

## The Rush County Historical Society

The Rush County Historical Society was first organized in March, 1960 for the purpose of promoting a county observance of the Kansas centennial celebration, but had become inactive at the conclusion of the festivities. The society was reactivated and incorporated on May 1, 1963, this time with plans to develop a museum to preserve the history and tell the story of Post Rock. The first officers of the society were chosen with Roy Ehly as president; Oliver Wilhelm, vice-president; Harry Grass, secretary, and Stan Merrill, treasurer. On May 17, 1964, the Society dedicated the Post Rock Museum, the first museum in what would eventually grow into a campus of five museums. In addition to the Historical Museum, the Society operates three other museums; The Post Rock Museum, the Nekoma Bank Museum, and the Pleasant Point School Museum. The Kansas Barbed Wire Museum, operated by the Kansas Barbed Wire Collectors Association is also located in the Grass Park museum complex.



The museum with yellow paint typical of early 20th century Santa Fe depots. When the Society prepared to repaint the building in 2002, they discovered the original 1880s reddish-brown color scheme.

## Become a part of the Society...

To become a member fill out this form and mail to:

**Rush County Historical Society, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 473**  
**La Crosse, Kansas 67548-0473**

(Name)

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Check one:

- Annual Membership \$ 5.00
- Lifetime Membership \$ 25.00
- Other Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Rush County Economic Development

## The Rush County Historical Society, Inc.

*History of...*

# Rush County Historical Museum



**202 W. 1st Street**  
**La Crosse, Kansas**

[www.rushcounty.org/RCHS](http://www.rushcounty.org/RCHS)



## History of the Timken Depot



Beginning in the 1870s and throughout their history, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe relied upon a relatively standardized design for their depot buildings in smaller communities. The simple but attractive designs were inexpensive and easy to build. In 1910, the railroad adopted a series of eight standard design schemes, based upon those earlier structures, that shared a basic design. The combination passenger and freight stations were constructed with board-and-batten siding and a gable roof with deep overhangs supported by decorative brackets. A bevel bay office window with a gable dormer added a simple yet elegant feature to the building. The buildings differed mainly in their size. There were four main line and four branch line designs ranging in size from 16'x40' for the "Number One" to 24'x80' for the "Number Four" design. Main line structures differed in having a larger office dormer to accommodate extra equipment needed for larger passenger markets. The standardized station plan soon became a trademark of the company.

The Timken station, dating back to 1887, was constructed prior to the adoption of the 1910 standardized scheme. However, the building resembles the "Number Two" plan. The 24'x42' combination building features a small waiting room

adjacent to the telegraph operator's office and ticket counter, and an elevated freight room with loading platform in the rear. Notable features of the building include tall six-over-six paned divided light windows in the office and waiting room and a moderately ornate office dormer with projecting gable tower. The building's windows and roof brackets differentiate it from later designs that feature six-over-nine paned windows and simple rafter tails instead of ornate brackets.

From the turn of the century, through the Great Depression, and into the years following World War II, the depot served the Timken area as its "link to the world." However, the decade of the 1960s signaled a new direction for rural America's railroads. Change was on the horizon.

In the 1960s, the railroad discontinued passenger services, and regular freight service was cut back. Depot agents were no longer assigned to small community depots. Railroad depots, once a hub of activity in the community, were left to sit silent. In the mid-1970s, the Santa Fe Railroad abandoned most of its depots including the one in Timken. In an effort to preserve the historic structure from demolition, the Rush County Historical Society purchased the wooden building from the railroad for the sum of \$5.15 (\$5.00 plus 15¢ tax). On May 27, 1975, the old depot building was loaded on the back of a truck and moved to Grass Park in La Crosse with plans to restore it as a museum.

When the building arrived at its new home, it was situated on a full basement, a feature it originally did not have. Historical Society



members then began the task of transforming the former train depot into an historical museum. Photographs, scrapbooks, dresses, uniforms, and other memorabilia were placed on display to tell the story of the people of Rush County. On April 17, 1983, the Rush County Historical Museum was dedicated as a museum of general history of the county. A new era in the life of the old depot had begun.

## Museum Collections

A variety of farm equipment and tools illustrates the perseverance and ingenuity of the county's citizens. The lifestyle of the pioneer farmer demanded long hours and hard work from sunrise to sunset. To help overcome these hardships, pioneer farmers were often forced to become inventors. The "Ficken Dammer", an agricultural implement on display in the museum, is an example of one of these unique inventions.

Pioneer lifestyle was not without some refinement. The museum exhibits a fine collection of men's, women's and children's attire from a variety of the county's social classes. Furniture and accessories further accentuate the aspects of pioneer and early 20th century social life. Church, theatrical events, and fraternal organizations were also an important part of Rush County society. A variety of memorabilia is preserved from organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic, churches, and musical groups.

The museum also houses a large collection of photographs, albums, and scrapbooks that preserve details of the history of the county.