



ENJOYING A VISIT at the LandMark Inn were (from left) Marcia (Rodehaver) Smith, her sister, Mary (Rodehaver) Mills and their third cousin, Annie Laurie (Jorn) Jochums, who met in Oberlin. It was the first time the sisters had met their cousin. —Photo by Dallice Mills



MARCIA LOHOEFENER portrayed Sarah J. Rodehaver Harvie for relatives and guests of Robert and Annie Laurie (Jorn) Jochums at the LandMark Inn. —Photo by Dallice Mills

Women revive the past

By MARY LOU OLSON

The early days of Oberlin came to life recently when two sisters, great-granddaughters of a pioneer couple, Oberlin founder John A. Rodehaver and Sarah J. (Moore) Rodehaver Harvie, came here to learn more about their roots.

The women, Mary (Rodehaver) Mills of Corvallis, Ore., and her sister, Marcia (Rodehaver) Smith of Bucksport, Maine, had contacted a third cousin, Annie Laurie (Jorn) Jochums, of Camarillo, Calif., and the three decided to meet in Oberlin, where Mrs. Jochums was born and reared, for their first meeting.

After many telephone conversations, Mrs. Mills and her husband Dallice, and Mrs. Smith made plans to fly to Denver, and Mrs. Jochums and her husband Robert drove to Oberlin. The women's brother-in-law, Tam Stubbs of Boulder, Colo., husband of their late sister, the former Carla Rodehaver, brought them to Oberlin. The women's parents were John and Carol Rodehaver.

Their great-grandmother, Sarah Rodehaver Harvie, and Mrs. Jochums' great-grandmother, Angeline (Moore) Miller, were sisters. Her parents were Chris and Esther (Douglas) Jorn.

The story of the Rodehaver family goes back to the very beginning of Oberlin. Mr. Rodehaver made settlement on the southwest quarter of Sec. 1, T3S R29W, of Decatur



Sarah J. Rodehaver Harvie

County on April 29, 1873, and proved up on the claim on Dec. 1, 1873. He had the north 100 acres platted and surveyed in April 1874. The townsite, called Westfield, became known as the Original Town of Oberlin. It is between Commercial and Victoria streets and Buffalo and Marks avenues.

The first house built for the family was a log room, 16 by 18 feet, with a shingle roof and board floor, the first in the county, according to a story written by Sarah Rodehaver, who later remarried and became Sarah J. Harvie.

It was Mr. Rodehaver who suggested that the name, which had been changed from Westfield to

Sappa, become Oberlin, after Oberlin, Ohio, from where the Rodehavers came. Mr. Rodehaver was appointed the town's first postmaster in March 1874, with his wife as assistant.

Mrs. Harvie played an important role in the early days of Oberlin. She was born Oct. 3, 1846, in Athens County, Ohio. She married Mr. Rodehaver on Nov. 30, 1864, and they had three children, Blanch, Bertha, and Carl.

The couple built the first hotel, the Oberlin House, in 1879, and she operated it for many years following their divorce. To show something of the magnitude of the enterprise, she said in a story she wrote that during the boom days of 1886 and 1887, the hotel was doing all the business it possibly could and she was banking \$75 per day after the help was paid.

She was also responsible for the selection of the sites for the Oberlin City School and the Oberlin Cemetery and was named "Oberlin's Mother" in an 1888 special edition of *The Oberlin Opinion* newspaper.

Two homes in Oberlin were owned by the Rodehavers, including the present residence of Jim and Reva Marshall at 307 N. Rodehaver, which shows J.A. Rodehaver as first owner on the abstract. The second, which was on the lot just north of Pauls Funeral Home, has been razed. Mrs. Jochums said she remembers going to visit Mrs. Harvie

at that home with her mother when she was six years old.

Robert Morgan, husband of Madonna Morgan, who left \$1 million dollars to Oberlin to be matched by the city to build The Gateway, was a grandson of the Rodehavers.

The group toured Oberlin, including the Last Indian Raid Museum, where they learned much about their heritage, the history of Oberlin, and enjoyed seeing a birdseye Maple bedroom suite which was owned by the Rodehavers.

The tour continued to the Oberlin Cemetery, where many of their ancestors are buried, The Gateway, and businesses in downtown Oberlin.

Mr. and Mrs. Jochums entertained with a coffee at the LandMark Inn honoring her cousins, during which Marcia Lohofener presented her portrayal of the life of Sarah J. Rodehaver Harvie.

Guests, in addition to Mr. and Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Stubbs, were Doris McKinzie, Hays; Cecelia Kotschwar, and Harry and Beverly Eiler, McCook; Dennis Fraker, Denver; Anna Ruth Brown, Indianola, Neb.; Doris Gilbert, Phyllis Lohofener, and Patty Brown, Oberlin; and Enid Foland, Almena, all 1943 classmates of Mrs. Jochums; Jerry and Marcia Lohofener, Connie Cramer, Irel Lohofener, Jody Betts, Cecil Hess and Mary Lou Olson.



THIS MAPLE BEDROOM SUITE at the Last Indian Raid Museum was owned by the Rodehaver family. —Photo by Dallice Mills