



Preservation News

WICHITA COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Wichita County Archives

Carol Rudd, Archivist

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wchitacountyhistorical.commission.org/

Hours of Operation:
Wednesday, Thursday, and
Friday

10:00am - 12:00pm &
1:00pm - 4:00pm

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

Program

Hanaba Welch
Doan's Picnic

MEETING

12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

AGENDA FOR MEETING:

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

Volume CCLXXXI November 2, 2023

Becky Trammell, Editor

From the Desk of Robert Palmer, Commission Chair

Guest Contributor: **Becky Trammell**

What do a "singing Mayor," an elephant, a W.P.A. sewing room, and Eleanor Roosevelt have in common? Memorial Auditorium.

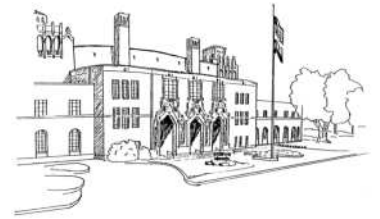
In 1914, Robert Huff and William McGregor gave land to the City of Wichita Falls for a park. The land, located near Crescent Lake and Seventh Street, would later include a pool and tourist park. W. M. Priddy gave money to build a fifty-foot wading pool. In November 1926 Judge Huff signed a waiver to all claims and restrictions on the Huff-McGregor Park so the City could build Memorial Auditorium.

Mayor R. E. Shepherd, known as the "Singing Mayor," visited Fair Park in Dallas. He brought back enthusiasm for a Wichita Falls cultural center and a center for city government. In December 1926, Mayor Shepherd and the city council advertised for bids for Memorial Auditorium.

A committee comprised of the mayor, city council, and local citizens, Walter Cline, W. B. Hamilton, John Bland, J. B. Marlow, and Harry Awker plus Colorado architect, Alfred A. Fischer. The group reviewed proposed architect plans, ultimately choosing Voelker & Dixon with J. E. Morgan as general contractor.

Constructed for a half-million dollars during 1927-28, Memorial received a nearly 1.5 million dollar update in 1964, finally getting air conditioning. In 1984, Memorial was designated a Historic Landmark by the City of Wichita Falls.

Memorial Auditorium soon was the home of City of Wichita Falls



offices and agency offices of the Boy Scouts, irrigation district, American Legion, Spanish War Veterans, child welfare agency, and the North Texas Cerebral Palsy treatment center. During the Depression, the finished basement housed a sewing room operated by the Works Progress Administration.

Upon opening in 1928, the Chicago Civic Opera performed "Aida" at the auditorium. Over the years many performers have taken the stage at Memorial.

They include Fanny Brice, Will Rogers, Liberace, Ethyl Barrymore, Duke Ellington, Al Jolsen, Paul Whitman, Charles Laughton, Gene Autry, Bob Hope, Elvis, Rise Stevens, Doris Day, and an elephant.

Eleanor Roosevelt spoke from the stage on a "Day in the White House" and Ronald Reagan appeared in later years.

There have been many discussions about Memorial Auditorium. In recent years, discussions about the future of Memorial's existence have circulated. The best way to end is with this quote from a 1967 newspaper, "Officials of both the city and chamber of commerce say it's impossible to put even a rough estimate on the dollars and cents return the revamped auditorium has brought Wichitans but they agree, as do most citizens, that it's a nice thing to have

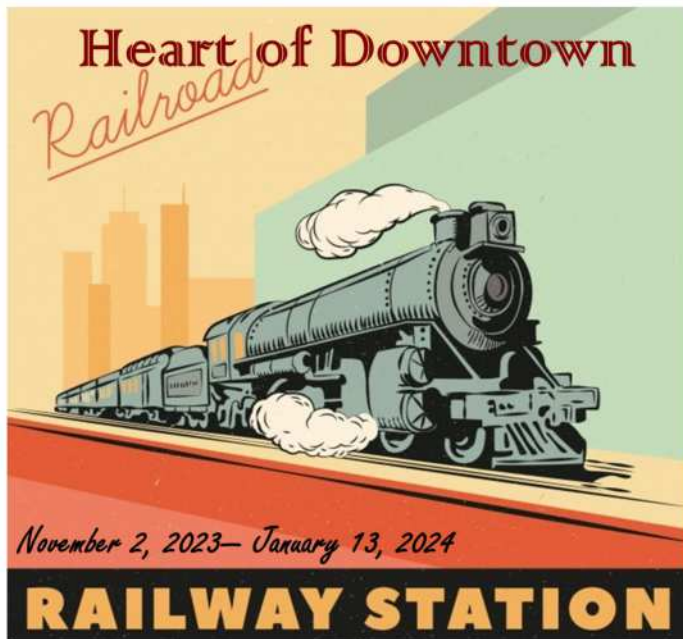
Wichita County Archive News - October 2023 - Monthly Report

Received a call in mid September from Marianne Wood, research assistant of author Bill Wright in Abilene, TX. Marianne requested information about the Webb Landscaping Co. as well as the family. A zoom call was held Oct. 13 to go over all the information found in the archives and on Newspaper.com. Looking forward to reading the book.

Orlando Sosa came to the archives looking for old ledgers. He is an artist who paints on ledger pages. Of course, I couldn't tear out pages, but Orlando got copies from a 1884 ledger that belonged to S. Burk Burnett.

The Floral Heights Addition is celebrating their 100th Anniversary soon. Several people have come to do research of their homes. It is wonderful to hear comments on how much their home sold for in the 20's and who was the original owner. By far the biggest challenge is reading the abstract.

Museum News



Be sure to celebrate the holiday season by visiting the Heart of Downtown Model Train exhibit.

Trains depart their stations
Thursday - Saturday 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, & 2:30



Thursday - Saturday: 10am - 4pm 720 Indiana Ave Wichita Falls

The Museum will be closed for Thanksgiving 20 - 24 November,
Christmas & New Year's 21 December - 3 January.

Wichita County Historical Commission

November 2, 2023 Agenda

Call to Order: Robert Palmer

Program: Hanaba Welch Doan's Picnic

Approval of minutes for October meeting: Sent to all members in 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: Membership update

Adjournment:

23 Study Club Recognition



Robert Palmer presents a plaque to Iowa Park 23 Study Club President Sue Scott commemorating the 100th anniversary of the organization.

WCHC Minutes – October 5, 2023

Call to order: Robert Palmer called the meeting to order at 11:59 am.

Attendance: Members: Carol Rudd, John Yates, Suzanne Darr, Celia Moseley, Robert Palmer, Medrith Collins, Joyce James, B.... Darrell, Katherine Phillips, Becky Trammell, JoAnn Graham, Byrle Graham

Attendance: Guest: Marsha Sharp, Marla Sharp, Josh Scott, Rose E. Wallace

Program: Marla Sharp and her mother, Marsha Sharp gave a delightful talk about the development of the Tanglewood Addition which was designed by Robert L. Wingler and Allen C. Sharp in 1961. The first house to be built was a Frank Lloyd Wright style that belonged to the Sharp family. Marla said the house was very modern and reminded her of the George Jetson cartoon house. Mrs. Marsha Sharp still lives in Tanglewood in what is known as the "Purple House."

The Program for November is Hanaba Welch and her topic is the Doan Picnic.

Minutes: Robert Palmer gave a touching tribute to Don Burkman who passed away Sept. 28. Becky Trammel said there will be a Remembrance Ceremony Oct. 22 at 2:00 at the Museum. The August and the September minutes were approved Suzanne Darr and John Yates.

Old Business: On Oct. 21 at 1:00pm, Hardin High School in Burkburnett will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary. They will be given a lovely commemorative plaque to display in the school. As a reminder, each plaque runs approximately \$350 each. Members are encouraged to give generously. Please see Carol Rudd in the Archives to make a donation.

Historical Commission polo shirts are being ordered. Members were asked to place their shirt size next to your name as they signed in.

New Business: The Historical Marker for the 10th Cavalry Creek was vandalized again and is waiting to be repaired. The measurements have been made and Robert and Becky are searching for a qualified person who can repair the aluminum pole. Bids will go to Judge Johnson.

Committee Reports:

Cemetery Committee: John Yates reported that a generous donor is providing funding for Riverside Cemetery repairs that Wichita County does not fund. In the works is a new headstone of grey granite to be placed at the bank robbers' grave, as well as many headstones that need leveling.

Markers: Becky Trammell reminded the group that the Historical Marker cycle starts Oct. 1 and ends Nov. 16. The Commission has two undertold markers pending: Jimmy Kolp and YOC Building. As a reminder, an undertold is free!!

Membership: If you know someone who wants to be part of the Commission, have them write a resume about themselves and their interest in history. The resume goes to the Commissioners Court for approval.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:03pm.

Minutes prepared by Carol A. Rudd

Program Planning

Woody Gossom will present the program for January.

Torin Halsey presents in February

In Memorium - Don Burkman



Don actively supported the Wichita County Historical Commission, serving on the Commission since 1977. Prior to that, he had been a member of the Clay County Historical Commission. During the Bicentennial Celebration, Don coordinated the preparation of the time capsule buried in Bellevue Park and activities related to the Bicentennial Wagon Train. Don pursued preservation of the Kell Field Air Terminal, "little adobe building," at Sheppard Air Force Base and served on the committee forming the Wichita County Archives. Don also co-led tours of Riverside Cemetery. In the past few years, Don recorded many of his personal recollections for use by the Wichita County Archives.

Burkburnett School 100th Anniversary

Robert Palmer presents a plaque commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Burkburnett School to Audrey Ash, BISD Assistant Superintendent. Looking on are Burkburnett Mayor Lori Kemp and Danny Taylor, Burkburnett Alumni Association.

