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## The Common Man

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1910 wedding photograph of Roy and Mollie Adams.

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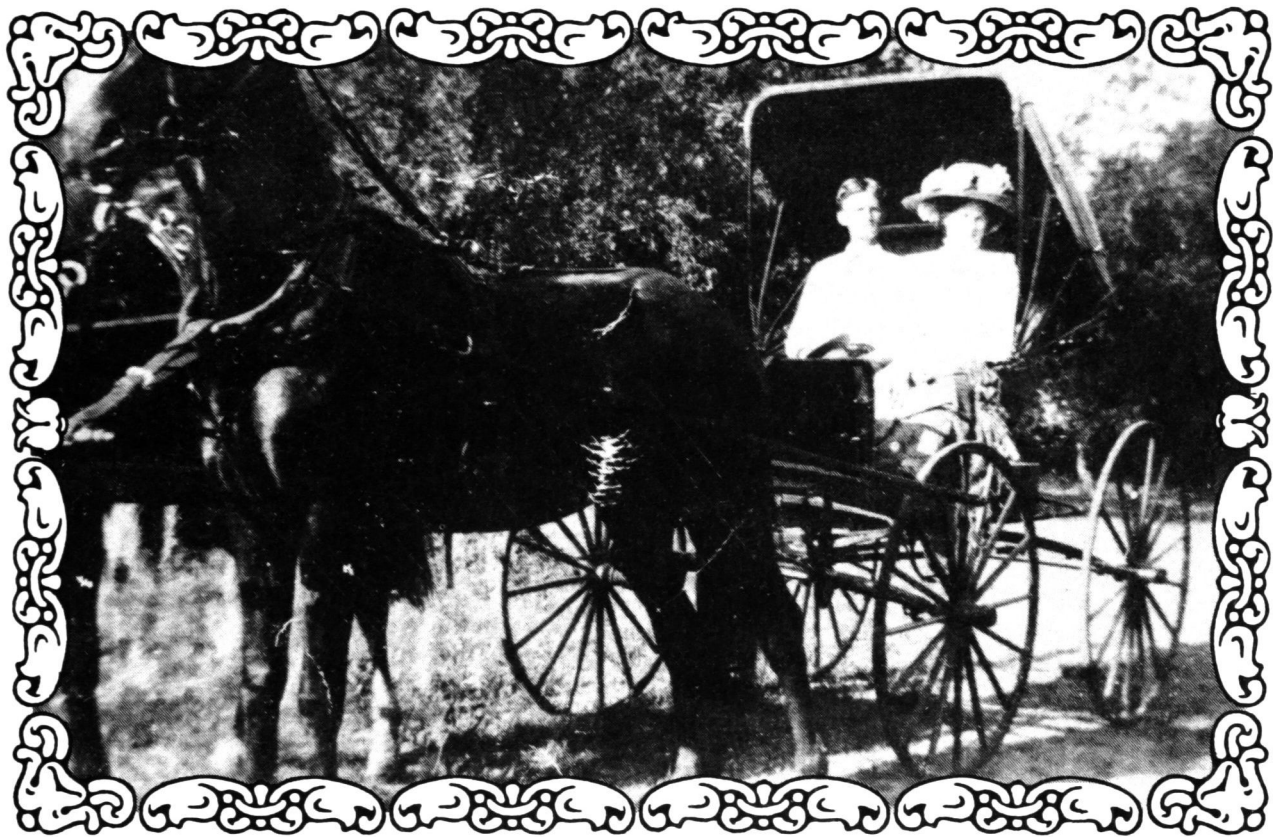
By Rulissa B. Minton

Memories are an important part of everyone's life, but apparently the most vivid and special memories my grandmother has are of her father, my great-grandfather, Roy Edward Adams. All my life, I've heard, from different members of my family, quotations from Roy on his philosophy and events he has told from his life. I guess now to me he seems like the most perfect, wonderful, honest, and extremely respected man that has ever lived. Roy, at the age of 81, finally decided to sit down and begin to put the events of his life down on paper. The summer after I graduated from high school, my

mother and grandmother suggested that I read Roy's book. Apparently, before, I had several unanswered questions floating around about his life, my ancestors, and my grandmother's life. After reading Roy's life story, I realized what a truly wonderful person Roy was just by being an honest, hard-working common man.

It's very evident in his autobiography that Roy's most important possession was his family — from the very beginning of his life in Western Oklahoma, when he, at the age of twelve, moved his widowed mother 240 miles to their new home 3½ miles north-

west of present Walters, Oklahoma. All his life he took care of his youngest sister, Myrtle, and his mother until he had his own family. Trouble and hardship seemed to follow our family, but Roy gave the much-needed emotional and financial support. Roy also loved everyone else and was the first to offer a stranger support. It's evident in his philosophy: "Charity begins at home. The most needed of all things is peace on earth and good will toward men. Live for those who love you and the good that you can do. It matters not how poor you are; give every man your good will."



His ideas were good, but he also showed in many ways all the time how much fun he had with his family. I can remember my uncle, Johnny Friels, telling me about the time Roy played a trick on him and Butch, his cousin. Both boys were always looking for lost treasure out on Cache Creek near Roy's farm. One time Roy fixed up an old army shell, colored some sand gold, put in some Indian beads, some confederate and Mexican money, two or three Indian arrowheads, wrote Davy Crockett's name on a little rock, and used a welding torch to seal it. Roy then hid the "treasure" at the creek and took the boys to guide them until they found it. Johnny still says to this day that it's one of his favorite memories of Roy.

Roy also had some beautiful ideas about Christ. The one that seems to give the most to people is this one: "If you find a little greener pasture, share it with the man coming after you. Just remember that Christ blazed a trail all the way through life, leaving a candle in every darkened place. Go straight ahead until you find His trail. It will be much easier from

there on to the end. Keep in mind there's no place like home and at the end of your trail, you will find an eternal home not made with hands."

Besides being a family man all his life, Roy was the all-time "Wheat" Adams. Farming was his life. He never knew anything but hard work. His parents before him knew nothing but farming and hard work, and all the other members of the family were farmers at least one time in their lives; but in times of need, they always came to "Wheat" Adams for financial help and some experience-filled advice.

"Wheat" Adams, then, was in addition to being a farmer and family man, a common man who wanted only happiness and comfort for his entire family throughout their lives. His attitudes toward both World Wars weren't of much consequence in his life except for the change in wheat prices. He remembered everything that happened in history and how it affected him. He said nothing about the Great Depression except that farmers were lucky because they could provide their own food from

a small garden, a few chickens, and a calf or two.

Roy Edward "Wheat" Adams lived a happy, full life from March 2, 1889 to May 4, 1971. He had no more than a sixth-grade education and lived his entire life from the age of twelve in and around Walters. By working hard and keeping his family around him, he led a happy, prosperous life and did the one important thing for his children by leaving his remaining family with all he had and by making their lives as easy as he could while he was alive. A statement by Roy's father, Watson Alexander Adams, is appropriate because it's one of the philosophies that Roy lived by: "The Bible tells us 'Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work, the seventh thou shalt rest.' The command is to labor six days as well as to rest one. It is just as great a sin not to work the six days as it is not to rest the seventh." ❖

*RULISSA B. MINTON is a student at SOSU from Waltes. She is undecided on a major, but in her spare time she enjoys reading and writing.*