Humorist, newspaper columnist, social commentator and actor are a few words to describe William Penn Adair Rogers, better known as Will Rogers. Another is Cherokee. Will was born Nov. 4, 1879, to Clement Vann and Mary America Schrimsher Rogers in Indian Territory near present-day Oologah. Built in 1875, the Birthplace Ranch where Will grew up was known as “the White House on the Verdigris River.”

Clement was a prominent Cherokee politician, and the home was used as a meeting place for summers, government social events and family reunions. Will’s parents owned the home for 20 years, and Will worked as a cowboy on the 400-acre ranch, learning to lasso from a freed slave. He later used that skill on the Vaudeville stage and in movies.

Clement moved to nearby Claremore after Mary died in 1890. However, the family has always owned the home and acreage. Today, the home is preserved and used as an homage to the family.

“We hope people that come to the ranch will see what it was like for the Rogers family in that time in history,” said Tad Jones, Will Rogers Memorial Museum and Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch executive director. “That’s why they come here.”

The ranch hosts annual events such as Family Day, Frontier Days Kids Camp and the Will Rogers/Wiley Post Fly-In. It’s located at 9501 E. 380 Road and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged.

As for Will’s life and career outside the Birthplace Ranch, the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore houses the largest collection of memorabilia and his entire writings collection. According to the website, the memorial has become “a world class museum of paintings, sculptures and other artifacts” about the life and times of Will.

Will died in a plane crash on Aug. 15, 1935, in Point Barrow, Alaska, along with famed aviator Wiley Post. He was buried in California but later interred on the museum’s grounds. According to the website, his wife, Betty, and three of their four children are also buried there. The museum is at 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd. It’s open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $7 for adults and $6 for seniors 62 and older and military personnel with ID. Children ages 6 to 17 are $5 and children under 5 are free. For more information, visit willrogers.com, call 918-343-8116 or email wrinfo@willrogers.com.

MARK DREADFULWATER
Multimedia Editor

OKLAHOMA’S FAVORITE SON

A Will Rogers statue with the inscription “I never met a man I didn’t like” stands in the rotunda of the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore. WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL MUSEUMS

Oh, SHOP CHEROKEE.

Find great gifts close to home. Visit Cherokee Nation Gift Shop in Tahlequah or online.
Just a short walk away from the Grand Lake o’ the Cherokees sits Pine Lodge Resort, a cozy getaway spot with hot tubs, wood-burning fireplaces, charcoal grills and lakefront views.

“We thought we would build a couple of cute little cabins here because there’s a marina next door, and we thought, ‘it’s for people who can’t spend the night on their boat.’ Everybody wanted a place to stay,” owner June Box said. “We’re the only log cabins on Grand Lake. Other places say they’re cabins, but it’s not true.”

The Cherokee Nation citizen and her husband, Art, began building the resort in 1997 and have expanded to 10 log cabins, 18 mobile homes and 27 recreational vehicle slips. The resort also features a clubhouse with a pool, laundry services, a kitchenette and table games.

It’s open year round and located minutes from hiking, a beach, the South Grand Lake Regional Airport and Arrowhead South Marina. The resort also has a membership with the marina that allows guests access to a limited number of boat slips and fine dining. It’s these amenities, and the resort’s location, that draw visitors from across Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas and Texas.

“We’re just about making special memories for people,” June said. “We’ve done so many honeymoons that they come back for anniversaries. It’s a nice getaway for a couple. We also do family reunions, and a lot of people that have companies or their branches, they bring them here for sales meetings or whatever they need.”

The resort can sleep up to 108 people, Art said, and is an annual destination for staff from the University of Tulsa and Oklahoma State University. The Boxes take care to make guests feel welcomed and place laminated nametags on the side of each log cabin before arrival, which Art said lets them know “they’re not just a tag number.”

Each cabin features a king or queen bed, a kitchenette, rock fireplace and private deck with a hot tub. Dishes, utensils, linens, towels and firewood are provided. Summer rates are $198 nightly for the resort’s lakeside cabins, which include a boat dock, and $168 for cabins on the property’s wooded area. A two-night minimum stay on weekends is required. June said there’s a waiting list for the recreational vehicle sites, which include 30-50 amp electrical hookups and a private deck. Annual leases are $235 per month plus electric and cable. Weekly and weekend rental rates are also available.

“We can’t have fun unless you drink” and was just ready to throw in the towel, but someone invited her to a meeting here,” she said. “She came thinking, ‘I really don’t want to be here,’ but then she said she had never laughed so hard and had so much fun in her life without drinking. She said this place here kind of saved her life. She thought it was so beautiful she couldn’t wait to come back.”

Pine Lodge Resort is located at 33635 Dock Road in Afton. For more information, call 918-782-1400 or visit www.pinelodgeresort.com or check Facebook.

BRITTNEY BENNETT
Reporter

Each Pine Lodge Resort cabin is equipped with a queen or king bed, kitchenette, sleeper sofa, rock fireplace and private dining area.

Furnished mobile homes are also available for nightly rentals. The Boxes also manage two homes near the lake – a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house and a four-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath home. Rates and minimum nights vary.

June said guests get something different out of their experiences depending on the reason they visit but that the resort is always an “escape” from life’s stresses.

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FOOD

When Cherokee Nation citizen Mandy Scott took ownership of the Harmony House in Muskogee in 2017, she kept things business as usual. “I have the same wait staff. Some have been here five, six, seven years. The kitchen staff is exactly the same. Everybody has pretty much stayed on since I’ve taken over,” she said. “Everything has just been really smooth and a good transition from the previous (owners) to me, and it’s just been great.”

Scott said she always dreamed of owning a restaurant, and once Harmony House became available, she approached the previous owner without hesitation. “I’ve always kind of wanted my own restaurant, and this was a perfect opportunity for me, just for its history here. It’s a very prestigious landmark for the city of Muskogee. I’m a drumer, and I believe if it’s something you want to do, you at least need to try it.”

Scott said the building is more than a century old and mentioned as a home, church and church before being converted into a tearoom lunch spot. “It’s a tearoom where ladies from all ages come in and have lunch with their best friend or mothers or daughters. It’s definitely a woman’s atmosphere, but we have a lot of men that come in here too because our food is just so good.”

Harmony House is known for menu items such as its chicken sandwich and its nameake club sandwich with chicken, cheese and honey mustard dressing on homemade pitas. Daily specials are also offered and Scott said you get a special. It comes with soup or salad and you get a dessert included with your meal. “She said. Everyone has their special days where they want to come in on ‘their’ day for their favorite.”

“Over the years my staff are Native American, so that’s important to me as well,” Scott said. “It’s important because I have a couple of key employees, at least half are Native American, including the two top bakers. We’re all, you know, traditional Cherokee food, but we do have a different type of food that would be good to incorporate in any party or event that Cherokee Nation would have, especially for our desserts.”

Harmony House is located at 208 S Seventh St. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. Cherokee Nation citizen and Peek-A-Boo Petting Zoo owner Jillian Gates said the zoo, which Cherokee Nation citizen Mandy Scott owns the Harmony House, a tearoom lunch spot located in a century old building in Muskogee. It was first a home, then bank and church before being converted into an eatery.

KIDS

Two donkeys are a part of the farm animal exhibit where visitors can roam the nearly 4-acre grounds and view exhibits offered at the Peek-A-Boo Petting Zoo in Paradise Hill in Sequoyah County.

PEEK-A-BOO!

TO SEE VIDEO

BRITTNEY BENNETT

Two donkeys are a part of the farm animal exhibit where visitors can roam the nearly 4-acre grounds and view exhibits offered at the Peek-A-Boo Petting Zoo in Paradise Hill in Sequoyah County.

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Field offices in Bartlesville, Claremore, Jay, Muskogee, Pryor, Sallisaw, Stilwell, Tulsa, Vinita, and West Siloam Springs
The store has been open for nearly two years. It opened on July 2, 2016, and Barnes said it “keeps getting better.” She said the store “has grown a lot” and foot traffic has increased. She said she incorporates into her bracelets and cuffs.

“Beading for me is so much more than making jewelry. It’s my meditation, it’s a way to connect with my heritage, and it just brings me peace and healing,” Barnes said. “It helps you focus, especially when you’re working with one bead at a time. You kind of have to focus.

The beadwork comes from our Native American heritage (Cherokee/Delaware). A lot of our designs incorporate a Peyote Stitch pattern. We have an open door policy. If anyone needs help with a (beadwork) project they can come in and we can give them whatever tips they need,” she said.

Barnes, who operates her store with the help of Kelly McCracken and Naomi Park, is an artist who enjoys beading and sharing her beading knowledge.

“One thing we are doing right now is we are starting to reach out to women to help them to learn how to bead. For me, it was extra income beading. I had to teach myself everything, so it’s nice for me to be able to show them the short cuts, and I can tell them where to find supplies. I touch individual classes, too,” Barnes said. “We are reaching people who don’t have the means, so we can help supply them. Hopefully it takes off.”

She said the sum of the beadwork classes, which are held the heurang, is to help women learn to bead so that they can possibly have an income or extra income.

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Barnes said the “joy” she gets from helping people learn to bead is the main reason she shares her skills. She said seeing people’s eyes light up when she’s sharing her knowledge for free makes her happy. “I’ve been there where I’ve asked people, ‘how do you this?’ and they want to guard it (in¬formation). I don’t want them to go through what I went through researching and Googling nonstop or even buying books to learn myself. So I can give them a shortcut and make it easier for them.”

She said another way to give back is creating how-to videos for beadwork that will be placed on the Native Uniques website.

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The storefront has been open for nearly two years. It opened on July 2, 2016, and Barnes said it “keeps getting better.” She said the store “has grown a lot” and foot traffic has increased. She credits a previous Cherokee Phoenix article and inclusion in its Shopping Guide for helping her business take off and gain momentum.

“It’s amazing that they are able to support tribal artists and get the word out,” she said. “And I will say the best marketing is by the word of mouth. When they come in and see the product and see, ‘Oh, this is what this looks like,’ that’s when the marketing starts. Word of mouth is always the best marketing.”

She said the city has been helping, too, as it promotes its downtown to bring in more people to shop and explore the area that includes three museums, boutiques and restaurants. Barnes said the store is that Barnes often has fun with her stuff and customers. “One of my biggest struggles is that it’s just awesome making those connections. It’s good to wake up and want to come to work,” she said.

Native Uniques is at 101 S.E. Frank Philips Blvd. Hours are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 918-214-3142 or visit www.nativeuniques.com or the shop’s Facebook page.

By Will Chavez

Native Uniques owner Samantha Barnes carefully stitches a bead onto a cuff. The boutique is located in Bartlesville and offers women’s clothing and jewelry.

One thing we are doing right now is we are starting to reach out to women to help them to learn how to bead. Samantha Barnes, Native Uniques owner

"One thing we are doing right now is we are starting to reach out to women to help them to learn how to bead. Samantha Barnes, Native Uniques owner

Native Uniques owner Samantha Barnes, left, assists a customer with clothing in the boutique located in Bartlesville. The women’s clothing store also has unique handmade Native American-style jewelry, including bracelets, necklaces and earrings.
FOR ADULTS

Cherokee Casino & Hotel Tulsa
From its modern hotel to the gaming floor, this 1.3 million-square-foot resort offers guests rock star treatment. Casino contains more than 3,200 electronic games, 36 table games and 14 poker tables while being surrounded by some of the world’s greatest rock memorabilia. The facility also has a 53 TV sports bar, Cherokee Hills Golf Course, as well as the musical venues Riffs, Center Bar and the Back 40 Bar and Grill. The facility also has 300 simultaneous TVs that broadcast live horse racing daily as well as on-site wagering kiosks for off-track betting. More than 200 electronic gaming machines make up the casino floor. The Dog Iron Grill features home-style cooking daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. along with a late night menu on Friday and Saturday until 1 a.m. For additional entertainment, stop in at Dog Iron Saloon a dance hall where you can enjoy live music every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The property also offers a 400-seat conference center with 2,700 seats and a 1-mile racetrack. It also offers 31,974-square-foot property is at 31501 U.S. Hwy 75.

Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville
Located along the Oklahoma Kansas line, this property features a spacious gaming floor and a full-service bar and grill. Alongside electronic games, it has The Bar and Grill, which is open daily and in close proximity. A large beer menu, as well as appetizers, soups and salads, entrees, salads, burgers and desserts. The 17,000-square-foot center is at 200 S. Highway 30.

Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs
Located in Claremore, Cherokee Will Rogers Downs, 12,240-square-foot complex is one of two racinos in Oklahoma and offers live music, dining and more. With live horse racing in the spring and fall, it features a 10,000-square-foot covered, open-air grandstand with 1,390 seats and a is attached racetrack. It also has 100 simulated TVs that broadcast live horse racing daily as well as on-site wagering kiosks for off-track betting. More than 200 electronic gaming machines make up the casino floor. The Dog Iron Grill features home-style cooking daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. along with a late night menu on Friday and Saturday until 1 a.m. For additional entertainment, stop in at Dog Iron Saloon a dance hall where you can enjoy live music every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The property also offers a 140-seat venue featuring the area’s largest dance floor and local and nationally renowned entertainers three nights a week. The hotel has 189 rooms, including seven suites. The property also offers 8,558 square feet of banquet and meeting space. It’s located at 2400 S Highway 412.

Cherokee Casino Grove
Cherokee Casino Grove sits moments away from Grand Lake, just north of Grove. Guests can step into the 36,000-square-foot gaming floor that has nearly 400 electronic games. Its Grove Springs Restaurant offers a full menu of breakfast, lunch and dinner. The property also has a 140-seat venue featuring the area’s largest dance floor and locally renowned entertainers three nights a week, as well as the musical venues Riffs, Center Bar and The Joint – a dance hall. The facility also has a family-friendly 51-television sports bar, Cherokee Hills Golf Course, and its Grove Springs Restaurant offers a full menu of breakfast, lunch and dinner. It also offers 33,000-square-foot property is at 1506 N. Highway 169.

Cherokee Casino West Siloam Springs
As the closest casino to northwest Arkansas, Cherokee Casino West Siloam Springs has a hotel, live entertainment, fine and casual dining and full-service bars. Inside the more-than-365,000-square-foot facility, there are 2,300 electronic games, 18 table games and its River City Café is open seven days a week. There are two eatery options also, The Buffet and a grab-and-go option that includes fruit smoothies, pastries and sandwiches. The property also offers more than 6,000 square feet of meeting and banquet rooms. It’s located at 777 W. Cherokee St. in Catoosa.

Cherokee Casino Sallisaw
The Four Winds Casino & Resort offers nearly 360 electronic gaming machines to play, and its Ramona Grill serves foods from specialty burgers to homemade Indian tacos. For guests on the go, the Ramona Grill also offers a “grab n’ go” option that includes fruit smoothies, pastries and sandwiches. The property also offers more than 1,200 electronic games. Its River City Café is open seven days a week. There are two eatery options also, The Buffet and a grab-and-go option that includes fruit smoothies, pastries and sandwiches. The property also offers more than 6,000 square feet of meeting and banquet rooms. It’s located at 777 W. Cherokee St. in Catoosa.

Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson
Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson features more than 20,000 square feet of gaming, dining and entertainment space. Gaming options consist of more than 300 electronic machines with weekly and monthly promotions. The Three Rivers Tavern is a restaurant offering all-American favorites from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Thursday through Sunday and until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. It also offers an extensive drink menu that includes wines, beers and specialty cocktails.

Cherokee Casino Roland
Located at 777 W. Cherokee St. in Catoosa.

Cherokee Casino Fort Smith
Cherokee Casino Fort Smith offers nearly 500 electronic gaming machines to play, and its Ramona Grill serves foods from specialty burgers to homemade Indian tacos. It’s at 31501 U.S. Hwy 75.

Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville
Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville, which is located at 107 N. Georgetown St., has The Bar and Grill, which is open until 2 a.m. seven days a week. There are two eatery options also, The Buffet and a grab-and-go option that includes fruit smoothies, pastries and sandwiches. The property also offers 18 table games and its 369,000-square-foot property is at 107 N. Georgetown St.

Cherokee Casino Tahlequah
The Cherokee Casino Tahlequah has Cherokee artworoks surrounding its inside as well as a gaming floor featuring more than 400 electronic games. Its River City Café is open seven days a week in a full-service restaurant and offers all-American favorites from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Thursday through Sunday and until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. It also offers an extensive drink menu that includes wines, beers and specialty cocktails.

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WHERE TO GO

SPOTS TO HIT

CHEROKEE PHOENIX

1. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino: 777 W. Cherokee St., Catoosa
2. Cherokee Casino Ramona: 3100 US Hwy 75
3. Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville: 1206 N. Hwy 169
4. Will Rogers Down: 2000 S. 4200 Road, Claremore
5. Cherokee Casino Grove: Hwy 99 & E. 250 Road
6. Cherokee Casino & Hotel West Siloam Springs: 2416 Hwy 412
7. Cherokee Casino Tahlequah: 16480 Hwy 62
8. Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson, 107 N. Georgetown Road & State Hwy 62

Cherokee Casinos

1. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino: 777 W. Cherokee St., Catoosa
2. Cherokee Casino Ramona: 3100 US Hwy 75
3. Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville: 1206 N. Hwy 169
4. Will Rogers Down: 2000 S. 4200 Road, Claremore
5. Cherokee Casino Grove: Hwy 99 & E. 250 Road
6. Cherokee Casino & Hotel West Siloam Springs: 2416 Hwy 412
7. Cherokee Casino Tahlequah: 16480 Hwy 62
8. Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson, 107 N. Georgetown Road & State Hwy 62

Businesses

2. Hi-Way Café: 473014 E. Hwy 68, Vinita
4. Riverside Resort: 5116 Hwy 10, Tahlequah
5. Arrowhead Floats: 7704 N. Hwy 10, Tahlequah
6. Peyton’s Place Resort: 10298 Hwy 10, Tahlequah
7. Falcon Floats: 16326 Hwy 10, Tahlequah
8. Skatehouse: 1518 N. Grand Ave., Tahlequah
10. Cherokee Heritage Center: 21182 S. Keeler Drive, Park Hill
11. Cherokee Nation Gift Shop: 17725 S. Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah
12. Wheelhouse Kitchen: 131112 W. Hwy 100, Webbers Falls
13. Stop 2 Shop Roadhouse Bargains: 111 S. Hwy 100, Webbers Falls
14. Morning Sky Boutique: 106 S. Thornton St., Vian

MAP: TERRY OSBURN

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