

LYNN RIGGS WEEK

A collaboration between the Western History Collections, OU University Libraries, the Mark Allen Everett Poetry Series, the Native Nations Center, and the Department of Native American Studies

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NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

A citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Lynn Riggs (1899-1954) attended OU from the fall of 1920 to December of 1923, without attaining his degree. During his tenure at OU, he first pursued fine arts then switched his focus to English. He served as poetry editor of the *University of Oklahoma Magazine*; wrote and produced his first play, *Cuckoo*; and wrote and published poems in national journals including *Poetry*, *Smart Set*, and *American Mercury*. His play, *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1931), served as the basis of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1943 Broadway musical *Oklahoma!*, which was later adapted into an Oscar-winning film. Riggs wrote 36 plays, 6 of which were produced on Broadway (not including *Oklahoma!*, which ran for 2,212 Broadway performances). His play *The Cherokee Night* (1932) continues to be produced. During his lifetime, he also published a collection of poetry, *The Iron Dish* (1931), and one posthumous collection, *This Book, This Hill, These People*, was published in 1982. He wrote six original screenplays, two of which were *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (1942) and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (1943). At the time of his passing, he was also at work on a novel, which was two-thirds completed.

