

Perkins, Oklahoma



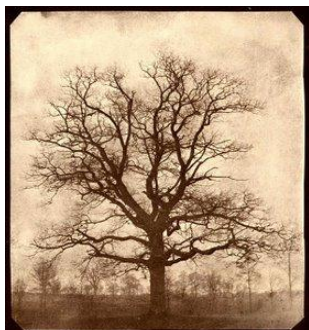
Located in southern Payne County along the north bank of the Cimarron River, Perkins was established in 1889 shortly after the land run by William A. Knipe. Originally known as "Cimarron" and "Italy," the town was named in honor of U.S. Sen. Bishop W. Perkins of Kansas, who used his official powers in Washington, D.C. to secure a post office. As it was impossible to secure the legally requisite 150 settlers in order to register the townsite, Knipe directed the settlement to be laid out using fictitious names. As settlers came in, real names replaced the fictitious ones on lot stakes, and a town patent was issued on August 25, 1891.

The availability of transportation aided the community from the time of its birth. The first wagon bridge across the Cimarron River in Oklahoma Territory was built at Perkins during the summer of 1891. The 740-foot-long structure was finished only three weeks before the September 22 opening of the Iowa and Sac and Fox reservations to the south, making Perkins the "gateway" to the new country. With the arrival of the Eastern Oklahoma Railway (a subsidiary of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway) line, which served Perkins from January 1900, the community was firmly established as a trade center. The area economy depended on agriculture, especially cotton, wheat, and corn.

Typical small-town, agriculture-oriented enterprises grew up in Perkins. A downtown area developed, only briefly set back by a fire in May 1913 that burned five buildings. The Perkins Telephone Company, an industry pioneer established in 1895, was an early provider of telephone service in Oklahoma Territory, with lines connecting Perkins with Chandler, Carney, Tryon, Guthrie, Langston, Stillwater, Pawnee, Morrison, and Perry. In 1912 and 1914, respectively, city water and electric light systems were installed.

Perkins's population stayed steady at 600 to 700 from 1900 to 1960. In 1967 local developer Harland B. Wells formed Oklahoma State Development Company and over the next thirty years added four hundred residential home sites and 298 single-family residences to the community. Within three years Perkins was home to 1,029, and by 1980, 1,762 people. Into the twenty-first century many residents have lived in Perkins and worked in Stillwater and other nearby towns.

Perkins was home to Frank "Pistol Pete" Eaton, author, scout, cowboy, deputy U.S. marshal, and living likeness of the Oklahoma State University mascot. Perkins is also home to the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. The community has continued to grow because of its school system, its low cost of living, and its proximity to Stillwater. Perkins is served by U.S. Highway 177 (originally State Highway 40). The 2000 census recorded a population of 2,272. A commission-manager form of administration guides the town. The Perkins Downtown Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR 00001578).



Ghost Hollow Legend

Near the city of Cushing in Payne County, this haunted location that has been dubbed Ghost Hollow. Located about a mile north of the Cimarron River, in the late 1800's Ghost Hollow was an ideal spot for hanging outlaws. According to legend there was an old elm tree and a sycamore there where lawbreakers were often strung up. The elm tree is said to still stand today. According to legend, an innocent man was hanged there in 1887 and the next day, all of the bark mysteriously fell off of the tree. From that night on, at the time of the full moon, the tree is said to glow an eerie, white color. The natural effects of having no bark in the light of the moon.