



PRESERVATION NEWS

MAY 5th, 2016

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LXXII

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**

PROGRAM

Jack Murphy, Parks Supervisor, City of Wichita Falls
Expansion of Riverside Cemetery

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

There was a time, in my early youth, when I thought Santa Claus owned White's Auto. My Dad had told my brother and me that Santa was going to bring us a new bicycle each for Christmas. My eight year old mind was on top of the world. I could picture a shining new Schwinn with tanks and headlight setting beside the Christmas tree on Christmas morning. However, I was not disappointed when the Schwinn turned about to be a "plain Jane" Huffy. I was, however, somewhat puzzled by the metallic sticker, on the fender, that said, "White's Auto, Wichita Falls, Texas". Oh well, so Santa owned White's Auto, so what!

For my twelfth Christmas, it was somewhat different. I knew the truth about Santa and I got to go with my Dad to White's Auto and pick out my new Savage, single shot 22, that I would get for Christmas. I spent many hours with that rifle, which I still have, lessening the population of Cotton-tailed rabbits and bull frogs on our family farm. White's Auto fulfilled the dreams of many kids, of all ages, for many years.

When automobiles took over in the teens, most parts and supplies for the auto were purchased from the auto dealer or a filling station. The idea of an auto store came about at an unlikely time, The Great Depression. Dreams don't always appear at convenient times. White's Auto began in Clinton, Oklahoma in 1930. It started with \$3400.00 in capital. It's originators were: Tom C., W. Erle, and W.A. White. George Adams was an additional partner. It prospered at a time when other businesses were falling by the wayside. It sold mostly car parts and accessories. In 1938, the decision was made to move the headquarters operation to Wichita Falls. This was a

good decision because Wichita Falls was in a prosperous area despite the Depression. The oil fields provided many jobs.

The store and, now developing, franchise stores added new lines of merchandise including: hardware, furniture, plumbing, household items, and bicycles and sporting goods. When I started playing competitive baseball, my Dad took me to White's and bought me a new Al Kaline baseball glove, which I still have. It's now worth about 20 times what my Dad paid for it. At its peak, White's had about 400 company owned and dealer authorized stores. Most small towns in North Texas and Southern Oklahoma had one. It was one of the largest employers in Wichita Falls and had one of the largest warehouses anywhere. The company encouraged a family atmosphere.

The first offices were at the end of Indiana street and the first store was on Lamar. The Call Field Road warehouse was completed in 1955. In 1985, all the inventory managers were called in and it was announced the warehouse was closing. White's was sold to City Products. Wichita Falls fostered the beginnings of many companies and operations. White's Auto was one of the best.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Weather reporting has become very sophisticated.

How did Warren Silver illustrate his weather maps?

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*Becky and I had an interesting experience Tuesday when we walked over to the Zale's Building to determine the best place to install the historic marker, **Zale Legacy**. We had a tour of the building from John Dickerson who has worked on the restoration for 2 ½ years. He is so enthusiastic about saving the architectural features, such as the wooden floors, the tin ceilings, glass tiles and other features. Tentative dedication is May 19th, but stay tuned.*

This is another step forward in the repurposing and renovation of downtown.

Please welcome new member, **Bryce Blair**. He is retired from the Fire Department is writing a book about the history of the department.

Continuing at the Museum of North Texas: *Get the Message? Innovations in Communications.*

A.E. Holland, originally called Barwise, was built in 1921 is 95 years old. After desegregation, the school was renamed A.E. Holland in honor of the longtime principal of Booker T. Washington. Holland was closed immediately after desegregation (1969), but was reopened a few months later as an alternative school. It closed permanently in 2002 and has subsequently been used as a storage facility.



205 Jalonic Street

These buildings are part of Wichita Falls history. If they disappear, they never reappear.
(Personal opinion, BT)



Alamo School officially opened 1910, is 106 years old. There is some disagreement on its exact opening date. Kate Haynes was the school librarian for a time and coal was used to heat the facility. Alamo was closed in 2014.

1912 11th Street

(Pictures from *Times Record News*)
