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FOOD

Spring/Summer 2023

Gardens in Camp

Anna Tamura

“Gardening, both ornamental and agricultural, was a common activity for Japanese American inmates in the temporary “assembly centers,” incarceration camps, and Justice Department camps. Camp gardens were continuations of prewar garden-building traditions, human and cultural responses to imprisonment and camp landscapes, and restorative activities that fostered communal healing and cultural cohesion. Vegetable gardens, also known as victory gardens during wartime, provided familiar edibles and contributed to sustainability efforts promoted by the federal government. While some of the gardens exhibited levels of resistance against confinement and the War Relocation Authority (WRA), others represented political symbols of loyalty and patriotism.”

ETC

Fall/Winter 2022

Rudolfo Anaya

Robert Con Davis-Undiano

“For many people in the U.S. and abroad, Rudolfo Anaya (1937-2020) defined the era he lived in. He published 50 volumes that range over novels, plays, poetry, essays, and children’s books. In a key moment in the civil rights era, these works gave the Latino community a face and a voice. They also helped the Latino community to see what was good and powerful in their own lives.”

The Essays—An Excerpt

Rudolfo Anaya

An excerpt from a moving and revealing story written by Anaya.

CODE

Spring/Summer 2022

Melvil Dewey and the Bias of Code

Sarah Olzawski

“Public libraries and the organizational ‘code’ we use to access information developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Though largely invisible to public library users, classification codes are the hidden architecture that enable the seamless discovery of information.” One of the mostly commonly used today is the Dewey Decimal System, plagued with inherent limitations and bias that librarians work to overcome as they strive toward equity and inclusion.

CROSSROADS

Fall/Winter 2021

The Absentee Shawnees and the True Story of Lake Thunderbird

John Truden

Truden illuminates the Absentee Shawnee’s enduring resilience amid the ill-considered consequences of constructing Oklahoma’s Lake Thunderbird. “Most people living in Norman, Del City, and Midwest City do not know their water comes from a twentieth-century trail of tears,” he writes. “The stories and memories hidden beneath Lake Thunderbird’s murky waters will forever be of Absentee Shawnee history. But it is more: The outcome is Oklahoma history. It is *our* history.”

Charting a True Course for North

Caroline Lowery

Executive Director, Caroline Lowery, delivered reflective remarks at the Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Symposium in 2021 and urged everyone to look to the humanities for direction.

Toward “One Tulsa”

Hannibal B. Johnson

The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre left transgenerational racial trauma for Tulsa’s Black community and a legacy of silence about the devastating loss of life and property. As Tulsa and the world commemorated the centennial of the Massacre in 2021, author Hannibal Johnson contextualized Tulsa’s struggle for reconciliation along the arc of oppression against Black Americans, from 1619 slavery through present-day protests and policing, that gave rise to the modern civil rights chants of “Black lives matter,” “I can’t breathe,” and “Say my name.”

Photographing the Tulsa Massacre

A conversation with Karlos K. Hill by Daniel Simon

Simon and Hill discuss the role of photography in documenting historic events as well as its role in current debates about racial justice. “While not their intention, white Tulsans who snapped pictures of Greenwood’s destruction made it possible for future generations to bear witness to what occurred,” Hill argues. “Without the photos of Greenwood’s destruction, I believe it would be more difficult to convince people now of the scale of violence that took place.”

Djeli

Kalenda Eaton

“A djeli (commonly known as a griot) is a West African storyteller who is the keeper of oral tradition and village history. This creative essay, based on the author’s family history, is written to honor speakers, perspectives, and storytelling traditions carried by Black women.”

Breaking Down Barriers

David W. Levy

Levy documents the struggle to end segregated education through the experience of George McLaurin, the first African American to attend The University of Oklahoma. This essay is adapted from *Breaking Down Barriers: George McLaurin and the Struggle to End Segregated Education* by David Levy and published by The University of Oklahoma Press.

Reflections on a Beleaguered Symbol

Tonnia L. Anderson

Tonnia Anderson explores the intersection of history, heritage, and hate associated with the Confederate Flag. “To move forward as human beings and a society,” she writes, “Confederate relics, which propagate a message of racism, belong to the pages of history. They do not and should not define twenty-first-century America.”

Poetry, Hope, and the Bear in the Backyard

Britton Gildersleeve

Alexander recounts how the darkest hour of her life led to finding hope in poetry. “The gift of poetry, both my own creation of it and my enjoyment of that created by others, has not fully vanquished my grief, which is, in itself, a gift. I do not wish to forget completely the feeling of sorrow, nor the pain of loss, because without those I might close my hear to the sorrow and grief of my fellow beings.”

CITIZEN 2020

Fall/Winter 2020

Election Day

Loren Gatch

“If Election Day represents political renewal, it is counterbalanced by an ethic of responsibility for the consequences of our choices. Though the future cannot vote, its premonitions do tug at our consciences and weigh upon the scale of our deliberations.”

What Comes Before “Woke”?

Franny Nudelman

Learn about the history of a sleep as a form of protest. “Long before ‘woke’ came to signify a new generation of awareness and activism, the language of sleep, dreams, and awakening infused social movements, from the religious revivals of the eighteenth century to the “dream” of racial equality preached by Martin Luther King.”

A Short History of Campaign Dirty Tricks

Elaine Kamarck

“In America today, outrageous lies, doctored videos, and impostors try to influence elections alongside legitimate news and direct campaign communications from would-be leaders. But dirty tricks are nothing new. While the medium may be different, the goals are as old as elections themselves. Thus, it is fitting to begin working on the problem of defending democracy in the internet age by trying to understand the world of dirty tricks in the pre-internet age.”

In Pursuit of Presidents and Principal Chiefs

Jay Hannah

“As an Oklahoman, I am a citizen of two nations: the United States and the Cherokee Nation...An election year is a touchstone of my past and a reminder that being a dual citizen has an added set of challenges in reconciling the parallels and proclivities in electing leaders. Election years remind me that I must choose wisely, whether voting for Principal Chief of my Native Nation or President of the United States.”

Learning from the Past—Acting for the Future

Ben Alpers

“An understanding of history—in the sense of what happened and the stories we tell about what happened—can play a critical role in informing our hopeful action in response to crisis. Crises, in turn, lead us to ask different questions of the past, to listen to voices that have been silenced or ignored.”

Leading the Way

Michelle Duster and A’Lelia Bundles

“As we mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the story of American women’s battle to secure the right to vote is being rewritten. Hidden drama and missing details are being revealed as...women of color now take their rightful places beside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.... This more accurate historical account allows us to reflect on the roles our ancestors, Ida B. Wells and Madam C. J. Walker, played in the fight for women’s suffrage. Ida B. Wells—Michelle Duster’s great-grandmother—is best known as a journalist, suffragist, antilynching activist, and a co-founder of the NAACP...Madam C. J. Walker—A’Lelia Bundles’s great-great-grandmother—was a beauty industry entrepreneur who provided jobs for thousands of Black women and became a philanthropist and political activist.”

On Civility

Pamela Chew

“Only now do I understand why my Chinese father wanted me to answer our phone or open the front door when the doorbell rang at our house in small-town Missouri. Even a professor who held an endowed chair still worried and dreaded a knock at the door. He constantly needed reassurance that his life in the Midwest in 1950—unlike the life he knew growing up in Chinatown in San Francisco during the ’20s and ’30s—would not be questioned, taken away, or jeopardized because of race, status, or documents.”

Educating the Troops

Stacy Takacs

Since WWII, American broadcasts have been used to educate and arguably, indoctrinate, American troops. “This two-pronged approach—emphasizing what we were fighting for and against—was in keeping with the prevailing philosophy of “democratic propaganda” that shaped America’s initial forays into public persuasion.”

Fixing our Reality Problem

Thomas E. Patterson

“Today’s media system is fragmented and includes partisan outlets that offer one-sided versions of reality that appeal to many Americans. These outlets are gathering places for the like-minded. Rather than provide a shared understanding, they offer a picture of the world that’s rosy on one side of the partisan divide, dark on the other. The effect is polarizing.”

The Truth is Out There

Kimberly Roblin

“Technology has revolutionized how we generate, encounter, access, share, and process information. It is everywhere. It crawls along our television screens. It populates our social media feeds. We google it. We scroll it. It is never more than a click away. But the Information Age can be difficult to navigate. The same mechanisms that make information so accessible have also made it easier to manipulate and fabricate. Although fake news is not a 21st-century invention, technology has amplified its presence and potential. Media literacy—the ability to discern fact from fiction, bias and opinion from outright untruths—has never been more critical. Information is good, but knowledge is better. The truth is out there. As responsible citizens, we must be willing to search for it.”

The Assault on Journalistic Ethics

Andy Rieger

“Respect and trust in the news media have dwindled in the past twenty years. Many in the profession worry that the public has lost sight of the role journalism has in a democratic society,” writes Rieger. But, he argues, “Journalism will survive this latest round of economic and ethical challenges. Technology will change delivery platforms. What will not change is the need to gather, assemble, and provide fair, unbiased news to the public at large—who deserve no less than the truth.”

Ask a Journalist

A generous grant by the Mellon Foundation and its Democracy and the Informed Citizen initiative inspired us to invite Oklahomans to engage directly with journalists. A dozen readers of Oklahoma Humanities magazine answered the call to turn the tables and take on the role of reporter to pose questions to five journalists representing news entities across our state. These engaged citizens deserve the byline and their names and towns are noted at right. Their questions and the journalists' answers are frank and thought-provoking—and well worth the extended read.

Popcorn, Politics, and the Press

Kimberly Roblin

“*The Washington Post*’s slogan warns “Democracy Dies In Darkness.” Without a free press and an informed electorate for illumination, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people cannot survive. There is a darkness, however, where democracy can exist. Where we can explore, criticize, dramatize, and analyze it—the darkness of movie theaters and living rooms.” Browse this selection of film and television that demonstrates our fascination with politics and the protections of the First Amendment.

HOME

Spring/Summer 2020

Preserving Home and Country

Sunu Kodumthara

“In a fifty-year newspaper career, Edith Cherry Johnson became an influential voice upholding the values of domesticity and appropriate roles for men and women. As a social and political conservative, she argued against a woman’s right to vote. In her view, the most important work for women was to preserve and protect the very nucleus of civilization: home and family. But as the country entered World War I in 1917 and “woman suffrage” legislation passed in Oklahoma in 1918, a changing American society would challenge her convictions.”

Hardship, Hope, and Home

Kimberly Roblin

“Her name is not as familiar as John Steinbeck or Woody Guthrie, but it should be; they voiced the pulse of a nation, but she took its picture. Dorothea Lange humanized the Dust Bowl and Depression in a way novels and songs could not. Employed by the Farm Security Administration (FSA), she photographed rural poverty and brought it into searing focus. Traveling the country, she documented migrant workers, farmers, and laborers, many of whom were Oklahoma Dust Bowl refugees. No matter the state—Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Oregon— the destination was ultimately the same: the intersection of hardship, hope, and, surprisingly, home.”

Mapping Woody Guthrie

Will Kaufman

“Then, in the wake of the socialist whirlwind and the oil busts in Oklahoma and Texas, came the dust storms, turning out a wandering tribe of American refugees numbering close to half a million, transforming the nation’s demographic and cultural landscapes as comprehensively as its natural one. In the mix was Woody Guthrie, making his way westward toward California’s Eden, gathering on the road and the rails the store of knowledge underpinning a body of writing that would catapult him to international renown.”

What Home is Not

Seungho Lee

“What does it mean to be ‘at home?’ Is home the place where you grew up, the space that contains your memories and possessions? Is the language you speak “the house of being,” as philosopher Martin Heidegger put it? Is it the people you love—your family and friends? The elasticity of what it means to be at home baffles me. My experience in Tulsa as a foreign student from Korea is filled with moments when I don’t feel at home. Maybe thinking about what home is not can help me more clearly define—and feel—what home can be.”

JUSTICE

Spring/Summer 2019

Excerpt: A Perilous Path

An interview with Bryan Stevenson by Anthony C. Thompson

“In early 2017, New York University School of Law launched the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law—a center founded on the idea that lawyers today cannot fully understand the American legal landscape without studying the relationship among race, ethnicity, and economic inequality on one hand, and the successes and failures of legal structures on the other. To mark the founding of this center, I asked NYU Professor of Clinical Law and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Bryan Stevenson, [and others] to join me for a conversation. In edited form, it is reproduced in the book *A Perilous Path* (The New Press, 2018), from which the following is excerpted.”

Bending the Arc of the Moral Universe

Hasan Kwame Jeffries

“If the arc does not bend on its own, then how can it be moved toward justice? Two years before the Selma to Montgomery March, [Martin Luther] King penned his Letter from Birmingham Jail, a veritable blueprint for exerting the kind of pressure needed. A close look at the core arguments that King made in the essay offers compelling insight into how to transform an unjust society into a just one.”

Poetry: Reflections on Justice

Paul Bowers and Dorothy Alexander

A pair of poems on justice.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Paul Lehman

“As a legal term, the word justice suggests reason and fairness. The meaning and interpretation of justice varies with different communities, especially ethnic groups, as well as different social and economic levels of society. Fiction is an interesting way to view these shifting applications of justice. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee gives us just such an opportunity as the novel’s plot weaves together different characters’ views of justice.”

Between You and Me

Ryan Gentzler

“Oklahoma has a problem. Being dubbed “first in the nation” might be a point of pride with many public policies. But when it comes to incarceration, we’re locking up Oklahomans in record numbers, stretching state coffers to support those behind bars, and removing breadwinners from society for petty offenses, leaving their families financially vulnerable and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and prison. Our state’s distinction at the top for mass incarceration of its citizens leaves much to be desired. How did we get here—and how can we pursue fair and balanced reform?”

Poetic Justice

An interview with Ellen Stackable by Julie Ann Ward

“[Ellen] Stackable is co-founder of Poetic Justice, a Tulsa nonprofit that offers restorative writing workshops to incarcerated women. The program approaches each writer as an individual, not just a statistic—and it works...the program acknowledges the limits of our justice system in providing rehabilitative opportunities for incarcerated women. The program creates a space for these women to form bonds with others and find peace within themselves through writing. The goal is to help participants find a sense of voice, hope, and the power to change—if not their circumstances, then at least the way in which they cope with those circumstances.”

Poetic Justice: The Poems

Writing by women in Oklahoma prisons

Five women share their stories and their poetry.

Unintended Consequences

Lindsay G. Robertson

“United States federal Indian policy has roots in our nation’s founding and is built on two broad constructs: that title to Indian lands was lost to discovering European sovereigns and subsequently passed to their American successors, and that tribes are “wards” of the United States, which acts as their guardian or trustee. These concepts were crystalized by the U.S. Supreme Court during the tenure of Chief Justice John Marshall, in three decisions commonly referred to as the ‘Marshall Trilogy.’”

Justice Like Water

Harold Shank

“Martin Luther King, Jr., a formidable champion of justice, frequently used the line “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” It’s a vivid image. We can see the surging water and hear the roar of the mighty stream. King knew that images give substance to abstract ideas. That’s why a picture can replace a thousand words or why seeing a painting or viewing a monument expands our view of the world. King, like others, used images to explain complex ideas—such as justice.”

Quilt of Democracy

Interview with Clara Luper by Paul Lehman

“October 2019 marks the 61st anniversary of the first sit-in of the Civil Rights Movement. That history-making event took place in Oklahoma City at Katz Drug Store, where thirteen teenagers and their advisor, Clara Luper, sat down at the lunch counter and refused to leave unless they were served. Twenty years ago, scholar Paul Lehman talked with Clara Luper and her daughter, Marilyn Hildreth, one of the young people who participated, about the sit-in and its legacy. Their observations are striking. Following is an edited excerpt from that conversation, recorded in October 1998.”

TRUTH

Spring/Summer 2018

Democracy and the Informed Citizen

An interview with Carl Bernstein by Dick Pryor

“Oklahoma Humanities had a rare opportunity to invite Pulitzer Prize winner Carl Bernstein to give his opinions on the role of journalism in our democracy as part of a nationwide initiative, “Democracy and the Informed Citizen.” The following interview with Dick Pryor, General Manager of KGOU Radio, features Bernstein’s thoughts on the challenge journalists and news consumers face in the distrustful climate of ‘fake news.’”

Have I Got a Story for You!

Philip Patterson

“Fake news.” We hear the allegations all the time. If there’s one thing a divided America can agree on, no matter which side you’re on, it is this: the news generated by the other side is nothing but half-truths, misrepresentations, or downright lies. Is there such a thing as objective journalism? Could an objective medium even survive in today’s deeply partisan journalism? Does democracy require an objective press—whatever that means? When we begin to examine the problem, whether the charge is “fake news,” “bias,” “clickbait,” or “mistrust of the media”, we realize that we’ve been here before, near the beginning of our republic. Perhaps a few lessons from history would be instructive.”

Hidden History

Hannibal B. Johnson

A poem on the history we don’t know.

Democracy at Risk—The American Media Under Attack

Mark Hanebutt

“Greed. Politics. Irrelevance. Indifference. Technology. The American news media is under attack. If it fails, the American republic may fail with it—for information is the lifeblood of a free people. How did it come to this? The American press had a noble start. At least in theory, it was based on a grand idea: the pursuit of truth.”

Finding True North

Darryl Tippens

“Literature is rooted in the grand paradox that fiction—whether a fairy tale, novel, poem, play, or film—can express enduring wisdom and practical advice for living in a complex world. Intuitive writers often exhibit an uncanny grasp of truth—especially those who have endured great suffering, and particularly those who have suffered under totalitarian systems.”

VIETNAM

Fall/Winter 2017

Documenting the Vietnam War

An interview with Lynn Novick by Carla Walker

The Vietnam War...includes interviews with approximately 100 witnesses—for and against the war—as well as scholar commentary on the people and events that shaped world history and American culture. In the following conversation, Novick discusses the diverse perspectives captured in the film and the crew’s discoveries along the way, insight that is sure to enhance your appreciation of this unforgettable documentary.”

Origins of the Vietnam War

Mark Atwood Lawrence

“To pinpoint the war’s origins in any of these ways, though, is to view history through a distinctly American lens. True, we may learn something of value about the U.S. experience by locating the start of war in the 1950s or 60s. But we risk missing the deeper sources of instability and conflict in Vietnam. In fact, the origins of the Vietnam War extend backward to eras long before the United States exerted power internationally or even existed as a nation.”

Private Doubts, Public Resolve, and Personal Ambitions

Fredrik Logevall

“For too long, we have debated the Vietnam conflict as though it began one spring day in the early 1960s. But the earlier period is pivotal to all that would happen later. We sometimes forget just how large the United States loomed in 1945, as World War II drew to a close. The war had seen the U.S. rise to a position of predominance in world (and especially East Asian) affairs. At the occasion of Japan’s surrender late that summer, the “open moment” when the future of Indochina was anyone’s guess, the U.S. had extraordinary political power in Asia of a kind never seen before (or since). Small wonder that as the guns fell silent and the Japanese gave up their occupation of Indochina, the major players—the French, the Vietnamese, the British, the Chinese, the Russians—all obsessed about a particular question regarding the territory: *What will the Americans do?*”

Protesting Vietnam

Sarah Eppler Janda

“Antiwar protests began in Oklahoma much the same as they did elsewhere in the United States. Even before combat troops were sent to Vietnam in March 1965, students, both nationally and locally were voicing their opposition. Sporting signs that read “I won’t fight in Vietnam” and “War on poverty not on people,” students from across the country participated in the first large March on Washington demonstration sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) on April 17, 1965. Organizers were stunned when an estimated 25,000 people showed up to join in the protest.”

Vietnam Redux—Retrieving Truths, Revising War

Christian G. Appy

“I had not intended to write another book about the Vietnam War. However, as the apparently endless wars in Afghanistan and Iraq dragged on, year after year, it felt imperative to re-examine a history that bears so many troubling similarities with the present.”

POETRY

Spring/Summer 2017

The Poet Has Spoken

Jason Stephenson

“Spoken word poetry places importance on both content and its performance—a crucial component that prompts some poets to refer to themselves as spoken word artists. In contrast with print poetry, audiences cannot linger over word choice, line breaks, and nuanced themes. Instead, they rely on a poet’s delivery, his use of volume, speed, and gestures to glean meaning. Spoken word performance, the give and take between poet and audience, makes for a more visceral experience of verse because it is immediate, temporary—recited and then gone. The inventive style has brought a renaissance to poetry, driven by its appeal to a younger generation, its embrace of diverse voices, and an informality that puts poet and audience on equal footing. This populism of poetry has opened the doors for more varied poets and audiences who have not felt welcomed by the traditional literary establishment. With spoken word, the common man and woman, not the literary critic, determine the value of poets and their work.”

DEMOCRACY

Fall/Winter 2016

Together

Congressman Tom Cole

“The story of our nation’s republic is the continual struggle to measure up to the lofty goals established in our founding documents. While the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights sum up who we aim to be, our history has certainly been marked by a combination of trials, mistakes, and successes along the way. And even today, we have not reached perfection or eliminated all shortfalls. The effort to fully realize and live up to the principles prescribed at our founding remains a work in progress at every level and in every branch of government. While often overlooked, misunderstood, or even intentionally undermined, we would be remiss to forget that in addition to federal, state, and local governing authorities there is another level of government that pre-exists the very nation in which we live. The enduring presence of tribal nations and lasting recognition of their sovereignty is not only significant in Oklahoma, but to all Americans. It is important for us to understand how tribes have shaped and contributed to our way of governing.”

Democracy, the Free Press, and the Meaning of Tribe

An interview with Sebastian Junger by Carla Walker

“Sebastian Junger examines a very different aspect of “tribe”: the tribe of us—all of us. He notes that, for millennia, native tribes and tribal culture remained relatively unchanged: members living in small groups, depending on each other for survival, governing with a cooperative egalitarianism that made everyone equal and deeply loyal—much like the conduct and expectations he observed in military platoons. Junger embedded with U.S. troops in Afghanistan’s Koren - gal Valley, chronicling soldiers in a dangerous outpost called “Restrepo.” He saw soldiers at their best and worst: eating and sleeping together in close quarters, sheltering in remote areas with little more than sandbags and ammunition, fighting emotional swings from boredom to terror. Whether native peoples or army infantry, Junger came to see that tribal mentality, “for the good of all,” was the difference between life and death.”

State of the Vote—Your “Right” Revealed

Joshua Sellers

“Whatever the merits of these theories, each of them presumes an unqualified, robust right to vote—at least for individuals who have reached the age of eighteen and whose citizenship is uncontroverted. But to describe the right as one inherent to our liberty would be inaccurate. One could argue that it is inaccurate to describe it as a right at all. The U.S. Constitution, a model of democracy for much of the world, does not provide anyone the right to vote. In truth, voting is mediated by a plethora of public and private institutions, each dictating in part whether we can vote, and also when, where, and how.”

Ideas or Interests? The Founders on Free Speech

Kevin Butterfield

“Perhaps the freedom of speech, which has long been a right that belongs to individuals, ought now to be extended to include corporations and private associations. I am no lawyer, and I have no legal grounds to doubt the five Supreme Court Justices who formulated the decision and know infinitely more about the law than I do. But as an early American historian, one who spends nearly as much time (mentally, that is) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as he does in the twenty-first, I can say without hesitation that many of the leading figures in the Founding era would have been incredulous.”

Power, Privacy, and the Fourth Amendment

Arthur G. LeFrancois

“In reflecting on American democracy and the Constitution, we might not think the Fourth Amendment has much pride of place. And yet it is there that the constitutional framers sought to answer one of the most fundamental questions regarding the relationship of the governed and those who govern: When can government seize or search its citizens and their property? Government may have no more profound a power.”

The New Today: Seven Trends in Old and New Media

Elaine Kamarck and Ashley Gabriele

“Twitter. Tumblr. Facebook. Digg. MySpace. BuzzFeed. It’s enough to make a baby boomer’s head spin. And enough to make a millennial say, “So?” Like every major technological revolution, from the printing press to radio and television, the Internet revolution’s impact on society has been greeted with pessimism by some and optimism by others. Nowhere is this more true than in journalism and media. For instance, President Obama’s 2015 State of the Union had fewer TV viewers than ever. But it was noteworthy for the live commentary it generated on Facebook and Twitter, and for the live online streaming coming from the White House that contained graphs, charts, and other data designed to make it easy for viewers to share via social media. So what does that mean? Are citizens less engaged because fewer watched the speech? Or are they more engaged because they interacted with their fellow citizens in a conversation about the speech (or parts of it)?”

Postcards from Public Service

Robert Henry

“The good folks at Oklahoma Humanities, with whom I often associate, have observed that I am something of a career public servant. Between state and federal offices, I have “served time” in all three branches of government. They asked me to write about this personal experience for a magazine issue on “Democracy.” Now, I’m getting old enough to ruminate, and lawyers are supposed to know how to tell stories, so I offer these thoughts—postcards, if you will—from each branch, along with some comments about citizenship, because every American can and should help “rule” this country.”

INTERNATIONALISM

Fall 2015

American Diplomacy—Forging a Continental Nation

Bill Bryans

“The depiction of the American West as a product of fiercely independent individuals who disdained government interference simply does not hold up to historical scrutiny—so asserted Texas historian Joe B. Franz in a 1963 address for the American Historical Association. Instead, he noted, the West benefitted from the largesse of the federal government: economic stimulus from the frontier military, government-sponsored exploration of the region, homestead laws that put large swaths of acreage under the plow, and public lands where cattlemen grazed their stock. Franz highlighted other examples, with one notable omission: The American West was fundamentally a product of international relations.”

Impertinent Questions: Internationalism Against American Empire

Alan McPherson

“Internationalism against the expansion of U.S. power in Latin America created a chain of resistance that began in the smallest, poorest countries and ended in Washington, D.C. In Latin American occupations, links forged in Santiago de Cuba, Tegucigalpa, Mexico City, New York, and elsewhere allowed those living under occupation to communicate their grievances to the Americas and beyond. Spurred by the growth of education, the war in Europe, improvements in communications and transportation, the progressive movement (to limit the worst excesses of capitalism and plutocracy), and, of course, the acquisition of U.S. overseas possessions such as the Philippines and Cuba, internationalist networks of writers, scholars, religious leaders, and government officials argued that the era of occupations should come to an end. Their immediate concerns were regional, focused on Latin America, but their ideology was global. Internationalist networks played a critical role, largely neglected by historians, in ending occupations.”

Where We Find Ourselves: The GPS of Poetry

Philip Metres

“In a globalized world, we are connected in ways that are both visible and invisible—through the Internet, through other people in this “country of immigrants,” through international travel, and through often-obscured economic, political, and military systems. Poetry can help us leap beyond thinking that humanity ends at the national border. In this essay, I’ll quote from my own work (To See the Earth and Sand Opera) and the work of other poets to show how poetry can help us not only imagine the lives of others but also to grow into an empathic understanding of our deep connectedness, to see that our fates are bound with others’.”

The U.S. and the U.N.—A Call for Multilateral Leadership

Thomas G. Weiss

“In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the United Nations appears remarkably ill adapted to the times. The organization was founded on a forward-looking vision that was very much ahead of the curve in 1945, but is hardly apt for today, let alone tomorrow. Both World War I and II gave rise to groundbreaking efforts resulting in the first two generations of universal international organizations—the League of Nations and the United Nations. At the end of the Cold War we all heaved a collective sigh of relief as the East-West confrontation ended with a whimper, not a bang. As a result, however, this conflict did not lead to the creation of a “third generation” of multilateral institutions, which we desperately need.”

Isolating America

Wendy N. Whitman Cobb

“The controversy over U.S. actions in the U.N. and abroad is not a new one. From the beginning of America’s history, prominent leaders have cautioned against getting too involved in world affairs. Although his Farewell Address is more often remembered for its caution against party politics, George Washington also warned against extensive relations with the rest of the world: “The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible.” Washington’s warning would always be difficult to abide by, evidenced within years by another war with England in 1812 and James Monroe’s declaration in 1823 that the U.S. would intervene in any further European attempts to colonize the Western Hemisphere. The rhetoric of isolationism would always seem greater than America’s commitment to it; and yet we find modern politicians arguing that America should recede from world affairs. What if American leaders implemented a full policy of isolationism? What consequences would emerge? What effects would everyday Americans feel?”

Being ME (Middle Eastern)

Ibtisam Barakat

“Francis Foster, the legendary children’s book editor for Random House and later for Farrar, Straus and Giroux/ Macmillan, passed away last summer. She will always be part of my creative journey. When Francis and I talked about *Tasting the Sky*, my memoir about childhood and war in Palestine, she said, “The Middle East is always in the news, but that does not mean Americans know much about Middle Eastern people.” She recalled the Native American proverb that one cannot empathize with the journey of another without walking in their moccasins. “Can the two sides of a notebook stand for a pair of moccasins?” I mused. She took a book that was on her desk, opened it, and put it on the floor like a pair of shoes. We both laughed. From this empathy-encompassed proverb, and the expansive light of Frances’ smiling blue eyes, I shall proceed by offering you my pair of moccasins. They are size ten medium, European size forty. They are sewn from memories and language and threaded with the string of a rababah instrument playing a Middle Eastern tune. I was often teased for the size of my feet, and I replied that I have big feet because I have a big journey. I invite you to become me for the duration of this essay—take a walk in my moccasins as a person from the Middle East.”

The Stranger

James McGirk

“Which was not so different than how I assembled my own identity as an American teenager growing up in India. For seven years I orbited New Delhi’s city-circumnavigating ring roads in the backseat of a Maruti Suzuki Gypsy 4x4. Like most capital cities, Delhi’s roads are eternally congested; in my day—the 1990s—this flow consisted of an anachronistic hodgepodge of ox carts and rusting bicycles and motorized trikes and Vespa scooters, Leyland lorries and locally manufactured Morris Oxfords

(called Hindustan Ambassadors), old-fashioned autos with bulbous headlamps, a scowling grill, and more often than not a pair of fluttering flags on the bonnet denoting the occupant's status as a brigadier general or Member of Parliament or other muckety-muck. Those ancient cars sent me into fugues of sorrow. I pined for the West. That the rare foreign makes I did see wore bright blue corps diplomatique license plates only reinforced that I was trapped in a different, slower clock cycle than what I imagined my teenaged, techno-savvy U.S. peers living in. I longed to escape and to return to a homeland I had never known."

ROMANCE

January 2015

Equal Access to Hometown Teams: Hurdling Race and Gender Barriers in Oklahoma Sports

Amy Carreiro

"Today, Oklahomans herald the athletic success of contemporary women, American Indians, and African Americans, such as: the University of Oklahoma's women's basketball coach Sherri Coale, a Healdton native and Oklahoma Christian University graduate; Heisman Trophy winner Sam Bradford (Cherokee) of Putnam City North High School and OU; and Olympic gold medalist wrestler Kenny Monday of Tulsa's Booker T. Washington High School and OSU, who was also a three-time All-American and a four-time U.S. Nationals Champion. It may be taken for granted now, but throughout most of the twentieth century, female, Native American, and African American athletes fought for equal playing time and against stereotypes. Their struggles to overcome gender and racial barriers created equal opportunities for many American athletes and fostered bonds among fans and teammates for their Oklahoma hometown teams."

WORLD WAR I

Fall 2014

Chicago, 1919: "We are and will always remain HUNS"

Christiane Brandt Faris

"The late nineteenth century saw a rise of xenophobia, particularly against Irish and German immigrants. Americans feared the loss of traditions and business to these newcomers. With entry into WWI looming, anti-German sentiments increased across the country and in Washington politics. Theodore Roosevelt denounced German-Americans as "hyphenated" citizens whose dual loyalties could not be tolerated."

When the Nation Came to Cordell

David Lowry, Chip Kooi, and Gary Lindsey

"Freedoms of speech and conscience are rights that Americans not only expect but demand. The freedom to speak our minds and defend our convictions is an essential American ideal. But free practice of those ideals hasn't always been upheld. During

World War I, federal and state governments actively quashed dissent. Even the small community of Cordell, Oklahoma, did not escape compliance with the prescribed patriotism. Anything but “all-in” support for the U.S. war effort was not just suppressed but prosecuted. Punishment meant fines or prison sentences. The following account reads like a screenplay or novel, but for Benjamin Randolph and Terrell Clay, conscientious objectors from Cordell, the event was all too real. When they refused the draft because of their anti-war beliefs, the sentence was swift and harsh.”

RIGHTS

Summer 2014

Blessings of Liberty

William E. White

“What are the inherent rights and liberties of the individual? How do we realize them and protect them? Are there limits? Do they include only the specifics listed in the Bill of Rights? Do they include, as Franklin Roosevelt proposed, rights to employment, housing, healthcare, education, and retirement? The very future of the American republic depends on answers that a new, rising generation of citizens will discover and apply. We are engaged in a great debate to discover, as Abraham Lincoln asked 150 years ago, can ‘a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that ‘all men are created equal’ long endure?’”

The Color of Blood

Joe Starita

“On January 2, 1879, thirty Ponca men, women, and children finished loading their belongings. The morning came in at nineteen below zero with a steady north wind. They hadn’t much in the way of winter clothing and it was coming down harder as the two worn-out horses stood motionless in the blinding snow. The boy was dressed in his best clothing and the chief gently placed him in a box and carefully lowered it into the back of one of the wagons. Then the father and mother turned their faces north and began walking away from the Warm Country, heading toward the Running Water. Their boy was going home.”

Marriage, Religion, and Equal Protection

Rick Tepker

“Human beings often pursue a personal vision of happiness by seeking love, companionship, a family, and a home. Sharing fate, fortune, and property with a loved one is, for most, a key to living a good life. The law protects the individual “pursuit of happiness” by recognizing, respecting, and enforcing an exchange of promises to share a life—sometimes, not always, called marriage. The exchange is a contract—and more.”

Fiction and Social Responsibility—Where Do They Intersect?

Naomi Benaron

“I attended the Third International Conference on Genocide, where I presented a paper on the rights and responsibilities of cultural appropriation. I wrote the paper because, having penned a novel from the point of view of a young Tutsi boy coming of age in the time surrounding the Rwandan genocide, it is a topic with which I frequently wrestle. During the Q&A, a Rwandan man raised his hand. “Don’t you feel silly,” he asked, “writing fiction about the Rwandan Genocide?” After my initial shock and a few clarifying words, I realized that the question was not, as I had first thought, flippant but rather a query into the nature of fiction itself and into its ability to engage an event so vast and unspeakable as genocide. I realized, too, that for me, it was actually a conflation of the two central questions that define my writing. Why do I write about social justice? And, given that I am driven to address these issues, why indeed do I use fiction to address them?”

Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home

Anita Hill

[From the introduction] “In her most recent book, *Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home*, Hill tracks the recent housing foreclosure crisis and the biases of gender, race, and class that have been the hallmarks of lending practices since the 1800s. Starting with her own family, Hill takes us through decades of history, noting the experiences of women in search for equality and ‘home.’ According to Hill, home is “a place that provides access to every opportunity America has to offer.” Without first securing that place, she says, there can be no equality.”

MEDICINE

Fall 2013

History of Medicine vs. Organic Chemistry

Sarah Tracy

“Can a course in the history of medicine prove as valuable in the long term as, say, a course in organic chemistry? This is a question I often ask my aspiring pre-med students at the University of Oklahoma Honors College, where I’ve taught since 1999. I’m an historian of medicine, so admittedly there is a certain bias that frames my question. I also direct the OU Medical Humanities Program—make that bias.”

THE COMMON GOOD

Summer 2013

What Isn’t for Sale?

Michael Sandel

“As the Cold war ended, markets and market thinking enjoyed unrivaled prestige, and understandably so. No other mechanism for organizing the production and distribution of

goods had proved as successful at generating affluence and prosperity. And yet even as growing numbers of countries around the world embraced market mechanisms in the operation of their economies, something else was happening. Market value were coming to play a greater role in social life. Economics was becoming an imperial domain. Today, the logic of buying and selling no longer applies to material goods alone. It increasingly governs the whole of life.”

Beyond Partisanship

Mickey Edwards

“A successful democracy is largely dependent on shared values and a commitment to civil discourse. A nation that is allergic to nuance and complexity can offer little guidance to its elected officials; a nation that cannot tolerate ambiguity or weigh evidence cannot easily be brought together in a common understanding of the community’s problems, much less in a reasoned conversation about proposals to address those problems. (This is why the decline in educational standards and the disappearance of classroom instruction in civics and critical thinking are so devastating to our attempts at self-government.)

One’s Self I Sing: Writing the American Spirit

Lori Lindsey

“Much like the people of America, the American character is an amalgam of heritages that spans time and place. The American character did not simply or suddenly appear; it formed over the course of decades. The open frontier and a spirit of independence and optimism took part in its formation. One of the greatest and most visible aspects of this American character is the philosophy of self-reliance and individualism.”

Civil Discourse in a Divided America

Scott Gelfand

“Politicians and pundits regularly remind us that America is a divided country—perhaps more divided than at any time in recent history. Americans disagree over many important issues: tax policy, gun control, capital punishment, and stem cell research, to name just a few. It is only natural to see our disagreement over these issues as evidence of a deeper, more profound disagreement; namely, a disagreement over our most basic moral codes.”

ETHICS

Fall 2012

The Good, the Bad, and the Moral Imagination

Scott Davidson

“What explains philosophy’s newfound appeal? One reason might be the discipline’s renewed focus on ethics. As society evolves, life’s questions become more complex. When the choices are difficult we come to appreciate the practical value of philosophy

and ethics to help us analyze options and make good decisions. Philosophical ethics is particularly well positioned to address “the big questions” of importance to public life.”

Truth and Consequences: A Lesson in Ethics

Philip Patterson

“Imagine a situation where you could interview and choose your next-door neighbor. You ask the first applicant, Mr. Smith, how he feels about taking someone’s life. He replies that he wouldn’t commit murder, because if he got caught he would go to jail. Applicant number two, Mr. Jones, says he would never kill anyone, because he believes in the sanctity of life. It takes little reflection to decide which neighbor you prefer. Motive matters. Choosing to commit murder is a moral decision, and Smith and Jones both passed the moral standard. But in ethics, the motivation behind our choices counts, too, and some motives may seem better or worse than others.”

Some Moral Perils of Criminal Law

Arthur G. LeFrancois

“Law cannot require all that is good or forbid all that is bad. For that reason alone, we know that law and morality (beliefs about what is right or wrong) are not the same. Still, law is inevitably a repository of our moral beliefs (our ethics). Legislation concretizes dominant moral opinion and so provides a window on the morals of any particular era. Law is also used to advance, and not simply reflect, particular moral visions. Think of the recent battles over Oklahoma’s “personhood” bill. Law is an agent, as well as a mirror, of morals. Unsurprisingly, then, the relationship between law and morals is complex. It is also uneasy.”

Are You In or Out? The Process of Integrity

Daryl Koehn

“We need to get away from the false notion that integrity is a fixed state in a pair of binary traits—good/ethical or bad/unethical. Integrity is an aspect of our being. Integrity is something we are (or are not) becoming, not something we have. We should think of integrity less as a character trait and more as a commitment to the ongoing process of seeking to make ever more considered, courageous, and fair choices. This “process viewpoint” provides hope that, even though we make mistakes or fall short of always making fair or courageous decisions, we have the ability to make better choices in the future.”

Lottery Night

Kim Stafford

“Against this backdrop, on the night of December 1, 1969, the U.S. government held a televised lottery to determine which young men should go to the killing fields in Vietnam. My brother was living with half a dozen friends in an old house on East 12th. That house was the place to be for a dark kind of party, and clearly the place to be for this

one. Anyone alive in those days may remember the surreal drama of U.S. congressman Alex Pirnie reaching into a cage to pull out the first of 366 numbered balls (leap-year birthdays got no slack). In his heavy black, mad scientist glasses, he looked at the ceiling, to assure us he wasn't handpicking a favorite."

RECONCILIATION

Summer 2012

Slavery's Castles

Doug Henderson

"I first encountered an African slave castle while photographing AIDS research in Ghana in 2004. I was surprised to learn that these grim, historic places had never been photographically documented. After years of research and planning, I returned to Africa with another photographer, Greg Merrell, to photograph as many sites associated with the slave trade as we could find."

Making Peace with the Past

Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf

"It is against this backdrop that we decided to drag one of America's skeletons out of the closet and confront it. Our goal was to address the historic wound inflicted by slavery and racism, a "scab" Americans pick at but have never committed to fully heal. In May 2011, we set out on a road trip as part of a larger "healing journey"—a black woman and a white man; a descendant of slaves and a descendant of slave traders. Together, we traveled more than six thousand miles, through twenty-one states, over four weeks. Our objective was to explore historic American sites through a specific lens: to learn how we each feel about race, how it has affected our lives and the American narrative; to understand the view from "the other side"; and to ponder how we can move beyond the legacy of slavery."

A History Long Forgotten: Intersections of Race in Early America

Arwin D. Smallwood

"For centuries America has attempted to simplify discussions of race into three broad categories: Native American, African American, and white. But a significant number of Americans have never seen themselves as belonging to only one race. They embrace and celebrate an identity that blends these cultures. In the 2010 U.S. Census, over nine million people identified themselves as multiracial—the majority sharing some combination of Native-American, African American, or Caucasian heritage."

Hope for Racial Healing: Rethinking Christian Missions among the Chickasaw

Otis W. Pickett

“Some wounds in American history simply cut too deep. The difficult and tumultuous relationship between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation is certainly one of those wounds. But perhaps some hope for future healing can be drawn from a deeper understanding of the injustices in our past. Today, in an era when attempts at racial reconciliation and solidarity seem fruitless in producing lasting change, we do well to re-examine and glean from the cooperative, interracial relationships in Mississippi mission churches of the early nineteenth century. These communities included whites, African Americans, and Native Americans, and were later carried from Mississippi into Oklahoma.”

Righting the Wrongs of History: Reparations and the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot

Hannibal B. Johnson

“A thoughtful, vigorous, and productive dialogue on reparations requires an understanding of the promise, possibilities, and parameters of these ameliorative measures. Most Tulsans agree that reparations are essential if we are to triumph over our tragic past. Indeed, we have begun making amends. Striking the appropriate balance—creating the right mix of measures that will help us heal our history—remains a challenge. So, too, does following through on our good intentions. When considering reparations, we are left with a question of morality and justice: As a civilized society, what actions must we take to salve the wounds of our own making? We accept the benefits that accrue across generations. We must likewise accept the burdens. If amends are to be made, if injustices are to be remedied, if wrongs are to be righted, the ultimate responsibility rests upon each of our shoulders.”

Reconciling Myself to The Body's Lessons

Faith Adiele

“My official ‘coming out’ as The Black Girl in my school occurred in third grade, when I debuted Chief Kamiakin Elementary School’s first Afro. Our town of Sunnyside, Washington, had never witnessed such a display. Originally formed as a Christian cooperative community on a few of the six million acres of land that Chief Kamiakin (of the Yakama tribe) and other Native chiefs were forced to relinquish to the U.S. government, the town had embraced its isolation, the ring of hills a deterrent to new ideas and new hairstyles. By the time my mother returned to the family farm in the early ’70s with me in tow, Sunnyside was a village consisting roughly of 4,500 Anglo farm owners, 1,500 Latino farm workers, one Asian family, one “Negro” family (according to the U.S. Census Distribution of the Negro Population), and me, product of an absent Nigerian father and Nordic-American mother.”

January 2012

Bridging Cultures through Humor

An interview with Firoozeh Dumas by Dr. Scott LaMascus and Editor Carla Walker

“The following interview is distilled from a three-hour conversation with Firoozeh Dumas when she visited Oklahoma City last July. We were dizzy from Oklahoma’s hottest summer on record—it was a balmy 105 degrees, down from a record-setting 110 just two days prior. Dizzy or no, we had great fun. It’s too bad the printed page isn’t equipped with a laugh track (we haven’t quite perfected the app for that). Firoozeh is the consummate humorist and relates her journey from Iranian immigrant to American citizen with both cheek and nostalgia. Add to the mix that she married a Frenchman and you’ll understand she has plenty of experience in embracing “the other.”

Information Please—The 4-1-1 on Becoming an Informed Voter

John Greiner

What’s the Matter with Congress?

Cindy Simon Rosenthal and Ronald M. Peters, Jr.

“In their book *Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the New American Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2010), scholars Cindy Simon Rosenthal and Ronald Peters examine contemporary American politics and how Nancy Pelosi navigated social, political, and institutional forces to become the first woman Speaker of the House in U.S. history. Here, they employ that research to show how political trends are making the inner workings of Congress anything but ‘business as usual.’”

The Changing Colors of Oklahoma Politics

Glen Roberson

“From the very beginning, Oklahoma’s political culture sat in a conservative milieu that continues today. Our political legacy is shaped by that not-so distant frontier society, personified by ambitious, independent farmers and ranchers, storekeepers, and indigenous industries like oil and gas. There has never been a wide gap in the Oklahoma mind between homesteader and wildcatter. Dr. Keith Gaddie of the University of Oklahoma stresses that Republican and Democratic leaders drink from the same reservoir of “probusiness” attitudes. Whether the Governor is a Democrat like Lee Cruce and Robert S. Kerr, or a Republican like Dewey Bartlett and Mary Fallin, all promote business investment and growth in the state.”

For Better or Worse—Understanding the Electoral College

Jan Hardt

“Although it has many critics, the Electoral College is our method for selecting the president of the United States. Calls to abolish the system were the subject of bitter public

debate after the 2000 presidential election, when Al Gore won the general election popular vote but lost the Electoral College vote to George W. Bush. That election reminded Americans that voting for president is not just about the popular vote, but rather a convoluted system invented by the Founding Fathers.”

Fall 2011

Unforeseen Beauty and Possibility: A Decade of Discovering Islam

Krista Tippett

“In a perfect world, or at least a perfectly informed one, most Americans would have known something about Islam as the 21st century opened. They would have been aware that over one billion of the world’s people belong to this faith that emerged from the monotheistic soil of Christianity and Judaism. They might also have known that Muslims would soon be the second largest religious group in the U.S., after Christians. And that statistic might have come alive in American imaginations in the form of the doctors and teachers, parents and citizens it represents. But we don’t live in a perfect world. September 11, 2001, was many Americans’ catastrophic introduction to Islam.”

Summer 2011

Dehumanized—When Math and Science Rule the School

Mark Slouka

“The case for the humanities is not hard to make, though it can be difficult. The humanities, done right, are the crucible in which our evolving notions of what it means to be fully human are put to the test; they teach us not what to do, but how to be. Their method is confrontational, their domain unlimited, their “product” not truth but the reasoned search for truth. They are thus, inescapably, political. Why? Because they complicate our vision, pull our most cherished notions out by the roots, flay our pieties. Because they grow uncertainty. Because they expand the reach of our understanding (and therefore our compassion), even as they force us to draw and re-draw the borders of tolerance. Because out of this self-building might emerge an individual formed through questioning and therefore unlikely to cede that right; an individual resistant to coercion, to manipulation and demagoguery. The humanities, in short, are a superb delivery mechanism for what we might call democratic values.”

Found in Translation: Revelations from the Peter Pitchlynn Journal

Marcia Haag with Henry Willis

“Finding a handwritten document by someone as important as Pitchlynn was exciting indeed. Dr. Morgan secured a copy of the journal and brought it to the two people he believed could translate and make something of it—Henry Willis, a native speaker and member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and me, Marcia Haag, Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma. Henry and I have collaborated for several years on projects to preserve the Choctaw language, including two volumes of Choctaw

pedagogical grammars. We agreed with great eagerness to translate the document, completely cognizant that it would be historically important, no matter what it contained, and that it would be a long slog under the best of conditions.”

Religious Liberty and the Confusion over “Separation”

Allen D. Hertzke

“Religious liberty is rightly viewed as the “first freedom” in the American experience, both for its pivotal role in the nation’s history and its place in the Constitution itself. The first sixteen words of the American Bill of Rights embody this exceptional stature: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The adoption of the First Amendment represented a true innovation in the history of the West, a break from a millennia-old pattern of established state churches, state-enforced religious doctrine, and various persecutions of minorities or dissenters.”

Please Reverend, No Politics from the Pulpit

Robin Meyers

“When a minister hears this, he or she knows what it really means: “No politics that I disagree with from the pulpit.” In a state as conservative as Oklahoma, the conservative Republican position is the normative one; therefore, the distribution of voter guides in churches or the endorsement of “God’s candidates” from the pulpit (which occurs regularly around election time in Oklahoma) is not thought to be a violation of the separation of church and state. But if a preacher speaks highly of a Democratic candidate or a policy favored by the Democratic Party, the response is often swift and urgent: No politics from the pulpit!”

Religion in Society: Striking the Balance

Martin H. Belsky

“The separation of church and state is an ideal that has shaped American identity, politics, and history from our country’s beginning. In more recent years, we have witnessed a shift in court decisions, particularly in those by the United States Supreme Court, away from strict separation. What are the implications of this new reality?”

January 2011

A Funny Thing Happened in Line at the Water Fountain

Jay Hannah

“Growing up in Oklahoma’s Adair County during the 1960s, touted at that time as one of the most poverty-stricken counties in the United States, oddly enough provided indelible advantages. It was there that a deep and abiding interest in the study of history was sparked and inextricably embedded into my life. It did not emanate from the usual

student's introduction to history through rote memorization of dates and events; rather, in an innocent moment of connection to the past through the faces of people."

Fall 2010

Immigration Law—How Did We Get Here?

Adam McKeown

"How have we come to believe that immigration control is a fundamental duty of national governments? Why do we even think that human travel can and should be controlled at national borders? How does this belief coexist with the equally common Western ideal that restricting departure from and movement within a nation are basic infringements on human freedom? In a society that prides itself on opportunity and equal treatment under law, why does our government impose quotas and restrict who can and cannot enter our country based on wealth, education, skills, family connections, or country of origin? A look at the history of immigration law can provide insight on these issues."

Historic Preservation—Finding the Human Experience in "Place"

Katie McLaughlin Friddle

"In a profession that walks a fine line between science and art, policy and creativity, preservationists marshal a multitude of sources to quantify those questions. We explain that it is good for the economy to revitalize our communities and environmentally friendly to "recycle" old buildings. We point to the number of jobs created and businesses supported through the rehabilitation of historic places. Exhaustive research into county assessors' records and insurance maps provides facts that herald the "-ness" of a building or place: the first, the last, the oldest, the best of a type or architect."

Summer 2010

Bridging Cultures

Jim Leach

"At a time when the world is in flux and the judgment of its leading democracy is in question, studies in the humanities have never been more important. The United States is currently intertwined in two civil wars more than a third of the way around the world. In making assumptions about the wisdom and manner of intervening in the affairs of other countries, would it be helpful for policy-makers to review the history of the French colonial experience in Algeria, the British and Russian experience in Afghanistan, the French and U.S. experience in Vietnam—before rather than after—a decision to go to war? Would it be useful to study the differences between and within the world's great religions? And would any aspects of our own colonial history be relevant to decision making?"

The Smokescreen of Race in America

Rilla Askew

“The state I grew up in is one of the most segregated places in the country. I know people don’t generally think of Oklahoma that way, but it’s no accident that it’s the only state in the union where Barack Obama did not carry a single county. Consider this: Jim Crow laws were the first laws passed by Oklahoma’s legislature. From the Trail of Tears to the all-black towns to the rush of white settlement in the land runs, Oklahoma’s history created the racial caldron that boiled over into the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921—a conflagration of such scale and violence it forged the separation and silent suspicion that exist to this day.”

Winter 2009

Settling Oklahoma—Women’s Journey Stories

Dr. Terri M. Baker

“While researching documents held in the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma, I came across a letter by a Choctaw woman that transported me to 1841. Rhoda Pitchlynn’s letter to her husband, Peter, is written while he is in “Washington City” on business. She relates her fear that “white people might kill” him and how his children miss him. The letter sparked my interest in the experiences of women of that time and I wondered: Were they like us? So I began to look for clues.”

House of Windows

An interview with Author and Photographer Yousef Khanfar by Carla Walker

“I have lived in two zones, in the Middle East and in America, so I have two families and there’s that big ocean between them. It was sad for me to see September 11, because I saw my people attacking my people. Somehow we have to build bridges of understanding between people, between cultures, between religions. We have to have more tolerance.”

Toward a Better Understanding of Islam

Dr. Charles Kimball

“Despite intense media attention since September 11, 2001, most Americans still know very little about Islam. Much of what people think they know is both incorrect and highly distorted. The dominant images of Islam in the U.S. are distinctly negative. This is a dangerous dynamic in our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Now, perhaps more than ever, it is important that people seek to overcome the ignorance, bias, and fear that have too often characterized relationships between the U.S.—frequently perceived as a Christian nation—and the Middle East, which is assumed to be largely Muslim.”

Summer 2009

Hugh Johnson—The Oklahoman behind FDR's First 100 Days

Larry Johnson

“Oklahoma’s Dust Bowl and Okie migrations became the very symbol of economic devastation during the Great Depression. But in one of the more delicious ironies of state history, Oklahoma’s Hugh S. Johnson became the architect of the first New Deal. On March 4, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt rose on unsteady legs and faced a wary nation to deliver his first inaugural address. Four years into the greatest economic crisis the United States had ever seen—that capitalism had ever seen—the new president sought to stanch the tide of despair and panic, assuring Americans that ‘the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.’”

Fall/Winter 2008

Amazing Grace: How Poets Helped End Slavery in the Atlantic World

James G. Basker

“The year 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. February 2009 will mark the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. As we reflect on this period, James Basker underscores the importance of preserving that history in our collective memory and cultural life. His book, *Amazing Grace*, compiles 15 years of research on the connections between literature and the history of slavery and abolition, research that has deepened his convictions about why literature matters.”

All-Black Towns in Oklahoma: Pride, Prejudice, and Perseverance on the Western Plains

Hannibal B. Johnson

“The all-Black towns offered hope: the prospect of full citizenship; the opportunity to be self-governing; and the chance to participate fully, through land ownership, in the American economic dream. Oklahoma seemed fleetingly to embody the American ideal. She was, it seemed, *El Dorado*, [the golden city of Spanish legend].”

What America Means to Me

Manuel Hogan

Manuel Hogan was one of two winners of the 2008 Colonial Day at the Capitol Literature Contest sponsored earlier this year by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. Colonial Day at the Capitol is an annual event for fifth-graders and is funded in part by a grant from OHC.

Summer 2008

Will Rogers for President!

Joseph H. Carter

“Hundreds of books on [Will] Rogers’ life and the re-release of his movies—he starred in 71 films— have kept alive the near-mythic admiration Oklahomans have for this icon of the common people. Schools, businesses, and a turnpike bear his name. Still, for all that we know and admire about this “Oklahoma Native Son,” many are surprised to hear about his run for the presidency of the United States.”

Truth, Lies, and Duct Tape

Sara Paretsky

“Just as libraries have been heavy losers in contemporary budget wars, they have also been on the front lines of today’s assaults against America’s most cherished liberties. This assault began with, but isn’t limited to, the USA Patriot Act, passed in the feverish fearful weeks immediately after 9/11. Every state in the union has laws, either written or established by legal precedent, to protect the privacy of library patrons: what we read, what we check out, what we look at on-line, is our business.”