



# PRESERVATION NEWS

June 2nd, 2016

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LXXIII

Robert Palmer, Chairman

## 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

http://www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

### 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 |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|

**Monthly Meeting:** Location: Luby's. Price for the luncheon is **\$10.00** each which includes: one meat, salad, vegetables, drink & dessert. Please bring the correct change. **RESERVATIONS NO LONGER NEEDED**

\*\*\*\*\***NO MEETING IN JULY**\*\*\*\*\*

### PROGRAM

Cynthia Laney - Downtown Proud

Zale Building and Downtown Development

#### From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

If America is a nation of immigrants, then Wichita County is, likewise, truly a County of Immigrants. We are a diverse population that came to the county, sometimes, many at a time. Doug James' series of Historical Commission programs that focused on different ethnic groups gave us many examples. The North and Northwest portions of the county were settled by three different groups of Germans. Col. Specht brought the group around Clara, many of whom were Lutherans. Emil Flusche actually recruited in Germany to bring the group who built the Mt. Carmel Catholic Church.

The third group is lesser known. After The Waggoner Ranch decided to sell the China Creek portion of its ranch, Pete Krohn bought up a large portion of the ranch that lies between what is now Brockreide Road and Enterprise Road. He brought in a group of people who were mostly German, but not closely aligned with The Lutheran or Catholic Churches. In fact, most attended The Baptist and Methodist Churches located near The Barwise Rural School. They were very interesting people, very intelligent, endowed with a great sense of humor. My favorite was Adolph Wittenbach, Sr.

The Wittenbach farm was located on what is now Payton Road just north of Highway 240. Farming that piece of land in the 20s and 30s would have been a monumental task. It was too far south to have the wonderful sandy-loam that the area just south of the Red River enjoys. In fact it is hard red tight land. Tight land was a term early day farmers used to describe

land that, when it was dry, you could not get a plow in it. You had to have a sense of humor to farm land like that with a team of horses. Adolph had a sense of humor.

When the last of the Barwise farm equipment was being auctioned off in the 1950s, Adolph was there, holding court. The auction finally came to a piece of old equipment that was, in particular, very complicated looking. Nobody knew what it was. They asked Adolph. He told his story in typical Adolph Wittenbach style.

"Well, the engineers at John Deere were sitting around one day with nothing to do. 'Let's make something', they said. So, they designed this piece of machinery that nobody could operate and nobody could fix. 'What can we call it?', one said. Another said, 'Let's call it a Corn-picker'. So they did. They painted John Deere on it, put it in their catalog, and sold a million of them.

The bidding went crazy. A farmer from Windthorst finally bought it at a very high price.

Adolph had done his job.

Later, Adolph's son, Adolph Wittenbach, Jr., known to his friends as A.W., went in the Army during World War II, learned how to be a mechanic, got out of the Army, and opened up Lakeroad implement Company in Punkin Center. He kept farmers operating for many, many years. He could fix anything.

Wichita County's immigrants have truly contributed to the greatness of the County.

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#### QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What was BS oil, primarily, used for throughout the county?

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## Wichita County Archive News

### June 2016

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Within the past few weeks, Wichita Falls - East Side has lost two stalwart community members with the passing of **Mrs. Roberta Farris** and **NaDonna Norriss** of Davenport Grocery. Mrs. Farris was the 110 year old mother of Charlye Farris. Ms. Norriss was the owner/manager of Davenport Grocery, the only Texas Treasure Business in Wichita Falls. Please keep their families in your thoughts.

Just a reminder that you have two more weeks to submit an Undertold Marker Application for this cycle. The deadline is June 15th. So far, we have submitted three.

“Got the Message? - Innovations in Communications” exhibit at MONTH continues to the end of June.

Mark your calendar for June 21st, “Wings Over Wichita” dinner at Wichita Falls Regional Airport. Contact MONTH for more information.

Welcome to new WCHC member, Linda Rangel Moore, of Burkburnett.

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William Levine and his brother, Morris, opened their first department store in Iowa Park. Their main products were gloves for the new oil industry.

The Levines opened stores in many locations in Texas and New Mexico. Later these stores were acquired by the Zale Corporation.

