

PRESERVATION NEWS

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Becky Trammell, Editor

From the Desk of Robert Palmer

The phrase “greatest ever” gets tossed around a lot. Most of the time, the person described is good, but hard to defend as “the greatest ever.” This is not the case with Wichita Falls High School’s Leo Baldwin. He was the greatest athlete to come out of Wichita Falls High. The numbers and history are there. He joins Electra High School’s Lawton Thomas and Iowa Park High School’s Bobby Gilbreath as the only County athletes to win seven State Track Meet gold medals. All led their team to State Track Championships.

Baldwin did it in 1923 and 1924 with the championship coming in 1924. You won’t find it in the 1924 Coyote annual because, at that time, track came too late to be in that year’s annual. It was specially placed in the 1925 Coyote annual.

Baldwin’s special spring began at the district meet. District track meets, at that time drew huge crowds. The 1925 annual states, “Coach Hall developed a track team that not only beat their old rival Electra but also won the state championship.” Electra had won the district and state champion-

ships in 1923. In the 20s, there was one state champion. At district, Baldwin won the high hurdles, the low hurdles, the high jump, the pole vault, and came in second in the 100-yard dash. At state, he won the state championship single-handedly while setting three new state records. He won the high hurdles, the low hurdles, the high jump, the shot put, and was second in the discus.

How good was he? At that time it was generally conceded the greatest athlete in the world for many years was Native American Jim Thorpe of Carlisle University. When Thorpe won the 1912 Olympics, he threw the shot put 42.5 feet. Baldwin threw it 47.4 feet. Thorpe ran the high hurdles in 15.6 seconds. Baldwin’s time was 15 seconds flat. Thorpe was better in the high jump with a leap of six feet three inches to Baldwin’s six feet one inch.

Baldwin, that same year, participated in the Oklahoma State Relay, the Michigan Track meet, and the National Track and Field meet in Chicago. He won first places in all but the Nationals where he

strained his knee in the preliminaries.

The University of Texas signed him to a three-sport scholarship: football, track, and basketball. His senior year at Old High he scored every team touchdown but one, and that one was a touchdown pass he threw to his teammate Joe Smith. At Texas, he won many first places and set several Southwest Conference track records.

He was a three-time SWC shot put champion, two-time SWC discus champion, and a member of the second place NCAA 440 yard relay team.

In 1968, he was named to the Texas High School Hall of Fame. Baldwin died on April 20, 1990, at the age of 85. He truly deserved the title, “Greatest Ever!”



Wichita County Archives

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

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

Program

John Yates
The Infamous Al
Jennings

MEETING

- 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm
AGENDA FOR MEETING:
1. Call to Order
 2. Introduction of Guests
 3. Business
 4. Program
 5. Adjourn



Wichita County Archive News - December 2021 - Monthly Report

- **Gregory Hall** of Grayson, Kentucky contacted the Archives about some old photos of 1920s Wichita Falls. He said they were from his wife's family and they were ready to do something with them. He didn't want to throw them in the trash and asked if we would be interested in having them. Naturally, we jumped at the opportunity and said we would love to have them. Mr. Hall sent them to us and what a treasure they are. The photos pertain to James D. McMahon in Wichita Falls and Burkburnett. Two of the photos are of the building where McMahon operated his construction business at 701 La Salle, which today we know as the "Littlest Skyscraper". The other photos in this collection are of McMahon's five oil wells on the Roberts lease near Bridgetown. By comparing men in all the different photos we have figured out which one is McMahon. So now, not only have we put a name to a face, but we now have the earliest known photo of the "Littlest Skyscraper" dated in the early 1920s. In one photo we see McMahon standing in front of his business at 701 La Salle, which was a one-story building at the time. This one-story building was the foundation of the "Littlest Skyscraper".

We have yet to figure out how Mr. Hall's wife's family came to have the photos.

- **Dr. Barbara Murphy**, Medical Director of Hospice of Wichita Falls contacted the Archives. She asked if we have any information on the health care administered to African Americans in Wichita Falls 100 years ago. They

are planning on educating their staff in February on the disparities that remain in the African American community and their distrust of the medical establishment. Most of the research we have on African Americans in Wichita Falls concerns schools and churches that served that community. With the help of Becky Trammell, we presented Dr. Murphy with a list of black physicians and dentists from as early as 1913. We asked Dr. Murphy to share the results of her research with the Archives.

- **Risa Brown** of Texas Wesleyan University contacted the Archives looking for information on W.B. Hamilton and his wife, Pearl. Brown is writing a book about the university and former students that attended. Mr. Hamilton and his wife Pearl both attended Polytechnic College which later became Texas Wesleyan University. Ms. Brown was furnished a wealth of information about those very influential citizens of Wichita Falls.

- **David Johnson** and his wife came to the Archives to research his family. They are both retired teachers visiting from Iowa. David's family settled in the Cashion/Friberg area in the 1920s. The family names he was searching were Callen & Perkins. He had a deed of trust on the land his family purchased and wanted to find where it was. We were able to help him locate the exact location of his family's farm near Friberg. We also found his grandmother listed in the Wichita County School Census records as a student at Cashion from 1922 to 1924. The Johnsons were elated with the information we provided.

WCHC and MoNTH News

Thanks to everyone who came out for the book signing of "Women of Wichita County Texas" in December. All available books were sold! More books will be available soon at the Museum of North Texas History.

The Museum of North Texas History will resume normal hours on Thursday, January 6th. The Heart of Downtown - Christmas Trains will still be running!

We were sorry to hear of the passing of WCHC member and son of long time member Joreen Ludeke, Max Ludeke. Max died suddenly in his home.

Max, who had worked for years in healthcare management and development, returned to his hometown of Burkburnett. He became active with the Burkburnett Historical Society and the Wichita County Historical Commission. Max was a contributing writer for "Women of Wichita County Texas."

Our thoughts and prayers are with Joreen and Max's family.