



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 XCI

February 1, 2018

From the desk of Robert Palmer

PROGRAM

TBA

With apologies to The Waltons, "My Grandfather used to say that nobody owns a 'river', but getting born and living and dying in its 'presence', we loved 'the Red River' and felt it was ours." When I was growing up, my Dad would tell me and my brothers, "Don't plan anything Saturday, we're going to the river." The river meant our farm on the south bank of the Red River in the north center of Wichita County. My family has now owned that farm for 110 years. Many relatives were born there. Many lived there, including me and several died there. One Uncle is buried there, one Uncle's ashes are scattered there. The river doesn't separate Texas and Wichita County from Oklahoma. In truer terms, the Red River joins Texas to Oklahoma.

The river begins far away from Wichita County. It is born in the Texas Panhandle, actually from two separate sources. It flows 1,360 miles to the Mississippi. The river's average flow is over 57,000 feet per second at its mouth. The red color begins almost immediately at its source on the Llano Estacado slope. Red clay along the way adds to the distinctive color. As the river flows through Palo Duro Canyon, it is at an altitude of 3440 feet. It drops almost 2,000 feet before it reaches Wichita County. The Red is joined by many creeks and rivers as it flows into our area. The two largest in Wichita County are Adams Creek and China Creek. The Wichita River joins the Red after it departs the county.

Red River's flow is usually gentle, but it can be a raging torrent almost a half mile wide carrying trees and bridge pilings. In the early 1930's, during one of these events, the Carter Family was living in the Swanson homestead, a two story house in the middle of the river bottom. As the water rose, the family fled to the top floors. Finally, neighbors got a wooden boat and rescued the family. The mother of one of the young men who participated in the rescue was quoted in The Wichita Falls Times as saying, "That's the maddest I've seen Ole Red".

The river's watershed covers 65,590 square miles. The river is very salty, largely because of salt springs near Esteline. This is a curse and a blessing. For the most part cattle and wild life don't drink the water. It does, however, support large populations of fish, mostly catfish and white bass. At the river's greatest width, at Lake Texoma, it supports a booming Striper Bass industry. In Wichita County, the clay sloping banks of each bluff are covered by from 10 to 30 feet of porous sand. Rainfall, above the bluffs, soaks into the sand. The rain is filtered by the clay and emerges at the bottom of the bluff as amazingly clear filtered springs.

Wild life of all forms gathers at these springs. This did not pass by the Native Americans who once populated the county. Their villages are located by looking on the bluff above the springs. In the driest summers, these springs still flow. In the coldest winters, they maintain their 55 degree temperature and flows when all other water, including the river, freezes up.

The original Native Americans were dominated by the Caddo Confederacy. The Wichita migrated in from Kansas. The warring Comanche disrupted all of this. Artifacts several thousand years in age are found in the older campsites. The artifacts indicate they were both hunter gatherers and agriculturally based. The first Spanish explorers followed the river basin. The area of the county was first accurately mapped by the 1852 Captain Randolph Barnes Marcy Expedition.

The river has played an important part in the Louisiana Purchase, the Adams-Onis Treaty, the Greer County Dispute, the Bridgetown Dispute, and more recently in the Department of the Interior attempted land grab.

Norman Maclean said, "All things merge into one, and a river runs through it." Mankind has lived along the Red River for thousands of years, but essentially, nobody owns it. It is its own force. It will be a prominent part of our lives as long as we share its wonder.



Question of the month

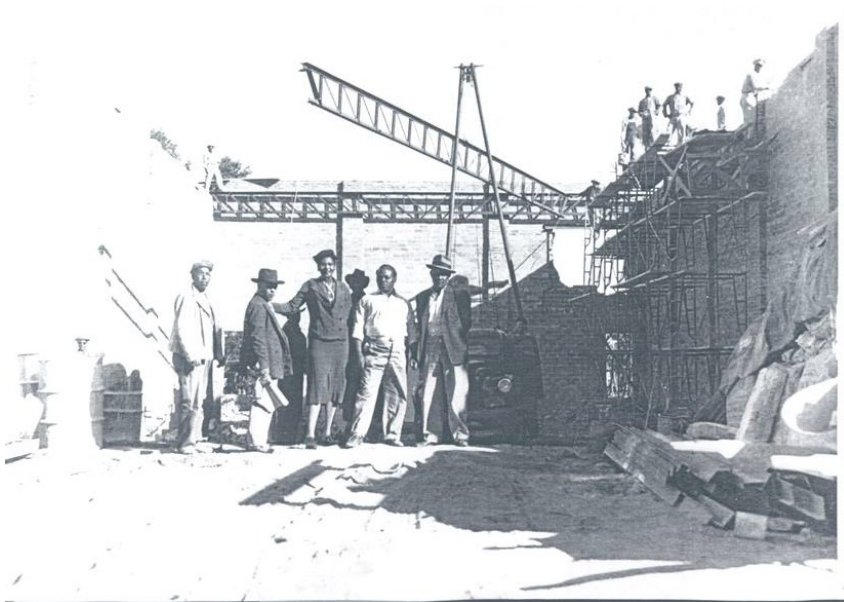
Name the fish naturally found in

Wichita County.

Wichita County Archive News

February 2018

The **Texas Historic Marker** honoring Dr. Anne Roark was dedicated on January 15th at 424 Flood Street, the sight of the ISIS (later Carver) Theater. In a BRISK north wind, the marker was revealed by (pictured at the dedication) Bill Steward, Brenda Jarrett, and Robert Palmer of the Wichita County Historical Commission. There was a nice size crowd given the weather conditions. The AKA sorority provided much needed hot chocolate. While at the dedication it was learned that Dr. Roark lies in an unmarked grave in Lake View Cemetery, that needs to be rectified. We are going to start a drive to gain enough funds to get her a well deserved marker. Dr. Roark's husband Daniel Henry Roark served in Cuba in the Spanish American War with an all African-American National Guard unit, the 23rd Kansas Co. E as a private. There will be more information forthcoming on Dr. Roark's headstone drive.



Museum of North Texas History News

REMEMBER: Museum of North Texas History Annual Membership Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 31st**. The Board will have an abbreviated meeting at 6:00pm and all members are invited to attend. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served. The annual membership meeting, beginning at 6:30pm, will follow.

The membership meeting is an opportunity for you to have input on exhibits and activities at the Museum. There will also be a summary of 2017 for the Museum and what is planned for 2018. Plus, the new slate of Board of Directors Officers will be introduced. Call the Museum at 322-7628 for more information.