
LUBBOCK HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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The **Annual Meeting of the Lubbock Heritage Society** was held on February 8th, 2015, at the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. President Pam Brink gave a warm greeting to attendees and shared the organization's busy schedule of activities for the past year. Forefront was the effort to deliver sets of the Lubbock Centennial book and dvd packages to the libraries of LISD, Frenship ISD, and Cooper ISD in order that their students have easy access to a well written and well researched history of Lubbock County. The LHS's recently published book, *Images of America: Lubbock*, has also been well received and is available for purchase from various vendors, including our own website. We have been vocal in our ongoing efforts to save the Godbold Center; we continue to support the renovation of the Landwer-Manicapelli House by the City of Lubbock;

and we are working to raise funds to preserve the historic Underwood Pullman Car. This year's board members were elected and approved by attendees of the meeting. Dr. Paul Carlson concluded the meeting by giving his presentation on the Nicolette Hotel's register book and how its contents could alter what we know about the founding of Lubbock County [see page 2].

THE UNDERWOOD PULLMAN CAR- "THE FAIR DEAL"

The Lubbock Heritage Society's resolve to memorialize and support the history and heritage of Lubbock occasionally branches out beyond architectural preservation. Such is the case with the Underwood Pullman Car. During an expansive period of growth of the cotton industry on the High Plains, Arch Underwood bought several train cars for use as inexpensive office space when the Santa Fe Railroad was selling them for scrap. One of these, the *Gainsborough*, still in the original Pullman configuration, was renamed the "*Fair Deal*" and reserved for traveling. The car had been part of the Twentieth Century Limited that ran between New York and Miami. It didn't get to Lubbock till 1950; nevertheless, it represents the parallel histories of the railroads, the introduction and growth of the cotton industry in the Panhandle, and the Underwood family – a story of remarkable change during the first half of the 20th Century.

In the years following the Civil War, eastern Texas had a railway system, but the west was considered suitable only for grazing and ranching. Then Col. Ranald Mackenzie ended the threat of hostile Plains Indians and barbed wire changed the open plains forever. The first railroad to penetrate northwest Texas in the 1880's was the *Fort Worth and Denver* and, after that, settlement blossomed and cotton production increased exponentially along the railway line. Arch Underwood served on its board and the Panhandle became

one of the fastest growing regions in the southwest with railroads bringing in supplies and carrying out cotton and cattle. Until it merged with the *Burlington Northern* in 1982, nearly one hundred years later, it was the last separate Texas railroad.

During those early years, Arch's father Harris F. Underwood, a cotton merchant from Athens, Texas, travelled through the region and anticipated the future of cotton in the west. He began to purchase land that became the beginning of the cotton compress and warehouse business that would be carried on by his family. Their vision was to have a facility within easy access of all area cotton farms and from 1950-1966, with plants measuring over 5,000 acres stretching across the Panhandle, they employed 3,300 people and paid \$29,000,000 in wages in the 27 towns where their compresses and warehouses were operated.

One threat to their vision was the attempt of coastal cotton warehousemen to gain an advantage via unequal railroad tariffs to thwart the growth of inland cotton plants. It fell to Arch to complete the legal battle that eventually worked its way to the Supreme Court before finally being resolved in 1930.

Through the years, Arch Underwood made steadfast friendships with men such as Judge Marvin Jones, Bob Poage, George Mahon, Sam Rayburn, and Fred

Vinson in the state and national government who were helpful in this cause. The close connection of all these men to the development and promotion of agriculture on the South Plains and the Underwood family's extensive involvement in cotton compressing makes the gift of the *Fair Deal* to the new Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Mackenzie Park a logical next step for the historic car.



The Lubbock Heritage Society recognizes that there has not been a passenger train through the Panhandle since 1967, so a car typical of the Pullman cars of the mid-century is an important educational element for people of this area. And the Bayer Museum collection would be incomplete without a tangible rail link in telling the story of cotton - one of the region's most important economic drivers. It is the goal of the Heritage Society to assist the Museum and the family in securing funding to make this transition possible.

SPRING 2015 LHS PROGRAMS

THE NICOLETTE HOTEL AND THE FOUNDING OF LUBBOCK COUNTY



Photograph of the Nicolette Hotel and its bell, courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library.

For the program of the LHS 2015 annual meeting, prolific author Paul H. Carlson, a long-time LHS member, elaborated on his latest research project – the mystery surrounding the register book of the Nicolette Hotel and how the hotel figures into the discussions that led to the establishment of Lubbock County.

There are differences, he notes, between information found in the register and Seymour Connor's influential chapter "the Founding of Lubbock" in the publication *A History of Lubbock* (1961). The 2 ½ story Nicolette Hotel, which was completed in 1889, was moved in 1891 to the area that would become downtown Lubbock. It flourished in its new location as a popular establishment for overnight stays and dining. Though the hotel has long been demolished, some artifacts

such as photographs, its large metal bell used to announce meal times [pictured at left], and its register book still exist. Carlson's paper can be read in its entirety in the 2014 issue of the *West Texas Historical Review*, published by the West Texas Historical Association.

REVISITING THE TEXAS TECH PRACTICE HOUSE



Home Management Houses, also called Practice Houses, were widely installed on college campuses following the Smith-Hughes Act with the goal in mind that women who received structured hands on experience in home management and child care would be better prepared for careers in the modern work force as well as in private households. In January of 1928, Texas Technological College officially opened its home management house with six students and a house director, which was felt to be the appropriate number of inhabitants as a "family" unit. A baby was added to the program in early 1936.

The two-story brick house consisted of a total of 12 rooms and a patio, and was built in the Spanish Renaissance style consistent with the rest of the campus

architecture. The front of the building faced College Avenue and a large open green space in the back separated its small enclosed backyard from the back side of the Home Economics Building.

On May 31, 2015, Lynn Whitfield, University Archivist for Texas Tech and a LHS Board member, presented a program titled "Practice Makes Perfect" on an in-depth history of the Texas Tech Practice House. Afterwards, attendees were able to tour the newly renovated building, rededicated on October 18, 2014, as The Cottage. The College of Human Sciences funded the building's renovation and did a beautiful job. Much of the building's original details remain and the colors used inside are consistent with those widely used in the 1920s. The charming little building resides in a part of the campus known as the Texas Tech Historic District.

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