

# Highland County Historical Society celebrates 50th anniversary, Part VI

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We are going through some grand spaces in the Highland House today as we complete our very quick walk through. Let's enter through the back door into the Pioneer Hallway. Look all around at the large number of primitive farm and woodworking tools.



We like to think of life as simpler 'back in the day' but it was surely harder, at least physically.

As your eyes graze the displays, look up and see the large and rare plow hanging above your head. Think not only of the strength and concentration it would take to make and use such a thing, but of the strength and creativity it took to hang it here.

In this area, you will see an old Post Office letter sorter. And, very prominently displayed is a portrait of C.S. Bell and many items related to the C.S. Bell Company, including a desk from the foundry which produced stoves, corn shellers, and cane mills in addition to bells.

In 1979, when the Highland House Museum was only 14 years old, it was the Bell Company, by then owned by Emerson Electric, who brought Bob and our family to Hillsboro. Bell's long-time office manager, Lenora Gordon, welcomed us and shared the culture of Hillsboro by giving us tours of the Bell's Opera House, which she owned, and the Highland House.

As I recall, the museum was already just full of beautiful and historic items. It is a marvel how much was collected and professionally displayed in such a short time. So many stories still to be discovered...

Let's just turn right here, between the mail sorter and the tool display into the Conference Room where the Board meets and community events are held. Prominently displayed in this room are a beautiful oak phone booth and an operator's switchboard. During the 2014 season it held the expanded Museum Shop.

Now, we walk into the East Parlor which celebrates music, fine furniture and art. The larger items include a Decker grand piano, an Eastlake sideboard, a pier mirror, an Empire sofa, and an inlaid round claw foot table. Smaller items include a carved ivory piece, melodeans, and a Thomas Edison cylinder player. A room for musical soirees.

Back upstairs to visit our final room, the Victorian Bedroom with its grand 1845 four piece early Victorian bedroom suite.

Certainly there are folks now who could duplicate the intricately crocheted bedspread but they would be rare. Here we experience elegance but the best, closer inspection of all this house contains, is yet to come.