

Riding the Sooner Range

By TED BEAIRD

Phew! How about a pause for a deep breath? From ye old Kansas City headquarters (the Muehlebach) where, down through the years, have often before (pre-war) been recorded the lines on Riding the Sooner Range—again (in-war) may these ramblin' comments be listed on this June 1, '45, torrid night? And, too, may they be recorded (post-war) in the challenging years ahead!

It's been a rugged trail since 2 p.m. on that Friday some three weeks ago (May 11) when (in the course of unnatural events) the call to Oklahoma City University came in to be away and get there to register in and counsel with that handful of old faithfuls still in there swingin' in an endeavor to salvage and hold together as best they may the speech interest of the senior high schools of the Sooner Commonwealth until the crisis of ever-mounting war problems subsides and calm is in vogue again!

There they were (these old faithfuls), at it and performing! Professor WAYNE CAMPBELL, of O.C.U., long-time associate. Colonel C. E. GRADY, of national reputation due to splendid work with American youth over a quarter-plus of a century. ELAINE TUCKER, the Classen "whiz" of like national reputation—who incidentally was taking out a "breather" occasionally to tell us of young son Johnny. E. E. BRADLEY, '39m.ed, of Panhandle A. and M. College. JOE JACKSON, '34ed, '40m.ed, the Bristow High red-head director. MAYBELLE CONGER, of Oklahoma City Central, the general-registerer-upper. BETTY SWIDENSKY WAGNER, '43ba, the lady-in-waiting (hubby still in South Pacific), and general judger-upper in ballot casting for her choice of the best of the lot! All these plus made that Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12, the mere shadow-of-shadows of past events in speech education activities in various interesting spots over these United States B.P.H. (Before Pearl Harbor!)

That very interesting evening—plus a night of visitation with my ole Blair grade school crony, now the successful banker, rancher, mayor and Lord High Mocus of the Grady County Community Center—Alex—GRADY HARRIS, '18, and wife, will be long remembered! For the first time in 30 years to be an overnight guest in his home—to "swap" yarns over the trek of events, to compare notes on family "rearin'", to measure the successes of cronies of former years, to "predict" and expound our views on the trends of the war, even to set in motion the "solution" of post-war world problems—all made for a most pleasant far-past-midnight session in the Harris home on that May 15 evening and far-into-the-morning visitation in the Alex headquarters of the Harris quartet!

In the Grady County capital, Chickasha, on the evening of May 16, at the formal installation of the O.U. Charter Club, many, many old faithfuls were there digging in. Our red-head, get-the-job-done boy, RALPH BRAND, '33ba, '38ma, now First Lt. Brand, intelligence officer plus personnel specialist of the Borden General Army Hospital, was duly elected "prexie" of the new outfit.

Others in attendance on that Chickasha (and Grady County) night of toil and labor were as follows: Mrs. Eva Clifton Woods, '12ba, '17ma, Verden; Ralph L. Lea, '34m.ed, Minco; Beth Feagles, '45ba, Oklahoma City, and Capt. Max Johnson, '39med, Hattie Holland, '16ba, Mrs. Ella Humphrey Thiriot, '41letters, Mrs. Ruth Melton Colwick, '35fa, Mrs. Louise Kayser Fortson, '34ba, Mary Hewett Bailey, '30ba, '37ma, William Fletcher Ward, '27fa, C. H. Schoolfield, '40eng, and Mrs. Schoolfield (Ona Bell Woolfskill, '40bus),

Frank Worrell, '30geol, John T. Eischeid, '14ba, A. C. Shultz, '12ph.c, W. S. Howard, '30eng, Grace Clark, '19ba, '33ma, Mrs. Mabel E. Boggess, '38m.ed, '40m.soc.wk, Jim Hatcher, '13ba, William Broderson, '35law, and Maj. G. S. Ingalls, '36med, all of Chickasha.

A hurried dash away from Chickasha to the Alumni headquarters at O.U. plus packing Kathryn in for a push-along swing to Sulphur and Murray County, came about at high noon May 17. A pleasant O.U. dinner on that evening and hours of visitation enabled the gang to solve many problems of state and to supervise, in due form, the high school graduation of PAUL WARREN, who was with Oklahoma Aggie mother FLORA, to be San Francisco-bound on the morrow to see Dad and Hubby, the ole O.U. reliable and standby Capt. PAUL REED, '16, that Transportation Corps soon-to-be major at the U.S. Army, San Francisco Port of Embarkation. That Oklahoma Aggie superintendent of Sulphur Schools L. B. (and charming Mrs.) PEAK really were most gracious hosts and are still, as they have been for years past, the loudest rootin' "Aggie" Sooners in these 77 counties of Oklahoma!

It is not a habit of your Range Rider to arise and drive 13 miles to breakfast. BUT out of that Sulphur conclave the drive was made on the morning of May 18 into the ranch lands to the south. There nestled in the beautiful landscape of "Ranchers' Paradise," as only deep southern Oklahoma can produce—a *double* rancher's breakfast was consumed! The ranch? "Cheebie's." The cook? "Cheebie." The place? Mr. and Mrs. B.S. "Cheebie" Graham! What a pleasant four hours of roamin'—roaming out with and in nature's handiwork! What pleasant exchanges of experiences—indeed, "reminiscences" with "Cheebie," Mrs. "Cheebie," plus her mother and sister recently arrived from their home in Bonham, Texas.

Upon preparation for departure for other Sooner assemblies—*what* a gracious and thoughtful gesture on the part of "Cheebie"—when he presented his personal check for \$1,000 and said, "It's my mere feeble contribution, Ted, toward something I have wanted to do for years. You select an artist. Have him do an excellent oil portrait of the first O.U. student president of the OKLAHOMA MEMORIAL UNION—the late GENE FAULKNER, '23ba. Records will disclose that it was this fine chap, with 25 of his comrades of World War I, who visualized 23 years ago *what* a Student Union would mean for succeeding University generations. It was Gene, Ted, who came to me back in 1922 and made known his dream of the future while I was "Y" secretary on the campus. It was Gene, the first student president of the Union, who unfolded the years and looked into the future. So, as a memorial to him, have the oil done and see that it is hung in the OKLAHOMA MEMORIAL UNION for those who this late in life appreciate his thoughtfulness in carrying the early-day banner for this outstanding student center!" (To all of which we O.U. alumni who, down through the years, have worked *with*, *by* and *for* this center, add our "Amen!")

But—check and re-check, the ticker-tape says! Check those lines because you are nearing 30. (Meaning to *us* *journalists*—runnin'-out-of-space.) Would that space would permit an exchange and recording of sessions of interest (with *interesting* O.U. alumni) that have followed day and night since driving away from "Cheebie's" ranch. At Ardmore, Healdton, Tulsa, Coffeyville, Kansas, Pawhuska, Ponca City, Pauls Valley, Altus—oh, other spots! Yes, this Riding the Sooner Range causes one to heed the Call to the Trail—and more Sooners!

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