

UNVEILING AND PRESENTATION

to

CITY OF FORT WORTH

EQUESTRIAN STATUE
AND PORTRAIT

of

WILL ROGERS

FORT WORTH

November 4, 1947



WILL ROGERS

November 4, 1879 ✦ August 15, 1935

Humorist

Philosopher

A Great American

"I never met a man I didn't like—"

FORT WORTH AND WILL ROGERS

FORT WORTH had a special place in the affections of the late Will Rogers. And Will Rogers occupied a place both special and unique in Fort Worth's heart. Perhaps neither ever stopped to analyze the reasons for this relationship. Friendship does not need and is not subject to dissection. It was sufficient for Fort Worth that Will liked it here. Perhaps it was sufficient for the ranch-born Will that in Fort Worth there were many with background and interests closely similar to his—people with whom, as he said more than once, he could feel completely comfortable. Although he had two others, Claremore, Okla., and Los Angeles, Will liked to call Fort Worth "home," and he missed no chance to visit it. Fort Worth took warm delight in these visits and keen pride in being one of the places he loved and in which he felt most at home.

So much did Fort Worth cherish this kinship with the sagacious humorist that when it built a coliseum and an auditorium—the one an arena for the rodeo and ranch sports Will loved, the other a setting for the kind of entertainment with which his first fame was connected—they appropriately were named for him. These are monuments to his memory. The works of art being unveiled today, gifts to the city by Amon Carter, long-time intimate friend of "sweet old Will Rogers," are likenesses of the man himself. In both the equestrian statue executed by Electra Waggoner and the life-sized portrait painted by Seymour Stone, he is shown in typical naturalness astride his favorite horse, Soapsuds.

To those who knew him, Will Rogers will always be an unforgettable figure. To those who had not that privilege, the likenesses in bronze and on canvas will convey an impression of the physical appearance of the slouching, cow-licked figure whose greatest quality was an unbounded capacity for friendship. Although the cowboy humorist-philosopher, a man of considerable wealth, left far less in cash at his death to his family than he gave during his lifetime to charity, his real legacy to the world was the example of a life lived unselfishly, the sage wit and rare commonsense of his monologues and writings, and the friendliness that knew neither rank nor national boundary.



GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Chief of Staff, United States Army



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Photo by Lotte Jacobi
MARGARET TRUMAN



Equestrian statue (life size) of Will Rogers on his favorite horse, Soapsuds, at the entrance of the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum Grounds. The statue is the work of Electra Waggoner, native Texan and noted sculptress of Fort Worth and New York.

PROGRAM

Hon. Fritz Lanham
Presiding

Invocation

"Home on the Range"

Introductions

Presentation of statue and portrait
to City of Fort Worth on
behalf of Amon Carter

Acceptance for the City
of Fort Worth

Unveiling

Music

Rev. James K. Thompson

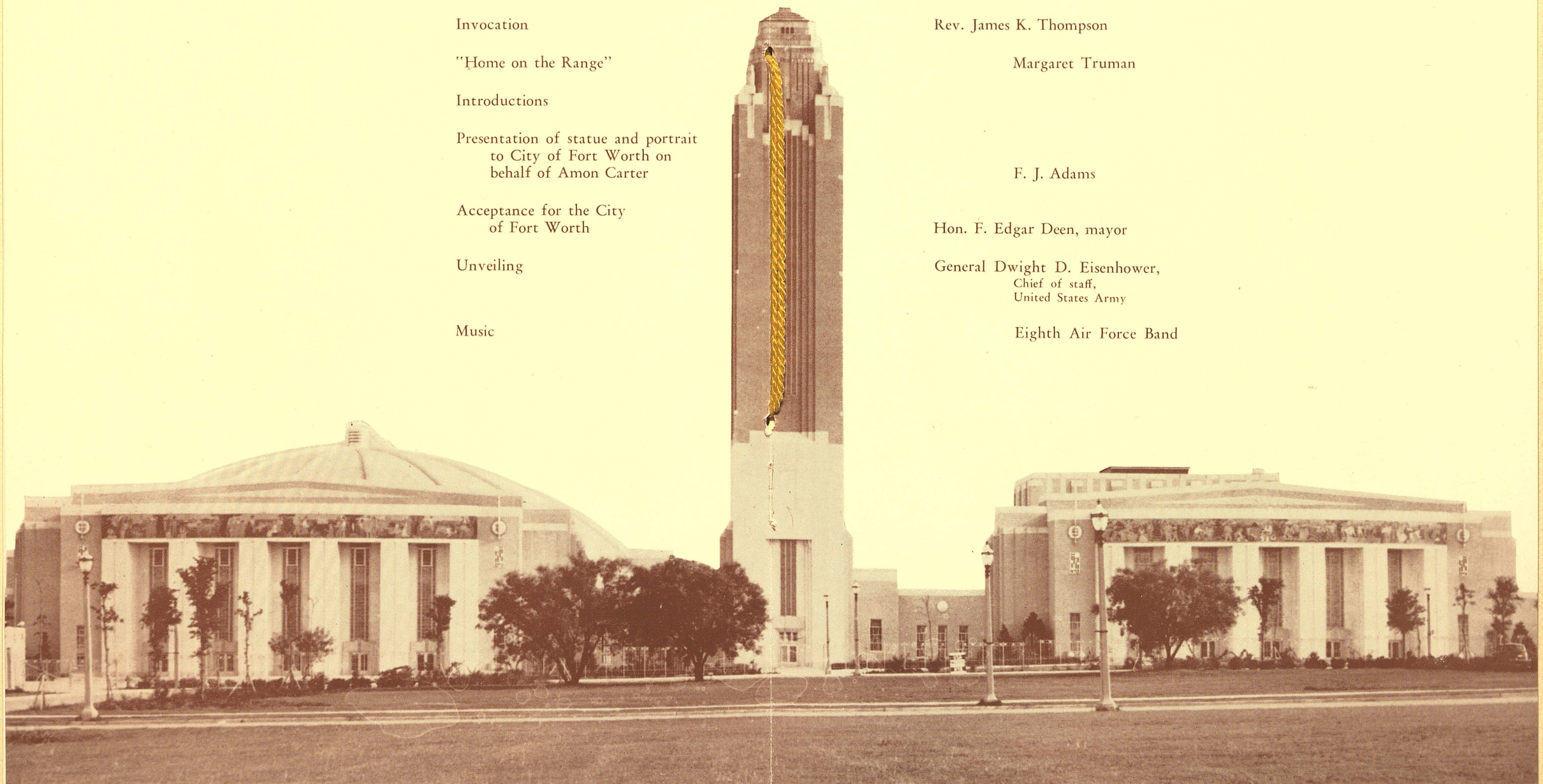
Margaret Truman

F. J. Adams

Hon. F. Edgar Deen, mayor

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Chief of staff,
United States Army

Eighth Air Force Band



THE WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL COLISEUM AND AUDITORIUM



ELECTRA WAGGONER

Noted sculptress who executed the statue



Life size portrait of Will Rogers that hangs in the entrance hall of the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum. Portrait by Seymour Stone of New York

WILL ROGERS – THE MAN

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JHERE was only one Will Rogers. His generation never produced a man with such a wide variety of outstanding talents. His genius was unique and it led him on to where he was sought by princes and presidents, but he always remained the plain, unassuming man to whom a lowly stage hand was just as important as a powerful statesman. Fortune and world fame were his, yet he always kept his sharp-heeled cowboy boots firmly on the ground. The motion pictures, radio, the printed word and stage were used by him as a medium of conveying his thoughts to others and made his name a household word of tremendous influence. A tireless traveler, he found his material in many lands but never did he forget his beginning on a cattle ranch in the old Indian Territory. He was at once a cowboy, rodeo rider, comedian, philosopher, humorist, and philanthropist, and his career seems almost fabulous. He might have been half a dozen men so many were his talents. Through all the plaudits that came his way he remained humble, always creating the impression that the applause was not meant for him. There was no pose with Will Rogers.

—from "Will Rogers,"
by P. J. O'Brien
(John C. Winston Co., 1935)



SEYMOUR STONE

Internationally famous portrait painter who did the portrait