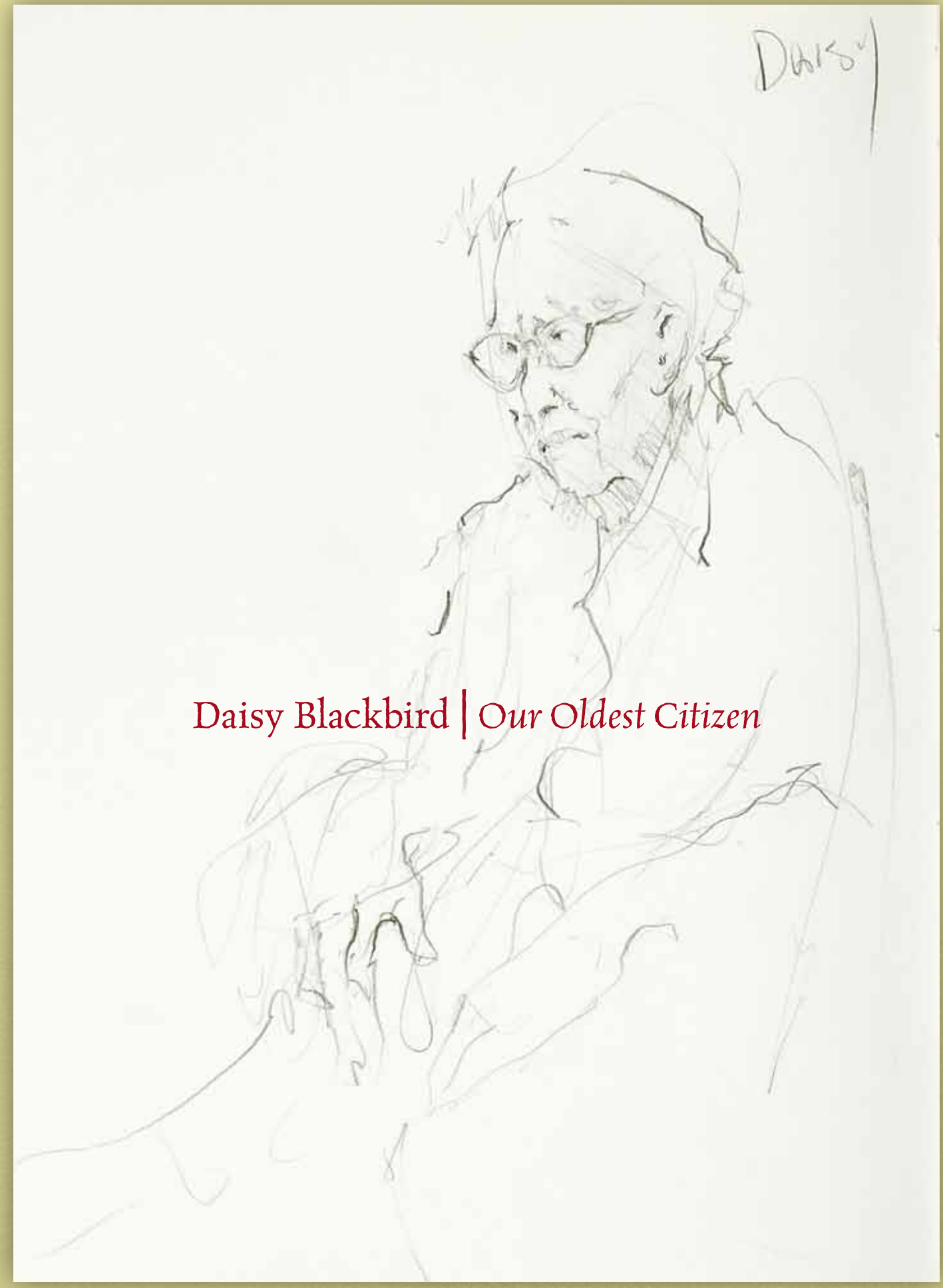


Daisy



Daisy Blackbird | Our Oldest Citizen

Daisy Blackbird was born January 18, 1903, near Tupelo, Indian Territory (I.T.). Her parents were Arthur E. and Elizabeth Colley Hawley. Elizabeth, who was born in 1883, spoke Chickasaw exclusively until she started school. Elizabeth, who was one-half Chickasaw, and four other members of the Hawley family, including Daisy, were given 160 acres of land each in Coal County after the Dawes Commission enrolled them as Chickasaw citizens following the turn of the century. The second oldest of ten siblings, Daisy took care of her younger brothers and sisters in their first home on her mother's allotment. "My mother married at a young age. I was one of the oldest, so I took care of the younger ones. There were seven girls and three boys," Daisy recalls.

Daisy's parents owed their marriage to the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889. Arthur's father, Edwin Hawley, participated in the run and settled near Britton, I.T. Eventually, Edwin moved to a farm near Byrd's Prairie, I.T., where his son Arthur went to work for William M. Colley and his full-blood Chickasaw wife, Lucy. Arthur soon met and married Elizabeth, the Colleys' daughter. The Hawleys were farmers, and like other Chickasaw families of the time, they worked long, hard days. The family owned cattle and kept a large garden and a peach orchard. Everyone

had daily responsibilities in the house and in the fields. Social life revolved around the changes of the seasons. School programs, church gatherings, and trips into town were special occasions spent with family and friends.

Daisy's family moved into the town of Tupelo, Oklahoma, when she was nine years old. The Hawley children attended school there. "In the small town of Tupelo, my father was very important. He was on the school board," Daisy explains. "When we moved to town, we lived in a big, two-story home. It was a beautiful place."

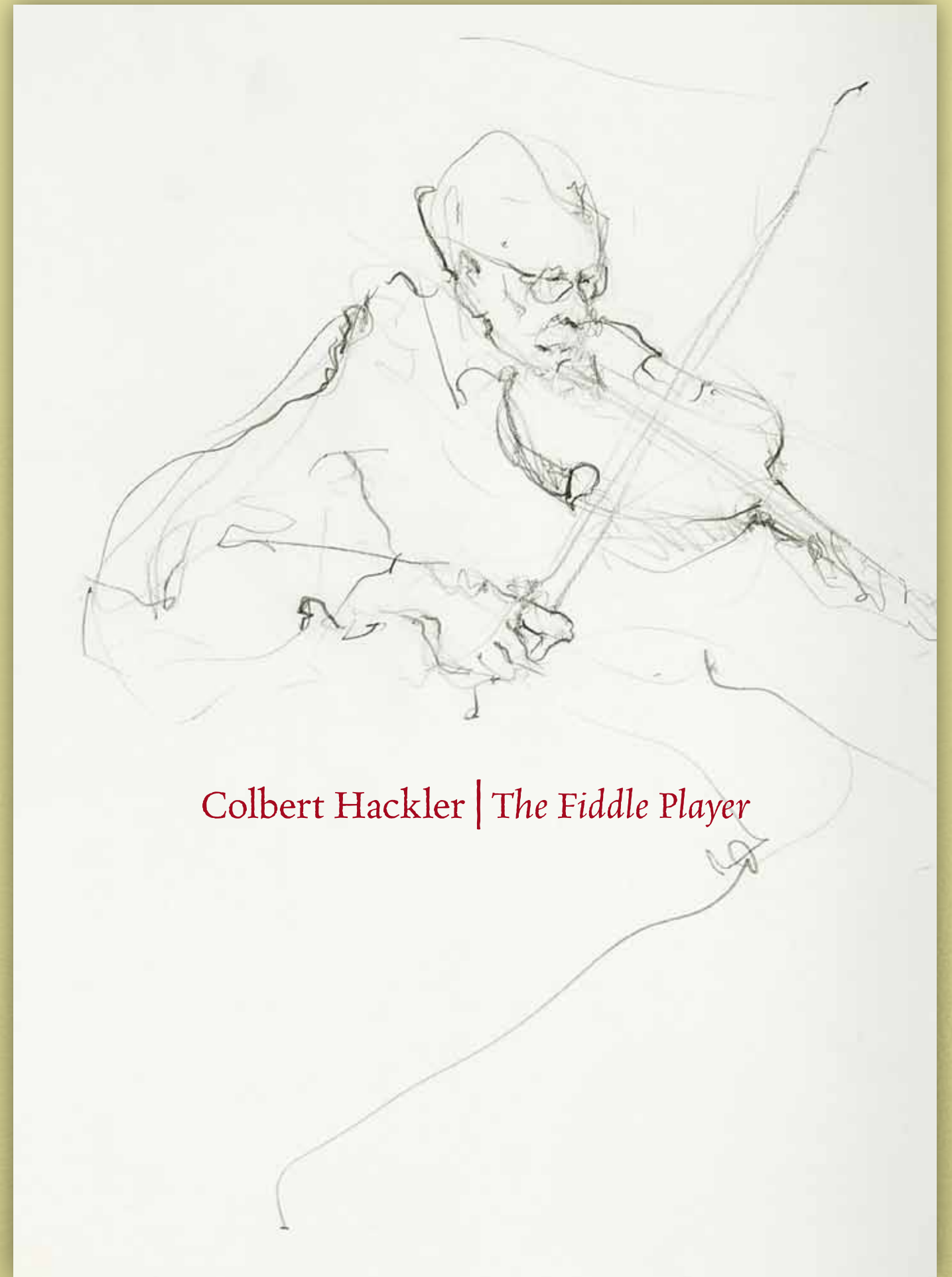
Daisy graduated from high school to attend Kansas State Teacher's College in Pittsburg, Kansas. After college, she returned to Oklahoma to teach in one-room schoolhouses in Tupelo and Coalgate. "In those days, we had all age groups in one room. I spent a lot of time with the fourth-grade children," she remembers fondly. Eventually, she took a job in Oklahoma City as a payroll clerk for the state Supreme Court. It was there she met her late husband, Oklahoma Chief Justice William Henry "Bill" Blackbird. "I was a payroll clerk for the Supreme Court. He was an elected judge from Muskogee. He had just bought a new car—a Buick. He asked me if I wanted to take a ride. I ended up married and lost my job. But it was worth it,"

Daisy remembers, gleefully. “We both couldn’t work at the Supreme Court.”

Daisy clearly recalls the hardships of the Great Depression. “I remember the Depression well. I can’t forget the bad things, like people not having new clothes very often, like some people not having enough food or enough medical care. There wasn’t enough money to hold things together. But, I remember the good things, too, like people coming over to visit on the porch at night without our wondering what they wanted. People would stop and help a stranger fix a flat on the road. Like people just pulling together. The Great Depression, as bad as it was, had a little good in it. I’m glad I was here then and I am glad I’m here now.”

Quilting, crocheting and painting were activities Daisy enjoyed for many years. Today, she shares a home with Wanda Montgomery, her 87-year-old sister, in Oklahoma City. Daisy’s own floral and landscape paintings decorate its walls. When asked what was most important to her about being Chickasaw, she remarked simply, “Well, it just comes natural.” Daisy is one of the last surviving original Dawes enrollees. As such, Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry honored her in ceremonies at the State Capitol in May 2008. At 107 years of age, Daisy Blackbird is the oldest living Chickasaw.





Colbert Hackler | *The Fiddle Player*

Colbert Hackler was born January 13, 1918, in Mannsville, Oklahoma. Colbert, his brother Harold, and their parents lived a quiet life. Colbert's mother and father noted his interest in music at an early age, and bought him a violin for Christmas when he was eight.

Soon after, the family moved to Ravia, Oklahoma. No one there could teach violin to young Colbert, so his parents sent him to the local piano teacher. The teacher and the boy shared notes and thoughts, and Colbert learned to play mostly by ear. Eager for more, he listened every day to WBAP's western swing radio show from across the Red River in Dallas, Texas, featuring Bob Wills and the Light Crust Doughboys. He learned a great deal by mimicking the fiddle playing of the "King of Western Swing."

Eventually, the family moved more than fifty miles west to Ringling, Oklahoma. While there, Colbert's father, a lumberyard manager, found a violin teacher in Ardmore who would give lessons to his son. After high school, the talented young musician entered Oklahoma City University, where he earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in music in 1943. Colbert soon accepted a job with Elk City public schools, and committed 17 years of his life to developing the music program there.





His quiet, gentle demeanor was perfect for teaching elements of music to young people.

Colbert was a member of the local Methodist church, where he and his wife, Mary Jean, were active in the music program. His civic commitment to Elk City was so well noted that in 1952 city leaders proclaimed a “Colbert Hackler Day.” By the time Colbert left Elk City, he had helped to establish a high school band, a junior high band, an elementary school band, a beginner’s band, a high school mixed chorus, two glee clubs, and a junior high mixed chorus.

In 1960, Colbert left Elk City to work on his doctorate in music at the University of Oklahoma. There, he taught both vocal and instrumental music at the University Laboratory School. When it was closed in 1971, he was moved to the main campus of the School of Music. There, he served as advisor for students seeking certification as instrumental music teachers in the public school system. Again the talents of many students were developed over the years through his gentle, unassuming teaching style. His gifts were shared with others, too—Colbert also would put on performances at retirement homes in the Norman area.

Sadly, Colbert lost his beloved wife to cancer in 1982. He retired for a time, but soon felt the need again to be involved in music and teaching. Upon his return, he became interested in the Suzuki method of music instruction, developed by Japanese violinist Shin'ichi Suzuki in the mid-twentieth century. The method seeks to develop skill through music immersion and support. Students are encouraged to take small steps while learning, and are immersed in an environment rich with a variety of art forms and means of self-expression. Its goal is to build the student's character through a nurturing atmosphere. Colbert adopted the method for his pupils, which included his two daughters, Maryanne Tullius and Sally Rice. He also has five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

For more than sixty years, Colbert Hackler has brought the joy of music to the lives of thousands. His goal was not so much to create a classical "Julliard" kind of student, but to develop one who enjoys making music. Shin'ichi Suzuki once said, "If a child hears fine music from the day of his birth, and learns to play it himself, he develops sensitivity, discipline, and endurance. He gets a beautiful heart." In his later years, Colbert Hackler has applied the Suzuki method to his own life, and has helped create a better world because of it.

