Foundations of Ada
Rix Robinson: Founding Father of Ada Village

Rix Robinson was born in 1789 in Richmond, Massachusetts. He studied law and was admitted to practice law in 1811. In 1812, he moved to Detroit and used the $1000 given to him by his father to become a sutler for American troops. Through his work, Robinson traveled to Green Bay and Mackinac Island, the centers of the fur trade. In 1820 he joined the American Fur Trading Co. When fur trader Madeline La Framboise retired, he took over her trading post at the juncture of the Grand and Thornapple Rivers. Eventually he managed twenty trading posts in West Michigan.

Robinson married Pee-miss-a-quot-o-quay, an Ottawa woman. This marriage was for a period of 100 moons. They had a son John born in 1826. She later died and Rix married Se-be-quay, also an Ottawa woman. In 1834 he became Supervisor of Kent Township and later Ada Township.

In the treaty of 1836, Native groups ceded half of the lower peninsula to the U.S. government. Robinson received $23,000 for his facilitation of the treaty. When Michigan became a state in 1837 he closed all of his trading posts and entered into state government.

From 1847 to 1849, Robinson served as a state senator. He presented a bill that would provide women the right to vote, which was defeated in the legislature. However, a bill which allowed women the right to own property outright did pass. He was a delegate to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1850 and a presidential elector.

Rix Robinson died in 1875 and is buried in Ada Cemetery.
Historic Property Program

The Ada Historical Society is pleased to announce the formation of a Historic Property committee. This committee will work to bring awareness of Ada’s historic homes and properties to the community at large. The committee is currently reviewing a listing of all properties in excess of 100 years old. The plan is to spotlight each of these properties and designate them as a Centennial Property. Each of these structures has contributed to Ada’s rich history in some unique manner. If you are interested in assisting with this project please call or email us.

A Portrait of the Bradfield House by Jeanne Rockett

A 16” x 20” acrylic painting commissioned by the Ada Historical Society from artist Jeanne Rockett was finished in November. Its subject, the recently demolished Bradfield House, was built in the 1870s as the home of local mill-owner and businessman Edward Bradfield. It was located on property at the corner of Bradfield St. and Ada Dr. The Ada Covered Bridge is also known as the Bradfield Covered Bridge. The Historical Society will keep the memory of this historic residence alive through this lovely commemorative painting. Prints of this painting are available in our gift shop.

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Tri River Historical Museum Network

Spring Into the Past, our small museums tour, will be on Saturday and Sunday, May 2-3, 2020. All of the museums in our group will be open that weekend. Our theme is “Celebrating Women’s Right to VOTE 1920-2020.” This fall another society/museum joined the group—Sand Lake Salisbury Park Museum/Historical Society. At the November meeting, several societies/museums signed up to host the 2020 meetings.

Looking Back

To our steadfast volunteers, the heart and soul of Ada Historical Society, WE THANK YOU. It has been an historic year because of all you do. Your kindness, dedication, and enthusiasm have made our community a better place.

The Music of the Civil Rights Era
Thursday, January 16, 2020 7:00 pm The Averill Museum

Music Historian Jon VanderPloeg on behalf of the African American Museum and Archives (GRAAMA) explores the meaningful songs that came to represent a movement. Join us!

Winter Hours and Events

To give our volunteers a break and do some behind-the-scenes work, the museum will be closed during January and February. We re-open to visitation on Friday, March 6th. Please call with any questions.

January 9, February 13, March 12—Monthly Board meetings
3:00 pm at the museum. Open to the public

Saturday, March 7—Ada is....Taking Care of Business Exhibit Opening
1-4:00 pm at the museum. Help celebrate the opening of a new Ada history exhibit. We are back in business with a fresh look at Ada merchants. Remember the Lena Lou? Or the Paper Bag? We do and many others too.

Friday, March 13—Ada Township Leprechaun Hunt.
Between 3-6:00 pm in the village. One of the leprechauns just might be sneaking around the museum that afternoon...

Saturday, March 21—Forest Hills Community Expo. 9:30 to 2:30 at Ada Christian School. AHS will participate with a table. Admission is free with vendors from all over the area, live entertainment, food and a kids play area.

At the Gift Shop

Canvas prints: 24x30 $185 16x20 $85 8x10 matted $33
Note cards pack of 10 $8