

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of this special issue of Heritage of the Great Plains deserves some commentary. Producing a radio series about the Great Plains was one of the first ideas discussed when Emporia State University began planning its Center for Great Plains Studies nearly ten years ago. In the late 1970s the Kansas Information Network agreed to distribute a series of public service announcements, and in January 1981 I was put in charge of the project. Although choosing a title for the series was relatively easy, selecting theme music and getting manuscripts was a bit more difficult. After considering both an original score and various popular songs, we decided on a folk song, "Lexington," performed by the Perry County, Tennessee Music Makers, and recorded by Stephen Davis, professor of psychology. Although Tennessee is not part of the Great Plains, the music seemed appropriate for "Plains Talk." I next asked Richard Keller, of the English Department, to record the introductory and exit lines for the spots, then solicited scripts from the faculty and wrote many myself. Thus far 90 people have written or recorded scripts for the 300 Plains Talk programs that have aired since our debut in June 1981.

We were not prepared for the enthusiastic response that greeted these spots. Letters, phone calls, and personal statements have come from all over Kansas, as well as from the four states surrounding us, many of them asking if Plains Talk were available in print. Thus this special issue.

Listed on the opposite page are those who have contributed these selected scripts. They range from faculty members to students in Denney Clements' journalism class for whom researching and writing a script is an assignment. Students in a commercial art class taught by Don Johnson are responsible for the drawings. The photographs come from a variety of sources that are identified in the book.

I would like to thank all those who have written scripts, contributed drawings, and given me ideas for improvements. I would also like to thank Larry Seefeldt, a technician at the ESU Media Center. He has spent many hours putting the music and voice tapes together so that they can be sent to the KIN.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who took the time to write and let us know that you were listening.

Julie Johnson
Editor
Plains Talk