



# PRESERVATION NEWS

# Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

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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 CCXLXV

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

March 4, 2021

## From the desk of Robert Palmer

ZOOM MEETING - March 4th  
11:00 am

Whatever you are, be good at it..." Abraham Lincoln  
Memorable people come in all shapes and sizes. Some are quiet and thoughtful. Some are brash and "always in the spotlight". T. Leo Moore was in the center of every spotlight. When you ask Electra people who he was, the usual answer is, "He's the man who stopped the train!" It's true, he did stop the train, but he was much more than that. He was revered by the common man, hated by the powers that be. He did things "his way" and really didn't care if "his way" offended other people. He did what he thought was right.

He arrived in Electra sometime in the late 1930s. As one newspaper described it, "He arrived with a big-top flair!" His presence was known immediately. He had come to Electra to make his fortune in the oil patch. Indeed, he was successful at that, but, soon, he became a factor in local and state politics. At that time in history, Electra was an important place for politicians to visit because of one thing - oil. Through the years, it would host Lyndon Johnson, Sam Rayburn, Allen Shivers, and a host of Hollywood and sports celebrities wanting to invest in oil.

T. Leo, a reported former circus roustabout, soon became heavily involved in the political world, eventually becoming "the people's mayor". Stories abound about people he helped out. One involved a man whose son had run into a dispute with the local police. After using great physical force, the boy was thrown into the city jail. His offense? He had been peeling out to impress his girlfriend. The dad went to T. Leo who immediately went to the police station. The boy was brought in and, after seeing the boy's condition, T. Leo turned and said, "Let him go!" The

story spread quickly, and "The people's mayor" was reaffirmed. He visited schools, was at every event - including PTA and Cub Scout meetings, and was, easily, the most recognizable person in the city. Then came the Train Stopping. Electra reached its peak population of over 6000 residents in 1936. Then it started a slow decline accelerated by World War II. Moore had gained statewide fame by taking on the Texas Railroad Commission over "allowables" determining how much oil could be pumped. In the fall of 1949, the Burlington Railroad decided to streamline its Zephyr train services by designating some towns as flag or "Whistle stops." Electra made the list. T. Leo was furious, threatening to impose a 15 MPH speed limit on the train. Moore had thousands of plastic train whistles made. Time magazine picked up the story. T. Leo declared, "We're going to win!" *Continued next month*

**T. Leo Moore**



# Wichita County Archive News

## March 2021

### Monthly Report – February 2021

-Professor Mary Draper from MSU has assigned her history students to write a paper on disasters in Wichita County. They have been in the Archives researching topics which include pandemics, 1918 Spanish Flu, droughts, and heat waves. They were given access to our TRN Collection on condition that they are allowed only one file out at a time and to be careful with the fragile material.

-Mary Testa Barron of Lebanon, Indiana (formerly Wichita Falls) was contacted via our Facebook page about her collection of photos she was posting online. The photos were of her father's, Testa's Italian Restaurant in Wichita Falls. The restaurant started downtown in 1950 and ended up on Sheppard Access Road in 1956. Testa's stayed in business until 1982. Mrs. Barron mailed us a flash drive with 61 images of her father's restaurant, adding a little local flavor to our collection.

-Kristin Tempelmeyer, an employee of Trinity Hughes Construction of WF stopped in at the Archives to research the building at 1200 Lamar. Trinity Hughes has purchased that building, which at one time was the Sears Automotive Center. They plan on remodeling the building and relocating their business there. A couple of photos of that location were found along with several Sanborn maps. Also of interest, Virgil Skeen lived in a two-story house at that address back as far as 1907. Virgil's brother, William was in the posse that chased after the 1896 bank robbers that were lynched in Wichita Falls.

### Just A Millennial Girl Living in a Museum World: Succeeding as a Young Museum Leader

#### Texas Historical Commission Webinar - March 4th - 10:00 am

Have you ever been the youngest person at the table AND also been the one in charge? Many young leaders are not trained to address the challenges that come with managing across generations. In this webinar, millennial museum director **Madeleine Calcote** will explore patterns of how different generations work, highlight some of the best aspects of varied generational approaches, and share examples from her own career. Whether managing up, down, or sideways, participants will learn strategies for success when working with any generation: passion, vision, perseverance, patience, and decisiveness. [REGISTER HERE](#)

### March 4, 2021 HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING AT 11:00AM

We will **ZOOM** again in March. 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.

### Bones of Texas - Photographic Exhibit at Museum of North Texas History

The only visitors now are the wind and rain, along with the sun and moon. The abandonment itself is the citizenry. Where once there was community, now there are the "Bones of Texas."

The traveling photography exhibit, "Bones of Texas" documenting the evolving landscapes of Texas, will arrive in Wichita Falls in March. The Museum of North Texas History is excited to announce the opening of Bones of Texas on Thursday, March 25th. The Museum will be open from 10:00am to 4:00pm on that day. This exhibit will be on display from March 26 through May 28. A reception is scheduled in April, honoring the photographers. Watch for more information.