

THE PATHFINDER

*The Historical
Preservation Journal of Westlake*

VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 1 • SUMMER 2003

A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTLAKE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION BOARD

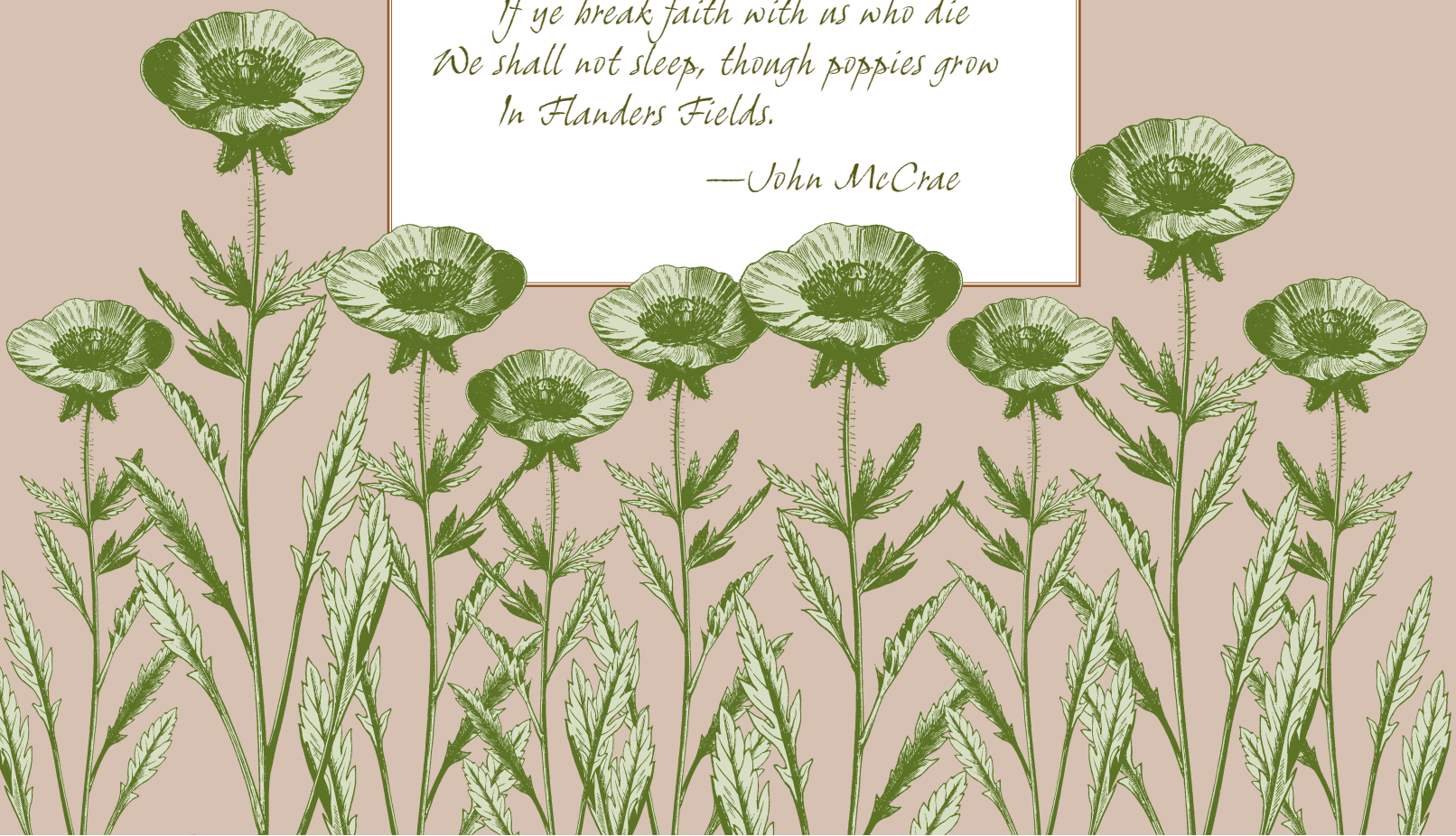
IN FLANDERS FIELDS

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.*

—John McCrae



Volume 2 • Number 1
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Editor

Joyce Gibson Roach

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The PathFinder is a publication of the Westlake Historical Preservation Board.

The editor welcomes articles and comments relating to the history of Westlake and Northeast Tarrant County addressed to: Westlake Historical Preservation Board
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Front cover: I.O.O.F. Cemetery, supposed hanging tree and tombstone of alleged horse thief, Elijah Homer Lay, from photos by Joyce Gibson Roach.

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The view from the Timbers ...

EDITOR'S PAGE

When I began to write, the redbud trees were in full bloom, wisteria swaged from the arbor, "armies clashed by night" and some were "lost in the hills away, far off from the gates of gold," as the old hymn, "The Ninety and Nine," notes. Now, as I finish, the Cross Timbers is green, the victory is as won as it can be, we bury some and rejoice to reclaim others. Life and death, loss and recovery, winter followed by springtime in Texas – life, on earth as it is, rolls on. This issue reflects that same continuation, moving on.

The beginning piece of this summer journal, marking the second year of publication, is about a cemetery, the Roanoke I.O.O.F. – Independent Order of Odd Fellows – from which no one moved on, literally at least. Figuratively, it was the last move



Arthur McWhirter

Granted in times past, there were cemetery restrictions, some real, some hinted at. Blacks were not allowed burial privileges in some cemeteries of the Southern persuasion.

Occasionally denominations got all tangled up in cemetery politics, but not often. Plots were nearly always family dominated where the clan could all be together, some containing ten or twelve gravesites. Family plots were known to be political – that is, who was laid next to whom and who was at somebody else's head or foot. But these were concerns for the living, not the dead.

At some point, in many communities, Memorial Day, sometimes referred to as Decoration Day, and Cemetery Work Day became entwined, occurring on the same Saturday or Sunday.

to "higher ground," to the "great getting' up morning" and "the unclouded day." What lay beyond the grave was reunion and renewal – the highest notions of continuation on the highest level.

To those of you new to rural places and the customs associated with the past, let me acquaint you with information that cemeteries were the communal gathering places, the heart of communities, even more than church, dry goods store, mill or gin – about the only other places folks gathered. These centers catered to specialized crowds, but the graveyard, as it was also called, provided reason and place to come together as the family of man regardless of class. Class was a term without much meaning anyway – the pioneering experience was a great leveler.

In an article from *Celebrations of Death* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), Anne Schiller noted that the "dead play a role in the continuity of communities;" that the "living need the dead if the culture is going to survive, so that to destroy its dead, deny its ancestors, sentences the culture itself to death." I doubt that early settlers entertained such sophisticated and thoughtful ideas about the deceased, but they did often create cemeteries as the first "place" even before a church or school.

A number of cemeteries began as burial sites for family members on family land. Bourland Cemetery, adjacent to Westlake but within the city limits of Keller, is such a site. Aurelius Delphus Bourland was a preacher and often away from home. After one trip,

he returned to find that the baby had died. Mrs. Bourland remembered that her husband had said when his time came he wanted to be buried on the hill beneath a certain cedar tree. Therefore, she buried the baby in that location. From that time on the spot became the burial site for others of the family as well as friends, some of whom had served in the Civil War – on both sides, North and South. In 1899 the site became a public burial place.

Frontier families living on acreage separated from others, sometimes by several miles, gathered according to their personal religious convictions, first in their own homes, but then to buildings designated as churches which they constructed themselves in

Tombstone of Elijah Homer Lay, alleged horse thief; photo by JGR.



concert with others of like mind. Often those churches marked the beginnings of settlements and villages. The church house, as it was sometimes called, was no more important than the cemetery close to the building. Being able to bury their loved ones in a central location must have offered a measure of comfort to strangers in a strange land. One of the most poignant passages in the Jonathan Blevins family saga, when they came to our vicinity along Bear Creek in 1873, is in recounting how the child of William and Louisa Tuttle Blevins died along the way and was buried beside the trail. A stranger who lived nearby shared the family's grief and comforted the parents with her promise to care for the tiny grave (*Blevins family history; Lyda White Collection*)

The establishment of our own Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery is still different and recounted in this issue. Readers will finally hear the story of our famous Hanging Tree, an interesting bit of frontier local history.

A yearly event known as Cemetery Work Day, a time when the grounds were maintained by the families of those buried, was much the same at many local cemeteries all over America – certainly here. It was a time when the entire community became involved. Men brought the necessary tools to clean all the

gravesites. Unused parts of the cemetery were plowed and the ground cleared of grass and low growth. Women brought baskets of food. An informal program of sorts was presented, giving rise to the phrase, “all day singing and dinner on the grounds.” It was not, as you might suppose, a sad day, but a social occasion for the purpose of remembrance and renewal – moving on.

In the Civil War South, solemn recognition of military dead eventually came to be known as Memorial Day. Recounting of that special day in both historic and personal terms by Frances Vick, guest writer, appears as the last offering in the journal.

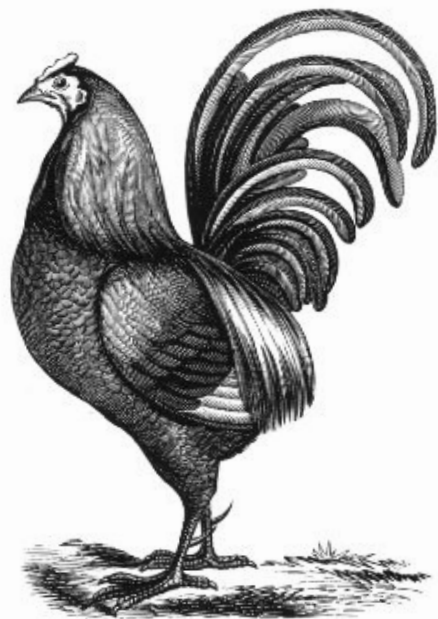
At some point, in many communities, Memorial Day, sometimes referred to as Decoration Day, and Cemetery Work Day became entwined, occurring on the same Saturday or Sunday. The date was, and still is, set by church groups according to their planning needs and may even include Reunion Day when church members who have moved away are notified and gather for food, fellowship and remembrance. James Ward Lee, guest writer whose piece about Old Roanoke appears in this issue of the journal, says he returns each year to his hometown of Leeds, Alabama, for Mother’s Day and Decoration Day celebrated at the same time. Such coming together may not even occur in the spring but rather in the summer or fall of the year in late October or November when Veterans Day used to be commemorated.

Most, but not all, such meetings happen at churches or cemeteries. Regardless of location you may be sure that there will be a program of some kind organized around a meal, sometimes a picnic or “covered dish” affair. There will certainly be singing, including old hymns, patriotic numbers or songs that recall the past. Words, whether grand oratory, speeches or remembrances from the crowd, also recall old times and old ways. There may be games for the children and the grown-ups, too. These occasions, no matter how they are arranged, have family, patriotism and acts of community citizenship at their core.

The town of Old Roanoke, one of the patron saints of Westlake, is the centerpiece of the journal. Like Brigadoon, the mythical city that came alive only every 100 years, she will rise from the mists to charm us again in the words of James Ward Lee. And, you’ll learn about FFR, First Families of Roanoke – as important as the designation, First Families of Virginia, from where the town took its name. You’ll hear about Dick Fanning and enjoy the reminiscences of Pat Turner, Emily Ragsdale and Conway Peterson.

Another of Westlake’s important businesses, DaimlerChrysler, lends its support to the summer journal. Their location provides a glimpse from the meadow – Texans would call it a pasture – of our loftiest hills, sometimes called the Mount Gilead Mountains. It is quite possible, of course, that early real estate promoters gave such names to mere hills in order to attract settlers to the region. Then, again, maybe they did look like mountains to some, especially when seen at a distance.

And there will be recipes, poetry, bits and pieces of this and that – all part of the magical place, Westlake – home. 🐔



DAIMLERCHRYSLER...

A View from the Meadow

—by Donald Bondeson—

Sharing its history with the City of Westlake, DaimlerChrysler Services is becoming a prominent part of the community. In November 2001, the first group of nearly 100 DaimlerChrysler Services employees moved into a new facility located on a 10-acre plot in the beautiful pastures of the Circle T Ranch, owned by Ross Perot Jr.'s Hillwood Development Corporation. The modern and elegant center harmonizes with its surroundings, a symbol of the continuing progress of Westlake. This facility is unique within DaimlerChrysler Services because it houses employees from both the Mercedes-Benz



While DaimlerChrysler Services gives to Westlake, Westlake offers DaimlerChrysler Services a superior business environment.

Credit and Chrysler Financial business units. The three departments – Mercedes-Benz Credit, Chrysler Financial and Remarketing Operations – provide customer service, collections, lease remarketing, operations support, title handling and training for the associated business units. DaimlerChrysler Services employs nearly 1,000 people in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding areas. Before coming together in the new building, the employees were scattered in offices in the Solana complex and near the Alliance Airport.

The Dallas Customer Contact Center supports Westlake and the surrounding areas not only by providing employment, but also by giving back to the community. Since moving into the community, employees dedicated time and financial aide to the following charities and programs:

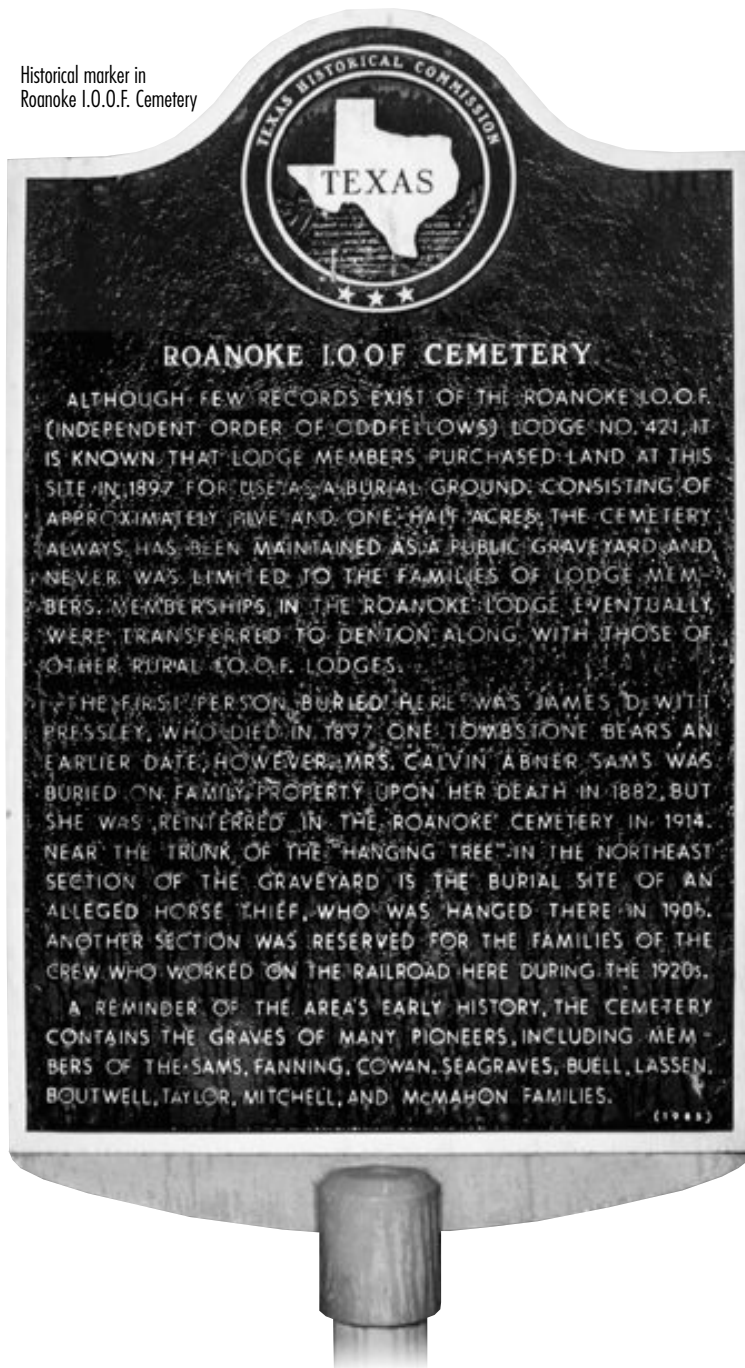
- Meals-on-Wheels at the Roanoke Community Center
- Tarrant County Food Bank
- Salvation Army Angel Tree project
- Habitat for Humanity
- The Battered Women's Foundation
- American Red Cross Southwest Region blood drives

Employees also teach local elementary and high school students about business and economics through Junior Achievement at Lone Star Elementary in Keller and Polytechnic High School in Fort Worth.

While DaimlerChrysler Services gives to Westlake, Westlake offers DaimlerChrysler Services a superior business environment. From the modern décor and state-of-the-art facility to the beautiful landscape, the relationship with Westlake is just beginning. 🌿

ROANOKE I.O.O.F CEMETERY

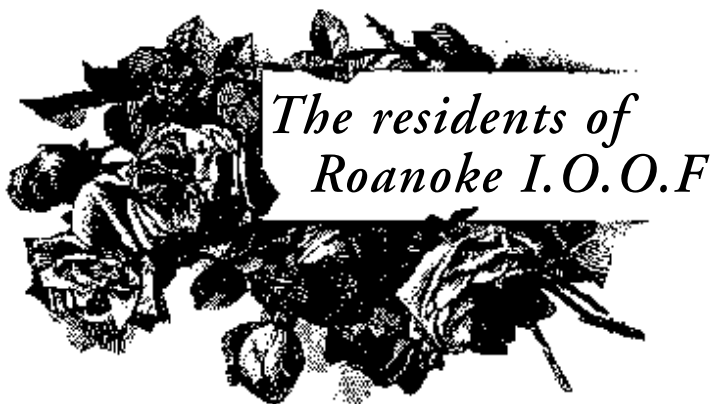
Historical marker in
Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery



Thereby hangs a tale ...

I find no evidence there was a trial before hanging the “alleged” horse thief, thirty-two year old Elijah Homer Lay, who was born May 18, 1874 and died December 17, 1906. Without a trial, the episode counts as vigilante justice – a self-appointed group taking matters into their own hands without benefit of judge or jury. Incidents of such justice were not frequent as late as 1906 in populated areas, but still not uncommon in areas further west than Roanoke that had no official law enforcement. Stealing a horse was considered a hanging offense, serious because it left a man afoot in the wilderness often to die. Roanoke could hardly be called wilderness by 1906. A mystery remains then. Did Elijah steal somebody’s plow horse, buggy horse, saddle horse or racehorse? All were valuable, but a saddle or racehorse the most valuable. Still, the punishment didn’t necessarily fit the crime. Was there other evidence against Elijah? Had he stolen before? Was he a long-time or short-term resident or just passing through? Why such a nice tombstone and who put it there, although well out of site of other burial plots? It may be that in time, perhaps after someone reads the journal, this mystery will be solved.

And is the tree identified as the “hanging tree” really the right tree? Some say yes and others say the tree was destroyed by natural causes years ago. Another mystery, then, but the legend is alive and well. (J.G.R.)



Some of the most valuable work of a historical preservation group is in publishing genealogy charts and information and cemetery records. Because of the work of a committee who functioned as part of a Bicentennial project, such information is available. The Denton County Historical Commission Cemetery Survey, conducted in June of 1976, showed that there were 125 legible grave markers, eight illegible markers and fifty-plus unmarked graves. According to their information, the oldest legible marker was that of J.C. Smith, 1898. Others, in alphabetical order are:

Allred, Rhoda E.—B. August 29, 1898, D. March 22, 1976. F.H.M.
 Barnes, John T.—1862-1939.
 Boutwell, E.M.—B. and D. 1921.
 Boutwell, J.J.—1866-1942.
 Boutwell, Leo—1905-1971.
 Boutwell, Sarah M.—B. February 1, 1881, D. November 19, 1965. F.H.M.
 Bouthwell, Doris—B. 1911, D. 1977.
 Bowen, Elois Sylvia—Daughter of T.L. and F.A. Bowen. B. April 19, 1905, D. March 22, 1907.
 Brand, E.L.—B. October 5, 1883, D. June 15, 1925.
 Brand, Mary A.—B. October 8, 1853, D. March 4, 1924.
 Brand, T.R.—B. April 2, 1939, D. March 24, 1918.
 Buell, Alice Howland—Wife of Thomas Warner Buell. B. February 10, 1836, D. January 11, 1911. D.S.
 Buell, Annie Giles—Wife of E.C. Buell. B. July 30, 1874, D. March 22, 1916.
 Buell, Erwin C.—Husband of Annie Giles Buell. B. October 4, 1869, D. September 1, 1939.

Buell, Marian Allen—1881-1970.
 Buell, Thomas Warner—Husband of Alice Howland Buell. B. December 7, 1831, D. December 20, 1906. D.S.
 Buell, Thomas Warner Jr.—1877-1952.
 Cardwell, Charles C.—Husband of Lou B. 1875-1950. D.S.
 Carpenter, Blanche—Wife of William J. B. December 14, 1882, D. January 5, 1955. D.S.
 Carpenter, Ruby—1915-1918.
 Carpenter, William J.—Husband of Blanche. B. January 6, 1876, D. September 19, 1940. D.S.
 Cowan, Anna Schoolfield—Wife of Samuel Houston Cowan. B. October 30, 1860, D. January 24, 1936. D.S.
 Cowan, Bessie R.—B. March 31, 1885, D. July 5, 1951.
 Cowan, C.A.—Husband of Gertrude E. B. August 17, 1876, D. August 2, 1964.
 Cowan, Gertrude E.—Wife of C.A. Cowan. B. September 13, 1880, D. September 18, 1913.
 Cowan, Ida Lee—B. October 4, 1874, D. January 30, 1971. "Any mail, Miss Ida?"
Note: Miss Ida was the postmistress in Roanoke from April 14, 1910 to June 30, 1947 – 37 years.
 Cowan, J.S.—1848-1903.
 Cowan, Samuel Houston—Husband of Anna Schoolfield Cowan. B. December 15, 1858, D. July 20, 1928. D.S.
 Cowan, William—B. October 7, 1832, D. November 4, 1910.
 Etter, Mrs. Mattie—1875-1939.
 Fanning, Annie I.—Wife of Charles G. B. 1892, D. 1962. D.S.
 Fanning, Claude W.—Husband of Annie I. 1868-1934. D.S.
 Fanning, Charles G.—Husband of Mary Nell. B. September 12, 1863, D. January 1, 1966. D.S.
 Fanning, Thomas Aubrey—B. August 27, 1912, D. June 1, 1917.
 Fawks, Fannie S.—B. October 3, 1859, D. January 1, 1937.
 Foster, R.B.—B. July 6, 1849, D. April 25, 1909.
 Foster, Ralph Woodrow—B. April 17, 1914, D. December 1, 1916.
 Gavin, May Elizabeth—Daughter of M. Gavin. B. January 9, 1872, D. June 21, 1905.
 Hayden, Christopher—B. February 16, 1838, D. February 24, 1912.
 Hogan, B.F.—Died April 8, 1902, Aged 40 years.
 Holland, Herbert S.—Husband of Roney D. Holland. B. January 21, 1898, D. September 2, 1970. D.S.



- Holland, Roney D.—Wife of Herbert S. B. June 22, 1897, D. January 7, 1967, D.S.
- Horton, Ida M.—Daughter of J.R. and E.M. Horton. Age 5 mos., 2 days.
- Hysmith, Lettie G.—Wife of L.C. Hysmith. B. February 10, 1878, D. August 30, 1905.
- Jarrell, Dora Phillips—Wife of M.F. Jarrell. B. March 31, 1868, D. August 4, 1917.
- Jarrell, J. Wilson—B. September 1, 1893, D. January 24, 1929.
- Jarrell, Martin F.—B. February 8, 1869, D. September 16, 1929.
- Kinley, Ancil James—B. July 23, 1910, D. April 6, 1963.
- Lassen, Anna A.—B. August 5, 1865, D. April 23, 1958. M.S.
- Lassen, Erich G.—1898-1968.
- Lassen, Gertrude—B. March 25, 1900, D. December 14, 1913.
- Lassen, Hedwig A.—B. September 29, 1905, D. November 19, 1991, M.S.
- Lassen Peter—B. January 17, 1866, D. March 26, 1958. M.S.
- Lay, Elijah Homer—B. May 18, 1874, D. December 17, 1906.
- Lee, Susan E.—1884-1975.
- McAnally, Lucy C.—Wife of Marion L. B. 1875, D. 1958. D.S.
- McAnally, Marion L.—Husband of Lucy C. 1850-1937. D.S.
- McMahon, Bryson A.—1916-1917.
- McMahon, Ethel L. (Flowers)—Wife of John Austin McMahon. B. February 24, 1874, D. August 21, 1941. D.S.
- McMahon, Helen I.—B. July 7, 1919, D. June 8, 1948.
- McMahon, John Austin—Husband of Ethel L. B. February 24, 1874, D. August 21, 1941. D.S.
- Mitchell, Edna Mae—Wife of Willie M. B. November 28, 1912, D. June 24, 1971. D.S.
- Mitchell, Elizabeth—Wife of J.W. Jr. B. January 26, 1908, D. March 12, 1958. D.S.
- Mitchell, J.W.—Husband of Mattie. 1877-1954. D.S.
- Mitchell, J.W. Jr.—Husband of Elizabeth. B. November 21, 1907, D. August 4, 1993. D.S.
- Mitchell, Mattie—Wife of J.W. Mitchell. 1875-1952. D.S.
- Mitchell, Thelbert Wayne—B. July 18, 1946, D. September 6, 1954.
- Mitchell, Willie M.—Husband of Edna Mae. B. September 2, 1900, D. August 16, 1982. D.S.
- Moore, Dr. F.P.—B. August 25, 1848, D. October 9, 1900.
- Nelson, Ernest George—Husband of Velma Frances. B. August 25, 1904, D. March 10, 1976. D.S.
- Nelson, Velma Frances—Wife of Ernest George. B. October 11, 1915, D. February 10, 1999. D.S.
- Newton, Lillyan W.—1887-1971.
- Owens, Bert E.—Husband of Ruby I. B. June 14, 1897, D. November 26, 1956. D.S.
- Owens, Clarence Leon—B. September 13, 1907, D. October 22, 1966.
- Owens, James Grant—B. December 22, 1924, D. February 16, 1964.
- Owens, James H.—Husband of Lula Ann. B. September 24, 1866, D. August 31, 1918. D.S.
- Owens, Lula Ann—Wife of James H. B. February 9, 1871, D. March 5, 1948. D.S.
- Owens, Ruby I.—Wife of Bert E. B. September 7, 1895, D. 1997. D.S.
- Pippin, Bluford—Husband of Georgia. B. December 23, 1879, D. June 2, 1977. D.S.
- Pippin, Georgia—Wife of Bluford. B. December 14, 1878, D. November 12, 1968. D.S.
- Pippin, Edgar Lee, Mrs.—B. February 4, 1904, D. August 3, 1976.
- Radney, Vivian—B. August 1929, D. July 22, 1976.
- Roark, Infant—Son of J.W. and E.W. Roark. B. and D. July 5, 1905.
- Roark, Dr. John W.—B. May 29, 1872, D. December 17, 1938.
- Robinson, Edwin Jerome—Son of C.E. and A.M. Robinson. B. October 1, 1899, D. February 22, 1913.
- Robinson, Frances Irene—Daughter of C.E. and A.M. Robinson. B. October 17, 1907, D. April 27, 1909.
- Reynolds, H.I.—1858-1938.
- Sams, C.A.—Husband of Lucinda. B. December 22, 1827, D. June 6, 1914. D.S.
- Sams, Lucinda—Wife of C.A. B. April 2, 1831, D. August 17, 1882, D.S.
- Seagraves, Dr. Btram—B. April 6, 1848, D. June 16, 1933.
- Seagraves, Emory Peter—B. October 13, 1895, D. May 21, 1897.
- Seagraves, J.H.—B. December 31, 1866, D. September 4, 1958.
- Seagraves, Lilly Murl—Wife of W.H. (Hise). B. May 25, 1871, D. February 5, 1964. D.S.
- Seagraves, Margaret M.—B. December 22, 1871, D. November 5, 1957.



Seagraves, Samuel T.—B. and D. October 4, 1969, F.H.M.
 Seagraves, W.H. (Hise)—Husband of Lilly Murl. B. May 25, 1871, D. February 5, 1964, D.S.
 Singleton, Willie H.—Son of S.H. and S.J. Singleton. D. January 11, 1902, Age 2 years, 10 mos. And 21 days.
 Smith, Amanda S.—B. February 15, 1876, D. July 28, 1951.
 Smith, Andrew M.—Husband of Mamie H. B. November 17, 1861, D. March 6, 1914.
 Smith, Arch W.—Husband of Ida I. 1872-1968. D.S.
 Smith, Ida I.—Wife of Arch W. Smith. 1881-1959. D.S.
 Smith, J.C.—Husband of Martha Smith. B. June 26, 1826, D. January 13, 1898. D.S.
 Smith, John D.—Son of J.G. and M. Smith. B. January 1, 1870, D. September 25, 1907.
 Smith, Mamie H.—Wife of Andrew M. B. September 5, 1861, D. February 1, 1953. D.S.
 Smith, Martha—Wife of J.C. B. February 20, 1832, D. March 28, 1902. D.S.
 Smith, R.H.—B. August 7, 1873, D. February 17, 1920.
 Stelle, Nellie J. (Pat)—1919-1975.
 Stephenson, Redin A.—B. March 26, 1904, D. August 5, 1976.
 Streetman, G.—B. May 11, 1889, D. December 26, 1907. Age 18 years, 7 mos., 15 days.
 Stump, Frank (Poo)—Husband of Sallie (Bonnie). B. December 6, 1852-D. August 17, 1945. D.S.
 Stump, Sallie (Bonnie)—Wife of Frank (Poo). B. March 30, 1863-D. November 6, 1955.
 Taylor, William C.—1878-1957.
 Thomason, George Stump—Infant son of J.W. and L.S. Thomason. B. October 30, 1907, D. January 16, 1911.
 Thomason, John W.—Husband of Lula S. 1883-1940. D.S.
 Thomason, Lula S.—Wife of John W. (dash) 1889-1926. D.S.
 Underwood, C.W.—B. April 13, 1909, D. November 19, 1976. D.S.
 Underwood, Ida Ruth—B. November 18, 1907, D. _____. D.S.
 Wharton, Martha L.—1854-1944.
 Wilson, H.B.—1874-1953.
 Wilson, Rosa Barnes—B. June 14, 1873, D. March 14, 1969.
 Wilson, Selma Foster—1875-1967.
 Woodburn, C.L.—1901-1950.

Note: Letters D.S. stand for Double Stone, M.S. for Marker or Marble Stone, and F.H.M. for Funeral Home Marker.

Some entries added from a supplement list provided with survey. Blanks left after D. indicate death has not occurred. Spelling of names taken directly from survey. Further information was provided by Dick Fanning, President of the Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery Association.

Odd Fellows in an uneven world

Odd name, Odd Fellows, but some say the words are exact – strange, funny, peculiar – those who are not necessarily in step with the popular world, as it was then when times were uneven, unstable and unpredictable. An informal history of the first Order in the United States, established in 1806 by five Brothers of the English Order and called the Shakespeare Lodge No.1, tells that the founders were three boat builders, a comedian and a vocalist. The first candidate for membership was a retired actor “who was the keeper of the tavern where they met.” The group didn’t last long – but they did, indeed, fit the description of odd.

The first official, recognized group of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows began in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1819 with a charter from the Duke of York Lodge in England. Thomas Wildey is considered the founder. He was born in London in 1782, became a member of a London Odd Fellow Lodge in 1804, emigrated to Baltimore in 1817 and, together with a few other English Odd Fellows, founded the Washington Lodge, No. 1, on April 26, 1819.

But who are they and what do they do? An Odd Fellows historian tells it best:

Where the Odd Fellows got their strange name, nobody knows. The word, “fellow,” has a number of meanings in the English language, one of which is

“brother.” Since the Order is a Fraternal Order, it is, of course, correct to translate “fellow” by “brother.”

It is more difficult to translate the word, “odd.” It could mean “remarkable, conspicuous, not normal.” In another text is said that “odd” has been derived from “Hod carrier.” It was then related to a simple workman in the building trade. “Odd” stems from “odes” and Odd Fellows are used to singing during their meetings. “Odd,” however, could also mean that members were different or special if compared with other organizations or that the members of the organization were unlike others. In the oldest known rituals (1797) the word, “odd,” is used in the meaning “apart – not belonging to” and that is a meaning most members of the Order can agree with.

Odd Fellows are members of an international brotherhood that is at least some 250 years old. Some think the Order much older. In the 18th century, they believed what was told in an old legend; namely, that the Order came into being during the reign of King Solomon. Perhaps, the Order was brought to England by the Roman commander, Agricola, in the year 98 AD.

The Commandment to all Odd Fellows is to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and educate the orphan.

Almost immediately after the foundation of the Order in America it became clear that the order could not work without the help of women if they wanted to care for the sick and educate the orphans. The women’s group is known as the Rebekahs. The name is taken from the story in the Old Testament when Rebekah drew water from the well for both men and animals. She is considered to be the protectress of water and the symbol of life.

It is the aim of the Order to promote the brotherhood of man. Friendship, love and truth is the motto of the order and the emblem consists of three links standing for the words in the motto (www.ioof.org).

Another article found on the same website and written by Don R. Smith and Wayne Roberts offers further explanation of the Commandments of the Order:

Visiting the sick was a daring, bold thing to do in 1819 because Baltimore, Maryland, was in the grip of a severe epidemic and sickness, distress, death, and the inevitable result, orphans, were to be found everywhere.

Odd Fellow Lodges normally provided monetary sick benefits to its members who were ill or injured and unable to work. In addition, lodges commonly provided all kinds of assistance to members who were in need, such as a box of groceries, a cord of wood, or a member or visiting nurse to care for a seriously ill member at home.

Burying the dead was taken very seriously by early Odd Fellows, and most lodges purchased land and established cemeteries as one of their first activities in a new town or city. Remembering the widows on special holidays and at other special times during the year is a thoughtful way to demonstrate that Odd Fellows do care for those left behind.

Reasons for joining Odd Fellowship in the early days had a many faceted answer. In 1927, a book commented that no Odd Fellow or his dependents ever will become a public charge. Although the benefits of membership were not lavish, they did eliminate the possibility of being cold, hungry and homeless. The security of belonging to an organization which would help them in times of sickness, distress or death, and which operated homes for their care and the care of dependents if their funds were depleted were important.

Today, the Three Link Fraternity, as it is called, has been in the forefront of nearly all organizations in helping to make this world a better place in which to live. Sponsorship of Boy and Girl Scout troops, youth organizations, youth and adult athletic teams and leagues, hospital and nursing home programs, various health agencies including the Odd Fellows World Eye Bank and Visual Research Foundation, educational loans and scholarships, and generally helping to make this world a better place in which to live are some of the activities of modern day Odd Fellows and Rebekahs. ❧

ROANOKE, ONCE AND AGAIN

— *by James Ward Lee* —

Draw a ten-mile circle around Roanoke today, and you will include Trophy Club, Alliance Airport, the Texas Motor Speedway, the north edges of Keller, Southlake, most of Westlake, and a goodly chunk of Lake Grapevine.

A century-and-a-half ago, a ten mile circle around Roanoke would have included only the Medlin Settlement, which was founded by immigrants from Missouri in 1847 a couple of miles north

of Roanoke on Denton Creek. The settlement was named for Louis and Charles Medlin, but later the name was changed to Garden Valley.

But by 1879, the folks from Medlin learned what all good Denton Countians know: Denton Creek will rise suddenly and wipe out houses and farms. So they moved south to a place closer to present-day Roanoke. And then not more than two years later, that nineteenth-century phenomenon, the railroad, came.

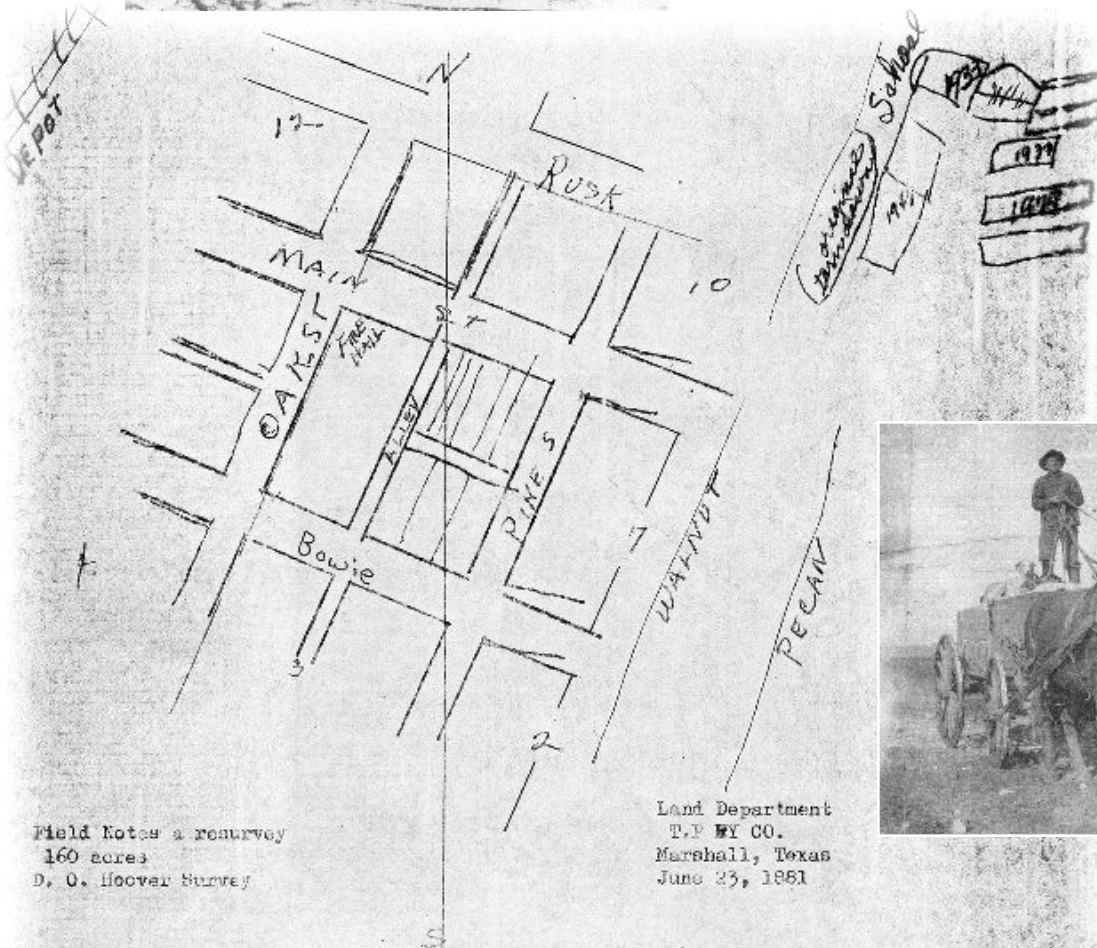
Young boy poses at site of boiler explosion at Jack Medlin's cotton gin where Clint Merritt, Sam Seagraves and Charlie Cleveland were killed on November 23, 1917.





Settlers who wanted to be in a town moved to be close to the railroad, the old Texas and Pacific, later the Missouri Pacific or Mopac. The railroad still cuts through the middle of Roanoke, as does Highway 377, the main road from Fort Worth to Denton before Interstate 35 was built to the west of town. Even today, 377 is a busy highway pouring people from Denton and Argyle south to Keller and Watauga and Haltom City and finally into Fort Worth.

Running east and west through town is Highway 114, which runs along the south side of Northpark Mall in Dallas and is known there as Northwest Highway. The highway leads away from Dallas to the northwest, toward Roanoke, toward



Upper Left: Berry Hood standing at door of Eli G. Harris's log cabin located east of wire bridge on north side of Denton Creek.

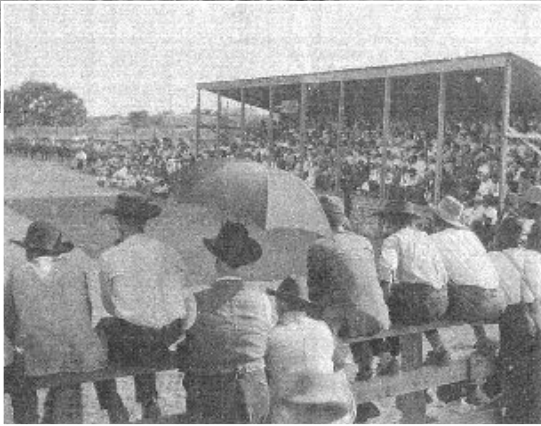
Left: Map of Town of Roanoke, 1881

Below: Ed Reed and his dog, Fuller, who liked to kill polecats.





Above: Looking north on Oak Street on Trade Day early 1900s



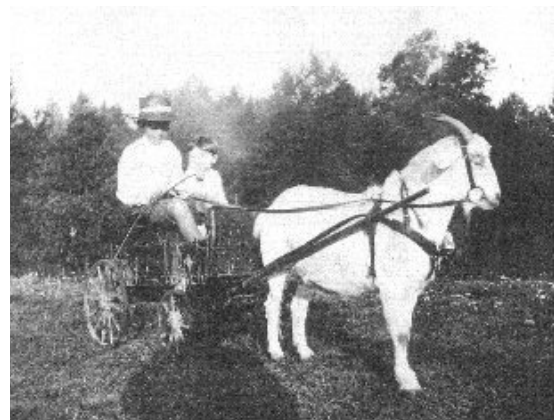
Left: Baseball game, 1905

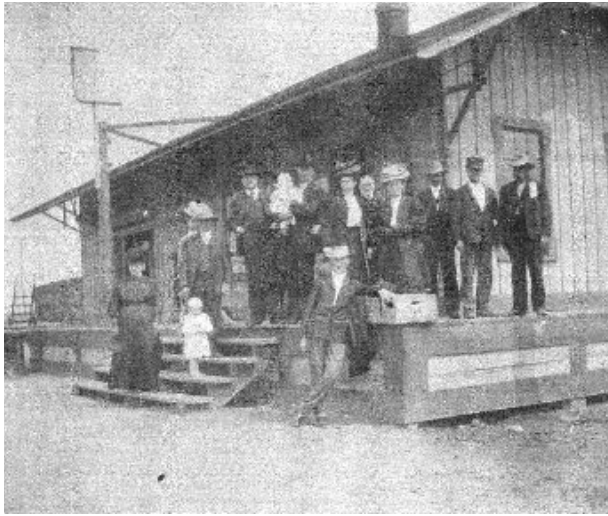
Justin, toward, as the name suggests, “the northwest.” The road actually ends, if my map is correct, in eastern New Mexico. Even the school district that Roanoke children attend is called Northwest ISD.

Like hundreds of Texas towns, Roanoke was named by one of the railroad men. And he did what people of nineteenth-century Texas often did: he named the town after another town—one in Virginia. (The largest number of Texas towns and cities are named for people—witness Denton, Dallas, Houston, Austin, and Krum; the second largest source for names comes from other cities in “the Old States” or in Europe—witness Roanoke, Paris, Athens, Boston and Old Boston and New Boston in East Texas.)

In its early days, Roanoke was a center for the cattle trade. A history of Roanoke written in the 1960s says that the town had “robust cattlemen, two saloons, a horse trough, and water tank, located in the center of what is now Oak Street. The settlers would

Clarence Garland and Hood Jenkins sitting in wagon drawn by billy goat, 1910.





Above: Waiting on the platform for the Texas and Pacific.

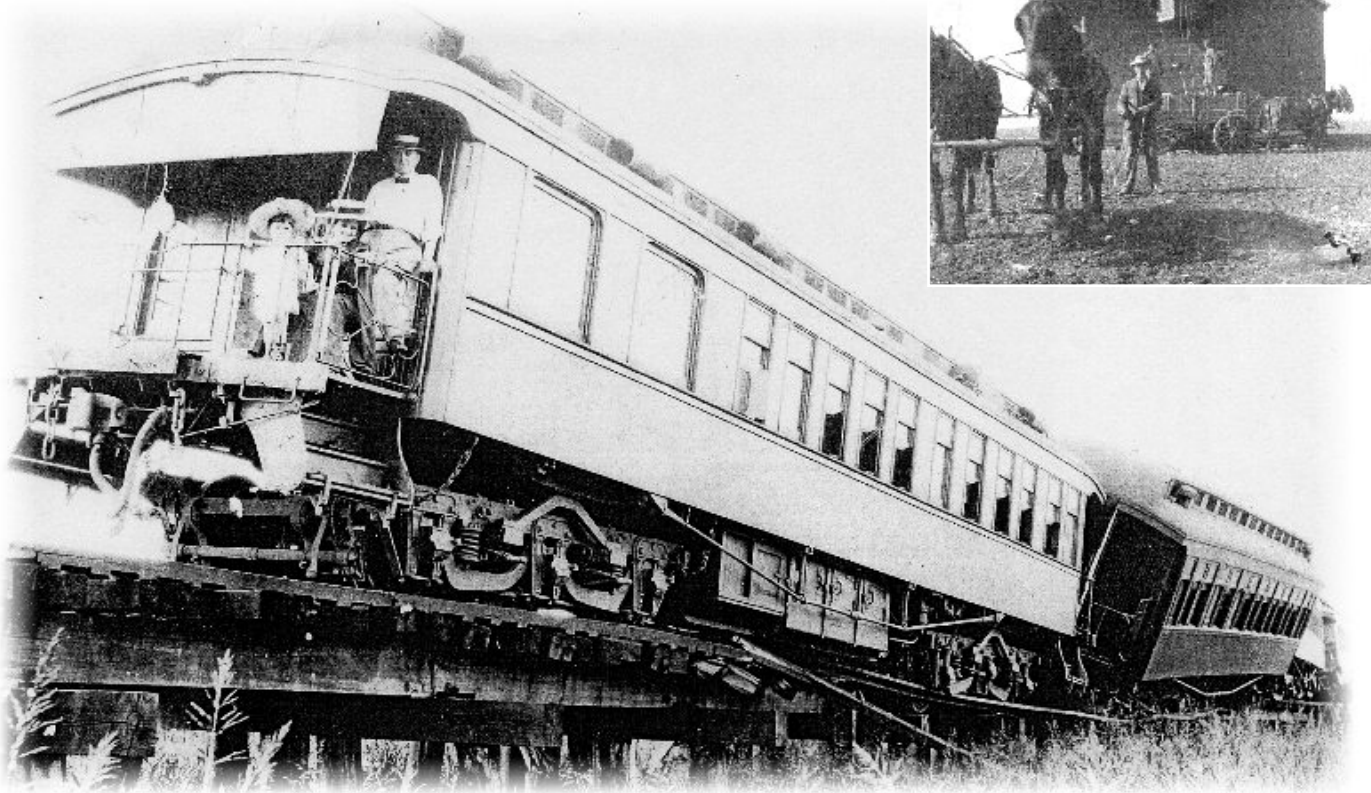
Below: Below: Train wreck, early 1900s, near depot where two men were killed.

Below Right: Unloading cotton seed from wagon to barn.

bring their barrels and buckets in horse drawn wagons ... to fill them with the water they needed.”

In the old days, Roanoke not only had two saloons, but there were two hotels—the Pacific and the Eureka. Those are what one might call exuberant names for hostelrys in such a small place. This small community had a poolhall way back in the late 1890s, and you remember what Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man* said about pool rooms! Those must have been heady days back when Roanoke haircuts cost fifteen cents and shaves a dime. How long has it been since anybody in Denton or Tarrant Counties went in for a “shave and haircut for two-bits”?

Like every other city in North Texas—and many as far away as Round Rock—Roanoke has its





21 girls, 16 boys and teacher in Roanoke Grade School

Sam Bass legends. As the song says, "Sam Bass he was from Indiana/It was his native home." But his fame rests on his exploits in Texas, especially in and around Denton County when he did his best robbing on what was called in story and song, "The Denton Mare." There is a cave to the northeast of Roanoke where Sam Bass hid some of his loot. Someone once said that there are over 2,000 Sam Bass caves in Texas, each containing \$20,000 in gold. Many are still looking for Sam Bass gold and lost silver mines. So far.....

Roanoke lived its happy unincorporated life until 1933, when the residents decided to make it all

official and registered the community as a town. After all, there were over four hundred citizens. (The estimated population as of 2003 is about 4,690.) There had been a U. S. Post Office there since 1882 and a Masonic Hall built on Oak Street in 1905. It is still there. And there were cotton gins and a grain elevator and over thirty businesses. Before Prohibition, there had been a saloon. And way back, around the turn of the century, there was a racetrack. And not for cars like the present nearby speedway, of course.

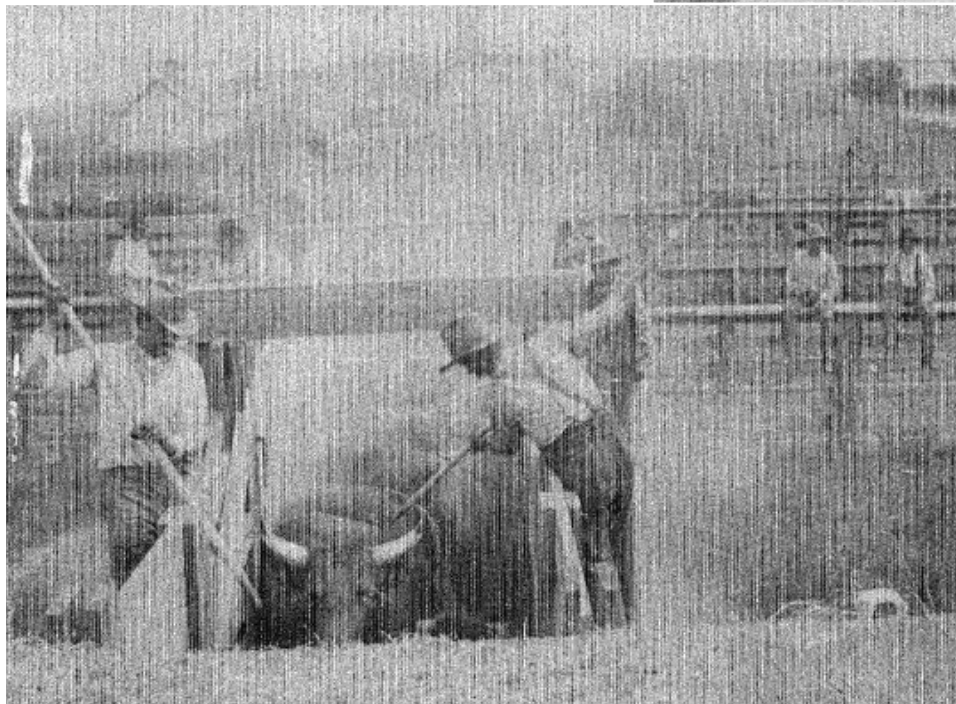
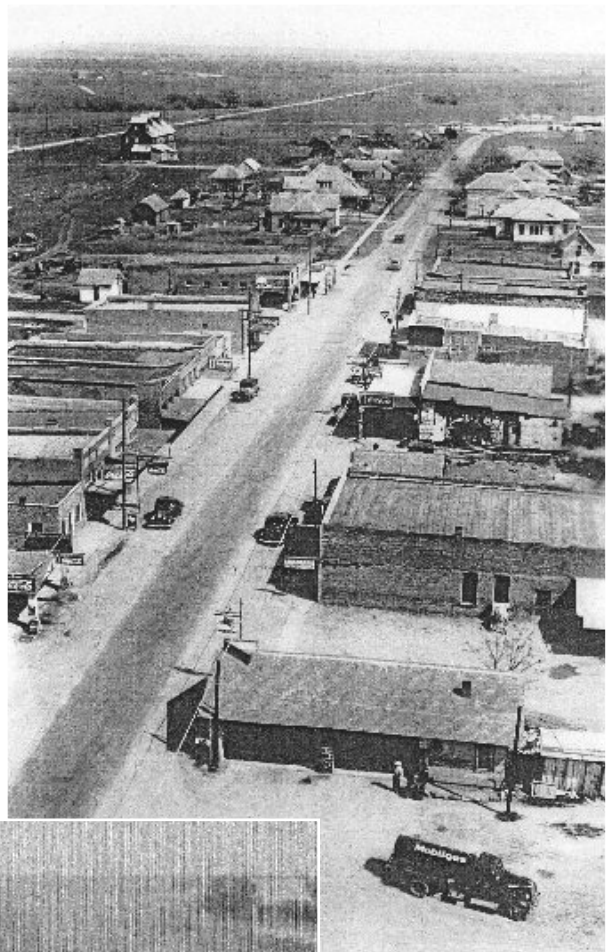
Roanoke is still a small town, but what was once a one-church town, having only "the Union

Church,” by 1962 there were five churches. And at present there are nine. No longer such a small town at a crossroads of three highways and a rail line, people in the hundreds flock today to the Classic Café for gourmet food or to Babe’s for fried chicken. It makes one wonder “Where will it all end.” Happily I am sure. 🍁

James Ward Lee is Professor Emeritus, University of North Texas, where he taught some forty years. He served as chair of the English department and was director for the Center for Texas Studies. He is considered the pen-ultimate literary critic of Texas literature, publishing widely on the subject. A book of personal essays, Texas, My Texas, (UNT Press) is his best work to date. He is a member of Texas Institute of Letters and the Texas Folklore Society.

Right: View from the water tower shortly after construction looking north on Oak Street.

Below: Loading cattle from pens to cattle cars



*Roanoke Photographs
Courtesy of*

ALBERTA LINCECUM

FROM THE
H.W. JENKINS
AND
UNA BRAND JENKINS
COLLECTION

CHARLES RICHARD “DICK” FANNING...

a man for all generations

—by Jack Wiesman—

Dick Fanning is what you might call well connected to the Roanoke area through his ancestry. He has been the president of the Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery Association for nineteen years, making him premiere guardian of the past. The association was formed in 1946.

A look at his family tree is impressive. His great grandfather was Jacob Harrison Fanning who arrived in the Roanoke area in 1875, coming from Illinois by train. His great grandmother was Hanna Elizabeth Sayre. Both are buried at Chapel Cemetery located

near Alliance Airport on the west side of Highway 135. Jacob's brother, John A. Fanning was the first of the family line to arrive in Denton County, coming in 1855 by wagon and settling on a farm southwest of Roanoke.

His grandfather was Charles Grant Fanning who was born in Roanoke. He was a farmer until 1905 and then became a rural route mail carrier from 1907 until 1931. His grandmother was Annie Ida Sams. Annie was the daughter of Calvin Abner Sams whose name is attached to Sams School, a schoolhouse

Charles Grant Fanning home, about 1905; left to right Elizabeth Fanning, Claude Walter (Buster) Fanning, Mable Fawks Warren, Ruby Fanning Owens, Annie Ida Sams Fanning.

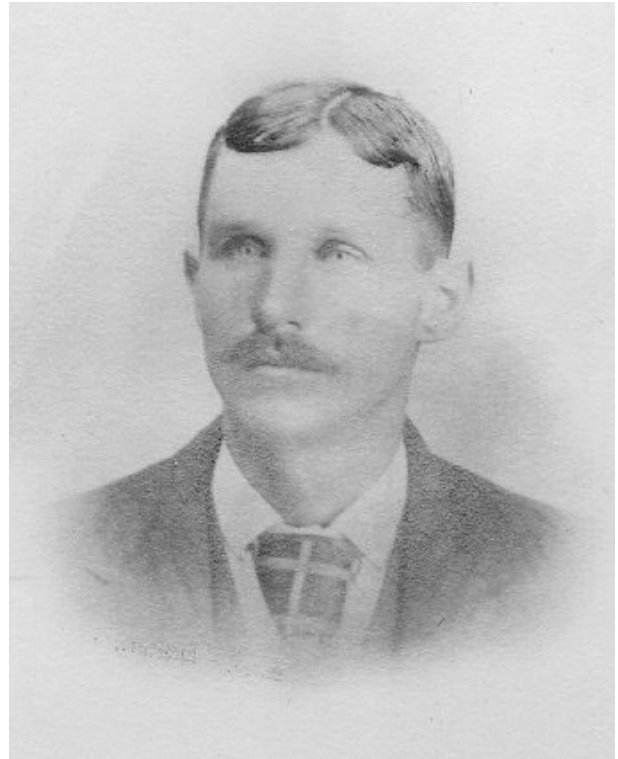


that used to be near the corner of Sams School Road and Dove, now in Westlake's town limits. Both are buried in the Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

Dick's father was Claude Walter Fanning, also born in Roanoke in 1893. He was a banker and also worked for Jenkins Hardware, served in France and Germany during World War I and was the second mayor of Roanoke from 1946 to 1958. His mother was Mary Nell Savage. Both are buried in the Roanoke I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

Dick's first wife was Julia Geneva Foster who is buried in Chapel Cemetery. Their children are Dixie Dianne Fanning Haynes and Richard Curtis Fanning. His present wife is Lauretta Jane (Wilson) Blackmon.

Fanning started working for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, known as CONVAIR, in 1942 when the company started building the B-24 Liberator aircraft at the beginning of World War II. He retired from General Dynamics in 1985 where he worked in structural design in the engineering department on such planes such as the B-36, B-36H that carried a nuclear payload, B-32, YB-60, F-102, TF-102, F-111 and F-16. ✂



Charles Grant Fanning

Chapel Cemetery near Alliance Airport



I REMEMBER...

— by Pat Turner —

What did you do in the “olden days” when there was nothing to do? It’s a question often put to senior citizens by children who want to know what childhood was like long ago. I put such a question to my friend, Pat Turner, who has multi-generational ties to the original settlers of the Medlin settlement and early Roanoke, asking her to recall instead what the grown-ups did for entertainment. The answer was – volleyball tournaments. (J.G.R.)

I can’t believe I am old enough to write about the “good ole days.” Evidently, however, the time has come.

Sports were a big thing for all of us in school – basketball, softball and volleyball for the girls with

basketball, baseball and football for the boys. The men continued to play basketball and baseball after they graduated, organizing into teams that played other teams from other small towns. School gyms were available for anybody to use. Volleyball was the one sport that both men and women could play, but at first only the men played. It was unusual for this reason: The men did not play volleyball in school, not only in Roanoke or in other small towns either. It was considered a girls’ sport. Maybe, because of their ball-handling skills and athletic ability, they found it a sport they could learn and get good at. And it gave us all another “season” to get together. Curt got a team together when we first married and lived in Grapevine. We moved to Roanoke in 1961.

Roanoke covered in snow, January 1947



Everyone that could “showed up” and that determined who would be playing. But the biggest hope was that there would be a set-up for each spiker. As the teams evolved, pairs developed and sharpened their skills at setting up the ball in the best position for a spiker to jump high, close to the net, to slam the ball in a place so that the opposing team couldn’t return it. The rest worked on recovering the ball after a serve from the opposing team and putting it in a favorable position close to the net. Strategy was a team effort. Everyone who came got playing time. Most everyone was a true “team player” – they had played sports all their lives and each one would take themselves out if it meant losing or winning a game in order to have the best on the floor.

Later, the women organized into a team. It wasn’t long before there was enough for two men’s and two women’s teams. Through the years we traveled many miles for a game, sometime only to play a particular town.

Curt and I recall many a time speeding down a country road trying to make the starting time during all types of weather – icy roads, downpours of rain, tornadoes and such did not deter our mission. The team rarely drove together but just all ended up at the same place at starting time.

Once, when going to Rhome for a game, we noticed that the weather was a little turbulent but not too bad. When we pulled up at the gym, there were many cars parked outside, but as we entered the building, an eerie feeling crept over us. Tables were set up with food to sell – hot coffee, fresh pies and the like. The lights were all on. The net was up and there were volleyballs on the court – but no people. Not a soul was in sight. Jackets, books and half-eaten food was scattered around the bleachers. We walked outside to see if something was going on. Nothing. We went back in and called out, hoping to get an answer. Absolute stillness.

In a few minutes we saw people seeming to come from nowhere. They had been in the basement

of the gym riding out a tornado. We did not know there was a basement and we certainly did not know there had been a tornado. Games began shortly and all was well.

Usually we played night games during the week and tournaments on Saturday. Some of the big tournaments, however, had to have night games and then the finals began early on Saturday. As I recall, during volleyball season we played at least one night during the week and most Saturdays.

Uniforms were interesting; in fact a joke for many years. When the men began playing at the Roanoke school gym, they all came as they were in “comfortable” clothes, consisting of cut-offs, greasy pants, torn levis, loose tacky shirts and the like. People

Trade Day; H.W. Jenkins’ Hardware Store, 1946



came dressed as they were, knowing they would go home sweaty and dirty. However, the men carried it way too far. As soon as their team improved and became “the team to beat,” they got a lot of comments about their “attire,” deciding to keep the unkempt look as their trademark. A big-city team would hear of their prowess and call wanting to come out to this little town and show us how volleyball ought to be

of our players reported the mistake to the officials and was told that the net couldn’t be raised any higher. His reply was “You mean we can put a man on the moon and can’t manage to raise a volleyball net?” A way was found to raise the net.

Once a friend from Justin built up the Roanoke team’s image, bragging to a Denton team about how good they were. An arrangement was

In a few minutes we saw people seeming to come from nowhere. They had been in the basement of the gym riding out a tornado. We did not know there was a basement and we certainly did not know there had been a tornado.

played. They went back to the city having learned a hard lesson – looks do not make a player.

Jim Steele played with the Roanoke team. Later Johnny Sue, Jim’s wife, played too. One time, Jim’s mother came to a game to watch him play and when his team came on the court she asked Johnny Sue who those “seedy looking” men were. About that time her son came on the court and joined the “seedy” bunch. As wives, we wished the men would spruce up a little, but it was amusing to be at an away game to hear the remarks from the audience before they saw them play.

The team did like to show off a bit. Beside that lack of “proper attire” one of their “fun acts” was during warm-up when they laughed and joked and shot hoops with the volleyball. One player could jump flat-footed up to the stage from the floor, a feat that always got the crowd’s attention. Gyms back then always included a stage on one end of the court, since it also served as an auditorium for programs, graduation and other events.

Competition was fierce, but rarely was there any cheating or uncontrolled acts of temper – and no violence. There was one incident when a team lowered their net about six inches below the standard height, thus giving a shorter team an advantage. One

made for the two teams to meet in the Justin gym. As a joke on the friend, the Roanoke team decided to switch the spiker and server positions for the first game, with disastrous results. The Denton team won handily and the friend was beside himself. Our team put the positions back in order and won the next two games just as easily as they lost the first one.

Occasionally, a team would import a good spiker from somewhere, but it seldom made a difference as our team was well-rounded and played together so long that could adjust to almost any situation.

Each town sponsored tournaments and this was the way to raise money for equipment, trophies and supplies or help with some project in the town. The women, many of whom played on teams too, prepared the food with help from non-players, set up tables, staffed the tables and ran the whole affair. Incidentally, small towns used to raise money by feeding the public at bake-sales, chili suppers and pancake breakfasts to air-condition the school, build ball fields, buy fire trucks or build community buildings.

In the beginning the team consisted mainly of men who had gone to school together. Many left Roanoke after marrying, or as in our case, being drafted during the Korean War. However, we hadn’t gone

far and it was easy to get us back together. By this time we were beginning to have families and it was before babysitters were so popular. We took our children wherever we went, unless a grandparent kept them. Our youngest son, after being taken to his older brother's football, baseball and basketball games and his parent's baseball, softball and volleyball games, would sometimes beg to be left with someone – anyone. He had had enough of sleeping on the bleachers. During these early years, everyone brought their children and they did have good times. They were allowed to visit with one another and play games. Sometimes they got on the court, although by accident, crawling out to get to a parent. Someone always got them out of harm's way in time and the game went on.

There are names that deserved to be called, although I don't remember all of them – Bill Pulliam, Bill Thomas, Truitt Peterson, Roger Tidwell and couples, Gene and Anita Brown, Jim and Johnny Sue Steele, Mickey and Vondal Reed, Claude and Joyce Roach, Curt and Pat Turner; and Cozette Harris, Mona Webb, Patsy Holloway, Marla Ratliff, Wanda Smith, Jackie Malone, Lahonda Peterson, Elaine Brown, Charlene Odom, Diane, Joy Smith.

And I want to thank my husband, Curt, the Reeds, Browns, Clarks, Tidwells and Cozette Harris for jogging my memory.

Yes, they were the good ole days in, oh, so many ways. 

Pat Turner's father was Henry Luttrell who had the Conoco station on the southeast corner of Highway 114 and Oak Street, now a vacant lot next to the Roanoke Drive-In. Henry is a descendant of the Charles Medlin family who originally settled the area in 1847 as part of the Missouri Colony. Pat's mother, Oma (Polley) Luttrell was raised in the Florence area. Curt's parents were Edna and L.D. Turner who came to Roanoke in the late 1930s from Justin and Ponder.



ROANOKE POST OFFICE DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

(Originally established as Elizabeth)

Postmasters

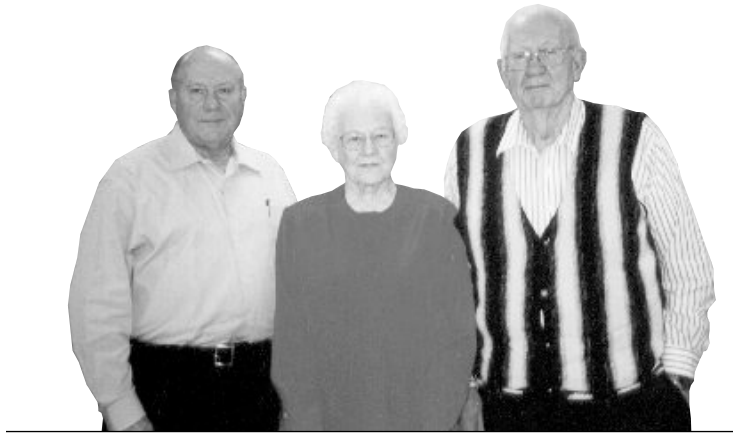
John W. Eatman	12/19/1870
Jackson G. Johnston	10/20/1871
George P. Merkendoller	06/02/1873
John H. Turner Sr.	12/14/1873
Augustus F. Wiggs	09/28/1874

CHANGED TO ROANOKE ON AUGUST 3, 1881

Augustus F. Wiggs	08/03/1881
Henry A. Biles	09/14/1887
Wesley O. Prather	09/26/1889
Mrs. Florra A. Odell	03/08/1890
George W. Medlin	02/24/1894
William Cowan	04/09/1898
Miss Ida L. Cowan	04/14/1910
George R. Jones	06/30/1947
George R. Jones	07/12/1947
Mrs. Anna Belle Lane	12/27/1961
John M. Tidwell	09/19/1964
Britta G. Schmidt	12/24/1990
Geary M. Reckling	10/06/1990
D.J. Taylor	12/20/1993

IN SEARCH OF YESTERDAY...

— an oral history interview by Kelly Bradley and Jack Wiesman —



Jack Wiesman, Emily Ragsdale and Conway Peterson

Kelly Bradley, Westlake Historical Preservation Board president and Jack Wiesman, associate editor of the journal, did a video-interview with Emily Ragsdale and Conway Peterson, long-time residents of the Roanoke area whose kinfolks were early settlers here. Such interviews are called oral histories and they illuminate time and place far better than merely facts. They also lend immediacy to the past through the flavor of idiom and speech patterns almost forgotten. The reader may find incorrect spelling of some surnames and place names in spite of efforts to get them right.

KB: We are interviewing two Roanoke residents that have been here for a long time and we will go with ladies first.

Emily: I'm Emily Bogart Ragsdale. I was a Bogart before I married; and the Bogarts lived here, too. I was born about a mile and a-half southwest of Roanoke in 1917. I am 84 and one-half years old.

Conway: My name is Conway Peterson – I am a Swede already – and I was born west of Roanoke about 5 miles. Dr. Roark delivered me and all us kids

were delivered in the same house out on the farm that is at the north end of Alliance Airport. There were six of us in all.

KB: And even though you lived one side of town and you lived the other side of town you both went to the Roanoke schools – right?

Conway: We wound up there but I went to Elizabeth the first five years.

Emily: But we did have the same Doctor Roark to deliver us. And we knew each other and knew of each other.

(Conway remarks that even though they will be talking about a lot of things in the past, they probably "won't talk about the one that got hung" or the hanging tree. Bradley replies, "Yes, that, too.")

Conway: I know the hanging tree; I saw it before it fell; it is not there any more. It was in the Oddfellows Cemetery in Westlake. I saw it before it fell. It was an old tree; no leaves on it – already dead before I saw it – it had fallen years ago.

KB: That is interesting because we thought it was still there.

Conway: N-o-o-o! There is a grave marker down there. I saw it once. I believe Buster Fanning saw to it that they got a marker for him.

Emily: I had a neighbor and he knew some of the people that was connected with Mr. Robison that was connected with that hanging – but I don't know if he had anything to do with it or not.

KB: Emily, tell us something about your family and when they moved to our area.

Emily: My father first came to Roanoke in 1905 in a covered wagon. He was married before he married my mother and had four children. They came and landed at Smithfield. She was in bad health and she wanted to go back home which was in Missouri, so he took her back home after they had lived here about three or four years. In the meantime, while they were in Missouri, she passed away and he came back to Texas and stayed at Roanoke since that was his home then. On visits back to Missouri, well, he got in connection with my mother. She had known him when he was living with his first wife, but they got to seeing each other and a romance started. So he sent for her and she came to Texas; they married in Fort Worth. My older brother was born in Smithfield and they moved to the Cartright farm about a year before I was born. The Cartright farm was about a mile and a-half southwest of Trophy Club about where the old Food Lion was, but now Tom Thumb owns it. There was another little road that went up to a big house on the hill. And there were three houses in a row that was just alike and we lived in the middle house. But my dad, when we was living with his first wife, lived in the big house on the hill and it was owned by a family from Weatherford by the name of Cartright

Conway: My grandfather, being from Sweden, and Uncle Fred, his older brother, came and he worked on the railroad and landed in New York. Then he worked his way down to Sedalia, Missouri. At that time they corresponded back to Sweden and my grandfather and his kid brother came over two years later and they met in Sedalia. Went over into

Kansas and then later on they worked on the railroad all the way across Oklahoma. When they got down into the Sherman area they started their own wagons with a freight business and they hauled freight to Fort Richardson in Jacksboro. They did that for about two years and then they located this farm out here just west of Alliance. They bought a few acres there – three brothers worked together and did not neither one marry for a long time. Then their sister Carlena was sent for and she came over and she was the housekeeper for the three boys for years. Then they sent for the rest of the family.

My father and mother started farming when they got married in 1912 on one of my grandfather's farms. He owned about sixteen different farms in the area at that time and he rented it to Dad on the halves. He furnished all the teams, wagons, all the seed and everything so dad would get half of it for just the labor. He would do that every couple of years. Later, Grandpa saw fit to give title to the land that my dad was working. Uncle Ben was working another piece of land but when it was divided, Daddy got 435 acres and had a \$13,000 debt on it, so you know there wasn't much was paid on it. Uncle Ben he got 500 and some odd acres with a \$9,000 debt.

They all worked pretty hard – all of them and us kids. We came to town, oh every five weeks or so, to get a haircut. I remember my dad would give me two quarters. I would get a haircut for myself and I'd give the barber the quarter for my baby brother. And I remember on two different occasions when I did that Mr. Smith said "You have been a good boy and I'm going to give you back a nickel." He did that twice. I was big enough to know to get an ice cream cone and if I was lucky I would get two licks off of that thing.

So Dad and Mother were, I guess you would say, prosperous but we did not know what extra money was because they were paying for the land. They built a big house and it still stands. And Intel bought part of the land out there from Perot and they saw fit to go to Arizona, I believe on account of Texas

wouldn't give them a tax break. They just shut their place down so the house out there is just standing now and they was going to tear it down. It was too expensive and the house was left. It's been empty for several years – my son was the last Peterson to occupy it, but I lived there longer than anyone. I came back from California after I retired and stayed with my mother for several years.

JW: Emily, what is the oldest memory you have as a youngster in this area?

Emily: Well, I started school when I was five and I have a lot of memories when I was in school but I remember before that when I was a kid. We always had company at our house. As I said, my dad had been married before he married my mother, and in fact all the children were grown and most of them married when he married my mother. All of his grandchildren was my age and there were some of them at our house all of the time. We did not have money to buy a lot of toys and would make our toys. We had swings on the trees and would take an old hoop of some kind and push it around over the place. We would get one or two bought toys at Christmas but most everything we played with were homemade toys.

Conway: As a youngster I can remember the old house that I was born in. And I can remember my sister being born on December 26th. We had a Delco electric system with a radio on it and when Jack Dempsey was fighting, my older brother took a lamp cord and went from the radio over to the speaker on the telephone. When the fight was going on everyone on the party line heard the fight.

I remember people coming to see us in the old house. A peddler came by and sold Mama a gallon bucket of syrup; I had it on the table rolling it back and forth, back and forth. And my brother came in and I run, because I was kinda afraid of him. The bucket fell on the floor and busted open.

JW: Emily, what was your father's occupation?

Emily: Well he was farmer and a dairyman, and he also worked on the highway from Roanoke to

Fort Worth when it was put in. I do not know what year that was. He worked at odd jobs, but his main profession was a farmer and dairyman. (*Date was possibly in the late 1920s or early '30s.*)

Conway: My daddy was strictly a farmer. He grew wheat, oats, barley, corn, sheep, cattle. We just had enough milk cows for the family. By the time I got to be sixteen I was running bundle wagons. I could keep up with my brother and bring in as big a load as he did. Dad got the first tractor in 1937. Then we got a combine. The thrasher had a stacker that rolled back and forth and you had a half-moon shaped haystack. You thrashed oats first and then wheat. You put your wheat on top to protect the oats underneath and the cattle tunnel in under and get the oats and straw.

KB: Emily, did you ever work in the fields or was your place in the kitchen?

Emily: Well, I worked some in the kitchen and I worked some in the field. I didn't do much field-work after I was grown, but I was probably anywhere from about nine to twelve years old when I did most of my field work.

Talking about the thrashing, now that was always the highlight of my summers. When the thrashers would come to our house, a bunch of the boys were the bundle carriers that stacked the grain and some of us girls would get out there and ride the bundle wagons with them and that was a big treat for us. My dad had a thrasher for a while and one of his cousins was the one that worked at the cook shack where we fed the workers.

JW: What about school? You said you went to Elizabeth?

Conway: Yes, Elizabeth. It was close to where the Speedway is now. It was a two-room school. It had a shingle roof and great big windows all on the north side; in fact the south side didn't have many windows because the cloakrooms were on the south side. We had a big porch where we went in. The smaller grades would go to the left, the higher grades go to the right

and in between would be a folding door, like an accordion door, that you close up and open. They'd get Mr. Jenkins' Hardware to loan them some lumber and they would build a stage and put on a big play there for everybody to come see.

South of the school building were horse sheds. They had a long tin shed that had stalls in it. I rode a horse for four years and then the school bus came by and picked us up. We would ride our horses and put them in the shed. The horses didn't get any feed or water all day long because they ate before they left and we would cross the creek on the way to school and they could drink and then drink again when we went back across the creek to go home.

Emily: I went to school here in Roanoke. I walked to school unless it was real cold or rainy; then sometimes dad would take us in the car. He was usually busy with farm work or something. When it was real cold he was afraid maybe I wouldn't make it and he would walk to town with me to be sure that I made it to town. But they also had a domino hall in town and it give him a chance to stay up there and play dominos all day and then I would walk home with him in the afternoon.

Conway: They closed the school at Elizabeth in the thirties sometime. They placed schools all around Roanoke because everything was horsepower, and every farmer had a tenant, and you had to have some way to educate all those kids. So they built schools – Star School, Elizabeth, Litsey, Medlin, Sams School – and the reason they placed them like that was so nobody had over two and a-half or three miles to go.

JW: At one time Roanoke was known for their cattle. Were there any ranches in this area?

Conway: Well now, there was a few scattered ones, yes. There was Onis Fenelson and Bud Day. And Mr. Jenkins had some cattle range. They would have a roundup every fall and we kids always enjoyed seeing them get out and driving the cows into town. They had a cattle pen down by the railroad where

they would hold them before shipping. They would drive them by our house and we were afraid to get out in front of them or anything but we liked to watch the cattle drive.

JW: What kind of disasters can you remember – like tornadoes, floods, fires and such?

Conway: Well now, the biggest thing that they had in this town was the gin blowing up years ago around 1917. We didn't have a mill here but Bewley Mills in Fort Worth bought grain – oats and wheat. It was taken by wagon; or shipped by train and later trucked there. When it was taken in wagons, their scales was fixed to where it would raise up. The team would set still, you know, and the team wouldn't be bothered. The wagon would tilt up in the back.

JW: Tell me how the Great Depression affected you.

Emily: Well, I know that I have heard about the Depression and I am sure that my family felt it, but we lived on the farm and we raised our own garden stuff and we killed pigs and killed chickens and we killed calves for our meat. We never went hungry and we supplied food for a lot of people. Dad had married children at that time and they would come out and he would load them up with stuff that we had canned. My mother canned all summer long and one of my chores was helping with canning. Anybody that come along selling peaches or apples or anything, Dad would go out and buy them by the bushels. We'd peel apples and peel peaches and can them. We always had plenty of food.

We didn't have any entertainment except there was a silent-movie house in Roanoke and we kids would come to town and watch that. Medicine shows would come through town nearly every year and that was a big treat for us too, but other than that we entertained ourselves out on the farm. There was three, four, five houses on this one place on the Cartright farm and, of course, everybody had children. Any day that we weren't in school we were together playing ball or had some kind of games

going so we didn't miss anything then. Our families sometimes would get together just for a big cookout and we'd play outside games.

JW: What is the first automobile that your family had?

Emily: A Model T Ford. The year I was born he bought a new 1917 Ford. When I was two weeks old, they went to Missouri in it and the weather was bad and I think it took them nearly a month to get up there. (chuckles) And when I was older and raising my family, my mother would tell me things a lot of times about taking care of my kids. And I said anybody that would start on a trip like that with a two-weeks old baby doesn't need to tell advice (chuckles).

Conway: I can recall a 1928 Dodge – my dad had one older prior to that time but I can barely remember it. He kept that '28 until 1936 and bought a Plymouth. He pulled trailers and everything else with that old '28 Dodge and when we junked it they fired it up and drove it to where we started tearing it apart.

JW: Was most of the fire you used in the house back then primarily wood, coal or kerosene?

Conway: We used wood all together – except we had a small, I think a three burner, kerosene stove Mama would can on sometimes. The rest of it was all wood. We got our wood down at the creek bottom.

Emily: It was the same for us. We used wood and we didn't have enough on our place but there was always wood down around the creek. I think they were just glad to get the trees cut out down there because people would go down around Denton Creek and cut trees.

Conway: We'd cut hackberry trees. We'd take the wagon box off and leave just the running gears and we'd load those big logs on the wagon and take them to the house. I've seen a pile forty feet long and as high as we could pitch them. We had a circular saw and we would borrow a tractor from John *Ottanger*. (He pronounces it "ah-tang-er.")

KB: Now wait. *Ottanger*? Is that the same as Ottinger (ah-tin-jer)?

Conway: It is *Ottanger*, but you all call it Ottinger.

KB: So the real pronunciation is *Ottanger*.

Conway: It was *Ottanger* until you Yankees came along (Chuckles).

Emily: Really, I don't think that Ottinger was started until about the time they named this street out here, or road, Ottinger and some got to calling it Ottinger.

JW: Most of the communities around the north Texas area had either first Monday or trade days. Can you tell me a bit about this in Roanoke?

Emily: I don't remember whether it was called the first Monday or not, but we always had trade day and it was usually on a Saturday. Everybody, the farmers and everyone, would quit work at noon to come into town on Saturday afternoon and they would have games for kids to play, baseball games, and then things for the little kids – some kind of sack races, potato something; I don't know what it was. And the grocery store, they would give out tickets and whoever won the tickets for certain things would get something at the grocery store. And, it was just a fun day for people to come in on Saturday afternoon.

Conway: Meanwhile, I can't recall none of that cause dad had us working in the field at that time. I guarantee you if it was a fair day we was working.

JW: But they did have trade day?

Emily: We did and that was continued on until my children was little because I remember bringing them to town when they were little for the trades day. They might not have had it every Saturday but maybe once a month but they did have some kind of entertainment. 

Grateful acknowledgement is made to WHPB member,
Dale Merrigan, for transcribing the video text.

(Oral histories will continue in the Winter issue of the journal)

Dinner on the ground ...

Pat Turner's remembrances about food served up at volleyball tournaments puts me in mind of the kinds of foods for picnics or "dinner on the ground" at Decoration Days or community and church gatherings.

Nowadays, picnic food is easy on the cook, often pre-prepared fixings from the super-market – sacks of chips and cookies, cakes and pies, already-cut-up fruits of all kinds, vegetable trays, fried chicken, potato salad, canned or bottled drinks. Sandwiches take about the only preparation, using packaged breads, meats and cheeses and bottled dressings.

Not necessarily so in "old times gone, but not forgotten." Dinner on the ground – sometimes spelled, grounds, meaning eating somewhere on the premises rather than on actual ground – was an occasion calling for competition among the cooks.

If there was chicken, the bird had to have its neck wrung first. That's certainly a lost art. Then it was put in a pot of boiling water as an aid in plucking the feathers. Next, the clucker was cut-up in pieces, seasoned, covered in flour and fried to a golden brown in a cast-iron skillet filled with lard – animal fat.

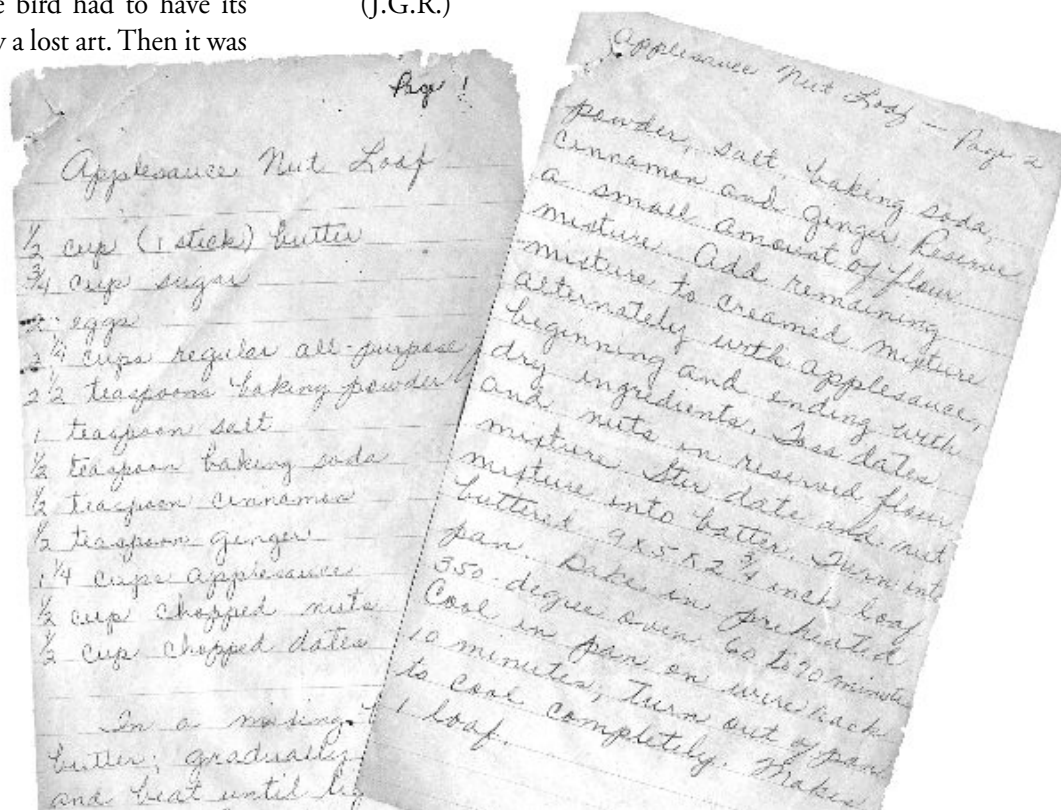
Vegetables came from the family garden. They had to be picked, washed, maybe cut up or sliced. If not that, vegetables had to be cooked – green beans, potatoes, black-eyed peas, squash, carrots and such. When cooked all were liberally seasoned with grease of some kind, preferably bacon drippings. Cooking meant just that; not left half raw and certainly not crunchy. 

Potato salad might be included and I don't have to tell you what trouble that is. Bread might be home-made and could be in the form of hot rolls – any of it trouble with a capital T.

Cakes and pies – well, Mercy! When is the last time you made your own piecrust and stood over a stove while the filling cooked; or fixed and iced a three-layer cake?

Then all of it – yes, all of it – had to be packed and carried to the event. It wouldn't be possible to provide recipes for everything, but just to remind you of the way life used to be, here's a simple recipe for an easy loaf cake suitable for taking to a picnic or "sociable" of any kind. The recipe was found among papers in the *Lyda White Collection*. There is no name attached.

(J.G.R.)



THE MEANING OF MEMORIAL DAY

by Frances Vick

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. Originally known as Decoration Day because it was a time set aside to honor the nation's Civil War dead by decorating their graves, it was first widely observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers. By proclamation of General John A. Logan, Decoration Day was "designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

Women of the South had been honoring their dead by decorating graves before the end of the Civil War. By the late 1800s, many communities across the country had begun to celebrate Memorial Day. This tradition changed after World War I to honor all those who died in any of America's wars.

In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated the last Monday in May. Memorial Day is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave by the 3d U.S. Infantry. It

is customary for the president or vice-president to give a speech honoring the contributions of the dead and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In 1968 Congress also changed the commemoration of Veterans Day, a day set aside to honor all veterans living and dead, from November 11 to the

fourth Monday in October. November 11 was originally known as Armistice Day, the day the fighting stopped in World War I. In 1921 an unknown World War I American was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on a hillside overlooking Washington, D. C. After other wars were fought, Armistice Day

was changed in 1954 to honor all veterans in all wars. Unknown Americans from World War II, Korean and Vietnam Wars joined their unknown brother from World War I. To honor these men, an Army honor guard, the 3d U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) keep vigil day and night. ❧



Photo of World War I funeral courtesy of Ruby Held. Her father, Robert Lee Palmer, is the soldier facing the casket just to the right of the American flag, which is made of flowers.

VETERANS IN ROANOKE I.O.O.F. CEMETERY

Civil War: Frank "Poo" Stump

World War I: Claude W. "Buster" Fanning

World War II: James V. "Hymie" Carpenter,
Kenneth Mitchell, Willie M. Mitchell, Beecher
L. Roberts, Frank Lee Thompson, Jack York

Vietnam: Jimmie Jack Daniel, Al Lee Steele

MY MEMORIAL DAYS

—by Frances Vick—

There are three graves that lie together in Lake Jackson Restwood Cemetery that always carry two flags on Memorial Day. One belongs to my brother's grave and one belongs to my father's grave. There should be one on my mother's grave, too. Her sacrifice was as great.

I have my mother's copy of *Best Loved Poems of the American People*. It is both painful and uplifting to read through it and look at the notes she left on some of the poems. One of the most painful to read is "I Have A Rendezvous with Death," by Alan Seeger, where she has written, "The last poem I heard my son give, December 11, 1944." And she has added what my brother said after reciting it: "Woman, you didn't know I was an Alan Seeger man, did you?" He apparently was trying to prepare her for whatever might come when he went overseas and into action. And it did come, on May 9, 1945, in a bombing raid on a supposed kamikaze base, when ground fire brought down Crew 17, Patrol Bombing Squadron 102 in their PB4YI, with my brother Andy on board. He lies out there somewhere in the deep.

In *Bingen on the Rhine*, by Caroline Norton, "where the soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers," my mother has bracketed the following lines:

*Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob
with drooping head,
When the troops are marching home again
with glad and gallant tread,
But to look upon them proudly, with a calm
and steadfast eye,
For her brother was a soldier too, and not
afraid to die.*

I have always assumed she meant for me to read that and act accordingly, which I have tried to do

down through the years, but I find it harder to do so in my older years than in my younger. The tears come much easier now.

My mother died in 1958, at age fifty-three, thirteen years after my brother was shot down over Marcus Island in the South Pacific. She battled cancer from 1953 until her death, which my brother Pat says was really caused by a broken heart. I can't argue with him. However, it left the task to me to be the one who represented the family at different monument raisings and such in later years. True to the admonition to *not weep for me*, I carried out those functions to the best of my ability in my mother's stead.

When my father was approaching his death in 1977, he asked Pat to arrange a military funeral and said he wanted it to be a joint funeral since there had

Seaman First Class, Andy Brannen, Patrol Bombing Squadron 102.



never been one for Andy. My father had been a Marine in World War I and World War II, and although he was a school man through and through, having taught and been an administrator for over thirty-five years, he felt deeply about the Marine Corps. It also apparently bothered him that no funeral had ever been held for Andy although the tombstone had been erected which gave all the appropriate information.

There had been no funeral because the telegram that came said Andy was missing in action, although my mother knew from the beginning that he was gone. My father held out hope until the war was over in August that Andy had been captured and was a Japanese prisoner of war. I guess that by the time the final telegram came they thought it was too long after the fact to hold a service.

The funeral was to be arranged through the local American Legion Post, the one named for Andy. My brother made the mistake of asking our father if he wanted Marines to be the honor guard, which our father said yes to with alacrity. As Pat said, from then on our father told everyone to be sure to come to his funeral because it was going to be a real show, complete with Marines. As Pat later said, it took some doing getting the Marines there but after he told the colonel that our father always said that the Marines took care of their own, it wasn't long before he agreed to be there with an honor guard. As Pat writes: "The Marines showed up on time and, true to Dad's promise, they put on an outstanding show. The captain joined Mother and Andy in style, with a half-dozen sharp Marines as sideboys."

My father had received four beautifully printed commendations from the French government for service during World War I which I had had framed and displayed in our home where Dad was living during his last illness. We took those to the funeral and displayed them beside his casket. The honor guard was duly impressed that they were doing duty for a Marine who had served in five major battles during



Aleta McClendon Peterson, Roanoke, World War II, WAVES, U.S. Navy; photo courtesy of Conway Peterson

World War I and in Pershing's Honor Guard afterwards. I am impressed, too, after going to the sites of those battles and reading about them and seeing what he had to do. Blanc Mont was particularly hard to visit. That is where he had been wounded, and looking up at the chalk white hill and the distance between where the Marines jumped off and the top, it was nothing short of a miracle that Pat and I were standing there together looking at the ground over which our father had dodged bullets, years before we were born. He should never have lived through it at all. So many didn't.

His lieutenant, John Overton, a Yale track star he admired tremendously, had not made it. He had been killed at Soissons. My father wrote that the last he saw of Lieutenant Overton in the charge across the sugar beet field, "he was walking backward and trying to shout something back to us. He carried his cane in the left hand and a .45 pistol in the right. The din and roar was so terrific that I didn't have any idea what he was saying, but interpreted it from his expression to be some words of encouragement. He was soon down, killed." My father himself spent that day in a sunken road, far out in front of the other troops, unable to move without getting shot at by German guns. Late in the evening he was able to find some



James C. Coleman,
Roanoke, World
War II, U.S. Navy;
photo courtesy of
Coleman family

Marines in a ditch and crawled over to them. They were relieved sometime after midnight, so he again escaped death. John Overton is one of the ones he remembered on Memorial Day. I was always told that had I been a boy my name would have been John Overton, so he became a hero to me, too.

I remember my father wearing red poppies in his lapel in the old Memorial Days when those poppies were sold with the funds going to the disabled veterans, as I remember. The history says the poppy money was

for the orphaned children and widows of the veterans, so perhaps that was so. In any case, the red poppies were prominent around the house during those years. I do not see them now and assume they are still around, but I am not sure where they are being sold.

My own personal memorial day, and my mother's, is May 9. On the Sunday closest to that date my mother always had red roses put on the church altar in honor of her son who had fallen in battle. I do, too, although I have added my father's and my mother's names to the remembrance along with Andy's. I expect my children will do the same as well. Although we lost Andy fifty-eight years ago he has never been forgotten, even by nieces and nephews who never knew him or their grandmother, who they never knew either. None of them have ever been forgotten nor the sacrifices they made. And particularly not on Memorial Day. 🌸

Frances Vick is Director Emeritus of University of North Texas Press. She is a member of Texas Folklore Society, Texas Institute of Letters and Texas Council for the Humanities, an alumnae of Leadership Texas and was named as one of 100 most influential women in Texas by the Dallas Morning News in 1999.

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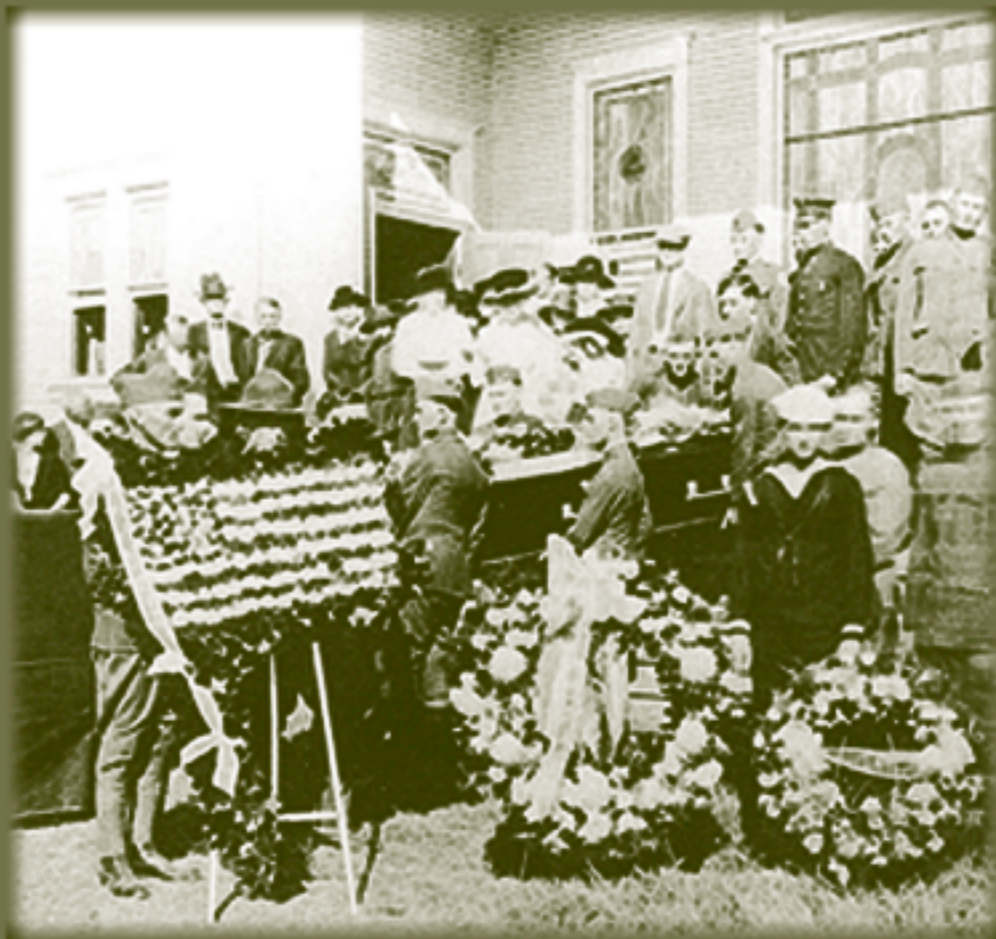
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AMERICA'S ANSWER

*Rest ye in peace, ye Flanders dead.
The fight that ye so bravely led
We've taken up. And we will keep
True faith with you who lie asleep
With each a cross to mark his bed,
In Flanders fields.*

*Fear not that ye have died for naught.
The torch ye threw to us we caught.
Ten million hands will hold it high,
And Freedom's light shall never die!
We've learned the lesson that ye taught
In Flanders fields.*

—R. W. Lilliard



*During our patriotic holiday observances this summer,
be sure to take the time to thank a veteran, salute the flag,
and reflect on the fortune of your birthright.*

Fire truck photo courtesy of Roanoke Fire Department; Engine is restored 1923 American La France
purchased from city of Fort Worth in 1945 for \$500.00