

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

To: Raven Hill friends

From: Cheri

Date: March 2, 2024

Re: **Happy National Old Stuff Day!**

Raven Hill Discovery Center is well known as an orphanage for animals that people buy at pet stores and do not want anymore. The pets get too big, they are too messy, kids go off to college, people are moving OR mainly, no one wants to take care of them anymore. So, they come live here at Raven Hill.

People may not always realize, however, that we are also an “orphanage” for **old stuff**. We are a repository for items that people do not want to throw away or give away and no one in their family wants it, so the object comes to reside at Raven Hill. People may get rid of **old stuff**, because they are decluttering to create more space, simplifying their lives, making room for new items, moving to a new location or upgrading to newer or better versions. Because our mission is to connect science, history and art, this often works in our favor, as long as we can reserve the right to “just say no”. We may already have too many of something or it just doesn’t fit with our mission!

So, it seems particularly fitting for us to recognize **National Old Stuff Day** on this 2nd day of March, because we make room for a lot of **old stuff** here. Sometimes it fits perfectly in one of our timelines, like old telephones or typewriters. Other times, visitors may notice that many of our exhibits are found displayed on old furniture or in old display cases. As the saying goes, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.”



*The animals are always a favorite, but not necessarily **old stuff**. Raven Hill is their forever home, when they are donated by people who can no longer care for them.*

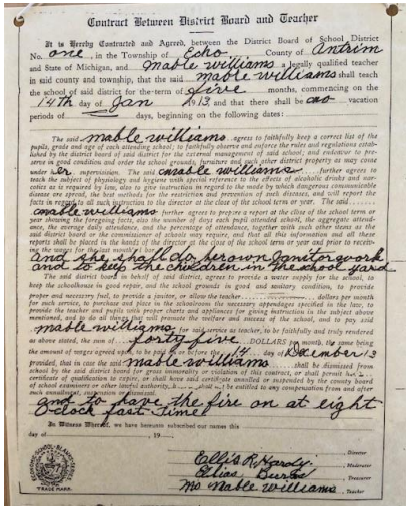


*Finding someone to take certain **old stuff** can be a real challenge, especially things like old pianos. One donated piano has become a popular hands-on exhibit in the Center’s Discovery Room. The Piano Harp can be hit, strummed or plucked to create sound vibrations.*

Sometimes **old stuff** ends up in the hands-on Discovery Room, where visitors delight in “calling” each other on the old phones or playing with the marble rolls. A donor might decide to get rid of an old toy or musical instrument they no longer use, considering it clutter. Many of our older visitors find themselves nostalgic for that item and/or era, while the younger set just enjoy the hands-on nature of the **old stuff**. An old stoplight with each of the three colors wired to switch separately is great fun for the little ones and often becomes a form of “freeze tag” to the older kids.



This marble roll is at least 70 years old and still entertains visitors in the hands-on Discovery Room at the Center.



The Schoolhouse at Raven Hill has lots of **old stuff**, including school desks, slate boards and even old teacher contracts showing that teachers were paid \$45 per month "and she shall do her own janitor work and keep the children in the school yard."



Raven Hill's collection of **old stuff** includes several ceramic jugs. The display shows how the jug shape has changed over time. On the left, the brown jug is a newer style from about 1844 and the lighter colored jug on the right is pre-1823.

Currently, Raven Hill is open to the public noon to 4pm on Saturdays and 2pm to 4pm on Sundays, plus any other time by appointment. You can call 231.536.3369 or email

info@miravenhill.org for reservations during the week. Be sure to schedule field trips, birthday parties or scout groups soon. A lot of spring field trip days are already booked! Detailed information on coming events like the April 8 Solar Eclipse, exhibits like "Under Michigan and Beyond—Rocks & Minerals" and programs like "Summer Classes for Kids" will be forthcoming. We look forward to seeing you here soon! Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy **National Old Stuff Day!**

Cheri

A lot of the **old stuff** ends up in the Evolving Technology Building becoming artifacts in the timelines of cooking, cleaning, laundry, toys & games, tools and communications from the Information Age back to the Stone Age.

Other times, visitors will come into Raven Hill and exclaim over a "new" exhibit or display, when in reality we have simply moved it from one place to another! Rearranging and moving **old stuff** to different spots gives the appearance of something being new. By changing the layout or placement of objects, the Center gets a fresh look and visitors see "new" things.



Before the Evolving Technology (ET) Building was completed, visitors could find collections of **old stuff** in the Main Museum. Now, these artifacts are in the ET Building helping to enrich visitors' educational journey through technology. They help guests bridge the gap between ancient innovations and their modern counterparts, illustrating the continuous thread of human ingenuity.



Here are two candidates for **old stuff** out in the ET Building. On the right is a wooden gear. On the left is a treadle sewing machine that was repurposed as an air compressor.



(Left) A 6'x6'x6' three-ton antique linotype or "line casting" machine was used in printing newspapers. It is an unusual donation of **old stuff**, but a great addition to the Raven Hill Print Shop. Linotypes were used in the late 1800's.

It took a car jack, several pieces of black iron pipe for rollers, two people and four hours to move this behemoth from the center of the Print Shop floor to its permanent home over by the wall.