

Tonganoxie Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 785 Tonganoxie, Kansas 66086

July 1, 2010

2010 Season Off to a Great Start

The Tonganoxie Historical Society enjoyed one of our best Opening Day events ever. The highlight of the day was an on-site encampment of **The Bald Eagles Re-enactors** group. Most of the re-enactors belong to the First Santa Fe Trail Plainsman Muzzleloaders. The group represents the “Mountain Men Era” in American history (1800-1840).



During the weekend, there were men, women, and children living as they would have during that period. (The only “modern” thing involved was the use of the facilities in the barn.) There were demonstrations to attract every interest: knife and tomahawk throwing, melting and molding lead balls, making leather garments, cooking, etc.



Don Long from Auburn, Kansas, melting lead and molding balls.

In addition to the encampment activities, all the buildings at the Site were open for visitors. The fire house was a huge attraction with the restored fire truck front and center, and new display cabinets showcasing all the photos, memorabilia, and

historical information regarding Tonganoxie fire-fighting history. A grand way to start the 2010 season, with more activities planned for the year.

TCHS will be hosting the Leavenworth County Cultural Meeting on August 12th. The group meets four times during each year, and brings together at least two representatives from each of the cultural groups around the county. The group’s latest project was the podcast series, which showcases our county’s historical heritage. The Leavenworth County Commission will host the series on the county website www.leavenworthcounty.org. The two entries regarding the Tonganoxie area include photos and data about silent movie actor Jack Hoey, and of local apple orchards. The photos and script for the Tonganoxie portion of the podcast was prepared by Susy Ross from our Museum.

If you find yourself with some spare time, come out on Wednesday and join all the fun – or at least stop in and look around, maybe enjoy a coffee break with us.



Monthly Meeting Hosts

The host/hostess list for 2010 is posted on the bulletin board in the church basement. If you cannot serve your assigned time, please contact Jean Pearson, 845-3228.

July 27 - Mike and Pam Smith & Laurence & Jean Hill

August 24 - Denise Baker and Deloris Edmonds

September 28 – John & Ferry Evans and John & Julienne Kaslaitis

From the Board

- Laurie Walters, Chairman

Did you happen to notice the antique vehicles in our driveway for Tongie Days? The cars paired with a lovely quilt show in the Reno Church, and volunteers greeting visitors in the Honey Valley School, the barn and Museum, and the fire house provided a DRY and interesting day for our visitors. Although the day started slowly because of the deluge of rain, we hosted more than sixty visitors for the day. Thanks to our members for the many hours donated which contributed to a successful event.

Our highway signs have been successful in attracting visitors to the Site. At this time, we have had as many visitors as the entire season last year. Our guests are very pleased with the quality of our efforts. Please bring your guests and family to visit us . . . new items are added in the Museum on a weekly basis. Keep in mind if you have a social group which would enjoy a visit, we would love to schedule a day and time for the tour.

The Honey Valley School is sporting a newly repaired and freshly painted ceiling. Siding has been applied to the eaves of the barn and the doors of the entire facility are being renovated to provide safe egress. Future projects include painting the interior of the school and assessment of the Reno Church roof.

The annual member picnic last Saturday was enjoyable in spite of the heat, due to a lovely breeze and really good shade for the event. Bill Peak stimulated the members to tell jokes and we discovered some very good stand-up comics.

Connie Putthoff was given a Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her significant service and tireless contributions to TCHS over the years. Connie has served as President at TCHS for the past several years, manages the building rentals, and organizes the numerous fund-raising events for our organization. We offer our sincere

gratitude for all Connie has done and continues to do for TCHS.



Museum News

The Museum volunteers continue cataloging and entering information into the PastPerfect computer program. Progress is being made, but the workers are finding the project to be an even larger endeavor than previously thought. Once completed, the program will encompass every artifact, item, and piece of information available in our museum.

Some of the new items in the Museum:

- A melodeon used by the Congregational Church in the 1800s. It was formerly owned by Harry Woodcock, founder (1868/1869) and first minister of the Congregational Church.
- Ceramic pieces created by Hazel Opliger whom many remember from the Jarbalo area
- An eclectic collection from Lelia Grove, complete with stunning photos of her all-girl band of the early 1900s. If you have any information or photos of Lelia Grove and/or this all-girl band, please contact the Museum.
- 1885 Union Pacific Railroad map detailing the railroads in Kansas at that time.

Now available at the Museum: three VHS copies of the movie *“Where Pigeons Go to Die”* starring Michael Landon - free to the first three people interested. Stop by or call the Museum, 845-2960 (Wednesday AM).

The Museum is in need of a piano bench or stool. If you have or know of someone who has a piano bench available, please contact Betty or Susy at the Museum.



The following essay is one of several writings given to me by the late Fred Leimkuhler. It is printed as written by Mr. Leimkuhler.

Talking Crow

-by Fred Leimkuhler

Mark Twain wrote a story, Jim Baker's Blue Jay Yarn. It has to do with the fact that blue jays could talk. Mark Twain says he knows it's true because Jim Baker told him so.

I'm going to tell you the story of a talking crow. I want you to believe it because I told you so.

John Bartlett came to Tonganoxie with his parents in 1895. John had a grocery and Meat Market in Tonganoxie for twelve years. It was on the south side of 4th Street just west of the Bank. John lived on 2nd Street just west of the old High School.

When the weather was nice we students would eat our lunches outside. John would come home for dinner each day. He drove a pickup truck and the crow would fly along beside the truck. The crow would get home before John and would set on the front porch railing and wait for John. When John got out of the truck and started for the front door, the crow would say "Hello John" - "Hello John" - "You're late John" - "You're late John."

John Bartlett died April 4, 1937, at the age of 44 years.

Some folks still refuse to believe the story, now you know it's true because I told you so.

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"War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religions, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge is preferable to it".

- Martin Luther, Table Talk, 1569

Upcoming Programs at TCHS

In case of inclement weather, or for information about any of the programs, please call Program Chairman Bill Peak at 913-845-2852.

July 27 – 7:00pm: Jane Rhoads - Kansas Opera Houses and Community Events

From melodrama to Shakespeare, from church socials to high school commencements, the opera houses of Kansas made significant contributions to the social and cultural fabric of our state. Tonight we take a look at how the opera houses emerged from plain second-story rooms to the elaborate theaters of larger communities, and how some renovated opera houses are once again serving as community cultural spaces. (A Kansas Humanities Council presentation)

August 24 – 7:00pm: Meet Charley Green – The Will Rogers of the Plains Author, entertainer and part-time cowboy, Charley Green doesn't profess to being a Will Rogers impersonator, just a story teller who's been influenced and inspired by Will Rogers. Join us as he shares some of the famous quotes and stories about Will Rogers, as well as some of his own stories, maybe a song or two and some cowboy poetry.

Sept 28 – 7:00pm: Program information not available at time of printing.

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Larry and Susy Ross, Opening Day 2010

In the Museum . . .



Ivory Pyralin Du Barry Celluloid Dresser Set, donated by Esther Eason

The dresser set pictured above was owned by Mary McKee, the grandmother of TCHS member Esther Eason. The photo in the small frame is Grace Wright Ritchie, great aunt of Esther Eason. Displayed are a powder box, nail file, button hook, hand mirror, hair receiver, picture frame, and a smaller box, probably used for jewelry or other small items. There would have been eighteen pieces available for the dresser sets of that time, including a tray to hold them.

Did You Know

Pyralin was a plastic produced to simulate ivory, and was often called “French Ivory”. It was first produced by the Xylonite Company in 1866. Other names for French Ivory include Celluloid, Ivoride, Ivorine, Ivoryty, and Pyralin.

In the 1870s there was a shortage of ivory for billiard balls and a \$10,000 prize was offered to anyone who could produce a substitute. John Wesley Hyatt mixed nitric acid and cellulose (guncotton) to make celluloid. They found that celluloid could be cut, rolled, folded, perforated, ironed, or embossed when heated. It was the first plastic to look like ivory. “French Ivory” products were produced by J. B. Ash Company of Rockford, Illinois. Since celluloid was highly flammable, it was eventually replaced with Bakelite and other fire-

retardant plastics. Hair combs and other dresser articles are often still made of celluloid today.

(Information is from Lillian Baker’s “Fifty Years of Collectible Fashion Jewelry 1925-1975” and from www.vintagesparkles.net)



Membership Report

The first half of this year has been a rewarding time for our organization. If you love history, if you enjoy sharing ideas and being with others who share your interest, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer but do not know what opportunities are available, please call or stop by the Site.

If your address, phone number, or email address has changed recently, please contact us so we can update your file information. If you have questions regarding your membership, please call me at 913-369-3835.

Welcome New Members:

Vintage Park at Tonganoxie Supporter

In Memory:

We extend our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Jim Edmonds of Tonganoxie, and to the family and friends of Tom Murry of Tonganoxie.



Fire House shows off during Tongie Days

Events Around Our Area

Looking for ideas for things to do? Want to get out of the house and go somewhere but don't want a long drive to get there? Check out some of these events that are happening around our area. And remember our Museum is open on Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00PM. Stop in and see what's new!

Now thru Sept 5th – Exhibit – **Faith at Lansing Correctional Facility** - on display at Lansing Historical Museum, 115 E. Kansas Ave, Lansing. For info, call Laura at 913-250-0203.

July 1 – 27th – Exhibit – **A Photographic Narrative, "The Indians of Kansas"** Basehor Historical Museum, 2812 155th St. Call Carla for further information, 913-724-4022.

Friday July 16 – 6-8pm and Saturday July 17 – 12:30-3:30pm – **"On the Rise" bread and bagel making class**. Suggested donation of \$20 per person. Mail reservation to P.O.Box 76, Basehor, KS 66007. Space is limited! Mark envelope: Attention Bread Making Class.

July 26 – Sept 25 – Exhibit - Wyandotte County Museum **Annual Quilt Exhibition: "Traditions"** Mon-Fri 9am-4pm and Sat 9-noon. 631 N. 126th St, Bonner Springs. Information, call Jennifer @ 913-573-5002

August 5 – 31 – Exhibit – **"Dust Bowls in Kansas"** Basehor Historical Museum, 2812 155th Street, further information call Carla @ 913-724-4022.

Sep 2-28 – Exhibit – **From Far Away Russia: "Russian Germans in Kansas"** Basehor Historical Museum, 2812 155th St. Information, call 913-724-4022.

"Our success, someone has said, depends not upon how far we progress but how far we go in comparison to our abilities."

- W. A. Murphy, January 1928

8 Wonders of Kansas History Results

Did any of you cast your vote for the 8 Wonders of Kansas History, sponsored by the **Kansas Sampler Foundation**? Results are (alphabetical order):

- 1930s Dust Bowl to Gas Exploration, Historic Adobe Museum, Ulysses
- Boot Hill Museum/Historic Dodge City
- Council Grove, Santa Fe Trail National Historic Landmark
- Fort Scott National Historic Site, Fort Scott
- Historic Fort Leavenworth, Leavenworth
- Historic Fort Riley, Junction City
- Kansas Museum of History, Topeka

The Kansas Cosmosphere & Space Center, the Kansas Underground Salt Museum, and the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum were chosen as *overall 8 Wonders of Kansas* so they were not eligible in the history contest. To see information about all 8 Wonders, go to www.8wonders.org.



How to Contact Us

Newsletter @ TCHS
P. O. Box 785
Tonganoxie, KS 66086
913-845-2960 (Museum, Wed AM)
913-369-3835 (Home)
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www.tonganoxiehistoricalsociety.org

Mark Your Calendar:

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August 24 – 7:00pm: *Meet Charley Green – The Will Rogers of the Plains*

September 28 – *Program information not available at print time - watch for announcement*

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