

Timeline of Oklahoma History

Created by the Oklahoma History Center Museum
Learning and Engagement Department



Oklahoma
Historical
Society



Oklahoma Prehistory

- According to archaeological research, 30,000 years ago, humans occupy the area now known as Oklahoma.
- From 800 to 1600 AD, **Caddoan-speaking people** live across a large area west of the Mississippi River (an area 1,200 miles long and 500 miles wide) including present-day Oklahoma.

AD 900–1300 Spiro Mounds

Spiro Mounds, located in eastern Oklahoma, was a thriving Mississippian-era trade center.

Visit Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center or the Oklahoma History Center to learn more about Oklahoma's fascinating prehistory!



Spiro Mounds Archaeological Site
(2012.201.B1205.0361, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Early European Explorers

- **1541:** Spanish conquistador **Francisco Vázquez de Coronado** treks through present-day Oklahoma in search of gold. Fellow Spaniard **Juan de Oñate** would try to find the famed gold in the Oklahoma Panhandle area in 1601.
- **1682:** French explorer Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle claims Louisiana Territory, including present-day Oklahoma, for France.
- **Louis Juchereau de St. Denis**, a French explorer, follows the Red River, making contact with Caddoan groups.

Early European Explorers

- **1719:** French explorer **Claude-Charles du Tisné** leads an expedition south from Illinois through present-day northeastern Oklahoma in a failed attempt to establish a trade route to the new Spanish settlement of Santa Fe. Fellow Frenchman **Jean Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe** explores the Red River region in hopes of establishing French settlements along the river.
- **1741:** **The Mallet brothers** and **André Fabry de la Bruyère** attempt to traverse the rivers of present-day Oklahoma to create a trade route to Santa Fe.
- **1770:** **Athanase de Mézières** goes on his first expedition up the Red River, successfully negotiating treaties with four American Indian tribes.

1796

Chouteau Trading Post

Jean Pierre Chouteau established the first permanent non-Indian settlement in Oklahoma near present-day Salina.

The Chouteau family created one of the largest fur-trading outfits in the US and was highly influential in early Louisiana Territory history.



Monument at Salina marking the site of Chouteau's trading post (2012.201.B1144.0019, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

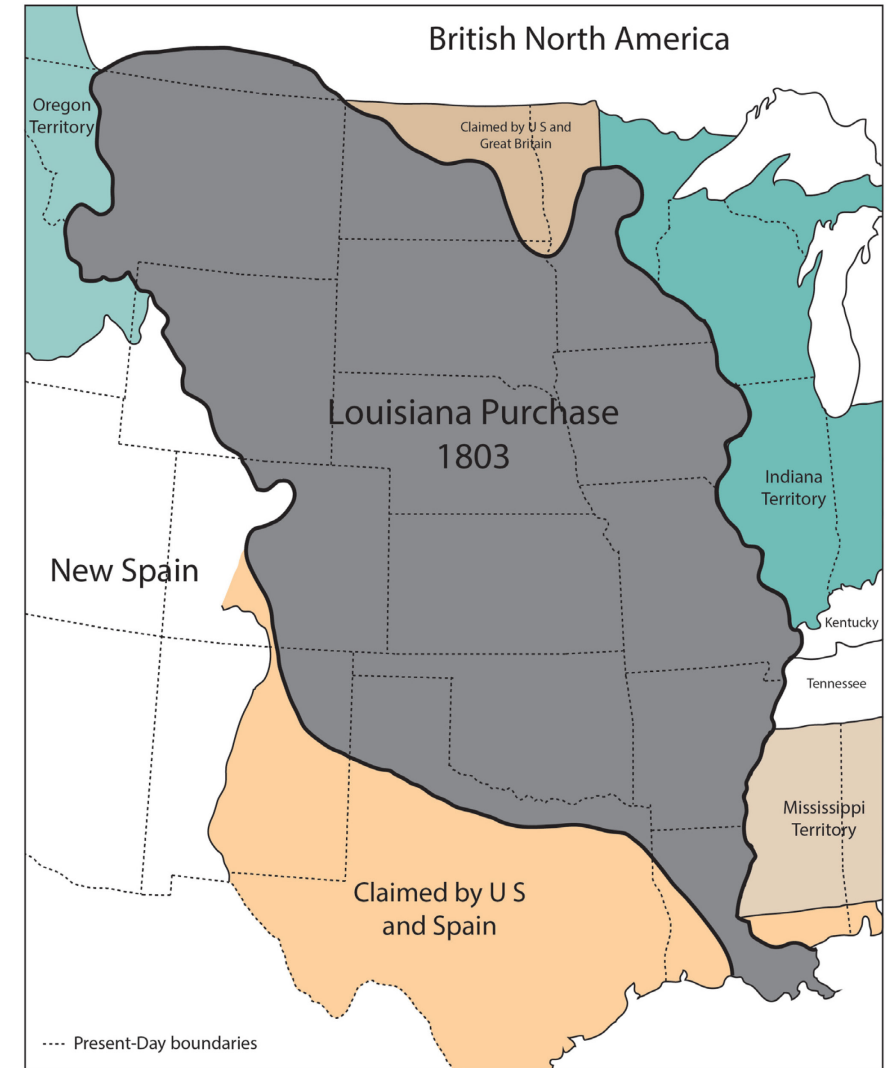
- **1762: Spain** acquires present-day Oklahoma from France after the Seven Years' War.
- **1800:** The Treaty of San Ildefonso transfers ownership of Louisiana Territory, including present-day Oklahoma, from Spain to **France**.

1804

Lewis and Clark

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson approves the purchase of the 530-million-acre Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million.

To explore this vast territory, Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Lewis and Clark encountered many tribes on their journey west, including Otoe and Missouri groups who would later be removed to Indian Territory beginning in 1880.



Map showing Louisiana Purchase (OHS)

1811

Great Salt Plains

George Sibley, an Indian agent, and his Osage guide Sans Orielle discover the Great Salt Plains near present-day Jet.

It is believed that the area was a shallow sea millions of years ago and the selenite crystals were formed by repeated water level rises.



The Great Salt Plains
(2012.201.B0228.0109, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

1821

Sequoyah

Sequoyah completes a syllabary of the Cherokee language. A syllabary is a phonetic writing system with symbols that represent syllables.

Sequoyah moved to Indian Territory in 1829. You can visit his cabin near Sallisaw. It is owned by the Cherokee Nation and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Sequoyah (2012.201.B1162.0171, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Early Trails and Settlements

- **1821:** The first school building in Indian Territory is constructed at **Union Mission** near present-day Chouteau.
- **1822:** Wagons travel the **Santa Fe Trail** through Oklahoma's Panhandle.
- **1824:** **Fort Gibson** and **Fort Towson** are built in Indian Territory to protect American Indians removed from the Southeast.

1827–1830

Indian Removal

The Muscogee (Creek) people begin the long process of forced removal from Alabama and Georgia to Indian Territory in 1827. More than 23,000 people make the journey over an 11-year period.

Congress passes the Indian Removal Act in 1830, mandating the removal of American Indians east of the Mississippi River.

The Choctaw people begin removal from their southeastern homelands to Indian Territory, signing the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, September 27, 1830.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1832:** Author **Washington Irving** accompanies an expedition of US rangers from Fort Gibson to present-day Norman and records his experiences in his book, *I*.
- **1835:** Samuel A. Worcester establishes the **first printing office** in Indian Territory.
- **1837:** The first major party of **Chickasaw** are removed to Indian Territory where they sign a treaty with the Choctaw for land in southeastern Oklahoma.

1838 Trail of Tears

The Cherokee begin their 800-mile trek from their southeastern homelands in Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia.

An estimated 4,000 people, or one-fifth of the Cherokee population, perished along the Trail of Tears.

1838

Steamboat *Heroine*

In May 1838, the *Heroine* sinks in the Red River near Fort Towson.

Steamboats transported supplies to towns and military settlements in Indian Territory. Early river travel could be dangerous; only two months prior, a major logjam was cleared to make the Red River passable.

Rediscovered in 1999, the *Heroine* is the earliest example of a western river steamboat studied by archaeologists.



Steamer Heroine on the Red River, 1838, by Peter Rindlisbacher (Steamboat Heroine Collection, OHS).

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1842: Fort Washita** is established in present-day southeastern Oklahoma to protect Chickasaw settlements.
- **1843:** Cherokee Principal Chief **John Ross** calls a meeting of the leaders of removed tribes to renew customs and revive alliances in the Cherokee capital of Tahlequah.
- **1844: *The Cherokee Advocate*** is the first newspaper in Indian Territory. ***The Cherokee Messenger*** is the first periodical.

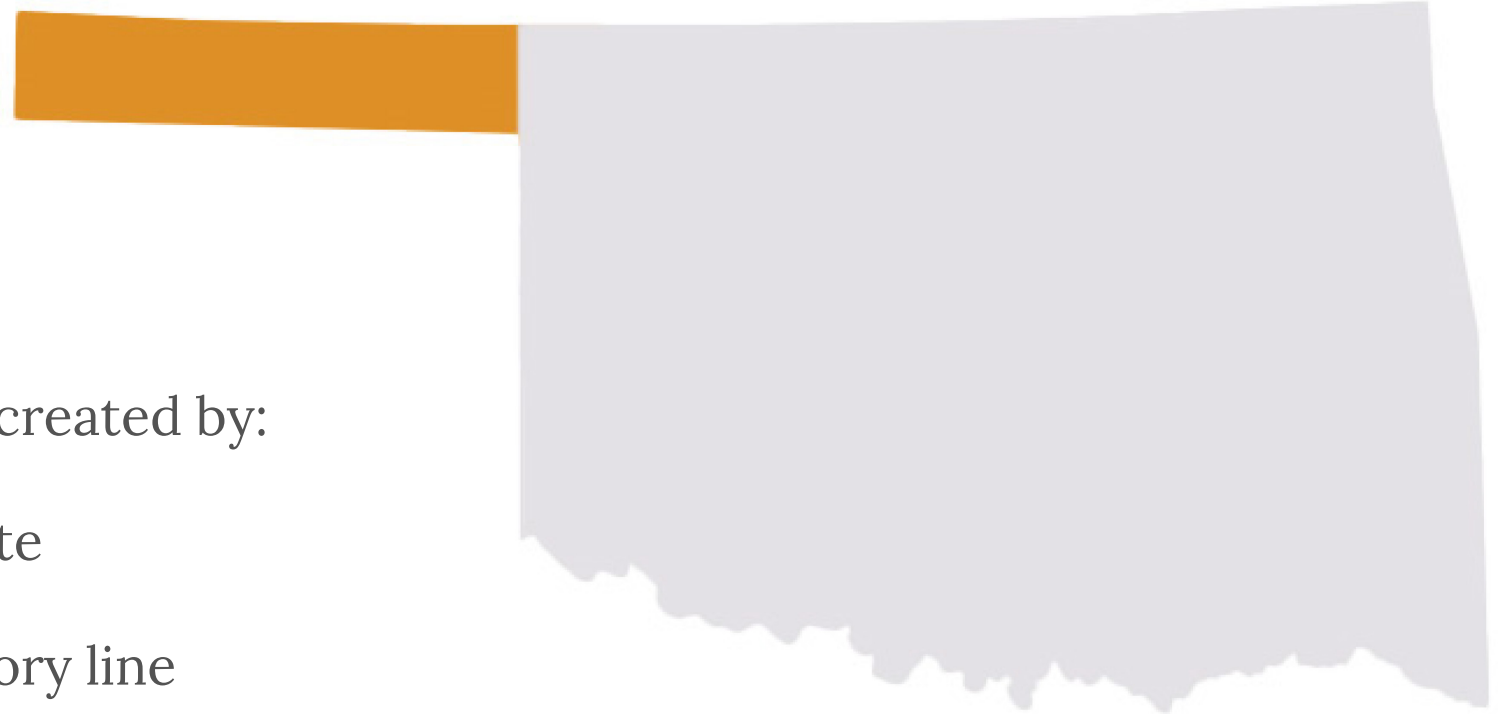
1845

No Man's Land

The future Oklahoma Panhandle is created by:

- Texas's annexation as a slave state
- The established free-state territory line agreed upon in the Missouri Compromise of 1825

No Man's Land is 166 miles long and only 34 miles wide!



Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1855–58:** The US military succeeds in driving out the majority of **Seminoles** from Florida to Indian Territory during the Third Seminole War.
- **1856: Chickasaws** establish tribal government, adopt a constitution, and declare Tishomingo as their capital.
- **1859: Lewis Ross**, brother of Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross, discovers oil on the Grand River near present-day Salina.
- **1860: Choctaws** adopt a new constitution establishing three branches of government in Doaksville, near Fort Towson.

1861–1865

The Civil War

Large factions of removed tribes side with the Confederacy, while smaller groups ally with the Union.

Confederate victories in Indian Territory:

- Battle of Round Mountain, November 19, 1861
- Second Battle of Cabin Creek, September 19, 1864, the last major engagement in Indian Territory during the Civil War.

Union victories in Indian Territory:

- First Battle of Cabin Creek, July 1–2, 1863
- Battle of Honey Springs, July 17, 1863



A reenactment of the Battle of Honey Springs, 2025

1862 Homestead Act

President Abraham Lincoln signed this bill into law on May 20, 1862.

It allowed settlers up to 160 acres of public land as long as they paid a small filing fee and lived on the land for five years.

Through the Homestead Act, settlers claimed 80 million acres of public land by 1900.



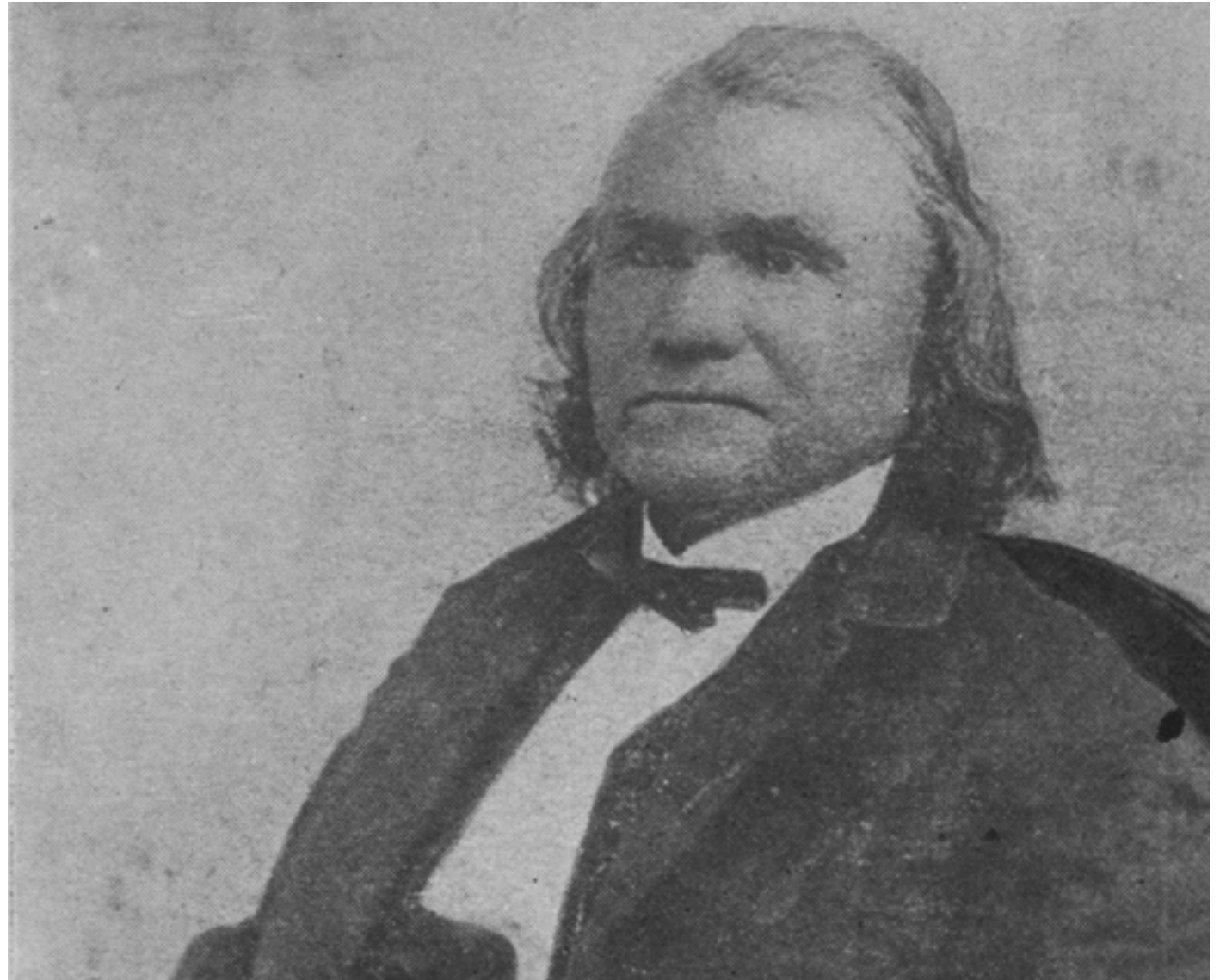
Dugout homestead in Major County
(2008.148.035.235, William Edson Photograph Collection, Cherokee Strip
Regional Heritage Center, OHS)

1865

Stand Watie

The Cherokee general surrenders at Doaksville near Fort Towson—the last Confederate general to surrender.

Watie's victories for the Confederacy included the capture of the Union steamboat *J. R. Williams* and the Second Battle of Cabin Creek in 1864.



Stand Watie (3864, William Parker Campbell Collection, OHS)

1866

Buffalo Soldiers

Six regiments of Buffalo Soldiers (units composed of African American soldiers) are deployed to protect the Great Plains.

These regiments represented ten percent of the army's strength in the late 19th century and one-half of the available military force in the West.

1866

All-Black Towns

After the Civil War, the first of more than 50 All-Black towns are created by formerly enslaved people in present-day Oklahoma.

All-Black towns were havens free of discrimination and prejudice, as well as prosperous economic and social communities.

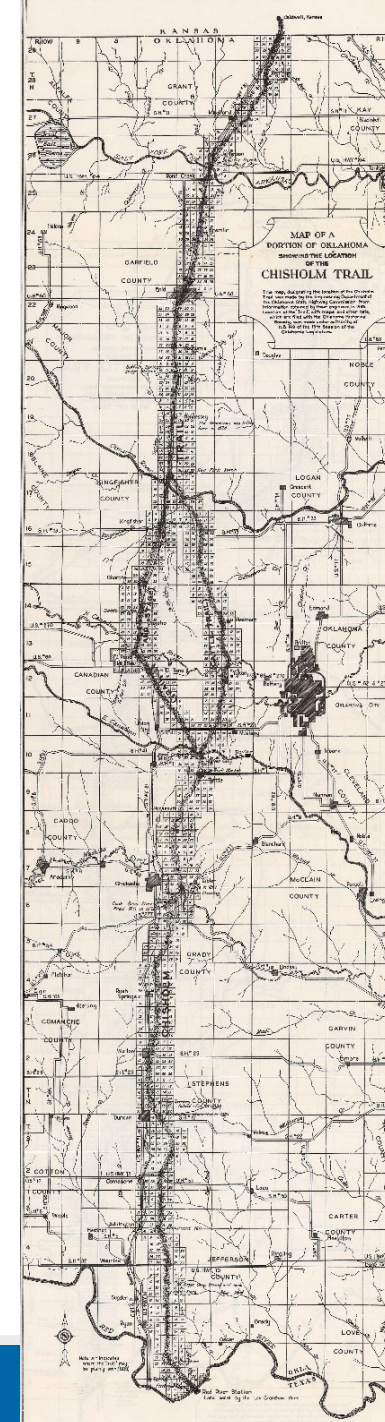


1867 Chisholm Trail

An estimated six million cattle travel the 800-mile trail from Texas to Kansas.

The trail gets its name from Jesse Chisholm, a trader and rancher with business in Oklahoma City and Wichita.

Cattle drives diminish with increased settlement along the trail, a new 1886 quarantine law in Kansas, and a bad blizzard in 1887 that devastated the cattle industry.



The Chisholm Trail
(HISMAP.0003
Oklahoma Historical
Society Map
Collection, OHS)

1868

Battle of the Washita

George Custer attacks Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle's camp on the Washita River near present-day Cheyenne on November 27.

Known as the Battle of Washita or the Massacre of Washita, an estimated 103 Cheyenne people are killed.



Black Kettle
(2012.201.B0092.0530,
Oklahoma Publishing
Company Photography
Collection, OHS).)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1868: Fort Supply** is established in Indian Territory during a US military campaign against the Plains Indians.
- **1869: Fort Sill** is established near present-day Lawton to keep the peace in Indian Territory.
- **1870:** The Missouri, Kansas, Texas Railway, known as the **KATY**, lays the first tracks in Indian Territory.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1871: Riverside Indian School**, the nation's oldest continually operated American Indian boarding school, opens in Anadarko.
- **1872: J. J. McAlester** and partners create the first major commercial coal mining operation in Indian Territory, the Osage Coal and Mining Company.
- **1875: Fort Reno** is built to pacify and protect the Cheyenne and Arapaho living nearby.

1875

Bass Reeves

Appointed by Judge Isaac C. Parker, the celebrated African American deputy US marshal begins his post at Fort Smith.

Bass served in Indian Territory for 32 years and arrested more than 3,000 fugitives.



Bass Reeves with other federal officials, 1907
(7301.0, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS)

1880

David L. Payne

The father of the Boomer Movement is arrested twice for attempting to create a colony of non-Indian settlers in Indian Territory.

Boomers were most interested in settling the Unassigned Lands, former Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole tribal land in present-day central Oklahoma, which was left vacant when land treaties were renegotiated after the Civil War.



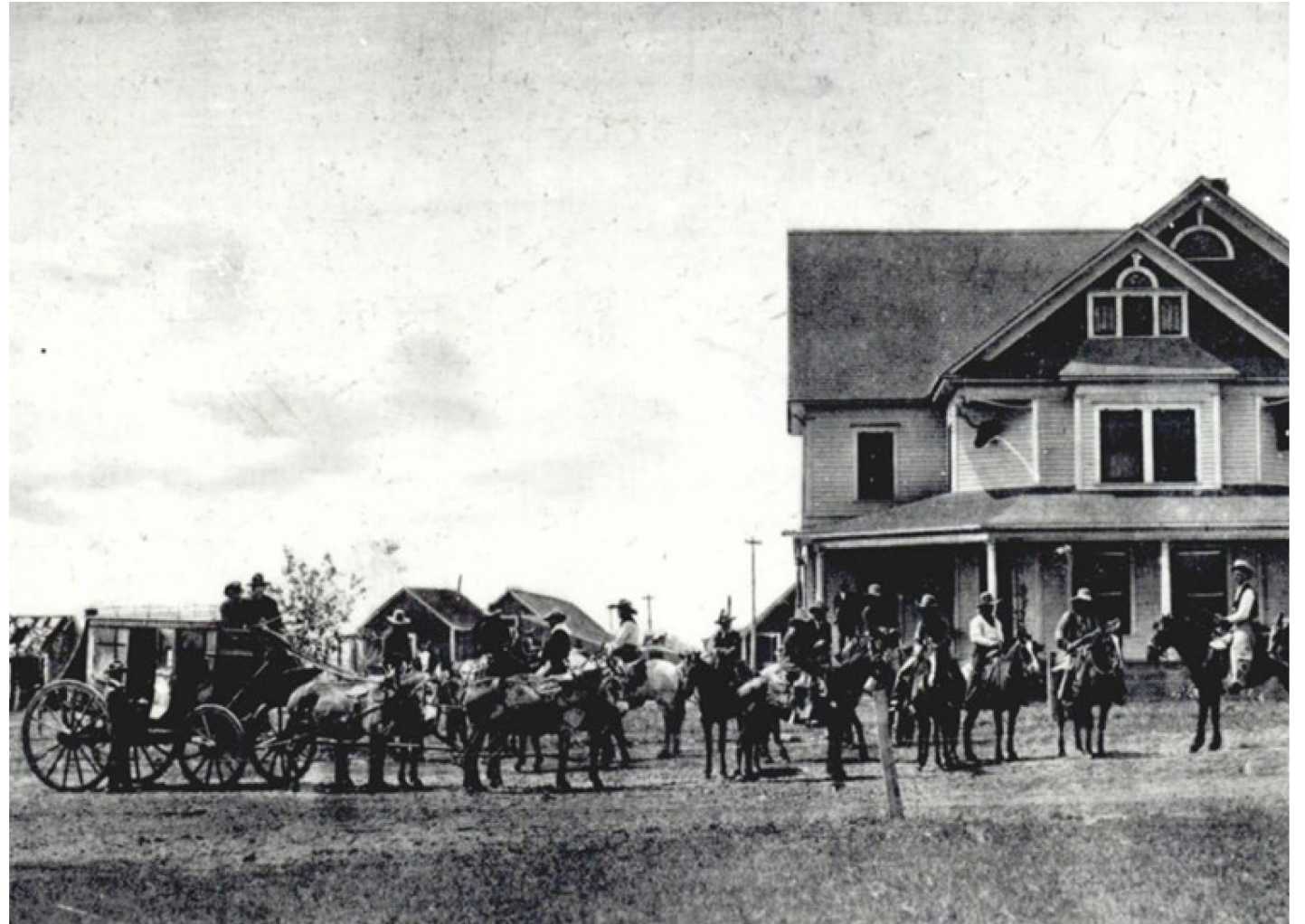
David L. Payne, a boomer leader in Oklahoma (2012.201.B1010.0278, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

1881

101 Ranch

Colonel George Washington Miller establishes the famed 101 Ranch in the Cherokee Outlet near present-day Ponca City.

The 101 brand became one of the most recognizable in the ranching and western entertainment worlds due to the international Wild West shows Colonel Miller's sons, Joe and George, organized in the early 20th century.



Arrival of a stagecoach bearing passengers to the famous 101 Ranch near Ponca City (2012.201.B0171.0187, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1881: Bacone College**, Oklahoma's oldest college or university, is chartered by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Tahlequah.
- **1887:** Congress enacts the **Dawes Act**, starting the policy of dissolving tribal land ownership and beginning the individual allotment system.
- **1889:** The **first public school** in present-day Oklahoma opens in Edmond.

1889

First Land Run

1.9 million acres in central Oklahoma known as the Unassigned Lands are opened for settlement.

More than 50,000 people participated. Those attempting to enter early or hide out on the land before the time of entry were called “sooners.”



Family crossing into Oklahoma during 1889 Land Run
(21412.BH772.2, Z. P. Meyers and Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1890:** The **Organic Act** establishes separate Oklahoma and Indian territories. Guthrie is established as Oklahoma Territory's capital.
- **1890:** The **University of Oklahoma** is established in Norman. Oklahoma A&M College, (now **Oklahoma State University**) is established in Stillwater.
- **1891:** **Iowa, Sac and Fox, Pottawatomie, and Shawnee lands** are opened by land run. Tonkawa lands are opened by allotment.
- **1892:** **Pawnee lands** are opened by allotment. **Cheyenne and Arapaho lands** are settled by land run.

1893

Cherokee Outlet Run

On September 16, the largest and most chaotic land run began in present-day northwestern Oklahoma.

Over 100,000 participants vied for 6.5 million acres.

Despite the attempt by lawmakers to make the process more official, the sheer number of participants was overwhelming and the majority of did not secure a land claim.



“The Race” by William S. Prettyman (4364, Czarina Conlan Collection, OHS)

1893

Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) is founded in Kingfisher.

The mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people.

The Oklahoma History Center is one of multiple OHS museums and historic sites. It serves as the headquarters for the OHS.



An early photo of Oklahoma Historical Society staff, 1910
(2103, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1895: Kickapoo “surplus lands”** are opened for settlement by allotment.
- **1896:** The US Supreme Court rules on the disputed area of **Greer County**, incorporating it into Oklahoma Territory.
- **1897:** The first commercial oil well in Oklahoma, **Nellie Johnstone No. 1**, is drilled near Bartlesville.
- **1897:** Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal School (now **Langston University**) is established by the Oklahoma Legislature on March 12.

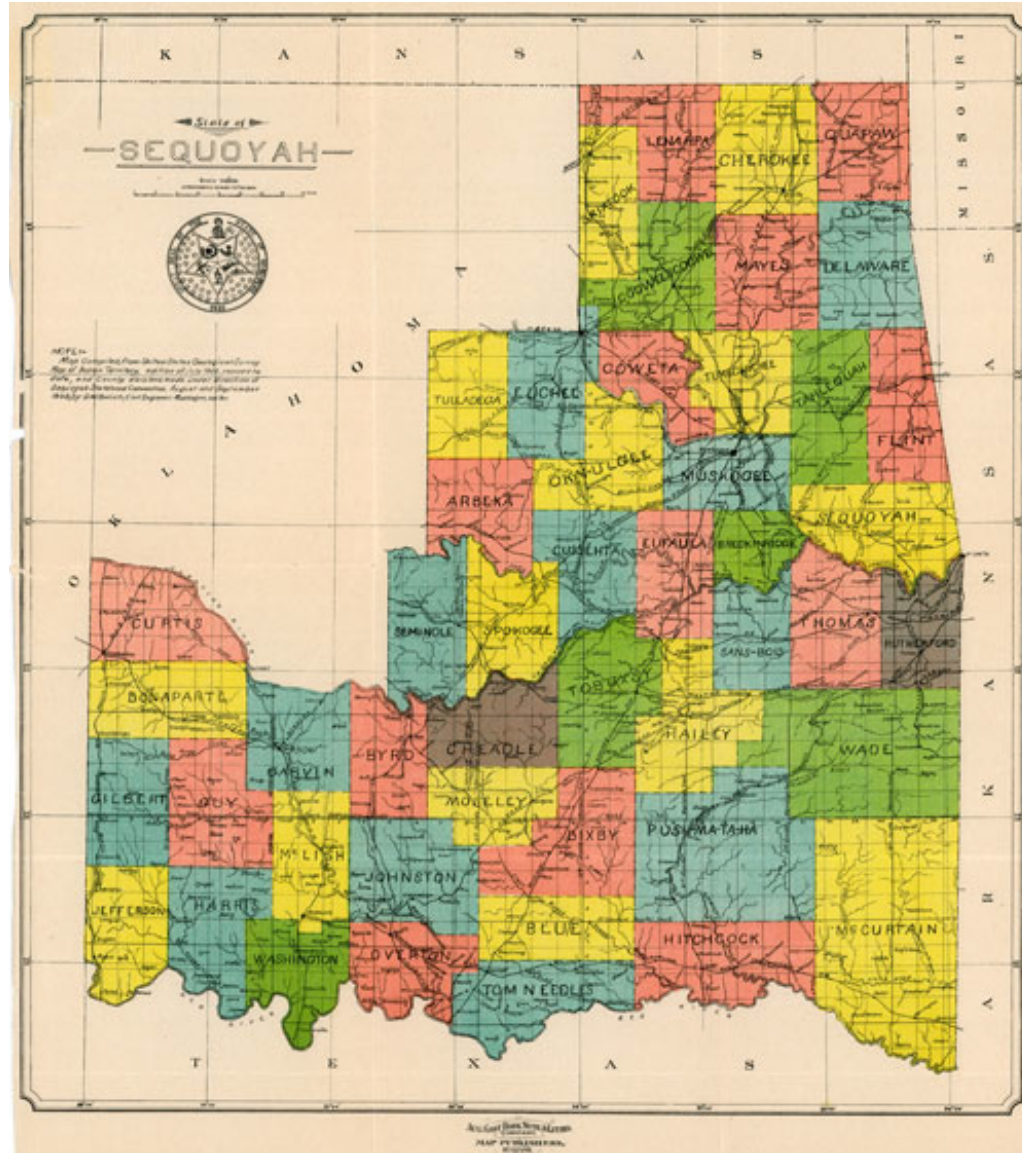
Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1898: The Curtis Act** abolishes tribal courts and governments. American Indians are placed under federal control, paving the way for expanded settlement in Indian Territory.
- **1901: The Wichita, Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache lands** are opened for settlement by lottery—the last major land opening in Oklahoma.
- **1903:** The Oklahoma Railway Company begins electric streetcar service in Oklahoma City.
- **1904: Ponca and Otoe-Missouria** lands are opened by allotment.

1905 Sequoyah Convention

Tribal delegates meet in Muskogee, Creek Nation, to discuss the formation of a separate state for tribes.

Many important figures in Oklahoma history attend the convention such as future governors William H. Murray and Charles N. Haskell. The constitution drafted here would serve as a guide for the eventual Oklahoma state constitution.



(ITMAP.FOREMAN.006, Grant Foreman Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

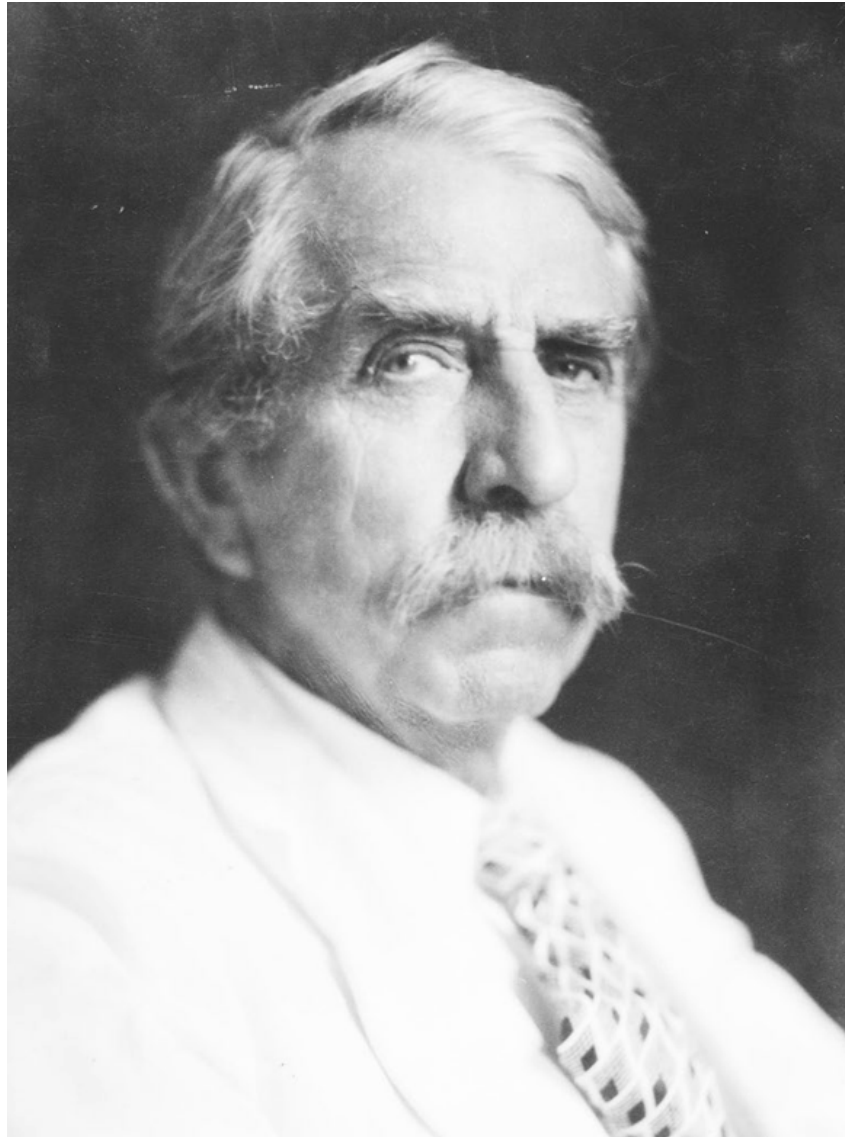
- **1905:** Frank Phillips moves his family to Bartlesville and found Phillips Petroleum. Glenn Pool, a major oil field, makes Tulsa “the Oil Capital of the World.”
- **1906: Osage and Kaw lands** are opened by allotment in the final land opening.

1906

William H. Murray

The future congressman and Oklahoma governor served as president of Oklahoma's Constitutional Convention.

Learn more about Murray and other key people, places, and events, in [*The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*](#).



William H. Murray
(21412.M49.2, Z.P. Meyers/
Barney Hillerman Photography
Collection, OHS)

1907 Statehood

On November 16, President Theodore Roosevelt declares Oklahoma the 46th state.

An important provision of the Oklahoma Constitution allows voters to initiate and approve amendments to the state's constitution.



Front page of *The Hobart Republican*, November 21, 1907

1907

Kate Barnard

Social justice reformer Catherine Ann Barnard becomes the first woman in Oklahoma elected to state public office.

Barnard successfully petitioned two reform measures during the Constitutional Convention: the end of child labor and the establishment of the office of commissioner of charities and corrections—the office she would be elected to run.



Kate Barnard (106, Oklahoma Historical Society Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1909:** One of the first **Boy Scout** troops in the United States is established in Pawhuska.
- **1910:** Oklahoma state capital moves from Guthrie to **Oklahoma City**.
- **1912:** Sac and Fox athlete **Jim Thorpe** wins gold medals in the pentathlon and decathlon at the Stockholm Olympics.
- **1913:** US Senator **Robert L. Owen** cosponsors the Federal Reserve Act, creating the central bank of the United States.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1913:** The first Oklahoma chapter of the **NAACP** was founded in Oklahoma City.
- **1915:** Roscoe Dunjee begins editing ***The Black Dispatch***, Oklahoma City's only Black newspaper.
- **1917: Henry Post Army Airfield** is constructed at Fort Sill—the oldest airfield in the US Army.

1917 Green Corn Rebellion

Hundreds of impoverished men of many races begin their march to the nation's capital to protest World War I conscription and the plight of the working class.

The rebellion gets its name from the green corn protesters planned to eat along the journey, but the protest march ended before it began when local possees broke up and arrested the rebels.



Headline of the Tulsa World, Saturday, August 4, 1917

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1917–18:** More than 85,000 Oklahomans serve in World War I. Nineteen Choctaw **Code Talkers** use their native language to transmit coded messages.
- **1920s:** World famous jazz and blues musicians frequent **Deep Deuce**, an African American business and cultural district in Oklahoma City.
- **1921: J. C. Karcher** tests seismic reflection method as a geologic exploration tool at a site near Dougherty.
- **1921:** Marland Refining Company, owned by future governor and oilman from Ponca City, **E. W. Marland**, discovers Tonkawa oil field, Oklahoma's greatest oil producer of the 1920s.

1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

The thriving African American Greenwood District is looted and burned during the Tulsa Race Massacre, May 31–June 1.

The estimated death toll ranges from 39 to 300 people with millions of dollars in property damage.



Aftermath of the devastation (Jerry L. Cornelius Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1923:** The Oklahoma Legislature impeaches **Governor John Calloway Walton**, due in part to his strong stance against the Ku Klux Klan.
- **1924:** The **45th Infantry Division**, a four-state division of the National Guard, is stationed at Fort Sill. The 45th played invaluable roles in World War II and the Korean War.
- **1924:** Historic music venue **Cain's Ballroom** is built in Tulsa, where it served first as a garage.
- **1926:** Construction begins on **Route 66**. The Mother Road runs nearly 400 miles through Oklahoma.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **Late 1920s:** At the University of Oklahoma, Oscar Jacobson mentors the **Kiowa Six**, traditional Plains Indian artists who achieved international fame.
- **1929:** Black Tuesday, the stock market crash on October 29, ushers in the **Great Depression**.
- **1930:** Oil well **Wild Mary Sudik 1** blows out in Oklahoma City, spraying an estimated 20,000 barrels of oil over the course of 11 days.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1932:** Oklahoma natives **J. Herman Banning and Thomas Allen** become the first African American pilots to cross the United States by airplane.
- **1933:** Congress authorizes the establishment of the **Civilian Conservation Corps**. As a result of this program, many public works projects are constructed in Oklahoma including Lake Murray and Roman Nose and Beavers Bend State Parks.

1930s

Wiley Post

1933: Wiley Post sets the solo record for flying around the world: 7 days, 18 hours, and 49 minutes.

1934: Post develops a new pressurized flight suit and helmet, the precursor to the first space suit.

1935: Post and friend Will Rogers die in a plane crash near Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15.



Will Rogers (wearing hat) and Wiley Post, 1935
(19336.135, Wiley Post Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1934:** Revered scholar and author **Angie Debo** is awarded the John H. Dunning prize by the American Historical Association for her dissertation and book, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic*.
- **1935:** On April 14, known as **Black Sunday**, the worst dust storm in western Oklahoma occurred.
- **1935: Works Progress Administration** is created, putting approximately 119,000 Oklahomans back to work on public projects like roads and municipal and county buildings.

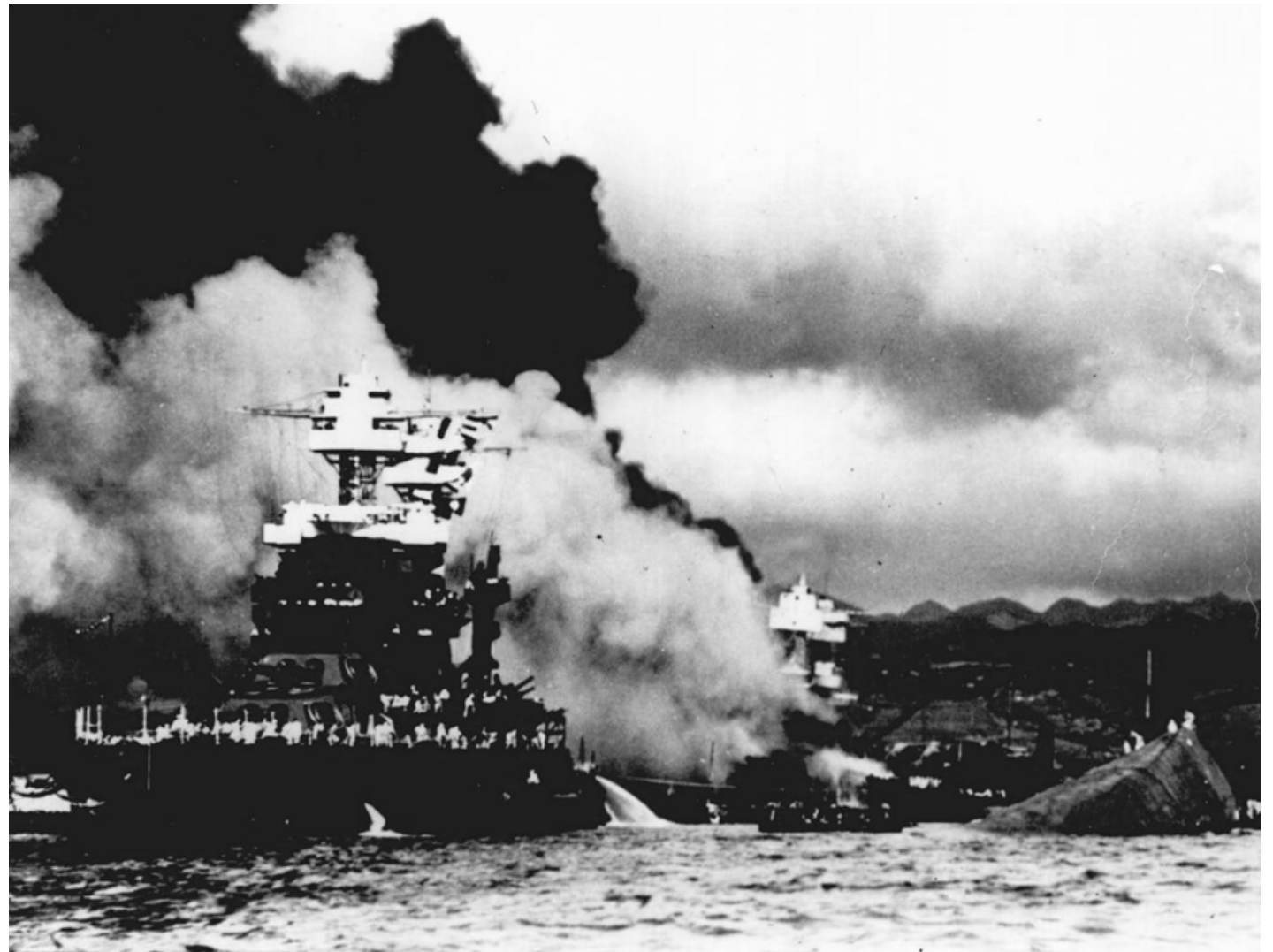
Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1939: *The Grapes of Wrath***, John Steinbeck's novel that focuses on migration from Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl, is published.
- **1940: Woody Guthrie**, Okemah native and internationally acclaimed folk singer, records his first album, *Dust Bowl Ballads*.

1941 Pearl Harbor

Japanese forces attack the Hawaiian naval base on December 7, killing thousands and spurring the US to war.

The battleship USS *Oklahoma* capsizes in the harbor, killing hundreds of sailors.



A Maryland BB-46 maneuvers around capsized USS *Oklahoma* (upturned hull on right) (2012.201.B0927.0335, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1941:** American Indian **Code Talkers** from many tribes serve in World War II.
- **1942:** Oil tycoon and future US Senator **Robert S. Kerr** is elected as Oklahoma's first native-born governor.
- **1943:** Rodgers and Hammerstein's ***Oklahoma!*** premieres at the St. James Theatre in New York City.

1943

Prisoner of War Camps

Oklahoma hosted 22,000 German and Italian prisoners of war at eight base camps.

Prisoners were clothed in surplus military fatigues with the letters “PW” stenciled on them.

POWs picked row crops and cotton, harvested wheat and corn, worked on ranches, and did many other duties to address the work shortage during the war.

1948

Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher

The US Supreme Court rules in Fisher's favor, making her the first African American admitted to the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

Fisher went on to serve on the faculty at Langston University in 1957 and was appointed to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, the school's governing body, in 1992.



Ada Sipuel signing the register of attorneys
(21412.M657.12, Z.P. Meyers/Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1950: *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*** mandates school integration in the state.
- **1952: McCarran-Walter Act** reopens immigration from Asian countries following World War II. As a result, Asian immigrant populations in Oklahoma increase exponentially.
- **1952:** Oklahoma City native **Ralph Waldo Ellison** publishes *Invisible Man*, a novel about the African American experience and 1953 National Book Award winner.

1954–1975 Vietnam War

In all, 988 brave Oklahomans lost their lives in the conflict.

Anti-war protests were common across the country during the war. On May 6, 1970, several hundred protesters held a strike at the University of Oklahoma campus. Similar protests occurred at Oklahoma State University and Central State College, now the University of Central Oklahoma.

Many Vietnamese refugees fleeing the violence are processed at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, eventually settling in nearby Oklahoma.



Vietnamese refugees arrive at Fort Smith, 1975
(2010.011.B128.0141, Oklahoma Journal Photography Collection, OHS)

1958

Clara Luper

The civil rights activist organized the NAACP Youth Council to conduct sit-ins at Katz Drug Store in Oklahoma City—one of the first sit-in protests in the country.

Luper promoted her fight for equality on her radio show from 1960 to 1980. She was the recipient of 154 awards in her lifetime, including the Langston Alumni Award and the National Voter Registration Award.



Sit-in at Katz Drug Store, 1958
(20246-38-395-B, John Melton Collection, OHS)

1959

Changing Times

Prohibition is repealed in the Oklahoma Legislature.

Surgeon **Nazih Zuhdi** performs the first cardiopulmonary bypass surgery in Oklahoma.

Norman native **Geraldyn Cobb** is one of 13 women selected for the elite Mercury astronaut program.



Law enforcement confiscates moonshine during prohibition, 1955
(2012.201.OVZ001.10996, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1962: Henry Bellmon**, the state's first Republican governor, is elected.
- **1963:** Shawnee native and Project Mercury astronaut **Leroy Gordon Cooper** flies his first mission on Faith 7, orbiting the Earth twenty-two times.
- **1965:** Weatherford native **Thomas Stafford** pilots his first mission on the Gemini 6A, completing the first rendezvous in space.
- **1968: Hannah Atkins** is elected. She is the first African American woman to the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

1971

McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System

The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System was completed in 1971.

There are 144 miles of this system running through Oklahoma.

Millions of tons of cargo are shipped up and down the river system each year.



Oats are unloaded at the Port of Catoosa on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (2012.201.B0927.0176, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1971: Carl Albert** begins his post as speaker of the US House of Representatives—the highest elected public office held by an Oklahoman.
- **1973:** Due in part to overcrowding and degraded building conditions, the three-day **McAlester prison riot** caused \$30 million of damage.
- **1978:** Future chief scientist of NASA and Bethany resident **Shannon Lucid** is selected as one of the first female astronauts. Lucid has logged 5,354 hours in space—more hours than any other female astronaut.

Timeline of Oklahoma History

- **1986: Vicki Miles-LaGrange** and **Maxine Horner** are the first African American women elected to the Oklahoma Senate.
- **1990:** Oklahoma becomes the **first state to limit state legislators' terms.**
 - when Oklahoma voters approve State Question 632 on September 18.
- **1991:** *Flight of Spirit*, a mural depicting the famous **Five American Indian ballerinas**, is installed in the Oklahoma Capitol to celebrate their contribution to the arts.
- **1994:** Eufaula native **J. C. Watts Jr.** is the first African American elected to the US House of Representatives from Oklahoma.

2005 Oklahoma History Center

The Oklahoma History Center opens in Oklahoma City.

It serves as the headquarters for the Oklahoma Historical Society and has 215,000 square feet of gallery and learning spaces.

Visit okhistory.org to continue exploring Oklahoma's fascinating history and culture!





Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma History Center
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
www.okhistory.org