

BEYOND STATEHOOD

LOGAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume II, Issue IIII

I am happy to report that we are receiving great feedback on our new WPA Tour series. We have been working with the Logan County Health Department in an effort to help publicize the tours and bring them to new audiences. I also have a new guided downtown walking tour route that will be available for groups. Our guided tours include a one mile loop of several key New Deal sites. We also have a special tour for children with our new Depression era puppet, Bertha. Our WPA Tour series is receiving regional recognition as 2016 Mountain Plains Museum Association Leadership award winner and an Oklahoma Museum Association Education and Outreach Honorable Mention awardees. If you have not seen our new WPA Tours, I encourage you to check them out at www.logancountyhistoricalsociety.org/wpa-tour. Interested in learning more, get a group together and I would be happy to give you a personalized tour.

Happy Exploring!

Amy Loch

Foucart Award Nominations

We are now accepting nominees for this year's Annual Foucart Awards program. To be eligible for a Foucart award, properties must be located in Logan County, over 50 years of age, and have recently been preserved or restored. To nominate a property please contact Amy at 405-215-9700 or amy.lchsok@yahoo.com

Preservation50
1966-2016

Celebrating the passing of the
National Historic Preservation Act

October 15, 1966

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.

The Noble Avenue Viaduct Bridge is believed to be the only double decker bridge built in Oklahoma. The viaduct bridge transformed the community as residents, were no longer stuck on the wrong side of the tracks waiting for trains to pass. Guthrie residents praised the viaduct plans in the Guthrie News Leader with comments such as "I will no longer be late for work" and "property values on the west side will increase".

Even before Oklahoma was opened for settlement, the Cottonwood Creek and the railroad lines became crucial to the location and development of what would become Guthrie. Problems were quickly discovered as the rail traffic increased and the Cottonwood proved to be prone to flooding, leaving people stranded. The need for a viaduct bridge was realized by 1897, but plans did not come together. In the early 1900s, a steel truss bridge was built to cross over the cottonwood but left people waiting for trains to pass. This bridge was condemned in the late 1920s, causing frustration for the residents of Guthrie.

Federal funds finally helped build the viaduct bridge in 1937 to carry traffic across the Cottonwood and railroad lines. The under bridge retained access to the industries along the river, such as the ice plant and railroad freighthouses. The Oklahoma State Highway Commission engineers designed the bridge specifically for Guthrie, adapting the standardized highway commission plans for this project. Works Progress Administration labor helped build the bridge which took nine months to complete. The bridge was dedicated on March 17, 1937, with the bridge being noted as "an important milestone in the civic development of the city."

Some content for this article was taken from historical documentation completed as part of the viaduct replacement project.



In 1978, Debra and Gary Noble moved into the first pyramid house in Oklahoma, near Coyle. To see more images of the pyramid house visit our [blog](#).



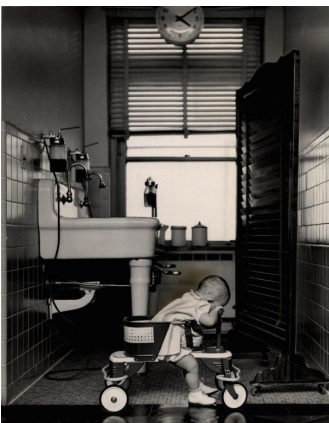
The LCHS is seeking historic photographs of Logan County from 1911-the present. We are especially interested in photographs which show how the county has changed over time. We are interested in scanning photographs and can return the originals to their owners, if desired. Photographs help to tell the story of our county and will be used for research, programming and to enhance our new website.

The Hospital that Almost Wasn't, Finds Hope for a New Life



As part of the next revitalization wave in Guthrie, plans are underway to renovate and utilize the former Benedictine Heights Hospital building on the west side of Guthrie for residential properties. As part of this project, Catherine Montgomery of the Preservation and Design Studio in OKC is in the process of nominating the hospital to the National Register of Historic Places. This project will be the third building in Guthrie nominated to the register this year.

While many who grew up in the area remember going to the hospital and some were even born inside, few remember how long the building of the hospital actually took. Construction on the hospital began in 1926, but the structure was not actually completed until 1948. This was not the first hospital built in Guthrie. The 40 bed Methodist Episcopal Hospital was not able to serve the full needs of the community, so plans were drawn for a new hospital in 1926. But plans stalled shortly after construction began with funds drying up for the project, which was largely funded through private donations of local residents. Multiple fundraising efforts were never able to raise the capital needed to enclose the structure. In 1931, the trustees of the Oklahoma Methodist Episcopal Hospital and Nurses training school voted to sell the partially completed property, but no buyers materialized. In 1946, an agreement was formed between the Cimarron Valley Hospital and the Benedictine sisters which allowed construction of the hospital to be completed. Funds still needed to be raised by the local community to furnish the hospital for use. The hospital finally opened in April of 1948, with 50 private rooms and wards to accommodate two to four residents each. The Benedictine sisters had residents on the fifth floor with a chapel for visitor and patient use. The fourth floor had two operating rooms, x-ray facilities, and orthopedic, urology, and cardiac specialists. The third floor housed labor and delivery, two nurseries, and was the only floor with air conditioning. Patient rooms were on the second floor. The first floor and basement housed administrative offices, cafeteria and kitchen, lab, pharmacy, and emergency room. In 1953, a special ward was added to care for children with special



Inside the hospital, c. 1952

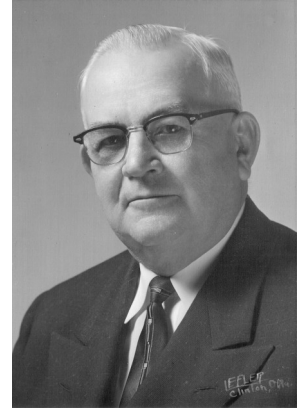
needs. The ward held 41 children and was reported to have had a long waiting list. However, by the 1960s the sisters were struggling to operate the hospital. The Benedictine sisters ceased operating the hospital on July 31, 1964 citing a "lack of religious hospital personal." In an effort to keep the hospital open, efforts were made to find a new religious group to take over hospital operations. An agreement was reached with St. Anthony's in OKC with the hospital being renamed the Alverno Heights Hospital, but the arrangement was short lived. As times changed, the age of the hospital showed and the Logan County Hospital Association knew they needed a new modern hospital. In 1974, the hospital name changed to Logan County Memorial Hospital and in 1978, the doors closed for good when a new hospital opened just west of Guthrie on South Academy Road.

A Slice of Time, 1959

Written by S. Abel de Valcourt

The year of 1959 is known in Oklahoma as the year that the last gasp of Prohibition died out and the state went wet. A deeply divisive social issue at the time, the prohibition of alcohol took one of its last breaths in Oklahoma. Nationally, the wave of Communism began to wash over the shores of Cuba. The Barbie Doll debuted on store shelves, the famous Mercury Seven were chosen for future manned spaceflight and the Explorer 6 launched and transmitted the first pictures of the Earth from orbit.

A bit closer to home, at the iconic First Methodist Church in Guthrie, the Reverend Blake Hickman and his wife Nellie took to the business of their last full year in Logan County. Three years previously, the Hickman's had come to Guthrie at the direction of the Methodist Conference, who commonly moved their pastors from church to church for a variety of reasons. Reverend Hickman was known to his parishioners as a fire-brand, a gifted and talented speaker with an unapologetic and sometimes confrontational style. To the Methodist Conference, he was known as a Church Builder. A preacher in Oklahoma from his youth, he was brought in to struggling or newer churches as a statement. An Oklahoma institution unto himself, he even was the speaker at the private family ceremony of Will Rogers in 1935.

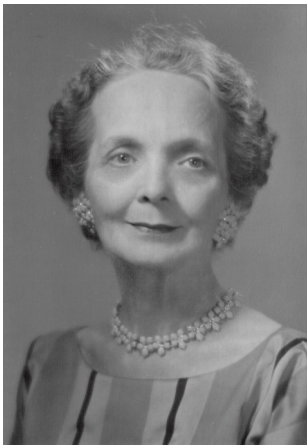


Nellie Hickman, in the tradition of many preacher's wives, took to the archiving and recording of the history of the community around her at each location she and her husband were brought to by his vocation. Yet in her failing health, 1959 would be the last of their full years in Guthrie before retirement.

In 2011, I was given a hoard of journals, photographs and other family records, including several church journals and scrap books from the various churches across Oklahoma. Contained within the worn pages of one of these journals is the story of Guthrie in 1959.

The First Methodist Church of Guthrie seemed, at least in 1959, to be the center of life in Logan County. There were multiple sponsorships of the Boy Scouts, various Little League Teams, and social engagements and community leadership meetings. There were many announcements of marriage throughout the year, including Linda Chappell to Joseph Balsiger and Velma Mitchell to Don Collins. Amusingly, Ira Eldridge a resident of the Masonic Home for the Aged sought refuge among the flower gardens so that he could "get away from all the old people" inside.

My 2nd Great Grandmother, Nellie Hickman was a staunch prohibitionist, so toward September of 1959, her focus appears to be there. Liquor stores opening across the state, prayer vigils, sing-ins and various signs of



peaceful protest litter the pages. To someone who had lived most of her life as a steady proponent of the "evils of alcohol" it must have been both frightening and disheartening for her to witness the celebrations and the protests of a state seemingly divided by alcohol.

By the end of May 1960, the Hickman's had moved on to Chickasha for a quiet retirement, with a flood of goodbye letters and words of sadness at their departure. It is clear that Reverend Hickman and Nellie enjoyed their time among the people of Logan County. Even after their departure she kept tabs on the community like a loving mother watching her children grow. Oklahoma had not heard the last sermon from Blake Hickman, after Nellie passed in 1961, he returned to the service of the community, this time in Verden. His firebrand surely had not dimmed, and there too he ended his career as he began it, a church and community builder.

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

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Advertise with the Trolley

Have your message seen around Guthrie or around Logan, Payne, Lincoln and Oklahoma Counties. Advertising space is available in various sizes on several vehicle locations. Prices start at just \$25.00 a month. Contact Melissa.trolley@yahoo.com or 282-6000 ex 6.

Logan County Museum and Historic Activity Directory

[Drug Store Museum](#), 214 W. Oklahoma Guthrie 405-282-1895

[First Capital Trolley](#), Guthrie 405-282-6000

[Frontier Country Museum](#), 500 N. Grand Crescent 405-969-3660

[Logan County Historical Society](#), Guthrie 405-215-9700

[Oklahoma Territorial Capital Sports Museum](#), 315 W. Oklahoma
Guthrie 405-260-1342

[Oklahoma Territorial Museum](#) 406 E. Oklahoma Guthrie 282-1889

[Owens Art Place](#), 1202 E. Harrison Guthrie 405-260-0204

Scottish Masonic Rite Temple, 900 E. Oklahoma Guthrie 282-1281

[Melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage Center](#), Langston University
405-466-3346



P.O. Box 1512
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