



OKLAHOMA HERITAGE Association
GAYLORD-PICKENS Museum

HERITAGE TIMES

Telling Oklahoma's Story Through Its People

GENEROSITY • INDIVIDUALISM • OPTIMISM • PERSEVERANCE • PIONEER SPIRIT

In **Lesson 8** students will explore some of the personalities that have played a role in Oklahoma's arts history.

Featured Oklahomans

Yvonne Chouteau
TeAta Fisher
Wilson Hurley
Jay O'Meilie
Augusta Metcalfe
Ed Ruscha
Nan Sheets
Maria Tallchief Paschen
Willard Stone

Yvonne Chouteau

Born in Vinita, Chouteau is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Major Jean Pierre Chouteau who established the oldest known white settlement in what is now Oklahoma. She made her first public appearance at the age of 3-1/2, when the Oklahoma Memorial Association, now the Oklahoma Heritage Association, invited her to ride on her own float in the Silver Anniversary Statehood Day parade in Oklahoma City. Her first national appearance came in Chicago during "A Century of Progress" where she represented Oklahoma on American Indian Day.

In 1943, she signed her first professional contract with the world famed Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and became the youngest American ever to become a member of the group. Chouteau and her husband, Miguel Terekhov, brought distinction to Norman and the University of Oklahoma when they became Artists in Residence, making O.U. the first university in the nation to have a ballerina on the permanent faculty.

Elementary Activity: Design a float to the one Chouteau rode on.

Secondary Activity: Explain the impact Chouteau had on the University of Oklahoma by becoming a member of the faculty.



TeAta Fisher

Born near Tishomingo in the Chickasaw Nation, Fisher is regarded as "the Modern Pocahontas." She earned her degree at the Oklahoma College for Women (now USAO) in Chickasha.

She first told her Native American stories as a means to finance her acting career in New York. Eventually, her storytelling blossomed into the craft for which she was so widely known. Te Ata's programs consisted of native legend myths, chants, and old rituals in gorgeous costumes native to her culture. She performed extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad until the late 1970s. She was a member of the National Congress of American Indians and became a close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. Te Ata was named Oklahoma's first State Treasure in 1987.

Elementary Activity: Comprise brief family stories, props are encouraged.

Secondary Activity: Explore the history and growth of the Chickasaw Nation.



Jay O'Meilie

O'Meilie graduated from Tulsa Central High School and received his art education at George Washington University, Art Students League of New York, the Chicago Academy of Fine Art, the University of Texas, and Cape School of Art.

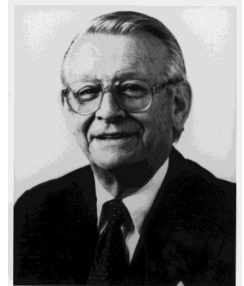
After his military service ended, O'Meilie became a professional artist and began an award-winning career. His works are in the country's lead-

ing art galleries and museums such as the Smithsonian and the National Academy of Design. Well known for his paintings of sports scenes, he co-created a Vietnam-era infantryman bronze Oklahoma War Veterans Memorial and *Oil Patch Warrior*, a 7' bronze salute to American and British oil workers of World War II, which stands in England's Sherwood Forest.

Elementary Activity:

Create a monument to Oklahoma veterans.

Secondary Activity: Explore the processes in creating a large piece like the *Oil Patch Warrior*.



Words of Wisdom
from the Oklahoma
Hall of Fame

"It was romance. Certainly in the beginning, you wanted nothing else but to dance. It was your life, your happiness...the nearer to perfection the better, and of course one never reaches that. You're always striving. It was extremely soul-satisfying."

-Yvonne Chouteau
 Inducted 1947

"A painting shows a view of the world that's been passed through another's mind. Love is not cadmium orange. There's no color you can mix, there's no line you can draw, that will put feeling into a painting. But if you go to the canvas with love and joy in your heart, somehow it comes off on the canvas."

-Wilson Hurley
 Inducted 1995

"I feel like anything I do in my art springs from attitudes I had when I was 16 years old living in the Sooner State."

-Ed Ruscha
 Inducted 2005

Nan Sheets

Living briefly in Bartlesville and Muskogee, Sheets moved to Oklahoma City in 1916. In 1919 she began summer classes at the Broadmoor Academy of Fine Arts in Colorado Springs.

Sheets dubbed her Oklahoma City house "The Elms" and turned it into a salon for local and visiting artists. Each summer she traveled, studied, and painted and upon her return offered her summer's works for sale. In demand as lecturer, juror, and judge across the country, she was invited to co-manage Oklahoma's earliest

New Deal project, and eighteen months later she became director of the WPA Experimental Art Gallery and later the WPA Oklahoma Art Center.

When World War II ended federal involvement in art centers, Nan Sheets and other art supporters infused the Oklahoma City center with new life as a museum. For the rest of her career she was closely aligned with the growth of the Oklahoma Art Center. During its early years she was the only paid staff member. Nan Sheets re-

tired as director of the Oklahoma Art Center in 1965.



Elementary Activity: Put on a classroom art show.
Secondary Activity: Explore local artists and identify the differences in the mediums they choose.

Maria Tallchief Paschen

Born in Fairfax, Paschen moved with her parents to California where she graduated from Beverly Hills High School. She made her debut as a dancer in Canada with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and soon garnered fame across America and around the world as a premier ballerina.

She married the famed teacher George Balanchine



early in her career and was instrumental in the establishment of the New York City Ballet, where she became a prima ballerina. She was honored along with four other Oklahoma Indian ballerinas with a mural at the State Capitol in 1991 and was one of five artists to receive the Kennedy Center Honors in 1996. She was named an Oklahoma Treas-

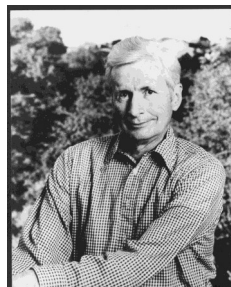
ure and the documentary "En Pointe: The Lives and Legacies of Ballet's Native Americans" featuring Oklahoma's five ballerinas debuted in 2000.

Elementary Activity: View the documentary as a class.
Secondary Activity: Explore the term "prima ballerina" and determine how a ballerina earns the title.

Wilson Hurley

A Tulsa native, Hurley was a practicing attorney and banker for 13 years before he sat preparing a will for a dying friend and decided to become an artist full time.

Hurley graduated from West Point and holds a law degree from George Washington University. He served as a pilot in World War II and



as a forward air controller in Vietnam. After leaving his law practice he began his career as a landscape artist and is regarded as a master of the western landscape and is a founding member of the National Academy of Western Art. He has received numerous awards and honors, including the Prix de West Award. His "Windows to the

West" is a destination at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

Elementary Activity: Create a drawing with 5 hidden objects.
Secondary Activity: Many of Hurley's paintings were grossly oversized. Explore the techniques he might have used in creating his masterpieces.

Augusta Metcalfe

Metcalfe moved with her family to Oklahoma at the age of six. She was herding cattle for her parents by the age of eight and later herded cattle for hire at 17-cents per head per month. It was while she was herding cattle that she began drawing cattle brands, horses, cattle, and dogs.

She was a single mother at the age of 27 and raised cattle, horses, and foxhounds.

She took first prize in an art contest at the Oklahoma City Fair in 1911. In 1949 she was the subject of a one-woman art show in Oklahoma City. One

year later *LIFE* Magazine printed two full color pages of her work. Thomas Edison, Harry Lauder, and General Douglas MacArthur were among her fans.

Metcalfe lived for 75 years on the same homestead near Durham, Oklahoma and her paintings vividly depict and preserve the pioneer life she knew.

Elementary Activity:

Choose a friend or family member to send a letter to and decorate the envelope before mailing.

Secondary Activity: Explore the scenery during the period of Metcalfe's life. What would she have seen? What might she have used as a model or backdrop?



Did you Know? from the Oklahoma Hall of Fame

The name **TeAta** means “bearer of the morning.”

Jay O’Meilia was a Navy Artist in World War II and in the Korean War.

Augusta Metcalfe used to draw on envelopes before putting them into the mail. She was known as the “Sagebrush Artist,” the “Prairie Painter,” and the “Grandma Moses” of Oklahoma.

Willard Stone

Born in Oktaha, Stone knew at a very early age, knew he wanted to be an artist. Drawing and painting were his preferred medium until an accident at the age of 13 caused the loss of portions of two fingers and a thumb.

Following several years of sculpting with clay, Stone enrolled at Bacone Indian College. Working under two renowned Native American artists, Stone quickly evolved into his style of sculpting wood. Although he

gained national recognition while still in college and subsequently received valuable assistance from Thomas Gilcrease and his Institute of

American History and Art, for many years he had to support his growing family by working odd jobs. It would be years later before the demand for his work enabled him to devote full time to his art. Stone’s



greatest contribution was his ability to incorporate the wood grain in his designs.

Elementary Activity:

Use Oklahoma’s red clay to create a sculpture. **Secondary Activity:** View the Gilcrease Museum website and study Stone’s use of the wood grain in creating his sculptures.

Ed Ruscha

Internationally recognized painter, printmaker, photographer and filmmaker Ruscha worked as a paperboy for *The Daily Oklahoman* and graduated from Northwest Classen High School before moving to Los Angeles to attend the Chouinard Art Institute.

By the early sixties he was well known as an artist through the progressive Ferus Gallery group and later achieved recognition for his many outstanding photographic books – including

his book *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*, containing photographs of gasoline stations along Route 66 between Oklahoma and L.A., a painting of the landmark Hollywood sign, and other subjects. *Architectural Digest* named Ruscha among the most significant contributors to the world of art in the 20th century and he completed a 30-foot by 12-foot painting, *Picture Without Words*, for the auditorium of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Elementary Activity:

Choose a common element—like Ruscha’s gas stations—and compile a portfolio.

Secondary Activity: Ruscha has a unique style. Compare his style to that of Metcalfe.



Educational opportunities annually offered by the **Oklahoma Heritage Association** include:

- More than \$4,000,000 in scholarships to high school students.
- Heritage Week competitions for students in grades 3 through 12.
- Teen Board for students grades 9-12.
- Interactive Versus Series compare and contrast an Oklahoman from our past with his or her contemporary.
- Field trips to the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum—voted Nickelodeon’s Parents’ Choice Best Pick for Teens.
- “I Am Oklahoma” program for students of all ages.
- *Oklahoma: Magazine of the Oklahoma Heritage Association* is distributed to high school libraries statewide.

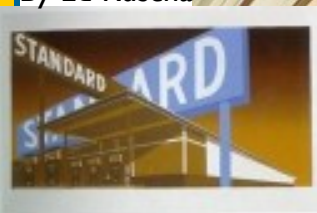
By Nan Sheets



By Wilson Hurley



By Ed Ruscha



By Mike Larsen



By Augusta Metcalfe

By Jay O’Meilia



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