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By Bill Boyer

The figure above, utilized for many years by newspaper reporters and editorialists, denoted that written copy handed into the editor and then on to the compositor, had reached its conclusion . . . in other words, that this was 'the end of the story'.

And such is the instance of the life of this publication's esteemed publisher and editor, Barbara Oringderff, who observed her 85th birthday on Dec. 16—also celebrating Christmas surrounded by family—before succumbing to her final illness two days shy of the new year . . . and will remain as a lingering absence in all who loved her.

Barbara, in earlier years, compiled columns over an eight-year period called "Reflections of Southwest Kansas" for the Garden City Telegram. She also published a "New West News" TV guide for the Garden City/Dodge City area. Dur-

ing that period she also served as co-announcer of Garden City's Beef Empire parade, starting in its second year, with that service culminating by her being designated Parade Marshal at its 43rd observance in 2011—a year after she first suffered cancer of the throat.

But back in 1979—three years after publishing a book, "True Sod" featuring early sod houses—she and Greg Harness formed Empire Advertising Inc., which, with the help of Barbara's daughter Carol produced brochures, booklets, city guides, etc. Pageant souvenir programs also were provided for the Miss America Pageant for three years beginning in 1991, when it was held in Wichita, and for the Miss Teen USA Pageant in 1995.

And it also was in 1979 that the first issue of Kansas Territorial was published (dated December/January, 1980)—a bi-monthly offering for

the area that once extended to the Rocky Mountains. This continued until 1986 when the publication was renamed Territorial magazine; but in its 20th year, co-publisher Greg Harness died (March 20, 1999), and the Territorial became a quarterly offering.

By its 25th year the magazine had continued its scope—and in addition to its popularity in Kansas and surrounding states, that year alone received subscriptions from Arkansas, Texas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Wyoming, New Mexico, Iowa, Arizona, Utah, California and Florida.

Barbara soloed as editor/publisher throughout its latest 19 years, traveling extensively (often with family members), remaining true to the magazine's purpose as expressed in her words: "We see the Territorial as primarily a High Plains business and industry magazine. . . . We spotlight farming, cattle ranching, travel and entertainment, trucking, and the oil (and gas) industry; all industries that play a vital part, both past and present, in life on the High Plains."

One of Barbara's "Covering the Territory" articles in a past issue I thought particularly interesting, mentioned the account of a copy of her book, "True Sod" being sent by a friend to Ronald Reagan (not yet in his role as President), who himself was enamored with the American West. Penned from his home in Los Angeles, Mr Reagan wrote to Barbara % the Kansas Heritage Center at Dodge City: "Dear Miss Oringderff: Thank you very much for the personally inscribed book. I am a western buff and am already half way through it - it's fascinating.

"Right now, Nancy and I are in a 100 year old 'Adobe' (at our ranch) which we've put back in shape virtually with our own hands.

"I've read many times about the sod houses and have been curious as to exactly what they were and how permanent. You've provided us the answers.

"Sincerely, Ronald Reagan"

And one of Barbara's favorite stories was when she and a friend were



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in Chicago, and heard that Oprah Winfrey was arriving to tape a show. They ensconced themselves early in the morning outside the venue so they could catch her arrival.

Barbara witnessed Oprah exit a cab, passing them by with a cheerful “Good morning girls”. Turning to her friend, Barbara said: “Well, we can go back to the hotel now. We’ve seen Oprah”—at which her friend screeched: “Where?” And Oprah, hearing them, came back out the door, put her arm around Barbara’s friend and asked: “Do you want to see my show?”

In Barbara’s words: “After asking where we were from, and making small talk, Oprah put an arm around each of us and with her bodyguard trailing about five steps behind, she walked us down the wide city sidewalk to the front of the building.

“Did you pay your cab driver?” she asked me sweetly, and when I looked up, there he was still sitting in the street with his mouth open and a stunned look on his face. He had been one of several who had told us we’d never get into the show without tickets.

“At the front entrance, about fifty men and women with tickets were waiting to get in. Oprah and her bodyguard waltzed us right through the awe-struck crowd and into the lobby, where she stayed to see that we got front row seats.”

I am particularly proud to have been a member of Barbara’s Territorial family since its inception (as has Jim Brown, who puts the magazine together), and it has been a profound pleasure to having worked with her. The Territorial has been an effort in which Barbara excelled—and will continue with the help of her daughters Sharon and Carol, and staff, to hopefully remain as an example of exemplary enterprise.

Barbara enjoyed an interesting and illustrating life, and her exuberance and friendly demeanor was an example for all. Thus, all I have stated heretofore has been but affirmation of its impact . . . with the Territorial itself, serving as her testimonial.

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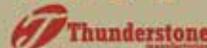


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