



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Bryce Blair, 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/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

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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

February 6, 2020

From the desk of Robert Palmer

PROGRAM

**Christopher J. Flis, Museum Director
The Whiteside Museum of Natural History**

Dad, it finally happened! I flew for the first time today. It was even more exciting than we thought it would be. Thank you for encouraging me to get into aviation. I can still see the look in your eyes when we watched Lt. Benjamin Foulois fly March 2, 1910 at Ft. Sam Houston. His Army Airplane No. 1 would only go 30 mph and flew at only 200 feet. I remember you saying he said, "I made my first solo, my first landing, and my first crackup - all in the same day." I was a little kid, but I remember promising you I would fly someday. Call Field, Texas made my dream come true.

I still have the letters you wrote while you were part of General Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa in March of 1916. The Jennys, you said, would change the course of battle forever. Those JN-3s were good, but nothing like the JN-4s we have at Call Field.

Our JN-4s are 27 feet 4 inches long and have a wingspan of 43 feet 7 inches. The wings are better built than the 3 or the 2. The maximum speed is 75 miles per hour and they will fly to 6,500 feet. Most importantly, unlike the 2 or 3, they will get to 2,000 feet in 7 minutes and 30 seconds. They are a wonderful machine. The Curtis Airplane Company did a great job with Benjamin D. Thomas's design. Mr. Thomas incorporated many of the things he learned with the English company, Sopwith Aviation. Sorry for so much detail, but, when you're training to be a pilot, it's all about detail!

Speaking about training here at Call Field, we spend a lot of time studying: Ground and aerial gunnery, aerial reconnaissance, and observation. Recently, we started a study of aerial photography. This was the thing you said would be the factor that made the airplane such a vital combat tool. Our instructors, many who have been to France, said knowing the details of the enemy's trenches, were critical knowledge. By the way, they hated the French planes they were forced to fly in France. They were very unstable.

When we get to leave the Field, we enjoy going to the nearby lake. They have a pavilion which hosts dances and we get to talk to the Wichita Falls people. They really like

Mr. Joseph Kemp. He has been a factor in the city, the lake, and the construction of Call Field. They said he and his friend, Frank Kell, privately donated \$20,000.00 to get Call Field here. The Chamber of Commerce added \$35,000.00. Originally, there were 30 buildings and it was designed to house seventy-two airplanes. During the construction, local women fed the workers.

There have been some crashes and, unfortunately, some lost lives. All in all, it's safe. We have had fewer crashes than any other training field. Like I said, The JN-4 is a very good airplane.

They're working on the water, but it's not good. It's nothing like the spring water we had at Ft. Sam Houston. There's a boom of sorts going on in the area. The nearby town of Electra produces a huge amount of oil from its nearby fields. There's talk that Burkburnett, north of here on the Red River, has the potential to produce a lot of oil, but nothing much has been found. Mr. Kell has built a lot of railroads, the Wichita Falls and Northwestern and the Wichita Falls and Southern. A common practice is to follow the railroads when we fly. The instructors really discourage it. It eliminates practicing navigation and there have been some close calls with planes going toward each other.

You'll like this. We are considered part of the U.S. Army Cavalry, just like you. We wear the riding pants and Cavalry boots and spurs, only, we wear the spurs upside down. We get a lot of kidding from the old NCOs, but we do it to keep us from sliding side to side in the plane. You just dig your spurs in.

Dad, that's about it. As you predicted, the world is wonderful from 3000 feet!

Your loving son, Aaron

Question of the Month

Name the breeds of horses that have been important in Wichita Falls history.

Wichita County Archive News

February 2020

Financial Report – Speaker Fund

Balance from Dec 2019	158.65
Donations	20.00
Balance - Jan 2020	178.65

-In response to the TRN front page newspaper article about the Archives digitizing our historical photos and records; we received a request from Brad Wharton of Fort Worth. He wanted to know if we have any photos of the W.T. Waggoner family, of which he is a direct descendant. We sent him three high resolution panoramic photos from the Benjamin Loden Collection. The photos were of: Zacaweista, W.T. Waggoner sitting on the porch at his Whiteface Ranch, and Santa Rosa Lake on Beaver Creek. Surprisingly, Mr. Wharton said he grew up at Zacaweista and had never seen a photo of it as old as the one we have. He was thrilled to get the photos and donated \$10 to the Archives.

-Windy Sizemore from Union Square Credit Union asked for some research on the old service station at 6th & Indiana that the Credit Union purchased. We provided a couple old photos of it and a list of the occupants since it was built in 1931. Union Square is using the station as an ATM location.

-Andy Lee is working on a National Register application for the building at 927 Indiana (next to the Wichita Theater, former Pier 1). We furnished him with two aerial photos, one from 1925 and the other from 1975. He wrote a very nice post about us on Facebook for our efforts.

-Mathew White came into the Archives looking for information & photos of Wichita Supply and Block Division here in Wichita Falls. He was provided several photos and newspaper articles from the TRN collection. He was surprised at the size and depth of our historical collection.

-Ted Buss came to the Archives to research the 1956 Spudder Baseball Team. That was the last full season for the Spudders, for which he is writing an article about. Ted donated \$10 to the Archives for the research we performed for him.

YEARLY TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION REPORT

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS (HISTORY RELATED READING, PRESENTATIONS, VOLUNTEERING, RESEARCH, WRITING, ETC.)

FROM JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019.

PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY PROJECTS RELATED TO HISTORY IN WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

Museum of North Texas History News - Upcoming Events



The Wichita Falls Alliance for Arts and Culture, in partnership with The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri brings the exhibition Negro Leagues Baseball to Wichita Falls. The exhibit will be housed at the Museum of North Texas History in downtown Wichita Falls. The exhibit, featuring a timeline of America's favorite pastime and explores the connections of

African American baseball history to Hispanic cultures, communities and countries, opened January 23, 2020 and will continue until March 13, 2020.

