



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Bill Steward, 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/

Wichita County Texas Archives is on Facebook

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

Location: Luby's

Reservations no longer needed

Volume LXXXVII

October 5th, 2017

From the desk of Robert Palmer

The history of Wichita County is, in many ways, linked with its neighboring land to the north, a prairie land known as the Big Pasture. The name was originally given to the land by Native Americans. The geology of the two areas is remarkably different. Wichita County has vast areas of low rolling red clay shrub land while Big Pasture is mostly flat grass land. Wichita County had vast oil reserves. The Big Pasture had very little. Wichita County was divided up early in the 1800s, after the Texas Revolution. Many Texas Revolutionary War veterans, school, and railroad grants defined the structure of what would later become the county. The Big Pasture was largely undefined until the Five Great Tribes were moved from the Southeastern U.S. and, then, it was mostly tribal boundaries. The early Spanish explorers and French traders mostly stayed to the north side of the Red River because it was easier to traverse. A few French trading posts were set up on the south side. We know at least one was in Wichita County.

A major series of battles among the Native Americans occurred when the Kiowa and Comanche drove the Apache out, eventually to what became New Mexico. Buffalo and antelope were abundant on the grassy pasture. It was an ideal situation for the Indians. Grass was plentiful and they hunted the animals that flocked to the grass. This did not pass by newly emerging cattle barons.

The Big Pasture is made up of about 488,000 acres. With the establishment of reservations after the Civil War, it was reserved, by treaty, for the tribes, a fact that has become very important in recent years. In 1901, each Native American received a land allotment from the Big Pasture. Approximately 3500 received allotments.

The famous 1905 Wolf Hunt was more than just entertainment for Theodore Roosevelt. If you look at the names in the famous picture, you see what was in the process of happening. The Indians were leasing the land to, mostly, W.T. Waggoner, S.B. Burnett, and Cal Suggs.

Paula Elmore

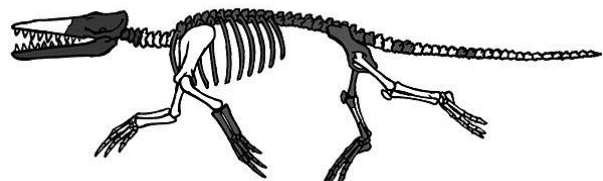
Miles Carpenter and the Early Auto

They received 2 cents per acre for 10 years. The money was carried in bags for each recipient. By agreement, it was in gold and silver; never paper. Phy Taylor, a Burnett Cowboy, later wrote about being on many of these money trips from Wichita Falls to Fort Sill. In typical government fashion, when the Indians started getting this money, their government rations were cut in half. The situation was about to change again.

The Wolf Hunt has been described as being done to show the Wichita Mountains as a potential National Preserve. That probably was true, but a more underlying reason was to set the stage for turning the land into producing agriculture land. On December 6, 1906, the land was sold off. The average price was six dollars per acre, the most, at that time, that had ever been paid for government land. Frank Kell had already started work on the Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad, a railroad designed to bring future crops to Kell's mills in Wichita Falls. We think of Wichita Falls being built, financially, on the back of the oil industry. That is true, but grain, shipped from the Big Pasture, was also a major source of the building of the wealth.

Question of the month.....

Where is the largest fossil bed in Wichita County?



Wichita County Archive News October 2017

One of the latest posts on Wichita County Texas Archives on Facebook. . .

Doodlebuggery, "A little device that goes up and down and around and around and makes you spend your money drilling dry holes in the ground". Witching for water, doodlebugology and other superstitious forms of finding whatever one is searching for has been going on for eons. The genre achieved new heights in the early oilfields such as the ones here in Wichita, Wilbarger and Clay County. One of my favorites is Dr. P.S. (Peyton Standifer) Griffith, a "Wiggle-Stick" man. This excerpt is from a wonderful book by UT Austin's Dr. Mody Boatright and William A. Owen, "Tales from the Derrick Floor". A lot of the research was conducted here in the Wichita Falls area in the early 50's with local historian legends, Louise Kelly and J. W. Williams doing the lead work.

Museum of North Texas History News

North Texas Legends honors Robert Seabury at 6:30pm on Friday, October 13th at Kemp Center for the Arts. Call for Reservations (322-7628).

Celebrate the holiday season with City Lights on November 18th from 6pm to 10pm with the debut of the TRAINS!

Neighbors Helping Neighbors, an exhibit honoring the local Volunteer Fire Departments, continues in the Harvey Exhibit Hall.



Abernathy and
Roosevelt

During the six-day hunt, they caught 16 wolves. Some were even captured alive by U.S. Marshal of the Oklahoma Territory Jack Abernathy. Abernathy was known for his talent of capturing wolves alive with his bare hands and performed the stunt at fairs. Roosevelt's personal physician was the only other party member who attempted the wolf capture trick – a move which nearly cost him a few fingers. Also on the hunt were Cecil Lyons, Col. Sloan Simpson, Lee Bivins, and Phy Taylor.

The Wolf Hunters - How many can you name?

