

720 INDIANA AVE., WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76301



From the Desk of Rober Palmer, Commission Chair **Flashback from November 2013**

In the north-central part of Wichita County, one of the most photogenic structures in the county draws your immediate attention. It is the beautiful Trinity Lutheran Church. It sits in the "community" of Clara... described by many as a ghost town. The history of Clara is linked to one of the most fascinating men ever to live in Wichita County.

Hermann Specht was born in Hamburg, Germany. He stated that he was raised on one of Bismarck's Prussian estates. Although he took the title Colonel and looked like a Prussian military officer, with a six-foot stately manner and a pointed mustache that pointed up on the ends, he acknowledged, late in his life, that he never served in the military. He certainly could play the part. He was very polished, well-spoken, and authoritarian in manner. He loved to travel around his vast land in a buggy, with a shotgun beside him, his hunting dogs in the back, and pulled by two brown and bay horses. He invited friends on the hunt and it closely resembled European hunts. He loved entertaining at his magnificent home on a hill north of Iowa Park. He certainly had money and knew how to use it. He was never mistaken for a common farmer.

Clara Vogel Lange was born in Louisiana in 1853. Clara was well educated. She married John Lange in 1870. He was a wealthy cotton trader. He developed health problems and passed away, leaving Clara a wealthy widow. The story has been lost to how she met and married Hermann Specht. However, Specht now had the finances to pursue his many dreams. Clara and Hermann Specht came to Iowa Park in 1886. **(Continued on Page 3)**

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 Moody
Using Fashion to Date
Photography - Part 2

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
May 2, 2024 Agenda**

Call to Order: Robert Palmer

Program: Mike Moody - Using Fashion to Date Photography Part 2

Approval of minutes for March and April 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:

Marker Dedication - Jimmy Hudson Kolp



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

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

Attendance Members: Becky Trammell, Robert Palmer, John Yates, Carol Rudd, Celia Mosley, Joyce James, Bryce Blair, Shanon Dwyer, Delores Culley, and Suzanne Darr.

Attendance Guest: Josh Scott, Rose Wallace, Lynn Walker, Theresa Gilmore.

Program: In April, The Historical Commission went on a "Road Trip to Scott Street." Mike and Penny Morford were gracious enough to let us tour their lovely home at 816 Scott St. Once the Buchanan Office Supply and Printing, Mike, an amazing carpenter, has turned the 15,000 sq.ft. building into a comfortable home, a man cave, a workshop, parking for 3 cars, multiple play areas for the grandchildren, and comfortable housing for Hotter-n-Hell bikers. It is a stunning home that welcomes everyone. Thank you, Mike and Penny.

Approval of Minutes: Because of the "Road Trip," the approval of March minutes are postponed until the May meeting.

Old Business: 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: A motion was made by Becky Trammell to buy cart to support a television that will have the ability to be moved as needed in the Archives and the museum. Celia Mosley made the motion to approve and Suzanne Darr seconded.

Becky Trammell made the yearly report to the the Commissioners Court at 10:00 a.m. on April 8th. Robert Palmer and Carol Rudd were in attendance. Trammell reported that over 4000 volunteer hours were logged. Additionally two historical markers will be added to the County. On April 20, the Texas Historical Marker for Jimmie Kolp, the first woman in Wichita County to receive a pilot's license, will be placed at Wichita Falls Regional Airport. The second Historical Marker is to honor Ralph O. Harvey, Jr. The marker will be placed on the outside of the Museum of North Texas History. Lastly, an open invitation was offered to the Commissioners Court to not be a stranger to the Archives.

Committee Reports: None

Adjournment: At 1:05 p.m. Becky Trammell made the motion to adjourn and Carol Rudd seconded.

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Clara was one of his best assets. She could entertain at any level. In 1890 he built one of the most elegant houses in Iowa Park. In 1886 he had brought thirteen families from Ohio. Each family bought 160 acres. A drought hit them hard and all but two left. He then began to bring in more families, most of German lineage, all very well adapted to handle the harsh conditions of North Texas. He set up a system to help them get supplies. Specht worked from five to ten men on his farm; he hired his labor. The names of those early settlers are all over the area. A trip through The Clara Cemetery is a visit through history. He planned a community, named for his wife. It almost caught on, but never really developed. The community pride is still there.

In 1903 Specht developed some form of paralysis. His ability to walk was hampered and his speed was slurred. His lands began to be sold. Clara died in 1912. He was despondent and was convinced to visit his brother Emil in Germany. He had maintained his German citizenship. The war kept him from returning. How he died is not clear, but it appears he was deprived of food because he was not vital to the war effort. He may have starved to death, a man who had provided so much for others.

**Wichita County Archives News
April 2024**

Two scrapbooks donated by Enid Klass, who lived in Wichita Falls for many years, were shipped to NYC for Enid's 93rd birthday celebration. The scrapbooks are filled with memories of her classmates from Ben Franklin Elementary School.

Rebecca Meyer from Dallas wanted information about her family home on Elizabeth St. The house was built in 1922 by Dennis and Myrtle Dellis. Dennis worked as a train conductor for the Missouri Kansas & Texas RR and Myrtle worked for D.D. Grocery on North Broadway. In 1946, they moved to Taylor Street. Four other families lived in the house until Rebecca's parents bought it in 1996.

Two students from MSU Texas, Daniel Antillor and Cecil Witherspoone, contacted the Archives about any information we had on Lake Ringgold. They are making a 15-minute film about Lake Ringgold and the controversial water grab that has been going on for many years. They, with other students, will be showing their films in May in the Fain Building.

In April 2023, Raeanne Graupmann wanted information about the 1979 tornado. The family had just moved into the area and the neighbors told her their home was in the path of the tornado. So, I pulled pictures and information. I called her, saying when she was ready, the files were here. Months came and went and periodically, Raeanne let me know she hadn't forgotten. The second week of April, Raeanna called saying her folks was in town. They were interested in seeing the Museum and Archives and she was ready to see the tornado information. On Friday, a perky young girl and an elderly gentleman appeared at the Archives. It was Raeanne and her father. Better late than never.

UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

May: Mike Moody

June: Lynn Walker

July: No meeting

August: Paul Bata

September "Field Trip": Valarie Maxwell of Gilbert Creek Gardens (Once the Ice House) in Burkburnett, Texas

October: OPEN

November: Orlando Sosa

December: OPEN