



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Bill Steward, Archivist

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

www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

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

Location: Luby's

Reservations no longer needed

Volume LXXXV

August 3rd, 2017

From the desk of Robert Palmer

There are many means of recording history. The very best are research based. This research involves the study of legal documents, the reading of previously published works, and personal interviews. Personal interviews produce interesting, but not always totally accurate history. Time and personal opinion often shade the stories. They do, however, lend the human quality to the writing.

Recently, I obtained a copy of THE HISTORY OF THE WAGGONER RANCH written by Knox Kinard. It was originally written as a thesis paper. Mr. Kinard was an educator and school administrator born in 1896. He passed away in 1973. In 1943, Mr. Kinard submitted his thesis paper to THE PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL REVIEW for publication. Mr. Kinard had served in many educational positions including elementary principal in Vernon, superintendent of schools at Oklaunion, and superintendent of Hereford and Pampa. He wrote the thesis in 1941. In 2011, Four-O Publishing of Abilene printed 325 limited edition copies and 16 deluxe copies.

What sets the history apart from other histories of the ranch are the number of personal interviews. Larry McMurtry wrote an introduction for the printing where he stated, "The Waggoners-Dan, Tom, and W.T.-may have had personalities but, if so, their historian, Knox Kinard, totally failed to capture them..." That may be partially true, but his interviews of Waggoner Cowboys and others did give the work a very distinct personality.

The interview of R.S. "Reese" Allen in July 1940 records thoughts about the operation of the China Creek Headquarters that have not been recorded before. As we discussed last year, Mr. Allen is one of the most under reported significant figures in Wichita County History. He was heavily involved in the sale of the Waggoner Colony Land. Most of us remember him as the "A" in K.M.A., but he was much more than that. What information he provided for the thesis, will be very important in the eventual writing of the documentation for the historical marker describing the importance of the ranch headquarters to Wichita County.

"In the early stages of the Three D Ranch in Wichita and Wilbarger counties, China Creek was the headquarters for all of the operations. China Creek was the logical place for headquarters as long as "the territory" was occupied for

Program

To be Announced

ranch leases. When the Waggoners came back to Texas, at the turn of the century, their holdings were concentrated too far from China Creek." The Waggoners, like Burk Burnett, built their empire partially by leasing land in Indian Territory. Having a headquarters on the south side of the Red River was a necessity. For the Waggoners, it was even more effective because of the closeness of a railroad at Beaver Switch, now Electra. The Waggoners could receive supplies by rail and, after the building of shipping pens, ship cattle by rail to Fort Worth.

At a point, the decision was made to sell the China Creek property. Even though grain and hay were being raised there and good water was readily available, the 12 mile distance to the railroad was too far. An often told story described why local farmers called the Headquarters "The Poor Farm." it was told that only cowboys with poor skills were sent to the ranch to farm the feed crops, a job no true cowboy wanted! They wanted to be on the range with the starry skies and cattle. Reese Allen was very involved in the sale process. Mr. Kinard states, "R.S. Allen sold more land than any other agent." Kinard additionally wrote, "Allen thinks that about 200 families came to the colony from about 1903 to 1913." The Waggoners only kept about one section. At the time of the thesis writing, a former Waggoner cowboy, Shinnery McElroy, lived on the property. When asked what kind of arrangement he had, McElroy said, "I get all I make."

The thesis is a gold mine of West Wichita County history.

Question of the Month

What was "a splitter" in top spinning?

Wichita County Archive News

August 2017

Museum of North Texas History News

Wings over Wichita will honor the Centennial of Call Field on August 1st at Wichita Falls Municipal Airport. Call Museum for more information. (322-7628)



Dan Waggoner



W. T. Waggoner



Guy Waggoner



Electra Waggoner



E. Paul Waggoner

Reese S. Allen

He is well-remembered for his colonization plan started in this area for Missouri farmers, for his interest in fruit growing, both oranges and strawberries, and for his main assistances in education. He founded a student loan fund, still in operating and was instrumental in helping many young people obtain an education and start in business. It was his habit to give to every cause for which aid was sought.

Excerpts from testimony of W.T. Waggoner

Deposition on Red River Boundary Dispute

How long have you owned land in Wichita County?

Well, the first that I owned was right here in this town. I had a block here once that I gave a pony for.

When did you first begin to pasture cattle on Red River?

Well, cattle were pastured there before I came. My father moved here about in '72 or '73, and I didn't come out here until '74 to stay. We had a ranch about three miles below here.

When did you sell your holdings there (along Red River)?

I think about 16 years ago. I sold to Reese Allen

How much did you have at that time?

I had -- really I have forgot, I think something like 83,000 acres.

How close did you go down to the Grandfield bridge, as it stands today?

What is the Grandfield bridge?

It is that toll bridge right there in the Big Bend.

Right close to Burnett's old ranch?

Just above the mouth of Wild Horse Creek

I guess about six or seven miles, my east line.

Your land began about six or seven miles above that?

Yes, sir.

You run up the river about how far?

I run above the mouth of the

Pease River.

About what distance is that by river mileage?

I expect is probably 35-40 miles.

About how long did you pasture cattle on the Oklahoma side, or the Territory side?

Well, when I first went there I didn't have any right there. From the time I leased it, I think I was over there about 20 years.

You leased land from the Indians?

Yes, sir.

How much acreage did you have the Territory side of the river?

I had something like 600,000 acres.

What was your pasture called?

Waggoner Pasture.

You leased that land from the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians?

Yes, sir.