

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

January 15, 2009

TCHS Welcomes 2009

- Al DiSanto, Board Chairman

The New Year has brought us two new Board members, Laurie Walters and Jim Stuke.

Laurie and her husband Perry owned and operated Wild Horse Orchards in nearby McLouth for many years. They recently closed the orchard operation and Laurie and Perry have been able to volunteer more at TCHS. Laurie is a regular in the Museum, and has worked in the past with the Water Commission.

Jim Stuke has been a volunteer at TCHS and has recently retired from the insurance industry. Jim and wife Janet are both very active in their church, and now that he is retired, Jim has more time to expand his volunteer efforts at TCHS. I feel that some good ideas will come from these new Board Members. Please feel free to offer your ideas to any Board Member for the betterment of TCHS.

I would like to recognize and thank CarolAnn Smith for the excellent job she is doing with our website. Carol established and maintains the site, making frequent changes and updates to the information. The website has pictures and information about the historical site, the Museum, the buildings and grounds, and has a copy of the most recent newsletter. If you haven't visited the website, check it out - - and recommend it to your friends - www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org.

Last month we had to cancel the annual Christmas party due to the weather. It was a tough call to make and I'm sure many members were disappointed. The barn was all set up for the festivities, and the Museum volunteers did a magnificent job with the holiday decorations. As you might imagine, a cancellation at almost the last minute can pose quite a chore for those trying to reach all the members to inform them. If you have email, please make sure that we have your correct email address. Linda DiSanto maintains the list of available email addresses, and if you are not currently on that list, or if your email address has changed, please contact her at disanto@wildblue.net

and update your information. If you do not have email and there is a question as to whether or not a meeting will be held, please call before going to the Site. (Al DiSanto 913-369-3835 or Connie Putthoff 913-845-2905.)

Looking forward, we will have an active and exciting time at TCHS in 2009. The monthly programs will continue to provide new and culturally-rich entertainment for the public. Membership is not a criterion to attend the meetings. Our Spring Open House is set for April 5th, and we hope to unveil the fire truck restoration project and the windmill restoration at this event.

Happy New Year to everyone!

Museum News

On January 30, Susy Ross and Helene Miller will travel to Leavenworth to participate in the Kansas Day program at Eisenhower School. All grades at the school (K - 6th) will participate, learning how things were in Kansas in 1861. As the city of Tonganoxie was not founded until 1866, our representatives will exhibit Native American items - artifacts, furs, clothing, and beading - and they will provide information about the peoples of this area during 1861. Ross and Miller will focus on Tonganoxie the Indian Chief and the Delaware Indians, and will discuss other Kansas Indians as well. Several other Leavenworth County museums are also involved in the Kansas Day learning program at the school.

Opening Day for the Museum is scheduled for the first Sunday in April (April 5th). New artifact donations have come to us over the winter months, and some are being prepared for display. There remains a lot to be done before Opening Day. Exhibits are being arranged, and there is always cleaning to be done. We are grateful to Susy Ross, Betty Englen, and Carol Stouffer for all they do to keep our Museum running smoothly.

Volunteer Spotlight

Our Volunteer Spotlight for January features Susy Ross, our volunteer Museum Director and Curator, and her husband Larry Ross, one of our every Wednesday volunteers. Not enough can be said about this dynamic duo and what they do for TCHS. Both are dedicated and give of themselves in whatever capacity necessary.



Susy works tirelessly at the historical site, and it is her skills and leadership efforts you witness when you enter the Museum. She provides leadership to several volunteers who work in the museum each week. She also represents our organization at the County Cultural meetings. Susy attends seminars and classes relative to museum administration in order to keep TCHS current with ongoing technology. She has also obtained grant monies for the Museum.

Larry is currently working on the fire truck restoration. He is an accomplished woodworker, and has constructed some of the display cases in the Museum. He also worked on the exhibit spaces which were added in the hay barn last year.

Susy was born and raised in Kansas City, Kansas. She spent her childhood summers in Colorado, and later earned her B.A. in English at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. She worked in the Kansas City, Kansas, public school system for what she describes as "one nightmare semester."

Larry was born in Pittsburg, Kansas, and raised on a Missouri farm four miles east of Pittsburg. He served in the U.S. Army from 1966-1968, then worked for Dearborn Midwest Conveyor Company for 33 years, retiring as a Senior Project Engineer.

Larry and Susy married in 1975, each bringing two children to the union. This has resulted in 13 perfect grandchildren. Susy delights in her time with her grandchildren, and always puts them and their interests above everything else in her life.

Being an avid hunter, Larry introduced Susy to muzzle loading - - target shooting with reproduction guns from the 1800 to 1840 time period. This hobby led to a passionate interest in the U.S. fur trade era, and they have pursued their interest in the history and ways of that time. Larry not only shoots, but also builds reproduction guns. Both have been named State Muzzle Loading Champions: Larry in Kansas, and Susy in Kansas and Missouri.

In addition to the muzzle loading activities, Susy has an intense interest in Kansas Indian culture. She taught herself Native American quill and beadwork, and has demonstrated her talents at TCHS on various occasions, most recently for the school children who visited our Site in early December. She has made many pieces of beadwork, some of which would rival the work done by Native Americans. She displayed her beadwork during a presentation on the subject at one of our monthly meetings on this subject, and was very well received.

Looking for "the country life" and a place to shoot brought them to their 20 acre homesite west of Tonganoxie in 1993. They joined TCHS in 1994, and have been active members and valued volunteers since that time.

In June 2008, Susy became one of the first "Distinguished Service Award" recipients at TCHS for her constant and continuing volunteer work. We are fortunate to have both Susy and Larry as members of our organization.

Fire Truck Restoration

- Al DiSanto

The restoration work on the fire truck continues to show progress. Most of the parts have now been primed and/or painted, and the assembly is starting to gain headway. Targeted completion date remains the first of April.

During the past several days, additional research has turned up some previously unknown but fascinating facts about our fire truck.

We all know that our fire truck served the city of Tonganoxie from 1951 until the early 1960s. We were never sure of the origin of the truck, and it has no manufacturer's identification or data plate. Finally, through a U.S. Military Fire Apparatus Historian, we have made identification.

The Army built many of the fire trucks that were used at their bases throughout the U.S. from the period between World War I and 1940 at the Motor Transport Shop, Holabird Quartermaster Depot, in Baltimore, Maryland. Our fire truck is known as a "Holabird Pumper", and was manufactured in 1936 and delivered to Fort Leavenworth that year. We do not yet know the length of service at Fort Leavenworth; however, we do know that the city of Tonganoxie purchased the pumper from a truck dealer in the area in 1951.

If you would like to view photos of these trucks, or you are interested in learning more about them, visit the website at www.firetrucks-atwar.com.

Did You Know

Frank and Mattie Fairchild, formerly of Ulster County New York, started the Fairchild Dairy in 1884 with 40 acres and 15 milk cows. Working with Kansas State University, Frank built what became the dairy center of Kansas, with himself the top dairyman of Kansas.

Frank, Mattie, and their six-year-old granddaughter Thelma, were killed in a car-train accident in 1917. The farm passed to their only child, Bessie, and her husband Archie Knox.

The original Fairchild-Knox dairy barn was built in 1901, but was destroyed by fire in 1932.

The second barn, built in 1932, still stands at the original site. Part of the original rock foundation supports the present barn. Bessie and Archie Knox passed the farm to their daughter Mildred, who with husband Arthur Young, raised white-face cattle on the land until 1976.

Mildred Knox Young donated the barn and 6.3 acres of land to TCHS in 1987. The Fairchild-Knox dairy barn and milk house are now the Tonganoxie Historical Society community building and Museum.

Membership Report

- Linda DiSanto

We are off to a great start for 2009. Membership cards and envelopes were included in the December newsletter, and the response has been very positive. If you want to renew your membership and did not receive these items, or if you know of someone who would like to become a member, please give me a call.

To determine if your dues have been paid for 2009, check the mailing address on your newsletter. "L" indicates that you are a Life Member and you owe no dues. If you have "09" after your name, you are paid through the end of 2009.

If your address, phone number, or email address has changed, please let me know so that I can update our files. The bad weather which caused our Christmas party to be cancelled was a great reason for keeping our records up to date. Although some members had to be called individually, it would have been very difficult to call *all* the members to advise them of the cancellation. So, if you have email, please provide your address in order to be kept up to date on any changes, and to receive announcements regarding meetings and programs. If you have any questions regarding your membership, feel free to call me (913-369-3835).

New Life Members:

Laurie Walters

Perry Walters

Patron Level Members:

Community National Bank

Supporter Level Members:

First State Bank & Trust

George and Colleen Anton

Carol Knox Smith

We also wish to thank the following members for their generous donations:

Dan and Caryle Carr - Leavenworth, KS

Tom and Billie Marshall - Roanoke, TX

Jim Watson - Pittsburg, KS

In Memory

We extend our sympathy to the families and friends of Lem Evans and Robert Turner.

Events Around the Area

In the Museum



This Gulbranson Player Piano was purchased in 1920 by Almanzor and Clarisa Jane Robison for their youngest daughter, Beulah Pauline Robison, born in 1910.

Beulah Robison Sprecher gave the piano to her only child, Glendean Sprecher Harriman. The piano was moved to Glendean's home in Reno in 1962. Glendean Sprecher Harriman gave the piano to her daughter, Susan Harriman Quisenberry of Tonganoxie, the family's fourth generation owner of the piano.

The piano contains tiny cloth bellows which pumps air for each one of the 88 keys. As the roll of perforated music paper turns, the bellows pumps air through the holes; the length of each note is determined by the length of the hole in the paper.

The piano was donated to TCHS by Susan Harriman Quisenberry.

Food for Thought

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?

If electricity is comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?

Jan 12-Feb 28 *Quindaro Ruins from A to Z*, an exhibit of artifacts excavated from the archaeological site of the old town of Quindaro. Information - Jennifer Laughlin 913-721-1078.

Feb 5 *Freak Show Artifacts* The Carousel Museum celebrates the Grand Opening of their 2nd floor display area with a traveling exhibit of items from the days of C.W. Parker's carnival freak shows. 320 S. Esplanade, Leavenworth. For further information, 913-682-1331.

Feb 12 - *Come celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday.* Abe will be on hand to answer any questions from pundits regarding his campaign in Leavenworth County. Admission is one cent (\$.01). Basehor Historical Museum, 2812 N. 155th St. For information call Carla 913-724-4022.

Feb 14 - *Valentine Day Luncheon 11:30-1:30* at Carousel Museum. \$12.50 per person, *adults only*, reservations *required*. 913-682-4514. 320 S. Esplanade, Leavenworth.

Feb 28 Leavenworth Historical Museums Association presents *A Taste of Leavenworth*. Sample local foods and beverages; auction, musical entertainment, etc. \$25 advance, \$30 at the door. *Adults only*. Starts at 5:30PM. University of St. Mary, McGilley Fieldhouse, 4100 S. 4th St. Leavenworth. Ticket info call 913-682-3050.

Mar 7 2PM Lansing Historical Museum presents *Picturing the Dust Bowl*, by Kate Meyer from the Spencer Museum of Art. Sponsored by Kansas Humanities Council. 115 E. Kansas Ave. Lansing. Info call 913-250-0203.

Mar 7 - May 31 *Mugged: A Rogue's Gallery*, a traveling exhibit of mug shots from the Leavenworth Penitentiary, on loan from the National Archives. Wyandotte County Museum, 631 N. 126th St. 913-721-1078.

Mar 21 - 10:00AM - Laura Phillippi of the Lansing Museum will preview a documentary film of the local prison. Basehor Historical Museum, 2812 N. 155th St. 913-724-4022.

Mark Your Calendars:

(All meetings begin at 7PM unless otherwise noted)

January 27 - Reclaiming Leavenworth County's Lost History

In March 2004, Jim Claunch of Leavenworth began a research project which would locate and identify every burial site in Leavenworth County. In 2006, he enlisted a few volunteers in his cause, which is an ongoing effort. The project includes the location and identification of burial sites, writing a history of these sites, developing a county-wide database of burials, and some restoration and preservation efforts. Some of these sites date back to pre-territorial days. More than half of the identified sites have been lost to the elements and vandalism, and a fourth of the remaining sites are in immediate danger. Jim will share photos and information about this project.

February 24 - Renovation of Fort Larned

Mike and Janice Seymour of Tonganoxie will dress in 1850-1860s period costume as they present information of the work done at Ft. Larned. During

the renovation, a name was found etched into an old stone located in a high area of the walls. The history of this mysterious name was traced, and the Seymour's will present their findings of this and of the reconstruction of the fort.

March 24 - To Be Announced

April 28 - Jan English, Chief - Wyandot Nation of Kansas and Cheryl Armstrong of the Wyandotte County Genealogical Society

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

Cheryl Armstrong, a member of the Wyandot Nation of Kansas through marriage, will assist Jan in the presentation. Cheryl is an avid genealogist, and volunteers at the Family History Center to help others discover their family histories.

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