

We go to "The Medicine Show"

By Missy Cox Jones

My daddy and mother, William Cornelius Cox and Minnie Steward Cox, my sister Maxine and I were living in Comanche, Texas. This was after Daddy sold the farm. I was probably 15 or 16 years old, and there was a Medicine Show coming to town and Daddy said we would go. Now, this was surprising, because we had never done anything like that before.

The Medicine Show was set up on a vacant lot south across the highway from the Comanche Jail. This vacant lot was used for skating rinks, circus show, and anything else that needed room to set up.

Of course, the show was at night and we all got ready and went. I can see parts of the show to this day, and the "stage" was set up with probably one wall standing at the back of the stage. These actors and actresses were fascinating. Because, we didn't get to see live theatre, we certainly went to the picture show, but not to see a live show.

This was a family show, so there wasn't anything off color about it. I remember one skit that they did. This woman was wearing a negligee, very discreet, since this was a family show. Someone knocked on the door inset on the back wall. The lady told this man "Tell him I'm in my negligee and indisposed". The man hollered back at the person at the door: "She's naked as a jaybird and can't find her clothes." We laughed along with everyone else, and thought that was so funny.

At intermission, people came around selling some kind of liniment, guaranteed to cure anything that ailed you. I remember my Daddy saying that it was probably mostly kerosene.

In later years, I remember reading that Irene Ryan, who played Grannie dampen on the television show "The Beverly Hillbillies" saying that she got her start in show business playing the medicine show circuit, and went on to vaudeville, then to movies and on to the long running television show.

Another example of looking and finding some entertainment that was so much fun.