

# The Public History Project

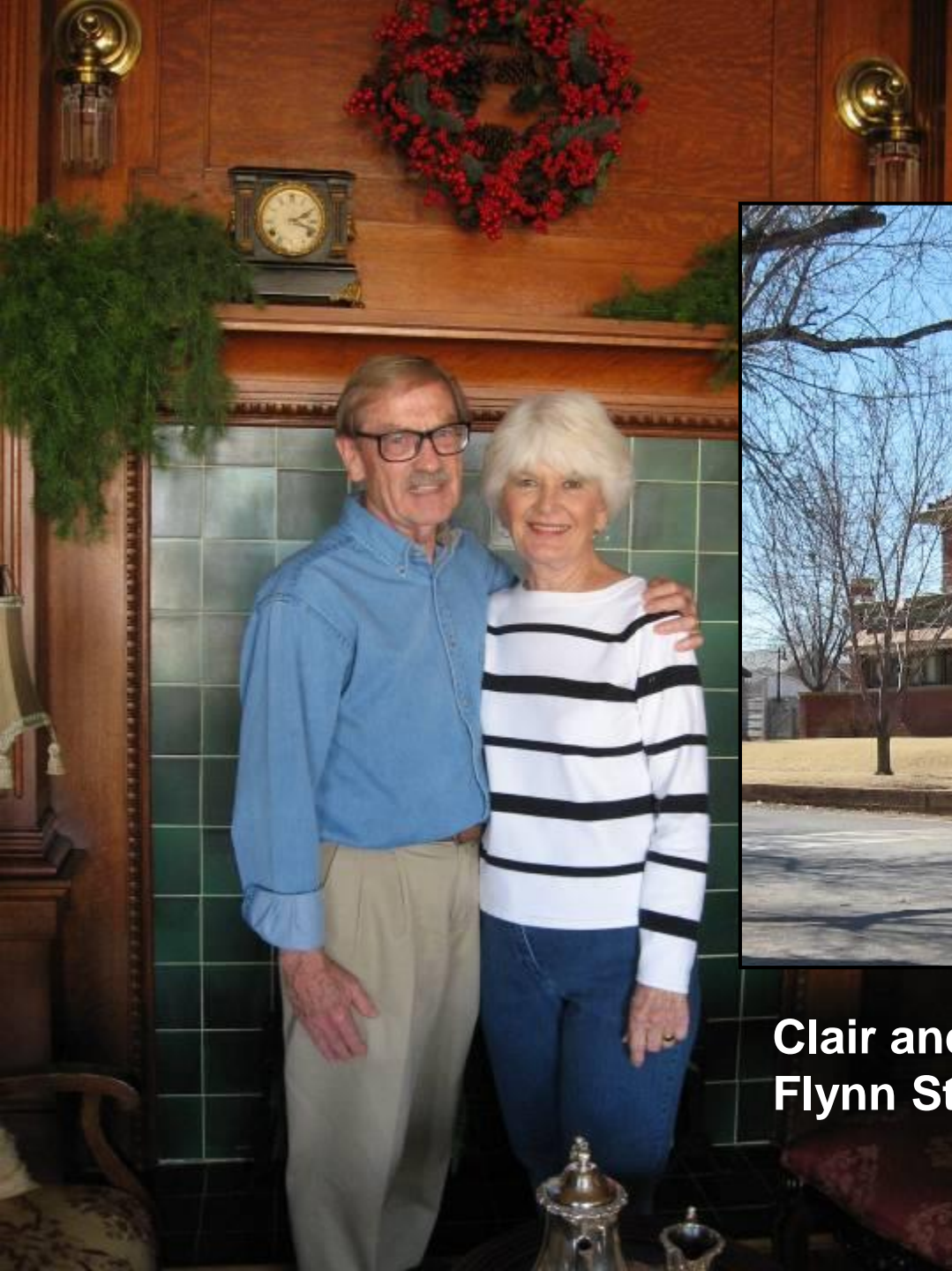
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“...For now, this idea may just be a pipe dream, but without dreams, great things can never be accomplished. With hard work and perseverance, maybe someday the Buffalo Depot can stand proud again.”

# CLASS 1: Historic Preservation – Spring 2008







**Clair and Sharon Larsen Home 801  
Flynn Street, Alva, Oklahoma**





Students in the first academic course in Historic Preservation at Northwestern Oklahoma State University (Spring 2008) repeatedly voiced one realization, our historical landscape is disappearing. The commercial structures surrounding Alva's city square, the homes of both prominent and everyday citizens, the work places near grain elevators and railroad depots, the churches and schools, even rural farm houses and barns, are all either disappearing or being transformed by changes that totally alter the landscape of our past.

Much work has been done to preserve our community's heritage. However, the march of development, reuse, or decay relentlessly takes its toll. This issue is complicated by the economic and social realities of our time. Rural Oklahoma towns are often losing the population and economic base that make historic preservation or revitalization possible.

What then is to be done? Our class discussions developed one solution. Students enrolled in the Public History Courses at NWOSU (which include Historic Preservation, Museum Methods, and Public History) will create **The Public History Project** to document the historical landscape of our region. Further, this collection will eventually connect with other cultural/historical resources to form an online 'atlas' of Northwestern Oklahoma.



**The Public History Project** is ongoing. Each semester, the Public History course (Historic Preservation, Museum Methods, Public History, or Archives) will include a Service-Learning component involving one or more of the following:

- collecting, organizing, or publishing the documentation of Northwest Oklahoma's historical landscape;
- making collection connections with other cultural/historical resources of Northwestern Oklahoma;
- forming an online 'atlas' of Northwestern Oklahoma complete with user guides, not only for the casual visitor, but also for educators.

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## Oklahoma | Campus Compact

*Mission: OkCC supports the civic purpose of higher education that includes developing students as citizens. OkCC assists member institutions in their efforts to develop citizenship skills by promoting and advancing methodologies including service-learning, volunteerism, community service, and political engagement.*

*Request for Proposals*

*Due: ~~March 31, 2008~~ April 9, 2008*

### **OkCC Service-Learning Incentive Grants**

#### **Grant Overview**

Oklahoma Campus Compact (OkCC) announces a competition for first-time applicants for the *Service-Learning Incentive Grants*. Up to ten (10) \$500 grants will be awarded. Institutions receiving grants will develop a service-learning component for an existing course that connects the course learning objectives in the course syllabus to meeting a community need and will implement the component during the fall 2008 semester (preferred). Exceptions for spring 2009 will be considered. Only OkCC members may apply.

2008. Proposals must be accompanied by a committee



# CLASS 2: Museum Methods – Fall 2008



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For the fall semester of 2008 (Museum Methods), the focus was on making connections with The Natural History Museum on the campus of NWOSU in Alva; The Cherokee Strip Museum in Alva; and The Freedom Museum in Freedom.

This work was supported by financial support from Oklahoma Campus Compact Service-Learning Grants. Their goal of incorporating service into academic courses in order to enhance student learning dovetailed with our Public History goal of connecting course objectives to experiences that meet community needs.





Ed Price Trip

1944

1945

JAL. EHRMAN





Students worked with signage, labeling, and interpretation.

In addition, students also 'collected' places from the Oklahoma landscape to add to **The Public History Project**.

The "Buffalo Depot" was one of these projects.

## Buffalo Depot

### Museum and Gallery Studies

#### Project – page 1

In my hometown of Buffalo, Okla., many buildings are old and rotten, falling down around our ears. One such building is the old town Depot currently located by the Farmer's Coop. The building itself is deteriorating, a rotting shadow of its former solid base. Intrigued, I made some phone calls to find out the history behind the depot, and I came up with some interesting details.

The depot was built in 1914 for the railroad that extended from Waynoka to Buffalo, and in between, this railroad made a stop at Freedom. I asked if the railroad went any further than Buffalo, and they told me that it came to Buffalo and turned around to head back to Freedom then to Waynoka where the main railroad tracks are located.

The rail was used for agricultural purposes; they used the spouts to fill grain cars. I think at one time they also used the rail to transport some passengers, but as cars became more popular, this practice was abandoned.





## Buffalo Depot

### Museum and Gallery Studies

#### Project – page 2

As far as who owns the depot, I found out that here in Buffalo a committee purchased the depot for a dollar from the Alva Farmers Coop. I spoke with the chairman of this committee, and she told me that it was going to be one of their beautification projects, but because of cost of moving the facility, they have not pursued this venture. She also told me that what they wanted to move it and restore the depot, thus using it to hold town events and also for a historical site.

I feel like if money was not an option, this building could be preserved and made an important part of Buffalo's history as well as an important part of Buffalo's future. For now, this idea may just be a pipe dream, but without dreams, great things can never be accomplished. With hard work and perseverance, maybe someday the Buffalo Depot can stand proud again.







## CLASS 3: Public History – Spring 2009

We are looking forward to the next course in Public History at Northwestern and to the continued growth of **The Public History Project**. We plan for this program to add to the quality of life in our extended community, not only in the sense of calling attention to and documenting the buildings and environments of our past, but also in connecting individual learners to people, places, and organizations that will enable them to develop and positively shape our future.

1. Photograph Campus Structures for **The Public History Project**  
Coordinating with NWOSU Anniversary Project
2. Locate and Inventory (with photos) NWOSU-owned Art on Campus
3. Collect Oral Histories from the Cherokee Strip Museum
  - Institutional History with Louise Prigmore
  - Collection Walk-Thru with Beth Smith
4. Inventory Project at the Cherokee Strip Museum
5. Inventory Project at the NWOSU Library
6. Database for **The Public History Project**

# CLASS 3: Public History – Spring 2009

- **Service-Learning is familiar.**
  - Experiences
  - Mission Statement
- **Service-Learning is work.**
  - Input High
  - Must Be Long-Term
  - Why do it?
- **Service-Learning is a great teaching technique.**
  - Learning Styles
  - Thought > Action
  - Enables Students, Teachers, & Partners
  - More Control of Total Process'
  - Greater Authenticity
    - For Me Personally as the Instructor
    - For Student
      - Outlook & Skills
      - Commitment to NWOSU