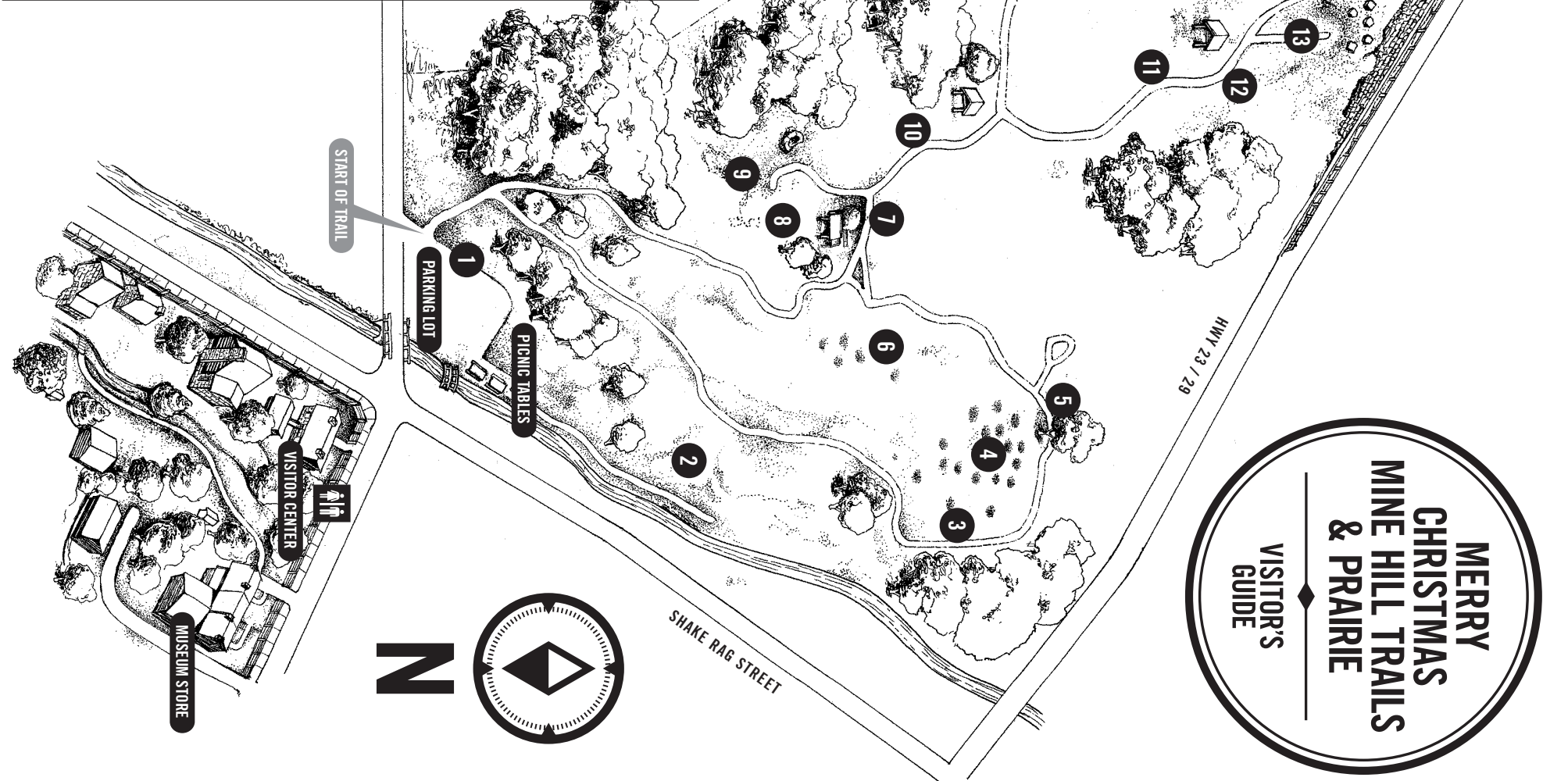


- STATIONS 1-16**
- LEAD TRAIL LOOP • Stations 1-7**
 1/2 Mile, 30 Minute Walk
- 1 The Land
 - 2 Mining
 - 3 Badger Holes & Sucker Holes
 - 4 Lead Mineral
 - 5 Merry Christmas Mine Prairie Sign
 - 6 Mineral Point
 - 7 Zinc Processing
- ZINC TRAIL LOOP • Stations 8-16**
 1/2 Mile, 30 Minute Walk
- 8 Mine Shaft No. 1 - The Merry Christmas Mine
 - 9 Log Furnace or Open House Roasting Hearth
 - 10 Mine Shaft No. 2
 - 11 Adit
 - 12 Mine Tailings Pile & Ore Cart Railway
 - 13 Ore Mill Foundation
 - 14 Imperial Type Ten Compressor
 - 15 Merry Christmas Mine Building
 - 16 The End of Mining



INTRODUCTION

The lead and zinc region is located adjacent to the Mississippi River, between the forest to the east and the prairies to the west. This area's topography was shaped mainly by stream erosion that created the valleys you see today. Mineral Point is located in the Driftless Area, a region left untouched by glaciers during the last Ice Age.

The first miners in the region were Native American women. As early as the 1600s, Native Americans began trading smelted ore with the French fur traders. When the first American miners--squatters from the Southeast--arrived in the 1820s, the hills were covered with stands of burr oak trees among prairie grasses and flowering plants. In the 1830s, Cornish settlers came to the area. As mining activity increased, the number of trees decreased primarily due to the large number of smelters burning trees to fuel their furnaces. In the 1830s a traveler commented, "I never enjoyed a more agreeable ride until we came within a few miles of Mineral Point. Here the hills were stripped of their trees, windlasses, mineral holes, piles of dirt, rocks and minerals greeted our view from all sides..." The lead mining boom lasted from 1827 to 1849 when many miners left to mine gold in California.

The second half of the 1800s saw the rise of zinc mining in Mineral Point. The Cornish miners were joined by Irish, Germans, African Americans, and Italians. Lead and zinc made Mineral Point a thriving community and played a major role in the settlement of Wisconsin. The last mine in Mineral Point closed in 1928.

The environmental impact of mining remained long after the last mines closed. In 1993, the Department of Natural Resources finished the cleanup of the lead and zinc tailings piles associated with the Mineral Point Zinc Works.

PENDARVIS MUSEUM STORE

The Museum Store is located on the corner of Shake Rag and Spruce Streets. It has a wide variety of items for children and adults. The store features a large selection of books, custom merchandise, and souvenirs to remember your trip to Mineral Point.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOURS: Open year round, sunrise to sunset

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE:

Please contact us at pendarvis@wisconsinhistory.org for more information.

Your donation helps us maintain the Merry Christmas Mine Hill Trails & Prairie!



114 Shake Rag Street
 Mineral Point, WI | 608.987.2122
pendarvishistoricsite.org

[f/PendarvisHistoricSite](https://www.facebook.com/PendarvisHistoricSite)



WISCONSIN
 HISTORICAL
 SOCIETY

Pendarvis is one of twelve museums and historic sites owned and operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

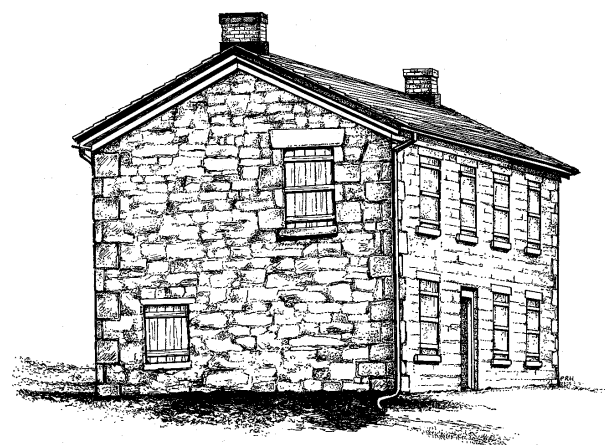
wisconsinhistory.org

VISIT FOR FREE! Wisconsin Historical Society Members receive FREE admission to our 12 historic sites (Black Point Lake Geneva Cruise Line and Madeline Island Ferry Line sold separately)! To become a member visit wisconsinhistory.org/membership



MERRY CHRISTMAS MINE HILL TRAILS & PRAIRIE

VISITOR'S GUIDE



Interpretive Walking Trails Through Wisconsin's Lead and Zinc Mining Past

MINERAL POINT, WISCONSIN

MERRY CHRISTMAS MINE HILL VISITOR'S GUIDE

Welcome to the Merry Christmas Mine Hill Trails and Prairie, part of Pendarvis Historic Site and the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Mine Hill is located on the eastern part of Mineral Point Hill, an upland formed by stream erosion from two branches of Brewery Creek.

The trail is identified by numbered posts marking points of interest or trail intersections.

LEAD TRAIL LOOP

1 THE LAND

The Upper Mississippi Valley lead and zinc area covers 1,776 square miles. The area was once covered in oak savannah – burr oaks among the prairie grasses. Centuries of weathering and erosion exposed the ore deposits in the limestone bedrock. The shallowness of the deposits meant that the minerals could be easily removed.

2 MINING

Starting in the 1600s, Native American women were the first to mine for lead on an industrial scale in this region. In the 1820s scores of American miners from southern states came here to mine the easily accessible lead. These early miners were illegal squatters within Ho-Chunk territory. Cornish miners and their families began immigrating to Mineral Point in significant numbers in the 1830s, drawn by work they had done for centuries back home.

3 BADGER HOLES & SUCKER HOLES

The early miners would dig shallow shafts called “sucker holes” or “badger holes” to extract the lead that was near the surface. They then made the holes into shelters by putting logs, brush, or sod over them. Since they lived in holes in the ground, miners were called “badgers.” The nickname for Wisconsin, the Badger State, comes from these early miners. This hill side has over 100 filled shafts and badger holes.

4 LEAD MINERAL

Miners dug galena, a lead sulfide ore that is Wisconsin's state mineral. Once brought to the surface, lead was sorted from rock, washed, and finally smelted. The lead was then poured into ingots called pigs, each weighing about 70 pounds. Lead was used in the manufacture of pewter, printers' type, weights, shot, and paint.

5 MERRY CHRISTMAS MINE PRAIRIE

After extensive restoration work, the 43 acre prairie is now one of the largest native prairies in southwestern Wisconsin.

“... I started with surprise and delight. I was in the midst of a prairie! A world of grass and flowers stretched around me, rising and falling in gentle undulations, as if an enchanter had struck the ocean swell, and it was at rest forever...”

– *A Summer Journey in the West*, Eliza Steele (1841)

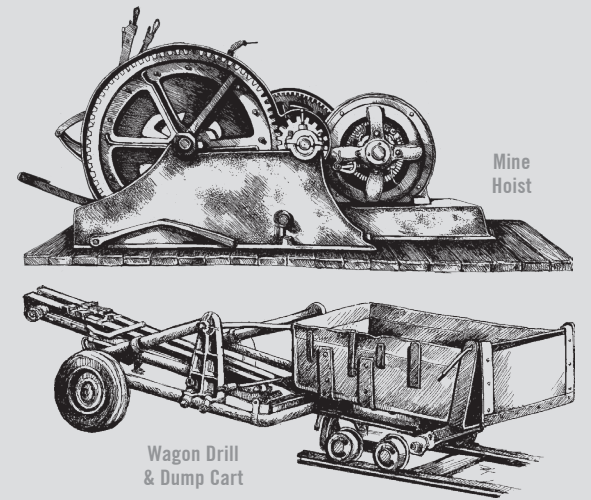
6 MINERAL POINT

Established in 1827, Mineral Point is the third oldest city in Wisconsin. By the mid-1830s, mining had made Mineral Point an important commercial center. It was the original county seat of Iowa County and the location of one of the first Land Offices in Wisconsin Territory.

7 ZINC PROCESSING

After lead mining in the area tapered out, it was discovered that zinc was also in the mines. This caused a resurgence of mining in Mineral Point. For a brief moment, Mineral Point had the largest zinc smelter in the world. The New Jersey Zinc Company produced zinc oxide and sulfuric acid in Mineral Point.

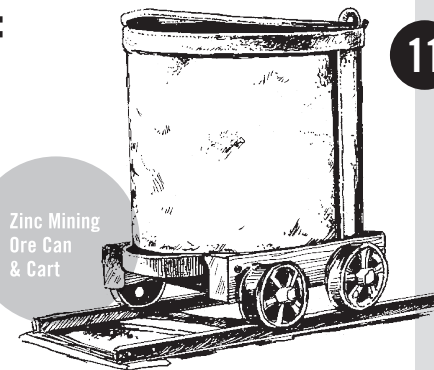
The trail to the left leads to stations 8 and 9, the trail straight ahead leads to station 10.



ZINC TRAIL LOOP

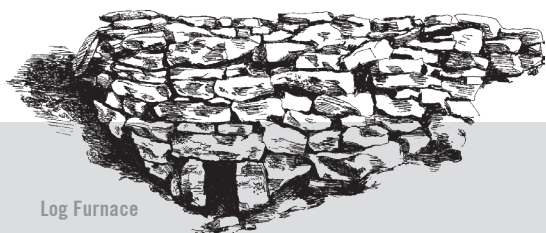
8 MINE SHAFT NO. 1: THE MERRY CHRISTMAS MINE

This shaft is one of the nine interconnected tunnels of the Merry Christmas Mine. The other shafts were filled in when the mine closed.



11 ADIT

Adits are tunnels that go out from mine shafts to the side of the hill. They are used for ventilation, draining water, or hauling ore from the mine. This 550 foot long adit was dug in the early 20th century.



9 LOG FURNACE OR OPEN ROASTING HEARTH

This is a reproduction of an early type of open smelter. Open smelters melted lead and burned off impurities. The melted lead ran out of the opening in the front of the furnace and was deposited into a bowl shaped mold dug into the ground.

12 MORE TAILINGS PILE & ORE CART RAILWAY

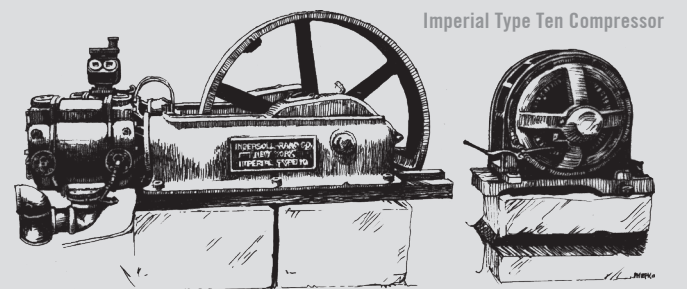
Miners used waste rock, or tailings, as the base for an ore cart railway. You can still see the remnants of the tailings pile today. Miners hauled the ore carts to the end of the railway, then dumped the ore down a chute and into an ore processing mill below.

13 ORE MILL FOUNDATION

The cement foundation piers of the Merry Christmas mill building can still be seen today. In the illustration you can see the chute that was used to dump the ore into the processing mill below, the tailings (waste rock) pile, and the building that stood on the piers.

14 IMPERIAL TYPE TEN COMPRESSOR

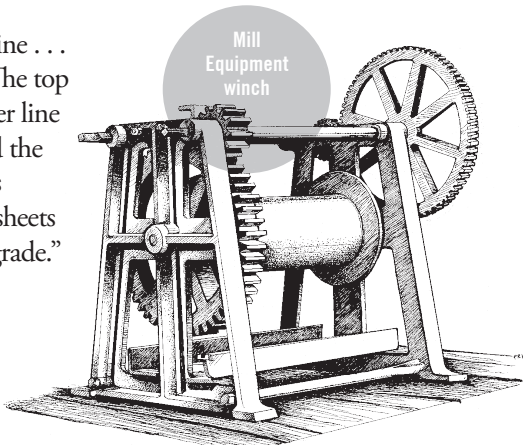
This air compressor from 1905 used a 75 horse-power motor connected to the large flywheel and piston to compress air. Heavy pipes brought the compressed air to the drills in the mine.



10 MINE SHAFT NO. 2

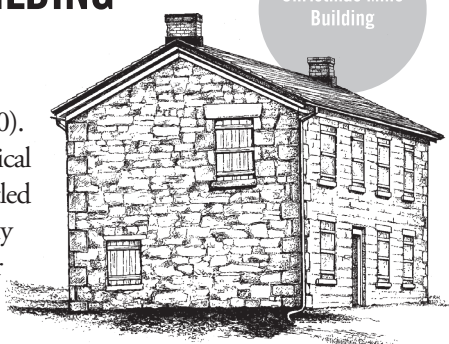
“The Merry Christmas mine... has resumed operations. The top flat [of ore] above the water line has been drifted upon and the showing is big. Under this deposit are two more flat sheets of zinc ore running high grade.” (Mineral Point Tribune, October 3, 1912.)

The trail to the right leads to station 11.



15 MERRY CHRISTMAS MINE BUILDING

This structure probably functioned as a mine building (1840s to 1900). The construction is typical of the Cornish who settled the area. The stone likely came from the mines or the surrounding area.



16 THE END OF MINING

Mineral Point changed as mining declined, shifting industry to service. Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum's Pendarvis House restaurant is an example of this change. They saved and repurposed an old Cornish home for their restaurant.

The trail straight ahead leads to station 10.