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# Some Weatherford Memories

By Claris Robinson

Since I'm a longtime resident of Weatherford, newcomers to this area often ask me to tell them about the Weatherford of past years and about the people who lived here. I'm always willing to tell as much as I remember. I remember, for instance, that some of the early-day settlers in the Weatherford area were the Bob Emerson family. They lived in a house located where the present-day Southwestern Bell Telephone building sits on the corner of Broadway and Tom Stafford streets.

Around 1912, when I was just a child, I used to go down the hill to the alley in back of Bob Emerson's house to eat white mulberries from tall bushes that were located south of the alley by the Emerson lots. My! Those white mulberries were much sweeter than the purple or red ones.

In the early 1980's, I was reminded of the white mulberries and the Emersons when I learned that Mrs. Potter, Bob's sister, was having a large sale.

A younger friend of mine, who also attended the sale, encouraged me to write about the Emersons and wondered how long I had known the family. I told her that we used to live on the same street--2½ blocks apart--when I was in grade school about seventy years ago.

Bob Emerson had a "racket store" (like the "five-and-ten" store of today) in the same place Tautfest's is located now. My sister, Roberta, wanted a doll in the window. I remember going down there to look at Christmas things, and there was a table piled full and high of celluloid-headed dolls with bright rose-pink cloth bodies stuffed with sawdust. That wasn't the type of doll Roberta wanted, however. She wanted a china-headed, sleepy, brown-eyed doll with curls of real hair, china hands and feet, and a real kid-skin body which could bend at the joints.

Roberta saved her money and took it down to Emerson's Racket Store, but she didn't have enough; so Bob wouldn't give her the doll. However, his brother Clyde took the little handful of money and gave Roberta the beautiful doll. She grabbed the doll and kept it the rest of her life.

Around 1916 or 1917, Bob "went with" (courted) Myrtle (whom I called *Myrtle*) Kelly, who later became an art teacher at the Normal School (now SOSU); later, Miss Kelly became Head of the Art Department. For many years, Miss Kelly also taught Sunday School class for elderly women at the Methodist Church in Weatherford.

Anyhow, Bob went to see Miss Kelly every night, and she always had his house slippers, chair, and pipe ready for him. They wanted to get married someday, but they had their mothers to take care of.

Once, Miss Kelly took a trip to Europe for art lessons. She came back home with many nice watercolor pictures and invited the "big wheels" of Weatherford to a tea at her house so she could show off her pictures. Afterwards, some of the people in this area would make fun of her for having such elaborate teas for showing off her pictures.

One day, Myrtle and Bob drove out in her car to Deer Creek, where she drew sketches of him. This was during World War I when cartoons of Kaiser ("Bill") Wilhelm

appeared in the daily newspapers. Miss Kelly drew a picture of Bob and then added a "Kaiser Bill" moustache on his upper lip; the sketch she made looked exactly like the Kaiser. It made Bob angry; before long, gossip was all over town about the incident.

Despite their occasional flare-ups, Myrtle and Bob remained friends for many years--in fact, until they died. They stayed true to each other all those years and never did get married to anyone else. They had their mothers to care for.

Bob's sister, Mrs. Potter, and her husband had a little hardware store in Weatherford between 1949-1950, which was called Potter's and Palmer's. They sold nails and various knick-knacks. It was located on South Custer Street across from the present location of Tautfest's. The building is now a storage area located just south of Gene's Shoe Repair Shop.

Bob's other sister, Willie, became the wife of Governor Johnston Murray. She herself had also been a candidate for Governor but had lost. She was an accomplished pianist and gave many piano recitals in this area.

The Emersons will long be remembered, and a museum will soon be located in the former Potter house at Main and Seventh. ●



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