



# PRESERVATION NEWS

October 6th, 2016

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LXXVI

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Wichita County Archives

720 Indiana Avenue

Wichita Falls, Texas 76301

Telephone 940-763-0020

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm & 1:00pm - 4:00pm

E-mail Address - archives@co.wichita.tx.us

http://www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

## AGENDA FOR MEETING

Lunch at 11:30am Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

- |                  |                           |             |            |            |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Call to Order | 2. Introduction of Guests | 3. Business | 4. Program | 5. Adjourn |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|

**Monthly Meeting:** Location: Luby's. Price for the luncheon is **\$10.00** each which includes: one meat, salad, vegetables, drink & dessert. Please bring the correct change. **RESERVATIONS NO LONGER NEEDED**

## PROGRAM

Pam Locklin-Dixon

History of Blacks in Burkburnett, Texas

### From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

When the train pulled into the station  
 He'd open up his case and resin up his bow  
 He'd play Upside Down Orange Blossom Special  
 Cause if you want to make a living  
 You got to put on a good show!

When Michael Martin Murphy wrote this song, turned into a hit by Johnny Lee, he wanted to give an image of what the old time western railroad stations were like. In most small towns, the railroad stations were the hub of activity, especially when the passenger trains pulled in. "Meeting the train" was a special event! True growth hit North Texas when the rail lines reached certain points. Towns would spring up along the route, especially when that point was the end of the line. It's hard to picture Fowlkes Station and Harrold being booming towns, but that's what happened.

Cafes and hotels were built near the station so new arrivals had a place to eat and stay. Iowa Park had the Park Hotel and the Metz Cafe. Electra had The Frontier Hotel and the famed White Rose Cafe. Wichita Falls had the St. James Hotel and a host of small food places. Many stories described the people who hung around the station and things that happened. Perhaps one of the best described a new arrival with a very large suitcase. He told the station watchers, "I'll give 50 cents for someone to carry my suitcase to the hotel." One man said he would do it. When he got back, his friends laughed at him because, well, he was a millionaire. When quizzed he said, "How do you think I got to be a millionaire?" The man was Dan Waggoner.

Railroads carried just about everything including: oil field parts, tractors, wagons, kit houses from Sears and Roebuck, chickens-lots of chickens, mail, and just about anything else you could order from

anywhere. The mail was a special story. When trains stopped, the mail was loaded onto a pull cart and taken to the post office. When trains didn't stop, the mail was thrown off in a very heavy canvas bag. If the train was going 30 miles an hour or more, you gave the mailbag a wide berth. Going out mail was hung in the same type bag on a pole. The train had a mounted hook that snagged the bag, quite an impressive sight. Many knew the mail train times and would go down to watch the event.

Children rode the train with no fear, much different than today. In the late 40s and early 50s, my brother and I would ride the train to Ft. Worth to see the Fat Stock Show. We'd board the Electra train at 2:30 in the morning. My uncle would meet us at the Ft. Worth station about sun up. Sunday afternoon we rode the train back to Electra. Nobody thought anything about it. The conductors were always friendly and kept an eye on us.

Burkburnett's train was a special case. It's been called many things, but the one I always heard was Doodlebug. It rode the Wichita Falls and Northwestern rails through western Oklahoma. Farm wives in Frederick and Magnum would ride it to Wichita Falls to shop. My Grandmother first rode it to Burkburnett to get to our farm as a 17 year old newlywed. When she left Magnum, there was a foot and a half of snow on the ground. She always told that the snow stayed for a month. But, she was in love!

Trains are special. They are a unique part of Wichita County history.

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## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

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### What was a Draft Horse?

# Wichita County Archive News

## October 2016

Texas Historical Marker Application Period: September 1st to November 15th. Two topics have been submitted: Wichita Falls Municipal Zoo and Booker T. Washington Elementary, Burkburnett. Narrative has been submitted for Undertold Marker for Dr. Anne Davis Roark.

Lita and Becky met with MSU staff concerning dedication of MU Desegregation Marker. Date pending for February 2017.

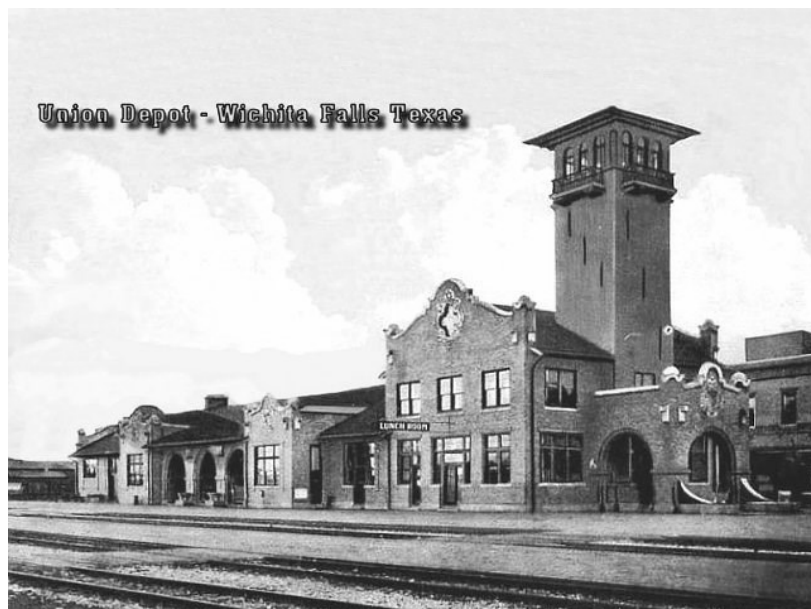
Museum of North Texas History will sponsor "North Texas Legends - Honoring Joe Tom White" on Tuesday, October 18th. Contact the Museum for reservations.

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Above - Burkburnett Depot

Below - Wichita Falls Depot (Original Kemp and Kell Route Depot)



Union Depot - Wichita Falls Texas



Above - Iowa Park Depot