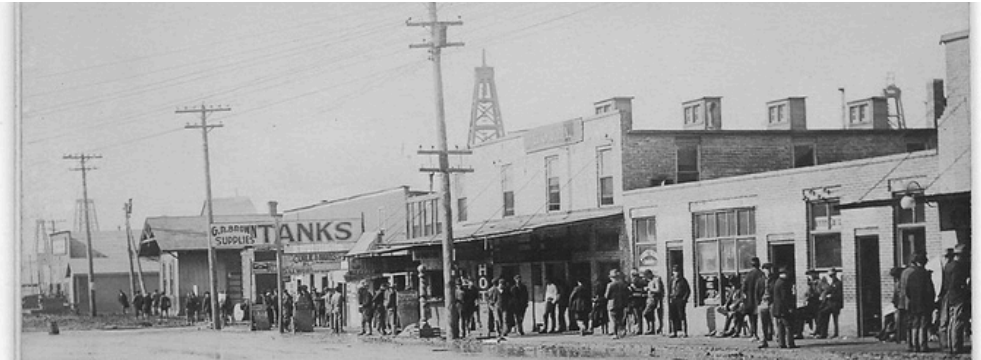


720 INDIANA AVE., WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76301



## From the desk of Robert Palmer

When J.H. Barwise stood on the hill overlooking what would become Wichita Falls, he made that famous statement about seeing a great city built on Faith. As The City and the County developed, that statement of Faith was a major building block for what would happen. The City and As the County grew, people of various religions built churches and, through their multiple beliefs, worshipped.

The early settlers came from many different places and brought the religion they had practiced with them. The first recorded religious meeting was in 1879 at the Harriet Seely House. In 1881, the Methodists organized the first church. In 1882, the Presbyterians built the first church building at the corner of 9th and Indiana. In 1882, the Catholic Church organized. In 1883, the Baptists built the first brick church at the corner of 10th and Indiana. In that same year, the Baptists built a church in what would become Burkburnett. The Methodists had been meeting in that area in the Harris home. The Iowa Park Baptists built their first church in 1890.

The Electra First Baptist Church was organized in 1907 by J.S. Sparks and L.A. Foster. Rural churches were being organized at the same time. Trinity Lutheran Church at Clara was organized in 1886. Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, north of Punkin Center, was built in 1906 when Emil Flusche brought in German settlers.

When J.H. Barwise's eldest son, T.H., organized the Barwise Rural School District just west of 10th Calvary Creek. He led church services first in the school building, then in a small wooden church. It was preceded by a brush arbor built at the location. Baptisms occurred on Cole Creek near Red River north of the church. The services were led by Methodist circuit riding preachers including Rev. Colburn who actively preached in Wichita County for over 50 years.

By the late 1960s, there were 156 churches in Wichita Falls and slightly under 200 churches in all of Wichita County. That number has greatly decreased over the last 60 years! In the 1940s, after World War II, it was estimated that 60 percent of the population attended church services on any given Sunday. The number today is less than 20 percent on any given Sunday!

The Wichita County Historical Commission has dedicated eleven Historical Markers commemorating Wichita County churches. These are: Central Baptist Church in Burkburnett, Cooper School and Church, Trinity Lutheran Church at Clara, Wichita Falls First United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls First Baptist Church, Friberg Cooper Methodist Church, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Saint John Baptist Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Trinity Lutheran Church of Iowa Park, and Providence Baptist Church of Burkburnett, the first African-American church in Wichita County.

The church outreach to people throughout the county's history has been widespread: revivals, vacation bible schools, church camps, and sponsoring missionary trips all over the world. It all began with a statement that this would be a community based on Faith!

### 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

**Deb Cornelius**  
**Rivers and Destinies**



### 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  
Minutes - November 7, 2024**

**Call to Order:** Robert Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

**Attendance Members:** Elizabeth Hawley, Paula Elmore, Byrle Graham, John Yates, Robert Palmer, Douglas James, Suzanne Darr, Billy Clark, Becky Trammell, Carol Rudd, Russell Miller, Shanon Morton, Brenda Jarrett, Jeremy Davis, Bryce Blair.

**Attendance Guest:** Orlando Sosa, Carmen Sosa, David Gray, Laurie Cruse.

**Program:** Orlando Sosa, a local Native American artist, was the November speaker. Orlando paints on old ledger sheets, works with beads, cloth, wood, metal, feathers and more. Self taught, the quality of Orlando's work is filled of love and respect to the elders.

**Approval of Minutes:** The October minutes were read and approved. Becky Trammell made the motion and John Yates seconded. All attending members accepted the motion.

**Chairman Reports:**

**Program:** The December program will be a tour of Memorial High School. The school is located at 6600 Kell West Blvd. on December 5 at 3:30 pm. We will meet in the foyer of the school. The tour guide will be Dr. Lee, superintendent of WFISD.

**Cemetery:** John Yates:

**Website:** Becky Trammell and Elizabeth Hawley:

**Markers:** The Ralph Harvey marker presentation encountered some bad weather, but it still was a time to rejoice in the life of a generous and true pioneer.

**Old Business:** Untold markers are season is from Oct. 1 to Nov. 15. These are being submitted: Abby Cooper, Dick Sparks, the East Branch YMCA, Charles Emerson and Gwendolyn Jackson.

**New Business:** In 2025, Executive Director Jeremy Davis wants to add the story of the 1896 bank robbery in the Nat's Hats area. Davis also wants to use the second tombstone in the exhibit. The old stone is property of Wichita County and is stored in the Archives. After deliberation a motion was made by Becky Trammell to lend the tombstone to the Museum of North Texas History and the tombstone will be housed in a sturdy glass case. The Motion to loan was unanimously seconded by all in attendance.

**Adjournment:** John Yates made the motion to adjourn; Carol Rudd seconded. The meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

## THC Report Time

Every year, the Wichita County Historical Commission completes an activity report submitted to the Texas Historical Commission. Please submit your volunteer hours, number of presentations to the community, and any other history activities.

### Agenda - February 6th

**Call to Order:** Robert Palmer

**Attendance Members:**

**Attendance Guest:**

**Program:** Deb Cornelius, author of Rivers and Destinies

**Approval of Minutes:** November/December

**Chairman Reports:**

**Program:** Douglas James

**Cemetery:** John Yates:

**Website:** Becky Trammell and Elizabeth Hawley:

**Markers:** Athletic Park/Spudder Park has been set.

**Old Business:**

**New Business:** THC Report

**Adjournment:**

### ARCHIVE HAPPENINGS

#### December and January

Gwen Koenig sent us a panorama of "Burk Oil Wells" that is in pristine condition. Gwen thought the picture was made by Eugene Goldbeck. Instead, the picture was made by Charles Steele who worked with Goldbeck in San Antonio. Steele's work is included in the Goldbeck collection at the Harry Ranson Center in Austin.

Got a phone call from Ben who lives in Missouri. He is cleaning out a relatives home and has found pictures from Wichita Falls and surrounding areas. He described some of the pictures and just wanted to make sure we were interested before he made the long trip. Ben said he would see us in the Spring.

I guess with the Christmas tree packed up, it's time to research your home. Three different walk-ins eagerly came to the Archives to find out how old their home is and who else has lived there. A short lesson on how to use the Criss-Cross Directory was all they needed. Who would have thought that December and January was Criss-Cross Month?

# Wichita County Historical Commission Minutes

## December 5, 2024

Call to Order: Douglas James called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m .

Attendance Members: Byrle Graham, Brenda Jarrett, Jeremy Davis, Bryce Blair, Shanon Morton, Kathryn Phillips, Carol Rudd

Attendance Guest: Lori Wilson, Beth Yates and Debbie Wineinger

Program: On Dec. 5, Dr. Lee, Superintendent of Wichita Falls ISD, took the Historical Commission members on a magical mystery tour of Memorial High School. After the group watched the busses pull out, we gathered in the library and began the tour. The Library, the Food Court, the Security System-**EVERYTHING**- is top of the line. Memorial's theatre is Broadway Bound. Not only is it ultra-professional, but the seating can be tuned into classrooms if needed. It was a long, hard row to build the new school, but it is gorgeous. Maverick...Long May it Reign. Thanks, Dr. Lee for the tour.

Approval of Minutes: The December minutes will be sent in January for approval at the February meeting.

Chairman Reports:

Program: Douglas James: Dr. Lee

Cemetery: John Yates:

Website: Becky Trammell and Elizabeth Hawley:

Markers:

Old Business:

New Business: There will be no Historical Commission meeting in January.

Adjournment:

**PROGRAM AND BOOK SIGNING**

Join us on at Noon, Thursday, February 6th to hear Burkburnett author Deb Cornelius discuss her new book, "Rivers and Destinies." The book presents a fictionalized telling of the story of pioneer settler, Mabel Gilbert. Ms. Cornelius will be signing copies of her book following her program.

**AUTHOR  
DEB CORNELIUS**

For more information about the book and upcoming events look at the ***Rivers and Destinies*** website **HERE**.

Join us as we dedicate the newest THC Marker commemorating Athletic Park/ Spudder Park.

Texas Historical Marker Dedication

Wichita County Historical Commission

**Athletic Park/Spudder Park**

**Spudder Baseball**

7th and Farris  
Thursday  
February 13th  
1:00 pm

ATHLETIC PARK / SPUDDER PARK

WICHITA FALLS CREWED UP THE EARLY 1900S ENJOYED LOCAL GAMES OF BASEBALL. IN THE 1920S CAPTAIN OWEN A. TAYLOR FOR WIFEKIA AND DAUGHTER LATER NAMED THE BLACK SPUDGERS IN THE TEXAS COLORED LEAGUE. AS THE CITY EXPANDED AN AREA OF APPROX. ONE TO TWO BLOCKS LOCAL BUSINESSMEN WILLIAM HARVEY AND JR. NEPTUN MAZUR PURCHASED THE AREA REDEVELOPED IN THE 1940S AND BUILT THE SPUDDER PARK. THE AREA FORMER WICHITA FALLS BASEBALL ASSOCIATION PURCHASED AN AREA THREE OF LAND ON THE TRIPLE E AND IN THE ATHLETIC PARK QUARTERS WITH A LAMPFORD GRANDSTAND. THE SPUDGERS, OWNED BY RESIDENT OWEN TAYLOR AND A PUBLIC COMPANY. JOINED THE TEXAS LEAGUE FROM 1925. THE BLACK SPUDGERS AND THE BLACK SPUDGERS SHARED THE ATHLETIC PARK THROUGH THE 1930S. SPUDGER STADIUM WAS BUILT AND OPENED FOR SEASON "SOFT" DEAL PLAYED IN A SEVEN YEAR GAME. THE SPUDGERS PLAYED IN THE TEXAS LEAGUE FROM 1925 TO 1931.