

Sapulpa, News Hotbed

By MALVINA STEPHENSON, '32

CREEK COUNTY is a veritable hotbed for news breaks—state highlights in political upsets, accidents, Indian features, crime scoops, even golf champs! And one Sapulpa journalist sees that it all gets into print through a score of publications.

Besides serving as managing editor of the *Sapulpa Herald*, Richard Caldwell, 26 as, writes for leading magazines, out-of-state papers, and several national news services.

In his tenth year out of school, this young Oklahoma newspaperman may number among his markets *Time*, *Holland's Magazine*, *Kansas City Star*, Central Press Association, and the International News Service. He is a regular staff correspondent for the United Press.

Along with his spot news coverage, Caldwell has drawn from the colorful Indian background of eastern Oklahoma for numerous features and magazine articles. Characteristic of this section is his recent article on Sapulpa's Joe Bruner, written for the Southern Personality series of *Holland's*.

"The Bruner article is a sketch of this militant Sapulpa chief who is a formidable foe of the administration of John C. Collier, commissioner of United States Indian affairs," Caldwell said, surveying the current interest in Indian affairs. Bruner, who is president of the American Indian Federation, spends a great part of his time in Washington now.

It's a queer turn of fate that's brought so many of the state's page one stories to Creek County. But the county seems to be the clearing house for some of the biggest news flashes in Oklahoma in recent years.

From the amount of copy it looks like Caldwell runs a regular UP bureau at Sapulpa. In recalling some of his stream-line stories that have crashed the front pages with a Sapulpa dateline, he described the finding of the last two Comer victims, the Piedmont farmers.

"We got a tip about 3 o'clock just as the *Herald* was going to press. Police were notified that two bodies had been found near a highway west of Sapulpa," Caldwell said. "After the officers surveyed the scene, it was a busy time taking pictures and getting stories to the morning papers."

Other top stories from the police beat in recent months include the officer massacre which took for its victims Chief Tom Brumley and C. P. Lloyd and the family murder by Chester Barrett. Back in the late twenties the trail of the elusive Matt Kimes was often scented in this section.

When the golf season 'putts' in, the activities of two Sapulpan on the greens send out reams of copy from Caldwell's machine. The champion swing of Mrs. Tom Wallace and Earl Berryhill often attracts the attention of fans all over the nation.

"And when one of them lays aside the clubs and comes home to be just another Sapulpa citizen, the readers want to get the human interest angle for a time," observed Caldwell. "I've written lots of UP stories about these celebrities."

From a political standpoint, Creek County might be defined as a unit of voting factions. And when election-time booms, it's sure to fire up some stories. The 1930 campaign saw Mrs. I. L. Huff wage a one-woman campaign that shook the very corners of the county. For spot news, human interest, or humor, the setting was perfect. And Caldwell kept his typewriter whizzing.

Former Senator George H. Jennings lives at Sapulpa. His verbal tiff with the fiery "Alfalfa Bill" Murray in 1934 more than once turned the state political spotlight on Creek County. About this time, the humor of State Representative Jimmie Wilson of Catfish Band fame lent a bit of color to both news and feature stories.

A festive Indian wedding performed at a tribal ceremony was the brilliant event for a feature by Caldwell which appeared in the *Kansas City Star*. In addition to a couple of Indian features for *Time*, Caldwell has written numerous stories for the *Daily Oklahoman*, the *Tulsa World*, and the *Tulsa Tribune*.

Other stories of state interest which have appeared in *Holland's* were written on a beautiful Tulsa garden and Kiowa Art on the state reservation. The former was reprinted in the *Tulsa World*, while the latter was the leading article in the magazine issue.

Caldwell's editorials in the *Sapulpa Herald* on both state and national issues have attracted widespread attention. Besides being reprinted in papers all over the state, the editorials have drawn comment from prominent national figures.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., congratulated the *Herald* on several occasions, and the

German consul at St. Louis took notice of an editorial concerning a Hitler policy.

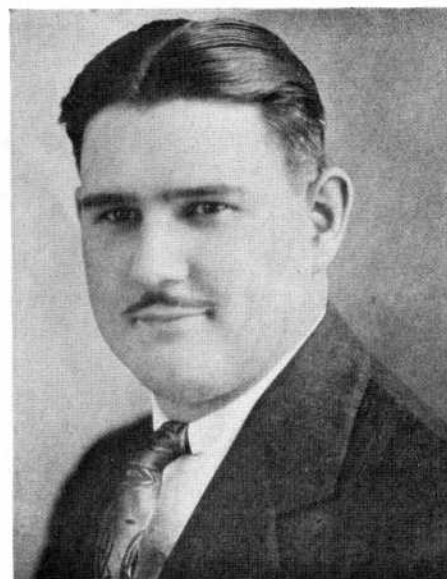
But Caldwell's writing hasn't been confined to the bounds of his own state. He is particularly interested in the whole region of the southwest and has made two trips to Old Mexico to study the country and its people.

"Mexico fascinates me," Caldwell said in reference to his trips. "From the quaint adobe huts to the magnificent Spanish architecture, the whole country is a spot of beauty—it is a haven for the writer." *The Sooner Magazine* and the *Tulsa World* ran stories on Caldwell's Mexican trips.

Caldwell has traveled widely in collecting material for his writing. And in every place he visits he makes a careful study of the sites and the people. These jaunts have taken him to New York, Canada, New Orleans, and the old Indian southwest. "I like to get out among people and study actual life," Caldwell remarks as he admits he's just always written. "That's where I get material for my short stories and plays." And Caldwell's friends are enthusiastically awaiting word of a short story and a play that are making the rounds now in New York.

Caldwell is perhaps the only journalism graduate since 1926 who has remained in the state and won success in three fields of writing. While holding the position of managing editor of a daily newspaper, he has been active in magazine article and creative writing. State literary columnists have often praised him as one of the state's promising young writers.

While attending the University, Caldwell was a prolific campus writer. He wrote short stories, book reviews, and was poetry editor of the *University of Oklahoma Magazine*. Dr. Benjamin A. Botkin, former editor of *Space* and *Folk-Say* and who is a well-known literary critic at the University of Oklahoma, pronounced his work "burgeoning with some of the romance of Robert Louis Stevenson."



John Frank, instructor in art for the past eight years, resigned his faculty position last month to devote full time to the Frankoma Potteries which he organized in Norman.