



Oklahoma  
Historical  
Society

# Mistletoe Leaves

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## Volunteers needed to help depict All-Black Civil War regiment

Fort Gibson Historic Site is calling for interested parties to join its inaugural First Kansas Colored Infantry Volunteer Regiment living history group. Fort Gibson and Honey Springs Battlefield have partnered to develop a First Kansas Colored Infantry Volunteer Regiment to help conduct programming depicting the All-Black Civil War regiment that was instrumental in helping the US Army defeat Confederate forces in Indian Territory, most notably in the Battle of Honey Springs.

The First Kansas Colored Infantry was made up of free Black and formerly enslaved people. Free Black and formerly enslaved women were employed by the army as nurses and laundresses to support the First Kansas. There is enough funding to supply seven men and four women with equipment and clothing. Fort Gibson and Honey Springs staff will regularly provide training and support for this volunteer group.

There will be a question-and-answer event on Saturday, July 22, from 1:30–3 p.m. at the Fort Gibson Historic Site Visitor Center located at 907 N. Garrison Ave. in Fort Gibson. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and sign up for the program at that time. Volunteers who are eligible will be fitted for uniforms and work with staff to determine the first training date, which will likely be in August 2023. The first program is tentatively scheduled for November 2023.

This group will conduct educational programming an average of four to five times a year, which can include demonstrations at the November Honey Springs event, garrison weekends at Fort Gibson Historic Site, the April 2024 commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Fort Gibson Historic Site, and the November 2024 commemoration of the Freedmen Commission.

If you or anyone you know is interested in joining this group, make plans to attend one of the Q&A events or send an email to [fortgibson@history.ok.gov](mailto:fortgibson@history.ok.gov).

## Battle of Honey Springs Memorial Service

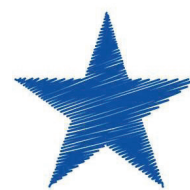


Honey Springs Battlefield will hold its annual memorial service honoring the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs near Checotah on Saturday, July 15, at 10 a.m.

The memorial service will be held outside on the lawn of the visitor center. Adam Lynn, site director for Honey Springs Battlefield, will give a welcome and opening remarks, followed by the presentation of colors by the color guard and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Honor

Guard. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Secretary of Veterans Affairs Grover Wind will give an invocation, and then there will be a musical presentation by Mvskoke citizen Anne Townsend-Edwards. John Beaver, curator for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Center and Archives, will be the guest speaker. The Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield will host its annual meeting following the retirement of the colors.

For more information please email [honeysprings@history.ok.gov](mailto:honeysprings@history.ok.gov) or call 918-617-7125.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
and BLUE STAR FAMILIES present  
[arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](https://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums)

**BLUE STAR MUSEUMS**

## The Oklahoma History Center is a Blue Star Museum

The Oklahoma History Center will join museums nationwide in the Blue Star Museums initiative. This program provides free admission to active duty US military personnel and their families this summer. The 2023 program began on Armed Forces Day, May 20, and will end on Labor Day, September 4.

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States military—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force, members of the Reserves, National Guard, US Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and up to five family members. Qualified members must show a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), DD Form 1173-1 ID card, or the Next Generation Uniformed Services (Real) ID card for entrance into a participating Blue Star Museum. Please call 405-522-0765 or visit [okhistory.org/historycenter](https://okhistory.org/historycenter) for admission costs and group rates.



STAFF PHOTOS BY E. MOXLEY

On Thursday, July 18, at 9 a.m., a USCIS Naturalization Ceremony will be held at the OHC. The Oath of Allegiance—the final step in becoming US citizens—will be administered to eligible candidates. Pictured right is a newly naturalized citizen in the OHC's Devon Great Hall, 2022.





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## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



By Trait Thompson

As we introduce you to the new officers of the OHS Board of Directors in this issue of *Mistletoe Leaves*, I wanted to give you a summary of my State of the OHS speech from our 2023 Meeting of the Membership, which took place on April 22, 2023, to both highlight our achievements and look toward the future:

In May 1893, 19 members of the Territorial Press Association met in Kingfisher and decided to preserve the history of the young territory by collecting newspapers. With that seemingly innocuous action 130 years ago, the OHS was born. We still collect newspapers, but our growth has burgeoned to 25 museums and historical sites across the state, with an operating budget of \$22 million, 135 full-time employees, a flagship museum, and another state-of-the-art museum (OKPOP) coming together in Tulsa to tell the story of Oklahoma creatives.

Our predecessors would be pleased to know that we now have over 2.8 million pages of newspapers that have been scanned to date, and our online digital archive, the Gateway to Oklahoma History, has just passed a milestone of containing over 1 million separate items with over 5.2 million total pages.

This year, the agency placed its confidence in Angela Spindle, who became membership officer, working with new strategies for our member relations efforts and growing our membership base to 5,700 this year. 93,000 visitors have frequented our museums and historic sites with an earned revenue of \$4 million; grants add another \$1.5 million. It has been no small accomplishment for the State Historic Preservation Office to process seven National Register of Historic Places nominations, 46 historic tax credit projects, and 3,500 Section 106 projects this fiscal year. Our Heritage Preservation Grant Program continues to provide critical assistance to small historical organizations across the state.

This 130th year also saw the modernization of our logo as we continued to rebrand the agency. Our new style guide, authored by Jennifer Towry, is our guidepost for incorporating our new, clean, and updated image for the agency, poised for success. We continue to update our technology,

making operations more efficient across the agency. This year, we made our website mobile-friendly; our patrons can easily access our website via their mobile devices. Incorporating a new collections management software, Argus, now allows staff across the agency to track their collections, with the ability to view collections at other sites. And finally, an update to our fundraising software, Raiser's Edge, will bring the agency into a new era of tracking and stewarding donors with myriad outreach options.

Our Oklahoma history podcast, *A Very OK Podcast*, continues to gain listeners, with our audience growing to 26,000 total downloads and counting. This accomplishment also speaks to the reach of our social media promotion and the over 11,000 subscribers of our e-weekly EXTRA!

There is much happening at our Museums and Historic Sites. After working with OMES and the Long-Range Capital Planning Commission this year, the OHS officially took possession of 13 acres at historic Fort Supply in northwest Oklahoma. After two years of work, the Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch was sold to the Cherokee Nation in June. We also officially opened the new visitor center at Honey Springs Battlefield in November.

Other highlights this year include the opening of *Taking Flight: Oklahomans Explore the Skies*, and the premiere of our new documentary film about the Oklahoma State Capitol entitled *The People's House*. In addition, country music and television superstar Blake Shelton became the honorary chairman of the fundraising campaign for OKPOP.

As I am sure other directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society have encountered, only some years are easy. Some of our long-term staff are approaching retirement, and transitioning staff poses challenges, especially in replacing their significant and irreplaceable knowledge base. Many of our devoted staff count their service not in years but decades. Every year, I am impressed by the quality and resourcefulness of our employees, who work tirelessly for the agency, and I will continue to advocate for them.

In the coming years, we will embark on a project to create a 5-year strategic plan for the agency to chart a course for where we want to be by 2028. Thanks to legislation proposed by Sen. Kevin Matthews, the OHS will have a significant role in creating a new Civil Rights Trail in Oklahoma. Our work also continues to bring a Route 66 Neon Park on the grounds of the OHC in time for the Mother Road's centennial in 2026.



## Going to the mattresses

On Tuesday, July 11, from 4–6 p.m., the Oklahoma History Center will hold an opening event for the photography exhibit *Watch Out for Flying Chairs: Professional Wrestling in Oklahoma*.

The exhibit examines professional wrestling in Oklahoma from its emergence in traveling carnivals to today. Oklahoma has been at the forefront of professional wrestling through its continued popularity across communities and the contributions of Oklahomans in and out of the squared circle. Since 1932 12 Oklahomans have stood on the top step to receive Olympic gold medals.

The photography exhibit will be displayed in the West Atrium Gallery on the first floor of the Oklahoma History Center. Please call 405-522-0765 or visit [www.okhistory.org/historycenter](http://www.okhistory.org/historycenter) for admission costs and group rates.



Mildred Burke, world champion lady wrestler, 1953 (2012.201.B0116.0373, OPUBCO Collection, OHS)



## Fighting for the Right to Fight

In the years leading up to World War II, racial segregation and discrimination were part of daily life for many in the United States. For most African Americans, even the most basic rights and services were fragmented or denied altogether. To be Black was to know the limits of freedom—excluded from the very opportunity, equality, and justice on which the country was founded. Yet, once World War II began, thousands of African Americans rushed to enlist, intent on serving the nation that treated them as second-class citizens. They were determined to fight to preserve the freedom that they themselves had been denied. This is their story.

*Fighting for the Right to Fight* will remain on exhibit through August 5 at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid. Call 580-237-1907 to learn more.

## Realizing the Dream: Katz's Drugstore lunch counter

The NAACP Youth Council staged multiple sit-ins from 1958–1964. Katz Drugstore was the first, from August 19–21, 1958. After planning for 15 months to stage the sit-ins, the Youth Council also sat in at four other lunch counters—John A. Brown's, Veazey's Drug, Kress, and Green's Variety Store.

Green's and Veazey's Drug immediately accommodated the demonstrators, but at Kress and Brown's, managers removed their counter stools and tried other tactics—like letting white youth into their establishments before opening their stores. To learn more about the sit-in movement, read "The Right to Be Served: Oklahoma City's Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, 1958–1964" by Carl R. Graves, from the Summer 1981 issue of *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, found on The Gateway to Oklahoma History at [gateway.okhistory.org](http://gateway.okhistory.org).



Experience the sit-ins at the replica Katz counter seen above, on exhibit in the Kerr-McGee Gallery on the third floor of the Oklahoma History Center.



## Will Rogers for President

tort the following week with the headline "I Accept the Nomination," writing that the platform of his candidacy could be: "Whatever the other fellow [don't] do, we will."

At this time, Rogers was in high demand as an entertainer, often asked to speak at conventions and give impromptu speeches for elected officials. He often made light of both Democrats and Republicans who were serving in public office. His unvarnished view of politics and politicians was refreshing and funny, but Rogers never took the idea of running for president seriously. This exhibit explores photographs, cartoons, and quotes from the time period. The articles that were featured in *LIFE* magazine surrounding the idea of his run are also featured. Taken together, a picture of the late 1920s emerges illustrating that the "campaign" was for the public's amusement and just another platform for Rogers's entertaining political satire. The exhibit will remain open at the WRMM through June 1, 2024.

The Will Rogers Memorial Museum (WRMM) in Claremore opened a new exhibit in early June entitled *Will Rogers for President* that highlights the history behind his mock campaign for the presidency 95 years ago.

In May 1928, *LIFE* magazine ran an entertaining story promoting the idea that Will Rogers was running for president. The article appealed to "dissatisfied voters of both parties," touting the idea that Rogers was a perfect fit for the candidacy. Taking the suggestion of his nomination by the "Anti-Bunk Party" as a joke, he penned a witty re-

## Get your kicks!

For the ultimate Route 66 experience, visit the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton. The museum offers visitors a personal journey through the history of the nation's most revered highway. Multiple galleries explore the open road as experienced by travelers on Route 66. The museum is located off I-40 at Exit 65. Call 580-323-7866 to plan your visit!



New and Future gallery at the Route 66 Museum.





# OHS Calendar of Events

## July

- 1 A History of Oklahoma's 46-Star Flag, Pioneer Woman Museum and Statue, Ponca City
- 1 Guided tours, Honey Springs Battlefield, Checotah
- 1 History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, Enid
- 7 Overnight at the Chuck Wagon, Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore
- 8 Quilting workshop with Martha Ray, Sod House Museum, Aline
- 8 Second Saturday Sewing Circle, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson



- 11 Experimenting with Sun Printing class, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 11 *Watch Out for Flying Chairs: Professional Wrestling in Oklahoma* exhibit opens, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 13 "How to Advocate for Route 66 Resources" Lunch and Learn webinar (VIRTUAL), State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City
- 15 Battle of Honey Springs Memorial Service, Honey Springs Battlefield, Checotah
- 15 History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, Enid
- 15 Kids Make History, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson
- 18 USCIS Naturalization Ceremony, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 19 Oklahoma Historical Society Executive Committee meeting, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 20 Historic Preservation Review Committee meeting, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 21 Barn Quilt workshop, Chisholm Trail Museum and Horizon Hill, Kingfisher
- 22 Barn Quilt workshop, Chisholm Trail Museum and Horizon Hill, Kingfisher
- 22 Hands-On Historic Skills, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson
- 22 Native Oklahoma Plant Dye class, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 22 Question and answer session for First Kansas Colored Infantry Volunteer Regiment, Fort Gibson Historic Site, Fort Gibson
- 26 Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors meeting, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 27 National History Day Boot Camp, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 27 Career Night at the Museum, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City

- 28 Movie Night featuring *Togo* (2019), Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore

## August

- 2 "Hidden Oklahoma: Archaeology and Revitalizing Traditional Art and Foodways" presentation by Dr. Ian Thompson (VIRTUAL), State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City
- 5 *Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in WWII* exhibit closes, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, Enid
- 5 American Indian Boarding Schools in Oklahoma workshop (in-person and VIRTUAL), Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 5 Family Fun Day, Cherokee Strip Museum and Rose Hill School, Perry
- 5 Blacksmithing Demonstrations, Cherokee Strip Museum and Rose Hill School, Perry
- 5 History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, Enid



- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 11 Wreath-laying ceremony and flyover at Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, Oologah
- 12 Will Rogers and Wiley Post Fly-In at the Birthplace Ranch, Oologah
- 12 Quilting workshop with Martha Ray, Sod House Museum, Aline
- 12 Second Saturday Sewing Circle, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson
- 16 "How to Protect Native American Archeological Sites and History" Lunch and Learn webinar (VIRTUAL), State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City
- 16 Oklahoma Historical Society Executive Committee meeting, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 19 History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, Enid
- 19 Kids Make History, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson
- 22 Oklahoma Route 66 Centennial Commission meeting, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City
- 25 Movie Night featuring Will Rogers in *State Fair* (1933), Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore
- 26 Hands-On Historic Skills, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson
- 31 STEM Night at the Museum, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City

Please visit [okhistory.org/events](http://okhistory.org/events) for additional information about OHS events, programs, and exhibits.

On April 13 at the OKPOP Museum, the Tulsa Drillers unveiled their new branding for their annual 918 Weekend, the "Tulsa Sound." Tulsa Sound is a style of music that features blues, blues rock, country, rock and roll, and swamp pop and was pioneered by Oklahomans like Leon Russell, JJ Cale, and Roger Tillison. The Drillers rebranded as the TulsaSound for four games this season from June 22-25 to pay tribute to the Tulsa Sound and its creators.

The OKPOP production team—Garrett Weindorf and Tyler Mann—have also been working hard on their "From the Vault" series. Each episode posted to YouTube features members of the staff discussing an Oklahoma creative and the items OKPOP has in its collections related to them. The most recent video from the series covers Leon Russell. Leon is often remembered as "a musician's musician." Musicians from every genre would flock to him just to bottle up a little of his magic. OKPOP is home to Leon Russell's music collection, including masters from his most epic albums.

The OKPOP production team has also been in the process of recording interviews with various Oklahoma creatives to add to our collections, gathering research, and producing content. Some of the most recent interviews have been conducted with Gary Gilmore, Johnny Williams, Neil Wade, and Louise Rowe.

Gilmore is a musician who has played bass alongside artists like Taj Mahal, JJ Cale, and on *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* concert film (1968). Williams is a saxophone player from Tulsa who was part of a band called The Starlighters in the 1950s, along with his school friends Leon Russell and JJ Cale. That trio also went on to tour with artist Jerry Lee Lewis. Neil Wade is an animator and executive at Nickelodeon Animation who is also originally from Tulsa. Louise Rowe is the only female musician to ever have played with Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys.

All four of these interviews proved to be a great way to connect with fellow Oklahoma artists and gather their amazing stories!



OKPOP staff members at an interview session with Gary Gilmore. From left to right: Tate Wittenberg, Garrett Weindorf, Gary Gilmore, Mark Dempsey, and Tyler Mann.



## 1966 Freedom March

By Larry O'Dell, OHS state historian

Clara Luper did not just apply her Civil Rights work to Oklahoma City. In 1966 she organized a "Freedom March" from Oklahoma City to Lawton. Although the main mission was to protest the segregation policies at Doe Doe Park, it was also a tribute to Will Cole, an Oklahoma soldier who died in Vietnam. She also saw it as an opportunity to endorse a Mississippi "Freedom March."

At the time, Doe Doe Park refused to integrate. The weekend before the march, Lawton police arrested 12 protestors there. On July 4, 1966, about 200 protestors walked from Oklahoma City to Lawton, garnering much media coverage about their mission. Police arrested 55 for trespassing, the charges were changed to "creating a nuisance in a public place" after city officials realized there were no trespassing laws on the books.

Doe Doe Park had a large swimming pool and a small zoo. The owner refused service to Blacks, put up a fence around the perimeter of the park, and protests continued off and on for two years. In 1968 a federal court ruling found that water parks did not fall under the rulings of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It was this perceived vindication

that caused the park owner, Bill Hutchins, to voluntarily integrate Doe Doe less than a month later. Doe Doe Park closed in 1985. This is just one of the many protests Clara Luper held around Oklahoma to champion Civil Rights.



Clara Luper, 1966 (2012.201. B0366B.0552, OPUBCO Collection, OHS).

## OHS participating in the September OMA Conference

The Oklahoma Museums Association will present the Oklahoma Museum Conference this fall in Broken Arrow from September 13-15. OHS Deputy Director Karen Whitecotton will discuss the specifics of museum accessioning and registration of collections. Oklahoma History Center Educator Carrie Fox will add to a discussion of community outreach and partnerships connected to museum programming. The OHS Research Division will also have a booth at the conference to promote programs, research, and grant opportunities. For more information, visit [okmuseums.org](http://okmuseums.org).

## Jimmy Stewart Collection

By Mallory Covington, OHS archival collections manager

James Edward Stewart was born in 1912 in Plano, Texas. He moved with his family to Oklahoma in 1916 and attended Douglass High School, where he met and befriended Ralph Ellison. In 1928, Stewart moved with his mother to Wichita, Kansas where he attended high school. He then went to the Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University (present-day Langston University).

After moving to Oklahoma City, Stewart worked a series of jobs in hotels and clubs until he met Roscoe Dunjee and started writing a column for *The Black Dispatch* newspaper titled "Jimmy Says." In June 1937 he went to work at Oklahoma Natural Gas Company as a janitor and became manager of the eastside office in 1940. He served during World War II and was honorably discharged in 1945. Throughout his life, Stewart was very active in the Civil Rights movement, serving as president of the Oklahoma City branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He served in several city and state positions as well as winning awards for his service and dedication to equality.

The Jimmy Stewart Collection (2006.075, nine boxes) contains writings, correspondence, and memorabilia gathered throughout Stewart's career. His collection includes

meeting minutes and rosters from 1937-1945 as well as speeches and writings from his work with the NAACP. Copies of his column "Jimmy Says" are also available in the collection. Many of his certificates and awards are housed in his collection. Additionally, the collection contains a binder with business cards of Stewart's contacts and material from Stewart's time in the Marine Corps. The collection also includes photographs and a roll of microfilm with NAACP materials.

The Jimmy Stewart Collection is available for viewing at the OHS's John and Eleanor Kirkpatrick Research Center Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Appointments are encouraged. The Research Center is located inside the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. Call 405-522-5225 or email [research@history.ok.gov](mailto:research@history.ok.gov).



Civil Rights activist Jimmy Stewart, 1980 (2012.201. B1209.0436, OPUBCO Collection, OHS).

## OHSMO telling the stories of the state's diversity

The Oklahoma Historical Society Multicultural Office (OHSMO) is developing programs and outreach initiatives to tell the story of Oklahoma's diverse heritage and give voice to historically underrepresented communities.

A series of video interviews are being recorded to create a historical record of the voices of community leaders from a number of backgrounds. Stories of resiliency, hope, tenacity, and innovation are being added to the expansive library of live interviews, video documentaries, and oral histories in the OHS archives. Visit the Oklahoma Historical Society's YouTube channel to view the "People of Oklahoma" playlist.

The OHSMO also holds several in-person events that include authentic traditions celebrated by the respective communities so that these cultures can be shared, appreciated, and experienced. Contact OHS Multicultural Officer Saidy Orellana at 405-522-5204 to join the conversation.

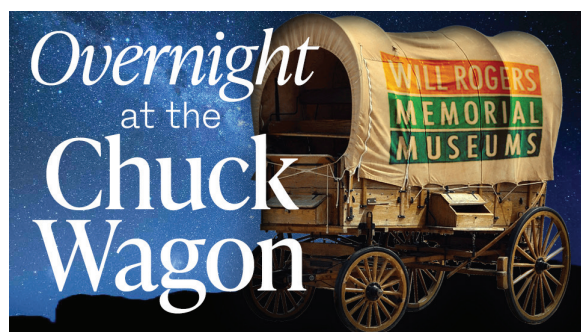
## Changes are coming: federal tax credit news

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is pleased to announce that the National Park Service has developed an online portal for federal tax credit submissions. This portal will go live this summer, and will include electronic transmission of applications, photographs, and architectural drawings. The SHPO will still receive hard-copy submissions for the state files. Follow the SHPO's Facebook page and website for up-to-date information about the process.

By the end of August 2023, the SHPO also will have available individual case studies on tax credit projects from across the state. These were prepared by students from the University of Oklahoma's Historic Preservation Planning class. Through these case studies people will be able to see the advantages of rehabilitating historic buildings utilizing the federal tax credits.

For details about the federal tax credit program, contact Sara Werneke at 405-522-4478 or [sara.werneke@history.ok.gov](mailto:sara.werneke@history.ok.gov).





## A night for little buckaroos!

Little ones and their grown-ups can pack their sleeping bags, pajamas, and toothbrushes and hit the dusty trail to stay Overnight at the Chuck Wagon at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum from 6 p.m. on Friday, July 7, to 9 a.m. on Saturday, July 8.

This event is for children ages 5–12 accompanied by at least one adult. Participants will bed down in various parts of the museum for a night of 19th-century activities, movies, arts and crafts, games, and storytelling, with a chuck wagon dinner and breakfast.

Call 918-341-0719 for more information.

## Alaskan pilot's daughter visits Will Rogers Memorial Museum

Susan Crosson Fraser grew up hearing tales about her Alaskan bush pilot father, Joe Crosson. He was the first to land a plane on a glacier, but the story best remembered was her mother Lillian's recollection of the last day of Will Rogers's life.

Visiting the exhibits at Will Rogers Memorial Museum brought her memories back to life. She recalled that once Wiley Post and Will Rogers had landed in Fairbanks on August 14, 1935, she took Rogers to the grocery store to pick up a watch he left to be repaired, buy a gift and send a telegram. Then Rogers and Post joined the Crosson family for dinner.

The following day, Rogers gave Joe Crosson a telegram to send to his daughter Mary, telling her he was planning to fly to Siberia. The rest of the story is well-known—sadly, Rogers and Post were killed in a plane crash on August 15, 1935. After hearing the news, Joe Crosson fueled up his plane, ready to help in any way. Betty Rogers personally re-

quested that Joe Crosson be the pilot to fly Will's body from Alaska to California after the deadly crash.

Crosson admires a photo of her father at the *Final Journey* gallery at WRMM earlier this year.



## HPF project suggestions

The Oklahoma Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), under the National Historic Preservation Act, administers the federal historic preservation program in Oklahoma. The purpose of the program is to encourage the preservation of the state's archaeological and historic resources for everyone's benefit. The SHPO conducts surveys to identify archaeological and historic resources; nominates eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); comments on the effects of federal undertakings on archaeological and historic resources; develops the statewide preservation plan; administers the Certified Local Governments (CLG) Program; provides comments to the National Park Service about rehabilitation projects proposed for federal tax credits; and provides public outreach programs and technical assistance to preservation professionals, government agencies, and interested citizens. The SHPO expects to receive approximately \$1,102,117 from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for these programs and its operations. Ten percent of the HPF award is reserved for pass-through grants to CLGs.

The SHPO's statewide preservation plan, now available for years 2020–2024 at [okhistory.org/shpo/stateplan](http://okhistory.org/shpo/stateplan), sets forth the statewide preservation community's goals and objectives. The SHPO's priorities for addressing the state plan's goals are a continuation of the archaeological and historic/architectural resources survey program, with special emphasis on resources associated with underrepresented peoples, and extension of survey coverage to previously unstudied areas; preparation of NRHP nominations; and continuation of public outreach and technical assistance programs. Your project ideas and recommended priorities for the SHPO's FY 2024 activities will help strengthen preservation efforts in Oklahoma.

The project suggestion form is available through the SHPO website at [okhistory.org/shpo/projectsuggestion](http://okhistory.org/shpo/projectsuggestion), or through hard copy by request. The form can be submitted electronically at any point during the year, but will only be considered for the next funding cycle that is available (the SHPO is governed by the federal fiscal year which runs from October 1–September 30). Contact Lynda Ozan at 405-522-4484 or [lynda.ozan@history.ok.gov](mailto:lynda.ozan@history.ok.gov) with questions or to receive a hard copy of the form.

Find further resources from the State Historic Preservation Office by visiting [okhistory.org/shpo](http://okhistory.org/shpo).



OHS Museums and Historic Sites Director Kathy Dickson, Oklahoma Senator George Burns, Oklahoma Representative Rick West, Spiro Mounds Director Anna Vincent, OHS Regional Director David Fowler, and OHS Executive Director Trait Thompson.

## Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center reopens

On Saturday, May 13, Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center reopened to the public. The event was held to celebrate the historic site's 45th anniversary. Spiro Mounds originally opened to the public on May 9, 1978.

Author Dr. Scott Hammerstedt was in attendance, signing copies of his and Amanda Regnier's new book, *Spiro Mounds and WPA Archaeology in Oklahoma*. He discussed his experiences excavating at Spiro, and the substance of the title. The celebration drew many families and friends to the site to explore the exhibits and meet the new director, Anna Vincent. Some brave souls dared to hit the trail despite the heat and humidity of the afternoon.

Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center is operated by the Oklahoma Historical Society. Regular hours of operation are Tuesday–Saturday from 9 a.m.–noon and 1–4 p.m. For more information, please call 918-962-2062. Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center is located at 18154 First St. in Spiro.

## One million and counting!

More than one million items are now available for viewing on The Gateway to Oklahoma History, a free online repository of Oklahoma history brought to you by the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) Research Division in partnership with the University of North Texas. The Gateway is a research tool that allows you to search and download historic Oklahoma newspaper pages, photographs, book pages, manuscripts, and maps from the 1840s to the present day.

There is in-person assistance available at during regular hours of operation in the John and Eleanor Kirkpatrick Research Center inside the Oklahoma History Center. Visit [okhistory.org/research](http://okhistory.org/research) for more information.





## Call for Folklife vendors

On Saturday, October 21, the Oklahoma History Center will host its annual Folklife Festival. Registrations are currently being taken for vendors and exhibitors who wish to participate in this event.

The annual event is designed to engage visitors with opportunities to experience other cultures and traditions. Many world cultures help to define the broader culture of the state. Contact the Oklahoma History Center at 405-522-0765 to learn more.



On Saturday, July 8, from 1–4 p.m., the Oklahoma History Center will host a class called “Experimenting with Sun Printing.”

Students will learn cyanotype processes and create their own artwork using native plants and sun printing techniques. Photographer and artist Jim Meeks will be the instructor. Meeks is a photo editor in the Research Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The class costs \$30 for members of the Oklahoma Historical Society and \$40 for nonmembers. All supplies are included in the cost. Please register for the Sun Printing class by visiting the Museum Store online at [store.okhistory.org](http://store.okhistory.org) and clicking on “Event Tickets.”



## Smithsonian internships

The Oklahoma History Center (OHC) Learning and Engagement Department is excited to host two Smithsonian Leadership for Change interns this summer! As a Smithsonian Affiliate, the OHC is part of a worldwide network of museums and cultural organizations that participate in the internship program.

This summer, native Oklahomans Izzy Wilson, a student at the University of Oklahoma, and Aletheia Coutts, a student at Howard University, have been selected as 2023 Leadership for Change interns. Wilson will work to tell the story of how agricultural practices during the settler period of our state’s history contributed to the Dust Bowl. Coutts will concentrate her time on a social media campaign highlighting notable Oklahomans. The internships will take place between June 12 and August 4.

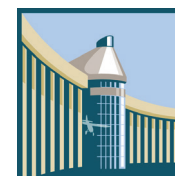
The Leadership for Change Internship is a program to help rising college sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are committed to helping communities, are passionate about social justice, and are driven to accelerate positive impact in our world. Students receive a \$4,800 stipend for the eight-week internship and a modest travel and lodging award. Interns can work all eight weeks in person in Washington, DC, or select a hybrid internship, spending three weeks on-site—working alongside mentors—and five weeks through virtual programs with an affiliated institution.

Readers may also be interested to know a former OHC intern, Maylou Guy (a student at Southern Nazarene), will be a Smithsonian Leadership for Change intern this summer at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian!

## STEM Night at OHC

On Thursday, August 31, from 4 to 6 p.m., the Oklahoma History Center will host a STEM Night for K–12 students and their families to explore the wonders of learning about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The event will focus on the history of STEM in Oklahoma and the STEM industry today to boost educational experiences of young learners!

Visitors are encouraged to explore the Oklahoma History Center’s exhibit galleries, which will be open through 5 p.m. that evening. The event is free, but registration is required through the Museum Store by visiting [store.okhistory.org](http://store.okhistory.org) and clicking on “Event Tickets.”



## “Newcomer” field trips

OHC Educator Carrie Fox is working to develop a specialized “Newcomer” field trip with the Oklahoma City Public Schools Language and Cultural Services Department. The Oklahoma City metro includes many student newcomers who are recent immigrants to this country. These students include many people from Afghanistan, Central America, and Vietnam. The primary goal of the specialized field trip is to introduce students to the history of their new home in the United States and make them feel welcome. These tours will include activities that will encourage English language skills through conversations with trained staff and volunteers. If you are interested in participating in these special field trips, please let Carrie Fox know at [carrie.fox@history.ok.gov](mailto:carrie.fox@history.ok.gov).

## American Indian Boarding Schools workshop

The Oklahoma History Center will host a workshop on Saturday, August 5, that focuses on American Indian boarding schools in Oklahoma. A 2022 report from the US Department of the Interior detailed the assimilationist policies and inherent abuse that the schools employed for decades. The report identified more than 400 schools across 37 states that operated between 1819 and 1969, including 76 in Oklahoma.

From 10–11:30 a.m., Dr. Farina King (Diné) will give an overview of the history of American Indian boarding schools in the state through a spatial lens while building on her work with the “Mapping Tahlequah History” project at Northeastern State University. This project demonstrates the value of citizen-led history to historical analysis.

From 12:30–2 p.m., Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) archivist Mallory Covington will provide a look at the American Indian records at the OHS with an emphasis on documents relating to boarding schools. The sessions with King and Covington are open to researchers, students, educators, and the general public.

An additional session for educators only will take place from 2–3:30 p.m. All sessions will be available in person at the Oklahoma History Center and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Please call 405-522-0765 or go to [okhistory.org/august5](http://okhistory.org/august5) to register online.



## OHS Board of Directors elects new officers



From right to left, OHS Board Treasurer Donna Sharpe, Vice President Karen Keith, President Duke R. Ligon, and OHS Executive Director Trait Thompson.

At its April 22, 2023, organizational meeting, the OHS Board of Directors elected Duke R. Ligon of Oklahoma City as its new president. In addition, the board elected Karen Keith of Tulsa as vice president and Donna Sharpe of Checotah as treasurer.

The results of the OHS Board of Directors election were also announced. OHS members elected Karen Keith of Tulsa to the board, as well as reelecting Jack Baker of Oklahoma City, Randy Beutler of Weatherford, and Deena Fisher of Woodward, and

Kenny Sivard of Idabel. Deena Fisher is the outgoing board president.

Newly elected OHS Board President Duke R. Ligon is an attorney; the owner and manager of Mekusukey Oil Company, LLC; and serves on several boards. He is currently cochairman of the executive council at the Energy Center at University of Texas Law School. He served as senior vice president and general counsel of Devon Energy Corporation for ten years before retiring in 2007. To see Ligon's full biography, visit [okhistory.org/about/dlligon](http://okhistory.org/about/dlligon).

"It is an honor to have the opportunity to assume this leadership role at the Oklahoma Historical Society," said Ligon. "I have worked with and around the board, as well as the staff, and both are exemplary and a credit to their profession. I look forward to helping further the mission at the Oklahoma Historical Society."

"The Oklahoma Historical Society has been fortunate over the years to have a board full of members who are eager to support our mission to collect, preserve, and share Oklahoma's unique history," said OHS Executive Director Trait Thompson. "With his background in executive leadership and love of the state's history, Duke R. Ligon is the ideal person to take up the mantle of leadership for the board."

OHS Board Vice President Karen Keith is the Tulsa County Commissioner for District Two. She graduated from Muskogee High School and Oklahoma State University, then worked 26 years in broadcasting, most of which were spent at KJRH in Tulsa.

Donna Sharpe, the new OHS Board treasurer, earned business and accounting degrees at Oklahoma State University and Northeastern State University. She and her family have been staunch supporters of the preservation and development of the Honey Springs Battlefield historic site.

The OHS is governed by a 25-member board of directors, with 13 elected by the OHS membership and 12 appointed by the governor. For more information about the OHS Board of Directors, visit [okhistory.org/about/board](http://okhistory.org/about/board).



## The tale of the "Mae West" vest

Along with uniforms, aviation badges, and medals, aviation enthusiasts can view a World War II pilot's life jacket that once belonged to US Navy pilot Harry Hanna (pictured at right, wearing the vest) at the new Oklahoma History Center (OHC) exhibit *Taking Flight: Oklahoma's Explore the Skies*. This type of vest was nicknamed a "Mae West" because it gave one a buxom appearance—like the sultry actress—when inflated.

Along with several flying aces aboard the USS *Hornet*, Hanna flew missions in the Pacific during World War II. This US Navy "Mae West" pneumatic life vest was used off the coast of Japan. In the spring of 1945, before a bombing run over Japan, Hanna's wing leader's plane was shot down and the pilot escaped the wreckage. Hanna maneuvered his plane overhead, opened the canopy, and threw the vest out the window to his wing leader to give him an additional flotation device. As his friend struggled, Hanna called for a rescue while he helped to fight off the enemy fighters in the neighborhood. To hear the incredibly touching story of heroism and brotherhood surrounding this artifact as presented by OHS Deputy Director Jeff Briley, watch the episode on this item in the "From the Collection" series at [okhistory.org/harry-hannah](http://okhistory.org/harry-hannah).

The OHC is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call 405-522-0765 for more information about all five galleries at the OHC.

