



“Dearly Departed” Exhibit Will Feature New Additions at Jersey County Historical Society

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE - The Jersey County Historical Society, located at the Cheney Mansion at 601 N. State St. in Jerseyville, is hosting their fourth annual “Dearly Departed” exhibit each Saturday in October beginning on the 8th with some new additions for 2022, according to Exhibit Director Connor Ashlock.

Ashlock said the exhibit tells stories of the mortuary process using local authentic historical artifacts.

“The Dearly Departed exhibit explores the funerary, mourning, and embalming practices as they would’ve been observed in our area in the late 1800s to early 1900s,” he said. “We do that by setting up spaces with authentic funeral artifacts that originate from this area - so visitors not only get to learn about customs and practices of the past, they actually get to see the artifacts in real-time.”

These artifacts come from the basement of the Alexander Funeral Home, built in 1864. Ashlock said that while he and funeral home proprietor Kari Jo Alexander were cleaning and organizing the basement, they discovered even more artifacts dating from the 1800s to the 1940s.

The discovery of these artifacts prompted Ashlock to expand the original concept of the exhibit to feature more historical eras, each with their own space.

“We decided to reconceptualize the exhibit ... we’re going to be incorporating artifacts that span from the 1800s through the 1940s,” Ashlock said. “We’re setting up different rooms of the home to appear for different eras of mourning. We’ve got one that’s a traditional late-Victorian era vignette ... we also have a nother vignette set up that will

reflect more of a 1920's parlor feel, in addition to spaces where we display actual embalming equipment as it would've appeared in a home setup, as well as funeral paraphernalia.”

This year's Dearly Departed exhibit will open on Saturday Oct. 8, and tours will run every hour on the hour from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tours will also be held on October 15, 22, and 29, and on weekdays by appointment only. The cost is \$10 by cash or check, paid upon arrival, and parking is available behind the Cheney Mansion on the Historical Society grounds.

While the event is held during the Halloween season, Ashlock added the exhibit is done “tastefully” and that the volunteer-led nature of the Historical Society means it's a great way to show community support.

“It's tastefully done - we do it during the Halloween season because that's whenever people are generally more interested in going to these types of events,” he said. “This is a really neat way for folks to get out and enjoy what I call the ‘spooky season,’ and you're also contributing to the community.”

For more information about the Dearly Departed exhibit or about the Jersey County Historical Society, visit their [Instagram page](#) or [website](#).