

Historic Harrah

Sweeney, Clubb, Navarre possible names

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The City of Harrah was named or nearly named for several different people or geographic areas during its long and colorful history.

The land that would become the town of Harrah had its first settler, Louis Navarre, in the 1870s. Navarre, was a member of the Potawatomi people who had signed an 1867 treaty to sell their Kansas lands in order to purchase lands in Indian Territory with the proceeds.

They also became citizens of the United States and thus became known as the Citizen Potawatomi.

In 1890, Navarre and the Citizen Potawatomi participated, unwillingly, in the allotment process implemented through the Dawes Act of 1887. With this Act, the Citizen Potawatomi people were forced to accept individual allotments.

In the Land Run of 1891, the remainder of the Potawatomi reservation in Oklahoma was opened up to non-Indian settlement, with about 450 square miles of the reservation given away by the government to settlers.

FRANK HARRAH, for whom the town is named, purchased 40 acres from Louis Navarre's allotment in April 1898 and early settlers included a large number of Polish immigrants. More than two million Poles entered American ports between 1897 and 1913, and the immigrants formed small communities around Choctaw Nation coal mines. Originally named Sweeney, after E.W. Sweeney, who operated a ferry beginning in 1891, the

town was renamed Harrah on December 22, 1898, and was incorporated in 1908. The town was almost renamed Clubb.

In the 1940s Harrah was a center of cotton ginning and its population was 741 in 1950. By 1990 4,206 people lived in Harrah. The 2010 census counted 5,095 residents and the 2020 census is expected to show more than 6,000 residents living in the city.

The population density was 428 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the city was 84% white, 1% African American, 7.3% Native American, 0.7% Asian, 0.7% from other races, and 6.3% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race made up 4% of the population.

Of the 1,960 households, 33% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 57.6% consisted of married couples living together, 10.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 26.3% were non-families.

A total of 22.7% of the households are occupied by a single individual and 26.1 percent had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.57 and the average family size was 3.02.

The median income for a household in the city was \$56,302, and the median income for a family was \$76,725. The per capita income for the city was \$25,545. About 6.1% of families and 8.4% of the population were below the poverty line, including 17.1% of those under age 18 and 4.7% of those age 65 or over.

HARRAH IS A PART of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Located

Prosperous Polish Population

Frank Harrah, for whom the town is named, purchased 40 acres in April 1898, and early settlers included a large number of Polish immigrants as more than two million entered America between 1897 and 1913. Many of the immigrants formed small communities around Choctaw Nation coal mines.

Midwest City and Shawnee. The first settlers of the area arrived in the 1870s, but the town was not incorporated until 1908. The town was settled by Americans, Polish immigrants and other groups and had a cotton ginning center. Evidence of these early Polish settlers remains apparent in the names of citizens, streets and businesses.

GEOGRAPHY. Harrah's elevation is 925 feet above sea level. It lies partly in the Great Plains near the geographical center of the 48 contiguous states in the United States. Oklahoma is located in a temperate region and experiences occasional extremes of temperature and precipitation typical of a continental climate.

Harrah lies in an area known as Tornado Alley characterized by frequent interaction between cold and warm air masses producing severe weather. An average of 54 tornadoes strike the state per year.

The city lies in the Harrah school district, with some western parts of the city in the Choctaw-Nicoma Park school district. Both districts offer primary and secondary school education.

Although there are no higher ed-

Oklahoma are less than 30 miles away. St. Gregory's University offers undergraduate programs in multiple areas of study and a graduate program in business.

Oklahoma Baptist University is owned by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and is ranked as Oklahoma's top regional college in the U.S. News rankings for 18 consecutive years.

Harrah students can also attend Eastern Oklahoma County Technical Center and have the opportunity to gain college credit with concurrent enrollment with Rose State College in Midwest City.

HARRAH NOTABLES

Dale Robertson, western actor was born in Harrah in 1923

Tim Holt, Western genre actor, buried here in 1973

Paul Waner, Hall of Fame Baseball player with the Pittsburgh Pirates

Jason Boland, Red Dirt singer and guitar player for Jason Boland and The Stragglers.

Matt Grice, 4-time state wrestling champion and UFC Fighter

Kellen and Brady Manek, Division 1 basketball stars