


# The Washington Countian

BARTLESVILLE AREA HISTORY MUSEUM  
PROTECT. COLLECT. PRESERVE. SHARE.

**BAHM PRESENTS**

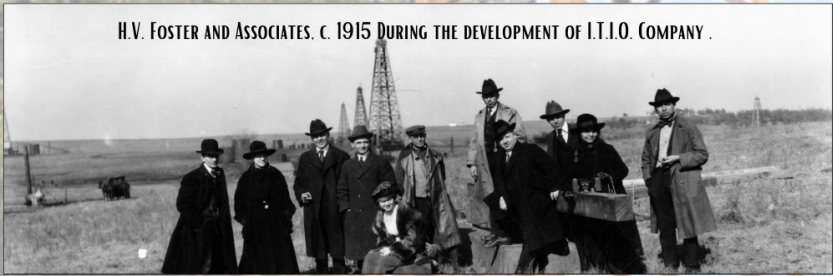
*Our Oily Past*

ON DISPLAY FROM APRIL 8TH THROUGH JULY 1ST



First Oil Train Out of Bartlesville, I.T.

H.V. FOSTER AND ASSOCIATES. c. 1915 DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF I.T.I.O. COMPANY.



**Bartlesville Area History Museum**  
401 S. Johnstone Ave. 5th Floor  
Monday-Friday | 8:00-4:00  
[www.bartlesvillehistory.com](http://www.bartlesvillehistory.com)  
Free Admission - Donations Welcome  
918.338.4290

The Museum is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (closed on weekends and holidays) at 401 S. Johnstone Avenue, 5th Floor. Museum admission is free, however donations are always welcome. No reservation is necessary.

## Bartlesville Area History Museum Presents:

### *“Our Oily Past”*

This Spring, BAHM is proud to present: *“Our Oily Past”* on display from April 8<sup>th</sup> through July 1<sup>st</sup>. The exhibit takes visitors on a journey exploring the successes of H.V. Foster and how he turned visions of wealth into revolutionizing the nation’s energy industry by taking over the development of oil and natural gas in the Osage Blanket Lease, which was then controlled by the business, the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil company (I.T.I.O).

The exhibit will feature various artifacts from local oil companies like I.T.I.O and youngsters or the “young at heart” may enjoy our history of oil coloring station and gander through BAHMs turn of the century Nelson Carr One-Room School!

# COLLECTIONS CORNER

Debbie Neece, Collections Manager

## THE LEGACY OF CHARLES DILBECK



Hidden deep behind a cluster of over grown trees and shrubs lies an architectural wonder. Bartlesville has been blessed with the creativity of many well-known architects...Bruce Goff, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walton Everman, Edward Buehler Delk, John Duncan Forsyth, Cliff May...but did you know Bartlesville has a Charles Dilbeck home?

Architect Charles Stevens Dilbeck of Dallas, TX built this "Mission Ranch" home for Newell G. "Budge" Welty and his wife Johnny about 1946. The Welty family owned and operated Bartlesville's Examiner Enterprise newspaper.

From 1950-1978 this was the home of Albert E. and Bernice "Bee" Buell. Albert retired in 1968, moved to Pecan Place in 1978 and died in 1983. At that time, their son, Barry Buell and his wife Joy moved into the home between 1978-1979 and continued to live there through 2020. The property is now in the ownership of the Oklahoma Wesleyan University who is breathing new life into the stately corner as a conference retreat.

## Wildcat Class of 1963 Donates Gift to Bartlesville Area History Museum



Debbie Neece with Claudean Stotts

*"Hosting the College High School Wildcat Class of 1963 was an honor. Our staff enjoyed sharing the history of Washington County with some of the classmates who had moved away from Bartlesville years ago and returned for a weekend of reconnection...and a little Sooner/Col-Hi rivalry talk. We greatly appreciate your generous donation and hope you return 'home' again soon. You are always welcome." said Debbie Neece.*

Concluding six years of fundraising efforts, the College High Wildcat Class of 1963 presented a check of \$4,800 to the Bartlesville Area History Museum on March 26 at the Museum.

Claudean Starrett Stotts presented the Class of 1963 donation check to the History Museum's Collection Manager, Debbie Neece to be used in forwarding the Museum's preservation and cataloging efforts of the Bob Heil Photography Collection.

The Class of 1963 began their fundraising work at their 55<sup>th</sup> reunion with classmates bringing items such as yearbooks, oil paintings, quilts, and other collectable items to be auctioned off at a live auction during the reunion. Then, at the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion, George and Marge Tabor designed and assembled a quilt and class yard spinners to be sold during the reunion held at the end of October 2023.

Mrs. Stotts, representing the Class, thanked Debbie Neece for hosting two guided tours at the History Museum for the 55<sup>th</sup> and the 60<sup>th</sup> Wildcat Reunions. This past fall, several classmates who had never seen



# In the Know With Nowlin

## Denise Nowlin, Education Coordinator



My name is Denise Nowlin. I am the new Education Coordinator at the Museum. Although I am not a native of Bartlesville, I have lived here, off and on, for almost 15 years. During my early years, I attended college and worked at Oklahoma Wesleyan University. I moved away for about 10 years, and now have returned with my husband, two children, and our two rowdy Schnauzers. We love living in a smaller community, being closer to my parents and siblings, enjoying our local restaurants, historical sites and riding our bikes on the Pathfinder.

Since I was a child, I have been fascinated with history. My parents used to take us to different museums where I remember seeing the still visible ruts of the Oregon Trail at the Ash Hollow State Historical Park near Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, and attending a rodeo at the Buffalo Bill Museum. Now that I am an adult, my family loves travelling to see different national parks and historical sites around the country. Any time we go out of town, we stop at a museum, it seems.



After I came to Bartlesville, I had the opportunity to work in the La Quinta Mansion on the campus of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. One summer, when I worked during the OK Mozart Festival, I followed the docent around listening to all of the fascinating stories about H.V. Foster. This is when my love of Bartlesville history was born. After I graduated college, I was a social studies teacher for several of years, before going back to school to become a librarian. I love being a librarian and I think that working in a library and a history museum are very similar. I love doing research and learning new things, writing reports, and making contact with different people in the community.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you as I give tours and visit area schools. If you would like to schedule a time to visit the Museum during a family outing, a group event or even on your lunch break, please feel free to contact me and I would be glad to give you a tour. [drnowlin@cityofbartlesville.org](mailto:drnowlin@cityofbartlesville.org) or called me at 918-338-4293.





# THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING EXCITING HAPPENING

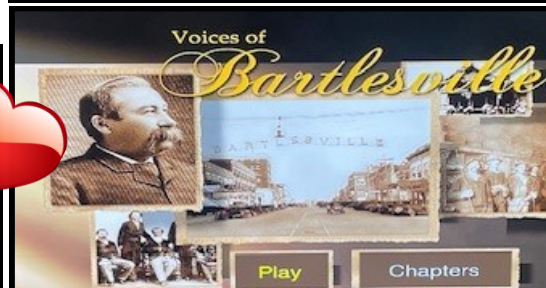
## January 18

Our January “Third Thursday Lunch and Learn” event featured guest speaker and author, Connie Cronley. Connie gave a discussion on her book *“A Life on Fire: Oklahoma’s Kate Barnard,”* followed by a book signing!



## February 15

Romance was in the air when guests grabbed their main squeeze and joined the Bartlesville Area History Museum for our sold out event with a BBQ dinner catered by Price’s Old Fashion Meat Market followed by the short RSU “Bartlesville Voices” film covering the successes of early Bartians! Silly faces were made in our custom selfie booth and sweet tooth’s were satisfied by BAHM sweet treats!

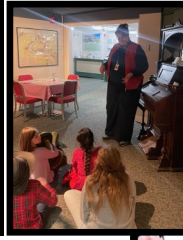




# AT THE BARTLESVILLE AREA HISTORY MUSEUM!

## February 16

Local homeschool groups were given lessons in penmanship, orthography (spelling), reading and arithmetic, while using an old fashion writing quill! Class was followed by a guided tour through



## February 29

Local virtual school groups were given lessons from schoolmarm Kay Little in followed by a guided tour through BAHM's Pioneer and exhibit galleries from BAHM's news member, Denise Nowlin!

## February 29

Staff, friends and family celebrated BAHM's Education Coordinator Mrs. Betty Keim and her retirement in a come and go tea party!!



## March 23

BAHM welcomed guests, with the help of the Easter Bunny, to a hot breakfast catered by Bambino's Downtown Bistro, followed by games and a craft!





# From Oil Rich to Park Recreation

By Shayla Cummins, Museum Coordinator



During 1893, the Cherokee Indian Council at Tahlequah granted a lease on five tracts covering 15 square miles, with a west boundary of the 96th Meridian, which was approved by the Department of the Interior. Early pioneers and entrepreneurs George B. Keeler, William Johnstone and Frank Overlees obtained the oil lease from the Cherokee Nation to drill for oil in Section 12, Township 26 North, Range 12 East, along the west bank of the Caney River. The trio hired the Cudahy Oil Company as the drilling contractor and McBride and Bloom, of Independence, KS, brought a drilling rig from Red Fork, 70 miles overland, to drilling along the Caney River.

After rig construction, drilling was set to begin on February 25, 1897 by drilling 400 feet down. They encountered Oswego Lime between 880 to 942 feet, Layton Sand between 975 to 987 feet, gas sand between 1,252 to 1,267 feet and Bartlesville Sand at 1,303 feet. Finally, at 1,320 feet, oil appeared.

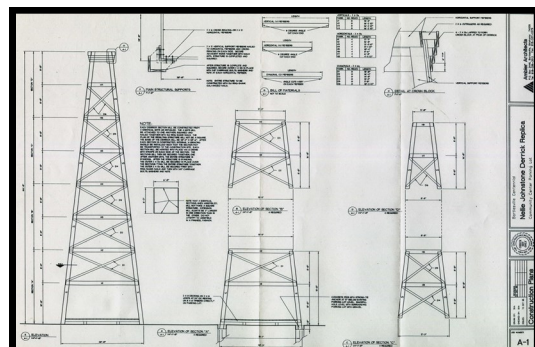
Almost daily progress reports were recorded in the Bartlesville Magnet newspaper as anticipation grew. Then, on March 25, 1897, Jennie Cass, stepdaughter of George Keeler, dropped the go-devil, which set off a nitroglycerin blast and brought the Nellie Johnstone #1 gusher in showing 50-75 barrels production. Oklahoma's first commercial oil well was born! The Nellie Johnstone No. 1 was named for the William Johnstone's daughter.

However, there was no transportation for the oil so the well was capped until the railroad arrived. The original Santa Fe Railroad Bridge was built across the Caney River and the first train crossed into Bartlesville in August 1899; however, the wooden trestle bridge would not support the larger engines and oil trains so the bridge pilings were replaced with poured concrete.

The land was allotted to Nellie Johnstone in July 1903 and production began that same year with the oil transported by rail to the refinery at Neodesha, Kansas. December of 1904, a new pipeline built by Prairie Oil and Gas Company transported the oil before it was plugged in 1948.



Nellie Johnstone Cannon sold the land to the City of Bartlesville with the condition that a park be built and named after her father. The mineral rights were not sold at that time. On January 1, 1944, the Cooperative Refinery Association acquired the oil lease of the "first commercial oil well" until March 12, 1948. At that time, the well was formally given to the City of Bartlesville. Johnstone Park quickly became a center for recreation and play for the citizens of Bartlesville. Today, a replica of the oil well stands at the site of the original rig.





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Opening of the BAHM new exhibit from April 8 through July 1, 2024  
“Our Oily Past”

The exhibit takes visitors on a journey exploring the success of H.V. Foster and Cities Service.

**April 8, 2024—Solar Eclipse** with Denise Nowlin 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Watch the Solar Eclipse and enjoy lunar themed snacks. Spots are limited and registration is required

**April 18, 2024—Guest Speaker Maria Gus**

Killers of the Flower Moon and how the City was impacted, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE Third Thursday Bring Your Lunch and Learn; light snacks provided.

**May 16, 2024—Nellie Johnstone Well Demonstration**, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE Third Thursday Bring Your Lunch and Learn: **Located at Johnstone Park**

**June 14, 2024—Kay Little, 14 Flags Over Oklahoma** 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE Third Thursday Bring Your Lunch and Learn; light snacks. All age groups welcome!



Did you know in downtown Bartlesville, the north/south streets are named and the east/west streets are numbered. Also, the odd numbered addresses are on the west and south sides of streets, while the even numbered addresses are on the north and east sides of streets.

## A DAY IN THE REGISTRAR'S LIFE

BY KASEY WERTS, BAHM REGISTRAR



World War II naturally curtailed production of consumer products. Raw materials for making a carpet sweeper including rubber, aluminum and wood were diverted for military production. Prior to the war, the sweeper base would be made from metal but due to metal rationing this was no longer an option. The continued lack of materials and the never ending need to clean led to the Bissell Company producing a War Model carpet sweeper. This model was made using wood for the base and revolutionized the world of carpet cleaning!

Thank you to Karla Winger for donating this cool piece of history!

### WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

Want to donate a family heirloom, antique find,  
photos or other materials?  
Please contact Kasey Werts at (918) 338-4290  
or [kawerts@cityofbartlesville.org](mailto:kawerts@cityofbartlesville.org)



## MUSEUM STAFF

Director, Shellie McGill

Assistant Director, Cindy Yell

Collections Manager, Debbie Neece

Museum Coordinator, Shayla Cummins

Registrar, Kasey Werts

Education Coordinator, Denise Nowlin

Museum Clerk/Temp, Tamra Rogers

Museum Clerk/Temp, Jenny Miller

## VISITATION STATS

Visitors for 2024 to date: 373

States: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MN, MO, NM, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, TX, WA

Countries: USA, Canada, France, India, Mexico, United Kingdom,



The BAHM newsletter is virtual! Join our mailing list to stay up to date on what's happening at the Museum. Scan the QR code with your cell phone camera to be taken to a form *to sign* up for the E-Newsletter. You'll get reminders about special events, guest speakers, and much more!

## Bartlesville Area History Museum

401 S. Johnstone Avenue, 5th Floor

Bartlesville, OK 74003

Phone (918) 338-4290

Web: [www.bartlesvillehistory.com](http://www.bartlesvillehistory.com)

Email: [history@cityofbartlesville.org](mailto:history@cityofbartlesville.org)

Past Perfect online database:

[bartlesvillehistory.pastperfectonline.com](http://bartlesvillehistory.pastperfectonline.com)



@bartlesville\_area\_history



BartlesvilleAreaHistoryMuseum

## MUSEUM HOURS

Monday - Friday: 8:00-4:00

Closed Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays



# AASLH

American Association  
for State and Local History

Bartlesville Area History Museum  
401 S. Johnstone Ave. - 5th Floor  
Bartlesville, OK 74003

