



Preservation Oklahoma News



The newsletter of Oklahoma's statewide preservation community.

January 1996

Volume 2, number 2

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State Historic Preservation Office Moves to New Location

After the April 19th bombing in Oklahoma City, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which was housed in the historic Journal Record building across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, operated from temporary quarters in the Wiley Post Historical Building, headquarters of the Oklahoma Historical Society. In late December, the SHPO moved into its new permanent offices at Shepherd Mall, which is located at northwest 23rd Street and Villa in Oklahoma City.

The SHPO's new address is:

**State Historic Preservation Office
Oklahoma Historical Society
2704 Villa Prom
Shepherd Mall
Oklahoma City, OK 73107**

The SHPO's new fax number is (405) 947-2918. The SHPO's telephone numbers remain the same. The main number is (405) 521-6249. To reach individual staff members, call them at their direct numbers:

Susan Allen	521-6387
Katharine Davis	521-6249
Marshall Gettys	521-6381
Melvena Heisch	522-4484
Pam McCarty	521-6386
Stan Mayer	522-4485
Eva Osborne	522-4479
Cindy Smelker	522-4478

The Shepherd Mall location was chosen because it offers easy access for the public and convenient access to the State Capitol complex. Shepherd Mall's new owners are converting much of the facility to an office-service use and several other government agencies are also now located there. This adaptive reuse of the mall is important to the success of general revitalization efforts along northwest 23rd Street.

The SHPO staff looks forward to serving you from their new offices.

Tulsa Entrepreneurs Make Preservation Their Business

Historic preservation encompasses a broad range of projects, groups, and individuals. One example is the innovative partnership called Riverside Parkway.

Bill Hiser and Steve Lower, two Tulsa entrepreneurs, are the driving force behind Riverside Parkway, a group of some fifty investors across the state investing in the rehabilitation of historically significant buildings in small towns in northeastern Oklahoma. The company owns buildings in Ralston, Fairfax, Pawhuska, and Cleveland, all of which have had preservation work done on them or plans prepared for rehabilitation projects.

Steve Lower notes that the projects may not make as much money as other real estate ventures, but "we obviously couldn't continue to work on projects in these communities if our investors didn't see the money making potential here."

The latest historic building to be transformed by Riverside Parkway is the Ralston Opera House. When Bill Hiser first looked at the old opera house in the mid 1980's, it seemed almost beyond saving. The ceiling boards hung in shreds after sixty years of neglect. The baroque curtain, itself once a showpiece, was little more than a pile of rags. The rear stairs, which stood in front of the old city jail, had succumbed to decay and termites decades ago. The work on the historic theatre's ornate interior required hours of painstaking work: refitting and refinishing floorboards, cleaning ninety year old paint work with Q-tips, and disposing of more than half a century of pigeon droppings that had literally buried many of the audience seats. The two men hired students from Oklahoma State University's school of art to recreate the ruined advertising curtain. Using an old photograph, magnified several times, they reproduced the curtain to the finest detail.

Today, after years of soliciting prospective investors for the project, frugal buying practices, and plenty of hands-on labor-intensive work, the Ralston Opera House is restored to a near-perfect reflection of its former splendor in terms of historical accuracy.

The Ralston Opera House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. Its stage is again basking in the glow of theatrical lighting as local shows and productions by Oklahoma State University performing arts groups keep the restored opera house busy.

In Pawhuska, at the corner of Grandview and Main, the Triangle Building, built in 1914, is also undergoing a facelift. The Triangle Building is a marvel of its era's style of Cubist influence encased in opulent Art Deco architecture. Sixteen-foot ceilings, ornate marble staircases, antique copper elevator, and decoratively painted floors are but a few of the building's remarkable features. At 21,000 square feet, the five-story office building is an ambitious

project. It has housed professional offices, scores of in-and-out businesses, and even makeshift apartments.

The rehabilitation effort has sparked a small boom in downtown Pawhuska. Since Riverside Parkway purchased the building and began work on it, seven new businesses have opened nearby. Local business owners express optimism about the project's success, since downtown Pawhuska has a shortage of office space.

The first two floors of the building are in the final stages of rehabilitation. The Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa has leased a sizable portion of the first floor to display some of its valuable works for local tourism. Bacone College occupies a second floor suite, where it offers satellite classes from its art department. Shadow Mountain Youth Counseling also has offices on the second floor. Hiser and Lower plan to put a gift shop and an old-fashioned soda fountain in the first floor lobby.

"We see tourism as the next real industry in Oklahoma," says Hiser. "We're trying to promote tourism, especially in the form of bus tours to the area we refer to as 'Riverside Parkway.'" Indeed, one of the corporation's main partners is the Wild West Tours Consortium, which is packaging a tour loop through Riverside Parkway's six target cities.

Hiser and Lower believe this type of marketing as an extremely important aspect of their preservation ethic. To preserve these buildings for future generations, the rehabilitation projects must be more than a temporary revival. The two men think the best protection for historic buildings is the kind of increased public awareness of their remarkable architectural and historical features that is generated by tours, events, and successful real estate development.

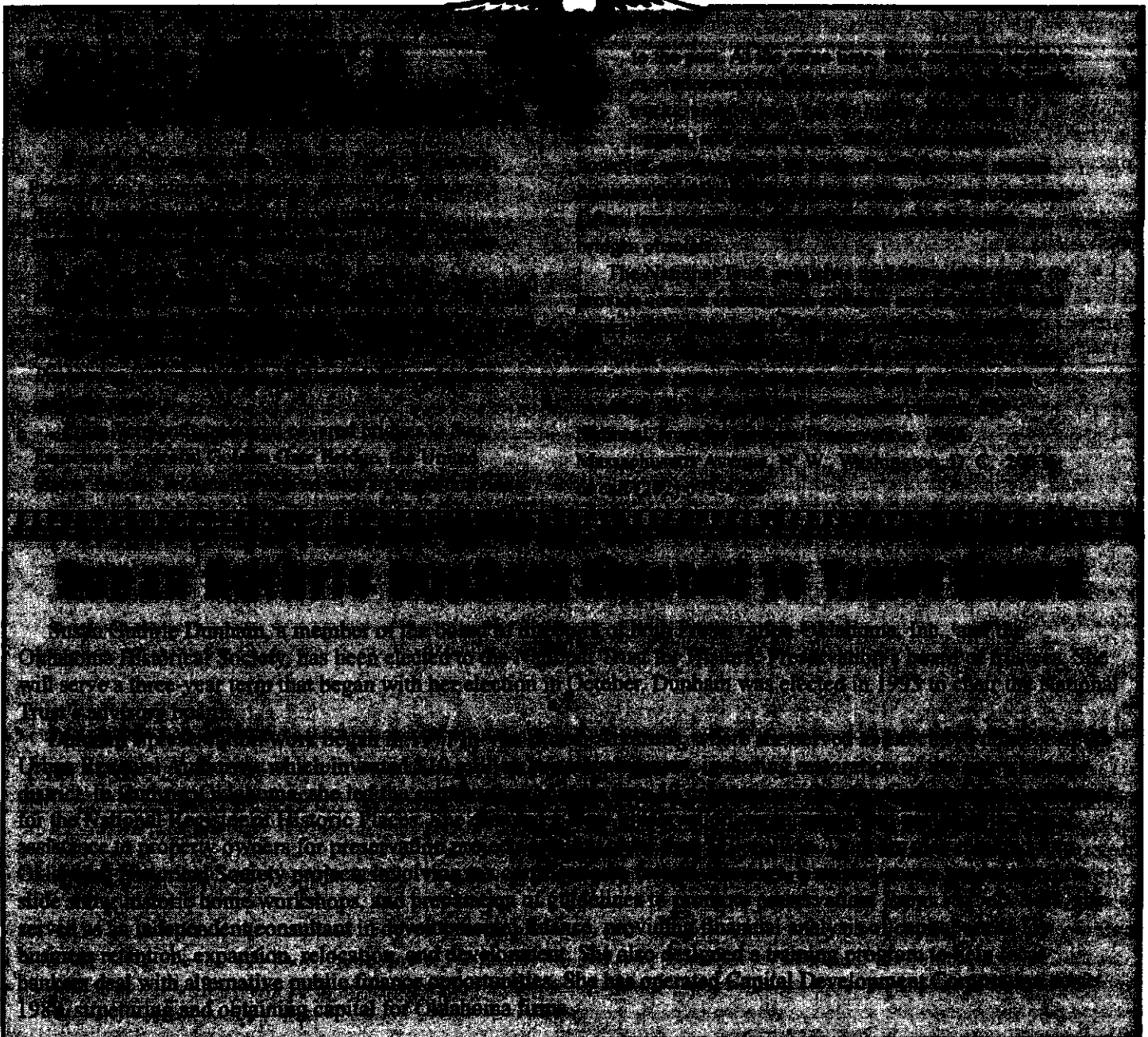


Bill Hiser and Steve Lower stand in front of their most recent acquisition, a historic building in Cleveland that holds Riverside Parkway's new offices.

National Trust Seeks Support for Commemorative Coin Act

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has requested help in securing Congressional co-sponsors for the James Madison Commemorative Coin Act. This legislation would enable Montpelier, the life-long home of James Madison and a museum property of the National Trust, to achieve long-term financial stability and self-sufficiency. The James Madison Commemorative Coin Act, sponsored by Congressman Bliley and Senators Warner and Robb, would authorize the U. S. Mint to issue a coin in 2001 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the birth of James Madison. After minting and production costs are recovered, the proceeds from the sale of the coin (estimated at \$8 million) would be used to establish an endowment and to fund capital improvement projects at Montpelier, which needs major rehabilitation and repair.

The Interior Appropriations conference committee voted to reduce the National Trust's federal appropriations by 50% in FY1996. In response to this, the Trust is devising innovative ways to replace this funding. The James Madison Coin is one such effort. In order for the legislation to be considered by the Congressional committee of jurisdiction, 290 Representatives need to co-sponsor the House bill and 41 Senators need to co-sponsor the Senate bill.



Sheila Graham Dunham, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has been elected to the position of President of the Trust. She will serve a three-year term that began with her election in October. Dunham was elected in 1995 to chair the National Trust's Board of Directors.

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Special Grants Assist Downtown OKC Recovery

To assist in the recovery efforts in downtown Oklahoma City, the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service awarded the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) a special \$44,000 grant from the Historic Preservation Fund. The SHPO identified two areas of need for which the funds could be used.

First, six historic churches suffered tremendous damage as a result of the bombing of the federal building. Due to limitations on availability of public funds to religious institutions, the SHPO determined that it could meet a real need by allocating funds to these important historic resources. The assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund can be used for nonconstruction activities that further the preservation of churches. Calvary Baptist Church and St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral applied and were granted matching funds for planning efforts. The churches will match the grants with private funds on a 60% (federal) to 40% (nonfederal) basis.

Calvary Baptist Church received an \$11,100 grant to assist in preparation of as-built drawings and a historic structures report. The historic church is located at 2nd and Walnut and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral received a \$9,000 grant to assist in preparation of plans and specifications for the building's rehabilitation. St. Paul's is located at 7th and Robinson and was listed in the National Register in 1977.

Second, to maximize the limited funding, the SHPO consulted with the City of Oklahoma City about a special project for the portion of North Broadway known as "Automobile Alley." The area is considered eligible as an historic district. The SHPO awarded the City of Oklahoma City a \$23,900 grant to facilitate revitalization efforts in this district. An architectural/historic survey, National Register district nomination, preservation plan, and design guidelines will be produced for the district. Additionally, the City will carry out an architectural/historic survey along a portion of North Robinson Avenue.

These planning projects will help ensure protection of the historic integrity of these important downtown Oklahoma City resources as restoration and rehabilitation work occurs.

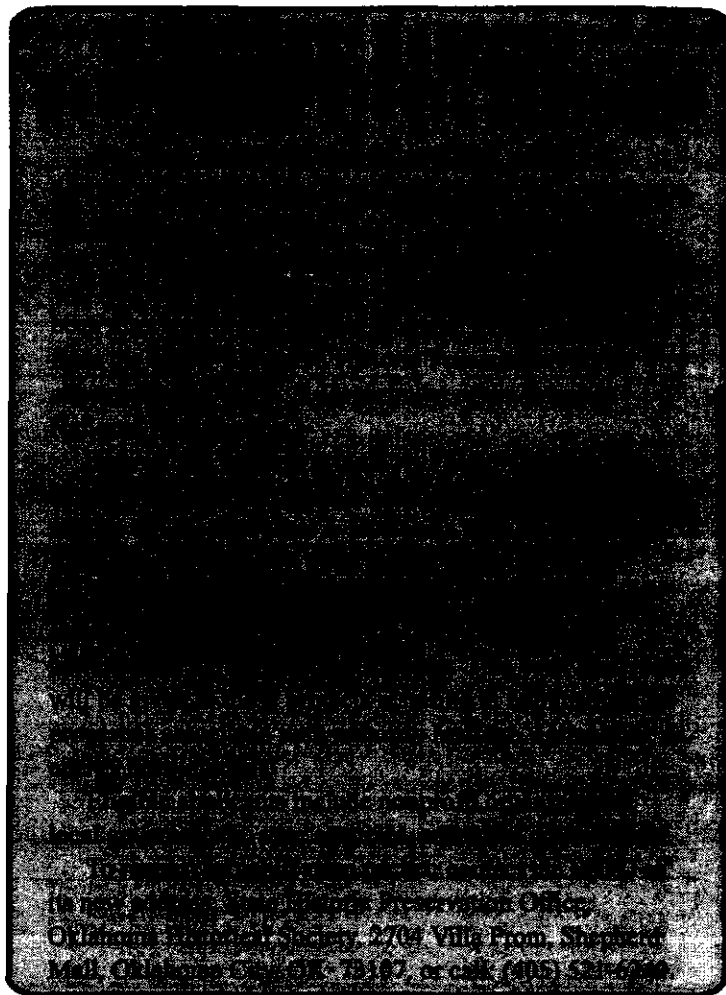
Duncan Site for 1996 Statewide Preservation Conference

Oklahoma's Eighth Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference will be held May 16th-18th in Duncan. Mark your calendars for this special event. The conference will focus on preservation in the local community.

Joining the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as this year's cosponsors are the Oklahoma Main Street Program, Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., and Main Street Duncan, Inc.

1996 marks the Oklahoma Main Street Program's 10th anniversary and the conference will be a celebration of the occasion. Duncan joined the Main Street Program in the initial year and provides the perfect setting for this year's conference.

A new feature of this year's conference will be a preservation resource fair running throughout the two and a half day event. Nonprofit organizations with a preservation-related focus and government agencies which offer services for the preservation community are invited to display exhibits. For details about participating, please contact Sharon Rhodes, Main Street Duncan, Inc., at (405) 252-8696.



State Historic Preservation Office
Oklahoma Historical Society, 2709 Villa From, Shepherd
Mall, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, or call (405) 521-6000

Know Your Preservation Terminology

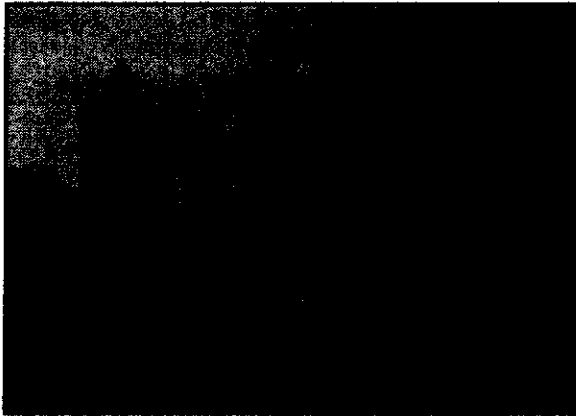
by Melvena Heisch, Deputy State
Historic Preservation Officer

As with any specialized field, understanding terminology is important for those involved in historic preservation. For the next several issues of *Preservation Oklahoma News*, we will provide some definitions for terms that are a part of the everyday "preservation lexicon."

The terms *rehabilitation*, *restoration*, and *renovation* mean very different things, but they are often used as though they were synonyms. *Renovation (or remodeling)* implies alteration of a building without regard for its historic character or fabric and the term is not appropriate for description of a historic preservation project. *Rehabilitation* and *restoration* projects result in preservation of historic buildings. The approach taken is determined by the planned use of the buildings. These preservation terms are defined as follows:

Rehabilitation

the act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property that are significant to its historical, architectural, and/or cultural value.

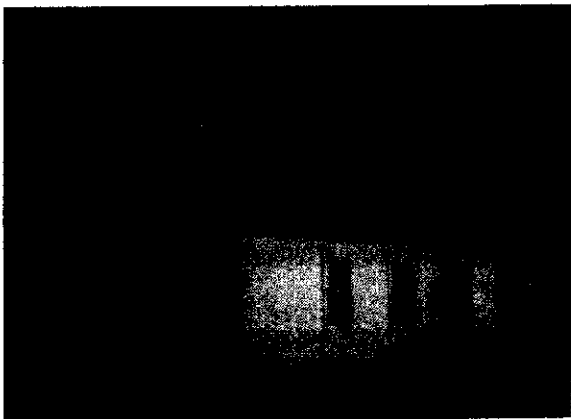


For example, a historic school building is *rehabilitated* when it is converted into an office building:

One Bell Central in downtown Oklahoma City, Southwestern Bell's corporate headquarters, began its life as Central High School. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Restoration

the act or process of accurately recreating the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by replacement of missing earlier work.



For example, a historic school building is *restored* when the changes made to convert it to use as an office are removed and all missing details are replaced based on historic photographs so that the building will serve as the setting for a living history program.

The Pleasant Valley School in Stillwater is a good example of a restored building. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

For definitions of other preservation terms, consult the glossary found in *Tomorrow's Legacy: Oklahoma Statewide Preservation Plan*, which is available from the SHPO.

Oklahoma Main Street Director Honored Clinard Commended for Decade of Excellence

Susie Clinard, director of the Department of Commerce's Oklahoma Main Street Program, was honored in November at the State Capitol for ten years of service and continuing excellence.

Clinard has been director of the statewide nonprofit program that revitalizes downtown commercial districts since its inception in 1985. The program is an initiative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in which 41 states participate. "[Clinard] is the glue behind the Oklahoma program," said Julie Warden, Main Street manager for Sapulpa. "It's her determination to make the program work that will take those downtown areas participating into the 21st century.

The Oklahoma Main Street program has been a nationwide model for success. In ten years, 31 cities across Oklahoma have participated, reinvesting \$93.4 million in their historic downtown districts. The majority of these funds have come from private sources. The program has produced a net gain of nearly 3,000 jobs, more than 1,000 new businesses, and priceless strides forward for historic preservation statewide.

Okmulgee, the first Main Street community in Oklahoma, is a prime example of this success story. In 1985, the city had a 75% vacancy rate in its downtown



Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Melvena Heisch (left) presenting commendation to Main Street Director Susie Clinard.

area, according to Nolan Crowley, Okmulgee's Main Street director. "Today, we have 95% occupancy, with a net gain of 85 new businesses and 155 new jobs -- we had no downtown and now we're thriving."

Clinard and the Oklahoma Main Street Program staff may be reached at (405) 841-5115.

Chandler Organization Forms to Save Historic Brick Streets

A new organization, called the Brick Booster's Club, has formed in Chandler in response to the threat to the city's historic brick streets. Their first organized event to raise awareness and preservation funds was a walking tour of the historic brick streets on November 19th, called "Hit the Bricks."

The club and educational/fund-raising events resulted from Chandler citizen meetings held to promote preservation and repairs to the city's remaining six blocks of brick streets.

Chandler was the site of a brick-making plant at the turn of the century. Many local buildings, as well as many across Oklahoma, are made of the local product, which was stamped "Chandler, O. T." For a short time after statehood, the plant produced bricks imprinted "Chandler, Okla." The early day bricks are the symbol of the new club. The streets, bricked in 1926, required virtually no maintenance until utility work caused areas to sink.

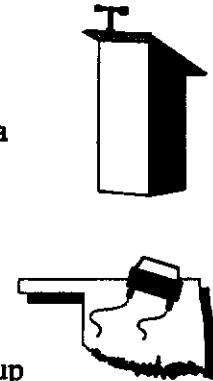
Club dues are \$2 per year, with monthly meetings planned to promote knowledge of Chandler's brick street history and to promote and assist the streets' maintenance and repairs. Interested individuals should contact club president Vivian Sage (405) 258-1502, or Sally Ferrell at (405) 258-1891.

Preservation Community Bulletin Board

NEED A SPEAKER FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING?

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., is here to chase away your public speaking blues. Our staff is eager to give presentations on historic preservation anywhere in the state. We can tailor the format to your needs, whether it be a rudimentary explanation of the background of historic preservation, or a treatment of some issue near and dear to your heart. And, you get a slide presentation on Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Properties, to boot! It's fun and educational.

All we ask in return is that you supply a carousel slide projector for the presentation and invest in a membership in Preservation Oklahoma. Round up the folks you know should be members, but who just haven't taken the plunge. To book an engagement, call (405) 232-5747.



Volunteer Opportunity for Educators:

Preservation Oklahoma is still working on a heritage education project in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office. As a first step toward education of public school students in the precepts of historic preservation, we will produce a curriculum guide to accompany the Oklahoma Historical Society's video "Oklahoma: a Past Preserved," as well as nine heritage readers to accompany the program. Interested persons with backgrounds in education, particularly those familiar with fourth grade and ninth grade materials, are encouraged to contact us for volunteer work associated with this project. Call Robert K. Erwin at (405) 232-5747.



Become a member of the statewide historic preservation network . . .

JOIN PRESERVATION OKLAHOMA!

Preservation Oklahoma's mission is to foster the preservation of historic buildings and sites in Oklahoma through advocacy, education, and technical and financial assistance within a statewide network. To join, complete the form below, indicating type of membership desired, and send with payment to: Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., P. O. Box 25043, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-004

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------------------|----------|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family: | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation: | \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Club: | \$1,000.00+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization: | \$45.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron: | \$250.00 | | |

Preservation Oklahoma News

Serving the Statewide Historic Preservation Community



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All correspondence, materials, or address changes should be sent to:

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 25043
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0043

Editors: **Robert K. Erwin**
Executive Director
Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
(405) 232-5747

Melvena Heisch
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Oklahoma Historical Society
(405) 522-4484

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 25043
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0043

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