

## The Round Tower

*Cleveland County Historical Society  
Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum*

### *Society News*

#### *Meet the new Museum Manager*

Two new museum positions created by the Cleveland County Historical Society.

Cleveland County Historical Society (CCHS) is pleased to announce Stephanie Hixon as Manager of the Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum. Museum Manager is a new position created by CCHS to take the place of the Curator. The City of Norman appointed CCHS as guardians of the historical house in 1973. In an agreement with CCHS, the City has provided funds to the historical society for the daily operation of the museum. In return, CCHS has agreed to provide tours, and to interpret the history of Norman and Central Oklahoma. To accomplish this goal, CCHS hires a Museum Manager, who helps CCHS to uphold the Society's agreement with the City.

The Manager reports directly to the Museum Director, also a new position created by CCHS, and is a board position. Jeffrey Wilhite will serve as Museum Director for 2014-2015. Wilhite is responsible for the planning and the operation of the museum. Under Wilhite's authority, the Museum Manager will help with educational programs, public tours of the historical house, and historical exhibits.

New Museum Manager, Stephanie Hixon, has a Bachelors of Arts in Multilingual Communications and a Minor in Business and Anthropology from Oklahoma Baptist University. She has interned at the Price Tower Arts Center in Bartlesville, Bartlesville Area History Museum, and the Mabree-Gerrer Art Museum in Shawnee.

New Museum Director, Jeffrey Wilhite, is a Cleveland County Historical Society board member and Associate Professor of Bibliography, Government Documents Librarian, Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma.

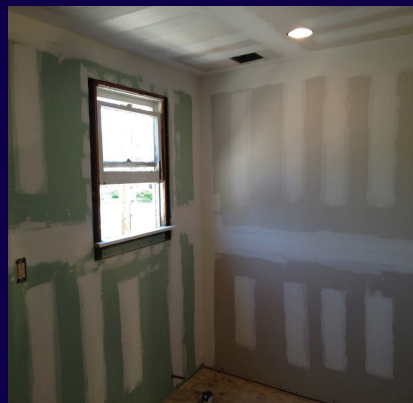
# NORMAN FORWARD

[www.normanforward.com](http://www.normanforward.com)

## *Carriage House Renovations*

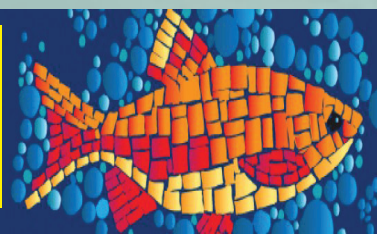


In March 2014, The City of Norman started renovations of the Carriage House that sits behind the Moore-Lindsay Historical House Museum. The facility is being renovated as a meeting space and classroom with a kitchenette at the north end. A back room will provide office space for the Cleveland County Historical Society. The main room will be used for CCHS meetings, lectures, and informal gatherings.



*Pisces Project*

*A Swim Complex  
for Norman*



<http://piscesproject.org/>





[www.hometownnorman.com](http://www.hometownnorman.com)

## From the Archives



### *Augusta Metcalfe--The Sagebrush Artist*

Since 1973, when the Moore-Lindsay House became a museum, the historical society has accepted numerous artifacts that tell a story about Norman and Oklahoma at the time of settlement, and now into the twentieth-first century. Of particular interest are two reproductions of Augusta Metcalfe's paintings depicting Oklahoma life and culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America.

In 1886 when Augusta Corson was three years old, her family moved from Marshall County Kansas to "No Man's Land," a desolate, windy, sagebrush covered region that Texas relinquished claim to in 1850. This strip of land, which bordered Kansas, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado, had no governmental authority; it was not a part of any state or territory. And, there was no law, which is probably why many referred to the region as Robber's Roost. Today, this strip of land is the western most part of the state of Oklahoma, which is referred to as the Oklahoma Panhandle. It was in this remote place where Augusta Corson Metcalfe lived. She captured her life and the culture of rural western Oklahoma in her sketches and paintings. Her artistic endeavors began when, as a little girl, she sketched on rocks and the white stones of an abandoned farmhouse. As she grew, so did her talent and by the 1950s, the world knew her as the Sagebrush Artist.

Augusta's family, like many who kept moving westward in the late nineteenth century, was in search of better grazing and farming land. After Augusta's father found the right piece of land on which to settle in 1886 in western Oklahoma, he built a 10ft by 12ft shack, and the family called it home. Eventually they moved from this adobe to a three-room sod house dug into the side of a ravine, which was close to deep spring ponds. The shady springs provided the family and their small cattle herd with relief from the summer heat.

*From the Archives, August Metcalfe ...Continued.....*



Augusta Metcalfe



Augusta Metcalfe working in her studio

Augusta was the youngest of four children and like her brothers and sister, she spent her days learning the skills that would help in contributing to the families economic welfare. But, when Augusta was not helping her mother or helping her brothers with the cattle, she found entertainment by sketching the life around her. Augusta was fascinated with horses and many of her childhood sketches were of horses and horse and buggies.

In 1908, Augusta married Jim Metcalf and they had a son whom they named Howard. Within a couple of years, husband Jim abandoned Augusta and her son leaving her to raise Howard alone. It was then that Augusta added an e to Metcalf, showing her independence. She did not marry again.

Like western artist, Charlie Russell, Augusta started demonstrating her talent in illustrating the letters and envelopes that she sent to friends. Her reputation as an artist began to grow as she sold painting to friends and neighbors. She exhibited some of her art as early as 1911 and won prizes at state fairs in Oklahoma and Texas. She eventually exhibited her work at the Grand Central Galleries in New York City, the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City and the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa Oklahoma. In 1968, three years before her death, Augusta Metcalfe was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

August Metclafe's paintings are hanging in the Informal Parlor of the Historical Museum.

*Community Events Calendar for Fall 2014*

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AUGUST-

- Moore- Lindsay Historical House: OU Football Display, [www.normanmuseum.org](http://www.normanmuseum.org)
- 15th, Moore Chamber of Commerce: Summer Spectacular Craft Show [www.moorechamber.com](http://www.moorechamber.com)
- 22nd-23rd , Firehouse Art Center, Midsummer Night's Fair, [www.normanfirehouse.com](http://www.normanfirehouse.com)

SEPTEMBER-

- Through September 14th, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Oil and Wood: Oklahoma Moderns George Bogart and James Henkle Nancy Johnston Records Gallery, [www.ou.edu/fjjma](http://www.ou.edu/fjjma)

OCTOBER-

- Moore-Lindsay Historical House: Halloween/ Mourning Traditions Display, [www.normanmuseum.org](http://www.normanmuseum.org)
- 24th, Downtown Norman Fall Fest [www.visitnorman.com/halloween](http://www.visitnorman.com/halloween)
- 31st, Noble Chamber of Commerce: Haunting Main Street [nobleok.org/events/annual-events](http://nobleok.org/events/annual-events)

NOVEMBER-

- Moore-Lindsay Historical House: Native American Heritage Month/ Kiowa 5 Display , [www.normanmuseum.org](http://www.normanmuseum.org)
- Sept 21- Jan 6: The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Dancers and Deities: Kachinas from the James T. Bialac Native American Art Collection [www.snomnh.ou.edu/exhibits](http://www.snomnh.ou.edu/exhibits)

DECEMBER-

- 12th ,Moore-Lindsay Historical House: Christmas Open House , [www.normanmuseum.org](http://www.normanmuseum.org)



## Norman's Grande Dame of Entertainment: The Sooner Theatre

Opera houses were once the main source of entertainment in the United States starting before the American Revolution in 1776. By the late nineteenth century, almost every small town in America sported one or two opera houses, where traveling troupes from New York, Boston and Chicago brought culture and entertainment to the American people. Norman kept up with the entertainment trends in the country. Soon after the establishment of Norman in 1889, John Franing opened an 850-seat opera house on East Main Street. With the advancement of technology and the “art of motion pictures,” at the turn of the twentieth century, opera houses gave way to movie houses. From 1890 to 1929, most theaters in downtown Norman showed silent movies; “talkies” took the place of “silent” movies by 1930. The Varsity Theatre, at 108 E. Main started in 1910 as an “Electric Theatre.” The advance from silent to talkie kept the Varsity open until 1954. University Theatre at 225-227 E. Main was art deco in design and showed films from 1925 until 1959. The most elegant theater in Norman, however, was the Sooner Theatre built at 101 E. Main in 1929.

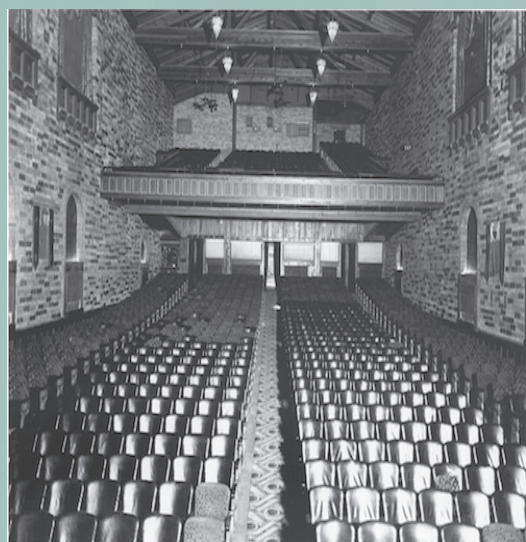
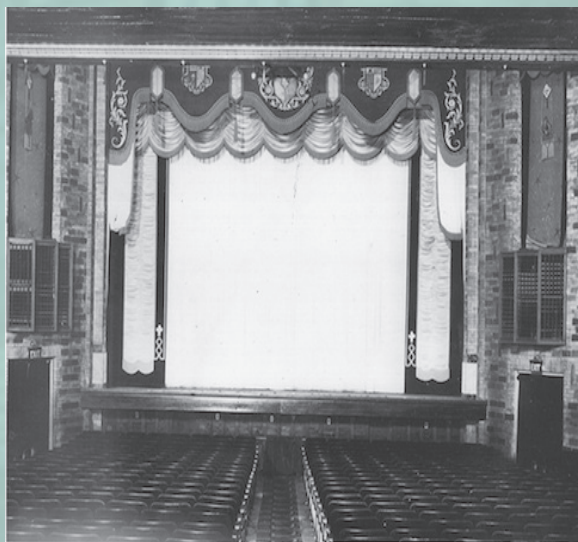
The year 1929 was a seminal year for the world of entertainment in America. *Buck Rogers*, the first sci-fi comic strip premiered, the first Academy Award was awarded to the movie *Wings*, and Norman Oklahoma's Sooner Theatre opened its doors for the first time on February 10 of that year. The theater occupied the town lot, where Pryor Adkins built the Planter's Hotel in May, 1889; Adkins building was the first brick building in Norman. The Planters Hotel was used as a town-gathering place for Christmas and New Years dances, and as the location for the first play, *Among the Breakers*. The Planter Hotel was razed in 1928 to make room for the Sooner. The Sooner Theatre was the first movie theater in the region to show “talking pictures,” over \$200,000 was spent to complete the structure; 2.7 million in 2014 dollars. The Sooner Theatre's architect, Harold Gimeno, designed a Spanish Colonial Style interior emphasizing imported mosaic tile and Italian marble. Harold, and his father, Patrio, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, hand painted the high beams and wall decorations. The ceiling has 252 hand-painted Spanish coat-of-arms. The theater also had specially designed lights and stained glass windows. On the exterior, Gimeno used yellow brick, which was trimmed with white limestone.



On the opening day of the Sooner Theatre on February 10th, 1929, the audience was thrilled by the talkie *Alias Jimmy Valentine*, a crime drama starring William Haines, Leila Hyams, and Lionel Barrymore. The film was Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's first talking picture. Admission costs .50 cents for adults and .25 cents for children. After the premiere, tickets to watch a newsreel, a cartoon and a feature film cost .40 cents for adults and .10 cents for children. Balcony seating was .30 cents.

The Sooner had a proud history until the 1970s, when giant movie multiplexes were built thus leaving few people interested in the downtown theater. In 1975, the Sooner Theatre closed with the movie *Battle of the Amazons*. Not until an intrepid group of Norman citizens rallied around the historic preservation movement in the 1970s did there become an interest in preserving cultural and historic buildings on Norman's Main Street. A citizens committee devoted to the restoration of the theater petitioned the City of Norman to buy the Sooner, which was then leased back to the committee for \$1 a year. Renovation of the theater soon began with the financial help from the City and the citizens of Norman. The Sooner Theatre reopened in 1982.

The Sooner Theatre is now listed on both the State and National Registry of Historic Places, and has since served as a venue for theatrical performances, concerts, benefits, and the spot for the annual interactive Halloween Rocky Horror Picture Show screening. The stained glass windows still shine at night, the hand painted ceiling still gleams, and eighty-five years later, the Grande Dame has never looked better.





## *Stories Behind the Photographs--*

### *The Graham/Johnson Families*



*Callie Graham Millinery Shop*

The day of the opening of the unassigned lands on April 22, 1889, entrepreneurs, hoping to financially gain from new opportunities in Oklahoma Territory, started business in hastily raised tents and roughly built wooden buildings on Main Street of the new town of Norman Oklahoma. Drug stores, dry good stores, harness shops, rooming houses and saloons soon lined the street. By 1900, the often referred to “crude establishments” gave way to more solid brick structures and businesses that catered to all aspects of Norman life; barber shops, confectioners, photographers, opera houses, and for women, millinery shops. Hattie and Callie Graham were probably the first women to set up business on Main Street when they opened Graham’s Millinery Shop at 224 E. Main Street in 1900.

The Graham sisters were the daughters of Robert and Marylis Graham of Chillicothe, Missouri. In 1878, Robert’s son Isaac, along with his uncle, traveled to the Chickasaw Nation looking for work; they were hired by Chickasaw chief, George Washington, to work on his ranch. When Robert Graham heard his son’s favorable reports about the opportunities in the Chickasaw country, he and his wife packed up their house hold belongings, and seven children, and moved to land that was a days ride by wagon from today’s Paul’s Valley. The family included four girls who, it was reported, became quite popular with the cowboys in the Territory. The oldest girl, Mary Elizabeth, or Molly, married Edward B. Johnson, the son of Chickasaw rancher, Montford T. Johnson. The union between these two families left a large historical imprint on Norman and the surrounding region.





The Arline Hotel, NW corner of Main and Webster.

Montford T. Johnson built a ranch in the Chickasaw Nation ten years before Robert Graham moved to the Territory and twenty years before the opening of the Unassigned Lands to the north of the Canadian River. He was a quarter Chickasaw and was raised by his Chickasaw grandmother in the Indian nation.

The Arline Hotel, NW corner of Main and Webster.

In 1862, Montford married Mary Elizabeth Campbell and they eventually had seven children. After his wife died in the early 1880s, Montford married again and had six more children. After the Civil War, Johnson built his cattle business by rounding up unbranded cattle that were abundant in the Nation. He established several ranches and eventually settled near Jesse Chisholm's home at Silver City, which was west of Tuttle near the popular cattle trail bearing Chisholm's name.

E.B. or Edward Bryant, was the oldest of Montford's thirteen children, he was born in 1863 near old Fort Arbuckle in the Chicksaw Nation. Like his father, E.B. Johnson became a cattleman, but Montford's son received an education that would make him an astute business man as well, a characteristic suited to the entrepreneur spirit of many who invested in Norman. E.B. attended local schools in Indian Territory and was a student at Cane Hill College in Arkansas, and later, the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute in New York, where he pursued a career in engineering. On February 1887, E. B. married Mollie Graham at Silver City near Minco in Indian Territory. E.B. ran his fathers store and invested in the bank at Minco and other business ventures in that area. In 1887, he established a ranch on Pond Creek, three miles from the South Canadian River, which became one of the best stock ranches in the Twin Territories.

E.B. and Mollie Graham had eight children. In 1899, E.B. moved his family to Norman to educate the children. Johnson re-established his farm N.E. of the town center in a location called "Johnson's Corner," which was at present day Robinson and N.E. 12 Ave.

In Norman, E.B. Johnson invested in property and in several local banks. In 1912, he was the prime investor in a plan to establish a bridge across the South Canadian River at Adkins Crossing; Johnson had business interest on both sides of the river. A day before the bridge opened, Johnson's cowboy's drove 290 head of cattle across the bridge and up the trail to stockyards in Oklahoma City.

In 1894, Johnson bought the Victoria Hotel at the corner of West Main and Webster. He renamed it the Arline House in honor of one of his daughters. He hired his sister-in-law, Callie Graham to run the hotel, which catered to the University of Oklahoma Students. In 1914, the Arline was sold again and became the First Christian Church. Hattie and Callie never married. When Hattie's health began to deteriorate, the sisters moved to Arizona, where Callie taught school on an Indian Reservation. Both died in Arizona, and were buried in Norman.

Both the Johnson and Graham families left their mark on Norman and many of the descendants of these two large families still live in Norman and Cleveland County. In 1994, Phyllis Murray, ancestry of Montford T. Johnson, built the Montford Inn, a bed and breakfast in Norman that ranks high on the list of quality bed and breakfast establishments throughout the country. Phyllis Murray's great aunt was Hallie Graham.



Montford Inn

<http://www.montfordinn.com/>