

COME HOME TO
RUSH
COUNTY **KS**



LA CROSSE

RUSH CENTER

LORETTO

TIMKEN

NEKOMA

ALEXANDER

MCCRACKEN

BISON

HARGRAVE

OTIS



HISTORY

Rush County was surveyed in 1867 and organized on Dec. 5, 1874, by Gov. Thomas Osborn. The county was named in honor of Capt. Alexander Rush, Company H of the 2nd Kansas Colored Infantry. P.C. Dixon filed the first claim in Rush County and settled on the banks of the Walnut Creek near present day Rush Center in 1870, receiving his grant from the land office in Salina in 1871. The first deed in Rush County was recorded in March 1875.

Walnut City was designated as the county seat and the city's name was changed to Rush Center. Within two years the county was re-surveyed and the southern tier of townships was given to neighboring Pawnee County in 1876. This changed the center of the county from Rush Center to La Crosse. A conflict arose between the two towns when the county records were moved to La Crosse as the intended county seat. The records were moved back and forth by wagon, amidst threats and gunfire, for years. However, no one was killed. La Crosse was finally declared the permanent county seat and the present courthouse was erected in 1888.

In the 1880 census, the 5,490 citizens of Rush County were well-educated, well-bred, young people who came from throughout the United States (4,275), Great Britain (133), Germany (178), Austria (72), Sweden (22), Bohemia (25), Canada (22) and Russia (763). There were 35 types of occupations listed, including 1,145 farmers, and one shipbuilder. Rush County was settled primarily by people who enriched the frontier with their culture.

Source: Rush County Historical Society



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MUSEUMS

KANSAS BARBED WIRE MUSEUM

120 W. FIRST ST., LA CROSSE

In 1970, realizing a need for a permanent home to exhibit barbed wire, the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce purchased a small storefront at 611 Main and offered the front room to the collectors. News of the unique museum spread. In May 1971, the Barbed Wire Museum was officially dedicated. With barbed wire collecting now synonymous with La Crosse, the small western Kansas community became known as The Barbed Wire Capital of the World.



In 1990, a larger facility was constructed in Grass Park to house more than 2,400 unique specimens of barbed wire, historical displays, fencing tools, the Barbed Wire Hall of Fame and a small theatre. An addition was finished in May 2005 to house the headquarters of the international Antique Barbed Wire Society and the Larry Greer Research Center, a collection of materials related to the historical impact of barbed wire.

Source: Kansas Barbed Wire Collectors Association



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RUSH COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

202 W. FIRST ST., LA CROSSE

The Rush County Historical Society was incorporated May 1, 1963, to develop a museum telling the story of Post Rock.

In 1975, the Society acquired the former Santa Fe



depot in Timken and moved it to Grass Park in La Crosse.

On April 17, 1983, the building was dedicated

as the Rush County Historical Museum. The museum houses a large collection of photographs and research materials, along with a selection of the tools, clothing and other artifacts that depict the history and lifestyle of the county's residents.

Source: Rush County Historical Society

Come discover how Rush County began. Step back in time at the



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POST ROCK MUSEUM

202 W. FIRST ST., LA CROSSE

Early pioneers were faced with an unusual difficulty on the expansive plains of Kansas; lack of trees. These industrious pioneers discovered a layer of rock, located only a few feet below the soil surface, that could be used to make permanent, weather resistant, beautiful buildings. The rock layer is known as limestone, and due to the geological formation, is just the right thickness (8 to 12 inches) for building stones and posts. When limestone is first exposed it is soft



and chalky, making it easier to drill and dress (form). Once the stone is exposed to air, the edges become hard, making it an exceptional building material for the plains pioneer. A quarry diorama and collection of artifacts depict how stone blocks were used for buildings, bridges, fence posts, artwork, hitching posts, troughs, tombstones and walkways.

Source: Rush County Historical Society

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NEKOMA BANK MUSEUM

202 W. FIRST ST., LA CROSSE

In the mid-1980s, when several Rush County banks fell into a state of insolvency and were closed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., Nekoma State Bank remained strong. In December 1986, a group of investors purchased the financial assets of the bank and moved its operations to La Crosse. The bank reopened in March 1987 in the building formerly occupied by the Farmers and Merchants State Bank.

For the next 15 years, the small building stood lifeless as a monument to a past until it became apparent time was taking its toll. Gary Kay, president of Nekoma State Bank in La Crosse recognized the building would be lost if not preserved. Under the direction of the Rush County Historical Society, a fundraising campaign was started with the intention of relocating the threatened building to Grass Park in La Crosse. In May 2003, the building was moved to its new location to begin a new chapter in its life as part of a complex of historical structures as a museum of early 20th century rural banking.

Source: Rush County Historical Society

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PLEASANT POINT ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

202 W. FIRST ST., LA CROSSE

The Rush County Historical Society moved a one-room school from 6.5 miles south of Nekoma in rural Rush County to the Grass Park Museum Complex in La Crosse. After two years, the building has been moved to a location immediately north of the Nekoma Bank Museum.

The century-old school house, one of the last of its kind, will be restored and maintained as it was in the early 1900s.

In addition, it will provide an opportunity for area youth to experience learning in a setting similar to that of their ancestors.

As a museum, the building will provide a place to house objects relevant to early education in Rush County along with collections from pioneer educator Howard Barnard.

The Society is accepting donations to help with restoration costs.

Source: Rush County Historical Society

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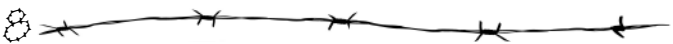
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McCracken Historical Museum Inc.

200 MAIN STREET, McCRACKEN

Located in the former City Jail on Main Street in McCracken, the museum displays numerous items relative to the history of McCracken, as well as a display of the 1973 movie, "Paper Moon," filmed in and around McCracken. Open by appointment.

Source: Rush County Historical Society

Bison Community Museum

202 MAIN STREET, BISON

The museum displays artifacts that offer a glimpse of the thriving business section once present in Bison, photographs of early Bison, and photos of the devastation left by the 1912 tornado. Open by appointment; contact the library.

Rush Center Community Museum

220 WASHINGTON, RUSH CENTER

Located in Walnut Valley Senior Center, the museum features artifacts from the community and a collection of photos and histories of many of the nearly 80 school districts in Rush County. Open by appointment; contact the Senior Center.

Lone Star School

AVENUE M, BISON

Constructed in 1878 of hand-hewn native stone, the building was the first German-speaking Methodist Church in Rush County and later was used as school district 34 and 64. The interior features original furnishings and gas light fixtures. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is open by appointment.

St. Joseph's Kirche

LIEBENTHAL

The town of Liebenthal, founded Feb. 22, 1878, is the oldest Volga-German settlement in the region. The present St. Joseph Church was dedicated May 28, 1905. Although twice gutted by fire, the native limestone church along with the rectory and school are a testament to the perseverance of the Volga German settlers.

WANT MORE? _____

For schedules and additional information, visit us on the Web or contact the tourism office at Rush County Economic Development at (785) 222-2808.



MUSEUM HOURS

POST ROCK MUSEUM

RUSH COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEKOMA BANK MUSEUM

KANSAS BARBED WIRE MUSEUM

Open daily May 1 to Aug. 31

Summer Hours: (May through August)

10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Saturday

1 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday

No admission fees (donations requested)

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- From Interstate 70, take Exit 159 at Hays and travel south 27 miles on U.S. Highway 183 to La Crosse. Continue through town on Main Street to First Street. The museums are located 1 block west of Main Street on the north side of the road in Grass Park.

- From Kansas Highway 96, turn north onto U.S. 183 at Rush Center. Travel 4 miles north to First Street on the south edge of La Crosse and turn left.

McCRACKEN RODEO

McCracken, KS

14 time KPRA Rodeo of the Year

2nd Weekend in July
Jack Wilson Mustang Arena

Rodeo Info

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Trail Ride

Lynn Kochenour (620-786-9764)

Queen Contest

Becky Benoit (785-639-3990)

TOWNS

ALEXANDER

Originally established on the Fort Hays-Fort Dodge Trail as a trading post known as Harvey's Ranche, Alexander is the oldest town in Rush County, founded in 1869. The town is named after its founder, Alexander Harvey. A state historical marker, located in the park along Kansas Highway 96, tells about the Fort Hays-Fort Dodge Trail.

BISON

Bison is named in honor of the buffalo (bison), once numerous across the prairies. The community is known for its quaint tree-lined Main Street and large city park.

LA CROSSE

La Crosse is named after the town of La Crosse, Wis. It is known as the Barbed Wire Capital of the World. La Crosse is the county seat and home to major industries including La Crosse Furniture Co. and Flame Engineering.

LIEBENTHAL

Liebenthal was founded by the immigrants of the Saratov-Volga region of the Ukraine in Russia. It was named after the town of Liebenthal, Russia.

LORETTO

Loretto was named after a city near the Adriatic Sea in Italy that is home to the Santa Casa di Loreto, a shrine believed to be the home of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today, little remains of the community. The historic St. Mary's Help of Christian's Church is now a shrine.

MCCRACKEN

McCracken was named after J.K. McCracken, the contractor in charge of building the Missouri Pacific Railroad and relative to railroad tycoon Jay Gould.



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Rush Center

TOWNS

NEKOMA

Nekoma is said to be an Indian word meaning "mother." With the recent closing of the post office, Nekoma has become a ghost town with only a few of the original buildings remaining.

OTIS

Otis was founded by railroad promoter Erastus C. Moderwell along the Missouri Pacific railroad. He named the town after his son, Otis Moderwell.

RUSH CENTER

First known as Walnut City, Rush Center was originally situated in the center of Rush County until the southern tier of townships was transferred to Pawnee County prior to 1874.

SHAFFER

Shaffer was named after its first postmaster, Franklin P. Shaffer. Today, little more exists of the town than a few homes and buildings situated along the county road a short distance from Highway 96.

TIMKEN

Timken is named after Henry Timken, the man who developed the Timken Roller Bearing. Henry Timken owned a considerable amount of land in the area at the time the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe railroad was being built through the county.

TIMKEN SEED FARMS



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DID YOU KNOW?_____



- La Crosse once boasted one of the few drive-in movie theaters in western Kansas, the Hill-Top Drive-In. Remnants of the large screen can still be seen today just south of the city. It first opened on June 15, 1954, and could accommodate 285 vehicles.

- Otis has one of the two largest facilities in the United States for extracting helium from natural gas.



- Rush Center annually hosts one of the largest St. Patrick's Day parades in the region.

- It might be a small place, but Effie's in Rush Center is known for serving up one of the best burgers around. The large beef patty, known famously as an Effie Burger, is sure to leave anyone satisfied. The business has been known to bring people in from far and wide.

ON THE WEB_____

- www.rushcounty.org
- www.rushcounty.org/RCHS



- McCracken annually hosts one of the state's largest rodeos. The McCracken Rodeo has won distinction as KPRA Rodeo of the Year many times and is one of the top attractions for the county each summer. Competitors come from several states to the small town one weekend in July.

- The Rush County Historical museum displays a variety of uniforms ranging from World War I military to uniforms worn by local marching bands.



RECREATION



Rush County offers a number of recreation opportunities. Many communities offer senior centers, community centers and libraries. Public swimming pools are open during the summer months in La Crosse and McCracken.

For the sportsman, walk-in hunting is available in a variety of locations throughout the county. Stone Lake, located east of La Crosse on Kansas Highway 4, provides opportunities for fishing, and Baker Memorial Sportsman's Club, east of La Crosse, hosts open trap shooting at scheduled times.

The county also boasts two golf courses, McCracken Country Club and La Crosse Country Club. Both are nine-hole courses featuring sand greens and multiple tournaments throughout the year.

Rush County Industrial Development



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"To promote the development of Rush County and to offer benefits to the partons of Rush County."

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WHERE WE ARE

Rush County is located in west-central Kansas and is home to 3,200 residents, according to the 2014 U.S. Census estimate. The county is comprised of 718 square miles. La Crosse, located in the center of the county, serves as the county seat.

THE PAST

FORT HAYS-FORT LARNED TRAIL

Also referred to as the Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock Trail, it served as a road for hauling freight and mail. The trail entered northern Rush County in Big Timber Township east of U.S. Highway 183, crossed Sand Creek east of La Crosse into Section 3-18-18, crossed Walnut Creek in W2 NE4 25-18-18 and crossed into Pawnee County three-quarters of a mile west of Ash Valley.

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RCED Rush County Economic Development

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7 Reasons to Choose Rush County...

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- *Quality Schools*
- *Recreation*
- *Healthcare*
- *History & Heritage*
- *Room with a View*

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