



PRESERVATION NEWS

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LVV

Robert Palmer, Chairman

May 7th, 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

Monthly Meeting: Location: **The Country Club.** Price for the luncheon is **\$17.00 each** 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

Norman Ransom - Women and the Right To Vote

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

A recent obituary in the Times-Records News contained all the usual information, but also contained this short notation, "He loved to make stained glass windows". Obviously behind that simple statement lies a great story...and many more stories.

People who frequent estate sales are often amazed by the large number of tools and books that relate to the making of hand tooled items. There are wood working tools, jewelry making tools, metal working tools and many others. We know our early settlers brought with them tools that were necessary to make and repair materials that were necessary for their existence. You see many drawknives, adzes, boring instruments, saws, hammers, and many other beautiful old tools. In addition they brought with them the knowledge and desire to make items that were useful and, at the same time, artistic.

Saddles were a necessity. The Oliver Brothers in Vernon, the Eddleman Brothers in Graham, Olsen-Stelzer in Henrietta, and Karl Bauch on Ohio Street produced saddles that are now the highest of collectibles. The owner of a set of Crockett Spurs has a valuable item. Many Wichita County residents made furniture down through the years. When I purchased the wood working tools from Greens Furniture, I knew I purchased someone's life story. Ben Valdez had been the last owner of the tools and I could see the tears in his eyes when he watched them leave. Richard and Donald Hill of Iowa Park made beautiful furniture. One of the best was a red oak table made from the wood of shipping pallets. When

the First Baptist Church of Iowa Park needed hymn book holders on the back of the pews, the Hill brothers made them.

Musical instruments were among the most beautiful of handmade items. Handmade guitars and violins show up occasionally. Mark Lee and his brother, Johnny Allen Lee, make beautiful Martin style guitars and European style violins. They studied under the guidance of the late Jimmy Givens of Grandfield, Oklahoma, a master maker of guitars, violins, and mandolins. Mark described to me how very difficult it is to get the right thickness for the right sound. Lynwood Givens of Electra and now a member of The Midwestern State University Board of Regents, has a long waiting list for his handcrafted violins.

(CONTINUED ON BACK)

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

Question of the month

Who holds the Wichita County record for the most state championship track medals?

Wichita County Archive News

May 2015

Wichita General Hospital marker has been received. Bethania marker is at the foundry.

JUNETEENTH 150th Anniversary City Wide Celebration

Three Day Celebration - June 19, 20, 21

For more information, contact the Juneteenth Committee, 940-767-5972 or email
wfjuneteenth@gmail.com

"Pioneers Remember" is now available at the Museum of North Texas History. All profits from the book sales (books are \$25) benefit the Museum. The book commemorates the Golden Jubilee Celebration held in September 1932. Information gathered from the pioneers was originally complied by Mary Kearby. The revised edition includes recently uncovered biographies of Wichita County pioneers.

Texas Historical Commission "Undertold Marker" application period begins on May 1st. This is an opportunity to receive a FREE marker for a topic that otherwise might be neglected. For more information, look at the THC website (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/>) or contact Lita at the Archives.

"Let Me Be Known By The Work Of My Hands" - CONTINUED

Among the rarest and most beautiful collectibles is a Mowery black powder rifle made by Bill Mowery while he had his shop in Iowa Park. Mowery rifles are located all over the globe. Along with guns, Wichita County residents liked fishing. Darrel Groth of Vernon makes, from scratch, split cane fly rods. This is hand craftsmanship at its highest level. The rod is hand planed and consists of six 60 degree strips of the finest tonkin bamboo fitted together to make 360 degrees. This is from the grip, which is hand turned, to the tip measured in thousands of an inch. It takes over 100 hours to make one rod. Dick Bundy makes graphite fly rods, which in itself is an art form. This brings me to a story.

Dick Waggoner, a member of a longtime historical Wichita County family, had one passion he dearly loved. It was fly fishing in Northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. His estate sale was a picture of what he loved. His fishing vest, his collection of hand tied flies, and several of his split cane rods were on sale. Among them was one marked, "Hand made for Dick Waggoner by Neil McMullen". The name, Neil McMullen, is familiar to many Wichita County residents. Neil ran Production Machine and Tool in Iowa Park and Wichita Falls. I didn't know he made split cane fly rods. I had to know the story. Neil is elderly now, but still a very capable person. I got hold of him to learn the story of the rod. The story really brought home the value of hand craftsmanship. Neil and Dick fished together and were good friends. Neil made the rod for Dick, and now the rest of the story, in exchange for jewelry made by Dick's wife for Mrs. McMullen. We Wichita County people are truly unique people!