

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

P. O. Box 785 Tonganoxie, KS 66086

913-369-3835

April 1, 2009

Opening Day Set for April 5th

Join us as we begin our 2009 season with *Opening Day at the Museum*, scheduled for Sunday, April 5th from 1:00 to 4:00pm. All buildings will be open for viewing, and docents will be on hand to provide tours and answer questions for the guests.

In the Honey Valley School we have an updated exhibit that showcases Honey Valley and some of those who attended the one-room school. Within the Museum, several of the exhibits have been reworked and rearranged for better presentation. A new exhibit is in the works, courtesy of Fred Leimkuhler, and should be ready by opening day. Fred has been preparing a display using local fossils, imprints, and rocks which will depict a geologic study of our area – from rain forest to glacier to present day.

The fire truck restoration project has made much progress over the winter. Not only have the volunteers worked faithfully every Wednesday morning, no matter the weather, but many of them can be found in the firehouse several days each week. The reward for this extra effort of volunteerism is seeing the pieces of this former Tonganoxie fire truck restored, repaired, or repainted, then go back together – one piece at a time – after so many years. Take time to review the photo exhibit of the restoration, tour the firehouse, and see the fire truck in its “almost completed” state.

Our annual bake sale, organized by Janet Angell-Felts, will be held in the barn. Bring your family and friends to see what’s new at the Site and enjoy a great afternoon of social time with our members and guests. Refreshments will be served in the gathering area in the barn.

If *con* is the opposite of *pro*, is Congress the opposite of progress?

Annual Picnic
Saturday, June 27th
6:00PM

In the Museum . . .



This cradle was owned and used by descendants of the Samuel Bell family of Ireland. Samuel Bell had three children: George, John, and Esther Elizabeth.

The oldest son John Bell and his wife Bertha Cox Bell came from Ireland in 1872. Their homestead was located on what is now the 23000 block of Dempsey Road. Their four children – Pearl, Bertha, Mary and John Wallace – were born in Leavenworth County and all slept in this cradle. The cradle was passed on to John Wallace Bell, whose daughter Virginia slept in it, as did her three children – Susan, Sandra, and Sam.

Samuel Bell’s youngest child Esther Elizabeth married and had five children – Mike, Phil, Kenny, Linda and Patrick. Patrick was born in 1961 and also slept in this cradle.

Original date and location where the cradle was manufactured is not known.

News from the Board

- Al DiSanto

I am pleased to announce that Cathy and Bill Peak have assumed the duties of Program Chairman for TCHS, and will secure programs and speakers for our monthly lecture series. Bill has recently retired from his career with the U.S. Postal Service, and he and Cathy will work together to coordinate programs and speakers as we continue our monthly lecture series.

We have completed the task of re-roofing the Museum. Funds for this project were provided by a grant from the County Commissioners.

Another completed project is the MUSEUM sign on the north side of the one-room school building. This sign is a result of the ingenuity and imagination of Gladys Walters, and was provided by an anonymous donor. It is more than just a little subtle advertising, with letters four feet high and very visible from the highway.

Congratulations to Connie Putthoff and all her volunteers for another great Chili & Soup Dinner on February 26th. This year's event raised \$2,336.49 for TCHS. Connie spends many hours organizing this fundraiser, and we want to thank her and all the volunteers who donated items, cooked the food, served, cleaned tables and did the final clean up, making this annual fundraiser a success.

We have some wonderful opportunities for members to volunteer for the 2009 season. We are looking for people to staff the Museum on Sunday afternoons so that we can remain open during the summer. This is an opportunity for persons of any age to spend an easy afternoon as docent for visitors to the Site. Please call Carol Slawson at 913-845-2228 if you are able to help.

We are fast approaching the little league season and time to open the TCHS baseball field

concession stand. This effort is our main fundraiser for the entire year, and we need volunteers to help staff the concession stand. The duty is divided up for people to work one evening a week for the 5 – 6 weeks of the season. We would also like to have additional volunteers sign up to be substitutes for fill-in duty. Please call Connie Putthoff at 913-845-2905 if you are able to help with this important fundraising event.

Volunteerism by our members is the criteria for success for TCHS. Being out and about with our various activities after the long gray winter is a good way to improve one's quality of life, and to help us carry on the mission of our historical Site. If you can give a few hours of your time to TCHS, please give Carol and Connie a call.

Looking ahead, plans are being made for our annual picnic on June 27th. Entertainment for this year will be the Ready Brothers Band. The event is held in the shade of the buildings with our ever-present gentle Kansas breeze. It's a great evening of fellowship at the Site, so please bring your lawn chairs and join us.

Did You Know

The Honey Valley School



The Honey Valley schoolhouse –

District #56 – was organized on March 25, 1869.

It was located about a mile south of Tonganoxie on the Gordon Harmon Farm, near Leavenworth County Road 1 and U.S. Highway 24/40.

Following the 1915 fire that destroyed the original building, on June 21, 1916 the district

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voted bonds for \$1,200.00 to erect a new school, a typical one-room building where one teacher taught the three “R’s” to all eight grades. The building which was constructed around 1916 was in use until 1956. It was moved to our Historical Site in 1991.

On September 25, 1999, an open house was held at the school to celebrate the eight years of renovation done by volunteer labor. The Honey Valley School building is available for use by educators who want their students to experience living history. As many as three generations of Tonganoxie students attended this school.

Volunteer Spotlight



In the Spotlight this issue are Dan and Caryle Carr. Dan is an *every Wednesday* volunteer, and he and Caryle help out with several of the TCHS fund-raisers. For many years Caryle enjoyed her “night out” with the guys at the ballpark concession stand while Dan cooked his own dinner.

Dan was born and raised in Armourdale, Kansas, living there 34 years. His parents and three siblings influenced the development of his broad interest in nearly everything – physical activities, scholarly activities, and community service. Dan retired ten years ago after nearly

40 years as a professor of medical biochemistry and molecular biology at the KU School of Medicine.

Caryle was born on a farm in Ellsworth County, Kansas; the farm is still owned and operated by family members. Caryle’s interest in things literary, scientific, and medical led her away from the farm, but she and Dan still visit there often. After graduation from Emporia State University, Caryle worked in several states before returning to Kansas. She is a retired professor of pathology and medical technology. During this time, she was a volunteer and officer of the medical auxiliary at KU Med Center. Later volunteer efforts include several medical charities, historical societies and museums, artistic groups, and civic groups.

The Carrs moved from Overland Park to Leavenworth County in 2001, where they continued their interest in history-related activities. Dan began work at First City Museum, restoring carousel horses and other wooden parts of carousels that would become part of the C.W. Parker Carousel Museum. He still devotes one day a week there, repairing and constructing displays for the museum. Currently he is helping with the restoration of a gasoline-powered trolley.

The Carrs participate in various activities of the Leavenworth County Historical Society and the Richard Allen Cultural Center and Museum. They became Life Members at TCHS in 2004.

Throughout their 40 years together, Dan and Caryle have continued to support the arts, charities, universities, governmental units, and civic groups. Of all their activities, they say their “best feelings come from the camaraderie shared with the members of TCHS.”

Only in America . . . do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Membership Report

- Linda DiSanto

If you have a change of address or phone number (or email address change), please contact us so that our records can be updated.

New Members:

Donna Irish

Royce Kitts

Upcoming TCHS Programs

In case of inclement weather, or for information about any of the programs or the picnic, please call 913-845-2852 or 913-369-3835.

April 28 – 7:00PM

***Jan English, Chief - Wyandot Nation of Kansas
and***

***Cheryl Armstrong – Wyandot County
Genealogical Society***

Our two special guests of this evening will present some background and history of the Wyandot Nation.

Jan English, Chief of the Wyandot of Kansas, will inform us of the earliest times of this Nation, of their journey from Canada to the Upper Sandusky area, and their difficult relocation to the Kansas Territory. She will also inform us about their lifestyles and customs, their language, and some of the treaties in which they were involved.

Cheryl Armstrong, a member of the Wyandotte Nation of Kansas through marriage, will assist Jan in the presentation. Cheryl's husband is a descendant of Robert Armstrong, who was kidnapped as a child and raised as a Wyandot. The family came from Ohio to Kansas with the Wyandot when the families were displaced from their homes in Ohio by the

Federal Government in 1843. Cheryl is an avid genealogist, and volunteers at the Family History Center to aid others in discovering their family histories.

May 26 – 7:00PM

Deborah Samson, Revolutionary Soldier

-Anna Smith, Kansas Alliance of Historical Performers

They said a woman could not fight for her country. They did not know Deborah Samson.

During the Revolutionary War, Massachusetts Colonist Deborah Samson disguised herself as a man and joined the Continental Army for American Independence from England. She became the first woman to receive a pension of money and land for her time in service, and is also the first known woman lecturer in the eighteenth century. Join us as Professional Historic Performer Anna Smith presents the story of this remarkable woman.

June 27 – 6:00PM

TCHS Annual Picnic – featuring the Ready Brothers Band

It's time for our Annual Picnic at the Site. Meat, drinks, and service materials will be provided. Bring your lawn chairs and your favorite picnic dish to share. This year we welcome the Ready Brothers Band and look forward to hearing some fine bluegrass, swing, country, and blues music. (For a preview, check out their website at www.readybrothers.com) The event is open to all members and guests. Join us for some great music, good food, and an evening of visiting with friends.

July 28 – 7:00PM

The Rip Chords Barbershop Quartet

The Rip Chords Barbershop Quartet has been entertaining audiences since 1962. The

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Quartet has performed throughout the central United States and once shared the stage with Eddie Fisher and Henry Fonda. The group was featured at the Missouri Silver Dollar City amusement park in their celebration of “Music Americana.” With a cumulative total of over 150 years of quartet singing experience, these retired professionals have found that there is life after work. Tom Knoebber, Bass, is retired from co-ownership of B&B Sign Company. Bill Hamm, Baritone, is retired from School District 501 as a music teacher. Herschel Stroud, Lead, is a retired Topeka dentist. Doug Exline, Tenor, is retired from the co-ownership of Salina Exline Manufacturing Company. With their unique musical skills, they enjoy sharing their love of four-part harmony with those who love live musical performances.

Events Around Our Area

April 5 – Opening Day at the Museum 1:00 to 4:00pm. Tongie Historical Site. Info: call 913-845-2477 or 913-369-3835.

Month of April – Victorian Secrets – exhibit of undergarments of 1800s. Basehor Museum
Tue 9-12; Thur 1-4; Sat 9-2. 913-724-4022

April 14 – Grand Slam at the Museum 5:30 to 7:00pm. Baseball-themed family night with Sizzle the Bull from T-Bones. Lansing Museum, 115 E. Kansas Avenue. Info 913-250-0203.

April 16 – Lansing Historical Society Spaghetti Dinner 5-7pm. Adults \$6, Kids 10 & under \$3.50. Further information contact Laura Phillippi 913-250-0203.

April 18 – Art at the Museum 10:00 to 3:00. Face painting, art demonstrations, kid crafts

2pm. Erika Nelson’s “World’s Largest Things Roadside Attractions” program. Lansing Museum, 115 E. Kansas Avenue. 913-250-0203.

April 25 – C.W. Parker birthday party 11am to 2pm with cake and lemonade at the Carousel Museum in Leavenworth. 913-682-3050.

Now thru Apr 29 – Kansas Tornadoes exhibit by Kansas State Historical Society. Basehor Historical Society Museum. Info: 724-4022.

May 16 - Laundress of the Civil War - 11am - a living history presentation by Vivian Ross of Leavenworth Co. Historical Society. Basehor Museum. Info: Carla 913-724-4022.

June 13 – Tongie Days at the Site 9am to 4pm. Again this year TCHS will feature two quilt shows, other demonstrations and/or activities in the barn, antique cars, and more. Activities will run *one day only* during the regular annual Tongie Days festival. Info: Vintage Quilt show call Jean Pearson 913-845-3228; Sacred Heart Quilt Show call Janet Stuke 913-369-3189. Museum info call Susy Ross 913-845-2477.

June 27 – Annual Pancake Breakfast 7-10am at Parker Carousel Museum, annual fund raiser for the museum. Info: 913-682-3050.

June 27 – “Evening with the Harvey Girls” dinner 6-9pm at the Carousel Museum, annual fund raiser for the National Fred Harvey Museum. Info and tickets: 913-682-3050.

Contact Us

Newsletter @ TCHS

P.O. Box 785

Tonganoxie, KS 66086

913-369-3835 (home)

913-845-2960 (Museum)

disanto@wildblue.net

www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org

Mark Your Calendars:

April 5 – Opening Day at the Museum 1:00 to 4:00pm

April 28 – Meeting 7:00pm – Jan English, Chief of Wyandot Nation/Cheryl Armstrong, Genealogist

May 26 – Meeting 7:00pm - Deborah Samson, Revolutionary Soldier (aka Anna Smith)

June 13 – 9:am – 4:00pm – Tongie Days at the Site

*June 27 – **6:00pm** - Annual Picnic at the Site*

July 28 – Meeting – 7:00pm - The Rip Chords Barbershop Quartet

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