

TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

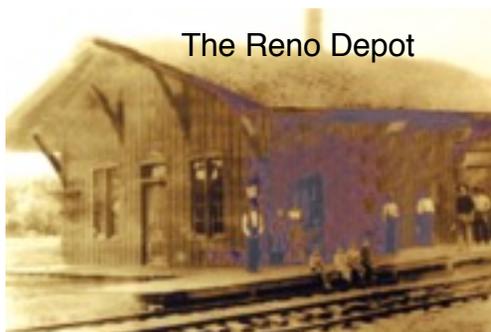
4th QUARTER NEWSLETTER, Dec. 2019



EARLY RENO, KANSAS

Reno was founded in 1861. It originally belonged to the Delaware Indians. The United States bought the Delaware land and eventually “sold” it to the Leavenworth Pawnee and Western RR. (This Railroad had several name changes but in 1880 it was consolidated with the Union Pacific Railroad.) In 1868 the land that was to become Reno, Kansas was sold to the Giles Filing family.

Most of the very early settlers came from Europe including Scotland, Germany, England, Norway, Ireland, Prussia, Switzerland, and Nova Scotia. Germany and Ireland with England a close third, provided most of the immigrants in Reno. The variation in these foreign backgrounds-language and culture-had a unique effect upon Reno, especially the Methodist Church.



The Reno Depot

At one time Reno had a black smith, a railroad station, an express station, two grocery stores, a creamery, a stockyard, a lumber yard, and a post office. In 1900 Tony Hess came to Reno. He operated a general store which included bus stops for the Greyhound and Santa Fe buses. I was in this store once as a kid. It had wood floors that were dark and the room was poorly lit. He seemed tall to me. Francis Korb said that he operated a dance hall. This was a rough place known as the White House. It was closed by the law several times. I think people got into fights there. During my time it was a beer place with a western band for dancing. TCHS interviewed some

people from Reno who were familiar with this operation. It seems that Tony Hess was the Justice of the Peace for Reno Township and he was a bootlegger. He made his hooch in the basement of his store. The law would call him a few hours before a raid in south Leavenworth Co. He would call his friends and the fellow we interviewed would ride his horse to the store and haul all the liquor away in gunny sacks to the ditch. The law would not find anything.

At first because of language, communication among Reno inhabitants was difficult, but the immigrants worked together to help each other build their homes and buildings. They managed to help each other and thus became very acquainted with each other. Over time the various families became very well acquainted. Transportation was by horse and was relatively difficult. Guess what happened. The various families with distinctly varied religions intermarried, and together they built and attended the Reno Methodist Church. Francis Korb was one of those who was raised a quaker. She remarked that these varied religions made the church much stronger. This was observed when the first church burned. They wanted the church rebuilt. The church members managed to build a new church that was somewhat bigger than the first church.

The first church was built in 1891. It was completed 16 August 1891. The members were from many varied faiths. The cost was \$1,900.00. John Jacobs was the first postmaster and minister. He was also a blacksmith and a Baptist. The opening day of service saw two services. There was considerable debt for the times. The debt was paid entirely by the end of the second service.



The first church burned in 1918. The fire was during service on Sunday. It was immediately decided to build another church on the same spot. The new church would be larger. Construction of the new church was done by members of the church. Most of the dirt work was done by hand. Church service was stopped in 1925, but Sunday school continued. In 1946 the church reopened. It was finally closed for good in 1993 and the church members brought the church to the Tonganoxie Historical Society. Now the church provides a service on Saturday and one on Sunday.

enough, Major Reno was tried for being a coward, involving his action at the battle of The Little Bighorn. He survived this trial, but later he was made to leave the army for conduct unbecoming an officer when he was involved with another officers's wife. The little town of Reno was actually named after General Jesse L. Reno. There are many Reno's in the United States (Reno County in Kansas, El Reno, OK. and many others) named after him. He was considered " a soldier's soldier". He was killed in the Civil War.

Tradition says the Phenicie brothers named the town of Reno, after Major M. A. Reno of the 7th Cavalry. Interestingly

The Evangelist, Reverend Samuel Kelso, was born in England. He travelled to Australia. On this trip to Australia he lost his first wife. She was buried at sea. He then married in Australia Christian Allen who had a daughter, Georgina, from a previous marriage. Georgina married one of the Phenicie brothers. Later Reverend Kelso returned to England. After 6 months he came to the United States. He purchased and settled on three farms in Reno, KS.



Samuel Kelso gave 40 acres of his land and laid out the town of Reno. He also gave two acres of land for the cemetery and established that anyone who wanted to be buried there could be buried there. That meant Indians, blacks, Mexicans—any one who wanted to be buried in Reno Cemetery could be buried in Reno Cemetery. Land for the school was also given by Rev. Kelso.

He was extremely involved in establishing the Reno Methodist Church, although he never preached in that church. He did preach under trees and he baptized people in the creek known as Nine Mile. Before the Methodist Church was constructed, the people of Reno

used the inside of the railroad station for their church. For a short time the members of the church used a small building for their meetings. In these structures, the Revered Kelso did preach. During these meeting many Indians, Blacks, RR workers, farmers as well as those with European background were noted listening to his sermons.

The Phenicie brothers came to Reno about one year after the Civil War. The four brothers, James, William, John and George (the youngest), all were in the Civil War. The Phenicie family have James and William spending 16 months in Andersonville, a notorious Confederate prison in Georgia. They actually were in Andersonville about 7 months, but they were in several other prisons. Many stories around Tonganoxie have the two brothers escaping from Andersonville, but that was not true. Toward the end of the war they were paroled and went home.. The brothers had different paths to Kansas.

The Phenicie's had a tremendous effect on the development of Reno, Kansas. They began by purchasing land and building railroad ties for the railroad. At one time the brothers owned all the land

along the railroad from Reno to Tonganoxie. Many early families were very supportive in the Methodist Church in Reno. It was the only church in town.

THE RENO LADIES AID

The Reno Ladies Aid was a significant group of ladies who were involved in every social event that the Reno Methodist Episcopal Church did. It was such an important social group (one that you wanted to be a member, so you could be part of the action) that several members of the Reno Ladies Aid were not members of the church. The Reno Ladies Aid was formed to provide financial support for the church. It was very successful in providing support for the church.

The members of this organization met twice a month. The dues were 30 cents per month. If you were the hostess for a meeting you paid one dollar. The organization was well organized and it was a large group of women.

If there was any social activities involved, the Reno Ladies Aid were there. They provided food when it was called for. They were involved in other programs which were informative and entertaining. One program was, "Does a farm woman age more quickly than a city person". Another program was "Should we buy in our home town, or should we go where it is cheaper". Bishop Quayle, who was associated with Baker University, provided a program. He was the grandfather of Vice President Dan Quayle.

Any time the Ladies could do something that would provide money for the church, you can bet that they were there. Farm sales, ice cream socials (You must know, they were noted for home made ice cream), watermelon feeds, fried chicken picnics, election dinners, were a few of the things they did to support the church. Pertaining to the ice cream socials, each member brought a cake. If you couldn't bring a cake you were expected to give one dollar.

They provided food for Veterans in Leavenworth and they supported a school in Wyandotte Co. with food. The ladies had a group of quilters which provided them with 1 dollar per quilt. Eventually they raised the price to 2 dollars per quilt.

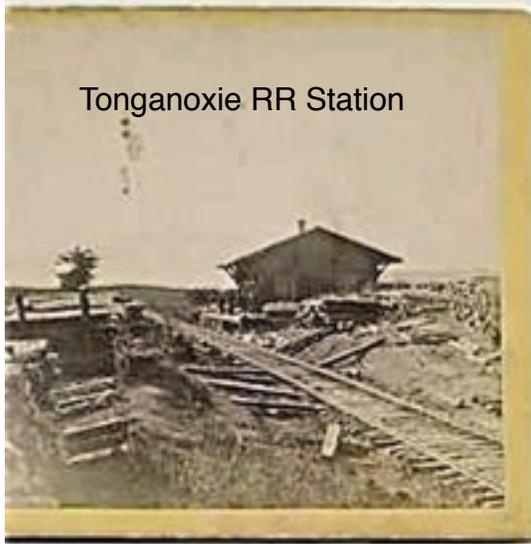
They produced a fantastic cook book. I believe the last one involved Debbie Skeet who compiled a cookbook that also involved history of the Ladies and the church. Our historical society has a copy of that book.

I remember The Reno Ladies Aid because for a very long time they had a food stand at the Leavenworth County Fair. It was in the far south east corner of the grounds. Their competition would be the carnival. My first encounter with them was when I was about 12. I went over to their food stand, sat down, and for some reason I ordered a bowl of chili. I never liked my mother's chili, nor Mrs. Pearson's chili. Mrs. Pearson lived across the street to the west. Why I ordered chili I don't remember. What I do remember was the chili was not like soup. It had body. I had a generous helping that was peaked at 2 inches above the bowl rim and not going to move, except by spoon. The ladies had ketchup and vinegar available to use in your chili. They also had crackers.

What I remember about that chili was that at that time I fell in love with the Reno Ladies Aid chili and I have enjoyed chili thereafter. I was a big fan of chili from then on. Most people think that Chili is pretty much the same. I disagree. The Ladies used a good quality of chili bean and the ratio of bean to hamburger was 1 to 1. They used Williams Chili powder AND they at the same time they used French's chili powder. And knowing how the Ladies did other things, I suspect that their beef was home grown and grain fed. It was probably raised especially for the Ladies use at the fair.

400 EX SLAVES COME TO KANSAS

The story of the Phenicie brothers coming to Kansas and bringing 400 ex slave families to Reno, Kansas has been told several times in various venues. Generally, it was believed to be true. The story is relatively simple. It is this:



Tonganoxie RR Station

After the Civil War the Phenicie brothers, William and James, brought 400 black families to Reno, Kansas to build railroad ties.

Where did they stay? How long did they stay in Reno? AND what if the makeup of these 400 ex slaves was something like one father, one mother and two kids. That would change the entire work force. Many questions are raised from this story. I will attempt to point out what is fact and what is questionable.

1. The Union Pacific, Eastern Division railroad's spur from Lawrence to Leavenworth was started in November of 1864 and completed in November of 1866. In a Leavenworth newspaper printed in Nov. 1866 there is an article about trains running from Leavenworth to Junction City. The Civil War was officially over in April of 1865. The Phenicie brothers did not show in Reno until the late spring of 1866. So, at the most there was 7 months of construction remaining on the spur in which railroad ties would be needed. If they were going to supply ties to the main line, the ties would have needed to be shipped past Junction City. In Nov. 1866 the main line was completed to Junction City.

2. How many ex slaves came to Kansas and settled in Reno? I don't believe the actual number of ex slaves will ever be known. There are several "Ole Timer's" who know about the early days of Reno. They will state that at one time Reno had a large population of Blacks, and Reno was larger in population than Tonganoxie's. Francis Korb several times talked about Reno and each time she told about these people helping farmers clean up trees and brush on their farms. Once she said some also made railroad ties. Arlene Prichard of the Linwood library said to me that the Black people did not dribble to Reno in groups of 2 or 3, but they came in large groups.



William Kahn

Several people have stated that the Blacks lived in caves on the Kahn place south of Reno. Now! Here is the interesting point. **The Kahn family did not come to Reno until 1880.** Were the ex-slaves living on Railroad property?? I do believe that most if not all of these ex slaves came from Missouri, but the number is suspect. In 1870 the census has 172 blacks living in Reno Township, which includes the town of Reno. It could be that these blacks living in caves did not have a permanent address, and therefore the census taker did not get them into the census.

I think the blacks were here before the Phenicie's arrived in Reno and that many of them made railroad ties from Oak and Walnut trees. However, I think the number of black people is suspect.

3. What happened to these black people? Where did they go and when did they go? I think these people came shortly after the Civil War ended (April 1865). If these people came before the end of the Civil War they would have been fugitives. The Emancipation Proclamation (Jan. 1, 1863) only applied to those

slaves which lived in states that left the Union. It did not apply to slaves that were living in states that had not left the Union. Missouri and Kentucky did not leave the Union. So all the slaves which were in the Union were not freed until after the War.



Phenicie family

According to the census, the Reno Township lost more than half of their black population from 1870 to 1885. In that same time period Tonganoxie lost one black person. I think that after the need for railroad ties and after many of the farms had been “Cleaned up”, there was not much work left to be done, so many ex slaves moved to other cities to get work. Lawrence and Tonganoxie (around 1870’s there were more blacks in the Tonganoxie school system than there were whites) were two towns which most likely had need for laborers.

In Tonganoxie there was a brick yard, a large mill and elevator which operated 24 hour per day, several creameries, many large dairies and several huge orchards. All needed reliable laborers.

The Fairchild Spring by Joy Lominska

Our spring (NOT the time of year) exhibit is making good progress. In late December, we gave the outdoor sign material to Nate Foresberg, our graphic designer. We will have three large signs overlooking the spring site, explaining springs, spring houses, and how this spring was used.

Kris Roberts and Joy Lominska went on a “field trip” with J. W. Evans and Rex Buchanan, our geology consultant, to tour the old quarry up the hill from the museum. Rock layers are still exposed and previous quarry activity is evident. It seems likely that the stone used at our spring came from this quarry, as it is only a short distance away and rock hauling would be downhill—an important consideration when using wagons!

A concrete pad has been poured for the signs at the spring, and a gravel drive and parking lot built to the south of the site. The pad was funded by the 2019 Pete and Margaret Leighty Trust grant, and the drive and parking area were funded by a 2019 Leavenworth County grant. We appreciate this financial support for the project. Production of the outdoor exhibit is funded by a grant from Humanities Kansas.

Work continues on the indoor spring exhibit, which will include artifacts found, photographs of the quarry, and information about the use of the spring on the farm.



Rex Buchanan leading us to examine the rock in the quarry uphill from the museum.

Tribute to Don Huebner by Laurie Walters

Sadly we learned that Don Huebner, founding member of our historical society and good friend to many, passed away January 1, 2020. He and his wife Patti supported our society as officers....Patti was secretary for several terms and Don was Chairman of the Board of Directors for at least two years. Together they worked diligently in our behalf and were always ready to share their lovely country home. This home which they lovingly restored was built by Crawford Moore, one of Tonganoxie's earliest settlers.

I remember Don's enthusiasm for sports....Perry and I for several years had Jayhawk basketball tickets in seats close to Don and his family. I also served on our rural water board with Don for six years. He had enthusiasm for all he did and it was contagious. We will miss him.

Update from the Museum



Picture is of an antique egg carrier made by the Gummer Manufacturing Company which was donated by Beverly Himpel Wiles and had been used by her family. This allowed the farmer to safely stack and carry cartons of farm fresh eggs to market. The carrier has been placed on display in one of our barn bay exhibits.

Delores Finch has been sorting through memorabilia of her family following her return to Tonganoxie.

Among the items she donated is a Certificate of Election of her father Dale Rawlings on May 5, 1967 as mayor of the city of Tonganoxie.

She also shared a beautiful photo of a rose garden which graced the grounds of the high school. She does not remember the date and if anyone can help us with the date and tell us more information about this garden, we would be delighted. It appears that the garden was at the new high school along the curve of 24-40 highway. The photograph shows that someone indeed had a very green thumb.

Work continues on the story of the barn quilts and in particular the story behind the Tonganoxie Nine Patch. This information will form the front panel of our wall hung map and family history display. It will be an attractive panel which will catch the visitor's eye and lead them to look through the other items.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an update on the Fairchild Spring which is a project headed by Joy Lominska. Most of the images in the museum are photo copies and over the winter we are refreshing images that have faded or curled.

Volunteers continue to concentrate on digitizing all printed documents which have been entered in our Past Perfect program. When saved as a digital image, the material is placed on an external hard drive which is taken home with a volunteer so if a disaster should strike the museum, the information, pictures, etc. can be retrieved.

The museum volunteers continue to upgrade our military display and we received word that Jon Nelson feels that his display of memorabilia and the story of Creighton Seigert should find its way to Tonganoxie soon.



FALL BARN BLOCK WORKSHOP

The October 5, 2019 Barn Block workshop was another success. Interesting tidbit – six of the blocks were done by people who traveled from Atchison and Oskaloosa, KS, as well as from Independence, MO, and Maryville, MO. It is wonderful to welcome travelers to our museum.

A thank you to Jean Pearson who directs this program.



FIRST GRADE INTRODUCTION TO PLAINS INDIANS LIFE

In 2015, Susy Ross took her collection of native American artifacts to the Tonganoxie Elementary School to share with the first graders. Susy did that for three years. We took a year off in 2018, but on September 30, 2019, Lynn Jennings and Joy Lominska took our Uses of the Buffalo trunk (created and documented by Susy and Larry Ross) to the elementary school and introduced all of the first grade classes to our collection.

We will enjoy meeting these students again when they are third graders and come back to the museum.

THIRD GRADE FIELD TRIP

The third grade field trip was a success again – according to teacher Missy Miller, it was by far the best field trip at TCHS since she has been coming with the students.

Six classes of third graders came to the site – a total of 120 students, with 30-35 teachers, aides, and parents accompanying the students.

Highlights this year included the initiation of a scavenger hunt format in the museum, which was the brainchild of our members who are retired teachers – Janet Burnett, Joy Lominska, Sarah Kettler, Janet Stuke and Lynn Jennings – who met at the museum last fall and winter to help create a program for the students that would make their museum experience memorable. The final product was created by Natalie Vondrak and Janet Burnett. The scavenger hunt was successful in engaging both students and parents.

We also welcomed four new volunteers: Natalie Vondrak, a first-year student in the KU Museum Studies graduate program; Susan Ibarra, the children's librarian at the Tonganoxie Public Library; and Don & Donna Talbott, who are also regular Wednesday volunteers.

To all of you who make this field trip possible with your time and efforts, thank you!

FOURTH TUESDAY October 22, 2019

“Who knew? Who knew that license plates could be so interesting?” We heard that comment more than once after the Fourth Tuesday program on October 22, 2019.

Brady Mikijanis, current president of the Kansas License Plate Collectors Association, walked us through the history of automotive license plates. The purpose, or course, from the beginning was revenue, but the execution of the plate designs is certainly intriguing.

Brady has donated a near-complete set of state-issued license plates since 1913 to the museum. He was able to combine his donations with those of Fred Scheller from 2014 for a most appealing display, permanently mounted in the fire house.

If you missed the program or have not yet seen the display, make sure you come by the museum



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 28, Fourth Tuesday program, 7:00 pm,

We are very excited to welcome Dr. Sarah Bell as the first Fourth Tuesday program of 2020. It is so appropriate to bring in the 2020 year with an focus on women 100 years ago.

Sarah Bell



“A Congress for Women: Women’s Clubs and the Chautauqua Movement,” presented by Dr. Sarah Bell, made possible by Humanities Kansas. At the Historical Site, 201 West Washington, Tonganoxie.

Chautauqua was a rural movement that focused on moral education and self-improvement. This presentation examines how women’s clubs inspired political activism and how this movement laid the groundwork for contemporary movements of gender equality. We are very excited to welcome Dr. Sarah Bell as the first Fourth Tuesday program of 2020. It is so appropriate to bring in the 2020 year with a focus on women 100 years ago.

Sarah marched in the Rose Bowl Parade on Jan 1 of this year, following the float #24, which was entitled "Years of Hope, Years of Courage." The float's motto was "Upon their shoulders, we won the vote. Upon our shoulders, we protect the vote. We celebrate and build for the future." The float was sponsored and funded by the National Women's History Alliance.

FUTURE FOURTH TUESDAY PROGRAMS

Feb 25, Fourth Tuesday program, 7:00 pm, speaker & program To Be Announced.

March 24, Fourth Tuesday program, 7:00 pm, speaker & program To Be Announced.

April 28, Fourth Tuesday program, 7:00 pm, speaker & program To Be Announced.

May 25, Memorial Day Biscuits & Gravy Breakfast.

May 26, Fourth Tuesday program, 7:00 pm, speaker & program To Be Announced.

These Fourth Tuesday programs are good for us. The programs get us out of the house; They offer socialization with friends; They give us refreshments and most important these programs are educational and that gives our brain another chance to be active. **PLEASE PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR !!!**

Feb 20, Annual Chili Supper,

11am to 7pm. The Chili Supper is our primary fundraiser of the year. Put it on your calendar – great chili and vegetable beef soup, baked potatoes, relish dishes and pies. It doesn't get much better.

LABELLING FUNDRAISER

Twelve volunteers gathered on Thursday morning, October 17, to place address labels on The Laborer Line newsletter. The fundraiser is organized by Denise Rodgers, who edits the newsletter. The work is made light by conversation and coffee. Many thanks this month to the volunteers who came out. Patty Choate, Tony Johnson, Gladys Walters, Lloyd Pearson, Don Fuhlhage, Mel Ramseier, Pat Ramseier, Linda Linnemann, Diane Jennings, Denise Rodgers, Perry Walters, and Kris Roberts

Mulberry Tree Converted to Mulberry Wooden Bowls



The old Mulberry tree that was seen at the **spring** was dying, as seen here. It was removed and sawed into chunks of wooden logs about 8 to 14 Inches in length. These round logs were cut (John Walter and his son Luke cut the logs) in 1/2 and sealed with Anchor seal to slow the drying process. The “blanks” as the wood is now called were then rough cut into bowls as seen above.

The bowls are then placed in a grocery paper bag and set aside to dry. The drying process is slow and takes several months.. By cutting the blanks while they are wet helps significantly speed up the drying process, but the paper bag slows it down. Confusing ??? If a log is left outside to dry it will dry at a rate of 1” per year. Cutting the blanks wet will reduce the total drying time to 4-6 months depending upon conditions. A cool place (a basement) that has an even temperature is best. Using a paper bag will slow the process so that cracks in the wood are hopefully avoided.

When the wood bowl is dry it will be warped and oblong. Now, you can finally finish the cutting. That is why you leave an inch of thickness in the sides of the rough cut bowl. Leaving the sides somewhat thick allow you to bring the bowl back to “round”. After one has completed the final cut, sanding is then accomplished. This activity-the sanding- can be vary troublesome because the very fine dust just hangs around in he air for several hours. You can't see the dangerous dust!!!! Without proper dust removal one is just asking for serious lung problems.

When these bowls (ca. 35 of varying sizes) are completed they will be for sale at the TCHS site and possibly other area around town.

MEMBERSHIP:

We are a 501c(3) non-profit organization, with mission to “collect, identify, record, preserve and display materials that illuminate the history of the greater Tonganoxie community.”

Your membership dues help to support the operations of the museum and keep it a free resource to the community and our visitors.

The Board of Directors voted in October to increase membership dues – something that has not been done in many years. Individual memberships will increase from \$10 to \$15 per year; Family memberships from \$15 to \$25 per year; Student memberships from \$5 to \$10 per year; and Life Memberships from \$100 to \$150, a one-time cost.

The Board also voted to extend a special offer to current members who may wish to become Life Members – current members may purchase a Life Membership at the old rate of \$100 through January 31, 2020.

We hope that you will be moved to support and join our organization as a yearly new or renewing member or as a life member. We value your support and deeply appreciate your interest in our mission.

I WISH TO JOIN THE TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NAME _____ **DATE** _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

PHONE NO. _____ **EMAIL** _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

CONTRIBUTOR LEVELS:

STUDENT **\$ 10.00** _____

SUPPORTER **\$100.00** _____

INDIVIDUAL **\$ 15.00** _____

SPONSOR **\$250.00** _____

FAMILY ** **\$ 25.00** _____

PATRON **\$500.00** _____

INDIVIDUAL LIFE **\$ 150.00** _____

BENEFACTOR **\$1,000.00** _____

**** FAMILY MEMBERS MUST RESIDE IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD**

PLEASE LIST NAMES _____

I WISH TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO TCHS

AMOUNT \$ _____

NOTES _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO TCHS AND MAIL TO:

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society
P.O. Box 785
Tonganoxie, Ks. 66086-0785