



Model-A Touring Club
Going Places in Model A Fords

The Milepost

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K. Smith Photo

Oklahoma is More Than—OK!

by Keith Smith

That's the consensus of the 45 members touring Oklahoma in June . We had a ball and we are ever in the debt of the **Roarks** for showing us the "Sooner State." Members started arriving in Cheyenne, Oklahoma in trickles, and on the evening of 6 June we all met in the "Social Barn" at the Croton Ranch for a welcome dinner ranch style. **Dwayne** and **Juhretta** Roark suitably welcomed us to their great state and let us know that we were going to be treated like foreign royalty! (Once in a while at selected hotels.)



Laughlins arrive in Cheyenne

The Croton Ranch is a rustic "dude" ranch which reflects the earlier pioneer days of the Sooner State. It was conveniently located about seven-plus miles from Cheyenne and was our headquarters prior to and at the end of our tour.

Monday, 7 June we hit the dusty trail southeast about 45 miles to Clinton where we all enjoyed a wonderful museum dedicated to Route 66—the



"Bunkhouse" at Croton Creek Ranch

"Mother Road." Displays were organized chronologically, so we could get a feel for how the road progressed during the years it was in use—from early gravel road, to paved two-lane, to parts that were

four-lane. The growth of businesses and the technology along the route were depicted as well. A very interesting and worthwhile museum!



Janice Gemmell & Bonnie Guthrie at Route 66 Museum
F. Gemmell Photo

Outside of Clinton, we stopped at the Mohawk Lodge, the first Indian trading post in Oklahoma (1892), where we browsed and made purchases of authentic Indian-made items and garnered more knowledge of the early Indian life in the area. Then it was east a few miles to Weatherford, the hometown of NASA Astronaut L/Gen Thomas Stafford, where there is an Air & Space museum dedicated to him. Afterwards it was due south to Lawton, some 80 miles where we spent the night.

Tuesday, the 8th, we drove about six miles to Ft. Sill, an Indian Wars outpost established in 1869. Today it serves as an artillery training base. During the course of our lecture, the *Ft. Sill Museum* Curator's words were frequently punctuated by distant booming of the guns. The museum, a National Historic Site, is tolerated by the Army, which it thinks has more important things to do, but it is actively supported by the interests of past Presidents and Army Secretaries, so it exists if not thrives.

The native stone buildings of the original barracks and offices surrounding the parade grounds are in excellent condition and house artifacts from the Indian Wars, honoring both the soldiers and the Native Americans who lived and died in these and later wars. It is a "must see" if you are ever in the area.

Some of us lunched in the "Patriot's



Relaxing on shady barracks porch, Ft. Sill
K. Smith Photo

Club" before continuing our tour to Duncan, where we thoroughly enjoyed our visit to the *Chisholm Trail Heritage Center*. Displays were extraordinary in that they combined several media and engaged several senses all at one time. Stampeding cattle flashed across the screen, spooked by lightning and crashing thunder and the pounding of the hooves of hundreds of animals set seats in sympathetic motion and finally when the horses of the cowpokes splashed through a stream, those in the front rows got a shower of water! In another theater, a scene is set on the prairie in the evening where a life-like Jesse Chisholm sits by a campfire and discusses how the trail got its name with a life-like cowboy.

Then it was off to Oklahoma City about 130 miles northward, where we had lodgings in the Hilton in the center of town—very nice!

On Wednesday, the 9th, the day started with a short walk to the *Oklahoma City National Memorial*, the site of the Murrah Building bombing. This memorial is dedicated to those who lost their lives there on 19 April 1995 and to their survivors and the heroic responders who faced grave dangers in the rescue efforts. To visit here is a sobering experience to think that any person would inflict such horrors on his fellow Americans. We doubt that any normal person can come away from this place with anything but sadness and sorrow. The memorial's purpose is to take the visitor back in time to see this horror reconstructed from the memories of witnesses and artifacts surviving. It is a place every American should visit, but unlike all our other stops, it is not pleasant. It is reverently and



Chairs represent those killed
at OK City Memorial

thoughtfully put together, however.

That evening, Juhretta and Dwayne hosted us at the Cattlemen's Steakhouse, a restaurant of great repute, where delicious, what looked like 12-ounce filet mignons were the order of the day! We had a hard time finishing with delicious, but way too big, coconut cream pie!

Its Thursday, the 10th and we have a short drive to Guthrie, but before leaving OK City, we have a couple of museums to visit! *The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum* was the target, but directly across the road from this landmark is the home of **Don Bolton**, an acquaintance of Dwayne's who is a serious car collector. So, a stop was arranged to see Don's beautiful cars before we took in the *Cowboy Museum*.

Don's cars were basically "brass cars," those made before 1915. His 30 or so cars were contained in two buildings on his residential prop-



Saulsbury's try out
Don Bolton's Columbus

erty. In addition to the cars he had an extensive collection of scale model airplanes hanging from the ceiling and model trains and cars along the walls. All kinds of automotive memorabilia was displayed in every available spot. Don was a very thoughtful and obliging host. His first words of welcome let us know that we were free to climb in the cars and take pictures! His second building was also the shop and one of his brass cars was laid out on a table as if for inspection. What a bright collection of shining brass! We must have spent almost two hours at Don's before driving across the road to the *Cowboy Museum* where we would enjoy the collections and eat.



National Cowboy & Western
Heritage Museum

This latter museum was a collection of all sorts of western artifacts, plus a museum of fine arts with paintings and sculptures of noted artists. One collection honored the cowboys of the silver screen from Will Rogers and Bill Hart to Tom Mix and Ken Maynard to Gene Autry and the "Duke," John Wayne. It covered it all, just as dust covered the cow trails through Oklahoma. That is, "completely!" When we tired of walking and looking, we gathered at the airy restaurant area for a tasty lunch. (Or was it "dinner?" Dwayne kept confusing us!). Then we were off to Guthrie 40 miles away.

Friday, 11th, we backtracked a bit toward OK City to hook up with Old Route-66 up to Tulsa. It was pleasant driving through the old towns along this route. Many were just the way they were back in the '60's or even much earlier, before 66 ran its route! These were really "Model A Roads!" Some stopped for antiquing, but we couldn't waste time, as we had a date to keep at the Tulsa Airport. **Jim Baker** had arranged a tour of the American Airlines maintenance facility,

one of the world's largest. We really appreciated the "large" part by the time we had walked through miles of hangers and the offices where the maintenance status of the entire fleet is maintained on a minute-to-minute basis. Thanks, Jim! It was interesting and most informative!

Saturday, the 12th was mostly a day to relax and do your own thing. Some went to the *Leake Car Auction* running through the week end. Numerous museums were available. Others used the opportunity for doing the laundry or odd maintenance jobs on the cars. The Double Tree was a very nice hotel and the covered garage helped keep the cars cool and dry, as rain showers were in evidence. That night, we drove about 18 miles east to Warren Place to "Discoveryland" for a chuck wagon style dinner and a performance of *Oklahoma* in an outdoor theater. (picture on page 1) The intermittent showers during the afternoon gave some a bit of apprehension about the "outdoors" part! But, aside from rain sprinkled seats, which dried easily, there was nothing to worry about. The players were young, talented and vivacious and the show was judged a success by all. Getting home in the dark over country roads added some more sense of adventure to the episode.

Sunday, the 13th was another day of relaxation, girding our loins, as it were from the ravages of the past week and getting ready for another round of non-stop adventure.

Monday, the 14th saw Bartlesville in our sights, 80 miles to the north via Route 66 and Claremore, the birthplace of that famous Model A Era American, Will Rogers! It rained during the night and was still threatening as we made the drive to the *Will Rogers Memorial Museums* in Claremore. The close-in parking at the Memorial was welcome as we had to dodge the rain drops getting to the door. All things relating to Will and his many interests are presented in interactive displays, from his old movies, to his life in California. Those of us from Southern California saw very good replicas of rooms from his Ranch on the Pacific Coast. It was a great museum and one we highly recommend.

It was time for lunch and then we were off for Bartlesville about 55 miles to the northeast and it was still raining! We discovered that we had gotten out of OK City and Tulsa, just a day before they were both flooded, though we didn't seem to encounter that much rain while driving.

Claremore is also the site of the J. M.



Will Rogers Memorial Museums

Davis Arms and Historical Museum, which some tour members elected to visit. This museum is the worlds largest , containing some 20,000 firearms and related artifacts.

We were divided into two groups (by lottery) for our stay in Bartlesville. Most of us were put up at the Inn at the Price Tower, the only "skyscraper" designed by world famous Frank Lloyd Wright. The 19-storied building opened to the public in 1959 as a multi-use office and apartment building. It currently houses the Price Tower Arts Center, the Inn and several offices.



The Price Tower

A memorable night there leads one to conclude that it is great that there was only one Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright!

Tuesday, 15th, having reached the north-eastern-most part of the tour, we turn to Ponca City some 90 miles west. But first, there is a tour of the Price Tower Museum and the Inn for those not having stayed there.

Our route is via *Woolaroc*, the 3700 acre wildlife refuge created by oil magnate Frank Phillips in 1925. This ranch is nestled in the hills, woods and lakes of the Osage Hills 12 miles southwest of Ponca City. The preserve shelters native wildlife such as elk, bison, longhorns and the like, while the museum presents artifacts and art related to the west and the pioneering days in

Oklahoma. It contains models of the 12 three-foot bronze model sculptures of pioneer womanhood that were entered in a competition sponsored by oilman E. W. Marland of Continental Oil Company. It is not known exactly what Marland paid each of the internationally know artists for their work, but speculation has it ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000 each. In 1930 the winner was selected after the exhibit had traveled around the country. Later Marland fell on hard times and sold many of his treasures to Phillips. The 12 model Pioneer Women were purchased for \$500 each! On the bottom floor is the 1927 Travel Air monoplane, the "Woolaroc," winner of the 1927 Dole air race from Oakland to Honolulu.



Pioneer Woman Mues
Pioneer Woman Statue



1927 Dole Race "Woolaroc"

In Ponca City, we visited the mansion of Mr. Marland. It was a magnificent building with many valuable furnishings. It was sad to consider that his fortunes turned only a few years after acquiring this mansion and he lived there only a very short time.

Following the mansion tour, many members attended a gathering at FS Ignitions for refreshments and a tour of the HGH Car Museum.

Wednesday, 16th, it is 230 miles from Ponca City back to Cheyenne where we rest our heads tonight. This is the longest drive of the tour,



Time out at the Marland mansion

but before we can get on this run, we have an important stop to make at the round barn of **Marvin Brules** at Pond Creek, about an hour west of Ponca City. Mr. Brules designed and built this brick barn himself, with the help of one other person. It took him a year to build it. He purchased 52,000 bricks and had only 100 left over! Some figuring! We enjoyed our stop at the round barn and meeting the owner. He had stored many old cars, buggies and other things in the lower floor. The local population enjoys the use of the barn for their social affairs so much that he hasn't been able to put it to full use in storing his collection of "stuff!"



Round Barn took 51,900 Bricks!

As we approached Enid from the north, it became apparent that we were in for a big storm. Clouds were gathering and flashes of lightning lit up the darkening sky. We couldn't help but think of all the terrible tornadoes that slashed across Oklahoma the week before we departed for our tour! We got to Enid and the sky opened and poured so much water that we never could say that we saw this city! As we got to the west of town, the skies began to clear, although there were

still frequent flashes of lightening. However, there was nothing to fear and we made it safe and dry to Cheyenne. That evening, we all gathered at the “social barn” for another group dinner.

Thursday, 17th was a great day enjoying the offerings of Cheyenne and the Roark’s ranch. We all gathered early at the Cheyenne Heritage Park in front of the Roll School.

We were to be “students” at this one-room country school this morning. **Miss Tracy**, the school mistress, called us to order outside the doorway and marched all the girls to one side of the school room and the boys to the other side. Then she laid down the rules that we had to observe, reflecting the discipline of school one-hundred years ago when this school was in op-



Ron Mosher—“Bad Boy!”

eration. A “bad boy” had to put his nose in a ring on the blackboard! We had a class in writing, the old way and we had arithmetic and we asked questions about what school was like way back then. Of course for some of the “old-timers” in the group, none of this was new! We had been



Elaine Perry Larry Whipple Don McBride Don Cooke Glendon Knutson
C. Mosher Photo

Recess at Roll School

there and done that! Several of us raised our hands when asked if we had been taught in a one-room school! We were then treated to recess of 100 years ago and Miss Tracy showed us how to roll hoops.

After school let out, we went to downtown Cheyenne where the Roarks have three buildings in which they store and show their car collections. The morning was spent in this pleasant, unhurried pastime. Then we were off to the ranch and our lunchtime experience.



Dwayne’s 1898 truck



Juhretta’s Town Car plus more!

The ranch is about seven miles from town on a gravel road. As one enters, the modest ranch house is first building passed then comes “Grandma’s House” which Dwayne had moved onto the property and restored and is used to house guests. Next are several blue-gray metal barns housing the bulk of the ranch equipment, followed by a large red metal barn where we gathered for lunch. Inside the red barn an antique carousel that Dwayne gave Juhretta a few years back occupies one-half of the building. It has been beautifully restored and in operating order. We all



Bill Laughlin gets some "ranching" experience



Mama's Boys-Sammy and Ron in front of Carousel



E. Perry Photo

acted like kids and rode to our heart's content! The other half of the building (nearly the size of half a basketball court) was set up with tables for our lunch. After a delicious lunch served by the Roarks' family, we braved the sun and took pictures of all the tour participants standing by their cars or their "Moms!" Then we went to another large steel barn

to view some of Dwayne's collection of antique farm machinery. That evening, we all drove to Elk City about 30 miles away for dinner. Some of us had a problem finding the diner, as we had a wrong GPS address, but we managed! On the way back to Cheyenne, we saw a magnificent Oklahoma sunset, one that the camera cannot do justice!



S. Bennett Photo

Friday, 18th, this day we become ranch hands and farmers. We started the day at the ranch with breakfast from the chuck wagon. Then we went out to "work the cattle." In the afternoon, we harvested the wheat (and fix some of the machinery we broke!). In all we harvested 169 bushels! — That ain't hay!



F. Gemmell Photo

John Saulsbury "checks out" on Dwayne's old farm machinery

Saturday, 19th is our final day of the tour. In the morning, Dwayne rounded up the buffalo using his truck and we had the opportunity to hand feed them they were so tame. In the afternoon, some went to the Washita Battlefield outside of town, That night we had our farewell dinner where we presented the Roarks with a memory book to which we



all contributed thoughts about the tour and a plaque to thank them for all their hard work. They pose with their granddaughters.

It is fitting that I end this report by listing the members of this tour family. Of course there were our leaders and hosts, **Juhretta and Dwayne Roark!** The other members of the cast were: **Connie & Jim Baker, Susie & Alan Bennett, Karen & Don Cooke, Bill Draper, Norma & Alan Garwood, Janice & Frank Gemmell, Bonnie & Sammy Guthrie, Jill & Paul Griesse, Norma & Milt Harris, Mary & Glyndon Knutson, Marilynn & Bob Krause, Janie & Bill Laughlin, Carolyn & Don McBride, Carol & Ron Mosher, Joan & Dennis Olson, Elaine & Marlin Perry, Beverly & John Saulsbury, Joann & Keith Smith, Suzanne & Gerald Thiele, Joyce & Bob Travis and Bobbie & Larry Whipple.**

We all had our individual a sub-group experiences over and beyond what I have reported here—experiences that will liven our lives forever. This was a unique tour in many ways. It was a tour by hosts who were proud of their state and wanted to share its bounty with their friends. It was marked by a generosity that is rare, even among close friends, the Roarks shared their precious cars with us—not just to see, but to drive. They placed a Cabriolet at the disposal of the Cookes because they had personal commitments that would have precluded their participation had Roarks not positioned the car at the OK City airport for the Cookes to drive and join us after we had started. When Sammy and his mother, Bonnie were stranded because Sammy's car blew a clutch. Dwayne said, "Not to worry!" He sent a truck bearing Juhretta's A-400 on it for Sammy to drive and carted Sammy's car back to the ranch.

It is interesting to note that there were three A-400's on the tour; belonging to Roarks, Thieles and Knutsons. Not quite so unusual, there were three Victorias, as well; Bill Draper (new

member), Krauses and Smiths. Only two Woodies; Perrys and Moshers.

Another footnote, Jim Baker's effort at American Airlines was capped by the fact that his very recent surgery prevented him from driving his Model A—on doctor's orders. Therefore, Jim and Connie flew to Tulsa and rented a car to continue with us on the tour thereafter.

To those who didn't make this tour, we send our consolations. You missed a great opportunity to tour in the USA. We hope to see you soon on a tour and reconnect our friendships. To those on the tour, Joann and I wish to express our gratitude for being able to be with you. It was great to see you all!

Thanks, Roarks!