



Significant Women of Tonganoxie that I know or should know.



Rock house
that Cora Wellhouse built

Cora Adelia Wellhouse
1863-1941- Cora Wellhouse was the youngest child of Frederick Wellhouse, well known orchardist. She was co-owner of the apple orchard. She achieved this position because when her brother died, she was the only person left to do this work.



This position helped her learn and understand business and how to deal with those involved in business.

Cora (Wellhouse) Bullard, Tonganoxie: Second Vice President Kansas Equal Suffrage Association, the first woman member of the American Livestock Association. She was appointed by Governor Allen as the first member of the Kansas School Textbook Commission. She was nationally known. Her involvement in social and political efforts were well known. She was a member of the Kansas Fruit Growers association.

She was one of the directors of the Kansas State Historical Society, and a member of Native Daughters of Kansas. During the World War I, Mrs. Bullard was active in war work. She was a member of the Council of Defense and vice-president of the First Congressional District, and a member of the Committee on Agricultural Production. She is an honorary member of the State Board of Agriculture and a life member of the State Historical Society.

Cora played a significant role in allowing young farmers to stay on the farm during war time. She recognized the significance of food for the military. The young farmers were safe from the draft.

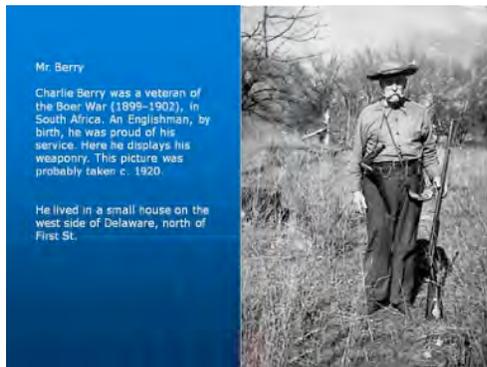
It has been stated that she was involved with every rock that was used in the building of the rock house a few miles Northeast of Tonganoxie.

She married Henry Shelby Bullard and in 1903 they moved into the rock house which can be seen today.

Magdalena Bury- Her name first appears in Tonganoxie in 1866. She had purchased 40 acres of land from the Union Pacific RR. These 40 acres of land became Tonganoxie, Kansas. Earlier in discussing Magdalena Bury and the purchase of the 40 acres of land, I had come across a news article reporting that Mr. English was the purchasers of the 40 acres of land from the RR and Mrs Bury bought that land from him. The news article went on to describe this action by the son of Mr. English, who was an Episcopalian priest.

Later I discovered at the Leavenworth court house that Magdalena Bury was in fact the person who bought the 40 acres of land from the RR and not Mr. English.

Magdalena was born in Germany in 1822. Her husband, Christian, was born in Germany in



Mr. Berry

Charlie Berry was a veteran of the Boer War (1899-1902), in South Africa. An Englishman, by birth, he was proud of his service. Here he displays his weaponry. This picture was probably taken c. 1920.

He lived in a small house on the west side of Delaware, north of First St.

1815. They were married in 1848/49 in Germany. The marriage produce 7 children. The first, Christian and Johnathan, were born in Germany. In 1853 Samuel was born in Iowa. Katherine, called Kate, was born in 1857, Louis was born in 1859 and Frederick was born in 1862. The last child born to this marriage was Charles* born in 1867. **This Charles Bury is quite often confused with the Charles Berry associated with the Boer War (picture left)**

In 1865 the Bury family were living in Tonganoxie. Christian B. was operating a saloon which is believed to have been located on what would eventually become the swimming pool. The Leavenworth Times reported that the Bury family owned the building located at the corner of 3rd and Main. She sold this building to James McKeehan who operated it until 1879.

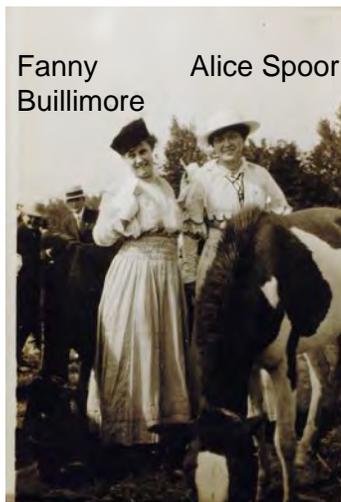
When Magdalena Bury purchased the 40 acres it has been said that she signed the paper work because her husband could not read or write.

Some time around 1869 the Bury family purchased an additional 80 acres of land. This land extended to the north to about where the present high school is located. On June 22, 1870, Magdalena Bury died and was buried in Hubble Hill Cemetery. Christian Bury sold a large number of lots to his daughter, Kate. Kate was 13 when this happened. He soon moved to Wichita and was never heard of again.

“Kate” Bury married an Angell and they began operating a hotel in the building that would be known as the Jones Hotel. Kate’s husband did not live a long life. One of her sons, was **Fred Angell** who was a barber for many years in Tonganoxie. He loved baseball and would close his barbershop while he watched or listened to the games.

Etta Katherine Angell Elston was commonly known as “E.K.”. She was the great granddaughter of Magdalena Bury. Although she knew of her relationship to Tonganoxie’s founding person, she never talked about this. What she did was raise two boys, have a full time job with Fred Zoellner’s grocery store and write numerous letters to many many different people. She especially wrote letters to men and boys in the military service. She always enjoyed receiving letters from these people, but if she never got a letter, she still continued to correspond with those individuals.

She loved sports, people and action. She was involved with numerous activities. She loved baking and cooking, and if there was a birthday person, she was probably involved. Her involvement usually meant that she was working in the background. She left the praises for other people. One time her boy, as a freshman, was out for football. After a few weeks he wanted to quit. She told him he didn’t have to go out for football, but he was not going to quit. Once you start something you must finish it.



Fanny Buillimore

Alice Spoor

Alice Spoor was born in England and came to Tonganoxie around 1900. She operated a millinery store in Tonganoxie for more than 40 years. She died in 1959 at the age of 86. She was very civic minded and interested in advancing Tonganoxie. With that in mind her association with the Tonganoxie library provided evidence of her interests. For some time the idea of a library was a few books kept in the bank building. Eventually those books were moved to Alice Spoor’s millinery store. Additional books were added and kept in the back of her store.

After a few years Alice needed to expand her store. She offered to share the back half of her new store with the library association. This association lasted around 30 years. It stopped when the library association needed more

space which became available when the owner of a grocery store moved to California.

She was very active in the Congregational Church. She sang in a church quartet and the church choir. She also was involved with the youth of Tonganoxie in that if you made an "A" in your school work all you had to do was to bring in your report card and receive some candy. The kids loved it. Ask Carol Slawson.



Gracie Reusch

Gracie Reusch and her husband, Merle, operated a filling station which not only sold gasoline and products to keep your vehicle working, they sold cigarettes, cigars, and OH! YES, CANDY. Merle operated a small trucking line that generally hauled cattle. During wheat or corn harvest, Merle would clean up the truck in preparation of hauling grain.

Although Merle operated the truck line, Gracie managed the store, took care of the books involving the trucking business, and kept all the kids in Tonganoxie happy with candy. At one time or another all the children around Tonganoxie knew where to get some free candy. Gracie loved it. Gracie and Merle had no children so Gracie took it upon herself to give candy to any kid who came by and whose parents didn't mind their kids getting some free candy.

It was not as well known as the free candy, but Gracie also helped the young people make some money with pop bottles. In those days pop bottles were worth some money. A regular pop bottle was worth two pennies. A regular beer bottle was worth 3 pennies. A quart beer bottle was worth a nickel.

Gracie would buy these bottles from the kids for face value, keep those bottles until the pop delivery man would come by and pick up the bottles. He would pay Gracie what Gracie paid the kids. She never made any money from this work, but the kids did. **Just ask me!!!!**



Mildred Knox
Young

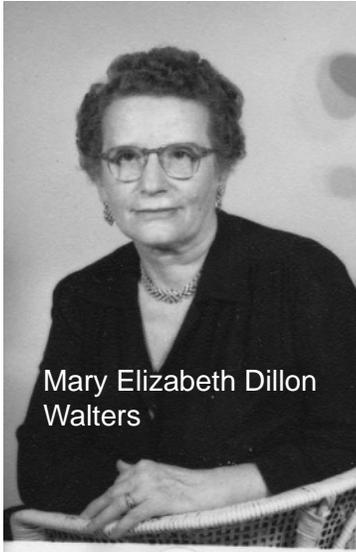
Mildred Knox Young grew up on a dairy farm which was originally started by the Fairchild name. Eventually, the Fairchild dairy became the Knox dairy. So Mildred as a young person became knowledgeable about dairies. Mildred had no children, but through the Congregational Church she worked with many of the church's youth. She loved playing the piano and the Church's pipe organ.

She gave a large amount of her time to the development of the children's church choir. Every Sunday she would play the piano for the Sunday school and 4 to 6 times a year she would accompany the children's choir for a presentation during the church service. What this really means is every week she had to be at the children's choir practice plus be involved with the kids choir 4 to 6 times a year. Oh, Yes! Christmas was an additional program which she helped get the kids ready.

In addition to this she also played the pipe organ for the church services. This required some special preparation because there was always a split second delay in the sound. You would play the note and a few moments later you would hear the sound.

These church items were not well known around town, but what she did for the entire community is provide the property and the buildings from her farm to the Tonganoxie Historical Society. The Historical society could not exist without her donation. Prior to this donation the historical society met at the Riford Center, which was good, but not nearly large enough to hold all the items in our museum.

Mary Elizabeth Dillon Walters was commonly referred to as “Maybeth”. She and her husband were married in 1925. Their only child was born in 1939. Until they moved to the town of Tonganoxie, Mrs. Walters had some adjustment to make. For several years she lived with her inlaws. She and her mother-in-law did not always agree on how food was to be cooked. In addition her mother-in-law would



Mary Elizabeth Dillon Walters

get up ca. 5 AM and get everything going and then she would go back to bed. That left Mrs. Walters with the total preparation of food for all the hired help. Her advice to me was to go and live with your wife’s people if you have to because they will know how to fix your oat meal. After a few years the Walters family moved to another farm. One problem was removed but another became a serious problem. The cattle would get out and she would have to go get them. Her husband was always in town visiting. Eventually they moved to town and this problem was solved.

Mrs Walters was an excellent helper. Mr. Walters was an auctioneer and if money is a judge of how good you are, he was good. He sold the items and she kept the books and was the clerk of the sales. After the 1951 flood, the sale business went down hill and eventually due to illness and no items to sell, they had to get out of this business.

Mrs Walters was a school teacher and she went back to teaching. Income was needed. She put her son through college on a teaching salary of \$3,500.00 per year. In addition she went back to school to get a masters degree in library science. She taught until she was 75 years old.

In addition to the above, Mrs. Walters had several civic groups that were

very important to her.

No. 1 was she was active in the Reading Club. This club was a strong backer for the library in Tonganoxie. The club bought books, read books, reported on books and helped the city library become a success.

No. 2 was she was always interested in having the church music be top notch. To this effort she bought excellent sheet music for the choir to sing. More importantly, the church with her direction desired to get a pipe organ. This eventually was successful. There were many church dinners for money, and the church members worked hard for several years to get enough money to purchase a Reuter organ. One could safely say the entire town bought that organ. However, Mrs. Walters had a serious part in acquiring that organ.

No. 3 was the swimming pool. During and after WWII the pool struggled. Money was probably the issue. It was not open all the time. And sometimes it was very dirty and probably not safe to swim. It wasn’t until the city took over the pool operation that the pool became a quality place. In that regard, the pool had been closed and it was up for sale. A Mrs Tom Butler from KC Kansas had purchased the pool and was going to tear out the pool and replace with rental property. Mrs. Butler was aware of many people not wanting to loose the pool. She knew Mrs. Walters and came to discuss the situation with Mrs. Walters. She offered the pool to the city for \$2,500.00.

Mrs Walters was aware that several towns were exploring building new pools for a cost of \$50,000-\$100,000.00. Tonganoxie already had the pool, we just needed the city to buy the pool and all people would be able to use this pool. With that in mind, she, Mrs. John Dorney and Walt Neibarger set out to get the city to buy the pool. This means there would have to be an election on keeping the pool. She canvased the city, leaving those people alone who she believe might not want the pool. It took quite a large amount of work to get the pool bought, but when the voting was over only 3-4 people voted against the city buying the pool.

The pool has always operated each year since the original voting. Now the pool has been totally remade and it is still successful. Just drive by in the summer and you will see.



Mollie Myers and her mother, Mrs. Benjamin Elliott

Molly Myers was an Elliott. The Elliott family was familiar in operating hotels. In fact her sister later in life operated the Elliott hotel. When that happened the Benjamin Elliott family (Molly's parents) came and helped Molly in her hotel/restaurant business. In 1894 Molly began her operation of the Myers hotel and restaurant. She was noted for her chicken dinners. It was a destination point and people came from all over. Frequently, military personnel came from Ft. Leavenworth to dine at her restaurant. General Pershing, Major DW Eisenhower, and Wm Inge dined at this hotel.

Molly raised a good amount of the food she served. She had to be well organized to kill the chickens, dress the chickens and cook them for the customers satisfaction. And she was obviously an excellent cook. Her husband, Jake, was probably not the best help because he suffered from a Civil War injury which made it difficult to "get around".

Molly died in 1930 and the business was taken over by her son, Jake Myers and his wife, Francis Young Myers. Times were tough and they lost the business. Finally, it was sold to Almeda Barber Tinberg at a sheriffs sale.

However, from 1894 to 1930, one would have to say that this operation was a tremendous success. To dine at this hotel and eat the chicken dinners became a destination point for people from all over the U.S. Molly always served a

considerable amount of food which was well received by many customers.



Helen Schilling

Helen Schilling

The Schilling family came to the U.S. from Bingen, Germany. They settled on a farm about 15 miles south of Hiawatha, KS. The town was called, Baker. It no longer exists.

In 1914 several families, including the Martin V. Schilling family and the Perry A. Walters family, moved from Baker, KS to Tonganoxie, Kansas. These families moved because of a tornado which destroyed many homes, barns, etc. in the Baker area. This tornado struck the area around Baker in 1911. Although, these families moved due to that tornado, the move never completely removed these families' thoughts about tornados. My dad, Perry A. Walters never completely "got over" that tornado.

Helen Schilling first started writing for The Mirror while she was in high school. Helen worked 12 years for the Suburban Telephone Company. Ten of those years she was the Chief Operator under the direction of Foster Laming. In 1943 she joined the U.S. Coast Guard as a Spar. She served 2.5 years in Boston. After completion of her Coast Guard career, she returned to Kansas City and worked at the White Goods Manufacturing Company for almost 30 years. For twenty years she served as traffic manager for this company.

During WWII she also served as a volunteer at the Massachusetts General Hospital. After she returned to Kansas she volunteered for the USO-Traveler's aid at the Union Station, and also volunteered at St. Mary's Hospital. She was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Tonganoxie, a 50 year member of Rinda Chapter no. 82, O.E.S, and the Rebekahs.

She was an active member of the Navy Club of Missouri, Conway Nichols American Legion Post No. 340 of Sugar Creek, Missouri, and she was the past Commander of the Kansas City Women's Post

No. 465. She also maintained her membership in the Kansas City Women's Traffic Cab of Greater Kansas City, MO.

She was one of the original board members of the Tonganoxie Community Historical Society. She was a proud and dedicated member of the Centennial Committee for Chief Tonganoxie Park.

After Helen moved back to Tonganoxie, she once again became a reporter for the Tonganoxie Mirror, a weekly newspaper. She seemed to thoroughly enjoy this position. She was always enthused about what she was doing. Always had a smile on her face. She always supported the historical society and we miss her support. What she did was gather a large number of Chili Feed tickets and sell them to the businesses all over Tonganoxie. She was good at this selling—she wouldn't take no for an answer. When she could no longer perform this operation, our sales of chili dinners dropped in number.

Mildred McMillon was born August 27, 1927 in Americus, Georgia. She died March 17, 2017. She lived in the Tonganoxie area from 1967 until she died at the age of 89. Mildred was very civic minded. She became active in civic items after her husband retired in 1980. The area she was active for the longest time was in the area of schools. She was elected to the local school board and served here for eleven and one half years. She then served 12 years with the Kansas State School Board. She followed this by serving again on the Tonganoxie School board for another four years. In 2011 she was inducted into the USD 464 Hall of Fame.



She was active in her church activities. She was a member of the United Methodist Church and served as president five times. She was past president of the United Methodist Women. She was also active in other areas. She was an active member of the Advisory Board of Leavenworth County Council on Aging. She was a member of the Silver Haired Legislature. She was a member of the Advisory Board for the Juvenile Correction Board. She was past president of the Leavenworth County Democratic Club. She was past president of Chapter AT-PEO of Tonganoxie, Past Matron of Sincerity Chapter #295 order of the Eastern Star, and the Red Hatters. She was active in Jimmy Carter's Presidential campaign and attended the inauguration activities including the BBQ on the White House Lawn.

The one thing that I find most interesting is that she was a member of the Kansas State Trap Shooters Association.

One can tell that she was a very active member in the civic areas that she joined. I believe that she must have been well organized and able to motivate many people.

Donna Wiley a well organized, remarkable women whose leadership has affected numerous adults and young people, particularly those involved in 4-H.



In 1993 Donna Wiley was named outstanding career woman by the Lawrence Woman's Network. Donna was Controller of the World Co., parent company of the Journal World. She was honored for her career achievements and community service. She was a charter member of the Lawrence Women's Network. and she is active in American Business Women's Association. She was named

Woman of the Year in 1986.

She also has been a member of the International Newspaper Financial Executives. While Donna had numerous affiliations with various women's organizations, her significant association was with the World Co. in Lawrence. This is the organization that she worked for. This is the organization that paid her a salary.

The organization that Donna gave the bulk of her free time was obviously, 4-H. Her long association with 4-H helped many young 4-H kids grow and develop into young adults. In 1963 when her children were old enough to be 4-H members she founded the Reno Bob White 4-H Club. Her work in 4-H has been described as "Special".

1. President of the Leavenworth County 4-H Foundation. She was the founder of this part of the 4-H organization. This foundation's job was to provide scholarship to those 4-H kids who were going to college.

2. During the second annual meeting of the 4-H foundation, Donna Wiley was surprised to discover that her name would be used for the Fairgrounds food pavilion. The food pavilion is the only method used to provide money for the scholarships to the 4-H seniors in school.

Donna was the leader in the food pavilion. This involved purchasing all the food for the pavilion which would operate from 7 AM until 11 PM for 5 days. She also determined the number of kids and adults needed to man the food pavilion. Just the planning of this 4-H project took most of a year.

3. Donna was the first recipient of the Spirit Award. This award honored Donna's effort in 4-H. She not only started a new club, the Reno Bob White 4-H Club, she designed a 4-H building and guided numerous young members with their various projects.

4. She has given many hours to 4-H. One year she kept track of the time she gave. The hours given that year were 360 hours. She has no regrets with the number of hours she has given to help the kids.

5. During the time she was a leader of the Reno Bobwhites, she notes that the club produced 6 state winners and one national winner.

When you consider all the things in which Donna was involved, you begin to understand how all this could work. Obviously, she must be very well organized, she has to understand people and how they work, and she has to work well with groups of adults and kids. We are glad to have her as a member of our historical society.



Making repairs on the Union Pacific Railroad depot in Tonganoxie. c. 1925.



Northwestern railroad depot on east 4th street where S&S Body shop is now. Date: 1890 JCL

It is obvious that these two photos (**above**) are identical. The problem is—which one is the correct photo for what is described. What do we really know? Not much. What we do know is this:

—The photo with the blue was done by Jim Morey. The yellow photo is seemingly done by JCL, or John Cass Lenahan.

—The original Union Pacific depot was painted red. I don't remember exactly when it was painted the buff color, but I think it was ca. 1900.

—The Kansas City, Wyandotte, and Northwestern RR was bankrupt about one year before it was considered open. I doubt if they put too much money into a depot. Yes, they had one, but I don't think it looked like this one.

—The JCL photo is dated 1890, the blue photo is dated 1925. I think the best date for these two photos is 1925.

—I'm not sure who was the most accurate researcher on these photos, but I put my money on Jim Morey.

March, TCHS welcomed Donna Higbee as our newest board member. Donna recently retired from a career with Parents as Teachers. Donna grew up in Tonganoxie as Donna Himpel. She married Dave Higbee forty years ago - they have two children, Elizabeth and Ben. Dave is also recently retired. We are very happy to welcome Donna to the Board!



New Chairs for the Barn! In preparing to move into the new high school classrooms, the school district decided to donate some of the furniture and equipment from the old buildings to local non-profits and the community. We were the very lucky recipients of over 70 stunning upholstered stacking chairs. The chairs replace some that have been in use for over ten years. We are very grateful!



In our last newsletter, we showed a **photo of the outhouse** behind the Honey Valley School laying on its side after a particularly windy evening in mid-December. Well, the outhouse is no longer laying down.

Our volunteers came up with a plan and assisted by our good neighbor, Gene Becker, were able to right the outhouse. It took some

carpentry to attach new sill plates to

the concrete slab, but once that was done, it was just some old-fashioned ingenuity to brace the outhouse and lift it into place.



And now the volunteers are getting new siding prepped to install on the outhouse. Our volunteers, Don Talbott, Jim Stuke, Dan Carr, and Lloyd Pearson are great!

Ed. Note: When I was growing up in Tonganoxie, every Halloween many farm items and out houses were moved around or turned over. “Bud” Laming while being interviewed for a DVD movie let it be known that one person who was out with some of his friends doing Halloween damage to a country school’s out house, fell into the “HOLE” that was left after the out house was turned over. Bud said that they left him to find his own way home.

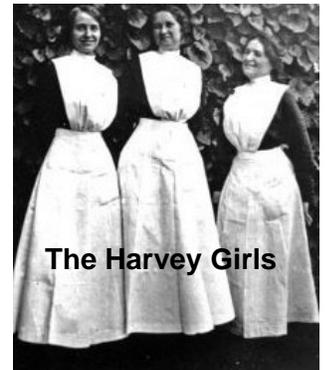
Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events at the Historical Society & Museum. All events are open to the public and, unless otherwise noted, all events are free.



Dr. Michaeline
Chance-Reay

Fourth Tuesday Program, April 26,

7:00pm. The topic is **The Harvey Girls**, presented by Dr. Michaeline Chance-Reay and sponsored by Humanities Kansas. The Harvey House chain of restaurants got its start in Topeka when Fred Harvey opened a café for people traveling the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. Preferring the term “Harvey Girl” to waitress, he recruited single women to work at his restaurants that gradually sprang up all the way to California and Texas. This presentation explores the job duties and working conditions of Harvey Girls from 1876 to the early 1950s.



The Harvey Girls



Jon Nelson

Fourth Tuesday Program, May 24, 7:00pm. Jon Nelson will give a presentation about Tonganoxie native **Creighton Siegert** and his World War II bombing mission over Germany on **May 24th**. Jon gave a program several years ago about Creighton that was very well received. Jon has done more research since that time and he is in the process of writing a book about Creighton, his family, his life in Tonganoxie, his service in the military, the crew, and the mission.



Creighton Siegert

Monday, May 30, Memorial Day Breakfast, 7:30am. We have missed two years of this special event, so plan now to stop by for Bixby’s Gravy & TCHS homemade biscuits. Donations will be happily accepted.

A VERY SPECIAL EXHIBIT

Featured in the Fairchild barn is a traveling exhibit which is well worth viewing. We were the first museum to show this exhibit which will be here for a limited time. Since Tonganoxie was originally a part of the Delaware Reserve, the historical society has prepared a supporting exhibit about the Delaware in Tonganoxie. The

permanent exhibits in the museum of prehistoric artifacts and detailed history of the Kansas and Delawares enriches the traveling panels.

Traveling Exhibit “**Living Sovereignty: Sustaining Indigenous Autonomy in ‘Indian Territory’ Kansas.**” Put simply, sovereignty is a group’s right to self-rule. As independent nations existing for generations before European and American settlement, America’s Indigenous peoples embodied sovereignty.

Throughout the history of interactions between the United States government and Indigenous nations and tribes, maintaining sovereignty and self-government has been a challenge that continues today.

Living Sovereignty explores the histories of the tribal peoples that populated Kansas and the ways they found to express their sovereignty and maintain cultural identity.

It is fitting that this exhibit is premiering in Tonganoxie, a town that was named in 1866 in honor of a Delaware man who lived here from the early 1830s into the early 1860s. Tonganoxie is also located in the heart of the land that made up the last Delaware Reservation, which was eliminated in 1866.

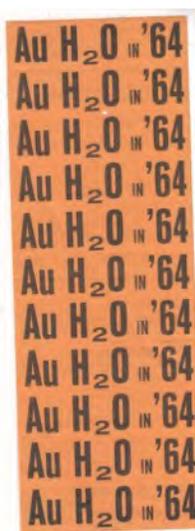
The traveling exhibit is the result of a collaboration between Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area, the Watkins Museum of History, and the Museum Studies Program at the KU College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

The exhibit will be on display until April 30, 2022 during regular museum hours (Tuesday 9-4, Wednesday 9-noon, Saturday 10-2) or any time by appointment (call 913-845-2960 or email TCHSTonganoxie@gmail.com).

From the Museum

A request for uniforms used by summer ball was in the last newsletter. Sure enough, J.W. Evans brought a bright green jersey and ball cap for the team sponsored by his company. Any more?

A 1933 Football Banquet Program from Tonganoxie High School and a Hawk Hollow schools Christmas card from 1919 -1920 were donated. Charles Conrad contributed several vintage photographs such as the opening the of AW RootBeer stand, a photo of the Rawlings Feed Store, and a photo of the mill with the third story still there.



Mike and Cheryl Emery brought to us a Buster Brown display mannequin from Zoellner’s. Another vintage campaign item is below. Who can translate the chemistry?

We received news that Anna Mary Doege Landauer passed away at her home just short of her 104th birthday. We appreciated her interest in history and her contributions to the museum. We will miss her.



Unveiling the Stories of Us, a photographic mural installed in the new High School Media Center. During the planning of the high school project, the school superintendent district commissioned Leigh Coffman (THS 1977) to prepare a mural using photographs of Tonganoxie. Leigh layered over 35 photographs to create a mural that hovers over the media center.

TCHS was asked to compile the stories behind the photographs. With the help of many community members, these stories were collected and presented in draft form by TCHS Board members at the Open House for the new high school on [February 9](#).

The final draft of the stories is nearly complete and will be presented to the school. Do take the time to see the mural at the high school. It is truly a work of art.

