

## A real winner

KATHY MILLS, Clarenceville's Homecoming Queen, and her court graced the parade Friday night before the Trojans trounced the Milford Redskins, 23-16, to win their first game of the year. (Staff photos by Bob Woodring)



## In Oklahoma

# They recall homesteading days

By SHERRY KAHAN

PLYMOUTH — Living in a house in Plymouth with plumbing, freezers and television sure isn't like it was homesteading in Oklahoma at the turn of the century.

Delbert Foreman of 11310 Southworth is the son of a man who homesteaded there in 1900, and grew up "among the jackrabbits and coyotes."

Today at 87 he can remember when part of Tulsa was a ragtown, meaning that the inhabitants lived in tents and covered wagons. He also saw plenty of Indians.

"No two ways about it," he said. "The Indians were nice, friendly people. We all lived together around there. Blacks too. I can't remember ever hearing of an Indian arrested for stealing or anything."

When Foreman was older he moved a few miles away from his father's home and built a house.

"It was just one room but I thought it was pretty nice," he recalled, adding that some people there lived in sod houses made of mesquite grass and others lived in a half dugout. This consisted of a hole dug in the ground and lined with boards and sod.

Life wasn't entirely austere, however, Foreman reported. "That country had more kinds of fruit than you see around today," he said. "Wild grapes grew along the river and we made wine. There were plums much bigger than the ones grown here with the help of 100 pounds of fertilizer."

"We produced all our own food," he continued. "We grew most everything," adding that he had walked many a mile behind a plow digging up the sod.

"When an animal was killed we hung the hindquarters in the cellar to avoid flies," he said, "and it would cure and really dry out. Some people hung the animal in a tree top where the flies wouldn't go."

They also ate salt pork, ham, quail, turkey and homemade sausage fried in lard and kept in jars.

Were there cowboys around? "Sure we saw a lot of cowboys," he said. "They didn't wear guns, but just about everybody owned guns in those days for hunting."

But was the life of a cowboy a hard life?

"Wasn't any harder being a cowboy in the west than working for Ford and worrying about being laid off," he said.

In time looking for greener pastures, Foreman and his family started east. His daughter, Mrs. Ethel Skaggs, offered a reminder that a journey to Arkansas in a covered wagon was by no means as romantic as it seems on film.

"My 16-month-old sister died on the trip from what we called the summer

complaint, really diarrhea, from the unsanitary conditions on the trip," she said.

After working in an apple orchard for several years, Foreman found a job in roundhouse No. 4 of the Mis-

souri, Kansas and Texas railway. Later following his relatives to this area, he worked for about 17 years picking up the mail from the mail train and taking it to the Plymouth post office.

Four of his six children live in the area. Clint Foreman lives in Plymouth, Dale lives in Livonia, Mrs. Freda Groom makes her home in Northville and Mrs. Skaggs is from South Lyon.

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