The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums
PLATTEVILLE
WISCONSIN

Newsletter

Spring 2025

Revamped Displays

Museums have to keep up with new research and new ways to make history relevant to our visitors. The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums are no exception to this rule. That is why this winter the museum staff have been hard at work identifying exhibits that needed to be updated, added to, or changed to communicate best with our audiences. So, we want to give you a sneak peek at what you might see when you walk through our doors so that you know you have something to look forward to this upcoming tour season.

Our East Display is the area that receives the most attention in our whole museum. It is the first place many of our visitors go, and it is where local school students begin their school field trips. Therefore, the artifacts and information that visitors encounter in there are very important for setting the stage for their entire experience. We have taken steps to utilize all of the space that we can in this display room by opening up the display alcoves and making them spaces our visitors can walk into to read panels and see artifacts. We gain about 60 square feet for every alcove we open and we have opened three of them. This has allowed us to move displays that were previously in the middle space of the room. By making room, we are allowing ourselves to add more of our collections pieces and the stories that are connected to them to be exhibited in our spaces. Perhaps most importantly though, is the fact that this helps to make our museum as accessible as it can be.

Now some of you may be wondering, "well won't all that extra space just make it look empty?" Yes, it will, until we create more panels and add more artifacts to the space. One exhibit that will refill the space created by these moves is coming back after a short hiatus. The exhibit we plan to reinstall is the Black Miners Exhibit that was created by a group of UW-Platteville students and Dr. Gene Tesdahl. Due to additional research conducted on the black mining community and other black entrepreneurs of the Mining District, the panels are being updated and will be displayed next to the Windlass that was found on the property of James Williams who was a respected black miner in the late 1800s. This exhibit also includes an audio aspect that will enhance the way we tell the story of black residents.

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Upcoming Events

Winter Lyceum
March 8 and March 22

For the second half of our Winter Lyceum, we are excited to welcome historic blacksmith Bob Rossdeutscher and historian Tracey Lee Roberts. Rossdeutscher will examine some of the hand forged metal tools and accessories in our collections. Roberts will speak on early housing in the Lead Mining District focusing more specifically on miners' houses termed "badger huts."

Talks are held at the museum beginning at 4 PM

Friends of the Museum Mini-Golf at the Museum
April 5

Join the Friends as they start a new fundraiser that will be sure to spark joy while exploring the museum in a new way. 9 mini golf holes will be designed to guide you through the museum displays. Along the way you can experience hands on learning that will help with your score at the end of the round. This is meant to be a full on experiential event that we hope will provide fun and will help you learn more about history. So gather your friends and family. We will provide museum safe putters and wiffle ball golf balls!

Community Free Day
May 1 - 10 AM - 5 PM

To thank the citizens of Platteville for their support since 1964, The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums offers two community free days a year. One is in the spring to celebrate reopening for our public season and one is in the fall to celebrate the end of a great season. Museum admission, including a Guided Mine Tour and Train Ride (weather permitting) will be free to Platteville residents with proof of residency. Registration is suggested. We look forward to seeing you on May 1!

The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums

PLATTEVILLE

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Friends of the Museum
Cornish Pasty Fundraiser

Order through April 10 | Pick up April 26

Six Delicious Flavors!

Beef* | Chicken | Vegetable | Pork: $10/ea

Chicken Pot Pie | Apple Pie: $11/ea

*Gluten Free Beef Available for $12/ea

Pasties offered frozen to bake at home

Bulk Discounts: Fill Your Freezer!

5-9: 20% off | 10+: 30% off

Order at: mining.jamison.museum

or call (608)348-3301

Community Free Day

For over 60 years our museum has been supported by our community and we want to thank you all for that support. That is why every year at the beginning and end of our season we welcome any citizens from the city of Platteville to visit the museum and go on a tour for free. These two days are some of our favorites at the museum because we get to share local history with our local community. We see all generations, people who have been to the museum before, and people who did not know the city had a museum. It is always a joy sharing the history with you all and we cannot wait to see you in May!

Museum admission, including a guided mine tour and train ride (weather permitting) will be free to Platteville residents with proof of residency. Registration is suggested but not required.

Boxing Exhibit

The Wisconsin Historical Society has a project called The History Makers Tour and we are excited to announce that the Mining and Rollo Jamison is going to be a part of this project this May! The History Makers Tour aims to bring history directly to local communities in every region of the state through pop-up exhibits, artifact displays, public programs, art installations, and other activities. When we learned that they had a boxing "step into history" experience, we knew that we had to give our famous boxing squirrels a nod.

Beginning on May 1, the museum will be home to the step into history boxing photo backdrop that also provides a brief history of the boxing program taught by professional boxer Baby Joe Gans in Milwaukee. The goal of this project is to provide an immerisive experience with history. Of course, you're going to want to visit your favorite boxers (The boxing squirrels). If you want a picture with the squirrels, their stunt doubles (pictured left) will be available for photos with the boxing back drop. So, we hope that this fun opportunity will bring you in to see what we are up to at the museum.

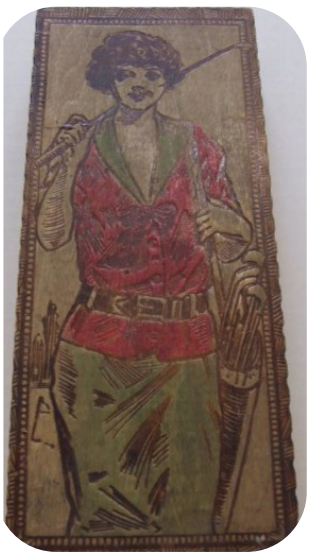
Revamped Displays

In addition to the changes in the East Display room, we are using a grant that we received from the Wisconsin Federation of Museums to update worn informational panels in our first floor exhibit space. The new panels that are being designed will feature the already existing content, but it will take up less space and will match the designs in other exhibit spaces throughout the museum. These upgrades will create consistency through the entire museum and will consolidate the information so that we can utilize our space for new research and to display more artifacts from our collections.

We are excited about these updates to our panels and the artifacts that we have on exhibit! We hope that it excites you just as much as it does us. While these additions will continue to take place throughout the next couple of years, the first steps should allow you, our visitors, to imagine the possibilities for our community museum! It is our goal as museum staff to provide you with more and more reasons to return and continue learning with us at the Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums!

Mini Golf in the Museum

Mini Golf in a museum? Yes, you read it correctly! Today many museums are forced to rethink how they interact with their communities and how they raise money. Thanks to the Friends of the Museum, we are testing out a new fun way to get our community to interact with the museums and to raise funds at the same time - Mini Golf in the museum! We are all excited about this fundraiser that is sure to spark joy while winding you through the museum exhibit spaces!



Since the museum strives to create educational value with everything we do, we are building in ways to help the mini golfers engage with our region's history. While putting your way through the museum, there will be opportunities to experience history through hands-on activities. If you choose to engage with these activities, you can erase strokes off your total score at the end of the course. So, there is a little incentive to learn while mini-golfing.

The event will kick off at 9 AM with tee times every 10 minutes. It is suggested that you register online since we are using tee times and will not be able to guarantee a tee time if you arrive the day of the event to purchase tickets. Groups can consist of up to six people with at least one adult. Admission is $5 for children 12 and under and $10 for adults. Golf balls and putters will be provided for you when you arrive for your tee time.

Volunteer Projects

We are always so grateful for our volunteers and all of the diverse work that they perform. We truly have a volunteer for everything that we do at the museum. Therefore, we want to highlight some of those volunteers and the projects that they are working on. We hope you are as inspired by their work as we are here at the museum!

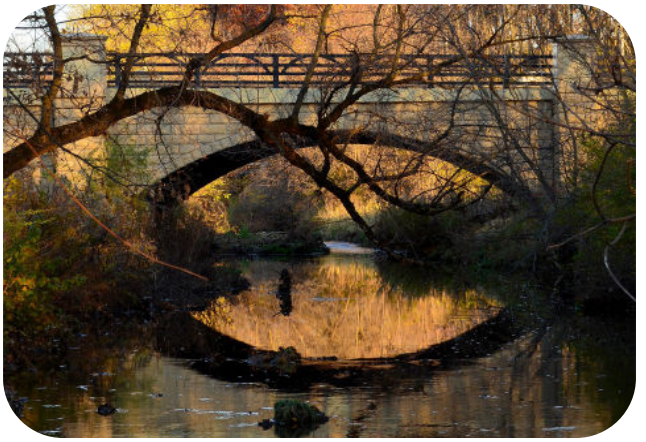
Martin Jacobson is constructing a moveable hands-on desk so that school field trips and general visitors have another opportunity to engage with history through physically interaction. While its primary use will be to allow visitors to interact with reproductions, it will also be used to improve our interactions with visitors. This desk will serve as a reflection station, book and resources station, and even crafting station. These types of activities are at the core of our mission and we thank Martin for his help.

Broderick Livermore is studying Social Studies education with an art history minor at the University of Wisconsin Platteville. He began to volunteer after his Public History class visited the museum. He helps the Museum Collections Manger (Christina Grev) catalog items in the museum's collections. More specifically he is creating an inventory of the items that have and have not been cataloged so that Christina is not spending time looking up files and instead can make progress cataloging. He has a passion for local museums as they help tell often overlooked regional stories. Broderick says "having the chance to volunteer has allowed me to help out with something I am passionate about." We are thankful to have such a passionate student in our community that is helping our museum preserve the past.

Kiersten Prom is an Environmental Science & Conservation and German double major. She began volunteering in February after visiting the museum with the Public History class. She wanted to volunteer at the museum because she loves history and plans to earn a PhD in archeology. She expressed her excitement for the projects she is working on stating that, "getting hands-on experience with artifacts is beyond cool, especially as an undergrad." She is working in conjunction with Broderick to create the inventory of items that need to be cataloged as a way to help Christina. We hope that Keirsten continues to find a passion for history in our collections!

The UWP Casting Class has been working on recreating the brake shoes for our 1931 Whitcomb Locomotive. This has been a project that has taught the students many things including 3D rendering, 3D printing, and of course, casting. The picture on the right shows them pouring the shoes at the UW-Platteville campus. They were able to display and talk about their project at a competition in Milwaukee where they took second place. We are proud to work with groups such as this one that allow our museum to care for our mining history in exciting and unique ways.

Driftless Walking Tour



Spring is right around the corner and we are excited to bring back the popular Driftless Walking Tour! This Walking Tour connects nature, history, and culture as visitors venture from the Museum on a 2-hour, 1.5-mile guided tour of portions of the David Canny Rountree Branch Trail. Participants will explore the landscape of the Driftless Area and the Upper Mississippi Valley Mining District, learning how the geographical features developed into a way of life from prehistory to the establishment of Wisconsin as the Badger State to the development of contemporary communities. This walk along a scenic, certified trout stream is offered in partnership with the Platteville Community Arboretum.

This year, the museum is hosting this tour as a part of a larger celebration of the Driftless Landscape. Merrimac and Main in Dodgeville has organized a week long learning experience about the Driftless area and this walking tour is just one part of their promotion. Additional activities will include a painting session of the driftless, live music at White Oak Savanna Events Farm & Sanctuary, stargazing, Savanna walking tours, and more! This partnership was formed to encourage more tourism and local support throughout the Upper Mississippi River Valley Lead and Zinc Mining District. We can't wait to walk with you and learn about the land, people, and minerals around us!

Tickets for the May 6 Driftless Walking Tour are available on our website. Admission prices for the walk are $3 for children under 5, $6 for youths 5-12, $12 for adults 13-64, and $10 for seniors 65+.

More information can be found at Mining.Jamison.museum/programs/

Young Pioneers Camp

The museum has hosted our hands-on Young Pioneers Camp for more than three decades and we are excited to announce that it will be held again this year from Tuesday, July 15 through Friday, July 18. Young Pioneers Camp is a weeklong day camp where children aged 7-12 gather and learn how residents of our area lived over 150 years ago. Each day the young pioneers experience a different topic in history and learn from doing.

Itenerary:

Day 1 - Native American History

Campers get to learn about the people who inhabited this area before Europeans began to lay claim to the land and where those native people are today. Our museum educators help the campers understand the Mining practices as well as the overall living situations of the Native Americans.

Day 2 - Mining History

While down in the mine learning about the process of mining, each child has a chance to find and take home pieces of lead. Additionally, they visit our onsite hoist house and learn about the processes of bringing ore above ground and what happens to it once it is harvested.

Day 3 - Cooking History

Homemade apple sauce, corn fritters, buckwheat pancakes, and ice cream! Our young campers get to learn how to make all of these goodies and more during day three of the camp. While making the food they learn about why these people made these foods and how they did it without our modern day appliances.

Day 4 - Hand Crafts

Toys, leather pouches, and peuter bullets! Each camper gets to craft their own pouches to take their goodies home in.

If you would like to sign your child up or would like more information, please visit the programs and events page on our website or call Christina at (608)348-3301.

Collections Corner

Museums have far more in their collections than they can ever imagine displaying. Since our museum has over 36,000 items, this is definitely the case for us. So, to help us show off more of our collections we have a few artifacts shown below that are either new to the collections or have an interesting story.

Popcorn Maker

The museum has proudly participated in the Wisconsin Science Festival for three years now, and each year has been centered around a different topic. Last year's theme was agriculture, which was perfect for this region since Grant County is a top agricultural producer for the state of Wisconsin. For the event, and in addition to the programs that we put on, we added two temporary displays to highlight the role that agriculture plays in our daily lives. Since corn is a staple crop here in the Midwest, one of the items on display is a metal popcorn maker. It is a relatively simple device with a metal box with a mesh wire top and a wooden handle. The kernels and oil were put on the box and then placed over an open flame until they popped.

We have another popcorn maker on display upstairs in the kitchen exhibit, and this is the most popular item for tour guides to ask students to identify during a school field trip. The number one response we get is a cheese grater, followed by a fryer, bedwarmer, and even a noodle maker. The students are equally thrilled and amazed that something as simple as popcorn has been a commonplace snack in American households for centuries and that their ancestors shared the same favorite foods as they do.

Quilts

Over the past year, we have not had one, but two quilts donated to our permanent collection. The first was a Wisconsin Mining School Quilt that was given to Bill Broughton as a gift. The second quilt, which you can see to the right is from Jill and Charles Staab. The Staabs came to the museum and donated this quilt that had belonged to their neighbor, LeRoy Loeffelholz. Loeffelholz owned the Piccadilly Ranch near Lima Township. This quilt, which was hand-sewn by LeRoy's mother and other local women in the late 1800s, has a "Currants and Coxcomb" pattern and is in great condition for its age. Jill and Charles were gifted this quilt from LeRoy, who himself saved it from being used as an oil rag for his brother's tractors. While donating this artifact, Jill and Charles stated that they believed the quilt should stay in Grant County as a remembrance of their neighbor LeRoy for other people to appreciate.

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Collections Corner

Pump Organ

This pump organ was created by an Evangelical preacher named Peter Phillip Bilhorn. It collapses into a 2x1.5 foot box that can then be transported. The pedals at the bottom pumped air, and when the keys were pressed, they blew air through metal reeds, creating sound. Additionally, unlike a normal organ, this portable model only has 39 keys. This instrument is now part of our permanent collection and was donated by Platteville's First Congregational United Church of Christ.

According to church historian Karen Rundell, "This Bilhorn Pump Organ replaced a Vocalion reed organ at First Congregational Church, Platteville, in the early 1900s. Mr. Alvin Rottigen was paid regularly for playing the organ and it was used in church services until 1928 when a new pipe organ replaced it at the cost of $5,200."

Call for 2025 Event Sponsors

This is the time of year when the Friends of The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums reach out to the community to seek sponsors to make a robust line-up of 2025 Museum events possible. Hundreds of thousands of families have discovered our region's mining and rural heritage — thanks in no small part to the contributions of our region's business community. We are pleased to offer generous sponsor recognition and access benefits for participating organizations and individuals. To sponsor an event include the event name(s) in the memo line of your check or contact Summer at (608) 348-3301 to discuss sponsorship details. Thank you!

Heritage Day	$200 (Minimum of 12 Needed)
Mine Day	$200 (Minimum of 12 Needed)
Historic Re-enactment	$200 (Minimum of 12 Needed)
Annual Meeting	$100 (Minimum of 4 Needed)

Museum Leadership

City of Platteville Museum Board
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Garrett Jones, Secretary
Lawrence Bowden
Kathy Connett
Tom Nall
Deb Jenny

Friends of the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums Board
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Kendall Miller, Visitor Services Specialist
Heidi Dyas-McBeth, Collections Assistant
Christina Grev, Collections Management and Education Specialist
Emma Larsen, Facilities Maintenance Technician
Sharon Trentz, Museum Custodial Technician
Summer Hamille, Administration Specialist
Tour Guides: Bruce Flesch and Taylor Beck

Behind the Scenes

Letter From the Friends of the Museum President - Deb Jenny

Welcome Spring!

Although the museum is closed during the winter season it amazes me how much is getting done! The staff have been building new exhibits and planning for the new season. They have so many new ideas and new events planned. I hope you'll take advantage of the opportunities available to you when the season opens May 1st.

The Friends of the Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums just held another successful Miners Ball. The Miners Ball is our largest fund raiser and I want to thank our partner and sponsor, the UW Platteville Foundation and Alumni Association, as well as our sponsors and auction donors, the Ken Kilian Classic Big Band, and everyone who attended. Without your support the event would not be possible.

We've already jumped into our Spring Pasty Sale. Be sure to put in your order by April 10th for these delicious comfort foods at mining.jamison.museum, call the museum or order from a Friends board member. Pick up day is April 26th. Also, don't miss our new Mini Golf in the Museum event on April 5th from 9 – Noon. A great family friendly way to spend a Saturday morning. We hope to see you there!

Deb Jenny, President

Yes, I Wish to Support the 2025 Annual Fund!

The Annual Fund directly supports Museum operations, key public programs and initiatives.

- The Friends are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 39-1363989.
- Gifts are tax deductible to the limits of the law.
- You can give conveniently online: **www.mining.jamison.museum/donate**
- Please consider the Museums in your estate plans.

Please return this form and make checks payable to:

The Friends of the Mining
& Rollo Jamison Museums
P.O. Box 780
Platteville, WI 53818

Contact Cody Grabhorn at (608) 348-3301 or museumdirector@platteville.org with questions.

Name(s) for Acknowledgment: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Gift Information ☐ Anonymous, please. ☐ I am interested to discuss a bequest.

☐ I/We enclose a $_____ gift in support of the Annual Fund.

☐ I/We enclose a restricted gift of $_____ for the following:

_____

☐ I/We Wish to be Sustainers and to a Make a Recurring Gift of $ _____

Account Type: Frequency: ☐ Monthly (~15th of month)

☐ Checking ☐ Savings ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually

This sustaining gift will be ongoing until I contact the museum to change it or cancel.

Bank Name _____

Account # _____ Routing # _____

Signature: _____

Charge the One-Time Donation to: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CSC #: _____

Signature: _____

Share a year of learning with us at our museum campus!

A new year ahead means many activities to participate in! We are excited to welcome back traditional events and introduce some new programming to engage with all of our local communities!

Join us for seasonal festivals, guided tours, galleries of changing exhibits, and underground programs. Of course, don't miss the Boxing Squirrels on display!

www.mining.jamison.museum

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Contact Us!

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Visit us on the web at
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