The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums
PLATTEVILLE
WISCONSIN

Newsletter

Spring 2024

A Homecoming for Director Cody Grabhorn

It's not often you get to be the leader of the organization that gave you your first opportunity in your dream field. Yet, here I am, filled with gratitude for the position I sit in as director. In the nine years since I left The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums, I have learned quite a bit about the museum field. I have seen how small and large museums have better served their communities and built strong educational organization for the future. While I have certainly learned a lot about the museum field, I am excited to learn what our local communities need from their museum. I hope to share the perspectives that I have gained while listening to our community so that together, we can propel our community museum into the future.

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Cody Grabhorn, Museums Director

Museum Re-opened May 1 For Tour Season

Tour season at The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums kicked off Wednesday, May 1, and runs through October. We'll be open Wednesday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Monday and Tuesday). Register for your tour at www.mining.jamison.museum/programs. You can also simply come to the museum and sign up if there is availability on the tours.

Museum admission includes: 1) a fully accessible self-guided tour of all interior and exterior exhibition galleries; 2) the option of a video tour or a guided underground tour of the 1845 Bevans Mine and Hoist House; and 3) a ride on a 1931 Whitcomb mine train through the 3-acre outdoor Museum campus (weather permitting).

Two UWP Education Classes Visit Museums

To kick off our school season we welcomed future teachers from the University's education program to learn about the museums and the resources we have for them! Many students and the professors were excited about the possibility of having another resource for learning how to educate the next generation.

Mark Your Calendar

May 4 and October 31
Community Free Days

To thank the citizens of Platteville for their continued support, we are offering two community free days: May 4 and season closing day, October 31. Museum admission, including a Guided Mine Tour and Train Ride (weather permitting) will be free to Platteville residents.

June 21
Make Music Platteville

Make Music Platteville is an annual one-day, citywide, free day of music held on the summer solstice, June 21. We have participated in this even in the past and plans have begun for the museum's participation again this year. Please stay tuned for more updates soon!

July 4
Heritage Day

We are excited for the annual July 4th community celebration of Platteville's rich history and bright future that draws more than 700 visitors annually. Visitors will enjoy a day of games, historical demonstrations, special exhibits, live music, and food, including custom ice cream flavors produced by Pioneer Sweets of UW-Platteville.

July 15 - 18
Young Pioneers Camp

Young Pioneers Camp is a fun day camp for students entering 2nd through 5th grades. Students who participate get a chance to travel into the past and discover life in our region in the pioneering period of the early 19th century. Prospect for minerals, create unique crafts, cook over a fire, play historic outdoor games, and more.

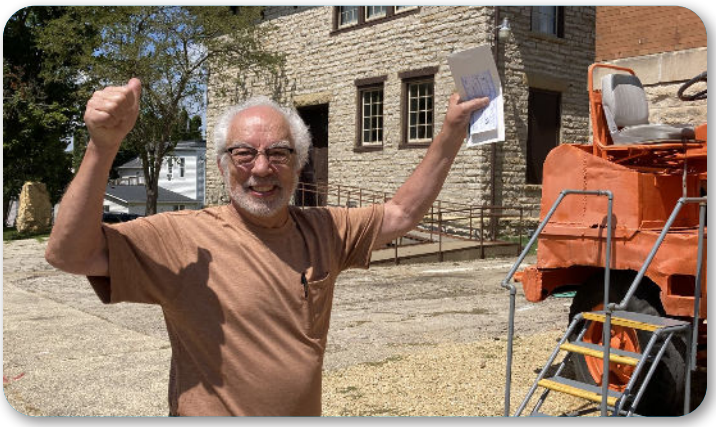
The Museum Receives a Grant for Take Home Kits!

We are excited to announce that the St. Mary's Platteville - Claudyne Gies Endowment Fund has awarded the museums a $700 grant to fund our take home activity kits! We will be able to create seven kits for children between the ages of 6 and 12 thanks to this grant. Each kit will include a book, game/activity, and a connection to the history of Platteville or the broader history of mining in the Driftless area.

Stay tuned for information about our pending Take Home Activity Kits.

May 1 - August 10
Pick & Gad Raffle

Save the date for this fun and important annual fundraiser now in its fourth year. Win cash prizes of up to $500 and support the Friends of The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums by purchasing one or more tickets! Sales open in May, and the drawing will take place during Mine Day (August 10).



2023 Pick & Gad Raffle Winner Andrew Baumann.

Lyceum Videos Go Live Online May 15 for All to View

The 2024 Winter Lyceum featured engaging lectures that explored a variety of topics. Participants joined in the live question-and-answer session at the end of each talk, probing the subjects that resonated with them. Each talk was recorded and made available exclusively to registrants. On May 15, the recordings will be made available freely to all via our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@theminingrollojamisonmuseu5138. We are excited to be able to make these videos available so as to make more of our educational opportunities accessible. We would like to thank the sponsors whose financial support has made this program possible: A&W Restaurant of Platteville, Inspiring Community, and Park Place Senior Living.

A view of our "Having Fun" exhibition in the museum

A Homecoming for director Cody Grabhorn

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A question I have heard recently from many people is, "is it weird being back?" In a sense, yes it is, because there are certain things that I remember being the same ten years ago and there are some things that are completely new to me. That familiarity mixed with a sense of new can be confusing. However, I think it is empowering to know that traditions have been kept and new ways to share our history have been adopted. In fact, when I came back for my interview in January, I noticed that the tour scripts resembled what I had known ten years ago but also included new talking points. Additionally, as I walked through the buildings, some of the weird quirks that I had long forgotten about were re-familiarized just like I had never left. Yet, upgrades to the Museum Store and the collections space were encouraging. So, in response to that question about it feeling weird to be back at The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums I often end up thinking about the changes that have been made and why they may have been made. I consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to really understand the decision making of the past by having the unique perspective of knowing how things were done ten years ago.

In that vein, it is interesting to look at our organization and see the direction in which each director decided to point the museum. Our museum has faced different needs throughout the years and I believe that each director has succeeded in meeting those needs. Today, it seems we are faced with new needs and desires that will require some new approaches from the museum. All of this is to say, we have made great progress, but there are, and will always be, ways we can improve how we preserve and tell the stories of those who came before us. One thing I have noticed in my first month as director is that there is a desire for us to move towards a more people centric approach to history. Another thing I have heard is that we need to freshen up our spaces and to give people more reasons to come through our doors. I hope to find ways to answer these calls and better serve our community.

During this first year I would love to really understand what our members want for their community museum! My goal is to continue providing quality programs and building community relations. With that being said, I am excited to dive right back in at The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums and I am honored to have the opportunity!

Museum Featured in The Mineral Collector's Newsletter

The Museum was featured in an article written by Robert L. Fox Jr. In his article Fox writes, "We are fortunate that a considerable amount of this area's history has been preserved at the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museum." The article goes on to explain that the museum contains "one of the largest collections of regional mining artifacts and dioramas in the Upper Midwest." We are so thankful to be noticed in this way and hope that articles such as this one attract people from our community, state, and even from around the world to see our collections.

Mineral News
Vol. 40, No. 3 — The Mineral Collector's Newsletter — $6.00
March 2024
Lepidolite: the Polylithionite-Trilithionite Problem
From the Al Hayat Claim, near Bikita, Masvingo, Zimbabwe
The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums
Robert L. Fox Jr.
NEW: DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS!

A look at the front page of the Mineral

Top 9 "Awesomely Odd" Places in WI to visit!

We were also mentioned in an article published by "Only In Your State." Here is an excerpt from the article: "Aside from the peculiar street layout, a visitor might be unaware of the city's mining past. The last mines disappeared more than a century ago and now the city is a college town, home to the University of Wisconsin Platteville. The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums preserves the city's mining past in a very interactive way. Tours take visitors deep into a very old and very authentic lead mine. The 1845 Bevans Lead-Zinc Mine gives visitors a chance to see what life was like for Wisconsin's early miners. Their world was very dark, and very dirty. For some, it was also lucrative. This deposit was discovered by a man named Lorenzo Bevans. In one year alone, the mine produced over two million pounds of valuable lead ore."

Featured on Only In Your State Wisconsin Attractions Site.

While we aren't sure we consider ourselves odd, we most certainly agree that we are a place you have to visit!

Find the article here: 9 Awesomely Odd Places in Wisconsin (www.onlyinyourstate.com/wisconsin/odd-museums-wi).

Glass Installed in Diorama

One of our oldest dioramas - now an artifact itself - has been brought back to life with a brand new casing. Over the last couple of months staff have been conserving the diorama and installing features that align with current museums standards such as LED lights to ensure the diorama's preservation for the future. This diorama shows the stratigraphy of the Upper Mississippi Mining District. The staff's hard work has paid off and the diorama is safely behind glass once again!

Collections Spotlight

Some notable artifacts have been "re-found" and handled by the collections team while carrying out projects for our Inspire! Grant for Small Museums and the suggestion made in our 2021 CAP report. Let us introduce you to a few of our favorites!

Gizmo

Our collections team has assessed the condition of two "wet" specimen jars and their inhabitants. Inside one jar was an assortment of aquatic creatures, such as honeycomb cowfish, freshwater eel, and various crustaceans, while the other contained a fetal piglet.

Collections space in the third floor of the Hamner Robbins Building

Concern for these items arose due to corrosion in the lid and lining of the jar. Additionally, what used to be formaldehyde inside the jars had turned a yellowish color and evaporated over time, leaving the specimens susceptible to deterioration.

At the suggestion of a UW-Platteville biology professor, we needed to obtain new jars, strain them, and refill them with a new solution of 75% ethanol. Thanks to the Milwaukee Public Museum for donating two specimen jars to our collection, we could transfer and store these pieces in new containers.

While straining the formaldehyde from the jar, we were surprised to find that the female piglet was conjoined. While there is only one head, the pig has two tails, eight legs, and four ears. This specimen is a wonderful addition to showcase all the oddities and curiosities that Rollo Jamison had collected over the years.

Utility Belt

Over the past year, the collections team has cataloged more than 1,000 objects to gain intellectual control over what artifacts we have in storage. However, we encounter items in our collection that do not have an Object ID Number and are considered FIC (Found in Collection), making it harder to determine their provenance and catalog them.

Rollo's Utility Belt

Thankfully, when we found a belt in our hallway storage, it was easy to identify who owned it. Like many of his belongings, Rollo Jamison etched his name into the belt and added some additional accouterments.

It has been noted that Rollo was a tinkerer who invented items such as a hands-free receiver consisting of a hard hat and an antenna. Metal hooks bolted onto the belt allowed him to hang and switch out tools such as a compass, pocket watch, pocketknife, and Swiss army knife with a spoon and fork. Additionally, a holder is attached to the belt holding a knife and hatchet with bullet casings as their handles.

His utility belt and tools show how much of a handyman Rollo truly was in addition to his resourcefulness.

Bound Newspapers

One of the biggest and most time-consuming projects that the collection's team has been working on recently is creating box supports for our bound newspapers.

Bound Newspapers in our Archives

There are over 260 bound newspaper books from the 1870s to the 1950s, including the Platteville Journal, Boscobel Dial, Grant County News, Grant County Witness, and the Platteville Witness. These box supports are being made to support the fragile spines and to protect the text block so they can continue to be stacked horizontally.

The supports are created using acid-free archival boards that collections assistant Heidi Dyas-McBeth has to measure and cut to fit the unique dimensions of every bound newspaper book. Additionally, we have been using makeup sponges to remove dust and dirt that has accumulated over time. Finally, we thread, glue, and tape ties to the boards to enclose the books.

If you are interested in this process, we have a new video on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@theminingrollojamisonmuseu5138) that showcases the steps for making these supports. As of now, we have completed over 30 boxes and are continually getting faster in making them.

Notable Recent Accessions

While we are cataloging all of the collections items that have been in our museums for decades, we also have important artifacts being added to our collections to ensure we have artifacts that tell the whole story of our area. Some items that have recently been acquired through donations are the hoist signal sign to the right. This shows the signals that miners below ground used to communicate with operators above. Objects like this sign help us to better convey the daily life of miners. Likewise, the wooden tape reel below helps to tell the story of our mine and how it was surveyed. It was owned by John Krogman who taught mining engineering at UW-Platteville. The sweatshirt was donated by John Broihahn. Broihahn was a part of the Explorer Post (a group connected with the Boy Scouts) who performed public service duties around Platteville.

Historic Collaborations

Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity shared energy and skills on a busy Saturday.

Volunteer Work Day

The UW-Platteville Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity worked with Museum staff on April 20 to carry out some necessary cleaning and relocating tasks during the spring volunteer day. The brothers worked together to relocate collections storage furniture, exhibit panel materials, and tools in the basement of the Rock School. Additionally, they helped Emma our Facilities Specialist prepare the railroad ties for a safety assessment later this summer and conducted general yard clean up. At the end of the day, they offered to return for more volunteer days in the future. We are happy we have such a friendly relationship with Sigma Tau Gamma and other university groups and are always thinking about how these friends can help improve the museum and our grounds. We wouldn't be able to do as much as we do without them. So, thank you Sigma Tau Gamma.

Museum to be Highlighted in Chamber's Good Morning Platteville

On Thursday May 23, the Museum will be highlighted in this educational program hosted by the Platteville Chamber. We will be joined by other organizations who focus on tourism in our area. Director Grabhorn will be interviewed and will talk about his vision for the Museum.

Good morning Platteville

Pioneer Sweets Ice Cream is Back on the Menu

We are excited to announce that we will have ice cream from Pioneer Sweets in the Museum Store again this year! The four flavors will include: Squirreled Away (Chocolate Hazelnut Honey), Driftless Grape and Peanut Butter Cookie, Chunky Miner's Delight (light caramel ice cream with chunks of chocolate covered pretzels), and Creamy Raspberry Lemonade Refresher.

Pioneer Sweets is an ice cream business run by UW-Platteville students.

School Season is Upon Us!

One of the best things to see here at the Museum is, of course, the children who visit to experience a field trip to our site! So far this spring season we have welcomed more than 400 students from seven different school districts! In the following weeks we will welcome an additional 600 hundreds students from ten more schools.

We count these as some of our favorite moments and we are so thankful to our community and supporters who make it possible. A large contributor to our success with schools groups is our scholarship fund which covers the costs for local schools to have field trips to our museums.

Support Your Museum

The 2025 Miners Ball will take place Saturday, February 15 .

Save the Date for the 2025 Miners Ball

Following a fun and exciting Miners Ball this past February, we extend our final gratitude to Diamond Sponsors Jordan Holthaus State Farm Insurance and UW-Platteville, to the Platinum Sponsors Bob Hundhausen Edward Jones and the Platteville Regional Chamber, and to the Gold and Silver Sponosors who made this annual gala a success while supporting the Friends of The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums. Thanks to all who attended and to the many hands that helped bring the Miners Ball to life: the planning committee, sponsors, auction donors, UW-Platteville Event Services, and the Ken Kilian Classic Big Band.

Now it is already time to start planning for next Valentine's Day! Save the Date for 2025: All are invited to the 2025 Miners Ball on Saturday, February 15! Watch our newletter and social media for registration information.

Welcome!

Lily Simon, Tour Guide

Cody Grabhorn, Museum Director

Museum Leadership

City of Platteville Museum Board

Brad Brogley, President
Garrett Jones, Secretary
Lawrence Bowden
Kathy Connett
Bob Gates
Deb Jenny
Bill Van Deest

Friends of the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums Board

Deb Jenny, President
Hap Daus, Vice President
Duane DeYoung, Treasurer
Dee Woolf, Secretary
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Matthew Zielinski

Museum Staff

Cody Grabhorn, Museum Director
Marie Bakken, Museum Specialist–Visitor Services
Christina Grev, Museum Specialist–Collections Management & Education
Heidi Dyas-McBeth, Collections Assistant
Kendall Miller, Communications Assistant
Angie Wright, Museum Specialist–Administration
Tour Guides: Bruce Flesch, Katie Kelly, Lily Simon, and Ashten Wilson

Behind the Scenes

Letter From the Museum Director

As I get settled as the director and we welcome back our seasonal tour guides and open for the season, I hope you will stop in to introduce yourselves to me and the rest of the staff. We would love to get to know our community and to hear what you expect from your community museum! It is an honor to be a part of the tradition here at The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums and I am grateful for the past leadership who have reached out and offered their suppport already. I am also thankful to be back in Platteville and I hope to give back to the community that offered so many opportunities to me.

Cody Grabhorn, Museum Director
(608) 348-3301

Yes, I Wish to Support the 2024 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: _____

Your Support Preserves History For Generations to Come

Seasonal programs offered year round create lifelong learning opportunities that connect us to place and cultural heritage.

Plan on enjoying all the fabulous programs the year has to offer rooted in our landscape, historic architecture, and heritage collection. (See details inside.)

www.mining.jamison.museum

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Contact Us!

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