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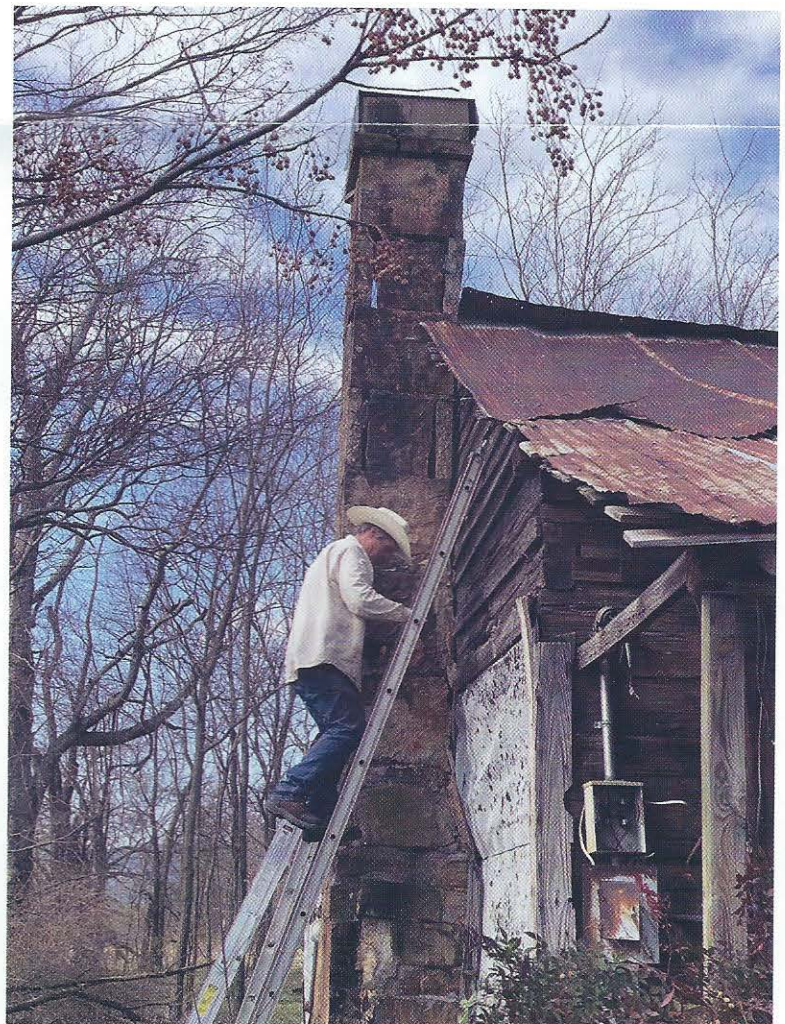


Edwards Store Receives Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant

The Edwards Store (Most Endangered Places 2013, 2018, and 2019) recently completed a major step in preservation with funds from a new grant courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The two chimneys (c.1850 and 1870) have been stabilized and work can soon begin on restoration of the fireplace interiors. The land around the building is also being cleared of trees and underbrush to mitigate damage from natural elements.

The Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Program is a grants-in-aid program offered by the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) with the goal of encouraging the collection, preservation, and sharing of Oklahoma history at the grassroots level in all parts of the state. Open to tribal and municipal governments and not-for-profit historical organizations located in Oklahoma and registered with the Oklahoma Secretary of State, this grants program offers funding for projects focused on collections, exhibits, and programming.

The Edwards Store, established in 1850, is one of the few remaining original structures that were stage stops on the Butterfield Overland mail and stage line from St. Louis to San Francisco from 1858 to 1861. Stage passengers were served meals at this location. Thomas Edwards established the trading post on the Fort Smith-Boggy Depot Road and it later became the original post office and site of the town of Red Oak. The structure is of "dog trot" design typical of the 19th century and built from hewn logs.

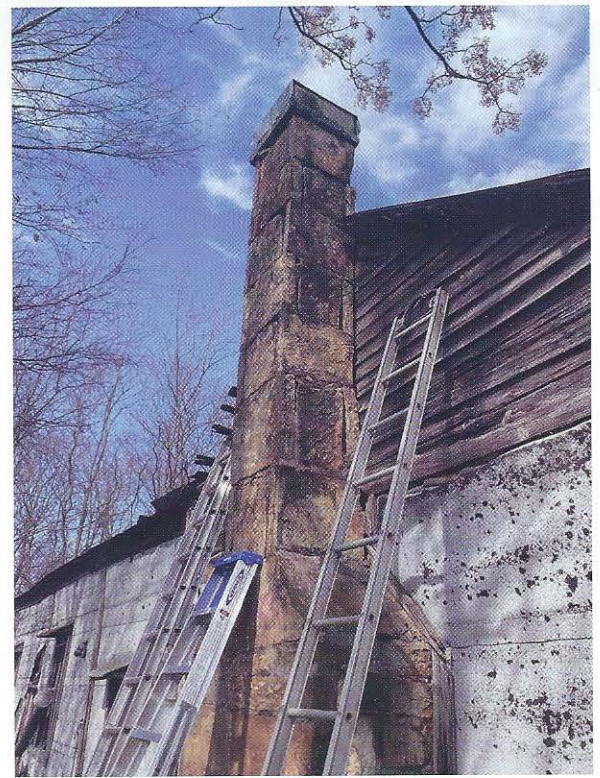


William Bailey works on Edwards Store Chimney, Photo:POK

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In early March, Preservation Oklahoma's Executive Director, Chantry Banks, had the opportunity to visit The Edwards Store and visit with historical preservationist William Bailey, who noted that chimney stabilization was happening at the perfect time. He wasn't sure how much time they would remain standing. Also on site that day was Edwards Store supporter and preservationist June Chubbuck. She gave Banks a tour of the property and adjacent family cemetery. She is excited about the prospects that Edwards Store holds for future generations. Plans are being made to restore the Store and surrounding grounds to what it might have looked like during the years of the Butterfield Overland stage line. Next steps will include archeological surveys of the property, identifying unmarked plots in the cemetery, and restoration of the well that sits just to the east of the store.

"I'm thrilled that a site featured so many times on our Most Endangered Places list is being preserved," Banks said. "I'm confident that the Edwards Store will be here for future generations to learn about Oklahoma's pre-statehood history and its important role in this overland mail route." Visit <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=BU019> for more information on the Butterfield Overland route.



1870 Chimney at Edwards Store, Photo: POK

