



PRESERVATION NEWS

APRIL 7th, 2016

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LXXI

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Wichita County Archives

720 Indiana Avenue

Wichita Falls, Texas 76301

Telephone 940-763-0020

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

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

<http://www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/>

AGENDA FOR MEETING

Lunch at 11:30am Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

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

Monthly Meeting: Location: Luby's. Price for the luncheon is **\$10.00** each which includes: one meat, salad, vegetables, drink & dessert. Please bring the correct change. **RESERVATIONS NO LONGER NEEDED**

PROGRAM

Russell Miller - Burkburnett Historical Society
Renovation of Panhandle Gasoline Station

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

The long drought followed by abundant rain produced an historic explosion in Wichita County animal populations. This event has occurred many times in the history of North Texas. Some happened before the arrival of human populations. Some after. Either way, the result, at some point, eventually affected later events in history.

The Museum of North Texas History has two very dynamic examples of early animal life. One is a dinosaur, three toed foot cast. Theories abound about what killed out the huge animals that once roamed our area. Jack Loftin, in Archer County, and the "dig" near Seymour brought all this to our attention. The Museum also contains a sandstone rock with a very good saber toothed cat footprint. The first humans, in what is now North Texas, lived in a world of animals that no longer exist. The present theory is that they, with their atlatls, were responsible for destroying the food chain with their ability to kill the mammoths. The gap was filled with huge herds of Bison. We picture the Native Americans living entirely off of the Bison, but studies of their camps, in North Texas, show most of their diet consisted of creek mussels and small mammals.

The population of small mammals in North Texas remained fairly stable from the time of the Native Americans until the present age. As we are seeing this year, it can change greatly in a short time. Weather is the greatest factor. Actions by man, including the use of poisons and herbicides, can also greatly affect animal populations. An important factor is loss of habitat.

The following is a list of animals that were in abundance in the 1960s, but, at some point, almost disappeared: jack rabbits, bull frogs, soft shelled turtles, great horned owls, and quail, particularly scaled or blue quail. Bobwhite quail populations were greatly reduced. Ironically, other animals became quite common, some in a good way, some in a disastrous way. These include: white-tailed deer, feral hogs, fire ants, bald eagles, mountain lions, white winged doves, ringed neck doves, porcupines, side winder rattlesnakes, and, recently, sugar cane aphids.

The recent increase in mice and rat populations has some very interesting characters. The most common are the deer mouse [*Peromyscus maniculatus*]. This is the mouse that ballooned in the four corners area and carried a virus that killed many Navaho Indians. They are a long life mouse that can live up to seven years. Another is the cotton rat [*Sigmodon hispidus*]. They can increase their population one hundred fold in less than three months. We are seeing a great increase in the number of short tailed grasshopper mice [*Onychomys leucogaster*]. These are vicious little creatures. As their name suggests, they eat grasshoppers, but can, also, eat other small mammals. They are the only mouse or rat that has vocal abilities. They can stand on the edge of their burrow and make a howling sound. Before 1960, they were native to New Mexico. History has many fantastic angles. Animals are an important part of it.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What was the name of the 1960's women's hair style that was created by fluffing and styling the hair as much as 8 or 9 inches around the head?

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In honor of the Centennial of WWI, we are compiling a list of WWI veterans buried in Wichita County. Currently, we have 65 confirmed veterans. If you know of existing lists, please share.

Historic Markers are popping everywhere:

Zales Legacy - Is here and we are waiting for Downtown Proud to schedule dedication.

MU Desegregation - Is here and we are waiting on MSU for dedication schedule.

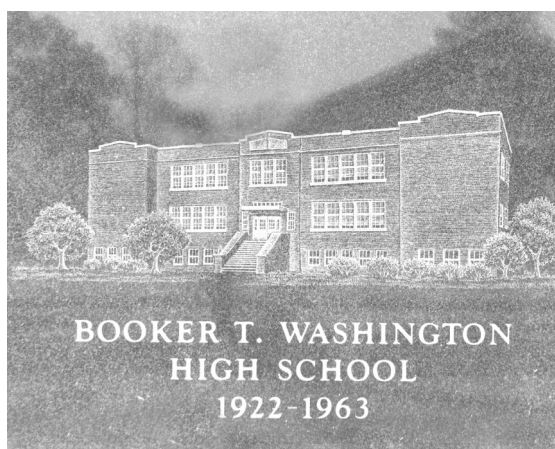
Bethania - Is here and we are waiting on United Regional Foundation to schedule dedication.

Dr. Fuller - Went to the foundry in January. We are hopeful to see it someday.

Burkburnett Masonic Lodge - Has yet to arrive in Wichita County.

Perkins-Prothro House - RTHL is at the foundry.

“An eight classroom, three story brick building. . .formally opened October 1921. . . (students arrived) September 1922. . .with 220 pupils, eight teachers, and the principal (A. E. Holland).
(L. Kelly , 1982)



When this school was built in 1921 on 700 Flood St., it served as the focal point of the African American community. In 1963 the high school moved into a new building at 1300 Harding St. The 1924 building was razed in 1971. This is the site of the THC marker.

Integration occurred in 1969 and the school on Harding was renamed Washington-Jackson to honor long-time teachers. At the request of the African American community, the Wichita Falls Independent School District, went back to the original name on March 29, 2016.

