

PRESERVATION NEWS

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LVIII

Robert Palmer, Chairman

March 5th, 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

1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests

3. Business

4. Program

5. Adjourn

<u>Monthly Meeting:</u> 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.

PROGRAM WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Norman Ransom - Women and the Right to Vote

From the Desk of Robert Palmer - MURCHISON AND RICHARDSON (CONTINUED)

When Clint Murchison was met at the Ft. Worth train station by his old friend Sid Richardson, he stepped right into the arms of a man with a plan. Richardson knew the value of the right kind of friends. Later in life, he would become friends with Dwight D. Eisenhower, to the point of urging him to run for President. He would hire a young John Connally as a lawyer. He would become friends with J. Edgar Hoover. In 1919, he needed Clint Murchison. Murchison understood business deals, was a gambler, and had a family with money connections.

Richardson had been in and out of Wichita County since 1911, when he worked days hauling pipe and nights as a drilling derrick floor crewman. One of his favorite stories was of working the rig one night by himself and being surrounded by coyotes. He spent the night on top of the boiler, jumping from foot to foot to avoid burning his feet. Before entering the oil fields, he had spent some time in college. Evidence suggests he spent most of his college time being chewed out by the Dean for carousing. He had come to the oil patch at the urging of his brother-in-law, Doc Bass, a last name that would become legendary in Texas. The Burkburnett oil field was a perfect painting palette for the emerging artists, Richardson and Murchison, to show their talent.

Their plan was simple; learn locations of potential new wells, buy up the land around it, sell the now developing lease, keep an interest in the wells. They gained their intelligence in many ways: listening to oilmen of all levels, sitting in on poker games, being in the places where information was shared, and, in one instance, posing as representatives of a major oil company to find out when the well would come in. In that instance, by morning, they owned control of all the surrounding land. Their first place of residence was the YMCA. For certain, Doc Bass saw their company a lot. At points, they borrowed money from the Murchisons in Athens.

Richardson took more chances than Murchison would have liked. The area along the Red River was delivering huge returns. In 1920 the market collapsed and, briefly, they found themselves insolvent. They

moved in with Doc Bass. During this time Anne White, the daughter of Tyler socialites, visited Murchison. He was stricken, proposed and was married. Richardson limped down the aisle on his bad leg as an usher. The supposedly bankrupt Murchison left for his honeymoon in a new yellow Rolls Royce.

The oil market rebounded and, for reasons unknown, the partnership began to deteriorate. Wichita County records show new wells and leases were now in one name or the other. Murchison began to drill successful wells on The Waggoner Ranch. Richardson began to unload his interests in Red River leases. Murchison formed a new partnership with Wichitan Ernest Fain. They hit well after well and soon were located in a downtown Wichita Falls building. They began to do contract drilling. In 1925, Murchison turned 30 years of age. He was wealthy. When Murchison began to look outside Wichita County for more drilling opportunities, he and Fain ceased to partner.

It had been an unbelievable partnership in an unbelievable time. At one point the risk taker Richardson told Murchison, "I may be the richest, but I owe more money!" At another time he said, "I'd rather be lucky than smart. A lot of smart people go hungry!" People liked and trusted Richardson. He could cuss you out one moment and hug your shoulders the next. They invested because they felt "he had done it before and he could do it again." All of this came from a man who wanted to stay out of the limelight. One friend said of him, "He stood in the shadows and covered his tracks!" Both were good at high stakes gambling, both in the game room and in the oil patch. They knew how to play the odds. Richardson's image was enhanced by his nephew, Perry Richardson Bass, born in Wichita Falls, November 11, 1914...oh, but that's another story!

>>>>> Question of the month

What world class golf record does Wichita Falls native and singer Don Cherry hold?

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Wichita General Hospital marker is at the foundry. Bethania inscription is pending state approval.

Annetta Reusch is seriously ill and hospitalized in the Dallas area. Your positive thoughts and prayers are needed by Annetta and her family.

Be sure to check out our new website at www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org. The site is a work in process and many thanks to Elizabeth Hawley.

WICHITA COUNTY WOMEN "FIRSTS"

Annie Roark - First African American woman to have a business office in downtown Wichita Falls.

Minnie Adickes - Pioneer realtor and first woman to serve on the Wichita Falls School Board.

Pat Norris - First woman to serve on to serve as Burkburnett Mayor and first woman to serve on Wichita County Commissioners' Court.

Jimmie Kolp - First local woman to perform a solo flight in Wichita County.

Virginia Carpenter - First woman to serve on the Burkburnett City Council.

Zenobia Trimble - First African American woman to vote in Wichita County.

Myrtle Hirschi Ledford - First women to serve on Wichita Falls City Council.

Lita Watson - First woman to serve on the Iowa Park City Council.

Kay Yaeger - First woman to serve as Wichita Falls Mayor.

Fleta Woolsey - Woman doctor who practiced at the Walker-Hargrave Clinic in 1925.

Carrie Gibson - Woman dentist who practiced in Wichita Falls during the early 1900s.

Martha Dudley - First woman to serve on Iowa Park School Board.

Charley Ferris - First African American woman licensed to practice law in the state of Texas.

LaNell Swanson - First woman to serve on Electra School Board.

LaJune Lewis - First woman to serve as Electra City Mayor.