

# Chimes of Soonerland

By EDITH WALKER

Musical notes mark the hours on the University campus now, and the soul-shaking whistle blasts have been eliminated

NO longer do strident whistle blasts puncture the day's routine on the University of Oklahoma campus, interrupting after-dinner speakers and wracking student nervous systems. After more than 25 years of whistle-tooting, quiet (comparatively speaking) reigns in Soonerland.

Yes indeed, returning alumni will find henceforth that the traditional whistle on the O. U. power plant is silent—succeeded by a set of chimes whose mellifluous tones are considered a more dignified, and certainly a more pleasant means of marking time on a college campus.

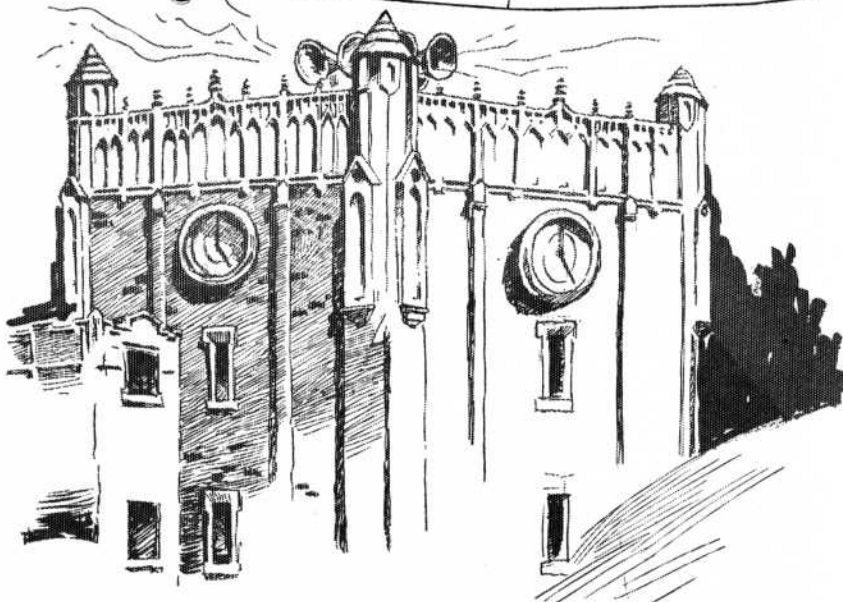
It is proper that a final tribute of a sort be paid the whistle on its largely unlamented demise.

In referring to "the whistle," it has been assumed that there was only one whistle since time immemorial. But such is not the case. There have been, in fact, three different whistles, one bearing a mongrel strain which presently will be explained.

Recalling a few memories out of the past, Bennie Shultz, supervisor of the University's light and power plant, remembers that the St. Pat's Council got a hankering for a whistle in 1916 while he was still a student in the College of Engineering. The engineers put their plan into action, made a campus-wide drive for money, and bought a whistle.

This first whistle, a piercing one-bell factory whistle, was engraved with: "St Pat's Council. Classes of 1917, '18, '19 and '20." For several years, this whistle rang for curfew and such other particular times as was necessary, and seemed to be doing its job faithfully.

By 1925, when physical boundaries of the campus and the student population had grown considerably, officials decided that a "factory" whistle was offensive to scholarly ears. So the curfew ringer was streamlined, the little one-bell whistle whisked into obscurity and replaced by a



FROM THE UNION TOWER, MELLIFLUOUS TONES

*It's all done with machinery and loudspeakers, but the effect upon nerves of campus inhabitants is most soothing*

modern three-bell whistle, which had a stifled sort of blast but still was piercing in intensity.

For a time it seemed as if the whistle of '25 would never wear out, but finally continuous usage took its toll and the little valve mechanism began to crack, making replacement necessary in 1937. Campus officials still had memories of the depression at this time and weren't so particular

when purchasing a successor to whistle No. 2. They bought a regular steamboat whistle of the three-bell variety, nothing fancy. But it whistled, at 8 a. m., 12 noon, 1 p. m., 5 p. m., and women's curfew depending upon the day of the week.

Probably this whistle would have had a longer career had not larceny interfered. Before whistle No. 3 was a year old, one of its three bells was stolen. Since it was apparent the whistle couldn't go on in this crippled condition, the officials reached way back on the shelf where they had put Whistle No. 1 in 1925. This, they said, will make up the deficiency. For when they added this one-bell whistle, it all added up to three bells again.

The whistle history reached a gradual stop this fall, when campus officials secured the present chimes after waiting through three months or so of priorities and red tape. The chimes were purchased last June and were ready to operate save for one mechanism which was held up at the factory by government orders.

The whistle ceased tooting and the chimes began chiming in December just in time to be used during caroling season. The chime apparatus is electrically controlled by the big clock in the Union lounge. It warms up the tubes in the eight amplifying horns set atop the Union tower from whence the sounds emanate. The striking of the hours and quarter-hours is reproduced through a small mi-

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NO TEARS ARE SHED

*The late but unlamented curfew whistle with campus water tower in background*



# SOONER

## Basketball!

REMAINING

HOME SCHEDULE

Feb. 7—Missouri

Feb. 16—Nebraska

Feb. 27—Kansas

Mar. 12—Okla. Aggies

General Admission **55c**

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Fieldhouse, Norman

and has recently been stationed at Edgwood Arsenal, Maryland.

**WITHERSPOON-PRICE:** Miss Dorothy Witherspoon, '41, Ada, and Orville Price, Wichita, Kansas, were married in December at the home of the bride's parents. Mrs. Price is a member of Chi Omega sorority. Mr. Price formerly attended East Central State College, Ada, and is employed with the Beech Aircraft Corporation in Wichita.

Lt. M. H. Yowell, '41ba, has been transferred from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to Camp Roberts, California.

**1942** James S. Crabtree, '42, Beaver, has taken a position in the petroleum division of the Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

Fred Damon, '42, Oklahoma City, has taken a position with the Phillips Petroleum Company, Bartlesville.

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crophone in the amplifying equipment and the sound is broadcast throughout the campus area and to a considerable distance beyond.

From 1 a. m. to 6 a. m. the chimes do not ring at all. Beginning at 6 a. m. through the 13-hour period until 7 p. m., the chimes sound only at the hour to coincide with class hours. From 7 p. m. to 1 a. m., the chimes ring every quarter-hour.

Reaction of campus folk to the chimes has been almost wholly favorable. The greatest rejoicing has been exhibited by the quintet of operators in the power plant who had the responsibility for tooting the whistle on time. Lee Brown, Norman, power plant operator for some fifteen years, holds the unique record of having blown curfew more than any other one man.

"What do I think of the new chimes?" grins Mr. Brown. "Why, I like them fine. Anything to get rid of that whistle." Supervisor Shultz echoes Mr. Brown's sentiments. "The whistle was a headache," he states succinctly. The quintet of operators generally agree that they are heartily in favor of the chimes, not because they particularly like chimes, but because it keeps them from having to remember to blow the whistle. Perhaps if all the seconds which the operators save by not blowing the whistle were laid end to end it would run into several hours in a year's time. But, of course, the thing they are relieved of is the necessity of watching the clock so religiously.

In the meantime, the old whistle still has not met with an ignominious end as might be believed. Friends have concocted several schemes to use it to best advantage and save it from total oblivion. Some have suggested that it be employed as a local air raid warning signal. Another plan is to make it into watch charms, proceeds from which would go into a defense fund. A third suggestion is to melt it down and remold the metal into little whistles. At any rate, Walter W. Kraft,

superintendent of the University utilities department, would like to see something pretty drastic done with the relic. Back in days past, Mr. Kraft discovered that students love to blow a whistle to commemorate some big event like winning the Big Six conference. And knowing student psychology, wary Mr. Kraft knows that if the old whistle is left around, it will be tooting again one of these days despite the melodious chimes.

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## Pass Bar Examination

Among the 31 out of 61 applicants who successfully passed Oklahoma Bar examinations in December were four former students and alumni of the University.

They are J. B. Marshall, '31, Edmond, district court clerk deputy; James Russell Blakeney, '34, and Herbert L. Pickett, '33, of Oklahoma City; and Rupert E. Wilson, Jr., '39ba, '41law, Norman.

## Records for Children

Parents who grow weary with reading fairy tales and children's yarns to their youngsters have Helen Myers, '33ba, recorder of children's phonograph records, to thank for remedying their situation.

For two years Miss Myers has been with the R. C. A. Victor Recording Company in Camden, New Jersey, pioneering in a new field which is proving a boon to child education. Of eleven children's albums recently released by the Victor Company, seven were Miss Myer's productions. Her picture, in connection with the release, appeared in the music department of *Time Magazine*.

Musical ventures of the Sooner alumna date back to her own childhood when she staged elaborate plays in the Myers' backyard in Oklahoma City, with acting, direction, music, dances and costumes ably supervised and executed by Helen Myers, age 8.

Coming to O. U. after a year at Gulf Park College in Mississippi, she somehow managed to cram the days full of music practice along with the many activities on a college campus. She was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, later elected its president, and a member of Mortar Board, Phi Beta Kappa and the University Glee Club.

The days since college have been equally busy for the blue-eyed, brown-haired musician. Several years after graduation, she landed in one of New York's swankiest supper clubs, Rockefeller Center's Rainbow Room, as featured entertainer. Not only was she giving piano and organ performances, but also sang each evening to white-tied, besequinned audiences.

From the bright lights of New York City, Miss Myers went to Camden, New Jersey, to join the Victor Recording Company as composer and producer of children's records. Musical composition, her first love, was the real reason for her going East, and the last two years she has devoted most of her time to this one field.