



Early 1900s photograph of local gentlemen Leo Lobsitz and Bert Keaton (uncle to legendary entertainer Buster Keaton), posing with hunting boots, rifles, and a loyal hunting dog. Courtesy of the museum's digital archives.

THE TIES THAT BIND

It's hard to reflect on the start of a new year without celebrating the incredible strides our organization made in 2024. What a remarkable year it has been! January 2nd marks one year since I began my tenure with The Cherokee Strip Historical Society, and it has been a deeply rewarding journey.

Guided by our dedicated board members, anchored by a clear strategic vision, and energized by meaningful collaborations with our community, we've achieved so much together. Some of my favorite milestones include the transformation of our gift shop,

the generous wagon donation that adds a new dimension to our collection, the flourishing of music and arts on our grounds, and the success of securing several impactful grants. Each of these accomplishments reflects the passion and commitment of everyone involved. For this quarters newsletter our cover is titled, "Ties That Bind," as a few of the stories in this addition connect family members, back to their shared roots, perhaps to the very place their stories all began.

As we step into 2025, I am excited to continue sharing engaging stories

from the past and uncovering new tidbits about the rich history of the Cherokee Outlet and Oklahoma—stories that might surprise and delight even the most avid history enthusiasts. Together, we can bring the past to life in fresh and inspiring ways. Thank you for being a vital part of our organization—whether through membership, volunteerism, or employment. Your support helps us fulfill our mission to "keep history alive," and for that, I am deeply grateful.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Madison Flores
Executive Director

Historical Society Updates

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Happy New Year to all our CSHS members! I can't wrap my mind around the fact that this century is a quarter gone. This month's newsletter theme is the Ties That Bind us to our Cherokee Strip Run history. It gives me an opening to write about my own family background. I have Strip pioneers on both sides of my family. My maternal grandfather, Benjamin Franklin Studebaker, staked a claim 2 miles south of Perry. A year later he brought his new bride, Laura, to live in a dugout in the side of a creek. On my paternal side, my great-great-grandparents, Abraham and Margaret Talbott, in their 60's, made the run into Garfield county, settling near Waukomis. The strength and endurance of these pioneers never ceases to amaze me. I invite you to explore more of these connections at our Cherokee Strip Historical Society annual meeting on Tuesday, January 28. You should be receiving an invitation to this exciting event soon. Robert Burch with OETA will speak about the Perry-Buster Keaton connection. This will follow our annual meeting at Pancoast Hall. Details are in the invitation and on the museum website. I am looking forward to seeing you all then!

Carol Steichen,
CSHS Board President

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL..KIND OF" SCHOOLHOUSE PLAY

As part of the past event, "Christmas on the Prairie," the event opener featured a schoolhouse play with 7 stars, and a full schoolhouse of viewers. This was a lighthearted play with a great deal of comedy involved.



A display of Christmas lights illuminates the night during the "Christmas on the Prairie: Open House" event. Captured beautifully by Alana Howard Photography.

Our program director was Jenna Hooper, a senior theatre major from Oklahoma State University. The program consisted of weekly rehearsals for the month of December leading up to the performance night, December 20th. After much positive response from the community in conclusion of the program, we are excited to announce a summer program in the schoolhouse for theatre. We look forward to offering this new opportunity in the months to come!

OKLAHOMA ARTS COUNCIL GRANT

Our past event "Christmas on The Prairie," was partially funded by a grant we received for community arts with Oklahoma Arts Council. We strived to invite local artists to take part in this event, to showcase their talents and promote the stability of arts in our community and museum. We also received a generous donation of supplies from Farha Whole sale of Ponca City towards our event.

MALZAHN FAMILY GRANT

In October, we were awarded a grant to resurface the museum entrance, up lift and transform our landscaping, invest in commercial Christmas lights, manage our woodlot of trees, and end with drone photography this Spring. We owe tremendous thanks to the Malzahn Family Affiliated Grant, as they always extend generosity to our community in the most amazing ways.



Christmas On the Prairie



Sponsored by Oklahoma Arts Council & Farha Wholesale

NEW EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY: THE LEGACY OF BUSTER KEATON

Our new temporary exhibit, opened on December 7, 2024, celebrates The Life of Buster Keaton and his enduring connections to Perry, dating back to his early childhood.

At the heart of this exhibit is a striking bronze plaque, a gift from Paramount Pictures, inscribed with a heartfelt tribute: "Buster Keaton, great star of the screen and illustrious citizen of Perry, Okla., where he first learned that one of man's highest achievements is the ability to make people laugh."

Adorning the plaque is a beautifully sculpted bronze replica of Keaton's iconic hat. Another highlight of the exhibit is the very hat he wore during the parade in Perry for the world premiere of *A Buster Keaton Story*, a film starring Donald O'Connell.

This thoughtfully curated exhibit offers a fascinating glimpse into the life and legacy of Buster Keaton, while also setting the stage for more stories and insights to be shared during our upcoming Cherokee Strip Historical Society Annual Meeting and program.



On display in the museum: Buster Keaton's hat worn in the parade of 1957 for his world premiere.



A Buster Keaton mural graces downtown Perry, located between Foster's Corner Drug and the Seth Wadley Dealership. Created by Perry's own Holly McHughes, the artwork celebrates the silent film legend's local ties. To the right of the mural, a snapshot from a movie scene captures a young Keaton gazing upward, adding a cinematic touch to this tribute.

ANNUAL MEETING & PROGRAM

This year's annual meeting and program of the Cherokee Strip Historical Society will kick off at 5:30 p.m. in Pancoast Hall (614 Cedar Street) on Tuesday, January 28th, 2025. The evening will feature a catered meal followed by a brief meeting reflecting on our organization's activities over the past year. We invite you to join us by purchasing a meal ticket at the museum or on our website, www.cherokee-strip-museum.org.

Tickets are priced at \$20 per person. After the meal and meeting, we will enjoy a brisk walk to the Heritage Center (222 N. 6th Street) for a program about Buster Keaton

presented by Robert Burch from OETA. He will share insights into the deep roots of The Keaton Family in Perry, dating back to 1893, and we will view some of Keaton's most memorable film moments. The evening will wrap up with a membership drive in the lobby of the Heritage Center. This program is free and open to the public, beginning at 6:45 p.m.

*Our mission is to collect,
preserve, and interpret the
history of the Cherokee
Outlet.*



Pictured above is Andrew Nelson and his son Atticus Nelson in front of Rose Hill School after attending for a day.

PAUL CRESS RESEARCH ROOM & CONNECTING FAMILY HISTORY

On Tuesday, December 5th, a Sapulpa Public Schools 3rd grade class came for “A Day at Rose Hill School 1910.” Amongst a few of the attendees was Atticus Nelson and his dad, Andrew. While the dad scanned the walls of the schoolhouse, he noticed the name “Nelson Pharmacy” on the banner that hangs from the ceiling. Nelson Pharmacy was one of many advertisements on the banner promoting local Perry businesses of the early 1900s.

While he continued to ponder, he noticed the class list posted on the wall by the front entrance of children who attended Rose Hill School in 1910. He noticed a few individuals with the last name Nelson. Simultaneously, a small memory of hearing about a great-grandfather in his family settled after the land run somewhere along Perry. He decided to go into the museum and ask about any history of the Nelson family.

We guided him into our Paul Cress Research room, where we store hundreds of homesteader family files. He pulled the “Nelson file” to discover a plethora of information about his family. It was his family, after all. Not only did he find out who his great-great-grandfather was and where he claimed his land, but he also found an old article about his grandfather. He found a Perry Daily Journal article about his grandpa, who left Perry High School to fight in World War II. He was never able to receive his diploma until later in life. The high school honorably dedicated his high school diploma to him at a later age in life.

****DIRECTOR’S NOTE****

We continue to open the Paul Cress Research Room to anyone interested in local history or state history. . This is a free resource provided to the public by the Cherokee Strip Historical Society.

A special thank you to our valued members

LIFETIME

Dan & Denise Allen, Laura Beers, Rose Mary Bezdicek, Karen Bigbee, Bob Bolay, Elise & Mason Bolay, Kay & Howard Bond, April & Kevin Bond, Cindy & John Boone, Marilyn & Leonard Branen, Bart Brorsen, Alanna Brown, Gloria Brown, Dolly & Lloyd Brown, Mickey Brown, Paula & Eldon Cinnamon, Earline Cockrum, Ethel & L.B. Coe, Jerry Cook, Kelly Cunningham & Pete Hudson, Melanie & Gerald Davidson, Cheryl & Bill DeJager, Karen & Gerald Demory, Marvin Dement, Ed Dolezal, Ann Dunagan, Rakhima & Dale Dunivan, Carol & Scott Dvorak, Gwen & Blaine Easter, Jeannie & Sam Ebersole, Jay Eby, Bettye Kay Evans, Mary Lou Foltz, Tom Frailey, Virginia Gengler, Susie & Eric Goldsberry, Lucille Graham, Amy and Charles Hall, Juana Hall, Carrie & Zack Hall, Mr. & Mrs. JBerry Harrison, Peggy Haxton, Sherrie Henry, Ann Hight, Dave Hoffman, Heather & Clint Hughes, Loyd Hughes, Mabel Hughes, Marilyn & Ernest Inselman, Norma & Lyle Jerome, Barbara & Marvin "Bud" Jirous, Gwen Johnson, Elizabeth Kastl, Ruby & Craig Kemnitz, Denise & Steve Kienholz, Mindy & Kelly Kiser, Janet Klingaman, Becky & Jim Knecht, Clarence Koch, Mary & JD Koch, Deloris Layne, Kathy & Roger Lewis, Patty & Dannie Luter, Linda Luthye & Jim Franklin, Lois & David Malget, John Malget, Sandra Malget, Ray Malget, Marjorie Martin, George McGuire, Janet & Robert Mildfelt, Glenda & Dennis Mittasch, Myra Moore, Claudia & Steven Mornhinweg, Nancy & Tom Nelson, Karen & John Niles, Reta & Ron Norton, Claudia & Larry Pannell, Rita & Robert Park, Melissa & Grady Parmley, Donna & Randy Parrish, Deloris & George

Patak, Betty Petermann, Charithah Pricer, Linda & Larry Raynes, Megan & Danny Ripley, Darlene Roads, Carla & Rusty Robbins, Cindy & Randy Rupp, Stephanie & Mark Rupp, Gloria & David Sarser, Sherri & Weldon Shieffer, Marilyn & George Seagraves, Janet & Mike Shannon, Kim & Willie Sheets, Diana & Bill Simon, Lorene & Chuck Smith, Sandy & James Soulek, Evelyn & Jimmie Spillman, A.F. Stehno, Carol & Dennis Steichen, Nancy & Rod Stirman, Marilyn & John Stroup, Janice Strub, Tanner Beverly, Shirley & Bill Tearney, Dee Ann & Mark Thomas, Carolyn & Dennis Thompson, Hulda & Thomas Trumbla, Sylvia Valuikas, Barbara VanCoeverying, Michelle Vann, Marilyn Voise, Jeannie Wade, Myr-Lou Rollins, Marianne & Kirk Ward, Betty & Bill Warner, Rena & Scott Wheatley, Karen Wilcox, Melanie & Dennis Williams, Crystal & Marty Williams, Donna & Harvey Yost, Laural & Eugene Zavodny, Ruben & Madison Flores, Pip & Claire Sarser, Barbara Seedorf, Debbie & Bruce Donahue, Sasha & Curt Leich, Denise Lovely

ANNUAL

Sharon & Dean Courtright, Nancy & John Deken, Elfrieda Wagner, Tory & Sam Bluntzer

NEW

Dallas Robbins

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President: Carol Steichen

Vice President: Ray Malget

Treasurer: Rena Wheatley

Recording Secretary: Glenda Mittasch

DIRECTORS

Karen Demory

Shelbi Duke

Kevin Bond

Marilynn Voise

April Smith

STAFF

Director: Madison Flores

Receptionist: Denise Lovely

Curator: Debbie Crozier

Historical Interpreters:

Alice Dwyer

Nancy Deken

Shelly Capehart

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our generous volunteers, including the Ditch Witch Maintenance crew, as well as Cheryl Dejager.

Preserving, collecting, and interpreting the history of the Cherokee Outlet

Sponsorships

Your support enables us to continue showcasing captivating exhibits, offering engaging educational programs, and fostering a deeper appreciation for our shared heritage. Together, let's ensure that future generations can explore and cherish the stories that define us. Become a sponsor today and make a lasting impact on our cultural legacy.

Levels of Giving

\$20 - Donor
\$20-99 - Supporter
\$100-\$499 - Range Rider
\$500-\$999 - Cowpoke
\$1,000-\$4,999 - Stake Claimer
\$5,000-\$9,999 - Covered Wagon
\$10,000-\$19,999 - Pioneer
\$20,000 & Over - Homesteader

The CSHS is a 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code. You will receive a letter confirming your tax deductible donation.



Become A Member

Want to join the Cherokee Strip Historical Society? Enjoy all the benefits of becoming a member today!

Annual Membership- \$25.00

Benefits:

- Free admissions + two guests
- 10% off of at the museum gift shop
- Added to the mailing list for newsletters, organization updates, event flyers and more

Lifetime Membership- \$150.00

Benefits:

- Free admissions + two guests
- 10% off of at the museum gift shop
- Added to the mailing list for newsletters, organization updates, event flyers and more
- Customized name plate added to our lifetime membership wall

Checks can be made payable to Cherokee Strip Historical Society, or please call us at 580-336-2405 to make a card payment over the phone.

cherokee-strip-museum.org
