



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/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

Volume CCXIII

Location: Luby's Lunch at 11:30AM Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

AGENDA FOR MEETING: 1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests
3. Business 4. Program 5. Adjourn

March 5, 2020

From the desk of Robert Palmer

PROGRAM

**Christopher J. Flis, Museum Director
The Whiteside Museum of Natural History**

The history of Wichita County is an exhibition of skilled craftsmanship. There have been furniture makers, musical instrument creators, even gun and fly rod makers. On a very large scale, there are houses that are more than shelter. They are works of art. A Sunday drive through the older sections of local communities is eye opening experiences. Estate sales are full of the tools used by those craftsmen. A wonderful find is to discover a carpenter's handmade wooden tool box full of tools of the trade.

The hammer was the star. Many were mere clubs. Others were fine tuned instruments. Balance was important. When you drive hundreds of nails, arm fatigue was going to happen. The bottom of the head was not pure flat. It was rounded. This allowed for off center hits. It was the same reason baseball bats and golf driver heads were rounded. It was self correcting.

The saw was more complicated than most people realize. Good carpenters sharpened them every day. Again, preventing arm fatigue was important. Some were works of art. Included was a saw set, a pliers-looking device to assure the teeth were set at the correct angle.

I recently bought a book about the carpenter's steel square. Square is a term that has been around since the building of the pyramids. Good carpenters could build a house that was square to less than a half of an inch! The pitch and length of rafters was calculated with the square. The carpenter's pencil was a precision instrument. "Measure twice, cut once" was a common expression. The width of the pencil mark was calculated into the measurement. In like manner, the plumb bob was an ancient tool, dating back thousands of years. It used the gravity of the Earth to

create a perfect up and down.

Drill bits and braces, again, were precision instruments. Stanley and Miller Falls made the best braces. Bits were made by many companies. Most were kept in an oiled canvas holder. The most collectible, but not necessarily the best, were Winchesters made by the gun manufacturing company. They also made planes and screw drivers. Stanley was the name in planes. Every good tool box had, at least, a Stanley No. 5 and a block plane. The large ship's planes, the wooden and transition planes, and the low numbered planes; No. 2, 3, and 4 are most collectible. No. 1's bring thousands of dollars. The Stanley No. 45 combination molding plane is a beautiful and highly collectible plane. Most carpenters' tool boxes had one with many different blades. The beautiful moldings in some old houses were not bought at a lumber yard, but made by a highly skilled carpenter.

Draw knives were very valuable tools. Collectors look for Blue Grass models. A similar tool was the spokeshave for drawing down excess wood. A Lufkin folding ruler was in every tool box. Seeing a skilled carpenter measure with one was seeing a skilled artist at work. Wooden handled chisels were used for a variety of purposes. Sharpness was very important.

These were the essential tools. There were more. The beautiful old houses didn't just happen. They were created by skilled artists. How important are they to us now? Well, many have been replaced by power tools, but, I know collectors who would cheat their mothers to get a wooden tool box full of these tools!

Question of the month.....What is an oil field "slip"?

Wichita County Archive News

March 2020

Wichita County Archives

Financial Report – Speaker Fund

Balance - Feb. 2020 178.65

-Lee Grace (former Times Pub. Sports Writer) came to the archives looking for info about the 1969 WFHS State Champ Football Team. His high school Class of 1970 is having their 50th Reunion this year and he wanted that plus any other articles we have for that school year. He was furnished a large volume of articles and photos for his reunion committee.

-De` Marcus Smith came in looking for photos of the Isis Theater and the Plaza Hotel on the Eastside of Wichita Falls. He was provided with several photos of those plus a few other locations on Eastside.

-Kate Singleton & Charlotte Adams from Post Oak Preservation of Austin came in looking for historic information on three different building in WF. Their company is working on National Register designations on those buildings. The Wichita Theater, the 2-story building next to it at 927 Indiana (former Pier 1) and 620 Ohio (former Eastern Treasures Antique Shop) are the buildings they are researching. We provided them with break-through info about when the 927 Indiana building was remodeled to the New Orleans style it is today. Additionally, they were furnish several photos and articles of the all the buildings.

-Jana Schmader of Downtown WF Development inquired about the date English Pharmacy was established. She thought this was their 100th Anniversary. She was provided photos and newspaper articles detailing it's beginning in March 1929.

-Lindsay Barker, Director of Communications & Marketing for the City of WF asked for photos of the first black firefighter in WF. She wanted them for Black History month. She was provided with several photos and articles of the first black firefighters in 1976.

Museum of North Texas History News Negro Leagues Beisbol Closes March 13



NEGRO LEAGUES BEISBOL Senior Day

**February 29
10 a.m.- 4 p.m.**

MUSEUM OF NORTH TEXAS HISTORY
720 INDIANA, DOWNTOWN WICHITA FALLS

Midwestern State University - Texas Speakers & Issues Series

Speakers & Issues Presents:
Dr. Leslie-Burl McLemore



**The Mississippi Freedom
Democratic Party: Some Personal
Reflections**

7:00 P.M.
March 5, 2020
Wichita Falls Museum of Art

For more information, contact Dr. Whitney Snow at (940) 397-8917 or
whitney.snow@msutexas.edu



LECTURE BY DR. RAY DOSWELL

Vice-President of Curatorial Services
The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
Kansas City, MO

Lecture begins at 2 p.m.

Exhibition and lecture are free to attend

To schedule a group tour,
please call: (940) 322-7628

www.wichitafallsarts.org