

PRESERVATION OKLAHOMA NEWS



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Office and Preservation Oklahoma

2012 Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places



The Walcourt Building in Oklahoma City. *Photo and image: Justin Moore*

On March 29th, Preservation Oklahoma unveiled the 2012 Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places List. The event was held at the Oklahoma Supreme Court Building, formerly home to the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City. Attendees participated in a silent auction and reception before the list was unveiled, and also had the opportunity to watch a screening of *Saving Yesterday*, an OETA program featuring many past and present Endangered properties, as well as some great preservation success stories. Event sponsors included BancFirst, Midtown Renaissance, Cherokee Nation Cultural Tourism, Running Wild Catering, Forest Building Materials, MA+ Architecture, Preservation El Reno, and Big Five Community Services, with generous support from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund and Kirkpatrick Foundation.

Since 1993, Preservation Oklahoma has recognized historic sites across the state at risk of demolition or deterioration, raising awareness of the need to protect Oklahoma's historic resources. While inclusion on the list does not guarantee protection or funding, it can be a key component in mobilizing support for the preservation of historic sites.

This year's list features many diverse new entries facing a wide range of threats. Each tells a story important to its community; some that have long been forgotten and others that continue to fascinate and make people wonder "what if?". Hopefully this year's list will inspire property owners, local governments, and average Oklahomans to take a second look at the historic resources around them and to consider what those resources could become.

Walcourt Building: Oklahoma City

Empty for decades, the Walcourt has long caught the attention of Oklahoma City residents and visitors, inspiring fantasies and questions about its history with its impressive but lonely appearance.

The Walcourt Apartment Building was constructed in 1927 in the Gothic style, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Its major period of use was from the time of its opening through the 1950s, when it was a posh apartment building for business people working downtown. Architect Joe Davis, builder Charles Beveridge, and consulting engineer and owner of the property, H.E. Musson, gave great attention to detail to create stylish apartments with high-end fixtures, including Kohler fixtures, genuine maple wood trim, and Shaeffer mantles in every unit. The imposing brick and cast stone exterior appealed to oilmen and bankers flocking to Oklahoma City during periods of prosperity.

Years of vacancy raise concern about deterioration, deferred maintenance, and damage caused by people and animals seeking shelter within. Owners reportedly have no plans to demolish the building but need help to see it put back into use. As surrounding neighborhoods see redevelopment and revitalization, this grand building is ripe for rehabilitation.

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Update on Tax Credit Task Force

The Task Force for the Study of Tax Credits and Economic Incentives in Oklahoma was established in 2011 under HB1285. The historic building rehabilitation tax credit was among the incentives programs considered during the task force's July 15th meeting, and a summary of that meeting appeared in the October issue of *Preservation Oklahoma News*.

Dr. Bob Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officer and several business and community leaders and preservation advocates spoke about the importance of the rehabilitation tax credits and answered questions during the July 15th meeting. Responding to a request from the task force, Dr. Blackburn attended their October 12th meeting to further discuss the certification process for the 20% tax credits.

The Task Force scrutinized each of Oklahoma's tax credit programs for constitutionality based on guidelines set forth by former Attorney General Drew Edmondson. The tax credit must (1) "promote a public purpose affecting the inhabitants of the state as a community, not as individuals;" (2) be supported by "adequate consideration;" and (3) have "adequate controls and safeguards."

On December 22, 2011, the task force released its report containing ten recommendations. These include the elimination of transferability; audits for those seeking to use tax credits; the requirement of prior approval of projects seeking to use tax credits by a state entity; fiscal impact statements for future tax credit legislation; requirements related to job retention or creation as a result of tax credits; the consideration of tax credits as a "last resort" for incentives;

limitations on dollar amounts of credits; sunset provisions; restrictions on consideration of tax credit legislation at the end of legislative session; and transparency.

Since the start of the 2012 Legislative Session, numerous bills addressing these and other concerns with tax credits have been introduced. House Bill 2979, which proposed to end transferability and eliminate the historic tax credit, failed in committee, but other bills that could impact the historic tax credit by eliminating it, extending its deferral (due to expire July 1 of this year), or otherwise altering the way in which it is administered, are still under consideration.

Introduced in 2005, the Credit for Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures allows property owners who rehabilitate National Register of Historic Places-eligible properties for use as public, for-profit entities to recoup a portion of their initial investment through tax incentives. It parallels a federal tax credit, therefore allowing up to a 20% state tax credit along with a 20% federal tax credit for a total of 40%.

There are very specific guidelines about the procedures of rehabilitation, and project proponents must stay within these guidelines to be eligible for the credit. Since its inception, over 20 properties across the state have been successfully rehabilitated utilizing the state tax credit, including such landmarks as the Mayo and Ambassador Hotels in Tulsa, the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma City, and the Wells Building in Sapulpa. Investors in these and many other projects have said that these would not have been possible without the tax incentives.

For more information, contact Preservation Oklahoma at preservationok@preservationok.org.

Are you a member of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.?

Not everyone who receives this newsletter is a member! Can't remember the last time you paid your dues? Haven't received an invitation in the mail from POK in a while? Please call to confirm your status at 405/525-5325, or email preservationok@preservationok.org.

You can rejoin at any time by mailing in the membership card on the back page of this newsletter, or at www.preservationok.org. Don't miss all the fun, the news, and the members-only opportunities—renew your membership in Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. today!

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Photo: Central Oklahoma AIA

Stage Center: Oklahoma City

This theater, designed by renowned architect John M. Johansen, is a beacon of modern architectural design nestled in downtown Oklahoma City. It gained national acclaim when the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded the design with its highest honor, the International Gold Circle Award, after its construction. However, citizens of Oklahoma City have been divided over its value to the community since its unveiling in 1970 as the Mummers Theater. The modern and unusual building with its industrial appearance was, and continues to be, too modern and unusual for some tastes.

Recent flooding in the summer of 2010 caused extensive damage to the theater building. Though there are no specific plans for demolition of Stage Center, finding a use with enough economic sustainability to repair and maintain the building has been difficult, causing many to fear the worst.

Considered by its architect, John Johansen, to be his best work, the iconic theater deserves to be appreciated by Oklahomans just as much as it is appreciated by the international architectural world. Its interesting design and prime location in a thriving part of downtown Oklahoma City hold promise for many potential uses and for a fresh start as part of the surrounding neighborhood's revitalization.



Photo: OK SHPO

Quanah Parker Star House: Cache

The Star House is a truly rare and exceptional treasure representing a fascinating piece of the story of the Comanche Nation in Oklahoma and the life of a significant figure, Quanah Parker. It is also a treasure that has been saved once before and now needs a third chance at life.

The Star House was built around 1890 for renowned Comanche warrior, leader, and statesman Quanah Parker. Quanah skillfully balanced his roles as a leader within the Comanche Nation and as an emissary to white culture, achieving great respect, fame and wealth in his lifetime.

In the 1950s, the expansion of neighboring Fort Sill threatened to destroy the house, so it was saved and moved to Eagle Park. The park is closed now, and recent assessments have revealed serious deterioration at the site. Action is needed to save this rare piece of Oklahoma history.

This is the third year for the Star House's inclusion on the Endangered List; with each year the interest in the house, and the concern for its condition, grows. Hopefully support from many interest groups and individuals across the state and country can be coordinated and this property saved before another year's list is published.

Continued on Page 9.

National Register Nomination Grants Round 2

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is now accepting applications for Round 2 of its annual matching grants to state, local, and tribal governments and non-profit organizations for the preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations. The SHPO reserved \$10,000 of its FY 2012 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) allocation from the U.S. Department of the Interior for these grants. The deadline for Round 2 applications is 5:00pm on June 1.

Each grant is limited to \$1,000.00, and the applicant must provide a nonfederal, cash match of at least \$700.00. Grant recipients will use the funds to retain an appropriately qualified professional to complete preparation of an individual property nomination for the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register is the catalogue of our nation's significant buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, and landscapes important in our past. While listing in the National Register is not a guarantee of preservation or of financial assistance, it is one of the most important components of the preservation strategy for any significant property. The designation provides increased public awareness of these irreplaceable resources, provides limited protection for them, qualifies property owners for federal tax credits under certain circumstances, and may qualify the property owner for grant assistance when such programs are funded.

To submit a National Register Nomination Grant application online or obtain an application form, just go to www.okhistory.org/shpo/nrgrant.htm. You may also obtain the application from the SHPO by calling 405/521-6249.

Upcoming Workshops on Preservation, Tombstone Conservation

Gravestone Conservation Workshop in Tahlequah

On May 11-12, 2012, Preservation Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation Cultural Tourism, and The Saline Preservation Association will host a hands-on workshop on gravestone and cemetery monument conservation. Jonathan Appell, a member of the Preservation Trades Network, will lead hands-on, interactive training for participants, covering topics including how to re-set stones, repair to fragmented stones, appropriate repair materials, use of infill material, and methods for repointing and cleaning masonry. Mr. Appell is a professional gravestone and masonry conservation specialist with expertise in cemetery preservation planning. He has performed gravestone preservation and planning projects on many historically significant cemeteries throughout the United States, including Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC, The Granary in Boston, MA, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Tarrytown, NY, The First

Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Greensboro, NC, and The New Haven Crypt in New Haven, CT. The two-day workshop will be held in the Tahlequah area. Participants may attend one or both days, but space is limited.

Preservation Workshop in McAlester

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office will host a preservation workshop in McAlester on Tuesday, June 19, 2012. Learn about the many tools, resources, and programs available for the preservation and revitalization of Oklahoma communities.

For more information about how to register for either of the workshops, please contact Preservation Oklahoma at 405/525-5325 or email preservationok@preservationok.org, or visit www.preservationok.org.

2012 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference Summary

Go with the Flow of Preservation: Oklahoma's 24th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference will be held June 6-8 in downtown Tahlequah at the Tahlequah Armory Municipal Center, 101 North Water Avenue. The program features three concurrent tracks of sessions that focus on rehabilitation case studies, regional heritage preservation initiatives, and local preservation program development. Several special events are also on the agenda. The Plenary Session (June 8) features two speakers, Jay Hannah and Jason Roberts, who will discuss the economic impacts and overall community benefits of historic preservation and heritage tourism at the state and local level.

Jay Hannah is Executive Vice President of Financial Services for BancFirst in Oklahoma City. He is a Citizen of the Cherokee Nation and a native of Adair County, and began his banking career in Guthrie where he became involved with local preservation efforts in the Guthrie Historic District. Returning to Tahlequah as a banker in the late 1980s, Jay helped to create the city's preservation district, served on the Main Street board, and wrote the transportation enhancements grant application that resulted in funding for Tahlequah's sidewalk and streetscape improvement project. He is active in Cherokee Nation affairs, including his recent service as Chairman of the Cherokee Nation Businesses, the enterprise arm of the tribe with responsibility for the development of the Nation's cultural tourism and historic preservation mission, the focus of his presentation. He works closely with Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. to administer the BancFirst funded "PlanFirst" Grant Program which supports local preservation efforts. Jay is a published author and frequent speaker on both the importance of history in our daily lives and the economic impact generated from preservation and cultural tourism.

Jason Roberts is the President and founder of the Oak Cliff Transit Authority, originator of the Better Block Project, the topic for his presentation, and co-founder of the Art Conspiracy and Bike Friendly Oak Cliff. In 2006, Jason formed the non-profit organization, Oak Cliff Transit Authority, to revive the Dallas streetcar system, and later spearheaded the city's ef-

fort in garnering a \$23 Million TIGER grant from the Federal Transit Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation, to help reintroduce a modern streetcar system to Dallas. In 2010, Jason organized a series of "Better Block" projects, taking blighted blocks with vacant properties in Southern Dallas and converting them into temporary walkable districts with pop-up businesses, bike lanes, cafe seating, and landscaping. In 2011, the American Society of Landscape Architects presented a National Honor Award to Team Better Block for their work while heralding the Better Block project as "a 21st-century version of what the Chicago World's Fair did in 1893."

Conference participants are sure to enjoy the hospitality of the Friends of the Thompson House as they host the opening reception on Wednesday evening. Two special tours are planned with each one offered on Thursday and Friday. They include a bus tour to landmarks of the Cherokee Nation and a bus tour of Tahlequah's historic properties.

The State Historic Preservation Office's annual awards banquet will be held on Thursday, June 7, and Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.'s annual meeting and luncheon is featured on Friday.

Registered architects and others can earn continuing education hours through conference attendance. Oklahoma college and university students pursuing degrees in preservation-related fields can apply for a scholarship to attend the conference. For information about either of these opportunities, visit the SHPO's website listed below or contact Melvena Heisch, Deputy SHPO at 405/522-4484 or mheisch@okhistory.org.

In late April, watch your mail for the conference registration brochure, or visit <http://www.tahlequahmainstreet.com> for online registration. Follow developments at <http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/spevents.htm>; <http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/conference.htm>; <http://www.twitter.com/okshpo>; and <http://www.okpreservationconference.wordpress.com>.

SHPO ANNOUNCES MAY WORKSHOPS

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office is pleased to announce its May workshop series. The sessions will be held May 2-4 at the Travertine Nature Center, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Sulphur (c.a. 90 mi. south of OKC).

The workshops are free and open to the public, but we ask that you register by 5:00pm, Wednesday, April 25. Space is limited and available on a first-come basis. To register, contact Betty Harris at bharris@okhistory.org or 405/521-6249. You may also register online at www.okhistory.org/shpo/workshops.php.

Registered architects who attend these workshops can qualify for American Institute of Architects Continuing Education System (AIA/CES) learning units. Simply register for the workshop(s). After the workshops, self-report your attendance at <http://www.aia.org/education/index.htm>. The SHPO will provide written learning objectives at the door and a certificate of attendance the week of May 9th.

If you have questions about any of the workshops, contact Melvena Heisch, Deputy SHPO, at 405/522-4484 or mheisch@okhistory.org.

Workshop Schedule and Descriptions:

May 2 (9:30am-12:00noon) - The Section 106 Review Process: Introduction and Overview

The half-day workshop provides the basics about Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and how the process works in Oklahoma. Specific topics include who is responsible for Section 106 compliance, when does Section 106 apply, what is the State Historic Preservation Office's role in the process, what other agencies are involved, what is a historic property, and what happens when a project will affect a historic property. The workshop is designed as a stand-alone session and as a companion to Determination of Eligibility under Section 106. Participants should also consider attending The Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

May 2 (1:30pm-4:30pm) - Determination of Eligibility under Section 106

The session provides a step-by-step description of how to document standing structures for the State Historic Preservation Office's review. Specific topics include a discussion of the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation, how to complete the Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form, photograph requirements, what a determination of eligibility means, how differences of opinion about eligibility are resolved, and when consultants may be helpful to agencies in preparing documentation for the Section 106 process. The session is designed as a stand-alone workshop or as a companion to The Section 106 Review Process: Introduction and Overview. Participants should also consider attending The Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

May 3 (9:30am-4:30pm) - Working with the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the foundation of the SHPO's programs, and a basic understanding of the register is essential for those involved in historic preservation at all levels of government and in the private sector. The workshop provides detailed information about the National Register criteria, what listing means, the rights of property owners in the nomination process, tips for preparing successful nominations, and much more.

May 4 (9:30am-12:00noon) - Federal and State Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

In this workshop participants will learn about the federal and state investment tax credits for certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. A detailed discussion of the Historic Preservation Certification Application, Parts 1, 2, and 3 will guide owners and developers in successfully preparing the information needed for the State Historic Preservation Office to review the project and for the National Park Service to certify it. This session is designed as a stand-alone workshop or as a companion to the Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

May 4 (1:30pm-4:30pm) - The Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

The half-day workshop features a thorough discussion of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. Generally referred to as The Standards, these commonsense principles are widely used in the historic preservation field. Whether you are involved in a rehabilitation project for the 20% federal and 20% state tax credits, planning a rehabilitation project funded with federal assistance, serving on a local historic preservation commission, or just wanting to know the best approach to rehabilitate your historic private home, you will find this session invaluable. It is designed as a stand-alone workshop and as a companion to Federal and State Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation.



Travertine Nature Center. Photo: National Park Service.

A Special Invitation!

Preservation Awards 2012

Preservation projects happen ONLY because of the efforts of local citizens across our state. Preservation Oklahoma would like to applaud the work of these individuals and groups whose tenacity, courage, and determination are the backbone of successful preservation projects across Oklahoma. We are eager to compile our 2012 Preservation Award recipients and would like to solicit your assistance. Help us identify candidates whose work in historic preservation is noteworthy by returning the completed form below.

Four awards will be given:

- 1) Rural Private Sector
- 2) Rural Public Sector
- 3) Urban Private Sector
- 4) Urban Public Sector

The Preservation Awards will be presented at Preservation Oklahoma's Annual Luncheon held at the Statewide Preservation Conference in Tahlequah on June 8, 2012.

Name of Candidate _____

Award Category _____

Candidate's Address _____

Candidate's Phone and Email _____

Name of person/group nominating candidate: _____

Nominator's Address _____

Nominator's phone and email _____

On a separate piece of paper, in 500 words or less, please describe why you believe this candidate should receive this award. Feel free to attach additional information, photos, and letters of recommendation.

Please return this form to:

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.

405 NW 15th Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73103

For more information, contact Preservation Oklahoma at preservationok@preservationok.org.

Deadline May 1, 2012

The Herndon Site and the Revitalization of Traditional Choctaw Pottery

Ian Thompson, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

A few years ago, Choctaw traditional pottery had all but vanished, but today, through a revitalization effort spearheaded by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, this ancient art form is becoming stronger and more vibrant than it has been for a century. The revitalization effort has drawn upon many sources of information, including archaeological research conducted at the Herndon site, in McCurtain County, Oklahoma.



Traditional Choctaw foods cooking in shell-tempered clay pots.
Photo: Ian Thompson

People living in the Choctaw homeland (Mississippi and western Alabama) began making pottery about 1,500 B.C. Since that time, ceramics have been made, developed, and used by the hands of 150 generations of ancestral Choctaw people at places like Moundville and the Bottle Creek archaeological site (both in Alabama). Choctaw people carried the art with them to what is now southeast Oklahoma during the 1830s on the Trail of Tears. One of the earliest places occupied by the Choctaw was the Herndon site in McCurtain County. This site represents an early, post-removal farmstead in southeast Oklahoma (Etchieson 2011). However, by the 1940s Choctaw communities had essentially stopped making and using traditional pottery.

In the revitalization effort, an attempt has been made to understand the changing technology and styles of Choctaw pottery through the ages. One major point of interest has been the specific styles that were made around the time period of the Trail of Tears. The primary decorated style for this time period is Chickachae Combed. Its distinctive decorations were made by dragging broken sections of combs across the damp clay, producing fine parallel lines.

The Herndon site stands out for the amount of 1800s Choctaw pottery sherds that it has produced (Etchieson 2011). The collection from the site is particularly significant for the diversity of combed designs represented within it. Also, it is somewhat unique in that burned bone is the primary

tempering material. Since 2010, these ceramics have been on loan from the Ouachita National Forest to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. They have been studied by Choctaw potters revitalizing the art, and brought to community meetings where they have been viewed by youth and elders alike. All of this helps to strengthen the connection between today's Choctaw people and our ancestors. The Choctaw Nation is grateful to the US Forest Service and its archaeologists for making this possible.

Since late 2009, the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department has hosted 200 pottery classes at 14 locations, reaching more than 1000 students in an effort to revitalize Choctaw pottery. Students dig clay by hand out of the ground. They clean it of roots and sticks, and mix it with a tempering material such as burned bone, burned mussel shell, quartz sand, or grog. They shape the vessels by hand, often burnishing them to a high luster and decorating them. The pots are fired outdoors in a wooden bonfire, until the pots are glowing red. The next morning, the vessels are taken from the cool ashes. If they are free of cracks or major damage, they can be used for cooking and serving foods.



Students in Idabel making Choctaw traditional pottery from McCurtain County clay. *Photo: Ian Thompson*

Over the last two years, Choctaw potters have made and fired more than 700 traditional pots. Today, a growing core group of students from these classes are making beautiful pieces of pottery, and beginning to take on their own students. The cycle continues, and a 3,500-year-old tradition lives on.

Bibliography

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Twenty Years of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.

2012 marks the twentieth anniversary of the creation of Preservation Oklahoma. In each newsletter this year we will feature a different article on Preservation Oklahoma's history as an organization. For this article, we will look back at the Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places List.

For decades, preservation organizations have produced lists of a top ten "endangered places" as a way to raise awareness and highlight threatened resources, and Preservation Oklahoma is no different. The organization started publishing a list of endangered places in 1993, a year after its founding, and many of these places have been saved and continue as living parts of Oklahoma communities. The following are a few highlights from past years' lists.

Washita Battlefield (NHL 1966): Appeared on the Most Endangered list from 1994 to 1996. On August 25, 2007, a new visitor center opened featuring new exhibits on the battle and the American soldiers and Cheyenne people involved, as well as a bookstore and film room.



Washita Battlefield Visitor Center. Photo: Okla. Dept. of Tourism

Fort Reno (NR 1970): Appeared on the Most Endangered List from 1994 to 1996. Fort Reno was removed from endangered status in 1997 and numerous restorative efforts undertaken, including extensive work on the chapel, barracks, hospital, and officer's quarters. The site received a prestigious Save America's Treasures grant in 2004, but further work and additional funding is needed.



Fort Reno. Photo: OK SHPO

Gold Dome (NR 2003): Appeared on the Most Endangered List in 2002 and 2003. The Gold Dome was purchased in 2003 and now houses offices, restaurant space, and an art gallery.



Gold Dome. Photo: OK SHPO

Saline Courthouse (NR 1976): Appeared on the Most Endangered list in 2003 and 2004. In 2005, a master plan was developed for restoration of the grounds for public use; thus far, the Courthouse and Springhouse have been completely restored.



Saline Courthouse. Photo: Lisa Melchior

Pawnee Boy's Dormitory (NR 2007): Appeared on the Most Endangered List in 2007. While the campus of the Pawnee Indian School is currently utilized by Pawnee Nation College and has undergone substantial restoration, the Boys Dormitory is in need of major repair.



Stuart Hotel. Photo: Terry Beck

Stuart Hotel (NR 1982): Appeared on the Most Endangered List in 2010. Currently, the Stuart Hotel is operated as a bed and breakfast by the grandson of the original proprietors.

For more information about Preservation Oklahoma's 20th anniversary events, contact Preservation Oklahoma at 405/525-5325 or at preservationok@preservationok.org.



Fine Arts Building, Alva. Photo: NWOSU

Fine Arts Building: Alva

Some of Oklahoma's most architecturally impressive buildings are those on college and university campuses. Designed by Solomon Andrew Layton, the Fine Arts Building on the NWOSU campus was built in 1907. The building originally was known as the Science Hall, and it housed the science departments, a library, gymnasium, and a training school for teachers. As the oldest standing building on the NWOSU campus, it has gone through several periods of deterioration and rehabilitation. With government and school budgets stretched, historic academic buildings must fight to be seen as priorities.



Morton Hospital, Tulsa. Photo: Justin Moore

Morton Hospital: Tulsa

The Morton Hospital was the first African American hospital in Tulsa, with African American physicians serving largely African American patients. Today, the original Morton Health building sits empty and abandoned since the move of the health center to a new facility. With its rich history, Morton Hospital deserves recognition and preservation.

Recently, the City of Tulsa, which currently owns the building, received a \$200,000 grant to clean the site of any hazardous substances. Hopefully this will make it easier for the building to be put back into use in the future.



Lincoln "Colored" School, Fairfax. Photo: Larry Jenkins

Lincoln "Colored" School: Fairfax

This one-room school house was built in 1929 to serve the African American population of Fairfax, in Osage County. Separate schools like this were prescribed by the Oklahoma Constitution to separate "colored" children from the white children. Though in poor condition, it is one of the only existing separate schools within the state.

Once schools were integrated, Lincoln ceased to be used, and in the 1970s a local family, generations of which had attended the school, purchased it from the city. Family members all live out of state now and have few resources to maintain the property. Without maintenance and constant care, this rare piece of a controversial but important part of Oklahoma's history could soon be lost.



Larkin Hotel, Blackwell. Photo: OK SHPO

Larkin Hotel: Blackwell

Built in the early 1920s by John Larkin, the 4-story hotel had 66 rooms, 48 of which had their own attached bathrooms, a dining room that was the hot spot to meet during Blackwell's heyday, and a grand ballroom graced by governors, congressmen and other prominent figures. Blackwell was a hub of agriculture, manufacturing, and oil and gas exploration, aided by early railroads providing access to shipping for the community. Blackwell's population peaked in the 1950s, but as the oil and gas boom went to bust, the town declined rapidly. With few guests to serve, the Larkin has been closed for decades. Though it appears to be in relatively good shape, it is too large and grand a building to continue without occupancy or maintenance.



Griffin Chapel, Norman. *Photo: Susan Atkinson*

Griffin Chapel: Norman

The complex known today as Griffin Memorial Hospital in Norman began life as a small school for women in the late 1800s. Eventually, when it could not compete with the University of Oklahoma, the building was sold to the Oklahoma Sanitarium Company in 1895 to be used as a facility to house the "violent insane."

Since that time, it has grown into a large-scale complex of mental health treatment facilities. This complex once included extensive gardens that patients would work as a part of treatment, as well as a bakery, dairy farm, ice and power plant, and orchards. Completely self-sufficient, the complex was like a small city. Built in 1936, Griffin Chapel functioned as a place of worship for the complex, as well as a location for social activities such as meetings and showing movies.

With the myriad of changes in attitude and treatment of mental health patients, Griffin Memorial, along with numerous other facilities across the state, has fallen well below its original capacity. Griffin Chapel has been empty and neglected for many years, and a series of recent fires have likely added to the deterioration. This architecturally distinctive building could be lost if action is not taken, sooner rather than later, to protect and rehabilitate it.

Archeological Sites Statewide: Lake Wister

Each year the Endangered List includes archeological sites statewide, threatened by acts of human-kind, from insensitive digging and exploration to development and construction, as well as by acts of nature.

This year the Lake Wister Archeological District is highlighted. The Lake Wister Archeological District is located in the Wister vicinity in LeFlore County (specific location restricted). This district, dated from 2500 B.C. to 800 A.D., is the core area of the Fourche Maline culture, the material remains of a prehistoric Indian people who made of the earliest shifts from a hunting-gathering nomadic lifestyle to horticulture.

More than 50 sites in this locale represent the best concentration of cultural resources known for this prehistoric culture. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Today, this important district is threatened with erosion of the banks on which it sits.

Continued on Page 11.



Farmers and Merchants Bank, Choteau. Photo: OK SHPO

Farmers and Merchants Bank: Choteau

This downtown bank was constructed in 1908. It served as a booming center of banking and business from the 1900s through the 1940s. It has a grand appearance for its size, with limestone pilasters and arched brick window and door surrounds, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Organized by pioneer businessmen as the second bank in Chouteau, it is the only structure still standing from that era in town. Like many commercial buildings in Oklahoma's rural communities, the Farmers and Merchants bank is at risk of being lost to the consequences of long-term vacancy, deterioration, and time itself.

Bridge over North Fork Red River: Jackson County

Historic bridges have been a common theme over many Endangered Places lists. The combination of interesting structural components and architectural details make them recognizable landmarks for locals and travelers using them, but constant changes in safety requirements and vehicular needs threaten to make historic bridges obsolete. These risks are compounded as the status of bridges and highways changes, and responsibility for maintenance shifts or becomes unclear, leaving the structures to fall into ruin.

Determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation survey publication "Spans of Time," this one-lane bridge was constructed in 1929 by Western Construction to carry old State Highway 62 over the Red River. The bridge had continuous use as a highway thoroughfare until the new Highway 62 bypassed it in 1970, when it was reverted to a county road.

In late 2009, the bridge failed to meet safety regulations and, without the funding to make necessary repairs, was closed to traffic. The bridge has not had any significant maintenance in decades and is in serious danger of being lost to neglect.

For more information about this and past years' Endangered Historic Places, or to learn more about this and other programs of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., contact POK at 405/525-5325 or preservationok@preservationok.org, or visit www.preservationok.org.



Bridge over North Fork Red River, Jackson County. Photo: Michael Bates



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