

The Round Tower

Cleveland County Historical Society
Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum



Upcoming Events

Feb.-May 26, Making
A Difference: Norman
Women Past and Present

June 9 : Second Friday
Art Walk Exhibit Opening
With Crafts.

June 9- August 26: Letter
and Handwriting Ex-
hibit.

July: Children's Summer
Camp

Check our Webpage or
Facebook page for up-
dates on these events.



Old Regime Study Club 1908



OU Law Students 1951

making a difference: **NORMAN WOMEN** past & present

**MARCH 3 -
MAY 27**

an exhibition
@ the moore-lindsay
historic house

free admission



508 N. PETERS
normanmuseum.org



Celebrating founding of Norman Train passes Historical House in 2013

What happened to Celebrating Norman's History?

As I write this for our newsletter on April 20, it is not clear if the citizens of Norman will celebrate the founding of Norman on April 22, 1889. Every year since 1889, proud citizens have celebrated the founding of their city in one form or another. Originally known as Founder's Day, the celebration was usually at City Park (now Andrew's Park), where kids ran around just out of reach of their parents, while their mothers set out the goodies on the lawn from their picnic baskets, and dads set up the horse shoe games. When they all gathered to eat, neighbors took turns telling their stories of the establishment of Norman.

Perhaps the biggest celebration was in 1964, at the 75th anniversary of settlement. The celebration lasted three days and included many citizens, who remembered April 22, 1889. The Norman Chamber of Commerce planned the events and kicked off the festivities when a replica of the 1889 Santa Fe engine, with two passenger coaches, chugged across the prairie and into town on April 22. The Cyrus K. Holliday, a Santa Fe museum piece, was on display at the Norman depot for a week. Riding the train were top officials of the Santa Fe Company and seventy Norman civic leaders.

Events for the three days had something for everyone. The Norman Round-Up Club sponsored a three-day rodeo including 40 rodeo clubs from around the state. They also sponsored a parade. The Chamber's tribute to the city Founders was a plan for a permanent historical display, which would be funded by private sources. For the kids, the Lion's Club carnival was set-up in downtown Norman.

The Founder's celebration also included lectures in architecture by Frank Lloyd Wright's son, Frank Jr. and there were three art exhibits sponsored by the University of Oklahoma School of Fine Arts. The university also played a role in filming the celebration. Coinciding with the city events, OU held the fourth annual television news film workshop at Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. Participants in the workshop were given the assignment to photograph Norman's three day celebration. Ned Hickman, director of motion picture production at OU, collected the individual newsreels and combined them to make a documentary of the celebration of Norman's founding. This newsreel does not appear to have survived the last 53 years.

Probably the highlight of the celebration was the grubstake's sweepstakes. For ten dollars, purchased from members of the Lion's Club, ticket holders had the chance to win a town lot. The greater Norman Builder's Association donated ten lots in different subdivisions around town. The grubstake winner would have the choice of one of those ten lots. The winner was A. Vuillemin, Rt. 1, Norman.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the celebration was the stories from those who still remembered April 22, 1889. They told their stories so that future generations would know their history. Mrs. Bugher was 8 yrs. old at the time of the land opening. She told of making the trip across the South Canadian River sitting on the high seat of the covered wagon beside her brother and mother. Her father was ahead of them on horseback, riding to stake his claim. Looking back from 1964, Mrs. Bugher could only marvel at all the historical changes that had taken place since that day.

In the 1970s, when the historical society was in its infancy, board members collected stories from the families who established the social, economic and religious life of Norman. We have those stories in two bound volumes, and an effort is being made to upload those stories to the CCHS web site. Perhaps there will never be a formal celebration of Norman's history again. It is the historical society's mission to continue to research, collect and disseminate Norman's history, and respect the work of those who made, and still make, Norman what it is today.

Sue Schrems, Ph.D
Cleveland County Historical Society

Women From Norman City Council Visit The Historical House for a Women's Forum

On March 26, in connection with our exhibit, "Making a Difference: Norman Women Past and Present", Stephanie Hixon, museum manager for the Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum, hosted a women's forum consisting of women in Norman's government. Mayor Lynne Miller and former Mayor Cindy Rosenthal along with city council members, Breea Clark(Ward 6) Aleisha Karjala(Ward 2) and Kate Bierman, (Ward 1), sat for questions and comments about their perspective on women who serve on Norman's City Council. The event was open to the public and commemorated March as Women's History Month. Below are photographs of the event.

Pictured, left to right:
Stephanie Hixon,
Breea Clark,
Lynne Miller,
Aleisha Karjala,
Cindy Rosenthal,
Kate Bierman.





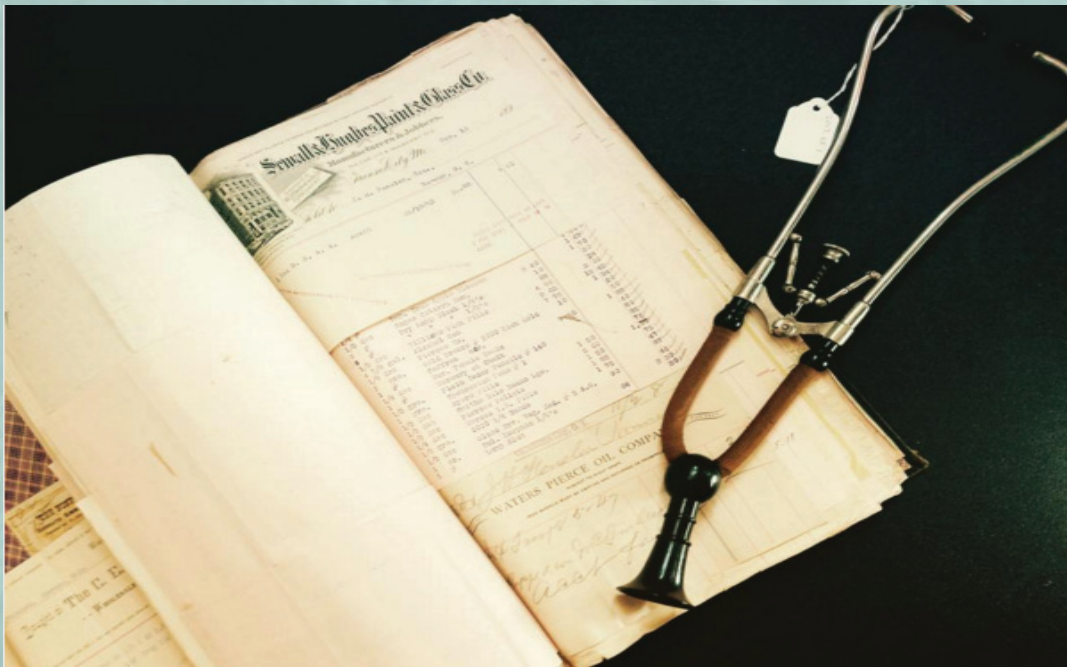
Mayor Miller, Center. Breea Clark, left, Aleisha Karjala, right.



Former Mayor Cindy Rosenthal with Aleisha Karjala.

New to the Archives

We are always pleased to accept new items to our archives. Artifacts from early Norman, or even artifacts from present day, help us to interpret the history of Norman.



Stethoscope and invoice book belonging to Dr. J. H. Fenelon. Dr. Fenelon owned a drug store on Main street in 1894 called Fenelon and Bellamy Drug Store.

Also new to the archive are newspapers from the early 1990s and 2000. Of particular interest are newspapers of the Murrah Bombing and the 100th anniversary of the Land Run, the Oklahoma Diamond Jubilee.

We also recieved a final edition of the Naval Base Newspaper, the Bull Horn.

Historical Gleanings: The 1930s and Norman's Economic Uncertainty

In the Economic Depression of the 1930s, many Oklahomans, including Norman citizens, had to come to grips with the economic reality that there was little money and fewer jobs. In 1932, some Americans saw hope in the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States. In his first 100 days, he proposed to the United States Congress a series of programs that were meant to stimulate the economy and put people back to work. Those programs were the beginning of a storm of government funding that reached every city, every town, and every countryside across America. For a small town the size of Norman, with a population of 9,603 citizens in 1930, community leaders did not wait for the government program to save the day; they organized and started programs they hoped would bring economic relief to the citizens, while they waited for the government's economic response.

Along with growing economic uncertainty in Norman in the early 1930s, there was weak economic leadership in the city. After initial settlement in April of 1889, downtown businesses did organize to promote commerce, but it was not until 1933 that there was a concentrated effort to strengthen Norman's economic future. It was in that year, that the Norman Chamber of Commerce was formally organized. The organization of the chamber was no doubt due to the economic downturn that many Norman businesses experienced. New Chamber of Commerce leadership believed that there needed to be local economic stimulus programs that encouraged people to buy goods, the hope being that more money would circulate and jobs would be created. The chamber devised several economic programs or events that preceded the influx of Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs in the mid to late 1930s.

One of the chamber's programs was called, "Auction It Off." Citizens were encouraged to bring household items or farm implements to an auction fair, where the sellers could realize some ready cash. The first auction drew a crowd of 300 people. The success encouraged planners to announce future auction dates. The merchants also planned monthly Dollar Days to offer buyers discounted merchandise, while the chamber encouraged farmer markets. With the Farmer's Market, the thought was that the market could do two things; it could help sell farm produce, and it could bring farmers and town folks together for a common cause. There was evidently an economic, social and perhaps political divide between those who lived in the Cleveland County farming community, and those who lived in the City of Norman. It was the chamber's plan to bring the two groups together for the economic betterment of both communities.

By the mid-1930s, Oklahoma farmers were suffering from over-production and low commodity prices. The farmers were financially doing well towards the end of WWI and into the beginning of the 1920s. But, America's post-war agricultural needs were not as great as in the war years. Toward the end of the 1920s, there was a glut of agricultural products on the market, prices began to fall and the farmer realized little for his produce.

Without the same income, it was difficult for many in the farming community to pay their loans; it became a vicious cycle trying to make ends meet. As a result, many Cleveland County farmers joined farmer's unions. The unions provided support, education on the best farming methods, and cooperatives that helped in lowering the prices of goods.

The Chamber of Commerce also encouraged civic groups to organize so that they could coordinate their efforts to help the community's needy. Over twenty-four civic organizations formed a federation; their mission was to evaluate the needs of the community and to devise programs to help.

In late 1933, the Roosevelt Administration launched the National Recovery Administration (NRA). The formal definition of the programs was "A New Deal agency established to eliminate cut-throat competition by bringing industry, labor, and government together to create codes of fair practices and set prices." For Norman, the NRA was probably the most intrusive government program that the city had seen thus far. Although the program was not mandatory, the federal government used a tactic from WWI Liberty bond drive; it was a person's patriotic duty to sign up for the NRA program, you were not patriotic if you did not participate. The social pressure was immense.

Washington NRA officials asked local Chamber of Commerce's across the country to be the local engine for a successful program in their area. In Norman the chamber members visited every business to ask the owners to sign a pledge stating that they would hire more employees. When or if the business owner signed the pledge, they would get a government card called the Blue Eagle to put in the window of his/her place of business; consumers were encouraged to only shop where there was a card in the window. The cards had the symbol of a blue eagle, which became the symbol of the NRA.

Blue Eagle cards were also designed for citizens to put in their automobiles or homes showing their support for the NRA program. Newspapers ran ads in support of the program-- "Add a man. It is cheaper to add a man than to give unemployment relief." By August 1933, president Roosevelt issued further instructions to the NRA. Businesses were now persuaded to shorten work hours and enforce a minimum wage. The idea of shorter work hours would enable more people an opportunity to work, therefore more wages and more spending power. Norman barbers were the first group in Norman to approve a code shortening hours of business. They agreed to limit working hours to a 52hr. week of a 70hr. week, and to set a minimum wage. The Chamber of Commerce asked those who were unemployed, both skilled and unskilled to register with the chamber office.



Above is shown a drawing of the "Blue Eagle" insignia which is the emblem of the re-employment campaign started by President Roosevelt and the National Recovery Administration. Distribution of the posters and other insignia to signers of the employers' blanket code agreement will start Tuesday at the Norman postoffice.

A citizens committee was appointed by the chamber to visit businesses in Norman to determine the "hold outs;" those who did not sign the pledge. Citizens formed a branch of a national organization called the Blue Eagle. Members of the organization looked for the Blue Eagle cards in store windows to make sure companies and businesses were in compliance with the NRA and the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce. The Blue Eagle organization was organized like a military group. They had generals, lieutenant generals, majors, and colonels. They went block to block canvassing the businesses. It is not clear what happened when they found a business out of compliance. By August 1933, the Norman Transcript reported that 50 citizens had received jobs from the NRA program and 68 companies had signed the pledge.

1933 was only the beginning of the difficult economic stretch for Norman and Cleveland County. The next article in CCHS newsletter will highlight the effort of the Chamber of Commerce to up-lift citizens, to keep their spirits high, and to incubate the feeling of economic confidence.

Sue Schrems, Ph.D.

Membership Renewal

Help maintain the Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum with your membership in the Cleveland and County Historical Society. The Historical Society, established in 1967, oversees the operation of the City owned Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum established in 1973 at 508 N. Peters. Your financial support through membership in the Society goes toward operation of the museum and helps to fund historical displays and educational exhibits.

There are three Levels of Membership, all members receive the quarterly newsletter, The Round Tower and access to our photo and paper archives and Sanborn Maps.

1. Standard: \$15.00

Includes online quarterly newsletter

2. Heritage: \$30.00

Includes quarterly online newsletter & copy of *Norman 1889-1949* (Arcadia Press 2012)

3. Premium : \$50.00

Includes online quarterly newsletter, limited edition museum replica Christmas ornament and copy of *Norman 1889-1949* (Arcadia Press 2012)

Mail your membership to Cleveland County Historical Society, 508 N. Peters, Norman Oklahoma 73069 **OR: Visit <http://www.normanmuseum.org/membership.html> and use credit card or paypal.**

We appreciate your financial support.

