

SOUNDS OF PAYNE COUNTY
A MUSEUM EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

By

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For my friends and family,
I could not have achieved this without your love and support.

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Abstract:

The following pages contain a history of the musicians and music that have come out of Payne County, Oklahoma and a description of how to use that history in a museum setting. The history incorporates the contributions of amateur and professional musicians that either grew up in the area or gained major influence from living in the county.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Oklahoma! Where the wind comes sweeping' down the plain...*¹ Those words probably come to mind whenever Oklahoma and music are uttered in the same sentence. Along with this may come thoughts of cowboy songs around a blazing camp fire. The music of Oklahoma on the other hand is a more complex story that involves many different music styles and locations all across the state. Oklahoma has contributed composers, performers and music innovators to the varied pool of American music. Amateur and professional musicians in Oklahoma “have provided a multitude of finished performances to help form the musical mosaic” of Oklahoma, the nation, and the world.²

¹ Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers. *Oklahoma The Complete Book and Lyrics of the Broadway Musical: The Applause Libretto Library Series* (New York: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2010): 119. The musical Oklahoma was actually inspired by an Oklahoman. The musical was based on the book *Green Grow the Lilacs* By Lynn Riggs who was born near Claremore in 1899 and wrote the play in 1929. *Green Grow the Lilacs* was produced and performed to mixed reviews on January 26, 1931. William G. Hyland. *The Song is Ended: Songwriters and American Music, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995):276-278; William W. Savage Jr. *Singing Cowboys and all that Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983):136.

² George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr. *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), x.

In many ways, Oklahoma was a crossroads for different immigrant and migrant groups. As settlers moved west and started to create communities in Indian Territory they brought with them cultural practices they had learned elsewhere. Oklahoma comprises of many different cultural groups that brought “cultural baggage” with them making Oklahoma a “myriad of vibrant musical subcultures.”³ Instruments sometimes made the journey west. “Pianos, music boxes, guitars, mandolins, and other musical instruments were included in the house hold [sic] goods of families immigrating to the area.”⁴ The music that settlers brought with them influenced the music that was created in local communities combining what was at hand. “Music travels with the people who play it.”⁵ In Oklahoma, this multiplicity of different song styles, books and instruments brought by groups of people originally from different parts of the country or other countries blended together to form one tradition. For example in a church congregation different church members brought their own hymnals and shared hymns from wherever home might have been before. Oklahoma’s central location and the opportunities for land that came with the land rushes brought many people from different backgrounds and places together providing a place for different music forms to come together in a cultural musical crossroad. In other words, Oklahoma was a “musical melting pot” where musicians brought what they knew and learned from those around them.⁶

“Local music” is any music that has played some role in the cultural life of a town, city, county, or state through the activities of local composers, performers, teachers, or publishers.”⁷ The local music of Payne County in this study is any of the music and musicians that have either

³ Ibid., xi.

⁴ Mabel Hov Dahl. *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 34.

⁵ William W. Savage. *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 3.

⁶ Ibid., 7, 15.

⁷ Edward W. Hathaway, “Developing a State Archive of Local Music Materials” *Notes* (March 1989): 483.

made Payne County their home or have influenced the musical life here. This is not limited to those who were born in the county or lived here permanently but also those who through their presence in Payne County, even for a brief span of time, influenced the musical culture of Payne County's settlements. The music that has come out of the county both reflected the lives of members of the community and brought new forms of cultural entertainment to residents.⁸

The following chapters contain a history of the music and musicians of Payne County, Oklahoma, both amateur and professional who helped shape the music of their local community. This paper defines professional musicians as those who gain their main source of income and some measure of recognition from music. In some cases musicians distributed this local music in other parts of Oklahoma and the nation in others they remained permanent fixtures in the local community. The last chapter gives a practical guide to how that history can become a product of public history through a proposed exhibition designed for the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History in Stillwater, Oklahoma, the county seat of Payne County. Museum exhibits are a part of the work that public historians create to connect varied audiences with tangible pieces of the past. Public historians strive to educate and show how significant the lessons from the past live into the present. Laying a foundation for a music exhibit is important as a way to connect people to their own personal histories and see how their own lives connect to the past. Through telling the story of Payne County's music in a museum exhibit based off of this foundation the Sheerar can connect people through their own perspectives to the local history of Payne County and also teach them that Payne County has left a legacy for Oklahoma and the nation.

⁸ Ibid., 484.

CHAPTER II

PAYNE COUNTY'S GIFTED AMATEURS

The earliest music in the “American Colonies that is documented in writing remains the singing of psalms.”¹ Church music was also one of the early forms of music for the residents of Payne County. Much of the social activity in new communities revolved around the church. Churches were a place of worship but they also afforded a chance for neighbors to converse with each other, dance and share music. When special events were scheduled at the church, musical entertainment often accompanied it. Pioneers in Oklahoma participated in church music more than any other musical activity.² This community based singing in churches “relies on musical participation and rotation of song leaders.”³ Angie Debo describes musical activity in the rural areas where people would meet for singing conventions in the “churches of a county, listening to quartets and duets from the different delegations and joining in group singing that practically loosens the rafters.”⁴

¹ Barbara Russano Hanning. *Concise History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 517.

² Robert E. Cunningham. *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 201; Adams, Kermit Gary. “Music in the Oklahoma Territory 1889-1907.” PhD diss., North Texas State University, 1979.

³ David Warren Steel and Richard H. Hulan, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 3.

⁴ Angie Debo. *Oklahoma Foot-Loose and Fancy-Free* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), 212.

Even before there were rafters to raise, church music and folk songs filled the air around the boomer camps that began an influx of settlers into Indian Territory. David Payne's boomers "often marched to a favorite song, "On to Beulah Land""¹ Music was a way to uplift the spirits of the boomers. It brought them together as a group. After the county was formed, music continued to be a major part of the pioneer community. There were church choirs even before there were church buildings.² Many of the early families participated in the Presbyterian Church Choir of Stillwater. A photo of the choir from 1910 included Loyal Payne, Raymond Moore, Ruth Lahman (whose father founded the first ice company in Stillwater) and C.E Donart for whom the high school built in 1960 was named. Churches also formed organizations that spread music to other church communities around them. Men in Perkins organized a Men's Gospel Team on February 22, 1914. The Gospel Team went to neighboring communities to share their faith through "Testimony and song."³

Music was a part of worship in church but also of special celebrations and concerts. At one church, singing followed the covered dish Christmas Eve meal. The Ladies Aid Society of Stillwater held a concert at the Presbyterian Church in 1892. The concert consisted of two Kansas men who were "assisted by local talent" including glee clubs, duets and quartets.⁴

Churches were also a source of larger instrumentation like pianos, especially when getting a piano to locations in Payne County was difficult. Before the arrival of the railroad, much of Payne County rested far away from stations and instruments had to be transported by wagon. This did not deter all instruments from arriving in Payne County, but the number did

¹ Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 124.

² *Ibid.*, 125.

³ Mahlon Erickson and David Sasser, *Queen City of the Cimarron: A Pictorial History 1889-1920* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications Inc., 1989), 202.

⁴ Peggy McCormick, *Making a Home In Stillwater* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, 1989), 23; *Stillwater Gazette*, April 1, 1892.

grow once it was easier to get them into the county. The first piano arrived in Stillwater after a long wagon journey from the railroad station 20 miles away.⁵ Families that may not have had the finances to purchase a piano or organ accessed these instruments at the local church. For many years, Payne County churches outnumbered pianos; although “reed organs were generally available”⁶ for church members to enjoy. The First Church of Christ Scientist of Stillwater, established in 1895, had a pump organ.⁷

Instruments alone cannot make music. Early in Payne County’s history, piano teachers and pianists arrived to bring music to the pianos. J.G. Boss, a piano instructor, came to Stillwater by 1890.⁸ In Cushing “the first teacher of piano and organ was Miss Mattie Griffeth.” Miss Griffeth taught in several rural schools before 1900.⁹ Mrs. J. W. Atherton opened a piano studio on September 6, 1921. She taught piano, harmony, and musical history. Her studio was at 901 ½ Main in Stillwater. Marie Van Pelt Mitchell, who moved to Ripley in the early 1900s with her family, was a former concert pianist in Kansas City. In Ripley she “found an outlet for her talent teaching piano lessons and directing special local performances.” Pianists who had learned from these teachers and the teachers themselves played for local social events like dances and had family functions.¹⁰

Music filled an entertainment need in isolated communities. Settlers relied on each other to survive the loneliness and isolation that living far from means of transportation

⁵ Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 205.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Laura Lou Wells, *Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory* (Stillwater: Frontier Printers Inc., 1975), 72; D. Earl Newsom. *Stillwater: A Cradle of Oklahoma History* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2007), 98.

⁸ Robert E. Cunningham. *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969): 205.

⁹ Laura Lou Wells, *Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory* (Stillwater: Frontier Printers Inc., 1975):72.

¹⁰ *Stillwater Gazette* February 1, 1918; Alvan Mitchell, *Little Tom and Fats* (Stillwater: Forum Press Inc., 1983): 14; Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004): 128.

created. Music was a way to bring people together. “In the age before radio and television, LP’s and CD’s, music was an event in itself, not mere background noise framing other activities.”¹¹ Music became the event, the reason to gather together to gain a break from the hard working days. Settlers did not wait for the establishment of proper towns before turning to a “social life of music.”¹² It was a “common thread, a way of communicating in the most eloquent way with each other and with those whose language and customs were a barrier.”¹³

Music was a social event, but also a personal way of relaxing. Early advertising in *The Oklahoman* touted “For the evenings nothing can be better or more reflecting than music.” Also “music expresses every emotion of the human heart.” Music was described as a connection to human emotion and a reflective time at the end of the day. “Keep in touch with popular music. It may not be the best music, but it is always good and it always entertains.”¹⁴ Oklahomans were encouraged to use music as a means to relax and a way to keep entertained.

Community based singing in Oklahoma was probably influenced by a particular form of music notation that made learning songs easier when there was little access to music education. Wanting many members to participate, this type of singing relied heavily on tune books that printed music using shape-note notation. “Shape-note systems notate each pitch in a scale with a shaped note head that corresponds to a solfege syllable.”¹⁵ Solfege syllables refer to pitches on the musical scale such as Do, Re, and Mi. For a frame of reference when Maria sings to the Von Trapp children in the *Sound of Music* she teaches the children using solfege. In shape note

¹¹ Edward W. Hathaway, “Developing a State Archive of Local Music Materials” *Notes*, (March 1989): 484.

¹² Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 127.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴ *The Oklahoman*, June 9, 1908; *The Oklahoman*, March 23, 1945; *The Oklahoman*, August 19, 1917.

¹⁵ Kiri Miller, *Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 5

notation, each of the notes are written as a symbol or shape. For example, Do, or low C on the scale would be represented with a shape such as a triangle. Every time it was written in the music, there would be a triangle to let the singer know to sing Do. A different note would have a different shape. Singers would sing different pitches from the shapes that they saw on the page. Shape note singing was easy to learn. It simplified learning music because singers did not have to know the lines and spaces of notes on the staff; they just had to know the note in the notation that corresponded to a particular pitch. Shape note singing became a form of family and community entertainment.¹⁶ The reason may be that the settlements were away from schools that could have taught regular music notation. Members of Payne County music societies used the shape notes that “their ancestors had used in the mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.”¹⁷

Angie Debo describes the early days when Oklahomans “sang everywhere they met, and they played every instrument that came to hand.”¹⁸ Those without entertainment who wanted it created it for themselves. Without performers of music at hand, Oklahomans made it themselves. Looking back at early Stillwater, the NewsPress reported on April 21, 1976 that “entertainment in early day Stillwater was mostly a do it yourself proposition.” Without the connection to the entertainment circuits, locals turned to each other to provide music.¹⁹ Those with musical talent “were called upon to play and to sing solos, duets and in groups.”²⁰

¹⁶ Harry Eskew, “Using Early American Hymnals and Tunebooks” *Notes* (September 1970): 20; Kiri Miller, *Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 5.

¹⁷ Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 125.

¹⁸ Angie Debo, *Oklahoma Foot-Loose and Fancy-Free* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), 212.

¹⁹ *Stillwater Newspress*, April 21, 1976; William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 3; Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 201.

²⁰ Laura Lou Wells, *Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory* (Stillwater: Frontier Printers Inc., 1975), 72.

Individuals and small groups performed in homes and at community events. "Concerts by local and professional musicians were plentiful between 1889 and 1907."²¹

One amateur local began entertaining at a young age. Lon Hays, who was born in Stillwater, became considered by many as one of the "best caller[s] at country dances"²² Early in his upbringing, Lon "got possession of a French harp, or mouth organ, as some call it." That mouth organ, known now as a harmonica, became "his constant companion." Eventually, the neighbors noticed and word of mouth "got around that he could be useful at public meetings."²³ One of his early gigs was playing for his fellow students on the way to and from school. He would sit on the school steps and play *Turkey in the Straw* while his classmates came into school. The process would be repeated when school ended for the day. In time he was popular for the music for dances probably from his talent. Lon did not only play his mouth organ. He created a wire holder for it so that he could have his hands free to play the school's reed organ for a dance.²⁴

Music groups also added to events around the county. C.A Lawson, a choir, and others were called upon to perform at an ice cream supper at the Payne Centre school house on June 25, 1895. Ruth Strode, who majored in music elsewhere before coming to live in Stillwater with her husband in 1914, was an "accomplished musician, sang in the choir in the First Presbyterian Church and sang for many weddings and hundreds of funerals." C.E. Donart, who later would be known for his contributions to Stillwater public schools, also had a musical side. Donart played

²¹ Kermit Gary Adams, "Music in the Oklahoma Territory 1889-1907"(PhD diss., North Texas State University, 1979), 2.

²² Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater Through the Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Arts and Humanities Council Inc., 1974), 101.

²³ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

the clarinet for the 101 Ranch Circus Cowboy Band. He represented the county even if the band did not.²⁵

Owning music provided a source of home entertainment for early Payne County residents. Sheet music and songsters provided the tunes and text to popular songs for a family to enjoy either around the piano or sung together without accompaniment. Songsters were “mostly pocket sized and soft covered” books with “texts of popular songs.”²⁶ Street sellers, itinerant peddlers, and performers sold these varied subject books that contained songs to advertise their businesses or their music. The prolific printing of songster’s, with dozens published each year, spread music of varying types all over the United States. Books such as these would have been affordable and obtainable by Payne County residents. Families that may not have been able to afford sheet music could have purchased a songster. Sheet music in the nineteenth and early twentieth century regularly cost twelve and a half cents for every page of printed music. This meant that sheet music for an entire song would cost twenty five to fifty cents. In comparison, a songster during the same time period cost between thirteen and fifty cents and contained between eighty nine and one hundred twenty five songs. Wealthier citizens in the nineteenth century used instruments such as the piano and owning sheet music as a status symbol perhaps owning a piece of a song even if just the text served a similar function.²⁷

A step up from owning the work of someone else is creating it. The Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History’s collection includes two pieces of sheet music that reveal that Payne County

²⁵ *Payne County Populist*, June 21, 1895; “Ruth Strode,” *Payne County Historical Review* (Stillwater: Payne County Historical Society, 2005): 15-16; “C.E. Donart,” *Payne County Historical Review* (Stillwater: Payne County Historical Society, 2004): 17-18.

²⁶ Norm Cohen, “The Forget-Me-Not Songsters and Their Role in the American Folksong Tradition” *American Music* (Summer, 2005): 138.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 138, 142, 147-149; Paul Charosh. “Studying Nineteenth-Century Popular Song” *American Music* (Winter, 1997): 478. Consumers of song texts also treasured what they purchased. Many consumers bound loose sheet music and songsters together creating volumes of their favorite music, in a way this can be seen as the first way people put together a playlist.

inhabitants were also involved in writing and printing their own music. The earlier piece of music was published by The Sunshine Writers, housed at 619 Lowry Street in Stillwater Oklahoma in 1919. The song was *I Long For that Old Sweetheart of Mine* written by W.H. Haycraft and J.E. Salisbury. In 1937, Mrs. Gus Koeller wrote and published *The Happy Club Song* which she dedicated to the Farm Women's Clubs of American of which she was a member. The copyright for this piece also places the publication from Stillwater.²⁸ In Perkins, Warren Chantry, an early pioneer, wrote the words and Mrs. Arlie Koss, the daughter of an 89er wrote the music for *Oklahoma My Home* in 1939. The chorus of *Oklahoma My Home* reveals the sentiment that Chantry felt for his home state.

Oh, Oklahoma, fair land of my dreaming
Land of the lover, the loved and the lost.
Cherish thy legends in tragedy teeming,
Legend where love reckoned not of the cost.²⁹

Oklahomans in Payne not only owned the works of others, but wrote and published music that celebrated where they lived and brought the talents of Payne County musicians to others.

Music businesses bolstered music's importance to the community. The Dickerson Brothers advertised to sell pianos, organs, "all kinds of musical instruments," sheet music and music books in the Stillwater *Gazette* printed March 31, 1893. That was just four years after the newspaper was established. The Payne County Populist, printed in 1900, continuously ran an advertisement for pianos and organs sold by E. E. Hopkins for cash and easy payments. Hopkins sold them from R.M. Oneal's furniture store. Different ads in the Stillwater *Gazette* in the early

²⁸Acc. Sheet Music, Sheerar Collection, 96.3.1, and 2004.38.1

²⁹David Sasser. *Perkins, Oklahoma Many People One Community: A Pictorial History* (Barnsdall, Oklahoma: Evans Publications, Inc., 2004) 370.

1920s extolled the Holmes Music Company that sold pianos, phonographs, and “all music merchandise.”³⁰ There were also ads for another music store in Stillwater, the McClain Music Company.³¹ The store also had advertisements in the Perkins *Courier*. In Stillwater, Chenoweth and Green, a long standing store, also sold music and instruments.³² On October 1, 1908 the Perkins *Courier* ran an advertisement for a contest where the winning community organization would get a piano. There were six contest conditions. Winners had to be organizations, churches, lodges, or schools within ten miles of Perkins and receive the highest number of votes which were placed in boxes around town. The contest was open for three to six months with the end to be two weeks from the date printed by the *Courier*. Ballots would be counted and reported each week. Twenty-five votes would be given for each one dollar purchase at most Perkins businesses. The contest probably got an organization a piano and increased the circulation of the paper in the process.³³

Aside from church organizations, communities created music groups such as community bands. “During the early part of the [twentieth] century, town band popularity peaked, and some states even passed laws allowing municipalities to levy a tax to support bands with the requirement that they provide free concerts and music at important public events.”³⁴ Although it is unknown whether or not settlements supported bands in Payne County through taxes, local bands and orchestras were among the first community groups organized in many of its settlements. Payne County bands were organized during the later years of “The Golden Age of Bands” a fifty year period that began after the Civil War and before America’s entry into World

³⁰ *Stillwater Gazette*, September 2, 1921.

³¹ *Stillwater Gazette*, June 30, 1922.

³² *Perkins Courier*, October 1, 1908; *The Oklahoman*, March 27, 1966.

³³ *Perkins Courier*, October 1, 1908.

³⁴ Jill M. Sullivan. “A Century of Women’s Bands in America” *Music Educators Journal* (September, 2008): 35.

War I.³⁵ The popularity of bands came partially from the improved mobility that the railroad offered travelling music groups and the comfort that was added to railroad travel with the addition of the Pullman sleeping car. During the time frame of the Golden Age of Bands, hundreds of professional bands toured the country igniting band popularity.³⁶

In many instances all a band needed to get started was a leader. Fenning Lyn Schatz introduced band music to Ripley around 1912. L.O. Woods filled the leadership position when he began a band in Stillwater in 1895.³⁷ The Stillwater band consisted of all men. Many of the band members came from Stillwater's first families including Harry Donart, one of Stillwater's first teachers; M.W.J. Holt, Stillwater's first fire chief; and, Arthyr Adams, who was one of Oklahoma A&M's first graduates. Stillwater's band gained popularity playing at many community events and even won out of state competitions. It provided Saturday night entertainment on the street during the summer and on special occasions. The men won first prize at a mid-western competition in Arkansas City and at a regional contest in Winfield, Kansas in 1899. Cushing first had a band in 1896. George Hosselton organized and directed the Hosselton Fife and Drum Corp in the early 1900s. The group had ten members by 1910.³⁸

Community bands played for all types of community events such as parades, group singing, and indoor and outdoor concerts. The schedule for the Perkins Fourth of July celebration on July 4, 1908 included "forenoon band concerts" on July third, a band concert on

³⁵ Ibid., 33-34.

³⁶ Ibid., 34.

³⁷ Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 27; Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 201.

³⁸ Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 206; D. Earl Newsom, *Stillwater: A Cradle of Oklahoma History* (Stillwater: New Forum Press Inc., 2007), 56; Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 201; Ibid., 204, 206; Laura Lou Wells, *Young Cushing in Oklahoma Territory* (Stillwater: Frontier Printers Inc., 1975), 73; David Sasser and Mahlon Erickson, *Queen of the Cimarron: A Pictorial History 1889-1920* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications Inc., 1989), 250-251.

the street at 9:00am on the Fourth followed, by the singing of the national anthem accompanied by the band with a chorus and the audience, and more band music at 10:30am.³⁹ In Stillwater the band followed the Grand Marshall in the Armistice parade on November 11, 1921.

Women and children in Payne County also participated in bands. Ripley had a children's rhythm band with members in grades first through third that played in parades and other community events. Perkins hosted a ladies band which in the early 1900s included Blanche Wagner, Grace Mathias, Madeline Harding, Vera Sutherland, Elsi Williams and Rose Williams. Ladies were between the ages of 18 and 25, and were good looking as well as being able to play. The Perkins ladies band got the opportunity to play for important state and out of state functions. On January 13, 1906 the ladies travelled from Perkins with their instruments to play in Guthrie for the inauguration of Governor Frank Franz who was "the last territorial governor of Oklahoma."⁴⁰ For this occasion the Perkins ladies band actually borrowed three girls from Cushing and another from Stillwater in order to balance the ensemble. The four girls were actually members of their own city's ladies bands. The instrumentation for that occasion included one tuba, three baritones, four trumpets, three clarinets, one snare drum, one bass drum and four trombones. A photo depicts that the ladies identified as from Cushing and Stillwater wore similar dresses to all the ladies in the picture but their hats are a different style. It seems the distinction from what town that the ladies resided in came from the style of hat that a particular town's band selected for the band uniform.⁴¹⁴² Stillwater also had a ladies band with members Olli Johns Gilges, Netta Johns, Pearl Holmes – Bailey, Edith Otey-Hettick, Maude

³⁹ *Perkins Journal*, July 3, 1908.

⁴⁰ D. Earl Newsom, *The Story of Exciting Payne County* (Stillwater: New Forums Press Inc., 1997), 176; Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 176; David Sasser, *A Place to Call Home: Perkins Oklahoma A History Through the 20th Century* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Perkins Historical Society, 2001), 324.

⁴¹ David Sasser and Mahlon Erickson, *Queen City of the Cimarron: A Pictorial History 1889-1920* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Evans Publications Inc., 1989), 240-241.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 324.

Knowles, Clara Brown, Edna Gilges Tull, Ora Kelgo Mitchell, Altie Johns Stumbo, Beutra Woods, Edna Donart- Millard, Pearl Reece, Nellie Harbison, Stella Taylor Gallagher and Laura Wood Houston. These ladies performed in Stillwater under a tent on the courthouse lawn in the summer as part of a Chautauqua Circuit and in Chicago, Kansas City, and St. Louis.⁴³ Chautauqua was a form of Vaudeville performed outdoors during the summer and was popular between 1874 and 1924. All over the country, cities and towns set up tents where “lecturers and respectable entertainers spent the summer touring on a local circuit.”⁴⁴ The *Stillwater Gazette* reported on April 28, 1922 that the Chautauqua for the summer of 1922 would begin on June 23. The Stillwater ladies band participated in a Vaudeville tradition that successfully entertained crowds in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and around the nation.

Early nineteenth century bands, both female and male, played a repertoire that “consisted of marches, quicksteps (fast marches), dances including the two step (in march time), waltzes, polkas,” arrangements of popular songs, and pieces designed to showcase the talents of soloists in the band.⁴⁵ Songs styles like this were a part of popular community events in Payne County including “cakewalks,” a social event popular in the 1890s where “dressed-up couples promenaded to the music of brass bands for prizes of cake.”⁴⁶ Bands were also a part of community celebrations like the Perkins Fourth of July celebration in 1908 which included a band concert to kick off the day’s events.⁴⁷

⁴³ Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater: Where Oklahoma Began* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council of Stillwater, Oklahoma Inc., 1969), 204-205.

⁴⁴ Anthony Slide. *The Encyclopedia of Vaudeville* (Westport, Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 1994), 92.

⁴⁵ Barbara Russano Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 520.

⁴⁶ Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 70.

⁴⁷ David Sasser, *A Place to Call Home: Perkins Oklahoma A History Through the 20th Century* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Perkins Historical Society, 2001), 63.

After the golden age of bands, community bands in Payne County remained popular for decades. A newsletter article from the *Ripley Review* on September 9, 1948 reported that the Ripley Band had elected band officers for the next year. They also discussed plans for funding the purchase of a King E Flat Tuba. Bands did not always continue. Some of the original community bands were discontinued only to be reinstated later. The current run of the Stillwater Community Band celebrated its 22nd season during the summer of 2013. During June, the Stillwater Community Band plays free concerts at the east lawn of the Stillwater public library or at the Stillwater Community Center.⁴⁸

Communities also organized music clubs that sponsored music events and meetings filled with music. In Stillwater, a club was named for Saint Cecilia, the Roman martyr that legend says sang so sweetly the angels came down from heaven to listen, and who became a patron saint during the middle ages. In the early 1950s, the Saint Cecilia Society members began a unique concert with an ensemble of multiple pianos and piano players playing all at once. Chenoweth and Green Music Company provided some of the pianos for this event. A February 13, 1953, performance included eight pianos in concert. This entertaining collection of multiple pianos played simultaneously occurred several times more. An information sheet from 1973 listed the pieces that would be performed and gave the instruction that individual groups would schedule their own practices.⁴⁹ Like Stillwater's Saint Cecilia Society, community music societies contributed to the entertainment of Payne County by grouping together and sponsoring unique events. Many hands make light work and light entertainment.

⁴⁸The concerts usually end with the audience singing to band accompaniment the theme song from *Oklahoma!* I have had the privilege of performing with the Stillwater Community band and the information for this paragraph came from the Stillwater Community Band Program for the Thursday June 27, 2013 7pm program at the Stillwater Public Library. That is in my personal collection.

⁴⁹ "That's Entertainment" museum file, Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History has some information from articles clipped from the Newspress February 12, 1953 and other programs and notes.

Payne County's schools started bands, choirs, and music clubs. Bands were created soon after high schools and junior highs were established. Sometimes their groups were small. In 1904, the Prairie Gem School had a five member kid orchestra. They played two fiddles, a banjo, a guitar, and were accompanied by an organist. F.L. Schatz directed a 17 member Forest Valley Band in 1910. As time passed, school bands grew. Yale High School's Band in 1921 included twelve members directed by Lee Brock. Instrumentation for the band uniquely included Harry Heenan who whistled. By 1927, the band had grown to thirty-two under the direction of Yale School Superintendent A. Frank Martin. Stillwater High School had an All-Girl Drum and Bugle Corps in 1946. The Washington School, which was the segregated black school in Stillwater, had a marching band that was one of the few at segregated schools in the state to have uniforms. Young students also participated in music clubs such as the Harmony Club a junior section of the Stillwater Music and Magazine Club that met at the home of Mrs. Jesse W Atherton.⁵⁰ Schools also had boy and girl glee clubs. In Yale, the 1926 Yale High School Girls Glee Club had 19 members not including their accompanist Christine James and director Mrs. Kathryn Grayson. Sometime in the 1920s the boys and girls glee clubs of Yale High School joined with the Yale High School band in a concert in nearby Quay.⁵¹

Sometimes distinguished graduates who did not play music professionally shared their music talents during their school years. Erskin Hill, who graduated South High In Stillwater and later became a four star general in the United States Air Force in 1977, was first well known for

⁵⁰ David Sasser, *Perkins, Oklahoma Many People One Community A Pictorial History* (Barnsdall, Oklahoma: Evans Publications Inc., 2004), 62- 63; Gary Gibson, *Ole' Yale High 1919-1987* (Yale, Oklahoma: Gary Gibson, 1990), 25, 86; Robert E. Cunningham, *Stillwater Through the Years* (Stillwater: Arts and Humanities Council Inc., 1974), 154,146; *Stillwater Gazette*, January 11, 1924.

⁵¹ Gary Gibson, *Ole Yale High 1919-1987* (Yale, Oklahoma: Gary Gibson, 1990), 66, 36.

his clarinet playing in school. Erskin took first place in competitions in Enid, Tonkawa, and Winfield, Kansas. He was also named an all-state band winner in 1935, 1936 and 1937.⁵²

School music groups from Payne County participated in music festivals and contests held in other parts of the state. Music contests have a long history in Oklahoma and Payne County Junior High and High School students participated in competitions within the county and throughout the state.⁵³ Payne County interscholastic music meets included competitions for piano and boy and girl glee clubs. In 1924, the Class A first place winner for piano was Stillwater. Cushing won second place. In Pawnee in 1963 “4,000 young musicians converged on the city to compete in 1,510 music events.”⁵⁴ Groups from Yale, Stillwater and Cushing participated. Stillwater High School participated in the Enid *Tri-State Band Festival* in 1933. Pioneer band members played solos and drum and bugle corps members competed in the marching contest. The Pioneer band members also contributed members to the main festival mass band concert that was directed in 1933 by New York band master Edwin Franko Goldman. County schools also showcased their ability to win competitions across the state. Stillwater High Schools band won the state band competition in 1932, The Perkins-Tryon School Jazz Band directed by Kent Taylor began eleven straight years of winning the Class 2 A State Jazz Band championship in 1974.⁵⁵

Apart from state competitions Payne County’s school bands and musical groups shared their talents with the local audience of parents and supporters in numerous concerts. In Stillwater, the High School Band and Orchestra and the Junior High Band held annual concerts.

⁵² D. Earl Newsom, *Stillwater: A Cradle of Oklahoma History* (Stillwater: New Forums Press Inc., 2007), 89.

⁵³ Howard F. Stein and Robert F. Hill, eds., *The Culture of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 150.

⁵⁴ *The Oklahoman*, April 7, 1963.

⁵⁵ *Stillwater Gazette*, April 7, 1933; *Stillwater Gazette*, April 18, 1924; David Sasser, *A Place to Call Home: Perkins Oklahoma A History Through the 20th Century* (Perkins, Oklahoma: Perkins Historical Society, 2001), 310.

The year 1933 included a concert by the High School Orchestra which won the state championship that year. Three days earlier, T. A. Patterson directed the band's annual concert. Some 750-1000 people attended the Junior High concert the same day and showed their support for the band by remaining after a twenty minute delay. The year 1933 must have been a good year for the Stillwater groups in terms of support. A Minstrel show reported on in the *Stillwater Gazette* the same day as the band concerts mentioned that the show had raised \$130 that was used to fund that year's band and orchestra state contest trips where the groups won sweepstakes trophies.⁵⁶

From its early days the college and then university brought music to Payne County as a location for music contests, a place of learning for college students and directors, and a concert hall. Oklahoma State Agriculture and Mechanical College (Oklahoma A&M), which officially became Oklahoma State University in 1957,⁵⁷ offered music from the beginning. Even before there was a proper music department or a degree in the subject, music played a role in the lives of students and in the surrounding community. The college auditorium provided a location for travelling musicians to bring concerts to the county. In 1921, an advertisement appeared for a concert at the college auditorium by Arthur Collins and Byron Harlan, a famous singing team. Admittance cards were available at the Holmes Music House, a local music store in Stillwater.⁵⁸

The Sigma Literary Society always featured music in their regular meetings. On October 20, 1893, nine charter members began the Sigma Literary Society. Two years later, in 1895, they boasted twenty active members. A typical meeting for the Sigmas included opening music, and

⁵⁶ *Stillwater Gazette*, May 26, 1933.

⁵⁷ Patrick M. Murphy, *History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988), 225.

⁵⁸ Collins and Harlan recorded many hit songs between 1901 and 1918 including a song titled *The Right Church, But the Wrong Pew*. Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn's Pop Memories 1890-1954* (Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Record Research Inc. 1986), 92-95; *Stillwater Gazette*, September 23, 1921.

special music part way through the meeting.⁵⁹ Members of the society formed into the Sigma Serenaders to perform at the meetings.⁶⁰ Literary societies such as the Sigma's were an important part of the early entertainment on college campuses. The societies participated in oratorical contests that at the time "produced as much excitement as athletic events."⁶¹ Music was an important part of the literary societies in their roles as a source of learning and intercollegiate competition. The Sigma's even sang for the community when they gained permission in May of 1894 to hold a concert at a local church to raise money for an organ.⁶²

In 1936, a unique organization of students began that helped many students fund college through their musical talents. A. Frank Martin appointed himself the role of gathering and "organizing students with the ability to entertain" and help them to gain employment through their talents entertaining on campus and in the community. This was the student entertainment bureau later called the Student Entertainers. The Bureau ranged in "size over the years from fifty to one hundred and sixty five members" and its talent ranged from a "female ventriloquist, to a girl's cornet trio, to quartets such as the Cowboys and the Gospel Singers, to the Little Symphony Orchestra and the Range Riders Western Orchestra." Just to give a sense of a year of entertaining, the "1951 Student Entertainer groups presented 374 programs before more than 70,000 people." Fifteen years after Martin organized the first group, hundreds of talented students had funded their education through music and entertainment. A long time

⁵⁹ LeRoy H. Fischer, *Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988),111-112; *The College Mirror*, May 15, 1895;

⁶⁰ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 12.

⁶¹ LeRoy H. Fischer. *Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988),113.

⁶² Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 12.

professor and head of the music department, Professor Max Mitchell, participated in this program.⁶³

A popular Christmas tradition for the university and the community came from a “joint enterprise of the music department and the student union.” The Madrigal Dinners began in 1975. People came to the event for an “elaborate portrayals of Renaissance English Christmas feasts.” A chorus of music students dressed in period costume and entertained the dinner guests. Madrigal Dinners became an annual tradition that recently has declined.⁶⁴

Angelo C. Scott, who became the president of Oklahoma A&M College in 1899, provided music on campus when there was no music department by performing “all musical affairs” on campus. He had help from his wife, Lola Smeltzer Scott, who had graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music. Together, the Scott’s “formed and directed a chorus and a male quartet.” They also staged musicals at the Stillwater Opera House. Even though music clearly seemed important to President Scott, it remained an extracurricular activity with no department and no degree. “The Choral club gave an annual presentation of a cantata, oratorio, or comic opera.” A favorite option for these presentations came from the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. A cantata is a sacred or secular piece of vocal music that incorporates solos, choruses and orchestral accompaniment. An oratorio is similar to a cantata except it is the setting of a religious text to music with solos, choruses and orchestra that originally was presented with scenery in the seventeenth century but later was performed in concert form. Since the pieces

⁶³ Patrick M. Murphy, *History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988), 204.

⁶⁴ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 396.

that they were singing involved orchestral accompaniment the choral club probably performed with other college music groups.⁶⁵

In 1908, Oklahoma A&M established its first orchestra. It performed weekly at Chapel. An important addition was women who at the time were not allowed to join the college band until much later. In 1980, the orchestra directed by Wayne E. Muller travelled to Innsbruck, Austria to perform in the Austrian Music Festival celebrating Innsbruck's 800th birthday. Early college bands provided the marching music for student military drills. This is what Oklahoma A&M's band led by H.A. Ide did. Marching music was not the only music that the bands performed. In plans for the 1921 armistice parade, organizers discussed using the full college band. Even though an occasional woman was allowed to play with the band on special occasions and with specialty instruments such as a harp, women were not allowed in the first band and remained banned until World War II when "bands out of necessity consisted largely of women."⁶⁶

An 1899 appropriation adding buildings to campus allowed departments to expand add class offerings. This led to the appointment of Ella Stevenson as the first music instructor. The position, however, only lasted for two years.⁶⁷ A math professor took the next step toward the creation of a music department. James F. Lawrence, who came to Oklahoma A&M in 1904,

⁶⁵Ibid., 19, 21; John Robert Brown, Graham Wade and Beth Wade, *A Concise Guide to Musical Terms* (Pacific, Missouri: Mel Bay Publications, 2002), 19, 30, 41.

⁶⁶Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs. Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990), 162; Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 41; *Stillwater Gazette*, October 28, 1921. The parade planners also contemplated using a chorus of 200 people and 600 other participants for the festivities; Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 201.

⁶⁷Ibid., 17.

assisted in organizing the first Oklahoma A&M band. His wife also directed a girl's glee club. The Lawrence's and a piano instructor "comprised the first music department listing."⁶⁸

I. Zackheim became the first full-time director of music in the fall of 1908. Zackheim did not serve long. In the fall of 1911, Joseph Watson became the music director at Oklahoma A&M.⁶⁹ He too would serve for a relatively short period of time. The short reigns of these two was followed by an influential and long serving music director. In 1915, when Joseph Watson unexpectedly passed away, Bohumil "Boh" Makousky, often referred to as "Oklahoma A. and M. College's own John Phillip Sousa" became the head of the music department.⁷⁰ Boh came to the department at a time when students were limited to how much music they could add to their education. In 1915, students were only allowed to take one credit hour of music per semester. In addition to the enrollment restrictions the music department only owned four old pianos housed in one music room, which happened to be right next to the typing room which probably drowned out the music.⁷¹ Music was not yet a degree option.

In his 28 years at Oklahoma A&M, Boh expanded the music department. Not long after taking over as head of the department, Boh had "built the music department to the point that it offered a three-year certificate with minors in piano, voice, string, brass and reed instruments, taught by a faculty of ten."⁷² The three year certificate was first offered in 1921. From then until 1947, 281 students graduated with either a three year certificate or a bachelors of arts degree in music. With Boh's leadership, and the direction of the dean of the science department, the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁹ That same years Frank E. Miller became the band and orchestra leader. Ibid., 41.

⁷⁰ Boh was also known by the nickname the "Music Man" Ibid., 54, 56; Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs. Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990), 143.

⁷¹ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 54.

⁷² Ibid., 55.

department that music was originally under, the music department finally offered a degree. At the beginning of his service as dean of the science department in 1935, Schiller Scroggs sought to gain accreditation for the music program and approve it for granting the bachelor of fine arts degree. Scroggs accomplished his goals. A bachelor of arts degree was first offered in 1936. The National Association of Schools of Music granted Oklahoma A&M music department provisional membership in 1938. By the middle of the 1960s, music had the thirteenth largest enrollment on campus which would not have been possible without the passion of Boh and others who wanted Oklahoma A&M to offer music as a degree.⁷³

Faculty recruitment was a part of this steady growth. Long serving faculty members in the music department hired by Boh included Frank Hladky who taught from 1920 to 1963. Hladky and other faculty members that started in the 1920s “provided the backbone for the program into the 1950s and 1960s.”⁷⁴ Boh also added to the music groups that already existed. “By the mid 1930s Oklahoma A&M had three different bands (symphonic, ROTC, and College Band), a symphony orchestra, symphonic choir, men’s and women’s glee clubs and a choral club.”⁷⁵ Boh was also a talented musician who cemented the relationship between sporting events and the band. In the early 1930s, Boh added classical music to game days with the “110-piece band.”⁷⁶ The band still performs for Oklahoma State University sporting events, but the music that they play is not just classical.

Boh’s lasting legacy and passion for Oklahoma A&M and music in Oklahoma was recognized before his retirement from teaching. His students honored him with an anniversary

⁷³ Ibid., 201, 198; LeRoy H. Fischer, *Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988),82; Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 200,291.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 199.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 199-200.

⁷⁶ Doris Dellinger, *History of Oklahoma State University Intercollegiate Athletics* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 96.

concert in 1940. He was also inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. Perhaps the most touching expression of his contribution to Oklahoma A&M came when he retired in 1943. The music the band performed while Boh directed was purchased “from his personal funds.” When he retired, he gave all that music to the university.⁷⁷

The music department continued to contribute to the cultural life on campus with frequent performances by students and faculty.⁷⁸ Musicians, both student and faculty, performed operettas, recitals, concerts and each year provided a Varsity Revue to “enrich campus life.”⁷⁹ Faculty member not only taught music to their students, they also provided concerts. Occasionally, the concerts involved other college professors. Oklahoma A&M faculty and University of Tulsa faculty participated in an exchange concert in 1949. Members of the music department played at the dedication of a new power plant in 1910.⁸⁰ Commencement activities since the late nineteenth century included “vocal solos, medleys, duets, octets” and “orchestral music.”⁸¹ In 1950, organ students in the music department contributed to music on campus every day with daily chime concerts at Old Central. These concerts continued until 1953, when the new library opened. Chime concerts included a wide variety of music including “fraternity and sorority songs.”⁸² Currently, when in season daily ringing of the chimes from the library includes school songs and holiday songs.

⁷⁷ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 200-201.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁸⁰ *The Oklahoman*, May 1, 1949; J. Lewie Sanderson, R. Dean McGlamery and David C. Peters, *History of Oklahoma State University Campus* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990), 70.

⁸¹ LeRoy H. Fischer, *Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1988), 119.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 196.

In 1929, the Varsity Revue began as an “all-college talent show to raise money for new band uniforms and music.”⁸³ The revue became an annual “all college” activity that involved hundreds of students in the “production, set construction, music, and dancing.” The 1959 Varsity Revue was described as a “campus extravaganza.”⁸⁴ Before the Revue existed Howard G. Seldomridge, a speech professor who came to Oklahoma A&M in 1906, helped stage productions as part of his responsibilities. Seldomridge, for instance, directed the student follies in 1908.⁸⁵

Over the years many music professors were recognized by their students and music organizations for their contributions to the music field. In 1966, L.N. “Cy” Perkins was honored by former members of the Men’s Glee Club on the occasion of his retirement. In addition to the recognition from his students that year, he was also honored as the Music Educators Association’s “Teacher of the Year.”⁸⁶ In 1987, music professor Peter E. Amstutz was among other professors honored with one of the Burlington Northern Foundation Faculty Awards.⁸⁷

Over the years, Oklahoma A&M’s music department gained a reputation of excellence. “Oklahoma A&M’s music graduates were readily accepted into Eastman and Julliard.”⁸⁸ The college also received a “gift of music records, music scores, and music books, together with sound equipment from the Carnegie Foundation of New York.” This collection remained in a special room known as the Carnegie Music Room in Old Central. “No other library like it could be

⁸³ Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs, Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1990),145.

⁸⁴ Patrick M. Murphy, *History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988), 230.

⁸⁵ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 22.

⁸⁶ Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs, Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1990),156.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁸⁸ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 204.

found in Oklahoma.”⁸⁹ Perhaps Oklahoma A&M was one of the colleges that Angie Debo referenced when she wrote that in Oklahoma “the colleges also have good music departments.”⁹⁰

Faculty and former music students penned many of the college’s school songs. One of the earliest came in 1908 when Professor Seldomridge was directing the student follies. The words to the finale of the show that the students sang was written by Seldomridge and used a tune he had heard on a New York theatre trip. The words were:

OAMC, OAMC we’ll sing your praise tonight,
To let you know where ‘er we go,
For the Orange and Black we’ll fight.
We’ll sing your worth o’er the earth,
And shout , kiyi, kiyee,
In books of fame, we’ll write your name, OAMC.⁹¹

The song soon became the college song *OAMC* which was later modified after the University’s name change to *Oh, OSU*.⁹² In 1934, long time music professor J.K. Long wrote a new pep song for the college entitled *Ride ‘Em Cowboys*.⁹³ Robert L. McCulloh, who graduated in 1949, completed the words and music to the Alma Mater in 1957.⁹⁴ In 1964, the college published a collection of fourteen songs titled *Songs of Oklahoma State* that included the *Alma Mater Hymn*

⁸⁹ LeRoy H. Fischer, *Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1988), 207.

⁹⁰ Angie Debo, *Oklahoma Foot-Loose and Fancy-Free* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), 213.

⁹¹ “Letter from Leonard Herron,” *Payne County Historical Review* (Stillwater: Payne County Historical Society, 2004): 17-18.

⁹² Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 12.

⁹³ Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs, Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1990), 147.

⁹⁴ Patrick M. Murphy, *History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1988), 225.

and *Ride 'Em Cowboys*. The book celebrated what faculty members and former students, along with current groups, had given musically to the college. Proceeds from the sale of the book went to purchase new band uniforms.⁹⁵

Music courses were offered for young women at the college as early as 1907.⁹⁶ The music department also offered classes and special learning opportunities to students outside the music department and Stillwater residents. Some classes were designed specifically for “adult beginners and for students in other fields.”⁹⁷ Dr. Karl Gehrrens held lectures open to the public in 1949, at which he spoke of music’s place in a democracy and “Success in Music Study.”⁹⁸

College music groups also spread music across the county and in other parts of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma A&M seventeen piece band performed on Agricultural Extension trains that travelled to Oklahoma communities with exhibit demonstrations for farmers. The band travelled with the train to entertain farmers at each of the stops. In addition to education farmers with new techniques in farming, the train brought music to isolated areas. In 1910, the extension train stops included Snyder, El Dorado, Okfuskee and Altus. The Stillwater Glee Club performed at an oratorical contest between colleges in Norman, Edmund, Stillwater, Alva, Kingfisher and Weatherford. The band was also known to take semiannual concert tours throughout the state between 1918 and 1931.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs, Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1990), 80.

⁹⁶ *The Oklahoman*, July 25, 1907.

⁹⁷ *The Oklahoman*, February 12, 1951.

⁹⁸ *The Oklahoman*, February 13, 1949.

⁹⁹ *The Oklahoman*, October 12, 1910; *The Oklahoman*, May 17, 1905; Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 199.

A group of band students started an organization that would become national and have a lasting presence in Payne County. In 1919, William Scroggs and a group of band students formed an honorary band fraternity called Kappa Kappa Psi. In February of 1920, the fraternity “received a charter as a national fraternity” and grew to have forty-one chapters. This fraternity still exists and has housed its national headquarters in Stillwater, first in the Seretean Center. In 1991, it moved to the restored Stillwater railroad station where it can be found today.¹⁰⁰

Over the years, Oklahoma A&M hosted contests and events for Oklahoma high schools. In 1949, the college held a three day state music contest in which 200 high schools participated in a piano competition and competitions for solos, ensembles, bands and orchestras. The *Oklahoman* reported this event as the “largest state instrumental contest ever held in Oklahoma.”¹⁰¹ Oklahoma A&M also hosted a contest for seven freshman music scholarships selected from students who won in the state high school music finals in 1948.¹⁰² “The Oklahoma Band Clinic and Music Festival [began] in 1933 and continued annually until 1968.”¹⁰³ “Each fall at Band Day, hundreds of budding bandsmen are featured in a football game.”¹⁰⁴ In 1942, Oklahoma A&M held the Thanksgiving Choral Festival a vocal clinic for high school students that lasted annually until 1987.¹⁰⁵

During the summer, while college students took a break, Oklahoma A&M’s music department sponsored learning opportunities for music teachers. In June 1955, the college scheduled four music workshops. The first on June 3 for elementary school educators was

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 56.

¹⁰¹ *The Oklahoman*, May 1, 1949.

¹⁰² *The Oklahoman*, May 28, 1948.

¹⁰³ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 199.

¹⁰⁴ Robert B. Kamm, Carolyn G. Hanneman and Carol C. Hiner, *Oklahoma State University People, Programs, Places: The First Hundred Years* (Stillwater, Oklahoma State University, 1990), 130.

¹⁰⁵ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 201.

taught by Margaret Nichols, a music teacher in Stillwater. Oklahoma A&M Professor L.N. Perkins taught the second workshop for Junior High and High School choral music teachers. Hiram Henry, the Oklahoma A&M Band Director, chaired the last two workshops for high school band directors.¹⁰⁶ Summer music workshops returned to Oklahoma State University in 1964. Workshops held in June again were for elementary educators and concert and stage bands.¹⁰⁷ About ten years later, in 1975, Wayne Muller the director of music extension at Oklahoma State University sponsored another series of summer workshops. This time they included classes in band, orchestra, chorus and stage band as well as elementary music teaching and organ playing.¹⁰⁸ The university demonstrated a commitment to further music education in Payne County and throughout Oklahoma. Through all the clinics over the years "Oklahoma A. and M. College prepared more music teachers than any other school in Oklahoma."¹⁰⁹ Oklahoma State University has continued to support and host teacher and student music clinics.

Other music groups were attracted to Oklahoma State University as a location for their meetings. The Oklahoma Music Educators Association held an annual December Music Clinic at OSU. This was a large clinic for music directors and musicians. For the clinic scheduled on December 11-12 1964, the campus was alerted to prepare for 400 music directors on the first day and around 4,000 high school musicians the second. At another year's clinic, 4,300 musicians were expected.¹¹⁰

The amateurs and teachers of Payne County brought entertainment to isolated towns, spread musical talent to outlying communities, and made an impact on Oklahoma's music. Even

¹⁰⁶ *The Oklahoman*, April 12, 1955.

¹⁰⁷ *The Oklahoman*, May 27, 1964.

¹⁰⁸ *The Oklahoman*, April 28, 1975.

¹⁰⁹ Adelia N. Hanson and Joseph A. Stout Jr., *History of the Oklahoma State University College of Arts and Sciences* (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 200.

¹¹⁰ *The Oklahoman*, November 1, 1964; *The Oklahoman*, November 3, 1963.

though these musicians did not professionally perform, their talent as individuals and groups helped keep communities together. Payne County musicians left their mark on the county and the state by creating community bands, teaching music in school and in college, and by writing and publishing their own works.

CHAPTER III

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

Apart from talented amateur individuals, community groups, students, and professors who gave their talents to the community and Oklahoma, Payne County also produced and influenced a wide array of professional musicians who contributed to classical, country, jazz, and rock music. Payne County's professional musicians have been part of "a rich and colorful array of music stars" produced by the state.¹

For instance Payne County has contributed musicians to the classical music world. Ted David Wylie is one of the few professional classical musicians to come out of the county. Born October 25, 1945 in Cushing, Oklahoma, Wylie's instrument is his voice. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in music from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1967, the tenor moved on to sing professionally in New Orleans. One of his roles was as Germont in *La Traviata* for the New Orleans Opera Company. Wylie also contributes to teaching other musicians as an Associate Professor of voice at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Ted Wylie is a member of the American Guild of Musical Artists and continues to teach.²

¹ John Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music* (Tulsa: HAWK Publishing Group, 2006), xi.

² Jaques Cattell Press, ed., *Who's Who in American Music: Classical* (New York, R.R. Bowker Company, 1983), 486.

The idyllic western image that many are familiar with, of cowboys sitting around the campfire singing did have a little bit of a basis in reality. “Cowboys were musical people, if not by inclination, then because their jobs required it.”¹ Music was a way to entertain each other on tedious cattle drives and even to calm the cows at night. Instruments that went along with cowboy singing on the trail included the harmonica, which was “best suited to the rigors of life on the trail”, the guitar and the fiddle.² Not surprisingly the areas that were populated by ranches and cattlemen influenced what is today country and western music that blends “twangy” singing with guitar, fiddle, and on occasion, even a harmonica. “In the early 1900s, some Oklahoma ranchers and cowboys began to organize small bands to play for local dances.”³ As these local groups became popular in other locations, they laid the foundation for musicians to play country music professionally.

A major contribution to the development of country and western music has its origins in Payne County. Two men helped to shape and promote a western string band that influenced a wave of singing cowboys on the radio, television and in movies that gained popularity all across the country in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. William McGinty and Otto Gray paved the road for more well-known western singers like Bob Wills, Gene Autrey, and Roy Rodgers. The men did this by creating a group that was the first western band to be recognized nationally, appear on the radio, tour the United States on stage, wear cowboy attire, appear on the cover of *Billboard* magazine, have a female sing country music, and form the instrumentation that was a model for other cowboy bands in the future.

¹ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 6.

² Ibid.

³ Mabel Hov Dahl, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 108.

William “Billy” McGinty, born in Oklahoma, left home when he was fourteen; and eventually became one of Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders and a performer in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show. After travelling the world he settled in Ripley, Oklahoma with his wife, Mollie and their sons.⁴ Otto Gray was born in South Dakota, but like many others, his parents were drawn to the first land rush in 1889 and homesteaded in Payne County. Otto grew up on his family’s farm southeast of Stillwater and northwest of Ripley. In 1906, he married Florence Opal Powell, who was later nicknamed Mommie when performing with the band. They lived for a time in Wyoming before returning to Oklahoma with their son, Owen, to the family farm near Stillwater. By 1925, Otto had established himself in Stillwater as a business man with a new and used furniture store. Just one year later he became the manager of Billy McGinty’s Cowboy Band.⁵

There is conflicting evidence about how the band started. Some sources claim that McGinty wanted “to preserve the music of the old west and present it to a new generation of listeners.”⁶ McGinty’s own son Jack recounts this assumption and told Carla Chlouber, who researched the band, “that his father was just drawn into the musical enterprise by his friends and family.”⁷ McGinty was actually hired to put his recognized name on a group that had already formed. In 1924, George Youngblood and Frank Sherrill, both Ripley businessmen, put together a string band called the Old Time Fiddlers in Ulys Moore’s barber shop. The Old Time Fiddlers

⁴ Carla Choulber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 7-8.

⁵ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 213; Carla Choulber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8; George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 213; Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8, 49.

⁶ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 34.

⁷ Mabel HovDahl Alexander, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 114.

played at dances and Ripley social events. The band included Maria Mitchell on piano. Maria also taught piano in Ripley. Youngblood thought that adding Bill McGinty to the band and using his name would bring recognition because McGinty, as a former Rough Rider and western showman, was already nationally recognized.⁸

Like others in Payne County, the local musicians also became interested in a new form of entertainment in the county, radio. The radio was a wonderful tool to spread a local group's music. In the spring of 1925, "Billy McGinty's Cowboy Band performed over radio station KFRU in Bristow, Oklahoma." This performance marked the very first western string band to perform on the radio.⁹ The band continued to play on the radio in Oklahoma throughout its existence. "By 1928, the band was playing over dozens of radio stations in the Midwest and East." The band's slogan was "On the Air Everywhere."¹⁰

The initial radio broadcasts became popular and the band began to travel to more destinations to play their music to new audiences. By 1926, the band was on the road in the Orpheum Vaudeville Circuit. McGinty and other members of the group were needed at home to run their businesses and care for their families so most of the original band members decided to stay in Ripley where the Old Time Fiddlers continued to entertain the community and in the barber shop where they had started. Instead of completely ending the group, Otto reorganized the band with mostly new members and moved its home base closer to his home in Stillwater. The band changed its name in 1928 to Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys.¹¹

⁸ D. Earl Newsom, *Stillwater: A Cradle of Oklahoma History* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, Inc., 2007), 143; Alvan Mitchell, *Little Tom and Fats* (Stillwater: New Forums Press Inc. 1983), 32-33.

⁹ Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53, 49.

¹¹ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 214.

Although not musical himself, Otto proved a master promoter. He took opportunities to create postcards and mailing materials that not only promoted the band but mentioned Stillwater as their home as often as he could. Otto became “known for his use of custom built cars” that advertised the band when they were at home and on the road. The very first band vehicle “displayed a large Stillwater, Oklahoma banner.”¹² By 1931, the band travelled in style with “nine specially built traveling cars” that attracted onlookers; much like the large bedecked tour buses today that have the name of the band plastered on the side. Otto also published several song books that contained “the songs of his Oklahoma Cowboys” including the western folk song *The Cowboys Lament*.¹³ His skills also gained the band a commercial sponsor in the Oklahoma Hosiery Company. This was the first instance that a country music band gained such commercial success.

Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys performed in Vaudeville between 1926 and 1935 with a variety act. The band performed their country and western music repertoire that included old-time fiddle tunes, ballads, novelty songs, and original pieces. The act also included rope tricks by Otto and Mommie, a dog, Rex that barked every time Otto came onto or off of the stage, and comedy performed by Owen Gray.¹⁴ Vaudeville took them to theaters in Kansas City, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. In each location they drew large crowds.¹⁵

The composition of the band exacted an important influence on later groups. The musicians often rotated in and out but the bands usual “line up generally consisted of Otto

¹² Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8, 51; Mabel HovDahl Alexander, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 111.

¹³ Mabel HovDahl Alexander, *Via Oklahoma: And Still the Music Flows* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2004), 111; Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 52.

¹⁴ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 214-215.

¹⁵ Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8.

(emcee), Mommie (vocals), Owen... played banjo, Wade “Hy” Allen (cello), “Zeke” Clements (vocals and guitar) and Chief Sanders (fiddle).” The band was the first group to include the cello.¹⁶ Claude Purvis who joined the Oklahoma Cowboys was a featured singer who may have been one of the first cowboys to sing solos over the radio and on vaudeville. One of Gray’s Cowboys, Dave Cutrell, who was mustachioed and bucktoothed, was actually nicknamed “Pistol Pete” like the current Oklahoma State University mascot even though he is not the inspiration for the character.¹⁷

The group eventually gained national notoriety through *Billboard* magazine. Gray’s group was written the subject of an article in 1929. More importantly, the magazine placed the band on its cover in 1931, the first western band to be on the famous show business magazine.¹⁸ *Billboard* was a long standing entertainment magazine. William H. Donaldson founded it in 1894 as a “home base for traveling entertainers to connect and “share with others of like interests.”¹⁹ After seeing the cover of *Billboard* magazine with the band attired in ten gallon hats, chaps and boots other western music groups adopted western wear as their standard performance image. There had been cowboys and yodeling in popular song since at least 1913, but this band’s ability

¹⁶ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 215.

¹⁷ Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 75; Tony Russell, *Country Music Originals: The Legends and the Lost* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 152.

¹⁸ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 216; Carla Chlouber, *Images of America: The Oklahoma Cowboy Band* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8.

¹⁹ *Billboard* magazine is a “road map to the stars and superstars of each era.” The stories and chart music lists record what was popular to a particular time frame. As early as 1903 *Billboard* was writing about vaudeville performers who were successful with certain songs. Ten years later the magazine printed the first music chart. By 1945 *Billboard* increased the lists to weekly printing. Csida. *American Entertainment: A Unique History of Popular Show Business*. (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1978).

to gain publicity and dress the part contributed to the huge popularity of cowboy string bands in the 1940s and 1950s.²⁰

The bands last tour was in 1935. Their main outlet had become Vaudeville which in the mid-1930s was in decline. Vaudeville was the top venue of popular entertainment from the late 1800s to the early 1930s before starting to gain major competition from radio and motion pictures. In its heyday, Vaudeville was considered the way to receive entertainment.²¹ Otto Gray and the Cowboys had performed near the end of Vaudeville's popularity. After the band disbanded, Gray retired and returned to his ranch near Stillwater where he and his wife lived out their lives. "Both Otto and "Mommie" Gray are buried in Fairlawn cemetery in Stillwater."²²

Singing cowboy bands like Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys were a mainstay in Oklahoma "performing and spreading the influence of a distinctive brand of music that... made" the years of the depression easier to bear."²³ They were an important part of the brand of music that was central to rural music in Oklahoma between the 1920s and 1940s.²⁴ Through his promotional zeal and showmanship Otto Gray "demonstrated the potential and the appeal of southwestern string bands." He mass produced something that had "been before 1924 merely rural dance music."²⁵

Payne County is also the home of another popular string band. Jack Cawley's Oklahoma Ridge Runners hailed from Stillwater. One of the Ridge Runners, guitarist and vocalist Leonard

²⁰ Timothy Wise. "Lullabies, Laments, and Ragtime Cowboys: Yodeling at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" *American Music* (Spring, 2008): 31.

²¹ Anthony Slide, *The Encyclopedia of Vaudeville* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), xiii-xiv.

²² George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 216.

²³ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

Fulwider actually played a gig with Otto Gray. Jack Cawley's Oklahoma Ridge Runners recorded songs in Dallas, Texas on October 10, 1929 and in Memphis Tennessee on Monday, November 29, 1930. For the Texas recording, Howard L. Cawley performed the fiddle, and Forrest A. Turner performed on the mandolin with Leonard Fulwider on guitar. They performed songs such as *Oklahoma Waltz* and *Blue Devil Rag*. In Tennessee, Howard Cawley and Leonard Fulwider performed with their instruments from the previous recording, and they were joined by Butler Elmore on mandolin for some songs and guitar for others, Jack Cawley played his guitar, and Clarence Brown on the violoncello. They performed *White River Stomp* and *My Cute Gal Sal*.²⁶

Another Payne County musician to make his mark on country music was Bobby Glen Barnett who was born in Cushing, Oklahoma in 1936.²⁷ After graduating from Cushing High School in 1953, he moved to El Paso where he lived and worked seven years before entering the country music field. Barnett gained popularity when he recorded Eddie Miller's *This Old Heart* in 1960 which reached #24 on the country charts. The recording was done for Razorback, an Oklahoma record label.²⁸ In 1963, he had another hit which made it number six on the charts titled *She Looks Good to the Crowd*.²⁹ Other popular songs he recorded include *Just Gotta Be Love* and *Cheatin' Kathleen*.³⁰ Following his earlier successes, Barnett had highs and lows on the charts. What he is best known for are his songs about historic Oklahomans. His albums *Heroes*

²⁶ Bob Pinson and Tony Russell, *Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921-1942* (Cary, North Carolina: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199.

²⁷ Charles Eugene Claghorn, *Biographical Dictionary of American Music* (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1973.), 39.

²⁸ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 36.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Charles Eugene Claghorn, *Biographical Dictionary of American Music* (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1973.), 39.

and *History and Heritage of Oklahoma* (volumes one and two) include songs about David L. Payne, Will Rodgers, Bill Pickett, and Woody Guthrie.³¹

Bass guitarist, harmony singer, comedian, and soloist Doyle Holly was born in Perkins, Oklahoma. "Doyle learned the bass guitar at an early age and early on formed a band with his older brothers which performed at local rodeos."³² Between 1963 and 1970, he performed with Buck Owens Buckaroos. During his Buckaroo career he "played bass guitar and sang on... nine albums with Owens."³³ Doyle remained a popular musician even after he left the Buckeroos and formed a new band, Vanishing Breed. After beginning life in the small town of Perkins, Doyle was often recognized as a talented musicians and a leader in country music. Just two years after the formation of his new band "Doyle was named bass player of the year by the" Academy of Country Music. In 1980 he was inducted "into the walkway of stars at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville."³⁴

Although Payne County has played a role in the development of country and western music, performers from the county have contributed their talents to other music styles like jazz. A Payne County native would be considered "the cool jazz trumpeter who most intensely represented the ethos of 1950s California jazz with his intimate, hushed vocal style and clear, warm, subdued tone of his horn." Chet Baker, "the jazz James Dean,"³⁵ was born Chesney H. Baker in Yale, Oklahoma in 1929.³⁶ Chet was around music from an early age. His father,

³¹ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 37.

³² *Ibid.*, 259.

³³ *Ibid.*, 257.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 257.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁶ Charles Eugene Claghorn, *Biographical Dictionary of American Music* (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1973.), 35.

“Chesney Baker, Sr., was a semi-professional country guitar player.”³⁷ Chet sang in the church choir and his mother took him to amateur contests throughout Oklahoma. The Baker family moved from Oklahoma to California in search of work. Prone to playing by ear, Chet did not find musical success in school band until marching band. He “learned the Sousa marches by ear, and played in the school dance band.” After graduating, Chet joined the army and was posted in Berlin, Germany after World War II to a desk job. His assignment did not last long. He auditioned and received a position as the “first trumpet player of the 298th army” a group that performed music “on freezing tarmacs for high-ranking officials and politicians as they exited planes” Out of the army, Chet met jazz baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan and they formed the Gerry Mulligan Quartet. The group left out the usual piano and “became known as the archetype for the breezy, laid-back west coast cool jazz sound.”³⁸ Baker “gained wide recognition for his solo on the Gerry Mulligan Quartet’s recording of “My Funny Valentine””³⁹ His recognition as a solo performance probably helped Baker as the Quartet broke up when Mulligan was sentenced to prison on drug charges and Baker began his solo career .⁴⁰ In 1953 and 1954, Baker won top trumpet player accolades in jazz polls sponsored by *Down Beat* and *Metronome* magazines.⁴¹ In 1955, this Oklahoman who had travelled west as an Okie in the depression was featured in the Hollywood film “Hell’s Horizon”⁴²

³⁷ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr. *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 24.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25, 27. Mulligan had written compositions for another famous jazz trumpeter. He wrote for Miles Davis’s Album *Birth of Cool*.

³⁹ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 100.

⁴⁰ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 27.

⁴¹ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 100; George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 27.

⁴² George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 270.

Baker had his own struggle with drug addiction which for a time diminished his career but did not defeat him. A slump in his career came after a drug arrest in 1960. In the mid 1960s, Baker sold two albums that were not critically well received but did sell enough to help him support his family. On July 22, 1966 Baker was “beaten badly by some thugs” which left his lip significantly damaged. He re-taught himself to play out the side of his mouth instead of the front with his embouchure and eventually went back to work. Dizzy Gillespie found out he was working again and helped find him a gig in 1973.⁴³ He recovered a piece of his former reputation in the 1970s and kept playing as a “premier instrumentalist.”⁴⁴ Throughout his career, he recorded “some 180 individual albums” and gained fans all over the world.⁴⁵ He had traveled far from the state of his birth but his home town remained a piece of his identity. This is seen as last time he signed a hotel register, he signed it Chet Baker of Yale, Oklahoma.⁴⁶ Oklahoma also acknowledged Baker when he was inducted into the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame in 1991.⁴⁷

One of the biggest names in country and western music may not be from Payne County but he found the road to fame and influence in Stillwater where he came to attend college. Garth Brooks was born and grew up in Yukon, Oklahoma. In the early 1980s, while attending Oklahoma State University, he began to perform music in public. “On weekends, Garth performed at local clubs on “The Strip” (South Washington Street) in Stillwater.” One of the clubs he frequented was Willie’s which was owned and operated by Bill Bloodworth. During the

⁴³ Ibid., 28, 29.

⁴⁴ William W. Savage, *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 100.

⁴⁵ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 30.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ John Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music* (Tulsa: HAWK Publishing Group, 2006), 160.

day, Garth worked across the street at the sporting goods store Dupree's and played music nights at Willie's.⁴⁸

Stillwater became a safe haven at the beginning of Garth's career. After he graduated college in 1984, Brooks decided to stay in Stillwater "Perfecting his musical act" before moving on to bigger places. In fact, after his first experiences in Nashville, Tennessee were negative, he again came to Stillwater and continued to play in local haunts. When his career took off, he used Dupree's Sporting Goods, where he had worked, to print his concert T-shirts. Brooks also named his second band Stillwater.⁴⁹ Garth Brooks rose to become one of many extremely popular country and western performers. He reached this superstar status with his second album, "No Fences, released in the fall of 1990" which sold 700,000 copies in the "first ten days of its release." He was "the ultimate soft-shell-or uptown, or mainstream-country artist of the 1990s"⁵⁰

Garth Brooks had been influenced by a music scene that hit Stillwater in the 1980s, one that created a new music style. It was a blend of music that has become known as Red Dirt music. Red Dirt music combines "varying degrees of blues, country, Tin Pan Alley, rock and roll, folk, and cowboy songs, often delivered with lyrically sardonic humor that is often dry as the red earth." Many musicians, whether they were from Payne County or not, who helped to create this eclectic blend of music met at Oklahoma State University as college students. Tom Skinner who had played with Brooks in his band Santa Fe, is considered along with Bob Childers one of Red Dirt's "early shapers." Red Dirt bands and musicians include the Red Dirt Rangers, Jimmy

⁴⁸ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 67.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Heather Maclachlan. "The Greatest Rock Star Who Never Was: Garth Brooks, Chris Gaines, and Modern America" *American Music* (Summer, 2008): 198.

LaFave, Cross Canadian Ragweed, Jason Boland and the Stragglers, The Great Divide, and No Justice.

The earliest Oklahoma musician to begin the move toward Red Dirt was guitarist Jess Ed Davis, who “hint[ed] at the “genre”” in his song *Red Dirt Boogie Brother* on the 1972 album *Ululu*. Steve Ripley’s 1970 band titled Moses called their record label Red Dirt. The “liner notes by Mike Dougan on the band’s self-titled debut in 1974” explained Red Dirt as a record label but “also the color of the earth surrounding Enid and nearby Stillwater, Moses’ home base, more important, Red Dirt is a hue of funk, a shade of sound, a basic spirit embodied in Moses’ music.”⁵¹ Dougan’s description of the reason behind the name of the record label and the band’s music is the tip of a new country music style that not too long after the middle of the 1970s took hold in Stillwater.

A major moment in the creation of Red Dirt music came in 1989 when John Cooper and Danny Pierce “moved into a rural six bedroom farmhouse on 149 acres for a hundred bucks a month.”⁵² The property was located near Stillwater and was known as “The Farm.” This one location rapidly entered into the local music scene of Stillwater “as a communal jam space, party center, and flophouse...throughout the 1990s”⁵³ Many who are classified as Red Dirt musicians spent time out at “The Farm,” either as one of the sixty rotating roommates or like Red Dirt Rangers member Brad Piccolo a “constant presence” though not living there.⁵⁴ Musicians such as Tom Skinner and Garth Brooks went to “The Farm”, to continue playing the music after the bars that they performed at had closed. Many musicians recall jam sessions until dawn around

⁵¹George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 410-411.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 413.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

bonfires.⁵⁵ The Farm continued to be a fixture in the Stillwater music community until 1999 when the property was purchased by a Methodist church.⁵⁶

“The Red Dirt Rangers are one of the most representative and long-lasting groups who emerged from the hybrid Red Dirt music scene.”⁵⁷ John Cooper, who rented the Farm, joined with Stillwater native Brad Piccolo and Bob Wiles to form the Red Dirt Rangers when all three men were “musically inspired during their college days at Oklahoma State.” They officially became a band at an Oklahoma City music festival in 1990. Their first professional album was named simply Red Dirt Music.⁵⁸

Jimmy LaFave, “considered a protégé of Woody Guthrie,” moved with his family to Stillwater when he was a teenager.⁵⁹ LaFave came of age musically in Oklahoma citing two other musicians as heavy musical influences. Woody Guthrie was one and Chet Baker the other. In fact, LaFave was asked, by Woody’s daughter Nora, to “represent Woody Guthrie’s music when he performed...for the induction ceremonies when Woody was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland.”⁶⁰ LaFave is credited as one of the creators of the Red Dirt sound. His song *Red Dirt Roads at Night* is considered the Red Dirt genre’s anthem. He recorded his first album in Stillwater in 1978.⁶¹ Like other musicians in Stillwater, LaFave performed at local watering holes like Willie’s Saloon. In fact, he shared band members with Garth Brooks during Brooks’ years in Stillwater.⁶²

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 414

⁵⁷ Ibid., 416-417.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 418.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 297.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 298.

⁶¹ Ibid., 410.

⁶² Ibid., 298.

In the mid- 1990s the Stillwater Red Dirt music scene included several young bands just starting out. Stillwater's bars including Willies Saloon, the Tumbleweed and the Wormy Dog Saloon, which had saddles for bar stools, played host to the bands that sprang up quickly in the talent pool of young musicians that either grew up in and around Payne County or came to Stillwater for college.⁶³

Kelley Green, J.J Lester, Scott Lester and Mike McClure formed The Great Divide in Stillwater in 1992.⁶⁴ Their music style "combines classic country tropes and instrumental styles that weave in and out of traditional honkytonk music and southern rock." Like many Red Dirt musicians, the group honed their skills out at "The Farm" and played in town at the Wormy Dog Saloon and the Tumbleweed.⁶⁵

Although the band originally formed outside of Payne County, in Yukon, in 1994 Cross Canadian Ragweed relocated their home base to Stillwater. Their successful shows at Stillwater bars and music festivals developed a fan base that "resulted in tens of thousands of independent albums sold."⁶⁶ The band's second disk included material that speaks of life in Oklahoma such as the songs *Boys from Oklahoma* and *Workin on OK*.⁶⁷ Their hit song *17*, which earned the number one "spot on the Texas Music chart on January of 2003" led to their national familiarity especially after they filmed the song's music video. The entire video was filmed in Stillwater and surrounding areas of Payne County.⁶⁸

Near the end of the jam sessions at The Farm a Red Dirt band was just beginning. Jason Boland and the Stragglers formed in 1998. This band became "one of the most successful young

⁶³ Ibid., 129-130.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 217.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 132

country groups.”⁶⁹ The bands leader, Jason Boland, learned to play the guitar in the sixth grade after seeing a movie about a 1930s blues musician. He moved to Stillwater to attend Oklahoma State University, pattern similar for Red Dirt musicians.⁷⁰ The year after the Stragglers started out they released their album *Pearl Snaps* which “quickly became one of the biggest selling roots country records in Texas in 1999.”⁷¹ Eventually ,the popularity of the band in Texas led them to move to the Lone Star state and the Stragglers relocated to Austin in 2002.

Though many of the Red Dirt groups and musicians have moved away, remnants of the music culture that contributed to this popular country style remain in Payne County. One such presence is Daddy O’s music store that remains on Main Street near the intersection of Main and Miller Streets. Mike Shannon, a guitarist and songwriter in the Red Dirt music scene, owns the store.⁷² Willies and other bars on the strip remain hangouts filled with college students and locals alike.

Eclectic music is no stranger to the musicians raised or influenced in Payne County communities. Mark Rubin serves as an excellent example. Rubin plays the string bass in a country/punk/rock band called the Bad Livers. He was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma where his dad worked as an “announcer for the Oklahoma State University cowboy marching band.”⁷³ Bad Livers formed in 1989. Rubin is known to some as an “outrageously diverse musician” who as of “2003 continued his eclectic career as a musician, producer, writer, and teacher.”⁷⁴

Walter Bradford Benton may not be a well-known figure in Oklahoma music, but he is a professional musician that also reflects the eclecticism of Payne County musicians. Benton was

⁶⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 55.

⁷¹ Ibid., 56.

⁷² Ibid, 414.

⁷³ Ibid., 440-441.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 443.

born in Stillwater on July 12, 1950.⁷⁵ His choice of instrument is what sets him apart from many county residents and Oklahomans in general. Benton performs music with the hichiriki, a short double-reed flute of Chinese origin that has the “nasality of an oboe but is much broader in sound.” The hichiriki is used in Japanese gagaku music. The word gagaku “means elegant, correct or refined.” It is the music of the Japanese court of which hichikiri and other woodwinds “carry the main melodic line.”⁷⁶ Benton’s recorded performances include *Songs of the Endless Earth* on Folkways records, and a hichiriki solo for an Austin gagaku group. Oklahomans of Payne County have even made their mark and learned unusual instruments for others to learn.⁷⁷

Far away from country music, a group of young musicians who grew up in Payne County began an alternative rock band that has reached popularity. Nick Wheeler and Tyson Ritter formed the “All American Rejects” in 1999 in their hometown of Stillwater, Oklahoma. At the age of seven, Wheeler started to play the guitar. He later played percussion in the Stillwater school band program and taught guitar at Daddy O’s music store.⁷⁸ The All-American Rejects play a “catchy power punk” music that shares a “youthful angst” that thousands of teenagers relate to because of their shared experiences.⁷⁹ After performing locally in a Stillwater music festival they started playing in shows with multiple performers and at gigs in Stillwater, Tulsa and Norman bars. The All American Rejects gained success with their first album released in 2002 which reached the top 50 of the *Billboard* magazine album charts for 2003. That same

⁷⁵ Jaques Cattell Press, ed., *Who’s Who in American Music: Classical* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1983), 32.

⁷⁶ William P. Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959): 116, 76, 95.

⁷⁷ Jaques Cattell Press, ed., *Who’s Who in American Music: Classical* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1983), 32.

⁷⁸ George O. Carney and Hugh W. Foley. *Oklahoma Music Guide: Biographies, Big Hits and Annual Events* (Stillwater: New Forums Press, 2003), 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

year, the group performed coast to coast.⁸⁰ The band maintained their Oklahoma home using an advantage that many Oklahoma musicians since “the heyday of Oklahoma jazz and western swing” have. Oklahoma is central in the country and is within a day’s ride of “major American Midwest cities.”⁸¹

Payne County has contributed talented professional musicians that have performed and written country, classical, jazz, and rock music. Payne County musicians, both amateur and professional, have contributed to developments in Oklahoman music and in performance all around the world. Music has impacted the local community as a means of entertaining what began as an isolated location and has since become a county of thriving communities. The amateur and professional musicians gave and continue to share their musical talents in many music styles enjoyed by members of Payne County’s communities as well as the state of Oklahoma, the rest of our nation, and the world.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁸¹ Ibid., 7.

CHAPTER IV

SOUNDS OF PAYNE COUNTY: A MUSEUM EXHIBIT

The history in chapters two and three lay the foundation for a proposed exhibit to educate the public about the music, musicians, and composers, both amateur and professional, that Payne County has produced. It also will decipher their contribution to the music of the state of Oklahoma and beyond. Audiences will gain knowledge of Payne County's contribution to music from the 1890s to the present day.

The Sounds of Payne County Exhibit will be displayed at the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History in Stillwater, Oklahoma. It is designed as a temporary exhibit that remains on display for four to six months. At the Sheerar the exterior bay areas are reserved for the semi-permanent exhibits that display Stillwater's history thematically. The middle section is used for temporary exhibitions on special themes, people, and groups. This temporary exhibit is designed to fit in that middle space. The Sheerar has movable exhibit walls that can be moved to customize the space for exhibits. Appendix six is a planned layout of the music exhibit, including arrows that show the intended flow of visitors through the exhibit. The layout of the space has been taken into account that visitors may not follow the intended flow, so space for counter movement has been considered.

Imagine walking into a hushed room. The walls around you are white and clean, with wooden floors underneath your feet that you carefully walk on trying to avoid adding sound to the silence. Glass cases full of the objects of the past surround you. You cannot get near them or interact but you know you are supposed to learn something, to feel something. This is after all an institution that is run by highly educated professionals who are imparting their knowledge to you by what is displayed. The “hallowed ground” with reverent silence described above is part of the traditional model for museums. Although there is an element of education and imparting of knowledge in this approach, it may not reach a diverse and intelligent audience.¹ There is an important aspect of the reverent silence of traditional museums that might close museums from a portion of the people that they are trying to reach. A feeling that you have entered on hallowed ground and must be on your best behavior surrounds you. If a visitor to a museum is uncomfortable, it is difficult for them to learn what the museum is offering. Visitors “should feel comfortable in the museum.”² Museums after all are an entertainment option for people using their spare time. “The museum is no more or less an entertainment option than is a shopping mall, a hiking trail in the woods, or a movie theatre.”³ Whether the museum likes it or not the audience that it is trying to entice are people choosing between the museum, theatre, and hiking trail. Can the museum be a source of entertainment while preserving its mission?

First, what is a museum's mission? “In their broadest purpose, museums are conservators of material culture. The good ones are interpreters of it.”⁴ Museums exist to take care of the artifacts but at the same time have the want and need to reach out to visitors and researchers by sharing the knowledge that is gleaned from the artifacts and resources that the

¹ Nigel Briggs. “Reaching a Broader Audience” *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 95-96.

² *Ibid.*, 98.

³ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴ Davud E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2010), 169.

museum protects. Interpretation is a means to engage the audience with interaction to impart knowledge.

This museum exhibit will try and follow the six interpretive practices that were outlined by Freeman Tilden in his work *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Tilden wrote about interpretation that was practical for museums, national historical sites, and national parks. First, interpretation has to “relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor.” Second, interpretation and information are not the same thing but interpretation has information in it. Third, “interpretation is an art.” Fourth, the primary purpose of interpretation is provocation not instruction. Fifth, interpretation should present a whole. Finally, interpretation presented to children should not be a diluted form of the adult presentation.⁵

To follow Tilden’s first principal museum text and descriptions of artifacts will incorporate frames of reference connecting that past to present experiences. This means that something more familiar to the audience will be alongside something that may not be as familiar. For example the information about solfege notes includes a reference to a movie that is very much a part of popular culture. When explaining solfege notes the movie *The Sound of Music* will be referenced to try and connect to knowledge with which audience members may be familiar so they have a means of understanding the less familiar.

Museums cannot deny that they seek to pass along information to visitors but that process is best wrapped in an interpretive package. Interpretation does have information but information is not necessarily interpretive. Museums are sharing information through interpretation. The curator chooses the information that will suite the story they are trying to

⁵ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 34-35.

tell. The selection is partly guided from the artifacts that are available to the curator. Appendix three has a list of possible artifacts to use that are within the museum's collection. Each is listed with its accession number and a brief description of what it is. Not all of the written history will make it to the finished product because the curator has to tie together written information with photos and artifacts from the collection. In implementation, the Sheerar may decide to request loans from the community to supplement what is available in its collection. This may change the information selected, and therefore the interpretation presented. This proposal gives a possible road map for an exhibit but, allows flexibility for what is in the collection and what may be borrowed from others. Interpretation has the information of research but is not entirely information itself. Interpretation allows for flexibility in what story is told with given information.

Museum display, like interpretation itself, is an art form. It is not meant to be "books on walls"⁶ It works on a visual level. Much care is taken about how the museum labels look. Appendix four has a sample of one of the museum labels in the font size and style that is planned for the exhibit. The font of the label has to be large enough that museum goers can see and read without getting too close. Efforts are also made to draw the audience's attention to them. One way to do this is to make sure that they pop off the wall with a visual tool like a color border. Each label for the proposed exhibit will get a two inch color border. The color will correspond to each subsection, such as using red label borders for the Red Dirt labels or blue for the community groups. Colors will depend on what artifacts are ultimately displayed. Font is an important part of the museum label visual as well. For the main body text font has to be readable. For this reason the simple and clean look of the Candara font previously used in other

⁶ Gaert Leinhardt and Karen Knutson, *Listening in on Museum Conversations* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2004).

exhibits at the Sheerar will supply the needed readability of the text. For interest and impact, the proposed font for the titles is Broadway that denotes musical performance and entertainment.

Objects and texts in the museum are a “springboard for visitors to discuss diverse and personal topics.” According to a study that listened to how museum visitors react to exhibits, visitors relate to how artifacts were created and how they work.⁷ Provocation is one of the purposes of interpretation. Museums provide information, but more importantly act as a “springboard” to conversations that bring the artifact and information closer to the visitor. Museums use provocation in text and visuals to excite the visitor’s desire to learn more. The goal of the museum is not only teach through the exhibit itself, but to peak the visitor’s curiosity and drive to learn more about a particular subject. By following Tilden’s fourth principle to primarily focus on provoking the visitor’s desire to know more this exhibit strives to light the fire of curiosity and discovery to get visitors interested in knowing more.

The focus is on select groups and music styles partly because of the available research material, and partly because an exhibit encompassing music groups can all too easily become a laundry list of different groups. Without focus an exhibit only skims the surface, showing very little of many different topics. “Even if an individual wanted to do so, it would be impossible to cope with every aspect of the nearby past simultaneously.”⁸ For this reason, the proposed exhibit has a defined objective to focus on two distinct sections. The amateur musician section primarily focuses on two sub-sections: the contribution of community groups and businesses; and the contribution of education which includes Oklahoma State University but only as a small

⁷ Gaert Leinhardt and Karen Knutson, *Listening in on Museum Conversations* (New York: Alta Mira, 2004), 11.

⁸ Davud E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2010), 17.

part. A complete exhibit could be done on the music history of Oklahoma State University formerly Oklahoma A&M. This exhibit, however, does not want to totally leave out the contribution that the college has had on Payne County's music. The small section on the college will emphasize organizations and professors who left a lasting impression on musical teaching at the college and the student organizations that contributed music into student living. The second half of the exhibit, based off of chapter three highlights the professional musicians who are either from Payne County or were influenced by time spent in the county. The museum exhibit should present a whole story without becoming a laundry list of music groups, including when and where they were created.

It is simple to follow Tilden's final principle. Since there is no separation between what is displayed for adults and children there is no dilution of the presentation for children. Part of the goal of a museum is to reach people. To do this, the text has to be readable for a wide variety of backgrounds. A good rule of thumb in label text is to avoid complex technical or foreign words. When such words are needed, such as mentioning the hichikiri, the museum text needs to explain what the terms mean. Simply, the museum will present readable text without diluting meanings or interesting terms.

It is suggested that the exhibit coincide with the Stillwater Arts festival that occurs every April. Popular community events can help historic sites and museums to raise attendance and money, and perhaps remind people that their own community has a place for the community to learn about its own past.⁹ There are two reasons to open this particular exhibit during the arts festival. Music is already a part of the festival activities. The other reason is the arts festival attracts people that may not know that the Sheerar exists, locals and tourists alike. Through

⁹ Cary Carson. "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" *The Public Historian* (Fall 2008): 13.

advertising or a booth set up at the festival, the Sheerar can increase community recognition. Hopefully, the popular subject of music will attract new audiences. Many within the community have limited knowledge of the Sheerar's existence, if they know about the museum at all. The Sheerar is a museum that is a "means of celebrating"¹⁰ its local community; Stillwater in particular, but also Payne County as a whole. Having a booth or a place set up at the festival advertising the museum may reach new members of the community.

In addition to the museum display, the exhibit should incorporate a monthly concert that provides listeners with the music that they have learned about in the exhibit. This could include a jazz trumpeter's homage to Chet Baker, or a piano duet in honor of the Saint Cecilia Music Society, or perhaps a cowboy string band. As long as concerts connect to the story told in the exhibit. This will be similar to an activity that the Sheerar already has, the Cool Classics Concerts that are sponsored during the summer.

Technology will play an important role in the exhibit. What is a music exhibit without the music? This exhibit will incorporate particular songs from the musicians and groups identified to share not only this story but how they sounded. The key issue with playing music in the small space of the Sheerar is the clashing of musical styles and genres playing at the same time. Nothing would be more distracting than hearing heavy metal and country and western at the same time while trying to read museum text. There are two possibilities to alleviate this situation. One is to stream the music all around visitors as they read. The second is to offer an interactive video. Visitors can scan through a menu and listen to the musician and groups to which they are drawn. Since the Sheerar does not have access to touch screens and is limited in budget for technology, a solution will incorporate a compromise of the two possibilities.

¹⁰ Cathy Stanton. "Outside the Frame: Assessing Partnerships Between Arts and Historical Organizations" *The Public Historian* (Winter, 2005): 20.

Utilizing the television monitor technology that the Sheerar already uses, a DVD will be created that has a menu of selections separated by music style so that visitors can select what they want to listen to. Instead of headphones, the music will be heard aloud by museum visitors all at once, but no more than one music style will play at the same time.

“A good device is far better than no contact at all.”¹¹ The point of this statement is the device has to be good. Technology that does not work is most frustrating to a museum visitor. No matter how good the idea of the device, or how the interpretation and information it holds, all the work of interpretation is futile if the electronic device does not work. For this reason, technology will supplement and complement the other parts of the display. The content must be better than the technology used. Poor content is not fixed through technology.

As places of learning, museums preserve artifacts and stories of the past in order to teach visitors. Whether that story is national or local, big or small, each museum finds ways to reach out to the audience and connect it to the past. Learning occurs when “individuals can do something that they could not do before...can understand and appreciate something they did not understand before...or can interpret and apply concepts in a way that they could not previously.”¹² Fortunately for any museum “it is, in fact, perfectly possible to provide both enjoyment and learning at the same time.”¹³ Learning can be fun.

One sure way to engage audiences is to connect the past to the current experiences of the present. Museums can add enjoyment and true connection by basing “its programs upon shared or overlapping experiences that tie the artifacts, ideas, and stories to visitors.” Museums

¹¹ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 134.

¹² Gaert Leinhardt and Karen Knutson, *Listening in on Museum Conversations* (New York: Alta Mira, 2004), 4-5.

¹³ Nigel Briggs. “Reaching a Broader Audience” *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 101.

can create a tangible link between the past and the experience of a visitor. The first step toward this relationship lies in a unique position the museum is in. Museums contain the “real stuff.”¹⁴ Artifacts provide a visual connection to the past. After all, “traces of historical events are found in things as well as words and images.”¹⁵

Artifacts alone do not convey the complete connection of what the museum is displaying. The strength of the museum also comes from the story being told. “Historians tell stories.”¹⁶ The story is the essential element to a successful history.¹⁷ The best technology is nothing without the historical story that is being told. In the same way artifacts are unimportant if they have no story. The story is the meaning behind the object giving it significance. The artifact itself is a tangible piece of history but a real connection between the audience and the artifact comes through the story of who used that particular object and what it was used for. This exhibit will seek to use the objects to tell the human story, who made the music in Payne County? How did they use the objects in the display to accomplish that? The relationships of artifacts to the story will be clearly established to try to answer as many questions about the context of the object.¹⁸

Museum Interaction is an important part of exhibition. The term interaction can be misleading. Just because the visitor is touching a computer screen or pressing buttons does not necessarily mean that they are engaged in interactive activity. Interaction means more than technology.¹⁹ To increase interaction without technology, instruments such as a drum or

¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹⁵ Davud E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2010), 59.

¹⁶ Ibid., 159.

¹⁷ Cary Carson. “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” *The Public Historian* (Fall, 2008): 19.

¹⁸ Ibid; David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2010), 54.

¹⁹ Ibid., 101.

tambourine in the final display area just before the comment cards will allow the museum visitors to contribute their own talents to Payne County's Music. This may be raucous and distracting, and might work better as a special activity for bringing in school groups or a tour with young children.

As is often the case with exhibits in smaller museums the limited numbers of artifacts on a particular subject may hinder the story line. Appendix two has a list of photographs and artifacts within the museum's collection appropriate for the proposed exhibit. Some of the artifacts are generic to the subject matter like the radio that may accompany the discussion of Billy McGinty and the first cowboy band radio broadcast. Photographs selected depict groups mentioned in the text. Stories from the written history become labels from the available photographs and artifacts in the museum to show a complete visual and textual story together. The creative additions, like the playable instruments or a request to borrow from the community may help to fill in gaps.

Together, the story and artifacts address historical questions that revolve around describing the past, measuring change over time, and analyzing cause and effect. This exhibit will go into all three. Consider the history of Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys. First, there is the creation of the local group known as the Old Time Fiddlers in a barber shop, the group is described in a particular time. Second, the museum visitor will be brought through the changes over time as the band travels and changes names and members. Third, the text will show the cause and effect relationship of the end of the band caused by a decline of Vaudeville. Going through the entire historical process using all three categories the exhibit will convey a historical whole not only with Otto Gray but with all that are explored.²⁰

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

Since the museum's curator has the power to choose the stories told and the artifacts shown, it is important that the museum allow the visitor to know the process and the reasoning behind what is on display. This entails adding additional materials that "may highlight what groups and stories were left out."²¹ In the case of this particular exhibit there will be an interactive booklet that teaches some of the material that either did not physically fit in the exhibit or lacked the visual connection to the artifacts that were available. This may simply be a binder that contains printed sheets of information with plastic sheet protectors on a podium stand for visitors to flip through. Greater detail about particular subjects will be found in the booklet such as music groups and individuals who are not on display or more information about those that are on display. For instance, the Red Dirt music scene's various groups will be paired down to fit into the overall exhibit but a book that visitors can flip through will contain information on the groups that were excluded. This also prevents visitors from being overwhelmed.

Many do not visit museums in the first place because they assume that there is nothing they can offer that is relevant to their own personal lives.²² The consequence of this statement is that museums have to make the stories of the past accessible to visitors and gear exhibitions where visitors interact with an exhibit not only through the items on display but through the story connecting the exhibit to the everyday life of visitors. Visitors polled by Conny Graft at Colonial Williamsburg "wanted more interactive and engaging experiences."²³ In other words, they wanted to be a part of the story, to know what it felt like to live in a particular time and place. This suggests that museum experiences should be "a physical and emotional experience." They should show what it was like to actual live something. When presenting music history, this

²¹ Nigel Briggs. "Reaching a Broader Audience" *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 97.

²² *Ibid.*, 98.

²³ Cary Carson. "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" *The Public Historian* (Fall, 2008): 17.

is not just about a timeline of names and dates of famous and amateur musicians; this exhibit will try to show how people lived Oklahoma's music.²⁴

Visitors are also looking to step into the past with their senses. Travelling to the past involves not just what they read, but what visitors see, touch, taste, and do. Audiences are looking to use their imaginations and actually experience something for themselves, transporting them to another time and place.²⁵ The Sheerar is not a living outdoor history museum, like Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village. However, by using the imagination and some ingenuity, this exhibit has the opportunity to engage the visitor using three of the five senses. The first two are a little obvious. Not many museum exhibits are capable of presenting without visitors using their sense of sight. The visual will be a large part of the exhibit. Since the exhibit shares music the audience will also be using their hearing to interact with the exhibit. The museum audience will also be able to touch particular items in the exhibit. The exhibit is incorporating interactive books that museum visitors can flip through to learn more about the individuals and groups that have come out of Payne County, and of course the music instruments to make their own music if that is placed in the exhibition.

To find out about reactions to the exhibit, there will be a final section of the exhibit that has comment cards. The walls near the comment cards will have a series of simple questions that will provide a starting point for museum visitors to comment on their experiences at the museum or to share a remembrance about music in Payne County. Feedback is an important part of knowing what is affective and what is not. The evaluation from this exhibit could be used to brainstorm better exhibits in the future.

²⁴ Nigel Briggs. "Reaching a Broader Audience" *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 100-102.

²⁵ Cary Carson. "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" *The Public Historian* (Fall, 2008): 18.

Exhibit builders must bear in mind the different perspectives that will come to view the work. Since this is a community museum, many of the visitors will have prior knowledge about some of the people and places that make up this history. There also, hopefully, will be visitors who are touring the community for the first time. The tourists who visit the museum and the locals will see the same display differently. Reactions to the display are similar to reactions to a movie based on a popular book. The locals are like the movie audience members who have read the book; they have prior knowledge of what will probably happen or the characters and places of the story. The tourist is like the audience member who has not read the book. The perspective of each audience member varies from what knowledge they bring to subject matter. The exhibit has to include information that a local may already know in order to get the visitor to the community on the same page.²⁶ For example a local may have knowledge of The Farm, the hang out for Red Dirt musicians, but this exhibit will include information on The Farm for those who don't know.

In the mail that popular documentary filmmaker Ken Burns received after the release of one of his film on the Civil War nearly one-third "mentioned family members, suggesting that these viewers saw the national history presented in the film through the lens of their family history."²⁷ This suggests that people connect to history through the experiences and the history that their family has passed down to them and through the experiences of family members and through their own experiences. The same holds true for museums. Carl Becker wrote an essay entitled "Every Man a Historian" in which he described every single person as their own historian. The most important lesson for museums to learn from Becker is that people are bringing into the museum their own background knowledge and experiences which help them

²⁶ David Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory" *The Public Historian* (Spring, 1996): 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

relate to the objects on display. They are looking through the prism of their own personal history to find something that creates a link to what they are viewing in the museum in order to find significance, to learn why it is important they learn about what is in front of them. The audience wants a personal connection, and the job of the historian is to give them that opportunity. The exhibit must strive to help the audience find relevance to today in the lessons of the past. Without a personal connection, without the relevance, is there any reason anyone should go to see what is on display? The exhibit that the museum presents cannot be “disconnected from the present and future concerns.” History is not what is over and done with but what the past events and people mean to the here and now.²⁸

Public historians also have the monumental task of trying to convey the complexity of the past. History is interpretive. With many different viewpoints, conflicting evidence of what actually happened, and the changes that memory creates, history becomes complicated. A single event can be presented in multiple ways. Public historians find themselves operating between multiple layers of interpretation, while trying to frame histories into the larger context. For the museum visitor to understand how complex the story is “the visitor should be presented with as many authentic voices as possible and a variety of viewpoints.” Let the visitor weigh the evidence and the different information even if it is difficult to interpret history for themselves. Make them a participant in the process of history, not just a passive observer.²⁹

History is often connected to a particular place that has gained significance through the experiences of individuals or groups share in those places. “The longer one lives in a place, the more likely that the environment becomes saturated with memories of significant life

²⁸ Nigel Briggs. “Reaching a Broader Audience” *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 101; Cary Carson. “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” *The Public Historian* (Fall, 2008): 13; David Glassberg. “Public History and the Study of Memory” *The Public Historian* (Spring, 1996): 22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 13; Nigel Briggs. “Reaching a Broader Audience” *The Public Historian* (Summer, 2000): 101.

experiences.” The significance of place is particularly important to museum displays. This is because the value and significance of a place is “linked to the memories and historical associations” that are given to it by individuals. Think of it as a child’s home. The home will have a particular association with the child later depending on the type of memories the home represents. A feeling of security and love can accompany trips back to the home when memories were happy. Negative memories can cause uneasy feelings and a sense that someone does want to go back “home.” For this particular exhibit, it is important to realize that since this is a local topic in a local museum many of the places that are involved in the story of Payne County music will already have an association and memory with community members. Visitors may already have memories and information about some of the places in the exhibit such as “The Farm”, or Oklahoma State University’s Seretean Center.³⁰

Museum curators interpret a story to place its significance in the present. “The purpose of interpretation is to stimulate the reader or hearer toward a desire to widen his horizon of interest and knowledge.” Interpretation leads the visitor to the “revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact.” This applies to the history presented in this museum. The interpretations of the stories will seek to harness the reader or listener to bring them to the realization that Payne County contributed to music formation and celebration in the state and nation. It will show that local history is unique but connected to important Oklahoman and American trends in music. Locals may have forgotten or never known that Payne County has impacted outside places, but the interpretation and information in the exhibit will “jog” local memories.³¹

³⁰ David Glassberg. “Public History and the Study of Memory” *The Public Historian* (Spring, 1996): 18, 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 33, 157.

One of the reasons that the Sheerar and this exhibit in particular are so important is its focus on preserving and educating the community about itself. Part of the formation of a person's identity comes from the community around them and the makeup of that community has a connection to the past. Henry Ford, who was known to not consider history that important, participated in history by having a feeling that the community that shaped him was needed to be preserved. He "instinctively knew that what had happened nearby, to himself, his ancestors, and other ordinary people" was important. He knew that "events and conditions in his family, church, school, workplace, and community helped form him and his personal world."³² The local history that connected to him was important. Local museums like the Sheerar have a place in preserving the local past and enlightening the community to the connections that define who community members are.

This is the reason why the exhibit does not solely focus on the professional musicians. The exhibit's purpose was to examine not only musicians who made music their profession but those that made music a part of their lives and a force in entertaining the local community. What was important about the locals? What did music mean in the lives of Payne County residents? Did music from the county reflect the community atmosphere? This proposed exhibit seeks to answer the question of what music meant to the local community and what it means now. Whenever possible, references to current music practices and professionals will take place.

"The historian who wishes to understand a topic never regards it as existing in a vacuum." This is because the placement of a particular subject into context may change its meaning and significance. Museum audiences can be looked at the same way. Museum visitors do not come to the museum without knowledge. They "bring their own style and substance to

³² Ibid., 1.

bear on their museum experience.” Throughout their lives, they may have learned bits and pieces or experienced situations similar to the experiences and material objects that the story encompasses. Museum visitors are not empty heads waiting to be filled with knowledge, but participants who bring with them their own references and their own assumptions and personality.³³

The proposed exhibit is not created in a vacuum. Similar subject matter has gone into previous exhibits. This provides an opportunity to reuse and repurpose exhibit text from the “That’s Entertainment” exhibits files. Efficient repurposing of usable text such as the Saint Cecilia Society labels from the previous exhibition saves valuable time that can be used in other ways. Time is especially important in the curation of exhibitions at small museums since curators often are writing text, printing and mounting text, prepping walls with a fresh coat of paint, staining display surfaces, cleaning glass cases, and arranging artifacts to complete exhibitions . Any saving of time in the writing of text leaves time for everything else.

Since museum visitors bring their own personal baggage of knowledge, assumptions, and interests, it is unrealistic that they will be drawn to everything on display with equal interest and passion. Not everything the exhibit displays “will arouse the individual and inspire him or her on a life course of learning.” The curator never knows for certain what a museum visitor will be drawn to so it is important to strive to show “a variety of possible themes.” This ensures a wide variety of people to find at least one item that peaks their interest or that they can identify with.³⁴ That is the reason why so many musical styles are touched upon to widen the scope of

³³ Ibid., 227; Gaert Leinhardt and Karen Knutson, *Listening in on Museum Conversations* (New York: Alta Mira, 2004), 101.

³⁴ Ibid., 6; David Glassberg. “Public History and the Study of Memory” *The Public Historian* (Spring, 1996): 15

the exhibit. Attention to detail and display of the many facets of the subject is needed because a curator never knows what will attract visitors and fully engage them in learning about the past.

By following Tilden's principles of interpretation, taking into account the resources and holdings of the Sheerar, and creating a dynamic display the "Sounds of Payne County" exhibit seeks to inform the museums visitors that Payne County has wonderfully contributed to the music of Oklahoma. Hopefully, the proposal will help to create an informative and entertaining exhibit that supports a local museum's effort to present important local history.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

This appendix is a sampling of potential museum labels for the exhibit. As mentioned, artifacts and photograph choices will guide the final decisions on text. The following represent one or two labels from each section preceded by the title of that section. Examples were chosen for their relationship to photographs or artifacts, or their importance to the overall exhibit story. Each example is separated by two spaces. Appendix 5 contains a sample of museum text in the proposed font and size.

Camp Songs, Shape Notes and Church Instruments:

Before Payne County lines were even drawn music held a place in the community of early settler groups. David Payne's boomer's lifted their spirits by marching to the song *On to Beulah Land*.

Oklahoma's settlers came from many different parts of the nation. Some of them brought with them the tradition of communal singing using shape note notation. Shape note notation is the use of shapes like circles and triangles to represent particular pitches. It was created to make it easy to learn and read music so that many voices could participate.

If you look closely in this photograph of the original worship space of the First Church of Christ Scientist of Stillwater you can spot the church's organ. Some members of the community had access to hearing or playing an instrument through their churches.

Local Publishing and Music Businesses

Payne County residents printed and published their own compositions. The two pieces of sheet music below were written and published by Stillwater residents. W.H. Haycraft and J.E. Salisbury wrote and printed *I Long For that Old Sweetheart of Mine* in 1919. Mrs. Gus Koeller released *The Happy Club Song* in 1937.

Compositions were not only in Stillwater. Warren Chantry of Perkins wrote *Oklahoma My Home* in 1939.

Early on, Payne County businesses sold music and musical instruments. The Dickerson Brothers in Stillwater advertised the availability of pianos, organs, and other types of musical instruments, sheet music and music books for purchase in 1893. In the 1920s Holmes Music sold pianos, phonographs, and other music merchandise. Current residents will recall Chenoweth and Green Music Company.

School Days

School bells like this one used by M.M. Sheerar in 1890 were used to denote moving to a new activity at school and when the day's work began and ended much like school bells today.

Sometimes, the school day began with more than bells. Lon Hayes, who later became known as a favorite performer for dances, played *Turkey in the Straw* from the school steps on his harmonica as his classmates came into school and as they left each day.

Payne County high school interscholastic meets included music competitions in piano and glee club. In 1924, Stillwater won first place and Cushing won second place in the interscholastic piano competition.

High School and Junior High bands also gave back their talents to the community with annual band concerts.

Community Bands

For many towns in Payne County, all it took to begin a community band was a leader. L.O. Woods began a men's band in Stillwater in 1895. Cushing's band began just a year later. Fenning Lyn Schatz introduced band music to Ripley in 1912. Bands from these towns gained popularity as they played on street corners and travelled to give concerts in other areas, even entertaining communities out of state.

Payne County communities often established separate women's bands which gained popularity throughout the state. The women of the Perkins Ladies Band joined with a few members from

the Stillwater and Cushing Ladies Bands to perform in Guthrie for the inauguration of Governor Frank Franz the last territorial governor of Oklahoma. The Stillwater's Ladies band performed Chautauqua tent shows that ran during the summer on open lawns and fields in Oklahoma but also as far away as Chicago.

College Days

Even before there was a music department, Oklahoma A&M College had music on campus. The Sigma Literary Society used music in their regular meetings. Music performers within the society became known as the Sigma Serenaders. Below is the handbook for the Sigma Literary Society which was printed in 1951.

The lives of talented college students was made financially better through a unique student organization created in 1936. The Student Entertainment Bureau, later called the Student Entertainers, was a group of students originally brought together by A. Frank Martin that provided entertaining individuals and groups that community members or organizations could hire for special functions. Community members gained entertainment while students earning their college education gained much needed employment. In 1951, this organization presented 374 programs before more than 70,000 people.

One music professor left a particularly lasting impression on Oklahoma A&M. Bohumil "Boh" Makousky often referred to as "Oklahoma A&M College's John Phillip Sousa" expanded the music department. The program went from a limited class offering of only one credit of music per semester to first allowing a three year music certificate and eventually to a bachelor of fine arts degree. Boh also provided new music for the Oklahoma A&M Band out of his own pocket, a collection that remained in the college's possession as a gift after Boh retired.

The Professionals

The origins of a professional group that demonstrated the potential for a nationally popular country and western string band began simply in Ulys Moore's barber shop in Ripley when George Youngblood and Frank Sherrill began the Old Time Fiddlers in 1924.

Youngblood thought that a Ripley man named Billy McGinty, who had been one of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders and performed with Buffalo Bill, would give the band national recognition so the Old Time Fiddlers became Billy McGinty's Cowboy Band.

When Members of the Billy McGinty band, including McGinty himself, were needed back in Payne County to care for their families and businesses Otto Gray decided to replace the original band members and continue to perform across the country. The band changed its name to Otto Gray and His Oklahoma Cowboys.

Otto Gray did not have a particular musical talent, but he was a master promoter. Gray advertised the band as they travelled with post cards, posters, and with the bands transportation. When Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys went on the road they went first in a car with a large banner displaying band name and home location of Stillwater on the side. By 1931, they travelled in nine specially made cars that attracted attention much like the gilded tour buses of current bands.

Jazzy

Outside of the jazz scene of Deep Deuce in Oklahoma City, Payne County produced a prominent jazz musician. Chet Baker was born Chesney H. Baker in Yale, Oklahoma in 1929. Chet learned to play the trumpet by ear, which entails playing back what you have heard somewhere else. Baker gained international recognition as the archetype for cool jazz.

Classic Eclecticism

Very few professional musicians from Payne County make a name for themselves in the classical music world. One who did used his voice. Ted David Wylie, who was born in Cushing in 1945, sang professionally as a tenor with the New Orleans Opera Company. Wylie has gone on to give his talent to others as an associate professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Walter Bradford Benton, born in Stillwater in 1950 contributed a unique instrument to what has come out of Payne County. Benton plays the hichikiri, a double-reed flute of Chinese origin, which is used in Japanese gagaku or court music.

Playing in the Red Dirt

Red Dirt music, a blend of blues, country, Tin Pan Alley, rock and roll, and folk, was born in Payne County. A major development in Red Dirt music came when John Cooper and Danny Pierce rented a piece of property outside of Stillwater in 1989 which gained the nickname "The Farm". Local musicians and college students made "The Farm" their hangout for jam sessions and late night parties around bonfires. Many of the groups of the Red Dirt music scene gained colleagues and honed their music style from the nights and days at "The Farm."

Jimmy LaFave one of the creators of the Red Dirt genre moved to Stillwater as a teenager with his family. Many consider his song *Red Dirt Roads at Night* as the genres anthem. LaFave is one of many musicians and groups to enjoy jamming at The Farm, playing at Willies Saloon, and recording popular songs for Oklahoma and anyone else who enjoys an eclectic combination of blues, country, rock and roll, folk , and cowboy songs.

One of the biggest names in country and western music may not be from Payne County but he found the road to fame and influence in Stillwater where he came to attend college. Garth Brooks was born and grew up in Yukon, Oklahoma. In the early 1980s, while attending Oklahoma State University, he began to perform music in public. Stillwater was a haven that Brooks returned to after his first experiences in Nashville, Tennessee were negative. When his career took off, he used Dupree's Sporting Goods, where he had worked, to print his concert T-shirts. Brooks also named his second band Stillwater.

APPENDIX 2

List of the photographs to be used for the exhibit that are in the collection of the Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History. Each photo is listed with the photo file number from the Sheerar's master list and a brief description of what the photo shows and has been placed under the category that the picture would apply to. There are gaps that can be filled with borrowing from other collections such as Special Collections at Oklahoma State University.

Camp Songs, Shape Notes and Church Instruments

99.14.1c Photo of the sanctuary of the First Church of Christ Scientist, this photo is going to be used because you can see one of the early pump organs that was owned and used by the church and will accompany text about churches and their role in bringing instruments to the communities.

Local Publishing and Music Businesses

170. Opera House 1901

School Days

25. a. Perkins High School Band in a Parade 1956

196. Stillwater High Band circa 1940s

232. 66. Washington School Band

Community Bands

38. The Stillwater Band on an Early Street

49. St. Cecilia Music Club

56. Armistice Day 1918

349. Stillwater Band circa 1899

368. Piano Ensemble Festival 1956

College Days

242.12 Copy of a Redskin Photo, Sleeping Band members OAMC on the train 1917

256. b-c. Bands

268. OAMC Drum Corps 1895

270 Band or KSPI 1947

366. Military Band OAMC 1924

The Professionals

47. Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys

APPENDIX 3

The following list is artifacts from the Sheerar's collection that comprise the main focus of the exhibit. Each artifact is listed with its reference number and location in the collection, and a brief description of what it is. Each artifact is listed under the subtitle of the section with which it fits.

Camp Songs, Shape Notes and Church Instruments

1959.42.1-22 This is a collection of music rolls

90.02 Phillips phonograph recording

2005.26 Gragert phonograph recording

Local Publishing and Music Businesses

96.3.1 Sheet music "The Happy Club Song"

2004.38.1 "I Long For That Old Sweetheart of Mine"

211.39 Program of the Philomathian Society at Opera House

School Days

1960.50.1 Old Country School Bell Eureka School Northeast of Stillwater

82.263 Brass School Bell with handle M.M. Sheerar school Bell 1890

College Days

76.161.1a Albert System B Flat Clarinet OAMC Band 1922 (this is actually on display in the OAMC section of the museum. 1b is the instruments case.

211.24 The Sigma Literary Society Handbook 1893-1897 published in 1951

82.263 Brass School Bell with handle M.M. Sheerar school Bell 1890

APPENDIX 4

The following is an example of the label text size for labels that will accompany artifacts and photographs.

When Members of the Billy McGinty band including McGinty himself were needed back in Payne County to care for their families and businesses Otto Gray decided to replace the original band members and continue to perform across the country. The band changed its name to Otto Gray and His Oklahoma Cowboys.

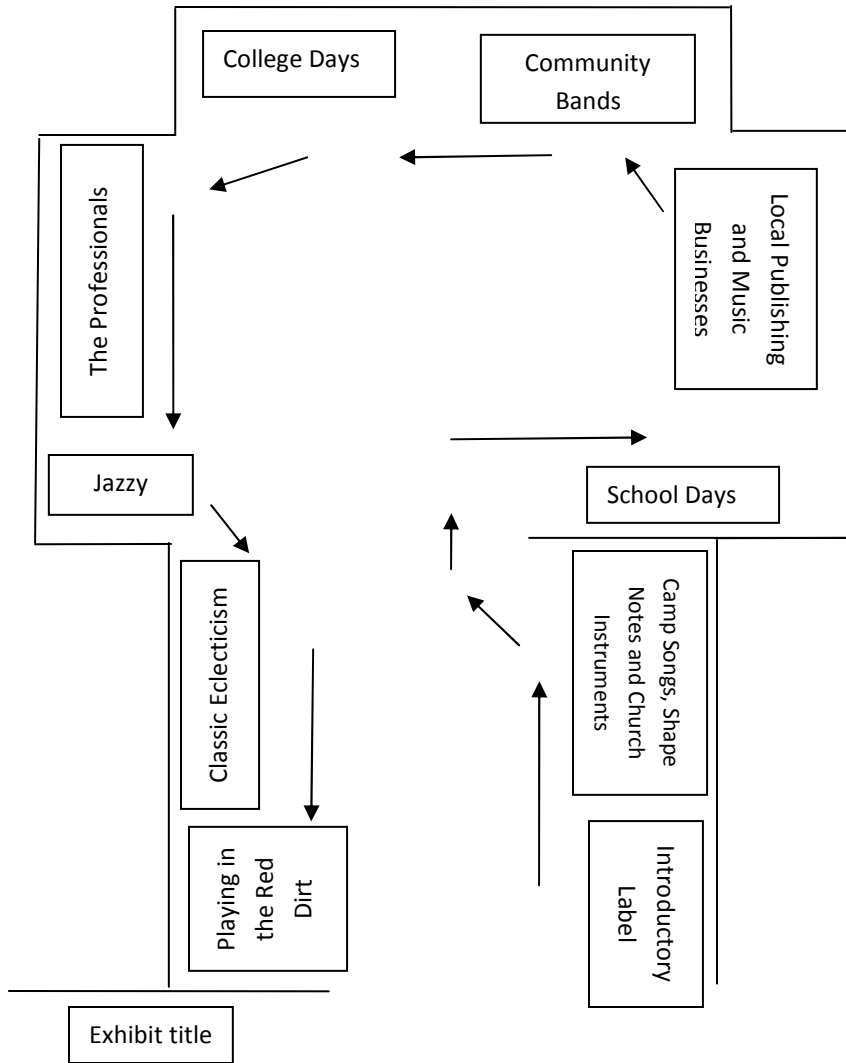
APPENDIX 5

This is the proposed main exhibit title font. The title text for the exhibit would be printed in a much larger font size such as 72 point font on a banner.

**The Sounds
of
Payne County**

APPENDIX 6

Basic Exhibit Layout of the exhibit with the placement of the subsections.



VITA

Cynthia Ingham

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: SOUNDS OF PAYNE COUNTY: A MUSEUM EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2013.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in History at West Texas A&M University, Canyon, TX in May, 2007.

Experience: Museum Intern, Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History, Stillwater, Oklahoma June 2012-December 2012.

Volunteer, Methodist Archive, Texas Wesleyan University, Fort Worth, Texas September 2007-August 2008.

Volunteer, Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church History Committee, Fort Worth, Texas June 2007-December 2007.

Professional Memberships: National Council on Public History