



# Preservation News

WICHITA COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Wichita County Archives

Bryce Blair, Archivist

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[wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/](http://wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/)

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

Wichita County Texas Archives is on [Facebook](#)

## Program

Pam Morgan-Davis

Dying for Love: A Valentine's Murder

## MEETING

12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

AGENDA FOR MEETING:

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

Volume CCLXXIII

February 2, 2023

Becky Trammell, Editor

## From the Desk of Robert Palmer, Commission Chair

### GUEST COLUMNIST—BRYCE BLAIR

A Wichita County Archives volunteer recently discovered a headstone in Riverside Cemetery with an unidentified logo and epitaph. The logo signified an African-American organization founded by former slaves in 1883, the Mosaic Templars of America. A total of five Mosaic Templar headstones exist in the African-American section of Riverside Cemetery.

A pillar of the African-American community of Wichita Falls, Zenobia Trimble joined the Mosaic in 1909 and promoted membership in the local chapter, attaining 80 members. Trimble served on the National Board of Mosaic Templars in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Mosaic was organized to provide health, death, and burial insurance for African-Americans, services denied to the African-American community by white companies. The local Mosaic chapter purchased real estate in town and contributed to the well-being of the black community. In 1930, the national organization filed for bankruptcy and no longer placed headstones for members.

The Mosaic Templars organized at the same time a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan was occurring in the south. Bowie, Graham, Burkburnett, Electra, and Wichita Falls had KKK chapters.

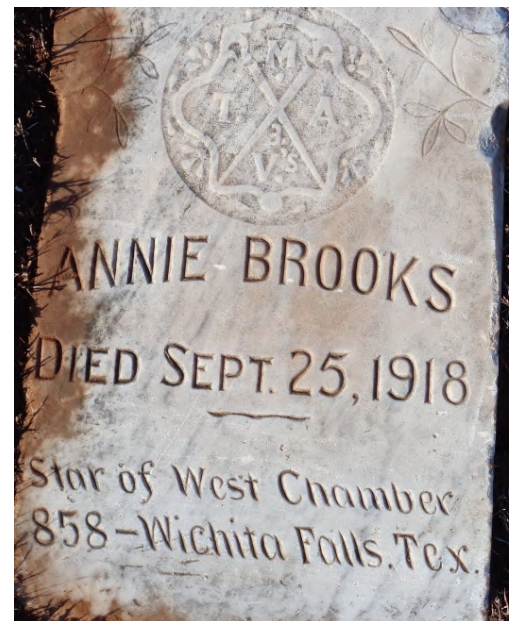
The KKK not only presented a threat to African-Americans. In the early 1920s, Jewish emigrant, Morris Bernard Zalefsky opened a jewelry store in Graham, Texas. After increased KKK activity, Zalefsky left Graham, opening a store in Wichita Falls in 1924. He later Americanized his name to Zale and became one of the largest jewelers in the world.

In April 1891 the first black church was organized in Wichita Falls, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. The church initially met in members' homes. In 1895, members purchased lots on Barwise Street and built a church. The church building was dynamited. A second church building on 101 Pecan Street was also dynamited.

Members of the church suspected who was behind the bombings, but no one was ever charged. A third church, built in 1897 at 104 Pecan Street, survived. Mount Pleasant Baptist thrived and grew, moving to several locations. The Mosaic Templars purchased the lot at 104 Pecan in 1909 for Mount Pleasant Baptist. Today, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church continues as the largest African-American church in Wichita Falls.

On March 29, 1922, an article published in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram announced the organization of an Anti-Klan group in Wichita Falls, determined to crush the local chapter of the KKK. The Anti-Klan body intended to "visit vengeance on them for every murder and other crime perpetuated."

The ethnic and racial conflict has been in Wichita Falls and North Texas since its early days. Conflict and struggle, part of our culture, causes change. History teaches us we will be judged by which side of a conflict we stand on. History, it seems, cannot be fooled.



**Wichita County Archive News - January 2023 - Monthly Report**

-Kelsy Allen, an employee of Dealers Auction Xchange contacted the Archives about getting photos and historical information on the location of their business at 2206 Sheppard Access Rd in Wichita Falls. Research indicated the road was built in the late 1940s, shortly after the completion of Sheppard AFB. The Access Road became a pretty popular location for commercial and industrial occupancies.

GroendykeTransportaion Co. was located at Dealers Auction Xchange address. Groendyke was one of the first businesses to locate on Sheppard Access Rd.

-Monte Payne contacted the Archives about researching his family from Electra. Turns out Mr. Payne was put up for adoption at birth, but he found out his grandfather was Bobby Lee Able. He just wanted to know who his family was and what they did. After researching, he was provided four generations of his family, with most being buried in the Electra Cemetery.

-Pamela Morgan contacted the Archives about a local story she is researching. Pam will be giving a presentation on that topic at the February historic commission meeting. She asked for any photos and facts we have on Buster Robertson. There was quite a surprise when we realized Buster was the young man that eloped with Mayor Frank Collier's daughter in 1925. The Mayor did not approve of Buster. In a fit of rage, the Mayor shot Buster, killing him. Pretty juicy story !!!

-Paul Ware, another descendant of Electra lineage contacted the Archives to research his family. His great-grandfathers were: William J McDaniel and William O. Andruess. We are in the beginning stages of research and welcome any input on these two families.

**WCHC News**

**2022 CHC Activity Summary**

**Programs** – 22 were presented by members to organizations and community

**Hours Volunteered:** 3892

**Articles - contributed to social media** – over 50 articles on north Texas history

**Historical Markers** – 103 standing markers

**Five markers in process:** Church of the Good Shepherd, Lloyd Ruby, Ralph Harvey, Providence Baptist Church, Jimmy Kolp

**Proceeds from Women of Wichita County** – \$2158 split between Museum And Archives for 2022