in the winter when the wealthy girls came to school. She was valedictorian of her class, an honor which previously had gone to wealthier girls. But on account of her grades, the class voted the distinction to her.

Anna Stewart married Mr Crouch in 1890. He had two small sons, and as Mrs Crouch continued to teach school, she took the boys right along to school with her. The family moved to Oklahoma in the first year of the new century, and located in Norman so the boys would have the opportunity of attending the university.

Death overtook the older boy, Harry, before he completed school with the '06



class. Joe, the younger boy, withdrew from the university before receiving his degree.

Mrs Crouch is one of the pioneer workers for farm women. She was appointed a delegate to the International Congress of Farm Women in Tulsa, by Governor Lee Cruce in 1914. The work accomplished by the congress led to the passage of the Smith-Lever act by which the federal government was to give \$10,000 to each state, to be added to \$10,000 raised by each state, the total sum to be spent in organizing farm women's clubs. Carl Williams, editor of the *Oklahoma Farmer Stockman*, and his wife, Mabel Bates Williams, helped to back this immense work for the rural women in Oklahoma. Mrs Crouch worked in the farm women's congress until there were 225 clubs organized in the state. When the war was in progress, it was decided to turn the organization over to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater, which directs the well known Farm Women's clubs now.

When the Chickasha chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution decided to mark historic places in Grady county, Mrs Crouch, a charter member, had another opportunity to display her extraordinary leadership in accomplishing worthwhile things. She was appointed chairman of the committee including Mrs Shirley M. Duckwall, Mrs Martha Kimble and Mrs Adda Voigt, all of Tuttle, which planned the marker for the Chisholm Trail and Silver City. Dedication was held on November 29, 1931. The huge

slab of rock, weighing nine tons, has bronze plates on each side. Upon one plate are cut the names of the Silver City pioneers of the first settlement on Chickasaw country. The other side bears the marker of the Chisholm Trail. The rock was given by Anton Soukup from his quarry at Mountain Park, and was delivered to its destination by the state. The bronze plates were bought with money donated from pioneers and friends, from all parts of the United States.

It is quite credible that a woman, just completing one more brilliant state work, and who has been so active in state and educational affairs as Mrs Crouch has been, should continue to place herself in the midst of the circulation and communication of thought, the university.



Moncrief's East Texas sale

Every new oil play brings to light some alumnus of the university. The name of W. A. Moncrief, ex '17, Fort Worth, Texas, lately appeared among a group of active oil men who completed the second major sale of acreage around a discovery well in the E-tex area.

Mr Moncrief was born August 25, 1895, to Mr and Mrs L. B. Moncrief when they were residing at Sulphur Springs, Texas. Five years later the Moncriefs came to Checotah and there young Moncrief secured his schooling, graduating in 1913 and that fall entering the University of Oklahoma, working his way through. He was assistant registrar the last two years and was active in athletics, being one of the best catchers the O. U. baseball team ever produced.

When the World war started Mr Moncrief volunteered and was sent to a training camp at Little Rock, Arkansas where because of his age he was commissioned a second lieutenant. Within a year he had become a first lieutenant and as such he went overseas, being in the service eighteen months in France and discharged in 1919.

Upon his return to the United States after the war he took a position in Ponca City with the Marland Oil company in the accounting department. When Marland opened offices in Texas for the Marland Oil company of Texas, Mr Moncrief was sent to Fort Worth as vice president in charge of the offices. When the Marland company moved the Texas offices back to Ponca City several years later, he resigned, went into the oil game on his own account and opened offices in Fort Worth.

To start with he began operations in south and west Texas. In the fall of 1930 he with several associates assembled a big block of acreage in Gregg