



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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wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on [Facebook](#)

Volume CCLXIV

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**

December 2, 2021

From the desk of Robert Palmer

Many Wichita County residents have had their stories told on the national stage. Lloyd Ruby, Don Cherry, Mia Hamm, Leon Gibbs, S.B. Burnett, Richard Skelton, Dude Smith, Bill Mack, Rufus King, The Whites, and Jimmy Kolp have been written about in many articles. Some were described, not just for their accomplishments, but for the difficulties they overcame. These include Eddie Hill, Kitty O'Neil, and Greg Abbott. Nothing compares in determination and pure ability to survive with the story of Dr. Beck Weathers. Movies, TV specials, and books, including his autobiography - LEFT FOR DEAD, MY JOURNEY HOME FROM EVEREST, told his story.

A graduate of Burkburnett High School and Midwestern University, Weathers was a successful pathologist. His world changed when he became obsessed with mountain climbing. He joined a group of experienced climbers who had the goal of climbing the tallest mountain on each continent. After many months of preparation and training, the group led by experienced climber New Zealander, Rob Hall, began their journey.

Very nearsighted, Weathers decided to make another preparation, having radical eye surgery. When the climb began, his eyes had not fully recovered, leaving his eyes misshapen. Eventually, the high altitude would leave him almost blind. He faced another problem. His obsession with climbing was destroying his marriage.

In the end, Weathers was left for dead twice. His wife was told he had perished on the mountain. In a long-standing tradition, those who died on Everest were left on Everest. Expedition leader Hall would die with his body left on Everest.

Everest can appear calm and beautiful beyond imagination. In a short time, the weather can change and become a force beyond imagination, with temperatures below -30 degrees and winds exceeding 150 mph. This happened to Weathers and the expedition.

Over 18 hours, the mountain would try to destroy the group. With his increasing blindness, he was left by the trail with the plan to pick him up on the trek back. Soon rescue teams were attempting to get to the group. Weathers had

sunk into the snow and began to develop hypothermia. The first two rescuers decided he was too far gone to save. After 10 hours, Beck knew things had gone wrong. Soon, a fellow team member, Mike Groom, reached Weathers and attempted to move him. The storm got worse. Visibility was virtually zero with temperatures and winds brutal beyond belief. Weathers lost a glove.

The effects of high altitude and freezing weather took control of their lives.

A Russian guide looked at Weathers and decided he was beyond help. The next morning, a Canadian doctor determined a woman climber from Japan covered in ice was beyond help. With his face covered in ice and jacket open to the waist, the doctor determined Weathers' condition the same. He was close to death. Beck later described it as not that bad.

Then the miracles began to happen and Weathers showed determination and survivability beyond human belief. He awoke from the coma at 4:00 pm. He was in bad shape, but determined. He stated his right arm sounded like a piece of wood when he banged it against the ground. He thought, "If I don't get up, think about where I am, and how do I get out of here, it's going to be over very quickly." He got up and stumbled down the mountain. When the lower camp people saw him coming, they were stunned. His face was black, but he was walking and talking.

He was evacuated by helicopter, the highest ever such rescue.

His right arm, the fingers on his left hand, pieces of his feet, and his nose were amputated. Doctors built him a new nose from neck skin and a piece of his ear. His wife cared for him during the recovery and their marriage was saved. Several years later he spoke at the Midwestern State University graduation. The crowd, including old friends, was spellbound!

Lynn Seman

Rolling Plains Master Naturalist

**Scurrying the Historical Path of the
Texas Horned Lizard**

Wichita County Archive News

November 2021

Monthly Report

-Suzanne Hey Darr came to the Archives to tell of her family's settling in Wichita County. We recorded her conversation and will add it to our oral interviews. Mrs. Darr told of her great grandfather, Columbus Waller, settling near Bacon, Texas. She said she has heard the story her whole life that Waller had a large herd of hogs. She said that they loaded the hogs on a train car at Bacon Switch and that is how it got the name Bacon, because of his hogs. After speaking with Mrs. Darr, we looked a little further into her story and found that there was a public school in Bacon from 1922 to 1928. Even though her story is very compelling, we are not sure if it overrides the Louise Kelly version on Bacon being named after Otis T Bacon, the first mayor of Wichita Falls.

-Sarah Walton of the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce came to the Archives looking for images of MSU Texas. The Chamber of Commerce is doing an economic impact study of MSU joining the Texas Tech system. They plan on using the images to give their presentation a little more personality. They were provided 30 images of Midwestern and a brief historical timeline. The date of the presentation is sometime around Dec 9th.

-Gretchen Stolfo from the Houston area was traveling with her husband and sister to Amarillo to visit a cousin. They stopped at the Archives to research the North Texas Furniture Company. Some friends of theirs, the Truly family owned it and they wanted to know more. They were provided several photos of the building, including some of when it burned down in 1952.

-Carmen Edwards of Tyler, Texas called asking for information on her great grandfather, Pink Mosley, that lived in Wichita Falls. She knew he was a pastor at the Church of the Living God on Roosevelt Street on Eastside, but not much more. With a little research it was discovered that his wife, Mary, was the pastor and he was the assistant pastor. Digital scans of the city directories with his name and an obituary, death certificate, WWI Draft Record, and Military Headstone Application for serving in WWI were sent to Carmen. She was very surprised and satisfied with all the information we provided.

- When we perform research at the Archives, a new folder is created in our computer and all research images and notes are saved there.

-Darrell Franklin of KFDX 3 contacted the Archives about getting images of Sheppard AFB for a story he is doing for their 80th Anniversary. He was provided a motion picture clip of when Sheppard had an open house for the public in 1941. We also gave him our collection of still photos of Sheppard. His presentation should air sometime during the week of Thanksgiving.

- Along with the North Texas Genealogy Association and the Wichita County Archives, the Museum of North Texas History wants to tell the stories of these hats and further preserve the history of our area. If you, a family member, friend, or neighbor has a hat in the exhibit, we would like to talk to you. Please contact the Wichita County Archives at 940-723-0020 or email Archives@co.wichita.tx.us for more information.

The Wichita County Historical Commission was saddened to hear of the passing of Arthur Bea Williams. A North Texas Legend who was either first woman or first African-American in many positions, will long be remembered as an example of determination. Our thoughts are with her daughter, Andrea.

DECEMBER 10 • 5:30-5:30PM • MUSEUM OF NORTH TEXAS HISTORY

WOMEN OF WICHITA COUNTY TEXAS STORIES ABOUT REMARKABLE WOMEN

BOOK SIGNING - PURCHASE YOUR BOOKS
AND MEET THE AUTHORS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4
10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

A Merry Museum Christmas

A Fun, Free, Family Event at the Museum of North
Texas History!