

TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3rd QUARTER NEWSLETTER, Sept. 2018

4th TUESDAYS PROGRAMS

The fourth Tuesday of each month is an important date for our historical society. It is the time when our members and friends can come together for socialization, for an educational experience, and a light dessert. The evening begins at 7 PM in the Reno Methodist Church (This is the very church that Michael Landon used in his movie, "Where Pigeons Go to Die") with a short business meeting followed by an educational program. Dessert is provided by members at the close of the program. June, July and December have a different program. June is the annual barbecue, July is the Leavenworth County fair so all is cancelled and December is the Christmas party.

If you haven't been to one of these programs, I invite you to set your priorities to include attending one of these programs. The last two educational programs have been exceptional.

PAUL CREIGHTON SEIGERT



Paul
Creighton
Seigert

The August program was given by Jon Nelson who grew up in Tonganoxie, but now lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife Glenda, who also grew up in Tonganoxie. Jon has been researching Creighton Seigert for many years.

It seems that Jon and his dad, Gene Nelson, went into Paul and Frances Seigert's West End Cafe for hamburgers and chili. Many times Paul would talk about his son, Creighton as he was called, and Jon would listen. Creighton was a young man in the U. S. Army Airforce, assigned to a B-24 Bomber. His station was in England during WW II. His plane exploded on Creighton's first flight. All were killed except one when the plane was hit in the bomb area. The plane was flying around 20,000 feet when it exploded.

The only survivor got out of the plane when it was about 400 feet above the ground. He was a POW until the war ended.

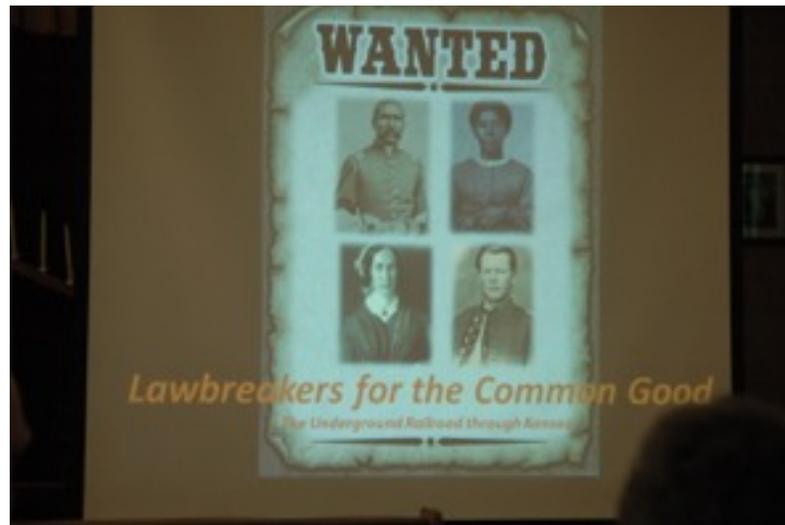
Jon has researched Paul Creighton Seigert in great depth. He has been to Germany several times and he knows where the exact crash site is located. He has interviewed the only survivor of this plane crash who is living near Houston, Texas. He plans to go back to Germany again and do some educated digging around the crash site. To do this he needs a professional person who knows how to get the digging permits.

With Jon's help, Peggy Lenahan, a cousin to Creighton, has donated Creighton's artifacts and belongings to our historical society. We will display them when a special display case is completed.

This lecture will soon be available for viewing on YouTube. I will provide the link when the program gets uploaded soon. The video is about one hour long.

Also Jon is writing a book about Creighton Seigert and which will be available when Jon has completed his research. He stated the the book is about 60% completed.

Lawbreakers for the Common Good.



ANNE HAWKINS, a teacher at Washburn University, kept us riveted to our seats as she presented the program titled *Lawbreakers for the Common Good* at the Sept 23 Fourth Tuesday. Anne covered the history of the Fugitive Slave Act and why the Border War in Kansas and Missouri started years before the civil war. In the mid-1800s, some Kansans defied federal, state, and territorial laws in pursuit of a common goal: liberty for all. This presentation explored true accounts of little-known operatives who worked illegally on the Underground Railroad in Kansas, a clandestine network that helped guide enslaved people to freedom. Risking fearful penalties for their underground involvement, these men, women, and children—both black and white—offer us examples of what

is possible for justice-seekers working together. This presentation was made possible by a grant from Humanities Kansas (formerly the Kansas Humanities Council).

By 1843, several hundred slaves a year were successfully escaping to the North, making slavery an unstable institution in the [border states](#).

The earlier *Fugitive Slave Act of 1793* was a Federal law which was written with the intent to enforce *Article 4, Section 2, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution*, which required the return of runaway slaves. It sought to force the authorities in free states to return fugitive slaves to their masters.

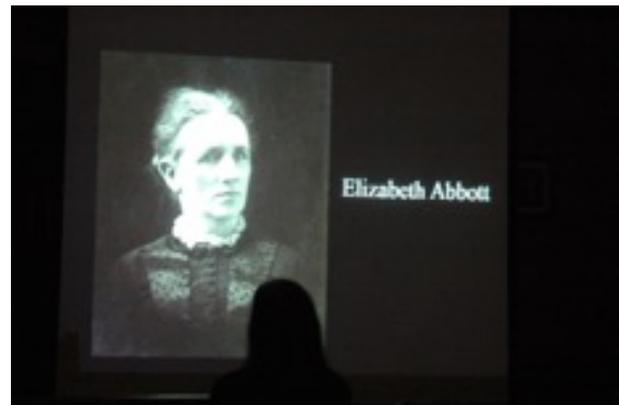
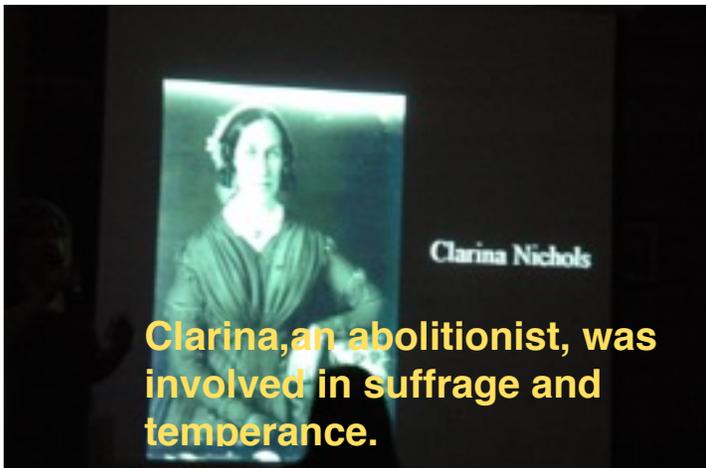
The **Fugitive Slave Law** or **Fugitive Slave Act** was passed by the *United States Congress* on September 18, 1850^[1], as part of the *Compromise of 1850* between *Southern slave-holding interests* and *Northern Free-Soilers*.

The Act was one of the most controversial elements of the 1850 compromise and heightened Northern fears of a "*slave power conspiracy*". It required that all escaped slaves, upon capture, be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate. *Abolitionists* nicknamed it the "*Bloodhound Law*" for the *dogs* that were used to track down runaway slaves. **from Wikipedia**

Her presentation about conscience and a greater good was full of stories of individual people who risked everything to fight slavery.

She devoted some time discussing "The Underground Railroad" and the dangers to those who were helping the slaves get to freedom.

She also discussed several people both black and white who were active in "The Underground Railroad". The early town of Quindaro was



discussed as it was part of the Underground Railroad. Clarina Nichols was an editor of the Quindaro Chindowan newspaper.

There is a black family who came to Tonganoxie shortly after the Civil War. Joseph Nichols was a slave in Missouri who escaped to Quindaro which is now part of northern Kansas City, Kansas. He



saw an ad for black people to join the military at Ft. Leavenworth. He did and fought in the 1st Regiment Kansas Volunteer Infantry (Colored). This was the first black infantry regiment that was organized in a Northern state and it was the first black regiment to see combat during the Civil War. He married his wife while his regiment was in Arkansas. After the war he lived in Leavenworth for a short time. He then moved to Tonganoxie. His daughter married a Jarrett and the Jarrett family still lives in Tonganoxie.

These two programs were outstanding. We have had some really outstanding programs for the last two years. The 4th Tuesday programs should be noted on your calendar.

CLASS OF 57 MINI REUNION

After most people had finished their dessert, Nancy Taylor to me, but she is Nancy Taylor Pearce to everyone, decided to show us old people an exercise that she does to help her balance. It looked to me that her balance was excellent. Everyone that saw this was impressed and thought she should go out for cheerleading again.



FAIR PARADE

Our 1936 USA Fire Pumper Truck once again hit the streets of Tonganoxie for the Leavenworth County Fair Parade. John Callaghan drove with his wife, Sheila, riding shotgun.

Remembering Colleen Anton:

by Connie Torneden

I was saddened to learn that another of our Life Members had passed away. I was not aware of the fact until mid-June. Colleen Anton passed away on April 25, 2018. Not only was she a member of TCHS, but she was a neighbor and her daughter, Penny, was in my class. We graduated from Tonganoxie High School together. Colleen was an expert seamstress and also enjoyed cooking. Janet Burnett noted that Colleen spoke to her Third Graders about Greek History and brought Greek food that she had prepared. I always enjoyed visiting with her. She had so many interesting things to talk about. She will be missed. We need to keep George and the family in our thoughts and prayers.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



On Labor Day weekend, Dominic Colacicco led four other Boy Scouts from Troop #357 in completing his Eagle Scout project.

Dominic was responsible to outline his project, to lead other Scouts in completing the project, and to coordinate with the historical society. Four scouts helped Dominic: Samuel Spiker, Thomas Stockman, and Tanner Dowell. Dominic's father, Joe Colacicco and Kathy Stockman also assisted.

The team relocated the 1922 Federal Aid plaque that is mounted on a triangular concrete post from its long-time place in the parking area, where it served as a bumper stop, to the front of our main garden, next to the County plaque honoring the Fairchild-Knox Barns and our flagpole. The Federal Aid marker is one of only three remaining in the state of Kansas. The team also weeded and removed the previous edging plants, replacing them with juniper and mums. Many thanks to this crew who did the work on one of the hottest Saturdays of the year!

WEBSITE FACELIFT

Our website has had a facelift in this past quarter. Our website has been designed by and updated by Sharon Pry. Sharon is also taking over the creation of our program posters - all of which is greatly appreciated. So, if you have not yet seen the website, take a look! www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org

SUNFLOWER GROWING CONTEST



About a year ago, Donna Wiley suggested that we include a Sunflower Growing contest, similar to one that the 4-H clubs used to have. She sent along contest rules, a short book about sunflowers, and ideas to promote the event and create prizes.

Lulu Stevens jumped right on board with enthusiasm, as she remembered the contest from when she was a child. Along with the Tonganoxie Business Association, we sponsored a Sunflower Growing Contest during the Sunflower Stroll on Labor Day

weekend. Jean Pearson and Erin Ellsworth were judges.

Well, it was not an ideal year for sunflowers, but we had five entrants. We also had a lot of enthusiasm and some great prizes. Every first place winner received a 2018 Grinter t-shirt, compliments of Kris Grinter at Sunflower General. All participants were given a free ice cream cone, compliments of Sonic Drive-in, a sunflower book, and a hand-crafted ribbon, compliments of Betty Englen.

Ted Grinter and family are the ones that grow the big sunflower fields just south of Reno. This year WAS a tough year for sunflowers in this part of Kansas. I'm told that Ted has planted sunflowers three times and finally got some sunflower plants growing. These sunflowers are now in full bloom and it is Oct 1.



SUNFLOWER STROLL

Labor Day weekend marked the second annual Tonganoxie Sunflower Stroll. The event premiered in 2017, organized by the Tonganoxie Business Association. TCHS participated last year by opening the museum all three days of the Memorial Day weekend. This year, we opened again for the entire weekend and more than doubled our visitors from last year.

PLEIN AIR



What is Plein Air? From Wikipedia: "En plein air, or plein air painting, is a phrase borrowed from the French equivalent meaning "open (in full) air". It is particularly used to describe the act of painting outdoors, where a painter reproduces the actual visual conditions seen at the time of the painting.

As part of the 2018 Sunflower Stroll, 18 painters came to Tonganoxie for three days (and a few nights) of painting. The final paintings were displayed in the Fairchild-Knox hay barn. It was a great experience and a colorful weekend.

One of the Plein Air painters was a relative of Stanley Hand, the person who owned the laundry on the south side of 4th street



next to Slawson's business.

When the painters come into the dairy barn the temperature was not too bad for a summer day. However about 3 PM it really got hot and many of the people began to suffer and to look for some way to improve the environment. A fan was tried but that just moved hot air from one place to another. Finally another door to the outside was opened and that helped.

I think the painters ultimately enjoyed their time and I think several paintings were sold. From the pictures noted here one can see how good the paintings were.

FACEBOOK

by Theresa Megee

One more short for the newsletter: Theresa Megee reports that when she took over as Facebook administrator in 2015, the historical society and museum had 135 likes. Today, three years later, that number is 482 likes - an increase of 260%.

NEW EXHIBITS

Next time you are on site, look for the vintage tornado siren that was donated to us by Leavenworth County Emergency Management. Our siren, or one just like it, was previously installed on a pole just southeast of the old City Hall. The County also installed the siren for us. From Chuck Magaha, Director Leavenworth County Emergency Management:

“The Thunderbolt siren was built originally for Civil Defense and used to warn the public of possible Air Raids in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. The siren was later used to warn for severe weather and tornados.

“At one time there were thousands of these sirens in the Midwest, especially in tornado alley where severe thunderstorms and tornados are common in the spring. Production ended for this model siren when newer sirens with battery back-up and advanced controls became available.

“This siren was purchased around 1970 and was used until 2013. The original cost was approximately \$6,500 when bought new; the cost today for the new technology is a cost of \$23,000.”



UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

Oct 23, 2018, 7:00 pm, Matt Veatch, Kansas State Historical Society, “The State Archives: Past, Present, and Future” Join us for a presentation by Matt Veatch, Kansas State Archivist. Mr. Veatch will present virtual highlights from the State Archives collections, including John Brown letters and even a few Tongie-related items. He will also discuss the future of the archives and offer some hints on how you can preserve your own digital memories for generations to come.

Nov 27, 2018, 7:00 pm, Leanne Chapman, Oskaloosa. Leanne Chapman is active in the Jefferson County Historical Society. She will be talking about **orphan trains**. This may also be a good opportunity to learn more about history just next door in Jefferson County.

Dec 18, 2018, 6:00 pm, Annual Holiday Party. Save the Date and watch for more details! If you are not a member please come anyway. This event like all others is open to all.

Jan 22, 2019, 7:00 pm, Barbara Higgins-Dover, “When Kings Reign.” The documentary, “When Kings Reign” was produced in Lawrence, Kansas, will be shown. Barbara Higgins-Dover, the producer, will talk about the making of the movie and give us more insight into the history of the Kaw River and some of the men who made their living and their homes on the river.

The names below have volunteered to provide desert after the 4th Tuesday programs have been given.

October - Sarah Kettler and Donna Wiley

November - Carol & Ed Slawson and to-be-named

Hosting a Fourth Tuesday meeting is a great way to get to know other members and to contribute to the hospitality of the event. If you are interested in hosting a program, call Janet Burnett at 913-244-4157. She is in charge of the hostesses

WHO WANTS TO BE A BOARD MEMBER?

Our Board of Directors is comprised of eight members plus one student member. There is currently one vacancy on the board and three positions come up for election this year. We are all volunteers.

The Board of Directors meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:00 to 7:30 pm in the basement of the Reno Methodist Church. We are a working board, which means that each of us contributes to the functioning of the historical society or the museum. We meet to oversee operations of the society and the museum, including special events and routine events.

Think about it - we need many talents and you probably have one or more of them. Better yet, talk to one of the current board members or visit an upcoming meeting.

Current Board: Ray Stockman, Connie Torneden, Theresa Megee, Janet Burnett, Jean Pearson, Tony Johnson, Connie Putthoff, and Kris Roberts.

TCHS TRIVIA - WIN A GHOST TOWN DVD

Be the first to answer all three questions correctly and win a Ghost Towns Around Tonganoxie DVD.

This DVD involves the towns around Tonganoxie that are in severe decline or no longer exist.

The towns in the program are Jarbalo, Boling, Little Stranger, Dimon, Stanwood, Ackerland, Springdale, Stanwood, Dafer, Linwood, Lenape, Fall Leaf, Reno, and Alexandria.

1. What does USA stand for, as it appears on the front of the museum's fire pumper truck?
2. How much money does a TCHS Board member earn as a board member?
3. What was the original purpose of the tornado sirens in this area?

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

by Laurie Walters, Museum Director

Check out our newly reworked dairy display! Joy Lominska has given us a corner full of surprises complete with the story of the Fairchilds, an explanation of how a separator works, the story of lightning striking the barn and much more. Learn about the Tonganoxie Surge (a patent for automated pulsation which created a revolution in milking). The history of Tonganoxie dairy creameries from the Fairchild Creamery to the more recent Faultless and Sealtest operation is displayed in photographs. You may even experience a calf weaner up close and personal!!!!

Please plan on stopping in to view the efforts of our labor.



In the past three months we continued to increase our number of visitors over a similar period a year ago. We enjoyed a visit from Fairchild relatives...the four kinfolk enjoyed seeing what the museum had to offer about Frank and Mattie Fairchild and saw that their photo was taken outside the museum near the label bearing their family name.

We also had the pleasure of meeting Fred Zoellner's granddaughter Meg McKinney Young. She contributed several items from the Zoellner Mercantile. This collar display is representative of how difficult it was to be a well-dressed gentlemen in times past. Men wore white shirts which needed to be laundered and starched. They were constructed without a collar and the detachable collars would be attached saving labor in ironing and starching. These collars must have been uncomfortable at best.

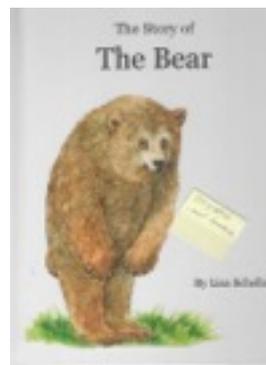


Collar display

The Bill Stephenson family donated a large collection of items including army uniforms belonging to Bill Sr. and Bill, Jr. Both men's medals, citations, and other military memorabilia were included. Also in this archive were photographs of local places. There was one of the best photos of Tonganoxie's Lodge that I have ever seen, two war flags of the Imperial Japanese Army, and over 123 other photos and items in the collection. Both Bills were long-time bankers in the First State Bank and well liked in the community.



Lisa Scheller donated several items relating to her family among which are the cradle used by her children which was given to her by Sara Mae Cain Diekmann and was Sara's as an infant. Also in the collection is the children's book authored by Lisa to help explain a grandfather's death to her children.



The next display area to work on will be the area of apple orchards...the Tonganoxie area was the site of many large and functional orchards. There was the Missouri Valley Orchard, Charles Miller Orchard, Freiemnuth's Many Oaks Orchard, and the Bullard/Wellhouse orchard to name a few. The state of Kansas encouraged land owners to establish orchards and many farms sported orchards of 100-200 trees. At the turn of the century, Kansas was one of the largest apple producing states. This display will be lodged in a wonderful antique merchant's case manufactured in Saint Louis. The donor was moving and surprised us out of the blue with the gift. Stay tuned for the outcome.

Museum director's note: In our reworking of displays we attempt to educate people as to how things functioned, how they were used, and the story of the people donating the items. I like to think that our visitors are spending quite a bit more time looking around the museum. This could not be done without the help of Jenny Alden, Joy Lominska, Betty Englen, Kris Roberts, Donna Talbot, Perry Walters and help from our Wednesday men, Lloyd Pearson, Jim Stuke, and Dan Carr. I am grateful.