

## Tom Crowl Gives History Lesson, and Surprise At End



Tom Crowl

Tom Crowl told us last week his version of "Oklahoma History 101, and included a line of the stage play, "Oklahoma!" at the end.

Texans are proud of their statehood, and Oklahomans should be too. We have a history that is "rich, unique, and interesting" Tom said.

Even George Washington mentioned the future Oklahoma, Tom related. But it was under Thomas Jefferson, our third president, that the Louisiana Purchase was made.

And it was President Andrew Jackson, who took office in 1828 and pushed the Removal Act of 1830.

Even though the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional, he forced removal of the Indians to what is now Oklahoma.

Some Indians left for Oklahoma voluntarily, but each tribe had its "Trail of Tears," Tom recalled.

During that time, from 1831 to 1842, there were 60,000 Indians moved to Oklahoma, he noted.

When the Creeks and Cherokees were moved here, there were already Osage Indians living where they were assigned. When Fort Gibson was built in 1832, it was to keep peace among the three tribes, he stated.

At that time the illegal aliens in this area were the white men. And the situation was handled about as poorly as it is being handled today, he reported.

This was the era of "Cattle Barons," since part of the southwestern territory was leased to them.

Then came the Civil War, and what Tom said was "probably the worst period in the history of the United States."

Most of the Indians sided with the South and a lot of their property was burned during the war. After the war, the Indians and cattlemen were against opening the Indian Lands to settlement. But the railroads and the "Boomers" were on the other side and they won in Congress.

After the war, all Indian treaties were made null and void, and their territory was decreased.

The MKT Railroad came to the McAlester area in 1872 and it was good for this area, since it helped the coal mining.

By 1880 most of the area around Indian Territory had been settled, and there was a push to open the Indian land to homesteading.

These people were the "Boomers," a term first used by a writer for the Kansas City Times.

The Land Run of 1889 brought up to 50,000 people to the "Indian Lands," Tom said.

There were 2,000,000 acres of "Unassigned Lands" bounded by Stillwater and Kingfisher on the north and the Canadian River on the south. The land had been divided into 160-acre tracts and it included Oklahoma City, Norman and Guthrie.

The people came in wagons and buggies, on horseback and walking.

Benjamin Harrison was president, and in other parts of the country, they called it, "Harrison's Horse Race." By nightfall on April 22, Guthrie claimed 15,000 inhabitants.

A "City Directory" four months later listed six banks, 16 barbers, 16 blacksmiths, 17 carpenters, 15 hotels, and 40 restaurants. There also were 81 lawyers, to file the claims and argue over them.

There were also "a few crooks, robbers and gamblers," Tom added.

A year later Congress passed the Organic Act, which created

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## The Navy's Back, So Is Pay For Service, Say Recruiters



Navy Recruiters, July 24

The Navy's back "and we're back strong," Chief Petty Officer Phil Del Real, said at our July 24 meeting.

Del Real and Petty Officer First Class Jerry Ferguson outlined the new Navy contracts and pay scales for re-enlistment and service.

Del Real explained that Active Duty includes Basic Training at Great Lakes, Ill. for eight weeks, followed by technical school. The person then gets a home visit before being assigned to his or her ultimate duty station.

The Navy Reserves involves eight weeks of Basic Training,

The person also goes on to technical school, then comes home and stays home. The Reserves have one weekend of

training per month plus two weeks of training each year.

Other plans provide guaranteed contracts and bonuses; fulltime Navy and fulltime college at the same time; college credits for Basic Training and Navy schools; medical and dental coverage; life insurance for Active Duty Members of \$400,000; Sea Pay, uniform allowance, Family Separation Allowance, Imminent Danger Pay and retirement. College usually is one year in the Navy for one year in school, the Chief Petty Officer said.

Moving is free, and there are MWR travel possibilities and other benefits.

Today's Navy offers a lot of training and a "sense of belonging," the two men said.

The Navy "makes you a better person," they stated.

"We're here to help...We love McAlester," the recruiters said.

The Navy Recruiting Station is at 1 East Choctaw, but will be moving into the Wal-Mart area.

# REI Helps County By \$11.1 Million; Firms Have 137 Jobs

The head of Rural Enterprises Inc. told us last week that the agency at Durant has assisted 10 businesses in Pittsburg County, since 2003, for a total of \$11,145,617, affecting 137 jobs.

The speaker was Tom Seth Smith, President and CEO of Rural Enterprises, headquartered at Durant.

The largest “assist” was to Komar for their new plant in McAlester. It amounted to \$7.38 million and involved 88 jobs. It was financed by New Markets Tax Credit and state tax credit.

Two McAlester Funeral Homes received SBA loans through REI, Brumley Mills, with an SBA 504 loan and Bank of Oklahoma loan, for \$1,314,500 and Harkins Funeral Home with an SBA 7(a) loan and First National Bank loan for \$882,563. Both loans created six jobs each.

KidzChoice, PC, McAlester received \$554,000, financed through an SBA 504 loan and Intermediary Relending Program through USDA Rural Development and The Bank, N.A.

State Beauty Supply, McAlester, received a \$581,500 SBA

7 (a) and Arvest Bank loan.

Harris Construction, Krebs; Twin Cities Feed & Garden Center, Haileyville; T&C Gorilla Store, Krebs, Cornwell Tools, McAlester; all received loans less than \$100,000 through the Small Business Administration or USDA’s IRP program. Oxbow Tack, McAlester received a \$130,000 IRP loan.

All of the latter loans created from two to 11 jobs, for a total of 137, including Komar.

Smith called this county “a special place.”

REI was started 25 years ago this year, created by former Congressman Wes Watkins, and helped by former Congressmen Bill Brewster, Brad Carson and Dan Boren.

REI has now been expanded to Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Alva, and by the end of the year will have an office at Lawton, Smith said.

Rural Enterprises has also assisted loans for the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma City and a new Muskogee hospital.

“We try to take the red tape out of loans,” Smith added.

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## Devon, With Local Connection, Largest in State



Kim Biggs

Devon Energy, the largest company in Oklahoma, was founded in 1971 by John Nichols, who is married to Mary Davis Nichols of McAlester, and his son, Larry Nichols is married to Polly Puckett Nichols of McAlester, an official of the company told us July 31.

The company is valued at \$42 billion, said Kim Biggs, Devon production foreman.

The company grew from 185 employees to 4,600. Devon has offices in Russia, China, Wyoming, Michigan, Houston and Canada.

They initially drilled 300 wells a year, but last year they drilled over 2,000.

Company wells in the Gulf of Mexico cost \$120 million each. The horizontal wells also cost more, but get more production, Biggs related.

However, in this area, wells are shallower than 10,000 feet.

The company has drilled in Pittsburg, Latimer Haskell, Hughes, Coal and Atoka Counties.

Devon will expand its reserves, but will continue to focus on environmental and safety factors, Biggs said.

Biggs and Monte Bruce, area production official, presented a \$5,000 check from the company to the McAlester United Way.



Devon official Monte Bruce presenting a check for \$5,000 to Yvette Martin

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### History Lesson from Page 1

Oklahoma territory and Indian Territory.

During the next few years, there were more land runs, allotments, lottery and sealed bids, to open more land to settlement.

The “Sooners” crossed into the territories before the set time, and were also called “Moonshiners” because they came under the moonlight, at night. Oklahomans later found a different meaning for both terms

As more settlers arrived from Europe, the federal government formed the Dawes Commission. The Indian population was registered, forming tribal rolls, and they were allotted specific tracts of land.

In 1897 the first commercial oil well was discovered and by 1907, the year of statehood, there were 5,000 producing oil rigs.

Next came the Cowboys, the Blacks, and the European immigrants.

President Theodore signed the law making Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory a state.

Life was hard for everyone in the new state. And it took strong-willed and tough people.

But after 100 years of working together as a state, Tom said, “I think the world would have to say, on this, our centennial, ‘You’re doing fine Oklahoma—Oklahoma OK!’”

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## Attendance, Visitors and Handshakers

Last week there were 42 in attendance. Brad Million was a guest of George Lampton., Rudy Halliburton was a guest of Tom Crowl. Bob Thornton was a Rotarian-in-waiting. Vick Woods was proposed as a new member.

On Aug. 7 there were 53 at the meeting. Judy Honey was a guest of John Freeman. Lou Rush was a guest of Dorothy Kennedy. Ryan Martin was a guest of Yvette. And Henry Butler was a guest of Loise Washington.

On July 31, there were 39 in attendance. Charles Neff was a guest of Dick Dudley. Vick Woods was a guest of Ann Owens. Chad Barney

and Bob Thornton were Rotarians-in-waiting.

On July 24 there were 45 Rotarians and guests. Vick Woods was a guest and Malorie Nelson was a guest of Angie.

HANDSHAKERS-Yvette Martin was the handhaker last week, and gave the \$1 to Orlean Smith. On July 31, Tim Whipps gave the dollar to Mike Lowber.

Now follow this closely: On July 24, Mary Shannon gave the dollar to Helen Wheeler. On Aug 7, Mary Shannon gave the buck to Steve Smith. Now back on July 3, Steve game the dollar to Helen Wheeler. If you know where the dollar is, please contact the FBI.