

PRESERVATION NEWS

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LVI **Robert Palmer, Chairman** January 8th, 2015

Wichita County Archives 720 Indiana Avenue

Wichita Falls, Texas 76301

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm & 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Telephone 940-763-0020

E-mail Address - archives@co.wichita.tx.us

AGENDA FOR MEETING

Lunch at 11:30am Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

4. Program 1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests 3. Business 5. Adjourn Monthly Meeting: Location: The Country Club. Price for the luncheon is <u>\$17.00 each</u> which includes: salads, main course, vegetables, drink & dessert. Please bring the correct change.

Reservations: Call the Archives (763-0020) and leave your name and number of reservations on the voice mail up thru Wednesday prior to the meeting. Call the Archives Wednesday (763-0020 or 322-7628) if you have a change of plans.

NOTE: MEETING DATE IS THURSDAY, JANUARY 8TH.

PROGRAM

Randy Schaffner Early Settlement -Stone Fort, Nacogdoches, Texas

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

Historians who study and categorize artifacts from Native American campsites find more than the arrowheads that most people look for. They will find, in a normal survey, 50 or more important artifacts for every arrowhead. A very large percentage of these finds are artifacts related to food and necessities of life made from animals the Native Americans killed or harvested. The Indians who lived in Wichita County had an abundance of animals to hunt. We still do.

Modern day hunting has become a sport, killing animals for fun or to become trophies. Hunters do indeed eat the deer they kill, but it is not because their existence depends on it. This was not true for the Indians or the early settlers. Man has hunted game in the Wichita County area for a long time. Early Indians did not possess bows and arrows. That technology had not been developed. They used spears, both the hand thrown kind and the, more improved, spear powered by the atlatl. The atlatl was simply a short handle that lengthened the full extent of the throwers arm. It could hurl a spear to distances that could exceed 100 yards, enough force to kill even the largest of animals, and some were very large! Atlatl points are fairly common in area campsites. The atlatl weight is not. The weight was a grooved rock tied to the atlatl shaft with sinew. It provided balance and increased inertia. It was a very advanced technology, proving the high extent of early man's thinking and problem solving skills.

Early area settlers brought with them a vast array of firearms, both for protection and to obtain food. The Texan-Santa Fe Expedition that passed through Wichita County in 1841 carried special .67 caliber rifles ordered for the expedition by The Republic of Texas from The Tyron Company in Philadelphia. The family of the late Senator John Tower donated one to The Bullock Museum. They are identified by a star on the side. Soldiers returning from the Civil War brought pistols and rifles although the terms of the surrender placed very severe restrictions on this practice. The two weapons that really affected what weapon a cowboy or settler owned were the 1873 Winchester rifle and the 1873 Colt revolver. Both of these weapons were developed just as Wichita County was beginning to be settled. Many cowboys had their picture made with their most prized possessions, their Colt and their Winchester.

Most early settlers owned a shotgun, the double barrel being the most desired. Throughout Wichita County, there are many old doubles. Some of these are very desirable collectibles. Among these are: British and Belgium doubles, Parkers, L.C. Smiths, Foxes, Remingtons, and Winchesters. Some are works of art. Some are worn plumb out from constant use. They were food getters. Wichita County, then and now, had great populations of quail, turkeys, doves, and rabbits. You could feed a family with a good double. Several years ago, an elderly gentleman was showing me his beautiful, but well worn double. I said to him, "I guess you killed a lot of birds to eat with that". His reply was, "No, I mostly killed skunks and coyotes who were trying to kill my chickens!" Either way, he fed his family!

Ouestion of the month

What is a polecat and where did the name come from?

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Volunteer Hours: We will be asking for these in January for our annual report. Count the time at meetings and for any historical project.

Received invoices for the following markers for 2015: Joe and Lois Perkins Estate., Burkburnett Masonic Lodge, and Morris B. Zale and Company.

March 2nd - Texas Independence Day. What are your ideas to commemorate the event?

2015 is the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth

1915 News of the Day

Vast amounts of water flooded into Wichita Falls, isolating the city. Wichita General Hospital opened Iowa Park opened first oil refinery in Wichita County Lusitania was sunk off coast of Ireland Entire force of United States military airplanes land in Wichita Falls, near area of present day Brook Village. All 6 airplanes were attempting a cross country flight.

