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## SWOSU Hosts Annual Organization Fair to Help Students Network Before Graduation

A new academic year at SWOSU means new students and new connections. That's where the SWOSU Organizational Fair comes in, helping students get acquainted with all of the student and community organizations and events that new SWOSU students can get involved with in order to help round out their university experience.

The annual event took place this past Wednesday on the student union south lawn and introduced SWOSU students to the various student organizations they'll encounter during their time at SWOSU as well as the local businesses they're sure to discover in and around Weatherford.

Wright Media was proud to be involved in the SWOSU Organizational Fair and invited students to play a quick game of cornhole for a chance to win prizes.

A large crowd of SWOSU students walk the pathway through the SWOSU organizational fair held last Wednesday, August 30. During the event, SWOSU students as well as local businesses and organizations gathered from 10am to 1:30pm to show what the SWOSU community has to offer to current SWOSU students.

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And aerial view of the SWOSU Organizational Fair as local businesses and organizations set up their booths.

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**Jim Ziech**

Jim Cecil Ziech was born November 20, 1959, to Reinhold and Gladys (MacGonagal) Ziech in Wausau, Wisconsin and passed away Tuesday, Augst 22, 2023 in the Weatherford Regional Hospital.



Jim attended school in Wisconsin before moving to Clinton, OK about 30 years ago. He has been an employee of the Clinton Mission House, working in all aspects, the shelter, dining hall and the warehouse. He was a most loyal employee, most always the first to show up for work and ready to help those in need. He will be best known for his duties and certainly missed at the Mission Warehouse. He was always willing to help someone.

He wasn't a man with many hobbies, but he did like to ride his bike and could be seen riding all over town and he was an avid Green Bay Packers Fan.

He is preceded in death by his parents, brother, Sheridan Ziech, Wayne Ziech and two sisters Arlene Hanke and Janet Zastrow.

He is survived by two brothers, Lenny Ziech and Bob Ziech, two sisters,, Mary Kitsemble and Sandy Milanowski and his long time Mission House family.

**Sonny Jones**

Glen Dale "Sonny" Jones was born February 18, 1933, in Cedar, OK, to Fred W. and Eula Frances (Wilburg) Jones and passed away Friday, August 25, 2023, at Summer Health Services in Okeene, Oklahoma.



Sonny was raised and attended school in Thomas, graduating with the Class of 1950. In high school, he played football and won 3 state championship rings. He enlisted in the Navy from 1951 - 1955 during the Korean Conflict.

On December 10, 1955, Sonny married Melba Eloise Passmore and they made their home in Thomas. They later moved to Weatherford where he worked as a butcher for over 30 years, working at Don's Meat Market and the grocery store.

Sonny and Eloise moved back to Thomas to retire. He played Santa's helper for many years. Sonny enjoyed raising pigs and going to the stock shows with his children, gardening, woodwork, Big Band music, and his dogs.

Sonny was preceded in death by his parents; wife; two sons, Randy and Terry Neil; and a sister, Lucille Jones.

He is survived by his son Curt Jones and wife Sharon; three daughters: Beth Hollan and husband Marty; Lisa Martinez and husband Ismael; and Dawn Hollander; and daughter-in-law Barbara Jones. He is also survived by three grandsons, four granddaughters, and ten great-grandchildren.

**Everett Hartzell**

Everett Melvin Hartzell was born November 14th, 1936, at St. Anthonys hospital in Oklahoma City to Howard and Josephine (Taylor) Hartzell. Everett passed away on Friday, August 25, 2023, in Edmond, OK, at the age of 86 years, 9 months and 11 days.



In his youth, the family moved much because of his father's Pentecostal ministry. As a small child he lived in Nacoma Park, OK, Oklahoma City, and then Hinton, OK where he went to the 1st and 2nd grade. He lived in Cordell, OK for 3rd thru 6th grade, and Elk City, OK for 7th grade. He attended Mt. Zion for 8th grade.

His high school years were spent at Hinton, OK where he was the Drum Major and President of his Senior class. He also drove the school bus his Jr. and Sr. year where he would let the younger kids drive (one was 11) so he could sit in the back with the girls.

In 1956, Everett joined the army at 20 years old. He served his country for three and a half years. He was sent to Korea where he was an MP driver and patrolled the 38th parallel. He didn't speak much about his stint in the war but said he would do it again. He was a strong believer in serving his country.

He began painting at age 14 with his dad. When he returned from Korea, he tried farming for a time. When it didn't stick, he started his contract painting business, Hartzell Painting. All of his children and wife worked alongside him.

He had such a giving and helpful heart. He would offer work to many who needed a job or help getting back on their feet, even if he didn't need the help. He loved his work.

He painted for 67 years. Everett retired at age 80 passing his business to his hard-working sons who continue with the quality work set forth by Everett in the beginning.

Everett was not just an avid music lover, but a great musician. His first band was called Gems. They played at church and many social events. The band grew and became Gospel Gems. They released an album in the late 60's with two songs Everett wrote, "If I Had Your Eyes" and "Good, Good, Feeling."

In the early 2000's, for a short time, Gospel Gems reunited just for fun. You rarely saw Everett without his guitar at family holidays and reunions. He would take song requests, sing and play guitar, many times turning into sing alongs with the whole family.

He attended Life Fellowship Church for over 20 years where he was a member of the praise and worship team. He went on six mission trips, four to Romania and two to Moldova.

The last few years of his life he was a member of the group, Jesus Jammers, where he attended Mt. Zion Pentecostal Holiness Church...the church where he first started his walk with Christ as a teenager.

While playing in his country Western Band, Movin' On, Everett met his "special angel" Pam Kitchens Taylor. They married on April 29th, 1978 in Weatherford, OK where they made their home.

He built his dream home in 1980. He made it big enough to accommodate his and Pam's large families and many friends. Christmas Eve at Everett and Pam's was a huge family favorite.

Their home was always open to their children's friends to gather for birthday parties and sport events, always supplying food and home-make ice cream. It was even a welcome place for some to call home when in need of one.

He loved traveling to Branson or going to see family any chance he had. Hobbies include gardening and canning. He loved sharing his homemade salsa or handing out any of his canned goods.

He loved teaching guitar lessons, making music with the "good ole boy" Don Barger, making homemade ice cream, and spending time with family and friends.

Everett was preceded in death by his father Howard Hartzell; mother Josephine (Taylor) Hartzell; daughter Shonna Hartzell; brother Daniel Hartzell; four sisters: Elaine, Norma, Geneva, and Nadine; Mother-in-Law (Mom) Lois Kitchens; and two "special nieces" Daisha Kitchens and Kim Kitchens Tupman.

He is survived by his wife Pam of the home; four sons, Randy Hartzell of Rice, WA; Mike and wife Emily Hartzell of Farmington, MN; Davin and wife Julie Hartzell of Hydro, OK; daughter, Jancie and husband Tom Hughes of Altus, OK; Lance and wife, Tricia Hartzell of Thomas, OK. Fifteen grandchildren: Blake, Hailey, Carrie, Shanna, Drew, Caden, Logan, Jordyn, Peyton, Austin, Addysen, Aubri, Ajay, Deegan, and Talon; and eight great grandchildren.

Everett is also survived by his sister-in-law, Janette Kitchens Willis of Kingman, KS, and brother-in-law Hector Sewell of OKC, as well as countless special nieces and nephews, friends, and adopted families.

**Sue Little**

Willa Sue (Graft) Little (93) passed away August 27 at Homestead Assisted Living Center of Clinton surrounded by family. She was born on 6/11/1930 to Warren and Dorothy (Nichols) "Peach" Graft in the home on the family farm in Custer County.



Dorothy died in 1936 when Sue was 5 years old.

Sue graduated from Independence High School in May 1948 and married E. N. "Bud" Little on May 26, 1948 in Wheeler, Texas. Their first ten years of marriage were spent in Texas and Louisiana, while he worked for oil companies. From 1956 to 1958 they lived in Venezuela.

In May of 1958, they returned to Clinton where their daughter, Karen Lynn was born. Sue helped Bud in the new and used car business and they purchased and ran Little Oldsmobile-Cadillac dealership in Clinton and Quality Olds-Cadillac in McAlester. She also worked at the turkey plant in Clinton and for the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.

Sue enjoyed playing cards, golf and just having fun in life! She always had a positive attitude with an infectious laugh everyone knew her by. She was a member of Clinton's First United Methodist Church.

Sue was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, her brother Richard Graft, sister-in-law Betty Graft, and her great-granddaughter, Leslie Brewer.

She is survived by her daughter, Karen Campbell and husband Dav of Locust Grove, granddaughter Heather Brown and husband Levi of Clinton, grandson Dustin Wilson of Locust Grove, her sister, Lois Shreve of Harlingen, Texas, great granddaughter Danyell Brewer and great grandson Rylen Brown of Clinton, great granddaughter Morgan Wilson and great grandsons Parker and Clint Wilson of Blair, great grandson Dalton Brewer and wife Chelsey of Muskogee, and two nieces: Barbara Griffin and husband Gary of Clinton and Beverly Hubert and husband David of Jacksonville, NC.

**Louise Sam**

Louise B. Sam was born November 19, 1934 to Reuben and Lucy (Beaver) Bent in Clinton, and passed away Sunday, August 14, 2023 in Oklahoma City.



Louise was raised in Clinton and has been in the area her whole life.

She married Clifford Ray Sam Jr. She was a member of the Indian Baptist Church in Clinton. She enjoyed sewing, beadwork, making moccasins, traveling, cooking, bowling, and loved spending time with her grandchildren.

Louise retired in the nursing field with the Indian Health Services.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Clifford, her maternal and paternal grandparents, two brothers Blyford Bent, Richard "Dickie" Goodblanket, her sister Hilda Bent, and an Uncle Johnny Bent.

She is survived by two daughters Karen Lyn Sam, and Mia Marisa Sam both of El Reno, three sons Randall Gene Sam Jr. and his wife Roxie of McAlester, OK., Clifford Sam Sr. and his wife Sandra of OKC, Anthony Sam Sr. and his wife Lucinda of El Reno, 16 grand children Renae Pedro, Jonathan, Mia, Kodi, Mya, Anthony, Amelia, Aron, Pamela, Randall, Harlan, Miles, Jeremy, Cedar, and Hunter.

She is also survived by numerous great and great-great grandchildren, special niece Debra Sam, special cousin Wilma Sonecalf, and special caretaker/friend Anita Wynn.



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# HIGHER GROUND

## Advancing the Kingdom



"Christianity, if false, is of no importance. And if true is of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important." This is surely one of C. S. Lewis's most often quoted statements. It comes from this English literary giant, who came to faith in Christ as a middle-aged agnostic.

Yet today, in many circles, even in churches, living for Christ is seen, or lived out as something of an appendage, certainly not something that consumes our interests and dominates our lifestyles. This is not to say that to live a Christ-centered life is to become

a religious recluse, with no interest in the coming football season or whether the Yankees will lose their lead on the way to the playoffs. It does mean that in the midst of this sometimes chaotic world our foremost concerns are the things the world offers. The Apostle John said that "if any man loves the world the love of the father is not in him." He goes on to describe the characteristics of the world as the "cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does." 1 John 2:15.

We all struggle with the pull of the world. David prayed in Psalm 86:11 "Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name." It is easy, in this pleasure mad world to let the things that pull our emotions hold us captive over the things that are eternal. A personal example: This evening the OSU Cowboys begin their season. It is televised. At that same hour, the Red Sox and Rangers are on another channel. It is the third option that disturbs me. A single parent of two boys, 6 and 7, is in need of encouragement. The boys came regularly to Vacation

Bible School and at least one of them has expressed an interest in coming to church. The father has recently walked away after trying to salvage a divorce situation. (I could bargain with God; "If I visit the family will you let the Red Sox win, they need all the help they can get at this point") That is silly of course. But we all subconsciously sometimes try to bargain with God?

The Apostle Paul, writing from a prison cell in Rome shares how his prison time is really serving to "advance the Gospel." The advancing of the gospel was his primary concern. None of us has the gifts or direct call that Paul had from God. But we, as believers are called to advance the gospel. It will take different forms for each of us. But as Bonhoeffer said, when God calls a man "he bids him come and die." Death to self is one of our daily struggles as we plod life's journey. It is a life-long battle but victories in every area will give strength for the next battle and bring the joy of obedience.

To comment: 580-302-1142, [jhm82@outlook.com](mailto:jhm82@outlook.com)

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# LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



## “The Coin Guy” — The Highly Collectable “Pattern Coins”



George T. Morgan was the chief coin designer and engraver at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia in the 19th century.

He is well-known for his design of the Morgan silver dollar minted from 1878 to 1904 and again in 1921.

George T. Morgan also designed other coins which were made known as patterns.

He designed a quarter dollar (pictured above) in 1879 as a pattern but, was not accepted to be minted.

The quarter dollar was certified by the Professional Coin Grading Service as a Proof 67+. It sold at auction for \$43,200.

Questions about collecting can be answered by calling The Coin Guy 580-890-8076. Thanks for your support.

Trent Boesen

## Custer County Free Fair Opens on September 7



**97th Annual**  
**CUSTER COUNTY**  
**Free Fair**

COUNTY WIDE  
**FREE FAIR**  
COUNTY PRIDE

CUSTER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Bust out the blue ribbons and grab your best produce and baked goods because the Custer County Free Fair is coming back for its 97th year at the Custer County Fairgrounds south of Clinton on Highway 183. The four-day event will run from Thursday, September 6th through Saturday, September 10th.

Chalk full of livestock shows, farming exhibits, and a ton of creative competitions the Custer County Free Fair is a fantastic way to show off the talent brimming in Western Oklahoma, especially its youth.

On Wednesday, the Free Fair begins registration at 3 p.m. for all open and 4H exhibits. Entries for rabbits, poultry, vegetables, and farm produce will also be accepted. Registration will run until 7 p.m.

On Thursday, the exhibitions begin in earnest, with the exhibition building opening at 8 a.m. That's also the deadline for the 4H and FFA farm equipment operators contest, which will begin shortly following the deadline at 8:30 a.m. Thursday's schedule of events will be capped off that evening, with the Farm Hand Olympics beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Farm Hand Olympics will feature five events showcasing farm hand feats of strength and agility, such as hay hauling, calf roping, water hauling, a wheelbarrow race, and a sack race, and will be split into two divisions; one for 4H members and another for FFA members.

Friday's schedule of events will include a petting zoo that will run from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., livestock shows for cattle, swine, goats, and sheep, and will conclude in the evening with an acrobatic circus show. The Circus show will include high-flying aerial acts, trampoline acts, ground acrobatics, and various other circus skills and will be presented by Cirque Adventure.

Saturday will be the final day of the Custer County Free Fair and will begin with a farmer's market that will run from 8 a.m. to noon.

At 9 a.m., there will be a stick horse race for children 5 years and younger, followed by the horse show at 9:30 a.m.

At 10 a.m., the Best of Wheat baking contest will be held in the new show barn classroom.

From 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., 95.5 the Coyote will be broadcasting live from the fair and supervising the tremendous BBQ abilities of Custer County's finest first responders at the First Responder's BBQ, which is slated to begin at 4 p.m. and winners awarded around 6 p.m.

Proceeds from the First Responder's BBQ will help support first responders around the county. The night will conclude once again with the Acrobatic stylings of Cirque Adventure.

For more information about the Custer County Free Fair, check out their Facebook page by searching Custer County Fairgrounds.



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**WRH / MRI UPDATE** – Weatherford Regional Hospital Chief Executive Officer Brian Denton says the MRI room construction continues to go well despite a small delay. Denton says the new MRI unit is projected to be up and running on October 1st.

**CLINTON / FRIENDS ON FRISCO** – Another edition of Friends on Frisco is taking place on September 14th. Clinton Chamber of Commerce President Julie Caldwell says the event will be Route 66-themed and feature a live band. Shops in downtown Clinton are open late during Friends on Frisco.

**WEATHERFORD CC / GOLF COURSE** – The Weatherford City Commissioner, acting as the Public Works Authority, approved a supplemental budget request from Prairie West Golf Course of just over \$343,000 for an irrigation project. Spokesperson Bruce Magill outlined the need for the funds, saying the equipment used for the project will allow sprinkler heads to be replaced in-house in the future.

**CLINTON / GOLF COURSE DAMAGE** – The City of Clinton and Clinton Riverside Golf Course took to social media over the weekend seeking information on damage done to the golf course Saturday night. Pictures show that damage from tire tracks was made on the 12th green. Anyone with information can call Clinton Police.

**WEATHERFORD / CANDIDATE FORUM** – The six candidates who are seeking seats in Wards 1 and 3 on the Weatherford City Commission will participate in a candidate forum next month. Ward 1 candidates Terri Lockhart, Madella Shelton, and Kendon Wood along with ward 3 candidates Rebecca Carman, Warren Goldmann, and Chad Martin will participate in the one-hour forum on September 5th at city hall. Chamber of Commerce Public Affairs Committee Co-Chair Jeff Berrong will serve as moderator of the forum. The election for both commission seats will be held on September 12th. Should a runoff be necessary, it will be held on October 10th. The candidate forum will be broadcast live by wright.media on Weatherford Eagle TV and 99.3 NewsTalk KCLI FM.

**ROTARY / FITZSIMMONS** – The SWOSU Archivist was on hand at the most recent Weatherford Rotary meeting to talk about the archives at the Al Harris Library on campus. Phillip Fitzsimmons says the public had made great use of the archive. Fitzsimmons says the archive is online, free, and open to the public, with three principal collections, including the Stafford, SWOSU History and Mythopoeic Society Collections.

**WHS / LOCKDOWN** – Weatherford High School had a 25-minute lockdown around noon on Thursday after a teacher overheard two students discuss having a gun on the facility, says Interim Superintendent Richard Brownen.

**WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!**

**OH HAPPY DAY TO YOU!**



Have a birthday, anniversary, or other special event? Email us at [sales@westokweekly.com](mailto:sales@westokweekly.com) to announce it here for FREE!

**Alcohol causing problems?** Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information.  
**Christian Free Store** – Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center “Bible Study,”** Every Monday Night from 7:00-8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. **Free and Open to the Public. OK Parkinson's Alliance,** monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. **Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org.**  
**Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

**Happy Birthday Wishes for Sept. 6th** - Mary Badillo, Dana Hickman, Richard Jenkins, Merebeth Kasper, Joyce Kellog, Marie Moore, Larry Sharry, Mansour Valli, Virginia Waddle, MaKayla Whiteshield; **Sept. 7th** - Ron Baker, Mindy Bay, Samantha Blagg, Tiffany Brinkley, Debbie Bryson, Elaine Garner, Norma Jump, Hannah Nance, Brady Hicks, Mystry Seward, Sabrina Shell, Paula Thiessen, Jennifer Wedel; **Sept. 8th** -Lindsey Bottom, Oakley Daniels, Sharon Fossett, Brooklyn Peace, Brandon Rogers, Natalie Roller, Sandra Thunderbull, Meaegan Trent, Curtis Walters, Christopher Walters, Alexandra Williams, Ryan Wilson; **Sept. 9th** - Tyler Barnett, Parker Broadbent, Brianna Dillion, Mary Elliot, Baylee Lehman, Marcella Panana, Taylor Parish, Ramona Patron, Kyle Slagell, Thomas Stephens, Emily Wise; **Sept. 10th** - Alexis Adams, Billy Joe Adams, Christopher Albright, Mickey Allen, Billy Austin, Blake Brewer, Corissa Crosby, Rachelle Epp, Adam Esparza, Hudson Ingram, Misty Krewall, Ridley Matthews, Dr. Karen Miller, Courtney Milligan, Shirley Pendleton, Diviya Baldwin, Anita Spradlin, Mattie Tolley, Donald Walters, John Wilson, Mandy Wise; **Sept. 11th** - Nathan Albright, Tommy Baldwin, Jennifer Friesen, Shannyn Gaffney, Randy Gilbert, Vince Mavity, Patches Mitchell, Terry Pearey, Irvin Schmidt, Tyler Sloan, Al Swaney, Jessica Vassar, Miley Whitley, BJ Whitley, Miley Whitley; **Sept. 12th** - Emma Kay Chrstian, Colton Gay, Reonna Gossen, Betty Jo Hill, Anita Malone, James Mitchell, Ellen Reel, Grant Schamburg, Nikki Slagell.



# SPORTS

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## SWOSU Falls in Season Opener to #8 Ouachita

SWOSU Football was bested by No. 8-ranked Ouachita on Thursday, falling to the Tigers 38-14 in the season opener.

The Bulldogs had a chance to jump out to a lead early in the first quarter, but missed a field goal attempt and went on to be held scoreless in the first half. SWOSU outscored Ouachita 14-10 in the second half, but the 28-0 halftime deficit proved to be too great to overcome.

Both sides began the game with three-and-out drives, before SWOSU got a 24-yard run from Ethane Hyche followed by a 26-yard pass connection from Scott Pfeiffer to Jack Pierce that had the Dawgs in business prior to the 10-minute mark of the opening quarter. Ouachita buckled down in the red zone to force fourth down and it paid off after SWOSU couldn't convert on a go-ahead field goal.

The Dawgs continued to hold firm on defense throughout the first quarter and limited Ouachita to just one touchdown. The Tigers settled in though in quarter two, scoring three times including a final touchdown in the closing seconds before halftime that seemed to zap any momentum and footing SWOSU had managed prior.

Hyche scored a two-yard run in the third quarter to represent SWOSU's lone offensive score in the contest.

Following a solid fourth quarter punt by Dayton Thrower that pinned the Tigers inside their own five-yard line, SWOSU capitalized on a mishandled ball by the Ouachita quarterback that resulted in Jeremiah Jones jumping on a loose ball for another touchdown on defense.

SWOSU's defense held a top-five rushing team in 2022 to just 153 yards on the ground on Thursday. Kendel Givens, Ouachita's running back who nearly broke 1,000 yards last season as their number two option, was held to just 41 yards on 19 attempts. Logan Monroe and Richard Silva combined for 25 tackles at linebacker. Silva also had a pair of tackles for loss.

It was Ouachita's passing attack that gave SWOSU trouble all night. The Tigers threw for 283 yards through the air and four scores.

The Dawgs managed just under 200 yards of total offense. Pfeiffer finished 11-for-23 for 131 yards and was sacked five times. Hyche ran 15 times for 67 yards and his score. Pierce, making his debut as a Dawg, caught four balls for 69 yards to lead the receiving core.

SWOSU finished just 3-for-13 on third down and lost the time of possession battle by over 15 minutes.

Following the loss, the Dawgs (0-1 GAC) will look to rebound with a road trip to Arkansas-Monticello set for next Saturday, September 9. SWOSU was 37-27 winners over the Boll Weevils last year.

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WEATHERFORD EAGLES	vs. Kingfisher	<b>W</b> 38-14
CLINTON RED TORNADOES	vs. Bishop McGuinness	<b>L</b> 28-0
SAYRE EAGLES	--	---
THOMAS TERRIERS	@ Cashion	<b>L</b> 39-14
WATONGA EAGLES	vs. Hobart	<b>L</b> 44-0
SWOSU BULLDOGS	vs. Ouachita Baptist	<b>L</b> 38-14

Tune in to the Chuck Edward's Sportscast on The Coyote 95.5 at 7:50am and 5:30pm and NewsTalk 99.3 at 7:40am and 5:30pm for more information. Tune in to the Zoo Sportscast on the Zoo 101.7 at 8:40am & 5:40pm.

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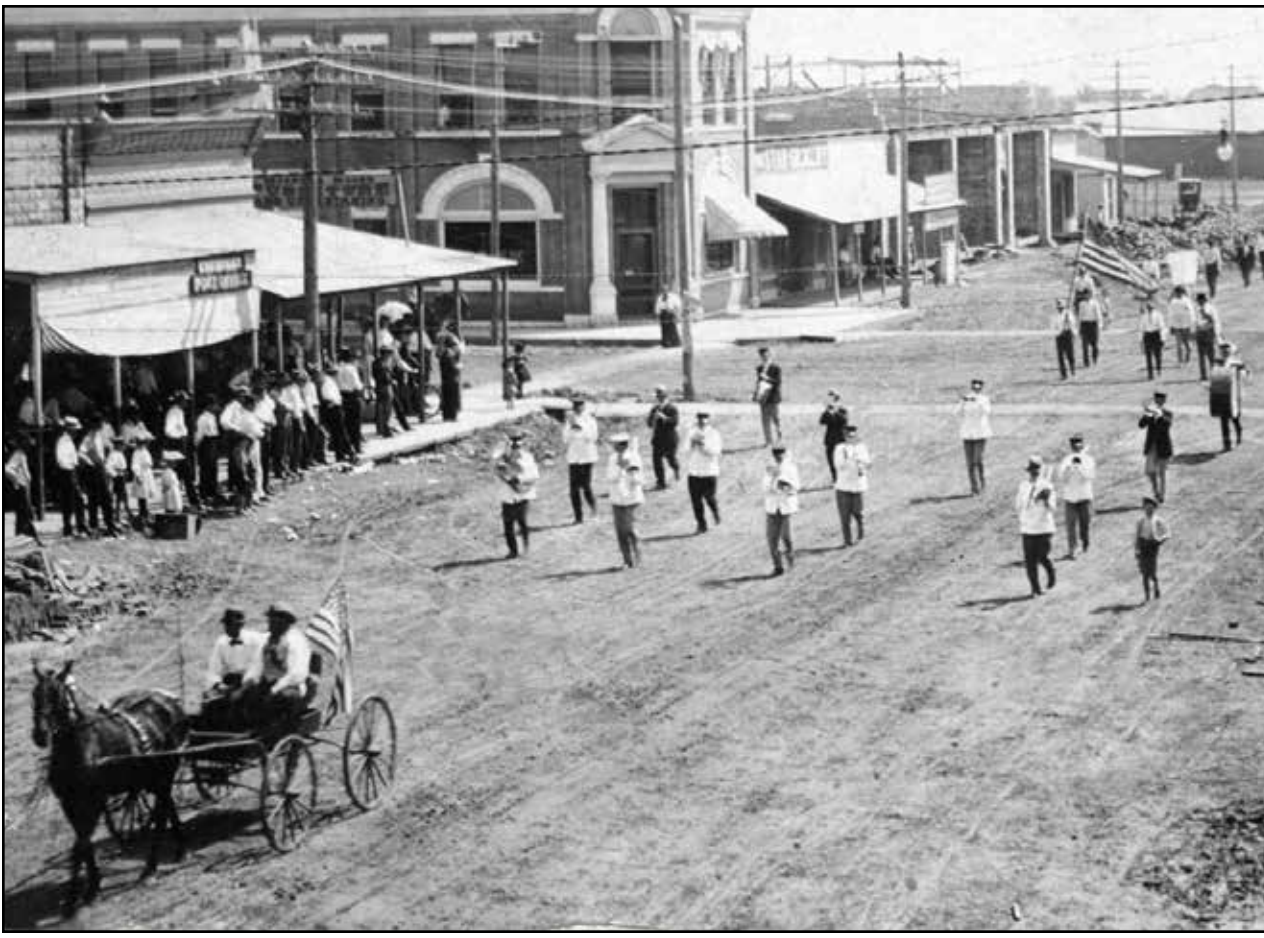
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# Oklahoma History: Union Strikes and Labor Day



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

Labor Day Parade in Cherokee, OK. Photo taken by Virginia Dell Geith, circa 1908.

Labor Day, an annual holiday where workers and businesses take the day off, is one of the staple American holidays and is extremely important to our history. However, many do not know why the day is important, or even why it is celebrated.

Beginning in the late 1800s, the United States was in the middle of the Industrial Revolution. The revolution described the transition of many American businesses and communities from rural towns to urban metropolises. The transition began with the invention and implantation of things like the cotton gin, electricity, and a transcontinental railroad. During this period of vast growth, the average worker would work 12-hour days and seven-day weeks just to earn enough for necessities. To keep up with demand, mills, factories, and mines would employ children as young as 5 years old, and parents would have no choice because the extra cents the children brought were worth the provisions they could buy.

The workplaces were often dangerous and toxic because modern reformation and workplace guidelines did not exist yet. Smog filled the air, facilities were not sanitized, and employee benefits and breaks were not even a thought. People working in these conditions had very little choice but to keep on working. Some of the most effected people were those who were very poor or recent immigrants.

As industrialization grew, manufacturing began working with independent agriculture departments which, after seeing the environment workers were exposed to, began pushing for better American employment. Labor unions first appeared near the end of the 18th century and began holding strikes, rallies, and protests to push employers to renegotiate compensation and conditions.

Employers pushed back causing many of these protests to turn violent. In Chicago 1886, several policemen and workers were killed during the Haymarket Riot that broke out when a bomb was thrown at the police. Similar events were cropping up all over the country, and their violent tendencies did more harm than good.

Proponents of labor reform found themselves having a hard time backing workers and unions that many considered to be the cause of such violence. But some companies were listening. Some of the most influential protest tactics were the employee labor strikes.

During the strikes, employees began refusing to work until their demands were met, and for some factories, each minute without production was costing them thousands. As the success of strikes grew, many workers began forming union marches to protest. One of the most successful marches took place on September 5th, 1882, when 10,000 New York City workers took unpaid time off to march from City Hall to Union Square. It became known as the first Labor Day parade.

Many workers across the country began holding similar marches and parades in September and states began passing legislation to recognize it. However, the United States Congress would not legalize the holiday until 1894 when employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company went up in protest about wage cuts and the firing of union reps. A nationwide strike against the Pullman company meant their railroad cars would cease operation and traffic on the railroads across the nation hit a standstill. In retaliation, the federal government sent troops to Chicago to cull the workers and a wave of riots broke out.

As unrest grew around the country, Congress passed an act to establish Labor Day as a national holiday in order to settle the unrest and repair ties with workers. On June 28th, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed it into law. Many of the workplace benefits we see today is the result of the hard work and sacrifice by the workers back then.

Today, Labor Day continues to celebrate the American worker with parades, barbecues, fireworks displays, and signals the end of summer. So, each time you celebrate Labor Day, just remember that it's not just a time for fun, but a time to consider how we can make the workplace better for future generations.

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