

720 INDIANA AVE., WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76301



From the Desk of Rober Palmer, Commission Chair

Beaver Creek enters the southwest part of Wichita County about four miles west of Highway 25. The creek wanders through the county until joining the Wichita River two miles east of Highway 25 about four miles northeast of Kadane Corner. Surprisingly, it was one of the first parts of the county settled. Inhabited by cougars and many, many rattlesnakes, the territory was and is hostile. With red clay and mesquite country, it took tough, hardy people to tame the county, well describing the early settlers.

The first family was the Mart Banta Family. After leaving Colorado Territory, they established residence along Beaver Creek October 5, 1877. The Banta family had a friendly, working relationship with the Indians, frequently attended Indian dance ceremonies. With the nearest supplies in Henrietta, they lived off the land. They killed buffalo, turkeys, deer, and antelope. Raising a garden was impossible with the wild animals getting most of the produce. They rendered the fat from the buffalo for lard. Lumber for their house was hauled from Sherman. The Bantas helped establish Beaver Creek School, Church, and Cemetery.

The nearest neighbors were two Burnett Ranch cowboys, Tom Roberts and Dick Sparks. They lived at the rock dam, three miles east on the creek. There was no Wichita Falls. Unable to buy cattle from the Burnetts and the Waggoners, they went into the sheep business. That didn't sit well with the Waggoners, a dislike remaining to this day. Mart Banta would go on to hold some of the first public offices in Wichita County.

George B. Ancell was a rugged individual. He began his career by driving mule teams for railroad construction. Convincing people to sell their land to the railroad was not a job for weak individuals. Ancell evolved into a railroad land buyer who purchased ranch land along Beaver Creek. The land became the Ancell - Richardson Ranch, part of which is still managed by George B. Ancell IV. Mr. Ancell was a legend. Many people remember him coming to Electra with a Colt 45 Pistol tucked in the top of his boot. This continued until Ancell took a few shots at his neighbor. After threats from the Sheriff to take the gun from him, he buried it in his backyard. The gun remained there until it was dug up by his great-grandson, William Carter "Scooter Bill" Richardson III, another notable name in Wichita County History.

Scooter Bill was an artist, a television personality, and a true "character." He worked in metal, making western-themed creations and leather, making saddles for the Rehab Auction. Scooter Bill was featured several times on "Texas Country Reporter" and was recognized by the Texas Legislature. Crafting his own coffin, Scooter Bill is buried in Beaver Creek Cemetery.

Other land owners include the Douglasses and the Bradleys. L. P. Douglas came to Wichita County from McMinnville, Tennessee in January 1890. He bought land in Beaver, now Electra. Beaver had a Post Office and three cottages. He signed the petition to change the name to Electra. He bought land east of Electra and along Beaver Creek. His granddaughter has a wonderful mini museum of old farm equipment on the Beaver Creek land, located alongside the Beaver Creek Road. The Bradleys bought land, eventually becoming Bradley 3 Ranch.

A notable family member was Rusty Bradley, pilot, skilled roper, and well-known area personality. One of the greatest moments was when the owners and managers of the four largest adjoining pieces of land met at the Beaver Creek Bridge, Rusty Bradley, Lazy J manager Swede Swenson, Herman Mitchell, and Nance manager Lee Beisch. It was a good time for everyone to be wearing boots!

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

**Robert Palmer
Undertold Stories
of Iowa Park**

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
February 1, 2024 Agenda

Call to Order: Robert Palmer

Program: Robert Palmer - Undertold Stories of Iowa Park

Approval of minutes for January 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

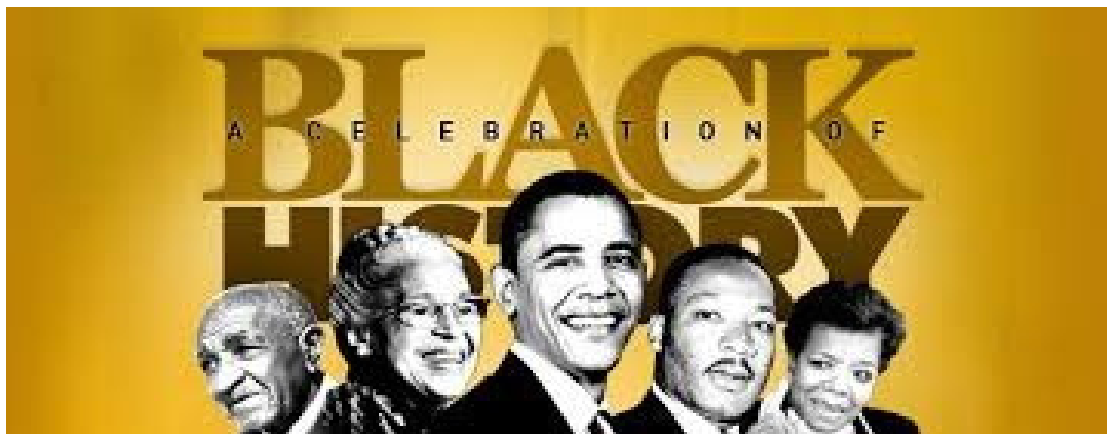
Website Committee: Becky Trammell/Elizabeth Hawley

Marker Committee: Becky Trammell

Old Business:

New Business:

Adjournment:



February is Black History Month

**Wichita County Historical Commission
January 4th Minutes**

Call to Order: Robert Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM

Attendance: Members: Bryce Blair, Brenda Jarrett, Robert Palmer, Pam Morgan, Katherine Phillips, John Yates. Medrith Collins, Carol Rudd

Attendance: No Guests in attendance

Program: Woody Gossom gave an entertaining program that highlighted his many years of public service. At the age of eight, Woody and his parents moved to Wichita Falls. His father had a concrete business and his mother was a legal secretary. As a child, nothing made Woody happier than wearing his cowboy outfit and six-shooters and spending his summers on a working ranch. When he entered politics as an adult, he was the only Republican in a courthouse of Democrats who were not going to give up their seats without a fight. Gossom used old-fashioned campaign tactics of knocking on doors, going around the county to meet the people, and listening to what the people wanted. With the surprising endorsement of the Times Record News, Gossom won by 400 votes. After 20+ years of serving the public, Woody is now retired but is just as busy.

Minutes: Approval of minutes for December. Pam Morgan made the motion to approve and John Yates seconded.

Old Business: If you know someone who would like to be a part of the Historical Commission, have them write a resume about themselves and their interest in history. The resume will be submitted to the Commissioners Court for approval.

New Business: January 27 at Noon will be the unveiling of the Historical Marker for the Providence Baptist Church in Burkburnett. The church is also celebrating its 100th anniversary. Please make plans to attend. The address is 612 Floyd Street, Burkburnett, TX.

Committee Reports: Don Burkman's death has left openings in the Nominating Committee and the Cemetery Committee. Bryce Blair volunteered on the Nomination Committee and Pam Morgan volunteered to be on the Cemetery Committee.

Adjournment: Pam Morgan made the motion to adjourn at 1:03 PM and Brenda Jarrett seconded.

Wichita County Archives News
January 2024

Join us in welcoming Lauren Love to the Archives. Lauren, who is majoring in Archival Studies, is a student at The University of North Texas. She will be completing her practicum and working for 120 hours.

Three more file cabinets have been moved into the Archives because 13 boxes from the TRN collection were found in the vault. No telling how long the boxes have been there, but they are ready to find a permanent home. If you have any free time, please consider helping out the Archives.

Another find in the vault was a large 20X26 unfinished scrapbook about the 1979 tornado. Additionally, there were boxes of old newspapers about the 1958, 1962, and 1964 tornadoes. Upon completion, the scrapbooks will be available for public research.

At the Boys and Girls Resale Shop in Burkburnett, they have a HUGE collection of cookbooks that I usually ignore. But the title of "Wichita Falls Centennial 1882-1982" caught my eye. Thumbing through the book I found Louise Kelly's Homemade Chili recipe, which sounds pretty good in this cold weather. The book was put together by the Senior Citizens Services of North Texas and is being added to the cookbook collection.



**Plan to attend the
dedication of the Texas
Historical Marker
commemorating
Providence Baptist
Church.**

**12:00 Noon, Saturday January 27th
612 Floyd Street, Burkburnett, Texas**