

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

June 1, 2008

June to be Busy Month

June is shaping up to be a busy month at the TCHS Site. On Saturday the 14th we will host ***Tongie Day at the Site***, a one-day event which will correspond with the annual festival held in downtown Tonganoxie. The Saturday-only event will be held from 9AM to 4PM and will feature two separate quilt shows, a men's hobbies display (collections & demonstrations), and there will be antique autos on the grounds.

The Vintage Quilt Show will be in the Reno Church, and is hosted by Jean Pearson. For information about this show, call Jean at 913-845-3228.

The *Quilts by Sacred Heart Altar Society* show will be in the Honey Valley School. Janet Stuke is hosting this show, and can be reached at 913-369-3189 for additional information.

The *Men's Hobbies* display will be held in the Fairchild/Knox barn. Anyone wishing to take part in this event should contact Susy Ross at 913-845-2477.

On Saturday, June 28, we will have our annual picnic at the Site. Meat, drinks, and service materials will be provided, and each family should bring a dish to share. The picnic is open to all members and guests, and is the perfect opportunity to enjoy a social evening with friends. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

In addition to preparations for these events, the ongoing work in the Museum and regular maintenance of the buildings and grounds continues. The Wednesday volunteers have their hands full trying to keep up with the mowing and outdoor maintenance. With all the rain lately, the grass is looking really healthy. If anyone is looking for an exciting Wednesday morning activity, come on out to the Site and try on one of our mowers. Everyone who shows up will be allowed to join the group for coffee and conversation at the 10:00 break.

George Cooper accepts Distinguished Service Award from President Connie Putthoff at May monthly meeting.



George recently stepped down as Chairman of the Board of TCHS, but remains as Vice President and a Board member. He served as Chairman for over ten years, in addition to his service as a regular Wednesday volunteer and other volunteer areas.

Dues reminder

As a volunteer organization which requires donations and fundraisers to sustain operations, we also depend on yearly dues to contribute toward this effort. If you have not taken care of your dues for this year, we would really appreciate your contribution toward this cause. The year through which you are currently paid is indicated on your mailing label.

Individual Membership	\$10.00
Family Membership	\$15.00
Life Membership	\$100.00

The joy of being a part of the preservation of Tonganoxie's history . . . *priceless!*

Payments may be mailed to TCHS, P.O. Box 785, Tonganoxie, KS 66086.

Leavenworth County, Kansas

-essay by Fred Leimkuhler

The area we now call Leavenworth County was first populated by the Plains Indians. In 1825, Captain William Clark, Indian Agent, called the chiefs of the Kansa and Osage tribes to St. Louis, where the Indians sold a large part of their land to the government to be used for resettlement of the “Civilized Tribes” of the east. These Eastern tribes received title to their land in reservation, for all time, a period which lasted 30 years.

When the Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed in 1854, it stated that the states of Kansas and Nebraska would decide, by public vote, whether to be a free or slave state.

In May 1854, Kansas was opened up for white settlement. Most of the white settlers settled on Kickapoo land and on the Delaware Outlet land, a strip of land north of the Delaware Reservation which gave the Delaware access to the hunting grounds to the west. The white settlers marked out claims under public domain.

Since the greatest demand for white settlement was along the eastern border, it was necessary to survey this area first. The north border was established along the 30th parallel, and would become the Kansas-Nebraska line. The survey was ¼ complete in 1861, ½ complete in 1869, ¾ complete in 1872 and finally finished in 1877. (*Kansas History*, Vol 5)

The first land sale of the Delaware Trust land was mid-November 1856. Those who had settled here must now go to land sales held at Ft. Leavenworth and bid on their land. A large number of capitalists and speculators were present. It was said that more than three million dollars was on deposit to buy land at the land sales. Although there had been much tension between the pro-slavery and free-state settlers, they temporarily put aside their differences to concentrate on getting title to their land.

Some 1200 men attended the land sales, which lasted several days. They formed a tight circle around the auctioneer to bid on their property. The government commissioners recognized this determination and quietly

helped the settlers get title to their property. Many had already made improvements on their claims. (*Settlement of Friends in Kansas*, William H. Coffin, 1903)

Robert E. Courtney, grandfather of Martha Duncanson Leimkuhler, first came to Kansas in 1854. He built a cabin and brought his family in April of 1855. Through the land sales, Robert was able to secure his 160 acre farm. (*The Courtney Farm*, Grace Courtney, 1905)

In the museum



Western Cottage Pump Organ and Stool
Originally owned by the Trackwell family of Jarbalo, the organ was donated to the Jarbalo Methodist Church. It was later purchased by Virginia Seymour, who donated it to TCHS.

Concession Stand Fundraiser

Our Concession Stand fundraiser started on May 19 and will last into July. We have five “family teams” who have volunteered to take charge of one day each week:

Monday	Theresa & Mike Megee
Tuesday	Janet Angel/Delbert Felts
Wednesday	Carol & Ed Slawson
Thursday	George Cooper
Friday	Larry & Susy Ross

Each group will assure they have enough help to run the stand. Several members have agreed to serve as “back-up” if needed. Thank you to those who have taken on this task.

Volunteer Spotlight

Connie Putthoff is not only one of our “every Wednesday” volunteers, she also serves as President of our Society, a position she has held for over three years. She manages the rentals of the buildings at the Site. She is Chairman of the Chili Supper and Renaissance Festival fund raising projects. She has served as Vice President, Chairman of Ways and Means, and formerly chaired our largest fundraising event, the ballpark concession stand.



Connie Jean Dobson was one of five children, born and raised on a farm north of Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa. Her formal education began in a one-room school, and she later attended a two-room school in Montrose, Iowa. While in High School, she opened a one-room school for people to view. This was not like the usual one-room schools. In this one, the desks were the window sills; there was one big desk in the center of the room, and a fireplace for heat. She says that the school “was probably not any bigger than my bedroom.” This sounds like good training for a future position at TCHS!!

Connie came to Tonganoxie in 1956 following her marriage to Harold Putthoff. Harold was born and raised in Montrose, Missouri, and came to the Tonganoxie area in 1951. He was a highly respected and loved member of the community, and was also a Charter/Life Member of TCHS. Connie says they joined TCHS because of an interest in the history and origins of their families. Connie lost

her life partner in November 2007, after 51 ½ years of marriage.

After coming to Tonganoxie, Connie worked at Kansas University in the Printing Services Department as Head Mailer. The remainder of her time has been spent raising her four children, twelve grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, and staying active in the community. During her “spare” time, she volunteers at Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Good Shepherd Thrift Shop, Tonganoxie Library, Sacred Heart Altar Society and other Church-related events. She is in charge of records and burials at Sacred Heart Cemetery, and works with a Leavenworth research group which is locating and documenting all burials in Leavenworth County. Connie is also a Master Gardner and takes care of her own yard, as well as helping at the VFW Park and around the TCHS grounds. She has traveled to Germany, and will be taking an Alaskan cruise in the near future.

When asking friends about Connie, I heard a lot of praise for her work and involvement in various functions. The statement I would hear most is how she is always willing to take on a job and see it through to the finish, giving it her all. She is a dedicated and caring person, one who would do anything to help someone in need.

O Little Tonganoxie Town

-by Laurence M. Hill, TCHS Member

O little Tonganoxie Town,
How still we see thee lie!
All down your short and friendly streets
Your folks walk smiling by.
O you of first-rate schooling proud,
Of lively library,
Of busy downtown district,
And Historic Society:
Good City staff make flow the
Water, taxes, trash and sewer.
Police, Council, sports, Firefighters are
Well –chronicled in the weekly *Mirror*.
For such a compact country town
You are a big surprise,
Bigger and better in all these ways
Than imagined in a new guy’s eyes.

Fire Truck Restoration



Dan Carr, Ed Slawson, and Larry Ross power wash fire truck chassis, removing several decades of dirt and grease.

Progress on the fire truck project is moving along rapidly. We have completed removing all the pieces and are now down to a bare chassis on wheels, with the engine still in place. All the body parts have been sand blasted and primed thanks to the efforts of member Bill Jones.

All chrome parts are out for re-plating. The under-frame and body parts are now out for finish paint by Doug Shoemaker, owner of DLS Sandblasting in Tonganoxie. Wood frames for the seats and cowl/dashboard have been totally rebuilt. Dashboard instruments are being refurbished, and new tires have been purchased.

The next item of focus will be cleaning and painting the chassis, and then the fun of re-assembly will begin.

Stop by the firehouse during Tongie Day at the Site and see how far we've come.

In Memory

We extend our sympathy to family and friends of those we lost during the month of May:

Linnie Herrmann, Life Member

Mary Selby, long-time Member

Events around the Area

June 7 – Basehor Historical Society presents “*Dairy Days*,” a community-sponsored annual event which celebrates the dairy history of the area. 9AM – 4PM. For further information, call Basehor Chamber of Commerce, 913-724-9000.

June 18-22 – *Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties*, presented by the Kansas Humanities Council. First-person portrayals of notable people of the era; daily workshops for adults and children; a Youth Chautauqua camp; and special history events offered daily. South Park in Lawrence, 12th and Massachusetts Streets. Contact Tracy Quillen at 785-357-0359 or online at www.kansashumanities.org.

June 21-Aug 23 – Wyandotte County Museum will feature *Popular Childhood Toys*, a collection of 20th Century toys to be enjoyed by multiple generations. This is an opportunity to view a collection of artifacts from the Museum’s rarely-seen holdings. 631 N. 126th St. Mon-Sat 10-4.

June 27-Aug 10 – *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit which showcases our state’s musical heritage, and offers the chance to hear musical performances by legendary roots musicians like Bill Monroe, Mahalia Jackson, Muddy Waters, Woody Guthrie, and others. Watkins Community Museum of History, Lawrence. Further information, call 785-841-4109.

The Leavenworth Historical Museum Association announces the recent addition of a fleet of trolleys. The trolleys are being restored by museum volunteer workers, the local Lions Club, and citizens of Leavenworth. They will be available to rent for special occasions, and for group tours around Leavenworth and the county, as well as specialized tours of Fort Leavenworth, the original Veterans Home, weddings, proms, home tours, etc. Contact First City Museum 913-682-1866 for information.

Preview of Coming Attractions

June 28 – Annual Picnic 6:00PM

The date for our Annual Picnic is almost here, and I hope you marked your calendar to join us for a great evening of fellowship, food, and fun. Meat, drinks, and service materials will be provided. Each family should bring a dish to share with the group. This event is open to all members and guests. Bring your family, bring your friends, and invite your neighbors.

July 22 – Elizabeth Wilson-Agin 7:00PM



Elizabeth Wilson-Agin, a geophysicist based in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, will be our guest speaker for the evening. She is internationally known for her research and her work utilizing her expertise to locate lost graves using a combination of ground-penetrating radar (GPR), GPS, geospatial software, and a very sharply trained eye. Her publications have reached Australia, New Zealand, and throughout Europe. She has been featured in various newspapers and magazines, and recently on the Yahoo home page regarding her research, and has spoken before audiences across the country about her fascinating work. A 1994 graduate of Tonganoxie High School, she earned a Bachelor's degree in archaeology from the University of Kansas and a Master's degree in geophysics from Emporia State. Join us and learn how Elizabeth uses her talents to discover lost burial sites.

How to Contact Us

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Phone: 913-369-3835 (home)
913-845-2960 (TCHS)

Web: www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org

In person: Wednesday mornings 9-12
201 W. Washington Street
Tonganoxie, KS 66086



Fred Leimkuhler and George Cooper visit during Open House in April.



Zoellner's Mercantile temporary display, showcasing original artifacts and other items depicting merchandise in the original store. Items donated by Tom Zoellner, Coleen Anton, Zara Zoellner McKinney, Tassie Williams, Elton and Linnie Herrmann, and others.

Mark your calendars:

June 14 – 9AM-4PM – Tongie Day Celebration at the Site

June 28 – 6PM – Annual Picnic at the Site – Bring covered dish

July 22 - 7PM – Monthly Meeting: Elizabeth Wilson-Agin/Locating Lost Burial Sites

Tonganoxie Community

Historical Society

P.O. box 785

Tonganoxie, KS 66086-0785

913-845-2960