

# BEYOND STATEHOOD

## LOGAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winter 2017 , Volume III, Issue I

This fall has been a busy quarter for the Logan County Historical Society. We have continued to engage audiences with our WPA Programming, Children's tours, and events at the Frontier Country Museum. I spoke to the Guthrie Lion's and Rotary Club members and I will be presenting the same program at the Guthrie Library this February. While speaking at the Lion's club, I had the privilege to meet Kenneth Mitchell, who was kind enough to sit down with me for an interview. Some of the highlights of this conversation can be found on page two. I have also been contacted for information about a number of other research projects with connections to Logan County. Sometimes these questions open doors to new stories to share with our members, such as this quarter's articles on the Rosenwald Schools and African American Pilots with Logan County roots. Our Foucart Awards are coming up this January and I hope you can join us to honor two terrific preservation projects in our county.

Keep Exploring!

*Amy Loch, Director*

*Beyond Statehood Logan County Historical Society*

### **Foucart Awards**

**January 26th**

**4:00 pm**

**See the Restoration of the Patti Lynn Diner**

**At Jerry's Wrecker**

**11151 Brockhous Rd, Guthrie**

**off of W. Simpson Rd, past Coltrane Rd**

### **The New Deal in Logan County**

**February 21st**

**6:00 pm**

**Guthrie Public Library**

**Free to the Public**

*The mission of the Logan County Historical Society is to conduct its activities in a manner which shall serve to preserve and perpetuate the history of Logan county and its people.*

## Kenneth Mitchell Interview

While giving a talk on the New Deal in Logan County for the Lion's Club this fall, I met Kenneth Mitchell. Many of you are probably familiar with Kenneth and know he loves to share the history of Guthrie. He added several new stories to my presentation and I knew he had many more to tell. He agreed to sit down with me for an interview to tell me about his life in Guthrie and his memories connected to the New Deal. We plan to add excerpts of this recorded interview to our website.

Kenneth was born in 1927. He and his mother moved to Guthrie to live with his grandparents, at 602. E. Springer, in 1933. The street cars ran right in front of his house, and he remembers riding the street cars once before they were completely closed. After that he rode the Interurban into the city for basketball games. Kenneth was in the first class to attend the new WPA-built, Capital School as a third grader.

His mother had a degree in music, but could not find a job in her field due to the Great Depression. Instead she got a job as a secretary in the Lodge Building across from the courthouse. His mother would walk to work, and Kenneth would sometimes go with. He remembers spending a great deal of time at this building and playing on the roof.

One of Kenneth's favorite childhood memories is portraying the Pioneer Boy in 89ers Day Parades across Oklahoma. He still remembers the 89ers Parade from 1936, which was the biggest parade in Guthrie, with NYC Mayor LaGuardia in attendance.

Kenneth went on to get a degree in journalism. He then spent more than 50 years in the abstract business in Guthrie. He married Jane, a girl he met when he was young, and had six children. He also coached baseball for many years, and for over thirty year's he took a group of young men to see a major league baseball team.



Local Guthrie photographer, Bob Bozarth, has been a collector of historic Guthrie photographers for many years. Recently he has added a new collection to his online depository of images. The Albert Bryan Collection. Bryan was a local photographer, whose negative collection was auctioned after his death. While most of his work was in studio, he also took a number of photographs of Guthrie buildings and street scenes from 1942-1984. Check out his work and other early photographs of Guthrie at [www.guthrietoday.com](http://www.guthrietoday.com)



### Rosenwald Schools

We have all heard of Carnegie Libraries, but are you familiar with Rosenwald Schools? From 1913-1923 Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company provided funding to assist with the building of African American schools across the south. In Oklahoma, the Rosenwald Fund aided in the construction of 198 education-related buildings in forty-four counties between 1920 and 1932. In Logan County several Rosenwald projects have been identified. Five are included in the national database

<http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/>

The Oklahoma State Preservation Office, recently contacted me looking for clues of other Rosenwald schools. If you know anything about the Rosenwald School in Logan County, please let us know at 405-215-9700.



### Into Flight: African American Pilots with Logan County Roots

A few months ago a woman contacted me looking for information for a research project she was working on. This project turned out to be the J. H. Banning project, which she has spent years working on. **James Herman Banning** went to school at Faver High School in Guthrie. He went onto become the first licensed African American pilot in the United States. He teamed up with Thomas C. Allen to become the first African Americans to fly coast to coast from Los Angeles to Long Island, New York in 1932. Their plane was pieced together from the parts and pieces they could gather from four planes. They had to stop along the way to entertain crowds so they could earn enough money for food and fuel to complete their trip. Each donor signed their names on the wing of the plane. Their plane malfunctioned shortly after completing their one way trip. They had to leave the plane and planned to save enough money to return for it. Banning earned money working at air shows, and unfortunately one of these stunts took his life, not long after making history.



Banning followed in the footsteps of **Bessie Coleman** the first African American and Native American woman to receive a pilot's license in 1921. Since she was not eligible to become a pilot in the United States, she went to Paris to earn an International Pilots License. Prior to this, Bessie spent one semester at Langston University. Banning later worked as the head pilot at the Bessie Coleman Aero club, created in her honor.



**Jim Tilmon**, aviation expert, local Emmy-winning newscaster, and musician, was born on July 31, 1934, in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Tilmon's interest in flying carried him from the U.S. Army to American Airlines in 1965, where he became the airline's third African American commercial pilot and the country's fifth. Tilmon spent 29 years with American Airlines before retiring. His talent earned him the Captain's Chair Award from American Airlines. United Airlines made him an honorary captain, and he had an aviator's navigation point named after him.



The Logan County Historical Society was pleased to partner with the Frontier Country Museum on two children's events this fall. The Youth Archery Shoot was held on the first cold day of the season just before Thanksgiving, with 8 families winning turkeys for their holiday feast. An Indoor Air Rifle Shoot took place on an even colder morning the Saturday before Christmas. During this event, 10 children won holiday hams. In total over 80 people attended these events. Crafts and snacks were also provided for youths of all ages by the LCHS. More family friendly events are being planned.



Peter the Puppet delighted another group of pre-schoolers this November for Children's Day Out. Peter shows the children around town by trolley as he entertains them with a game of guess that sound. The tour's sound effects are designed to give them a glimpse into the early 1900s. Peter tells a more in-depth story for grade school children, while still engaging them with sounds of the past.



LCHS Director, Amy Loch accepts Leadership and Innovation Award for the society's WPA Tour Experience Program at the Mountain Plains Museum Association conference in Oklahoma City.



A recent question posted to our Facebook page asked where Marcel Action Inc. was located in Guthrie in the 1950s? Marcel D'Avignon was a well known stock car driver at the Taft Speedway in OKC in the 1950s. He built his own car and worked in Guthrie. This photo of him was found on the Gateway to Oklahoma History. Do you know where Marcel Action was located?



## Why Join the Logan County Historical Society?

- Show your support for Logan County historical activities
- Receive quarterly newsletters
- Name recognition on Membership Newsletter
- Invitation to premier actives and events
- Support community collaboration
- Support historic programming and local historical awards
- Individual Memberships are only \$25 and Family Memberships are \$50 a year
- Business Memberships are \$100 a year
- Inquire about additional membership levels and sponsorship opportunities



## Logan County Historical Society Membership Form

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Communication Method: Email \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level: Individual (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Business (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: Make checks payable to Logan County Historical Society

PO Box 1512 Guthrie, OK 73044

## LCHS Board Members

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[Amy Loch](#), Director LCHS  
[Melissa Fesler](#), Director FCT

## Logan County Museum and Historic Activity Directory

[Drug Store Museum](#), Guthrie 405-282-1895  
[First Capital Trolley](#), Guthrie 405-282-6000  
[Frontier Country Museum](#), Crescent 405-969-3660  
[Logan County Historical Society](#), Guthrie 405-215-9700  
[Oklahoma Territorial Capital Sports Museum](#), Guthrie  
405-260-1342  
[Oklahoma Territorial Museum](#) Guthrie 405-282-1889  
[Owens Art Place](#), Guthrie 405-260-0204  
Scottish Masonic Rite Temple, Guthrie 405-282-1281  
[Melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage Center](#), Langston University  
405-466-3346

*History never looks like history when you  
are living through it. John W. Gardner*



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