

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

March 5, 2008

Opening Day Set for April 6

Opening Day at the Museum will be Sunday, April 6, from 1:00 to 4:00pm. Preparations for the Opening continue in the Museum, and the new exhibit areas in the barn are now ready for visitors. Of special interest are two "must see" temporary displays: A display featuring the history of Zoellner's Mercantile will be shown for four months. The second display will feature 18 Indian artifacts from the private collection of Mr. Fred Leimkuhler, and will be exhibited for three months.

There will be volunteers on hand during the Opening to provide tours and information about the buildings at the Site. The firehouse will be open, so plan to check out the progress on the fire truck restoration project.

Refreshments will be served in the gathering area of the barn. Janet Angell-Felts is organizing a bake sale which will feature many kinds of homemade breads (banana nut, pumpkin, cherry, zucchini, etc.). Mark your calendars and plan to come out on Sunday, April 6th for Opening Day at the Museum.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM:

-- Work on the KMA grant photo project continues. Laurie Walters and Linda DiSanto are copying original photographs in the museum and placing the originals in acid-free storage, in order to insure that the photos we now have will be protected for years to come.

-- Two more display cabinets have been given to the Museum by Wyandotte County

Museum. We appreciate this valuable donation, and have found a home for the cases in our display area.

-- In March the Museum will be getting our new Power Point laptop and projector. This equipment will allow for creation of programs and will be available for use by guest speakers. We will also be getting our new PastPerfect software program which will be a great help in organizing and maintaining records for the

Museum. These items are available to us because of the County grants which we received last year.

-- Janet Stuke and Jean Pearson are beginning plans for Tonganoxie Days at the Site, June 14.

-- TCHS will have a float in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, downtown Tonganoxie on March 15. If you want to volunteer to help with this project, contact Susy Ross at the Museum.

TCHS Website Now Ready

For several months we have been telling you about our efforts to establish a website for the Historical Society. In today's world, the ability to access information in a timely manner is extremely important, and we want to keep our members as well-informed as possible. We are happy to report "Mission Accomplished" - the site is now ready for use.

Our volunteer curator, Susy Ross, and a few other brave souls spent many hours gathering information, selecting and installing photos, writing and re-writing items to be included on the site. New member CarolAnn Smith has graciously offered her expertise in setting up and maintaining the site for us. A big Thank You to CarolAnn for taking on this monumental task.

The new website contains information about TCHS, including contact information

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

March 5, 2008

and phone numbers, guides to the buildings and historical site, upcoming programs and monthly meetings, membership information, a copy of our current Newsletter, some great photos and more. If you have access to a computer, please visit the website and let us know how we are doing.

www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org/

From the Board

- by George Cooper, Chairman

The upcoming months will be some of our busiest. A float is being planned for the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Opening Day is just around the corner, and Tongie Days is fast approaching. Outside maintenance will begin, and the ongoing restoration of the fire truck continues. In addition to these and other happenings, we begin to work toward our yearly fund-raising events, the largest one being the ballpark concession stand.

We have some goals and concerns for the future of our historic Site:

-- Examine new funding ideas for maintaining the Site and to allow us to remain open at least five days a week. This would mean hiring a qualified full-time curator.

- - Plan for expansion to fulfill the need for museum space, office space, a gift shop, archive and research room, and climate-controlled artifact storage.

-- Establish an endowment that will grow to help relieve the constant burden to support operations

We welcome ideas from all members, and invite you to attend monthly board meetings, held every third Wednesday at 9:00am.



This wicker baby buggy was purchased new by Robert and Nannie Graham in 1896. It was used in the 1900s by Eva Graham Wiley (b.1905); in the 1910s by Robert Graham; in the 1920s by Janet Wiley (b.1926) and Francis Wiley (b.1928); in the 1930s by June Wiley (b.1934). It was last used by the Clarence Wiley family. The buggy was passed to Eva Wiley, then to Francis and Donna Wiley, who donated the buggy to TCHS.

Honey Valley School News

On January 29th, the Honey Valley School came to life when the McLouth third grade students descended upon the historical Site. Approximately 35 students and their teachers endured blizzard-like conditions in order to celebrate Kansas' 147th birthday and to learn more about Kansas history.

Our School Coordinator, Helene Miller, planned and executed this event, with the help of her group of hardy volunteers. "None of this would have been possible without our volunteers," said Helene, "especially our subs, who filled in when some of the regular volunteers became ill or had unavoidable obligations."

IN THE MUSEUM

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS



Barbara Dale teaching in Honey Valley School

Barbara Dale did her usual good job as a one-room school teacher, and Vernilea Fulhage taught Kansas ABC's. Wayne Davidson entertained the group with music from the past. Perry and Laurie Walters and Howard Fields did a great job explaining artifacts in the museum and barn areas. George Cooper arrived at the last minute to show a silent movie to the kids. And Connie Putthoff worked her magic as chef of the johnnycakes.

Bell ringers for the very cold wintry day were Deloris White, Gladys Walters, and Donna Fields, who had her arm in a sling. Talk about dedication!!

"A huge Thank You to everyone who made our Kansas Day a success," says Helene. (And a huge Thank You to Helene for her dedication to this worthwhile educational project.)

TCHS Members Recognized by Chamber of Commerce

Historical Society members George

March 5, 2008

Cooper and Bo Himpel were presented with Citizen of the Year awards by the Tonganoxie Chamber of Commerce at their annual meeting in January. Cooper is our Board Chairman, a Life Member of TCHS, and one of the "every Wednesday" volunteers at the Site. Bo Himpel, also a Life Member, has volunteered many hours to various efforts in the Tonganoxie community. Also recognized by the Chamber was another of our Life Members, John Lenahan, who received a Community Service award. Congratulations to these award recipients.

School Days, School Days

-- an essay by Fred Leimkuhler

When people first came to Kansas, public schools had not been established. The first schools in our area were due to a pioneer effort.

The first school north of the Kansas River in the Kansas Territory was started by the Quakers (Society of Friends) at Springdale. A Quaker, V.K. Stanley, came to Kansas and since he had some education, he was persuaded to start a school. In May 1856, in a log cabin that was being used as a Friends Meeting House, the first school was started. The building was in the northeast corner of the property where the Springdale Church is now located. There were 18 pupils from the community in attendance.

The logs were small, the cracks well chinked with mortar composed of mud and prairie grass roots. The roof was composed of three-foot boards of oak timber, brought from Stranger Creek two miles to the east. The seats were slabs with no backs and four pegs for legs. The teachers stool was a block sawed from the end of a log, 15 inches wide

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

and three feet long. By 1860 there were two teachers, Mahlon Olephant and Huldia Wilson, and 50 pupils.

The first school of higher learning in the area was the Tonganoxie Friends Academy, established in 1882. William P. Trueblood was the first principal. By 1890, there were 90 students. Drucella Coffin, who was later to be the County Superintendent of Schools for many years, was a graduate of Tonganoxie Friends Academy. Many of our local teachers were also graduates of the Academy.

The Academy was discontinued when the high school system was developed in 1898. The first graduating class from Tonganoxie High School was in 1901.



Vernilea Fulhage serving johnnycakes to McLouth third grade students.

Programs Report

- - by Julienne Kaslaitis

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of planning the programs for our meetings. Several of you have given me wonderful suggestions and other good information, making this an easier task. Please continue to pass along suggestions for programs and speakers to me. Although the suggestions may not be utilized right away, I am keeping a file for months ahead, which will be passed along to the next person who may do this job.

Thank you for your "feedback" on our

March 5, 2008

presenters and please let me know what interests you. When you make a suggestion, please provide all the information you have: full name, phone number, address, when you heard this person speak, subject matter, and whether or not you think they might be available. You may email it, or just write it on a sheet of paper and give it to me. It is my very great desire to find good, informative, entertaining programs for us.



Helene Miller on a very cold January day at TCHS

Volunteer Spotlight

Howard Fields, one of the "every Wednesday" volunteers is in the "spotlight" for this issue.



Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

March 5, 2008

Howard was born and raised in Humansville, Missouri, a small community about 50 miles north of Springfield. He attended the Humansville public schools, and after graduation attended Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, where he met Donna Jean, his future wife. After SBU, Howard went on to the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Howard worked in the computer field as Computer Specialist/Data Center Management in the Kansas City area for about 20 years. From there, they moved to Houston, Texas, where he held similar positions in the oilfield industry until his retirement in 1994. Upon retirement, he and Donna Jean decided they would rather retire to someplace in the Midwest, in an area that would have four seasons - they wanted to escape the oppressive heat and humidity of south Texas.

Howard and Donna Jean joined TCHS in 1994 in order "to get acquainted in a new community," and they wanted to "join an organization of like-minded individuals in an interesting and worthwhile endeavor." Howard has served as president, treasurer, and Board Member of TCHS. Both he and Donna Jean step forward whenever the need arises.

Married for 57 years, Howard and Donna

Jean have four daughters, ten grandchildren, and one great-grandson. They are members of Tonganoxie Methodist Church. Howard served in the Army during the Korean conflict, is a member of the American Legion, and also volunteers at the Tongie Public Library. During his "spare" time, he enjoys playing golf and spending time with his family.

Linda DiSanto

P. O. Box 785

Tonganoxie, KS 66086

Phone: 913-845-2960

(Wed. AM, or leave a message on the answering machine)

Email: disanto@wildblue.net

(please mention TCHS in the subject area so your message will not be automatically deleted)

Preview of Coming Attractions

March 25 - Michael McClellan

In 1918 the Great War had ended and there seemed nothing was out of reach of American science, industry and ingenuity. The United States had arrived at a Golden Age. Yet in our midst lurked a killer of massive proportion not seen since the Black Death swept through Europe. *INFLUENZA*. Thousands upon thousands of (primarily) young adults (not the elderly nor the children) died within hours or days of coming down with the flu. How was it for your family in 1918?

Michael McClellan, teacher of World History to freshmen at Tonganoxie High School and qualified teacher of American Government and Politics, will be our presenter for this evening. Mr. McClellan has lived in Guantanamo, Cuba, and was awarded a Fulbright-Hays grant to study in Russia. He and his wife have lived in Tonganoxie since 1985.

Mr. McClellan says, "Today, the influenza outbreak of 1918 is virtually erased from the American memory, but on the horizon awaits the next generation of virus evolving into a killer."

How to Reach Us

Mail: Newsletter@TCHS

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

March 5, 2008

April 22 - Ben Saathoff



Deep within the DNA of a community is the history of their religious faith and beliefs. It is varied and important to the lives of the people over many generations.

Ben Saathoff, a local pastor serving from 1975 to 2004 at Tonganoxie Christian Church, will share with us the religious history unfolding in our community. What is the oldest church? How many different faith communities are there in our area? Do they all meet on Sunday? Who are some of the parishioners?

Ben grew up in the western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming area. He and Margaret married in 1962 and served in Wyoming and Colorado before moving to Kansas. He retired as Senior Pastor, and now serves as Pastoral Minister at Tonganoxie Christian Church.

May 27 - John Duncanson



Former Deputy Sheriff for Leavenworth County, John Duncanson is a superb teacher and presenter. He will inform us about defensive driving for seniors, give facts and figures regarding accidents and mishaps, and will mix it up with facts and figures regarding the history of law enforcement in Leavenworth County.

John is a graduate of Tonganoxie High School; he and Nancy have two children. He has safety instructor training in AAA Drivers Improvement Program; Emergency Vehicle Operator Defensive Driving, National Safety Council, and since retirement he is an instructor for the AARP Driver Safety Program.