

## THE BELKNAPS, 1861-1974

By Alice Belknap Robinson and Lucille S. Belknap

Harold Raymond Belknap, who has been associated with The Norman Transcript for fifty-eight of its eighty-five years, was born in Norman, Oklahoma Territory, in 1904, of pioneer parents. His sister, Alice (Mrs. J. H. Robinson), his son, Dr. Hal R. Belknap, and grandchildren, Jamie, 13, and Hal, 12, are the other descendants of two early day Norman families -- Belknap and Spottswood - living in Norman in 1974.

John Franklin Belknap arrived in Norman in 1895 from Tokyo, Japan. William Egbert and Sarah Alice Spottswood came to Norman from Iowa in 1900 following the Oklahoma Run in 1889. Both families had earlier settled in several areas of the Louisiana Purchase states and the Oregon Territory.

John Franklin Belknap was born in Minnesota April 11, 1861, and moved with his family while still a small boy to a farm near Blair, Nebraska. He was graduated from the National Normal University of Lebanon, Ohio, Boston University School of Theology, and from the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago. He was sent by the North Methodist Board of Missions as a professor of psychology and education to the Anglo-Japanese College in Tokyo, where he taught for five years.

Soon after his arrival in Norman, John Franklin Belknap met Miss Harriet Spottswood, a former Iowa school teacher whom he married in 1905. In addition to Harold and Alice, the Belknaps had a third child, Gwendolyn Sue (Mrs. C. E. Meek), who resided in Norman until 1938. John Franklin Belknap died April 30, 1939, and his wife, Harriet, passed away July 19, 1959.

### Robinsons and Meeks

Alice Belknap graduated from Norman High School and the University of Oklahoma in 1928 with a B. S. degree and taught home economics until her marriage to John H. (Jack) Robinson of Fairfax, Oklahoma. He had graduated from Fairfax High School and attended the University of Oklahoma. After living in Fairfax and Guthrie, they moved to Norman in 1953. Alice taught English in Norman High School until her retirement in 1971. Her husband, Jack, was one of the early members of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and is now laboratory supervisor in the School of Electrical Engineering at the University of Oklahoma. The Robinsons have three children: Jane Ann, Jim and Sally.

Jane Ann Robinson attended Cottey College in Nevada, Missouri, for one year and graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1957 with a B. A.

degree in home economics, majoring in fashion arts. After graduation Jane Ann was employed at Foley's in Houston, Texas, in the training program and later as editor of Port-Foley-0, the store publication for employees, and in New Orleans as a legal secretary. She was married to Earl Curtis Hutchins from Crookston, Minnesota, (M. D. Tulane University, 1963). He completed a residency in internal medicine at St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas and a residency in neurology at Kansas University's Medical Center in Kansas City before he began his practice of neurology in Greeley, Colorado. They have four children: Kimberleigh, 15; Brian, 11; Todd, 5 and Matthew, 4.

James McKee Robinson was graduated from the University of Oklahoma School of Business in 1961 and received a Juris Doctrate degree from the School of Law in 1965. Jim is an attorney-at-law with the firm of Monnet, Hayes, Bullis, Thompson and Edwards in Oklahoma City. His wife, the former Patricia Alice Dougherty of Oklahoma City, (B. A. University of Oklahoma, 1965) is attending Oklahoma City University School of Law. Jim and Patty have two children, Sarah Elizabeth (Beth) 7, and James McKee (Buddy) 4.

Sally Robinson was graduated with a B. A. degree in psychology from Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania in 1965 although she attended the University of Oklahoma during her junior year. She received her M. A. degree from Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Sally is interested in social problems related to child development and education. She has done research in child development at the University of London, taught in New York City and Tuskegee, Alabama, and worked on educational policy for rural schools at the National Institute of Education in Washington, D. C.

The John F. Belknaps' second daughter, Gwendolyn, also graduated from Norman High School and attended the University of Oklahoma before her marriage to Charles Edmund (Mickey) Meek, a Norman boy, in 1929. He worked at The Norman Transcript until he joined the staff of The Banner News in Magnolia, Arkansas in 1938. They moved to Beaumont, Texas in 1946 where Mickey was mechanical superintendent for The Beaumont Enterprise and Journal until his retirement in 1971. Both their son, Charles Raymond (Sonny) Meek, also employed by the Enterprise Company, and their daughter, Peggy Sue Meek Scarborough, reside in Beaumont. Grandchildren of the Meeks' are Sonny's children, Pamela, 18; Meliisa, 16 and Michael 12, and Peggy Sue's two daughters, Cindy, 20, and Martha Kate, 14.

#### Harold Belknap

Harold, the Belknap's only child who did not leave Norman, began his career at The Norman Transcript in 1916 while he was in grade schools. In a Rotary Spokes article (April, 1962, written by Dr. J. O. Hassler, O. U. mathematics professor) titled "Another Horatio Alger Story of a Hometown Boy Making Good at Home", he recalled: "At the age of twelve (as one of four carriers), Harold began delivering The Norman Transcript in the shrubbery and on porch roofs to all (67) subscribers south of Symmes Street and west of the Santa Fe tracks." Alice, his sister, remembers this quite well because

she sometimes helped him fold and deliver his papers, she skipped the houses with barking dogs. She was rewarded with a candy bar at the old University Shop or a movie after finishing the route. Harold has been a member of The Transcript staff since that time.

When he entered high school, he became a part-time printer's devil, advancing to mailing clerk, on up to printer and pressman by the time he finished high school in 1921. While in his senior year, he was editor of The Trail, Norman High School's yearbook. Even after Harold entered the University of Oklahoma, he continued working at The Transcript as an advertising salesman.

He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1925 with a B. A. degree in business and a certificate in journalism. He became manager of The Transcript's commercial printing department and assistant advertising manager.

Following the death of R. H. Parham, Publisher of The Norman Transcript, in 1929, Fred Tarman became Editor and Publisher and Harold Belknap was named Business Manager. His title was changed to Associate Publisher in 1947. In 1965 he was named Co-Publisher with Tarman. Following the retirement of Fred Tarman in 1969, now Editor Emeritus, Harold became Editor and Publisher of the newspaper he had served so long in so many capacities.

With Mr. Tarman as Editor and Publisher from 1922-1969, the Transcript had become one of the foremost newspapers in the state, winning the Sweepstakes Trophy at the State Fair in competition 22 of the 33 years the awards were made. It has since won the Sweepstakes Trophy five of the six years of Belknap's Editorship. The Transcript also was recognized as one of the top newspapers in the nation by the National Newspaper Association at its meeting in October 1973, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. It was designated a "National Blue Ribbon Newspaper" for 1974 by the National Editorial Foundation, Washington, D. C.

Plans for the expansion of The Transcript's new addition and conversion to offset printing were announced on the paper's 85th birthday anniversary, July 13, 1974. These improvements and expansion will increase the printing capacity to 45,000 64-page newspapers per hour and provide better picture reproduction with broader use of color in illustrations. A change will be made in The Transcript's format thus presenting a new face to its readers.

For over half a century, Harold has been a member of the Oklahoma Press Association. He was first elected to the board of directors in 1966 and has served as chairman of its constitutional revision committee, its insurance, budget and finance committees and as a member of the association's legislative committee. In 1967, he received the Oklahoma Press Association's Half-Century Citation, and is a member of the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation and a lifetime member of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalism fraternity. He has served as vice-president and president of the Oklahoma Press Association completing the latter office in June, 1974. Jim Pate, Madill Record, his successor, said "Harold Belknap will be a 'hard act to follow' in many ways".

The Transcript has always maintained consistent and strong support for the University of Oklahoma - its needs and programs. Harold participated in this cooperation which has continued during his Editorship. He has been active in the O. U. Alumni Association and other university organizations, including the Board of Visitors and the President's Council. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Oklahoma Memorial Union.

In 1972, he was named Chairman of the Oklahoma Constitutional Board on Legislative Compensation. In 1971, he was chairman of the ad hoc committee of the Board of Visitors to recommend reorganization of the O. U. Publications Board. He is a member of the O. U. Alumni Association's Century Club, an honorary member of the University's "O" Club, the Touch-down Club and a leader in the Big Eight Cities organization, established to maintain constantly-improving rapport between the universities and the communities in which they are located in the Big Eight Conference. He naturally is an avid football fan with basketball, baseball and wrestling close behind in his interest.

Harold has always applied himself to civic responsibilities beginning with Boy Scout activities in which he attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He was one of the four charter members of Troop 1, forerunner of Troop 241, honored by the troop during its celebration of its fiftieth year of continuous scouting in 1970.

He has been a member of Rotary Club since 1927 and served as secretary, president and a delegate to two Rotary International Conventions. He has long been a member of the Chamber of Commerce serving in many offices. He was vestryman at St. John's Episcopal Church and was chairman of the building committee that directed the expansion of the church plant in 1957. His only devout hobby is trout fishing in the Conejos and Rio Grande Rivers in Colorado, a hobby he has pursued for over fifty years with a changing group of equally dedicated fishermen-friends who now refer to themselves as C. R. A. S. Inc., meaning Conejos River Angling and Singing Society.

Harold married Lucille Shoemate, University of Oklahoma student, June 11, 1933, a Missourian born in Kansas City, (B. S. 1946; M. S. 1950). They have two children, Hal and Kay, both graduates of the University of Oklahoma with degrees in Zoology. Hal, 15 months older, received his M. D. degree from Tulane Medical School in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1960 where his thesis "A Genetic Analysis of Families in which Leprosy Occurs" was awarded the Jacob C. Geiger Gold Medal. He interned the following year at Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. His three-year residency in internal medicine was done at Fitzsimons General Hospital in Denver, Colorado, where he was Chief Resident. He spent three additional years in the Army Medical Corps in Munich, Germany, from 1964-1967. While there, he passed his Boards for Certification for Internal Medicine taking his written examinations in Heidelberg in 1966 and returning to his alma mater, Tulane Medical School, on leave from the Army a few months later, to take his oral examinations in February, 1967.

He returned to Norman in October of that year to establish his medical

practice fulfilling a long-time dream, and saw his first patients in private practice in a suite in the Norman Medical Center with Dr. F. C. Buffington and Dr. Bill Patten.

Later, Hal, with Doctors Gerald W. McCullough, Thomas W. Thurston and Frank K. Cooper built the Physicians and Surgeons Building at 900 North Porter, across the street from the Norman Municipal Hospital. He has been joined in Internal Medicine Associates by three internists, Dr. Jerry D. Leu, Dr. J. Kin Pirtle and Dr. Bruce A. Naylor, all University of Oklahoma Medical School graduates and all Board Certified.

Hal was one who saw the need for the establishment of a coronary care unit at the O. U. football stadium after some experiences with spectators' heart attacks at football games where proper emergency care could not always be given quickly enough to save lives. The Gomer Jones Coronary Care Unit succeeded these early efforts. It is now a top-flight, well-staffed and equipped organization supported by the University Health Sciences Center of the University of Oklahoma, and physicians and nurses from the Norman and Oklahoma City areas. It has saved many lives. Hal is presently Chief of Medicine and President-elect of the Norman Municipal Hospital medical staff.

He was married to Ann Boyle, Oklahoma City, (B. A., O. U., 1956) in August, 1955, when both were twenty years of age. They have two children, Jamie Lucille, 13, and Hal Raymond III, 12. Both attend Irving Middle School.

The Harold Belknaps' daughter, Kay, graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1958 and spent an additional year training in Medical Technology at St. Francis Hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii. She returned to the states and worked at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston, Texas, until her marriage. She married Dudley Crawford Sharp, Jr. (Princeton and The University of Texas) in November 1965 and resides in Houston. Kay and Dudley have three daughters, Gigi, 6; Tina 5 and Lucy 3. All attend a Montessori school.