

***Objects from the Collection******Magazine Stand*****Location**

Library

**Manufacturer**

Roycroft Industries

**Medium**

White Oak Wood

**Dimensions**

64 x 21 x 18 inches

**Date**

c. 1908-15

***About the Magazine Stand***

In the library of the Farm House Museum stands a striking Roycroft magazine stand that was gifted to Charles Curtiss by the class of 1901. As a response to the Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts Movement influenced the creation of Roycroft Industries, which employed many highly skilled artisans to produce unique objects such as books, lamps, and eventually furniture. This movement focused on manufacturing goods by hand, producing a rustic, medieval appearance that is distinctive to Roycroft Industries. Due to the Roycroft Industries' short lived venture, these objects are a unique piece of Victorian Era history to own.

Charles Curtiss, whose family occupied the Farm House from 1897 to 1947, served as Iowa State College's Dean of Agriculture for thirty years. He made his mark upon the early campus by creating an exceptional Agriculture College. Along with publishing his work in the Iowa Agricultural Experimental Station, he was deeply involved in promoting Iowa State College through livestock judging competitions and by creating the first agriculture engineering program. Today, Dean Curtiss' progressive views of agriculture persist at Iowa State University as research and new innovations continue.

***Phonograph***

Thomas A. Edison

**Location**

Second Floor Hallway

**Manufacturer**

Thomas A. Edison

**Dimensions**

31 x 45 x 22 inches

**Date**

1910

***About the Phonograph***

One means of entertainment during the Victorian Era can be attributed to Thomas Edison whose invention of the phonograph allowed for musical amusement and leisure. First created in 1877 as a means to record one's voice, the phonograph was developed to bring music into the household. As competition arose in the phonograph market, the quality of the phonograph increased while the price declined, allowing for middle-class households to purchase the once expensive machine.

The floor model seen in the Farm House Museum was created in 1910 and shows a new innovation to the phonograph: the use of the new Blue Amberol disc. Before this disc, lower-quality wax cylinders were used, which allowed for only two-minutes of music on each side, and the cylinders could not be mass produced. The Blue Amberol disc provided four-minutes of music and gave a higher sound quality due to the hard surface of the disc which provided a constant surface speed.

Farm House Museum contains a large collection of Blue Amberol discs that can be played for visitors on the floor model phonograph. Each side contains a single song that represents popular musical genres of the time including jazz, opera, and foxtrot.



## ***Taxidermy Cases***

Lucy B. Kimball

### **Location**

Library & Bedroom

### **Dimensions**

22 x 13 x 6 inches

### **Date**

c. 1870-1880

## **About the *Taxidermy Cases***

Two of the most unique objects in the Farm House Museum are no doubt the taxidermy display cases. Though it appears macabre to many modern viewers, taxidermy was a popular exhibition of artistic skill for Victorians, involving creating an environment for preserved flora and fauna. This was one way for a Victorian household to showcase their wealth to visitors as well as providing an educational display of local ecology.

Both of the displays in the Farm House Museum were created and sold by Lucy B. Kimball in the 1870s. Arsenic compounds were a typical chemical used to exterminate and preserve the specimens. This poisonous chemical was also known for its bleaching properties, which made it a popular make-up item for women trying to achieve the stylishly pale complexion of those who were not required to work manual labor. Museums now test these displays to ensure there are no traces of arsenic which could prove harmful to other collection objects.



## ***Quilt and Coverlet Collection***

### **Date**

1860-1910

## **About the *Quilt and Coverlet Collection***

The Farm House Museum has a large quilt collection. Quilting--the art of stitching two layers of cloth together with batting in between for added warmth--originated over 5,000 years ago in Egypt. Quilting was brought to the New World with the onset of European colonization in the 16th century. It was during this time that quilting became necessary as a means to survive the harsh, unfamiliar climate of America.

Before the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, cloth was expensive. Having a quilt was a luxury many could not afford. The rise of the Industrial Revolution, however, allowed fabric to become more readily available at a lower price through mass production, making the artistic expression that is so often associated with quilts obtainable to the larger population. Quilting trends in the Victorian Era included many different patterns and colorful fabric, and competitive quilting was practiced by women.

The Farm House Museum's collection of quilts boasts an incredibly diverse and rare assortment of patterns with bold designs such as Honeycomb, Diamond, Irish Chain, and Crazy.

# **Farm House Museum**

*Objects from the Collection*

Additional Information on the Farm House and other University Museums Information sheets are available at the University Museums office - 290 Scheman Building (2nd floor) 515-294-3342 or visit us online at [www.museums.iastate.edu](http://www.museums.iastate.edu)