

THE DOCENT NEWS



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

March 2003

Tracks in the Tallgrass

- Jerry Wagener

The March 1st reorientation, despite some lingering uncertainty about the weather, was well attended by over 53% of the 103 returning docents. The room was pretty full; in the future we may have to find a new place if that inches above 60%.

We were well rewarded with preserve updates from Harvey and Bob, an introduction to the new *Flint Hills Initiative* involving patch-burn cattle grazing from Bob and guest speaker Jay Kerby, and a delightful summary of Osage County history by Jenk Jones.

Don Bruner put this reorientation together, making all the arrangements, getting the speakers, and then ramrodding the meeting itself. He kept us on schedule, and we even finished early. Not to mention that fantastic set of door prizes. Afterward someone told me this was "one of the best retraining sessions". Thanks, Don.

Harvey informed us that the research center contract has been signed, and construction will begin this

month. It is a scaled-down facility, containing labs and meeting rooms. The stucco house will be remodeled to provide sleeping and eating quarters. When Jean and I were working at the Visitors Center on March 4th, Ann was scurrying to finish "clearing everything out" of the stucco house, readying it for remodeling.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article by Andrew Donovan-Shead on the patch-burn experiment, which in a sense is the big new thing at the preserve. With its emphasis on space to study cattle grazing, the target size of the bison herd has been reduce from 3200 to 2600. Check our website for the related patch-burn scientific paper.

Jenk's paper is also on the website; it will make you a McCurdy buff, if not a full-fledged Osage history buff. This paper addresses, quite nicely, a suggestion to provide docents with more background in Osage County history. Jenk's paper is also being published in segments in the newsletter and will most likely be in the next version of the docent manual.

Another suggestion was to provide the docents with additional information

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about the prairie flora, particularly about the current flowers in bloom. Doris Mayfield provided new flower brochures, distributed at reorientation, organized by flower color and indicating what months each is in bloom. These brochures are available for sale in the visitors center (50 cents). Doris also distributed a one-page description of the new Nature Room layout.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a description by Dennis Bires on the adopt-a-mile concept that we are trying out. Next month I'll post a topo map in the docent room at the visitors center, depicting each mile. Thanks to Dennis, our new Workday Coordinator, for arranging our prairie workday events.

Another thing that received an enthusiastic on-the-fly let's-give-it-a-try reception is a possible opportunity for docents to participate in field data gathering in conjunction with some of the research projects being conducted on the preserve; but ones not as dicey as closely following individual bison, like Jay Kerby does to determine their precise grazing patterns. A signup sheet was passed around, which Bob has, so if you missed out and are interested let Bob or me know.

We currently have 45 new-docent applications this year, thanks to June Endres' recruiting efforts and those of her cadre of helpers. Each

of the applicants received a letter from me. The next step on that front is new docent training, which starts April 5th. David Turner has put together an excellent training program.

David has also been hard at work updating the docent manual, which is to be given to all docents this year, not just the new ones. A few were distributed at reorientation, but there weren't enough to go around since the copying hadn't been completed. For those that did not get one, copies will ultimately be available in the visitors center.

All-in-all it's shaping up to be an exciting year on the prairie. Makes me feel mighty good to be a part of it.

Jenny 


Stucco House Update


- Kay Krebbs


Docents please be advised that due to the remodeling currently in progress on the stucco house, it will not be available for docents to spend the night if they are working double shifts. The stucco house will not be available for any overnight guests until sometime this fall after the restoration is completed.




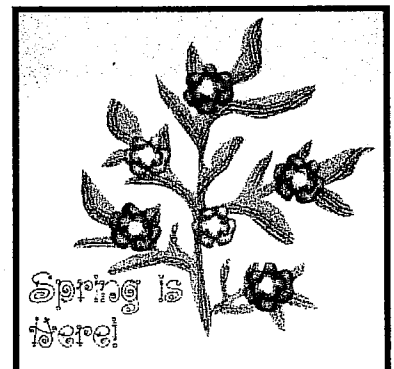
Prairie Update - Bob Hamilton

 **Fencing:** In February we initiated the construction of 10 miles of new boundary fence on the preserve's southeast side. This fencing project needs to be completed before this fall so the next 7,000 acres can be added to the bison unit. As of mid-March we have completed about 2 miles of fence in this very rough terrain.

 **Burning:** Conducted our first prescribed burn this spring on March 13th. By mid-April we need to conduct about 20 burns on about 20,000 acres.

 **Research Station:** The contractor broke ground on March 11th, with an expected 12-14 month construction period.

 **Bison:** No new calves as of March 20th, but we expect a few early birds by the end of March. Main calving season is mid-April through May. Expecting about 500 calves this spring.



Plant Identification - Van Vives

Many of us are real beginners in plant identification. I have tried to put together a few suggestions of what to look for and what notes to take when confronting an unknown plant.

The professional botanist has a long list of terms to rely upon, but I think we amateurs would welcome a short list to work from. It would also be helpful to have a digital camera to take a picture of the plant. The picture could then be emailed to other people who might be more knowledgeable.

I am currently trying to put together a database that lists various features of particular forbs, legumes, and woody plants. Hopefully the database can be searched using a filter and thus produce only several plants that fit the description. Then perhaps going to pictures of plants, the unknown can be identified.

When the database is completed I will be happy to email it to anyone interested. Remember that this is an experiment on my part and will have to be checked out. It should be able to be imported into a MSWorks, Excel, or Lotus database program.

Plant Identification Recommendation - Record the following:

1. Flower color
2. Number of flower petals
3. Color of center florets, if present
4. The month of blooming
5. Stem characteristics: erect, branching, branching above, originating from rootstock, etc.
6. Leaf characteristics: alternate, opposite, compound, simple, if lobed, if serrated
7. Leaflets, number, (if leaf is compound)
8. Presence of hair on stems or leaves
9. Presence of spurs or thorns
10. Are stem nodes prominent
11. Any other unique characteristics.



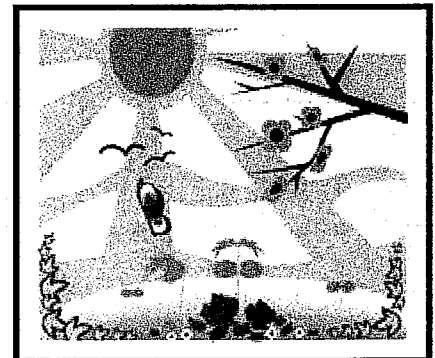
Adopt-a-Mile Program - Dennis Bires

At Docent Reorientation on March 1st, we proposed a new Adopt-a-Mile Program to keep the preserve roads litter-free between Prairie Road Crew clean-ups. The program is by no means intended to replace regular

Prairie Road Crew days, but rather to keep things looking pristine all season long. We sought volunteers among those who serve at the preserve at least monthly, and so can keep an eye on their mile regularly.

The response was, to say the least, overwhelming. A total of fourteen stretches of Preserve roadway were assigned to volunteers, some of them family teams. Only one or two segments remain unclaimed, so those who could not attend reorientation should act quickly to get involved. Contact Dennis Bires at (918) 631-2443, or via e-mail at dennisbires@lycos.com, or Jerry Wagener at (918) 636-6361 or via e-mail at Jerry@Wagener.com.

Congratulations to the proud adoptive parents: Dave Dolcater, Don Bruner, Jerry & Jean Wagener, Marian & Dennis Bires, Jay Ross, George Meyers, Kim & Phil Hagan, Iris McPerson, Barbara Bates, John Boxall, Art Browning, Van Vives, Kara Morgan and Elizabeth Stacy, and Mary Ann Davis.



**Prairie Road Crew,
Picnic and
Waterfall Hike Day
Planned!**

- Dennis Bires

Balmy weather is forecast for Saturday, May 3rd, the date of our next Prairie Road Crew clean up, from 10:00 to noon. A relatively easy morning's work is anticipated, as more than thirty garbage bags of litter were removed on our first 2003 Road Crew outing on February 22nd, and the new Adopt-a-Mile clean-up program is off the ground.

Even if you can't make it for the morning, don't think of missing the cookout at Preserve Headquarters at noon. If renovation work allows, we'll barbecue outside the Stucco House. All food and drinks will be provided, so just come hungry.

Following lunch, at about 1:30, Harvey Payne will lead us on a hike to the fabled Mary's Waterfall, deep in the recesses of the Hog Creek watershed. We hope also to find Dr. Livingston. Off-trail hiking attire will be a must for this journey, which will take at least an hour and a half round trip.

Please notify Dennis Bires by Friday, April 25th of your intention to attend, so we'll have sufficient grub for everyone. Phone me at (918) 341-3908 (home),

or (918) 631-2443 (work.), or e-mail me at dennisbires@lycos.com to confirm your participation!



What's Up?

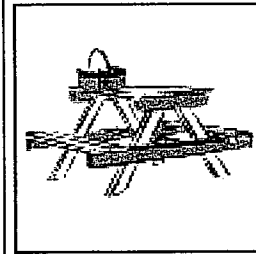
- Van Vives

Well, if you have walked on the trail lately you know the answer--not much! The only wildflower in bloom is the tiny Spring Beauty. Though elfin in stature, it has to be haughty to brave the cold winds of late winter.

Another common name, fitting for this early riser, is Good-Morning-Spring. The scientific name is *Claytonia Virginica* and it is a member of the purslane family.

The yarrow plants are green and sprouting vigorously. If one looks at the base of many of the wildflower plants one can see the bulging green pods of future stems and leaves ready to burst forth. With the rainfall we have recently had and with a little warm weather the will see the prairie go through a marvelous transformation.

While walking the trail this week I was serenaded by hundreds of frogs around the water holes and small ponds. As a child I used to be told they were praying for rain. Well, now I know better. They were praying for a mate!



**Picnic
Table
Work
Day**

**- Dennis
Bires**

A small group of volunteers is needed to do some carpentry repair work on some of the tables in the preserve picnic area. We'll get together on Saturday, April 19, from 10:00 to 1:00, at the Visitors Center. Tools and lumber will be provided.

**Mark Your Calendar
with These
Important Dates!**

**TGP New Docent Classroom
Training**

April 5th 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Chamber of Commerce Media
Room, Pawhuska

April 6th, 1 - 4 p.m. Chamber of
Commerce Media Room,
Pawhuska

**TGP New Docent On-Site
Training**

April 12th, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. TGP

Picnic Table Work Day

April 19th 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
TGP Visitor's Center

Prairie Road Crew

May 3rd, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., TGP

**Cook-out and Waterfall
Hike**

May 3rd 12 p.m.

For more information visit the
on-line calendar of events @
[www.oklahomanature.org/OK/
tallarass_volunteers.html](http://www.oklahomanature.org/OK/tallarass_volunteers.html)

Visitation Summary

- George Meyers

January and February 2003

January visitors were few and far between. Only 98 visitors signed in, 29 from other states, 7 from other countries and 62 from Oklahoma. There were 8 visitors from Pennsylvania, 4 from Arkansas, 3 from Ohio, 2 each from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Minnesota. The foreign visitors were 2 each from Chile, Germany and Switzerland and 1 from Australia. The previous low visitor count was 108 visitors in January 2001.

The most visitors came on Sunday (30%), followed by Saturday (29%) and Monday (18%). The middle of the day was the most popular as 38% came between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. with 28% between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. There were six days with no visitors signed in. Five of the seven foreign visitors were first timers, as were 24 of the 29 other state visitors and 26 of the 62 Oklahoma visitors.

February visitors were scarce! Thirty-nine visitors signed in, 33 from Oklahoma, 6 from 5 other states and no foreigners. Florida, Louisiana, New York and Texas were the other states. There were only 10 days with visitors and 18 with none. Most of the visitors came on the weekends. "Wonderful" and "Great" were the comments.

January and February were the lowest visitation months in our records.

With the gift shop open, and spring at hand, the visitors will be welcome!



Adventures in Adopting-A-Mile

- Kim Hagan

Adopt-a-Mile, what a wonderful idea! I readily volunteered to take a segment, a 1.25 mile stretch beginning at the top of the first big hill just inside the bison unit. What a great location, starting off with a vista all the way to Kansas! At least that's what I envisioned when I first visited my section of road a mere 13 days after the Prairie Road Crew Workday. What I didn't realize is that I'd be so busy scanning the bar ditches that I barely noticed the bison grazing nearby on my way to work at the Visitor's Center that day.

I started out enthused. I felt like a proud momma tending to her loved one, the awe inspiring Tall Grass Prairie. I stopped first at the monument to clear away 12 empty cans of assorted light beer and three beer 12-pack cartons. Without a sack to collect them in, Phil's pickup floorboard became my temporary trash bin. Oh well, I thought, Ann always has a supply of trash bags at the Visitor's Center.

Meanwhile, the truck was starting to smell like a bar the day after a big bash. I ambled along until I came to my patch of road. Then I spotted it, the first piece of trash, a mere few feet into my adopted stretch of road. Then another, and another! I began to believe that I adopted the party mile, which just may be some form of karmic payback from my youth. Beer cans were the target of my cleaning frenzy for the most part, along with the 12-pack packaging they are so conveniently sold in. Interestingly enough, they were all light beer cans and cartons, so our litterbugs must be watching their caloric intake!

A short while into my cleaning frenzy, I spotted a few cans just past the bar ditch. Someone has good aim, I mused. I ambled over with the single-minded purpose of getting the dang cans off the prairie when I was forced to redirect my attention to the mud I was slipping in. Yes, the preserve got rain the day before I arrived and this made the bar ditch extremely slippery. I almost plopped right down but somehow caught my balance in the nick of time. The thought passed through my mind that I just may show up for my shift looking like one of the cowboys after a rough day on the preserve! My boots were caked in mud, but it was earned honestly and I felt great knowing I was making a difference. After 30 minutes and covering a mere quarter mile, I decided I better high-

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tail it to the visitor's center. The rest of the clean-up work could wait until my shift was over.

I cast my eyes on the roadside the rest of the journey to the Visitor Center just to see if there was as much recently accumulated trash elsewhere on the preserve. I did spot an occasional can or bottle, but nothing like I encountered on the party mile.

When I arrived at the center, I hollered to Ann, letting her know I was there but needed to hose off my boots before I dared to step inside. This is when I found out that my boots aren't 100% water-resistant! Using the waterspout, as the hose was still put away for the winter, and the fencing as a scraper, I did the best I could to clean off my boots. Still, all day I was dropping clumps of dried mud on the floor and therefore pledged to Ann that I would sweep my way out of the door when I left for the day. During lunch I put the collected beer cans and cartons into a trash bag. I had already had one filled with one mile to go when I returned towards Pawhuska later in the day!

Finding my mile was a bit more difficult in reverse. I thought I had targeted a landmark, but one curve looks a lot like another out there on the prairie, at least to a Yankee like me! So I drove back to the top of the hill and began again. At one spot I picked up 11 light beer cans and one Diet Mountain Dew. Again health

conscience litters had left their mark. As I worked the road, side to side, shielding my eyes from the sun now low in the west, I found another bag's worth of trash. I did notice that some of it is tricky, hiding behind small rises in the shoulder and only visible when I turned around for the trip home. Every time I thought I was done, another can or bottle would be gleaming the in delightful sunshine. The mud was a bit dried up, but I still got my boots plastered with the stuff. I'd be sure to take them off before trudging into the house, but the truck took a beating. Just when I thought I was done, I saw one last bottle, and low and behold, it was a sole regular, full strength, full calorie Budweiser! It almost restored my faith in the American beer drinker.

So, after clearing out two full bags of trash on a 1.25 mile stretch of road that was cleared a mere 13 days prior, I do believe I have the right to lovingly designate my segment the party mile. I'm not sure if it's the view they stop for, or the last chance to clear out empties before leaving the bison unit that's the motivator, but the drinkers seem to like this stretch of road as much as I do. But they surely show it in different ways!

So next time you're driving anywhere on the preserve and spot a glistening piece of trash on the roadside, feel free to take a stretch break, exit your vehicle and pick up the offending item, especially if you're on the party mile.

Just be sure to carry a trash bag with you!

As for me, I look forward to my next adventure on my Adopt-A-Mile. It's a wonderful program.



Docent Reorientation Door Prize Drawing



Docent Reorientation Chow Line



Docent Reorientation: Dick Baker Talk



Docent Reorientation Participants

The Patch-Burn Experiment

- Andrew Donovan Shead

Overall I thought the March 1st Docent Reorientation Meeting good; in particular, I was favorably impressed by the excellence of the speakers. Jenk Jones gave a lucid talk on the history of Osage County; I admired the structure and organization of his writing, sitting at ease to enjoy his telling of the story.

What I want to do here is to share some thoughts provoked by Harvey Payne, Bob Hamilton, and Jay Kerby. You might have noticed the mad scientist sitting on a lawn chair in the bed of pick-up truck out on the prairie. That was Jay watching the motions of grazing bison. He gave us a summary of his field research. Listening to these chaps, it didn't take me long to identify the TGP brief, which is: *Lead by Example*.

To lead by example is a logical progression of TNC's science-based mission. It is a top-down approach from management of ecoregions, to management of the TGP and outgrowth of Bob Hamilton's concern for what happens to the declining land around the preserve, to the specific research by scientists such as Jay Kerby. To me this top-down approach appears rational and coherent.

Before expanding on this I should report a cogent observation made by Harvey

Payne. He said that ranchers and other large landowners don't manage land with the express objective of destroying it. What happens is that land degrades through incompatible use, usage without understanding the mechanisms that cause degradation. It is research at the TGP and other such places that exposes these mechanisms to our understanding, giving the scientists practical results to support their arguments for changing current land management practices.

TGP Management has devised a planning process to assess threats to the prairie; this process is risk-analysis that consists in iterative of these steps:

1. Research questions about the prairie. For example, Jay Kerby's research into the grazing habits of bison and cattle.
2. Analyze data produced by research.
3. Compare results of analysis to current prairie management objectives.
4. Adjust management practice to match conclusions drawn from this comparison.
5. Provide advice to others in areas surrounding the Tallgrass Prairie.

This iterative process of management is a closed-loop that provides continual adjustment of the process itself. Direction in which the

TGP is going is a good example: Jay Kerby's research has shown that bison respond to the characteristics of their environment depending on their needs. This is the main thrust of Jay's research. Conclusions drawn from this research may apply to cattle. The result is that management of TGP has revised its objective of 3,200 head of bison to 2,600. This is coupled with an increase in the number of cattle for research into the effects on cattle of patch-burn grazing. This has potential to influence the grazing practice of commercial cattle ranchers if the scientists can confirm their educated guesses.

Key to all this is widespread use of incompatible burn-grazing regimes that have a homogenizing, impoverishing effect on the land. The TGP patch-burn-grazing regime has a heterogeneous, enriching effect.

Traditional rangeland management practice razes grassland early every year to promote fresh, lush new growth in spring as feed for livestock. This practice favors uniformity of plant life such as annuals at the expense of plants having a biennial or longer cycle of life. In turn, this has adverse effect on some animals while promoting others.

Populations of prairie chickens are most disrupted because they need undisturbed prairie vegetation with native

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grasses 30-50 cm high in which to rear their broods, and freshly burned regenerating areas in which feed and breed.

The net result is that on the TGP scientists think that cattle can, like bison, be grazed with next to no supplements, because the browse produced by patch-burn is so much richer. Also, patch-burn moves animals naturally, eliminating manual rotation with trucks, fences, and personnel, which produces a corresponding reduction in costs. All this occurs with an increase in biodiversity.

TNC, and the TGP in particular, are taking a wise interdisciplinary approach that involves range management, science, ranchers, and conservation biology. The objective is to "...restore heterogeneity on range lands [through] ecosystem management based on evolutionary grazing patterns." Jay's thesis advisor, Samuel Fuhlendorf, "...proposes a paradigm that enhances heterogeneity instead of homogeneity to promote biological diversity and wildlife habitat on range lands grazed by livestock" in his paper entitled "Restoring Heterogeneity on Rangelands: Ecosystem Management Based on Evolutionary Grazing Patterns.". This paper is now available on the web.

Patch-burning, though, may only really apply to those prairies that have a long history of grazing and fire.

Evolutionary grazing patterns are important and obvious once we contemplate it. Historically, we have thought of animals as dumb commodities to be disposed of as we see fit. In fact, to survive an animal must interact intelligently with the environment it inhabits. Imagine that you, an urban dweller, are suddenly transported to the Kalahari Desert. You would die in the midst of plenty because you would not know how to interact with your new environment. You wouldn't have enough time to learn before you died of starvation. A similar fate is met by the Kalahari tribesman let loose in New York City. And so it is with animals to a degree. They need time to learn their environment to find out where the best grazing is and what stuff they should avoid.

To remain healthy, animals need to live in a diverse, heterogeneous environment. Biologist Cindy Engel has published a very readable survey entitled *Wild Health* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002) that describes "...how animals keep themselves well and what we can learn from them." Her book adds another dimension to what motivates animal grazing. As we saw from Jay Kerby's presentation, there is a marked difference between the grazing habits of male and female bison, the most likely cause being the greater nutritional needs of a female whose body chemistry changes so dramatically from month to month.

During the 1939-45 world war, British scientists calculated that 10-percent of domestic food production was lost to space occupied by hedgerows. Hedgerows are what gave Britain its characteristic patchwork quilt look from the air. Hedgerows were used to divide fields and contain animals; they were grubbed out to enlarge fields for economies of scale and to allow large machinery to operate more efficiently. Fences took the place of the remaining hedges and ditches. Food production increased. Unfortunately biodiversity decreased in the more homogenous environment. The hedges and ditches had been home to many different species of animal and acted as communicating cover between different areas of land. James Lovelock of the Gaia theory was one of those scientists who have since realized their mistake.

So is biodiversity to be believed? Research at the TGP is an example giving practical, tangible results. An example closer to home is the difference in quality between eggs from free-range chickens and those coming from battery hens. Free-range eggs have richer, more orange yolks whereas the battery egg is insipid. Given a choice, I prefer eating bison to beef. I am told that beef once tasted as good as bison does today, surely a consequence of current practice in the cattle industry.



History of Osage County

Part I of a VI Part Series

- Jenk Jones

Elmer McCurdy was one of that legion of rootless men who drifted west across America during the restlessness of the frontier era. Leaving Maine in his youth, he worked as a plumber, a miner and a soldier before a brief and subsequently fatal career as an outlaw, one of the more inept of that breed. Under normal circumstances, he would have disappeared into dust without leaving the merest trace upon the sands of history.

But fate decreed differently for McCurdy, or whichever of the several aliases he used. Shot to death by a posse in northern Osage County when he was just 31, he would in death have a career twice as long as his meager life span, travel more, earn more money (for others) and achieve far greater fame and notoriety than he ever did in life.

An intriguing story? You bet! It's one of a myriad of true yarns about this land we call The Osage that will fascinate visitors to the Tallgrass and give them reason even beyond the bison, the birds, and the beasts to revere this land as we do. (I'll get back to Elmer in part VI of this series, so stay tuned!)

Osage County, The Osage Nation, The Osage.

These are different ways of describing the same place. I prefer The Osage, because its geography and geology, plentiful wildlife and mix of vegetation, rich history and

extraordinary cast of characters stretch far beyond mere legal jurisdiction or tribal legacy, giving it almost a mystical cast. Here live the Osage Indians, once per capita the richest people on earth due to oil. Here is bluestem grass that many call the best grazing in America. Here the wooded eastern half of the nation fades away as the drier conditions of the West take over, inhibiting tree growth. And here in The Osage lived remarkable Indian leaders, a future president, men and women who would become entertainment stars, a war hero, oilmen who staked fortunes on formations hidden deep underground, cattlemen who braved drought, blizzard and the vagaries of markets, even outlaws famous or otherwise. Paint The Osage in these hues and your visitors will get a fascinating picture.

The Osage, at 2,251 square miles, is the largest county in Oklahoma, larger than either Delaware or Rhode Island. The Tallgrass Preserve, at the southern end of the Flint Hills that range down from Kansas, has rocks dating from 290 to 298 million years ago, somewhat older than neighboring areas to the north. Tell kids that they are older than the dinosaurs and their eyes will glaze with awe.

Slicing through the Tallgrass' eastern sector is the Cross Timbers, a natural barrier of tangled growth that helped separate Woodland and Plains Indians and was a tough wall to breach for soldiers, pioneers and early-day oilmen.

Sandstone that underpins the Osage's eastern areas helps

trap moisture for those hardy trees that are the forest's advance guard; in the western Osage, limestone nurtures the lush grasses that signal the beginning of the Great Plains. Both sandstone and limestone intermingle with shale.

To give you an idea of the myriad of interesting bits of information about The Osage, throughout this series I'll toss you some names of places and people, attractions in Pawhuska and a capsule of what I call the Four Pillars of the Osage: the tribe itself, the oil, cattle and outlaw history. Through your travels and readings you will find more to add.

Names on the Land

Osage: A French corruption of Wa-sha'-she or Wa-zha'-zhe, the name by which tribesmen called themselves. The Osages are members of the southern Sioux linguistic group, along with such closely related tribes as the Kaw (or Kansa), Omaha, Ponca and Quapaw.

Pawhuska: The name means White Hair; it was given to Osage Chief Paw-hiu-Skah (spellings vary) after he took part in a battle in Ohio against American troops during the Washington administration. He tried to scalp a fallen officer, only to have the officer's white hair, a powdered wig, come off in the chief's hand. Aided by the diversion, the officer escaped. The chief thought the hair had great power, it had helped protect its wearer, and kept the wig with him for the rest of his life, taking the name White Hair as a result of his experience.

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Nelagoney: A community near Pawhuska meaning, *spring* or *good water* in Osage.

Pershing: Located on Oklahoma 11 southeast of Pawhuska. This oil boom town was named for Gen. John J. Pershing, head of U.S. forces in Europe in World War I. The ruin of a church is just south of the highway; within a block were the four B's of oilfield living: Baptists, bootlegger, bar and bordello.

Okesa: Located south of U.S. 60 between Pawhuska and Bartlesville. It means halfway in Osage, and was halfway between Pawhuska and the western border of the Cherokee Nation in post-Civil War Indian Territory. Okesa was an outlaw haven and site of the last train robbery in Oklahoma in 1923. Outlaws also hid out in the area's caves, thick woods and small canyons.

Wynona: A now-faded oil-boom town on Oklahoma 99 south of Pawhuska that means *first-born daughter* in the Sioux language.

Hominy: An important oil town in the southern part of the county on Oklahoma 99 and Oklahoma 20. The name is believed to be a corruption of Harmony, for the old Harmony Mission in Missouri. Local artist Cha Tullis' metal sculpture on the hill immediately west of town depicts an Indian war party. There also are colorful murals on town buildings, mostly by Cha.

Barnsdall: Originally named Bigheart for Chief James Bigheart, whose grave

alongside Oklahoma 11 less than a mile southeast of town has a historical marker. The grave is just north of 11's junction with Oklahoma 123; it is the tallest marker and topped by a cross. Barnsdall was an oil town that survived flood, tornado, major fire, a nitro wagon explosion and a deadly blast at its refinery in a 14-year span. It is proud of its Main Street oil well, though one account says the well came first and the street was built around it. The town's old stone buildings are interesting. See the marker next to a tiny museum about the Tallant plant three miles north (alongside Oklahoma 11), a petrochemical pioneer that played a key role in World War II.

Burbank: West of Pawhuska on U.S. 60, this community, supposedly named for cockleburs on a nearby bluff, gave its name to the greatest of the Osage oilfields. This ghost town with only a few residents remaining, is worth exploring.

Blackland: A cattle-loading area outside Tallgrass Prairie Preserve on the Bison Loop road. During World War II more cattle were unloaded and loaded here than at any spot in the United States.

Foraker: Located a few miles west of the preserve, it was named for a U.S. senator from Ohio. It had two booms: first in agriculture with corn, alfalfa, cattle, and hogs, and second as a shipment point serving the Burbank Field. Once it had 2,000 residents; today it's maybe two dozen.

Avant: Named for prominent Osage Ben Avant, who was shot

to death for hitching his horse in town at a place where only automobiles were allowed.

Woolaroc: Frank Phillips' fabled ranch located between Bartlesville and Barnsdall. The name is a contraction of wood, lakes and rocks.

Fairfax: Southwest of Pawhuska, this town is the site of the grave of Chief Ne-kah-wah-she-tun-kah, the last Osage chief to be provided a traditional tribal burial ceremony. As the *Oklahoma Historical Tour Guide* reports, "Unfortunately this included placing a human scalp in the grave. A Wichita chief was selected for this 'honor.' The taking of the scalp in 1923 understandably caused a rather nasty intertribal incident and the U.S. government banned any future scalp-hunting."

Places of Note in Pawhuska

Million Dollar Elm: Only the stump remains of the famed tree under which rich oil-lease sales were held, beginning in 1912. Many quarter-section leases brought bids of more than \$1 million, hence the name. Photos of that era show the trunk surrounded by oilmen, bankers, blanket Indians, tool pushers and other interested parties in a colorful tableau. The stump is on the grounds of the Indian agent's house atop Agency Hill, between the county courthouse and the Osage council chambers. The tree died in the mid-1980s. A marker tells its' history.

Constantine Theater: A refurbished theater now used for various musical events. It was used to host the lease sales

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when the weather was bad. It was built in the 1880s as a hotel and converted to an opera house in 1914.

Immaculate Conception Church:

Some of the finest stained glass windows in America, made by Munich craftsmen nearly a century ago, are in this Catholic church. The large window on the north wall, titled "Cathedral of the Osage," depicts what were then living Osages and required special permission from the Vatican. Cost of the window then: \$5,000, plus the cost of bringing German workmen to install it. Note the artistry, color and expressive faces in the larger windows along the walls flanking the pews, also crafted in Munich. The Stations of the Cross come from Italy. The door midway on south side, up the steps that parallel the church's main axis, usually is open.

Osage tribal chambers: On Agency Hill, the chambers include a mural of the Osage Story of Creation and another depicting famous Osages. The next building to the north is a tribal museum.

Osage County Museum: Located in the former Santa Fe Railroad depot, it has an interesting if eclectic mix, including early scout equipment, and many historical photos.

City Hall: A wonderful stone building just west of the Constantine Theater. It once served as the Osage Council House.

First National Bank Lobby: Period ceiling, floor and quaint teller cages. It is worth taking a look at this lobby.

Triangle Building: This historic structure across Main Street from the First National Bank is on the site of the original station used for disbursing funds to the Osages.

Oldest Building in Pawhuska: A small stone structure just east of the new Visitor's Center on Main Street, it was built for a blacksmith who worked for the tribe.

Now that you have an idea of the number and diversity of interesting places in the Osage, we will look some of the people of the Osage in the next installment.



Coming Next Month...

Part II of
History of Osage County
by
Jenk Jones

and

Part III of
Children of the Middle Waters
by
Nick Del Grosso



Docent Reorientation Participants



Docent Reorientation: Bob H, Jenk J, Elizabeth S. and Jerry W confer



Docent Reorientation: Miss Hamilton and her father, Bob



Docent Reorientation Participants



Docent Reorientation: Ann W. & gang

Apr 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			George Meyers	Kim Hagan	Pat Jaynes	Beverly Atteberry Jim Deming
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dorothy Buck Nancy Irby	Loretta Vives Van Vives	Hugh Selman Peggy Selman		Dick Baker Sally Baker	Jean Wagener Jerry Wagener	Don Bruner TG Jean Wagener Jerry Wagener
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Jenk Jones, Jr. Cheryl Kilpatrick	John Boxall	Phyllis Connally	Dave Dolcater Marilyn Keefer	Yuki Roberts	Jo Brooks Irene Ward	John Fisher TG Irene Ward
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
John Boxall TG	Frank Lacey	Hugh Selman Peggy Selman	Stuart Marshall	Bill Rinehart	June Endres Nancy Irby	Kara Morgan Van Vives TG
27	28	29	30			
Nicholas Delgrosso	Iris McPherson	Andrew Donovan-Shead	Don Baird Larry Myers			

May 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yuki Roberts	Loretta Vives Van Vives	Dick Baker Sally Baker		Kim Hagan		Beverly Atteberry Don Bruner TG Phyllis Connally
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Frank Lacey		Dave Dolcater			John Fisher TG Kara Morgan
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Bonita Warren	George Brenner Bonita Warren	Marilyn Keefer Stuart Marshall	Iris McPherson Bill Rinehart	Nancy Irby	Van Vives TG
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Nicholas Delgrosso	Frank Lacey				Jo Brooks June Endres	