



SHEERAR MUSEUM *of Stillwater History*

SHEERAR CULTURAL & HERITAGE CENTER

702 S. DUNCAN STREET

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074

PHONE 405-377-0359

STILLWATER MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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Ammie Bryant
Director

Brandon Neal Jones
Registrar

April 1, 2016

Norman McNickle, City Manager
City of Stillwater
P.O. Box 1449
Stillwater, OK 74076

Dear Mr. McNickle,

Thanks to support from the City of Stillwater and many private contributors, the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History completed its 41st year of collecting, preserving, and interpreting Stillwater's history on November 17, 2015.

For the fiscal year 2016-2017, the Sheerar Museum is requesting \$15,000 in support from the City of Stillwater to maintain programming at the current level.

Programs, exhibits, and events set for 2016-2017 include new temporary exhibits in the Museum Gallery, the continuation of the award-winning elementary education program, as well as the presentation of community programs and the planning of new exhibits and programs.

The Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History is currently seeking sponsors and grant funding to continue the popular Cool Classics Summer Concert Series in July. Since 2007, the Sheerar Cultural & Heritage Center Auditorium has served as host to the Cool Classics, co-sponsoring the event with St. Cecilia Music Club. In 2012, the Sheerar Museum took over the direction of the concert series. In 2015, over 500 audience members attended four concerts on Fridays in July featuring performances by local, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa-based musicians. The concerts were free to the public and were produced by the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History, hosted in the Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center Auditorium and funded in part through a matching grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater. This July will mark the 10th year of this fantastic free community concert series.

This spring the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History is once again presenting its award-winning free education program for area elementary students. This program continues to be offered as a collaboration between the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History and the Oklahoma WONDERtorium. Over 500 area students from throughout Stillwater as well as Perkins-Tryon and Drumright will participate in the program by the end of this school year. Teacher evaluations are consistently high for this program and we invite you and city council members to attend one of these programs to observe it in action this spring.

During the fall of 2016, the Museum will open an all new exhibit about the history of the ROTC in Stillwater to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of ROTC with the National Defense Act of 1916. Research and planning for this exhibit began last summer with plans to open this fall.



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As always, the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History will continue to remain open to additional programs and events for the benefit of the public as we become aware of them.

The Sheerar Museum quarterly report for January, February, and March 2016 is enclosed, along with a summary of 2015 events and programs and the 2016 Sheerar Museum Budget. In addition, we have attached the April 2016 newsletter which highlights recent events and programs as well as those coming up in the next quarter. Our financial report will follow at the end of May. It is being prepared by our CPA and will be ready by May 15.

Stillwater is fortunate to have dedicated staff members at the Sheerar Museum, who keep the museum operating at a professional level.

Thank you for considering our request. We need and appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Pat Jaynes, President
Stillwater Museum Association

Enclosures



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SHEERAR MUSEUM OF APRIL 2016 QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE CITY OF STILLWATER

JANUARY 2016

The Museum was open for 27 days in January of 2016. Total visitation to the facility was 138. Total visitation includes individuals who came to meetings/events at the Sheerar Auditorium.

During January, Museum Director Ammie Bryant met with graduate students in the public history program at OSU to develop the new exhibit, "Stillwater in the 1920s." "Stillwater in the 1920s" is an exhibit developed to coordinate with the "Two Books, One Community: Stillwater Reads *The Great Gatsby* and *Fire in Beulah*" community-wide reading event which kicked off in March.

Additionally, the Botanic Garden at OSU approached the Sheerar Museum about serving as the rain location for its concert series. The Board agreed to host the concerts free of charge in partnership with the Botanic Garden should the weather prohibit holding the concerts in the garden this year. Concert dates are: May 6, June 3, September 9, and October 7.

FEBRUARY 2016

The museum was open 24 days in February of 2016. Total visitation to the facility was 320. Total visitation includes individuals who came to meetings/events at the Sheerar Auditorium.

Work continued on the research and planning of the new exhibit, "Stillwater in the 1920s."

Additionally, Museum staff discovered extensive damage to the Sheerar building's chimney caused by a lightning strike. Staff members had previously documented a lightning strike on November 5, 2015 which had caused extensive damage to the museum's phones, phone lines, internet router, and other electronic equipment. Repairs to the chimney cost the Museum \$950 which was covered in part under our insurance policy after meeting the deductible.

MARCH 2015

The Museum was open 25 days in March 2016. In addition to Mondays, the Museum was closed Saturday, March 26 and Sunday, March 27 for the holiday weekend. Total visitation to the facility was 802. Total visitation includes individuals who came to meetings/events at the Sheerar Auditorium.

In March, the Museum finalized the spring schedule for the award-winning education program, "How Oklahoma Began." Volunteer recruiting efforts for the program began and volunteer training dates were also scheduled.

In March 2016, the Museum worked with the Stillwater Public Library and OSU library to help promote the community-wide reading event "Two Books, One Community: Stillwater Reads *The Great Gatsby* and *Fire in Beulah*." The Museum opened the new exhibit "Stillwater in the 1920s" to a record-breaking crowd of 140. Following the exhibit opening, Jim Showalter presented a program on the history of the KKK in Payne County in the Sheerar Museum Auditorium with 150 people in attendance. Additionally, the Museum will host two book discussions in April and another program on Art Deco Architecture presented by Dr. Michael Rabens.



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SUMMARY OF 2015

In 2015, the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History's hours of operation were 11am to 5pm Tuesday through Friday and 1pm to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The Museum was closed on Mondays, Holidays, and for inclement weather. The Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center counted 7,828 visitors. This number includes visitors to the museum as well as individuals who attended programs and events at the Sheerar Center Auditorium. Of the 2,254 visitors who signed the guest book, 1,513 indicated they were from Stillwater; 506 people visited from 56 different Oklahoma communities; 192 visited from 35 different states; and 73 visited from 12 different countries.

The Auditorium housed events with an estimated 5,574 in attendance for the year. The Sheerar Center Auditorium was used by the following organizations: St. Cecilia Music Club, Stillwater Art Guild, Junior Service League, OSU Music Department, Payne County Historical Society, Town & Gown Theatre, One Book One Community Stillwater Reads *True Grit* Book Discussions, Stillwater Christian Home Education Fellowship, Jean Hill's Irish Dancers, Anna Smith Piano Studio, Payne County Leadership Connections, Adventures in Stillwater, Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma, Dr. Tonia Sharlach, Delta Delta Delta, Stillwater Sister Cities Council, and various private individuals for events such as weddings and recitals.

In its 41st year of collecting, preserving, and presenting Stillwater's History the Sheerar Museum presented many programs and exhibits, as well as celebrated outstanding accomplishments. The following is a synopsis of the year's events and programs.

One Book One Community Stillwater Reads True Grit

During March and April of 2015, the Stillwater Public Library and the OSU Library presented a community-wide reading event with *True Grit* as the subject. The Museum opened an exhibit in partnership with the program during the fall of 2014 called "Notorious Payne County." The exhibit remained open through the spring of 2015. As part of this partnership, the Museum also hosted book discussions and the program "Gun that Won the West" presented by David Kennedy, the Curator of Collections at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid. Kennedy is an expert on the history of firearms in the west.

"Taxes in Ancient Mesopotamia"

Just in time for Tax Day, the museum hosted a program presented by Dr. Tonia Sharlach from the Oklahoma State University History Department about "Taxes in Ancient Mesopotamia." The Museum sponsored the presentation of the program by Dr. Sharlach, whose research was funded by the Oklahoma Humanities Council. The event took place April 7, 2015.

"How Oklahoma Began"

During April and May of 2015, the Museum presented the award-winning education program, "**How Oklahoma Began!**" in partnership with the Oklahoma WONDERtorium. The program was offered free to area students during the spring of 2015 and served over 500 area Oklahoma history students. Volunteers from the Golden K Kiwanis and Payne County Home and Community Education as well as other community members made this program possible.



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9th SEASON OF COOL CLASSICS

During 2015, the **Cool Classics Summer Concert Series** was presented thanks to funding from the Arts & Humanities Council of Stillwater. In 2015, the series included four concerts with a total of over 500 people in attendance for the series! The concerts featured talented musicians from the Stillwater, Tulsa, and the Oklahoma City area.

During the 2015 season, the Cool Classics featured Ladies at Play, Appassionata Viola & Harp Duo, Trio Aleszky, and the Grice Duo.

Each concert's reception was sponsored by various community organizations including our own Sheerar Museum Board of Trustees, Stillwater League of Women Voters, Town & Gown Theatre, and OLLI.

“Stories Unfolding: A 30th Anniversary Celebration”

Museum Director Ammie Bryant and OSU Graduate Student Brandon Neal Jones worked together to research and install the new exhibit **“Stories Unfolding”** which looked at the history of the sister cities relationship between Stillwater, Okla. and Kameoka, Japan. The exhibit opened in October 2015. The exhibit was made possible through a partnership with the Stillwater Sister Cities Council as well as additional support from the School of International Studies at OSU. The Sheerar Museum Board of Trustees hosted a special ceremony on Sunday, October 25, 2015 with honored guests from the city of Kameoka in Japan. For more about this exhibit, see the Registrar's report on page 2.

Stillwater Short Play Festival.

On November 14 and 15, 2015 the Troupe d'Jour and members of Town & Gown Theatre presented the 3rd annual “Stillwater Shorts Festival” in the Sheerar Museum Auditorium. This year's presentation of the program was held in support of the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History. Plays written by Robert Channing Reynolds, Milton Smith, Tim Prasil, Susan Apker, and Jill Morris.

Many thanks to the members of these organizations who worked so hard to make this event possible: Debbie Sutton, Judy Smith, Sue Moore, Billy McCollom, Larry Francis, Jeri Seefeldt, Lucy Robinson, Jacob Boyd, Valerie Thrasher, Kunal Gandhi, Linda Garmy, Diane Keenom, Scott Dean, Jim Gray, Janice James, Bill Van Ness, Charissa Prchal, Dawn Behrens, Caleb Branam, Gabby Forsyth, George Romero, Reid Patten, Nick Lutke, Kia Dorsey, and Lewis Giles.

HOURS OF OPERATION, ADMISSION, AND SCOPE OF WORK

There is no admission charge to visit the museum, and after hours tours are available at no additional charge. The Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History offers quality programming and educational exhibits free to the public. This service is especially important during these difficult financial times when families are looking for affordable, fun, and educational activities.

The Sheerar Museum's hours of public access are similar to or exceed many of the other local museums currently operating in the Stillwater area. Visitors to the Sheerar Museum from other cities and states often complement our exhibits. We work hard to research and present professional exhibits that interpret the history



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and enhances the reputation of Stillwater with visitors. We also embrace opportunities to collaborate with other institutions in the community.

The Sheerar Museum's collection of artifacts is the most valuable resource we have in preserving and interpreting Stillwater's history. The collection continues to grow and it is estimated that the Sheerar houses well over 75,000 artifacts. With the help of volunteers and student interns, part time staff members continue to work to enter and organize these items into a database. This includes all those items that were donated before the museum had access to computers. We can only provide estimates of the number of artifacts in the collection because early records are incomplete and recent gifts often include hundreds of items.

While paid staff and volunteer time are limited, we continue to work on the entry and organization of the records into a collections database so that we may better locate information about each item for use in programming, exhibits, and research. Work also continues on the digitization of the Museum's vast photo collection into a database where it will be easier to locate photographs by subject with the added benefit that the photos will be available for viewing on the computer database to limit handling and inadvertent damage as a result.

In addition to time spent on the care and exhibition of collections and programming, staff members also serve the community in other ways. Many of our visitors come to the museum seeking information about their family, homestead, the house they grew up in, history of businesses and properties in Stillwater, and many other research inquiries. We attempt to respond to these requests as best we can and this also takes staff time.

The Sheerar Museum's goals continue to be to increase our ability to care for our collection; preserve and interpret Stillwater's history for the enrichment of its future; increase visitation and awareness of our facility, quality programs, and exhibits; and to better serve our community members and their research needs.

Ammie Bryant, Museum Director, April 2016