

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society



The family of Carol Dee Knox Smith celebrating her 90th birthday at the Fairchild-Knox Barn. Carol (third from left in front row) shared her family history with all and led them on tour of all buildings after lunch.

90th Birthday Celebration at Family Barn

By Kay Soetaert

On June 10th Carol Dee Knox Smith celebrated her 90th birthday at the Tonganoxie Community Historical Site. About forty members of her family and some friends attended this special occasion in the Barn built in 1932 by her grandfather Archie Knox. The land which encompasses the Historical Site was originally owned by her great-grandfather Frank Fairchild. She picked this location for her gathering to share the history of her family with the younger generations.

After a wonderful bar-b-q luncheon and birthday cake Carol shared some of her favorite memories. She had several handouts and a scrapbook full of the Fairchild-Knox history which dates back to the late 1800's in this area. She spoke of her family's progressive dairy practices and also the hardships and tragedies the family overcame.

After the rain stopped, she led the group which included a couple of newborns to the Honey Valley School where Carol had attended elementary school. Her mother, Mrs. Jeanne Knox had been a teacher at Honey Valley before she became a revered third-grade teacher at Tonganoxie Elementary. Carol, a former teacher herself, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and then all recited the Lord's Prayer before sitting at their desks.

All of us at TCHS wish Carol a Happy Birthday and thank her for choosing our site for this occasion. We are grateful for all the support which this family has given the Society over the years. Their recent gift has been earmarked for needed school preservation and is currently underway. The history of the Fairchild-Knox Farms and families can be found on pages 6 and 7, along with more photos from her birthday event.

Upcoming Events

Fourth Tuesday Programs

August 22nd, 7:00 pm:
 "In the Eye of the Border Storm: The Under Ground Railroad at Quindaro, Kansas Territory 1857" with presenter and Independent Researcher Steve Collins PhD.

October 24th 7:00 pm:
 "Railroaded: The Industry That Shaped Kansas" with author and historian Leo Oliva; sponsored by Humanities Kansas

Other Events

September 23, 6 pm:
 Five town picnic at the TCHS site to recognize the 100th anniversary of the five town picnic held in Tonganoxie that celebrated the completion of the local portion of The Victory Highway.

October 21, 9 am to 2 pm:
 Barn Block Workshop. Registration opens on August 7th. Space is limited to 12 people.

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

From the President, Kris Roberts

It has been a busy quarter, including Fourth Tuesday programs, the annual Biscuits and Gravy Memorial Day Breakfast, and History Camp. We also contributed to the Summer Reading Program at the library with some background information for the Bigfoot Tour of Tonganoxie.

We hosted two barn block workshops for 4-H youth and parents to create 2' x 2' barn blocks with animals to be used as identification on the fair barns starting this year.

One of the very heartwarming events this quarter was a reception in the barn for Helene Miller in late June. The reception was also a sort of reunion, as many past and present volunteers came by to say hello, along with other friends of Helene and the historical society. Helene, a long-time teacher, was active in the historical society twenty years ago and led the charge to develop the third-grade field trip in 2006.

Helene moved to Joplin some years ago but was in Tonganoxie in late June for a short visit. TCHS board member, Shirley Martin, organized the reception in the barn and invited many of Helene's friends. I was especially grateful to meet Helene, who until June 27, had only been a name in our files. It was a very good day.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for a very special picnic in September.

We will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the completion of the paved road between Kansas City, KS and Topeka and Leavenworth in 1923. In 1923 Tonganoxie hosted a Five Town Picnic to celebrate.

The paved road was known by several names. It was the Fort to Fort Road in many accounts and had been in progress for four or five years. But it also became known as the Victory Highway in 1923, and later Highway 40.

To really grasp the significance of this road, you must remember that paved roads were very rare in 1923. Roads were made of dirt – mud after a rain or a spring thaw. Automobiles were just becoming popular and affordable. There were no federal highways and no state highways.

We are partnering with the Watkins Museum in Lawrence, the Wyandotte County Museum, and the Leavenworth County Historical Society to create a traveling exhibit that tells the story of early roads in this area and the opening of this very special section of road.

The exhibit will premier in Tonganoxie on September 16 during Tonganoxie Days in the old City Council Chambers, and then travel to the museum for a 2023 Five Town Picnic on September 23. More details will follow on social media and our website.

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. 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**

Second Quarter Happenings



Biscuits and Gravy held for Memorial Day

The Memorial Day Biscuits and Gravy was a success as we served about 65 at our annual breakfast. The local Boy Scouts and American Legion and VFW kicked off the morning with Reveille and raising of the flag at 7:30 am. Many volunteers helped with making the biscuits, providing food and serving and cleaning. Big thank you to Dennis Bixby for providing the gravy again.



THS Students Volunteer

On May 3 we welcomed ten Tonganoxie High School students and teacher, John Tollefson to our grounds for the annual High School Community Work Day. They weeded beds, cleaned the barn, museum and school and even washed our 1936 Fire Truck. It is always a highlight to have these groups come out and lend a hand.



4-H Students spend day designing at barn

Seventeen local 4-Hers and several leaders spent several Saturdays designing and painting Barn Blocks for the Fair Grounds' different animal barns. They completed eleven blocks using their own designs. Another great community project for us to be involved in.



Miller honored with coffee

On June 27 a coffee was held in the Barn for long-time member and former resident Helene Miller. Many past and present volunteers and friends came by to visit and enjoy refreshments. Board member Shirley Martin organized this event which was enjoyed by many.

From the Museum Director, Laurie Walters

The museum continues to receive donations from patrons in Tonganoxie and from those afar who send digital photos, boxes of items, and documents related to Tonganoxie. We are grateful for their gifts and we continue to piece together the story of this community.

Judy Taylor Erwin donated her Tonganoxie Chieftains from 1958, 59, 60 and 61 to our archive. We would like to amass a complete set of yearbooks and we find we still have quite a few blanks. If you are interested in donating your yearbook, please contact us. Many of our visitors are interested in looking through the yearbooks that pertain to their relatives.

Promotions from the Past

Do you remember the Hancock Variety Store on the south side of Fourth Street?



The photo is of a billfold given to customers for promotion. Harriet Hancock (whom I met right after I was married and who was exceptionally kind to me when I stopped by to shop) ran the store and eventually sold it in 1975.

Familiar Tonganoxie Business Leaders

Two other local people you might know are Bill Seymour and John McCaffrey. Bill was a longtime grocer here in town and John was a barber in town and later worked at Bill's store.



The photo is compliments of Charles and Debbi Conrad.



Summer Intern builds exhibits, works with camp

Marie Brockhoff, our summer intern, has been assembling a new exhibit filled with unusual items not normally seen in our exhibits. It is directly inside the museum entrance and you will enjoy taking a look at the display. Some items may evoke some memories!!! Marie has helped with our history camp, has manned the museum for summer hours, and is an all-around jack of all trades. She will return to college this fall. The photo is of Marie with the new exhibit, Odd Things.

Museum assists local families with historical search

The museum team continues to conduct research for individuals looking for family history in our area.

We had an interesting query from Omaha regarding an image of what was reportedly Chief Tonganoxie.

This image was based on the photograph of Wolf Robe, a southern Cheyenne chief taken by F.A. Rinehart in 1898 and presented in Omaha, Nebraska. This same image can be found on the internet identified as Tonganoxie, but as has been explained to us, the shirt and beaded designs are not Delaware and the subject wears a peace medal. Tonganoxie has never been listed as a recipient of the peace medal. Please stop in and view the new things in the museum and see what is in the air for new exhibits.

Wednesday mornings from 9-noon are work days for staff and volunteers. Please drop by to enjoy a good cup of coffee with us.

History Camp 2023 Stars of History Meets Kansas

TCHS offered its 3rd History Camp with the theme focusing on science and its role in Kansas history.

The camp ran from June 5-June 9 with 17 campers and 11 volunteers attending. Topics included communication, paleontology, water, transportation and farm chemistry. It also included recognition of historical and modern-day Kansans who have made contributions in these areas. Thanks to all who made this another successful History Camp.



Campers collaborating on identification of skull using app. The campers participated in our 3rd annual history camp in June.



A camper creates a suncatcher print on Paleo Day during the TCHS history campy.



Assistants and campers join guest speaker Mike Stieben for group photo on Transportation Day.



Volunteer Sarah Kettler sharing story of winter count calendar created by Susy Ross, longtime member. Calendar uses images instead of words.



Campers working together to create a timeline for the different modes of communication.

Fairchild-Knox Barn

The Fairchild-Knox Barn and Milk Parlor are home to the Historical Society's museum and also provide a community space. Both are filled with agricultural and historical displays about Tonganoxie and surrounding areas.

Frank Fairchild built a new dairy barn in 1901—it was said to be the largest barn in the area, with 60 stalls and hay storage above. The low stone walls on the east and west sides of the current hay barn are from the original 1901 barn.

This barn was state-of-the-art with concrete floors and a manure removal system. Frank Fairchild worked with Kansas State Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) and he sought out innovative and progressive practices. He was recognized as one of the top dairymen in Kansas.

The original dairy barn was struck by lightning and burned down in 1932. Archie Knox, Frank's son-in-law, was running the dairy farm at this time. He quickly replaced the original barn, using portions of the stone walls on the east and west. He built the hay barn out of wood, but did not include a loft—instead, he had two over-sized doors built on the east and west sides of the barn, creating a passageway between them. Archie stored loose hay in this barn.

Horses pulled a wagon full of loose hay through the west door and stopped in the passageway. A hay hook was lowered and picked up loads of loose hay and then raised again and pulled to north side of barn. The lead end of the rope was attached to a draft horse, which walked through the north door to pull the hay to the needed location. The hay hook and ropes and pulleys are on display in the hay barn.



The 1949 photo was taken near the intersection of Washington Street and US 24-40, in front of what is now the West Haven Baptist Church. At that time, the property was part of the Fairchild-Knox Farm.

The manure carrier is also on display as it was found in the barn when the barn was gifted to the museum. It was likely used in the 1932 barn, although Frank Fairchild also used a manure collection system in the 1901 barn.

The milking parlor walls are a glazed, clay tile which were often used as underground conduit for telephone wires.

The can room is located on the east side of the milking parlor. The can room features a large concrete tub where the milk cans were stored and a small door opening on the east wall where the cans could be loaded into wagons for delivery. Cold water was piped to the tub in the can room from a spring located south of the barns. This is the same spring used by mid-nineteenth century travelers on the Leavenworth-Lawrence Road and is now a permanent outside exhibit.

Fairchild-Knox Family History

Family has deep history in Tonganoxie

Frank Fairchild had moved to Tonganoxie with his parents and siblings from Ulster County, New York. He married Mattie Enochs in 1884.

Frank's father was a dairyman and owned several farms in area. Frank and Mattie lived on farm, which is now the home of the Historical Society with their home being east of barn, where Vintage Park Assisted Living is located today.

Frank and Mattie had one child, a daughter named Bessie. Bessie married Archie Knox, from another local dairy family. They had three children—Mildred, Alfred and Thelma. Frank, Mattie, and their 6-year-old granddaughter, Thelma Knox, were tragically killed in a car-train accident in 1917. As a result, the farm passed to their only child, Bessie, and her husband Archie Knox. They continued in the dairy business until the farm was passed on to their daughter Mildred and her husband Art Young.

The Youngs raised beef cattle on the farm until the 1970's. Alfred Knox and his wife, Jeanne, had two daughters, Carol and Janice, and lived on farm south of Tonganoxie. During the 1940s, Jeanne Knox taught at the Honey Valley one-room school where both daughters. Mrs. Knox then taught third grade at Tonganoxie Elementary School. She was held in high esteem by all her students. After retiring from farming and teaching, Alfred and Jeanne Knox moved to Bella Vista, Arkansas.

In 1987, Mildred Knox Young donated the barns and 6.3 acres of land to the Tonganoxie Community Historical Society (TCHS) for the purpose of establishing a museum. TCHS purchased 3.7 acres from Mildred Young's estate to create the ten-acre grounds of TCHS.



The Honey Valley School Class of 1915 included the three children of Archie and Bessie (Fairchild) Knox. Third row, left to right—Alfred, unknown, Mildred. Second row, far right—Thelma.



The Honey Valley School Class of 1938-39 included Carol Dee Knox in the first row. Knox is on the far right.



Carol Dee Knox Smith leading her family in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at her 90th Birthday party inside the Honey Valley School.

Volunteer Spotlight



Pictured in the photo from left to right are David Higbee, Don Talbot, Lloyd Slawson, Lloyd Pearson, and retired volunteer Dan Carr. This photo was taken by Jim Stuke.

TCHS MOWING AND FACILITIES VOLUNTEERS

The TCHS would like to recognize and thank some of the people who keep our grounds and facilities looking nice. Lloyd Pearson volunteered from 2004 through 2022. He helped with mowing, taking care of the grounds, and with the maintenance of our facilities. He also served on the board as did his wife Jean. Lloyd was honored in 2013 with the TCHS Distinguished Service Award. We thank Lloyd for his many years of dedicated service for the TCHS.

Jim Stuke has volunteered with mowing and maintenance of the grounds and facilities since 2008. He and his wife Janet have been active in the TCHS for many years. Jim served on the board for several years. He received the TCHS Distinguished Service Award in 2013.

Don and Donna Talbot moved to Tonganoxie from Missouri in 2016. They both began volunteering with the TCHS in 2017. Don helps

with mowing, caring for the grounds, and maintenance of the facilities.

Lloyd Slawson is a 1967 graduate of Tonganoxie High School. After a successful career in the plumbing business, Lloyd has been volunteering at the TCHS for over a year. He helps with mowing, caring for the grounds, and maintenance of the facilities.

David Higbee grew up in Independence, Missouri. He and his wife Donna have been active in the TCHS. Donna currently serves on the board. David retired after a successful career with Community National Bank. He has been volunteering on the mowing and maintenance crew for more than a year.

The TCHS board truly appreciates all the time and talent that these men have contributed to the TCHS.

Upcoming Events



Researcher to discuss how the Underground Railroad ran through Quindaro

Fourth Tuesday Program, August 22, 7:00 pm. In the Eye of the Border Storm: The Under Ground Railroad at Quindaro, Kansas Territory 1857 with presenter Steve Collins PhD.

Dr. Steve Collins has researched the Quindaro Ruins and the Under Ground Railroad since 1998. His presentation will focus on the history of this Free State town and its Under Ground Railroad from the arrival of the Wyandot Natives to the issue of the final copy of the Quindaro Chindowan newspaper in the summer of 1858.

The image looks north through the mouth of the cooling cave in the Brewery Building at the Quindaro Ruins. Oral history suggests that John Brown met with Quindaro's abolitionist leaders in the Brewery and that it was one of the cluster of safe houses at Quindaro.

How the Railroad Industry Shaped Kansas

Fourth Tuesday Program, October 24, 7:00 pm. Railroaded: The Industry That Shaped Kansas with author Leo Oliva. Sponsored by Humanities Kansas. This presentation will examine how many towns in Kansas were founded because of the railroad, the complicated legacy of railroads, and the negative impact of railroads on the Native peoples in Kansas.

Picnic planned to commemorate 100th Anniversary of highway

September 23, Five Town Picnic at the TCHS site. The exhibit opens at 5 p.m. The picnic begins at 6 p.m. This picnic commemorates the 100th anniversary of the original Five Town Picnic that was held in Tonganoxie to celebrate the completion of the local portion of the Victory Highway.

The five towns are Topeka, Kansas City, Kansas, Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Tonganoxie. The map from the Lawrence Journal-World shows the Victory Highway and is provided below.



Tonganoxie Community Historical Society
201 West Washington Street
P.O. Box 785
Tonganoxie, Kansas 66086

Advantages of Qualified Charitable Distribution

Individuals who own retirement accounts such as IRAs and 401-ks are required to take required minimum distributions (RMD's) from these accounts beginning at age 73 in 2023. The SECURE Act of 2019 changed the age at which RMD's begin from age 70 ½ to 72, and then to 73 in 2023 and 75 in 2033. A RMD is normally taxable.

A qualified charitable donation (QCD) is a direct funds transfer from your custodian to a qualified charity that can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year. The funds must go directly from your custodian to the charities of your choice. A QCD must usually take place by December 31st of the current year in order to lower your income for that year.

The QCD excludes the amount given to charities from your taxable income. A lower taxable income may reduce the impact on some tax credits and deductions, including taxable Social Security benefits and Medicare. A QCD allows you to benefit from a charitable donation even if you are not able to itemize. You must be at least 70 ½ years of age to make a QCD.

A QCD may be an excellent way for you to lower your taxable income and at the same time to give to a qualified charity such as the Tonganoxie Community Historical Society. Please contact your tax advisor for more details about a QCD.