

Fall Dinner Meeting a Success



On April 10, the Rush County Historical Society (RCHS) held our annual spring dinner meeting and program. The event was at the Moscow Christian Church. President Lou Starkey welcomed members and gave updates on the many current projects. Then, it was onto the program.

“To Tell the Truth” was a fun and interactive program developed by Program Committee co-chairs Carol Holzback and Marianne Scott. Each table of attendees unboxed a mystery item brought from the museum which they then had

to present to the entire group. But here’s where it gets interesting—the presentation could be the truth or a bluff. The audience tested their knowledge and tallied correct answers.

Among the items seen that night were cow kickers, a cobbler’s hammer, wooden humidior, jelly press and an ether mask. One table team correctly identified truth versus bluff for all 10 items. Marvin Hedrick won the prize for the best bluff.

Corporate Sponsors

Please extend your appreciation to these corporate sponsors of Rush County Historical Society.

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And contractor **Bunch Heating and Cooling** for donating their services.

Thank you to **Rushville Parks Department** for help with grounds work.

Doll House Open House

The museum is open the first Sunday of the month from April through December. Our first open house of the year was very special as over 20 vintage doll houses were on display throughout the museum. Children especially enjoyed seeing the doll houses. It was quite a contrast to today's toys that usually require batteries or the internet. Those sharing their doll houses were: Angel Keal, Carol Holzback, Barb Drake, Carrie Scholl, Marianne Scott, Brittnee Hillebrand, Kristen Hass, Lois Liggett and Elizabeth Gratzner.



Valuable Artifact Preservation



Currently, one of the museum's rarest artifacts is being preserved. The RCHS is proud to own a Penny Farthing "Eagle" bicycle. This style bicycle had the smaller wheel in the front and are said to be difficult to ride. It was manufactured from 1889-1892. The bike is in Texas for its conservation and is expected home toward the end of the year. The maintenance was made possible through an Indiana Historical Society Heritage Grant. Additional funding came from donations and the museum.

Penny Farthings were popular for their ability to cover long distances, but they were dangerous due to the high center of gravity and risk of falls. They became obsolete with the introduction of the safety bicycle with its chain drive and pneumatic tires.

Fun at the Fair



The Historical Society brought pioneer days to the 2025 Rush County Fair. Our exhibit was in the Community Building which was open evenings the week of June 30th.

Our booth featured a mobile, replica log cabin. Program co-chairs Carol Holzback and Marianne Scott plan to take the cabin to elementary schools to provide Indiana history.

Additional educational programming has been aided with a Community Grant from the Rush County Community Foundation.

Membership

In 2026, the RCHS would like to resume our past practice of collecting dues at the beginning of the year. Dues and membership levels will remain the same. Collection within the first quarter of the year will provide some operating funds up-front and simplify recordkeeping. Watch your mail for a reminder letter with renewal form in late January or February.

New members joining in September or later will have their dues credited the following year. Please continue to support the museum and urge others to join.

Out-going board members, Lou Starkey and Bob Bridges, will be missed as their terms end in December 2025. Bob has served four years on the board. Lou has served six years on the board, three as president. Thank you for your service.

Tentative Calendar

Check website for updates: www.rushcountyhistory.org

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| September 20 | Willkie Day Parade, open house at museum after parade |
| October 5 | Open House at museum, 2-4pm |
| October 11 | Work Day at museum, 9am-noon (all are welcome) |
| October 12 | Threshing Dinner (Gentlemen RSVP to 765-570-2109) |
| November 13 | Fall dinner meeting at 201 Building (RSVP to 765-570-2109) |
| December 7 | Festival of the Trees open house, 4-7pm |
| December 8 | Christmas 1863, at museum (RSVP to 765-570-2109) |

Board Member Spotlight

A huge "Thank You" to board member Charlie Fields who worked tirelessly to repair the wood around all the downstairs windows on Gowdy House. The downstairs has 11 windows that needed repair, caulk and painting.

Charlie logged approximately 70 hours, working during the hot summer days. He saved the museum thousands of dollars by donating his time and talent.

Charlie also built the log cabin used at our fair display. Plans are to use the cabin for Indiana history events. Charlie, we appreciate you!



Maintenance and Repairs



We are very thankful to those whose generous donations have helped with the completion of several projects including tuck pointing of the carriage house and plastering and repair of the children's room. More work is needed as the gutters and soffits of both the Gowdy House and Carriage House require attention.



The museum has a new storage shed at the back edge of our property. The old shed was falling apart so it was neither secure nor protecting its contents. Marianne Scott spearheaded the efforts with committee members John Wilson, Steve Mahan and Kevin Spilman.



Some fundraisers for repairs that members participated in were the 50/50 drawing at the summer concert series and sponsor nights at our local Dairy Queen. Membership dues fall far short of covering even the monthly bills to keep the museum open. General maintenance, repairs and any restorations require additional funding.

Historic Library Bookcase

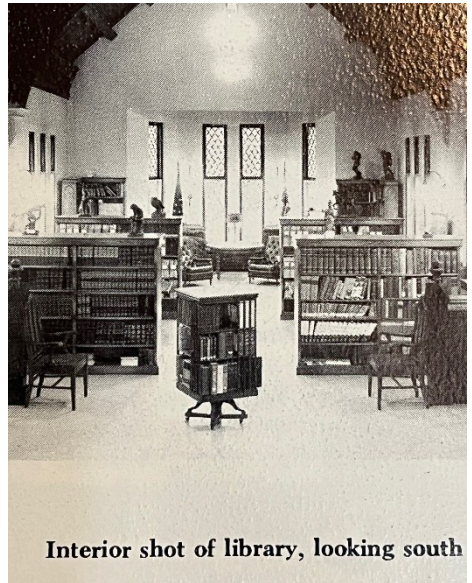


The Museum has acquired another piece of furniture with an interesting Rush County history. The spinner bookcase comes from the Rushville City Library and is thought to be an original piece. Mary Sleeth, our first librarian, would have helped create this piece of Park Furniture.

Park Furniture was widely known for its cherry furniture, however; due to the Gothic style of the library and its oak paneling, it was decided that oak wood was a better choice. The library's tables, chairs, bookcases, and our little spinner bookcase were all designed by and made at the Park Furniture Company of Rushville in 1930.

The little spinner bookcase was in use at the library from 1931 until this summer. Its shelves held countless books on a variety of genres and many of us can remember spinning the bookcase around and around looking for that just right book to read. A picture in the Sesquicentennial edition of Rush County History shows that the bookcase had basically remained in the same location in the library's reading room for over ninety years.

Due to safety regulations, the little spinner bookcase could not be used in the new Love Community Center Library. Attorney and Rush County Historical Board member, Julie Newhouse, recognized its historical value and donated it to the museum. Happily, the little bookcase has been repurposed and is used to display artifacts in the Transportation Room of the museum.



Interior shot of library, looking south

Hosting Educators

On July 31, RCHS hosted approximately 20 new teachers and administrators to showcase what the museum has to offer. Besides preserving history, RCHS promotes education. We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with Rush County Schools.



Newly Acquired Medical Artifacts



The museum is pleased to have many new pharmaceutical and medical items donated by Kip Burkett from the Rushville Pharmacy. RCHS was happy to receive the articles and glad that Kip thought of us as he was closing. Most of the pieces are on display in the Carriage House behind the Gowdy House Museum.

Volunteers at Work



The museum has two or three “work days” each year to tackle various jobs around the grounds and inside the museum. These work days are usually from 9 a.m. to noon on a Saturday. We encourage our membership to join us. Everyone’s contribution is very much appreciated.

Earlier work days were held in March and May of this year. Tasks may range from organizing items, to cleaning, to changing displays, to yard work.

The next planned work day is Saturday, October 11. Come for an hour or stay for three. You can help the museum and get to know fellow members who share your interest in Rush County history.

Gowdy House Museum Hours



The Gowdy House Museum is open Monday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Open Houses are scheduled the first Sunday of the month from April through November from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Tours, meetings, and other special times can be requested by contacting one of the members listed below.

Lou Starkey (317) 502-5047

Bob Bridges (765) 561-3217



Rush County Historical Society

Gowdy House Museum

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“Come – be a part of history!”

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