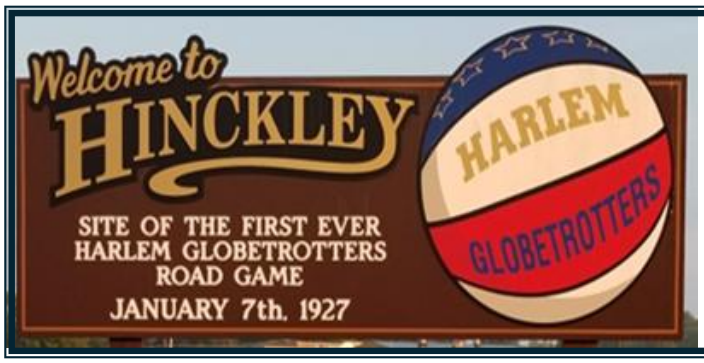


Hinckley Historical Society News
2026, Volume 5

29 Years of Heart, Hard Work and Country Charm

Some places are worth the drive. At the Happy Henhouse in Hinckley, you'll find gifts, decor and a place to connect.



Customers travel from near and far, making visits a tradition for sister weekends and outings with friends.

Before it was a boutique, it was the Hughes family's chicken coop. The chickens were happy to move so Theresa Hughes could make room for her dream!

Theresa and her husband, Earl, moved to Hinckley when their children were young. Theresa grew up helping her grandfather at his West Chicago Goose Vegetable Stand. Later, at Nicole's Hallmark in Aurora, she discovered her love of retail and making customers feel welcome.



Earl and Theresa transformed the coop, added an old Dodge pickup truck for decoration, and with determination started buying antiques and décor. An Ohio wholesaler added gifts. However, the most meaningful part of the Henhouse can't be arranged on a shelf.

The Hughes family knows heartbreak. After the loss of their son, the Hinckley community surrounded them with love and support. Theresa has never forgotten that kindness, and today she offers the same care to others.

People walk into the Henhouse carrying more than a shopping list. They may be grieving, facing a difficult season or simply needing to get out of the house and talk.

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(Heart, continued from page 1)

Theresa also thoughtfully keeps sympathy and bereavement gifts on hand for those who have lost a loved one, as well as meaningful gifts for remembering and honoring someone. She understands that finding the right way to express love and support can be difficult, so she created a place so people don't have to travel far to find something meaningful.

Two years ago, a February tornado badly damaged the store and tore apart the corn crib used to store items for the store. The next morning, neighbors arrived with chainsaws, equipment, and meals. The community and local businesses pitched in for weeks.

Customers asked when the store would reopen, reminding Theresa how much it meant to them. Earl and Theresa repaired the shop and rebuilt. They were reminded that small town relationships were worth more than anything damaged in the storm.



Emma, Teresa, Earl, and Ashley

Theresa meets vendors, studies trends, and plans orders. Earl handles deliveries because the old bridge in their driveway can't handle large semitrucks. He hauls pallets from East Sandwich Road up their lane and has earned the title of CEO—Carry Everything Out.

Mary Cummingham has been part of the Henhouse family for 15 years, Daughter Ashley helps with marketing, and granddaughter Emma registers purchases when she is not active in school or raising goats.



As the Henhouse approaches 30 years in business, Theresa is still finding all those unique items that you can't find in the big box stores. Whether you're looking for a holiday gift or simply a place to pause and talk; take the drive and stop in.

The Happy Henhouse is built on hard work, family, and a community that shows up. Sometimes the best thing you take home isn't something you bought. It's the feeling that you were welcomed, heard, and felt good company.

The businesses in Hinckley, like the Henhouse, encourage people to support local, enjoy the small shops, and spend a little time in the country.

The Happy Henhouse is located at 8329 East Sandwich Road, Hinckley. This article was provided by Ashley Hughes.

Serving the needs of our Community

Comments by Library Executive Director Rylie Roubal for the HHS Annual Meeting

For 113 years the library has tried to meet the needs of the Hinckley community. This has looked very different over the years, but the biggest draw stays the same--books. Our collection holds about 20,000 items, and we average about 20,000 checkouts each year. Patrons also have access to more than 5 million items since we are connected to a consortium of 136 libraries in Northern Illinois called the PrairieCat Libraries.



Through the interlibrary loan process, Hinckley patrons can request items from any of those libraries and pick them up here for free in about a week. Through reciprocal borrowing, your Hinckley library card is also valid at all of the other PrairieCat Libraries—even as far as Galena—and return their books in Hinckley.

We also subscribe to two e-book apps: Libby and The Palace Project. Download the app, log in with your library card number, and enjoy the convenience of reading e-books or listening to audiobooks from your phone or tablet.

In the past, libraries were only about books. They're still our biggest draw, but we've branched out into other ways to serve the community. Of the 14,000 visitors we see each year, 3,600 of them use the free public computers with fast internet. They print resumes and return labels, check the news, and game with friends. Though you might think of faxing as an outdated technology, there are still governmental and medical facilities that only accept faxed forms. We offer faxing, printing, copying, and scanning for reasonable prices.



Even more than the computer users, 4,500 of our visitors came to the library for our programs last year. Story time and chess club meet weekly year-round. We offer adult programs like book club or Try It Club where we experiment with different art and craft projects. The Summer Reading Program helps students maintain their reading level when they're out of school and provides daily activities. During school breaks we give out free snacks, which is one of the biggest draws for the little ones.

In 1913 the original library was formed by the Woman's Club, housed in the red Leifheit building (146 E. Lincoln Avenue), and supported by bake sales. Reportedly, the bestseller was baked beans rather than the more traditional sweets. Volunteers staffed the library a few hours each week.

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One of our current board members, Amie Carey, is the great granddaughter of Jessie Weber who was on the founding board in 1913, and the women in her family have served on the board for more than 90 years. In fact, it has been primarily women who have kept the library going since its start. The first recorded male board member started in 1987, and fewer than a dozen men have served overall. *(Shown are Amie Carey with donors Debbie Constant, left, and Dan Templin of the DeKalb County Community Foundation).*

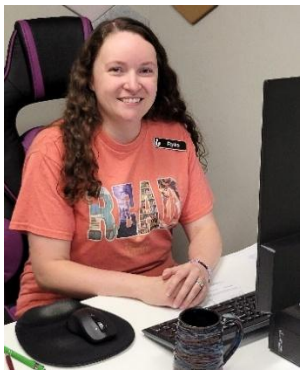


When the Hinckley Community Building was constructed in 1926, the library moved into a small second floor room. Despite trying to convince taxpayers of the importance of the library for many years, the volunteers had to keep running it on bake sales and unpaid labor until a referendum passed voter approval in 1964. At that time, the library began receiving funding from property taxes and hired the first paid librarian, Lillian Hartman, who now has a study room named after her. Lillian served for 12 years and was followed by Helen Fritsch for another 12 years, Eve Kirk for 1 year, Shirley Wilhelmsen for 21 years, Genevieve Guran for 1 year, and Heather Shlah for 1 year.



The Squaw Grove Township Library became a district in 1986, which separated the library from township oversight and allowed it to levy its own property taxes separately. The name was changed to Hinckley Public Library District in 2006.

Though we're not supported by bake sales anymore, volunteers still helped paint, stain, and move furniture into the new library. The community's generosity made it possible to open with over $407,000 in private donations.



Since the move we've seen a 19% average daily increase of visitors. Until now we've never had space for interviews, social services, tutoring, depositions, or Zoom calls.

The modern, easily-accessible library is all about connections: with new moms at story time, new friends at chess club, Facetime with grandkids, or interactive play sets for 4-year-olds like Lila. We look forward to seeing you.

Rylie Roubal has been Executive Director of the Hinckley Public Library District for 14 years.

Walking in Pierce Township



The weather was beautiful for the Historical Society's fifth cemetery walk in a historic cemetery a few miles north of Hinckley. Cemetery board president Stan Schumacher welcomed about 30 people to one of the oldest cemeteries in DeKalb County. He explained that the seven residents featured on the walk were from founding families of the township who had an impact on farming and life in the community.

Schumacher recalled that the cemetery was affiliated with the Evangelical Church until 1925 when they gave the deed to the cemetery association.

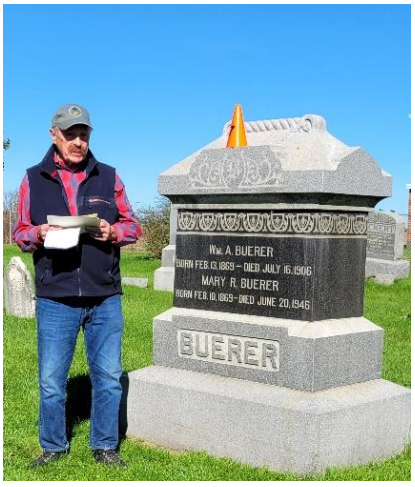


Telling stories about the deceased were a combination of local relatives and people interested in history. Ron Klein, Stan Schumacher, and Bob Pritchard spoke about their relatives.

Ron Klein related how his great grandfather Theodore came from Germany, traveled to California looking for gold, then returned to Pierce to marry, buy land, and purchase cattle for the Chicago market. Ron's great uncle owned the Hinckley Review Newspaper.

Stan Schumacher remembered that his great grandfather Peter also emigrated from Germany and his children and grandchildren would farm, be active in the church, and welcome community leaders.





Bob Pritchard shared his family tree that came to Pierce in 1849, farmed, and helped build the church. His great grandfather died in a farm accident at the age of 37. His four daughters would help keep the farm going and after marriage all farmed in the area

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(Walking, continued from page 5)

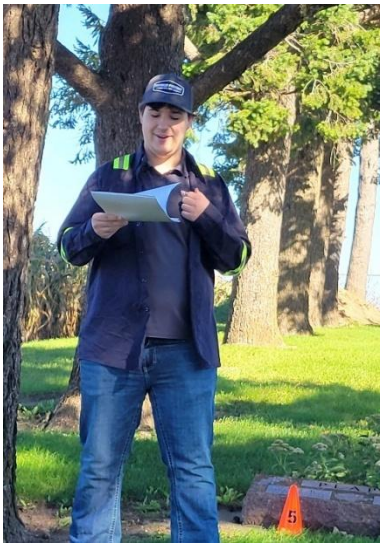
Other story tellers were Grant Austin, Berny Fitzgerald, Xavier Quirk-Haines, and Hunter Schmidtbauer. Hunter shared stories about Ivan Grimm who served in WWI, farmed, raised six sons, served as a volunteer fireman, Farm Bureau director and Legion member.

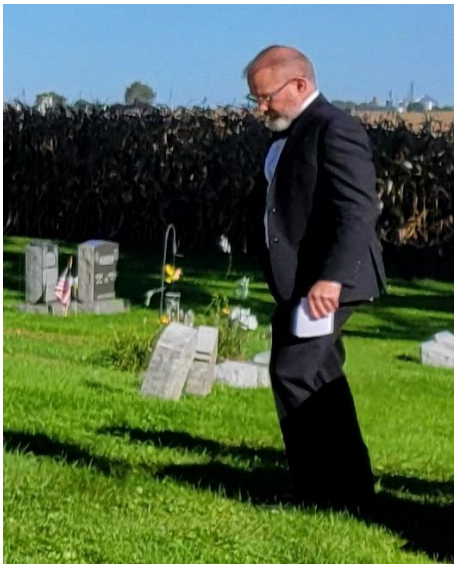


Grant (below) shared the life of George Kuter who died at age 71 after battling cancer. Geroge arrived in Pierce with his family in 1852 and farmed. He was very active the church and supported missionary work. With his wife Amelia Buerer he raised 13 children.



Xavier relived the life of Earl Plapp who was related to the Schumachers, Plapps, Nehrings and Wesphals. Earl farmed and drove a truck for 47 years before moving to Hinckley where he was Superintendent of Public Works, active as an EMT and volunteer fireman, and charter member of Lions. He and Betty had three children and raised two nieces.





Berny told about the life of William Haish who was born in Pierce, farmed, ran a farm implement business in Hinckley, was president of the bank, school board as well as the village. He was a nephew of barb wire founder Jacob Haish.

Copies of the presentations are available from the Historical Society. We appreciate the story tellers' time and the hospitality of the Cemetery Association.

Busy, Successful Year

Annual Meeting Report

"The Historical Society had fun planning and providing a variety of programs for the community this year to help celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary," said Bob Pritchard, HHS president at the group's Annual Meeting. "Hundreds of people attended the six historical presentations, two vocal performances and two band concerts that occurred from April to October."

Pritchard showed pictures of the groups and audiences that participated. He said we were especially delighted with the H-BR student presentations, appearance of Ben Franklin, involvement of community leaders in reading the Declaration of Independence on July 8, and quality of the musical groups. Their songs reflected how music has influenced public opinion and united our country over the years.













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Besides newsletters and the museum, the Board of Directors feel the mission of HHS includes providing programs in the community that bring to life and create interest in our history and personal stories. The Historical Society is making plans for its exhibits and programming in 2027. The board welcomes your suggestions for local activities and new museum displays. Give us a call, email or letter with your suggestions for programs that might interest the community.

Next year, Hinckley will be celebrating its 150th anniversary of becoming a town and then there is the 100th year since Hinckley welcomed the first Globetrotters basketball road game. Watch for our efforts to support these celebrations.

Museum Closed for the Winter As some people travel to warmer climates in the winter and weather may force others to hunker down in their homes; the museum will be closed from November 15 to April 1. **That doesn't mean you can't schedule a visit to the museum during this time.** If you have visitors and are looking for interesting activities, call for an appointment to visit the museum (815-761-4058). It could also be the basis for a good family trivia game about Hinckley.

Annual Meeting Financial Report

Treasurer Barry Morsch reported at the Annual Meeting that 2025 revenues for the year totaled $30,098 while expenses were $41,288. The Society maintains a cash reserve that totaled $72,471. During the past 12 months, 66 donations totaled $25,035.



The Society formed an Endowment Fund with the DeKalb County Community Foundation in 2022 to provide funding for special projects beyond our annual budget. However, only interest earned from the Fund can be used. Barry said donations can be made to HHS for the Endowment Fund in honor or in memory of a loved one. At the end of 2025, the fund had a balance of $86,197 made by six families to honor loved ones.

Five Board Members Elected



The Society's Board of Directors serve terms of three years. In the election at the meeting, four board members ran for retention and one new member was added to the board. Here are the results.

Cathy Bartels, vice president, has served on the board since 2020. She returned to her hometown in 2019 after a 38-year career in national retailing. She utilized her skills and contacts to lead the remodeling of the museum in 2022.



Stephanie Shelton moved to Hinckley in 2021 with her family. She studied history and political science in college and used those skills in jobs for museum education and as a resource teacher for a school district.



Ardith Trumpy comes from a family who have been a part of the community for over 100 years. She developed skills as an artist in college and was a leader in creating the town's Mosaic Mural and renovating the museum exhibits.



Jay Yaggie moved to Hinckley when he was in third grade. He is now CEO of the family businesses-Strypes Plus More- and is a gifted graphic designer. Jay produced the signage in the museum.



Berny Fitzgerald moved to town in 2020 and started volunteering at the museum and for the Cemetery Walks. He is a Field Service Technician for the Specialty Valve Division of Mueller Water Products. Berny travels around the country to perform training on new valves for water treatment and wastewater plants and to repair valves and motor actuators.

Board Members:

President - Bob Pritchard; Vice Pres. – Cathy Bartels; Secretary – Jennifer Klambauer
Treasurer – Barry Morsch; Other members –Berny Fitzgerald, Shawn McCrea, Rebecca Nickels, Stephanie Shelton, Ardith Trumpy, and Jay Yaggie; Newsletter published by Bob and Mary Pritchard

HINCKLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
"Preserving the past for the future."

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Website: Hinckleyhistoricalsociety.com
Phone: 815-761-4058

* Museum will close on Nov. 15 for the winter

* Museum is still open by appointment this winter

* Share your ideas for 2027 programming

* Thank you for your support this year

Service Award Presented to Pritchard



Vice President Cathy Bartels presented the 2026 HHS Service Award to Bob Pritchard at the Society's Annual Meeting. Pritchard is a charter member of the Society and has served as Board President for nine years. He and his wife Mary research and produce the five newsletters on behalf of the Society each year. Bob volunteered 80 hours with an intern this summer to accession artifacts for the museum. They digitized over 700 pictures, sorted and organized artifacts, and recorded information.

Bob is a tireless leader and had the vision to expand the museum to the full first floor when it became available. He has enjoyed collaborating with the high school students to record over 30 oral history interviews with adults about their memories of Hinckley. He also plays host to third graders when they visit the museum and has developed a scavenger hunt for them to find items in the museum.

The service award, created in 2018, was named after Dolores Bastian and Kenneth Bushnell who were instrumental in forming the Society and establishing a museum in Hinckley. Their vision and dedicated service will forever be remembered and celebrated as the Histories of Hinckley and the Townships of Squaw Grove and Pierce are preserved and shared with future generations.