

Will Rogers Performed for Enthusiastic Waxahachie Audience in February 1927

Internationally famous cowboy humorist Will Rogers arrived in Waxahachie by train on Saturday afternoon, February 26, 1927 to the city's excitement and praise and anticipation for his performance at 8:30 that evening at the Chautauqua Auditorium.

In the week leading up to Rogers' arrival, the *Waxahachie Daily Light* had daily articles, photos, and advertisements announcing his upcoming program and describing his life, career, and character. Several articles and ads indicated that he would close out his show with some of his famed lariat tricks. One article stated that early ticket sales indicated that a capacity crowd was expected.

At the Chautauqua that evening, while the audience waited for Will Rogers to appear, "a radio program was received and

amplified to fill the air with music through a receiving set up through the courtesy of the Walter Music Company." Following this, the entertainer appeared and provided the audience "one hundred and one minutes of engrossingly entertaining comments and cross fires on topics of the day." The following day's *Waxahachie Daily Light* described his discussion of his trip to Europe, Mussolini, U.S. foreign policy, the League of Nations, disarmament, the plight of the farmer, former Texas Governor Jim Ferguson, college students, prohibition, airplanes, automobiles and bad roads.

Rogers performed to an enthusiastic crowd at the Chautauqua Auditorium. However, their "one disappointment came when he closed his act without displaying his skill at trick roping, at which his dexterity gave him his first attention in vaudeville and the name of 'poet lariat'." After finishing his show "and adding a fresh stick to his unwieldy chew of gum, he walked out where a waiting car took him to the train for California."

America's Greatest Humorist

WILL ROGERS

"Self-Appointed Ambassador to
Foreign Governments"


The Prince of Entertainers
—and—
Entertainer of the Prince

Greatest Humorist of All Times

Chautauqua Auditorium

Saturday Evening
Feb. 26, 8:30

Tickets on sale at Curlin's Pharmacy,
Trinity Pharmacy, and Walter Music Shop



Rogers' February 1927 visit to Waxahachie was his only appearance in this part of the state that was scheduled for that year. He had just returned from a trip to Europe and was now on his third American tour.

Will Rogers died in a plane crash on August 15, 1935 with his friend and pilot Wiley Post (who himself had visited Waxahachie in 1932). The *Waxahachie Daily Light's* large bold headline on that day said: "CRASH KILLS ROGERS AND POST." The page included Rogers' photo and two lead articles retelling the story of his 1927 visit to Waxahachie.

On September 19, 1975, Will Rogers, Jr. followed his father's footsteps to the Waxahachie Chautauqua Auditorium, just two months after its restoration. He spoke on "My Father's Humor," discussing the life, influences, and career of Will Rogers, Sr. He said that he had heard the term "Waxahachie crowd" from his father and understood it to mean "a warm and friendly audience." He said that Waxahachie had "a wonderful auditorium but all you need is some soft seats."

(Source: Waxahachie Daily Light.)