



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Bryce Blair, Archivist

Wichita County Archives

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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/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

Volume CCX

Location: Luby's Lunch at 11:30AM Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

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

December 5, 2019

From the desk of Robert Palmer

PROGRAM

John Yates

Down a Rabbit Hole: the 1896 Bank Robbery (part one)

Recently, my grandsons traveled to San Antonio. They were overwhelmed by the Alamo, as they well should have been. I let them tell me the story as if I had never heard it. They put me on the spot when they asked me, "What is Wichita Falls' Alamo?" What are we known for?

It reminded me of the U.S. Mints' Quarter program. We all waited anxiously as the various quarters came out, wondering what would be chosen to represent each of the states. Let's expand on that. I turned the question back to them. What do you think symbolizes Wichita County? Our discussion bounced back and forth between the County and the various communities in the county.

They quickly threw out the Falls. The original falls was long gone and the present one is a representative example, though an impressive one. My youngest grandson said the Littlest Skyscraper. We eliminated it because, well, it was a scandal. I reminded them the name of the County is Wichita. In a time when Native American mascots are disappearing rapidly, communities and even states named for Native Americans are untouched: Nocona, Iowa Park, Comanche, and others. We decided to not eliminate that idea. The beehive grass huts of the Wichitas are still impressive.

Geological items were used in the state quarters. Natural Bridges, Missouri River, Mt. Rainer, Mt. Rushmore, and the Grand Canyon were chosen. That brings us back to the Falls idea. The Red River and the Wichita River are possibilities. Lake Wichita is definitely in the mix, especially with the Pavilion.

Animals were a popular choice: Bison, Salmon, Pheasants, Scissortail, and cattle. Who chose a cow? The answer was Wisconsin, who also, added cheese and corn. Picture cattle, mustangs, wheat, and pigs...alright I'm stretching...representing Wichita County. Iowa Park and Wichita Falls High School got it right. The Hawk and the Coyote truly are part of the county!

Two states chose the Wright Brothers' plane. With Call Field and Sheppard Air Force Base so important to the

county's history, they would have to be part of our symbol.

Texas chose an outline of the state and the Lone Star. A map with the county's outline embossed with...what? What represents the entire county, all of the communities? Historically, it was oil. What would Wichita County be without oil? Not much!

The county was a mix of ranches, small farms, and not much population. Oil brought people and money. Electra, Burkburnett, Iowa Park, Kamay, and, yes, Wichita Falls, owe their growth and money to oil. At one time, the County was the nation's major supplier of oil. The County's oil was very high level oil, with very little contaminants like sulfur. When we researched Electra for its Centennial Book, we made a quick calculation of how many people passed through Electra during its productive years. You quickly realized the number was very large. Add Burkburnett and Wichita Falls to that and you get many, many people who, at one time, called the county home. It's easy to say our natural resources are rapidly going away and the county is slowly dying. I don't buy that. This may shock you, but what we consider problems may be treasures. Our rivers are salty, but that may not be bad. A new industry is rapidly developing that grows salt water fish and shrimp in areas that have salty water. We are prime candidates. Mesquite wood is a very desirable wood. It's just a matter of getting the industry going.

Come to our meeting with your ideas.

Question of the Month

Is The Statue of Liberty in New York or New Jersey? These tie to our discussion.

Wichita County Archive News

December 2019

Financial Report – Speaker Fund

Balance from Oct 2019	170.65
Lunch for Speaker	12.00
Balance - Nov 2019	158.65



-Elizabeth Hawley and Becky Trammell have been working on an amazing book about ALL the historical markers in Wichita County. We at the archives have been assisting in finding photos to help bring each marker's story alive. We look forward to seeing their finished handiwork.

-Trish Choate came to the archives looking for information about the Rodney Reed case. She was writing a story about his conviction of rape and murder. Reed was sentenced to death for the crime and is appealing his judgement.

-Cydney Menzik came to the archives looking for information about the Eastside. She and a few other MSU students are working together on a story about the history and life on the Eastside of WF. Additionally, they have been using the museum to conduct oral interviews with Eastside residents. Interviews were also done with Commission Members Brenda Jarrett and Becky Trammell. We look forward to seeing their finished product. Perhaps we can talk them into making a presentation to the WCHC !!!!

-Colby McGinley, an airman from SAFB came to the archives looking for old historical maps and photos of Wichita Falls. He started this at his first assignment in Seattle, WA and wants to continue with every place he is stationed. Looks like a young historian in the making.

-Judith McGinnis and TRN photographer, Torin Halsey, came to the archives to do a story on John Yates. They documented his phenomenal efforts at helping digitize the old photos and records we maintain at the archives. Judith didn't know when the story would run, so start checking the paper for our story.

YEARLY REPORT

Every year, the Wichita County Historical Commission is required to submit to the Texas Historical Commission a report detailing the Commission's activities during the year. This report includes total hours volunteered by Commission members, activities of the Commission in the community, and projects undertaken by the Commission.

At the January 2020 meeting, we will be asking for your volunteer hours plus any presentations and/or other activities in which you have participated. Thanks for your assistance.

Memorial Auditorium

Built in 1927 and officially opened in 1928, Municipal (later renamed Memorial) Auditorium, has stood on a bluff overlooking the city as a symbol of Wichita Falls. For many years there have been discussions of "what to do with Memorial?" After some research, the first step in providing protections for the building would be designation as a Registered Texas Historic Landmark. Potentially, pursuit of National Historic Registry and State Antiquities Landmark could be done. Anyone interested in researching Memorial Auditorium and preparing applications, please contact Becky Trammell.

Museum of North Texas History News - Upcoming Events

After missing last year, the trains have returned to the Museum of North Texas History. The Heart of Downtown Trains is currently in the station at MONTH. Thanks to Ron Mauch, our great model train enthusiast volunteer, the magic and whimsy of model trains are chugging away in the Ralph Harvey Hall. From dinosaurs to McDonald's to a flowing water feature, be prepared to remember the child-like awe of Christmas morning.

The Heart of Downtown Trains will run during December to mid-January at 11:30am, 1:00pm, and 3:00pm during regular museum hours.

