



First Jenks Arkansas River Bridge



## JENKS AMERICA MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# JAM NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 2. 2025

### A lot is happening with the JAM



The Jenks America Museum & Historical Society is pleased to welcome Angie Huffman Duntz to the board of director's as vice president.

As the president of the Jenks Chamber of Commerce, Angie brings invaluable experience and strong community leadership to this role. In her previous position at the Goddard, Ks. Chamber of Commerce, her strategic planning and leadership efforts more than doubled the Chamber's membership and budget, greatly expanding its impact.

Beyond her professional and community contributions, Angie is also an accomplished speechwriter, an experienced event planner, and a state record holder in powerlifting. She states she's excited to learn more about the history of Jenks America in her new role.

We are thrilled to have her on our team—welcome, Angie!

*Thank You  
Lonnie Sims*

Tulsa County Commissioner  
Dist. 2

For your generous contribution to  
the Jenks America Museum &  
Historical Society

[www.jenksameriamuseum.org](http://www.jenksameriamuseum.org)

### Thank you, Lonnie Sims

The Jenks America Museum & Historical Society has received a generous donation from District 2 Tulsa County Commissioner Lonnie Sims. Lonnie's donation will bring the Jenks America Museum a step closer to opening a museum for the city of Jenks.

Lonnie is a former mayor of Jenks and a strong supporter of the Jenks America Museum. Please join us in thanking him for his important donation.



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## Where Jenks Got Its Name and a State Called Sequoyah

By Brian Sherman

Do you know why Jenks is called Jenks and about efforts to change the city's name to something else? Have you ever wondered where Tulsa's first post office was located? Were you aware that Native Americans living in Oklahoma petitioned the U.S. government to allow them to create their own state?

You could have learned all about the answers to these burning questions – in most cases – and much more if you had attended “The Beginning of a City” at the Jenks Library Feb. 15. The presentation by Dr. Eric Fox, an event sponsored by the Jenks America Museum & Historical Society, was also streamed online and is available on the JAM Facebook page.

So where did Jenks get its name? According to Fox, former history teacher and current assistant principal at Jenks High School, the book titled *Oklahoma Place Names* claims the city was named after Albert E. Jenks, a longtime local resident who served as the postmaster. However, *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History*, which is published by the state's historical society, gives credit to William Henry Jenks, an executive in the Philadelphia headquarters of the Midland Valley Railroad, which passed through Jenks on the way from Fort Smith to Kansas, beginning in 1903.

Regardless of which story you choose to believe, you should have no problem accepting the fact that Tulsa's first post office was located at 36th and Utica. But before we move on to that thing about Oklahoma's Native Americans wanting their own state, there's one more chapter in history to discuss concerning the name of our town – the one about televangelist Oral Roberts asking local officials to annex his campus on the other side of the Arkansas River and change the name of the town to Riverside. It seems that he was having trouble getting the necessary permits to build a hospital from the city of Tulsa and felt like he'd be more successful with the leaders of the much smaller municipality. But why the name change? JAM Board Member Wayne Parker told the group of 30 people who attended Dr. Fox's presentation that Roberts was laboring under the delusion that “Jenks is a nice town, but it needs to upgrade its image.”

Long before local leaders rebuffed Roberts' request to change the town's name, in 1905, tribal leaders met in Muskogee and voted to petition Congress to establish the state of Sequoyah. President Teddy Roosevelt didn't like the idea, their request was denied and, two years later, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory were combined to form what would become the nation's 46th state: Oklahoma. Fox's talk, the first of many to be presented by JAM, delved into several other important topics related to the history of Jenks, from the Civil War –

Native Americans fought on both sides – to the Dawes Commission, established in 1893 to encourage the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma to cede their tribal lands and adopt a policy of individual allotments to the discovery oil in the Red Fork area in 1901. Founded five years later, the oil boom made Jenks into a “wildcatter town – chaotic dangerous, cutthroat and disorganized,” Fox pointed out. Its population when statehood arrived in 1907 was 465.

How chaotic was it? Fox related a story about a baseball game between the residents of Jenks and those who lived in nearby Bixby.

“People were going to talk about economic development and have a baseball game. Somebody made a \$2 bet, but, more important, somebody brought a lot of liquor. There was a little baseball, a lot of drinking, an argument and, the way the story goes, a brawl between Bixby and Jenks people.”

JAM’s next presentation is scheduled for April 26 at 10:30 a.m.at the Jenks Library. Three lifelong Jenks residents – Helen Duckert, Janis Engle and Jay Creekmore – will share their experiences growing up in Jenks and relate memorable stories from the past.



JENKS AMERICA MUSEUM  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**YOU ARE INVITED TO:  
A CONVERSATION WITH THREE LIFELONG JENKS  
RESIDENTS**

**HELEN DUCKERT, JANIS ENGLE AND JAY CREEKMORE**

Join us or a special event featuring three lifelong Jenks residents as they share their experiences growing up in Jenks and memorable stories from the past.

- EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:**
- History Presentation
  - Q&A Session
  - Light Refreshments

**SPEAKERS**

Jenks Lifers: Helen Duckert, Janis Engle and Jay Creekmore

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 26, 2025 AT 10:30  
JENKS CITY LIBRARY**



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!  
FIND MORE INFORMATION AT  
[WWW.JENKSAMERICAMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.JENKSAMERICAMUSEUM.ORG)



ENTRY FEE:  
**FREE**  
This event will be live streamed on Facebook on the Jenks America Museum & Historical Society page

**April JAM Meeting**

Tuesday

April 8, 2025 5:30 PM

Louie’s Gril & Bar Jenks

**JAM Sponsored By**



**TEDFORD  
INSURANCE**