



Mayflower Messenger

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants
Sixtieth Anniversary Issue

Vol. 9,
No. 2

October
2007

Governor's message:

This is our **Sixtieth Anniversary** newsletter with articles submitted by our members. Many thanks to Jeannine Long and Marquette Brown for their efforts in collecting, writing and editing articles for this special edition of **Mayflower Messenger**.

We feel privileged to celebrate our Compact Day meeting in the beautiful Oklahoma History Center.

I commented on the Historical Rivalry in the spring Mayflower Messenger. Having attended Jamestown's 400th Anniversary, it appears that both Plymouth and Jamestown have experienced "twisted history." An article appearing in the Sunday Oklahoman on September 8, titled "History buffs would give their right arms to have his removed" reminded me of the pamphlet distributed at one of our past meetings titled "Scrambled History" by Robert C. Notson, concerning a "war of words and Ideas" and that now is the time to tell the true story of Plymouth and its true place in history.

On June 20 this year a 24-foot statue of Christopher Newport was permanently placed at CNU (Christopher Newport University) just a few blocks from where the James River flows into Chesapeake Bay. Upriver is Jamestown. Newport was the captain of the Susan Constant, largest of the three ships that carried the settlers. He had lost his arm in about 1590, with historical accounts saying only that it was "stricken off" during a fight. The statue shows him standing with his left hand on his hip and his right arm stretched in front of him. The sculptor commented, "We don't show our heroes maimed."

My primary purpose in attending the Jamestown 400th was to learn more about my Mayflower/Jamestown ancestor, Stephen Hopkins. I was not disappointed. It was a thrill to see the replicas of the three original ships sail into the island just as they did 400 years ago. The island was closed to the public and Jamestown Society members held a special ceremony and rededication at the foot of the Captain John Smith statue on the shore by the newly discovered original fort.

We are proud of our Mayflower and Oklahoma heritage and celebrate Oklahoma's Centennial. Since we will have members attending the Compact Day Meeting from all over the state, the 60th Anniversary luncheon program will be brief to allow tours of the beautiful facility.

June McCuiston, Governor

Compact Day Meeting

to be held at the

Oklahoma History Center

2401 Laird Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK

in the

Chesapeake Room

November 10, 2007

Board of Assistants' Meeting

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

General Meeting ~ 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Luncheon ~ Noon ~ \$25 per plate

Menu:

Entrees: Turkey and ham
Field greens salad with maple vinaigrette
Roasted new potatoes ~ Sugar snap peas
Cheesecake with assorted toppings

Special 60th Anniversary Program:

Oklahoma Rising

Remember to send your \$25 check with your reservation by November 6 to

Mildred Greenstreet, Treasurer
3220 S. Zunis Place, Tulsa, OK, 74105-2236
Telephone: (918) 743-7529



Mayflower Messenger Editor: Jeannine Burks Long
1225 North Canyon Way, Guthrie, OK 73044-3942 jeaniology@cox.net

Oklahoma Genealogical Society Hosts Lineage Groups

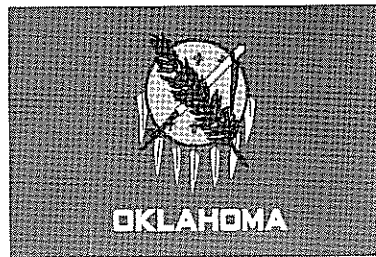
To celebrate Oklahoma's 100th birthday, the Oklahoma Genealogical Society held a well-attended and highly successful Centennial Ancestor Fair on August 4 at the new Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. OGS felt Oklahoma has great people who invest their time and talents in a multitude of organizations that promote our wonderful heritage. Because of this, they invited organizations to tell the public about their purpose, activities, special emphasis, and how to join. There was no cost to the societies or to the public. The societies could sell publications or other society items and keep the money they earned. In addition to the special events, entrance was free to the History Museum exhibits that day.

The downstairs hall and Chesapeake Auditorium were filled with exhibitors. There was a steady flow of people who visited the tables seeking information and just looking. Many contests were held at the fair. There were also displays of photos of ancestors and genealogy contests in categories.

Governor June McCuiston and Marquette Brown manned the booth for The Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants. There were quite a few people eligible to join the Mayflower. Six people asked that an application be sent to them. The Mayflower table had a display of Pilgrim books for children and examples of what could be found on the Mayflower web page. Mayflower post cards were given away.

People were encouraged to wear costumes and there was a costume parade. The photo below shows the Mayflower table at the fair, our Governor, past Governor and their winning costumes.

Marquette Brown, (left) wearing a Pilgrim dress, won first place in the costume contest, and Governor June McCuiston (right) won second place in the most authentic costume category.



*... and the
land we belong,
to is grand . .*

Junior Chairman Finds Joy in Research

Mary Craig, Junior Membership Chairman, was the subject of a feature in the Tulsa World newspaper during National Family History Month in October 2006. The reporter, Jason Collington, related how a box full of family history launched Mary on a voyage to find her ancestors.

"I was the oldest grandchild on both sides of my family," Mary remembered. "If I didn't pull all the information together and find out my family genealogy, no one would know how to do it."

Actually, she didn't know that much about researching genealogy but she soon learned. When she started out all she had was a bunch of names and stories. Mary found she liked searching the libraries and the Internet.

It was pleasurable, especially when she found that one of the stories she had heard as a kid was true. It was really true that her mother's family first hailed from Plymouth, Massachusetts. With a little more searching she found that she had an ancestor on the Mayflower, John Alden. Oh, what fun! Especially for her grandchildren who took special note of her findings.

"One of the cutest things to come out of all this was that when we had Thanksgiving at my house with some company, one of the guests asked the grandchildren if they knew who the people were in the pilgrim pictures I had up. One said, 'They're my relatives.'"

"Learning what I did certainly makes Thanksgiving special for my family now, especially for the grandchildren," Mary concluded. Her only regret is that she didn't start her research earlier so that her mother could know that she had an ancestor on the Mayflower.

Oklahoma has the largest Native American population of any state in the United States. Many of the 250,000 American Indians living in Oklahoma are descended from the 67 tribes who inhabited the Indian Territory. Oklahoma is tribal headquarters for 39 tribes.

Members Hear Lecture on Saints, Strangers, Savages

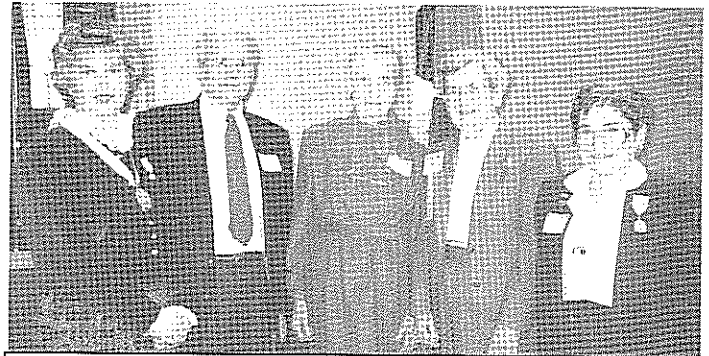
In 1996 the Oklahoma Society celebrated Compact Day in Oklahoma City and heard Brandon Fentem, Lindsay High School teacher, speak on "Saints, Strangers and Savages."

After the Pilgrims received a patent to settle a peculiar plantation in Virginia, the next question was who was going to pay the cost of settling in the New World according to Fentem. At that time Virginia extended from Florida well into what is now New England. Pilgrims barely had enough money to pay their passage from the Netherlands back to England, much less money for the trip to the colonies and supplies they would need until they were established.

Thomas Weston, a London ironmonger and a small capitalist, approached the agent and offered the Pilgrims to pay all expenses. They would work for him for seven years with all profits going to him. After seven years, each Pilgrim from 16 years of age up would receive one share of the company (\$200 in today's money). The houses, gardens, and fields they cultivated would belong to Weston.

"Basically, Weston told the Pilgrims they could take the offer or leave it and most of them decided to leave it." A minority, leaders of the Pilgrim fathers -- Brewster, Bradford, Winslow, Carver, Cushman, White, Cook and Allerton -- decided to take it. These Pilgrims, going over for religious purposes, were called Saints.

Weston declared that not enough Pilgrims agreed to make the trip to make it worthwhile so he opened the endeavor up to the public. These volunteers, called "Strangers," were not interested in religion but were looking for an opportunity to get ahead and better themselves. Among them were Chilton, Eaton, Warren, Fuller and Standish. Some of them became pillars of the Pilgrim community.



Officers installed, l to r: Mrs. William Majors, Governor; Prentice Hapgood, Mrs. Paul A. Wolff, Mrs. John Greenstreet, Mrs. Lee Reusser.

On Nov. 16, 1620, the Mayflower was anchored off the coast of New England when it became apparent that the ship had missed its destination and would not be in the bounds of Virginia. Some of the "Strangers" bragged that as soon as they were ashore it would be every man for himself -- no one would have authority. That was remedied by drawing up a Compact, much like a church covenant belonging to the Pilgrims, and persuading every responsible man to sign. It did not set up a structure of government but was an agreement that whatever government evolved, citizens would obey it, the speaker related.

Several "savages" were important to the survival of the Pilgrims. Squanto, the surviving member of the Pawtuxet tribe, stayed with the Pilgrims and showed them how to plant corn, how to fish, tramp the mud to bring up eels and how to gather the right herbs in the forest. William Bradford called him "the special instrument of God for our good."

The Pilgrims had settled on the site of Squanto's tribe that had all perished from a disease. Squanto also acted as an interpreter in the conclusion of the treaty of Plymouth with Massasoit. This peace treaty lasted 59 years. One of the reasons the Plymouth settlement lasted was that they had the good will and protection of Massasoit, Fentem reported.

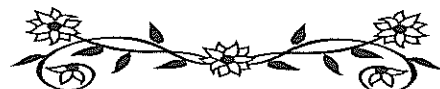
At the conclusion of the program, Jack Sterret installed the following new officers: Mrs. William S. Majors, Governor; Prentice Hapgood, Deputy Governor; Mrs. Paul A. Wolff, Secretary; Mrs. John A. Greenstreet, Treasurer; Mrs. Edgar Q. Copley, Historian; Mrs. Jerry Reidy, Elder; Dr. Mark Everett, Surgeon; Mrs. Lee Reusser, Captain; Philip Wright, counselor; Louis Patterson, Parliamentarian and Mrs. Jon Johnston, Junior Chairman.

New members introduced or announced were Velada June McCuiston, Kimberly Sue McAdoo, Doris Lytle Gass, Billy Keith Doty, and Judith Ann Forehand. v

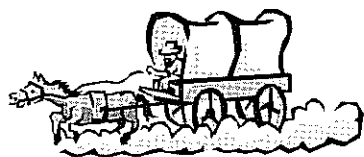
We thank Dr. Mike Haywood for the use of his painting "A Prosperous Wind -- The Mayflower Leaving English Shores" on our 60th Anniversary envelope. Dr. Haywood has a growing international reputation as a marine and portrait painter. His contact information:

**Mike Haywood
4 Meadow Court, St Mabyn, Bodmin,
Cornwall. PL30 3BH.
United Kingdom**

<http://www.mikehaywoodart.co.uk/Mayflower.html>



A Program Revisited



The Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants held its spring meeting May 2, 1998, in Tulsa, Governor Rosalie Majors presiding. Dr. Brad Agnew, Northeastern State University professor, spoke about "**Oklahoma Pioneers.**" The program was funded by the Oklahoma Humanities Council. In his presentation he drew a parallel between the pioneers of the Land Run and the pilgrims of Plymouth, citing similarities and hardships.



Scholarship Program

At the **spring 1998** meeting Dr. Malcolm Patterson and wife Kathy, Scholarship Chairmen, proposed an award of \$1,000 to be offered to a student or senior history major who attended an Oklahoma college or university. The award would be based upon a portfolio of college work dealing with any topic of American History before 1861. Deadline for the first application was January 15, 1999, the winner to be announced by April 15 of that year. Guidelines were available at all state colleges and universities, applications to be submitted to the Pattersons.

No applications being received under the original plan, in spite of mailing packets to every four-year college or university in Oklahoma, a new plan was formulated in 1999 offering a scholarship to a student related to any member of the Oklahoma Society, who attends a four-year college or university, anywhere, and who has a GPA of at least 3.25. Relationship may be by birth, marriage or adoption, and the scholarship is awarded on a system of points, which encourages history majors, graduate students and those with several members of their family in the OSMD.

Under this plan the Oklahoma Mayflower Society has presented a \$1,000 scholarship to a worthy student each year since 1999.

The 2008 Scholarship Contest was announced in September. Previous applicants may reapply by submitting updated transcripts. Deadline for applications: February 1, 2008. The recipient will be announced by April 1, 2008. Contact the Pattersons for more info.

Oklahoma Junior Mayflower Society

The Oklahoma Junior Mayflower Society is for lineal descendants of members for the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants from birth to 25 years of age. At present we have had 249 members with 76 now under the age of 25.

The sponsor fills out an application for membership and sends it with a \$6 fee to the Junior Membership Chairperson. There are no yearly dues. The child then receives an 8½ X 11 inch certificate suitable for framing with their name and the name of their Mayflower ancestor. I try to send birthday greetings to the children each year, so I need the sponsors to inform me of address changes.

By becoming a junior member the children know their Mayflower ancestor and can easily become a member at any age by adding a generation or two of data to their sponsor's membership application. The children can become lifetime members by making application to the Oklahoma State Registrar with adult fee.

Mary Craig
Junior Membership Chair

Welcome ~ New Members

New Members since our spring 2007 meeting:

872	77307	Mahlon Elwood Blagg, Jr.	Edmond	John Howland
873	77506	Roger Roy Scott	Tulsa	Isaac Allerton
874	77507	Marlene Coffman	Stigler	Edward Fuller
875	77523	Mary Holden Tinker	Tulsa	Edward Fuller
876	77568	Larry Joe Nelson	Stillwater	Francis Cooke
			Elkton,	
877	77667	Pamela Ann Alvis Hill	MD	Richard Warren
878	77682	Lauri Ann Robinson	Okla. City	William Brewster
879	77683	Virginia Lee Barton	Norman	Thomas Rogers
880	77696	Shirley Ball Arnold	Stillwater	John Howland

In Memoriam

#703, Dorothy Blodgett Conn - b. 14 Mar 1914; d. 2 Jun 2007. Survived by husband, Walter J. Conn, Tulsa; two daughters, Mary Ann (Mrs. Vincent E.) Lysaght and Barbara (Mrs. Bill H.) Lipe; five grandchildren, one being Susan E. Lysaght, our 2003 Scholarship winner. William Bradford descendant.

#340, Audrey Mary McNutt - b. 26 Feb 1934; d. 12 Dec 2006; Austin, TX. Edward Fuller descendant.

#669, Margaret Luella Henley - b. 2 Sep 1922; d. 16 Jun 2006. Oklahoma City. Francis Cooke descendant.

Persistence Pays Off

Eltrie Snow Beil certainly believes "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." She began her serious search for her Mayflower ancestor in 1989, applying to be a member of the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants. Too often her application came back for more proof. Finally, her papers were approved in 1995. At last, when Stephen Hopkins' name sounded during the roll call, she could stand up. She had earned this honor by hard work and diligence. She felt her "Snow" connection led back to Stephen Hopkins and the Mayflower. This was a line that was new. No one had used it to claim membership.

She found that Constance Hopkins, daughter of Stephen Hopkins, had married Nicholas Snow who arrived on the Anne, the third ship to bring passengers to the New World. It was easy researching until the Snow descendants left Plymouth. She found William Snow in Kent County, Delaware. He paid his taxes from 1740 to 1780. His name on the list of 1780 included a notation that simply said, "Gon to Karoliner."

Eltrie turned her attention there. She had some help from two gentlemen -- the late Tommy Webb, author of *The Webb Families of DeKalb County, Tennessee and 23 Related Families*, and John Austin, who wrote the Silver book on Hopkins. She found a deed in Stokes County, North Carolina that provided the proof she needed. When she sent her line and proof to John Austin in 1994, his book had already gone to press but he said he would include her new line in the next printing of the Stephen Hopkins book in two years.

In her research, Eltrie had corresponded with other Snows. Richard F. Snow, Topsham, Maine, sent information about a Richard M. Snow, Rockland, Maine, who had written a book about the Snow line. She later received a copy of this book plus photos of graves at Cove Burying Ground and the Snow Library at Cape Cod from a distant relative in Atlanta, GA.

Eltrie's Mayflower membership resulted in more members for the Society -- daughters Governor Velada June McCuiston and LuCinda Elenita Beil Melton and granddaughters Laurie Michelle McCuiston Knight and Stephanie Juleen McCuiston Fuqua.

Marquetta G. Brown

Third Anniversary Revisited and More

In 1950, The Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants celebrated its third anniversary by hosting Governor General Col. Walter M. Pratt and his wife. They had visited Mayflower Societies throughout the South before coming to Tulsa. They brought interesting news of their trip. Col. Pratt gave a strong patriotic talk based on Pilgrim history. He explained the "Passport of Membership" which he had originated and designed. The interest created by his visit brought many new members to the Oklahoma Society.

From the first organizational meeting in 1947, members had urged relatives and eligible people to join. Dues were kept low resulting in entire families joining as members. A good percentage of them were youthful.

In 1951 Nathan R. Patterson, who had five lines of descent from Mayflower passengers and ten Mayflower ancestors, was elected governor. With the increased membership it was decided to hold the first Compact Day meeting in Oklahoma City. This resulted in holding two meetings a year. The Anniversary meeting was held in the spring in Tulsa.

In 1951 Miss Lucinda B. Neff was elected secretary and immediately began writing a quarterly *Mayflower Newsletter*, the first such newsletter published regularly by any State Society. It did much to hold interest of members who could not attend meetings, contained information about the early Pilgrims, an account of meetings and personal items concerning members. Mrs. Fenno E. de Vries, Secretary General, asked that sample copies be sent to different societies.

The tradition that Miss Neff started in 1951 is carried on today by our capable editor, Jeannine Long. Even with other heavy commitments, she has found time to publish the *Mayflower Messenger* for the past seven years. She fills the paper with news of the Society and other State Societies and keeps alert to items to include that would be of interest to the members.

It is no small task to publish a newsletter. Besides the writing and editing of articles there is the task of working with the printer and proofreading, addressing, stamping and mailing the copies on time. Any newsletter editor deserves an accolade -- especially the *Mayflower Messenger* one.

Marquetta G. Brown

Oklahoma Inventions: The parking meter (invented in OKC), the shopping cart (invented in Ardmore) and the electric guitar (invented in Beggs).

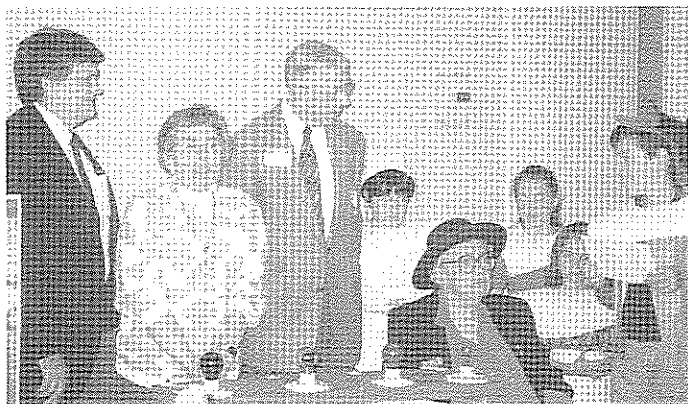
Fiftieth Anniversary

The meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants was held in Tulsa, May 3, 1997, using the theme "Pass It On." Governor Rosalie Majors gave the greetings, Elder Barbara Reidy gave the invocation, and Captain Norma Reusser led the Pledge of Allegiance. Historian Lois Copley introduced the new members and presented their passports. Deputy Governor Prentice Hapgood called the roll.

Mrs. Candace Sterett Johnston, Junior Chairman, provided the program featuring children and grandchildren of the members. The children sang "Pass It On" and then called members from the audience to play the game "Name That Ancestor." Members chosen to be contestants were Lois Copley, Mary Rudy, Charles O'Leary and Lewis Patterson. Joshua Johnston of Noble, serving as the Master of Ceremonies, read clues describing a passenger on the Mayflower and the first player to recognize the ancestor hit a button to light up the board. The children at the meeting wore paper pilgrim hats and collars. Elder Barbara Reidy gave the benediction.

The Oklahoma Society was granted its charter when the General Board of Assistants of the National Society met with the Pennsylvania Society on Jan. 11, 1947. The Oklahoma grant has 29 names of charter members. In 1997 the chapter had 212 members.

Marquette G. Brown



Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants, four members play "Name that Ancestor" game. Left to right, Charles O'Leary, Lois Copley, Lewis Patterson and Mary Rudy. Master of Ceremonies Joshua Johnston gave clues and contestants hit the button to light up the board.

Vinita, the oldest incorporated town on Oklahoma Route 66, being established in 1871, was the first Oklahoma town to enjoy electricity.

Headline Stories ~1947

January 1: *Headline in the NY Times: Train disturber killed; Conductor in Oklahoma Shoots Attacker in 'Self-Defense'*

April 9: The most deadly tornado in Oklahoma history killed 116 people in Woodward alone.

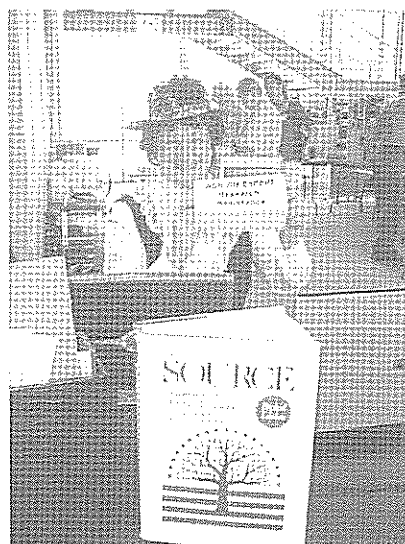
April 30: The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority was created by act of the 21st Oklahoma Legislature. The act authorized the Turner Turnpike, which cut travel time between Oklahoma City and Tulsa almost in half. "It was one of the metropolitan areas' first victories over a rural-dominated legislature." *Oklahoma Today Online*

May 31: Six persons were dead, 23 injured, half of Leedy's population of 855 was homeless and the business district was a shambles in the wake of one of three tornadoes that ripped across western Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle.

May 7: An Oklahoma Legislator shot a State Senator on the chamber floor. A flourish of guns between two members of the state Legislature and at least two shots on the floor of the state Senate caused Senators, employees and visitors to take cover under desks or run for exits and left a Senator with a bullet wound in his left hip.

October 12: The Texas football team defeated Oklahoma, 34-14, as fans fought and pop bottles flew. Police escorted officials from the gridiron in Dallas — Longhorns triumphed on Layne's sharp shooting passes before a crowd of 45,500.

No doubt the charter members of the Oklahoma Mayflower Society exhibited better behavior than that reported in the last two items. ~ The Editor



Ask an Expert!

Mayflower Society member Carolyn Leonard, in costume, holds an "Ask an Expert" sign at the August Centennial Ancestor Fair at the Oklahoma History Center. She was available to assist attendees with their genealogical research questions.

A Boomer's* Daughter

Perle Skirvin Mesta Becomes Hostess with the Mostest

By Deputy Governor Katherine Littell

When the refurbished historic Skirvin Tower Hotel opened in February 2007, it brought back memories to me of the Skirvins in general and Perle Skirvin Mesta in particular. Although I was a reluctant debutante, my parents gave me a lovely debut party at the Washington, D. C., Sulgrave Club in 1954. I really wanted to be in California horseback riding with Aunt Flossie or reading in the libraries at Radcliff. I did, however, enjoy my party because so many of my parents' very interesting friends attended, with whom I formed lasting friendships. Perle Mesta strode up the grand staircase of the Wadsworth Mansion, now the Sulgrave Club, put her hand on my shoulder, looked straight at me and in a strong, emphatic, cheerful voice, said "This is the debutante of the year!" I was delighted to be so generously recognized by such a brilliant, charming, resourceful, capable lady. She made all my efforts to comply with my parents' wishes worthwhile.

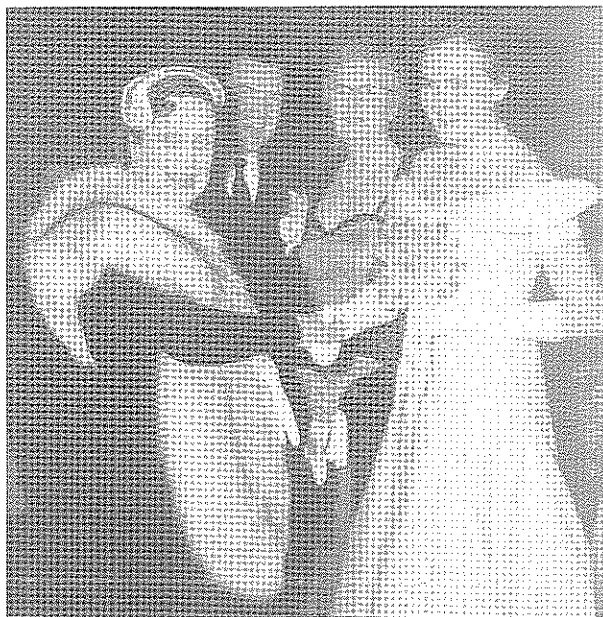
Perle's mother, Hattie Reid Skirvin died in 1908. In 1909 her father William Skirvin was approached by Colonel Ned Green, son of Hetty Green, the obsessive New York financier, known as the "witch of Wall Street." Hetty Green had sent her son to purchase property in Oklahoma City. He offered a substantial sum for four lots at the corner of First and Broadway. Skirvin was ready to sell until the Colonel mentioned that his mother, Hetty Green, planned to build the biggest hotel in Oklahoma City on the land. Aware of Hetty Green's phenomenal business acumen, Skirvin withdrew his lots from sale. During 1910 and 1911 Skirvin and his three children built the first Skirvin Hotel on the Northeast corner of First Street and Broadway.

In 1929 their next project was the Skirvin Tower Hotel on the Northwest corner of First Street and Broadway in Oklahoma City. Both hotels across the street from each other were and still are among the outstanding hotels in the Southwest. By 1930 William Balser Skirvin's net worth amounted to \$1,500,000.

William's good fortune started in 1889 when he and his brother-in-law made the run into Oklahoma Territory. They started from Arkansas City, Kansas, on a train so crowded they rode into Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, on top of the train. They both acquired property in the new town of Guthrie which they sold at a profit shortly afterwards and reinvested their money in a real estate business on Galveston Island, Texas. Skirvin survived the hurricane, which struck Galveston in 1900 and assisted in the rescue work.

In 1901, the success of the Spindletop Hill oil well prompted William to get into the oil business where he quickly made a fortune. In 1906 he moved his family to Oklahoma City, and re-entered the real estate business in the rapidly developing city. Skirvin later pursued the oil

business in the Healdton field in Carter County, Oklahoma, the Ada field in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, the El Dorado, Kansas oil field in 1917-1918 and in the Oklahoma City oil field in 1931.



Mrs. George Mesta (Perle Reid Skirvin Mesta) greets Katherine and her parents in the receiving line, December 28, 1954, at the Sulgrave Club in Washington, D.C.

As his eldest child, Perle Reid Skirvin, was often her father's confidante. She had inherited her father's vital versatility, wit, good humor sagacious initiative, and well-defined individuality. Although Perle and her sister Marguerite attended private boarding school, Perle's innate, social talents were honed by her observations at her father's hotel.

In September 1911, the Skirvin Hotel, ten stories high, two wings and 300 rooms, was ready for occupancy. It was the biggest and most luxurious hotel in the entire Southwest with a view from every room, each with running ice water. There was a ballroom for 500 people and an elegant dining room where Professor Kachelski every evening conducted the nine-piece orchestra to entertain the dinner guests.

William Skirvin sold the family home and moved with children into a five-room suite on the ninth floor of the hotel. Perle and Marguerite enthusiastically imbibed the sophistication of the elegant new residence. They enjoyed sitting in the lobby observing the encounters of powerful business, politicians and Indians in the gracious ambiance of the hotel. Perle Skirvin was mastering the techniques of

social interaction as magic yeast in political and business pursuits.

In 1915 after completing her studies at Sherwood, Perle decided to pursue a career in New York. Although 33 years old and by the standards of the day already a spinster, Perle, daughter of an Oklahoma oil and real estate baron, received abundant attention from New York bachelors. Destiny however, spoke decisively with an invitation from a friend of Aunt Florence for Perle and her great aunt to attend a dinner party at the Waldorf Hotel. Among the guests was George Mesta. Perle's initial impression of him was favorable, but not enthusiastic. George was an engineer and had his own company, the Mesta Machine Company, which was worth about \$15,000,000 when Perle became acquainted with him. They married in the spring of 1917. The newlyweds spent most their time in Washington where Perle made many friends, among them President and Mrs. Harding, President and Mrs. Coolidge.

When George Mesta suddenly died April 22, 1925, of a heart attack, Perle was distraught with grief. Her father advised her effectively on the management of the Mesta Machine Company which Perle controlled. Perle owned homes in Newport, New York, Washington D. C., as well as a ranch in Arizona. She entertained Vice President Charles Curtis to the astonishment of other Newport hostesses, who complained he had "no social standing and was part Indian." Curtis was from Kansas and was a member of the Kaw tribe. He was eventually included in many Newport social events, as the first Vice President of the United States ever to visit. Perle knew Dwight Eisenhower through her friend Helen Easkin Eisenhower who was married to Milton. Dwight called Perle "Perleie." It amused her and she decided to change the spelling of her name to "Perle."

An enthusiastic Democrat and supporter of Harry Truman, Perle represented Rhode Island as a delegate. Under the tutelage of her close friend, India Edwards, Chairman of the National Democrat Women's Division, Perle honed her political skills and was instrumental in Truman's nomination for President. Her astute and elegant party giving enhanced his campaign.

During the 1948 campaign Perle gave a reception a reception for President Truman at the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma City. Her father, who had died in 1944, would have loved the event. She remembered how her father had prepared the "presidential" suite for the visit of President Wilson when Wilson was touring the country in support of the League of Nations. Wilson had suffered a stroke the day before he was to arrive.

Later Truman appointed Perle as the first United States Minister to Luxembourg. Her tour of duty in Luxembourg presented as many challenges as serving as a director of the Mesta Machine Company. She met them all, as Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt acknowledged in an article for *Flair* magazine.

Luxembourg was the seventh largest steel-producing country in the world, and when the President appointed Mrs. Mesta he knew she ran her own steel

business and that she was familiar with the iron mines that belonged to her. It was no surprise to him, then that immediately on arrival at her post she accepted an invitation by the miners in southern Luxembourg to come and see their mines. She knew quite well when the President sent her to Luxembourg that he did so because he thought she could be useful in that particular place. He knew that she wanted to be useful, since the world was going through a crisis. He felt that anyone who had brains and ability should use them for the benefit of the country.

Irving Berlin composed the musical, *Call Me Madam*, celebrating Minister Mesta's diplomatic success. Perle returned to Washington, D. C., in 1953. It was good fortune that she was in town and honored me by attending my party.

**A Boomer is someone who participated in the land run.*



In the Land Run of 1889, William Skirvin rode into Guthrie in a train so crowded he rode on top of the train.

Meeting Notes ~ Spring 2007

Forty-seven people attended the April 14, 2007, meeting at the beautiful Tulsa Country Club.

Governor June McCuiston discussed an article from the *Mayflower Quarterly* on the speculated origin of the name Mayflower for the ship, which related to the table decorations of May flowers. Treasurer Mildred Greenstreet announced that she had DVDs of the Mayflower story for sale. Historian Kathy Patterson announced that we have gained eight new members and one supplemental thus far this year. New members Diana Winburn and Velma Finley were present and received their Passports. Junior Chair Mary Craig reported that we have gained six new junior members since our November meeting.

Elder Malcolm Patterson introduced the scholarship winner for 2007, OU student Tim Baer.

A DVD of the Pilgrim Hall project was shown to help visualize the need for the support of the Oklahoma Society for the Pilgrim Hall Museum campaign. The recommendation of the Board of Assistants to pledge \$200 a year for five years for the campaign was approved.

Mr. Dick O'Neil, President of the Philbrook Docent Speakers Bureau, presented an enjoyable program of elegant and inspiring English and American portraits from the Philbrook Museum of Art, from the Colonial era to the twentieth century.

After roll call and introduction of guests, the Nominating Committee for the Board of Assistants was announced: Marquetta Brown, D. Burton Howard and Prentiss Hapgood.