



SPRING 1963

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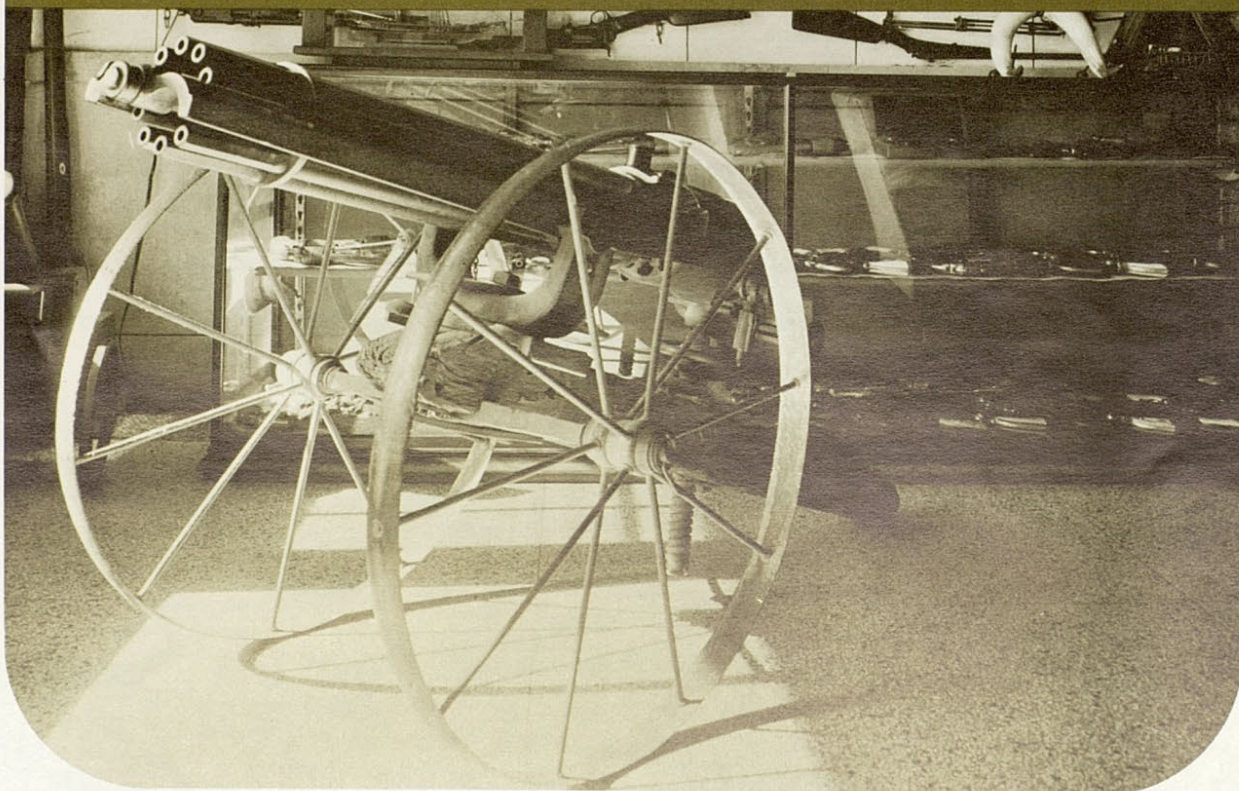


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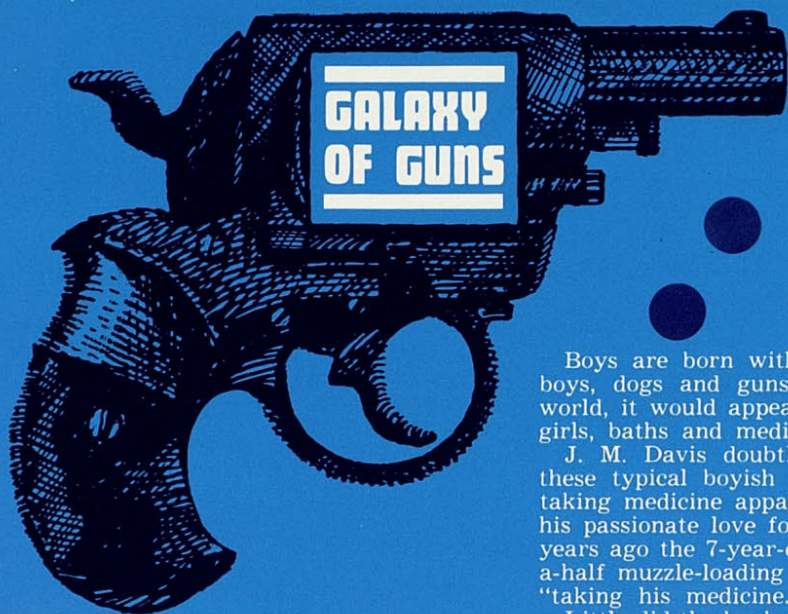


## COVER STORY

Once a terrifying instrument of death, this now-silenced sentinel in the foreground stands watch over the largest private collection of guns in the world...the renowned J. M. Davis collection in Claremore, Oklahoma. The Gatling gun, now obsolete, was once the most feared weapon of war and is the granddaddy of the modern machine gun. The 30,000-piece collection to which the Gatling gun belongs is open to the public in the Mason Hotel in Claremore.







Boys are born with a natural liking for other boys, dogs and guns. They also come into the world, it would appear, with an innate dislike for girls, baths and medicine.

J. M. Davis doubtlessly was born with all of these typical boyish traits. But any aversion to taking medicine apparently was exceeded only by his passionate love for guns. Thus it was that 69 years ago the 7-year-old lad received a dollar-and-a-half muzzle-loading shotgun from his father for "taking his medicine."

Little did the boy's father realize the impact this simple gift was to make on his son's life. From it evolved an avocation that soon became a profitable, enjoyable, and life-long vocation. It ultimately made J. M. Davis the owner of the largest private gun collection in the world.

Davis was a young man of 31 when he moved to Claremore, Oklahoma, in 1917 and purchased the Mason Hotel. A dozen years later his collection of firearms had grown to 99 and he definitely was "in business." He also began to amass a collection of Indian relics and assorted other rare museum items.

His first sizeable purchase of guns was in 1930 when he acquired the famous U. S. Besette collection of 500 pieces. Two years later he bought the Smith collection at Vinita, Oklahoma, and the John Sallings collection of 500, running his total to 2,500 weapons.

Near-daily "swapping and buying" permitted Davis to continually add to his stockpile of rare guns. "Scarcely a day goes by that I don't buy or sell at least one gun," he says.

War played a part in adding to the collection. After Nazi bombers had razed the London Museum, the former mayor of Claremore journeyed to the British capital where he purchased several weapons. Ironically, military weapons were not involved — at least no pieces of modern warfare.

The prize plum in the London purchase — a 450-year-old Dutch lock pistol carved with likenesses of all European rulers at the time — occupies a special niche in Davis' collection.

Other rare and unusual weapons are numerous in the arsenal that occupies nearly every spare inch of space in the lobbies and halls of the hotel's





The walls of the Mason Hotel lobby in Claremore are lined with guns of all descriptions, above. The 11-foot steer horns in the photo below are reported to be the largest in the world. The pistol in the center of the photo at right was used by Napoleon Bonaparte.

first two floors. A 500-year-old Chinese weapon is the oldest in the collection and, like many other rare pieces, is valued at several thousand dollars.

A hand gun owned and used by Napoleon Bonaparte in his European conquests hangs prominently on the wall over the registration desk at the hotel. It, too, is a rare and valuable piece.

Estimates of the value of the Davis collection have ranged from \$2 million to \$5 million.

Fabulous though they are, both in number and antiquity, the 30,000 guns represent less than half the interesting items in Davis' collection. Visitors to the landmark hotel in downtown Claremore can browse through more than 600 animal horns and mounted heads — purported to be one of the largest collections of its kind. Too, they can view a gigantic collection of beer steins numbering more than 1,250. Indian relics including tom-toms, bows and arrows, tomahawks, Indian garments and the like surpass the 20,000 mark.

Old musical instruments number more than 100 and included in a collection of 25 old music boxes

is the first such instrument in America. A collection of various types of handcuffs and other prisoners' items totals more than 200.

The entire collection is open to the public free of charge.

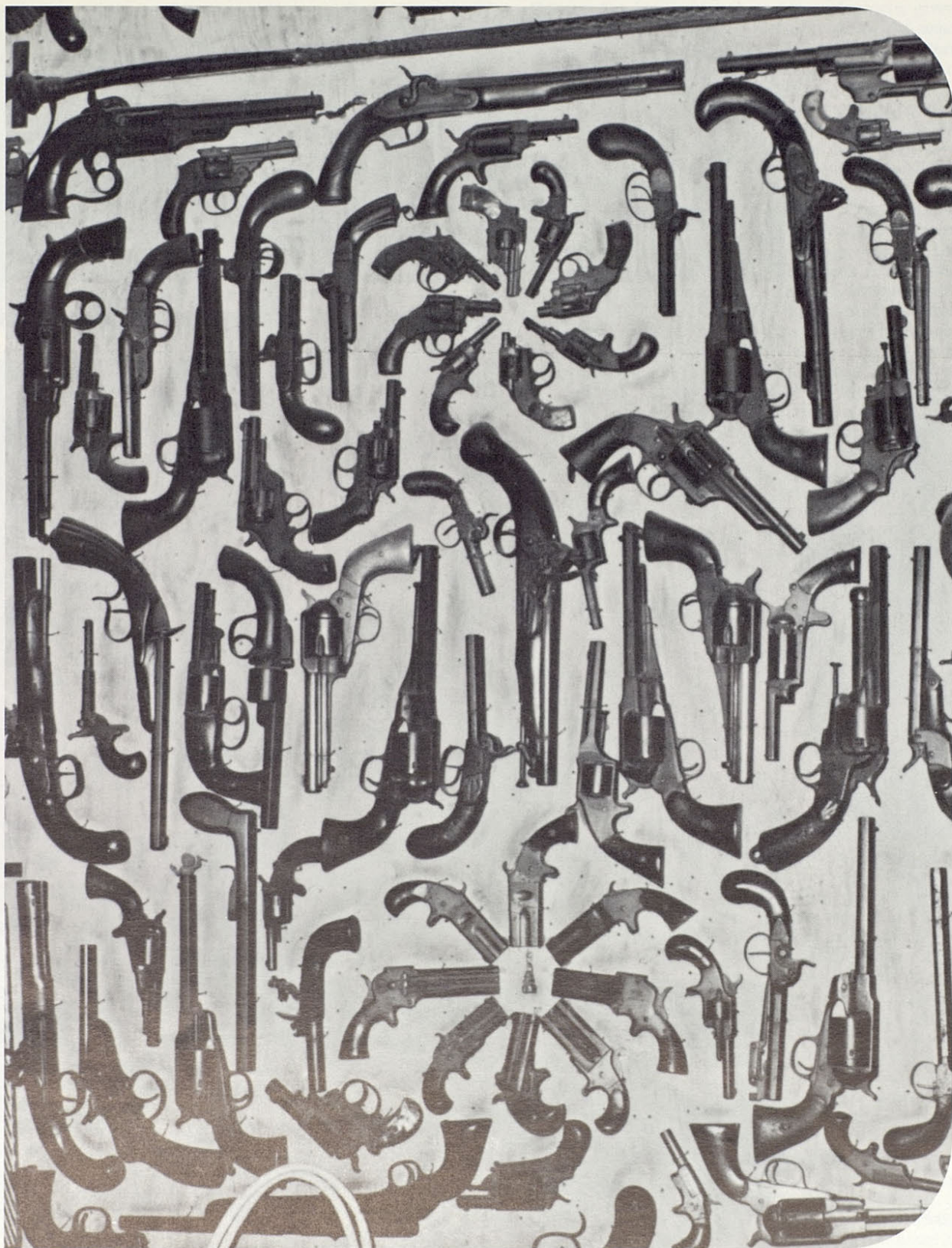
"I guess we get at least a million visitors a year," Davis said. "That's how many they get up yonder (gesturing toward the Will Rogers Memorial, about a mile to the west) and I'm sure we get a lot who don't even go up there."

Those who take time to stop are afforded a rearward look into history, mirrored in the weapons and wares of the times. Through these rare items can be seen the miseries of war, the advancement of civilization, personal tragedies and individual triumphs. And through them all is reflected the hard and diligent life-time work of J. M. Davis.

Hanging over an archway leading from the Mason Hotel lobby to the coffee shop is a dollar-and-a-half muzzle-loading shotgun. To the casual observer, it is just another of the guns. But to J. M. Davis, it is the acorn from which the oak grew.



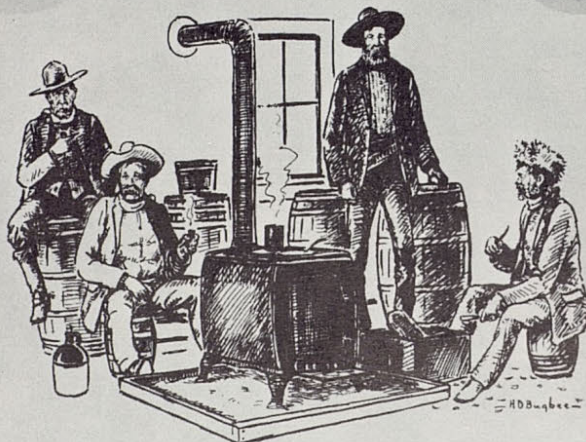








*Charles Schreiner*  
*General Merchandise*



*"Gone is the whittling and tobacco juice."*

By J. EVETTS HALEY

## CHARLES SCHREINER PIONEER MERCHANT

Something warm and fragrant went out of American country life with the passing of the old-time country store. Only by chance, and in remote and rural areas, can a nostalgic reminder of this relic of a more casual and trusting age be found, and then but faintly suggestive of the importance and the appeal of its pioneer predecessor.

Before a modern and mobile age geared to speed made standardization the rule, the country store—a combination of leisurely social life and business ways—was apparently the one institution that no far-flung community could do without. It was usually the first business to spring up at the dim cross-roads of commerce to supply the stark essentials of life; to substitute, at times, for a depository and bank; to furnish a handy news and loafing center; and on occasion, as the country "settled up," to become a highly partisan political forum and arena. It was a focal point of vivid living when life was never cut to pattern.

Beneath its usually crude but familiar sign, "General Merchandise,"



its open doors and ways invited rough and ready men from far and near to sit in its shade for lunches of sardines and crackers in summer, and to gather around its glowing stove in winter to smoke, spit and whittle while warming their talk from generous jugs, filled from nearby barrels with distilled spirits designed to sustain them upon their homeward journeys, never too pressing and often indefinitely deferred.

Throughout the West these unusual institutions and their owners left lasting impact upon their place and time. Almost every section had its favorite general store. But of those that summed up the qualities that endeared them to their communities, that reflected the temper and the character of their owners, and that typified the interests and the nature of the land they served, that of *Charles Schreiner, General Merchandise*, located in the rocky but verdant hills of Texas, was outstanding.

The scars of the War Between the States were still fresh and deep when young Schreiner, a bundle of tireless energy and business sense, founded it upon the outer edge of the Texas settlement. A native of the old world, born in Alsace-Lorraine on February 22, 1838, he was left an orphan by the death of his father at San Antonio immediately after their migration in 1852, and forced to fend for himself. After service as an Indian fighter with the Texas rangers and with the Southern troops throughout the war, and several years as a cowboy, he was fairly seasoned to life upon the borders of Texas, where every westward move was countered by hostile red and roving men.

Half the state was still unsettled when, in 1857, he pushed his little bunch of cattle some 60 miles out into those hills that begin with the northern edge of San Antonio, and stretch on in great and green confusion back through the heart of Texas, to settle upon that periphery of high adventure that was the frontier line of settlement. On a tributary to that bewitching stream of cypress shade named for the Lady of Guadalupe, he built a log cabin among the gnarled but lasting liveoaks, and settled down with sheep and cattle.

Some shingle-makers were camping nearby, cutting the cypress trees, sawing them into blocks and riving them into shakes for sale back in the settlements. Their camp became the village of Kerrville. From Camp Verde, an army outpost in a green valley just to the south, strange caravans of camels and dromedaries were shuffling out under heavy loads, testing their utility for western army transport. Back of Verde the line of settlement bent southwest past San Antonio to Laredo and Eagle Pass, on the Rio Bravo, while on the other hand it stretched north by east through the Cross Timbers and the Palo Pinto region to Preston's Bend, on Red River. Across some 600 miles of unsettled space to the west, beaten and burned by perpetual wind and sun, were the cool adobe huts of the next settlement, Paso del Norte.

Except for its scattered water and virgin grass still held by the Indians, this vast void to the west and north had little in promise for the settlers except hardship and hazard, distance and danger. But with the end of the Civil War and the consequent diversion of interest and effort from conflict to commerce, the tremendously vital nature of the American people was destined in less than two decades, to turn this vast and forbidding western half of the state to productive use.

From his vantage range on Turtle Creek, young Charles Schreiner, with that unusual business sagacity that is a part of prophecy, sensed the trend of the times. His life had been frugal and hard. Now the thing that came to interest him most was the possibility of trade, business and commerce. And where reckless nature had once impelled him into the Texas rangers and along Indian trails beyond the frontier, that same venturesome spirit carried him eagerly into the frontier world of business. He conceived that the shingle-makers' camp on the Guadalupe needed a good country store, and that he, a Texas cowboy, was the man to supply it.

Characteristic of his conservative nature, he did not venture wildly, but went down the river to the neighboring village of Comfort and associated himself with an old world merchant, August Faltin. He proposed that they build a general mercantile store with himself in charge at Kerrville. Faltin agreed, and in a cypress, clap-board building some 30 by 60 feet, on Christmas eve 1869, *Charles Schreiner Company* opened its country store.

Three-inch batten boards covered the building's seams, but did not seal out the cold or the heavy dust stirred by reckless hooves at the hitching racks. There was no paint, but white-washed walls suggested a regard for sanitation while offering a little resistance to the tell-tale gray that creeps across the unpainted face of weathered lumber. On one side was a lean-to shed used for storage and sleeping quarters for the clerks, only at first there were no clerks.

Down the length of the building on the right was a rough board counter which was to be worn slick by the passage of the homely commodities to meet the needs of the pioneers of the Texas hills. Back of it the wall was banked with bolts of dry-goods — calico, hickory and jeans. On the opposite side were harness and saddles, pendant from hooks, and an array of wooden-ware — buckets, kegs and tubs, likewise attached to the wall. Barrels of sugar, coffee, rice, lard and dried fruit were ranged beneath a counter at the back, with Garrett's Snuff, Hostetter's Bitters and other necessities on the shelves behind it.

By the terms of the partnership agreement, Faltin advanced \$10,000 to the business against Schreiner's time and energy. Schreiner was to take out his living expenses with Faltin drawing an equal amount as profit, his initial investment to



be paid back in ten years' time. It looked like a hard bargain with money talking tough. And it was, but Schreiner was determined to get ahead.

The store's first credit ledger, carefully preserved since the customers were largely devoid of cash and dependent on credit, shows but two customers on the opening day. One bought seven and a half pounds of coffee for two dollars; the other two quarts of whiskey for a dollar and a half; while the owner drew a dollar in cash for living expenses.

Thus it would seem that there was not a Christmas rush in Kerrville in 1869, or much to augur an optimistic future. Yet it should be recalled that this was a land of stark and simple needs, and that the men who struggled with its soil were

dling out each Saturday night on his Billy horse, and returning by daylight on Monday morning. With his tremendous drive and ingenuity, business got better, and he was able to move to town where he celebrated Christmas of 1871 with what must have seemed lavish presents for his wife and children, which the ledger lists as follows:

2 hats: 50 .....	\$1.00
1 French harp .....	.22
1 belt .....	.25
11 yd. Swiss .....	3.30
Clock .....	4.50
2 prize boxes .....	.20



*This early photograph was taken in front of one of Schreiner's branch stores in Rock Springs, Texas.*

necessarily possessed of a patience that prompted them to endure. Charles Schreiner proved himself a rustler after business. At the end of the first week, the credit ledger discloses, he had forty-one customers, and the fact that the sons and grandsons of twenty-seven of these were still customers of Charles Schreiner Company seventy-five years later bespoke something of the stable nature of this land, as well as the character of this country store.

More than two months passed before Schreiner again drew on the business for cash, and then for two dollars and sixty-five cents for a trip to Fredericksburg. At first he lived in the store and left his family at his ranch on Turtle Creek, sad-

Truly he was beginning to prosper. And whatever the frugal people of the hills had to sell found a ready market at Schreiner's. Bales of shingles were bought and stacked beside the store for freighting to San Antonio and Austin; wild pecans, gathered along the streams, were credited on account; hides of all description and odors — bear, deer, cat, coon and beef — were bought by the bale and stacked in a shed behind; and dried venison and other cured meat, wild honey and beeswax, bear oil and garden produce were carted in, while salt, sugar, flour, plug tobacco and whiskey were carefully carried out.

Throughout the seventies their world was chang-



ing. The country beyond was being taken from the Indians by tough-fibered men on horses whose herds were profitably tapping the markets of Kansas by way of the Texas Trail and those of New Mexico, Colorado and the Northwest over Good-night's Trail. As the cowmen spread their operations, Schreiner's trade spread with them, and Kerrville became an important point on one branch of the Texas Trail.

Round about, many ranchmen were already turning to sheep and when the Franco-Prussian War pushed the demand for wool to fantastic heights, they found themselves in tall clover. Great flocks were drifted in from established ranges around San Antonio and from along the Rio Grande. Ever alert to business, Schreiner began to buy wool in a big way. He kept long teams in tandem snaking his wool wagons to the railhead at San Antonio, and groaning back across the limestone hills with 200 pound sacks of salt — salt that had come as ballast in ships from England to Indianola on the Texas coast. Other freight included 160 pound sacks of bean coffee, and barrels of sugar, molasses, dried fruit and whiskey — always barrels of the stuff, for despite the fact that streams and springs were abundant, the snakes were mighty bad and it was always a dry and thirsty land.

Due to the scarcity of money the settlers made heavy resort to trade and barter. Since Schreiner was already in the business, and since his customers were long on cattle and short on cash, it was natural for him to start trading in cattle. But when ready markets are lacking, cattle call for land, and Schreiner began buying, and seasonally, putting his herds upon the Texas Trail seeking markets hundreds of miles away. The entries on the credit ledger grew. But the cattle boom of the early eighties was followed by the crash of the middle eighties, and Schreiner's partners on the range and trail were on the rocks.

His sturdy customers stayed with their land, sheep and cattle, and he stayed with them. Payments were made with everything from beef to beeswax. To begin with, at the store, payments in cash were distinguished with the words "currency" or "coin," and greenbacks were accepted only at ten to fifteen per cent discount. County jury scrip and state warrants were likewise subject to penalty. Only "coin" was taken at face value and most of that in gold, for these men were too close to the realities of life and the intrinsic worth of things not to know that "paper" is potentially dangerous, and that the tried and ultimate standard of value was the incorruptible metal.

Those early customers fortunate enough to have gold usually carried it in morrals,<sup>1</sup> which they carelessly pitched upon the counter in payment of accounts or left to be stashed away for safe-keeping while they ventured in the hills. When Schreiner needed to make a deposit a Mexican cowboy carried the metal in a morral<sup>1</sup> swinging from the horn of his saddle to bank in San Antonio. For twenty

years the store, while serving as a depository for coin, and while discounting warrants, notes and suspect currency, took the place of a bank. But the purpose of business is profit, and sensing more of it here, the owner branched off with these activities to organize a bank of his own.

Yet he always stayed close to the life of the land. At times, from his daily round of the store, he would jump on his Billy horse and lope out to tally a herd at the corrals on Town Creek, or to see how a branding was going. He kept plowing his earnings into Texas lands until his magnificent hill country ranches totalled 600,000 acres, and during the peak years of trail driving, he and his partners, Lytle and Light, sometimes had 25,000 cattle on the trail at once, driving in all, it is said, some 150,000 head.

Never unmindful of public duty, he organized an early company of Minute Men for protection of the frontier against outlaws and Indians, was elected its leader and ever afterward was known as "Captain" Schreiner. With fantastic utilization of his energy, he found time to serve for years, as a county officer. He helped promote and heavily subsidized a railroad from San Antonio, built and operated a grist and flour mill with water power from the Guadalupe, revolutionized the range wool trade by conceiving the idea of consignment to storage and selling on commission, and established and endowed a private institute for the education of American boys. But always his operations revolved around, and were an outgrowth of, his original business — Schreiner's country store.

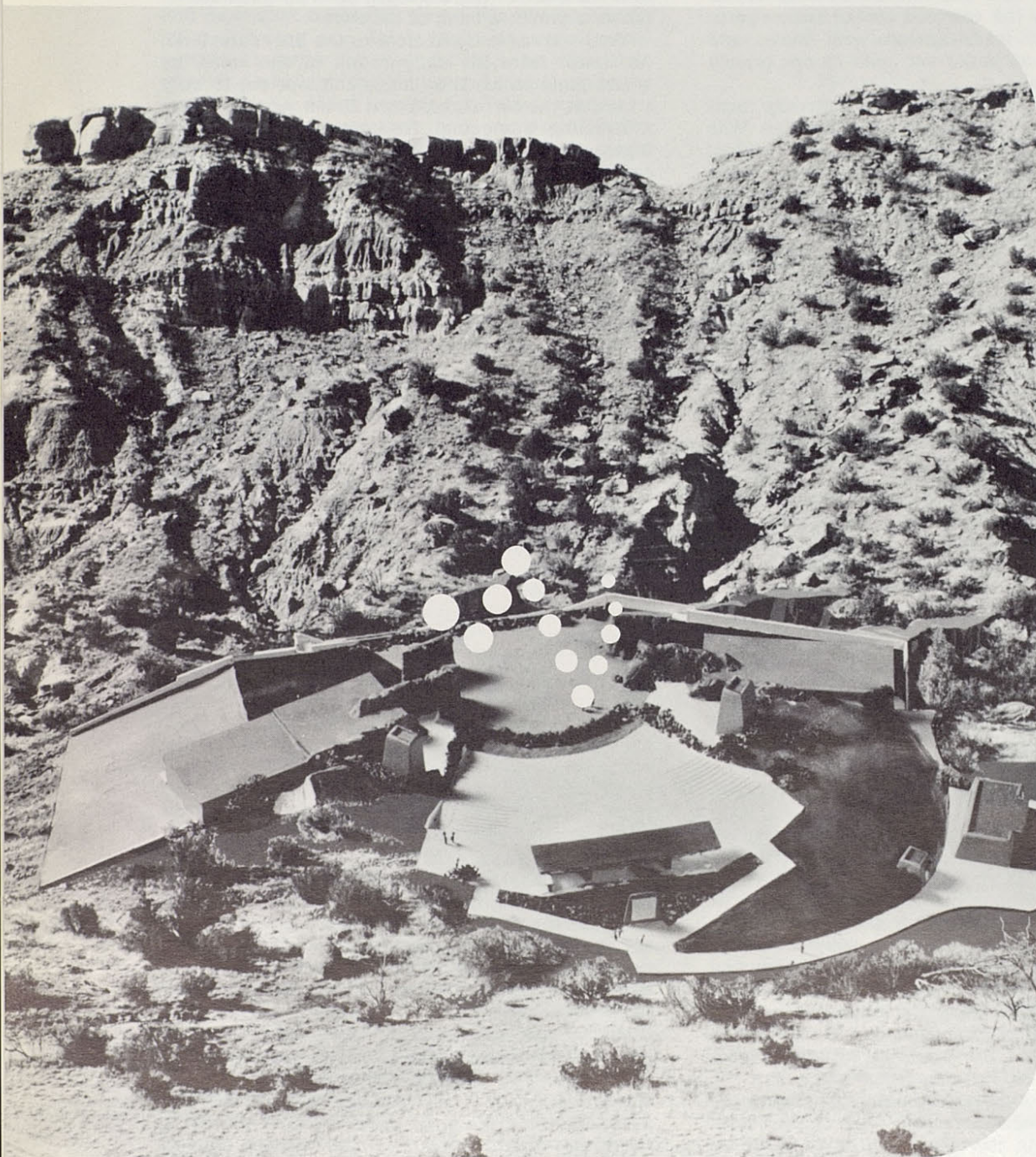
His tremendous capacity for detail and for organization — the discipline of a well-ordered mind — kept every ramification of his business humming. Without fret and worry he would dismiss the loss of a quarter of a million dollars in a mining enterprise. But when he found a dripping faucet at the store, he raised unmitigated sand with every employee — and yet he owned the water-works! But the first was the result of honest venture; the other waste, and indefensible.

After 50 years he surrendered the reins of his ranching, banking and mercantile business to his able sons, but gradually and reluctantly as with most dominant characters. Until he died on February 9, 1927, he held them to rigid observance of the hard lessons in economics and living that this rocky land, in its pioneer period, had grounded so deeply in him.

His unique establishment, the fountain-head of all his enterprises, continues to flourish with the fourth generation, after spreading into all the orderly and specialized features of a modern department store. Even 94 years after its founding, something differentiates it in this modern age — a suggestion of the Captain's sturdy character, of warm human interest, of leisurely living — in keeping with the traditions that flowed across a rough board counter with the simple commodities of an old-time country store.

<sup>1</sup>Span. A bag hung to the mouth of mules or horses; game bag.





**SYMPHONY  
IN THE  
ROUGH**



One sun-washed afternoon, unusually stout winds whipped the yellow grasslands in ceaseless whisper, as if somehow signaling monumental change. A steady rumble of hooves echoed across the expanse as men spurred their Spanish mounts toward the northeast, toward the seven cities of gold.

Coronado's men, riding forth in Old World charm and splendor, armor gleaming in the day, posed a hopeful, tireless and courageous band.

They did not find what they sought — the mythical golden cities of opulence and perpetual ease — but they did open up a vast new area to the onrush of civilization in this, the New World. An accomplishment as awesome and far-reaching as the exploration and conquest of ancient Egypt across the Mediterranean by the Greeks centuries earlier!

Next came the Comancheros. These hardy adventurers of mixed blood and ancestry traded for trinkets and hides with the native wild peoples — the Indians — at the risk of immediate and violent death.

And then the ranchers and the farmers appeared in the canyons and upon the flats. Some were killed by the ruling redmen or the vicious wintry northers to which they were unaccustomed. Others valiantly lived to build settlement from chaos. The barbed wire they brought soon spread across the land, and the open range died a natural death.

The venturesome railroads struggled like spiders into the area, and the towns followed closely behind. And finally, the cities grew from this last lost wilderness like four o'clocks bursting forth at the divinely appointed hour.

Here is the past that Panhandle residents have inherited and grown to cherish — a fabulous past that soon will be re-created through a vivid medium new to this corner of the nation — symphonic drama.

And there is no place more fitting for the presentation of historical drama than Palo Duro Canyon southeast of Amarillo. The scenic canyon, carved out of the flat prairie over a period of 90,000 years, was the site of the final Indian battle in the Panhandle. It was here that Col. McKenzie's U. S. Army troops defeated a band of Kiowas and Comanches who long had harassed far-flung settlements. The battle brought relative calm and welcome tranquility.

The shots will ring out anew and cavalry men will shout as of old when the drama opens in 1964 — presented six nights a week during a 10-week summer period. Work has begun on the open-air

amphitheater and its attendant landscaping. The structure, designed to seat 1,000 persons, will blend into the hillside, providing a natural setting for the re-creation of the historical scenes.

Total cost of the amphitheater and production of the drama for the first year will be \$350,000. A drive is now underway throughout the Panhandle area to raise this amount. Sponsor of the campaign is the Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation.

Besides contributing invaluable to cultural heritage, the new attraction will bring industry to the area, complementing other nearby points of interest visited annually — such as the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum at Canyon and Boy's Ranch at Old Tascosa. The drama will enlist the services of young performers recruited from the speech and drama departments of West Texas State College. The amphitheater may also be used for other civic programs when needed.

Author of the drama is Pulitzer Prize-winning Playwright Paul Green of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. A veteran in the art of symphonic drama and the son of a Confederate veteran, Green rose to high distinction for his Broadway play, *In Abraham's Bosom*. Green has completed the script for the Panhandle drama and will assist in its direction.

A dedicated American and distinguished novelist, short story writer, poet and essayist, Green has written several symphonic dramas, the most notable being *The Lost Colony*, which plays every year at Roanoke Island, North Carolina. Others are *The Common Glory*, produced annually at Williamsburg, Virginia; *The Book of Job*, Pineville, Kentucky; *The Stephen Foster Story*, Bardstown, Kentucky; and *Unto These Hills*, Cherokee, North Carolina.

In each of his works Green attempts to present the greatness and dignity of America through the gallant episodes of her history. He strives to convey the meaning of Thomas Jefferson's words: "Let us in prayer and dedication of spirit resolve now to . . . lift our faces toward the light, a new people, and under God and under Heaven dedicate ourselves to establishing here on this earth a government of righteousness, of true liberty and of justice among men."

The symphonic drama is dedicated to the enhancement of our homeland and the preservation of its traditions. More essentially, it will be dedicated to the youth, who will inherit the age.






## TULSA: BOOMING SOONER CITY







Where sturdy oaks once marked the site of the *Talsi*, or town council, of the Creek Indians, gleaming skyscrapers now denote the site of Tulsa, second largest city in Oklahoma and indisputable claimant to the title "Oil Capital of the World."

Oil and a rich Indian heritage have provided a solid base for the fantastic growth of the eastern Oklahoma city. The red man conceived the town and gave it its name—black gold gave it sustenance to perpetuate its growth.

Tulsa has recorded considerable progress in the transition from teepees to towers. In a relatively short span of 65 years, it has zoomed from a small Indian village to a metropolis ranked near 50th in size nationally.

Through the years, Tulsa never has forgotten her Indian heritage. The city's Indian history dates to 1836 when Archie Yahola, town chief of the Lochapokas and a full-blooded Creek, migrated with his people to the territory. Under an oak tree that still stands amidst modern dwellings, Yahola presided over the *Talsi* at the settlement known by his people as Tulsey-town.

The territory remained in the hands of the Creeks until the inevitable railroad pushed ahead in 1882 from Vinita, Indian Territory, to establish a terminal at Tulsey-town. The city was incorporated as Tulsa in January, 1898, and the first government townsite survey was made in 1900. The population was 1,390.

Few cities have succeeded in capturing the fancy of the general public as Tulsa has. Songs have been written about her and her initial oil bonanza provided the setting for Hollywood's production of "Boom Town." Tulsa's name has become synonymous with oil, a word itself often associated with adventure and excitement.

The booms at Tulsa have not been confined to the celluloid of movie films, however. The city's proximity to two gigantic oil strikes made explosive population growth practically inevitable. The booms have been actual as well as fabled.

While Tulsa is proud of her oil industry and what it has meant to her, she hasn't "put all her eggs in one basket." Petroleum and its allied industries have kept the city high on the economic totem pole, but at the same time, Tulsa has achieved considerable economic stature through her strategic location as a trade center for eastern Oklahoma, northwestern Arkansas, southwestern Missouri, and southeastern Kansas.

Tulsa's growth was slow during the first few years, but was accelerated considerably with the discovery of oil in 1901 at Red Fork, just five miles away. By 1905 the Arkansas River was bridged and roads had been built to the new oil fields. Houses and business buildings mushroomed. A water system was constructed and steps were taken to perfect the municipal government.

The discovery in 1906 of a second oil bonanza—the Glenn Oil Pool—16 miles south of town furnished added impetus to the city's expansion. Gusher fields of Cushing, Drumright, Tonkawa, Burbank and Oklahoma City continued to boost Tulsa's claim as an oil center. But when Oklahoma became a state in 1907, the city's population stood at a disappointing 7,298.

The second decade of the new century brought new promise. By 1910 pipelines had been opened to the Gulf of Mexico and oil prices were on the rise. The boom was really on!

While building was brisk and the city's growth was next to phenomenal, it all came about with regulated orderliness. Tulsa, unlike most cities and particularly unlike the cinema versions of boom towns, was "built" rather than allowed to "just grow." This foresight by her pioneer governing body is reflected in Tulsa's present orderly appearance.

Now a city of 275,000, Tulsa is the home of more than 300 oil firms, the center of manufacturing for Oklahoma and—strange as it may seem—is soon to become a river port. Elaborate plans for barge transportation to the Mississippi are nearing realization. A dredging project on the Verdigris River is expected to be completed sometime in 1970, giving Tulsa an outlet to the sea.

Tulsa also is actively engaged in the nation's space exploration program. Three firms are working on one of the country's top space projects and extensive engineering studies are underway on other phases of the country's future space program.

The city's tourist sights are legion. Philbrook Art Center with its beautiful galleries, fabulous art collection valued at more than two and a half million dollars and famous Indian Museum housing a complete exhibit of Southwestern Indian lore has become one of the finest such centers in the nation. Of equal importance in the preservation of Indian culture is the city's Gilcrease Foundation.

Those in search of recreation are well provided for in Tulsa. The city's 3,000-acre Mohawk municipal park and zoological gardens provide recreational facilities for thousands annually. Dozens of other parks and play areas are located throughout the city.

As a technological oil center, Tulsa is the home of the International Petroleum Exposition—the largest exhibit of a single industry in the world. Tulsa also boasts a number of ultra-modern petroleum research laboratories.

The Tulsa Little Theatre with 6,800 members, the University of Tulsa, a number of garden clubs and an outstanding symphonic orchestra are but a few of the city's outlets for cultural pursuits.

Tulsa is a glamorous city. It is a city rich in historical background, fierce civic pride and an optimistic outlook for the future.

*Tulsa in Photographs: On opposite page, from top, are Tulsa's modern skyline, its new air terminal, Philbrook Museum and a typical scene of homes built along the many lakes in the area.*



# S—si—quo—ya ᎠᎢᎴᎦᎵᎠ



## ● SEQUOYAH: GENIUS OF THE ABC'S

Progress of civilization has indisputably paralleled the evolution of the written word. As languages and visible means of communicating them have developed, man has progressively moved from primitivism toward higher planes of living.

The evolution of the written word, when viewed in retrospect, appears to have been excruciatingly slow. The development of languages, from prehistoric caveman pictographs, through Egyptian hieroglyphics, to the alphabets of modern tongues, has required millions of years.

The English language, as an example, is the result of more than 3,000 years of development by Egyptian, Phoenician and Greek scholars. Today it is recognized as one of the major accomplishments in the field of languages.

Thus, in light of the slow evolutionary process, it is ironic and nearly unbelievable that one man should perfect an alphabet for his unwritten language in the incredibly short span of 12 years. But an illiterate half-breed Cherokee named Sequoyah has been acclaimed for accomplishing such a feat — hailed by scholars as the greatest single achievement in the history of languages.

Sequoyah, often known by his English name of George Guess, was the son of a prominent woman of the Cherokee Nation. Born between 1760 and 1770 in the town of Taskigi, near Fort Loudon, Tennessee, he was believed to be the son of Nathaniel Guess. Some claim he was the son of a

German trader while certain of his tribe maintain he was full-blood Cherokee. Documents seem to bear out his claim to the Guess lineage.

Sequoyah's mother died about the turn of the nineteenth century and he inherited her trading post. There he learned and became skilled at the silversmith trade, using French, Spanish and English coins for work material. Mechanically minded and skillful of hand, he became an expert blacksmith, tool maker, painter and farmer.

Lameness in one leg, believed to have been caused by a hunting accident, left him a cripple in later life. But nature has a way of maintaining balance and often strengthens one faculty when another is weakened. Thus Sequoyah, deprived of many of the excitements of war and the pleasures of the chase, found his mind consistently turned to the mystery of the power of "speaking by letters" during periods of confinement to his cabin.

Sequoyah's curiosity in written words was aroused initially about 1791, but his idea was greeted with derisive laughter from his fellow tribesmen. Undaunted and with the aid of an English spelling book (although he could read none of it), he continued studying the matter and in 1809 began actually to create symbols on pieces of bark. At first he planned the invention of a sign for every word in the Cherokee language, but after two years abandoned that idea, having hit upon the concept of a sign or symbol for each sound.

GWY

CHEROKEE



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PHENIX.

VOL. I.

NEW ECHOTA, WEDNESDAY JULY 9, 1894.

NO. 20.



Sequoyah, who had married Sallie of the Bird Clan of the Cherokees, was living in Wills Valley, Alabama, when he began his study. To support his growing family that was eventually to include four children by Sallie and three by his second wife, Utiyu, he operated a small farm, trading post and blacksmith shop. After a brief hitch with the Cherokee Regiment in the War of 1812 that interrupted his study briefly, he moved in 1818 to what is now Pope County, Arkansas. There he set up a salt works in conjunction with his blacksmith shop.

Still later he moved to Eastern Oklahoma where a cabin he built has been enshrined as a state monument.

During the hours of work on his farm and in his shop, Sequoyah continued to study sounds, to listen to talks and speeches in tribal council, and to listen intently to the conversations of friends. As he devoted more and more time to his study, people began to think him demented. Even his wife, angered at his long hours in a small cabin he had built for seclusion, turned against him and burned his precious bark manuscripts. Undaunted, he promptly resumed his labors and re-created his alphabet.

The height of Sequoyah's harassment came when a band of tribesmen visited him with intentions of putting him to death as a sorcerer, according to tribal laws. But through a trial granted by Cherokee Chief George Lowry, and with the assistance of his daughter, Ayogu, the wily Sequoyah demonstrated the value of his works. Before a week had passed, the warriors had become so interested they had mastered the new writing.

From then, news of Sequoyah's "talking leaves" spread rapidly. Within an incredibly short time, generally after only three or four days, entire communities were communicating by means of the new written word.

Sequoyah's completed syllabary included 85 characters, representing to his satisfaction all the sounds in the Cherokee language. He had used some characters from his old English spelling book and some from his own imagination.

So complete was his alphabet and so far-reaching was its influence on the Cherokee people that in 1828 the first Indian newspaper — "The Cherokee Phoenix" — was published, containing the laws and constitution of the tribe in its native tongue.

In the spring of 1842, Sequoyah left for Mexico in an attempt to find other Cherokees displaced years earlier in land exchanges. There he died and was buried in the summer of 1843.

His mission to teach his new alphabet to the displaced tribesmen never was accomplished. But the mission to which he had devoted much of his life left him unique in the annals of history.

His work — accepted by society during his life time and still in use today — stands as a living memorial to the steadfast pursuit of his belief.



*"Dedicated to the Progress of the Great Southwest and Rocky Mountain Area."*

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