

TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1st. QUARTER NEWSLETTER, March, 2014



“OLD TONGANOXIE”

In January TCHS presented a DVD program on historic Tonganoxie. This movie was a three hour interview with Bob Lenahan and Harold Denholm about “Old Tonganoxie”. This interview was edited to two-one hour DVDs. Only one DVD was shown and due to a time restraint, the last 10 minutes of that movie were not shown.

For the February program a live presentation was organized with Bob Lenahan, Harold Denholm, Roger Shilling, Art Hancock and J. W. Evan as the presenters.



c. 1919. Frank U. Henry was an early Tonganoxie merchant. He had one of the five grocery stores located on 4th Street at this time. This view is looking east from 4th and Delaware. Mr. Henry's store was located on the northeast corner of 4th and Delaware. It was later replaced with a one story brick structure that housed the Tonganoxie Public Library for many years and now is used by the Tonganoxie Police Dept.

This program was video presentation of old buildings, street scenes, and photos of the people involved with “Old Tonganoxie”. The people named above had been interviewed previously by TCHS (a DVD was made from each interview), and each interviewer discussed their knowledge of what they knew about the people, the buildings and events pertaining to historic Tonganoxie. This program went an hour and one half; AND the people wanted more.

The January AND February programs were extremely well attended (the house was packed) and many of those attending requested additional programs on that subject. With the extensive interest expressed by the public, TCHS will provide another program, **“Old Tonganoxie-part 2” on Sunday, May 4th, 2014, beginning at 2 P.M. This program will be in the barn.**

The format of the May program will be similar to the February program with some changes. The presentation will be provided by the same people above, plus we have added Charles (“Tuna”) Conrad.

“Tuna” as he is called also has a good knowledge of historic Tonganoxie. This time, however, we encourage



the audience to ASK QUESTIONS AND PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION on topics that are being discussed AT THE TIME THEY ARE BEING DISCUSSED. This will allow all those in attendance to enhance their knowledge of the subject.

We are not encouraging discussions within the audience--that is distracting and discouraging. Any audience participation should not be for a few people, but it should be for the benefit for all of those present.

TCHS recognizes that at this present time in history, no one person knows all that may be known about any of these topics or stories, but in an effort to discover and learn, a program with audience participation might provide additional knowledge. Some variation in the traditional stories is expected.

The format is expected to be as follows. A one hour presentation--followed by a break for home baked desserts and use of the "old age" room--followed by an additional hour for those who have the interest.

I expect with the interest shown last time that the length won't be an issue because the first program as stated was one and one half hour-and people wanted more.

Please consider bringing a friend. There will be plenty of room.

TCHS BUILDING PROJECT

by Jim Stuke

Over the last several months, many hours have been expended in developing an adequate facility for our numerous artifacts. At this time it was decided that a new museum was not feasible, but Suzy and Larry Ross developed and provided a plan in which a small portion of the existing barn would be remodeled for artifact storage. The new storage area is ca. 650 Sq. Ft. at a cost of \$22,000.00.

Jim Stuke, past chairman of the board and building committee chairman, reports that the construction of the new artifact storage facility in the barn is nearing completion. The climate controlled two level facility will provide storage space for artifacts so existing exhibits can be rotated and new exhibits can be added.

The entrance (slightly altered) to the museum will be along the west wall. The current inside museum

door will provide a direct entrance into the new storage area. The square footage of the museum remains the same.

Until all of the new storage space is filled, the office staff (museum volunteers) will use this space to work on special projects.

Our society has many wonderful artifacts that need to be displayed. Building this facility will allow more of them to be seen and appreciated by our visitors and guests.

Fred Scheller is the general contractor.



Museum Hours

Kathy Stockman has volunteered to maintain the sign-up register for docents to open and operate the museum and site for our season (April 27-October 26). The hours are Sunday, 1-4 PM. It takes two individuals (or couples) to open and operate the site. It is a good way to learn about your historical society while you host the visitors.

Please consider signing up (we will provide training and/or support). Why not volunteer before you're asked???

[Onion rings in the car cushions do not improve with time.](#) **Erma Bombeck**

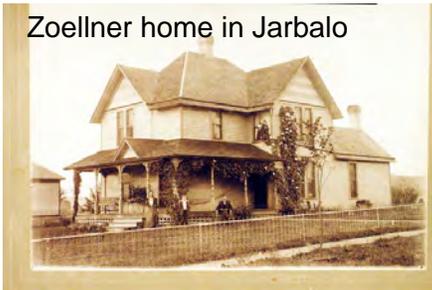




HISTORIC ZOELLNER BUILDING To SELL

For the editor, this building will always have the Fred Zoellner touch. The Zoellners came from Germany eventually settling in Kansas in 1859. In 1872 John Zoellner, Fred's grandfather, settled on a farm in the Jarbalo area. John Zoellner died in 1888 and his son, Frank Zoellner operated a mercantile store in Jarbalo for 13 years.

Zoellner home in Jarbalo



In 1895 Frank Zoellner came to Tonganoxie where he operated a general mercantile store until 1900. In this year a company was formed with stock being purchased.

It seems that the ten people employed were all stock owners, however, Frank was the principle owner and president.

The store operated as a general store with each of the four departments (grocery, hardware, dry goods & implements) operating separately.

When I became aware of the Zoellner's store, Walt Zoellner operated the hardware store (Carl Oakson owned and operated the hardware store for many years after purchasing the business from Walt Zoellner) and Fred operated the grocery and dry good store. Fred had excellent help in the dry goods department because of Grace Schilling and Nell Angel. He also had excellent help on the grocery side with Ted Pearson as the butcher and Etta Kathryn Angel Elston. Most of the adult help had been with Fred Zoellner for many years.

I went to work for Fred when I was a freshman in high school. Fred always hired some high school help. Ronnie Baker worked a short time, but Larry Deaton and Art Hancock worked there the most when I did. The job started on Saturday at 7:30 AM

and quit around 9 PM or when the dishwashing was done.

What I remember about Fred was the excellent quality of his meat, but he was not a good butcher. Many times I heard a sound (it was much higher than middle C) like a dog would make when his tail was stepped on. When ever you heard this sound you knew that Fred had cut his finger on the meat slicer. Also, as the produce declined and would begin to wilt, he would put the vegetable in the cooler, in a bucket with water to revive them. They were never revived, consequently, his wife would get them. It must have been frustrating for her to serve wilted celery or lettuce.

The building was old, and the men's bathroom??? was adjacent to the women's and you could hear what was being said from either.

I always thought Fred was an easy boss. He'd tell you what to do and walk away. He gave me the delivery route my first summer, and told me to get the money and keep track of everything. If you needed a day off, no questions were asked, it was always O.K.

His only advice was given to me several times was, "P. Lee", he's say, "Never let money stand in the way of love". I took that advice.

Fred lost his son, John, to a heart attack. John never liked to lose, and always played sports very competitively. He gave his best and never gave up. Apparently, his heart gave out during a basketball game. John was 41.

Fred's daughter, Zara Ann, gave me piano lesson. It was a disaster, I only learned one song, "I am mister middle C". I played it perfectly--the song only had one note--can you guess the note!!! Piano lost to baseball.

Zara died March 23, 2014 in Tulsa where she lived most of her married life. Two daughters and one son were left, bringing an end to the Zoellner years in Tonganoxie.



COUNTRY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
(CSAA)

A special visit to the Honey Valley School will take place June 18th at 9 AM. Our site will be a tour stop on the CSAA's bus tour as they finish their annual convention in St. Joseph, Mo. Our Honey Valley School will be the only stop in Leavenworth County. Kent Quarles and Carol Dee Knox Smith (former students) will be present to talk to the group. The group is expected to be larger than 50 people. They will also tour the museum as well as the school.

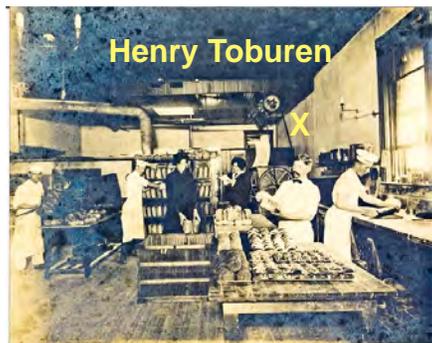
It is my understanding that several months ago Bill Peak had the opportunity to be at the museum when some representatives from this association visited the site. He took them to the school and spent hours showing and discussing the school.



Obviously they were impressed. A big Thanks to Bill Peak !!

The Chairman of the Board's Message -by Laurie Walters

The museum crew of Betty Englen, Carol Stouffer, Kathy Peak, Jenny Alden, and Laurie Walters work every Wednesday morning. Some of the group also work on Tuesday morning to keep ahead of new accessions and the shuffling of artifacts and displays to facilitate construction of the new storage area.



Some new items in the museum include vintage photos of the Toburen Bakery, Photo copies of stock certificates issued for businesses in town such as the swimming pool, the Faultless Creamery, etc.

Several new **custard glass souvenirs of Tonganoxie have been added to our collection.

Work continues to document and add photos from John Cass Lenahan's collection to our computer

data base. At this writing we have added 195 John C. Lenahan photos to our system (**one needs to know that documentation of a photo requires much more than a simple identification--such as who, what, where, when and how big is the photo, and who gave it**). We have at least that many to complete adding all of his photos. A large tremendous THANKS YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND GOOD WORK !!!



Keyta Kelly portrays Kirby McRill

For the evening program, Keyta Kelly and friends gave a pageant/portrayal of Kirby McRill, a historic figure from Reno and Tonganoxie. He was known to have walked everywhere he went. He was known in Kansas City as civic minded and promoted Kanas City by walking. Through the Heart of America Walking Club, Ed Shanahan walked a race with Kirby McRill from the Coates House to Swope Park. Kirby won the race and there were favorable international responses from European leaders.



One time he walked to Chicago.

He had a girl friend for three years but she jilted him. It has been said that he later had another girl friend, and she also jilted him.

He was easily identified by his red hair and beard, but he also wore combinations of clothes and cowboy hats which also helped recognize him. Once I saw him walking east on the south side of 4th street near the junction of Main Street and Fourth Street. At that time he wasn't particularly thin, had white hair and a long--very long white beard. I was 8 and thought he would make a good Santa Claus. He was well known in many places.

Cars would honk at him as they attempted to avoid hitting him, but eventually he was hit and killed by a car while walking. It seems that his neck was broken.

He was the uncle of Babe McRill and great uncle of Frank, Walter and Gene McRill.

**Custard glass is Milk glass which has had Uranium added to the kiln. This gives Milk Glass the custard yellow color, hence the name "Custard Glass"



Betty Englen

“THE UNSUNG HEROS OF TCHS”

A faithful volunteer for many years, Betty has a true gift to “make things beautiful”. Her genius at creating our displays is amazing. The information imparted in the museum tags and the research to generate them is her handiwork. We count on her quiet dedication and willingness to see a task to completion.



Jenny Alden

If you hear the computer keyboard going at incredible speed, you know Jenny is in the museum. After retiring from a career of data entry, Jenny has networked our computers and continues to enter data for us. Without her expertise our data entry would flounder.



Carol Stouffer

We are grateful Carol followed her son and family from western Kansas. She quietly helps sort, measure, record numbers and assist in the tasks at hand. Carol manages our gift shop and is on the lookout for new items which will enhance our

historical mission.



Kathy Peak

Kathy not only serves TCHS as president but is membership chairman and has tackled placing our membership information in our data base. Kathy wears many hats and is always a welcome sight in our office. When time permits, she also enters data.



Jean Pearson

Jean co-ordinates all the hostesses who provide those delicious goodies at our member meetings. She spurred our barn quilt session and aids in many other projects.

HOSTESS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER---by Jean Pearson

Each month TCHS has a monthly meeting. These meetings are generally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month. For each meeting hostesses for that program provide desserts for members and guest to enjoy.

The hostesses for the second quarter of 2014 are:

April 22: 7 PM	Ed and Carol Slawson Dr. & Mrs. Gruendel
May 27 7 PM	Carol Stouffer Maryann Needham Connie Tornado
June 24 6 PM	Membership appreciation picnic.
Note date:	June 28, 2014 (Last Saturday In June)
For June each person attending needs to bring a covered dish.	



THE PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

-by Kathy Peek

LATEST MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

The membership list has been revised and brought up to date.

As of March 28, 2014 we have 150 members, of which 65 are life members.

10 of The Life Members live out of State

93 Members live in Tonganoxie

15 Have a Lawrence Address

12 Have a Leavenworth Address

5 are from Linwood

5 are from McLouth

2 are from Kansas City, KS

2 are from Lansing

6 (1 each) are from Bonner Springs, Eudora, Garnett, Louisburg, Overland Park and Redfield

St. PATRICK'S DAY



It wasn't the 17th, but the 15th of March when the City of Tonganoxie celebrated the patron Saint of Ireland, a person who was believed to have been born ca. 385 AD. Here in the United States this day has been recognized since the late 1800's.

On this day Tonganoxie celebrated with the annual St. Patrick's Day parade. It was a great day; a little nippy at 8; but warming by parade time. The sun was shining with--would you believe--no wind.

TCHS provided the 1938 pumper truck for the parade and Jim Stuke had the privilege of driving the truck. Del Englen was in the back. His job was to operate the Bell. Del must have been here before because he was already trained. I could hear the bell.

I was excited because I had never ridden on any fire truck, and now at the ripe old age of 55, I was having my chance. And now because Jim had invited me to participate, here I was in the passenger's seat. It was an honor to be riding on this fire truck.

Now all who have been on this fire truck understand that this fire truck is not easy to drive. If you are searching for a word to describe driving this vehicle, "difficult" pops right into your head. It is hard to shift gears, and next to impossible to steer and let me tell you--when the band in front of you stops, you immediately hit the brakes and pray.

It was obvious that Jim Stuke was being punished by someone, perhaps St. Patrick himself. I wondered what he had done. Surely with all the many years of good work and excellent leadership that Jim has performed for TCHS, they wouldn't be attempting some type of revenge.

Jim pointed the truck west and away we went. Racing through the town at 1 mph, I noticed that the truck never strayed from its appointed direction. That was fortunate. We didn't hit a curb.

My actual job was to operate the siren and wave to the crowd. My written job description was: **person will sit in the passenger street, wave to the crowd and notice the kids. Person must be able**

to make two very high steps into the fire truck without slipping, and you must smile, wave your green hat (hat provided by TCHS), and pull the siren knob. The management did not provide diagrams of the dashboard, so one had to figure where the knob was.

I believe I was over-educated for the job, but I performed it magnificently.



You pulled a small knob and a low growl began. If you continued to pull the knob the sound became louder and higher pitched.

I was afraid to see how loud and how high the sound from the siren might be--I was thinking about the poor dogs and how they might cry--so I pushed the knob in sooner than one might.

The parade path was loaded with kids of all ages. I saw several young men ca. 10-12 give me the "trucker's" sign to blow the horn. You know--arm at a right angle at the elbow and move it up and down--All truckers respond to that sign. I thought things never change. So when the sign was given, I gave the siren a wee bit more loudness--just to let them know I appreciated them being there.

Let me tell you, I had the fun job, but Jim had the most significant job. Keeping that truck on task was a job one might lose sleep over. Come to think of it, I noticed that Jim seemed a little tired and perhaps a little shaky from coffee nerves.

There was some discussion about making a wide turn onto US 24/40 highway, and if it could be even be done, but fortunately for me, Jim let me off at the Congregational Church. My job was done, I had a smile. I was grateful there were no bugs. You would never know where a bug might light when being charged at 1 mph.

Thankful thoughts went through my brain because I didn't have to drive, and I had been a kid again for one hour.

When my portion of the trip was ended, I carefully, very carefully put one foot down followed by the other and got off the truck. Now I was in good shape and on the ground. The people in the truck sit high above the ground.

On a more serious note, this fire truck played a significant role in the protection of houses and businesses in Tonganoxie. I now have a much better idea of what it took to get something like this truck to a fire and have it function.

The truck is very hard to drive, especially turning and I wonder at the muscle strength these guys like the Salmons must have had to steer this vehicle.

The restoration of this truck was accomplished by the men of TCHS who took the time and provided the effort to completely restore the truck to its present condition. I am guessing that the original concept of restoring this truck was born in the basement of the Reno Church, during the men's coffee break. These coffee breaks are generally longer than the 15 minute government authorized coffee break--but who's counting?

Al DiSanto was also a very significant force in overseeing this project and seeing it to completion. There were several people on this project who have restored old vehicles, but one of Al's hobbies is restoring old vehicles. He had done many before.

We all give thanks to those people in Tonganoxie who used this truck to fight fires, who maintained this truck and to those who drove and rode on this truck. It was more than work!!

We also are grateful to those who had to foresight to restore it for history.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY - Part 2

This year the parade was fortunate to have Donna Hoegler, Tonganoxie's own, Mrs. Kansas 2014. Mrs Hoegler was sidelined by, and survived a brain disorder known as Arnold-Chiari Malformation, a condition in which the brain sags down and stops the flow of spinal fluid. It is a difficult diagnosis, and may have symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis.

Donna became her own advocate and the physicians ultimately achieved the correct diagnosis. She underwent the necessary operations to correct the problem and now is the 2014 winner of the Mrs. Kansas contest

“God didn't put me through everything he put me through just to sit back and do hair,” she said. And Mrs Hoegler has objectives to make people

aware of breast cancer and the disorder known as



Arnold-Chiari malformation. Donna operates the H . Ave. hair saloon located in Tonganoxie.

In late August or early Sept, Donna, her husband, Nick and their son will be in Arizona for the National Mrs. America contest,

For those old timers reading this newsletter, Donna is the daughter of Charley (“Tuna”) and Debi Conrad, and the granddaughter of Don and Shirley Conrad, all of Tonganoxie.



The programs for April & May are yet to be determined. The June program will be the Annual Membership Appreciation Picnic. It is June 28, (last Sat. in June) beginning ca. 6 PM.



Kid Thoughts

It is amazing how reasoning can fail without all of the facts. This actually happened !!

Nicholas was just two and one half years when his mother changed his breakfast protein from patty sausage to link sausage.

All of Nicholas' young life he was around two house cats and a dog. All animals were house broken. The dog, however, went outside to perform some of his bodily functions. Nicholas knew all about that, even at his age, when he pronounced to his mother, “This poop tastes pretty good” !!

Mom immediately initiated a new educational project.