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Draper Loved The State, Too

STANLEY DRAPER'S great love was Oklahoma City but he was a statewide personality, too, a real Oklahoma booster.

Draper realized fully that great cities depend upon the country around them for success, and he was dedicated to the upbuilding of the state, especially the agricultural and oil industries that produce so much of our new wealth.

The Trade Trip wasn't invented by Draper, but he used it with finesse, and no town was too small for the trains, cars and buses to stop so that Oklahoma City people could become acquainted with their neighbors.

Long before the word "ecology" found its way into the common vocabulary, Draper was trying to improve our environment by boosting soil and water conservation. He staged conservation clinics featuring nationally-known personalities, soil-building contests, and thousands remember the "Farm-in-a-Day" on the site of the State Fairgrounds, as well as other spectacular events.

The stock yards and packing plants, established in 1911, still were the biggest things in town when Draper arrived in 1919. Naturally, he joined in the boom for livestock, but he didn't quit working for the industry's growth after factories and federal installations employing thousands became important, too.

Throughout Draper's years at the Chamber of Commerce, one of the major units was the Agriculture and Livestock Division, and many of its committee members were farmers and ranchers.

Youth leaders over the nation have been amazed at the long continued Oklahoma success story at the annual International 4-H Club Congress in Chicago. Year after year, Oklaho-

mans have brought home more scholarships and awards than delegations from any other state. Here is one of the reasons for this success.

A quarter of a century ago, the idea of holding an Oklahoma 4-H Club Congress, modeled after Chicago, came out of a Chamber of Commerce meeting. Draper liked it, and each November since, outstanding boys and girls from all 77 counties have come to Oklahoma City to see the Chicago-bound delegation depart. They go home determined to become winners themselves. Many succeed.

Draper loved to see things grow, as Cityans know from visits to his home gardens and from seeing his skills applied to the beautiful gardens at Oklahoma Heritage Center. It has been said that he would have been a highly successful business executive, and he would have been a great farmer, too.

About 30 years ago, Draper bought a modest-sized farm near Witcher, northeast of Oklahoma City, and moved there, tackling the work with characteristic zeal. He drafted family members to help with early and late chores and drove himself as though the nation depended upon the vegetables and turkeys raised on his farm.

There were not enough hours to do everything, though, and Stanley had a calling to build a great city. Reluctantly, he gave up farming. If he had stayed with it, he might have been farming half the county eventually, raising everything from apples to zebras.

Stanley Draper will be remembered for his tremendous contributions to development of Oklahoma City, and people over the state know that his love for Oklahoma was truly statewide.