

Mrs. Jane McCallum Still Fights For Old Ideals---Recognition of Women

By CURTIS BISHOP

The days pass gracefully for Mrs. Jane Yelvington McCallum, and she wears them as well as in the years she was launching crusades for women's rights or when she was serving as secretary of state under two governors.

At her comfortable home at 613 West 32nd Street Mrs. McCallum tends flowers and shrubs with unusually 'green fingers', keeps up personal associations of half a century and spends other hours working away at a hobby which Texans should be happy she adopted--the history of her native state, and particularly of the women who have served it.

And she spends odd hours putting into physical form some of her memories.

THERE ARE MANY of them, and those recollections are important to the Texas story. They begin, for her, as a child at La Vernia in Wilson County in the year 1878. Her father set her up on a gate post and told her to watch the winding road very carefully.

A trail herd bound for Kansas was raising dust a mile or so away and her father wanted his whole family to see it pass.

"It will be the last one on the Chisholm Trail," he predicted. It was.

Then those flood of memories move on to 1896, when the son of a Carolina planter came to Texas on a visit and on the spur of the moment agreed to become a teacher in the La Vernia schools.

He didn't realize it at the moment, but it was the decision of a lifetime.

The young Carolinian was to become one of Texas' best known and best loved school superintendents, and not too many years after his death an impressive Austin high school was to bear his name.

He and the 18-year-old Yelvington girl who had already become closely interested in Texas history and legend were married the same year. After teaching assignments at Kennedy and Seguin he became associated with the Austin public schools in 1903.

And, once a citizen of the Capital City, Mrs. McCallum grew more and more concerned with the affairs of her state. Already she had spoken out on two crusades dear to her heart--women's suffrage and prohibition. She persuaded Hal Sevier, then owner of

The Austin American, to publish her column headed "Suffrage Corner." She threw one editorial barrage after another at the scoffing opposition to granting women the right to cast a ballot.

Later she became a full fledged staff member of The Statesman (the two papers were not then affiliated) and stayed with the newspaper fraternity throughout World War II, despite the fact that she continued to campaign editorially for prohibition and the Statesman's editor, Edmunds Travis, was actively opposed to it.

MRS. McCALLUM was one of the first mothers ever to attend the University of Texas, and she was as active on the campus as in her crusade for women's rights. One reform for which she was directly responsible were signs directing new students to various buildings. Some of them, ordered posted by the UT president, are still there.

Women's suffrage had come, and also prohibition for its era, but Mrs. McCallum had not lost her interest in public affairs. Women, she still insisted, must take a bigger responsibility in government.

And there were still issues. The 1920s had arrived but it was still Texas.

The Ku Klux Klan had come back to life. A political personality named James E. Ferguson was fighting to hold gubernatorial authority under his wife's name. And a young Central Texas attorney, Dan Moody, won office as attorney general, then boldly began to assail the record of Ferguson's administration.

It was no present day campaign in which funds are contributed by the many thousands and professional public relations men steer a candidate carefully down the victory trail. Dan Moody had a ringing voice and unlimited energy and some friends--one of them Jane Y. McCallum.

She set up local campaign headquarters at her home, borrowing typewriters and other equipment. She and friends contributed modestly to employ one secretary at \$75 a month. Letters, editorials and pamphlets . . . out they flooded asking Texas women to vote for Dan Moody.

Enough did. And during the Christmas holidays the governor-to-be paid a visit to Mrs. McCallum and shortly she was secretary of state.

She found that the office was sadly in need of a woman's touch. She had installed new index filing and modern office machinery. And when going through one cabinet she found a rusty tin box, tied with a rotting ribbon, and inside the long missing copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence signed March 2, 1836.

Mrs. McCallum served as secretary of state for 12 years, longer than any other. But the "private" life to which she then retired was by no means an idle one. The grey haired soft faced lady can still take time out from her writing and her flowers to join a crusade.

Her children are widely scattered now, only A. N. or Artie, as he is better known, living in Austin. Kathleen has become Mrs. John L. Morley and lives in Oklahoma City. A. Y. McCallum is now a contractor in Corpus Christi after achieving football fame as coach at Texas A&I under the nickname of "Bud." Brown Mc-

Callum lives in Alice and Henry B. McCallum in Tyler.

Eight grandchildren and one great grandchild occasionally visit the shady home on West 32nd, where wisteria breaks out into glorious bloom early every spring. Then Mrs. McCallum puts her writing away for a while. She is not one to let the past overshadow the present.

HER WRITING is varied--articles for newspapers, magazines, and so on. One of her most serious efforts is a book recording the feats and personalities of women both prominent and notorious in the Texas story, which she has entitled "Not All Texans Are Men."

This pseudo Texas historian and often would be author has read portions of it, and there are some highly interesting accounts of women who have contributed much to Texas. But the effort is blighted by one unpardonable omission.

There isn't a chapter in it about Jane Y. McCallum.



JANE Y. McCALLUM