

Wichita County
Historical
Commission

Preservation News



JOHN'S RABBIT HOLE

First Street Car in World To Be Propelled
With Power Generated From Primary Cells



This picture, taken in Wichita Falls, shows the trolleyless streetcar snapped at the corner of Eighth and Indiana. The inventor, Julius J. Krohn, seen at the lever on the first car, is operating the mechanism. His partner, John J. McGivney, is not visible in this picture. It is said that this was the first streetcar in the history of electricity to be propelled by power generated from primary cells.

Whether the claim can be substantiated or not, there is no doubt that the event was a notable one in the annals of electric traction. **Note: the “trolleyless” notation meant the car’s “trolley” mast that connected to the overhead electric line. Being battery-powered, the trolley car didn’t need its trolley. Also, the mention of “traction lines” meant that it was running on the rail track in the street.**

Wichita County
Archives
Carol Rudd, Archivist

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

Wichita County
Texas
Archives is on
Facebook

Program
Karen Montgomery -
Gagne
City of Wichita Falls
Planning Division

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

In October 2023, I received a phone call from Bill Wright and his assistant, Marianne Wood. Bill was working on a new book and needed information about the Webb family. The Webb's had a beautiful nursery business. Bill gave a rundown of what he was looking for and would check back in a few months. In June of 2023, I sent the information from the Archives. And now, the book called "MiMi" is in print. Go to Amazon and check out Bill's old and new books.

Spring is in the air and people are thinking about buying a new "old" home in the Floral Heights Historical District. The area still has beautiful homes that, with some work, can shine like it did in the 20s and 30s.

Most buyers want to know when it was built and who lived in it. That is when the Chris/Cross directory comes in very handy. In fact, all four homes on the block were built in the 20s. 1301 was the home of A D. Montgomery and his father, J. T. Montgomery, lived across the street in 1300. Mr. and Mrs. Kruger, of Kruger Jewelry, lived in 1305. 1307 was the Buchanan Terrace. It had 18 apartments and one of the tenants was a young J. A. Kell. The potential buyer is looking at 1309 Buchanan. The house was built in 1920 and has had six owners. One particular owner was the Byron Livingston Fain family that lived there from 1925-1960.

February 5, 2026 - Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: Co-chairman John Yates called the Historical Commission to order at 12:00 noon.

Attendance Members: John Yates, Bryce Blair, Paula Elmore, Laurie Cruse, Douglas O. James, Celia Moseley, Robert Palmer, Billy Clark, Joe Ross, Suzanne Darr, Julia Eriksen, Becky Trammell, Carol Rudd.

Attendance Guest: Karen Montgomery-Gagne, Josh Scott, Rose Wallace, Rachel Patterson, Theresa Gilmore.

Program: Joe Ross of Joseph A. Ross, Architect Inc. did an outstanding job of letting the Historical Commission hear the story and see the plans of beautiful homes of the early oil boom. Most of the homes were built by Stanley Field, a native of Kansas City. On Brook St. side by side homes were large, lavish and ready to entertain 800 friends while the youngsters had their get-togethers in the basement. Later Indian Heights--nicknamed Millionaires Row--became the place to build. Later, Morning Side was developing beautiful homes for beautiful people. The next time Joe speaks at the Commission, the topic will be "Courthouses and Schools."

Approval of Minutes: The approval of the February minutes was approved by Doug James and seconded by Bryce Blair.

Chairman Reports:

Program: Get ready to go on a field trip to the Downtown Wichita Falls Post Office. We will meet out front and start the tour at Noon.

Cemetery: John Yates made an appeal to take a moment to stop by a cemetery and take a good look at the markers. Is the headstone in good shape or does it need repositioning? Is there a marker missing, or has it been vandalized. Let somebody know.

Website: The Commission has several ways to get the message out to the public: Facebook, Wichita County Historical Commission. Org.

Markers: Three markers have been approved to moved to a different location. Thirteen markers have been approved.

Old Business: On behalf of the commission, Bryce Blair presented a plaque commemorating Robert Palmer's 15 years of service to the Historical Commission.

New Business: Where will we have our meeting?

All of us agree that parking in front of the Museum is a problem. Below are three options on the table. Be ready to vote at the next meeting.

1. Move to the Kemp Center of the Arts.
2. Move to the Clarence W. Muehlberger Travel Center.
3. Move to the Pickers Loft

Adjournment: At 1:08 pm Bryce Blair made the motion to adjourn and Carol Rudd seconded.

How To Refinish A THC Marker

Step-by-Step Refinishing Process

- **Clean the Surface:** Use a stiff wire brush to remove debris, flaking paint, and rust. Wash thoroughly with soap and water, then let it dry completely.
- **Tape and Mask:** Apply 2-inch painter's tape to the raised border and base of the marker to protect it from the base coat.
- **Apply Base Coat:** Apply two even coats of automotive black lacquer spray paint to the entire plaque.
- **Highlight Letters:** After the black paint is fully dry, use a soft cotton cloth and lacquer thinner to remove paint from the lettering and medallion, revealing the raised aluminum/bronze.
- **Alternatively,** some use a dry sponge technique with white paint, but the solvent method is standard, notes [this YouTube video](#).
- **Sand the Edges:** Remove tape from the border and use 80-grit sandpaper (by hand or with a sander) to remove black lacquer from the raised text and border.
- **Apply Clear Coat:** Apply two even coats of clear lacquer spray to the entire surface for long-term protection.
- **Special Handling:** If the marker is missing pieces, contact a conservator, as repairing granite requires specialized, deeply anchored epoxy

March 5, 2026 - Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: Co-chairman Becky Trammell called the Historical Commission to order at 12:00 noon.

Attendance Members: Bryce Blair, Douglas O. Jones, Jeremy Davis, Brenda Jarrett, John Yates, Elizabeth Hawley, Becky Trammell, Carol Rudd, Teri Kramer, Joe Ross.

Attendance Guest: Michael Bindel.

Program: Who doesn't love to go on a field trip? Bryce Blair made arrangements to take a tour of the very old, but still beautiful structure of the downtown Wichita Falls Post Office. The building was established in December 1879 and the very first postmaster was Charles G. Converse. The Federal Building, as it is called, was constructed in circa 1933 in the Art Deco style. The building serves as the main post office and if needed federal offices are on the third and fourth floor.

Approval of Minutes: The March minutes will be approved at the April meeting.

Chairman Reports:

Program: April Meeting: Karen Montgomery-Gagne from the Landmark Commission will talk about Marker Renovation.

Cemetery: More information will be given about headstones. Take just a minute to drive or walk through the cemetery to find those that need help.

Website: The Commission has several ways to get the message out to the public: Facebook, Wichita County Historical Commission .Org.

Old Business: The Archives is still in need of helpers for one or two hours a week. Here are two jobs: working in the vault, cleaning up the Anniversary collection.

New Business: After consideration, it is time to vote where we will have the Commission meetings.

Adjournment: At 1:25 p.m. Carol Rudd made the motion to adjourn and Becky Trammell seconded the motion.

Agenda - April 2nd

Call to Order: Becky Trammell

Attendance Members:

Attendance Guest:

Program: Karen Montgomery-Gagne -
Landmark Commission/Marker Renovation

Approval of Minutes: February, March

Chairman Reports:

Program: Douglas James & Shannon Morton

Cemetery: John Yates:

Website: Becky Trammell and Elizabeth Hawley

Markers: Spring cycle begins March 1, 2026.

Marker dedication on April 18th.

Old Business: Archive needs

New Business: Vote on meeting location

Adjournment:

VOLUNTEER



Ralph Harvey volunteering for the Archives.

Do you have an hour a week to give to the Archives? We need you. There are many projects that need sorting, filing, and recording. Please, give an hour to the Archives. Promise you will learn something and help those who come to the Archives to do research.

Upcoming Programs

MAY - Brandon Owens - TPWD Dundee Fish Hatcheries

JUNE - Denny McCarthy - Iowa Park Library **ROAD TRIP**

JULY - NO MEETING

AUGUST - Mike Moody - Fashion and Photo Dating (Part Two)

Seen At the Graham B. Purcell Federal Office Building (U.S. Post Office and Courthouse)

We had a great tour of the Downtown Post Office, thanks to Bryce Blair and Jayme Hopcus, Postmaster. From the basement to the courtroom, the building is very impressive.



Remarkable Woman Brenda Jarrett

March was Women’s History Month, a time to appreciate the women in our community whose selfless acts make a lasting impact. We congratulate WCHC member and winner of Remarkable Women 2026, Brenda Jarrett, a woman whose efforts have inspired generations of Wichitans.



QUESTION FOR APRIL

What was the first iconic “**black plaque**” Texas Historical Marker mounted in Wichita County?

CENTENNIAL MARKERS
Placed in nearly every Texas county in 1936 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Texas’ independence from Mexico.



Wichita Falls Traction Company Marker Re-dedication

Thanks to the City of Wichita Falls and the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee for hosting the Re-dedication of the Wichita Falls Traction Company THC Marker. The marker was relocated to Bridwell Park on Harrison Street.



Commissioners Court Yearly Report

On Tuesday, April 14, at 10:00am the WCHC presents its yearly report to the Wichita County Commissioners Court. Please plan to attend.

Location Vote

1. Pickers' Universe
2. Kemp Center for the Arts
3. Clarence Muehlberger Travel Center

ART Walk is continuing and a new location for Thursday meeting will be voted on at the April meeting.

Burkburnett Junior High Texas Historical Marker

Join us in Burkburnett on Saturday, April 18th at 4:00pm for the dedication of the BJHS marker. The marker is located at the corner of South Avenue D and Glendale Street.



Created by the **William G. Pomeroy Foundation, National Historic Marker Weekend** is now in its sixth year.

Join us at the Museum of North Texas History on Friday, April 24th for lunch, followed by an opportunity to refinish a Texas Historical Marker. Thanks to Karen Montgomery-Gagne of the Wichita Falls Landmark Commission for this program.

