

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

June 2007

EXPANSION PLANNED FOR TCHS

Submitted by George Cooper,
Chairman of the Board

The Fairchild-Knox property, consisting of four acres of the original dairy farm and the original farm house, has been purchased by a California group. Closing is set for July of this year. The buyer wishes to clear the property and has offered the historic home to TCHS, to be moved at our expense. We have obtained two bids for moving the building, and one of the bids has been approved by the Board (5 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain). The approved bid is for \$44,000 and will include preparation, moving the building, and a new basement foundation. No contracts have been signed, and another bid is expected from the company which moved the Reno Church and Honey Valley School.

When moved to our Site and restored on a full basement, this structure will provide the much-needed space for expansion of the museum facilities, including a welcoming center, gift shop, office and research space, and artifact display and storage space. It is hoped that furnishings depicting the early period of the home can be obtained.

There will continue to be costs associated with repairs and improvements. A well-executed fund drive will be needed to provide a large part of the money to save this home and restore it. Member comments, questions, and suggestions are welcome. Contact George Cooper at the Museum office.

Other announcements from the Board:

- The first item on the agenda at TCHS is to recognize the amazing group of volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to keeping the wheels turning at the Site. We thank you.

- Howard Fields, our Treasurer for nine years, has decided to retire from this position. Howard is among our most dedicated volunteers, having also served as President of the Association for one term, and continues to be a member of our Wednesday work team. Our thanks to Carol Slawson for accepting this challenging position. A Life Member, Carol has been an active volunteer for many years.

- Janet Angell stepped down as Director after two terms, but has agreed to continue as Board Secretary. In addition to assisting with publicizing programs, Janet will serve as Publicity Director, representing TCHS on the School Superintendent's Patron Meeting, the Tonganoxie Chamber of Commerce, and the Leavenworth Historical Society.

- Julienne Kaslaitis has accepted the position of Program Coordinator. Julienne will obtain speakers and plan programs for our monthly meetings, a function formerly handled by George Cooper. Ideas for programs should be sent to Julienne at the Museum.

- An employee was hired to clean certain areas of the Site bi-monthly.

- We are looking for someone to establish and maintain a TCHS website.

- Betty Englen, our Historian for the past ten years, is looking for someone to take over this job.

* * *

FROM OUR TREASURER -

We started the year with a great first quarter. The income from receipt of dues and Life Memberships, fund-raising projects, a county grant, and rental of the TCHS buildings were the major contributors to our income of \$9,082.23 for the first quarter. Expenses totaled \$3,902.90 in the first quarter. The major expenses include utilities, maintenance and improvements of the buildings, promotional materials, membership fees, postage and supplies. In the fall we prepay our gas for heating, so our utilities do not reflect all of the heating expenses. We ended the first quarter with \$12,929.18 in our checking account.

Upon written request of Board Chairman George Cooper, we received a grant from Leavenworth County for \$1,250.

In October of last year, we received a generous donation of \$10,000 from a former Tonganoxie resident, Foster (Bud) Laming. The Laming family were early settlers of our town. Bud's family were the founders of Suburban Telephone Co., our local telephone service for many years.

Once again, our volunteers will operate the snack concession at the baseball games this summer. This enterprise provides our largest income for the year. * * *

- Submitted by Carol Slawson, Treasurer

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE BRINGS CROWDS

On April 1, our season began with an Open House at the Site. A gathering area in the barn, decorated with a 'sunflower' theme, welcomed visitors as they toured the three historic buildings. Guests were treated to coffee and home-made cookies. Hostesses were Susy Ross, Helene Miller, and Linda DiSanto.

MUSEUM NEWS

Rachel Saalwachter, a recent graduate of the KU Museum Studies Program, has joined us as part-time Curator for the Museum. Rachel came to us in May, and has started work on conservation and storage. She will work six hours each week, three of which will be on Sundays from 1-4pm during regular Museum hours. Please make an effort to stop by and welcome Rachel to TCHS.

The Museum has received two major donations over the past year:

- Eunice Ridgeway Schenck Estate.

Deborah Clark, Martha Elliott and Kim Fabian, nieces of Mrs Schenck, have donated 130 items from her estate. Mrs. Schenck was a teacher at the Honey Valley School during the 1930s, and this donation includes many of her personal papers, her teacher contracts, and pupil grade books. Also included are photos and papers of: Will Ridgeway, who ran the local dray business for years; Ida Kirby Ridgeway, who had a deep interest in politics and writing; Ray and Blanch Ridgeway and their connection to the State Lake; Howard and Maude Stringfellow Moore, including a writing desk and folding game table which had belonged to them.

- Charles "Jack" Hoey items.

Mr. and Mrs Berry Mauldin, friends and neighbors of the late Charles Hoey of Arkansas, have donated over 25 items that once belonged to Hoey. Charles "Jack" Hoey was born and raised in Tonganoxie, and later became a star of silent films. The items include his bow ties, his cowboy hat, family photos, army papers, personal papers, movie memorabilia from the 1940s (including an autographed photo of Tom Mix), and personal papers belonging to Charles' wife Marie Helen Mahan.

Other donations include:

- The Museum was fortunate to receive items for a new display on Col. John McCone, a local hero in the Cold War with the USSR. Research and information for this exhibit was done by Kerry Putthoff, who was in contact with John

McCone while doing his research. Our thanks go to Kerry for this outstanding effort, and for his donation of these valuable items.

- Richmond Champion 5-row Seed Drill, circa 1890, donated by Albert Joe Doege. This item has been completely restored by member Al DiSanto, and is now on display in the barn.

- quilt made by the Smith Ladies Aide Society, donated by Delores Edmonds;

- Wright chain saw, donated by Wayne Finch;

- Surge "Tonganoxie" electric pulsator, donated by Bill New;

- signs and cabinet used by Willie Bowersox, donated by Jack Jarrot;

- genealogy of the Bury family, researched by Delores White;

- barn wood, donated by Mr. & Mrs. Frank Kukuk. * * *

- Submitted by Susy Ross, Curator

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

It's been a busy year, with on-going repairs, painting, and cleaning of the buildings. As activity at the Site increases, grounds maintenance is vital, with mowing and trimming consuming most of our Wednesday work time.

- A new sidewalk to the firehouse was installed in December.

- The parking area was dressed with gravel.

- Day-to-day electrical and mechanical maintenance.

- Addition of steel siding to the barn progresses.

- New carpet is installed in the church.

- Painting of two bell towers and other hard to reach areas done as a Scouting project under direction of Eagle Scout Micah Titterington.

- 1926 windmill tower erected last summer; motor is to be rebuilt.

- Coffee breaks - rest and social time, but vital for discussion of many issues. * * *

- Information from Del Englen

HELENE MILLER RECEIVES AWARD; NAMED SCHOOL COORDINATOR

In May this year, Helene Miller was presented with the "Friend of Education" award. Helene was nominated for the award by Dr. Richard Erickson, Superintendent of the Tonganoxie Unified School District, who also made the presentation at a special breakfast meeting.

In addition to winning this award, Helene, a former school teacher and dedicated member at TCHS, has volunteered to be our School Coordinator. As such, she will be in charge of all school/education activities at the Site.

On January 29, she organized "Kansas Day at TCHS" in celebration of the anniversary of Kansas statehood. Through her efforts and skillful planning, the fourth and fifth graders from Linwood Elementary School were taken back in time to the early days of Kansas. They "attended" classes, learned about the Kanza Indians, and had a guided tour of the Museum, followed by refreshments in the church basement.

"Always we teach the children to respect the property and hopefully help them know the importance of our Historical Site and of their heritage," states Helene. "We make it fun for everyone!" * * *

TONGIE DAYS - JUNE 9 & 10

Tongie Days was celebrated at TCHS with displays in all three buildings. The Tonganoxie United Methodist Women sponsored a two-day Bridal Display in the Honey Valley School House. Visitors were able to view items from several categories, including wedding gowns, vintage gowns, groom's apparel, and other bridal and wedding attire. Vintage handkerchiefs, purses, photos,

and other items were also shown. The display was organized under the leadership of Vernilea Fuhlhage and assisted by Carol Slawson and Dena Schaffer.

The Reno Church was the location for the annual Vintage Quilt Show. This was the third year for this show which showcases quilts 50 or more years old. More than 20 vintage quilts were on display, spread across the wooden pews in the old Reno Church. A special exhibit this year included a private collection of newspaper patterns from the 1930s and 1940s. The show was organized and hosted by Jean Pearson, who stated that "while a few of the quilts were originally made in other areas of the country, they were all on loan from families living in the Tonganoxie area."

For the third year, the Sacred Heart Church Altar Society sponsored a Quilt Show at TCHS during Tongie Days. Held in the Fairchild-Knox barn, this show featured "anything quilted" - including table runners, clothing, baby quilts, etc. Quilting frames were set up and the ladies worked on a baby quilt to demonstrate techniques and answer questions from onlookers. Janet Stuke, Chairperson of this event, said that they do this in order to educate the community in quilting as an art form. "A lot of people do not realize that the old fashioned way of quilting is still done," said Janet. Along with Janet, other Sacred Heart quilters include Gladys Walters, MaryAnn Needham, Cleopha Hurla, Sharon Edmonds, Francis Frick, Mary Ann Theroff, and Betty Lingenfelter (and others who drop in occasionally to quilt and visit a while).

* * *

it was acquired by the City of Tonganoxie in 1951 and became the primary pumper truck for the Tonganoxie Fire Department. Around 1960, it was relegated as a back-up truck when the city finally updated to new equipment. It was eventually taken out of service and fell into disrepair, where the elements and deterioration took its toll.

The Wednesday volunteers have begun a restoration program, of which the first item was to determine whether the massive engine could be revived. After overhaul, the engine was started for the first time in about 40 years, and it appears to function well.

Several members were on hand for the recent start-up, including Roy Salmon and Ed Slawson, two former Tonganoxie Volunteer Firemen who had driven and worked on this same engine during the time it was in service.

TCHS member Gladys Walters recalled the days when her father, John Sparks, along with several other of the volunteer firemen, would meet on Mondays and work on the fire engine. The fire truck was taken to Salmon's Garage, across the street from the Fire Department. There the men would start the engine, and do cleaning and repairs on the truck and hoses.

Mechanical work will continue along with restoration of the body. Many of the parts (i.e., lights, siren, hoses, etc.) were removed from the truck over the years. If possible, we would like to get them back to help with the restoration.

Stop by and watch the "work-in-progress."

- Submitted by Al DiSanto

* * *

FIRE TRUCK UPDATE

Work continues on the fire truck which was acquired in 2003. Research shows it to be vintage 1930, with a Continental 6-cylinder engine. Originally built for the U.S. Corps of Engineers,

*Have you noticed the flowers around the buildings? We have Connie Putthoff to thank for this beautiful addition to the Site. She stops by every few days to check on and groom the flowerbeds. **Great job!!!***

HIGH TEA IN THE BARN

High tea in a barn? Can it be?? On May 12, approximately 80 guests were on hand to enjoy High Tea in the magically transformed and beautifully decorated barn. Everyone was in awe as the tea was served in fine China, with fancy linens and antique crystal. Hostesses were dressed in long-sleeve white blouses, long black skirts, and white aprons. Cathy Peak wore an elegant antique apron, purchased especially for this event.

Chairperson JoAnn Brown planned and organized the event, and was assisted by co-hosts Jean Pearson, Gladys Walters, Janet Stuke, Mary Ann Needham, Cathy Peak, Susy Ross, and Betty Englen.

The menu included dainty cookies, scones, various finger sandwiches, chocolate-dipped strawberries, pecan torts, and other delicacies. "The ladies spent two days baking (all the food was hand-made) and one day setting up for the Tea," said JoAnn. The decorating magic was performed under the leadership of Betty Englen.

In addition to the delicious food and tea, the guests also received bisque trinket boxes and book markers as souvenirs of their day at High Tea. To top everything off, music was provided by Ellen Bottorf, local pianist, who played music from the 20s through 50s on the antique piano. (Ellen played for our Christmas party last year.)

Plan now to attend next year's High Tea in the Barn. * * *

CALLING COMMITTEE

Each month, a group of ladies known as the Calling Committee call the members to remind them of the meeting, and occasionally about cancellations and other announcements.

Chairman of this committee is Harriett Mark, and assisting her is Nila Denholm, Jean Pearson, and Winnie Turner. This is a valuable service to our organization, and we appreciate their hard work to keep us informed. * * *

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Without them there would be no TCHS. Many of our members go the extra mile by coming to the Site *every* Wednesday morning to do the cleaning, maintenance, snow removal, mowing grass, landscaping, and so many other chores which are required to ensure the continued operation of the Site. Most of them "report for duty" every week, missing only for vacations or emergencies. So often, the ones who tirelessly give of their time and labor never truly receive the recognition they so richly deserve. So to all of our volunteers, a huge THANK YOU! * * *

EVERY WEDNESDAY WORK CREW

- Dan Carr
- George Cooper
- Wayne Davidson
- Al DiSanto
- Betty Englen
- Del Englen
- Delbert Felts
- Howard Fields
- Bill Latham
- Lloyd Pearson
- Larry Ross
- Susy Ross
- Ed Slawson

WE NEED YOUR HELP . . .

Our area has been included in the new Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, a project to map our nation's history. Susy Ross, our Volunteer Curator, is working with Fred Leimkuhler to develop a tour guide of historical places in Tonganoxie. The first phase of the project will be Fourth Street. Susy is asking for any old photos and information on old businesses and buildings in our area. Any help toward this project will be appreciated. Call the Museum at 913-845-2960, or email Susy at ttchs785@aol.com. * * *

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Since January 1, we have welcomed 18 new members and added five new Life Members to our roster. Many of the new members will become Volunteers, which will help meet the increasing demands we face at TCHS.

The income generated from yearly dues, fundraisers, donations and memorials, combined with the dedication of our volunteers ensures the year-to-year success of our organization.

We have many challenges ahead of us - maintenance and upkeep of the Site; acquisition, restoration, and preservation of artifacts and exhibits; development of programs; expansion of the Museum; cost of supplies and postage - just to name a few. In order to meet these challenges, the Board of Directors has approved an increase in yearly dues beginning in January 2008. Cost of Individual Membership will increase to \$10 per year; Family Membership will increase to \$15 per year; all other levels will remain the same.

With the support and generosity of our members, and the guidance of our TCHS leadership, we will continue our goal to preserve our local history as we strive to improve our value to the community. We appreciate you, and we thank you for your continued support.

- Linda DiSanto, Membership

* * *

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

2006	Cathy Cooper
	Lennie Hermann
	Sara Zoellner-McKinney
	Harold Putthoff
	Joyce Terry
2007	Cheryl Emery
	Mike Emery
	Beth Cline Enloe
	Harriett Mark
	Gary Williams

IN MEMORIAM

2006	Frances Korb
	Patricia Lou (Edmonds) Needham
	Robert Needham
	Nancy Louise Smith
	Wayne Turner
2007	Irene Korb
	Doris June Salmon
	Sally Wilcox

FUND-RAISER EVENTS VALUABLE RESOURCE TO TCHS

Following the donations, memorials, building rentals, and membership dues which TCHS receives, fund-raisers provide the remainder of our income. Profits from fund raisers benefit all areas of the organization.

Each year during baseball season, a group of dedicated members volunteer to work for one night a week at the concession stand. Lloyd Pearson makes sure the supplies are on hand and the booth is well-stocked. New volunteers are

invited to partake in the fun (plus you may get to see a good game!). This is our biggest moneymaker of the year.

Another fund-raising event is labeling union newsletters for mailing. Denise Baker secures this job for us and brings the materials to the Site where the volunteers gather and apply the labels. Denise arranges for food to be brought in, and some of the members bring home-made cakes and treats as well. An evening of easy work, social time, and good food - - PLUS, TCHS makes a tidy profit!

Our yearly Soup and Chili Dinner is chaired by Connie Putthoff. Although this is a lot of hard work, the chili Dinner presents TCHS with a nice profit each year. Connie has been doing this for several years, and *knows* what she is doing.

Gladys Walters collects and redeems Best Choice labels throughout the year, adding to the TCHS treasury. Remember to bring your Best Choice labels to the meetings, or mail them to Gladys at the Museum.

Last fall, a group of 20 volunteers worked the concession stands at the Renaissance Festival in Bonner Springs. For about five hours of work, our organization realized a handsome sum of around \$1,000. Thanks to Connie for securing this fund raiser.

If you would like to volunteer to help with any of these activities, or if you know of a fund raiser that would work for our group, please contact the Museum office.

* * *

TCHS ANNUAL PICNIC

The annual picnic was held on Saturday June 16 with approximately 45 members and guests in attendance. Meat, drinks, and service materials were provided by TCHS. Members outdid themselves this year, with everyone bringing their very best picnic dishes to share. Del Englen, Delbert Felts, Lloyd Pearson, and Dan Carr manned the grill, and encouraged everyone

to come back for seconds. Everything was so tasty that many of the members did go back for seconds - - *several times!!!*

In addition to the great food, we were entertained by musicians Steve and Cindy LaForge, Eddie Middleton, and Leon Bell, who delighted the group with their bluegrass and folk music. This same group performed for our picnic in 2005, and was enthusiastically welcomed back for this year's event.

The evening provided the perfect opportunity for members to meet our new part-time Curator, Rachel Saalwachter. However, missing from the crowd was our Chairman George Cooper and his wife, Ruth. Ruth had fallen earlier in the week and was in the hospital with a broken hip. We send our best wishes to her and hope she mends quickly.

If you missed this year's picnic, you missed a great evening of fun, entertainment, good food, and fantastic companionship. We will look forward to seeing you there next year!

* * *

"As I got older, history meant so much more to me than when I was a kid."

-Frances Korb, 1914-2006

CONTACT US

We welcome your feedback on our efforts to keep you informed. You may contact us at

TCHS Newsletter
201 W. Washington
Tonganoxie, KS 66086
913-845-2960
ttchs785@aol.com

CHECK OUT THE GIFT SHOP!!!

Donna Jean Fields has volunteered to be in charge of the Museum Gift Shop. Items currently available for sale include: pen-and-ink note cards with original artwork by Fred Leimkuhler; cookbooks written by Coleen Anton; embroidered tee shirts, denim shirts, and caps; and many other items. Stop by the Gift Shop and see what Donna Jean has "in store" for us.

Oftentimes when groups experience growth and change, some things are pushed aside for more pressing matters. This is the case of our TCHS Newsletter. For this we apologize and will try to be more attentive. Thank you for your understanding.

TONGANOXIE COMMUNITY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
201 W. Washington
Tonganoxie, Kansas 66086

