

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

TCHS

September 1, 2008

Museum News

Work continues on the KMA grant photo project, with completion expected during the next few weeks. Photographs exhibited in the Museum are being duplicated and originals are being preserved in archive-quality storage.

The Fred Leimkuhler exhibit of Indian artifacts and the Zoellner Mercantile exhibit are still available for viewing. Both exhibits are "temporary" exhibits, and will not be shown after this season.

In August, Larry and Susy Ross traveled to Salina, Kansas, along with Laurie and Perry Walters, to attend a full-day workshop on the PastPerfect software program. This computer program is capable of handling all our Museum artifact records. The PastPerfect software was made available to TCHS as a result of a grant from Leavenworth County.

Plans are underway for some of the Museum workers to attend the annual KMA conference to be held in Manhattan, Kansas in October. The theme of this year's conference is "Creative Collaboration for Growth," and will focus on finding growth for our organization through collaborative efforts with other associations similar to ours, such as history museums, natural history, art and cultural organizations, nature centers, zoos and tourism entities.

Betty Englen, who volunteers many, many hours to TCHS and to the Museum, offers the following interesting statistics about visitors to our Site *up to mid-August this year*:
We have had 454 visitors thus far; of that number we find that - - -

-24 came because another visitor recommended our Site

-80 who came were members, or were told about the Museum by members

-11 saw the highway sign

-4 saw the State website

-26 were return visitors

-2 saw our table ads

-12 saw our notice in the *Mirror*

-90 came for Tongie Days or Open House

-205 school children have visited TCHS.

With the efforts put forth by our group of dedicated volunteers, our Site will continue to grow and to offer an outstanding opportunity to both our visitors (and our local youth) to learn about and experience our history. To all our volunteers, members, and visitors who continue to support our efforts, we say "Thank you."

Honey Valley School News

-by Helene Miller, School Coordinator

The Tonganoxie Third Graders are coming!!!

On October 9 and 10, we are expecting the entire third grade from Tonganoxie Elementary School.

Over the two days, we will welcome 134 kids to the Site, where the subjects for the day will be Genealogy, Kansas Indians, and School Days of Yesteryear. They will also learn about artifacts from earlier times and experience how things used to be done, followed by a tour of the Museum. The children will bring their lunch and enjoy a sing-along of old songs. They get to sample johnnycakes along the way.

When the students leave us, they will take along a cookie, a bookmark about the historical Site, and an introduction to Kansas history. We hope they also leave with a better understanding about their local history.

We are looking forward to seeing the kids once again, and I really appreciate the many volunteers who help make this program possible.

TCHS Board News

Other than the usual day-to-day operations, the most notable news from your Board is a new policy for awards, and the establishment of a new award. The Distinguished Service Award has been created to give recognition to those volunteers who have served in a leadership capacity and have given of their time and talent over a period of many years.

The first Distinguished Service Award was presented to former Board Chairman George Cooper at the monthly meeting in May. In June, Museum Director Susy Ross received DSA recognition at our annual picnic. And at our July meeting, Del and Betty Englen were both recognized with this special award.

We have applied for a grant from the Kansas Museum Association for some much-needed new tables to be used for meetings. We have also applied for a Leavenworth County grant for funds to replace the Museum roof. Hopefully, these requests will be fruitful.

A huge Thank You goes to the volunteers who gave of their time and of themselves to work the ballpark concession this year.

-Al DiSanto, Board Chairman

Congratulations

. . . to **Betty and Del Englen**, Life members, on being awarded the TCHS Distinguished Service Award.

The awards were presented by George Cooper and Susy Ross during the July monthly meeting.



*Left to right:
George Cooper, Del Englen, Susy Ross, Betty Englen.*

Volunteer Spotlight

Carol and Ed Slawson have been members of TCHS for many years, and became “active” members around 1999. Ed is one our “every Wednesday” volunteers, utilizing his experience in the heating/air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical field, and volunteering in whatever capacity is required. He has been a member of the Board since 1999. Carol has worn many hats during her time at TCHS, volunteering whenever needed, and has been our Treasurer since 2007.



Ed was born in Kansas City, KS; he had four brothers and four sisters. The family moved to a farm west of Tonganoxie in 1946. Ed joined the Naval Reserve at age 17, and went on active duty after graduation from Tonganoxie High School.

Carol was born in Tonganoxie, one of eight children. She and her siblings all graduated from Tonganoxie High School, as did both her parents. Carol and Ed dated all through high school, and married just days after her graduation. They recently celebrated their 50th Anniversary. The Slawsons have three children: a son in Portland, Oregon, and two daughters in the Tonganoxie area. They are blessed with five grandchildren.

Carol and Ed owned and operated Slawson Plumbing Electric from 1970 until the end of 1998. While Ed and his employees did the heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical work on new homes as well as service, Carol ran the store, selling appliances and hardware, and doing all the office duties.

After selling the business and retiring, Ed became a Model A enthusiast. They purchased a 1930 Model A Sedan, and have traveled with the Plain Ol' A's car club on many trips. Ed has also restored a 1931 Model A pickup, of which he is very proud (shown in photo).

The Slawsons are members of Tonganoxie Methodist Church. Ed is a member (and Past Master) of the Masonic Lodge, and is Secretary of Tonganoxie Cemetery Association. He served on the Park Board for many years, overseeing operation of the Swimming Pool. He was also a volunteer with the Fire Department for 25 years. Carol was Secretary of the Cemetery Association for five years, and a member of Eastern Star for many years.

Being active in Tonganoxie's business community for so many years, the Slawsons "want to give back to the community" and are both "very interested in preserving the history of Tonganoxie."

In the Museum . . .



The above bonnets were hand-made by Lela May Walters Freienmuth (circa 1920s) for her daughter, Shirley Freienmuth (Kasper). The bonnets were donated to TCHS by Shirley Kasper.

Throughout the 19th Century and well into the 20th Century, girls (and women) always wore hats or bonnets when outdoors or attending social functions. The bonnet on the left was known as a "pilot cap" style bonnet. It was light-weight, could be sized for infants or toddlers, and tended to stay put better than other styles. There were three darts along the lower back edge, and the trim and ties were made of self-fabric or coordinating material.

The center bonnet is in the "prairie style" and features an extended brim, for protection from the sun. The item on the right would later

become known as a "Jack and Jill" style, an easy and simple style which provided protection on a hot day, and was easily transported.

Preview of Coming Attraction

(All meetings begin at 7:00PM unless otherwise indicated.)

September 23 – Alaska and the Arctic Circle in a Model A Automobile

In 1988, 14 antique automobiles traveled to Alaska for the adventure of a lifetime. Six of the cars were from the Kansas City area, two of those six from Lawrence and one from Tonganoxie. They left early on August 21, 1988, and met the rest of the group in Calgary, Canada, on August 28. They arrived home on September 24. Join us for an evening of memories as local participants present a recap of the trip. Come share this memorable adventure and hear how a seemingly impossible trip was accomplished. Some of the original Model A's from the trip will be in the parking lot for your inspection.

October 28 –History of Dentistry.
(Tentative program)

November 18 – Music of the 40's.
(Tentative program)

December 16 – Annual Christmas Party.
Our special guest of the evening will be Jan Schaefer, musician at the Christian Church in Tonganoxie. Jan will entertain us with her musical talent and will lead us in a group sing-along. Members should bring their favorite holiday dish to share. Come enjoy some holiday music, good food, and festive social time with friends. The fun starts at **6:00PM**.

NOTE: The dates for the Nov and Dec meetings have been moved to the THIRD Tuesday of the month to accommodate the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

July Program Commentary

Our July meeting, “Locating Lost Burial Sites,” presented by Elizabeth Wilson-Agin, generated many positive comments and left a few unanswered questions. Some felt that the subject matter was somewhat “technical” and that additional information and further discussion would be helpful. Since that meeting, Elizabeth has graciously answered a few of those questions, which I wanted to share with you.

*When grave shafts were dug by hand, especially in clay soils, burial of children in shallow graves saved both energy and costs. Even now, children (infants) are buried closer to the surface.

*Quite a few people have been buried with their “treasures.” Even present day burials often include small mementos. Old war veterans may have been buried with swords or armor, and even in Jewish burial sites where they have only wooden caskets, any small metallic items are detectable with this equipment (jewelry, buttons, etc.).

*Costs of obtaining the ground-penetrating radar and other equipment can run between \$50,000 to well over \$250,000. Commercially available metal detectors are not sensitive enough to detect deeply buried grave goods, nor would they have the ability to detect soil areas that have been disturbed, as does the ground-penetrating radar or use of aerial kite photography. There are no simple “on/off” switches, and the equipment is operable only by highly skilled personnel.

*Elizabeth Agin has traveled over the world with the equipment. Most of her work is done for cemeteries (rather than individuals). The costs associated with just the transportation of equipment would likely be prohibitive for individual work, whereas cemeteries could do various projects at the same time, spreading out the costs.

Elizabeth says, “Thanks again for having me! I had a wonderful time and it was a great honor to be a part of the Society!” Our thanks go to

Elizabeth for giving her time and talent to our Historical Society and to our community.

Watch for announcements regarding a future TCHS program relating to the cemetery work being done by a group of volunteers right here in Leavenworth County. As you read this, burial sites are being located and documented for the future, and attention is finally being focused on many of the abandoned cemeteries around Leavenworth County.

Gone, but not forgotten.

AARP Driver Safety Program to be Held at Site

TCHS will host an AARP Driver Safety Program at the Site on Tuesday, October 21. The one-day course will be presented by John A. Duncanson, retired Patrol Division Commander of the Leavenworth County Sheriff's Department. Duncanson will inform us about defensive driving techniques for seniors and other safety issues. Some insurance companies may offer a discount on your premium for seniors who have completed the course. You should inquire about this with your insurer.

Cost for the program will be \$10.00, and lunch will be provided. To register for the seminar, or for further information, please contact Jim Stuke at 913-369-3189.

Did You Know

The Fairchild-Knox dairy barn and milk house, which are now the Community Building and Museum for Tonganoxie Community Historical Society, was built in 1901, then destroyed by a fire in 1932.

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

Frank and Mattie Fairchild and their six-year old daughter, Thelma, were killed in a car

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accident in 1917. The farm passed to the only remaining child, daughter Bessie Fairchild Knox and her husband, Archie.

The second barn, built in 1932, still stands at its original location. 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-faced cattle on the land until 1976.

Mildred Knox Young donated the barn and 6.3 acres of land to the Historical Society in 1987.

Lansing Museum Grand Re-opening

Members of TCHS attended the grand re-opening of the Lansing Historical Museum on August 1st. The Museum has been closed for about a year, due to fire damage to the building. Restoration is complete, and they are back to full operation. If



you have not seen the Museum, stop in the next time you are in the Lansing area.

Larry Ross, Betty Englen, Susy Ross, Del Englen, Linda DiSanto, Al DiSanto at Lansing Historical Museum re-opening.

To Contact Us:

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Events Around the Area

Sept 2-Nov 8 – *Community Threads.* Annual quilt show at the Wyandotte County Museum. 631 N. 126th St. M-F 9-4 and Sat 9-12.

Sept 26 – *Parker Carousel Golf Tournament* at Leavenworth County Club. For information call Marguerite Strange 913-682-3050.

Oct 11 – 10:30AM. Leavenworth County Historical Society presents Dr. William Worley portraying *August Bondi (1833-1907), soldier and settler*, who came from Austria to Kansas, rode with John Brown, and served in the Union Army. Bondi offers a rare look into the challenges faced by Jewish settlers of Kansas. Program made possible by KS Humanities Council and Jewish Community Foundation of KC. 1128 5th Ave. Leavenworth. Further information, call 913-682-7759

Now thru Oct 26 – *Strawberry Hill Museum & Cultural Center*, 720 N. 4th, KC, KS. Collectibles exhibit, including 1940s greeting cards, teapots and cups, glass figurines, much more. Also included is a special military exhibit honoring 574 servicemen and women from the Strawberry Hill area who served in WWII. Further information call 913-371-3264.

Thru end of Oct – *Mugged! A Rogue's Gallery of Leavenworth Penitentiary Mug Shots.* A traveling display of the National Archives, this photographic exhibit includes inmate mug shots taken from the early records of the famed prison. First City Museum, 743 Delaware, Leavenworth. Mon – Sat 8-11AM; Thurs 1-4PM. Contact C. VanOrden 913-682-1866

"Since a politician never believes what he says, he is surprised when others believe him."

-Charles DeGaulle in Newsweek, 1962

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

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