



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/

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 CCI

Jan. 3, 2019

From the desk of Robert Palmer

PROGRAM

Pete Gill - Lake Wichita Revitalization Committee
TBA

It is 1976, Oregon's Alford Desert. The Hydrogen Peroxide powered rocket car quickly passes 100 miles per hour, then 200, then 300, and then blows past the 400 miles per hour limit she is contracted not to exceed. You heard correctly, she! But then, the 5 foot 2 inch, 95 pound, by most standards, handicapped lady, who spent her young, formative years growing up in Wichita Falls, Texas, was never one to let others put limitations on what she could accomplish!

She finally reached an unbelievable top speed of 621 miles per hour, averaging 512.71 miles per hour. She was supposed to break only the women's speed record and allow the overall record to be set by a man driver, Hal Needham. She only used 60% of the vehicle's available thrust. Her comment was, "I could have hit 700 miles per hour!"

Kitty Linn O'Neil was born March 24, 1946 in Nueces, Texas. Her mother, Patsy, was a Native American Cherokee. Kitty had an assigned number. At five months of age, she was struck by measles, mumps, and smallpox, all at the same time. Sometime later, her mother realized she had lost her ability to hear. Kitty's mother, a determined lady, took education classes in order to home school her deaf daughter. She was dedicated to the principle that Kitty would not be handicapped. She founded The Listening Eyes School for The Deaf in Wichita Falls. Kitty's father, an Air Corps Pilot and Wildcatter, had been killed in an air plane crash.

By age eight, Kitty was enrolled in public schools in Wichita Falls. She learned to play the cello by sensing changes in vibrations. At age 12, she joined a swim team. Six months later, she won the AAU Southwest District Junior Meet. In 1962, her family moved to California. She won the 1964 AAU National 10 meter diving event. A broken wrist and Spinal Meningitis kept her from trying for the Olympics and ended her diving career. She then moved to High Speed Water Skiing. In 1970, she set the official women's speed record at 104.85 miles per hour. She set a women's record for speed on

water at 275 miles per hour. She then moved to automobile and cross country motorcycle racing. After an accident, she had two severed fingers reattached and, after, rehab, was able to play the piano.

In 1976, she joined Stunts Unlimited, Hollywood's top stunt organization. Shortly thereafter, she broke the world land speed record. The vehicle had 48,000 horsepower. In 1977, she performed a stunt that required her to enter a burning van with her clothes on fire, and then, fall seven stories over a parking garage edge. Also, in 1977, she drove a rocket powered dragster 279.5 miles per hour. By comparison, Eddie Hill, in 1962, set the A/Gas record at 202.70 miles per hour. Of course, this record was in a much different kind of vehicle.

In a 1979 filming of Wonder Woman, she set a women's high fall record of 127 feet. She later bettered that with a 180 foot fall from a helicopter. She did stunts for: THE BIONIC WOMAN, AIRPORT '77, THE BLUES BROTHERS, and SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT II. Mattel created a Kitty O'Neil Action Figure. She walked away from it all in 1982 when two friends were killed doing stunts.

Stockard Channing starred in a movie about Kitty's life entitled **SILENT VICTORY: THE KITTY O'NEIL STORY**. Kitty did the stunts for the movie. Along the way, she survived two bouts with cancer.

She set 22 speed records on land and water. Kitty O'Neil passed away November 2, 2018.

Question of the Month

Eddie Hill's top drag racing speed on water was:

140.66 mph, 167.43 mph, 220.76 mph?

Wichita County Archive News

January 2019

Monthly Report - December 2018

“If you love your job, you’ll never work a day in your life”.

That old saying sums up my career as a Wichita Falls Firefighter. I bring that same sentiment into my new employment with Wichita County.

Starting in my new position as Wichita County Archivist, I look forward to meeting new people and delving into the rich history of Wichita County. My predecessors, Bill Steward and Lita Watson have laid the ground work on which I plan to build. The challenge of organizing the newly acquired Times Record News files will be one of my primary tasks. I offer an open invitation to all to come in and meet me as this new adventure begins. Additionally, my door will always be open to anyone wishing to research Wichita County history.

Historically yours, Bryce Blair

Archive Activity

J.D. Powell of Wichita Falls visited the Archives looking for an old blue print from Wichita Falls. We let him scan the original blueprints of the Wichita General Hospital. He wanted to make a large print of the hospital blueprints to display in his office. He very generously donated \$100 to the Archives.

Laura Mytinger of Kansas City, Missouri visited the Archives. She just recently learned that both she and her husband have roots in Wichita Falls. Firstly, her husband’s grandfather was J.C. Mytinger, business man in Wichita Falls in the 1920s and 1930s. He started out as secretary for Frank Kell and worked his way up to General Manager of Wichita Mill and Elevator Co. He eventually owned his own grain mill along with several other businesses. J.C. Mytinger built and lived in the big white two story home on Seymour Hwy at Fairway (northwest corner). Laura’s father-in-law is Frank Kell Mytinger. J.C. Mytinger named his son after his beloved boss, Frank Kell. Secondly, Laura’s grandfather was Jesse F. Lauck, nationally renowned architect. J.F. Lauck came to Wichita Falls in 1919 and worked for Robert Waggoner. His office was in what is now, “Big Blue”. Lauck designed his home at 106 Morningside Drive. He also designed the Walter Cline home in Country Club Addition (house that resembles the White House) and the Weeks Mansion on Kell Blvd. It is believed Lauck had a big influence on the entire lay-out of Morningside Addition and the design of some of the homes in that neighborhood. Lauck stayed in Wichita Falls until 1922, and then moved to Kansas City.

Laura met her husband while they were both attending TCU. She only recently found the connection to Wichita Falls while looking through an old Chamber of Commerce book that belonged to her grandfather.

WCHC Volunteer Hours for 2018

Please submit your volunteer hours for 2018 as soon as possible.
We need these hours for our yearly report to the state.

Museum of North Texas History News

Your membership donation to The Museum of North Texas History helps ensure we can continue to meet our mission: “To collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history of the North Texas Area. To inspire an interest in the past for the education and enrichment of people of all ages.”

Please plan to attend our 2019 Membership Celebration on **Tuesday, January 29th at 6:00pm**. This is an opportunity for the Board to hear from you, the membership, on past Museum activities and possible future activities.