

720 INDIANA AVE., WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76301



From the Desk of Rober Palmer, Commission Chair
Guest Contributor: Becky Trammell

What do a “singing Mayor,” an elephant, a W.P.A. sewing room, Dolly Parton, and Eleanor Roosevelt have in common? Memorial Auditorium.

Mayor R. E. Shepherd, known as the “Singing Mayor,” visited Fair Park in Dallas. He brought back an enthusiasm for a Wichita Falls cultural center and a center for city government. In December 1926, Mayor Shepherd and the city council advertised for bids for Memorial Auditorium.

A committee was formed, comprised of the mayor, city council, and local citizens, Walter Cline, W. B. Hamilton, John Bland, J. B. Marlow, and Harry Awker, plus Colorado architect, Alfred A. Fischer. The group reviewed proposed architect plans, ultimately choosing Voelker & Dixon with J. E. Morgan as general contractor.

Constructed for a half-million dollars during 1927-28, Memorial received nearly 1.5 million dollar update in 1964, finally getting air conditioning. In 1984, Memorial was designated a Historic Landmark by the City of Wichita Falls.

With Memorial Auditorium scheduled for an extensive renovation, the Museum of North Texas History celebrated the history of Memorial Auditorium in Art Alley. Wichita County Archivist Carol Rudd and Archive Volunteer John Yates presented Memorial's history through pictures gifted to the Archives from long-time Memorial manager and Museum of North Texas History friend, the late Don Burkman.



Wichita County Archives
Carol Rudd, Archivist

Hours of Operation:
Wednesday, Thursday,
and Friday
10:00am - 4:00pm

Wichita County Texas Archives is on
Facebook

Program

Mike and Penny Morford
Buchanan Office
Supply - Road Trip
816 Scott

MEETING

First Thursday of the Month
12:00 Noon - 1:00pm
Museum of North Texas History
720 Indiana

Becky Trammell, Newsletter Editor

**Wichita County Historical Commission
April 4, 2024 Agenda**

Call to Order: Robert Palmer

Program: Mike and Penny Morford - Buchanan Renovation

Approval of minutes for March meeting: Sent to all members in the newsletter.

Financial Report: Status of Account

Committee Reports:

Program Committee: Douglas James, Chairman

Cemetery Committee: John Yates, Chairman

Website Committee: Becky Trammell/Elizabeth Hawley

Marker Committee: Becky Trammell (Harvey and Kolp)

Old Business:

New Business:

Adjournment:

APRIL MEETING ROAD TRIP

**Our April meeting will be held at 816 Scott, the former home of
Buchanan Office Supply and Printing.**

Park on Scott Street and enter through the glass door.

DO NOT PARK IN THE AT&T LOT!!

*Mike and Penny Morford have
graciously offered to host our meeting
at their home. Mike and Penny
renovated the space to accommodate
both living and storage for their many
hobbies and artifacts.*



Wichita County Commissioners Court

On Tuesday, April 9th at 10:00 am, the Commission will present its yearly report to the Wichita County Commissioners Court. This is our opportunity to advise the Court about the activities of the WCHC. Please plan to attend.

**Wichita County Historical Commission
Minutes
March 7, 2024**

Call to Order: Robert Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:00p.m.

Attendance Members: Robert Palmer, Shanon Dwyer Morton, Joyce James, Joreen Ludeke, Katherine Phillips, Carol Rudd, Billy Clark, Suzanne Darr, Elizabeth Hawley, Becky Trammell, Medrith Collins, Brenda Jarrett, Mark Beauchamp, Douglas James

Attendance Guest: Torin Halsey, Amy Ludeke Dreimiller, Cathy Rule, Sue Harrington, Judy Austin, Rose Wellace, Jenara Kocks Burgess, Barb Foster, Kathy Salan, Shirley Keig-Wilson, Mike Wilson

Program: Torin Halsey worked for Times Record News for 36 years. It all started with winning a local photography contest with the prize of working two weeks in the photography department of TRN. His last day of work was July 31, 2022. Torin began the meeting by reading the farewell article he wrote which expressed thank you to TRN for allowing him to have the best job ever. His talk focused on some of his favorite pictures over the years. For example, the ostrich on the loose, meeting a fella who's nickname and job was "Pyro", Rattlesnake Roundups that are always exciting, and the Barwise School Boat Float event. Great stories and great memories. Since retiring, Torin has been traveling and taking pictures that please him. Thank you, Torin for letting us into your world.

Approval of Minutes: February minutes were approved.

Treasurer's report: John Yates is absent.

Old Business: Robert Palmer announced a meeting to review possible changes to the By-Laws. If you are interested, contact Carol Rudd.

The Riverside Cemetery Tour books are available for free at the Archives.

We are still looking for new members for the Historical Commission. All it requires is a short resume about themselves and their interest in history. The information is submitted to the Commissioners Court for approval.

New Business: We will present our yearly report to the Commissioners Court on April 8 at 10:00 a.m. during their regular meeting. All are invited.

Committee Reports: Two Historical Markers are on their way. The Jimmy Kolp marker will be placed at the Municipal Airport. Additionally, Electra will be planning a big hullabaloo to celebrate one of the first women in Texas to earn a pilot's license. The Ralph Harvey marker will be fixed to the Museum building. Presently, renovation of the Ralph Harvey room is in process.

Adjournment: Becky Trammell motioned to adjourn and Carol Rudd seconded it at 1:05 p.m.

Wichita County Archives News
March 2024

Working at the Archives is never a dull moment. We meet some very interesting people. Here are just a few examples of what goes on at the Archives.

Last month I told about Kevin Thuerwaechter of Lockhart, Texas who called about finding a WWII dog tag that had belonged to MSGT Allen D. Magill who lived in Wichita Falls and who died in 1982. I found the obituary of the wife who died in 2017 and was buried beside her husband in Crestview Cemetery by Owens and Brumley. I called O&B and explained the finding of the dog tag and wanted to return it to the family. Owens and Brumley will contact the daughters and hopefully, they will take possession of the dog tag.

Michael Daeley from Chicago called and asked if we had any information about the house on 1100 Travis and about his great-grandfather, Dan M. Hardy. The Travis home is stunning and I was anxious to know more about the home and the family. Hardy was originally from Archer City and came to Wichita Falls in 1903. He and a partner, T.R. Bennett, operated a saloon called "The Bank" located on 8th Street. Eventually, they will move their venture to Ohio Street. In 1914 Hardy bought out Bennett, sold the saloon, and went into the Wholesale Liquor business. In 1919 he, like so many others, got involved in the oil industry and had offices downtown, the last in the Staley building. Drilling was going well until he was indicted, along with four of his workers, for bribing a U.S. government agent for the State of Oklahoma and for conspiracy to sell liquor to the Indians. The court case went on for four years. Finally, he was acquitted. Hardy died in 1929.

Phillip Malone came into the Archives to look around and he saw we had some pictures of musical entertainers who performed at the Memorial Auditorium in the early days. John Yates and I said we sure wished we had a picture of Elvis when he performed there. Mr. Malone grinned and said that he saw Elvis at the Memorial Audition in 1956. He was driving a truck through town, there was no traffic and was wondering where all the cars had gone. Then he remembered that Elvis was coming to town but he didn't have the money for the ticket. But he wanted to maybe get a look of Elvis and the kids who were attending the performance. When he arrived at the Memorial Auditorium there was no one at the door collecting tickets so he walked right in and saw Elvis. He remembers all the shouting and screaming and girls were crying. He spotted a girl he knew from school. She was lucky enough to get a signed picture of Elvis that she still has today. And yes, Phillip later married that girl.

To go along with the Elvis story, Lauren Love, our intern, found in the TRN file cabinet a story of a Wichita Falls boy who became an Elvis Impersonator. His name is Bobby Young who was a 1971 graduate of Old High. He also appeared on the stage of the Memorial Auditorium and eventually had a lounge show in Vegas.

Lastly, a native of Wichita Falls, let's call him Bob, called to ask if we had any info on the Maskat Temple on Lamar. Bob lives in one of the apartments.

Carol: "Yes, what exactly are you looking for?"

Bob: "Do you know if there was ever a bowling alley in the building?"

Carol: "Hmmm. I've never heard that before, but I knew it was the USO building in WWII."

Bob: "Is the building haunted?"

Carol: "You know, we have a file called Paranormal Activity that you're welcome to read. In fact, you are welcome to come to the Archives and I'll pull everything we have on the Temple."

I'll keep you posted if Bob comes to do research.