

PRESERVATION NEWS

JUNE 2, 2022

VOLUME CCLXX

Becky Trammell, Editor

From the Desk of Robert Palmer

We historians are at a critical point in our role as preservationists of history. Economic problems coupled with cultural changes have placed cities, counties, and owners of important historical sites and artifacts in a position of having to make difficult decisions.

Several very important historical buildings and locations in Wichita County are in great danger of being lost or greatly altered. Recently I talked with people from Electra. Five very important historical Electra buildings face major decisions about their future. This included: the WPA (Works Progress Administration)-built building in the city park, the current City Hall, the old high school, and the Annie Marie Jones School building. The City Park building was built of Beaver brown stone quarried near Electra. It is the best example in the county of structures built of that stone by the WPA. Frequently pictured with Texaco broadly painted on its top, the City Hall building is the iconic building of early Electra. Producers Oil Company became Texaco in that building. Upstairs housed the first movie theater. Aviator Jimmie Kolp and early lawyer Ben Tipton also had their offices upstairs.

The old high school celebrates its 100th anniversary next year. The large, beautifully constructed building with a wonderful history shares a similar position as Wichita Falls High School, with very limited value in today's world. The Annie Marie Jones school building was the first one-room school in the western half of the county, the first library in Electra, and the first black school in the western half of the county. Similarly, the first Valley View wooden school is about to collapse. Only the entranceway of the main old school remains. The Electra Community Center, originally the Rocky Point School, is being studied for future use and needs repairs. It is the last intact rural school in the county.

Alarming, many beautiful, historically valuable old churches are closing. Others share doubtful futures. It was sad to see our former commission member, Mary Thomas's Episcopal Church completely removed. The Presbyterian Church in Iowa Park has been sold and repurposed. The First Christian Church in Iowa Park will become the new city hall. The old Methodist church, in Electra, is in bad disrepair. The old

Nazarene Church, the beautiful huge building on the edge of the town center, is a giveaway for anyone who wants. The building, constructed by joining the Wofford Hotel and the Electra Hotel, was accomplished by mule power.

The proposed increase in the downtown historic district in Wichita Falls by Andy Lee is to be commended. The creation of a community museum in Iowa Park is to be commended. Burkburnett's historical actions are to be commended.

In the past whole communities have completely disappeared: Fowlkes, Bridgetown, Mt. Carmel, all three Newtowns, Barwise, and several are greatly reduced in size: Kadane Corner, Kamay, and Valley View. Preserving history is our charge. Again, with a changing world, it won't be easy, but we have dedicated ourselves to that task.

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

Robert Palmer
The History of
Native American
Culture in North
Texas-Part Two

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 - May 2022 - Monthly Report

-Brenda Jarrett has been very busy getting photos of Eastside to the Archives. Just this month she brought a couple of 16 mm movie films to the Archives. They were game tapes of the Booker T. Washington Leopards football team playing Ft Worth and Breckenridge in 1967. She asked if we could do anything with them. Our Archives does not have the equipment to work with those films. Tai Kriedler at Texas Tech was notified. On May 17th, Tai and Elissa Stroman from the Texas Tech Southwest Collections Library were in town to secure an oral history from WCHC member, Joreen Ludeke. They stopped by the Archives to check out the 16 mm film. They were both very excited about the tapes and volunteered to digitize along with needed restoration at no charge. Brenda has a grocery sack full of films and agreed to let them do all of them. Texas Tech will do all the work, paying all expenses, and preserve the tapes in specialized storage. While Texas Tech has “ownership” of the tapes, Brenda and the Archives will receive digital copies of everything that can be used as we please. Win-Win agreement for everyone.

These films constitute a valuable asset to the local community and to the alumni of the schools played by Booker T. Washington on the films.

-Bob Hardy is clearing out his building at 618 Ohio. He brought a few items to the Archives and asked if we would be interested in having them. The items included a first day cancellation of the first Air Mail Letter out of Wichita Falls. Also included was another cancelled letter from 1937, plus some report cards belonging to May Bartlett when she was at San Jacinto Elementary in 1916 and WFHS in 1920. We gladly accepted everything and added it to our collection.

-Jeanette Charos of the Downtown W.F. Development contacted the Archives about “ghost signs” in the downtown area (faded, painted signs on buildings that are no longer legible). She inquired about three different signs located at: 1009 Ohio, 819 Ohio, and 820 Travis. We have figured out all the signs and are sending them the information. Now we are wondering how they will use that information.

-Mystery at the Museum - The Unknown Portrait – The Archives has gotten involved with the unidentified Emil Hermann portrait in the Museum. We have been posting on our Facebook page, the responses sent in and photos of those persons to see if they match. So far, none of them have been correct. The only guess that we haven’t been able to verify is of Albert Zundelowitz. He was a very early resident of WF and died in 1929. We cannot find a photo of him and if it is him, the portrait would have to have been painted from a photograph since it was completed in 1934 or 1954. Do any of the historical commission members have any ideas of who the portrait is and/or do you know of a picture of Albert Zundelowitz??

**NO MEETING IN JULY - SEE
YOU IN AUGUST**