

Museum Notes

for the week of December 28, 2025 – January 3, 2026
by Kristen Parrott, curator

2025 was a big year for the Vernon County Historical Society, with a number of important events and changes in addition to our regular offerings.

Monthly public history programs at the Vernon County Museum and History Center attracted big crowds for topics such as the Amish in Wisconsin, “Indigenous Ways of Knowing about Wisconsin’s Tribal Nations”, and the La Crosse and Southeastern railroad.

New exhibits installed at the museum included one about the Romance School, several focused on the U.S. 250th, and a temporary display about Norwegian immigrants in Vernon County. Among the groups taking guided tours at the museum this past year were Viroqua 3rd graders, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School 4th graders, and Hillsboro 5th graders.

The genealogy class that meets at the history center on the second Thursday of each month (except in December and January) explored many topics this past year such as the Coon Prairie Cemetery, researching ancestors from Ireland and the United Kingdom, and genealogy resources at the Prairie du Chien public library.

Community events that the Vernon County Historical Society organized in 2025 included the annual drive-through pork chop dinner, the country schoolhouse road tour in October, and the July 4th strawberry shortcake social at the Sherry-Butt House.

The biggest news of 2025 was that we fundraised for and installed heating and air-conditioning on the upper floors of the history center building, and insulation in the attic. We hope that this will be a great benefit to the whole county, as visitors can now tour the exhibits at any time of the year in relative comfort. About 20 years ago we devised a three-point plan to add an elevator, a conference room, and upstairs heating/air-conditioning to the building, and now we have completed the final portion of that plan.

Other accomplishments of the year included creating a temporary exhibits room, improving shelving in the newspaper storage room, and finishing our multi-year project of creating a country schoolteacher database.

We are so grateful to the many volunteers who helped accomplish so much, and to the many community members who support us and attend our events and programs. Thank you!