

PRESERVATION NEWS

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LVIV **Robert Palmer, Chairman** **April 2nd, 2015**

Wichita County Archives

720 Indiana Avenue

Wichita Falls, Texas 76301 Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm & 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Telephone 940-763-0020

E-mail Address - archives@co.wichita.tx.us

AGENDA FOR MEETING

Lunch at 11:30am Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm 4. Program 1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests 3. Business 5. Adjourn Monthly Meeting: Location: The Country Club. Price for the luncheon is <u>\$17.00 each</u> which includes: salads, main course, vegetables, drink & dessert. Please bring the correct change.

Reservations: Call the Archives (763-0020) and leave your name and number of reservations on the voice mail up thru Wednesday prior to the meeting. Call the Archives Wednesday (763-0020 or 322-7628) if you have a change of plans.

PROGRAM

Brian A. Bollinger, CEO **Texas Historical Association** The Next Steps . . .

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

Modern architects seem to stress function and use when designing modern buildings. The result is a rather plain design and what some people refer to as the box store look. They do make good use of space and easy movement about the structure. What they lack is the beautiful appearance and use of natural materials so wonderfully incorporated into many of our older buildings. Imagine if the Texas State Capitol looked like a tin warehouse instead of the beautiful pink Marble Falls stone monument that it is. Wichita County is fortunate that many of our early decision makers chose to use beautiful architecture when building the structures of the county. Some of the designs are ornate, while other designs are beautiful in simplicity.

There are many beautiful churches all over the county. The First Methodist of Wichita Falls, the original First Baptist of Wichita Falls, The First Baptist of Burkburnett, and Sacred Heart of Wichita Falls are great examples. Floral Heights Methodist Church is unique in the fact that the designers used a variety of architectural styles. Clara Lutheran Church is so very important because of its design and location. It is a stunning break from the otherwise ordinary country that surrounds it. The old Methodist Church in Electra is an imposing structure, but is slowly falling into an extreme state of disrepair. The First Baptist Church in Iowa Park is exceptional in that it maintained the beautiful old church and built a stately new church that are intertwined. That's preservation at its best.

Governmental structures in the modern era are usually very plain in design. The older structures were not elaborate, but very beautifully functional in appearance. The Federal Building in Wichita Falls is an imposing structure. In all Post Offices, the government used stone and bronze in a manner that reflected the strength of the U.S. Government. It's worth the drive to Electra to

view the three stone images carved inside the Post Office. They show cowboys and cattle, oil field workers, and farmers. One of my favorite governmental type buildings is the old Water District Building on East Scott street. At first it appears quite plain, just a red brick building. But the more you look at it, the more you appreciate it. We feel a sense of guilt when we remember buildings that are gone, sometimes only in appearance. The Wichita Falls depot was a beautiful building. The Electra Depot was destroyed in the past couple of years. The old courthouse and the Electra City Hall are still there, kind of. Both have been covered by what was thought to be modern design. As we found out, modern design doesn't last long.

School buildings really show the change from beauty to function. Wichita Falls High School and all the early elementary buildings are imposing structures. The old Burkburnett High School and Electra High School, in appearance, reflect the might of our educational system. Midwestern State University is just a wonderfully designed campus. What a great decision it was to keep the same design throughout its network of buildings. One single object of school design makes the 15 mile drive to Valley View worthwhile. The buildings are essentially gone, but the carved stone front entrance to the old school remains.

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Question of the month

Who started his morning radio broadcast with, "It's a wonderful day in the great southwest!"

Wichita County Archive News April 2015

Wichita General Hospital marker is at the foundry. Bethania inscription is pending review.

Annetta Reusch is seriously ill and hospitalized in the Dallas area. Your positive thoughts and prayers are needed by Annetta and her family.

We are saddened to learn of the recent death of Jack Loftin, premier historian of Archer County. He marked countless historic sites in Archer County and wrote the book <u>Trails through Archer</u>.

Check our new website at www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org. The site is a work in process and many thanks to Elizabeth Hawley. Also, Elizabeth has a blog about her project - http:// speakingofhistoricalmarkers.blogspot.com/

THE MEDALLION - is a quarterly publication of the Texas Historical Commission containing interesting facts about history and historical preservation projects around the state. As a member of the Wichita County Historical Commission, you are entitled to receive this publication. If you don't receive this and would like to, contact Lita and she will get you on the list.

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Privately constructed buildings, in the 20s and 30s, were monuments to the success and strength of the business. Downtown Wichita Falls is trying to reconstruct that image.

Old theaters were built to reflect the display of the art that was being presented inside. The Wichita Theater in Wichita Falls is functional and delightful. The Old Vaudeville Grand Theater, in

Electra. is slowly being returned to its glory.

Buildings are, well, buildings, but they do reflect our culture and our values. Do we really want to be represented by a tin box building?

