

Right Out of the Old West

By ELOISE M. FRUGE

On a five acre spread a few miles from Sam Houston State Park near Lake Charles lives Tom Moss. The home he shares with his wife and three children is modern to the last detail, yet it is within these walls that Tom creates paintings and sculptures right out of the Old West.

SELF-TAUGHT, MOSS HAS never had a lesson in either painting or sculpture, yet this lover of horses, cattle and the West is one of the nation's foremost painters and sculptors of western art.

Tom Moss has been creating paintings of western scenes for about seven years. Most of his paintings have Central and West Texas backgrounds, but Oklahoma and Colorado have furnished some also. "I've always been interested in the West and in western art," Moss said with a shy smile. "When I was a kid I used to sketch cow-

boys and I read all of Will James' books. I even copied his pictures."

The works of Charles Russell and Fredric Remington were also favorites. George Phippen is a favorite contemporary artist. Tom's childhood experiences in the oil field towns of South and East Texas along with raising registered quarter horses led to the rodeo circuit while in high school and college. Possibly the greatest incentive to paint and sculpt came from living in Houston. It was there that Moss got to visit museums and art galleries abounding in western painting and sculpture. He also met artists, got to know them and learned from them. Among the western artists he admired and met are Jim Reno, A. P. Baker and H. Clay Dahlberg. They looked at his paintings, listened to his desire to sculpt, gave him a few pointers and much encouragement.

JUST HOW DID Tom Moss get started sculpting?

"I can explain that better than Tom," his wife said. "He's too modest. If Tom decides to do something he just does it. He came home with a paperback on sculpture and said, 'I'm going into sculpture.' He did, and they've been very well received. Galleries in Houston, Austin, Santa Fe and Tuscon are handling his work," she said proudly.

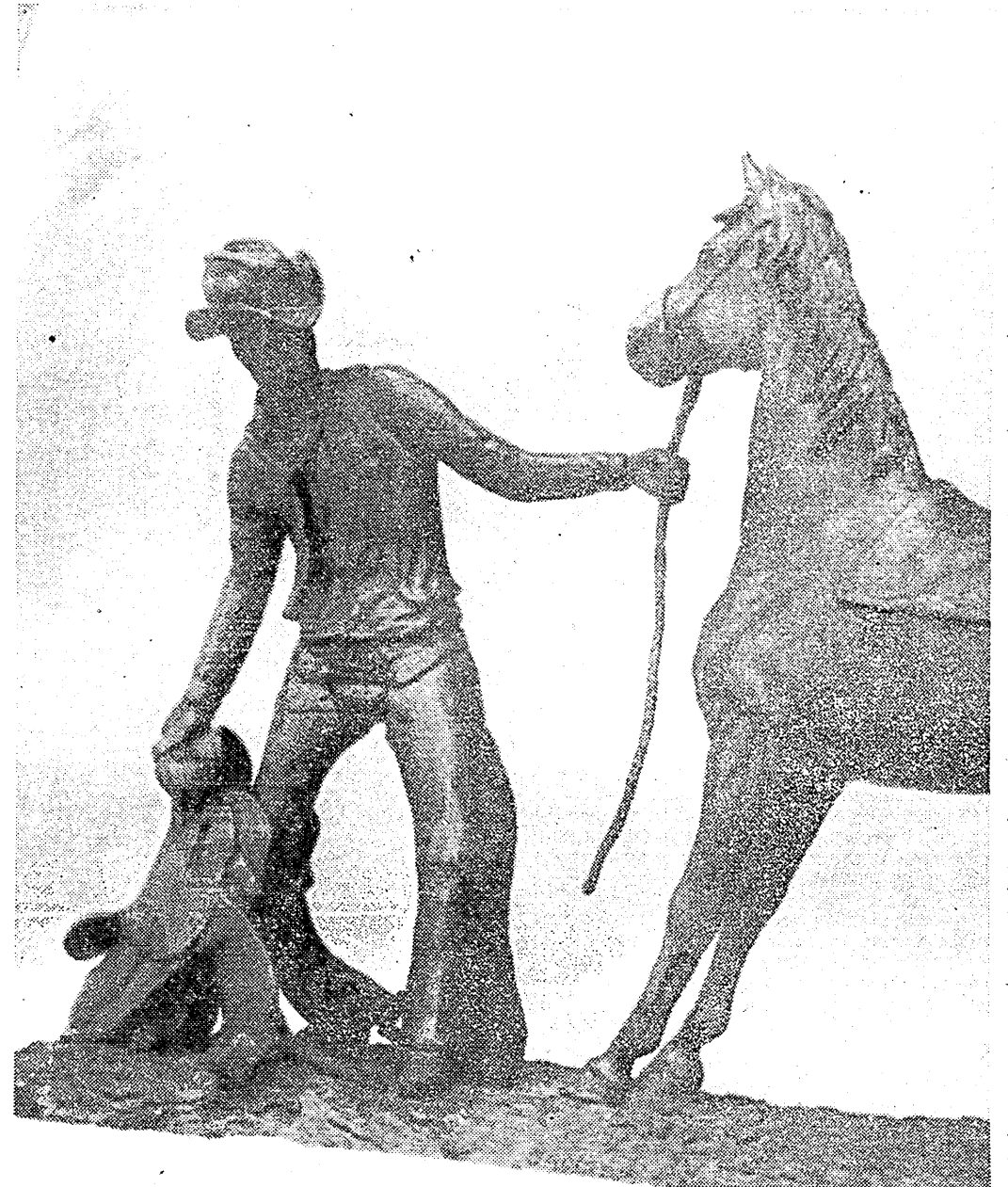
Moss feels his wife is his biggest critic as well as his best help — she can spot right away if something is not quite right and suggest the right approach immediately.

In the time he has been sculpting Tom has produced four small Indian busts representing four different tribes, the Crow, the Apache, the Sioux and the Shoshone. He has larger sculptures entitled Saddling the Bronc, Moving Camp, Working Cattle, On Night Herd, and Signal. He is presently working on one he'll probably call Unpacking. Working in the evenings and on weekends it usually takes him about two to three months to complete a work. He starts with modeling wax (especially for sculpting) although he occasionally works with clay. Since you can get more detail in wax, that is the medium he uses most.

TOM DOESN'T REQUIRE many tools in creating his sculptures. He uses an armature he makes himself out of aluminum or lead wire to build his horses on. (He sometimes uses an old coat hanger, but this doesn't bend as easily.) He has four or five small tools lying around on his work table but says that ninety per cent of the time he uses one little tool to work in the detail.

When his wax or clay model is up to his specifications he sends it off to Weatherford, Texas, to a foundry and has them cast in bronze by what is known as the lost wax process. This same process was used by the Chinese, Egyptians and Romans in ancient times. Normally his bronze sculptures are in limited editions of ten, the Indian heads (because they're small) are in twenty. Moss keeps one of each for his estate, the rest are for sale.

Movie and TV star Dale Robertson, also a collector of western art, reserved the first bronze in each edition of



the Indian busts. He also commissioned a larger bronze, "Cutting Cattle."

TOM MOSS HOPES eventually to be able to devote most of his time to his art. In the meantime he and his

family enjoy their five acre spread in the heart of the Cajun bayou country, surrounded by western paintings and sculptures created by Moss along with books on and paintings of other western artists.

Stars in the Center

Limousines and Rare Wine

By ROBERT H. TAYLOR

Joni Mitchell wanted a rare wine and Neil Young insisted on a banquet.

Performances by Three Dog Night, Elvis Presley, Moody Blues and other name performers are not only glamorous, but can be as burdensome as getting pickles for an expectant mother.

SOME ARE AS ELUSIVE as butterflies, others as demanding as Attila, but most, according to William Hite, are amazing. As LSU Union Theater director, Hite has watched many of the contacts of his office blossom into shows at the modern LSU Assembly Center.

Contracting Elvis, his summer success, was the result of three years of close contact. An average of seven calls a day for the past three years was answered. Each was a request about an Elvis appearance by a fan who had gotten word his or her idol might make a trip to the center.

Part of the three-year discussion included the fact Elvis rarely does campus performances. Civic auditoriums are better suited to the Elvis approach, but a show could be arranged providing the right conditions be set.

CONCESSIONS WOULD include no discount tickets, with prices to be the standard rate at all Presley concerts. His salary would be ninety per cent of the gate plus anything above the \$10,000 rental fee of the center for two nights, assuming the gate involved more than \$100,000 for the nights.

Even the certainty of two nights was reached only after much discourse. Originally it had been a one-night affair. Those three years would result in a public acceptance approaching the unbelievable. Elvis Presley sold out 29,044 seats in only four days.

The usual heavy advertisement and numerous outlets for ticket sales never were needed. The ticket office has two full-time employes and twelve part-time students who sorted huge quantities of mail as the tickets vanished into return envelopes. Few tickets ever reached the counter.

Elvis and company arrived in four jet planes carrying seventy workers, including a twenty-piece orchestra, an electric band and a twelve-member vocal support group.

To protect Presley, and direct traffic, forty city

sheriffs and twenty campus police were hired at twenty dollars a night by the Elvis managers. Student marshalls also aided.

PROBLEMS? There are more than just Elvis. What has three limousines, three color television sets and four trucks of sound equipment? Emerson? Lake? And Palmer? Yes.

The popular music group asked that a stage one hundred by forty feet be provided. They were to have the TV sets in three separate dressing rooms and a catering service was to provide them with prime cuts. Of course, the threesome paid for the luxuries with their salaries.

Emerson, Lake and Palmer also insisted on treating their fans to quadraphonic sound. The latest craze in stereo required four systems producing four different sets of sounds to be hung around the corners of the center. It is unusually loud even for rock which approaches ear-shattering intensity on occasion.

IN CONTRAST, country music fans were treated to one Conway Twitty-Loretta Lynn show where only the amplification facilities of the Assembly Center were used. This fact went unnoticed by the different, yet equally hungry music lovers.

Conway Twitty, Johnny Cash, ZZ Top can all be reached easier than some would believe. Any artists can be reached by the directory entitled Official Talent and Booking Directory. More appropriately, their agents can be reached. The agent is then requested to present a list of possible performance dates, which are checked against dates the Assembly Center is open.

Previously scheduled events, no matter how small, must be held on schedule. Special consideration is given to students being away on break, or preparing for finals. No concerts are scheduled during a break.

Student committees in the previous school year turned down Grand Funk and Chicago. Both had expressed an interest in playing and performing dates were available.

THE GENERAL ARRANGEMENT with performers is a ninety-ten split in which the performer gets the ninety per cent. The student committee will then take the ten per cent and pay the rent for the center at the reduced student rate. The rest is mainly profit as the artist is ex-

pected to handle all expenses incurred in keeping the mammoth facility open.

When the show is not a success, the expenses will be a loss to the performer. Steven Stills and Rod Stewart are just two examples of shows that did not succeed. Stills has the dubious record at an \$8,000 loss to the promoter — not to LSU. The poor crowds were nearly fatal, yet some stars decline the large crowds for a less profitable small one.

Joni Mitchell chose the close quarters of the 4,600 seat theater facilities for sipping her rare wine. Hite speculated the wine was more of a challenge than a requisite for the lady songstress.

ANOTHER PRECEDENT setting performer is Liza Minelli, who refused to allow a customer to see her from behind. No seats are sold to the rear of the stage and a quaint 11,000 saw the sold out concert. Liza asserted no poor seats in the Assembly Center would be sold.

Poor timing, conflicting events and changing styles can effect the artist. For big, widely known names such as War those ducats may seem like bullion in cardboard. No standing room seats are sold in the LSU Assembly Center. Occasionally the inevitable occurs and a ticket is lost.

All mail-order purchased tickets are recorded the day of sale. New ones are issued in case of loss or even destruction. Despite contrary belief, tickets bought over the counter or from a friend are also usually replaced justly on one provision.

If the purchaser can remember where he would have sat, a steward checks the seat. If no one is seated, the assumption is the sad story was a true one.

During Elvis' stay, ticket scalping went up to fifty dollars for a single ticket in some cases. Reselling at a price above the ticket face value is prohibited and led to several arrests.

IN THE NEAR FUTURE, Elton John, Emmett Kelly Jr. and Robert Goulet will stand under the spotlights to thrill the crowds not measured to date. Long before they ever reach the first step of the stage, men like William Hite will have been tracing new footsteps and preparing for the desires of a John Denver, Or Neil Diamond, Or Ray Charles. Or . . . who knows?