As part of a recent tour, Nancy Denner (right) stopped by Washington, D. C., to say hello to Page Belcher and wife. He is congressman from Enid.

OKLAHOMA'S FAIR LADY

A couple of years ago, Nancy Denner, a pretty fine arts major at the University, was a "nobody" in a big pond. Today her charm is known to literally millions.

By LEN WHITE

WHEN THE SCHOOL TERM ended at the University of Oklahoma last spring, a certain coed with an extra-long pony tail walked away from final examinations at the end of her junior year with no particular plans for the summer.

But during the summer months some very important things happened to her. She went all the way from driving a tractor to becoming "Miss Oklahoma" and second runner-up for "Miss America" at the Atlantic City beauty pageant last September.

Nancy Denner returned to the O. U. campus this fall as a familiar personality not only to the people of Alva, Oklahoma, her hometown, but to just about everyone in the United States who read the newspapers and watched television while the event was taking place. And when the winners were announced in both beauty contests, no one could have been more surprised—and certainly no one could have been happier and more excited — than Nancy Denner herself.

"I was eliminating myself all the time," Nancy said, speaking of the last tense moments of the "Miss America" pageant. "Of course I kept hoping I would be one of the top ten finalists — but I never dreamed I'd make the top five."

Actually she did much better than make the top five, though. She was one of the top three, with only two other contestants ranked above her when the final tabulations were all in. It was a remarkable showing — and one that both she and the state she represented can always be proud of.

One of the most important fans in Nancy's cheering section was another Denner—her father. But during the week of the pageant, three chaperones, two policemen, and a chauffeur were assigned to Nancy; and the closely-guarded contest-

ants were forbidden to converse with any male—fathers included.

"I would always see Daddy, though," Nancy said, "because he always knew where and when we would be eating. And I knew where he was sitting when the contest was going on because he would yell 'yip-yip' every time my name was called. Just knowing he was there was heavens of help."

She said the "yip-yip" yell was one she had grown up with. When she was a little girl she used to play in the canyons behind their house in Alva; and when her father wanted her for some reason, he would always call her that way.

Nancy said she received "worlds and worlds" of telegrams from people she didn't even know. One came from Oklahoma movie star Dale Robertson saying "All of Oklahoma and half of California are behind you." But the one that meant the most to her came from a friend at O. U. It had only three words: "Go! Go! Go!" And she did.

"My three days in New York were nothing but educational so far as show business is concerned," she said. "I was able to meet directors, producers, and stars —and by an act of congress my chaperone and I were able to get tickets to *My Fair Lady.*"

She wasn't kidding about the "act of congress" bit. That's practically what it takes to get tickets for the show, one of the biggest sellouts ever on Broadway. Nancy posed her problem to an Oklahoma legislator — and, somehow, two choice seats were made available.

After the final curtain of *My Fair Lady,* Nancy decided to go backstage to meet Glen Kezer, a member of the cast and an O. U. alumnus.

"I had never seen Glen before, but I wanted to meet him, so I walked up to the stage manager and said, 'I'm here to see Glen Kezer. I'm a friend of his—and he's expecting me.' And the stage manager let me through. But once inside I knew I would never recognize Glen, and I knew he didn't know me, so I told the stage manager I was near-sighted, which I am, and that I would appreciate it very much if he would point Glen out when he showed up. A few minutes later he said, 'That's him,' pointing to a fellow coming down some stairs—and I ran up to Glen, very quickly told him I was from Oklahoma and O. U., and everything worked out fine. I've never tried anything like that before, I mean barging through and faking your way—but it works. If you make people think you're important, they'll believe you."

NANCY IS A FINE arts major, and even before the contests she had done considerable work in the drama school. When asked if her dramatic training had been an asset in the contest, she replied, "Yes, very definitely. Having been on a stage and before groups of people in school shows was an experience very much in my favor. I wasn't completely relaxed, but I think I was far more relaxed than many of the girls who were appearing before a crowd and performing or being interviewed for the first time.

"But another thing that helped a great deal was my nearsightedness. Many people don't know that — but I'm very nearsighted. A lot of my friends have said, 'Nancy, how could you stand to be facing all those thousands of people and having them look at you?' I can honestly say it didn't bother me. I couldn't see them."

Nancy said the only time she got thoroughly shaken was when she was told that she was one of the ten finalists, about five minutes before the coast-to-coast telecast of the pageant was scheduled to go on the air, and that she had to cut her reading of Edna St. Vincent Millay's "The Ballad of the Harp Weaver" from three minutes and twenty seconds to three minutes. She dashed back to the dressing room and quickly ran through the poem, trying to figure out where the poem could be shortened without destroying some essential part of it. And, to make matters worse, she was told that the orchestra had been instructed to start playing if a contestant hadn't finished in the allotted time.

She braved it—calm, nearsighted, and relatively unsure of the outcome. She finished the last word of the poem (by hurrying it up a bit at the end) just as the conductor raised his baton, and just seconds before an orchestra would have drowned her out.

At the Atlantic City beach one afternoon Nancy decided that she would like a hot dog. But she had no money with her. A vendor with a little pushcart came by and she told him her chaperone had gone back to the hotel to get her purse, and asked if he would mind waiting until she returned with the money. In the meantime a crowd began gathering not far from where Nancy and the vendor were standing.

The vendor said, "I'll bet they're looking at one of those 'Miss America' contestants. You know, I've been here for years and years, and I've never seen one of those girls up close. Would you mind watching my cart while I go over and try to see?"

Nancy stayed with the cart, and when the man came back he said, "It wasn't one of the 'Miss America' contestants, after all."

She wanted very much to tell him—but the rules obligated the contestants to keep their identity secret. She did get the hot dog, though.

A little girl staying on the same floor of the hotel Nancy was in during her week in Atlantic City used to wait up for her to come in each night. She would be waiting at the door of her room, and Nancy always stopped to talk with her for a few minutes. When all the contestants were given the "Miss America" dolls, Nancy let the little girl take care of it until it was time for the return trip to Oklahoma.

Marilyn Van Derbur, who was crowned "Miss America," and Nancy became close friends during the week of the pageant. They lived next door to each other in the same hotel. They helped each other in every possible way, even going so far as Nancy's sneaking out, wrapped up in a cloak, to a wing of the auditorium to hear Marilyn in the talent division, to give a "requested" opinion of it; and so far as carrying a comb tucked away in her gown, since the feat would have hardly been possible in the gown Marilyn wore.

Marilyn was due to visit Nancy at Norman when O. U. played Colorado October 26 at Owen Stadium—but Nancy got the Asian flu, and the visit was postponed. Yet, Nancy has paid a visit to Colorado since then. Her opinion of the current "Miss America": "She deserved to win."

Nancy arranged her class schedule this semester in such a way as to allow for as much free time as possible for doing the many things a "Miss Oklahoma" is required to do.

"One of my most cherished duties is visiting and speaking in small towns," Nancy said. "No matter what I am to do, I'm always certain that they appreciate it, that they are sincere. It might just go back to my being from a small town, but I actually think there's more to it than that. I love the people in small towns."

She said that one of the hardest things she had to become accustomed to was walking into restaurants, rooms, classes, or even across campus, and seeing people pointing or whispering.

"I knew they were talking about me," she said. "It was rather embarrassing at first. But it doesn't bother me so much anymore."

After graduation from O. U., Nancy isn't quite certain about her plans. Several things are pending—with television work

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among the more favored choices. Outside of completing school, she has only one more obligation to perform: a return to the pageant at Atlantic City next fall to be on hand for the coronation of the next "Miss America."

One thing should be clarified—the answer given by Nancy to her approval or disapproval of boys' wearing Bermuda shorts. Her television answer was "disapproval," but that answer had to be quick at the time she gave it. The truth is that she doesn't really disapprove, but that "they look okay on some boys, and I have no objection to their wearing them. It's just that Bermuda shorts very definitely have their place—picnics, some parties, and things like that. I just don't approve of them on the streets—and on dates."

And if anyone knows that different cuts of apparel have their place, it's Nancy. Very possibly the starting point of her renown was the production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* presented by the University Players in January, 1956. She was a lady of the court in that play and wore a long, hot, elaborate costume which kept her on her feet constantly; if she sat down, the costume would be crushed in the wrong places and, consequently, ruined.

Then Nancy earned some extra money when summer rolled around, driving a tractor in one of the exhibits at the state fairgrounds' Oklahoma Semi-centennial Exposition. Pigtailed this time and just a mite sore from wheeling the machine about the floor and acting out in pantomime the public address system's elaboration, she now wore—coveralls.

Both costumes were a far cry from her "Miss America" pageant gowns, and neither would have been suitable, needless to say. Nancy Denner had come a long way in a very short time.

IMMORTAL LITIGANT

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only white labor, but it was said that he "still owned slaves back home."

It is not the poor state of the Chief Justice's health at the time he was induced to write the Opinion of the Court, nor the acknowledged influence of Justice Wayne that form the most interesting basis for speculating about the authorship of the Opinion. An analysis of the sentence structure in writings of the Dred Scott Justices reveals some additional evidence concerning the authorship of the Opinion of the Court. Fourteen pages from known opinions of Justices Taney, Wayne, and Grier, and twelve pages from the Opinion of the Court were subjected to Llewellyn M. Buell's "List of Common Words for Elimination in Style Analysis" (*Vocabulary Improvement,* New York, 1939).

By eliminating from the samples all common words which also appear in the Buell "List," there remain only the substantive or content vocabulary of the Justice, made up of rarer and less frequently used words. By subjecting this content vocabulary to the word frequency tables in Thorndike's Word Book, it has been possible to determine an exact rarity value for each word used. A comparison of the vocabulary, both content and common, found in the Opinion of the Court, with vocabularies found in opinions known to have been written by Justices Taney, Wayne, and Grier clearly suggests the participation of Justice Wayne in the preparation of the Opinion of the Court.

But that is not all. The repetition of sounds, as well as words, is often a marked characteristic of style. An unusual effect is produced when passages taken from the Opinion of the Court are read orally, and simultaneously, with other passages taken from Justice Wayne's known opinions. A parallelism of sound, of emphasis, and of words used is immediately discernible. Repetition of words is typical of Justice Wayne's style, but not of Taney's.

It is significant too that Taney did not comply with the Rule of the Court that an opinion should be delivered over to the Clerk to be recorded immediately after it had been read from the Bench. A note designating the order in which the opinions were to appear in the official report of the case was prepared by Chief Justice Taney and Delivered to the Clerk of the Court on March 13, 1857.

A newspaper reporter calling at the Clerk's office on March 28, 1857, was told that the "opinion of the Court, as read by the Chief Justice, is not yet on file . . ." Subsequently, Justice Curtis learned that Justice Taney was revising the Opinion. On April 2, 1857, Curtis wrote to the Clerk, asking to see a preliminary print of the revised Opinion. The Clerk advised Justice Curtis that orders from the Chief Justice had forbidden the release of the Opinion to anyone until all of the opinions had been published in the official form. This sparked an angry exchange of correspondence between Justice Curtis and Chief Justice Taney, and culminated in the resignation of Curtis from the Court.

In May of 1857, Dred Scott was sold by Dr. Chaffee and Mrs. Emerson to Taylor Blow of St. Louis, the son of the man who had sold Scott to Emerson 23 years before. And three months after the United States Supreme Sourt rendered its decision denying that Scott had any rights as a free man, he was emancipated by Taylor Blow.

Even though he had the assurance in advance that he would be freed after the Court rendered its final decision—for the parties were actually interested only in a test case—the strain of the journey through the state and Federal courts was too much for Scott who was then in his sixties. He died 18 months after being made a "citizen."

Not too long after, the North and South were embroiled in the Civil War, and the Fourteenth Amendment that followed nullified the Dred Scott decision.