

# 3 Rivers Historian

Winter 2003

A Journal of the Three Rivers Museum

V. 6, No. 1

## Christmas at the Depot

**F**ollowing the Muskogee Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 7, the Downtown Depot District of Muskogee at 3rd & Elgin created a little Christmas magic of its own

The Three Rivers Museum served hot wassail and cookies to cold parade watchers at the Midland Valley Depot. Nearly 150 people stopped in at the museum after the parade. They welcomed a hot drink after standing out in the cold.

Many were first-time visitors to the museum and some expressed surprise that the museum existed. "I didn't even know this was here," was a statement often made. "I'll have to come back when I can spend more time."

Nearly 100 individuals did take the time to tour the museum after enjoying the punch and cookies.

"This was a good opportunity to make people aware of the museum," said Linda Moore, Executive Director of the Three Rivers Museum. "We hope every visitor who learned about us for the first time will come back and will bring their families."

Across the street at the Frisco Freight Depot, the Oklahoma Music Hall of



*Parade goers stop by the museum and enjoy the exhibits*

Fame featured a local band and a fireworks sendoff for Santa. The winning entrants of the Muskogee Phoenix' Christmas Parade were announced that evening.

The Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame plans to renovate the interior of the Frisco Depot and locate its offices there. The building is owned by the City of Muskogee

Both depots in the Historic Depot District decorated for Christmas with lights and wreaths.

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# Three Rivers Museum Board & Staff

## Officers/Staff:

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Roger Bell

*Executive Director:*

Linda Moore

*Marketing:*

Jonita Mullins

## Board of Directors:

Lynn Campbell

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Kit Stewart

Ed Warren

*Emeritus Member:*

Delphia Warren

## Museum News Briefs

### New Artifacts on Display

**N**early 40 new artifacts have been added to exhibits at the Three Rivers Museum. These include some recent acquisitions from donors all across the Three Rivers area.

An antique saddle and old farm implements have been added to the farming and ranching display. A baggage cart and trunk were lifted into the railroad exhibit. Vintage photos of Muskogee, old milk bottles and other small items of nostalgia are now a part of the "Gone, But Not Forgotten Exhibit."

In addition to these permanent items, a 1914 Model T Ford and 1964 1/2 Mustang are on loan to the museum until spring. We are also displaying a Rough Rider exhibit from the Thomas~Foreman Historic Home.

Come by and see all these new items!

### Phoenix Holds Photo Shoot at Museum

**T**he Muskogee Phoenix newspaper chose the Three Rivers Museum for a special sports edition photo shoot recently. The newspaper selected top area football players to highlight in the special edition.



The football players and coach of the year had their photos taken on the vintage switch engine behind the depot and on the 1964 1/2 Mustang being displayed in the exhibit hall.

### Doctors' Day Set for March

**T**he Muskogee Medical Auxiliary Group, led by Ann Barker Ong, is developing a special exhibit on medical history in Muskogee. They will unveil the exhibit on March 28 at the Three Rivers Museum during a Doctors Day reception.

The Medical History Exhibit will then be on display to the public at the museum for an indefinite period of time. Everyone is invited to come see this special exhibit after March 28.

### The Life of a Soldier



**H**oward McKinnis, interpreter at the Honey Springs Battlefield, brought an array

of soldier's accoutrement from the Civil War era to display on Military Day November 9. He did an excellent job in explaining what a typical day in the life of an early soldier was like.

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Managing Editor: Jonita Mullins

# Muskogee's Early Waterworks

by Wally Waits

**H**OWARD V. Hinckley came to Muskogee in May of 1899. His initial task was to resurvey the streets of Muskogee following the disastrous fire of the previous winter when much of the business district burnt to the ground.

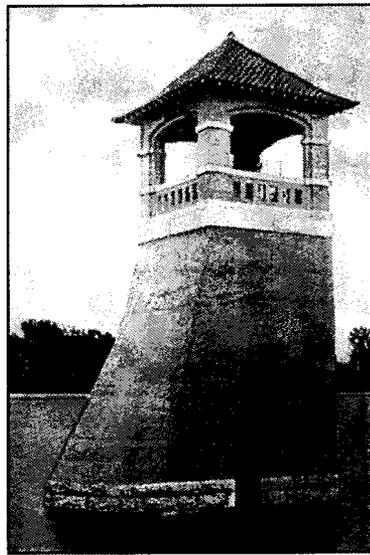
Hinckley was born in Massachusetts about 1856 and spent much of his adult life dealing with water related projects. By 1880 he had moved to Topeka, Kansas, and started his professional career as a civil engineer.

It appears he began working with another engineer in Topeka named Clarence Pullen. His notable construction project by the end of the century was that of a stone bridge built in Topeka.

Because Hinckley went right to work the next day after arriving in Muskogee, it seems likely that he had already been in contact with representatives of the city. He quickly took on a "Mr. Hayes as his chief assistant" and ordered 6000 stakes for use in realigning the streets and businesses. Beginning with Main and Okmulgee, the realignment was to push into the residential areas as the work progressed.

Along with the rebuilding following the fire, the Muskogee City Council and the city fathers chose to address the need for an improved water source for both consumption and fire fighting. One advisor, Mr. E. Bent of Chicago, was brought in to evaluate the merit for a system of pipes and pumps and the cost associated with such a large project as Muskogee was considering. Projected costs were estimated at \$150,000.

Hinckley's skills in surveying and civil engineering prompted his selection to work on building a city-wide water



*The pumping station on the Grand River*

supply system. The city council agreed to pay Hinckley \$100 for "an outline plan and brief of specifications for a water works system and an estimate of the cost thereof..." He was then to receive 1½% of the estimated construction cost, less the \$100 originally paid, to "prepare complete plans and specifications."

Altogether, drawing up the plans cost \$2,250. The contract with Hinckley further stated that he was to receive another 1½% of the actual construction costs for overseeing the work.

The Grand River's clean water was widely preferred to the muddy Arkansas. Hinckley certainly designed the intake that drew water out of the Grand River for Muskogee consumption.

The site for the pumping station was chosen because of "a vast bed of hard gravel, the deposit of ages... It is a natural filter which would cost hundreds of thousands [of dollars] to construct by artificial means. This pure spring water will receive this filtering

*continued on page 6*

## The Three Rivers Area

What makes up the Three Rivers Area? It is defined to include Muskogee County, all the counties that border Muskogee County — Cherokee, Haskell, McIntosh, Okmulgee, Wagoner — as well as Southern Mayes and Western Sequoyah Counties.

The Three Rivers Museum hopes to collect and preserve historical artifacts from this entire region. Contact the museum if you have something to donate at 686-6624.

## Our Mission

# Grand Opening Set for Thomas-Foreman Home

*The Three Rivers Museum has been established to tell the complete story of the founding, settlement and development of the Three Rivers area of Oklahoma. The museum will actively seek to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret a collection of historic artifacts. We will serve the visitors and residents of the area through these efforts as well as through educational programs and special events. The Three Rivers Museum hopes its work will establish a respect for the region's past and will contribute quality and value to its future.*

**T**he Thomas-Foreman Historic Home will hold a Grand Opening on Saturday, April 5, 2003 at its location at 1419 W. Okmulgee Avenue in Muskogee.

The renovations currently being made to the home will soon be completed. Three Rivers Museum of Muskogee is overseeing the needed repairs since contracting with the Oklahoma Historical Society to operate the 1898 farmhouse.

Currently, Linda Moore, executive director of Three Rivers Museum, is working on restoration of the home and designing new exhibits of the home's historical contents.

A new brochure on the home is

being developed now that will feature the home's beautiful ginkgo tree in its golden fall colors. The Foremans brought the ginkgo from China and planted it in the side yard.

The Thomas-Foreman Home contains an eclectic collection of books and memorabilia from the Foreman's many trips abroad and includes rare photos, documents and works of Native American art.

The Thomas-Foreman Historic Home will be open to the public every Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission will be \$2 for adults and \$1 for seniors and students. Children under 6 will be admitted for free.

## Your Support Is Needed!

Your tax-deductible donation to Friends of the Thomas-Foreman Home will help us save this Muskogee treasure and help us with maintenance and utilities. All money sent to the Thomas-Foreman Home is kept separate from Three Rivers Museum funds. Please complete the form at right and mail to:

Friends of the  
Thomas-Foreman Home\*  
1419 W. Okmulgee Ave.  
Muskogee, OK 74401

**Thank you!**

\*Friends is a 501c3 corporation.

Yes, I want to help save the Thomas-Foreman Home!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark your donation level below. Donors will receive the Home's quarterly newsletter **The Trellis** and free admission to the Thomas-Foreman Home.

\_\_\_ \$20 Individual      \_\_\_ \$30 Family  
\_\_\_ \$100 Builder      \_\_\_ \$250 Friend  
\_\_\_ \$500 Sustainer

Make checks payable to Friends of the Thomas-Foreman Home.

# She Brought Her Hatchets

by Roger L. Bell

**A**n “immense crowd of onlookers” greeted the KATY Flyer as it stopped at Muskogee’s depot on February 1, 1906. Out stepped a tall elderly woman clad “in a plain poke bonnet with a dark gray shawl thrown loosely over her shoulders and carrying in her hand a grip full of golden hatchets.” The woman walked up to the depot platform.

At once newspapermen surrounded her and began to ask questions. She responded to a few of them in private and then said to the crowd, “I like newspaper men, but I cannot say as much for those fellows that write the headlines.”

One reporter asked her if there was any truth to the rumor that she had sold her property in Guthrie to a brewery. She quickly responded, “I would die at the stake before I’d sell one foot of my property to any jaw breaking beer juggling brewer.”

Carrie Nation arrived in Muskogee as a national public figure. Nation felt that she was divinely ordained to forcefully promote temperance.

A brief marriage to an alcoholic in the late 1800’s fueled Nation’s disdain for alcohol. She also fought against gambling, cigarette smoking, and other vices. Other causes that she promoted were women’s rights and the “fair treatment of the black race.”

Nation burst on to the national scene in 1900 when she busted up a Kiowa, Kansas saloon in the name of temperance. Between 1900 and 1910 she was arrested over 30 times after leading her followers in the destruction of bars and saloons across the United States.

Nation came to Muskogee at a time when she had become increasingly

militant and radical in her activities. A month earlier while in Houston she had created such a stir that officials seriously considered bringing her before a sanity commission.

In Muskogee, she exclaimed, “My this is a bustling, lively town.” After her short talk at the depot, a cab met her and she was spirited away to an apartment building on south Third Street. Some local supporters had arranged lodging for her there.

Later that night she gave a well-attended lecture on prohibition at Saint Paul Methodist Church. All during her stay she sold small pewter hatchet pins to many in the community to help fund her efforts. It is said that she sold thousands of these pins across the United States over the years after a man in a candy store in Topeka had fashioned one for her.

One of these pins was saved as a gift for Muskogee lawman Bud Ledbetter. Ledbetter was amongst the most respected lawmen in Indian Territory at the time and had gained a strong reputation for his “still busting” and “anti-liquor” law enforcement activities.

During her stay she was quoted as saying to a reporter, “I want to meet Bud Ledbetter and I want to congratulate him. He is doing a great work for this country.”

The next morning Mrs. Nation left for Pauls Valley, Oklahoma where she had been summoned as a witness before a grand jury to testify in a case brought against an angry mob that had attacked a minister in the community while she was delivering a speech.

Nation told reporters during her stay that “they nearly killed him and

*continued on page 6*

## Where Is the Three Rivers Museum?

The museum is located in downtown Muskogee at 220 Elgin. Take Hwy 69 to Okmulgee Ave. Then east on Okmulgee Ave. to 3rd St. Then go south on 3rd St. to Elgin.

## We're on the Web!

Stay up to date with Museum News and Special Events by visiting our website at [www.3riversmuseum.com](http://www.3riversmuseum.com)

1880 Topeka, Shawnee  
County, Kansas census,  
E. D. 4, sheet 76B.

*Muskogee Phoenix*,  
"End of the Century,"  
1899, pp. 73, 95

*Muskogee Phoenix*, 18  
May 1899, p. 10.

*Muskogee Phoenix*, 8  
Jun 1899, p. 2.

*Muskogee Daily Phoe-  
nix*, 2 Jul 1903, p. 1.

Expanded Inventory of  
Suspension Bridges  
Online database <[http://  
www.bridgemeister.com/  
fulllist.htm](http://www.bridgemeister.com/fulllist.htm)>.

1920 Oklahoma City,  
Oklahoma County, Okla-  
homa census, E. D. 126,  
sheet 13A

*Transactions of the  
American Society of Civil  
Engineers*, v. 89 (1926),  
p. 1045.

# Muskogee's Early Waterworks

and will come to the city almost as clear as distilled water."

Work on the city's waterworks commenced with the intention of bringing Grand River water to town. However, delays in building the conduit across the Arkansas River resulted in the Arkansas being the first source of water in 1903. Townspeople were therefore able to finally obtain water out of a faucet if they had signed up for a water connection.

This water was safe for washing with, but had to be boiled for drinking and cooking. The main point of using water from the Arkansas River was to finally grant a sense of security in case another fire broke out.

The water pressure was less than adequate in mid-1903 because the water reservoir being built on Standpipe Hill, now just behind Sadler Elementary School, had reached a height of only 25 feet. The hill's elevation and the short height of the reservoir still provided much of the pressure the city was to use for years to come.

At its ultimate height of over 100 feet, the pressure and volume of the standpipe reservoir lasted the growing city less than ten years. Town growth and the reser-

voir's design necessitated the construction of the Agency Hill reservoir.

Howard V. Hinckley's plans and labor on behalf of Muskogee's citizens brought water relief. When the work was finished, he moved on to other jobs.

Though much of Hinckley's life after his work in Muskogee is unknown, several facts are relevant. In 1907 he built a suspension bridge called the "Bromide Bridge" near Sulphur, Oklahoma.

Apparently this bridge was located near Bromide Hill and Bromide Spring in Murray County.

Though the Bromide Bridge washed out in 1916, Hinckley continued to work designing bridges. At the time of his death on April 21, 1926 he was working as a bridge engineer for the State of Oklahoma and resided in Oklahoma City. He was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a contributor to the society's annual *Transactions*.

*"In 1903, townspeople were finally able to obtain water out of a faucet if they had signed up for a water connection."*

## Carrie Nation cont.

to protect him I threw myself across his body where the mob had dragged him."

Her last comments upon leaving Muskogee were to a local newspaper reporter. She said, "I can't talk with anyone with tobacco breath. I am glad I didn't detect it on your breath." The newspaperman later admitted that he had just put out his cigar a few

moments before she came up to him. The train soon was gone and Carrie Nation's Muskogee visit was a memory.

Carrie Nation died on June 9, 1911 at Leavenworth Kansas virtually alone and penniless. Her tombstone in the Belton, Missouri cemetery reads "Faithful To The Cause of Prohibition. She Hath Done What She Could."

# Thanks to These Museum Members

**M**USEUM MEMBERSHIP continues to grow. We would like to welcome all our (♦) new members and those who have renewed their membership in the past three months. Thank you for being a part of the Three Rivers Museum.

## Individual

♦ Margaret Cain  
 Michael Cristantiello  
 Dorothy Gardner  
 ♦ Delayne Grant  
 Merton Jeanes  
 Norma Kilgore  
 Barbara Lang  
 Hugh Meredith  
 ♦ Jerry Pippin  
 ♦ Larry Ross  
 ♦ Roberta Scott  
 ♦ Stan Smith  
 Marie Wadley  
 Erma Whittet

## Family

Roy & Lin Barmore  
 Hershel & Patsy Beaver

Chip Bevilaqua Family  
 Bill & Ann Boies  
 Bethany Bowline  
 Rodney & Tish Callahan  
 Al Cheeseman  
 Phyllis Durland  
 Hubert & Louise Ellison  
 Julia Hurst/Jacob Gonzales  
 Geraldine Bates Hannah  
 Clay & Joy Harrell  
 Timothy Hopkins  
 Jayson Jarrard Family  
 Clarence & Nancy Mayberry  
 Robert & Carol Mix  
 Arnold & Nita Moore  
 Carl & Janet Moore  
 Kai Moore Family  
 Robert & Ann Roe  
 Troy Thornton Family  
 Warren Weakland

## Builder

Children's Clinic

## Sponsor

Jim & Billie Alexander

## Sustainer

Richard & Leigh Bradley  
 ♦ Central High School  
 Class of '46  
 Waterloo Industries

## Benefactor

Kirshner Foundation

## Patron

## New Books in the Whistlestop Gift Shop

*The Dawes Commission*  
by Kent Carter

"Rich in photographs, this book will provide anyone with interest in Native American ancestry a heightened understanding of the Dawes Commission and the Five Civilized Tribes."

*The Five Civilized Tribes*  
by Grant Foreman

"Grant Foreman is known as the dean of American Indian historians. His history of the Five Civilized Tribes is a recognized standard in the field."

# THREE RIVERS MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

You can be a part of history! Join the Three Rivers Museum today. Your annual membership fee entitles you to a membership card, subscription to the quarterly journal, free admission to the museum and a 10% discount on purchases in the museum gift shop.

Please complete this form and mail with your check made payable to the Three Rivers Museum.

\_\_\_ Individual Membership \$25    \_\_\_ Family Membership \$35    \_\_\_ Builder Membership \$100  
 \_\_\_ Sponsor Membership \$250    \_\_\_ Sustainer Membership \$500

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Clip or copy and mail to: Three Rivers Museum  
 220 Elgin, Muskogee, OK 74401



## Contact Us

The Three Rivers Museum is always looking for historical artifacts pertinent to the Three Rivers area of Oklahoma.

A representative from the Museum would be happy to meet with anyone who would like to make a donation. Please call us at 686-6624.

### Editor's Note:

The "Three Rivers Historian" needs your historical articles. Please submit them to: Three Rivers Historian, Attn: Managing Editor, 220 Elgin, Muskogee, OK 74401.

### Museum Hours:

Wed. thru Sat.  
10:00 a.m. to  
5:00 p.m.

Call about group reservations and rates  
**686-6624**

## Three Rivers Events

### Spring Has Full Slate of Events

**T**he Three Rivers Museum has a full slate of events coming up this Spring. First, we're hosting a Caravan Tour of the Three Forks area, visiting sites of earliest Oklahoma history, on Saturday, March 29 starting at 9:00 a.m.

The tour will begin at the museum with a brief overview by Dr. Brad Agnew, history professor at Northeastern State University.

Then we'll carpool to such sites as Bacone College, Old Fort Davis, the Fort Gibson Stockade and National Cemetery and the site of Sam Houston's trading post Wigwam Neosho.

This is just a partial list of the sites we'll visit. Lunch will be in Okay. Call the museum if you'd like more details.

On Saturday, April 5, we'll join the Thomas-Foreman Historic Home with its Grand Opening. The home has been spruced up with new interpretive exhibits. Even if you've visited in the past, you'll want to stop by the Home to get a new view of this old treasure.

Then on Saturday, May 17, we'll host our second annual Railroad Day. This year we'll feature the vintage switch engine donated to us last fall. Railroad enthusiasts and collectors will want to come see it up close.

## Cookson Hills Tour a Success

Over 25 people took our Cookson Hills Caravan Tour this past November to sites around Gore, Webbers Falls and Vian. Hosts of the tour were R.D. Morgan, author of *Bad Boys of the Cookson Hills* and his wife Naomi. Here are some photos from the tour.



*Ron Morgan explains the layout of the old Bradshaw farm*



*The group studies information on the Griffin Cemetery near Webber's Falls*