

The Picture Show in Midland

By Missy Cox Jones

In the late 1920's, my parents, Will and Minnie Cox, my brother Wilburn and my sister Geneva lived in West Texas. Yes, I know that covers a lot of territory, but they lived near Knott, Ackerly, Stanton and when I was born in 1930, they lived 24 miles from Big Spring.

This was during the dust bowl and the depression and times were getting pretty hard. My Daddy was farming, and for a number of years, things had gone really well. Crops were good, and they were making a good living.

Then, the dust bowl came, and with it came the droughts. Daddy had bought a 1927 or 1928 Ford Touring car, with running boards on the side. This car was very serviceable because they traveled lots of time to their home town, which was Comanche in Comanche County, central Texas.

My mother had a sister and she, her husband and several boys and girls lived in Midland, Texas. This was before I was born, but this story was told many times in our family. Mama and Daddy would load up the car and go over to Midland to spend the weekend. My sister and brother said that on Saturday afternoon, the kids were all given money for the Picture Show in downtown Midland. I have no idea where my aunt and uncle and their family lived at, what street, but they walked downtown to the picture show.

Usually on Saturday afternoon, there would be a good western movie playing. When all of these kids got home, they re-enacted this movie outside in the yard, and each of them were playing a part from the movie that they had just seen. This was so important in their lives, they could quote parts of the dialogue.

Fast forward for about fifty years, until about the mid 1980's. Our family had moved back to Comanche after the depression, and one year, we were having a family reunion out at Proctor Lake, near Comanche. This was a pretty lake, and we had a covered pavilion rented for several days. There were a number of travel trailers, and we had set up our trailers, and it being a hot afternoon, we were all sitting down to rest and to enjoy a tall glass of iced tea.

A car drove up, a nice looking gray haired man got out. We said hello, he said hello, and my sister Geneva jumped up and hollered, "Hoot Gibson". This man was our cousin, and Geneva hadn't seen him in about 50 years, but she recognized him as our cousin, and when they were kids and came home from the movies in Midland, he always wanted to play the part of Hoot Gibson, an old time western movie star.

Now, western movies were not all that the kids got to see. Sometimes, they would see "Laurel and Hardy" movies. What a treasure these two men were. When we were all older, and we were having a family get together, my brother and my sister would get started about those old movies. My brother would say, "Hey, remember the time they

.....". And they could tell the movie script and lots of the dialogue. My sister would say, "Hey, remember the time they were going to" We would all laugh until we cried.

Yes, these Laurel and Hardy movies are classics. I watch them every time I get a chance, and we all loved hearing Wilburn and Geneva reliving their happy times as children at the picture show in Midland, Texas.