

# ROSELLE HISTORY MUSEUM

Winter 2024 Newsletter



Official publication of the  
Roselle Historical Foundation

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Facebook: <https://facebook.com/rosellehistorymuseum>



**Holidays at the Museum!**

**Come and see our vintage Christmas displays!**



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## Marketing Manager's Corner

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Another chapter of library history has begun in Roselle! In the November 5 election, a majority of Roselle residents voted “yes” to the bond referendum question. A new library building and campus will be constructed at 233 E. Maple, a building currently owned by the Village of Roselle. The two parties agreed to a land swap of the current library building on Park Street for the Maple Avenue property.

The design and engineering phase will begin in 2025, with construction projected to begin on the new library in 2026. While we wait, let us look back at the library's storied history....

January 1940 - The Roselle Public Library began as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Salk Pioneer School furnished space for the first public library in Roselle.

In 1945, the library rented the building pictured above located at the corner of Park & Main Streets from Paul Juhnke and Harvey Holland. The library board eventually purchased the building in 1959.

In 1963 and 1971 the building was enlarged to expand access to materials, programs, etc. The Roselle Public Library District was formally created in 1972.

The current Park Street property was dedicated in 1982 and remodeled in 1997.

Congratulations to the staff and board of the Roselle Public Library on their successful referendum campaign. I look forward to checking out the new library!

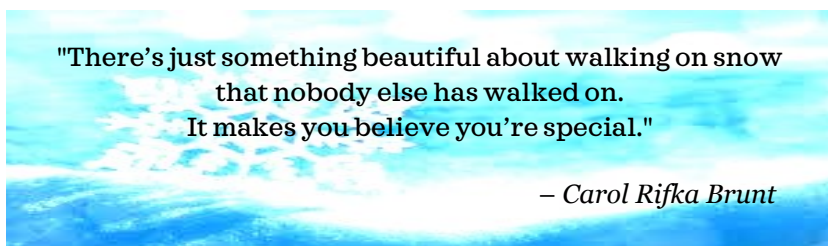


Downtown Roselle has been rejuvenated with the recent completion of the public spaces of the Petal Porch, Promenade, and Plaza. New signage was placed in front of Village Hall as well as at the corner of Main and Prospect Streets (pictured above) directing residents and visitors to downtown landmarks.

*Keri Soukup*  
Marketing Manager



Thank you to Countryside Funeral Homes & Crematory for being our First Business sponsor



– Carol Rifka Brunt



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## From the Museum Manager's Desk

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Winter is here in all its glory and the RHM is looking forward to next year's events.

This year's calendar of events is still pending, but we hope to bring back these successful events:

- ◆ Beginning Genealogy Class
- ◆ Antiques Appraisal Event
- ◆ Genealogy Helps (will continue the first Thursday of every month at 10:30, at the coach house)



Please look for these events to be posted on our Facebook page, Website ([rosellehistory.org](http://rosellehistory.org)) and signage.

We were so happy to promote the first Polonia Day fundraiser for Roselle Sister Cities back in September. From all accounts, it was a great success! If you have a Roselle event and you would like to get the word out – please email me direct at [museummanager@rosellehistory.org](mailto:museummanager@rosellehistory.org) or, you may contact our marketing manager at [marketingmanager@rosellehistory.org](mailto:marketingmanager@rosellehistory.org). We love partnering co-operative ventures with other Roselle organizations as well – so if you have an event and you would like to include us, please let us know. Together, we can get it done!

We finally have enough recipes for our Vintage Cookbook! We will be starting the work to put it together soon! If you are interested in helping to lay out the cookbook or editing it; please contact us! We would LOVE another set of hands to help.

Speaking of volunteering – we are wide open for 2025 volunteers! If your expertise is office work, event planning or volunteering at an event, docent volunteering to help bring the history of Roselle to our many visitors every year; we can train you for that! There is all manner of ways that you can volunteer and contribute to our vibrant group that is welcoming to all ages. Why not come and see what you can do to promote and preserve Roselle history... and make some new friends in the process!

If you love libraries, but not the hours, then you must come to check out our Little Library on Prospect Street in front of the museum! There are many books to choose from, so please stop by!

Pretty soon, the gardening season will be upon us! We are organizing group members now to plan for spring gardening on the museum campus. If you love to garden – and who does not – please join our happy group of gardeners that make the campus beautiful. If you are a specialty gardener, we have two smaller gardens in need of your expertise. Please join us!



Civic Museum Christmas tree at Turner's pond





On November 11, the Roselle American Legion had the first ever burning ceremony of old military uniforms from the museum. All the buttons, badges and medals were removed from the uniforms.

## Politics as Usual?

Martin Van Buren, at times during his tenure as vice president from 1833-1837, presided over the senate wearing a brace of pistols. This is one of those factoids that pops up from time to time and seems a bit silly. A brief look at congress during this period shows that it is more surprising that any vice president would not have come armed. Congress during the Antebellum Era was a violent place where passions ran high. Between 1830 and 1860, there were at least 70 incidents where physical violence broke out between members of congress, with some of these incidents occurring within the chambers. In many ways the most famous violent incident, the caning of Charles Sumner on the floor of the senate, was not as much an outlier as it was the one time things got out of hand.

It was not just congress that was violent, but politics in general. In 1857, a brawl broke out in the Illinois state legislature. The following year, similar incidents occurred in New York and Massachusetts. None of these top an incident that occurred in Arkansas in 1837. During a debate, a representative insulted the Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives. The Speaker came down from the chair and stabbed the representative to death with a bowie knife. After being acquitted of murder when the jury found that it had been an excusable homicide, the Speaker was reelected to the legislature. He then pulled his knife on another representative during a debate. This time he was only stopped from committing another murder when several other representatives brandished their pistols at him.

Even Abraham Lincoln was involved in this violence. In 1842, he came close to fighting a duel with the state auditor, James Shields. Being the challenged party, Lincoln was allowed to choose the weapons to be used. In part because he had little experience with firearms, and in part because his stature would give him an advantage, he chose broadswords. At the dueling ground, Lincoln practiced by chopping off part of a high up branch of a tree. Seeing how much longer his opponent's reach was, Shields opted to forgive Lincoln's insult and avoid the duel.

Much of the fighting during this period arose from two factors: alcohol and slavery. The alcohol had a more direct effect. Many members of congress

spent good portions of the day intoxicated, and there were even two bars located within the capital building itself. As early as 1809, senate expenses on what was euphemistically called "syrup" were quite high, although hiding it under this title had its own drawbacks as it was unclear why a legislative body would need so much syrup.

Disputes over slavery also devolved into violence that was fueled by the cultural differences that had developed in the two sections. Northerners had for the most part moved past dueling by this period, although they were not above more informal fisticuffs. Southerners for the most part embraced an honor culture that often resorted to ritualized violence as a means of asserting manhood. Southerners were quick to challenge others to duels and quickly realized that northerners generally backed down. This, with several other factors, made it so that southerners viewed themselves as manlier than their northern counterparts. For their part, this behavior prompted most northerners to view southerners as uncivilized brutes.

John Quincy Adams presented a unique conundrum for the southerners, however. Many southerners would have loved nothing more than to bully Adams, increasingly vocal in his abolitionism as he served in the House of Representatives following his presidency, with their dueling challenges. Unfortunately, he was off limits under the rules of dueling. One was not supposed to challenge an "old man" to a duel, and being in his late 60s and 70s for much of this period, Adams would have been considered an old man. Also, one was only supposed to challenge an equal. As a former president and the son of a former president, no southerner in congress was his equal. To challenge him would have only led to embarrassment, and Adams used this protection to its fullest.

With members of congress drunkenly picking fights with people in theaters, fighting each other on the floor of the House and the Senate, and state legislators committing murder in their chambers, Van Buren's pistols suddenly seem like a prudent measure.

By Tom Piorkowski



# Roselle History Museum Newsletter

39 E. Elm St

Roselle, IL 60172

Newsletter generously sponsored by



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*Together we'll shape the future*

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home." — Edith Sitwell



Summer House

### Mission Statement

To maintain and enhance a historically accurate museum with primary focus on Roselle and surrounding areas  
To collect local facts and artifacts of today that will be part of our village history and pride tomorrow.  
To provide a dynamic historical and educational resource for our residents and visitors.

### Board of Directors & Staff

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Walter Lotz  
Janice Wood

**Friends of the Museum**  
Mary Beahan, Peggy Ott,  
and Michael Drewitz

### General Meetings

Second Saturday of the Month  
10-11:30 am - 39 E. Elm St.

### Museum Hours

Sundays: 2-4 pm  
Wednesday through Saturday  
10 am - 2 pm, by appt

**Editor:** Janice Wood  
editor@rosellehistory.org

### CONTRIBUTION FORM

Mail to: Roselle History Museum, 39 E. Elm St., Roselle, IL 60172

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Circle one: \$30 \$50\* \$100 \$250 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### TWO NEW WAYS TO SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION VIA PAYPAL

- 1) Scan the QR Code at the right to donate
- 2) Go to <https://tinyurl.com/PayPalRHM>



\_\_\_\_\_ \*My contribution is at least \$50. Please send me a free copy of the "Remembering Roselle" history book.  
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