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# WESTVIEW

A Journal of Western Oklahoma

1985

SUMMER

\$2.50

Special Issue

Western Oklahoma's  
Historic Resources

prepared by the Oklahoma  
Historical Society





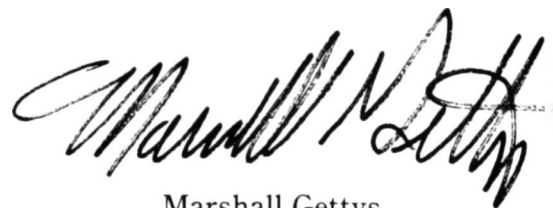
# FOREWORD

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**T**here are many ways a person, a culture, or a nation can relate to the past. One is through the preservation of physical remains belonging to that past. Most Americans are familiar with Mount Vernon, the White House, Mesa Verde, and the Little Bighorn; but relatively few are aware that there is an ongoing program to identify, preserve, and protect lesser known resources.

The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The register is a listing of properties that are significant at the local, state, or national level and which are recognized for such significance in history, archaeology, and architecture. The register serves a more important function than just recognition. Placement on the register serves as the keystone for federal tax benefits for the owners of listed commercial buildings. Listing also affords the property some protection from federally sponsored construction projects. Finally the designation makes a structure eligible for grants for rehabilitation (when money is available from the Department of the Interior).

This volume of WESTVIEW will focus on the properties in Western Oklahoma listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Not all of the properties so listed are included, but those that are represent every level of significance. From archaeological sites to the homes of past governors, and from a gold rush in the Wichitas to the beginnings of the wheat industry, the resources described present aspects of history that range from the little known to the well known. The diversity of sites clearly demonstrates the rich heritage of the region.



Marshall Gettys  
Guest Editor  
Historic Archaeologist  
Oklahoma Historical Society



# WESTVIEW

Weatherford, Oklahoma

Published by Southwestern Oklahoma State University

## Summer

*(a special issue done in cooperation with the Oklahoma Historical Society)*

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Volume 4      Western Oklahoma's Historic Resources      Number 4

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#### COVER

Illustration by: Bill Peavler — The Davison Silo, south of Arnett

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# The Pre-History Of Central And Western Oklahoma

*by Stanley Bussey*

**A**s late as the early 1920's, it was generally assumed that the American Indians had entered the continent about the time of Christ, perhaps replacing earlier immigrants from Egypt or Phoenicia. Some groups, the Apache for example, were believed to be relative latecomers to the scene, Mongol refugees from Genghiz Khan or one of his descendants. Ar-

chaeologists were gradually filling in the picture of human occupation of North America; however, there were few archaeologists, and they were hampered by the lack of good dating techniques.

In 1926, a geologist excavating the remains of extinct Pleistocene bison near Folsom, New Mexico, found stone spear points with the bison bones and suddenly quintupled the length of time humans were known to have been in the Americas. Later work pushed the earliest date of human occupation back even further, and some archaeologists feel we have not yet finished with this task.

This summary may give the impression that we know more about Oklahoma's prehistoric past than we really do. Of necessity it ignores the confusion and controversy that exist about most major aspects of the human past in Oklahoma. In fact, our task is like trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces missing—we think we know what the picture is, but we still don't know many of the details.

### THE PRE-PROJECTILE POINT HORIZON

There is good evidence for humans in North America 12,000 years ago and fair evidence for occupation as early as 14,000 years ago. Some archaeologists believe that human occupation in the Americas is much older, perhaps as much as 100,000 years. Evidence for these very early occupations is shaky, and most professional archaeologists are skeptical; but before the Folsom discoveries, the same thing could be said about the belief that humans lived here in the late Pleistocene.

The Pre-Projectile Point Horizon is a period created to include all of the very early evidence. No sites of this period have been identified in Oklahoma.

### PALEO-INDIAN PERIOD

This period, which began sometime between 12,000 and 10,000 years ago, includes the best documented early evidence of hunters in North America.

It includes many groups of hunters who lived around the end of the Pleistocene and hunted Ice Age animals before they became extinct. These animals included mammoth, several species of large bison, wild horses, and camels to name the most common. All of the groups of this period used assemblages of stone tools developed for killing and processing large game, although the animals emphasized vary through time.

While interpreting archeological data, archeologists rely heavily on distinctive artifacts that have a restricted distribution in time and space --the "diagnostic" artifacts. In the Paleo-Indian period, most of the diagnostic artifacts are flaked stone spear points. Other tools, which are not as distinctive, include flaked stone scrapers, choppers, and knives; bone awls and needles; and shell and stone beads.

Archaeologists divide the Paleo-Indian material of the Southwestern Plains into two complexes. The Llano complex, marked by Clovis and Folsom points, is earlier (roughly 10,000 B.C. -7,500 B.C.) and is found with the remains of extinct animals species. The Plano artifact complex, marked by such point types as Plainview, Midland, Eden, Scottsbluff, and Meserve/Dalton, is later and is found with mixtures of extinct and modern animals.

One characteristic of the period is that artifact types are spread over broad areas, suggesting the people followed herds across the plains and prairies without any particular territorial restrictions. In general, the Paleo-Indian way of life probably resembled that of the bison-hunting peoples the Spanish found on the Southwestern Plains in A.D. 1541.

Three National Register sites in Oklahoma date from this period. The Cedar Creek site in Washita County probably is the oldest. This site, exposed in creek banks, covers about 3,360 acres and includes hearths and other camp evidence as well as mammoth and bison bones. The other two

sites, the Johnson-Cline and the Shores archaeological sites, are in Texas County. These sites are camp areas in sand dunes and show long occupations. Beginning with the late Paleo-Indian Plainview and extending into the Plains Village period, both sites appear to have some stratification. Bat Cave, in Cimmaron County, may contain Paleo-Indian material.

### ARCHAIC PERIOD

During the entire Paleo-Indian period, the climate of the area had been gradually changing, becoming warmer and drier. For reasons not fully understood, many species of animals (elephants, camels, and several varieties of bison) became extinct in North America. Others (musk ox, some large bison, and perhaps horse) shifted north where they survived in smaller numbers. By the end of the Paleo-Indian period, the climate and the plants and animals of the area were essentially modern in character. The only major herd animals left were bison, and they tended to stay in the north during dry periods.

From about 6,000 B.C. to about A.D. 300, people of several local Archaic traditions roamed restricted territories in Central and Western Oklahoma, gradually becoming more efficient at exploiting the resources of their own areas. Artifact distributions reflect the smaller territories used by Archaic groups. Artifact types, especially spear points, are spread over much smaller areas than previously and the use of imported rock is much less common.

Hunting patterns changed from an emphasis on large herd animals (horse, camel, bison) to an emphasis on smaller, more solitary animals (deer, turkey, squirrel, racoon). Fishing was added to the inventory of skills, and vegetable foods became much more important than in the Paleo-Indian period.

Spear points of the Archaic tend to be large and crudely flaked. Most types have stems or tangs formed by side-or-corner notching or by indenting



the sides of the base. The tool inventory continues to include a variety of chipped knives, scrapers, drills and choppers. Grinding stones for processing seeds and other vegetable foods appear. Ground stone tools and ornaments gradually become more common.

About A.D. 300, pottery-making part-time farmers of the Woodland tradition began moving into the area along stream valleys. However, the Archaic tradition remained important in Central and Western Oklahoma for several centuries and probably continued to exist locally until the historic period.

Because of the complexity of Oklahoma's Archaic cultures, the lack of dense occupations, and the susceptibility of Archaic sites to damage by European farming methods, archaeologists have not made as much progress in defining local Archaic traditions as might be desired.

Both the Johnson-Cline and the Shores National Register sites have evidence of Archaic occupations. Bat Cave probably contains Archaic material. Other National Register sites with remains of this period include the Red Ghost Cave and Three Entrance Cave sites in Cimarron County, the three sites of the Gore Pit District in Comanche County, and the East-erwood site in Texas County.

### THE WOODLAND PERIOD

The Woodland tradition, the first farming tradition, was established in the Eastern United States by 1000 B.C. In many places, the Woodland tradition was a continuation of the local Archaic traditions, with the addition of pottery, burial mounds and other earthworks, and the use of some domesticated plants. Farming does not appear to have replaced the existing hunting and gathering economy, but to have supplemented it. A simplified version of the Woodland tradition reached Eastern Oklahoma about the time of Christ and had spread along drainages into Central Oklahoma by A.D. 300.

Artifacts of this period include plain and cord-marked pottery, stone pipes, arrow points (indicating the introduction of the bow), and shell and flaked stone hoes. This period is very poorly known in Central and Western Oklahoma. Because the domesticated plants grown by Woodland peoples--corn, squash, and sunflowers--should have provided a more stable food base than hunting and gathering alone, we would expect to find sedentary villages with Woodland artifacts, but no definite villages have been found.

Of the National Register sites, Woodland occupation is found only in the Three Entrance Cave District in Cimarron County.

### THE VILLAGE FARMING PERIOD

These cultures were more successful and more widespread than the earlier Woodland tradition. Although there were regional variations, they shared a number of general characteristics. These include the use of permanent houses in sedentary villages, the bow, pottery, ground stone axes, and hoes made of bison shoulder blades. Beans, an important protein supplement, appeared early in the period. There is some evidence of warfare, and some late villages are protected by stockades.

At least four distinctive local traditions--the Custer, the Washita River, the Henrietta, and the Panhandle--are found in Oklahoma, though the last two are more common in Texas. Villages tend to be on the heights above stream valleys, and farming probably was done in the valleys.

The Panhandle groups show some evidence of influence from the Puebloan Southwest, especially in the houses. Panhandle houses include both single and multiple room with sunken floors and foundations of vertical stone slabs. The other Plains Village cultures used single room square or rectangular houses with thatched roofs supported by four support posts and walls of branches and clay. Storage pits scattered around houses were common.

Of the four traditions identified so

far, the Washita River is the best known. Our knowledge of the others is marginal at best, and it is likely that some distinctive regional variants have not yet been identified.

It is probable that the origins of many of the historic Indian tribes of the Southern Plains are traceable to local variants of the village farming sites, but few definite conclusions have been reached at this time.

In the historic period, there was considerable cultural confusion in the area as new groups moved in and older groups began moving around. This process actually began late in the prehistoric period when northern groups, probably Plains Apaches, began moving down into the Panhandle from Colorado and Kansas. These peoples are represented archaeologically by the Antelope Creek cultures.

Of the Village Farming cultures, the Washita River and the Panhandle are best represented on the National Register. Washita River sites include the McLemore site in Washita County, the Jewett site in Grady County, and the Lamb-Miller and Goodwin-Baker sites, in Roger Mills County. Panhandle sites include the Nash II-Clawson site, the Two Sisters site, and the Stamper site in Texas County, the Sharps Creek Crossing or Roy Smith site in Beaver County. The Johnson-Cline and Shores sites in Texas County may also have Panhandle remains.

Four National Register sites--the Allee site in Roger Mills County, the Billy Rose and Lonker sites in Beaver County, and the Beagley-Stinson sites in Harper County--are of the general village farming tradition style but have not been identified by local variant.

### HISTORIC PERIOD

The historic period saw the end of the village farming tradition as well as the end of any Archaic remnants that might have survived in Western Oklahoma, but the changes occurred without European observers and were unrecorded. Many factors seem to

*continued on page 28*

# Historic Indian Sites Of Western Oklahoma

by Marshall Gettys

**T**here are numerous sites in Western Oklahoma related to known historic Indian tribes. Unlike the tribes of Eastern Oklahoma, most tribes in the western portion of the state had at least some familiarity with the area in which they were forced to settle. Some of the tribes in this portion of the state include the Fort Sill Apache, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Arapaho.

Some types of the sites related to these tribes and included on the National Register of Historic Places are battlefields, schools, graves of well-known and highly respected Indian leaders and the homes occupied by some of those leaders.

Possibly the best-known site in Western Oklahoma is that of the Battle of the Washita. This site, located in central Roger Mills County, was the scene of an engagement be-

tween the Seventh Cavalry of the United States Army, led by Colonel George Custer, and the Southern Cheyenne. Here 800 men of the Seventh Cavalry participated in the surprise attack on the Southern Cheyenne Village of Black Kettle, the noted peace leader of the Southern Cheyenne. Over 100 Cheyenne warriors were killed and 53 women and children were taken prisoner. This massacre was a tremendous psychological blow to the Indians. Until this time the Indians had relied on the winter for protection from the army. This same battle provided a psychological boost to the cavalry by proving that a successful winter campaign could be conducted.

Today the town of Cheyenne occupies part of the battle area; however, a small but significant portion of the battlefield is a state park. This area is situated along highway 47 west of

*This two-story house on the grounds of the Darlington Game Farm is constructed of adobe and covered with clapboard.*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SAKCHAI LAIVADHANA



Cheyenne in such a manner that most of the significant locales of the battle can be seen and a good sense of the battle obtained.

**S**everal residences of Indian leaders are still standing in Western Oklahoma. Perhaps the most famous of these is the "Star House" of Quanah Parker. The house is so named because of the stars painted on the roof.

Quanah Parker, the last Comanche leader to surrender to the United States, was the son of a captured white girl, Cynthia Ann Parker, and the Comanche Chief, Peta Nokoni. Quanah Parker was a noted war leader of the Comanche until he sensed the futility of resistance and surrendered in 1875. Although he ceased armed resistance, Parker continued as an important influence in the Comanche tribe. At various times he served with the Indian Police, as a judge on the Court of Indian Offenses and as a tribal delegate to Washington, D.C.

The Star House was constructed around 1890 by Quanah Parker to house himself and several of his wives. The house was a large one by the standards of the day and included between twelve and twenty-two rooms, depending on how they are counted. Eight of the rooms were bedrooms. According to tradition, all bedrooms for the wives were furnished alike to avoid complaints. Although Quanah Parker had eight wives in his life, there are documentary indications that he limited himself to five at any one time.

The name is derived from the stars painted on the roof of the house. Tradition holds that these stars were painted on the house to impress a general at Fort Sill and were related to the stars on the uniforms of generals of the army. Two stars were reportedly painted on the smokehouse and two on a summer house. Unfortunately neither of these structures has survived.

**A**nother very important residence is the only remaining Comanche chief's house. Located in Comanche County, near Elgin, this structure represents part of a program to reward those Comanche leaders who were friendly toward the United States government during Comanche Indian Wars of 1874-1875. Built as part of a program to pro-

vide houses for select Comanche chiefs, this house is the only one of 15 (2 stone and 13 picket logs) remaining.

Known historically as the Penateka House (the Comanche word for *honey eaters*, the name of the band whose headman was to occupy the house), this structure was built in 1877. This house was intended for the use of Tsee-aht-sinne-kah, then headman of the Penateka. Apparently the houses were not in continuous use by the leaders of the tribe and thus others used the structure, including Army scouts and other transients.

Built of stone, this structure is a "saddle bag" floor plan in which two adjacent rooms, each with a fireplace, share a common chimney. This structure consists of an 18 foot wide, 30 foot long stone residence with walls 14 inches thick. All of the materials used in the house were obtained locally, with limestone quarried from a nearby outcrop and mortar produced in a kiln built on the property.

**S**chools have also played an important role in the history of many of the tribes in the western portion of the state. One was the Seger Indian School. Established by John Seger, this school was part of a settlement that later became the town of Colony, Oklahoma.



*The Order of Eastern Star built Darlington Chapel when the boarding school for homeless children was in operation.*

This red brick structure, today on the property of the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribe, was built by Seger and his helpers with bricks and mortar manufactured on the grounds. Construction of the school building was supervised by Seger, who has been described as a "master of all trades." This would certainly apply to the construction of the school.

There is no indication that Seger ever employed any construction specialists in his building project, even though the project required such complex skills as building and operating a brick kiln, building and operating a lime kiln and, of course, the construction itself.

At one time, there were more than 1200 acres under cultivation and the colony was nearly independent. Although many of the original buildings have been destroyed, those that remain testify to the strong will of John Seger and his loyalty to the Arapaho.

The Fort Sill Indian School was established in 1871 to serve students of the Plains Indian tribes. Lawrie Tatum, a Quaker, was the first agent and came to the area in 1869. The first school building, a frame structure, burned in 1885. After being closed for a few years, the school reopened in a different location (today in Northeast Lawton). Some of these buildings were eventually placed on the National Register. At the time of occupation, the school was not located in the main part of Lawton, but it attracted its own commercial interests, including the well-known "Red Store," a nearby agency store.

Until its recent closing, the school served Indian students from the entire country but particularly the tribes of the South Plains. Alumni of the school have served with distinction in World War One, World War Two, Korea, and Viet Nam.

Building 309, the girls' dormitory, is the oldest remaining structure. Built in 1904, it was the first of several stone buildings to be constructed during this period. Unlike other buildings constructed at this time, this one had indoor plumbing and was wired for electricity. The basement contained the bath facilities, a playroom, and the boiler room. The first and second floors were dormitories and house-mothers' residences (one per floor); the attic was used only for storage.

Another important agency site is Darlington, which has served a variety of functions in the state, including that of Indian Agency, Children's Home, and State Game Farm. The structures on the site today represent all of these occupations.

Originally named "The Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency," the Darlington Agency was founded by Brinton Darlington, one of the first Quaker Indian agents appointed by President Grant. He served as the agent for only three years until his death in 1872 but was so respected by the tribes in his charge that the agency name was changed to honor him. In 1909, the services of the Darlington Agency were moved to Concho. Even at this late date the feeling was so strong concerning Darlington that a petition was filed by the tribes to have the name of Concho changed to Darlington.

Of particular interest here are two residences related to the agency period. These structures were both built in the 1870's and are of adobe construction, although they have been

covered with clapboards after construction. Both of these houses have been in continuous use from the time of their construction.

In 1910 the Agency was purchased by the Masons for use as a children's home and retirement home for Masons. The site served in this capacity until 1922 when the Masons moved to Guthrie. However, during the tenure of the Masons at Darlington, the order of Eastern Star erected a chapel that is also on the National Register. Also built during this period and listed on the National Register is a three-story dormitory constructed as part of the children's home complex.

Taken over by the state, the facility served as a drug rehabilitation center for three years and was then abandoned. Still property of the state, Darlington was taken over in 1932 by the Oklahoma Game and Fish Commission as a bird hatchery and research station. It continues in the same role today.

Although normally considered a military site, Cantonment was never formally named as a military post by the United States Army. Established in 1879, the post was in active use for only three years before it was abandoned in 1882. Today a single building, one of three built by the military, remains at the site. This structure, built of local stone and brick, was originally officers' quarters. It has also served as the Agency building for the Cheyenne-Arapaho and as part of two school complexes, an early one associated with the Mennonites and a later one operated by the Department of Interior. The officers' quarters were gutted by fire in the early 1960's, but restored in the 1970's by the owners, the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribes. With its location near the dam of Canton Reservoir, the site has been utilized as part of a recreation area by these tribes. Hopefully this will assure that the site will be preserved.



*The Penateka House near Elgin was constructed by the federal government for use by Comanche leaders.*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SAKCHAI LAIVADHANA

**A**lthough gravesites are not commonly placed on the National Register, some of special significance are so listed. One of the most important graves related to Native Americans is that of Black Beaver, the well-known scout. For 35 years, Black Beaver served the United States government as scout and interpreter. He spoke English, French, and Spanish as well as eight Indian languages.

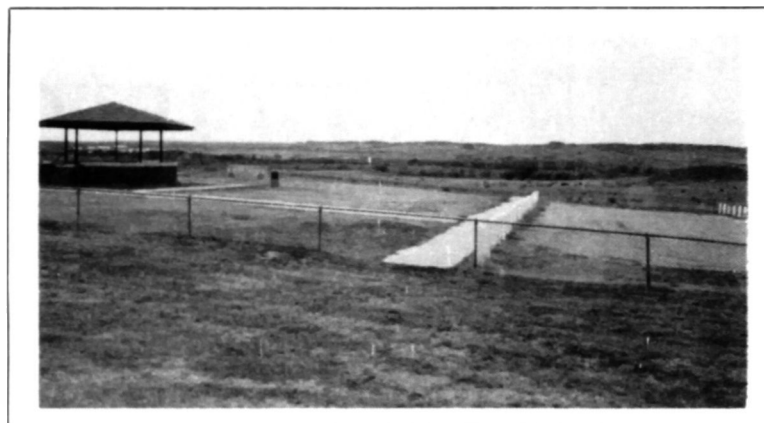


*This building, constructed by John Seger, with almost exclusively local materials, is one of the few that remain of Seger Colony Mission School.*

He served with Marcy, escorting gold-seekers to the West Coast, with Emory and the Union forces during the Civil War, and after the war with several Indian agents. All who served with him praised both his character and his intelligence. In the words of Israel G. Vore in 1879, "He served the United States under Generals Harney, Marcy, Belknap, Emory, Sacket and Standly and various other officers and Agents and Superintendents of Indian Affairs, as guide and interpreter--none of whom ever charged him with falsehood or a dishonorable act."

**I**n 1834, the famous artist George Catlin painted a Wichita village encamped at Devils Canyon in what is now Southwest Oklahoma. Although nothing remains at this site today, it is still important because it is one of the few occupation sites that can be positively related to the Wichita tribe, a tribe of great importance to the history of early Oklahoma. Although the site was not visited again until 1852, at which time it had been abandoned, the description of the extensive village and the related farmland in combination with the known occupation by this tribe make this an important site.

The sites described above do not constitute even a small fraction of the sites in Western Oklahoma important to native Americans. Many sites of great importance have not yet



*Today, this park provides a viewing area for the Washita Battlefield, one of the most significant sites related to Native American history.*

been researched and nominated to the National Register. Hopefully this brief review will serve to generate interest in placing additional sites on the register. The history of the American Indian is so interwoven with the broad sweep of our nation's past that the two cannot be separated. With the recognition and preservation of each Native American site, all Americans have another small bit of assurance that their history is preserved and its importance appreciated. **W**

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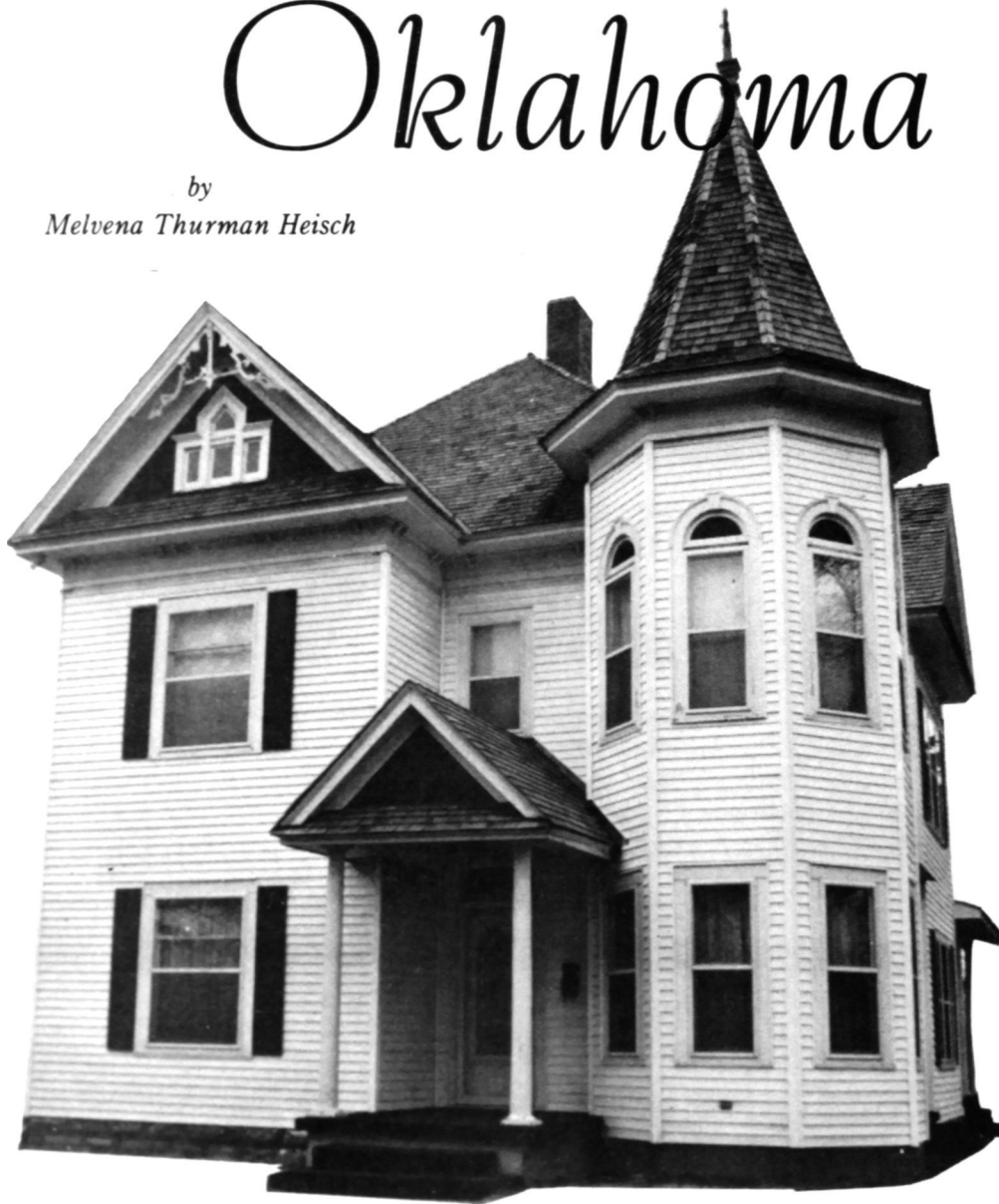
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# Historic Houses of Western Oklahoma

by  
Melvena Thurman Heisch



*The Wagoner House in Watonga is a fine example of the Victorian Queen Anne architectural style.*

Driving down a city street or along a country road in Western Oklahoma you will see houses that look like those in any other part of the state. But a closer look reveals many structures quite unique to the region. The cattlemen, sodbusters, and town builders who settled here brought ideas about what kind of house they wanted to build. Conditions, however, often dictated designs far different from the homes they had left behind.

Many of these houses are now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Some are associated with outstanding persons, while others are recognized for their architectural style. The variety ranges from the modest soddy to the elegant mansion.

Many of the early settlers in Western Oklahoma had only the materials available on their land for construction. It was often too far to a commercial center for purchase of conventional building materials, or perhaps more importantly, the settler could not afford to buy them. However, the prairie sod made an excellent substitute. Brush and poles cut from trees on the property served for the roof structure. The very fortunate home builder might be able to acquire glass for window panes.

Interior finishes were as crude as the exterior, but lace curtains or an elegant chest from another home often helped make the soddy more home-like.

Three sod structures in Western Oklahoma are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As the houses were intended for only temporary use, it is quite unusual to find any remaining intact. The Lane Cabin, Marshall McCulley's Sod House, and the Page Soddy all remain because of preservation measures (planned or inadvertent).

James Lane, a cowboy in "No Man's Land," built a sod building in an "L" shape for his home and trading post. It is located in Beaver City and was completed ca. 1880. Years later ad-

ditions were made to it. However, the original sod structure can still be detected. It was stuccoed, but now there is a distinct color difference giving away the position of the original sod building.

As Oklahoma was opened little by little to Euro-American settlement, thousands of newcomers found themselves on 160-acre tracts of land far from supply points and without much timber. Marshall McCully made the run on December 16, 1893 into the Cherokee Outlet and established claim to land near Cleo Springs. He constructed a sod house consisting of two rooms. The McCully family lived in the dwelling from 1894 until 1909 and then built a frame house, a pattern that was commonplace. The soddy was relegated to the status of a storage building. The locations of the new house and a large elm tree are probably responsible for protection of the McCulley soddy. In 1963 the property was transferred to the Oklahoma Historical Society. Some restoration work was done, and a metal protective structure was built over it. Today, the soddy is open to the public.

A most unusual sod house is located near Buffalo. In 1902 William Shaw



*The Ferguson Home in Watonga, the home of one of the Oklahoma Territorial Governors, today is a public museum.*

bought a relinquishment in the Cherokee Outlet. He constructed a sod house, but it had several departures from the typical design. It had a hipped roof covered with wood shingles. Both the interior and exterior walls were plastered. The plastering of the exterior walls at the time of construction accounts for the fact that it

did not significantly deteriorate over the years. Cap Page purchased the property in 1912. He and his family continued to use the soddy even after a frame house was built. It served as extra sleeping space, and in times of severe weather, it provided a storm shelter.

While the soddies were generally very crude in appearance and designed only as temporary shelters, the inhabitants made them as comfortable as possible. The interiors often had plastered or papered walls (using newspaper pages). Furnishings were sparse. But often a bed or chest was brought from the former home to help make the dark little earthen structure seem more like home. Packing boxes and scraps of wood were used to construct makeshift chairs, cabinets, and other pieces. Thick walls and only a few small windows made the interiors dark. Leaky roofs were almost always a problem, but the sod roofs did offer protection from the extreme temperatures of a Western Oklahoma summer or winter.

In August 1901, the Kiowa-Comanche lands were opened for settlement. Instead of the chaotic "run" a giant lottery was held to distribute



*The Mahoney-Clark House will serve non-profit organizations in Lawton when restoration is completed.*

the homesteads. The right to select the second piece of land was won by Mattie Beal, a young telephone operator from Wichita, Kansas. Demonstrating a real business sense, she selected 160 acres of land a quarter mile south of the boundary for the townsite of Lawton. She gained approval to auction off town lots prior to "proving up" her claim. She created the first subdivision for the city. During the early years in Lawton she lived in a two-room frame house. By statehood, she and her husband, Charles Warren Payne, could well afford a substantial house. At 5th Street and Smith Avenue, they had their Colonial Revival style home constructed. The fourteen-room mansion was one of the most elegant homes of Western Oklahoma. Today it is owned by the Lawton Heritage Association and is a house museum.

After the Civil War ended, the range cattle industry boomed on the Great Plains. Large herds of Texas cattle were driven across Indian Territory to railroad connections in Kansas. As homesteaders began drifting onto the Plains and establishing claims to choice pieces of land, the open range dwindled. Thus Indian Territory attracted the attention of



*The Mattie Beal House entryway is one of the most impressive in Southwestern Oklahoma.*

the large cattle ranchers. Investment groups operated enormous stock raising efforts with capital from the Eastern United States as well as foreign countries. During the 1880's Indian Territory was the scene of a very lucrative cattle industry.

It is difficult to find many intact structures associated with this exciting

chapter of present-day Oklahoma's history. Houses were built for the ranchers and the cowboys, but most of them have long since vanished altogether or been so altered that their historic appearance is gone. A few, however, do remain. Two excellent examples are the CCC Ranch House in the Oklahoma Panhandle and the Cronkite Ranch House situated in Western Blaine County.

In the Oklahoma Panhandle the familiar names of Anchor D. Hitch and CCC all bring to mind images of the cattle industry.

The CCC Ranch Headquarters, including the ranch house and a bunkhouse, is listed in the National Register. The house itself was constructed ca. 1880. It is a modest one-story affair built of a smooth white native stone laid in a running bond pattern. The house faces east toward the Beaver River. It is in almost original condition and is one of the finest remaining symbols of the once flourishing open-range era.

Another historic ranch house still in fine condition is that of William Cronkite. He established his stock-raising enterprise in what is today Western Blaine County. As did many



*The Ferguson House is constructed of small granite cobblestones, a common building material in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.*



ranchers, when the area was opened to settlement, Cronkite claimed a 160-acre tract of land. Then later he expanded his range by leasing Indian allotments. Much of the land in this part of the territory was unsuited for cultivation and had been selected as the allotments for the Indian tribes. Thus larger ranches developed. Cronkite constructed his unusual house in 1906. North of his headquarters is one of the best-known deposits of gypsum. A part of the Cronkite business included the quarry of the mineral. Materials from this operation were used to make the building blocks for the two-story ranch house. Another house built of this unusual material has been identified in Watonga. The historical association with William Cronkite and the construction method used for his house both make this a very significant structure.

Two other ranch houses located in Southwestern Oklahoma are also of architectural significance. Both houses are now within the boundaries of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Ben Ferguson, in 1927, and Earl Ingram, in 1928, built houses on their small ranches. During this period, many kinds of structures were built

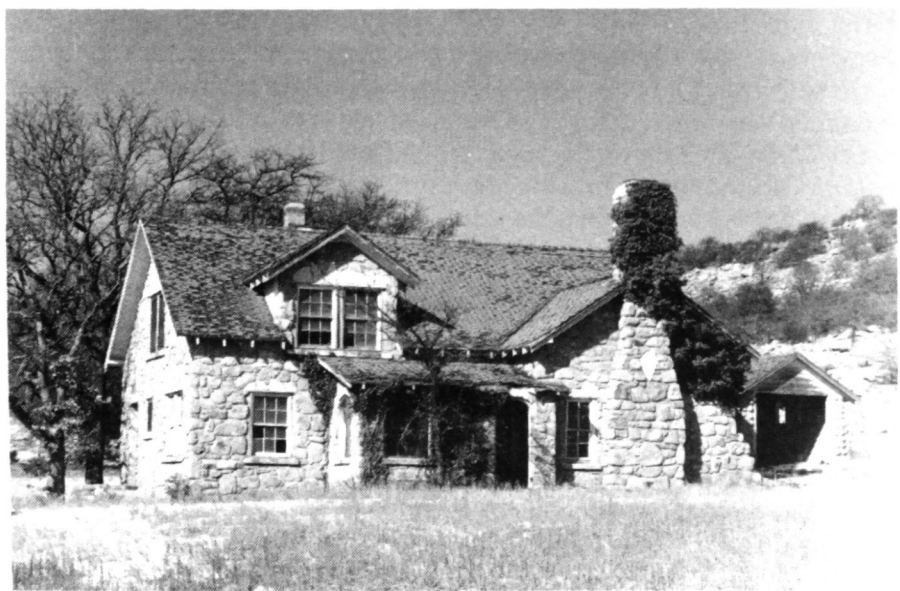


*The Patrick Hurley House is today the residence of Fort Sill's Commanding General.*

with the abundantly available granite. The Ingram House, sometimes referred to as the "Enchanted Cottage," was constructed of granite slabs on the north, south, and west elevations. The east elevation and main facade were built of cobblestones. Found in a wide range of sizes, the stones are round and smooth. Their use resulted

in a very distinctive appearance. Ferguson also used cobblestones. His house has all exterior walls built of the material, as well as a workshop garage adjacent to it. Today, the Fish and Wildlife Department owns the unique structures.

Homes of historically important government officials are found across Oklahoma. Three of these found in Western Oklahoma are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. One of the most architecturally unique is that of Abraham J. Seay, second territorial governor of Oklahoma Territory. Seay was a justice of the territorial Supreme Court, and in 1892 he was appointed to the gubernatorial post. Almost immediately he began construction of the large brick home in Kingfisher. Hopes of Kingfisher citizens were once again raised that by some chance their community might actually become the territorial capital. Of course this was not to be. Seay served in the position of territorial governor for only one year, but his home remains as one of the most impressive in Kingfisher. It was considered quite elegant, complete with a third-floor ballroom. The most interesting feature is the three-stories-



*The Ingram House is one of several old ranch houses in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County.*

tall domed tower on the northeast corner of the structure. It served as a library and retreat for Seay.

Another home of a territorial governor is located in Watonga, Blaine County. Thompson Benton Ferguson made the "Run of '89" and then later moved to the newly opened Cheyenne and Arapaho lands to establish a newspaper. He and his wife operated the WATONGA REPUBLICAN. In 1901 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Ferguson the sixth governor of Oklahoma Territory. He served in that capacity until early 1906. In 1901 Ferguson began construction of a three-story frame structure demonstrating elements of the later Victorian period. Both the Ferguson House and the Seay Mansion are property of the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation and are operated as house museums.

Yet another of these important residences, the Hurley House, is found at Fort Sill. Just to the northwest of what is called the Old Post, construction began in 1909 on the "New Post" area. The Hurley House is an impressive residence in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It contains over 6,900 square feet and is constructed of reinforced concrete. The exterior walls are stuccoed, and it has a tile roof. Some modifications have been made, but the building still retains its basic original exterior appearance. The quarters has housed numerous U.S. Army dignitaries. But, the most famous person to live in the structure was Patrick J. Hurley. He served as Secretary of War during the Hoover administration. Hurley visited Fort Sill in this capacity and designated it as the U.S. Army's Field Artillery School for Hoover. The Hurley House continues to serve as the residence of the post commander.

We sometimes tend to consider houses as significant only when they are large, elegant homes of well-known persons. Two small cottages have been found in Western Oklahoma that fit into the category of seemingly modest and insignificant. Each is

associated with a person who contributed greatly to the history of our state. The home of Isabel Crawford, a missionary, and the home of Lee Dorrah, a pioneer doctor, are listed in the National Register.

One of the first women missionaries to the Kiowa Indians in Oklahoma was Isabel Crawford. The daughter of Irish parents who had come to live in Canada, Isabel was educated at the American Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago. Upon graduation in 1893, she came to Indian Territory to run the Saddle Mountain Mission (near present-day Hobart). She served in this way until 1906. At that time she continued to work for the American Baptist Home Mission Society through writing and other organizational activities. Today, the modest plains cottage constructed in 1906 remains as the only known structure associated with Isabel Crawford. She purchased it from her brother in 1916 and owned it until 1941. Many similar houses were once seen all across Western Oklahoma. Because they were quite modest and their significance seldom recognized, most have deteriorated, were altered, or were totally destroyed. The Crawford House, after a careful rehabilitation, retains its historic exterior appearance.

Somewhat larger than the Crawford House, the Dorrah-Trent House located in Hammon was constructed in 1909. Dr. Lee Dorrah came to the small Western Oklahoma community in that year and served the Red Moon Indian Agency as a physician. From that time on he became a strong supporter of the rights of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people. Because of ill health, Dr. Dorrah retired to Southern California in 1925. Today his home can still be seen. It is owned and maintained by the City of Hammon and houses a museum.

The first third of the twentieth century saw tremendous growth in Western Oklahoma, a growth which included the construction of many homes. Several of these were listed in the National Register because they

are a very significant part of the region's architectural history.

Elements of the Victorian and Queen Anne styles were popular for residential structures during this period. A good example of the application of these decorative features is found in the J. H. Wagner House in Watonga. Wagner came to the Cheyenne and Arapaho country just as it opened and established a merchantile in a tent in Watonga. In 1903, having married and become quite successful, he had his elegant three-story home built on North Prouty. Queen Anne influences are very much present. One of the outstanding features is a two-story, eight-sided tower at the northeast corner of the structure. The house has four gables in the roof and a total of fifty-two windows. Efforts to preserve this unique Watonga home have done much to increase public awareness of the importance of such structures in the community.

Constructed in 1904, the Montgomery-Liman house (home of a local successful merchant) is one of the most impressive in Marlow (Stephens County). Purchased in the 1970's by the Limans, the style of the house is clearly eclectic borrowing from several styles including Victorian, Queen Anne, Western Stick, and Prairie styles.

One of the most unusual residential structures in Lawton is the Mahoney-Clark House located on West Gore Avenue. Architect Guy Dale designed this Spanish Colonial Revival style structure, and the builder was Walter Spitler. The house was constructed in 1909 and was originally designed as a duplex. Only a few years ago the house was a target for demolition. However, the concern of several citizen groups for this unusual building has resulted in its preservation. In cooperation with the Clark family, restoration efforts by the Lawton Heritage Association are underway.

Yet another architecturally significant house constructed in 1911 is found in Buffalo, Harper County. About the time of statehood there was

great concern for building fire-proof commercial and residential structures in that community. The Appletown House, built by a local stone mason, H. A. Monhollon, was constructed of pressed concrete blocks (artificial stone). It is one of the few remaining structures built of this material during the period. It is also well preserved and illustrates the outstanding workmanship of Monhollon.

Unique design is found also in the house of John David Laney and his family, early settlers in present-day Tillman County. After living in a variety of structures, Laney had his one-story farmhouse constructed. It is a folk architecture adaptation of the bungalow style, and it is one of the most unusual houses found in Southwestern Oklahoma. Several kinds of native stone, including granite, were used in the construction. One of the most interesting features is that in each of the gables appears a letter.

The letters spell out "L" "A" "N" "E" "Y". Also, a four-foot-high fence built of stone is found on the property. The structure is truly a personal expression.

Still another architecturally significant house of Western Oklahoma is the Storm House on West Broadway in Elk City, Beckham County. Architect P. A. Engwall designed the house in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Builder G. E. Martin completed construction of the house in 1930. The structure possesses many of the features characteristic of the architectural style so popular in the period 1915-1945. It has a tile roof and stuccoed exterior walls, for example. A most unusual oriel window (an ornamental bay window located above the first floor level) gives this two-story house a ship-like appearance.

In summary, Western Oklahoma is rich with a variety of residential structures. Design of these significant buildings ranges from the humble sod

house to elaborately decorated two- and three-story, masonry construction houses. Some reflect traditional ideas of design, while others are one-of-a-kind dwellings. We all are curious about older houses as we pass through a community or along a country road. One of the most popular places for tourists to visit is a historic house.

They are of value because they were once associated with persons important in our past or because of their design. Whatever the reason for the identification of certain structures as worthy of preservation, they do represent an irreplaceable historic resource. They tell the story of those who have shaped our history more than almost any other structure or building can. It is essential that such houses as those discussed above be treated sensitively and retained for future generations. ❧

# Security State Bank

## CHEYENNE, OKLAHOMA

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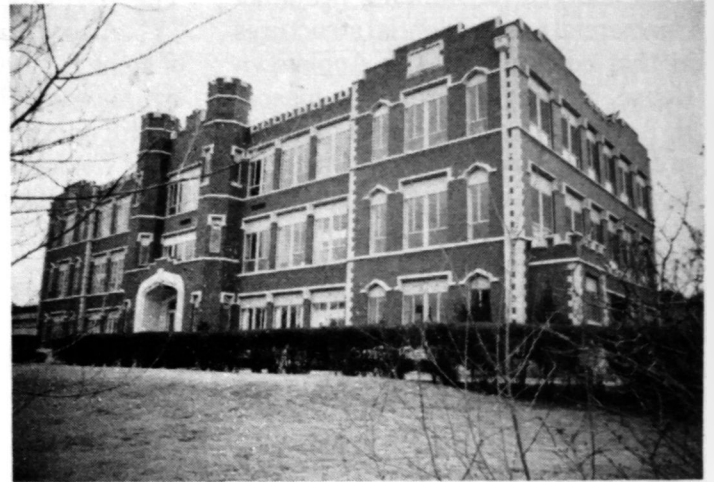
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*"Growing By Helping Others Grow"*



*The Lawton Carnegie Library*



*The Science and Art Building at Northwestern Oklahoma State University*

# SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND OF WESTERN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SAKCHAI LAIVADHANA

In most early Oklahoma towns the progress of the community could be tracked by the appearance of certain symbols--store, bank, standard streets, the election officials, and commencement of public services. However, independent of these efforts there would also appear other key elements of the growth of the town. These are the churches, fraternal, and educational buildings created by and for the town's citizens.

Often one or more of these are the first permanent buildings within the town. Their presence sometimes even acted as anchors for the continuing development of the town. Sometimes too, they are the last recognizable remnants of a town effort, marking the location of dreams spent.

These types of buildings reflect the basic hopes and needs of the people establishing the towns. The churches and fraternal lodges provided the spiritual and social needs of the settlers; the educational facilities

reflected the hope of success for the generations to come.

Due to their capacity and location, these buildings often served for activities beyond their expected purpose when built. Whether for public meetings to discuss matters of community importance, as shelter for the unexpected, but all too frequent emergencies, or as to host events connected with those happier times of celebration and party, these facilities might often provide the only suitable shelter.

Because of their effect upon the day-to-day and long-term development of the towns in which they are located, some of these buildings have been recognized as being historically significant and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

One of the most readily recognized sources of a beginning community's strength is its churches. Usually the first and sometimes the only long-term and permanent building within new areas of

settlement, churches often became the focal points of much civic action and development within a community.

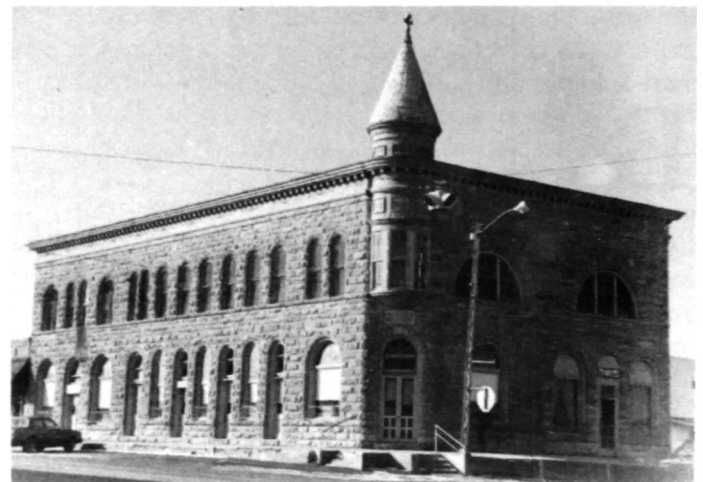
The First Presbyterian Church of Beaver, the Menneville Mennonite Church and the Walters First United Methodist Church are good examples of the role played by churches in the establishment and growth of early communities.

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN** Church of Beaver was built by its congregation in 1887 under the direction of Reverend R. M. Overstreet. The construction was financed both by local donations and with aid from the church's missionary board in New York City. Materials used were wagon freighted from across "No Man's Land," by Frank Laughlin from Dodge City, Kansas and took four days over the then roadless countryside. Today the appearance of the ninety-seven-year-old wooden building is much the same as when the original construction was com-





*Czech Hall in Canadian County*



*The Apache State Bank building*

# EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS OKLAHOMA

*by John R. Hill*

pleted. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

**ANOTHER WOODEN CHURCH** building that reflects the development of early churches in the state is the Menneville Mennonite Church. Dedicated on Christmas Day 1894, some three years after the congregation formed, the ninety-year church is perhaps the oldest such building related to the Mennonite faith in Oklahoma.

The Mennonites who formed this church were a part of the missionary efforts at Darlington, which was the first such work among the Plains tribes of Western Oklahoma. The families were of Swiss, German, and German-Russian origin and occupied land in the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands after opening in April, 1892. The church remained in service until 1959, when the membership had grown so few in number that the church was disbanded. The building

was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

**THE CONGREGATION OF** the Walters First United Methodist Church formed in 1902 and constructed its first church upon the site of the present building which was built in 1917. Reverend B. M. Nelson oversaw the construction of this brick structure. The church exhibits major elements of the Romanesque Revival style in its archivolt windows, octagonal central dome, and gabled roof. The building is a well-known landmark in the central part of the Cotton County seat. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

**A**mong those early settlers in the area of what became Oklahoma were many who had been members of social and fraternal organizations previously. Others, who were members of the many ethnic groups coming to the state, found such organizations to be one method of sustaining their ethnic

traditions.

**CZECH HALL, HOME OF THE** Jan Zizka Lodge No. 67 of the Zapadni Caske-Bratske Jadnety, set near the earlier site of "Bohemian Hall" was commonly called by this name until the 1940's when it became better known as Czech Hall. The Z.C.B.J. is a fraternal and self-help organization established in the 1890's with this particular lodge being chartered in 1899.

The present wood frame meeting house was built in 1925 and is located about two miles south of Yukon. The building has had additions through the years as need arose for more meeting and recreational space. The Hall has served many activities such as gymnastics, plays, and weekly dances which it still hosts.

Today Czech Hall is a viable link for the descendants of the territorial period, Czech-Bohemian immigrants. It serves as a focal point for the preservation of those traditions and

customs of this ethnic group while at the same time exposing these unique aspects to other segments of the state's population.

**B**uildings constructed by the International Order of Odd Fellows generally follow a multi-use type of design which benefited the organization in several ways. Typically, the upper floor is designed as a meeting hall for the membership while the lower floor is for commercial rental to businesses. This provides an ongoing source of income for the social organization as well as the protection of the building being occupied on a daily basis.

The I.O.O.F. buildings in Cherokee, Aline, Carmen, and Buffalo, though built over a period of time ranging from 1902 to 1931, all followed this basic design plan.

**THE BUFFALO I.O.O.F. BUILT** in 1917 has housed a newspaper office since its construction and continues this long-term association today as it is now occupied by the HARPER COUNTY JOURNAL, one of only two newspapers in the county.

One of the few remaining masonry structures in Buffalo (once known as "stone city" due to its strict fire-prevention ordinances), it exhibits the characteristics of a style common to rural Oklahoma known as "plains commercial." This style has a wide range of appearances in buildings but is identified by clean, straight lines, devoid of large scale decorative features, and usually two-story brick buildings.

This particular building served in many instances as a meeting hall and social gathering place for the county and is perhaps the most significant landmark in the town. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

**AMONG THE THREE I.O.O.F.** buildings in Alfalfa County, the Cherokee Lodge is the newest, built in 1931. The L-shaped, plains commercial structure sits on one of the first two business lots sold in Cherokee. The building is rather unique as part of the commercial space was specifically designed to accommodate and is still

used as a mortuary. The remainder of the commercial space has been used for a cafe, legal offices, and currently for insurance and real estate sales. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

**THE I.O.O.F. BUILDING IN** Aline is the second I.O.O.F. building constructed in this town. Built in 1930, it is located across the street from the site of the first building. The street-level storefront features three recessed entrances but is also typical of the plains commercial style. As with the Cherokee lodge building, the I.O.O.F. chapter has disbanded; the building is no longer used for meetings. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

**THE CARMEN LODGE IS THE** last I.O.O.F. chapter active in Alfalfa County and since it was constructed in 1902, it is also the oldest. This building is yet another variation of the Plains Commercial style. Carmen is also the location of the I.O.O.F. which served as a home for orphaned children until WWII. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

**A**n important aspect reflecting the continuing development of a community is the public educational buildings constructed. This development in Western Oklahoma is represented by three National Register buildings located on the Central State, Southwestern, and Northwestern University campuses.

**THE FIRST OF THESE THREE,** Old North Tower in Edmond, is the first building erected for publically supported, higher education in Oklahoma Territory, being the oldest such building in the state. Started in the summer of 1892, the building seated its first classes on January 2, 1893.

Originally designated as the Territorial Normal School, Old North served as the location of the first teacher-training classes to help meet the needs of growing territorial and later state populations. Still in active use today, the building was one of the first Oklahoma buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places

being so designated in 1971.

**THE SCIENCE HALL ON THE** Northwestern State University campus at Alva, is a design of the noted architect Solomon Andrew Layton, and was completed in 1907. The Jacobethian style building is the oldest building on the Northwestern campus, which was the second normal institution designated by the Territorial legislature.

This building, which is one of Layton's early works, contained a library, gymnasium, and a lecture hall with a capacity of three hundred. The building has served a variety of functions of various departments and for a short time after the loss of the administration building in the 1930's quartered that division. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

**ANOTHER BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE** of the initial creation and development of higher education in Oklahoma is the Science Building at Southwestern State University in Weatherford. The three-story, brick building, though designated as the Science Building, provided classroom space to some sixteen other departments of the school when completed in 1909.

The Science Building features large, Ionic style columns on the front elevation supporting a balcony and triangular pediment with a classic detailing and design. The building, the second building constructed on the campus, is the oldest as the original Administration Building was lost to fire in 1941. This building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

**O**ne building that might be found within a town marking that served as a gauge of not only community progress, but also became an indicator of local pride and civic spirit was the public library. If the town happened to be the county seat, chances were that the library might be a building constructed with the aid of an Andrew Carnegie Foundation Library grant. The El Reno, Hobart, and Lawton Carnegie Libraries

are examples of this type of building which are on the National Register of Historic Places.

**FINISHED IN 1905, THE EL** Reno Library was only the fourth Carnegie-sponsored building authorized in what was to become Oklahoma. The design of the library was somewhat unusual as there was a second-story auditorium. This area was found useful for a number of public functions such as the high-school graduations until other facilities were constructed to accommodate these activities.

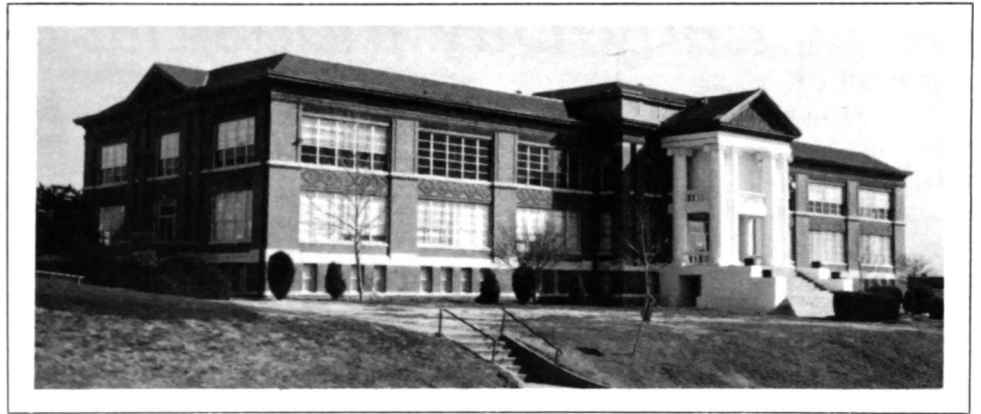
With interior changes, updating of equipment, and the addition of an archives building, the El Reno Carnegie Library continues to serve the city's population, the oldest Carnegie Library to still be a functioning facility. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**THE HOBART CARNEGIE** Library was opened in September, 1912; it was constructed with some 10,000.00 dollars from the Carnegie Foundation. The final creation of the library in Hobart was actually the result of a long-term desire on the part of the citizens of Hobart. This effort dated back to September, 1901, one month after the first sale of town lots, with creation of a public reading room featuring newspapers, periodicals, and books.

Though the brick building is small, having one floor and a basement area, its design allows the maximum use of interior space. The front facade features a projected entry and the primary decorative elements to be observed in the building. The three remaining exterior walls possess simple windows set high up in the wall to allow uninterrupted wall areas to allow the placement of book shelves.

The basement area of the building initially served as a meeting area and space for community activities such as the Yamparika Club. As needs increased, however, the basement was designated and used as the Junior Library. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**WESTVIEW, Summer 1985**



*The Old Science Building at Weatherford is associated with early efforts to eliminate a teacher shortage in the early 1900's.*

**LAWTON'S CARNEGIE LI-**brary is the last building to be built in Oklahoma with the sponsorship of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation. Its construction represented a twenty-year effort on the part of interested citizens to bring a library to the town.

The first letter of interest was submitted to Mr. Carnegie in August, 1902, by an interested individual; the first city authorized request for assistance came in 1910. When a vote was held to approve a grant of \$20,000 from the Carnegie Foundation, the support for the project was not resounding, succeeding by only fifty-five votes.

Because of this and the poor record of the other libraries funded in the state, the Carnegie Foundation was somewhat reticent to act. However, in March of 1916, the appropriate papers were forwarded to the Carnegie officials and the funds were committed to the planned Lawton building.

Though another town election was held in April of 1917 that provided the needed majority to accept the committed funds, the United States entry into World War I again delayed beginning of actual construction. The final acceptance was fortunate as the offering of new grants was ended in November of 1917, and only those committed and accepted before that date were honored.

Construction on the building was finally begun in late 1920, and the Lawton Carnegie Library was dedicated on June 22, 1922, its service continuing until 1973. The building

was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

**A**nother and perhaps seemingly unrelated building that serves as an example of community development as expressed by civic spirit is a small structure located adjacent to the railroad tracks in El Reno. This is the Red Cross Canteen.

El Reno's Red Cross Canteen is a unique structure both historically and structurally being recognized as the nation's first such facility to be introduced. The idea of such a facility was originated by a local bridge club known as the "TBA" early in 1918 to provide relief and assistance to the multitude of soldiers passing through the town on trains during WWI.

Built of donated telegraph poles by Rock Island railroad employee volunteers in 1918, the building had a log cabin appearance and was set on the railroad right of way.

Following the end of its use after World War I, the building was moved from its first site and placed in a city park. However, it was repaired and rededicated near its original site as a Bicentennial project and is now a part of the Canadian County Society Museum complex. The building is used as a center depicting the efforts of the Red Cross Canteen during the first and second world wars. Despite having been moved, this building possessed exceptional historical significance and so still qualified for the National Register of Historic Places. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. ❧

# Early-Day Industrial and Commercial Properties

by Bill Peavler

By the time of statehood there were many structures of industry and commerce within the boundaries of Oklahoma. As early as the 1620's, Spaniards in Southwest Oklahoma could have been using arrastras to process gold ore in the Wichita Mountains. However, it was in the late 1800's and early 1900's that settlers labored in Oklahoma's west to wrest a livelihood with their hands and ingenuity.

The structures discussed in this article were built to fulfill specific needs. Utilizing local materials and available expertise, the structures as finally completed were often statements of their simple functional origin. Some, however, not only fulfilled these functional requirements but also illustrated the innovative minds that produced them. It is intriguing to consider the mental gymnastics of a trail driver hoping to extract salt with sheet steel vats shipped from Kansas City and hauled from Kingfisher over the roadless prairie to Salt Creek. Or, how many reasons could there be for building a Silo with fourteen sides? This narrative will discuss the following types of industrial and commercial properties: early-day mills, grain elevators, dams and irrigation ditches, a blacksmith shop, mineral related sites, a store building, and the wood frame silo with fourteen sides.

## *MILLS — FLOUR FOR FAMILY AND NATION*

At the time of statehood, Oklahoma had 77 mills producing flour and corn meal, but by 1940 the number had dwindled to 32. Only a handful remain of what was a vigorous industry and a business which almost every county seat could claim as a viable part of the community. In the first third of the twentieth century, most Oklahoma towns could boast of their own mill, particularly if the town was situated in Western Oklahoma.





The Whited grist mill is located in Elk City. For many years a ruinous structure, it has been in part rehabilitated and continues as a project of local preservationists. A modest building since its beginning, it has served the community for 40 years, expanding only when necessary. Construction started in 1903 and when completed the mill consisted of a mill room with two small lean-tos. The first lean-to was used as shelling space and the other protected the scales. The mill room held, in addition to the mill, a corn crib, a cob bin, and a fanning device which removed soil and chaff from the kernels before grinding. Grinding stones were originally imported from France and most of the machinery bears the date 1971. In time a third addition was built to house a Hammermill. In 1928, additional milling equipment was located in the final addition.

The Whited Grist Mill closed in 1944. When restoration was begun in 1974, floors had rotted and machinery had fallen to the ground. Recently the roof has been replaced, rotted floors and supports have been removed and rebuilt, and most of the machinery has been reinstalled. A local mechanic is now recreating a kerosene engine to match the original which powered the milling works.

The Seiling Milling Company had its beginnings when a group of local farmers, merchants, and bankers approached Fred Sanders in 1917 about a much-needed milling operation. Mr. Sanders agreed with the need and purchased a "Midget Marvel" coal-powered steam flour mill, built a two-story wood frame building to house the mill and began milling locally produced wheat into "White Rose" flour. He also had an agreement to distribute flour to Cheyenne and

Arapaho tribes in the area.

Construction by the Seiling Milling Company began in 1917 with completion a year later. A more elaborate operation than the Whited Grist Mill, the Seiling Mill contained two stories and a basement. Grain storage occupied the second floor while milling and marketing utilized space on the ground floor. The rooms necessary to complete the milling process were in the basement. In 1923, a two-story engine room with concrete cooling tank was built. Millmen responsible for starting the generator at 4:00 a.m. used the second floor as a sleeping room. The woodframe elevator section built in the early 1930's, had five storage bins of 1500 bushels each. A feed room was built in 1934 with another addition with workshop constructed after that. In 1937, a 50,000 bushel grain storage was added to the mill complex.

A change in appearance occurred in the early 1930's when the original mill room and engine space were stuccoed over existing wood siding. Metal siding was applied to the elevator section and grain storage tank, but the scale room described above remained red brick, single story and adjacent to the truck scale.

For many years the Mill's surroundings were primarily prairie and farm land. But today, because of

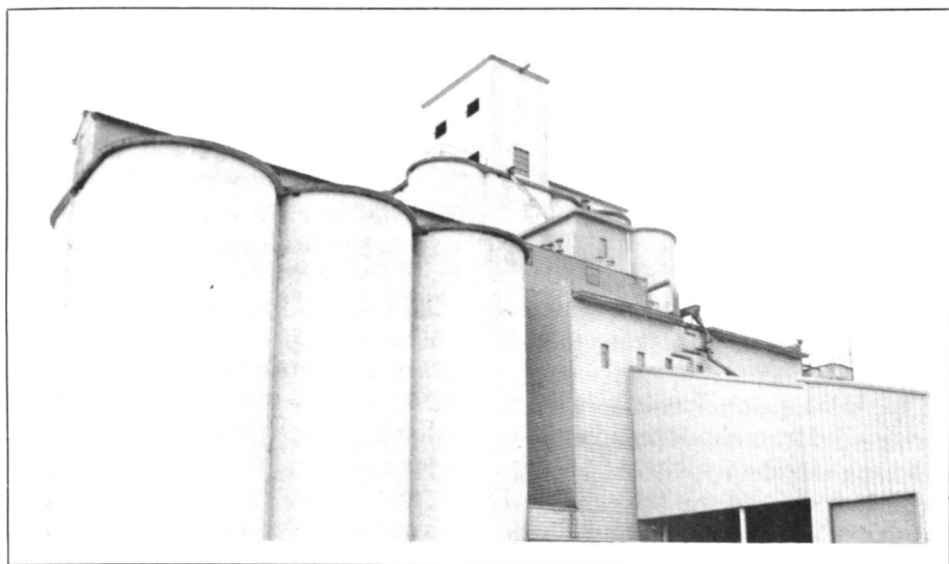
expanding residential needs, the mill is located inside the city limits near bungalows and mobile homes.

During the depression years, flour was a staple ingredient in the diet of farmers and small-town residents. It was at this time the mill ran 24 hours a day, supplying a critical service to area residents. A Sanders relative stated, "A lot of people might have gone hungry if we hadn't milled their wheat into flour. If someone ever complained about the flour, I'd bake a batch of really good bread from their flour and take it to them."

By 1940 the Mill was producing 50 barrels of flour a day: A special coarse grind of flour called "White Rose Special," the regular "White Rose" flour and a whole wheat flour. The mill was closed in 1952 when changing markets dictated larger milling operations and small quantities packaged flour. Increasing taxes which forced many small operators out of business also affected the existence of the Seiling Milling Company. Today, the mill works, equipment, and buildings remain completely intact and recall milling technology between 1917 to 1952.

The year the Okeene Mill was founded, 1901, marked the arrival of two railroad lines in that Oklahoma town, the Rock Island and Frisco. A

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SAKCHAI LAIVADHANA



*Opposite: The tall, central structure with two windows is a portion of the original mill still visible.*

*Right: A row of small windows indicates a side of the original mill at the Okeene Milling Company.*

typical small-town business to begin with, the mill grew rapidly as the railroad's presence contributed to the growth of the town of Okeene.

Concluding the first 25 years of operation, the mill remained at 100-barrel capability, with a storing capacity of 16,000 bushels of wheat in four bins. Early records indicate many farmers brought their grain to the mill for processing, taking flour and milling by-products (bran, shorts, meal, chops, etc.) back to the farm for home consumption. For the first 50 years, the Okeene Mill was concerned with only the production of family-oriented products. Today, none of these items are produced. With a capacity of 1,550 barrels and grain storage of 700,000 bushels, the Okeene Mill caters to the bulk-flour trade.

Survival of Okeene milling has depended upon innovative approaches to the industry. As has agriculture, the milling business has undergone almost revolutionary changes since World War I. For example, in 1926 Okeene Flour was turning out family flour in 12, 24, and 48-pound bags for sale in nearby retail outlets. By the mid-1930's, Okeene Mill claimed a first by making statewide deliveries with a fleet of 16 trucks. The mill was among the first to market its product in printed cloth bags that allowed frugal housewives to convert the empty bags into children's clothing, curtains, and household items. In the promotional field, Okeene Mill was a leader with its merchants "Biscuit Day" and the well-known "Okeene Pancake Supper" which was used to raise funds for churches, schools and civic organizations. Conveyor belts and cups used to move grain and mill products were discontinued in the 1950's in favor of a pneumatic system, one of the first to be installed in the southwest.

The mill, which was basically a 3-story wood frame building adjoining an 1-story warehouse with a flanking loading dock and detached office structure, has disappeared with modernization. The core, however, con-

tinues to be productive and is incorporated within the greatly expanded present-day plant. With its highly visible location, identified by the imposing mass of concrete elevators, the Okeene Mill illustrates that through ingenuity and perseverance a small business can survive in the face of bigness, standardization, and faceless cost-conscious efficiency.

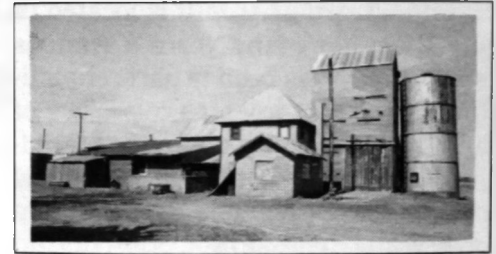
#### GRAIN ELEVATORS — THE SENTINELS OF THE PLAINS

Traveling through wheat country and in the vicinity of these specialized buildings, it is simple to understand their domination of the landscape. As a special visual reference in the endlessness of the horizon, communities and small towns such as Knowles, Turpin and Hooker can usually be pin-pointed by the silhouette of their grain elevator against the sky.

The most common type of grain elevator construction was wood frame with a square plan. Sheathing of the frame was flat or corrugated sheet metal, the whole structure being stabilized from the great internal pressures and weight of grain by steel tie-rods. Without a multitude of tie-rods the structure would be torn apart by stresses from within. An observer is always amazed by the web-work of steel rods visible in an empty grain elevator. Between 1900 and 1930 hundreds of these structures were built reaching heights of 100' to 120' with plans of 30' to 40' square.

The grain elevators were significant in making the union between the railroads and wheat growers possible. The major reason the railroads built across the western part of the state was to move the area's large wheat crops. Much of the labor needed to build the railroads was performed by the farmers themselves. The grain elevators made it possible to store grain until enough accumulated to make train shipment profitable. At other times the grain was stored until a favorable rise in prices occurred.

Another material used in the construction of grain elevators was hollow clay tile. These masonry units



*The functions of small flour mills, as oriented to family trade, is well represented by the Seiling Milling Company.*

were 5" thick and 9"x12" on the face, curved to adapt to the radius of a 15' circle plan. Because of these dimensions the height of the bins were limited to 30'. During construction a heavy gauge wire was placed in the horizontal mortar joints for reinforcing of the curved walls. Vertical steel rods were placed at openings as the walls grew in height but no evidence is available indicating that tie-rods were ever used on the cylindrical bins. The towns Goltry, Cherokee, and Buffalo have examples of hollow clay elevators.

#### DAMS AND IRRIGATION — MAKING THE DESERT BLOOM

Fullerton Dam and the Old Settlers Ditch, located at opposing ends of the western side of the state, performed the same beneficial function for farmers. Both locations are hard hit by lack of water during certain periods of the year, yet actions by completely different entities provided irrigation facilities in the early 1900's to supplement water needs for area agriculture.

Turkey Creek was the source of water for the Fullerton Dam and Irrigation system located in Southwestern Oklahoma. The dam was built with limestone from a nearby quarry and excavated earth. Impounded water irrigated as much as 1500 acres, some as far away as 5 miles. The reservoir was also used for fishing, boating, and picnics.

After construction of the dam in 1895 till 1916 when the Fullerton family relinquished control, the area was well known for the size and abundance of its crops. Fullerton found a ready market for his products



*Red clay tile construction allowed elevators such as this one at Ingersoll, to be larger in capacity than might have been otherwise possible.*

and won many awards with his vegetables at the World's Fair in Chicago and other expositions.

Land development companies, noting the success of Fullerton's efforts, made many offers to buy him out. When he died in 1916, the property was sold to satisfy debts incurred because of falling produce prices and increasing production costs. New owners raised the dam as recommended by an engineer, but when it broke in 1919 in a heavy flood they lost interest. Today it remains in ruins.

East of the panhandle at the northwest corner of the state in a shallow valley, now known as Ditch Valley, is located the Old Settler's Irrigation Ditch. Headwaters for this ditch are formed by an earthen dam that is reconstructed each year after the ice breaks in the Cimarron River. For many years maintenance of dam and ditches was by local farmers using teams of horses and mules pulling scoops to move earth and sand.

Settlement began in this area in 1893, but it was not until 1903 that a group of farmers conceived the idea of an irrigation channel using water diverted from the Cimarron River. After purchasing easements the Settlers Milling Canal and Reservoir Company dug a channel which runs 14 miles south and east of the dam site. After completion prior to statehood, the ditch had a capability of irrigating three thousand to six thousand acres.

The company was reorganized in 1927, and again in 1942 when it decided to take advantage of new

government programs. A more permanent diversion dam was built and repairs to the channel were made. Yet today, after numerous floods destroyed the dam, the company has reverted to building a yearly diversion structure. It continues to use a few surviving concrete flumes which allow better access to water.

Rainfall in this part of Oklahoma averages only about 22 inches annually. Ditch Valley, after 80 years of irrigation resembles a veritable oasis with lush, green farmlands of alfalfa, oats, wheat, and rows of trees along the embankment at each side of the ditch.

#### **BLACKSMITH SHOP — THE FIX ANYTHING PLACE**

The Owl Blacksmith Shop, built in Weatherford sometime before 1900, is a simple wood frame structure with pitched roof and concrete slab floor. Early photographs show a traditional false front with the painted owl enclosed in a circle just above the shop sign. Thirty years later a lean-to addition to the west had been completed and the entire front was sheathed in horizontally applied corrugated iron.

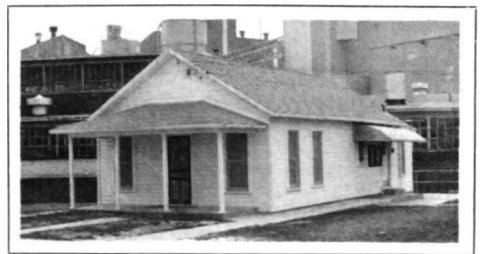
The interior has changed only with additions of various tools of the trade. The original anvil, forge, joiner, and belt driven trip hammer continue to be used for everyday work from the town and surrounding farms. For 70 years the father/son business has endured without drastic change in appearance or nature of the enterprise. Lee Cotter, Sr. bought the Owl Blacksmith Shop in 1913, just 15 years after Weatherford was established. Lee Cotter, Jr. learned the trade from his father and has run the shop since his father's death. As they say in Weatherford, "If Lee Cotter can't fix something, ---It can't be fixed."

#### **MINERALS — THARS SALT IN THE CREEK, GYP IN THE BOTTOM, AND GOLD IN THE HILLS**

From the early 1800's Indians in the area collected dried salt from edges of the creek that would be 8" to 10" thick. Later, Drovers and then settlers gathered from the salt deposits

for home and trading purposes. The most notable of these was Jesse Chisholm, a trader of Cherokee extraction and for whom the famous cattle trail was named. The Old Salt Works constituted the first systematic attempt in Western Oklahoma to distill salt for a profit.

Jeff Saunders, ex-cattle trail drover, designed and built two large metal vats which makeup the Old Salt Works. One quarter inch steel plate was used for the curved bottoms and vertical ends of the 12 ft. x 45 ft. x 12 in. deep containers. It is theorized that the fabricated vats came by Rock Island Railroad to Kingfisher and overland from there to the present location on Salt Creek. By piping brine from the creek into the vats, and heating the water with wood fires to speed evaporation, approximately 4,000 pounds of salt could be produced every 10 hours. Even though this operation was never successful for Jeff Saunders, he did pioneer a new industry. Four miles downstream from the Saunders Works, in 1901, the Morton Salt Company located an impressive salt plant which thrived for more than a decade.



*This small building, now a personnel office for U.S. Gypsum, is one of the few structures associated with the first Southard gypsum mining operation.*

In Southard, the Gypsum industry is represented by the Old Plant Office Building, a simple wood frame structure covered with clapboard siding. A pitched roof of composition shingles provides gentle contrast with the low hipped roof of the porch. Constructed in 1905, the 21' x 54' building rests on poured concrete stem walls. Its concrete slab porch floor and steps lead to

unimposing front and rear doors.

Continuing to function as office space for clerks and administrators to this day, the Old Plant Office Building is surrounded by more recent structures. It reflects the development over time of the Gypsum industry in Blaine County and Oklahoma.

George H. Southard, builder of the Old Plant Office Building, is credited with exploiting one of the purest deposits of Gypsum in the nation. In 1912 the United States Gypsum Company acquired the property and has since operated the facility as its Southard Plant. Ore, taken from over 4,000 acres of land, is refined and processed into over 260 different products and shipped daily in 30 railroad cars and 15 or more trucks.

One hundred miles south of the Gypsum works lies an area rich in Spanish History for it was in the early 1620's that Father Juan De Salas was in the Wichita Mountains. No definite

link establishes Mexican mines with Fr. De Salas, but the remains of the two separate arrastras at the northeast foot of Mt. Sheridan are typical of the construction of the bark mills used in small tanneries and Mexican ore mills.

Granite slabs were used as the floors of the arrastras with thin slabs and boulders forming the vertical walls around the circumference of the two circles. The path thus formed being as regular as possible. Between the two walls, roughly 18" high above the stone slab floor, was placed the stone drag which was pulled over any ore placed in the path. Pinned to the top of a center pole, set deeply in the earth was a smaller pole acting as a lever attached by ropes to the drag stone. The free end was attached to a draft animal. Reports indicate that a horse making six to ten revolutions per minute could pulverize one to three tons of ore in twenty-four hours.

Horizontal marks scored into the sides of the trough are strong evidence that the arrastras were used.

Two and a half miles north of the arrastra east of Mount Sheridan is the Meers store which is famous for its part in the gold rush in the Wichita Mountains in 1901. When this land was opened to the white settlement by lottery, prospectors swarmed in and concentrated their efforts along the west and north slopes of the Wichitas. More than 5,000 miners and prospectors came from all over the United States. Wildman, Golden Pass, Canyon City, and Meers were a few of the tent and shack towns that sprang up overnight. Territorial mining newspapers were born with the towns, running such headlines as "The Wichita Mountains, the future mineral district of America."

Digging started at the Gold Blossom Mine near Meers in 1901. Evidence of

*continued on p. 28*

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# WESTVIEW

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## PATRONS

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*continued from page 7*

have been involved. Although European presence was largely absent, the Village Farmers probably were, ultimately, the victims of European actions. One factor may have been the spread of European diseases, especially smallpox, and a mutated syphilis. From the south, west and north, the addition of domesticated horses increased mobility and expanded the parameters of warfare. From the south, east and west, dislocations of peoples responding to French and Spanish actions probably were a factor.

Six National Register sites are of this historic period. The Longest site, in Jefferson County, was a fortified Taovayas Wichita village attacked by Colonel Don Diego Ortiz Parrilla in 1759 in retaliation for an earlier Wichita raid on the San Saba mission. The Edwards site, in Beckham County, is a fortified farming village of unknown affiliation. The Little Deer site, in Custer County, is also of unknown affiliation, but has Plains Apachean affinities. The Cedar Breaks Archaeological District in Cimmaron County includes three sites, one of which includes tipi rings (rings of

rocks used to anchor tipi bases). Other sites contain historic rock art. Finally, the Goodwin-Baker site in Roger Mills County, which also has a Village Farmer occupation, has evidence of a historic occupation that may be Plains Apachean.

These sites are only a few of many in Oklahoma. Many sites are still unrecorded and many have not been adequately investigated. There will always be questions to be answered by archeological research, but only by awareness and action can we preserve the resource necessary to answer these questions. ❶

*continued from p. 26*

the long abandoned arristras stimulated interest in this particular area, but because of government interest in the same locale an order was given for all to quit the premises. Meers, named after Col. A. J. Meers, relocated to a site north of the original location and soon boasted the usual assortment of hotels, cafes, stores, blacksmith shops, saloons, and churches. In 1903 the newspapers continued boasting of the mining activity in the area. By 1907 it was all over and miners and prospectors were moving on to greener fields or settling on the newly opened land as farmers or ranchers.

#### ***A STORE BUILDING--ALL THAT REMAINS OF MEERS***

The unpainted, vertical, board and batten covered wood frame, false fronted, ramshackle building is almost enhanced by the metal soft drink advertising signs. It has been used as a drug store, general store, grocery store, post office, living quarters, art gallery, meeting place, and cafe. Meers remains a memorial to the Wichita Mountains "Gold Rush" of the early 1900's and to the mystique of vast underground riches which hangs over the entire region since the first Spaniards came this way from Mexico three centuries before.

#### ***SILO--AN UNORDINARY INNOVATION IN WOOD***

Twenty miles southeast of Arnett, the Davison Silo, constructed over 60 years ago, along with a two-story log house, is evidence that the owner, Francis Davison was considered no ordinary man. He held a deep interest in wildlife conservation and raised countless quail, prairie chicken, and wild turkey on his ranch. In 1921, he reintroduced buffalo to the ranch under an agreement with the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge. The buffalo roundups were always popular with his visitors but no one was ever allowed to take aim at any of the game, in season or out.

Perched on its foundation of concrete is Davison's fourteen-sided (6 feet to each side) Silo (see front cover). Constructed of 2 x 4's laid flat expressing individuality and structural integrity. Thirty-six feet tall, the structure is capped with pitched shingled roof planes. The roof proper is ornamented with a cupola having 14 small windows and, repeated again, a tiny shingled roof of 14 sections topped with a 5 foot wood pole.

On the south side of the silo is a feed chute, crafted with similar workmanship and care. Capping the chute is a wall dormer which ties back into the

silo's main roof. To further keep the elements on the exterior of the building, the builder clad the entire structure with tongue and groove siding. Originally, the joints were covered with sheet metal mouldings where the roof panels changed planes (or direction). Most of these pieces have rusted or blown away, and where shingles are missing many holes are now appearing in the roof. But in spite of its deterioration, the silo is basically sound and standing proud.

*Innovation, expertise, function and ingenuity* were words used at the beginning of this article. These words were applied to the actions of our early-day businessmen, farmers, miners, and builders as they created the built environment. Sometimes by trial and error, many times with materials at hand, and most times with grit, guts, and persistence, these achievements are today marvels to behold. The structures introduced here are barely representative of the multitude that existed and were every bit as important in the development of Western Oklahoma. ❷



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## PHOTO ESSAY



*The El Reno Hotel is a fine example of Oklahoma's early commercial structures.*



*Both the scale building and elevator at Ingersoll were constructed of red clay tiles, a material common in elevator construction before 1930*



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# Photography by: Sakchai Laivadhana

staff photographer for  
*Oklahoma Historical Society*

*The Cronkhite Ranch house is the headquarters of a well-known cattle ranch in Northwest Oklahoma.*





*Mattie Beal built, after selling her allotment near Lawton, this home in what was then the outskirts of the city.*

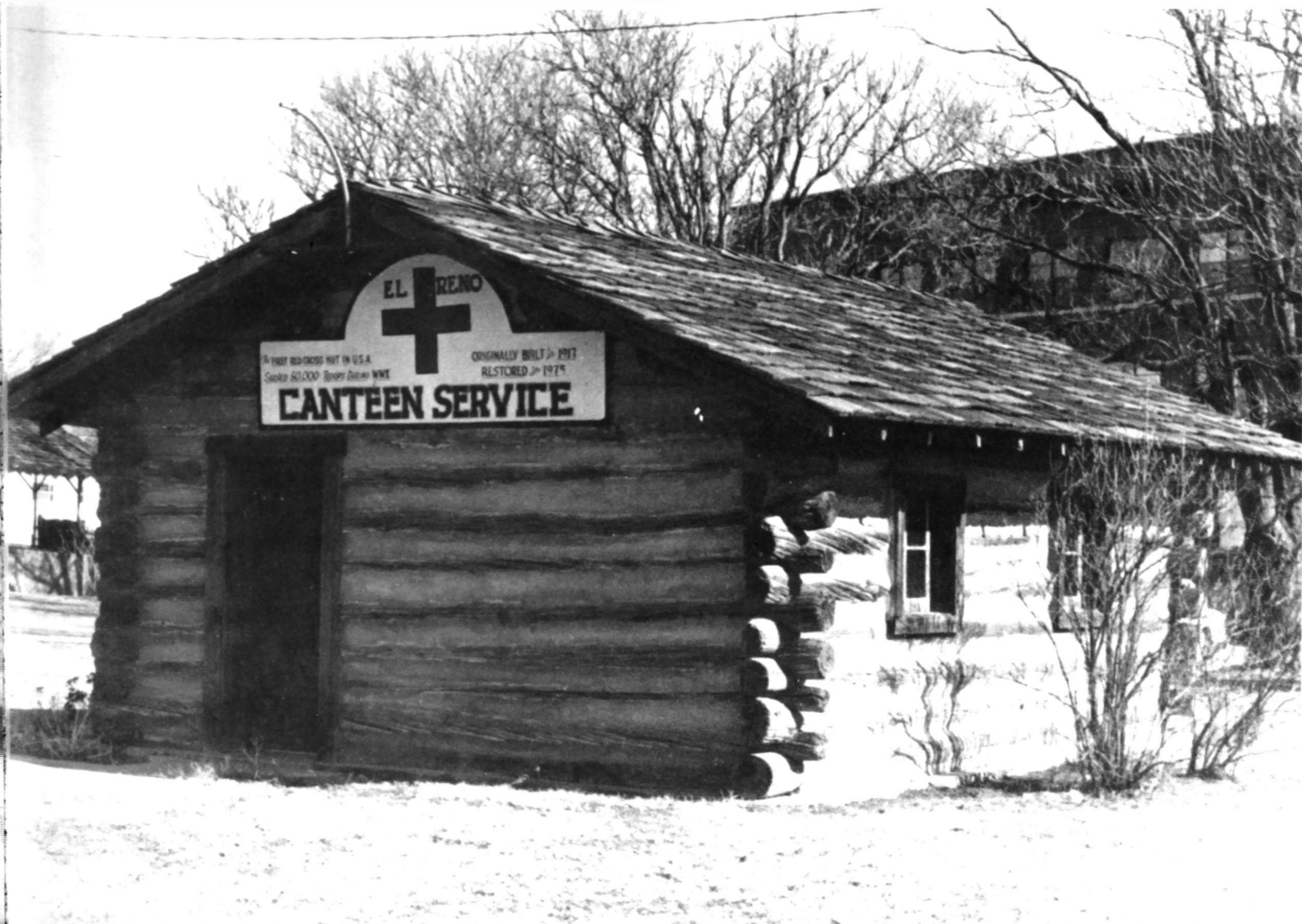


*The small house at Darlington Agency is one of two dating from the 1870's.*



*This large structure is one of the Darlington Agency buildings dating to the 1880's.*

*The Red Cross Canteen in El Reno dates from the era of World War I.*





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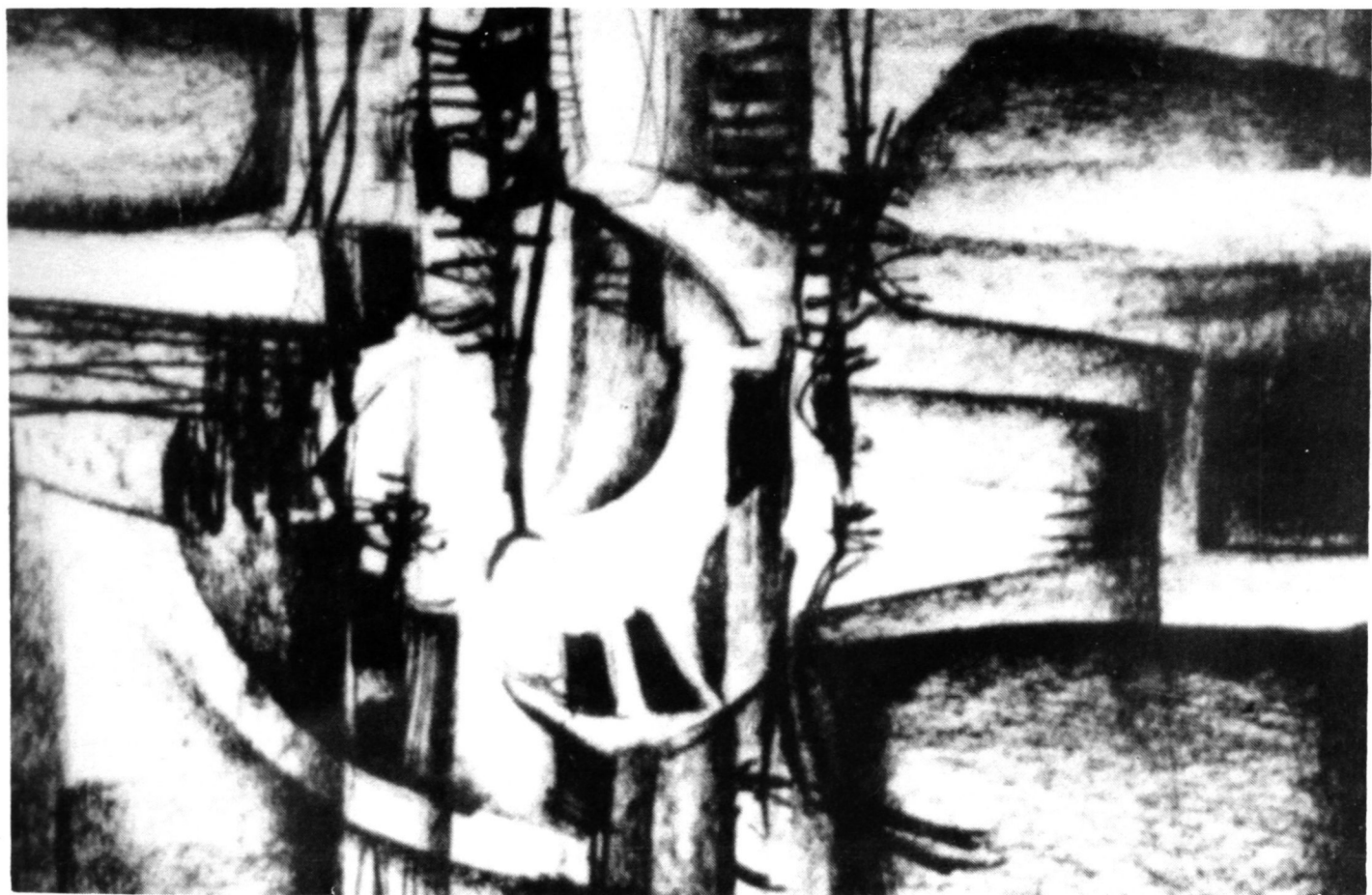


Illustration by: George Calvert

# Fall, 1985

"Western Oklahoma Artists, Musicians, and Writers." Feature articles, poems, stories, and graphics are needed on people or activities related to the theme. Deadline: July 1, 1985.

WINTER, 1985. "Famous Western Oklahomans." Oklahomans in all fields. Nominate your favorite famous person in a short story, poem, article, etc. Deadline: October 1, 1985.

SPRING, 1986. "Western Oklahoma Firsts." Western Oklahoma boasts the first quadruplets born in Oklahoma. Surely there are other "firsts." Deadline: January 1, 1986.

SUMMER, 1986. "Western Oklahoma's Uniqueness." What makes Western Oklahoma unique? We expect various answers in a variety of forms. Deadline: March 1, 1986.

FALL, 1986 "Western Oklahoma Schools." Send in submissions of your favorite school days memories or experiences. This is a topic in which everyone can participate. Deadline: July 1, 1986.



Projected future themes are "Western Oklahoma Events" (Winter, 1986), and "Western Oklahoma Settlers" (Spring, 1987).

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