



OHS events postponed and canceled due to COVID-19

The first priority of the Oklahoma Historical Society is the health and safety of our patrons, volunteers, and staff. We stand with our fellow Oklahomans in the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. At the date this issue of *Mistletoe Leaves* went to press, per Executive Orders 2020-06 and 2020-07 from Governor Kevin Stitt in response to COVID-19, all OHS sites and affiliates will be closed until April 30, and all OHS-sponsored events canceled until May 2. Some museums and historic sites have canceled events into May and June. We will be reassessing future cancelations and closings as this serious situation develops.

Because the OHS's museums, historic sites, and affiliates may experience continued closures due to the global pandemic, we encourage you to stay informed as we move forward together. If you are considering a visit, please call our museums and sites to be sure of their hours. We are posting the most up-to-date information on our website's homepage and events calendar to keep you updated as the situation develops.

We appreciate your continued support and understanding as we navigate this uncertain time and continue to collect, preserve, and share the history of Oklahoma and its people.

OHS online resources

Are you looking for something different to pass the time at home? Oklahoma Historical Society sites and museums may be closed, but the OHS has plenty of online resources to explore. At www.okhistory.org online visitors can take a virtual tour of the Oklahoma History Center, search collections, listen to podcasts, and view online exhibits. The website also offers thousands of historic images, including 100 years of photographs from the *Oklahoman* newspaper, available on The Gateway to Oklahoma History.

Visitors to the OHS website can research photographs, documents, and maps related to the state's history. There are also free genealogical resources, including more than 40 indexes and databases with records including marriages, divorces, land openings, directories, incarcerations, lineage group applications, biographies, and censuses. Researchers can find American Indian resources such as the Dawes Final Rolls for the Five Tribes, used in tracing Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, and Choctaw lineage.

The public can connect to OHS museums, historic sites, and affiliates through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube by visiting www.okhistory.org/socialmedia to find the OHS site and social media platform you wish to visit. Through social media, the OHS shares historic photographs, teaches about life in the past, and gives behind-the-scenes views of the workings of staff and volunteers. OHS YouTube channels contain hundreds of videos, including footage of historic events, news reports, interviews, and early home movies. Also available are footage from University of Oklahoma football games and coach's shows from the Barry Switzer Collection. OHS channels feature interviews by Oklahoma City television icon Ida B with celebrities including the Beach Boys and a young Roy Clark.

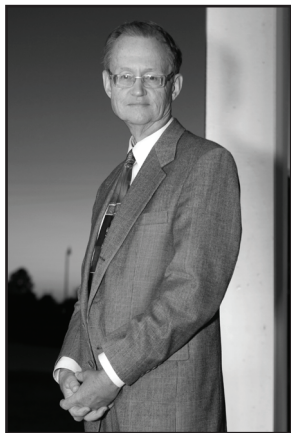


The *Pioneer Woman* statue in Ponca City carries an important message about public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum announces cancelation of Wild West Show

After much consideration, the Oklahoma Historical Society and the board members of the Friends of the Pawnee Bill Ranch Association have decided to cancel this year's Pawnee Bill's Original Wild West Show and festival that was scheduled for June 12-13, 2020. While we will certainly miss the reunion of returning guests, friends, and reenactors this year, we hope to see everyone in 2021 when this one-of-kind historical reenactment will return. Please continue to support the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Pawnee Bill Ranch Association during this difficult time when hard decisions such as this must be made.





Director's Column

By Dr. Bob L. Blackburn
Executive Director

The COVID-19 crisis has been disruptive, costly, and, too often, deadly. As I write this I am sitting at my desk in the Oklahoma History Center, which is closed to the public and contains only a handful of employees deemed critical.

As a manager, I wonder how long this will last, how it will affect our health, and how we will recover without losing the momentum that we have gained. As a historian, I have comfort knowing we will find a way through the crisis and emerge stronger than ever before.

There are many examples of Oklahoma resilience.

In 1893 a small band of journalists decided to organize the Oklahoma Historical Society. The challenges must have seemed overwhelming, from sparse population and lack of shared history to frontier distances and the failure of every bank after the Panic of 1893. Those first members did not give up, and two years later the OHS became a territorial agency with public support.

In 1902 the OHS was destined to become a branch of higher education tied to one campus rather than a statewide organization with deep and widespread support. Leaders from the Oklahoma Press Association did not give up and maneuvered a move to the Carnegie Library in Oklahoma City, setting the stage for the OHS to become a state agency in 1907.

In 1928 the OHS was stuck in the basement of the State Capitol with limited

space, limited public support, and limited power to resist the space-grabbing needs of growing state agencies. Members of the OHS Board of Directors, armed with the possibility of acquiring all of the Indian Archives gathered by the Dawes Commission, lobbied the Oklahoma Legislature and received the money to build the Oklahoma Historical Building, later known as the Wiley Post Building.

In 1937, with shrinking budgets during the Great Depression and the lingering effect of Governor William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray's firing of Executive Director Joseph Thoburn, the OHS leadership team applied for and received a number of make-work federal grants that funded the first major oral history project in state history—what we now call the Indian-Pioneer Papers.

In 1989, after the turbulence of going through five executive directors in 10 years, OHS leaders launched a new business plan that relied more on donated funds for higher standards and earned revenue for sustainability. The results included the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, the first steps toward digitizing 33 million pages of newspapers, and the Oklahoma History Center.

In 2012 the governor proposed abolishing the OHS as a public/private partnership, transferring all assets to a subdivision of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, and converting the institution from an educational resource to an economic development tool. OHS leaders fought back, retained the independence of the private/public partnership, and earned additional support from legislative leaders to launch new efforts such as OKPOP and the Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Program for local historical groups.

Yes, the COVID-19 crisis is a threat to all of us, but as OHS leaders have proven time and again, we can overcome the challenge and emerge stronger on the other side. It is the Oklahoma way.

Dr. Bob



Safe at home? Reminisce with the OHS Film and Video Archives

Unfortunately for baseball fans the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the postponement of a new season. With all of our sports arenas and venues now closed, for many of you there is no joy in Mudville.

Do not lose hope—this is a great time to visit the Oklahoma Historical Society's Film and Video Archives!

Sports selections are just a few of the films featured in our Film and Video Archives, which are available to view online. In addition to a rich offering of sporting events, including many classic OU football games, we encourage visitors to explore Oklahoma's past through historic footage featuring American Indians, family gatherings, community activities, political events, iconic figures, and more.

We also have 30 years of news footage, documentaries, and television specials available in our WKY KTVY KFOR Archives. This unique collection captures a rare audio/visual view into Oklahoma's past.

Join our over 8,000 subscribers and link to our online OHS Film and Video Archives at www.okhistory.org/research/film.

Development News

By Larry O'Dell

I hope everyone is staying safe. As most of you know, the Oklahoma Historical Society canceled the Oklahoma History Conference and postponed our annual membership meeting. We have also delayed the counting of election ballots, which traditionally takes more than 10 participants. We will tally the votes as soon as it is safe to do so. We tentatively plan to hold the ballot count and meeting of the membership in June, at which time we will announce the results of our board election. We will keep you informed. If you do not already subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter *OHS EXTRA!* and wish to do so, please send an email to pr@okhistory.org requesting to be added.

In this difficult time, the OHS will need to depend on its supporters more than ever. You can renew your membership online at www.okhistory.org/membership, or please donate online to our Annual Giving Campaign at www.okhistory.org/give. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 405-522-6676 or email me at lodell@okhistory.org.



Oklahoma Historical Society
Membership Office
405-522-5242
ohsmembers@okhistory.org

Mistletoe Leaves (USPS 018-315) is published bimonthly by the Oklahoma Historical Society, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK (ISSN 1932-0108)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Mistletoe Leaves*, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917.

By authorization of the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) Board of Directors, 4,800 copies are prepared at a cost of \$1,038.77 bimonthly. The publication is financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Oklahoma Historical Society or the United States Department of the Interior. Mention of trade names does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by either organization.

Mistletoe Leaves is published for the members and friends of the OHS in partial fulfillment of its mission to collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people.

The public and OHS members are encouraged to submit heritage-related items for publication. Students and teachers are invited to share studies and programs and to duplicate contents as desired. Editors are welcome to reprint materials with credit.

All Oklahoma Historical Society facilities are for the education and enjoyment of all. State and federal regulations prohibit unlawful discrimination in state and federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, and/or handicap.

Anyone denied benefits should contact the grievance manager of the Oklahoma Historical Society, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917, telephone 405-522-5299, and/or the director, Office of Equal Opportunity, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Making digital history at CSRHC

Though closed through much of the month of March and all of April in the wake of the COVID-19 threat, the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center (CSRHC) in Enid has ramped up its online content in an attempt to continue to fulfill its mission to educate the public and document history.

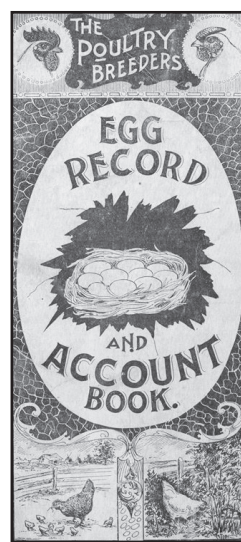
The CSRHC has posted video interviews with its living history interpreters to Facebook and YouTube. These men and women make the Humphrey Heritage Village come to life on a regular basis, transporting visitors back to the turn of the 20th century. The CSRHC also has posted a series of short video tours at different stops in the galleries, including a nine-part video tour of the last temporary exhibit *Bison*, designed by the National Bison Foundation. The public's access to this exhibit was cut short due to the site's closure.

During this crisis, the CSRHC hopes to chronicle this historic event in different ways. In one post on the museum's Facebook page, the public was asked to share photos of their own "sanity projects"—things like quilts, puzzles, and drawings—that keep them grounded as they suffer from a little cabin fever. The CSRHC also asked people to post images of their "home office," as everyone adjusts to a new, at least temporary, reality.

Though these are fun ways of continuing to engage with the public while sites are closed, they are also ways of documenting history as it unfolds.

The CSRHC Archives has continued to share images of rarely seen manuscripts and photos on Facebook as well, sharing more posts than usual. Some of the things shown recently include a rare claim flag, a surveyor's field book that predates the Cherokee Outlet Run, and a poultry and egg account book. As usual, our digitized collections are available on The Gateway to Oklahoma History at gateway.okhistory.org. Archivist Aaron Preston has also provided audio clips from oral histories in the CSRHC Archives.

Please visit the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center's website at www.csrhc.org or go to its Facebook page to see the history of the Cherokee Outlet, both in the past and as it unfolds.



Egg Record and Account Book from the CSRHC collections.

Teaching children about historic preservation

Take a stroll down Main Street Ardmore and learn about the city's rich history with the help of its newest publication, *Main Street Kids Activity Book—Become a Jr. Preservationist*. The project was a product of the City of Ardmore's annual Certified Local Governments (CLG) Historic Preservation Fund allocation from the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office. Jessica Scott, coordinator of the Ardmore CLG program, spearheaded this project that not only gives kids of all ages a small glimpse into the history of Ardmore and its Main Street, but also provides the fun of different activities such as word searches, crosswords, and drawing. This activity book, along with its "Jr. Preservationist" badge, is a fun way to get everyone interested in preservation in Ardmore. The State Historic Preservation Office, which oversees the CLG program, is hopeful that more of the state's CLG participants will use Ardmore's great example and create some fun history activities for kids in their communities. To learn more about the City of Ardmore's activity book or to receive a copy, contact Jessica Scott at jscott@ardmorecity.org. To learn more about Oklahoma's Certified Local Governments program, contact Shea Otley at sjotley@okhistory.org.

Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom

By Angela Spindle

On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation decreed "all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." Lincoln's proclamation was a monumental step in eradicating chattel slavery in the United States. However, the seemingly expansive proclamation applied exclusively to Confederate states that had seceded from the Union, and exempted Union-controlled border states and regions. The full realization of freedom the proclamation offered depended on a Union victory.

Many slaveholders had migrated to the more isolated West, withholding word of emancipation for an additional harvest season or until the arrival of government agents. Two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, an estimated 250,000 slaves were still held captive in Texas. Two months after CSA General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, 2,000 Union soldiers arrived at Galveston Bay on the Texas Gulf Coast to enforce the proclamation. On June 19, 1865, from the balcony of the Ashton Villa, Union General Gordon Granger announced the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery.

Granger's General Order No. 3 declared in part, "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes, and work for wages."

Widespread celebration ensued as the news of emancipation slowly spread throughout Texas. Juneteenth, a name created by the freed slaves of Texas, became an informal holiday throughout African American communities. Picnics, parades, and prayer services became annual Juneteenth celebrations. As African Americans from Texas migrated to surrounding states, the celebration of June 19 as emancipation day spread.

During the summer of 1865 emancipation slowly expanded into Indian Territory. Due to the territory's unique status and the sovereignty of the tribes, slavery did not officially end in Indian Territory

until 1866, when newly negotiated treaties were ratified with the five southern Indian nations. The treaties abolished slavery, extended citizenship, and granted land rights to freed slaves in the territory. Many of these freed slaves settled together, creating several All-Black towns. These communities, as well as the opening of the Unassigned Lands in 1889, attracted scores of African American migrants from Texas, who then established Juneteenth celebrations in what is now known as Oklahoma.

Juneteenth participation waned in the mid-20th century with the arrival of the civil rights movement. Fighting racial discrimination and segregation became the focus in African American communities. By the 1970s a strong interest in African American cultural heritage emerged and Juneteenth celebrations became popular again. Texas became the first state to recognize Juneteenth as an official state holiday on January 1, 1980. The state of Oklahoma declared the third Saturday in June "Juneteenth National Freedom" on May 2, 1994. Currently 45 states and Washington, DC, recognize Juneteenth as an emancipation celebration.

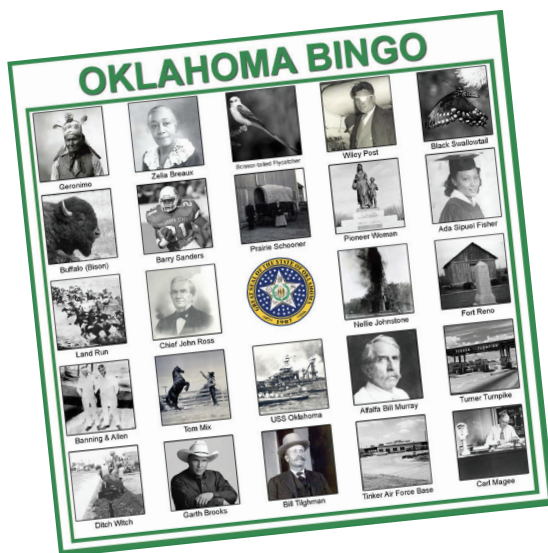
Angela Spindle is the development and membership coordinator for the OHS.



Let us be your resource for educational tools!

Need new ways to keep your kids engaged with educational activities while they are not in the classroom?

Check out the **OHS Kids!** page at www.okhistory.org/kids.



On our OHS Kids! page, it's all fun and games!

We have printable crosswords, word finds, scrambles, and Oklahoma bingo!



Pop in your earphones and listen to our audio tour.

Find out who this man is, and why these shopping carts are so small.

Hint: He was originally from Ardmore.

Stay safe at home while you follow **Winnie Mae's** travels!



E-exhibits bring the Oklahoma History Center into your living room!

With more than 15 choices, our online exhibits explore everything from American Indian culture to Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* to Oklahomans and Space. Find your favorite subject and connect to fun facts, glossaries, activities, and loads of other fun features!



In the mood to color inside the lines?

Check out our coloring pages and ready-made bookmarks.



Did you know?

A woman born in Oklahoma was the inspiration for Rosie the Riveter as depicted on the "We Can Do It!" poster. Naomi Parker Fraley was born on August 26, 1921, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

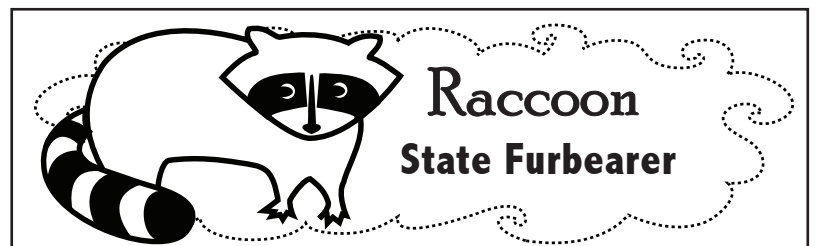


The American bison is the state animal of Oklahoma. Bison can weigh up to 2,000 pounds and stand almost six feet tall!



What in the world is mistletoe?

Log on and check out our information about state symbols and their meanings.



Parents and Teachers

The mission of the Oklahoma History Center is to collect, preserve, and share Oklahoma history. While our doors are closed, our website continues to offer a variety of unique educational materials and tools to facilitate sharing our state's past with schoolchildren learning from home.

Explore our website to link to all of our educational and entertaining online resources. Check out our new resource guides on our Education page, www.okhistory.org/historycenter/education, which correlate with Oklahoma education standards. As educators, we hope to be a useful resource to you in building lesson plans that can meet with social studies, United States studies, United States history and Oklahoma history content skills and academic standards.

During this uncertain time and until we can welcome you back, please take advantage of our virtual and audio museum tours.

New Oklahoma National Register listings

The Oklahoma Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office (OKSHPO) is pleased to announce the newest National Register of Historic Places listings for Oklahoma. The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of properties significant in our past.



Founders' Place Historic District

Founders' Place Historic District, located in Muskogee, Muskogee County, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its role in Community Planning and Development and for Architecture. The district is roughly bounded by West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the north, North 12th Street to the east, Court Street to the south, and North 17th Street to the west. The Founders' Place Historic District is an excellent representation of the residential development of early Muskogee from 1903 to 1951. It was in an area desirable for prosperous businessmen, physicians, politicians, and developers of Muskogee, also known as the "founders" of Muskogee, because it was slightly over a mile from downtown Muskogee and the streetcar line ran directly south of the neighborhood. The historic district includes the popular styles of architecture of the time including, but not limited to, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Queen Anne, Prairie School, Craftsman/Bungalow, Renaissance Revival, Tudor Revival, and Minimal Traditional.



Capitol Hill General Hospital

Capitol Hill General Hospital, located at 2400 South Harvey Avenue in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in Health/Medicine and for Architecture. Built by Dr. William H. Williamson in 1930, the hospital

is a significant local example of a medical building designed in the Art Deco architectural style. From 1930 to 1966, Capitol Hill General Hospital provided medical services to residents in south Oklahoma City. In the early 20th century, many Oklahomans relied on private physicians and rarely visited hospitals. Today, most Oklahomans seek treatment at large medical campuses capable of providing a variety of services. In contrast, Capitol Hill General Hospital operated during an era when small general hospitals throughout the state became "institutions of first resort" to those seeking medical care for all sorts of injuries and ailments. In other words, Capitol Hill General Hospital occupies a key historical period situated between the eras of private house calls and contemporary medical complexes.



The State National Bank Building

The State National Bank Building at 2 East Main Street in Shawnee, Pottawatomie County, was built in 1928. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in Commerce and Economics, as well as for Architecture. The building was built for the State National Bank, which was established in 1902. The bank closed as part of the National Banking Holiday of 1933. In 1934 the building reopened as the American National Bank. In 1936 a three-story addition was constructed off the north side of the building. The upper floors of the building were also home to numerous local businesses over the years, including several oil companies that came to Shawnee after oil was discovered in the region in the early 1920s. The six-story building is one of the largest historic buildings in Shawnee, and is an excellent example of Classical Revival architecture in that city.

Fire Station No. 13, located at 3924 Charles Page Boulevard in Tulsa, Tulsa County, was built in 1931 to meet the needs of the growing city of Tulsa when the area west of the Tulsa city limits was annexed. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with Community Planning and Development, as well as for Architecture. Local architect Albert Joseph Love designed and

used the popular Zigzag Art Deco style for the fire station. Fire Station No. 13 was the first known fire station to feature the Art Deco style in the city of Tulsa—a city associated with Art Deco architecture. To date, it is the only Art Deco fire station in Tulsa that features the Zigzag emphasis. Fire Station No. 13 was strategically located and designed for the surrounding community. The building was constructed smaller than earlier fire stations, allowing it to blend with the scale of the adjacent residential structures.



Tulsa Fire Station No. 13

Listing in the National Register is an honorific designation that provides recognition, limited protection, and, in some cases, financial incentives for these important properties. The SHPO identifies, evaluates, and nominates properties for this special designation.

If you believe a property in your area is eligible, please fill out the Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form at www.okhistory.org/shpo/nrprelim.htm. For more information contact National Register of Historic Places Coordinator Sara Werneke at swerneke@okhistory.org or 405-522-4478.



Documentary research basis for banking article

Great Plains Quarterly published Michael J. Hightower's article, "Battle of the Banks: The Genesis and Resilience of Community Banking in Oklahoma" in its recent 2020 winter issue. The article is based on documentary research that Hightower conducted at the Oklahoma History Center, and on oral history interviews that he recorded as part of the OHS's bank and commerce history project in support of the *Crossroads of Commerce: A History of Free Enterprise in Oklahoma* exhibit.



White Hair Memorial joins Facebook

White Hair Memorial recently joined the Facebook community and will be sharing special posts relating to Osage history and culture. The memorial is located in the former home of Lillie Morrell Burkhart, a descendant of Osage Chief Pawhuska (White Hair). In keeping with the memorial's focus, its new Facebook page will feature posts about its collections, which will include artifacts, documents, and photographs. Stay connected with White Hair Memorial by liking their page and following along at www.facebook.com/whitehairmemorial.

Beekeeping at Hunter's Home

Hunter's Home in Park Hill, Oklahoma's only antebellum plantation living history site, has added beekeeping to its living history activities at the site.

It is a fairly common myth that bees are not native to North America, but when Europeans first stepped foot on the continent there were more than 4,000 native bee species. The honey bee, however, was not among them. Early shipping records show the honey bee was introduced to the new land as early as 1622.

American Indians considered the honey bee to be a harbinger of bad news, since it signaled the advance of white settlements. However, they soon learned to take advantage of the feral honey bees that swarmed and migrated into the woods. For the most part tribes did not keep bees, but Shorey Ross, a descendant of the Ross family, talked about bees in the Cherokee Nation in the Indian-Pioneer Papers, a collection of oral histories conducted in the 1930s.

Beekeeping up until the mid-19th century consisted of cutting down a bee tree, harvesting the honey and comb, and, unfortunately, leaving the bees to die. As time passed, they began to use gum tree hives made from the hollow black gum tree, as well as bee skeps made of conical-shaped woven straw to house bees. These made it easier to harvest the honey and wax, but harvesting still included killing the bees. The honey and comb were harvested by holding the hives over brimstone.

During the 1800s new ways to humanely keep bees and harvest honey were developed. In a rush to patent the perfect hive, more than 1,000 patents were reg-



istered with the US Patent Office. John Sweet filed the oldest patent in 1810. It was not until October 5, 1852, that Reverend L. L. Langstroth, known as the father of modern beekeeping, patented the Langstroth hive, the hive most beekeepers use today.

Hunter's Home got its first hive in 2018. Interpreter Greg McGee researched bees in the Cherokee Nation and took classes to learn how to establish and care for a hive. Last year Hunter's Home harvested its first honey and sold it through the gift shop. This spring McGee has captured four swarms, growing the number of swarms to seven. That should mean more honey available for sale this fall.

Visitors can see the Langstroth hives being used in programming and as part of the apiary while learning about the benefits of beekeeping in the Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, at Hunter's Home.

Edmond educator nominated for National History Day Teacher of the Year

Justin Carroll, a teacher at Deer Creek Middle School in Edmond, was nominated for the Patricia Behring Teacher of the Year award. The award is sponsored by Patricia Behring, widow of the late Kenneth E. Behring, who previously sponsored the National History Day National Contest for many years.

Every year, each of the 58 National History Day affiliates may nominate one middle school teacher for this award, and Carroll is the junior division nominee from Oklahoma. Each nominee for the \$10,000 award is a teacher who demonstrates a commitment to engaging students in historical learning through the innovative use of primary sources, implementation of active learning strategies to foster historical thinking skills, and participation in the National History Day Contest. Each nominee will receive \$500 as a result of their nomination.

"Teachers are among the greatest resources children have to develop

the skills necessary to become critical thinkers," said National History Day Executive Director Dr. Cathy Gorn. "The nominees for the Behring Award have shown a dedication to teaching that goes beyond the classroom. I congratulate Mr. Carroll on his well-deserved nomination."

Patricia Behring sponsors this award in recognition of the pivotal role teachers play in the lives of students. The national winner will be selected by a committee of experienced teachers and historians, and will be announced on June 18, 2020. Nominees' work must clearly illustrate the development and use of creative teaching methods that interest students in history and help them make exciting discoveries about the past. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National History Day Competition will be virtual. The National Contest Awards Ceremony will take place online. For updated information please visit www.nhd.org.

About National History Day (NHD):

NHD is a nonprofit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as documentaries, exhibits, papers, performances, or websites. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Park Service, Southwest Airlines, the Crown Family Foundation, the Better Angels Society, and the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation. For more information, visit nhd.org.



Tom Mix, center (Tom Mix Collection, OHS)

Tom Mix Collection

By Jan H. Richardson

Tom Mix was one of the most successful silent film stars of the 1910s and 1920s. A larger-than-life persona, it is often hard to separate the fact from the fiction, though it cannot be denied that he was incredibly successful. He made 370 full-length Westerns, and at the height of his movie career he was being paid \$17,500 per week, which would be \$275,000 in today's money.

Mix was born in 1880 in Mix Run, Pennsylvania, and moved to Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, in 1905. He was a skilled horseman and rifleman, and eventually found work with the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show. He began his movie career in 1909 with a small part in *The Cowboy Millionaire* and ended his career starring in the film *The Miracle Rider* in 1935. He died in 1940 at the age of 60 when he crashed his Cord Phaeton car into a dry wash near Florence, Arizona.

The Tom Mix Collection (M2012.012, 1 letter thin box, 5 oversize boxes) includes correspondence to Mix from US presidents and five scrapbooks. The scrapbooks contain correspondence and telegrams from political figures either thanking Mix for visiting or attempting to encourage him to visit, early life information on Mix's daughter Thomasina, movie and career items from 1917 to 1938, and documents relating to Mix's lawsuit against the 101 Ranch and a lawsuit filed against him by his former wife, Victoria, alleging a shooting.

While the public cannot view the Tom Mix Collection at the time this goes to press due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the need for social distancing, it will be available again to all Oklahomans when the Oklahoma History Center Research Center is able to reopen. For more information call 405-522-5225 or email research@okhistory.org.

Jan H. Richardson is the processing archivist in the OHS Research Division's Manuscript Archives.

Tillers International Plowing Workshop

By David Fowler

Since I began working for the OHS, Tillers International has been on my bucket list of places to visit. When the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) announced a plowing workshop at Tillers I knew I had to attend. Not only was I going to be able to check off one of my bucket list places, I was also going to be able to improve my plowing skills by learning from some of the masters in the business.

With financial support from the Friends of the Murrell Home, I hit the road. It was a long drive from Park Hill, Oklahoma, to Scotts, Michigan. Fighting the urge to stop at the countless antique stores along the route, I pressed on to arrive at Tillers by early afternoon on Friday to be ready for the workshop the next morning. There I met up with Jim Slining and Ed Schultz, two of the workshop instructors. I was given my room assignment and settled in. I walked around the property and spent a little time catching up with Ed, and then Jim took us to view the Tillers collections. What a treat that was—two massive buildings full of tools and farm equipment! Tillers is a wonderful resource ready for curious minds to explore. After the tour we met up with several more workshop participants, and it was on to the local restaurant for a supper of sea perch.

Up early with coffee on the run, we headed to the barns for a meet-and-greet. After brief introductions from the instructors and participants, we went to work harnessing the horses and yoking the oxen as the instructors taught us the right way to do it. An hour was spent driving the teams through an obstacle course and then off to the fields to plow.

Ed, Don, and Pete Watson went through the basics of laying out the field and striking out. They also covered plowing techniques, how to adjust the plow, and how to finish off a furrow. We each took turns plowing, driving, and plowing solo. After a lunch break we were back out into the field for more instruction and plowing. We had two teams of horses and two



teams of oxen going at the same time. I have always had a slight anxiety about working with oxen, stemming from a bad experience at a previous workshop. Because of the format of this workshop, I was able to focus on working more with the oxen. As a result, I worked through some of my issues and became a little more confident with the oxen. We plowed through the afternoon and ended the day with supper and then off to bed.

Sunday started with harnessing and yoking, then off to the fields to continue plowing. We spent the day plowing, stopped briefly for lunch, and then continued into the late afternoon. Jim produced an old hillside plow with a rotating mold board for us to use. I have heard many a tale of this style of plow being used in the Ozarks, and thanks to the folks at the workshop I can now say I have used one!

This truly was one of the best workshops I have attended. It was an all-out, hands-on affair. Almost every moment was spent in the field plowing and gaining experience that only comes from doing. I am ever so happy that I decided to attend. The proof in the pudding was after I returned home. When we plowed the fields at Hunter's Home in Park Hill and at Nash Farm in Grapevine, Texas, later in October, I could see how much the workshop had improved my plowing skills. I was able to share the knowledge and skills I gained with others at these events.

David Fowler is a regional director for the OHS's Museums and Historic Sites Division.

*Start exploring
your past today!*

www.okhistory.org

Capturing family histories

By Chad Williams

As an archivist for the Oklahoma Historical Society, I can think of hundreds of conversations over the years with patrons who visited the Oklahoma History Center Research Center, not to mention chats with my own family and friends, about the regret of not recording family history. The story was always the same: “I wish I had taken the time to record all the stories told by the older generation of family and friends.” Now is your chance to make that wish a reality. Take advantage of the extra time you may have at home to sit down with family members and record their accounts of days gone by.

Oral histories are audio or video recordings of people that detail their lives, the lives of their families, their work, places they lived, town histories, military service, and life in general. Capturing this family history for future generations is a great way to, as the Oklahoma Historical Society’s mission states, “collect, preserve, and share” history. The opportunity is right in front of you!

People of all ages can create oral histories. Here are some helpful tips:

- 1) Obtain a device to capture the audio or video, which can be as simple as a smart phone.
- 2) Create a list of questions prior to the interview—below is a sample:
 - Interviewee’s first and last name
 - Interviewer’s first and last name
 - Date and place of interview
 - Where and when were you born?
 - What are the names of your parents, your partner/spouse, children?
 - Where did you go to school, live, work, serve in the military?
 - Tell me about some of your most happy memories as a kid, adult, parent.
 - Other topics could include: firsts (job, car, etc.), politics, religion, technology, economics, race relations, health, trends, advice to future generations, life timelines, and major events. You might talk about the recent COVID-19 pandemic and how that has changed life in the past months.
- 3) Once you begin asking the questions, the interview may go in all directions and that is good. Let the interviewee feel comfortable as you guide them with the questions. Most of all, enjoy your time together—some interviews last 45 minutes and some last hours.
- 5) Finally, contact the Oklahoma Historical Society to place a copy of the interview in our collections for safekeeping. The Oklahoma Historical Society is the perfect repository to place these oral history family treasures after they have been captured on audio or video. We will send you a release form and a gift agreement to be signed by the interviewee and interviewer, which allows the OHS to add the oral history to our collections and share it with future generations.

For more information about OHS oral histories, please visit www.okhistory.org/research/oralhist. For more information about gift agreements and donations to the Research Center, please visit www.okhistory.org/research/donations.

Chad Williams is the director of the OHS Research Division.



The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture offers useful resources

For all of us staying safer at home during the era of COVID-19, OHS offers an ever-expanding set of online research resources for historians, genealogists, students, teachers, and the general public. One of our most interesting, useful, and wide-ranging offerings is *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. It is available for free at www.okhistory.org/encyclopedia, and includes more than 2,600 articles.

The encyclopedia provides a well-rounded portrait of the state’s history, its geography, natural resources, incorporated towns, as well as fascinating people and their pursuits. Resourceful users will discover that

Oklahoma has overcome many tough times, including the Dust Bowl, Great Depression, Penn Square Bank collapse and recession of the 1980s, deadly tornadoes, and the Oklahoma City Bombing. This free resource synthesizes decades of scholarship and provides a tool for anyone interested in learning about and understanding Oklahoma’s heritage.

