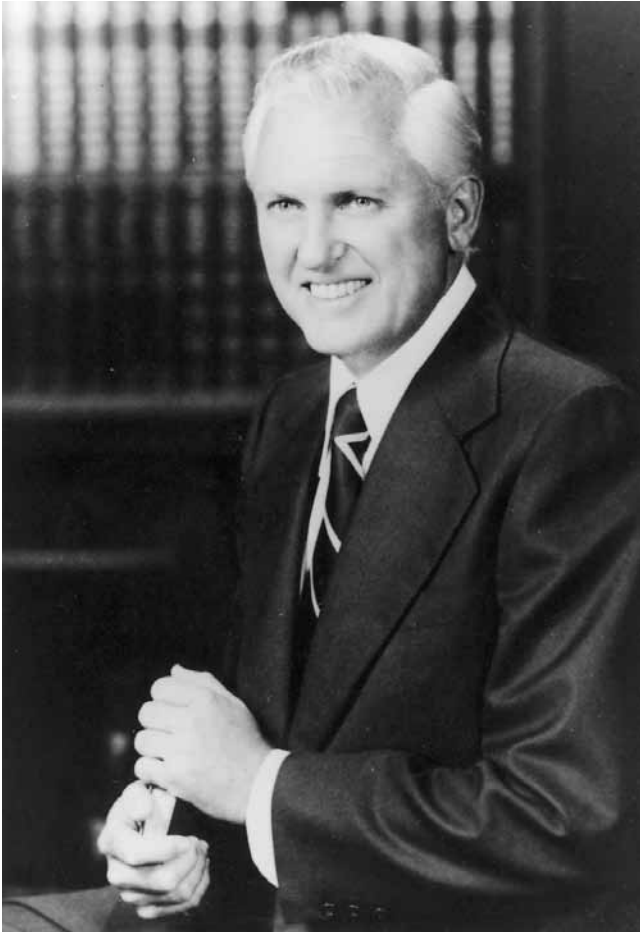


Highlights of the 1970s and 1980s

MADAM MAYOR. In 1971, Patience Sewell Latting became the mayor of Oklahoma City. She was the first woman to head the government of a city of more than 200,000 people and one of only fourteen women to head the governments of cities of more than 30,000 residents.

The fifty-two-year-old mayor was sworn in on April 13 after a campaign against “cronyism” (employment of friends and relatives) in government. Her opponent, Bill Bishop, stated, “Running against a woman is the most impossible thing I’ve ever had to do.” Similar remarks from others brought angry responses from some of the state’s women, but Mayor Latting pleaded, “Please don’t make me out as a *women’s liberationist*.”

Mayor Latting came to her office with an impressive background, including a degree in mathematics from the University of Oklahoma, that she earned at the age of nineteen. She served as legislative chairman for the Oklahoma Parent-Teachers Association, and in that capacity, she wrote the *reapportionment* plan which was adopted for the state legislature. She earned a master’s degree in economics and statistics from Columbia University. She served the Chase-Manhattan Bank for a time as a researcher.



Governor David Hall

GOVERNOR DAVID HALL. David Hall was elected governor of Oklahoma in 1970. During his term of office, he distinguished himself in several positive ways.

Born October 20, 1930, in Oklahoma City, Hall received a bachelor’s degree in government and history from the University of Oklahoma in 1952. In 1959, he graduated from the University of Tulsa School of Law, where he was selected as Outstanding Law Student. He had served in the United States Air Force from 1952 to 1954 and was a captain in the Air Force Reserves, Judge Advocate General Division. He served as Tulsa County Attorney from 1962 to 1966, after which he went into private practice. He was a professor of law at the University of Tulsa in 1968. He

authored the *Oklahoma Criminal Information Form Book*.

Hall served on the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America. He was president of the County Attorneys Association of Oklahoma. He was state director of the Executive Committee of the National District Attorneys Association and chairman of the National Bail Bond Study Committee. A 32nd degree Mason and a Shriner, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for Service to Youth by the International Order of DeMolay.

When Hall was inaugurated as governor in 1971, he inherited financial problems. State income did not meet agency needs, and per-pupil spending had dropped to a ranking of 45th, ahead only of Idaho, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. Hall proposed several tax increases, and the legislature approved increases in the oil and gas taxes, state income taxes, and liquor taxes to raise \$43 million in **revenue**. Most of the increased **revenue** went to education.

The legislature also approved the Public Kindergarten Law, making state-funded kindergarten available for students. Hall also proposed special education and vocational training bills.

Hall worked to bring more business into the state, especially to the more impoverished counties, without loss of tax **revenue**. In 1973, new industry worth \$613 million came to Oklahoma.

Governor Hall made a bid for re-election but lost in the primary to David Lyle Boren. In 1975, just four days following the end of his **tenure** as governor, David Hall was charged by a federal grand jury on charges of **extortion** and bribery — specifically of conspiring to bribe Secretary of State John Rogers Jr. to invest \$10 million in state retirement funds in a private company.

Hall was convicted on March 14, 1976, and sentenced to three years in the Swift Trail Camp Federal Prison outside Safford, Arizona, beginning on November 22, 1976. Hall was released on his own recognizance (promise to appear) and drove himself to prison at the appropriate time. He served 18 months, less one day, and was released.

McALESTER PRISON RIOT. The most serious and most acute problem faced by Hall as governor was the McAlester prison riot. Beginning at 2:28 p.m. on July 27, 1973, the riot lasted through the weekend. But at the end of that weekend, most of the prison lay smoldering, and four inmates were dead. Forty others, inmates and guards, were injured.

Hostages were seized, fires were started, and at one point, the voice of an inmate shouted over the public address system, “This is a revolution!”

Angry inmates took revenge against their enemies. Three died of stab-wounds.

National Guard units were sent to the prison. Four government officials worked through the weekend to bring peace to the area — Chairman of



At an anti-war protest at the Pentagon in October 1967, student protestors put flowers in the barrels of National Guard rifles.

the State Board of Corrections Irvine Ungerman, Commissioner of Public Safety Wayne Lawson, Director of the Department of Corrections Leo McCracken, and McAlester Penitentiary Warden Park Anderson. Both individually and as a group, they met, at first, with several hundred prisoners. Main negotiations were handled with a group of 130 prisoners, and finally, a spokesman for the inmates, Dan Kuykendall, emerged. He was an inmate from Pittsburg County. Hostages were released by 11:30 a.m. on July 28. The riot officially ended at noon that same day.

Some of the improvements in the prison program a year later included increased recreational facilities and active inmate organizations affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous, drug abuse groups, and *ethnic* groups. *Restrictions* were lifted from mail and reading material, and barber shops were *established* in each of the cell houses. A new accounting system was

established for inmates to discourage “*loan sharking*” and to give greater protection to the majority.

Adding to the problems already imposed by the riot, Federal District Judge Luther Bohanon ruled on May 30, 1974, that “double-celling” (housing more than one inmate in a single cell) was unconstitutional. Bohanon decreed that each inmate was entitled to 60 square feet of space in a cell or 75 square feet of space in a dormitory. The state faced the possibility of fines and the loss of federal funds if it did not comply with the order.

Hall and succeeding governors Boren and Nigh labored with the same problems. They granted more paroles and expanded living quarters until the judge’s order was removed and double-celling was approved on September 28, 1982.

THE VIETNAM WAR. American involvement in the Vietnam War ended early in 1973. The last of the fighting men and women returned home in March. Although it is said that the United States actively participated in the Vietnam War for 12 years, it is hard to say when the Americans actually became involved. Since the end of World War II, American presidents had watched events there and had sent advisors to assist with stopping the advancing communists. By 1963, there were 23,000 American advisors in South Vietnam.

In 1964, the *Maddox*, an American ship, was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Viet Cong (communists from North Vietnam) thought the ship had been sent to assist the South Vietnamese. Actually, it was on a scientific *mission*. As a result of that incident, Congress sent a message to President Johnson “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States, and to prevent further aggression.”

Escalation (increase in scope and intensity) resulted, and by 1968, there were 1.6 million soldiers fighting the war in Southeast Asia, including 540,000 Americans. Nevertheless, United States officials remained committed to “limited involvement” — the same kind of policy that had existed during the Korean War.

Meanwhile, the American people were divided on the issue of the war. Some thought no troops should be sent. Some thought enough troops should be sent to put a quick end to the war. Some liked the government’s policy of limited involvement.

As the war lengthened and involvement increased, more and more

people opposed American participation. Demonstrations became a common means of protest, and angry people marched down the streets of American cities, carrying signs **demanding** that American soldiers be

brought home. Rally bonfires lit the skies, and young men burned their draft cards in the flames, as the beat of rock music and strains of anti-war songs cut the air.

It was a troubled time in America and in Oklahoma. People were divided into two camps — Doves and Hawks. The Doves opposed the war while the Hawks believed in the cause.

The Vietnam War was a central issue of the presidential campaign of 1968, and the Democratic Convention in Chicago was fraught with protest and violence. Protes-

tors and police clashed in the streets, and Americans watched their countrymen hurling insults and rocks at each other on the evening news.

Violence increased across the nation. On May 4, 1970, four students were killed in a protest demonstration at Kent State University in Ohio. Advancing students were shot by National Guard troops who had been sent to put down the riot. In the next few days, more 80 colleges nationwide closed temporarily because of protests.

In January 1973 a cease-fire agreement was signed, and the United States agreed to leave South Vietnam. As soon as the Americans were gone, the Viet Cong broke the agreement, invading South Vietnam. The war ended on April 30, 1975, when the Viet Cong captured the South Vietnamese capital.

More than 58,000 American soldiers died in the conflict. Thousands of Oklahoma soldiers served in the Vietnam War, and many of them died in Vietnam. Others returned home to a troubled nation, and many felt betrayed. They had done what their government asked of them, and they felt they weren't supported by their countrymen.



The Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., inscribed with the names of all who were killed during the war. It is one of the most visited sights in the nation's capital.

Most swallowed their feelings and picked up their lives, either going to work or entering school, putting their combat experiences behind them. Some, however, were unable to shake the emotional devastation wrought by the violence they had experienced in their service and the strange reception they felt they received at home. As with all wars, some of the casualties did not actually die. They lived and were sent home to try to piece their lives together, but some failed. Statistically, the percentage of mental and emotional casualties was much higher after the war in Vietnam than following any other war in modern history.

There is no doubt that this war was different. Even those veterans who successfully put it behind them and got on with their lives seemed to feel some bitterness about their experiences. The unveiling of the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day, 1982, began a national healing. Many Oklahoma names are etched into the memorial wall. The remembrance of their sacrifice on the Altar of Freedom had finally put into proper perspective the argument concerning the war.

GOVERNOR DAVID LYLE BOREN. Born in Washington, D.C., on April 21, 1941, David Boren received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1963, a master's degree from Oxford University, England, in 1965, and a law degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 1968. He was a Rhodes Scholar and an honor student. He was selected as one of the three Outstanding Young Men in Oklahoma in 1969 by the state's Jaycees.

He was chairman of the Division of Social Sciences and a professor of political science at Oklahoma Baptist University. He was also a practicing attorney. He was elected to the Oklahoma State House of Representatives in 1966, remaining there until his election as governor of the state.

Inaugurated on January 13, 1975, Boren was the first governor to receive more than 500,000 votes in an election. A few months older than J. Howard Edmondson when he took office, Boren was the second-youngest governor in state history. At the time of his administration, he was the youngest chief executive in the nation.

While in office, Boren served as chairman of the five-state Ozarks Regional Commission and the Southern Growth Policies Board. He was a member of the Energy Committee of the Southern Governors' Conference and of the Education Commission of the States. He was a member of the Task Force on Social Welfare Reform of the National Governors' Conference, and he was chairman of the Interstate Oil Compact Com-

mission. Some of his most important work was in tax reduction and tax reform, especially in elimination of *inheritance tax* between husbands and wives.

Boren became the first governor in history to become divorced while in office, when his marriage to the former Janna Lou Little was *terminated* early in his term. Just before the end of his term, he married Judge Molly Shi from Ada.



Governor David Boren

Governor Boren became the fourth Oklahoma governor to be elected to the U.S. Senate, so he resigned from office on January 3, 1979, just five days before the end of his term. Once again, Lt. Governor George Nigh took the reins of office until the term was completed. This time, however, on January 8, when the new governor was to be inaugurated, he didn't step down. Instead, he once more took the oath of office. Nigh had been elected governor after spending 16 years in the second highest office in the state.

In November 1994, after resigning from the U.S. Senate, David Boren became the thirteenth President of the University of Oklahoma in Norman. At fifty-three, Boren said that this move fulfilled a lifelong dream.

IDABEL RIOT. The most recent race riot in the state occurred in the small southeastern Oklahoma town of Idabel in January 1980. In less than twenty four hours, three people were dead, several injured, and \$100,000 worth of property destroyed or damaged.

On Saturday evening, January 19, a fifteen-year-old African American, Henry Johnson, was shot and killed in the parking lot of The Black Hat, a local nightclub. The youth and some of his friends were *allegedly* breaking into a parked car when discovered by a patron, who brandished a gun and chased them from the area while firing.

Rumors circulated that the boy had been beaten to death. A group of African American citizens converged on the town's police department at noon on Sunday and *demand*ed the arrest of the man they thought had done the killing. They delivered an *ultimatum*: Arrest the killer by 7:00 p.m. or face violence in the streets.

Ironically, Police Chief Hoppy Denison arrested a suspect, but not the man the crowd suspected. Citizens were unaware of the arrest when a mob emerged from the African American neighborhood and set fire to The Black Hat. From there they proceeded up the street, vandalizing

businesses. At about 10:00 p.m., the angry group encountered police in an empty field behind a service station. Ruben Farmer, a thirty-six-year-old ex-policeman, was killed in the melee, and a third fatality was discovered the next morning when the body of a twenty-six-year-old African American man, William Mack, was found.

More than 300 people were said to be involved in the ruckus, including Idabel police, sheriff's office personnel, highway patrolmen, and three SWAT teams. News people descended upon the small town. By Monday morning the town was filled with strangers — journalists to cover the news and officers to keep the peace. Groups from three Klaverns of the Ku Klux Klan arrived later in the week, but by that time, a bitter peace had settled on the small town, and no further trouble erupted.

Many Idabel whites sympathized with their African American neighbors, and a grievance committee was *established*. Government spokesmen named the “lack of communication” and “rumors” for the trouble and labeled it an “isolated incident.”

GOVERNOR GEORGE NIGH. George Nigh was born in McAlester on June 9, 1927. He earned a bachelor's degree from East Central State Teachers College in Ada and taught history and government in McAlester High School.

Nigh's political career began in 1950 when he became the youngest member ever elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives. He served four terms as a representative from Pittsburgh County. In 1958, he became the youngest person ever elected to the lieutenant governor's post. At age thirty-one, he was elected to serve under Governor J. Howard Edmondson, the state's youngest governor. Nigh became the seventeenth governor of the state when he served out the last nine days of Edmondson's term. Nigh served as lieutenant governor from 1959 to 1963, then again for three consecutive terms from 1967 to 1979.

On January 3, 1979, Nigh again assumed the governor's office to fulfill David Boren's term. On January 8, Governor Nigh actually began his own elected term as governor.

In his days as a junior legislator, Nigh persuaded the team of Rodgers and Hammerstein to allow Oklahoma to adopt their song *Oklahoma!* as the state song. Later, after being elected lieutenant governor and learning that his main job was to wait in the wings for something to happen to the governor, Nigh decided to expand the duties of the office. One of the things he did was promote Oklahoma to the movie industry. Thanks to

his efforts, several movies have been filmed, wholly or partially, within the state. Nigh promoted industrial development and tourism and spent a lot of time just promoting the state itself. He was in high *demand* as a public speaker.

Nigh vowed that he would not run against an incumbent governor. “I wasn’t going to undercut a governor I’d served as lieutenant governor,” he said. So he didn’t run against Dewey Bartlett or David Hall. When David Boren decided to run for the U.S. Senate, however, Nigh threw his hat in the ring in the governor’s race.



During the campaign, Don Price, one of Nigh’s campaign workers, was driving a van in the campaign caravan. Somewhere in western Oklahoma, the van exploded and ignited, setting the clothes of the driver on fire. The other members of the caravan rolled Price on the ground to put out the fire and sent him to the hospital with a passing motorist. The stubble on the ground had caught fire. As soon as Price was safely on the way, the rest of the group set about to extinguish the fire. A few days later, the following letter appeared in a local paper:

I wasn’t sure who I’d vote for until the other day I passed a van parked beside the road with big George Nigh signs. All Nigh’s workers were out in a field trying to beat out the flames with campaign signs. A candidate whose people are that concerned about others gets my vote.

Governor George Nigh

The lady who wrote the letter probably never knew how the fire started, but when Nigh won the general election by only 52.3 percent, his campaign staff was grateful for the vote.

As governor, Nigh fostered sixteen major tax reductions, restructured the state mental health system, overhauled the state personnel system, and increased state employees’ wages. He wrote a plan to save rail service in the state. He *established* the State Office of Handicapped Concerns and the Diamond Jubilee Commission, and he instituted prison reforms. Under Governor Nigh, Oklahoma became the first state to have all its correctional institutions approved by the American Correctional Association.

CONNORS PRISON RIOT. On August 29, 1983, a riot erupted in the Connors Prison at Hominy. It started in the mess hall and lasted three days. It involved Oklahoma Highway Patrol troopers and members

of the Oklahoma National Guard. The new prison facility, just recently acclaimed as the best and most *progressive* of its kind, was virtually leveled. Prisoners were transferred to other facilities until matters could be brought under control. Within a few days, under orders from Governor Nigh, the prisoners were back at Hominy working the cleanup detail. The prison has since been rebuilt.

FIRST GOVERNOR TO SUCCEED HIMSELF. In 1982 Governor George Nigh became the first Oklahoma governor to succeed himself in office. Although two previous governors had run for re-election in two consecutive campaigns, Nigh was the first to be elected to a second term. In January 1983, the state's twenty-second governor began his second full term in office. However, not only had the governor served two of his own terms, but he completed terms for two other governors. He is thus the only person in state history to have served four separate terms of office as governor.

PARI-MUTUEL BETTING. The horse racing industry has been alive and well in Oklahoma for many years. Oklahoma produces more race horses per capita than any other state. However, the issue of pari-mutuel betting, a system of wagering on horse races, has been a controversial one. On September 21, 1982, voters approved pari-mutuel betting by more than 125,000 votes. Nearly a million voters turned out for the election. Oklahoma became the thirty-second state to adopt some form of pari-mutuel betting.

PENN SQUARE BANK. On July 5, 1982, news of the failure of Oklahoma City's Penn Square Bank rocked the financial world. Growing in a few years from a small consumer bank to one of the largest banks in the Southwest, Penn Square reportedly failed because of noncompliance with usual banking rules, especially in making loans. Many energy companies were among the bank's customers, and some received large loans without enough *collateral* (property or securities to guarantee a loan). Records revealed that some of the loans had been made long after oil prices began declining. The recession and a lack of sufficient *collateral* made it impossible for bankers to collect on loans due.

A large number of the loans had been sold to other banks around the country. Many of those banks suffered losses or failed because of the Penn Square loans. Several uninsured depositors lost large sums of money in

the failure, and businesses closed their doors or sold out as a result. The economy of the entire state, as well as that of some other states, was adversely affected by the failure of Penn Square Bank.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER SCANDALS. The biggest story in the state in 1981 and 1982 was the county commissioner scandals. With more than 120 *indictments* touching almost every county, commission-

ers resigned in wholesale numbers, many of them admitting that they had taken kickbacks from various suppliers of road and bridge-building equipment. Federal officials claimed that Oklahoma taxpayers were robbed of \$1 billion by those elected officials. They further claimed that the scandal *constituted* the largest investigation with the greatest number of people involved that had occurred anywhere in the United States at that time.

Reactions of officials and of citizens varied. One man running for office in western Oklahoma pleaded for votes on the basis that he never took more than 10 percent in payoffs.

One official from Delaware County, convicted of accepting kickbacks, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. His constituents gave him a big send-off, an appreciation party, acclaiming him as a “good ol’ boy,” while the band in the background played *Your Cheatin’ Heart*.

As a result of the scandal, Governor George Nigh signed a bill passed by the legislature which removed county commissioners from the purchase of road materials. Signed into law on May 11, 1982, the County Reform Bill makes county clerks responsible for county purchasing.

GOVERNOR AGAIN. Henry Bellmon, who in the 1960s became Oklahoma’s first Republican governor, became the first governor elected to two nonconsecutive terms. Elected the twenty-third governor of Oklahoma on November 4, 1986, he was inaugurated in Oklahoma City on January 12, 1987.

Following his resignation as director of the Department of Human Services in 1983, Bellmon became director of the National Cowboy Hall of



An oil field worker walks along casing pipe in western Oklahoma’s Anadarko Basin during the oil boom of the early 1980s.

Fame, which was financially troubled at the time. He also worked to help economically disadvantaged farmers.

While Bellmon took office in 1987, the state was in dire financial straits. The oil boom of the early 1980s was long gone and state government was facing a \$350 million shortfall. The dilemma was whether to raise taxes to meet expenses or cut services to Oklahoma's citizens by 17 percent. After much negotiating, Bellmon succeeded in seeing the tax increase passed, no small feat during a severe economic downturn.

Another hard-fought battle occurred with the passage of House Bill 1017. The education reform package passed in 1990 after eight months of *controversy*, and then only narrowly. Among the most disputed points was the requirement of successful completion of a comprehensive examination by high school seniors. Any senior who did not pass the test could not receive a diploma. Another *controversy* was the \$230 million tax increase needed to fund HB-1017. The tax increase aroused public anger, and Oklahomans passed State Question 640 requiring future tax increases to be passed by a vote of the people or by a three-fourths majority of the legislature.

Henry Bellmon was the first governor to receive permission to name a Secretary of Education. Dr. Smith Holt of Oklahoma State University was appointed the state's first Secretary of Education. Dr. Holt resigned in 1988, and Sandy Garrett was appointed to replace him. In June of that year, Dr. John Folks resigned as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a separate, elective office. Bellmon appointed Gerald E. Hoeltzel, former superintendent of Watonga Public Schools, to finish Folks's term. In the fall of 1990, Garrett defeated Hoeltzel to become the first woman elected to the post of Oklahoma's State Superintendent of Public Instruction. She continued to serve in the governor's cabinet as Secretary of Education.

A PRISON RIOT. The summer of 1988 brought other changes. At Stringtown, prisoners captured hostages and took over a portion of the prison. Before the hostages were released and the riot quelled, several million dollars' worth of damage had been done in the burning of buildings and destruction of property. The damage was so *extensive* that the governor had to call the legislature into special session to allocate money to begin making repairs.



*Admiral William
Crowe*

OLYMPIC FESTIVAL. In 1989, Oklahoma hosted its first Olympic Festival. Hundreds of thousands of people from across the nation attended the summer games in several locations in central Oklahoma. The festival not only gave Oklahoma a much-needed economic boost but it also gave Oklahomans the opportunity to see world-class athletes in competition.

OKLAHOMA'S HIGHEST MILITARY OFFICIAL. Admiral William J. Crowe, a native of Oklahoma City, retired from his position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 1989. The former Central High School Student Body President and graduate of the United States Naval Academy reached the pinnacle in the military, the only post higher being Commander-in-Chief, President of the United States. Af-

ter retirement, Crowe returned to the University of Oklahoma, where he had spent his first year in college (1942-43), to teach courses in national defense policymaking.

In 1994, Crowe was appointed to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James in Great Britain.

GOVERNOR WALTERS. Valedictorian of the 1969 Canute High School graduating class, David Walters earned a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering at the University of Oklahoma in 1973, and a master's of business administration from Harvard University in 1977.

An Oklahoma businessman, Walters was elected governor in November 1990. He had previously

served as chair of the Oklahoma Human Services Commission and co-chair of the Commission on the Reform of State Government. He made an unsuccessful bid for governor in 1986, when he was defeated by former governor and U.S. Senator Henry Bellmon.

As governor, Walters supported downsizing the state government, and by summer 1994, 2,500 state jobs had been eliminated from the public payroll. He developed and promoted a \$350 million bond issue for capital improvements for higher education. It was the first measure of its kind to be approved by Oklahoma voters in twenty-five years.



Governor David Walters

THE GOVERNOR PLEADS GUILTY. On October 21, 1992, David Walters became the first Oklahoma governor to plead guilty to criminal charges while still in office. A grand jury investigating Walters' 1990 election campaign charged him with eight felonies and one misdemeanor related to fund-raising. In a plea bargain agreement, Walters pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor violations, and the felony counts were dropped. Walters said that he chose to agree to the plea bargain and enter the guilty plea rather than to subject his family and the State of Oklahoma to further turmoil. Because he did not plead guilty to a felony, Walters was able to continue in office. He agreed not to run for re-election.

BOOM AND BUST AGAIN. The 1980s comprised both the most prosperous and the most depressed decade in modern-day Oklahoma. The state was enjoying an oil boom as it entered the 1980s, although the rest of the country had slipped into a recession. Unemployed workers from other states flocked to the Oklahoma oil fields to fill \$12-per-hour jobs, mostly in the Anadarko basin in the western part of the state. A shortage of mobile homes and motel rooms inspired the building of a record number of motels. Still, people were forced to live in their cars and sleep in parks until housing became available.

Oil companies drilled wells to record depths, producing oil and gas at the highest prices thus far and signing contracts to build pipelines to great lengths and for long time periods. Prosperity abounded, and the newly rich, convinced that it would last at least until the end of the century, spent in record amounts.

In 1984, the *Boom* slid all the way to *Bust*. The tide began to turn in 1982 with the failure of Penn Square Bank. Banks started to topple like dominoes. In 1984, numbers of energy-related jobs declined throughout the state, falling from a high of 102,200 in 1982 to 42,600 in 1988, a net loss of about 60,000 jobs. Oklahoma went from the state with the lowest unemployment rate to the state with the highest unemployment rate. Real estate values first rose to dizzying heights, inspiring a building boom but eventually plummeted along with the real estate values. Businesses, large and small, went bankrupt, putting more people out of work. People who had moved into the state to find jobs left when they found themselves unemployed again.

The largest number of bank failures, thirty-three, occurred in 1987. By the end of the decade, one-fifth of the state's banks had closed. Regulators claimed that poor management was the primary cause. There were

too many unsecured and under-secured loans, especially in the oil and gas industry.

The failing energy industry was followed by a failing real estate and building industry, which was followed by the failing savings and loan industry. As real estate values fell, building loans became under-secured. Homestead Savings and Loan in Woodward became the state's first S&L casualty, closing in October, 1986. On August 31, 1988, regulators took control of fourteen savings and loan companies.

Building in Oklahoma continued long after the economy began to falter, and regulators cited overbuilding as the reason for the S&L industry's problems.

The federal government closed or "bailed out" seven of every ten S&Ls in Oklahoma.

Another 1980s financial *phenomenon* was the corporate raid, an unfriendly take over of a company by stock purchase, perfected by two Oklahoma natives, Holdenville's T. Boone Pickens and Tulsa's Henry Roberts Kravis. Kravis headed the largest

corporate takeover in history, seizing the RJR Nabisco Corporation in a \$24.5 billion deal.

Pickens and Kravis altered the way America does business with their perfection of the leveraged buy-out (LBO). In the LBO, a buyer uses a targeted company's own assets to buy or take over the company and to pay off the debt *incurred*. This usually results in the company's being broken up and sold in small pieces.

Three of Oklahoma's five largest energy companies were threatened with hostile takeovers. As a result, Phillips Petroleum Company restructured as a smaller corporation; the DuPont Company bought Conoco, Inc., to help it avoid a takeover; and Cities Service merged with Occidental but was later dismantled. Conoco and Phillips have now merged into ConocoPhillips, the third largest integrated energy company in the United States.



The downtown Oklahoma City skyline taken from the northwest. The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building (before the bombing) is clearly visible on the left side of the photograph.

THE GULF WAR. By the end of 1990, Oklahoma and other American soldiers were gathering with fighting units from twenty-seven other nations in Saudi Arabia to ensure the right of sovereignty to the tiny country of Kuwait. Ignoring warnings from the United Nations, Saddam Hussein, Iraqi dictator and commander of the world's fourth-largest army, had invaded Kuwait because he wanted its oil fields. Saddam defied the world's efforts at negotiations. The Persian Gulf War, "Operation Desert Storm," commenced on January 17, 1991, with fierce air attacks on strategic Iraqi military sites.

Tinker Air Force Base's AWACS, Sentry E-3 airborne warning and control system planes, led fighter planes to their targets, as pilots flew thousands of sorties (missions) daily. Marine Captain Craig Berryman of Cleveland was taken prisoner when his Harrier jet was shot down early in the war. He was held by the Iraqis thirty-seven days and awarded the Oklahoma Cross of Valor upon his return home.

Oklahoma sent regular military personnel, military reservists, and members of the National Guard — 1,750 from the Army National Guard and 280 from the Air National Guard — to fight; many of those who went were women. Most of the guard units were support groups. The only combat battalion was the 158th Field *Artillery*, specializing in Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and specifically chosen by General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the coalition combat troops.

The 158th led the charge against Iraq on February 23, when Sergeant David Clowers of Oklahoma City and Staff Sergeant Brad Rittenhouse of Lawton fired the first missile of the ground war. One hundred hours later, the war was over. Schwarzkopf hailed the 158th for its outstanding performance; it achieved the highest rate of fire in the Third Army.

Before surrendering, the Iraqi army, by orders of Saddam, dumped millions of gallons of oil into the Persian Gulf and set fire to the Kuwaiti oil fields. After the war, Cudd Pressure Control, Inc., of Woodward sent skilled personnel from the Oklahoma oil fields to extinguish the tricky oil well fires in Kuwait.

OKLAHOMA IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY. Oklahoma plays an active role in world trade, production, and services. The state ranks high nationally in agricultural exports. State drilling rigs are located around the world, from the North Sea to Indonesia, and from the African desert kingdoms to Oklahoma's own prairie lands. Tinker Air Force Base and Federal Aviation Administration facilities play important roles in the

nation's security and international air safety.

Tons of Oklahoma farm products are harvested in Oklahoma fields and shipped far away. Farm exports change because of conditions in other countries. For example, if the wheat harvest in Russia is poor, huge shipments of Oklahoma wheat find their way to the Russians. It is estimated that four of every five bushels of Oklahoma wheat are sold to other nations. Wheat accounts for nearly three-fourths of Oklahoma's total export sales. Major buyers of Oklahoma wheat include Russia, China, Brazil, and Japan.

Wheat is only a part of the export market. Live animals, including cattle and horses, as well as beef and pork products, make up millions of

dollars in export markets. Canada and Mexico are large purchasers of livestock. Oklahoma producers sold beef to Japan but have struggled to overcome trade **restrictions** related to mad cow disease, or **bovine** spongiform encephalopathy.

Animal hides and skins account for a market worth almost \$50 million. Most hides and skins have gone to Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

A good example of how international trade works is that Oklahoma exports hides and skins, then imports baseballs, baseball gloves, and women's purses made from them.

Oklahoma cotton and soybeans are major exports. Cotton accounts for \$35 million in export markets. The main purchasers of cotton are Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Soybeans, an excellent source of protein, are bought by many poor countries, as well as by major European nations.

Foreign investment in Oklahoma has greatly increased, particularly with the Hitachi Computer products plant located in Norman. The plant began operation in April, 1987. The plant makes computer disk drives, which are sold throughout the world.

Oklahoma's major crop each year is hard red winter wheat. Much of the crop is sold to other countries.



World trade has no greater impact on any Oklahoma industry than it does on petroleum. The price of Oklahoma crude oil is directly related to oil prices in the Middle East. Many government decisions affect oil prices. For example, rulings by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission determine how oil products are transported and marketed. Other such government actions include a possible oil import fee, deregulation of natural gas, and repeal of the windfall profits tax. Many issues affect drilling and production decisions. These, in turn, affect the amounts of oil and gas sold.

Despite the depressed oil market, Oklahoma's industry still shows strength. Natural gas appears to offer a stronger future market than crude oil. Decisions made in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries directly affect the Oklahoma oil and gas production market, as evidenced by the Persian Gulf War.

Weyerhaeuser Corp. in Valliant and Wright City is a major producer and harvester of timber products in southeastern Oklahoma. The company's pine tree farms cover thousands of acres in McCurtain and neighboring counties. These timberlands furnish raw materials for paper and lumber products exported worldwide.

People driving through the countryside can see tree farming at all stages of development. Forests are managed scientifically. Weyerhaeuser promotes conservation by immediately replanting harvested areas of timber.

Oklahoma companies often have international ties. For example, the Burford Corporation of Maysville markets its twist-tie machines worldwide. Bakery products, or other products packaged in bags and then twist-tied to preserve freshness, are tied on Burford machines manufactured at the Maysville plant.

Tires made by Goodyear in Lawton, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Oklahoma City, and Michelin in Ardmore are marketed in the United States and abroad, particularly in Europe and the Far East.

Dollars from tourism increased with the opening of Remington Park in Oklahoma City. On September 1, 1988, Remington Park welcomed more than 15,000 fans to the inaugural day of racing. In the first race on the first day, "Bold Les," ridden by jockey Buddy Winnett, came from last to first, passing "Northern Writer" to win the race by six lengths. Now Remington Park has gambling in addition to horse racing.

Oklahoma's film, video, and music industries pumped an estimated \$50 million into the state's economy in 1987. Movies are a growth industry in the state. Investments made by the Gaylord family in the entertain-

ment industry have brought more attention to Oklahoma as an excellent location for tourism and filming. Portions of the movie *Rain Man*, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1989, were filmed in Oklahoma.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did Governor David Hall do to improve the financial condition of the state?
2. What were the results of the McAlester Prison riot?
3. What are some of the major accomplishments of George Nigh's first term as governor?
4. What political scandals made news in Oklahoma during the 1970s and 1980s?
5. What problems did the Department of Corrections encounter in the 1970s?

AWACS, which stands for "airborne warning and control system" planes, were used in the Gulf War to direct air operations.

