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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 9

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## Welcome to Picher Oklahoma! The Town That "Jack" Built



We usually feature a picture of the town's "Welcome" sign on our front page. Picher has no such sign. Instead people are greeted by the mountains of chat, which can be seen long before you reach the city limits of Picher.

The chat piles are just one of the remnants of the "BOOM" days of Picher. Jack was what the zinc-lead ore mined in the area was called. Unfortunately, what gave Picher a grand and prosperous start, is also what is giving it a slow lingering death.

Most of the people we talked to, while doing research for this issue, are long term residents of Picher. Many are in favor of a buyout and moving the town, for the benefit of the children of the area. Elevated lead levels can cause learning disabilities and other health problems. But at the same time, many don't want to leave the only "HOME" they have ever known.

Regardless of what happens in Picher, it is the PEOPLE who make the town, and we met some wonderful people! We thank everyone who helped us with the articles and features in this issue.

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## Picher History

Named after the Picher Lead Company (later the Eagle-Picher Lead Company), the town of Picher, Oklahoma, was founded in 1915. The company had extended its operations in Oklahoma after several decades of lead and zinc mining around Joplin, Missouri, and Galena, Kansas. The opening of the Picher field ushered in the last great mineral development in what became known as the Tri-State District. Only a dozen years after its founding, Picher had become the center of the largest lead and zinc mining district in the world.

During the period of the first "big boom" about 1917-19, the population of Picher was estimated to be around 22,500. There are some who said it was in excess of 25,000. From 1915 to about 1930 Picher was the center of the largest zinc mining area of the world. During most those years, more than 50 percent of the worlds zinc was mined in Ottawa County. "Jack" was the term applied to the zinc-lead ores mined in the Tri-State District, and Picher was known as "the town that jack built."

The finding of ore in the Picher area was something of an accident. Test holes were being dug around Commerce, but none was found. While the rig was being returned to Webb City, Missouri, it broke down near the present site of Picher. During repairs, a test hole was drilled and ore was struck at 270 feet, leading to the Picher strike in 1914.

The first families moved into Picher in 1915, when the Whitebird Mill was established. For about the first three years there was little activity. During the First World War, the Germans took over the Belgian zinc smelters, creating shortage of zinc in the Allied countries. Zinc prices soared, and the boom was on!

## FYI

Most of the vintage pictures you will see in this issue are courtesy of John Schehrer. He has an excellent website full of vintage photos of several places in Ottawa County. He also offers Photo CDs for sale.

[www.homestead.com/schehrer2/](http://www.homestead.com/schehrer2/)



Early days of Picher



All land in the Picher area was owned or leased by the Picher Company. Although the company laid out a town site and people could secure land for building purposes, the company reserved the right to take over all surface areas on a 30-day notice. The town was quickly filled with tents until clapboard houses replaced them. People came from far and wide to make a "fast buck."

Picher's public school system was established in 1917 with an enrollment of 1200 students and 32 teachers. In 1929 enrollment had jumped to 3500 students and 81 teachers. In 1921 the Senior High School building was constructed. The school opened with 100 students and 4 teachers. In 1923 the board added the west wing to be classrooms, library, office, and study hall. An east wing was also added for Jr. High classrooms and library.

A new Jr. High School, called the Central School was constructed, and the new building was ready in the fall of 1924. During that same time frame, six Elementary Schools were being constructed. Whitebird, Mineral Heights, Central, Cardin, Douthat, and Northwest, which was some times called Blue Front. All of these schools had a harmonica band and 5 had primary bands. All of the schools had a PTA and each sent a representative to a PTA Council.

In 1918, seventeen million dollars worth of ore had been produced in the little section about 15 miles square, called the Oklahoma-Kansas field. Nine-tenths of that had been mined within three miles of Picher!

Dr. D.L. Connell founded the Picher Hospital in 1916. O.S. Picher persuaded the doctor to accept a position as surgeon for the Eagle-Picher Lead Company. When he was first hired, all patients were given first aid at a small facility in Picher, and then transported to hospitals in Joplin. After the death of a patient due to the trauma of being transported over rough roads, Dr. Connell established the Picher Hospital.



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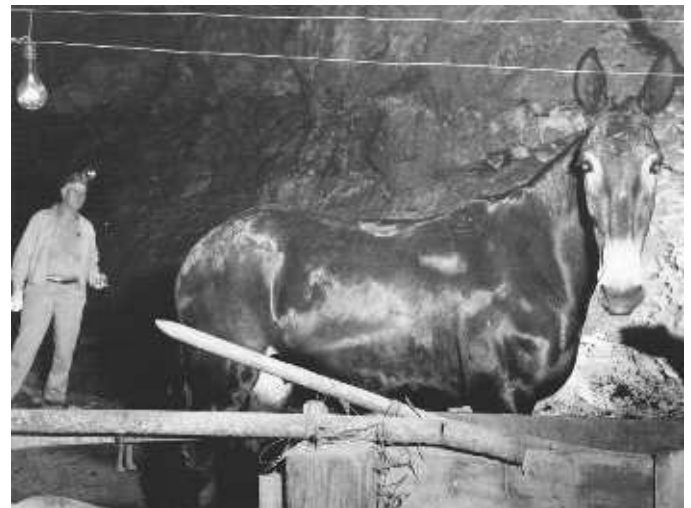
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The hospital grew and expanded over the years, and in 1938 a new building was constructed. The Picher Hospital was the first in Ottawa County to be completely air-conditioned. The hospital was also the first to be approved by the Oklahoma Crippled Children's Commission, and the first to offer complete laboratory and diagnostic facilities to the area.

In 1917 the railroad built into the town. In 1918 the citizens of Picher decided to incorporate as a city, to try to bring law and order to the town and to improve the public welfare. The company donated \$400 and a citizen donated a lot for a jail to be built. The streets were frequently knee deep in mud. The first ordinance dealt with public peace, health, and safety.

The council secured electric power for the town. Bonds were passed for the installation of waterworks and sewage system. There was defaulting on the bonds, resulting in the delay of the water system until 1920.

With the end of the war, the demand for zinc decreased, and as with most boomtowns, the population of Picher declined to about 10,000 in 1920. During the 1930s the depression took a disastrous toll on Picher. The town had few advantages to offer prospective investors. Clear deeds were unobtainable, and mountains of chat piles (Continued on next page) existed within the city limits.



The miners put in long hard days, working in deplorable conditions. Even mules and horses were used underground!



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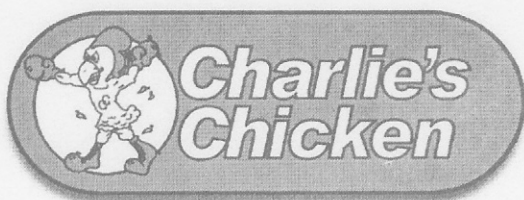
**Tues-Sat 9am-5pm**

During the 1940s, World War II provided a minor boom for the zinc industries. The Federal Government subsidized the zinc producers, and the industry regained some of its former importance. Then, as before, with the end of the war came the end of demand for zinc. Once again, there was a major exodus from Picher, leaving the town in great disrepair.

In February 1950, some 200 residents were given 30 days notice to vacate their homes and businesses. The evacuation notice came because of imminent danger of a cave-in. Nearly the entire town is undermined. The chert and limestone in which the mines were cut is strong enough to allow large rooms to be hollowed out, with pillars of the native rock left as supports for the "roof."

Inspectors found that two pillars beneath the main business district were showing signs of cracking, and the stress was becoming critical. The 145-foot thick subterranean roof was in danger of collapsing. This mine had not been worked in over thirty years. The section to be vacated was 2 blocks wide and almost 3 blocks long. A dozen businesses, a 38-unit apartment complex, and 35 residences were affected. A high cyclone fence was erected around the affected area, and all buildings removed.

During the 1960s, one area did cave in during the night. Some homes slid toward the middle of the depression.



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## Picher Now

According to the 2000 census, Picher's population is 1,640. There are approximately 430 students enrolled in the Picher-Cardin Schools. With 60 people working there, the school system is probably the city's largest employer.

The school system offers a well-rounded sports program and a wide range of extra curricular activities, groups, and clubs.

Sam Freeman is the Mayor of Picher. He is serving his third term. He also has 23 years with the Picher Volunteer Fire Department. Other City Council members are: Timmy Reeves, Gabe Huffman, Phillip Johnson, and Joanne Freeland. Krista Foster is Utility Clerk. City Clerk is Carolyn Elmore.

The city is getting a new building that will house several city offices and the Water Department. The building is still under construction, but should be ready for occupancy before the end of the year.

The Picher Police Department has three fulltime officers and four reserve officers. Chief of Police is Gary Graham.

Picher Volunteer Fire Department is continuously trying to improve their fire fighting skills. Learning in life is a non-stop habit to them. They take pride in making good response times, safety on and off the scene and putting out the fire in the least amount of time possible. One of their goals is to keep the fire district as safe as possible. Bravery is one thing, and stupidity is another, and they believe they know the difference.

The training they have had and the amount of experience with the fire department allows them to make proper decisions on the scene of any emergency situation. They strive to make the fire district a safer place for all. It all comes with the job, to protect, to serve and to save all property possible.

Jeff Reeves is the Fire Chief. Bruce Evans is Assistant Chief. They have a total of 21 volunteers.



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# The First State Bank Of Picher

The bank was established June 1, 1918, when the doors of its forerunner opened in Hockerville. The State Banking Department granted a charter to the Hockerville bank, and the first meeting of stockholders was held May 20, 1918. The first board of directors was elected at that first meeting. They were: L.C. Hocker, R.O. Thomas, S.J. Chambers, and Ross R. Bayless.

Construction of the concrete building that would house the bank started early in 1918. L.C. Hocker and sons owned the land where the bank was located on Hockerville's Main Street. Several dates were set for the opening of the new bank, but contractors were unable to get it ready for occupancy until June 1 of that year.

Hockerville was "laid out" on a bald prairie. The town was never incorporated, therefore all public improvements, including the building of streets and sidewalks were made by citizens who were already busy erecting new stores, businesses, homes, and other improvements.

Hockerville continued to grow, reaching an estimated population of 3,500. Many who flocked to the area during the mining boom were put up in large frame boarding houses and small tents.

At the peak of its growth, the town stretched to St. Louis (later called Zincville) on the west, halfway to Quapaw on the south, and spread across the state line into Kansas on the north.

After the boom created by World War I, the town's population waned to the point they could no longer support the bank. By the end of 1929, the last bank left in Picher, the old Bank of Picher failed. The owners of First State Bank of Hockerville made application to the State Banking Department to move the bank to Picher and change the name to the First State Bank of Picher.

The move to the Clark building at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main in Picher took place February 24, 1930. The bank was moved to South Connell Ave. in 1950, due to the forced evacuation because of the cave-in scare. In 1982 the bank moved directly across the street to 301 South Connell. The building they moved from was over 50 years old. It was said to have once been a hospital.

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# Tar Creek: Buyouts of Homes to Start

The following article appeared in the June 12, 2004 issue of the Tulsa World. Omer Gillham is a World Staff Writer.

## **Families with small children living in the Superfund site can start applying Sept. 1**

The voluntary relocation of Tar Creek families with small children could begin as soon as September, a state official said.

Miles Tolbert, Oklahoma secretary of the environment, said Senate Bill 1490 would take effect Sept. 1. That's when families living in the Tar Creek Superfund site in Ottawa County can apply for a state-sponsored buyout of their devalued homes.

Qualifying families are those with children 6 years old and younger. Those families have four months to apply for a buyout beginning in September, Tolbert said.

Tolbert said Gov. Brad Henry would appoint a nine-member public trust to oversee the buyout of an estimated 100 families living in the lead-polluted area.

The volunteer trust will be called the Lead-Impacted Communities Relocation Assistance Trust and will give local control of the buyout plan to Tar Creek residents, Tolbert said.

Henry recently signed legislation that provides \$3 million for the buyout, with an additional \$2 million expected to be appropriated next year.

Tolbert dismissed concerns of some Ottawa County families that a second trust added to legislation late in the process would divert money from the relocation effort.

"Absolutely not," Tolbert said. "The money is too tight for the buyout so there is no extra cash so to speak."

While legislation does not specifically name the second trust, the Tulsa World has identified it as the Grand Gateway Economic Development Authority.

Tolbert said Grand Gateway staff could be used to assist the Lead-Impacted trust in evaluating the value of certain Tar Creek properties. However, Tolbert said any funds going to Grand Gateway would be limited to administrative services.

Tolbert said it is difficult to estimate how much money Grand Gateway might receive in the buyout process.

The Grand Gateway authority is an entity of the Grand Gateway Economic Development Association, which is a council representing seven counties in northeastern Oklahoma, said executive director Ed Crone. The association addresses issues of transportation, fire protection, aging services and environmental hazards. Crone said Grand Gateway would like to offer free administrative assistance to the buyout; however, costs could be incurred if his office is required to add staff for the effort.

"We just don't know yet," Crone said. "In the past, we have done clerical or administrative work for state projects basically for free. We will have to see how the Tar Creek buyout goes."

Grand Gateway typically receives 5.6 percent of grant project funding for federal projects, Crone said. That amount is sometimes waived on state projects.

While the particulars of establishing the buyout process are still being worked out, one thing is fairly certain: Grand Gateway will administer the buy out checks to Tar Creek families wanting to move out of the polluted site, Crone said.

That means the Lead-Impacted trust made up of Tar Creek residents will evaluate properties for purchase while Grand Gateway could review some or all evaluations and administer the buyout checks for such purposes, Crone said.

Tolbert said: "We want to be very certain that the way we use Grand Gateway would not create another layer of expense and bureaucracy. It would be foolish to reinvent the wheel."

Sen. Mike Morgan, D-Stillwater, said questions about how buyout money will be handled "have some basis."



"There are reasons for such suspicions because of past events and how things have been handled in the area," Morgan said. "We are going to monitor this very carefully to be sure unnecessary spending does not happen."

Morgan co-sponsored the legislation making the buyout possible. He said the plan "is really a first step in getting more federal involvement down the road."

"We want to remind the federal government of its responsibility in this area and hopefully encourage some federal support to clean up the entire area," he said.

The buyout involved only state funds.

The federal government has committed \$45 million to help clean up targeted areas of the massive Superfund site. The Tar Creek Superfund site involves a 40-square-mile area polluted by decades of lead and zinc mining. The towns of Picher and Cardin are at the heart of the site.

Blood samples show that 40 percent of children living in some areas of Tar Creek have significantly elevated levels of lead in their blood. Such exposure is believed to contribute to learning disabilities and possibly neurological damage in young children.

Henry's relocation plan gives a fair market value for Tar Creek homes based on a comparable price of homes outside the Superfund site. Tar Creek homeowners have seen their property values plummet since the area was designated as a Superfund site 20 years ago.



An open mineshaft in a populated part of Picher is not blocked off by any kind of barrier. Sealing it off is not among current remediation projects.

JANET PEARSON / Tulsa World



Another open mine shaft in Picher, also not fenced off, is not on any list of remediation projects. In the background is a large chat pile.

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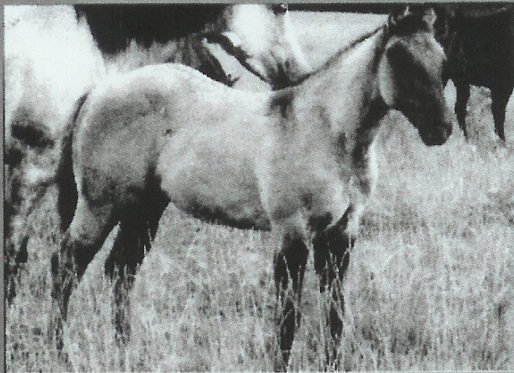
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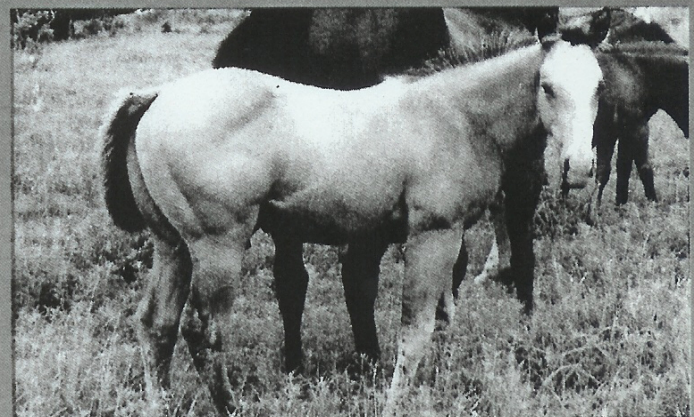
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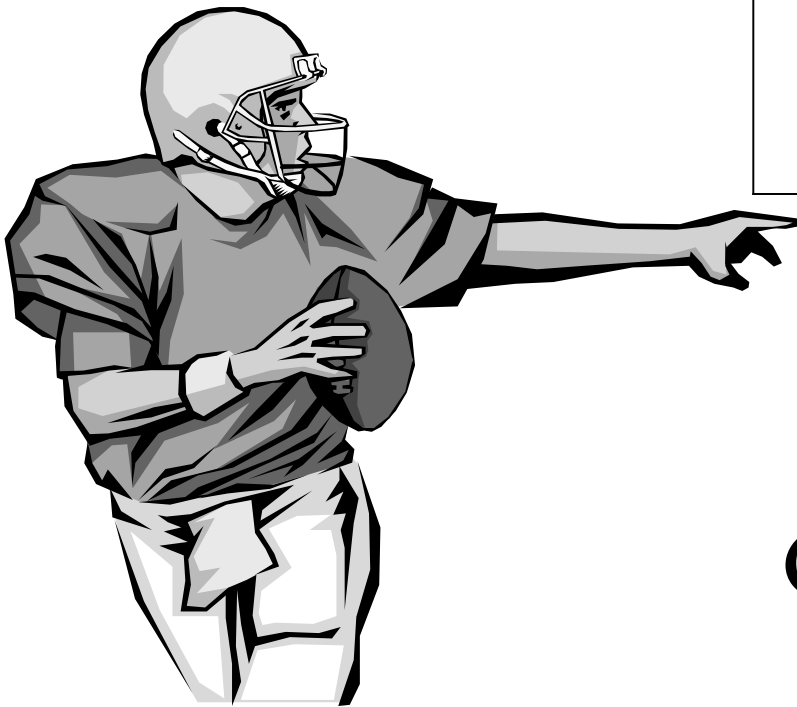


**Kimberly Pace**  
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The 2004/2005 Picher-Cardin school year started August 12th



**Picher-Cardin  
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Football Schedule**



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**High School**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Time</b>
Sept. 10	Barnsdall	Home	7:30
Sept. 17	Joplin Mcauley	Away	7:00
Sept. 24	Fairland	Home	7:30
Oct. 1	Oklahoma Union	Away	7:30
Oct. 8	Wyandotte	Home	7:30
Oct. 15	Ketchum	Home	7:30
Oct. 22	Commerce	Away	7:30
Oct. 29	Quapaw	Home	7:30
Nov. 4	Afton	Away	7:30

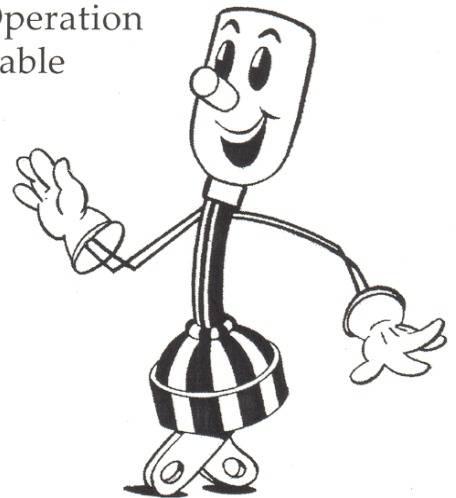
**Junior High**

Sept. 13	Wyandotte	Home	6:30
Sept. 20	Quapaw	Away	6:30
Sept. 27	Afton	Home	6:30
Oct. 4	Commerce	Home	6:30
Oct. 11	Oklahoma Union	Home	6:30
Oct. 18	Fairland	Away	6:30
Oct. 25	Ketchum	Away	6:30



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## Picher-Cardin Grad Is A Real "Rascal"

Rascal Flatts that is..... Joe Don Rooney grew up in Picher Oklahoma and graduated from high school there. Joe Don's musical influences first came from his brother and sisters. "They were all into music when I was growing up so, I went through a lot of different musical genres." His parents are Windell and Jo Rooney.

In 1995 Rooney was performing at the Grand Lake Opry, in Grove. He was a member of the Driftwood Band. Joe Don said in one telephone interview with a Tulsa World writer, "It was real country. Ron Allgood, who owned the place, hired me to play lead and acoustic and sing backup mainly, because they had a lot of girl singers in the show."

It was the first regular music job for Rooney, who grew up in Picher, although he and some friends from Miami played a few gigs together in the early '90s. Mostly, though, their stage was a back porch in a Miami neighborhood. Lucky for Rooney, the porch happened to be next door to the home of a woman who became one of the Grand Lake Opry vocalists.

"She called me up, told me about it, and said, 'I know you play rock 'n' roll, but you've got to be able to play a little bit of country, too. C'm'on down here and audition.' I did, and I got the job."

That gig led to others, and Rooney started living the life of a regional working musician. From the Grand Lake Opry he went out on the honky-tonk circuit with an Arkansas-based steel-guitarist and vocalist named Jim Ritchie. Ritchie's drummer joined the touring band Singletree, and Rooney went with him. Then Rooney took a job with a family-style show in Eureka Springs, Ark. And at the end of the 1998 tourist season in Eureka Springs, he hooked up with another singer named Jeff Bates, working out of Little Rock. Bates hired Nashville musicians to play gigs with him, and one of them turned out to be Preston Stanfill, Chely Wright's drummer. Stanfill and Rooney became friends, and in 1999, Rooney joined Chely Wright's band.

"I went down to meet her, we went out to dinner, and she hired me," he said. "She had her cell phone, and she had me call back to Picher and tell my mom and dad. She told 'em, 'I'm going to hire Joe Don for my band. What do you think about that?' And they were floored."



Rascal Flatts



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Also in Wright's touring band was a keyboard player named Jay DeMarcus, and he and Rooney immediately hit it off.

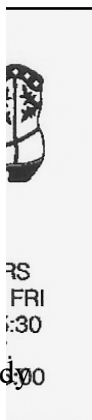
"He kept telling me about his cousin, Gary, who sang so well," said Rooney. "Gary was on the road with (contemporary Christian artist) Michael English, but when they weren't touring they were playing down in Nashville's Printer's Alley at a place called the Fiddle & Steel Guitar Bar. One day in late March, Jay called me and said, 'We don't have a guitar player tonight. You want to come down and sit in?' I did, and I knew every song they were doing. The first one we sang together was 'Church on Cumberland Road,' and when we all reached that chorus -- well, it was a moment."

The other two men also realized that something special had been born, and soon Rooney was the group's regular guitarist. Eventually, with the help of their friend Mila Mason, herself a singer-songwriter, the trio got an audition with Lyric Street Records, Disney's country label.

"After we got a demo to Doug Howard, a senior vice president at Lyric Street, he asked us to come in and sing for him," remembered Rooney. "We went in and sang for him and two other vice presidents, and it was like singing to a wall. These three guys listened with no expression at all, and then told us hanks and said things like, 'We know you've got a lot of other places to go.'

"We went home, called our folks, and told 'em it was over. We knew we were failures. But then, after about 40 minutes, Doug Howard called and said, 'We absolutely loved it.' It turned out that they just couldn't show their emotions about the music because the president of the label, Randy Goodman, was out of the country." When Goodman returned, he got excited as well, quickly working out a deal to sign the group.

In an era when every success in country music is hard-won and breakthrough debuts have become almost non-existent, the story of Rascal Flatts has been nothing short of incredible. Their platinum debut CD spawned four top-10 singles, including the chart-topping "Prayin For Daylight" and the multi-media smash "I'm Movin On," and stayed on the charts for two years. It's platinum status places the trio in elite company, joining SheDaisy and the Dixie Chicks as the only groups in the last five years whose debuts sold a million copies.



Rascal Flatts--comprised of Jay DeMarcus, Gary LeVox, and Joe Don Rooney--quickly earned two #1 CMT videos and a #1 GAC video, scored appearances on the soundtracks of *The Emperors New Groove* and *We Were Soldiers*, and were the subjects of a one-hour live television concert. Along the way, they were voted the ACM's 2001 New Vocal Group of the Year.

If it seems as though their level of success--not to mention their schedule--has been breathtaking. You'll get no argument from the three young men in the center of the maelstrom. "It's been incredible," they say, almost in unison. "It's unbelievable--the thrill of a lifetime," adds Jay. "We're beyond blessed. It keeps getting better and better. It's meant bigger crowds and more people knowing our music."

They were more than anxious for the chance to bring their added experience to their second CD, called *Melt*. "A lot of people talk about the sophomore blues," says Gary, "but we weren't scared by it. We were excited about the chance to get some new music out and to make use of the creative control Lyric Street gave us."

"We're very serious about the art of making music," says Jay, "and we felt we were capable of being even more involved in the creative process. It was great to be able to be more hands-on in the crafting of this record."

One change this time involved the increased use of the trio's world-class musicianship. Jay, who played keyboards and acted as bandleader for Chely Wright, brought his instrumental, as well as his vocal skills to bear on *Melt*; playing bass and taking a major role in arranging the trio's vocals. Joe Don, whose instrumental skills have earned him comparisons with the likes of Vince Gill, handled a good deal of the guitar work on the project. Both were the perfect complement to the amazing vocal ability Gary has brought to both of Rascal Flatts' CDs.

The three brought another dimension to *Melt*, taking on the role of co-producers. One added responsibility came as they weighed their own improving songwriting skills against those of country's other stellar writers.

"It's a very democratic thing," says Joe Don of the process. "I think we've all become better songwriters in the last couple years, but we're still going to live and die by the motto, the best song wins, no matter what."

In fact, when two outside songs the trio couldn't resist came in late in the search, one of the songs dropped to make room, had been written by all three members. It was symbolic of the intensive and painstaking song search.

"It's a process that has been long and tedious," says Joe Don. "It started two or three years ago, and we went through two or three thousand songs. That's one great thing about our co-producers, Mark Bright and Marty Williams. We can really trust their judgment on songs as we search for the best material."

That perspective held true even in the light of their outside songwriting success. Jay's "Jezebel" appeared on the last Chely Wright album, Joe Don's "Right Now" is on the new Chad Brock album, and Gary's recent cut *This Pretender* on Joe Diffie's latest.

The rising tide of popularity became a tidal wave with the release of "I'm Movin On," a phenomenon that still leaves band members shaking their heads.

"The song *I'm Movin On* became bigger than us," says Jay. "It's one of those songs with such a powerful message it can move anybody in any phase of life. If you're 12 and lose a parent, 35 and going through a divorce, or 70 and losing somebody to cancer, you've got to face moving on. It's a universal song that really did more than we expected. It's turned our lives upside-down. We're still catching up to it."

The hit songs and the relentless work ethic drove them inexorably toward platinum status, and it was there that they caught their breath long enough to appreciate how far they'd come.

"Definitely, going platinum was our biggest goal," says Joe Don. "When we reached that stage, we knew we'd really done what we'd set out to do with that record. "Now," adds Gary, "we want to expand more on the foundation we started to build with that first album, and with *Melt*, I think we've accomplished that."

Information for this story came from a January 26, 2001 article in the *Tulsa World* written by John Wooley and from the Rascal Flatts website: [www.rascalflatts.com](http://www.rascalflatts.com)

Check out the site for more pictures of the guys and concert dates.



## Picher Mining Museum

We have all heard the old saying “One picture is worth a thousand words.” If that is the case, all the pictures in this museum speak volumes about the history of Picher.

There are pictures, mining artifacts, old newspaper clippings and much more housed within the walls of the building that was once home to the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore producers Association.

Thanks to the efforts of Frank Wood, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

The museum is the only one in the state of Oklahoma dedicated to the preservation of hard rock lead and zinc mining history.

We made several trips to the museum while doing research for this issue, and every time we found something we missed the first time.

The museum is open 1pm to 4pm, seven days a week. They are closed on legal holidays. Admission is free. They are located at 508 N. Connell in Picher. Call (918) 673-1192 or 673-1414 for tour arrangements.

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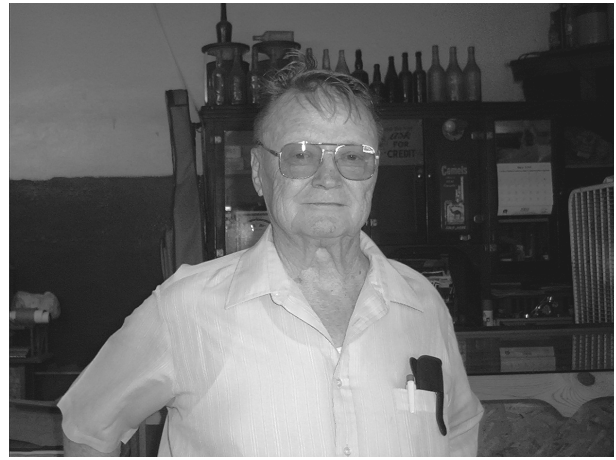
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## Picher's Second Museum

Orval "Hoppy" Ray has operated the Pastime Pool Hall since 1962. He borrowed money from the owner of the grocery store, and opened the pool hall as a family recreation center. He got the nickname Hoppy, as a child, playing cowboys and Indians. He always had to be Hopalong Cassidy.

Hoppy is a long time resident of Picher. In 1938 he was working as a popcorn boy at the Roxy Theater, and playing pool at the pool hall, he was 13 at the time. A game of pool was a nickel then. At one time he was a Constable for the Northern District, and he also worked for Goodwrench for 22 years, retiring in 1976 for medical reasons.

The pool hall really isn't open for business as a pool hall anymore. On Monday nights, starting at 7pm during the summer and 6pm during the winter, different bands come in and play bluegrass, gospel, and country music. The rest of the time the place serves as home to many pictures, artifacts, and memorabilia from the early years of Picher and the mining industry.




Hoppy Ray inside Picher's other museum

Baseball great, Mickey Mantel and different members of his family used to hang out at the pool hall! There are pictures hanging on the wall of Mickey's dad working the mines in Picher.

Contact Hoppy for a tour of the museum.

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## 2004 Grad Is Academic All-Stater

Picher-Cardin student Craig Cruzan didn't let his area's link to learning disabilities affect him. Sledding on top of enormous piles of lead chat has not slowed Academic All-Stater Craig Cruzan, the first Picher-Cardin High School senior in the school's history to receive All-State status.

He hopes that recognition, as one of Oklahoma's 100 outstanding seniors will improve the reputation of both his school and his community.

"I like it here. We get a bad rap here ever since people started doing testing (on blood-lead levels)," Cruzan said. "Our school is an excellent school. I think it's important for people to know we have good students here."

Picher sits in the middle of the Tar Creek Superfund site, which is polluted by lead, cadmium and other heavy metals from decades of mining.

One-hundred-foot piles of chat -- the gravel-like remains from heavy-metal mining -- are prevalent throughout the Picher and Cardin area.

Blood samples have shown that many living in the area have elevated levels of lead in their blood, which contributes to learning disabilities in children. Cruzan avoided those problems, even though he didn't avoid the chat. When it snowed, Cruzan rode his sled down those chat piles.

Cruzan has a 4.2 grade point average and scored a 31 on the ACT college-entrance exam. He was one of only 100 public high school seniors recognized as Academic All-Staters by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence at the foundation's banquet, held in May of this year at the Tulsa Convention Center.

The foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization established by David Boren in 1985 to recognize academic excellence in Oklahoma's public schools. Each year, 100 seniors are recognized with Academic All-State Awards.

The foundation also awards a Medal for Excellence to a teacher at the elementary, secondary and collegiate level, an administrator and a local education foundation each year.

Each of the six medal winners receive a \$7,500 cash award with an additional \$1,000 cash award going to schools of the winning teachers and administrators.

Academic All-Staters receive a \$1,500 scholarship, a medallion and commemorative plaque and an Academic All-State flag to be displayed at their school's campus.



Craig Cruzan

Picher-Cardin High School will fly its flag with pride. Principal Bruce Chrz said Cruzan is the first student from the school to be recognized with an Academic All-State award.

"It sends a message to the rest of our kids . . . that students here can still reach and achieve some of those higher awards even though we're a small school."

There are only about 110 students in the high school, and only 26 students in Cruzan's graduating class.

Aside from proving that the high school is a good school, Chrz said he hopes Cruzan's recognition will shine a positive light on the entire community.

"There are many good students here with good families," Chrz said. "There are good students and there are good things going on in Picher."

This story was taken from an article that appeared in May in the Tulsa World.

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## Picher Had Three Theaters

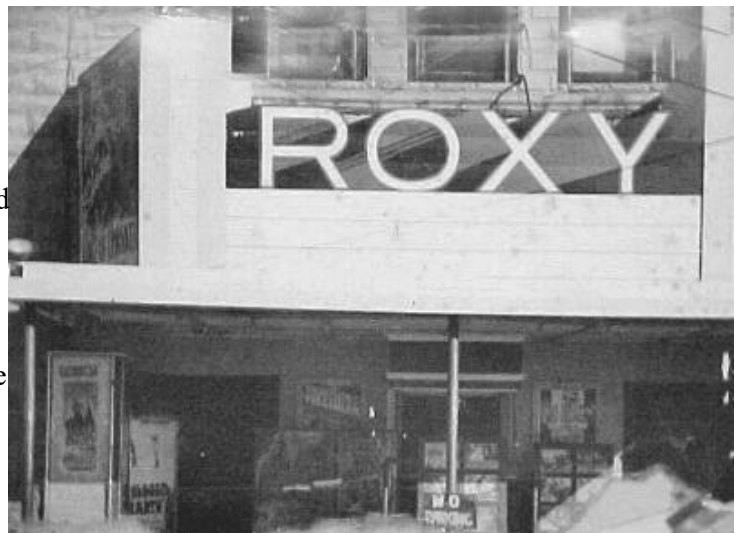
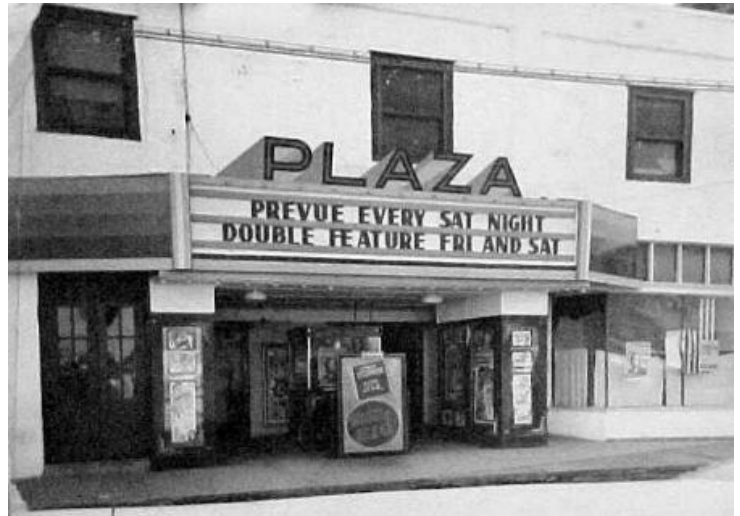
At one time Picher had three movie theaters. Photos of all three, taken in 1944, appeared in a March 22, 2001 Tri-State Tribune article. Frank Wood, who is the President of the Picher Mining Field Museum, wrote the article. The theaters were the Mystic, Plaza, and Roxy.

The Plaza was located on the south side of West 2<sup>nd</sup> St. The Mystic was across the street and one block west. The Roxy was on the east side of Main St.

The Roxy and the Plaza featured Saturday double feature matinees, usually B grade westerns, and a cartoon. Admission for children was 10 cents in the 1940s. The Plaza also had action packed serial features, which ended in a cliffhanger every week, to keep the viewers coming back.

The Mystic usually ran the latest Hollywood releases for the older moviegoers. Frank stated in the article that the sound quality was always better at the Mystic. It also had the better screen and always seemed cooler than the other two theaters.

As the years passed, the Mystic closed, followed by the Roxy, leaving the Plaza as the only theater in town. Several years later it burned and was not replaced. For a brief time movies were shown at the old bowling alley (later Fireman's Hall).

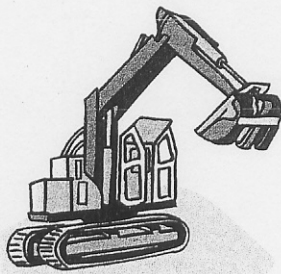


### *Stone's*

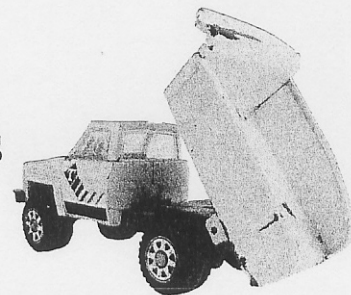
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## **Picher-Cardin Grad Played Pro Football**

Picher – Cardin graduate, Ron Yankowski played college football at NEO and Kansas State. In 1971 he was an eighth round draft pick of the St Louis Cardinals football team. He played 10 seasons as a defensive lineman.

The following are game highlights we found in the archives on the Dallas Cowboys' web site.

During a December 1975 game, with Dallas trailing 21-3, Dallas was going for a first down on fourth and nine at the Cardinal 33, but guard Burton Lawless moved and it was fourth and 14 at the 44. Staubach tried to run, tried to pass and had the ball knocked away by end Ron Yankowski. "I felt confident Roger could run for it on that particular play," said Tom Landry. "But we didn't block Yankowski and it failed. I went for it because I felt we HAD to get some points on the board."

During a November 1977 game, the score was tied 17-17. The Dallas offense set up for a rather pathetic effort from its own 22. You doubtless have heard little about the Cardinal front four, but guys such as Mike Dawson and Ron Yankowski trapped Roger Staubach, who did not have a good night, twice. Yankowski coming off tackle Pat Donovan smeared Staubach for a 10-yard loss back to his own seven on second down. On third down, end John Zook pressured Staubach, who threw into the ground.

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# Thank You!

We want to thank everyone who helped us, while doing research for this issue! It was a pleasure meeting all of you! We work with limited manpower and time. The help we get from residents of the community enables us to feature more interesting facts about the towns we visit. We apologize to anyone we didn't have time to contact, who had stories for this issue.

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