

Ponca City Yesterday

A Historical Time Line of Ponca City, Oklahoma

- 1719
 - A French expedition from St. Louis explored overland and discovered an established village on the Arkansas River. It is believed that this village may have been the one in Kay County which in later years became known as Fredinandina. This was perhaps the first of the white man with Native Americans in what became Oklahoma.
- 1803
 - The Louisiana Purchase added to the territorial U.S.
- 1806
 - November. Lt. Wilkinson and five men from the Pike expedition explored the Arkansas River in northern Oklahoma by boat. It was an early winter, and they fought the bitter cold and ice.
- 1818
 - A faction of the Cherokee Nation signed a treaty with the federal government and moved to western Arkansas and northeastern Indian Territory.
- 1828
 - May. The US Congress ratified a treaty which guaranteed the Cherokees “free and unmolested use” of a perpetual outlet west. The Cherokee Outlet, or Strip, was created.
- 1838
 - The majority of the Cherokee Nation was compelled to join the rest of the tribe in Indian Territory on the “Trail of Tears”. Of the 16,000 who started, 4,000 died on the forced march.
- 1858
 - The Ponca Tribe, a small, friendly, agricultural tribe, accepted an agreement with the federal government for a reservation in South Dakota from which they could not be moved without their permission.
- 1861-1865
 - The Civil War
- 1866
 - July 19. The US government and the Cherokee Nation signed an agreement under which tribes friendly to the Cherokees could be resettled in the Outlet.
 - Great herds of cattle were driven from Texas to the railhead towns in Kansas via trails across the Outlet.
- 1870-1881
 - The Osage, Pawnee, Nez Perce, Tonkawa, Ponca, Otoe, and Missouriia were assigned reservations in the Outlet.
- 1875
 - Continental Oil founded in Ogden, Utah.
- 1877
 - The Ponca nation was forced to leave its lands in South Dakota against its will and move to Oklahoma. A large number died on the trail and during the first harsh winter. Standing Bear, one of the chiefs, left the Outlet with several tribal members

in an attempt to return to South Dakota. He was arrested, imprisoned and tried in Nebraska. The trial was a landmark case. In the judge's decision, Native Americans were finally declared "people" within the meaning of United States law.

- 1879
 - Colonel George Miller founded the 101 Ranch on land leased from the Otoe and Ponca tribes. He lived in Winfield, Kansas.
- 1880
 - Groups of would-be settlers, known as "Boomers", invaded Indian Territory in an attempt to force Congress to open the lands to settlement. A large tent city was erected on the east side of the river from the current location of Blackwell. Troops removed the settlers.
- 1883
 - A group of ranchers met at Caldwell, Kansas, and formed the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association. This organization leased the Strip from the Cherokees, divided it into individual ranges, and continued to hold the grazing rights until 1891.
- 1889
 - The federal government attempted to purchase the Outlet from the Cherokee Nation for \$1.25 an acre, but the Cherokees were reluctant. They were collecting grazing fees and had an offer from the livestock syndicate of \$3 an acre.
- 1891
 - February 17. President Benjamin Harrison yielded to pressure from the prospective settlers and issued a proclamation denying the cattlemen further use of the grazing lands, thereby terminating the fees paid to the Cherokees.
 - December. The Cherokee Nation signed an agreement with the federal government to sell 6,000,000 acres of the Outlet for \$8,595,736 or approximately \$1.40 an acre.
- 1892
 - Nation-wide depression
- 1893
 - March 3. Congress authorized the opening of the Cherokee Outlet to settlement.
 - June. Burton Seymour Barnes traveled from Adrian, Michigan, to Arkansas City, Kansas, with the idea to found a city in the Outlet when it was opened.
 - July-August. B.S. Barnes traveled and explored the land to be opened in search of a good location for the city.
 - August 17. President Grover Cleveland issued a proclamation that the outlet would be opened for settlement on September 16 by a run.
 - September 14. The *Ponca City Democrat* was printed in Arkansas City for distribution on the 16th. The first office would be a tent at First and Cleveland, barricaded with bales of hay to stop the stray bullets which flew fast and furious that night.
 - September 16. The run and the founding of Ponca City.
 - November 16. Ponca City's first school opened. It was two rooms totaling 2,050 square feet, with three unpaid teachers. Five thousand people attended a celebration.
- 1894
 - January. "New Ponca" Post Office opened.
 - Two churches were built, the Presbyterian and the E.M. (or Methodist)
 - May. The Cherokee Strip's first electric lights were turned on in Ponca City.

- September 16. Population 2,000. There were three schools and a contract for a complete water works. A steam flour mill was operating and milling 100 barrels a day.
- There was a drought in Oklahoma Territory.
- 1895
 - Ponca City was chartered as a village.
 - April 19. The cornerstone was laid for the Santa Fe depot.
 - May. The first two students graduated from the Ponca City school.
 - The drought continued.
- 1896
 - The Northern Oklahoma Telephone Company completed the telephone exchange in Ponca City. They had 30 customers and a 100 phone capacity.
 - Fall. A limestone school was completed on the present location of the East Junior High.
 - Henry Ford built his first automobile.
- 1897
 - The Arcade Hotel was moved from Cross to Ponca City.
 - Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska
 - Ponca City got its first daily newspaper, the Republican *Daily Courier*.
 - First commercial oil well in Oklahoma was drilled 70 miles east of Ponca City.
- 1898
 - February. The US declared war on Spain following the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor.
 - July 1. The Rough Riders charged San Juan Hill on foot when the commissary failed to transport their horses.
- 1899
 - Ponca City was incorporated as a city.
 - Long distance phone service came to town.
 - The limestone school was expanded.
- 1900
 - There were 45 states in the union and less than 150 total miles of paved roads. The average worker earned \$.22 an hour.
 - April 11. Fire destroyed the entire north side of East Grand between 2nd and 3rd Streets. A limestone firewall had been defective, allowing the fire to spread. Twelve buildings and fifteen businesses were destroyed. After the fire, every building in this block was built of brick.
 - June. The Pabst Brewing Company, owner of the building in which had burned, donated two hose carts with 6 foot wheels to the City fire department.
 - September 8. Galveston hurricane and flood.
 - \$4,000 was appropriated by the City Council to build a new brick city hall at 5th and Grand. The funds came from saloon licenses and fine for public drunkenness.
- 1901
 - President McKinley was assassinated and Teddy Roosevelt became President.
 - The original frame school house was cut in half. Half was moved to the NW part of town, while the other half was moved to South 6th street for Negro children.
 - Ponca City's population was 2,500 and ragtime jazz developed in the U.S.
 - Kiowa Comanche lands opened for settlement with land assigned by lottery to avoid a "disorderly run".

- **1902**
 - The United States acquired the Panama Canal.
 - February 1. The Farmers National Bank (now 1st National Bank & Trust) opened in town.
- **1903**
 - Charles H. Ruby, Ponca City grocer, organized the Ponca City Oil, Gas, and Mineral Company and sold stock to local farmers and townspeople.
 - The Wright Brothers flew a powered airplane at Kitty Hawk, NC.
 - The silent movie *The Great Train Robbery* was released.
- **1904**
 - The women of the 20th Century Club organized a book exchange in the back of an insurance office on Grand, thus beginning the city's first public library.
 - Charles Ruby began drilling northeast of town, with several wells proving successful in the area where the Pioneer Woman is now located.
 - The first World Series of baseball was played.
- **1905**
 - Col. Miller staged a Wild West show for the National Editorial Association. It was a big success with 65,000 people attending.
 - Gas mains were laid from the wells northeast of town, and Ponca Citians slowly began to put gas to use. Initial acceptance was slow; many believed the gas was dangerous.
 - Will Rogers began to receive top billing on the vaudeville circuit.
 - Indian Territory held a constitutional convention and submitted a request to be admitted to the Union as an all-Indian state known as Sequoia.
- **1906**
 - April. Col. Miller took the 101 Wild West show on the road for the first time. Over the years many famous people performed or were associated with the show. Among them were Buffalo Bill Cody, Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Lucille Mulhall, and Bill Picket, the black cowboy who invented bull dogging as a rodeo event. The show grew to 1,700 people including a troupe of 300 Indians. Every ten days while the show was on the road, 30,000 lbs. of meat, fruit, and vegetables produced on the home ranch were shipped out of Ponca to the show in refrigerated rail cars.
 - Ponca City had 400 phones.
 - The San Francisco earthquake struck, killing 700. At least one orphan from the quake was adopted by a Ponca City couple.
 - The Oklahoma Constitutional Convention was held with 55 delegates from Indian Territory and 55 delegates from Oklahoma Territory.
- **1907**
 - Oklahoma became the 46th state. It came in dry, however, and all 18 of Ponca City's saloons had to close.
 - The Boy Scout movement was founded.
 - The undefeated Yale football team beat undefeated Harvard using a new play – the forward pass.
- **1908**
 - E.W. Marland and his wife Mary Virginia moved to Ponca City. Their first residence was a three room suite in the Arcade Hotel.
 - The first Model T Ford was produced.
 - Ponca City's population was 2,529

- **1909**
 - Robert Perry reached the North Pole.
 - The NAACP was organized in New York with W.E.B. DuBois as president.
 - E.W. Marland and the Miller Brothers organized the 101 Oil Company.
 - Bill McFadden met E.W. Marland in Hot Springs and came out to the 101 Ranch for his health. It was told that he brought a suitcase with \$100,000 in it which he guarded with two derringers. McFadden invested in the 101 Oil Company and became vice-president of it.
- **1910**
 - With money raised from “teas” and a grant from Andrew Carnegie, a new public library was built on two lots on the southwest corner of 5th and Grand.
 - The 101 Oil Company brought in a large gas well on ranch property.
 - December 31. The limestone school was severely damaged by fire.
- **1911**
 - The school was rebuilt immediately. Some of the limestone from the original building was still good and used in the rebuilt structure.
 - The first Indianapolis 500 was run.
 - The 101 Oil Company finally struck oil with “Willie Cry No. 1.”
 - The United Sash and Door Company opened at the south end of 1st Street.
 - Lew Wentz arrived in Ponca City to look after the interests of a Pittsburg, PA, investor in the 101 Oil Company. Wentz became secretary of the oil company.
- **1912**
 - April 12. A tornado (then known as a cyclone) damaged 161 homes and destroyed a fairground and race track on Ponca City’s west side. The United Sash and Door, commonly known as the Glass Factory, was also damaged.
 - The Brett Implement Co. was selling Buick automobiles and Studebaker buggies.
 - The S.S. Titanic sank with the loss of 1,513 souls.
 - Jim Thrope’s medals, trophies, and records were erased from the books.
 - Construction began on the first refinery to be built in Ponca City, located at the south end of First Street and owned by the Ponca City Refining Company.
- **1913**
 - There were 500 phones in Ponca City and a population of approximately 5,000.
 - The city had four blocks of brick streets and 1.5 miles of “macadamized” streets. There were one paid fire chief and two companies of volunteers. The city limits were from South Ave. to Highland and primarily from 10th to the railroad, with a few streets west of the tracks and 2 blocks south of South Ave. between 3rd and 7th Streets.
 - The city boasted 6 churches, 3 lumber yards, 9 hotels or boarding houses, and 4 movie houses.
- **1914**
 - June 14. Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serbian and WW I began.
- **1915**
 - Marland built his first mansion at 1000 East Grand with a 8 acres of gardens, maintained by a Japanese gardener. To the north of the house and gardens were a polo field and a beautifully landscaped golf course which was opened to the public.
 - The Glass Plant closed its doors.

- 1916
 - The Marland Oil Company was established and began building a refinery and tank farm on the south edge of town, west of the existing refinery.
 - Pancho Villa invaded the US at Columbus, New Mexico, and killed 17 Americans.
 - July 30. German saboteurs blew up American munitions near Jersey City, New Jersey.
 - The Chase Opera House burned down.
- 1917
 - The US entered WW I. The value of the oil in the Marland tank farm doubled overnight.
 - The Civic Center Auditorium was begun. Before it was completed, it was used on October 2, 1917, to hold a send off for 141 Kay County soldiers leaving for WW I. Later notables such as Will Rogers and John P. Sousa appeared there.
 - All frame buildings on Grand between 1st and 4th Streets were condemned.
 - October 19. Ponca City Refinery Company was sold to Empire Refining Co.
 - November 7. Lenin appointed Chief of Commissioners in Russia after October revolution.
 - Frank and Blanche Lucas arrived in Ponca City from Guthrie; he was Marland's personal treasurer. Mrs. Lucas had been active in organizing the Oklahoma Suffrage Association and was directly responsible for the adoption of woman suffrage in Oklahoma. Prior to statehood, she had published Oklahoma's first woman magazine, *The Pioneer Woman*.
- 1918
 - November 11. The armistice ending WW I was signed.
 - November 18. The *Courier* and *Democrat* were merged into the *Ponca City News*.
 - A third refinery, the Lake Park Refinery, was located where the Pioneer Woman now stands.
 - Nickles & Gentry Body Shop opened on North First.
 - The world-wide "Spanish" influenza epidemic began.
- 1919
 - The first hospital in Ponca City was opened by the Chamber of Commerce in a former boarding house at Oak and West Grand.
 - August. The cornerstone of the Moose Lodge was laid at 111-113 North 3rd. The post office occupied most of the first floor of this building for 14 years.
 - The 18th Amendment was ratified, and Prohibition began.
 - There was a housing shortage in Ponca City, with the population almost doubled to 9,000.
 - The city had 10 miles of brick streets, two paid firemen, and two grade schools.
 - E.W. Marland and associates opened two financial institutions to make home loans.
- 1920
 - There were 1000 phones in Ponca City.
 - The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.
 - In an explosive growth, an average of one new house was completed every day during the year. Over the next few years, Marland and associates built nearly 1,000 new homes and made them available to Marland Oil employees.
 - A big discovery well was drilled in Osage County.
- 1921

- The first experimental seismological equipment was developed by Dr. W.P. Haseman for the Marland Oil Company in Ponca City.
- June 20. Marland brought in the first well of the Three Sands or Tonkawa Oil Field, and the oil boom began in earnest.
- The ownership of the hospital at Oak and Grand was assumed by the Sisters of St. Joseph. It was considered a fire trap, and a fund drive was begun to build a new hospital.
- Several new housing additions were added to the city.
- 1923
 - Hearings on the Teapot Dome scandal were held in Washington D.C.
 - The City of Ponca had outgrown its city hall at 5th and Grand. New offices were built on either side of the Civic Auditorium, and the old city hall tower was torn down.
 - Marland sold \$12 million of Marland Oil Stock to J.P. Morgan and Company.
 - The home building boom continued at a rate of one-a-day.
- 1924
 - Ford cars sold for \$290.
 - February. The Jens-Marie Hotel opened on the southeast corner of 2nd and Cleveland, the former site of John Niemann's potato patch.
 - Lew Wentz bought out the holdings of his late partner and organized the Wentz Oil Corporation. His company was the largest one-man oil company in the world by 1926.
 - October 27. The first "real office building" in Ponca City, the 6 story Masonic building at Grand and 3rd, was dedicated. Security Bank and Trust occupied the first two floors, and the Lew Wentz Oil Company occupied the next one.
 - Roy Mertz opened Mertz Machine Shop at Pine and Grand.
- 1925
 - Ponca City had 15,000 citizens and 18 miles of brick or concrete streets, 3 fire trucks, 5 grade schools, and more than 20 hotels, with 9 in two blocks of South 1st and 2nd Streets.
 - The fountain and WW I Memorial was built in front of the Civic Center, a project of the DAR.
 - June 22. Gordon Matzene and his Oriental art collection arrived in Ponca City.
 - The Scopes "Monkey" Trial began in Tennessee.
 - The fund drive for the construction of a new hospital on property north of town at 14th and Hartford was completed and construction began. The drive had raised \$250,000. The property was donated by E.W. Marland.
- 1926
 - There were 3,000 phones in Ponca City.
 - Mrs. Mary Virginia Marland died.
 - Attucks School was built for Negro children in Dixie Hill.
 - June 1. Camp McFadden was given to the Camp Fire Girls by Bill McFadden, vice-president of Marland Oil. Equipment for the camp was furnished by several civic clubs.
 - November 2. The new 50-bed "Hospital on the Hill" opened.
 - Lew Wentz help found the Oklahoma Society for Crippled Children and contributed over \$50,000 to it.
- 1927

- Population 16,000 and the current Ponca City High School was built.
- The Poncan Theatre was built, the fifth and most grand theatre in town. An evening's show might have been composed of vaudeville acts, singing, opera, drama, and dancing combined with a silent feature. These performances were accompanied by a Wurlitzer organ, two pianos, and the Poncan Orchestra. Some of the famous performers who appeared there were Will Rogers, Ethel Barrymore, and Sally Rand.
- WBBZ, a touring radio station from Indianapolis on the Redpath Circuit, began broadcasting from the stage of the new Poncan Theatre.
- Charles Lindberg flew solo from New York to Paris.
- The first "talkie" was produced – *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson
- A new light plant was built for the city.
- The Cross town site was annexed into Ponca City.
- The first building code was passed in Ponca City. No building could be constructed without a permit.
- The one-a-day home average continued.
- 1928
 - January 29. Construction of the Wentz swimming pool began on a hilltop northeast of town.
 - The American Legion Children's Home was established through the efforts of Mrs. I.M. Rittenhouse, E.W. Marland's sister.
 - The new Marland Mansion was completed on a hilltop east of 14th Street at a cost of \$5.5 million.
 - July 28. Marland married Lydie Roberts in Pennsylvania.
 - Marland Industrial Institute was completed east of town on what became known later as Academy Hill. The institute was a private in-house school and country club for Marland Oil.
 - Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.
 - November 1. Marland resigned from the presidency of Marland Oil. Dan Moran became president.
- 1929
 - February 14. The St. Valentine's Massacre in Chicago.
 - Marland Oil acquired all the assets of Continental Oil Company and changed its name.
 - June. Facilities of the Marland Industrial Institute became the Quah-Ta-See-Da Club, Ponca City's newest golf course.
 - There were 4,000 phones in town.
 - October 28. The stock market collapsed on "Black Friday," beginning a worldwide crisis.
- 1930
 - The Great Depression began.
 - April 22. The Pioneer Woman statue was unveiled at 14th and Monument Road. 40,000 people gathered for the festivities and to hear Will Rogers speak.
 - July 4. The Ponca City Airport was dedicated. A 300 mile air race was held from Ponca City to Tulsa to Wichita and back. 30,000 people attended.
 - Nickles Machine Corp. opened a new plant on South First.
- 1932
 - E.W. Marland was elected to the U.S. Congress.

- Continental Oil added 119 new service stations and 43 bulk plants.
- 1933
 - June. At the height of the Great Depression, the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce requested Congress to allow the PWA to build a lake east of town as a water supply.
 - “Miss Oklahoma” was selected at a pageant at Wentz Pool, her first step on the way to Atlantic City and to the “Miss America” contest.
 - December. Several hundred people signed petitions requesting the city commission to apply to the Federal PWA for a loan to construct a new library. The waterworks and the library were the first WPA projects in the state.
- 1934
 - March. Voters in Ponca City passed a library bond issue by a 2 to 1 margin.
 - The Interstate Oil Compact Commission was organized in Ponca City by E.W. Marland.
 - A “Little Rascals” episode was filmed in Ponca City with several local children as extras.
- 1935
 - March. PWA project 4436, Lake Ponca, was completed. The new Federal Building and Post Office opened.
 - April 17. The city was heavily damaged by hail.
 - July 15. A boating regatta was held to celebrate the opening of Lake Ponca.
 - Marland elected 10th governor of Oklahoma.
 - December 18. The new library building, the first in Oklahoma to be air conditioned, was formally dedicated. The structure was nationally admired, and several communities requested copies of the architectural plans.
 - First membership drive for Community Concerts was held, coordinated by Dorothy Focht.
- 1936
 - July 31. Empire Oil & Refining changed its name to Cities Service Oil Company.
 - September. The WPA completed construction of the Blaine Stadium and field house.
 - First Community Concert was held.
- 1939
 - September 17. The Thunderbird Aviation Club held an air show at the airport to celebrate its enlargement. The runways were lengthened to 3,500 feet and hard surfaced, making it all weather and capable of accommodating the largest aircraft of the day.
- 1940
 - September. The Ponca Military Academy was opened by Colonel & Mrs. William V. Cox in the former Marland Industrial Institute and Quah-Ta-See-Da Club facilities.
 - John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* was published.
 - Lew Wentz elected Republican national committeeman.
 - The Continental Associates building, with an indoor pool, a gym, and cafeteria, was opened next to the Conoco headquarters building.
- 1941
 - May. Marland sold his mansion to the Discalced Carmelite Fathers for \$66,000.
 - August. British Flight Training School No. 6 began training pilots at the Ponca City airport.

- October 3. E.W. Marland died at the age of 67.
- December. The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. The US entered World War II.
- 1942
 - Gasoline rationing began.
 - Because of the war, Continental hired women for the first time to work in the refinery.
 - Mid-American Manufacturing Company opened to produce canvas articles for the army, including pup-tents, leggings, bed rolls, and back packs.
 - October. Ponca City Art Association organized by the Daubers, a group of the Woman's Club Fine Arts Department.
- 1943
 - May. A new 100 octane refinery went into production, operated by Continental Oil Company in Ponca City. This aviation fuel allowed Allied aircraft to develop 20% more power than previous fuels – an important edge in the struggle for the skies of war.
- 1944
 - The Kiwanis Club sponsored a war bond drive in Ponca City and raised \$250,000 to purchase a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber for the war effort. The plane was christened "Miss Ponca City". Due to the urgent need for it overseas, the plane was sent to Europe as soon as it was ready. It did not return from the war.
 - July 9. The *Ponca City News* reported that \$21,000 worth of war bonds had been sold in a door drive by the Boy Scouts. The highest amount sold by a single individual was \$4,000, sold by a young member of Troop 3, Charles Casey.
 - Ponca City's Continental refinery employees were commended by the US Navy for producing and packaging 15,000 barrels of aircraft oil urgently needed in the Pacific theater of the war. This oil was produced, packaged, and loaded in 108 railroad boxcars in only 6 days.
- 1945
 - April 12. President Roosevelt died at his vacation cottage in Warm Springs, Georgia.
 - May 7. The war in Europe ended as Germany unconditionally surrendered.
 - August. The first atomic bombs were dropped on Japan.
 - September 2. World War II finally ended as Japan surrendered.
- 1946
 - Population 20,000
 - June 26. The Defense Plant Corporation turned over the deed for the Darr School complex to the City of Ponca City for development.
 - Ponca City pharmacist and businessman T.J. Cuzalina began his one-man campaign to elect General Dwight D. Eisenhower as President of the United States, using his weekly column in the *Ponca City News* and clever contests. His contests finally spawned the "I Like Ike" campaign slogan used in Eisenhower's winning Presidential campaign.
 - July 8. The Piper Aircraft Western Plant began assembling J-3 Piper Cubs at the Darr School complex. To win the plant, Ponca City had competed against 28 other cities. To assist in bringing the plant to town, townspeople raised \$79,000. The plant had an annual payroll of \$400,000, with an additional \$700,000 of goods and services being purchased in the local economy. At the height of operations, 300 workers were building planes.

- **1947**
 - Jackie Robinson became the first Afro-American to sign a contract with a major league baseball team.
 - The “Hospital on the Hill” was expanded to 100 beds with a new maternity floor and delivery room to accommodate the post-war baby boom.
 - Continental Oil bought the defense plant it operated during the war and it became Conoco’s South Plant.
- **1948**
 - Piper’s aircraft assembly plant closed due to a glut of aircraft on the market.
 - Berlin Airlift began when the USSR stopped all rail and road traffic into Berlin from the West.
 - July 20. The Marland Mansion was purchased by the Felician Sisters for \$50,000.
 - December. Ponca City’s first traffic light was installed at First and Grand.
- **1949**
 - January. Radio Station WBBZ was sold to the Ponca City Publishing Company.
 - Mao Zedong established the People’s Republic of China.
 - June 9. Lew Wentz died of heart failure.
- **1950**
 - The Ponca City Library inherited the Matzene collection of Oriental art.
 - Continental Oil broke ground for a new research laboratory building in Ponca City, costing \$2,250,000.
 - June 25. Communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea and the Korean War began.
 - NATO organized to counter the USSR in Europe.
 - Continental’s corporate offices were moved from Ponca City to Houston, Texas.
 - Under terms of Mr. Wentz’s will, the swimming pool and camp located on Lake Ponca were given to the city.
 - September. Gruner and Company, manufacturer of rock bits, opened their new plant on Waverly after moving from Tonkawa.
- **1951**
 - May 8. The statue of E.W. Marland at 5th and Grand was unveiled on the 77th anniversary of his birth. The statue was a gift of Mrs. Lydie Marland and was presented in ceremonies to the city by her brother George. The statue was originally made in France sometime between 1927 and 1930 by sculptor Jo Davidson.
 - Conoco received a citation from the National Audubon Society for its cooperation in protecting the whooping cranes.
- **1952**
 - November. Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected President.
 - The Ponca City Dodgers, a class D Brooklyn Dodgers farm club, played in Ponca City.
- **1953**
 - January 20. The PO-HI band marched in the inaugural parade for Dwight D. Eisenhower after a successful fund drive by the band parents and local merchants.
 - July 27. Korean armistice was signed.
 - Fourteen new classrooms were added to the school administration building on the north side of Grand. The new rooms were connected to the junior high on the south side of Grand by a tunnel.

- A separate \$32,000 Community Library was opened at South 12th and Scott, south of Attucks School, to serve the black community in Dixie Hill.
- The new administration building and concrete runways were dedicated at the Ponca City airport.
- Continental Black, Inc. began construction of a carbon black plant south of town.
- Cities Service Oil company began a multi-million dollar modernization of their refinery.
- Lydie Marland left Ponca City.
- 1954
 - US Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.
 - Voters approved a \$2,838,000 expansion of Ponca City's water and light facilities.
 - A new 513,000 bushel co-op elevator was built southwest of town on Ranch Drive.
 - Hartford Avenue Shopping Center opened at 7th and Hartford.
 - A recreation building was built at the American Legion Children's Home.
 - The Pioneer Woman Statue was the top tourist attraction in the state, drawing 58,050 visitors.
- 1955
 - Bill Haley and the Comets introduced rock-n-roll to America and the world.
 - Martin Luther King led his first march for desegregation.
 - The Woodlands subdivision was annexed into the city limits.
 - May 25. The new tornado warning sirens were put to the test for the first time when a severe storm moved through the area. Only heavy rains and 65 MPH winds hit Ponca City, but a tornado destroyed northeast Blackwell, killing 20 and injuring 500.
 - The Ponca City Clubs, another D league ball club, moved to town.
 - A group of young Poncan Indian farmers won a Conservation Service Award, the first Native American group in Oklahoma to be recognized. Few awards were given in the U.S.
 - July. In a special meeting, the Board of Education adopted a plan for racial integration. Black junior and senior high students could enroll in the fall on a volunteer basis, with Attucks Junior-Senior High to operate on a temporary basis.
 - Salk polio vaccine arrived. Children in the schools began their series of inoculations against polio.
 - Ninety citizens interested in starting a YMCA attended a kick-off breakfast at the Jens-Marie Hotel. Dr. E.H. Arrendall was elected the first president of the Y.
 - Joe Steichen, Route 4, was named the outstanding young farmer in Oklahoma.
 - The search for Lydie Marland was intensified by the Oklahoma Crime Bureau. She had been missing for 2 years.
 - An \$80,000 armory was built in Dan Moran Park on South Avenue.
 - A \$900,000 addition to PO-HI was completed.
- 1956
 - Fidel Castro landed in Cuba with a small armed force in the first step to overthrow Batista.
 - Soviet Troops invaded Hungary.
 - Conoco obtained a patent for vibroseis equipment which mechanically generates low frequency vibrations for seismic exploration. The system replaced the use of explosives for petroleum.

- Mickey Mantle came to town to play against the Cubs.
- September. Ponca City junior high students were integrated, along with one black teacher joining the each staff. Attucks School continued operating with the first through sixth grades.
- Governor Raymond Gary dedicated the widening of Highway 77 (14th Street).
- December 29. Mrs. J.S. Hutchins died, leaving \$500,000 to the city to build a suitable property to be called the James S. Hutchins Memorial.
- 1957
 - January. PCHS band marched in the Rose Bowl parade after raising \$13,500.
 - The Kaw Dam and Reservoir Development Association was organized.
 - The USSR became the first nation in space.
 - The Ponca City Cubs moved up to C League ball.
 - Federal troops were sent to Little Rock to enforce desegregation.
 - The state Legislature passed Senator Roy Grantham's bill providing money for the construction of the Pioneer Woman Museum in Ponca City.
- 1958
 - September 16. The Pioneer Woman Museum was dedicated on land donated by the Chamber of Commerce in 1938.
 - The US launched its first space satellite from Cape Canaveral; NASA was established.
 - Alaska became the 49th state admitted to the United States.
- 1959
 - Batista fled Cuba and Castro became Premier.
 - Hawaii became the 50th state in the union.
 - Ponca Playhouse, a community theater, was organized.
- 1960
 - Francis Gary Powers' U-2 was shot down over the USSR just as President Eisenhower was to meet with the Soviet premier to discuss the lessening of tensions.
 - September. Ponca Citian Jerrie Cobb was named the first woman chosen as an astronaut candidate in NASA's project Mercury.
 - September 7. Two Ponca City wrestlers, Doug Blubaugh and Shelby Wilson, won Olympic Gold medals in Rome, Italy.
 - Five concerned parents in Ponca City organized the Kay County Council for Retarded Children. A Training Center and Sheltered Workshop were then established in Washington School for 3 developmentally disabled children. Space was donated by the school board, and there was one volunteer teacher, three volunteer mothers, three toys, and \$10.
- 1961
 - President Kennedy admitted US involvement in the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba.
 - The USSR launched the first man into space.
 - Alan Shepard became the first American into suborbital space.
 - The Soviet Union built the Berlin Wall.
- 1962
 - February 25. John Glenn orbited the earth 3 times.
 - The US Congress approved the plans for Kaw Dam.

- Friends T.J. Cuzalina and D.W. Sims organized and held the first Cherokee Strip Golf Classic. The first benefit raised \$1,000 for the Training Center and Sheltered Workshop of the Council for Retarded Children.
- A new wing was added onto the hospital with more than 48 more beds and new surgery and recovery rooms.
- 101 Ranch Rodeo Foundation was formed.
- December 9. The Hutchins Memorial Auditorium was dedicated. Designed by architect John Duncan Forsyth, it is a memorial to the Ponca City grocer/grain merchant and his wife.
- 1963
 - The Hampton House was finally moved out of the middle of Grand Avenue, and the street was extended westward.
 - Dr. King delivered his “I have a Dream” Speech in Washington D.C.
 - November 22. President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas just before noon.
- 1964
 - Britain granted license to Conoco to drill for oil and gas in the North Sea.
 - Dr. M.L. King received the Nobel Peace Prize and the U.S. enacted historic civil rights law.
 - Summer. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed; US aircraft began heavy bombing of Vietnam, and the Marines were sent in a major escalation of the war.
- 1965
 - Miss Frida Wetzel deeded 15 acres on North Union to the Kay County Council for Retarded Children.
 - The World’s Fair was held in New York City.
- 1966
 - Ponca City Art Association bought the Soldani Mansion for \$37,000.
 - May 21. Ground breaking ceremonies were held for Kaw Lake. Civil Engineer Fred Fellows, whose studies led to the project, kept the first shovel full of dirt turned by Senator Mike Monroney.
 - May. Attucks School closed at the end of the school year. All students were integrated into the school system.
 - US Spacecraft Survey landed on moon and transmitted TV pictures back to earth.
- 1967
 - Arcade Hotel ceased operations as a hotel, but some residential apartments continued to be rented.
 - April. City Commissioners agreed to buy the original Marland Mansion from Mrs. Jay Paris. The house was to be used to establish a Cultural Center and house the Indian Museum, which had been in the basement of the Library.
 - September 9. The Art Center was dedicated with an exhibit of works from the Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma City Art Center, Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma, and the Philbrook Art Center.
 - Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors.
- 1968
 - March. Mertz Iron and Machine Works’ sixty employees moved into a new 30,000 sq. feet facility on Waverly.
 - April 4. Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis.
 - Surveyor 7 successfully landed on the moon, and three US astronauts circled the moon and returned on Apollo 7.

- A major oil field discovered on Alaska's North Slope.
- The Cherokee Strip Golf Classic raised \$112,000 for the Training Center and the Sheltered Workshop.
- 1969
 - July 20. Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon.
 - Construction began for a new facility on North Union for the training center and workshop for the developmentally disabled.
- 1970
 - The Training Center and Sheltered Workshop was incorporated as the Opportunity Center. The 22,000 square foot facility was completed and opened.
 - Four students protesting the Vietnam War were killed by National Guardsmen on the campus of Kent State.
 - The Conoco capsule replaced the Conoco triangle.
- 1971
 - February. The YMCA opened at Grand and 7th.
 - 26th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, allowing eighteen year olds to vote.
 - March 9. Kay County voters gave a resounding "yes" when asked to support building a vocational school. The vote was 3,528 for and only 298 against.
- 1972
 - Five men were arrested inside the Watergate complex after bugging Democrat National Headquarters there.
 - Conoco's R&D in Ponca City developed and patented the polymeric drag reducer known as "CDR Flow Improver" to facilitate crude oil flow from pipelines.
 - Bill Pickett, forty years after his death, was elected to the National Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame – the first black man who was so honored.
- 1973
 - January 23. A cease-fire was signed in Vietnam. America began pulling out troops.
 - The old Ponca City hospital facility was torn down and replaced by St. Joseph Medical Center of Ponca City.
 - October 12. Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned. Gerald Ford was sworn in as Vice President.
 - Camp McFadden closed due to the construction of Kaw Lake.
 - Titus Manufacturing opened in Ponca City.
- 1974
 - January. Arcade Hotel demolished.
 - March 15. A federal grand jury concluded President Nixon was part of the Watergate cover-up.
 - Frank Robinson became the first black to manage a major league baseball team, the Cleveland Indians.
 - August 8. Richard Nixon resigned, the first President to do so. Gerald Ford became 39th President and the first to have never won a national election.
 - August. The Pioneer Vo-Tech opened its doors on North Ash in Ponca City. More than 400 students enrolled for day classes with 325 additional students in night classes.
 - The Ponca City Helpline was begun. Local churches, civic organizations, clubs, individuals, and the City all contributed to the forming the organization, and a director was hired.

- The Felician Sisters announced Assumption Villa was for sale.
- 1975
 - Ponca City voters passed a bond issue to build a new Public Safety Center.
 - September 16. Citizens of Ponca City voted to purchase Assumption Villa (the Marland Mansion) from the Felician Sisters. Continental Oil Company contributed \$717,500 towards the purchase.
 - In Vietnam, the Communist forces seized Saigon.
 - December 6. The city purchased the Marland Mansion.
- 1976
 - The Community Pool opened at the Y.
 - The United States began celebrating its Bicentennial.
 - May 22. Kaw Dam and Lake were completed, and a celebration, parade, and dedication were led by Governor Boren.
 - Jimmy Carter defeated President Ford in Ford's first national election.
- 1977
 - January 27. Municipal Court was held for the first time in the new Public Safety Center.
 - The space shuttle "Enterprise" made its first manned flight into space.
- 1978
 - January 8. The Jens-Marie Hotel was torn down to make way for a parking lot.
 - Blaine Stadium was renamed Sullins Stadium in honor of Earl Sullins, former POHI coach whose football team won more games more than any other coach.
 - May 19. Conoco's North Tower was dedicated by Governor David Boren.
 - Conoco became the first company to receive an Honor Award from the Whooping Crane Conservation Association for its efforts to safeguard the environment and wildlife in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.
- 1979
 - July. Marland Conference Center was dedicated by Governor George Nigh.
 - Continental Oil Company officially changed its name to Conoco Inc.
 - Islamic militants seized the American Embassy in Iran and held the staff as hostages.
 - Record one day rainfall of 11+ inches.
 - The USSR invaded Afghanistan.
- 1980
 - April 7. The US broke diplomatic ties with Iran.
 - \$1.4 million Public Works Department building completed.
 - Hy-Jack Company, owned by Jim McNeal, came into full production of hydraulically powered surface pump jacks.
 - Lech Walesa formed the Solidarity Union in Poland.
 - November. Don Nickels of Ponca City was elected to the US Senate as Ronald Regan won the Presidency.
 - Eight new housing subdivisions were added.
- 1981
 - January. Iran freed the fifty-two hostages.
 - Sandra Day O'Connor was named the first woman justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
 - March 30. President Reagan was wounded by John Hinckley.
 - Sullins Stadium got a new lighting system.

- September 30. DuPont bought out all Conoco stock and it became wholly owned subsidiary.
- Security Bank building (the old Masonic bldg.) got a facelift with much of the original appearance being restored.
- Jarrie Cobb nominated for the Noble Peace Prize for her work with Amazon Natives.
- 1982
 - AT&T was broken up by the US courts.
 - March 8. The Ponca City Orchestra was founded by Mary Martin.
 - Smith-Gruner completed a 48,000 square foot expansion.
 - General Can Company opened with 44 employees.
- 1983
 - April 4. The first US woman astronaut went into space on in the shuttle Challenger.
 - The new Camp McFadden opened 1.5 miles northeast of the old one.
 - October 23. A bomb killed 237 Marines in Beriut.
 - Mertz added a new 5,000 sq. foot building.
- 1984
 - February 7. Troops were removed from Lebanon.
 - Officials from Interstate Oil Compact Commission came to pay tribute to founding fathers. Memorabilia from the first fifty years of the organization was placed in a time capsule at the foot of the IOCC monument at the Pioneer Woman Museum.
 - Continental Carbon Company was purchased by Witco Chemical.
 - The YMCA added more racquetball courts.
 - Helpline added Teenline and 76ABUSE services.
- 1985
 - February 19. Milhail Gorbachev became leader of the USSR.
 - Westminster Village opened with 11 employees, 37 units sold and over 100 members.
 - Poncan Theatre closed.
 - September. The Cherokee Strip Chili Cookoff was begun at Lake Ponca Park by the Pilot Club to benefit Hospice.
 - A \$5 million bond issue passed to build a new elementary school and renovate existing buildings.
- 1986
 - January 28. The space shuttle Challenger exploded during a launch.
 - March. With the drive and leadership of Jan Merrifield, Grand Central Station opened at 5th and Central to provide teens a safe place to have fun.
 - The world's worst nuclear accident happened at Chernobyl.
 - The Ponca City Arts & Humanities Council was founded by Cheryl White.
 - October. Over 18 inches of rain fell in one week, causing major flooding and disruption.
- 1987
 - June. The PC Main Street Authority, under the leadership of Phil Bandy, was formed for the purpose of historic preservation and revitalization of downtown.
 - The first Leadership Ponca City class graduated.
 - August. Union Elementary School opened its doors.

- Labor Day. The Ponca City International Pow Wow, a joint effort of the Convention & Visitors Bureau and an inter-tribal committee, held its first Pow Wow at the 101 Rodeo Grounds.
- October 13. Ground was broken for a new wing on the Library.
- December. Dick Pitts and Cheryl Fletcher started the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and began matching volunteers with Ponca City agencies, who needed volunteer assistance in their operations.
- 1988
 - May. The first annual Iris Festival, promoted by Jerry Cathey, was sponsored by the Main Street Authority.
 - The Child Development Center moved its new facility on South Elm, the old Jefferson School building.
 - The Smithsonian exhibit “Black Women: Against the Odds” was given to the Pioneer Woman Museum by the local DAR.
 - December. A Pan-Am 747 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland.
- 1989
 - January. Conoco dedicated a new hangar at the airport.
 - February. Bob Caine was elected as the first black-American to serve on the Ponca City School Board.
 - April. Chinese citizens demonstrated for democracy and were shot in Tienaman Square.
 - The Poncan Theatre Company, a non-profit arts corporation, was founded to restore and reopen the theatre. The theatre was donated to the company by Enole Baumert. Restoration and fund raising were led by Larry Buck.
 - May. Jo Saylor’s sculpture, “Through the Eyes of a Child”, was dedicated at the Ponca City Library.
 - July. The new Silk Screen Shop opened at Opportunity Village.
 - A Sleep Disorder Lab opened at St. Joseph Medical Center.
 - The Bi-State Mental Health Foundation was renamed the Edwin Fair Community Mental Health Center.
 - September 10. The new wing of the Library was dedicated.
 - Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe.
- 1990
 - January. Voters passed a bond issue for expansion of the Pioneer Area Vo-Tech.
 - January 2. First Christian Church began offering a free meal to Ponca City citizens in need.
 - April. Conoco offered to buy the homes in sections of south Ponca City near the refinery.
 - Conoco and DuPont developed a non-ozone depleting alternative to CPCs. The pilot plant for production of this environmentally friendly product was built and operated in the R&D West facility in Ponca City.
 - Patt Hughes served as chairman of the Ponca Area Chamber of Commerce, the first woman to do so.
 - August 2. Iraq invaded Kuwait.
- 1991
 - January 1. The Conoco fire brigade of the Ponca City Fire Department extinguished a fire at the refinery.
 - Desert Storm freed Kuwait.

- **May.** The Cherokee Strip Cookoff for Chili and BBQ was moved to the grounds of the Marland Mansion during the Iris festival.
- **July.** The Ponca City School Board elected Bob Caine as its first black president.
- **A two night rodeo** was held honoring Bill Pickett at the 101 Rodeo Grounds.
- **September 1.** Jo Ann Muchmore was hired as full-time executive director of the Ponca Theatre Company.
- **Ponca City Area Habitat for Humanity** received its first donated house. This local work was begun by Neil Winslow, Albright United Methodist, and other local ministers.
- **At a strategic planning meeting** of the Chamber of Commerce, Cheryl Fletcher, Dennis Parker, and Chuck Westerheide realized a need for Ponca City to have a vision of the future; the idea of Ponca City Tomorrow, Inc. was born.
- **1992**
 - **The first woman mayor of Ponca City, Marliyn Andrews,** was elected.
 - **May.** Jennifer Hughes became the first woman from Ponca City to graduate from the U.S. Air Force Academy.
 - **The Chautauqua tent show** was brought back to town by the Arts and Humanities Council.
 - **America 2000 design team,** chaired by Keni Ray, was formed, as Governor Walters declared Ponca City an “America 2000” community.
 - **Communism collapsed in USSR** after an attempted coup.
 - **July.** Arts Adventure, a mini-Quartz Mountain experience for junior high students, began under PC Arts & Humanities Council auspices through the efforts of Jane Miller.
- **1993**
 - **Ponca City Tomorrow Inc.** was incorporated as a 501(c)3non-profit corporation.
 - **February.** Construction of Centennial Plaza began in front of the Civic Auditorium.

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