

Dorothy Stone Tells of Rogers as Friend

Editor's Note—Dorothy Stone, daughter of Fred Stone, and herself a stage and screen star, tells an International News Service reporter "what Will Rogers meant to me."

Following is the first installment of a series of four articles based on the interview.

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NEW YORK, Aug. 19.—Although torn with grief at the untimely death of Will Rogers, Dorothy Stone con-



sented to tell some of her intimate recollections of this great, lovable man only because, as she said, it represented an opportunity to pay tribute to his memory.

She came down stairs to meet the writer looking pale and distraught, with obvious signs of the great sorrow

DOROTHY. she was feeling. Refusing a cigaret, she sat down, and was silent for a moment. Then she said:

"I don't know where to begin. I see the tragic story staring at me in black type in every newspaper, but I can't believe it, I can't seem to realize it. It all seems too unreal. No one as vital or with as positive a nature could be wiped out and have his whole individuality end right there. He is as eternal as the Spring—just as sure as there's a universe there's a Will Rogers, and there will always be one—somewhere."

She spoke slowly, with sadness and deep conviction. Continuing, she said:

"When I think of Will Rogers, I think of an exciting cowboy who used to pick me up in his saddle when I was a little girl and trot along twirling his lariat.

He Kept Wet Vigil.

"I think of a man who sat on his horse all night in a blinding rain-storm, keeping a lonely vigil to warn people the road embankment had been swept away in the flood.

"And I think of the closing night of 'Three Cheers' when the audience rose in a body and applauded almost in frenzy when Will Rogers made his final bow, and the entire company stood with tears streaming down their cheeks."

Miss Stone seemed to lose some of her reserve as she talked, and, leaning forward, she began:

"As I said before, my earliest recollection of him was as a thrilling figure on horseback who would come trotting along, swoop down, pick me up in his saddle, and then, to my huge delight, whirl his lasso in ever-widening circles. Even now I can remember his booming laughter and how I would cling to the pommel of the saddle with his arm resting me in his lap.

"Then he went away for a time, and other people began to loom large in my childish horizon. One day, however, I came home from Sunday school about noon, just when the family was sitting down to dinner. I noticed we had company, and my daddy called:

"Come in, Dotty, and meet our guests."

"I went around the table, and, as he introduced me to each one, I made a very formal curtsy, and, just as I had been taught, said with strained politeness:

"I am very glad to meet you."

Will Wouldn't Move.

"Then, as I was almost around the table, I looked up at the chair to see none other than my cowboy friend. Immediately every vestige of my solemn politeness disappeared—I stuck out my hand, and, in a deep voice, said:

"Hollo, Will!"

"He grinned broadly, swept me into his arms and said:

"Hello, Come!"

"He used to give all the children the title of 'Come Dot!' and 'Come Paul,' although he referred to his own son as 'little old Jim.'

"It was during the Summer of 1915, I think, that he and his family took our house in Amityville, Long Island, while we were in California. It was in our home that Summer, too, that one of his boys was born.

"When we came back to Amityville after the Summer was over Will and his family decided they didn't want to leave so they rented a farm right across the street from us. We were all delighted, of course, and I believe I spent more time over at the Rogers' than at home after that.

"Our family has always had riding horses, and, at that time, I had three ponies of my own, but I used to love to go over and ride Will's horses. He told me to ride them whenever I wanted, and, sometimes, he would ride with me. Those occasions were a real treat for me, and I can vividly see him, chuckling and laughing, and sometimes singing as we rode.

Preferred His Ponies.

"Daddy, however, would often scold:

"Why don't you ride your own ponies? Will might want to use one of his horses while you're out with it, and you really shouldn't impose upon him. Besides, what's wrong with your own ponies?"

"I don't like my ponies as well as I like his."

"It was during that period that Will gave me a pair of silver spurs, a silver-mounted bridle, and a little black leather quirt with my name on the handle. They are still among my most prized possessions.

"The lives of our two families have been so closely knit together that I can remember when all of their children were born and the excitement which heralded the arrival of each one. I was a very tiny child myself, and I would blush to tell him now, but I can remember holding little Bill in my lap when he was a baby. How pleased I was when Aunt Betty (Mrs. Rogers) would let me hold him!"

In the next instalment Miss Stone will tell some incidents illustrating Rogers' unusual devotion to his family, and will tell how he used to rope a stuffed calf in his living room. She also will tell of an amusing conversation between Will Rogers and her father, Fred Stone, and she will describe Will's drenched, all-night vigil during the Los Angeles flood.