

## Tonganoxie Community Historical Society



Tonganoxie High School Students and teachers have been working to provide a new design for the newsletter. Students Rachel Harbour and Rowin Pruitt are helping with the newsletter. The students are pictured with teacher Nick Bratkovic.

## Historical Society Partners With Local High School Students to Redesign Newsletter

By Kay Soetaert

Welcome to our 1st Quarter, 2023 Newsletter. This publication is a collaboration with the Tonganoxie High School Journalism class and some of our Museum directors. We hope you enjoy the new format and please provide any feedback to us which can help us improve as we move forward with this quarterly project.

At this time we want to thank long-time volunteer Perry Walters for overseeing the writing and publication of this newsletter for the past 11 years. We are grateful for his contributions and all the research he has added to our archives. The newsletter is an important medium for us in staying in contact with our members and all appreciate Perry's years of service in that role. Please thank Perry next time you see him.

This new collaboration has been spearheaded by Ken Mark, Board Member and Mr. Nicholas Bratkovic, THS journalism instructor and his students. We are always excited to work with another community group as it gives us an opportunity to share more of the happenings at the Museum. As we progress in this relationship, we will encourage high school students also to contribute articles. This is what many would call "a work in progress" so please be patient and let us know your thoughts on ways to improve. It is our goal to keep all our members informed of future events, share some interesting historical facts, and encourage others to join us out at the site volunteering as we strive to keep our local history alive.



## Upcoming Events

### Fourth Tuesday Programs

April 25, 2023 7 p.m. –  
A Moth on the Publick Purse:  
A Short History of Fort Osage,  
presented by David Bennett

May 23, 2023 7 p.m. –  
Faith and Camp Funston,  
presented by Patricia Cecil,  
sponsored by Humanities  
Kansas

Memorial Day Biscuits and  
Gravy Monday, May 29  
7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Reveille at 7:30, raise the flag  
(Boy Scouts) Presentation of  
the Colors (American Legion  
and VFW) Biscuits and Gravy  
Breakfast with fruit, coffee  
cakes, orange juice, water and  
coffee.

History Camp  
Monday, June 5 through  
Friday, June 9 from 9 a.m. to  
noon. History Camp is a  
themed camp focusing on  
local history and is open to  
youth entering grades 4, 5, 6  
in the fall of 2023.

Registration opens in mid-May.

All events are located at the  
TCHS site at 201 West  
Washington Street.

## From the President

By Kris Roberts

Volunteers Janet Burnett and Joy Lominska are focusing their efforts on reaching out to community members who attended a one-room schoolhouse and can share their experiences and memories with us. For several months now, the pair have focused their efforts on the 25+ one room schools in southwest Leavenworth County. Honey Valley School, which is located on the museum site, is the perfect place to tell these stories. Our displays in the schoolhouse have always told the stories on Honey Valley School, and we are determined to tell more stories and share more information about these schools.

Honey Valley School was organized on March 25, 1869, as District #56. It was the 56th school incorporated in Leavenworth County in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The schoolhouse was renovated by TCHS volunteers in the 1990s. You can help them with their research. If you have stories or memories that you could share with us, please call or e-mail us to set up a time to come in.

Perhaps you recognized the 1936 USA Fire Pumper Truck in the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 11. Dave Higbee and John Callaghan drove the truck for us in the rain. Our truck has been in the St. Patrick's Day parade for over fifteen years.



John Callaghan and Dave Higbee are ready for the parade to start.

### Museum improvements

On another topic, the historical society continues to work on improving the facilities at the museum. This winter, we have replaced and added to the exterior light fixtures at the museum. Pictures won't do this story any justice. You must see it in person. Be sure to come out for a Fourth Tuesday program soon to see the improvement these lights make to our parking lot. This project was funded through local grants and donations.

# About The Tonganoxie Historical Society

**Tonganoxie Community Historical Society Mission Statement—**  
Our mission is to discover, collect, identify, preserve and display materials that illustrate the history of the Tonganoxie community and make these materials accessible to the community.

### Hours:

Tuesdays – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Wednesdays – 9:00 am to noon

Saturdays – 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Other times can be arranged by appointment.

### Contact Information:

Call 913-845-2960 or email [TCHSTonganoxie@gmail.com](mailto:TCHSTonganoxie@gmail.com). for more information. Holidays and weather can affect our times. Please call or check Facebook if uncertain.

### ADMISSION IS FREE.

We are funded through dues, donations, fund-raisers and grants. Your membership and your contributions are important.

### Board of Directors

Ray Stockman, Chairman

Kris Roberts, President

Janet Burnett, Vice President

Connie Torneden, Secretary

Shirley Martin, Treasurer

Donna Higbee

Ken Mark

Rose Mangan

Kay Soetaert

Laurie Walters, Museum Director



**TONGANOXIE  
COMMUNITY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

# From the Museum Director

By Laurie Walters

Occasionally a donation comes into the museum that beautifully connects to one of our archived items from years ago. Such was the case of a poem written by Doc. Brown, a vaudeville ventriloquist, and magician from Tonganoxie. His poem called Cox's Hill is shared below:

## Cox's Hill

*To each his own at sleighin' time,  
No doubt you have a favorite spot.  
My thoughts go back to Cox's Hill,  
Where I went sleddin' as a Tot.  
Th' Home-Town kids would gather,  
Upon this snowy frozen crest-  
An' Eager-Beavers gathered sticks,  
To light the' pathway for th' rest.*

*They all came from miles around,  
With sled, toboggan an' ski.  
Now, when we were all assembled,  
'Round th' bon-fire burnin' bright  
We'd harmonize, Home-made style,  
Our voices echoed in th' night.*

*What fun we had a slidin' down,  
'Twas our reward for hence we came.  
At times on a bump or bush we'd spill,  
This sport was really nothin' tame.  
But this didn't bother us a bit,  
Nor gave us too much thrill.  
Oh! To be a youth again,  
An' go A-coasting down COX'S HILL.*



Sledding on Cox's Hill.

Jackie Wilson Scholar donated a file of material from the Alumni Association of Tonganoxie High School. Included was a ledger of the alumni banquet materials used for planning all the alumni banquets and reunions from 1916 onward. This material is filed here, and future planners will be welcome to review in order that they can proceed with contemporary planning.

It is interesting to scan the menus. Some early ones boast of Society Flakes, Tempting Teasers, and Angel Delight. Cherry Pie was an all-time favorite. These events which are still occurring today take a lot of preparation and notification of the honored 25 year and 50 year classes.

## Recent Events

Genesis School 6th and 7th graders came to Reno Church on January 24, as part of their studies of early churches in southern Leavenworth County. Volunteers talked about the history of the Reno Church and where it was located. A map of Reno was provided so that the group could travel to Reno and locate where the church stood from 1891 until 1993.

Judy Manthe, Principal Chief of the Wyandot Nation, presented the Fourth Tuesday program on January 24. The topic was “Lyda Burton Conley and the Strength of the Wyandot Women.” Lyda Conley and her sisters fought to save the Huron Cemetery in Kansas City, Kansas.

In 1910 she was the third woman and the first Native American to argue a case before the Supreme Court of the United States.

### February Program

The February 28 Fourth Tuesday program was homegrown -- “Memories: Identifying Old Photos of Tonganoxie People and Places.” Tuna Conrad and the historical society worked together to gather interesting photographs to share with attendees and attendees brought photographs too. Sharing tidbits of history and stories of family and friends is what makes history come alive.

## The annual Chili Supper Returned after 2-years

For two years, the historical society was unable to host its Annual Chili Supper. But in 2023, we came back!

We were greeted by an ice storm the night before our intended date for the supper. Thanks to the flexibility of the United Methodist Church, we moved the supper from Thursday, February 16 to Friday, February 17.

What a great day it was! We served over 250 meals. The pies were beautiful. The chili and the vegetable beef soup were great. We will be back again next year to host our modern-day equivalent of a soup social and a pie social all wrapped in one.

Pictures: Gladys Walters and friends; Nancy Pearce; Lani Putthoff.





# King of Fourth Street



By Kay Soetart

As a youngster in the 1960s, I spent a lot of my childhood hours on 4th Street in Tonganoxie. My parents, Bill and Lois Emery, ran Emery Feed Store at 4th and Pleasant Street and for my three brothers and I, this was like a second home. During the summers, we helped in different roles and it was always the place we walked to after school. In 1967 I moved up a street and started working at The Tonganoxie Mirror and had an up close look at all the businesses and their owners on 4th. I was always very impressed with the idea of being a business owner as I noted that they were respected and very community focused. These were the folks who had a vision and they were also the ones doing many hours of volunteering for causes in Tonganoxie. I can still think back on that decade and recite most of those business owners and where their shops were located. One that I did not get to know personally was Fred Angell, the barber, who was on the south side 500 block of Fourth.

He was one of those dedicated business owners who I admired and seemed to have a pulse of the town. After a little research over fifty years later, I understand more about “The King of Fourth Street” or Mr. Tonganoxie II, which were nicknames many used for Fred Angell.

Fred was born March 3, 1887 to Kate and Alton Angell in Illinois. But he already had a thread to Tonganoxie as it was his grandmother Magdalena Bury who platted the

original 40 acres of property which was named The Village of Tonganoxie.

He bought the barber shop in 1909 and ran it continuously until 1972 when sickness slowed him down. He actually became a barber at age 15 and when he finally closed his shop he had been on 4th Street working for a period of sixty-eight years. But he was more than a barber. He was Fire Chief for thirty-five years and at one time the President of the State Firemen’s Association. He also served on the City Council and played the drums for the Tonganoxie Band. He provided the locals with the latest town news and gossip as well as being an expert on sports, especially baseball.

Walt Neibarger wrote an editorial in The Tonganoxie Mirror after Fred passed on November 8, 1972. One passage says “Fred was the official link to the founding of the town, now a venerable community with its 100-year Centennial behind it. Others came and went but Fred stuck around the old camping ground. He never lived anyplace else, didn’t want to. He didn’t quit until the last out in inning number nine.”

I sometimes wish I could still walk by that barber shop and look in and see the happenings. He would always have a white shirt and bow tie on and if not working you could catch him in the barber chair listening to a game on the radio. No surprises, just another day on 4th Street.

# Volunteer Spotlight

## DAN CARR

Our holiday dinner in December celebrated more than just holidays.

We also celebrated long-time volunteer, Dan Carr, who relocated in January 2023 to Prairie Village, KS to be closer to relatives. Dan's talents are many. Through the years Dan, as a volunteer, has fabricated custom shims for displays in the museum. He created our gift shop a few years ago, using apple crates and old merchandise shelving. He was a part of the crew that put life back into our 1936 USA Fire Pumper Truck. And he has been on the mowing crew for as long as he has been volunteering.

Dan and his wife, Caryle, moved to rural Leavenworth County in 2001 from Kansas City. Both were professors, Dan in medical biochemistry and molecular biology and Caryle in pathology and medical technology. After moving to this area, they quickly became involved in volunteer work with several museums in Leavenworth and, fortunately for us, in Tonganoxie.

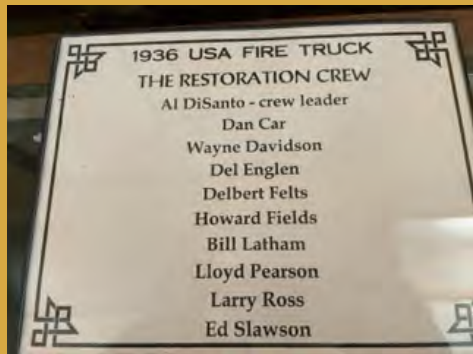
Together, Dan and Caryle were active in TCHS, hosting refreshments at program meetings and serving as docents at the museum on Sunday afternoons. Having no children of their own, they always signed up to docent the museum on Mother's Day and Father's Day, so that other volunteers could spend those days with family. Sadly, Caryle passed away in January 2018. We have missed her.

It is a small world. Dan knew both Fred Leimkuhler and George Cooper from his life in Kansas City before he and Caryle moved to this area. He was delighted to run into both men when he started volunteering at TCHS.

Now Dan is in a new chapter of his life. We hope to see him some Wednesday morning this summer for coffee (and maybe some mowing).



# In Memoriam



## Delbert Felts

Delbert Felts, 94, Tonganoxie, passed away December 12, 2022 at his home. Delbert was a devoted longtime volunteer at the Historical Society. He was a member of the 1936 USA Fire Truck Restoration Crew who worked tirelessly on Tonganoxie's first pumper truck which is now used for local parades.

Delbert was also instrumental in the development of the display rooms depicting earlier times in our Barn. And in recent years it was Delbert who pointed out the Spring which is on the Museum property. His knowledge and history of this spring were the first steps in the creation of the recent Fairchild Spring Exhibit.



## Mary Jane Grinter

Mary Jane Grinter, 85, Reno, passed away on January 27, 2023. She was a life member of TCHS and we are so grateful for the beautiful painting of the Reno Methodist Church she gifted the Museum. It is a beautiful watercolor that she painted on site in 2007. The painting hangs in the church and is a great reminder of her artistic talent. A picture of the painting is included below.



Tonganoxie Community Historical Society  
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PO Box 785  
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## **TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE**

The TCHS is a non-profit, community-based organization that relies on its members and others in the community to help us move forward with our mission. Here are some opportunities to partner with us.

- **Volunteer** – You could volunteer to share your talents by helping with various activities and events at the museum or with our buildings and grounds. Volunteer opportunities include assisting in providing programs for local students, serving as a docent for groups and individuals touring our facilities, helping to create new exhibits in the museum, providing refreshments for our 4th Tuesday programs, and helping with mowing and maintenance of our facilities.
- **Attending our 4th Tuesday programs** - We provide programs with presentations by quality speakers about interesting topics.
- **Artifacts** –If you have items of local historical interest, including old photographs, please consider donating them to the TCHS.
- **Membership** – Please encourage your friends and acquaintances to become either annual or lifetime members of the TCHS. Membership information is provided on our website.
- **Donations** – Please consider supporting the TCHS financially. Some ways of doing this include donations by cash or check, automatic withdrawals from your checking account, donations of stocks and securities, Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRA's, and bequests. Please contact us for more information about these donation options.