

Oklahoma HUMANITIES

MAY 2009



AN INTERVIEW WITH POET JIM BARNES

COWBOYS & PRESIDENTS

OHC ANNUAL REPORT

SEE THE SMITHSONIAN IN OKLAHOMA

JOURNEY
Stories

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Oklahoma HUMANITIES

MAY 2009

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Oklahoma HUMANITIES is published biannually by the Oklahoma Humanities Council (OHC), 428 W. California Ave., Ste. 270, Oklahoma City, OK 73102. OHC is an independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote meaningful public engagement with the humanities—disciplines such as history, literature, philosophy, and archaeology. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), OHC provides funding and resources that support humanities education and a vibrant cultural life for all Oklahomans.

The opinions expressed in *Oklahoma* HUMANITIES are those of the authors. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in the magazine do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Oklahoma Humanities Council, its Board of Trustees, or staff.

Reader letters are welcome and may be directed to the Editor at: carla@okhumanitiescouncil.org or by mailing to the above address. Include "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line of your message. Letters are published subject to editorial discretion and may be edited for clarity or space.

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ON THE COVER

Courtesy of Peggy Tiger. Reproduction of *Trail of Tears* (undated) by Jerome Tiger (Creek-Seminole). Oil on canvas, 18 ¼" x 24". Arthur & Shifra Silberman Collection, 1996.27.0987, from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, OK





President Lyndon B. Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson picking wildflowers, July 5, 1968. Photo by Frank Wolfe. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum (story on page 19)

FEATURES

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Special Feature: Journey Stories



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From the Executive Director
ANN THOMPSON

At a recent public speaking engagement, an audience member asked me if the work of the Council was controversial. My usual response to the question, because I get it often, is that it is not; but as I answered that night, I began to realize that being labeled controversial may not be such a bad thing.

The root of the word controversy is Latin, *controversus*, and can be translated as “turned against.” The word controversy, then, can mean a debate or discussion that allows for opposing opinions. Examining an issue from various viewpoints is healthy and should be encouraged. As I told the audience member, life is complex and issues that confront us are increasingly complex. We should encourage discussion to help us better understand the issues.

Oklahoma Humanities Council programs offer a safe forum for discussion. We do not advocate any political, religious, or social position; in fact, we are expressly mandated by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) not to do so. Although we don’t provide the answers, we do ask the questions. When the United States Congress authorized the NEH in 1965, it was to ensure that the nation’s rich cultural heritage is available to all Americans in order to have a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.

In the same way that good teachers make their subjects relevant to their students, our programs must be relevant to our audiences. To further this goal our council will be initiating a community discussion program called *Humanities Forum*. The pilot project will take place in Oklahoma City this summer with possible topics such as the role of religion in civic life, the economy, poverty, patriotism, labor, peace, and conflict resolution. We are not creating controversy through our programming; it already exists. What we hope to create is opportunity for increased understanding through the humanities disciplines so that our opinions are informed.

LETTERS

First off, let me say how impressed I was with the [Oklahoma Humanities Awards] evening and everything OHC works to support. I was very pleased to find out my company helps to support such an excellent organization, and I couldn’t stop praising the event to my colleagues. I find myself attending several events for the company and this was by far one that meant the most to me. However, I wanted to tell you that I admired your work on the magazine. It really captured the essence of what it seems OHC stands for and doesn’t seem to overly emphasize any particular aspect of the humanities, though I do admit my preference for poetry. I was especially delighted to see the mention of Naomi Shihab Nye at the very end of the magazine. I have enjoyed her work ever since I read her prose poem “What Happened to Everybody.” The magazine seems to be off to a fantastic start.

Jeremiah Adams
Chesapeake Energy

Congratulations on a wonderful second issue! From tracing the travels of two young boys in 1909 Oklahoma to a survey of Black communities in our state, this issue is a real winner. Your coverage of exhibitions and publications that we might otherwise miss are particularly useful. We are eagerly awaiting your next publication in May!

John and Carol Blackwell
Oklahoma City

My compliments for your recent Oklahoma Humanities Awards dinner and its expansion to include six categories of achievement. It was interesting to hear about each of your winners and the contribution each has made—and will continue to make—to Oklahoma’s cultural environment. Your audience, which included individuals from all parts of Oklahoma, is proof that the interest in the humanities is alive and well in our state. As a former resident of a small town in Western Oklahoma, I will always remember two programs that came to our community through your organization’s sponsorship that were special highlights for me. Congratulations to your organization and the important role it plays in enriching all of our lives.

Emily Stratton, Executive Director
Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence

Please add my name to those who are delighted with the new *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. The November issue was both an amazing celebration of the vitality of the humanities in Oklahoma, and an excellent presentation of the threads of commonality that bind us together as a nation. The photography was breathtaking, and my grandchildren loved the story of the school teachers retracing the Abernathy boys’ trip. Congratulations on this wonderful new magazine!

Linda Reese
East Central University

OHC PRIVACY POLICY

Protecting your privacy is extremely importance to us. For detailed information on our privacy policy, call us at (405) 235-0280 or go to our website:
www.okhumanitiescouncil.org

I was teaching Santaigo Baca in my Diversity class at SWOSU—the interview with him in the November 2008 edition was enormously helpful. The material on all-Black towns in the issue was similarly right on target for my class.

Viki Craig
Southwestern Oklahoma State University

What a fabulous diversity of articles and imagery in the November issue of *Oklahoma Humanities*! It's the perfect content for the classy new format. Thanks for all that you do to bring our rich heritage and amazing modern complexity to life.

Rilla Askew, Author & Professor
Kauneonga Lake, NY and Norman, OK

CONGRATULATIONS!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to congratulate Carla Walker, Editor of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine, for her superb accomplishment in the design and publication in a new format. The magazine has received many accolades and awards (*see photo caption*) and has provided valuable visibility with its rich content in humanities disciplines. It also highlights calendar items for our Council and other nonprofits throughout the state to alert our audience of opportunities for participation in meaningful public programming. The Executive Committee of the Council recently gave Carla special recognition for her outstanding achievement. We are most appreciative of Carla's efforts and talents and look forward to many more award-winning issues in the future.

J. Edward Barth, Chair



Editor Carla Walker, left, is congratulated by Diana Rogers, President of the Central Oklahoma chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. At the chapter's recent Bronze Quill Awards, Walker accepted Awards of Merit for *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine in two categories: Print Design and Print Communications/Magazine. Walker also received an Honorable Mention Award for writing, the only entry awarded in the Writing Portfolio category.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

Send your letters and opinions to the Editor at:
carla@okhumanitiescouncil.org. Include "Letter to the Editor"
in the subject line of your message. We look forward to hearing from you.



From the OHC Board of Trustees
ED BARTH, CHAIR

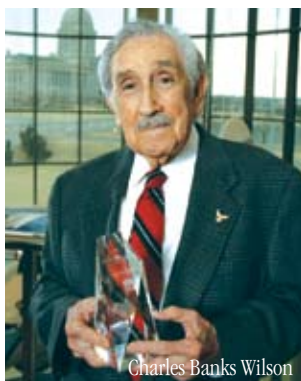
As Oklahoma's own Will Rogers said in 1929, "Take all your savings and buy some good stock and hold it till it goes up, then sell it. If it don't go up, don't buy it." This timeless, albeit humorous advice reminds us that economic downturns have occurred before and the nation has survived.

At a time when all of us are watching our resources and expenditures, we may also be more discerning in our charitable giving. As our need for social services increases, so too does our need to examine who we are as individuals and community members. This is the mission of the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Lifelong learning must not be put on hold during our belt-tightening. Our quality of life is as important today as ever. It needs to be encouraged as we rely on each other for support and understanding.

Our Council's commitment to support excellent education in the humanities for levels K-12 is a good example of a growing need. Resources for teachers and students must continue to expand. We need an educated and wise younger generation in order for them to become informed citizens. Our Council has several programs, such as teacher institutes, *Poetry Out Loud*, and the Lincoln Essay Contest that address this need. We also continue to engage Oklahomans through our grants and direct programs such as the *Oklahoma Conversation in the Humanities*; *Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma!*; and *Museum on Main Street*.

The Oklahoma Humanities Council is a good investment as Will Rogers might say. Its value will continue to go up because the worth of its services continues to increase. I encourage our donors and friends to continue to support the important work of the Council as we support each other in this difficult time.

2009 OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES AWARDS



Charles Banks Wilson



Tim Gonzales [right] and Lona Barrick, OHC Board



Ken Busby and Edith Wilson, AHCT Board

OHC honored six awardees at its Oklahoma Humanities Awards dinner on March 7th at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. This year's awards were expanded to include six categories to increase recognition for contributions to the humanities in Oklahoma. Awardees and guests enjoyed an intimate dinner and a video presentation highlighting the awardees' accomplishments. A call for nominations for the 2010 awards will be posted this summer. Watch the OHC website for details: www.okhumanitiescouncil.org/programs.

Celebrated artist **Charles Banks Wilson**, Fayetteville, AR, received OHC's highest honor, the Oklahoma Humanities Award, for his contributions to Oklahoma culture, particularly his lifetime quest to portray the remaining American Indian "purebloods," individuals with only one tribal lineage. Wilson grew up in Miami, OK, and his portraits and murals of Oklahoma heritage are seen in the State Capitol by thousands of visitors each year.

Kiowa-Apache author and educator **Alecia Gonzales**, Anadarko, received the Public Humanities Award for her efforts to perpetuate the Kiowa language, including publishing the first classroom guide on the Kiowa language in the history of the tribe. Gonzales' son, Tim, accepted the award on her behalf.

2008 Oklahoma Chautauqua was recognized as Outstanding OHC Project, honoring programming made possible by OHC funds. Oklahoma Chautauqua is a project of OHC and the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa (AHCT). The program travels to several Oklahoma communities each summer, with five days and nights of workshops, local entertainment, and re-creations of people from history. AHCT Executive Director Ken Busby accepted the award.

Charles P. Schroeder, Oklahoma City, executive director of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, received the Community Leadership Award. Under Schroeder's leadership, the Museum has expanded collections and programming to promote understanding of the humanities, particularly in Western cowboy and Native American cultures.

Teresa Potter, Moore, fifth-grade teacher at Fisher Elementary, received the Humanities in Education Award for outstanding leadership in applying humanities programming in the classroom. Potter recently marked her eighth year as project director for Colonial Day at the Capitol, which transports fifth graders to America's founding era through interactions with historical interpreters, workshops, period games and crafts, and other activities.

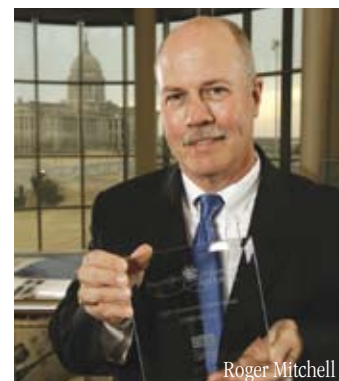
ONEOK, Inc., Tulsa, received the Community Support Award. ONEOK's outreach included financial support of the Artist-in-Residence program at the L.E. Rader Center in Sand Springs. The program engages incarcerated youth with arts and humanities programs that encourage positive, creative outlets for self expression. Roger Mitchell, president of Oklahoma Natural Gas, accepted the award on behalf of ONEOK.



Charles Schroeder



Teresa Miller and Beverly Davis, OHC Board



Roger Mitchell

2009 TEACHER INSTITUTES



OHC's summer institutes provide content-rich, professional development centered on humanities themes. Participants network with peers, university professors, and other humanities professionals in an intensive exploration of curriculum-relevant topics—at no cost. Application inquiries should be directed to the contact person listed for each university.

Heartlands At Home and Abroad

Cameron University, Lawton – June 8-12

Contact Doug Catterall: dougc@cameron.edu

For high school educators. Interrelates World History, U.S. History, and Oklahoma History by exploring the theme of heartlands across six world regions. More at: www.cameron.edu/history_government/heartlands.

Culture & Diversity in Curriculum

Oral Roberts University, Tulsa – June 15-17

Contact Mary Alice Trent: mtrent@oru.edu

Explores diversity and history to foster greater cultural awareness and sensitivity in the classroom. Emphasis placed on Oklahoma's Black Wall Street, myths and legends of Chicano and Latino heritage, and immigration in America.

Living the Past: Connecting the Western Tradition To Contemporary Experience

University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond – July 14-17

Contact Mary Brodnax: MBrodnax@uco.edu

For high school and middle school instructors of the arts, languages, humanities, history, or social studies. Using philosophy, architecture, economic history, and visual art, participants will link the values and ideas of Western culture to contemporary experience in urban Oklahoma. More at: www.libarts.uco.edu/ltf/

Teaching Civic Engagement and the Politics of Democracy: Environmental History, Land and Energy Stewardship, and Community in Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond – July 27-30

Contact Patti Loughlin: ploughlin@uco.edu

Provides an environmental case study, service learning toolkit, and lesson plans to implement student-identified projects in the classroom and the community. More at: www.libarts.uco.edu/tce

GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE

At its September meeting, the OHC Board of Trustees awarded \$78,690 in grants to fund humanities projects across the state: museum exhibits, school curriculum, the 37th Annual Symposium on the American Indian, a two-day event with poet Natasha Trethewey, and a variety of other public events. Nonprofit organizations planning humanities projects are encouraged to apply for grants. The next deadline for draft applications is August 1st. For guidelines and forms, visit the OHC website: www.okhumanitiescouncil.org/grants.

CALL FOR HOST SITES

OHC is accepting host site applications for *Key Ingredients: America by Food*, a Smithsonian traveling exhibit that will tour six Oklahoma communities beginning in October 2011 through August 2012. [Read about the debut of our current exhibit, *Journey Stories*, beginning on page 19.]

examines
culture of food,
and etiquette to
the evolution
kitchen.



Key Ingredients
the history and
from ceremonies
technology and
of the American

The project is specifically designed to benefit rural communities. Small-town hosts provide hard work, ambition, community events, and volunteers; in return, they receive higher visibility, increased attendance, and professional training from OHC staff, the project scholar, and Smithsonian personnel. The deadline for applications is October 15, 2009. Interested communities may apply online at: www.okhumanitiescouncil.org/museum-on-main-street.

HUMANITIES FORUM

In collaboration with Full Circle Bookstore in Oklahoma City, OHC debuts a new program in June—*Humanities Forum*—which will get people talking about contemporary issues. Our goal is to facilitate the public exchange of ideas—“public,” as in everyone is welcome, and “exchange,” as in you offer your opinion, other people add theirs, and we all walk away with a better understanding of each other and our world. As a springboard for each conversation, participants are asked to read a short text, which will be available soon at Full Circle or by contacting OHC. Discussions will be scholar-moderated to ensure differing ideas are treated with mutual respect. Join us: Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., at Full Circle Bookstore.

June 2 *God and Country: The Civic Role of Religion*

June 9 *Financial Responsibility and the Moral Life*

June 16 *The Social Gospel of Sharing*

June 23 *Loyalty and Truth: The Nature of Critical Patriotism*

June 30 *Where There is No Justice, There Can Be No Peace*



Leone Ghezzi, 6th Grade, Classen SAS, Oklahoma City

2009 LINCOLN ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

OHC recognized 15 students as winners of the 2009 Lincoln Essay Contest at a reception in April at the Oklahoma History Center. Winners were chosen from 2500 entries, representing 179 public, private, parochial, and home schools in 46 communities statewide. BancFirst and Sonic, America's Drive-In provided funding for this year's competition. Lincoln portrait cookies were provided by Kathy Tegart of Cookies by Design in Moore.

In connection with the 2009 Lincoln Bicentennial, students were asked to address the subject, "Why should Oklahomans celebrate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth?" At the awards reception, Dr. Bob Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, made remarks on the Lincoln legacy in Oklahoma. Students were then invited to tour the History Center.

Kindergarten through third grade students participated with drawings; fourth through twelfth grade students submitted essays. First, second, and third place winners in each grade category received cash awards of \$100, \$150, and \$200 respectively. First place winners' teachers received a \$250 classroom grant. Winners included:

Kindergarten through 1st Grade:
1st Place - Carson Thompson
2nd Place - Daniel Huls
3rd Place - Madigan Smith

2nd through 3rd Grade:
1st Place - Tanner Evans
2nd Place - Hunter Moore
3rd Place - Preston Fridrich

4th through 6th Grade:
1st Place - Jacquelyn Galier
2nd Place - Leone Ghezzi
3rd Place - Allyson Rowe

7th through 9th Grade:
1st Place - Justin Ross
2nd Place - Joe Mussatto
3rd Place - Jacquelyn Ex

10th through 12th Grade:
1st Place - Jonathan Cleveland
2nd Place - Kirby Andrews
3rd Place - Ashlie Simpson

POETRY OUT LOUD FINALS

Renae Perry, a sophomore at Stillwater High School, won the 2009 state finals of the *Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest* held on February 28th at Oklahoma City University. OHC facilitates the competition with the Oklahoma Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the Poetry Foundation.

Six regional winners competed in the finals, including: Nathan Holliday, Putnam City West High School, Oklahoma City; Mati Kappel, MacArthur High School, Lawton; Renae Perry, Stillwater High School; Christina Williams, Sapulpa High School; 2nd place winner Sarah Wilson, New Lima High School, Wewoka; and Zachary Corcoran Young, Harding Charter Preparatory High School, Oklahoma City.

As the state winner, Perry received a \$200 prize and a trip to compete in the National Finals in Washington, D.C.. Perry's school received \$500 for the purchase of poetry books. Her teacher, Debbie Dawson, also attended the National Finals thanks to a grant from Sonic, America's Drive-In. Second place winner Sarah Wilson received a \$100 prize; her school received \$200 for poetry books. Results of the National Finals will be announced on the OHC website in May.

For information on how your school can participate, contact Dr. Jennifer Kidney: jennifer@okhumanitiescouncil.org.



Winner Renae Perry [second from right] with judges Carla Walker, Carol Hamilton, Jim Barnes, Dorothy Alexander, and Kim McCoy

Oklahoma CONVERSATION

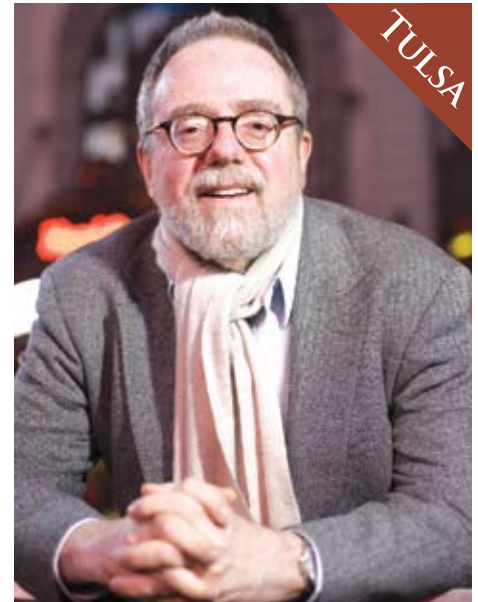
IN THE HUMANITIES

David Denby, film critic for *The New Yorker* magazine, will be the featured speaker in Tulsa for OHC's second annual *Oklahoma Conversation in the Humanities*. The free event will be held October 1st, 7:00 p.m., at All Souls Unitarian Church, 2952 S. Peoria Avenue. A ticketed reception at 6:00 p.m. will allow attendees to meet Mr. Denby over wine and hors d'oeuvres.

"The *Oklahoma Conversation in the Humanities* is designed to bring people together to discuss relevant topics that have a basis in the humanities," said OHC Executive Director Ann Thompson. "We feature individuals who can get our audience thinking and talking about our shared culture. The subject of film and film criticism is a good basis to spark that kind of conversation."

Before joining *The New Yorker*, David Denby was the film critic for *New York* magazine for 20 years. His writing has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The New Republic*. In his newest book, *Snark* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), Denby traces the history of a particular kind of personal insult, from its invention in the drinking clubs of ancient Athens through the age of the Internet, where it has become the style of media, politics, and celebrity websites.

Denby's other books include *Great Books* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) and *American Sucker* (Little, Brown & Company, 2005). A selection of Denby's books will be available for sale and signing following the presentation. Information



on reception tickets and the Conversation will be posted soon on the Council website: www.okhumanitiescouncil.org/programs. ■

Arrangements for the appearance of David Denby by Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau, 437 Fifth Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10016.

CELEBRATE THE LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL WITH OKLAHOMA CHAUTAUQUA

Tulsa, June 2-6, OSU-Tulsa Campus • Enid, June 9-13, Humphrey Heritage Village • Lawton, June 16-20, Lawton Public Library

Oklahoma Chautauqua is historical tourism at its finest. It's your chance to time travel to another era and meet history's most illustrious characters. Evening performances include first-person presentations of historical characters and an opportunity for audiences to pose questions to the presenter "in character" as the historical figure and, when the presentation is over, as the scholar who researched the character. Daytime workshops and lectures give further glimpses of

the social, cultural, and political nuances of the era. The program is free and open to the public.

This year's theme, *Lincoln's Legacy of Equality: Voices on the Fringe*, uses the 2009 bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth to examine the legacy of our 16th president—a legacy of freedom and equality, demonstrated in the lives of outspoken men and women who advocated for those on the fringe of society. Characters include:

- Jefferson Davis (1808-1889), President of the Confederate States of America
- Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), African-American author, orator, statesman, and reformer
- Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), African-American humanitarian for the Underground Railroad
- Walt Whitman (1819-1892), poet known for writing with singularly American character
- John Ross (1790-1866), principal chief of the Cherokee Nation and advocate for Native American treaty rights



For information on specific events in each community, contact the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa at: www.ahct.org. Oklahoma Chautauqua is a partnership of OHC and the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa. ■

From left to right: Dr. Doug Mishler as Jefferson Davis; Charles Pace as Frederick Douglas; Ilene Evans as Harriet Tubman; Dr. Michael Hughes as John Ross; and Dr. Carrol Peterson as Walt Whitman.

JOURNEY Stories

A Smithsonian Exhibit Tours Oklahoma

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., is perhaps the most comprehensive resource on American history and culture. Experiencing a Smithsonian exhibit of this caliber may well be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many Oklahomans, especially those in rural communities. The Oklahoma Humanities Council is proud to initiate this exciting program in our state. Host communities have been planning and preparing for your visit for an entire year, so make your plans now to attend.



Smithsonian
Institution



Exhibit Overview

Journey Stories uses images, audio, and artifacts to explore an ideal that is central to the American identity—the freedom to move. The exhibit includes individual journey stories and demonstrates the roles of travel and movement in building a diverse, American society. Themes such as immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom illustrate American mobility and how it has evolved as an assertion of individual freedom.

Journey stories of how we and our ancestors came to America are central to our personal heritage. Regardless of ethnic or racial backgrounds, everyone has a story to tell. From Native Americans to immigrants, our history is filled with stories of people leaving everything behind to reach a new life: in another state, across the continent, or across an ocean. The reasons behind those decisions are myriad. Many chose to move, searching for something better in a new land. Others had no choice. Enslaved Africans were captured and relocated to a strange land where they bravely asserted their own cultures. Native Americans, who had been living off the land for centuries, were often pushed aside by newcomers.

These journeys involved getting from one place to another, but our transportation history is more than boats, buses, cars, wagons, and trucks. Transportation technology was largely inspired by the human drive for freedom. The intersection between transportation and American society is complicated, but it tells us much about who we are. This wonderful Smithsonian exhibit, *Journey Stories*, examines travel and personal stories—from the search for a better life to fun and frolic on the open road.

If you can't travel and want to experience the exhibit, make a virtual visit to the Museum on Main Street website:

www.museumonmainstreet.org ■

Journey Stories is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Oklahoma programming is funded by Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, Chesapeake Energy, and the *We the People* Initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Image credits: Page 10: *Indians Traveling*. The W. Duncan MacMillan Foundation. Page 11, from top right: African-American migrant family. A young girl and her family migrate from Florida to New Jersey, 1940. Library of Congress, LC-USF34-040841. Travel editors board an airplane during a tour of Tennessee, 1957. Tennessee State Library and Archives. Families waving good-bye to troops, Decatur, IL, 1944. Courtesy the *Herald & Review*, Decatur, IL.



CAUGHT IN A W

STOP # 1: OKMULGEE

Creek Council House Museum
106 W. 6th St.
Information: 918/756-2324
June 27-August 7



Journey Stories makes its Oklahoma debut in Okmulgee's pride and joy, the Creek Council House Museum. Built in 1878, the Council House was the first permanent building in Okmulgee and the town literally grew in its shadow. The structure was used as the capitol for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation until 1906. The Council House and grounds are designated a National Historic Landmark. The Museum's permanent collections are steeped in the history and culture of the Muscogee (Creek) people and rotating art exhibits make each visit a new experience.

Next to the Council House, food and fun are great attractions in this town. Coleman's in downtown Okmulgee is famed for its "world famous" homemade pies and Kirby's Cafe offers a chicken salad sandwich that can't be beat. Another can't-miss spot for locals and visitors is Café on the Square, where dinner is often accompanied by guitar serenades.

Pack a picnic, your fishing poles, and the kids and spend the afternoon at the lake. Kiddies Lake, a large stone-bordered pond, has great playground equipment and ducks (don't forget the stale bread to feed them). The twin lakes, Okmulgee and Dripping Springs, offer some of the best bass fishing in the state. Enjoy an afternoon or camp out and spend the weekend!

The initial goal of this essay was to give an overview of transportation and immigration themes specific to Oklahoma in association with the upcoming tour of the Smithsonian exhibit *Journey Stories*. In approaching the topic, however, I find myself "caught in a Wewoka switch."

For readers unfamiliar with the expression, it originated in Wewoka, Oklahoma, when the town served as a switching station for several railroads during the oil boom of the 1920s. When freight got lost on the sidetracks, it was said to be caught in a Wewoka switch. The phrase today denotes a dilemma; trying to condense Oklahoma's many journey stories for this article is certainly that. Given the state's rich history, I'll highlight just a few stories I've become aware of through OHC programs and my travel across the state.

The stories begin with people. Although Oklahoma is a microcosm of the great American melting pot, it has unique populations. There are 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma, though the state has been home to 67 tribes over time. Oklahoma served as the terminus for the Trail of Tears, the forced journey of many Native tribes.

Heavener Runestone State Park, in southeastern Oklahoma, is the site of a mysterious journey. The

park boasts a 10-by-12-foot sandstone slab, upon which are markings thought to be Viking runes. Much has been written about the markings since their discovery by Gloria Steward Farley, who was the first to write about them extensively. She spent 38 years researching the markings to determine if they were indeed made by exploring Vikings as they paddled north on the region's rivers, roughly around the eleventh century. As I walked through the heavily wooded rock outcroppings, I wondered whether those hapless Vikings ever made it back down the Arkansas River.

A few years ago our Council funded *From Shtetl to the Sooner State*, an exhibit at the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art in Tulsa. The exhibit focused on Jewish communities in Europe and the circumstances that led immigrants to choose Oklahoma as a destination over states with larger cities. By 1927, there were 7,800 Jews living in Oklahoma. I was struck by the exhibit photographs of Jewish families establishing businesses and schools and making a go of life in this unsettled land. Like most of the state's population, Jews left in large numbers during the Depression, so this journey story has both an entrance and a departure. Today there are roughly 5,050 Jews in Oklahoma.



NEWOKA SWITCH

By Ann Thompson, OHC Executive Director

I was surprised to learn that writer Washington Irving visited the area of our state in 1832. I read Irving's *A Tour on the Prairie* when I participated in one of our Council's most popular programs, *Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma!* On a steamer to Detroit, Irving and two traveling companions met U.S. Indian commissioner Henry Leavitt Ellsworth on his way to Indian Territory to assess the government's forced removal of tribes. The trio accompanied Ellsworth on a wild tour of present-day Oklahoma, where they encountered grizzly bears, wolves, buffalo, and elk. It was a rough and dangerous journey—quite a contrast from the bucolic Hudson River valley I associate with Irving.

Oklahoma journey stories are also revealed in our history of transportation. As with most of America, the railroads hastened settlement. When the small town of Waynoka allowed John Harvey to open a restaurant adjacent to its depot in 1910, it created the first of the popular Harvey Houses.

When aviation became popular, Charles Lindbergh chose Waynoka for an airport as a stopover on a transcontinental route from New York to Los Angeles. The complete trip took 48 hours and began with an airplane ride from New York City to Waynoka. Passengers had a meal at the Harvey

House and then boarded a train for Los Angeles, stopping for breakfast in Clovis, New Mexico.

Will Rogers was an energetic supporter of aviation. As he said in the *Daily Telegrams* on February 28, 1929, "If flying is dangerous pass a law and stop it. But don't divide our nation between a class that should fly and one that shouldn't. Aviation is not a fad, it's a necessity and will be our mode of travel long after all the people who are too valuable to fly have met their desired deaths by the roadsides on Sunday afternoons." Rogers died in 1935 while flying in Alaska with his friend and pilot, Wiley Post. His death was mourned nationwide. Oklahoma City's airport is named for him, possibly the only airport in the country named for a civilian who died in an airplane crash.

Journey Stories makes its Oklahoma debut in Okmulgee on June 27. It will then travel to Newkirk, Sand Springs, Miami, Durant, and Chandler. Each host site will tie their own community's journey stories to the national themes of the exhibit. I'm anticipating adding more unique Oklahoma journey stories to my collection as I travel from our Oklahoma City office to the six exhibit host sites. I hope you'll join me.

STOP #2: NEWKIRK

Newkirk Public Library
116 N. Maple
Information: 580/362-3934
August 15-September 25



Newkirk's new state-of-the-art library is the site for this stop of the *Journey Stories* tour. The town boasts the largest collection of limestone buildings and historic streetscape in the state. Pocket parks dot the downtown area, with markers revealing tidbits of town history. Many of Newkirk's downtown businesses will feature exhibits on the journey stories of the local community. Themes include historic Highway 77; the Santa Fe Railroad; Kay County's three courthouses; and Charles Curtis, who was a Kaw tribe member and U.S. Vice President.

Journey Stories will coincide with Newkirk's annual Charlie Adams Day, named for the man who opened a drug store in 1899 and patented Good Luck Liniment. This year's celebration is on Saturday, September 12, and will feature barbecue, a Dutch oven cook off, storytelling, music, crafts, and more. Year-round family activities include Kaw Lake for boating, fishing, and hiking, and the Newkirk Country Club Lake and Golf Course, one of the Oklahoma's oldest courses with sand greens. If you love gaming, two casinos are just outside of town.

When you're ready for a snack, Stage Coach Barbeque serves homemade ice cream and "the best ribs anywhere." For breakfast or lunch, try the Main Street Bakery for pastries and sandwiches on homemade breads and buns. Locals say you cannot leave town without trying Lil' Tepa for Mexican food and the mushroom swiss burgers that are large enough for two. For pizza, you gotta go to Gottigos.



Early photo of Waynoka's Santa Fe Depot, built in 1910. Courtesy Waynoka Historical Society.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AMERICAN

By Amanda Kouri, Fifth Grader, James L. Dennis Elementary, Oklahoma City

STOP #3: SAND SPRINGS

Sand Springs Cultural and Historical Museum

9 E. Broadway

Information: 918/246-2509

October 3-November 13



Stop number three is the Sand Springs Cultural and Historical Museum located in the historic Page Memorial Library. Its beautiful art deco architecture honors town founder Charles Page and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in America. In 1907, Page financed a group home for orphans and widows on land just west of Tulsa. He developed businesses to serve the little community and the town of Sand Springs was born. The Museum chronicles Page's story and the early twentieth-century industrial town. Charles Page Triangle Park, where trolley cars once made turns, features a bronze statue of the founder.

Any walking tour of downtown should include the City Garden featuring lush plantings and a water garden with goldfish. It's a great place for a picnic lunch—perhaps from Chastain's, the local eatery named for and housed in the old clothing store building dating from the early 1920s. Chastain's menu is varied—from Cowboy Stew to prime rib and owner Laurie Joslin's homemade tortilla soup.

For outdoor fun, visit Keystone State Park and Keystone Lake, stocked with striper, walleye, bass, and catfish. Keystone Ancient Forest is a 1300-acre, old-growth forest remnant, featuring glimpses of native habitat which began centuries ago. For you kids at heart, don't miss the BMX track, a two-acre motocross bicycle track with lighting, concessions, and a playground.

Hi, my name is Amanda Kouri and I am going to tell you a little bit about my family and what they had to sacrifice to have freedom. I come from a Lebanese family. My parents are both 100 percent Lebanese. I am proud to be Lebanese and I am very proud of my family. My Jiddy, grandfather, always said, "There is nothing like family, they will never let you down." He always believed that our heritage was the most important thing about being Lebanese.

All of my great-great-grandparents lived in Lebanon. They were born and raised in a small town called Juidiet. They worked hard and made very little money. My great-great-grandfathers were importers of olive oil. Times were really hard.

A horrible war was going on. There were many deaths and the whole town was being destroyed. Many times when they would hear bombs coming from miles away, they would hide in their bathtubs to stay safe.

My great-great-grandparents did not want this kind of life for their children, so they sent their oldest child alone, at the age of 15, to sail to America. They only had enough money to send Alexandra and they told her when they got enough money to come they would. But they had to send her at this time, because it was no longer safe at all to live there. She sailed from Lebanon to Ellis Island. From Ellis Island, she began a new life in Drumright, Oklahoma. At a very young age, she had to find work to survive.

Time went by, and she received a letter from her parents that they would not be able to leave Lebanon because the war had gotten so bad. Nobody was allowed to come in or out. My great-grandmother never saw her parents again. She was so scared and alone. After many years, she received a letter saying that her parents had died. Imagine leaving your parents at the age of 15 and never seeing them again. Imagine sending your child to another country alone at the age of 15.

I am so blessed to live in America where I am free. I am so blessed to have had such brave great-great-grandparents and great-grandparents who



made it possible for all of their family to be free. This is what my family did for freedom. ■

Amanda Kouri won the 2009 Colonial Day at the Capitol Literature Contest sponsored earlier this year by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. Colonial Day at the Capitol is an annual event for fifth graders and is funded in part by a grant from OHC.

Approximately 500 students—most dressed in colonial attire—attend Colonial Day each year. Students interact with colonial period characters, recite the Bill of Rights, participate in a debate between American patriots and British loyalists, and engage in hands-on activities such as colonial games and crafts.

Amanda is the daughter of Trey and Annette Kouri of Oklahoma City. She is a straight-A student who participates in sports, Honor Chorus, and a student leadership and service organization. Amanda read her award-winning essay in the House Chambers during Colonial Day activities and received a standing ovation. Congratulations, Amanda!

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ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2008



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The Oklahoma Humanities Council (OHC) is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we strive to stimulate discussion, inform new perspectives, and actively engage people in lifelong learning by targeting two critical areas of need in our state: K-12 humanities education and community building. Our mission is to promote meaningful public engagement with the humanities; we do this by providing funding and resources that support humanities education and a vibrant cultural life for all Oklahomans.

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Headquartered in Oklahoma City and celebrating its 20th anniversary, Chesapeake Energy is proud to conduct business in a city whose rich history in the oil and natural gas industry is matched by outstanding organizations serving our community, such as the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Being a true corporate citizen and building valuable partnerships is a strong part of the Chesapeake culture and vital in every community where we conduct business.

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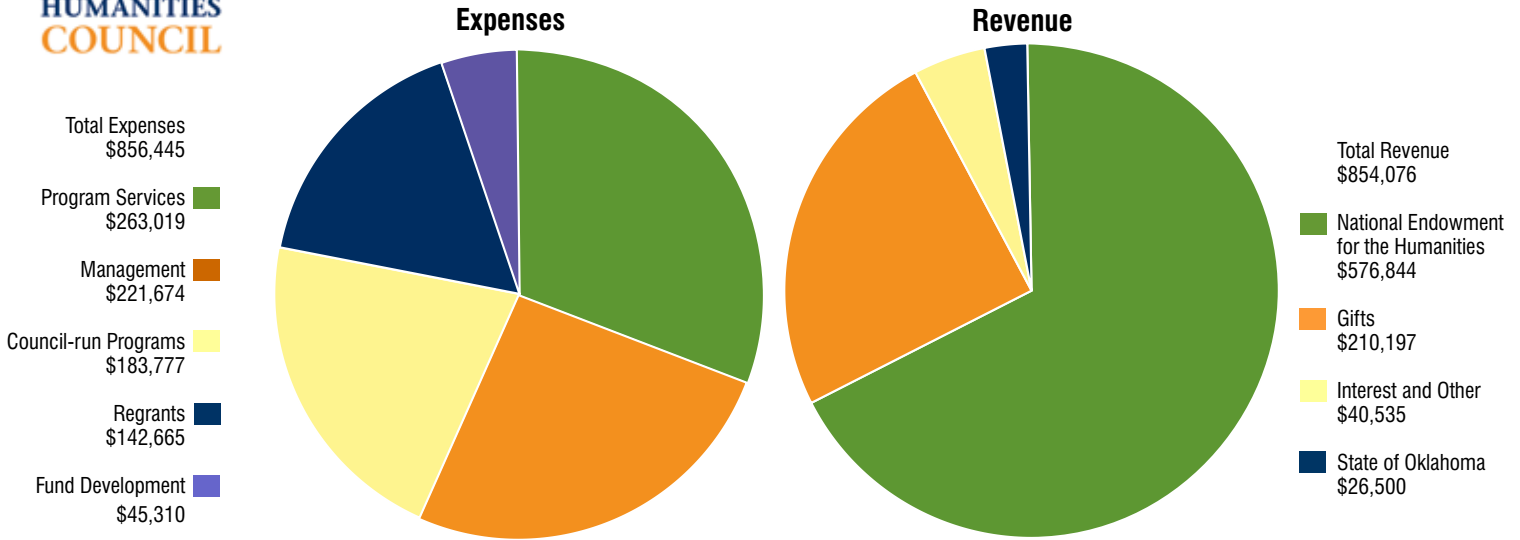
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SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2008



Note: These figures are from the audited financial statements for the time period of November 1, 2007 through October 31, 2008.

Summary of Grants Awarded

Major Grants	\$109,487
Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma	\$ 31,122
Opportunity Grants	\$ 18,636
Chautauqua Grants	\$ 17,000
Research Grants	\$ 9,000
Oklahoma Connections	\$ 3,134
Total grants awarded	\$188,379

In fiscal year 2008, the Oklahoma Humanities Council funded 852 programs across the state. These programs served 172,671 Oklahomans who participated in cultural events, lectures, reading and discussion groups, exhibits, teacher training, classroom competitions, and much more.

For a complete listing of grants awarded, visit www.okhumanitiescouncil.org/grants

What our audiences have to say:

Community Grants

It gives seniors a cultural, encouraging, educational outing and fellowship. This is a gift to seniors who made Lawton what it is today!
—*Golden Girls & Guys Day Out, Lawton Public Library*

We drove 60 miles each way to attend and it was well worth it.
—*4th Annual McBride Lecture with Bill McKibben, Oklahoma Christian University*

Sharing times like this, especially talking about matters as important as poetry, are great community builders. —*Conversations with Poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, Oklahoma City University*

Many communities came together for this presentation. New friendships and contacts were formed. Everyone present was able to take away something that could be used to improve personal or professional lives. —*Anna Myers, Oklahoma Juvenile Historical Author, Friends of the Margaret Carder Library, Mangum*

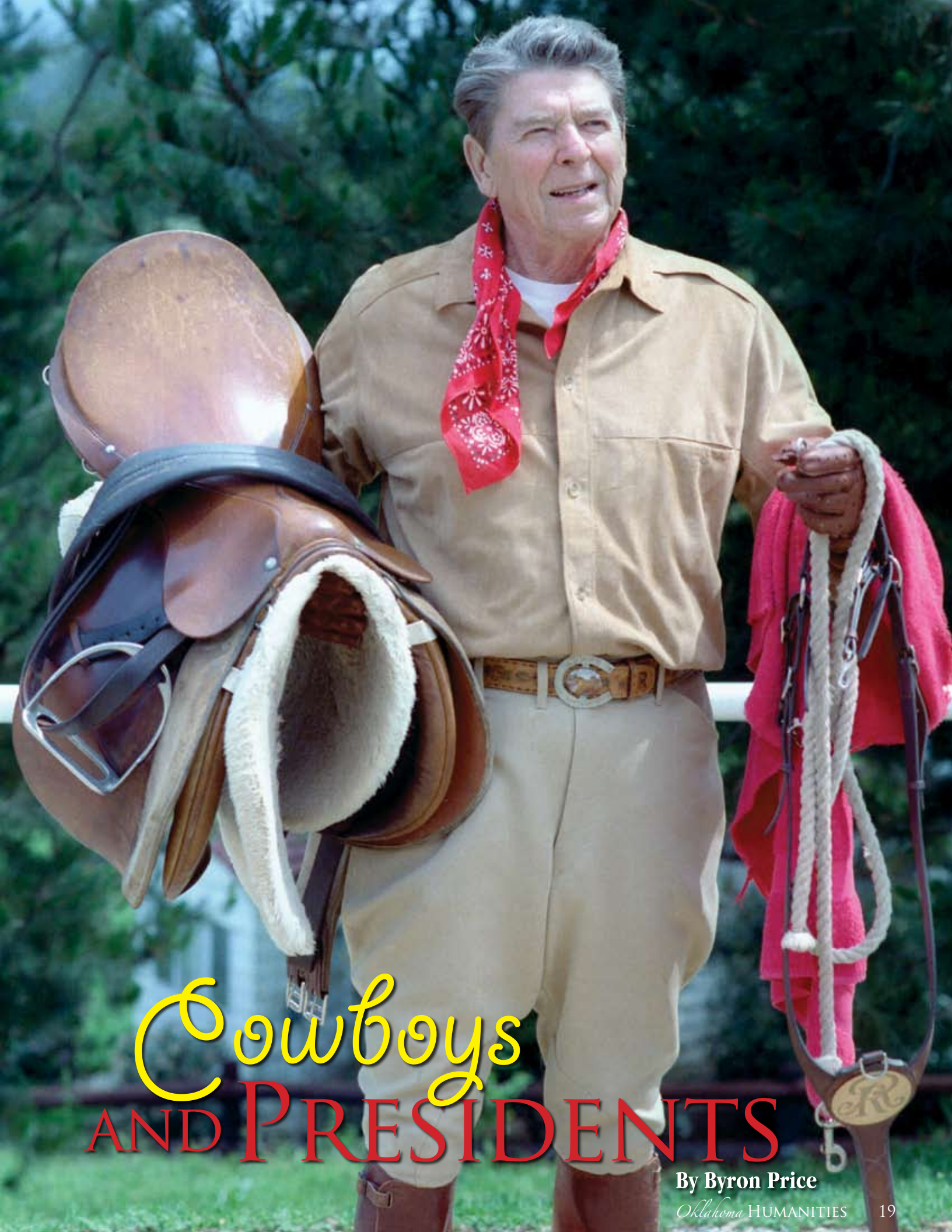
Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma!

I never did much reading when I was young—my reason for joining this group. Having lived most of my 80+ years in Oklahoma, this book [*Tour of the Prairies*] takes me back to my Oklahoma history class in high school. —*The Oklahoma Experience: From Wilderness to Metropolis, Newkirk Public Library*

I love to read and programs like this broaden my variety of reading materials. —*Invisibility and Identity, Stillwater Public Library*

Oklahoma Chautauqua

The authenticity of the portrayal of Malcolm X spanning his personal growth and development was effectively accomplished therefore allowing the truth to spark discussion, exchange, and positive change. —*A Time for Every Purpose: America in the 1960s, Lawton Public Library*



Cowboys AND PRESIDENTS

By Byron Price

Oklahoma HUMANITIES

Although not the first icon attached to the presidency, the American cowboy remains perhaps the most visible, resilient, and controversial symbol ever associated with the office. Presidents have often used the vision of a heroic range rider to define themselves and their administrations. In turn, their supporters and critics, both here and abroad, have found this legendary character useful in both praising and criticizing presidential leadership and policy.



The evidence of the cowboy's presence in presidential politics is everywhere—in figures of speech and public pronouncements; in the symbols and rituals of nominating conventions and campaigns; in the art that decorates the White House and Oval Office; in the movies that presidents watch to unwind from the daily grind; in the gifts they give and receive while in office; in some of the footwear, headgear, and clothing they wear; in the political patronage they dispense; in their choice of close advisors; and in the values they embrace.

The strength of the cowboy image lies in its ability to transcend the boundaries of race, class, gender, and religion; embrace the ideas of both democracy and aristocracy; and change with the times. But as many incumbents and candidates have learned, embracing the image is no guarantee of election or even nomination, much less success in office.

While many modern Americans see cowboys as paragons of virtue—rugged, courageous,

independent, and selfless—others view them as juvenile, reckless, and dangerous. For the cowboy image to remain a positive and effective political tool, it must always be accompanied by vigorous leadership and successful policies. Otherwise the tag “cowboy” can become a wearisome burden to bear.

Cold War Cowboys

The U.S. emerged from World War II to face a “Cold War” with the Soviet Union. Adapting to new political realities and stoked by the ubiquity of Western films and television series in the postwar era, the image of the cowboy increasingly moved beyond its domestic roots into the global arena where it became a potent symbol of American foreign policy.

In his book *The Cowboy Hero*, historian William Savage writes that Americans tend to hold the cowboy hero and the mythic West most dear in the wake of national traumas such as war and economic depression. The nation, Savage argues, finds strength, stability, and core values in these iconic images which are helpful in the process of re-centering and moving forward to face new challenges. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the cowboy image flourished not only on film but also in literature and fashion. Tourism to the American West thrived as well.

Unlike some who had occupied the office before him, Harry S. Truman resisted the urge to dress in clothing or gear of occupations alien to his own for photo opportunities or political benefit. He took a dim view of such antics, recalling the ribbing that Calvin Coolidge had once endured for donning a cowboy outfit and an Indian headdress. Although unwilling to dress the part, the president was never reluctant to accept occupational trappings as gifts or to talk livestock with his constituents. During his 1948 campaign, he received a set of silver mounted spurs from Nebraska supporters and promised enthusiastic supporters at Grand Island to use them on Congress when he returned to Washington.

Throughout his presidency, Dwight Eisenhower expressed affection for the history and lore of the Old West. Eisenhower enjoyed reading stories of cowboys and the West and reportedly kept the works of such novelists as Zane Gray and Luke Short at his bedside. Although he had been president of Columbia University before assuming the nation's highest office, some highbrows believed

that Ike's thirst for cowboy stories was indicative of an anti-intellectual bent; however, Arthur Larson, an Eisenhower speechwriter, said that his boss's penchant for Western novels was purposely exaggerated by administration publicists to make him more appealing to voters.

With the 1960 presidential election on the horizon, Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas recognized that no southerner had prevailed in a presidential election in more than a century and that to win the office he must broaden his appeal. Part of his strategy involved emphasizing connections to the West that he had carefully cultivated over the previous decade.

In contrast to Johnson's down-homestyle and vocal twang, the Texan's chief rival for the Democratic nomination, John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, exuded a youthful sophistication and charm that many Americans found irresistible. Kennedy was no cowpuncher, real or imagined. Still, this son of New England was keenly aware of the national appeal of the West and its heroes, and his campaign rhetoric often reflected this sensitivity. Kennedy's savvy selection of Lyndon B. Johnson as his running mate balanced the ticket with an





experienced politician who appealed to both the South and the West and ensured that the image of the cowboy hero would always be close at hand.

On November 22, 1963, an assassin's bullet unexpectedly elevated Lyndon Johnson to the presidency. The presidential party had stayed in Fort Worth, where Kennedy delivered a breakfast speech. At the end of the program, a local dignitary presented Kennedy with a cowboy hat. To the disappointment of the crowd, the chief executive declined to try it on but offered to model it later at the White House. Felled by an assassin's bullet a few hours later in Dallas, JFK never got the chance to make good on his promise.

Lyndon Johnson's cowboy image was well established before he settled into the presidential saddle. Outfitted in Western wear and relaxing at his ranch, the rangy Texan both looked and played the part of a Westerner. He enjoyed showing off the 2,700-acre spread to U.S. officials and foreign heads of state. The president's special guests nearly always left the Texas White House with a better understanding of its occupant and a cowboy hat, bestowed with great ceremony by their host. One reporter dubbed LBJ's informal ranch meetings "barbecue diplomacy."

Although it seemed with Johnson's retirement that the cowboy image had been put out to pasture, its absence from the Oval Office was short-lived. In 1974, the cowboy of popular culture made another unexpected appearance, this time on Air Force One carrying President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev to a summit conference in California. Flying over the Grand

Canyon, the Russian leader remarked that he knew the famous landmark from the Western movies he had seen in Russia. Then, as one writer reported later, the "leaders of the two most powerful nations on earth stood face-to-face in the aisle of the plane, as in *High Noon*, drew their revolvers in the form of their fingers and shot each other dead."

Gerald R. Ford, who assumed the presidency in 1974 following the Watergate scandal and Richard Nixon's resignation, also knew the value of the cowboy image. He dressed the part when visiting the West and when he attended a 1975 Washington party for journalists. *Time* magazine reported that Ford was "all tricked out like a cocktail cowboy in a snazzy Western-style shirt suit of blue-gray flannel decorated with white saddle stitching."

Running as a Washington outsider in the 1976 presidential race, Democrat Jimmy Carter denied Gerald Ford a second term. Using Western metaphors to characterize the Georgia peanut farmer's election victory, *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker later wrote:

[Washington] . . . was a town ripe for the arrival of a stranger, a lone rider pure of

heart, galloping in from the purifying grandeur of the great open countryside. In a room full of bourbon guzzlers, he would order sarsaparilla, and afterward clean up the town.

By the time Jimmy Carter took the reins of power in Washington, however, the Western movies and television programs that spawned such images had almost disappeared.

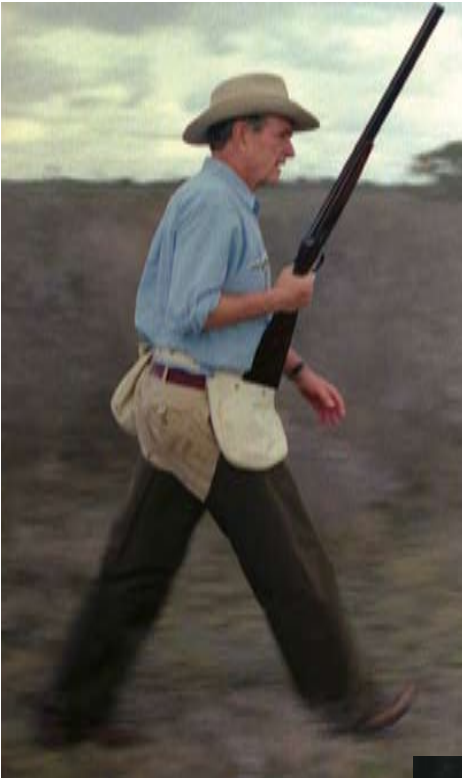
A Movie Cowboy in the White House

When former actor and California governor Ronald Reagan ran for president in 1980, his image as a cowboy was already established, thanks to roles in such films as *Law and Order* and *Cattle Queen of Montana*. Throughout his term, Reagan punctuated his speeches and policy statements with imagery that reflected his adopted region, its history, and its heroes.

Just as the LBJ Ranch had served as Lyndon Johnson's "Texas White House," so did Rancho del Cielo become Reagan's "Western White House." Security experts installed bulletproof glass windows in the adobe ranch house, camouflaged surveillance gear inside fake boulders, and carved numbers into rocks on the equestrian trails so that agents could more easily track "Rawhide," the president's Secret Service code name, on his daily horseback rides.

To his supporters, Reagan was the cowboy hero of their dreams—brave, sturdy, and true. Critics at home and abroad often used the term *cowboy* to attack the president's domestic and foreign policy agendas. Reagan's infectious and





unfailing optimism, straightforward style of leadership, and reputation as the “Great Communicator,” however, kept the naysayers at bay.

After two terms in the presidential saddle, Reagan campaigned for his old running mate, George H.W. Bush. After whipping the crowd into a frenzy on Bush’s behalf at the Mesquite Rodeo near Dallas, the outgoing chief executive took a lap around the arena in a buckboard. As he waved his familiar white cowboy hat in farewell, the event’s announcer called him the “grandest cowboy of them all.”

Still in the Saddle: Cowboy Presidents at the Millennium and Beyond

Reagan proved a tough act to follow. George H.W. Bush had learned some valuable lessons from his old boss about the political usefulness of the cowboy image, particularly when campaigning in the West. At a February 1988 campaign stop in Oklahoma City, Bush addressed a Republican rally at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. His remarks compared the hard knocks of political candidates to those of rodeo riders. “You learn that the rodeo is full of hard encounters with the ground,” he observed. “And you learn to pick yourself up and dust yourself off.”

In the 1992 Republican primaries Bush faced

a stiff challenge from hard-charging Texas businessman H. Ross Perot. As the campaign progressed, Bush ratcheted up his cowboy image to counteract Perot’s dogged attacks on his leadership and record. At the White House, the president wore a Western shirt and ate barbecued ribs with reporters. Although Bush eventually won the Republican nomination, Perot cut into his strength by running as an Independent, ensuring that former Arkansas governor Bill Clinton prevailed in the general election.

Clinton was the first president of the post-World War II generation and the first impacted by television Westerns. As president, he watched the 1952 Western classic film *High Noon* an astounding 30 times, more than all of his predecessors combined. The inner strength of the cowboy hero no doubt inspired the leader of the Free World to carry on in the face of adversity. Although Bill Clinton did not run for the presidency as a cowboy, he donned the



hat when political expediency demanded.

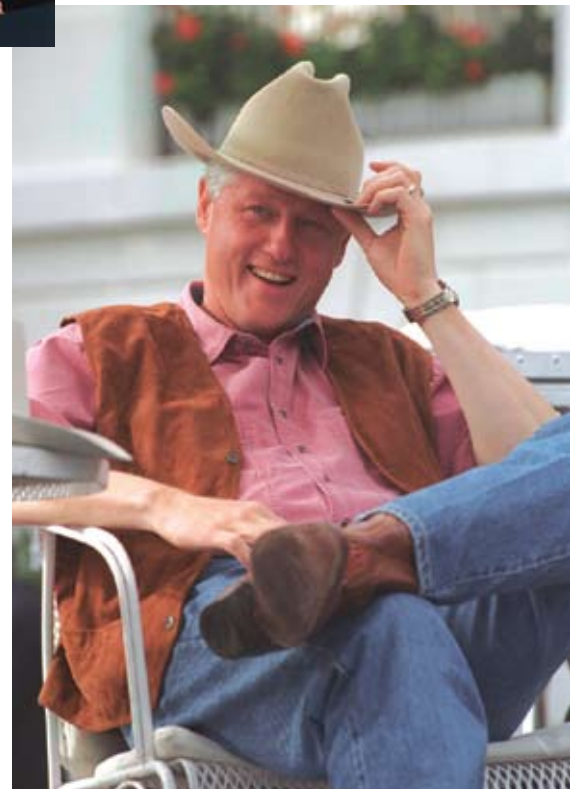
By the 1990s, the image of the cowboy was a controversial and even hated symbol in many corners of the globe and had become synonymous with irresponsible, unrestrained, and unilateral conduct in social and economic pursuits as well as political and diplomatic discourse. Critics of the U.S. government were applying the term *cowboy* to a broad range of economic, social, and diplomatic issues. Foreign leaders who had long used the word pejoratively to characterize American foreign policy now also found it useful in attacking political rivals at home. During a March 1997 visit to Colgate University, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev hurled the insult at his political rival, Boris Yeltsin. Earlier, Gorbachev had taken Yeltsin to task for instituting unbridled, “cowboy-style” economic reforms.

As the turn of the twenty-first century approached,

two new contenders vied for the U.S. presidency. True to form, each candidate portrayed himself as a common man rooted in the soil. Al Gore often reminisced at campaign appearances about the summers he worked on the family farm near Carthage, Tennessee. George W. Bush talked about his childhood in West Texas and the small ranch he had recently purchased as a retreat near Waco.

Following his inauguration in January 2001, George Bush was not long in reintroducing the art of the American West to the Oval Office. Frederic Remington’s sculpture *Broncho Buster*, a part of the permanent White House art collection since the Ford administration, again enjoyed a place of prominence, along with *A Charge to Keep*, a western scene painted by American artist and magazine illustrator W.H.D. Koerner (1878-1938).

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, the president and his closest advisors repeatedly called upon the image of the cowboy to reassure their countrymen and to communicate their intentions to the world. After 9/11, cowboy hats and boots became a more visible part of the president’s wardrobe, especially as he traveled to and from the White House.





In press conferences and speeches, Bush and his inner circle increasingly used what one journalist called “John Wayne rhetoric” to express their determination to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice.

By early 2005, some journalists, including the Ivy League editor of the *Harvard Crimson*, believed that Bush’s much maligned “cowboy diplomacy” at last seemed to be working in Iraq. But as the war dragged on, critics continued to blast away at the president’s cowboy reputation. Writing in the *Manchester Guardian*, Philip James drew a distinction between Ronald Reagan, who talked like a cowboy but acted like a diplomat, and George Bush, who both sounded and operated like a cowboy in the arena of international affairs.

Bush often returned to his embattled image as a cowboy to connect with voters. Whether defending his war on terror, promoting his immigration policies, or supporting Republican congressional candidates, the president said he always found a crowd full of cowboy hats comforting.

Many Americans believe that after more than a century of marking and branding presidential policies and wearing the badge of leadership, the legendary cowboy hero ought to ride off into the sunset never to return. Yet there is still evidence of vitality in this saddle-worn symbol of democracy.

Some of the 2008 presidential candidates, including Republicans John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, and Fred Thompson, and Democrat Barack Obama, paid homage to the cowboy by donning Western hats and/or boots on the campaign trail.

Only Hillary Clinton seemed (at least for the moment) willing to remove the word “cowboy” from her political lexicon. On September 30, 2007, she told an audience in Oakland, California, that on her first day as president she would dispatch diplomats around the world bearing the message that “the era of cowboy diplomacy is over.”

Whether or not the cowboy will continue to be a useful figure on the political landscape is difficult to predict. Few symbols have had a longer shelf-life; have expressed the values, hopes, and dreams of Americans so clearly; or have been so easily grasped by the world at large, for better or worse. History has also shown that the cowboy hero is not only tough and resilient in adversity, but always ready to answer the call of a country and a president in distress. ■

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of the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West at the University of Oklahoma, where he also serves as Director of the University of Oklahoma Press.

Image Credits: Page 19: Pres. Reagan at Rancho del Cielo, 1986. Ronald Reagan Library; C34126-17. Page 20: [Left] Pres. John F. Kennedy at the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce breakfast, Nov. 22, 1963, by Raymond Buck. *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Photograph Collection, The Univ. of Texas at Arlington Library; AR406-6 #4816. [Right] Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson at his ranch, 1967. Photo by Michael Geissing. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. Page 21: [Left] President Ford in the Oval Office, 1976. The Frederic Remington cowboy sculpture in the background was reintroduced to the Oval Office by George W. Bush. Photo by Karl Schumacher. Gerald R. Ford Library; A8064-10A. [Right] Reagan on the campaign trail. Ronald Reagan Library. Page 22: [Left] George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. [Center] President George W. Bush, Olympic Torch Relay Ceremony, 2001. Photo by Paul Morse. Office of George W. Bush. [Right] William J. Clinton Presidential Library. Page 23: Barrack Obama tips a cowboy hat given to him by a volunteer after a campaign stop in Austin, Texas, 2007. Photo by Matthew C. Wright, www.matthewwrightphotography.com.

Getting it Right

An Interview with State Poet Laureate Jim Barnes —By Carla Walker, Editor

There are moments that never end, but repeat themselves in mind or art, and for this I am grateful, and for this I am a poet.
—Jim Barnes

My conversation with Jim Barnes was on a wintry afternoon in February at his ranch in Atoka, Oklahoma. At first meeting, Barnes is soft spoken. One might assume he's shy—until the subject of poetry arises; then it is as if he is lit from within. His passion for poetry and for perfecting his craft is genuine. If you get the chance, don't miss the opportunity to hear this man read his work aloud. The grit of his voice reveals every pebble and rock he crafts on the page.

Carla Walker: First, I want to congratulate you on being appointed by Governor Brad Henry as our new Oklahoma State Poet Laureate.

Jim Barnes: Thank you. It's a great honor and a great pleasure.

CW: At the time of this interview, your appointment is still very new. Have you had time to think about what you want to accomplish as poet laureate?

JB: I would like to bring poetry to Oklahoma in a way that it hasn't been done before; that is, to emphasize that modern poetry has something to offer. There are poems that touch the heart, poems that touch the soul. It need not be what we think

of as traditional, doggerel rhyming verse, though some of that might be quite good as well. Poetry is an art and it is as diverse as painting, perhaps even more so.

CW: In my research, I came across a 2007 interview you did with Dr. Kent Gustavson on *Sound Authors Radio*. You said, "I'm afraid of every poem I write." What is the fear you were speaking of?

JB: I think I meant I was afraid of not getting it right. I would like to write the perfect poem, but of course if I do that, then I'll have to stop, because what's left? That's the fear: writing a poem that doesn't quite do it—and I have no one to really satisfy except myself. Readers of poetry are few and there are going to be fewer unless something is done. My voice may be small, but I hope it will be heard by a few people and maybe I can make a small difference.

CW: Dr. Gustavson asked you to talk about being a Native American poet and you replied, "I'm a writer first of all. My blood doesn't talk to me, my head talks to me. I am a child of my environment." Tell us what you meant by that statement.

JB: I am influenced by things around me. Inheritance is fine, but I don't know that so much is passed on intellectually through the blood. Because I'm an eighth Choctaw doesn't mean that I'm a child of nature only; I'm other things as well. I'm a quarter Welsh, but I don't feel any more Welsh than I feel Choctaw. I'm just proud to be alive, whether Choctaw, Welsh, English, whatever the rest of the mongrel nation I am. I'm very proud to be what I am.

Certainly I know more Choctaw than I know Welsh in terms of language. That has to be learned; it's not passed on by blood, it's passed on by environment and what people have to give you, what the past has to give you. You are doomed unless you know the past, absolutely doomed unless you have *something* out of the past to work with.

CW: In the literary world, much is made of writing from a sense of place. You have traveled widely and your poetry reflects beautiful images of Oklahoma and Europe. As a reader, I sense that your work is not only a reflection of physical place but also of mind, of memory, of all the writers you've read and admired. Is that conscious on your part, that it comes through your poetry?

JB: There are absolutely no accidents in poetry. You don't write by making nice little sentences. Each one has to be studied, thought out; each one has to be shaped. Poetry is from the gut, the heart, the head; it has to take in all of those things. Sound, sense, tonality, pause, silence—it's all important. *You've got to get it right*, and it's not right until it's heard as well as seen. It's important how a poem looks on the page, but it's important how it sounds as well. I can convince you more by sound than I can by the written word. I do that not through abstraction but through particulars.

CW: You've been the editor of *The Chariton Review* since 1975?

JB: That's right, two issues a year since 1975.

CW: I would guess that you've read thousands of manuscripts during that time.





Origin

Find a word
you haven't said or signed.

Farm it through
the very terraces of lung,
the steppes of eyes;
and watch a certain power grow,
an origin, a stem.

For there is a chemistry
to words:

how, for instance,
the saliva rises
to the tongue
as the word forms
like a cake
midthroat;

how, too,
the teeth grow
sharp
as the word
falls from the lips
like a green apple.

Molecular
as helix or hell,
words hold together even
stuff the deaf-mute's made of:
a tree of fingers,
a lace of flesh.

Looking for Hemingway's Ghost at the Crillon

When he was flush he drank at the Crillon,
by his own admission. We try the kirsh,
the cherries blooming down our dry throats
after a day in the Tuileries. A bush
coat hangs on a peg behind the bar Sonia
Rykiel redesigned. We know it could not
be his. But its hanging there blurs the gold
and red of the barroom and tells us older
tales than we hear across the bright tables.

Many a boast and bad lie still linger
in the whiskey air. We pay him homage due
and disregard the lies and lives he led.
His words do not mean trouble here: no one
reads in the glittering light lesser lives have
left. Ghosts still walk these halls looking for a way
to lose their sins. We raise our glasses to
all returns, liberations of every sort,
remembering hard the early days before

we lost a generation of giants who will
not walk these vivid halls again. We fool
ourselves into other lives, our own too
poor to rival reality. Our day goes down
heavy with wishes that cannot stand long
against the sunlight splashing through the panes
that speak across the years we do not know.
In our lives there is a vagueness no song
can make clear, nor utterance long endure.

JB: Tens of thousands.

CW: With all that experience, does your job as an editor make you a better writer or does the practice of writing make you a better editor?

JB: It's a difficult question. I would be a writer whether I edited or not, but I wouldn't be an editor if I weren't a writer—or would I? I can't separate the two very easily. It's an interesting question. After thirty-odd years I'm about ready to make a choice to give up editing. I don't know how many years I've got left, but I'm spending a lot of energy in editing and I think maybe I should be spending that energy in another way, like writing.

CW: As an aside, I want to tell you that I enjoyed your memoir, *On Native Ground*, so very much. Your combination of prose and poetry was like being at one of your readings, having you there to give me the background of the poem. In that text, you express harsh criticism of contemporary poetry and fiction for what you call "relativism" or focusing on familial conflict. You said that "even the French recognize that something is dreadfully wrong with contemporary American poetry." Now, twelve years after that book was published, are you still as pessimistic?

JB: Even more so. I cannot stand the poetry of the "I-sayers" and "my-sayers"; it has a terrible case of "my-itis." There is absolutely no imagination in too many forms today. Sure, you use your own experience, but you have the right to embellish, to make it better. Your only loyalty should be to the making of a good poem.

Even students who are professing to be poets and writers, who are studying for MAs and MFAs in creative writing, don't read enough. They are in love with the idea of being a poet, but not in doing the work that it takes to be it. Many of them could be very fine writers, but they're being rushed toward a degree. The muse just isn't there too often.

What *is* the muse? I can't say except it is working toward finishing that poem. That's the only muse I have, the muse of drive. It's difficult to write well and anybody who says it isn't is crazy. Good writing is hard work.

CW: You mentioned that students aren't well read enough. Can you point to particular writers that were important to you?

JB: The *Bible*; all of the Greek tragedians, the Greek poets; the Roman tragedians and playwrights; the historians; Dante; Shakespeare; Petrarch. They're all important, but you've got to realize that there's a development along the way. What was once fresh imagery, fresh metaphor, has become stale. Read Petrarch and you'll find it's full of what we know today is cliché—"bright eyes, sweet lips"—those mean nothing today, but at one time they were fresh images. We've worn them out imitating them. Poetry has to change, the language has to stay fresh and vital.

CW: Again, in *On Native Ground* you state, "Every poet wants attention, but few care enough about what it takes to earn it." What must poets do to earn attention?

JB: Having something to say, something that is pertinent to people beyond your spoiled little world. You must continue to read, you have to open your eyes to a broader world. You've got to go places, see things, you have to participate. You can't just sit back and say I'm going to be a poet and *voilà*, a poem; it doesn't work that way. Be aware that you can't learn anything without a book in your hand.

CW: What prompted your interest in translating the poetry of other poets from around the world?

JB: My interest in languages, I guess. I took German and French as an undergraduate and translation exercise was part of it. I found I like to do it. Translation is a way for me to get my juices flowing when my original work is slowing down. When I feel like I have nothing to say, translation is a way to force that I say more. It's a kind of work you know must take place in your own work, when you're translating any thought onto paper.

CW: In a review of your work, A. Robert Lee refers to your "care for exactness of image." I want to give our readers a few lines from your poetry to demonstrate his point:

All that's left is hard, / the bone-dry creek, /
the knife shade of a single tree, / the prairie
burned brown by a screaming summer sun
(from "Surveying Near Elsworth, Kansas,"
La Plata Cantata, 1989).

When rivers no longer run but squat like
turtles in their / scummy houses (from

"Dog Days," *A Season of Loss*, 1985).

Many a boast and bad lie still linger / in the
whiskey air (from "Looking for Hemingway's
Ghost at the Crillon," *Paris*, 1997).

Do you work at having that "exactness of image"
or does it come naturally to you?

JB: It's work. I wouldn't dare say *whiskeyed*; it's
got to be *whiskey* air, noun as adjective. If you're
lucky, if you're *awful* lucky and very attentive to
what you're doing, sometimes it's easy, but I don't
like to admit that; it's mostly hard.

CW: Attentive is a good word to describe what
you're doing. Much of your work is as structured
in form as it is in choice of words. It's as if you
have a love affair with form.

JB: I admire form and I admire people who use
form, use it well. For example, I would not use
rhyme without bowing first to metrics. Anyone
can rhyme, even a child. I like rhyme and I like
internal rhyme as well, but I like to acknowledge
metrics, I know what they can do. I like to be
metrically in tune with rhyme.

CW: Your writing reveals a fascination for
language. In your poem "Origin," you go so
far as to state, "there is a chemistry to words."
Give us a few thoughts on words and what their
"chemistry" means to you.

JB: Words don't work alone, they work together.
Take Shelley's line, "the oozy woods." He's talking
about the underwater atmosphere. When you
consider the image, the "ooziness," you almost
feel oozy.

Words work together. One word rubs against
another word and you have a different meaning
than you would with the one word or two other
words. "Oozy woods" is highly emotional for
Shelley's poem. "Whiskey air" tells you exactly
what air I wanted for that poem. It's putting the
words in the right sequence. That's what I'm
always trying to do, not succeeding very often,
but getting as close as I can with this insufficient
brain that tries to work with language, as poets
do. ■

Hugh S. Johnson

The Oklahoman Behind FDR's First 100 Days

By Larry Johnson



At press time, Barack Obama is rounding out his first 100 days in office, the measure of success or failure at the outset of an administration that has nipped at the heels of presidents since Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR received much of the credit for the extraordinary legislation enacted by Congress to stimulate the American economy in the midst of the Great Depression. In truth, it took many people—Republicans and Democrats—to rally the country and begin economic recovery. In the following article, author Larry Johnson tells us about Oklahoma's Hugh Johnson, the man at the center of strategic planning and initiatives that marked success for the *first* 100 days.

Oklahoma's Dust Bowl and Okie migrations became the very symbol of economic devastation during the Great Depression. But in one of the more delicious ironies of state history, Oklahoma's Hugh S. Johnson became the architect of the first New Deal. On March 4, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt rose on unsteady legs and faced a wary nation to deliver his first inaugural address. Four years into the greatest economic crisis the United States had ever seen—that capitalism had ever seen—the new president sought to stanch the tide of despair and panic, assuring Americans that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Roosevelt's invocation of fear was no rhetorical device. Observers were gravely concerned that the United States was on the brink of an anarchy that would pale the Russian Revolution by comparison. Americans had lost confidence in democracy and began to cast an envious eye across the Atlantic to the bold, confident new governments in Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union.

In the weeks before his inauguration, Roosevelt assembled the Brain Trust, a team of brilliant young advisers culled from universities, think tanks, and private industry to try to revive the American economy. The brain trusters devised triage measures, but it would take a significant jolt to begin complete recovery. It was clear that the entire country had to rise and move in concert. Such a Herculean task would require months of planning, months in the quagmire of Congress, and months for execution. What's more, the consortium of egos, ideas, and philosophies of the Brain Trust would never be able to arrive at a consensus for how it should be done. One of the most prominent brain trusters, industrial capitalist Bernard Baruch, offered to lend Roosevelt one of his top employees—perhaps the only

man in the country capable of creating such a plan—General Hugh Samuel Johnson of Alva, Oklahoma.

From Oklahoma to West Point

Hugh Johnson was born in Kansas and raised in Alva where his father had gained an appointment as postmaster. Throughout his life, Johnson recalled his days in Alva as the best childhood a kid could have, crediting life on the prairie as preparation for the challenges he faced. Young “Hughie” did preparatory studies at Northwestern Normal School before securing an appointment to West Point. In 1903 he became the first Oklahoman to graduate from the academy.

Johnson served with distinction in the prestigious First Cavalry in the Philippines and San Francisco. By 1916, he had gone to law school and was an adjutant for General John J. Pershing. He shared a tent with Lt. George Patton, whom he called a “Sears-Roebuck cowboy” and later admired for his bravery. Johnson performed so ably that Pershing recommended him to the powerful General Enoch Crowder of the Army's legal division in Washington. Johnson loathed the idea of serving behind a desk in Washington, but his superiors appealed to his sense of duty, convincing him that he was of most use in the capital.

Secret Maneuvers

It was inevitable that President Wilson would commit American troops to fight in the European war, but America's army was small, ill-equipped, decentralized, and all-volunteer. Crowder named Johnson the key member of the team charged with creating a plan for a national draft. Realizing that local self-government was the bulwark of American society, Johnson proposed to provide troops through local draft boards.

The plan was a tough sell in Congress. Johnson knew that the longer Congress deliberated, the greater the delay in getting troops drafted, trained, and deployed overseas. He approached the government printer about printing 30 million registration forms. Both agreed the work should begin right away, but it was illegal to print at public expense without Congressional approval. Johnson gambled and ordered the printing to proceed secretly at night behind blackened windows. He and the printer soon realized how difficult it was to hide 30 million forms as



stacks of them filled the halls of the print shop. Johnson then conspired with the Postmaster, who secretly provided him with postal sacks, and the post office soon filled as well.

As Congress debated, Johnson mailed the forms to the as-yet-unauthorized draft boards. When Congress finally authorized the draft, Johnson was ordered to print and distribute the registration forms. He confidently informed his superiors that he had already taken care of the matter, allowing the U.S. to enter the war ahead of schedule. Summoned to the Secretary of War's office, Johnson fully expected a censure; instead, he was awarded the rank of Colonel and named by Crowder to represent the Army on the War Industries Board, responsible for mobilizing America's economy for war.

The challenge lay in the economy's Darwinian capitalist principles of survival of the fittest. Though still a young man, Johnson displayed extraordinary talent for simplifying the complex and won the favor of powerful Board chairman Bernard Baruch with his plan. America's economy grew by an astounding 20 percent that year. At age 36, Hugh Johnson earned the rank of Brigadier General—the youngest ever to achieve that rank outside the Civil War.

Johnson retired from the Army in 1919 and spent the Twenties in private industry, eventually as the right-hand man for Baruch. Baruch was a solid Democrat and strong Roosevelt supporter during

the 1932 campaign, for which he lent Johnson as an economic advisor and speaker. After the election, Johnson worked with a team to devise an economic recovery plan for Roosevelt.

Crafting the New Deal

In Johnson, Franklin Roosevelt found the ideal point man for his New Deal. Not only did Johnson have the knowledge to devise the economic plan, but he could deliver the message. Roosevelt knew Johnson could wage the war for public opinion—in the press and in Congress—with what historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. called “a fusillade of insults, wisecracks and picturesque phrases . . . [and] the qualities of a top sergeant, a frontier editor, and a proconsul.”

Johnson saw economic success as parity between three forces: industry, labor, and the consumer. He realized that the three forces did not trust each other and any successful plan would offer something to each. His plan used government as the independent catalyst to jolt the economy back to life.

As the inauguration neared, Johnson worked long days, poring over reams of statistics and dense economic theories. He identified the deflationary spiral caused by vicious competition: industries competed by lowering prices, which caused them to work labor longer hours at lower wages, thus undercutting the spending power of the consumer. Put simply, prices were low, but no one had the money to purchase anything.

Although charged with only an advisory role, Johnson drafted a complete Congress-ready bill for Roosevelt dubbed the National Industrial Recovery Act. The NIRA gave the president broad dictatorial powers to command the American economy for two years. The plan was a classic carrot-and-stick motivator. Industry would be required to put a ceiling on hours (40-hour work week) and a floor on wages (minimum wage), and child labor was abolished. In return they received a suspension of anti-trust laws, allowing formation of cartels to control prices and production. Labor received collective bargaining rights in addition to wage and hour concessions. The consumer would have solid purchasing power when paid a living wage and protected from high prices.

Johnson intended for the government to be the partner and referee during the recovery with the ultimate goal of industry self-regulation. Finally, Johnson proposed a massive public works program which would immediately employ millions of people and consume industrial products while putting money in consumers' pockets. To deflect accusations of communism and fascism, Johnson insisted that participation be voluntary, that government not compel industry to participate.

Selling the Plan

Roosevelt and his Brain Trust were impressed with NIRA and the bill was presented in Congress by early May. This New Deal was a revolution in American economic thought and, as *Time* magazine said when naming Johnson Man of



the Year for 1933, its success required a “dynamic personality . . . with an enormous amount of energy . . . and a phrasemaker handy with the tools of propaganda.”

As Congress debated the bill, largely on ideological grounds, Johnson began selling the plan to the public. He conferred with businessmen and labor leaders, wrote industrial codes, and recruited volunteers. He convinced both the United States Chamber of Commerce and the American Federation of Labor to publicly endorse the plan. After a month, NIRA passed both houses of Congress and Roosevelt signed it into law on June 15—the last of the famed “First 100 Days.” Johnson was placed at the helm of the new National Recovery Administration (NRA). Roosevelt, however, felt that the public works provision was too much for one man and created the Public Works Administration to handle that part of the plan. Johnson was devastated at his loss of oversight for the public works provision, the physical stimulus of his plan, so he substituted a “moral stimulus,” an upsurge in national emotion that would chase away fear and get people to believe in the possibility of recovery.

As a rally-point, Johnson personified the NRA with the Blue Eagle, a symbol with lightning in one talon and a gear in the other. Posters and placards featuring the Blue Eagle were placed in factories and shop windows of participating businesses, proclaiming, “We Do Our Part.” Consumers were encouraged to do business only with NRA members. While Johnson himself could be quite coercive in getting businesses to accept the industrial codes, he warned citizens not to boycott those who did not participate. He stumped across the country, selling his plan to the public. Several parades were staged to celebrate this New Deal. The New York City parade featured nearly two million marchers and took over ten hours to complete. While at the Tulsa parade, Johnson’s mother, Elizabeth, warned the crowd that, “People had better obey the NRA because my son will enforce it like lightning—and you never can tell when lightning will strike!”

Celebrities joined in, too, including Will Rogers who assured people, “This thing sounds like Santa Claus—it sounds goofy, but it’s absolutely sound.”

Hugh Johnson’s Legacy

After six months, NRA had put four million



people back to work and payrolls increased by over two billion dollars. Industrial production rose 67 percent. Johnson’s popularity rivaled that of Roosevelt, but a year into the plan, the 18-hour days and responsibility for the nation’s economy began to take its toll. Johnson was twice hospitalized and began drinking heavily. He became a liability to Roosevelt and was asked to resign in June 1934. The NRA limped along until the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in May 1935, just weeks before it would have expired anyway.

Johnson knew all along that the NRA would not stand the scrutiny of the courts, but he also strongly believed the plan would work. By the time the decision was handed down, the NRA had served its purpose and nearly all of its best qualities were folded into federal policies. Johnson remained loyal to Roosevelt until the second New Deal came in 1936, which brought a reversal of Johnson’s fiscally tight first New Deal and featured deficit spending and vastly expanded social programs.

Johnson’s bellicosity and unwillingness to do things “the Washington way” are often blamed for both the success and failure of the NRA. Johnson always contended that his job was to clear the air of fear and get people back to work; in that he was indeed successful. Most of his innovations stand today as federal policy, including the 40-hour work week, the minimum wage, and the abolition of child labor.

Hugh Samuel Johnson returned to Oklahoma a hero, despite the state’s sometimes violent political resistance to the New Deal. He tested the waters for political office, but had been gone too long to drum up solid support. Returning to Washington, he finished out his days as a columnist criticizing the more liberal second and third New Deals and died at the age of 60 in 1942. ■

Larry Johnson currently serves as Reference Librarian for the Metropolitan Library System and manages the Downtown Library’s Oklahoma Room, special collections on the history of Oklahoma and the Southwest. He has authored many articles and books and has been a finalist for an Oklahoma Book Award. His latest book is *Historic Photos of Oklahoma* (Turner, 2009).

Image credits, Page 27: [top] Franklin D. Roosevelt, c. 1905-1945. Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress; LC H25-25231-BF [center] Col. Hugh S. Johnson, 1918. Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress; LC-H261-12090. *Page 28:* Protest against child labor in a labor parade, 1909. George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress; LC-USZ62-22198. *Page 29:* Pres. Wilson at Draft Parade, 1917. Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress; LC-H261-9395

CALENDAR

Events



Oklahoma Chautauqua

- June 2-6, Tulsa
 - June 9-13, Enid
 - June 16-20, Lawton
- Information: 918/584-3333

This year's theme, *Lincoln's Legacy of Equality: Voices on the Fringe*, uses the 2009 bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth to examine the legacy of our 16th president. See page 9 for more details. ■



OK Mozart International Festival

Living History Showcase Series
Community Center Mezzanine, Bartlesville
Information: 918/336-9900
www.okmozart.com

Michelle M. Martin of Discovering History will portray heroines of the American West in historically accurate, nineteenth-century attire. Events begin at 1 p.m. each day and include:

- June 15: Portrayal of Charlotte Swords
- June 16: Portrayal of Elizabeth Brunson Hoole
- June 17: Portrayal of Emma Caroline Morely
- June 18: Portrayal of Caroline Ingalls
- June 19: Portrayal of Mattie Huffman ■



Africa West Heritage & Culture Festival

Metro Tech Conference Center, OKC
June 13 and 14
Information: 405/427-4444
www.capitolchamber.org

Celebrating the African American heritage of Oklahoma, including programs, exhibits, food, and competitions to attract attendees of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Sponsored by the Capitol Chamber. ■



Photo by Jim Argo

Pawnee Bill Wild West Show

Pawnee Bill Ranch, Pawnee
June 13, 20, and 27
Information: 918/762-2513

Enjoy trick riding and roping, daring deeds, and fireworks. Downtown parade at 2:00 p.m. Side show opens at 5:30 p.m.; Wild West Show starts at 7:00 p.m. ■



Civil War Weekend

Fort Washita Historic Site
State Rd. 199, near Durant
September 25, 26, and 27
Information: 580/924-6502

Visit Union and Confederate camps, participate in drills, and observe demonstration battles. ■

Exhibits



Journey Stories

A Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit
June 2009-April 2010
Information: 405/235-0280

Journey Stories uses images, audio, and artifacts to explore an ideal that is central to the American identity—the freedom to move. The exhibit includes individual journey stories and demonstrates the roles of travel and movement in building a diverse, American society. For venue locations and detailed information, see pages 10-14. *Image Credit: Emigrants Crossing the Plains* by Felix Darley, 1869. Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-2634. ■

Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma! Reading & Discussion Programs

Rebirth of a Nation:

Nationalism and the Civil War
Lawton Public Library, 6:30 p.m.
110 SW 4th St., Lawton
Information: 580/581-3450

- May 19, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Presented by Judy Neale
- June 16, *Ordeal by Fire*
Presented by Daniel Snell
- July 21, *Reconstruction: After the Civil War*
Presented by Lynn Musslewhite
- August 18, *The Private Mary Chestnut*
Presented by Heather Everett ■



Photo by Yousef Khanfar

End Notes From the Editor —Carla Walker

If you've read this issue from front to back, you know that our theme is "Journey Stories" in honor of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit we're hosting beginning in June (see page 10). Though you're just hearing about the excitement, our staff and the six host sites have been planning and coordinating the tour for over a year. Now that I've worked with the idea for some time, it occurs to me that *all* stories are about journeys—journeys of time and space, journeys of the heart, journeys where lessons are learned or opportunities lost.

My journey story is rooted in the perseverance and determination of my grandparents. My granny, Stella West Tucker, delivered the mail on horseback in the early 1920s. She traveled a 20-mile route, every other day, between Boswell and Sand Bluff in southeast Oklahoma. The salary was \$60 a month; her horse's name was Pet. The

photograph of her from that time shows a young, 20-year-old girl in overalls, leather work gloves, and a worn felt cowboy hat. She's sitting astride Pet and her smile is relaxed and confident. I should look at that photo more often.

The journey story my dad tells is about his father, Morgan Walker, known to our family as Pappy. Pappy lost his legs in World War I, but, with the help of braces, still managed to walk behind a mule to plow his fields. Dad remembers watching Pappy sit on the edge of the bed after a day of plowing, rubbing liniment into the bloody stumps of his legs, and then strapping on those braces to go out and plow again the next day . . . and the next . . . and the next. A strong work ethic is tightly woven into our family journey story.

So, what's your story? I hope this issue inspires

you to travel to see the Smithsonian exhibit and to think about your own journey stories. One of the great things about working for the Oklahoma Humanities Council is the chance to explore—and pass on to you—the wonderful journey stories of our state and our world.

Don't miss our next issue, when we'll have a photo essay and interview with photographer Yousef Khanfar. Yousef grew up in Kuwait. We'll ask him about choosing peace over violence and how he communicates that through the camera lens. The beautiful image above is a sample of his work.

Until next time, "shop" our calendar and plan your stay-cation to include a great humanities program.



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