



# 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/](http://wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/)

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

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

Volume CCXLXIII

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

January 7, 2021

## From the desk of Robert Palmer

ZOOM MEETING - January 7th  
11:00 am

The political world, at times, completely reverses itself. This was true when, in 1934, when James V. Allred from Wichita Falls, was elected Governor of Texas.

Allred was born March 29, 1899, in Bowie, Texas. After graduation from Bowie High School, he enrolled in Rice Institute but dropped out to work for the United States Immigration Service. He then enlisted in the United States Navy during World War I. In 1921 he received an LL.B degree from Cumberland University in Tennessee and began a law practice in Wichita Falls. He married Joe Betsy Miller of Wichita Falls on June 20, 1927 and they had three sons. She died in 1993, had many friends in the city, and is buried in Riverside Cemetery.

In 1923, he was named District Attorney for the Thirtieth Texas District which covered Wichita, Archer, and Young Counties. He was called, "The Fighting District Attorney", because of his open opposition to the Ku Klux Klan. In 1930, he ran a successful race for State Attorney General. He won acclaim for his campaign against monopolies and large businesses. He was a very popular choice to run for Governor in 1934. A major campaign issue for him was his opposition to a state sales tax. He openly made the pardoning powers of the Governor a major issue. The pardoning powers had been severely abused by Pa and Ma Ferguson (James and Miriam), Governors before him. At one point, Ma was averaging over 100 pardons per month.

In the Democratic Primary, he was opposed by, ironically, two candidates from Wichita Falls, Charles C. McDonald and Tom F. Hunter. He won the nomination in a run-off. As Governor, the reversal occurred. Ma Ferguson had a running war with the Texas Rangers, the elite law enforcement agency in Texas. Originally developed to provide security along the Texas-Native American Frontier, by the 1900s, it performed a number of roles. Unfortunately, at times, they were felt to be part of the extreme violence along the Mexican Border. The biographies of several prominent Rangers appear to confirm this. Much of the violence was the taking of land

from Mexican citizens by showing evidence in court that their land titles weren't valid. The result was the formation of large ranches and oil properties. The Fergusons both sought to make the Rangers of lesser importance. Solid Rangers, such as Frank Hamer, had worked to clean up the Ranger force. Ma wanted to, in essence, abolish it. The Rangers openly opposed her election. Many resigned. Once in office, she eventually eliminated the full 144 man force and replaced them with people of her own choice. Many of her choices were corrupt and the whole enforcement by "Rangers" fell into chaos. Her husband had 26 Articles of Impeachment filed against him. Ten of them stuck. The Fergusons were masters of retaliation. Ma showed it with the Rangers. Pa showed it with The University of Texas. He wanted certain faculty members removed. When they refused, he vetoed all appropriations to the University.

Ma was college-educated and very intelligent, but at times, amazingly clueless. This was the world James V. Allred stepped into with his election. It was a perfect platform to show what he could do and he did. He was commended by President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the state's performance in the National Recovery Program. He was named "Man of the Year" by the National Junior Chamber of Commerce. He won reelection in 1936 by a landslide vote. At the end of his second term, he was nominated by President Roosevelt for a Federal District Judgeship. He had taken the State of Texas from a national embarrassment to a shining star of how to run a state. His reputation was of the highest level until his death in 1959.

We can be very proud of his ties to Wichita County.

### Question of the Month

**What important job did Ranger Frank Hamer take on after his resignation from The Texas Rangers?**

**Happy New Year!**

# Wichita County Archive News

## January 2021

### Monthly Report – December 2020

After working as Wichita County Archivist for two years now, I am still amazed at the breadth and depth of history contained within our office. I am just now getting a handle on all the different places we search for documents and photos. I know Lita Watson must have gotten tired of me calling and asking questions all the time. It is one of my future projects to document those different reference places so future archivists will have a good handle on connecting resources.

This December was interesting in that we were not processing newly acquired items, but instead reviewing already accessioned records. While looking up one topic, we often find something else of interest (we call them “rabbit holes”). John Yates stumbled upon some historical newspaper articles written by TRN Editorial Director, William Donnell. He wrote a column for a couple years in the mid 1970’s called “Footsteps In Our History”. Turns out they were very accurate accounts of historical events occurring in Wichita Falls before 1900. We have two whole boxes of Donnell’s records. This highlights one of the deficits in the way we accession records into the archives. There was such a vast array of information contained in Donnell’s collection, making it difficult to categorize. John has started digitizing it and adding metadata so it will be searchable. Additionally, he has made a booklet of Donnell’s stories with a table of contents to be placed on the book shelf.

We also found a box of mystery photos and post cards that has been sitting in the Archives for over a year now (no idea where it came from). There were several photos that were identified in that box. We looked them up on Ancestry, found connections and sent digital copies to their relatives. They were all very grateful to receive such a nice little gift at the end of the year.

This seemed to be such a pleasant way to end 2020.

### Membership Renewal

Historical Commission membership is a two year cycle and it’s time to renew. We also need to gather information for the yearly report to the state. Please contact the Archives with the following information: 1) Do you wish to continue on the Commission and your current contact information, 2) Your volunteer hours for the year, and 3) any projects you were involved in related to history.

Email; [archives@co.wichita.tx.us](mailto:archives@co.wichita.tx.us) Telephone 940-763-0020

### January 7, 2021 HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING AT 11:00AM

We will **ZOOM** again in January. If you have difficulty logging on, please let me (Becky) know. I’ll be happy to walk through the process with you.

Watch for a separate email with the ZOOM link.

### Museum of North Texas History News

The Museum continues it’s opening schedule of Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. We are starting with a reduced schedule to stay on top of our new and improved cleaning procedures. Our goal is to keep our visitors and our staff safe.