

OUR HERITAGE

PAST – PRESENT - FUTURE

THE HISTORY OF SAPULPA OK

(Continued from February Newsletter)

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Natural Resources, Energy and Early-day Industry

The county seat of Creek County, Sapulpa is situated approximately twelve miles southwest of Tulsa along Interstate 44. State Highways 33 and 97 and Historic Route 66 also lead travelers to Sapulpa.

The first three decades (1890-1920) of Sapulpa's rapid growth can be attributed to railroad activities and to the exploitation of natural resources, such as walnut trees, clay, petroleum, natural gas, and sand for glass manufacturing. The town's first industry was the harvesting of walnut trees. In 1898 the second industry was born with the establishment of the Sapulpa Pressed Brick Company, and a few years later Sapulpa Brick Company began operating. By 1900 the railroad designated Sapulpa as a division point or overhaul base for its rolling stock, giving the town its first major industry. This initial period of economic development continued until February 10, 1927, when the railroad moved its maintenance shops to Tulsa. On November 22, 1905, a discovery well four miles southeast of town opened up the prolific Glenn Pool Field. During the oil boom the population almost doubled, from 4,259 in 1907 to 8,283 in 1910. By the 1920s citizens were also employed at Oklahoma's largest cotton compress and at four glass plants.

Water

The largest creeks that run through this area are Rock and Polecat. Up until 1908, most of Sapulpa's water needs were met with fresh water springs and annual rainfall run-off which helped keep the creeks flowing and aquifers and wells filled with ample water supply. With increasing demand, initiated by the railroad, Frisco asked the town to furnish them with quality water for their steam engines. There was a spring on North Water between East Hobson and the RR tracks which was utilized. Additionally a 4 inch water supply pipe was laid, down Water Street south to Rock Creek near Taft Street.

Agriculture

[SANDY CLAY SOIL: A large part of eastern Oklahoma contains sandy clay soil. This is in a region, which the geologist know as the Carboniferous or Coal Measures rocks. The high hills of eastern Oklahoma contain sandstone; the valleys and level uplands consist largely of clay. A strip of this soil extends from the Kansas line south past Vinita as far as Tulsa and Sapulpa, including the county of Okmulgee and Muskogee, south to McAlester and Coalgate and east of the Arkansas line. The soil in this area is usually fertile and capable of producing a large variety of crops, particularly corn, cotton and wheat.]



In national and state mythos, if no longer in demographic fact, Oklahoma is a rural state. A vital part of that rural image and self-image is the role of farming and farming culture. Farming in Oklahoma has long been a cultural system as well as an economic one. For many rural Oklahomans, farming is a cherished way of life as well as a livelihood. At the turn of the twentieth century, in fact, many more live to farm than farm to live.

Oklahoma agricultural crops have historically included corn, cotton, winter wheat, wheat hay, oats, milo maize, Kaffir corn, broom

corn, soybeans, peanuts, sweet potatoes, alfalfa, cow peas, and wild hay. Other farm products have included poultry, cheese, milk, eggs, butter, and various fruits and vegetables. Many Oklahoma farmers raise livestock (cows, pigs) as well as crops. Historically, cotton and corn gave way to winter wheat as the state's primary crop.

The number of Oklahoma farms peaked at 213,325 in 1935 and were down to 72,000 by 1980. In 1920 Oklahoma's farm population was 50 percent of the state total, while by 1950 it was down to 25 percent. By 1997 only 33,060 listed farming as their main occupation; 55 percent earned their primary income outside farming (as so-called "sidewalk" and "suitcase" farmers) attesting to the value of farming in their lives and in the continuity of the family. By the 1990s farming enterprises were largely managed by large operators.

Oklahoma Territory between 1889-1901 led to an influx of cotton farmers.

Whether a tenant or a homesteader, a farmer began each season by tilling the soil and planting the crop in late April or early May. Once the plants sprouted, workers with hoes thinned the rows once to prevent plant overcrowding and again later to control weeds. At harvest time, normally beginning in late September, family members and other workers placed the handpicked cotton in cloth sacks, which were weighed when full. The crop was dumped into a wagon and delivered to nearby gins. Such practices continued until widespread mechanization was instituted after World War II.

At 1907 statehood farmers in all but three Oklahoma counties raised cotton on almost one-fourth of the state's cultivated acreage. There were approximately three hundred cotton gins in OK, Sapulpa once having one of the largest, processed the lint into five-hundred-pound bales and separated the seed from the fiber. Compressing plants, where the bales were pressed and stored, operated at McAlester, Ardmore, Mangum, and Oklahoma City, which became the center for marketing companies. Eight textile plants purchased fiber for their businesses, and thirty-seven cottonseed oil mills crushed seeds, using the residue oil for food products, the linters to make paper, the hulls to mix with livestock feeds, and the cake and meal to feed animals.

Ranching & Livestock

From early in its history as Indian Territory, Oklahoma, thanks to its combination of nutritious grasses and productive grain farms, has been a major factor in the cattle industry.

The origins of Oklahoma cattle raising go back to the 1830s when the Five Civilized Tribes came from the southeastern United States and resettled in Indian Territory. In addition to bringing large herds of livestock with them, they also practiced a system of communal land ownership that favored open range grazing. This in turn led to increased herd sizes.

After the Civil War the era of cattle drives moved through much of Oklahoma from Texas, Kansas and Nebraska to Eastern shipping ports. The huge herds were driven by men on horse-back, "cowboys", legendary heroes in their own right.

Cattle raising in Oklahoma during the twentieth century, as in the rest of the plains, moved toward improved breeds and more scientific methods of handling. Trail drives gave way to railroads, then trucks, and finally stock trailers. One effect of barbed wire and windmills was that Oklahoma stockmen could keep scrub bulls away from their cows and thus upgrade their herds. In the first half of the twentieth century the Hereford was the preferred breed, while Aberdeen-Angus became dominant in the latter half.

Cattle along with other livestock were delivered to stockyards to be sold. Several Meat-Packing plants were established in the Sapulpa area, where the meat was processed (butchered) and wrapped for delivery to markets. You might remember Wells, Miller and Wickam Packing.

For farm work, hauling, riding, racing, and showing, horses and mules have been a steady, profitable industry in Oklahoma since the first inhabitants began using the animals in the eighteenth century. Horses formed an important part of American Indian trade patterns and by the nineteenth century enabled Plains tribes to subsist successfully by bison hunting. In the Territorial Era horses were necessary accouterments for ranchers and cowboys in order to work cattle. Mules, too, were even more important than horses in ranch farming, general farming, and hauling. Horses and mules continued to be important as power sources in the economy of Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory until the general adoption of the gasoline engine to power mechanized equipment.

Natural Gas *is one of the most popular forms of energy in use today. It is colorless and odorless, except when a malodorant is added for safety purposes, and it burns with an even temperature. When burned, it is more environmentally friendly than many other fuels.*

Glenn Pool Oil Field Discovery

Long before the onset of Oklahoma's great oil booms, the state's early inhabitants tapped into the region's many natural oil and gas seeps. Across the state American Indians employed the black liquid that oozed from beneath the rocks and accumulated on the surface of creeks and springs as medicine for both themselves and their animals.

In 1905, the Ida E. Glenn #1 was drilled on Mrs. Glenn's allotment in Sec. 10-17N-12E in Tulsa County, I.T. The oil boom in this area was on. Kiefer became a boomtown complete with dirt streets, tents, and an influx of workers.

Sapulpa began to realize the importance of its location relative to the new oil field, and soon grew from a small village into a thriving city.

The story of Glenn Pool is too great to summarize here, but the beginning of Sapulpa's growth is directly related to oil exploration and production in this area.

Brick Plants: Road Paving & Buildings

[Sapulpa Downtown Historical District: Majority of buildings were constructed between 1904 and 1952. Although the downtown predates 1904, the majority of early construction was frame buildings that no longer exist. Following the opening of the Glenn Pool oil field in 1905, substantial brick commercial buildings began to appear. The "Crossroads of America" was at the corner of Main Street and Dewey Avenue, where U.S. 75 and U.S. 66 met.]

Among Oklahoma's varied and numerous natural resources, raw earth itself might not seem valuable, at first observation. However, deposits of clay and shale, the essential ingredient in brick and tile, are found in almost all of the seventy-seven counties, and most of the substance is suitable for creating some kind of building material. Clay products produced in Oklahoma have included face brick, common brick, paving brick, construction-grade terra cotta tile, drainage tile, plumbing tile, sanitary tile, pottery, and stoneware.

Bricks have historically been one of the state's most important building materials. When true towns began to rise amid the hills and on the prairies in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, residents customarily built their stores and homes of wood. Quite often, in both Indian and Oklahoma territories a town's first brick edifice was a bank. In hundreds of communities, "bricks" were erected after entire blocks of wood-frame buildings burned. Because it was fire-retardant, brick became the preferred construction material in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Oklahoma-made brick tended to be either red or dark buff in color, thereby giving character to the main streets of many towns. In addition to residences, churches, and business buildings of brick, a considerable number of barns and other farm structures and grain elevators were constructed of terra cotta tile blocks.

The Sapulpa Pressed Brick Company was incorporated in 1898, with J. Boyd, Fred Pfendler and Webster Wilder as owners. The company had fifty-five acres of land with ample shale reserve located at the west side of town just past Independence Street on the south side of the Frisco RR tracks. This was sold in 1902 and became the Sapulpa Brick and Tile Company owned by the Hermes family for many years.



Glass Industry

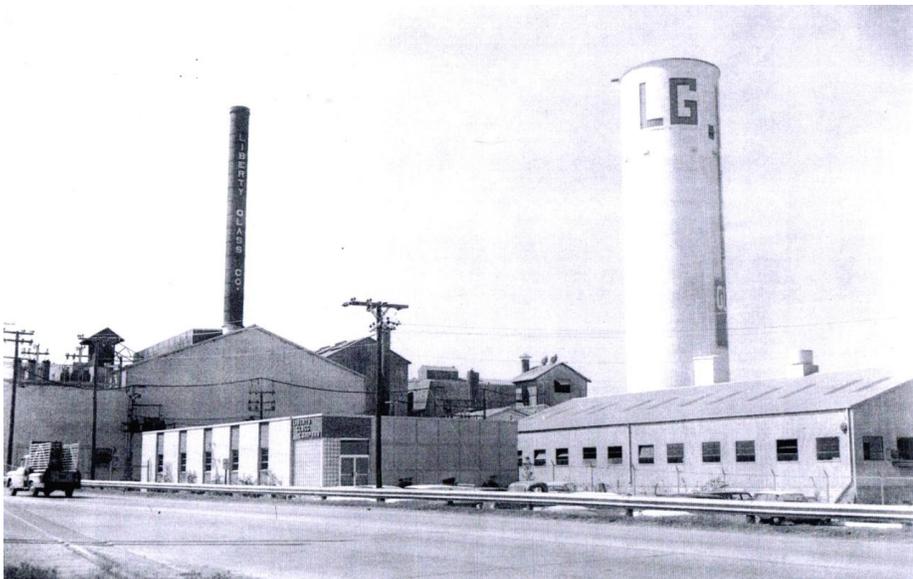
Due to an abundance of natural gas produced in the area, glass companies began manufacturing various products in Sapulpa. At one time Sapulpa had four glass plants.

The Sunflower Glass Plant began operations at 800 West Dewey in 1913. Frank Bostock and Fred J. Lucas headed this company. They produced window or 'flat' glass, which was sold nationwide. In 1924, Sunflower leased its plant and equipment to Victory Window Glass Co. Keeping up with new technology was expensive, and Victory ceased operations in 1932.

The Schramm Glass Manufacturing Company which made fruit jars was also located west of the city. It was established around 1914 and continued operations until the mid-1920s.

In 1912 George Fulton Collins, Sr. established the Premium Glass Company, located on North Mission.

In 1914 H. U. Bartlett and Collins formed a partnership starting the Bartlett-Collins Glass Company, which involved the former Premium Glass Company plant and a second plant located on South Linden Street.



In 1918 the partnership was dissolved, with Bartlett retaining the plant on South Linden and the name Bartlett-Collins. Bartlett-Collins Glass Company, makers of household glassware, by midcentury employed five hundred.

Mr. Collins continued operating the plant on North Mission Street, and it was incorporated as the Liberty Glass Company. By 1950 Liberty annually supplied a national and international market with one million glass milk bottles. The factory still continues to operate is now known as St. Gobain (Verallia North America). Bartlett Collins became part of Lancaster Colony, but closed down

within the past few years.

By 1980 eleven glass factories operated in Oklahoma, the three major being in Sapulpa. Glass production earned Sapulpa the designation of "The Crystal City of the Southwest."

Frankoma Pottery

In February 1938, John and Grace Lee Frank moved their family from Norman, Oklahoma to begin a small pottery business in Sapulpa. Little did they realize that before too many years their products would be sold worldwide.

Two disastrous fires leveled their plant, located on the original Route 66, which could have been the end of Frankoma Pottery. But, like the "phoenix," it arose from the ashes to become larger than ever. The Frank's daughter, Joniece managed the business for several years. The company was sold to the Merrimans in early 2000, but in 2008 Joe Ragosta purchased it.

Frankoma, as a Sapulpa manufacturer, is now a memory as the contents of the building were auctioned off piece by piece on May 18, 2011.



Excerpts from the above articles were contributed by Oklahoma Historical Society

Industry in the area was in full force during the early part of the 20th Century. Sapulpa population grew at a fast pace and with that came the need for an abundance of supplies and services.

- Cotton Compress
- Horse & Buggy to Auto – Sales & Maintenance
- Railroad – Frisco Yards
- Grain Storage & Feed Stores
- Stockyard near RR
- Packing Plants – Wells, Miller & Wickam
- Building Construction Lumber Companies – Whitfield, Spurrier, Seaman, Benson
- Banks & Loan Companies – Creek, Farmer & Merchant, American National
- Brick Plant – Sapulpa Pressed Brick to Sapulpa Brick & Tile
- Traction – Grading for road & rail
- Glass Plants – Premium, Sunflower, Schramm, Bartlett-Collins, Liberty
- Central Light & Fuel & Creek Oil & Gas
- Electric – Sapulpa & Rogers
- Steel & Iron Foundries
- Tank Co. -Maloney
- Oil Field Supply - Bovaird
- Sapulpa Produce
- Mercantiles – Hall, John Egan
- Bakeries – Rogers
- Ice Plant

To discuss future in upcoming issues:

- Post Office
- Telephone
- Hotels & Restaurants
- Businesses, Churches & Homes
- Entertainment
- Funeral Homes & Cemetery

SAPULPA HISTORICAL MUSEUM AT 100 E. LEE

THIRD FLOOR EXHIBITS

(Not on Tour)

Foyer - St. James Hotel 1907 This five-story building was located on the northwest corner of Main & Lee, with 100 roomy, well ventilated and lighted guest rooms and all the modern conveniences including steam heat, electric lighting, telephones & hot/cold water. The rotunda and dining room were elegant. St. James was a quality establishment built at a cost of \$100,000.00. **It was destroyed by fire in the 1950s**

Archival & Photo Offices – Sapulpa Historical Museum receives donations of artifacts and photos and knowledgeable volunteers access and record every item. You will notice, as you walk through the museum, that items are strategically place and each has a number on it. This is how we keep track of all the contents of the building.

Early day Fashion Room – Women’s clothing and accessories have change constantly. Here we capture the era 1920-40’s look. Hats, shoes, handbags and jewelry made the fashion statement complete.

Livermore Room – Ed and Melba Livermore graduated from the O.U. School of Journalism in 1940 and were married in 1941. In 1959, they acquired the Sapulpa Daily Herald and moved to Sapulpa. This room is filled with some of their home furniture and memorabilia.

YWCA Bedroom – This is a replica of the simple room and quaint furnishings of a young woman that may have resided here.

Saunders's Hall & Community Banquet Room (Seating for 100) Was named after Sapulpa, J.B. Saunders, a wealthy oil man, who donated \$\$\$ to the Historical Society for renovations.

Exhibits in Saunders's Hall:

Miss **Elizabeth Reynolds**, an only child, taught English at Sapulpa High School for many years, and later served on the Engineering Department staff at Oklahoma State University. Her father was a local attorney. Having no near relatives when she died, Miss Reynolds left her estate to Sapulpa Historical Society, the proceeds from which have enabled us to keep our museum open. The doll seen in the cradle was given to her in 1908 by her parents. Prior to her death, Elizabeth had the doll restored, as she knew it would come live with us.

Mrs. **Jessy Sullivan** owned a local abstract company. Her husband predeceased her, and her only child, a son, was killed in WW II. Mrs. Sullivan left this lovely furniture to our museum. She was very active in the Republican Party, and her collection of elephants can be seen here.

FYI – Along the south side of East Lee Ave., Sapulpa Historical Foundation owns several buildings just beyond the alley of the Sapulpa Historical Museum to the east.



← Former Standard Auto Supply at the corner of Lee & Park to be Sapulpa Fire Museum

→ Former Benson Lumber Co. is currently Midtown Mini-Storage operated by SHS.



Coming Soon....

SAPULPA FIRE MUSEUM

Sapulpa Historical Society is currently putting the finishing touches on the building at 124 E. Lee Ave.

to open to the public in April 2013