

Arcadia Round Barn Banner

The Official Newsletter of the Arcadia Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

SPRING 2026 EDITION

Ralph Keely Odor * The Man Who Invented Vornado

Have you noticed the avocado green floor fans inside the Arcadia Round Barn? The fans came from the Vornado Factory in Andover, Kansas. The gentleman who bought the fans and had them sent to the barn (free-of-charge) is Don Morris, of Punta Gorda, Florida. Morris is a member of AHPS and is great-grandson to William Harrison Odor, original builder of the Round Barn. Morris is the author of the book *"The Man Who Invented Vornado,"* which is available to read inside the Round Barn. Donald Robert Morris wrote this book because his grandfather never got the credit he deserved for his inventions.

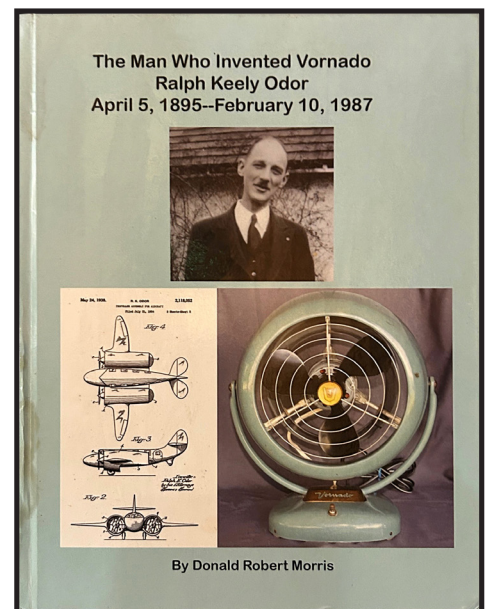
• ODOR, RALPH KEELY (1895-1987) •



Born in Arcadia, Oklahoma, on April 5, 1895, into the farm family of William H. and Myra E. Odor, Ralph Keely Odor was a World War I veteran and an engineer. His service in the war introduced him to aviation, and afterward his job required him to take airplane trips. In the 1920s he began experimenting with ways to build a better aircraft engine. He returned to the Arcadia area in the 1920s (where in 1898 his father had constructed the now-famous Arcadia Round Barn) and set about creating models of his idea, finally building a working model in a laundry in Edmond. The concept that Odor developed was called a "vortex tornado" because it channeled air through a tube, past spinning vanes, creating a vacuum that made the propeller spin faster. He built and flew his "vornado plane" in 1929. Odor soon moved to Stillwater, where Oklahoma A&M University (now Oklahoma State University) provided him a laboratory. Students at the university filmed a flight of his model in 1931, and that film is still accessible for viewing on the Internet. A patent for the air-moving device that powered the plane was filed in 1934 and approved in 1938. In December 1934 he exhibited his airplane, which he called the "Vornado plane," at the Industrial Arts and Home Work Shop Exhibition in Oklahoma City. His was the earliest use of the term "vornado."

In 1938 Odor filed a patent for an indoor air circulator based on the same principle (Patent No. 2330907, reg. U.S. Patent Office, approved October 5, 1938. A similar patent was filed by Odor in Canada and approved in 1940). Plans for manufacturing Odor's fan were placed with Propellair Company of Ohio, and a few were produced and marketed. The beginning of U.S. involvement in World War II preempted future development of both the airplane project and the fan.

After the war Odor went to work as an engineer for O.A. Sutton's Aircraft Welders Company in Kansas. Sutton manufactured the fans but neglected to credit Ralph Odor for his inventions. However, Odor's revolutionary idea and his engineering work is documented in patents and drawings and in the media of the day. In the late twentieth century the Vornado whole-room air circulator was revived and manufactured by Vornado Air LLC. After research and verification of the origin of the vortex tornado air circulator concept, the company gave Ralph K. Odor credit for his invention. Odor died on February 10, 1987, in Portage, Ohio. (Some information written by Dianna Everett for the Oklahoma Historical Society)



Book Cover: *The Man Who Invented Vornado - Ralph Keely Odor* by Donald Robert Morris



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*The Arcadia Round Barn
Banner*, the official newsletter
of the Arcadia Historical &
Preservation Society, Inc.,
is published quarterly and
funded by your support.

*The expenses for maintaining
the Round Barn* are paid with
funds from brick sales, member-
ships, loft rentals, barn sales and
donations. To help preserve this
historical landmark, please
consider sending a donation.

FORMS for loft rental, brick
orders & membership can be
downloaded from our website:
www.arcadiaroundbarn.com

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY ON MARCH 23, 2026



The Nominating Committee of the Arcadia Historical & Preservation
Society presents the following slate of Officers and Trustees
to be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Society on
Monday, March 23, 2026 ■ 6 pm at the Round Barn.

TRUSTEES:

Joe Baxter

—RE-ELECTED

—NEW

Vi Davis

Jackie Caldwell

Shellee Graham

Arthur Ganther

Monte Courtney

Clint Spencer

Michelle Hara

Ray Robison

Devin Wooden

Mike Kertok

Ann Young

Elisabeth Lowe

Andrea Moon

Linda Simonton

OFFICERS: TO BE ELECTED FROM THE EXISTING TRUSTEES
AND TO SERVE A TERM OF ONE YEAR FROM APRIL 1, 2026

PRESIDENT

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HONORARY POSITION:

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LERENCE ROBISON

★ VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

VIOLA "VI" & DANNY DAVIS. Vi serves on the AHPS Board of Directors. She is past president, treasurer and vice-president.

• **How long have you been involved with the Round Barn?**

(DANNY) "I've lived in Arcadia since 1973. The barn was in bad shape and getting worse. As a young man, I walked around the barn after it rained because it would expose quarters that people would toss around the barn for good luck. After a storm, I drove by and the roof had collapsed (1988). I thought it was a shame, that someone should do something about that. Not long after, a 74-year-old carpenter from Midwest City with no connection to the barn thought the same thing: Do something to save that barn. His name was *Luke Robison. Luke contacted the people who owned the barn and started the process of raising funds to restore it. At this time the Arcadia Historical & Preservation Society—with the help of Beverly White (from Luther) and others—was formed and fundraising began. I was involved with my own business and unable to work on the barn project but I did furnish all the scaffolding during reconstruction." (*Luke Robison was 74-years-old in 1988 and turned 78 when the barn was completed in 1992.)



Viola "Vi" & Danny Davis

(VI) "I opened Arcadia Tag & Title in 2002. The business, a metal building, was located on Danny's shop parking lot on Main Street. I remember on some days making only \$2 and on a good day made \$20. Danny had to support the business for many years but Arcadia Tag & Title stands on its own now thanks to great employees and wonderful customers. I remember that at least once a month, sometimes more, Lerence Robison (Luke's son) would drop by the office and ask me to join the Arcadia Historical Society. Before long I was INVOLVED, helping organize the membership, and manage loft rentals. My business phone number became the Round Barn contact number and there was no Round Barn website at the time, so Arcadia Tag was the only point of contact for the barn."

• **Why did you volunteer at the barn?** Arcadia is our home and community. The Arcadia Round Barn is a huge part of history in Arcadia. We also enjoy promoting unity with the community.

• **What type of work / volunteer roles have you done for the Round Barn?** **(DANNY)** "I worked on and off for a year at the gift shop to help relieve Butch. As a paid contractor (ABA Contractors, Inc.), I set pavers, installed the sidewalk around the barn, converted the old fire station into the "now" restroom, installed the concrete picnic tables, built the trash dumpster, built the Arcadia Round Barn stone sign out front, and oversaw the paving of the parking lot. My biggest sacrifice was Vi's involvement." **(VI)** "My involvement led to grant writing, providing office space, and creating newsletters. Over the years, I have been President, Treasurer and VP."

"Our first business, other than the construction company, was "Arcadia Cafe," opened in 1985 where Blockman's Restaurant is now. During this time Lake Arcadia was being constructed so we thought it a good idea to convert the old gas station on Hwy 66 into a restaurant. There were only 4 businesses in town at the time: Lake Stop, Jack's Welding Shop (Richardson Bldg), Traylor Wrecker Service, and ABA Contractors."

• **Tell me something I should know about Vi & Danny?** "We are residents of Lake Hiwassee but our commercial businesses are all in Arcadia. In 2007, we along with Aubrey McClendon, opened new businesses in Arcadia. Mr. McClendon opened the famous POPS on 66 and we built the "Windmill Shops" and moved Arcadia Tag & Title from the metal building on Main Street to the shopping center. The shopping center added approximately nine businesses to the area."

• **Family:** "We have four children and six grandchildren. Our daughter, Danielle, was raised visiting Butch at the barn and recalls she had to keep her distance because he chewed and spit!"

UPCOMING EVENTS: SAVE THESE DATES!



Saturday • April 11th • 2026

SAT • APRIL 11, 2026
 3rd Annual Classic Cars
 A-Round the Barn
 Car Show: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

SUNDAY ELM TREE CONCERTS (1 p.m. to 3 p.m.)



Sun • May 3, 2026 -
 -**Gypsy Twang** *Okie Roots*
 Sun • May 17, 2026 -
 -**Brave Amigos** *Guitar Virtuosos*
 Sun • May 24, 2026 -
 -**Buffalo Rogers** *Songwriter*
 Sun • May 31, 2026 -**Lightfoot Family Band** *Folk Roots*

Sun • June 7, 2026 -**Mighty Green** *Reggae Rock*
 Sun • June 21, 2026 -**Tucker Wayne Evans** *Songwriter*
 Sun • June 28, 2026 -**JOE BAXTER** *Barn Music*

and many more Elm Tree concerts through September 27th 2026.



• Saturday, October 17, 2026 is the **Round Barn Round-Up**. This is a music and arts festival, and an official Route 66 Centennial event partnering with the Oklahoma Route 66 Association.



THE ORIGINAL ROUTE 66 LANDMARK
 ARCADIA, OKLAHOMA, USA

ARCADIA HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY
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