

BLACK AMERICANS IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

It has been stated that there were between 200,000 and 250,000 soldiers and militia that served the colonists during the Revolutionary war. It had to be difficult to accurately determine the actual number of patriots serving in the military. There were occasions when for various reason the soldier went home to plant seed, take care of personal business, etc.

As the colonists discussed the British tyranny more and more, the black slaves began more and more to think about freedom from slavery. They were willing to fight for a cause which might give them freedom. However, by 1775 the Continental Congress had adopted a policy excluding black soldiers from the army. General Washington was one of those who did not want the Afro-Americans fighting. Many of the southerners didn't feel comfortable giving a black slave a gun to use. Others thought they should be left to do the farm work.

Each state in the Union had quotas, and soon it became difficult for the various states to fill those quotas. At this time the states turned to the Afro-Americans. Many of the slaves were interested in becoming part of this war. However, the Afro-American's were interested in fighting on the side which they thought would win and give them their freedom. 9,000 blacks fought for the Colonists and 20,000 blacks fought for the English.

General Washington, during the Valley Forge winter, changed his mind about using blacks. He had lost a significant number of men. Many died from disease and the winter caused lots of problems like frostbite, etc. Others were discouraged and went home.

Some of the blacks were already free, but many were promised their freedom if they would join the war. In the south the only blacks which were allowed to fight were the blacks who had already gained their freedom. To fill the state quotas, it became necessary to draft soldiers. Many of the colonists used a black person to take their place. For this the blacks were promised their freedom. In the case of the English, they kept their promises and took the blacks to Canada or in some cases they went to some islands in the Caribbean. The Colonists for the most part kept their promises, but there were a number of blacks who went back to being a slave.

The average length of time in service for an African-American soldier during the war was four and a half years (due to many serving for the whole eight-year duration), which was eight times longer than the average period for white soldiers. Meaning that while they were only four percent of the manpower base, they comprised around 25% of the Patriots' strength in terms of man-hours, though this includes supportive roles.

In all the American troops the units were totally integrated. They ate, slept, fought as a totally integrated unit. The one exception to this was the Rhode Island 1st. This unit had segregated companies. Some companies were white and some were black. All the officers were white.

This questions what was the first all black outfit to fight as a unit. Was the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment the first to be an all black unit in the Civil War; or was it the Rhode Island 1st? The difference might be as simple that the Rhode Island 1st fought while the United States didn't exist.

A French regiment of colored troops (the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint-Domingue) under the command of Comte d'Estaing and one of the largest combatant contingent of color in the American Revolutionary War, fought on behalf of the Patriots in the Siege of Savannah.

Below are listed some of the African-Americans who distinguished themselves in the Revolutionary War.

Crispus Attucks. Crispus Attuck's father was a likely a slave and his mother was a Wampanoag Indian. He escaped to Nantucket Island where he became a Whaler. He became the first man to die in the Boston Massacre. He was a well built person with strength. He actively fought, but was the first one killed in the Boston Massacre. He was a martyr to the Revolutionary cause after that.

Salem Poor "We declare that a Negro man called Salem Poor....behaved like an experienced officer, as well as an excellent officer...a brave and gallant soldier." Salem Poor had fought in the French & Indian Wars and he continued in the Revolutionary War. In the Battle of Bunker Hill he distinguished himself by killing a British officer, Lieutenant Colonel James Abercrombie, along with several other enemy soldiers. This changed the battle in favor of the colonists.

Peter Salem. He was one of the heroes of Bunker Hill. He shot Maj. John Pitcarin and helped change the outcome of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Although the English were said to have won that battle, the outcome in terms of those killed or wounded was in favor of the colonists. The English lost a great number of men. Many more than the Colonists.

James Armistead (Lafayette) He was born into slavery. His master gave him permission to enlist in the Marquis de Lafayette's French Allied unit. He became a double agent. To the British he was a simple slave who had great knowledge of the surrounding territory. Because of local knowledge the British received him without suspicion.

Armistead provided significant information about the British who were preparing for the Battle of Yorktown. He informed Lafayette and Washington about the movement of British Ships which allowed the Colonist to whip the English at Yorktown. This battle ended the Revolutionary War.

After the Revolutionary war was over James went back to being a slave because he was not considered a soldier, he was a spy. It took Lafayette several years of court battle to get this changed. James Armistead then changed his last name to Lafayette.

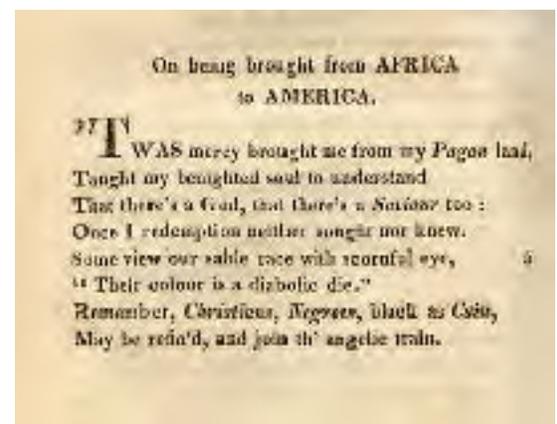
Barzillac Lew. During the bloodiest battle of the war, It was said that Lew kept American morale high with his fife version of "There's Nothing Makes the British Run like 'Yankee Doodle Dandy.'

Cato Howe. served for the entire war in the 2nd Massachusetts. The regiment fought at Bunker Hill and served in the New York campaign, the Battle of Trenton, Battle of Princeton, Battle of Saratoga and the Battle of Monmouth. Between the late spring of 1778, Cato Howe was at Valley Forge. The 2nd Massachusetts, from 1779 on, was part of the "Highland's Department", serving along the Hudson River around West Point.

Phillis Wheatley was a revolutionary intellectual who waged a war for freedom with her words. Her owners educated her and supported her literary pursuits. In 1773, at around age 20, Wheatley became the first African American and third woman to publish a book of poetry in the young nation. Shortly after this, her owners freed her. Influential colonists read Wheatley's poems and lauded her talent. She also advocated for independence, artfully expressing support for George Washington's Revolutionary War. In 1775, she sent a copy of a poem entitled "To His Excellency, George Washington" to the then-military general. The following year, Washington invited Wheatley to visit him at his headquarters in [Cambridge, Massachusetts](#), which she did in March 1776.^[20] [Thomas Paine](#) republished the poem in the [Pennsylvania Gazette](#) in April 1776.^[21] Washington, who himself had been forced to end his formal education at age 11, appreciated Wheatley's support and extolled her talent.

Poem by Phillis Wheatley to George Washington

Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.



See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of heaven's revolving light
Involved in sorrows and veil of night!

The goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel bind her golden hair:
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.

Muse! bow propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;
Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.
In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.
Shall I to Washington their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.
Thee, first in peace and honours,—we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.
Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore!

One century scarce perform'd its destined
round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!
Fix'd are the eyes of the nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.

Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! be thine.

Ed Note: Tradition is a very difficult item to overcome. Family traditions; societal traditions; Even if one can produce knowledge that the traditions may be incorrect, it still is almost impossible to change tradition.

In the case of the Afro/Americans, historically it was the common tradition that the Blacks would not be capable of being quality fighters. The reasons were not well defined and variable. I am not a well educated person in the history of the blacks and their ability to fight, but in the last several months I have read about the blacks and war. It is well documented that the black people could fight very well. They proved it over and over.

In the Revolutionary War noted above, we discover how good the blacks were in that fight. We read about the Civil War and the Kansas 1st and 2nd infantry (black infantry) being excellent fighters along the Kansas/Missouri border and extending into Arkansas and Oklahoma territories. In WW I we have read how successful the 92nd and 93rd infantry battalions were. The 93rd was the most decorated unit of WW I. In this war many of the blacks



Phillis Wheatley

were kept out of most of the fighting because of the traditional thinking that they would not be good fighters. However when they were allowed to fight they proved their merit.

In WW II the “Red Tail’s” were a group of black pilots who flew fighter planes. Their job it was to protect the bombers on their flights to bomb the Nazi’s. Simply put, these black pilots were extremely good at protecting the bombers. With the bright red tails on the fighter planes these pilots were noted by those in the bombers to provide excellent protection. The bombers were pleased when they saw these red tailed planes arriving. However, when these bomber pilots discovered the “Red Tails” were flown by black pilots they were surprised. From that point on they recognized that blacks could fly and fight as good as most.

The sad part about all of this is: In each war the Afro/American had to prove once again that they could fight. Nothing about their ability to fight carried over.

FROM THE MUSEUM - Laurie Walters

The people in the museum not only make up the tremendous displays, and log artifacts into the computer, they provide many other services. One of the services provided by our historical society is research about the Tonganoxie area. Debra Henning of the University of Chicago requested information of the Friends Academy with particular emphasis on Irving King and his sister, Florence. King was the principal at the Friends Academy from 1896-1898. Two other individuals, Robert Lincoln Kelly (a descendant of Stanton Pearson who was an early Quaker in Kansas) and Charles William Jones listing Tonganoxie as his home address were among 42 students earning advanced degrees from the University of Chicago.

While King began his career in education here at the Friends Academy after graduating in 1896 from Earlham College, a Quaker college in Richmond, Indiana. He went on to Louisiana State Normal School as superintendant, then as instructor in Psychology and History of Education at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y. Next he was Assistant Professor of Education at the



Inside Friends Academy. L-R
Miss. King. &. Prof. King



Miss King. Irving King. May
Chapin

University of Michigan, and then Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. He retired in 1920. He received a degree of Ph.D. from Chicago in 1904, graduating magna cum laude.

Irving King, head of the University of Iowa Department of Literature, had an unusual sideline for an English professor; raising chickens. In 1918 King started a hatchery as a hobby on the south side of Jackson Avenue in Iowa City. Eventually, the hatchery occupied several wood structures from Sheridan Avenue to Ralston Creek. Local residents bought dressed chickens and eggs here or from neighborhood groceries, supplied by the hatchery. Farmers came to buy live chickens and chickens were sent by train to Denver and eggs shipped to Chicago.

Quakers (or Friends) believed that education was important and educated women as well as men. According to the Report of the State Superintendent of Schools, the total expenditures for the academy June 1897-June 1898 was \$820. Whereas, the total receipts were \$780. Rates of tuition, not including board: First year 65 cents per week; second year, 70 cents per week; third year, 75 cents per week; fourth year, 75cents per week. Drusilla Coffin (who later served many years as the much feared and admired County Superintendent of Schools) was a student at this time. She attended the academy for one year

Local Authors Associated with Tonganoxie



TONGANOXIE AUTHORS : MORE OF THEM THAN YOU MIGHT EXPECT!

Back in the fall of 2020, we put together an exhibit in the display case in the First State Bank & Trust Fourth Street lobby. The bank has recently re-opened its lobbies, so take the opportunity of better weather to check out that exhibit of Tonganoxie Authors. You will be so impressed with the literary caliber of our town!

List of Books in the FSBT display fall 2020

Little Toy Dog, William White, writing about John McKone The Old Home Place, Joy Lominska Jayhawk, Jay Stout with George Cooper. Homemade Biography, Tom Zoellner. The Bear, Lisa Scheller

Formation of the Solar System, James Louis Baker

Yankee Reporters and Southern Secrets, Michael Fuhlhage

Unfettered, Kent Weatherby, and numerous other titles

Airball, Lisa Harkrader. Fighting the Current There and Back, Jared Jellison

An autobiography, Helen Funkhouser. The Past Speaks, Geoff McCue

GEORGE COOPER GIFT TO TCHS



We are very grateful to George Cooper for remembering TCHS in his will. George left us a most generous gift. Our organization was so fortunate to have George's leadership over a span of thirteen years. The gift of his time and energies was huge and we continue to feel the effects of his efforts here. His financial gift is also huge and the Board of Directors will be considering how to best utilize these funds in the coming months.

Three of George Cooper's daughters presented a check to the TCHS Board on March 16. Pictured are (left to right) Kris Roberts, Laurie Putthoff, Cathy Cooper and Merrilee Cooper

WINDOW RESTORATION WORKSHOPS



The Reno Church on the historical site is undergoing some restoration work this year. In late February and early March, we completed two separate Window Restoration Workshops. Each two-day workshop brought six volunteers together, each to work on one window, under the instruction and supervision of John Wood, of Wood Works Restoration.

On day one, we learned how to remove both the top and bottom sashes from the window frames, and how the old rope and weight windows operate. Each sash was taken to the barn, where we had work stations set up to remove the old glazing, then remove the glass, and then clean up and scrape down the old exterior paint. All of the work done was on the exterior side of the sash.



Once the sashes were cleaned, it became evident that some repairs were needed. John Wood took sashes back to his workshop to replace or repair sections of rotted wood and brought the windows back for the second day. On the second day, glass was replaced in the sashes. Much of the existing glass in the windows went right back in the sashes, but replacement glass was also needed.

We were fortunate to find Tobiason Art Glass Studio in St. Joseph, MO. John Wood met with the owner, Rick Rader, and picked out glass which would match the panes that were needed as closely as possible.

After dry fitting the glass, we prepared the glazing bed, set the glass in the sash, installed points (using a very cool point gun!), and then installed the glazing. Glazing is an art! The glazing was followed with primer and two coats of finish paint and the windows were re-installed a few days after each workshop.

We invite you to take a look at the windows the next time you are out to the site to visit. The biggest change you will see is the abundance of light in the church. Behind the red velvet drapery on the north wall of the church is a double window with a separate peak. These north windows have been behind the drapery for a long time, but now they allow in the north light.





We were able to do this work now because TCHS volunteers in the 1990s and early 2000s had installed plexiglass over the church windows. The plexiglass protected the windows from wind damage and the glazing from deterioration. The plexiglass also allowed us to remove the windows, work on them and replace them without having to board up the openings.

Wood Works will be building custom storm windows for the Reno Church. Once the storm windows are complete and

ready to install, the existing plexiglass, now yellowed from UV exposure, will be removed. At that point, the simple beauty of our church windows will be evident from outside the church. The work on the windows is funded by two grants - the Pete and Margaret Leighty Trust Fund and the Leavenworth County Museums Fund.

We must also thank the volunteers who volunteered to be in these workshops and spent two days working on windows: Craig Burchette, Laura Elkins, Lloyd Pearson, Mark Richards, Kris Roberts, Steve Skeet, Jim Stuke, Don Talbott, Donna Talbott, John Walter, Luke Walter.

The group was assisted by several volunteers who came in to help: Bob Lominska, Joy Lominska, B.A. Skeet, Ray Stockman. We were fed a delicious lunch each day by Shirley Martin, Jean Pearson, Laurie Walters. And, of course, special thanks to our workshop leader and his assistants - John Wood and his very competent children, Francine and Linus.



THE CHILI SUPPER WILL RETURN



The Chili Supper or Chili Feed in February has been a constant over the past 20 years or so, but our board decided that this year was one we would have to skip.

We missed the camaraderie of creating the meal and the company of all who come to enjoy it. So, mark your calendars now for the next Chili Supper, Thursday, February 17, 2022.

Photos are from our 2019 Chili Supper.

ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE



Perhaps you saw the TCHS 1936 United States Army Fire Pumper Truck in the St. Patrick's Day parade this year, driven by Tonganoxie's own Deputy Chief John Callaghan. Had it been a sunnier day, several of our members would have been in the back of the truck, celebrating not only an Irish holiday, but the chance to participate in the parade!

Next year, we sure hope to be on the truck - see you then!

BARN BLOCK WORKSHOPS COMING IN APRIL 2021



For over a year, we have not been able to offer any of our popular Barn Block Workshops. But we are back!

Jean Pearson is leading two Barn Block Workshops in April - one on Thursday, April 22 and one on Saturday, April 24. The workshop on April 22 is full, but there are spaces left in the Saturday workshop.

Participants create a Barn Block suitable for hanging on a barn or a fence or a living room wall. The workshop fee is \$55 for a 2'x2' block; \$120 for a 4'x4' block. Paint is provided along with instructions. Participants arrive at 9:00 am and leave by 3:00 pm with a completed barn block.



If you are interested in attending the workshop, send us an email - TCHSTonganoxie@gmail.com.

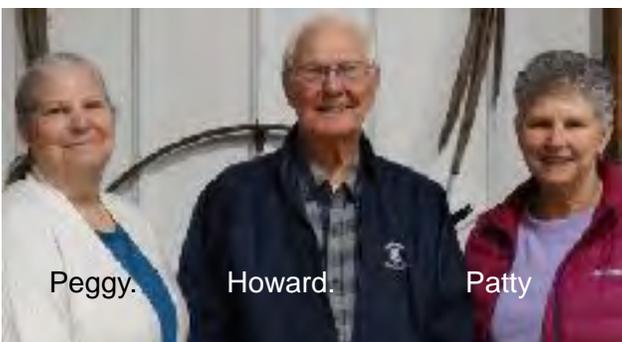


BOY SCOUTS CAMP OUT AT THE MUSEUM

Boy Scout Troop #357 camped out at the museum site the last weekend in March for two nights. In addition to honing some camping skills, the scouts did some clean up around the site.

HOWARD FIELDS FAREWELL RECEPTION

In late 1993, John Cass Lenahan, who had founded and been the first president of TCHS since 1981, decided that it was time to step away from the presidency. That winter, TCHS voted to install Howard Fields as president of the organization. Howard





served as president during the years 1994 and 1995.

Howard also served as treasurer or co-treasurer for ten years in the late 1990s and early 2000s. From looking at scrapbooks from the years that Howard served on the board, it is clear that he never met a project he did not volunteer to help with. From jack hammering out the milk house floor to righting the hay barn, to repairing the schoolhouse floor and windows to reglazing the schoolhouse windows to building the split rail fence at our entrance to painting just about anything and better than just about anyone, Howard has been huge in building our museum.

Howard's kind demeanor and ready smile have charmed all of us and we will miss him. We wish him only good fortune and many more reasons to smile as he sets off a new adventure on the coast of Oregon with two of his daughters (see photo above).

NEED MOWERS AND WEED TRIMMERS FOR THIS SUMMER - JOIN A CREW THAT WORKS AND HAS FUN

The grass is starting to grow and we could sure use another one or two folks to help us keep the grass mowed and trimmed at the museum. If you like to mow or trim weeds, do we have a deal for you. Our volunteers keep our grounds looking top notch, but they always have time for coffee and conversation too.

Stop by on a Wednesday morning around 9 am or send us an email to TCHSTonganoxie@gmail.com or call us at 913-845-2960 to let us know you are interested.

Maps in the Museum

By Joy Lominska

A project that has been underway for several months at the museum is updating and adding to the vertical hanging display (the one with pages like a gigantic book, hanging on the north wall inside the museum). This case contains maps, vignettes of early settlers, and some history of the area.

The first map that was added was from the 1860s survey of the county. Surveyors measured the sections that became the framework for land ownership in Leavenworth County. As they walked the section lines, they recorded natural features: streams, woodlands, rock outcrops, buffalo licks, springs. This written record of the land, with careful measurements, was sent to a mapmaker in Nebraska who created a hand-drawn, water-colored map. The GIS office in Leavenworth combined six small maps into a large map that is now displayed in the case. Near the Kansas River in the southern part of the county are numerous rectangles, representing the corn fields of individual Delaware Indians who lived in the area. Some are labeled with the name of the owner: Captain Sarcoxie, One-Eyed

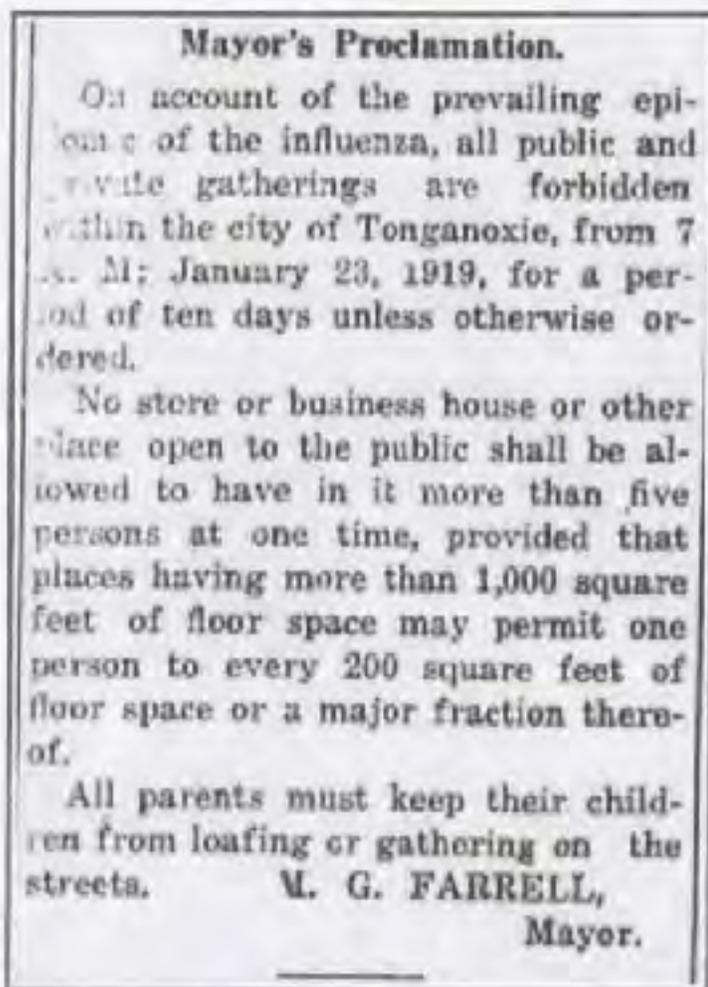
Jackson. Wavy green lines enclose areas that were native woodland, primarily along rivers and streams.

It can be difficult to get oriented looking at one of these old plat maps, because there are no modern features like roads and cities. The Kansas River and Stranger Creek are good starting points. If you want to locate your own property, it is helpful to know the legal description.

Adjacent to the plat map is a description of the tools and techniques used by the early surveyors. A survey team was typically composed of one or more of each of the following: surveyor, axe man, compass man, chain man. The chains were the measuring tool for land surveying.

Another map recently added to the display, also created for us by the GIS, shows the area surrounding Tonganoxie as depicted in an 1878 atlas. This map is easier to interpret, with roads and towns marking familiar spaces and landowners' names on their farms.

Other maps have been added to this display and the pages illustrating the lives of early settlers are being reworked. If you are researching family history, this is a good place to start.



Our recent pandemic is not the first to affect Tonganoxie as evidenced by the mayoral proclamation of January 23, 1919. People were restricted from all public and private gatherings. Businesses were restricted as to the number of customers allowed inside. Proclamation is signed by M. G. Farrell, mayor, who happens to be the grandfather of Larry Deaton a current member and past board member of our historical society.

M. G. Farrell's place of business was in the building just west of the old Shilling building. He sold cigars which he made himself.