

POCI Bus Tour Reveals a Vaudeville-Era Destination!

by David Dorman



In an earlier installment of our 2022 POCI Convention previews, we introduced a bus tour which takes us to the fascinating Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore, Oklahoma.

Following this museum visit, we will continue our travels along Route 66 towards Miami, Oklahoma and the world famous Coleman Theatre where we'll enjoy lunch inside the

refurbished ballroom. The Coleman Theatre is a historic performance venue and movie house originally built in 1929 for George Coleman, a local mining magnate. It has a distinctive Spanish Colonial Revival exterior with an ornate Louis XV interior.

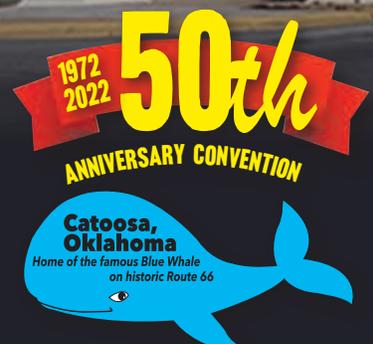
The Coleman Theatre was proudly billed as the most elaborate entertainment facility between Dallas and Kansas City. Mr. Coleman conceived

and funded the theatre, determined to provide Miami and "Mother Road" travelers the very best of entertainment in the most modern of surroundings.

Fully restored to its 1920s splendor, the theater's interior offers intricate historical detailing, a fully restored original chandelier, and carved, winding staircases flanked by gilded candelabra-toting statues.



The Indian Nations Chapter is ready to welcome you to the 50th anniversary of POCI's International Convention. This milestone event will take place in Catoosa, Oklahoma, near Tulsa and adjacent to Interstate 44, from July 12-16, 2022.





Historically, the Coleman's varied program offerings typified an American entertainment industry in marked transition. Alongside the latest movies from Hollywood — including “talkies” from the earliest screenings — patrons would enjoy old-time Vaudeville performances or live music from a ten-person orchestra and a vintage pipe organ known as the “Mighty Wurlitzer.”

Opened in 1929, the Coleman Theatre remains operational still today. In 1989, the Coleman family donated the building to the City of Miami and, with the support of private and public funding, hundreds of community volunteers have assisted in restoring this historic venue. Even the old Mighty Wurlitzer, itself thought to be long lost, has returned. The theatre was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Both of these tour destinations are quite unique and promise to be a great family destination.

During our return trip to the host hotel, our group will pause briefly at one of Route 66's most photogenic locations, the Blue Whale. From magazines, post cards to multiple television appearances, the Blue Whale remains a top destination stop for all Mother Road enthusiasts. Don't miss it!

Even More Oklahoma Destinations Beckon Your Visit!

During your time in Oklahoma – perhaps either before or after the POCl convention activities slated for July 12-16th – why not consider visiting these other nearby attractions?

The Gathering Place



At the top of your list should be an incredible site known simply as “The Gathering Place.” Construction for this family-oriented spot began in 2004 as a major expansion and renovation of the Tulsa River Parks area near 31st Street and Riverside Parkway. Phase I, designed by landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, consists of 66.5 acres. The Gathering Place, a project of the George Kaiser Family Foundation, has further expansion plans that will make it one of the largest parks in the U.S. The reported \$465 million total cost of Phase I was funded by private and corporate donations, including \$200 million alone from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The Gathering Place was named the best new attraction

in the United States according to a poll conducted by *USA Today*.

But what exactly is The Gathering Place? After many years of planning and construction, it's now a recreational and meeting venue that offers something for everyone. Activities include a several-acre area designed just for spirited youngsters with free paddle boats, canoes and kayaks (available on a first-come, first-served basis). Food and drinks are also available. Fascinating surprises await visitors of all ages in every corner of this amazing park. Check it out; we promise you won't be disappointed!

The Gilcrease Museum

Just a heads-up. The Gilcrease Museum, which houses the largest collection of Western American art ever assembled may have been on your list of places to visit while in the Tulsa area. But, the museum is now



closed for two to three years while they build a new and larger facility. Unfortunate for us this year, but a huge step forward for the museum.

Tulsa Route 66

Route 66 Historical Village

Designed to tell the story of Tulsa's oil and transportation industries, the Route 66 Historical Village is an open-air museum along Southwest Boulevard. Start your visit in the information center that was inspired by an early Mother Road-era Phillips 66 gas station. Then head over to the 194-foot-tall oil derrick that marks the spot where oil was first discovered in T-Town on June 25, 1901. Stretched out in the shadow of the oil derrick is a Meteor Frisco 4500. This steam locomotive once traveled through Tulsa, transporting passengers and freight overnight between St. Louis and Oklahoma City.



Route 66 Historical Village

is hand-breaded and served with two sides and a freshly baked dinner roll. You'll also discover a long list of burger options, and the deep-fried onion rings are great as your side dish. And whether you order it for breakfast or as a dessert, don't leave Tally's without trying a homemade cinnamon roll. There's an antique store next door you might want to visit as well.



Cyrus Avery Centennial Plaza

Located on the east bank of the Arkansas River, the Cyrus Avery Centennial Plaza pays homage to the Father of Route 66. Walk across the skybridge and read the informational signs before snapping pics of the large sculpture in the center of the plaza. The East Meets West sculpture stands at the symbolic midpoint of the



Route 66 Historical Village

Tally's Good Food Cafe

Nothing pairs with a Route 66 road trip like an old-fashioned diner serving up delicious comfort food surrounded by 1950s memorabilia. Be sure to stop for a bite at Tally's Good Food Cafe. With more than 100 dishes on the menu, it can be hard to narrow down your choices, but Tally's is known for having the best chicken-fried steak along Route 66. Each piece



Cyrus Avery Centennial Plaza

Cyrus Avery Centennial Plaza Mother Road, illustrating a common occurrence when horse-drawn wagons from the oil fields and automobiles jockeyed for passing rights on the original narrow bridge that spanned the river.

Route 66 Rising

Rising from the center of the traffic circle where Cyrus Avery's tourist court and service station once stood (now known as the Avery Traffic Circle) is a large public art piece. While you can't miss the sculpture at the intersection of E. Admiral Place and S. Mingo Road, finding a spot to get out and take a photo can be a bit more complicated. You might have better luck pulling into the lot at Clayton Homes and carefully making your way across two lanes of traffic to the lush center.

Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum

The award-winning Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum is a must-see!

Car lovers everywhere are excited about visiting Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum where they will find a plethora of cars and car stuff! The former, decommissioned 45th National Guard Armory was converted to this 12,000 square-foot auto museum in 2015. Since opening its doors, thousands of visitors from all over the world have walked through its doors, enjoying a variety of vehicles from decades past (plus a military section that



honors our veterans).

Along with the cars themselves, you'll see lots of car memorabilia. The Rick Kirk Collection features unique FORD items, including some one-of-a-kind pieces. And, Dean's Garage has car engines, manuals and posters from days gone by.

But here, the cars are the stars. Each vehicle is owned by an individual who is delighted to share their love of cars with others. Cars are rotated regularly, so there's always something new to see.

For the kids, there is the Seek-and-Find game, which they love. Parents like it too, because that game keeps kids busy! Mom and Dad can enjoy looking at the vehicles while their kids complete the game for a prize.

Outside, on the southeast lawn, the museum's 66-foot-tall visible gas pump



The museum's 66' tall visible pump.



stands ready to welcome visitors from all over the world. The iconic replica of an authentic 1950s pump is without a doubt the world's tallest gas pump.

The Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00am-4:00pm, and on Sundays (March-November) from Noon until 4:00pm. Closed on Sundays during December, January and February.

Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum
13 Sahoma Lake Road
Sapulpa, OK
918-216-1171
Heartofroute66.org 