



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Bryce Blair, Archivist

Wichita County Archives

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

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www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

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Location: Museum of North Texas History Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

AGENDA FOR MEETING: 1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests
3. Business 4. Program 5. Adjourn

April 2020

From the desk of Robert Palmer

No Meeting in April

Our lives have been greatly changed. Schools are closed. Public interaction has been curtailed at a level we have never experienced. All of us are wondering what the long term effect will be. One thing we know. As Americans, Texans, and residents of North Texas, we are strong. Even though this pandemic appears to be frightening, we have been there before. Our parents and grandparents lived through the Spanish Flu of 1918. Most of us went through the polio years that reached their peak in the early 1950s. Many of us were given the vaccine at school which was, in many ways, test trials.

The Spanish Flu pandemic occurred from January 1918 to December 1920. It infected over 500 million people, one fourth of the world's population. The death toll was somewhere between 17 million and 50 million. It's hard to say exactly because there were many other diseases killing people. World War I was an obvious contributor to its spread. The virus is still around, reappearing as The Swine Flu in 2009. The returning soldiers are generally credited with bringing the virus to America, although it is likely it was here before that. The center of the first infections appears to be around Ft. Riley, Kansas. Poor knowledge of hygiene greatly contributed to its spread. The oil fields of Burkburnett and Electra were especially hard hit. Two Electra doctors: Dr. Ogden and Dr. Parmley, were ex-military doctors. They came to Electra primarily to treat the flu. Most flues attack the very young and the very old the hardest. The Spanish Flu strongly attacked young adults. It hit in two waves. The second wave was the most, immediately, deadly. It killed a large number in a short time. As we know about our current virus, mutations within the virus can be deadly. The flu had been in the continental European armies for years and hit the British and American armies later. This greatly affected the outcome of the war.

The least affected major population area was China. Most other large population areas had massive infections. Cure theories were sometimes dangerous. Many people died of aspirin poisoning. It was thought that large amounts of aspirin were a quick cure. In the end isolation and hygiene were the cure that was most effective.

Polio had been around for a long time, but hit with fury in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yes, we were scared. In 1950, polio infected over 60,000 children, killing 3,000, paralyzing

over 35,000 in an average year. Most Americans were aware that President Roosevelt had been paralyzed by polio. After the war, Americans had become much more socially active. The days of the Depression were gone; farmers were moving to town, people went to movies and swimming pools in greater numbers. We socially interacted at a higher level. Virtually every kid got measles, chickenpox, and, sometimes, mumps. One summer one of our neighbor kids got chickenpox. Other neighbors brought their kids down to "visit" so they would get chickenpox in the summer, instead of at a time when they would have to miss school. Then, polio got worse. We began to hear of kids we knew getting it. We quit going to the public swimming pool. Barbara, a girl in my class, got it. They had visited relatives in Kansas City and she came down with the disease. For many years she went to school, from her home, over a speaker that was carried by one of her fellow students from class to class. My cousin, Kenneth, in Odessa got it. We had gone to the Odessa swimming pool with his family shortly before that. When the school trials began in 1954, our parents didn't hesitate to consent. We were taken, class by class, down to the auditorium, to line up and get our shot. Some kids cried. All took the shot. The sugar cube came later. America, Texas, and North Texas came together.

This difficult time will, eventually, pass.

Important websites

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

<http://www.wichitafallstx.gov/2088/COVID-19>

Wichita County Archive News

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Balance from Jan 2020	178.65
Speaker's Lunch	13.30
<u>Reconciliation (see note)</u>	<u>33.20*</u>
Balance – Mar 2020	132.15

-Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce moved their office in the Hamilton Building and did some house cleaning in the process. They asked the Archives if we would be interested in any of their old records. Three pick-up truck loads of their material were moved to the Archives. This included more than 60 City Directories. We now have records of many of the industrial development projects in which they were involved. After filling in a few of the city directories we were missing, the remaining directories were offered to the public for a donation of \$5 each. So far we have received \$150 in donations.

-The Archives is starting a new fund to upgrade our digital imaging equipment. Right now we have a basic 9”X12” flatbed scanner. We hope to someday upgrade to a larger one. Donations from the WFCC will kick off this new fund. The speaker fund will continue to be funded through donations as well, keeping it at a minimum of \$100.

(*Note: Three City Directories were sent to Cindy Dake of Arlington. She sent us a check in the amount of \$33.20 to cover her donation and the cost of shipping. That check was deposited in the WCHC checking account. To reconcile this deposit, \$33.20 was moved from the speaker fund to the digital fund.)

-Danielle Brigati from the Butt Holdsworth Library in Kerrville contacted the Archives for information and images of Ace Reid, Jr. She is preparing an exhibit at their library about him. Reid was a native of Electra and became famous for his “Cowpoke” cartoons. He and his wife had moved to Kerrville, where he lived for the rest of his life.

-Lacey Price from SAFB came to the Archives looking for the history of the German pilot training program at Sheppard. She was provided several photos and newspaper articles on the topic.

-Marilyn Meador from the North Texas Genealogical Association came in the Archives to research the family of P.P. Langford.

NO MEETING IN APRIL

With an over abundance of caution (a phrase we have heard often), the decision was made to cancel our April meeting. Concerns for corona virus transmission prompted this decision. We want all our members to follow current health guidelines, particularly social distancing and hand-washing.

We will be in contact with commission members prior to any future meetings.

FUTURE WCHC MEETING LOCATION

After investigating a variety of options, the location committee (Bryce, Douglas, Ginger and Becky) chose the Museum of North Texas History as our meeting location. The Museum will not charge for using the facility. (We would encourage all WCHC members to become Museum members to show our appreciation.)

Time of the meeting will remain the same. You are responsible for your own food, if you wish to eat during the meeting.

Museum of North Texas History News

At present time, the Museum remains closed due to restrictions implemented by the City of Wichita Falls related to the Covid-19 Virus.

Please consult with the City of Wichita Falls/County of Wichita Health District (<http://www.wichitafallstx.gov/2088/COVID-19>) for further updates concerning Covid-19.