



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

wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on [Facebook](#)

Volume CCXLX

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**

October 1, 2020

From the desk of Robert Palmer

October ZOOM MEETING

"The worst sin you can ever commit to yourself is to set and wait for someone to give you money." - Mac Duke, Money Planner

Much as we hate to admit it, money, many times, has been the driving force in our lives and in the creation of history. It is a major concern now, with the pandemic, and it has been a major concern throughout the history of Wichita County. Many of the people who came to our area in the early part of the 20th century came to "make their fortune" in the oil booms. They worked hard for their money and they enjoyed the fruits of their labor.

In 1950, Lefty Frizzell wrote, "If you got the money, honey, I got the time!" A year later Hank Williams wrote, "I got a hot rod Ford and a two dollar bill and I know a spot right over the hill!" Most people's desire to make money was more family oriented: food, a place to live, clothes, and maybe even a car. Most often, it was not easy. The protections we now see for workers were almost nonexistent in the early to middle 1900s.

The minimum wage law was signed into law in 1938. It guaranteed 25 cents an hour. Protection for retired workers became law August 14, 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Social Security into being. As the government is prone to do, Income Tax had been created much earlier, in October 1913. Most work situations were not affected by these laws. If you worked in the fields or the oil patch, you got what the boss paid. A dollar a day for a ten hour day was common during the first part of the Great Depression. A story was told of a farmer who was working several men for a dollar a day. He said, "I'm going into town. Do you want me to get you a coke? That sounded great to all of them so they said, "yes!" The coke was a welcome treat, but not so welcome when the nickel was deducted from their end of the day pay!

Cotton choppers, in the early 50s were paid 50 cents an hour for a ten hour day. One farmer was notorious for still paying \$3.00 a day, but he always had workers. Quitting time was when he decided to quit, often at dark. In the oil fields, the more dangerous jobs paid more money. Derrick men were well compensated. The "pusher" was well paid. His job was to keep everyone working at their peak. On some crews you could challenge the "pusher" for his job. It involved going out behind the rig and deciding who could handle all the men.

Farm work had some definite benefits, one of which was a meal cooked by the farmer's wife. There was an opposite side to that coin. One farmer was known for the dice game he conducted after

the cotton picking was done. Many pickers lost their day's wages right back to the man who had just paid them. The temptation to double your day's wages was too big a temptation for some people.

When you hit town, there were many people waiting to separate you from your money. Loan shark laws were not there before World War II. In almost all Wichita County towns, most people knew who the loaners were. The interest rates were staggering. Despite that, the borrower would pay back the money. It's easy to picture tough guys collecting the debt, but the non-payers actually had better options. One loaner owned a mattress factory. If you couldn't pay the debt, you were given the option of helping make mattresses, after hours, until the debt was paid. Another had a string of rent houses. You could earn money by painting houses, after hours. Boom towns had many bars and other entertainment places. All were designed to get the workers' money.

No one was going to give you money. You earned it. Stable families survived. Many family situations were not so fortunate. There are some wonderful stories of Good Samaritans who helped needy families. I will pay tribute to one, former Wichita County Commissioner Bud Greer. Bud would get beds, even a house, a refrigerator or whatever the family needed. He had a list of donors, including me. He would walk into my office and say, "Robert, I need \$20.00!" You didn't ask questions. You just gave him the money because you knew he was helping someone in need!

Money is money. It is, unfortunately, a driving force in our lives.

Quotes about Money

I ate so many armadillos when I was young, I still roll up into a ball when I hear a dog bark.

If a trip around the world cost a dollar, I couldn't get to the Oklahoma line.

They're running with the big dogs.
She's rich enough to eat her laying hens.

Undertold Markers - Application Period

**Submission can begin November 1st
Extends to December 15th.**

Wichita County Archive News

October 2020

Wichita County Archives
Monthly Report – September 2020

Despite being closed to the public, the Wichita County Archives still receives requests for historic information. More often than not, a request is usually received by the Museum of North Texas History, and then Madeleine refers it to us.

- The digitization of the Chamber of Commerce Photo Collection is finally complete. Many of the photos are of unidentified men and women. Anyone with knowledge of local businessmen back in the 1950-60s is cordially invited to come down to the archives to help identify these persons. (It'll be easy as looking at photos on a computer screen)
- Several different groups of MSU students are doing historical research projects on a variety of topics. -The Littlest Skyscraper was the first request, which coincidentally is being researched by Lita Watson for an Untold Texas Historical Marker.
- Next was research on the White Sanitarium on Olen Street. There has been a lot of interest in that building due to the rumors of it being haunted.
- Lastly, we received a request for information on the April 1994 Tornadoes that hit all around this area. We were surprised to learn that it was a storm system that lasted 3 days, producing twisters in Windthorst, Clay and Montague Counties, Dallas, Ft Worth and Gainesville. As the system moved northeast it produced tornadoes all the way to Illinois, Indiana, and Tennessee.
- Lou Murdock called to say she had some collectibles from the Founders Lion Club to donate along with some old photos. I went to her home to pick everything up.
- Steve Griffith requested a copy of the TRN newspaper article about 1970 Texas-Oklahoma Junior Golf Tournament in which Arnold Palmer made an appearance.
- John Yates has completed his research on Dick Sparks which will be one of our Untold Historical Marker applications.

ZOOM MEETING - THURSDAY, October 1st - 11:00 AM

Topic: Wichita County Historical Commission
Time: Oct 1, 2020 11:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75431755788?pwd=RHICYWFrRDQyRGFyTXFMUDFEOTdFQOT09>

Meeting ID: 754 3175 5788
Passcode: z26fRS

Museum of North Texas History News

The Museum will open to the public Friday, October 2nd! Our new schedule will be Friday and Saturdays 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. We are starting with a reduced schedule to stay on top of our new and improved cleaning procedures. Our goal is to keep our visitors and our staff safe.

The book, entitled *Historical Markers of Wichita County, Texas 1936-2020*, is a collection of essays and photographs that document the history of the county. The book is edited by Rebecca Trammell and Elizabeth B. Hawley. It features a map of Wichita County and a photograph of the editors.

Historical Markers of Wichita County, Texas 1936 - 2020
Edited by Rebecca Trammell and Elizabeth B. Hawley

On Saturday, October 17th from 10:00am to 12:00pm, Becky and Elizabeth will be at the Museum of North Texas History for a book signing of their book, "Historical Markers of Wichita County, Texas 1936-2020." Sales of the book benefit the Museum of North Texas History and the Wichita County Archives.