



2020

Annual Impact Report



est 1906

Our Manitowoc County Historical Society was created in 1906 by people just like you who wanted to preserve and share the stories of our past.

Nestled in the scenic rolling Ice Age Kettle Moraine countryside of Eastern Wisconsin, today the Manitowoc County Historical Society is a museum of living history. Feel the heat from the blacksmith's forge, take part in one-room school lessons, and find your ancestor's name in our archives.

Our Mission:

The Manitowoc County Historical Society collects, interprets, preserves, and promotes the history and heritage of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, in order to educate the public and heighten its understanding and appreciation of the past as it proceeds into the future.

Our Vision:

Inspire curiosity and foster lifelong learning about Manitowoc County's past by providing engaging, individualized and unique experiences.



DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

While this was an unusual year in many ways, one of the milestones we cherished was the celebration of our 50th anniversary for Pinecrest Historical Village. Our Manitowoc County Historical Society first led the charge to create a historical village in the 1960s. The original 40 acre property was donated by Hugo and Eleanor Vetting in November, 1969 and the first building was moved to the site in January, 1970. We're proud to continue carrying out this vision 50 years later, welcoming thousands of visitors each year to experience Wisconsin's rural life of the past.

As 2020 draws to a close, we're filled with gratitude for your support and attendance throughout a year marked by constant change. With plenty of hand sanitizer and social distancing policies in place, we opened a little later than we originally planned, but once things got going we were bustling with members, visitors and volunteers throughout the season.

In addition to our 50th anniversary, we celebrated:

- Restoration progress on various projects
- Safe and educational public programs such as the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show and the Mid-Lakes Threshere
- Museum take-home activity kits

We also hosted 2 traveling exhibits that centered around the 100th anniversary of the Woman's Suffrage Movement: "We Stand on their Shoulders" from the Wisconsin Historical Society and "Rightfully Hers" from the National Archives.

The 2020 season was not without difficulty, however. Beyond delaying our season opening we had to cancel programs and suspend all school programs. Despite those setbacks we were able to provide small scale educational opportunities, historic interpretation, and a safe outdoor exploration space in support of our mission. We even added a few extras such as virtual program options for schoolchildren and behind the scenes videos on social media.

In this year of adaptation and innovation, we thank you for your continued support and attendance.

Together we can provide experiences for all ages to step into the stories of our past.

Amy Meyer
Executive Director

Community supporters and MCHS Members generously give additional gifts to support special projects and initiatives to bring our local history to life.

You make success stories like these possible! Thank you!

KRUEGER SAWMILL MAKES 'FIRST CUT'

After years of development and planning, a permanent sawmill structure was erected to be a part of Pinecrest Village by members of the Mid-Lakes Rustic Iron with a sawmill donated by the Krueger family. The sawmill was operated by Edwin Krueger around the Newton area in the early to mid-1900s.

Last fall Rick Krueger and Clayton Wernecke, with help from Shoto Valley Excavating, were able to prep the site for a cement slab and pour the base for the sawmill structure. As time, weather, and pandemic safety precautions allowed this spring, the structure moved vertical, with construction headed by volunteer Bill Pauwels.

The Krueger Sawmill made its debut during the Mid-Lakes Threshereee on September 12-13, 2020.



Pictured is the Krueger Sawmill, located south of the arena and Meeme House.

SPARK! transforms to at home pen pal program



Prior to Coronavirus, MCHS offered programming for individuals with memory loss along with their caregivers, known as the SPARK! Program. Unfortunately, COVID has prevented the program from continuing in the traditional sense. The idea for a new format came after a phone call from a participant's spouse and caregiver asking if the program would resume soon. After the phone call, MCHS decided to adapt. We elected to start a Pen Pal Program.

The Pinecrest Pen Pal Program enlists volunteers to write letters to SPARK! individuals affected by memory loss. In this time of uncertainty, it is all the more vital to reach out and care for one another. The SPARK! pen pal program engages at least 4 care partnerships each month (with a caregiver and care receiver) as well as 4 museum volunteers.

Pictured is Carol, taking part in using a whirl-a-button, one of the SPARK! at home kit activities.

2020 offers new ways to share



Where is Fred B.?

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in spring, a new county-wide scavenger hunt was created to bring our local history to life—“Where in Manitowoc County is Fred B.?”.

This effort was shared through our local newspapers—the Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter and the Valders Journal. Each week, people would follow clues such as the one below, to learn about local history landmarks in Manitowoc County. They could download the cut out of Frederick Borchardt - aka “Flat Fred” and take him along while they explored our local history. We also encouraged people to share their “Flat Fred” pictures on social media. The webpage received 83 views to date.

One of the 20 clues given was: *Follow the “pigeons” to the “X” (and maybe another X) to find this tall, skinny spot that references back to the Revolutionary War as a way to signal colonists. The first recorded one of these in Manitowoc County was raised in 1852 with 31 stars gracing the top, and another in 1922 with 17 more stars.*

This clue location was the Meeme Liberty Pole.

Virtual lessons

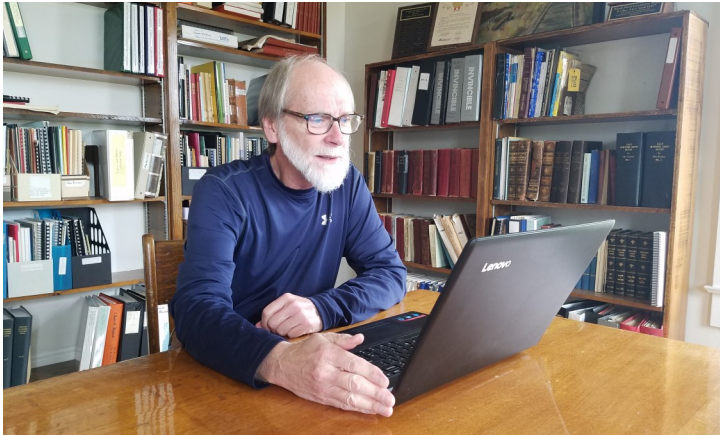
Virtual videos of volunteers exploring our museum’s historic structures were also a large part of our virtual programming. From cheesemaking to blacksmithing, and even a virtual storytime with the Manitowoc Public Library at the Collins Depot, our mission was able to reach people of all ages through virtual engagements.

It was very fitting that the first virtual program of the Manitowoc County Historical Society was shared by Bob Fay, the first director of MCHS, on the history of Pinecrest Historical Village. This debuted in April and can be viewed on the museum’s YouTube channel.

A virtual webinar was also hosted by Ed Prigge in celebration of the 150th anniversary for the City of Manitowoc.

We transformed our Civil War Days, an in-person program, to be a reenactor only program where we made videos of various aspects of the Civil War.

The 6-part video series, Civil War on the [Home]front, could be seen on the museum’s facebook page and YouTube channel. The series received over 240 views.



Pictured above: A family took “Flat Fred B.” on a scavenger hunt to find a clue to his location in May, 2020.

Pictured below: Former MCHS Director Bob Fay shared the history and creation story of Pinecrest Historical Village in a virtual webinar in May, 2020.

Engage with us on social media!

Visit our YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages to discover more about the stories of our past! Links to all of our social media pages can be found on our website at ManitowocCountyHistory.org.



Restoration becomes pandemic focus

Improvements on the historic structures of Pinecrest Village became a strong priority in 2020. Volunteers and local contractors continued the strong tradition of those who created the site a half century ago by focusing on restoration throughout the pandemic.

The first structure relocated to the museum in January of 1970 was the Sorenson House. Today, volunteers are working on a new front porch for the structure. Window repairs were also made at the Carstens building/saloon and the Kunze Cabin.

The McAllister House Welcome Center received a new brick walkway and patio thanks to Little Chute based Highway Landscapers Inc. Highway Landscapers Inc worked to remove and repair the previous brick walkway on the east and west side of the historic farmhouse. Highway Landscapers also added a patio to the west side of the old farmhouse.

The Meeme Livery Stable is nearing completion for a grand opening in 2021. Dennis, Brenda, and Jacob Tienor worked on exterior finishes such as a livestock fence on the south side of the building and exterior painting.

The iconic front porch was reconstructed at the Meeme House, a circa 1855 stagecoach inn. Restoration work is being completed by Hamann Construction.

One of the largest undertakings for the summer has been structural and cosmetic repair to the museum's 1870s General Store. This project included renovations to make the restrooms on the south side of the General Store ADA accessible. The General Store's structural repairs and restrooms have been made possible by ACE Building Service and Maritime Plumbing. The exterior of the building was painted by R.B. Painting and Drywall, Valdars.

The completed restroom project, and other restoration efforts, are made possible by generous donors to the museum's Vetting Fund, including the Ruth St. John and John Dunham West Foundation. The Vetting Fund was created in honor of Hugo and Eleanor Vetting, who donated their 40 acre farm field to start the creation of Pinecrest Historical Village in 1969. Since the Vetting Fund's creation in 1988, over \$2.5 million has been donated to assist with the continued creation and preservation of the museum's historic structures.



Pictured at top: The Meeme Livery Stable, chicken coop, Meeme House, and Meeme Poll House at the Manitowoc County Historical Society, in summer 2020.

Pictured to the top right: A new brick walkway was installed at the McAllister House Welcome Center.

Pictured at the bottom right: The general store received much attention for various structural repairs.

Meeme Poll House opens with virtual fanfare

In a year of firsts, we held a virtual grand opening for the Meeme Poll House on September 17 through the Museum's Facebook page.

The Meeme Poll House, the official voting place in the Town of Meeme for 83 years, was erected by Joseph Schwartz and Edmund Kolb in 1900. German immigrants and their descendants exercised their democratic right to vote in this simple wooden structure. The Meeme House, originally a stagecoach inn, served as the town's polling place in the 19th century. The Meeme Poll House closed in 1983.

The Meeme Poll House is now a part of Pinecrest Village. The project has been made possible by generous donors to the Meeme House project, DeVooght House Lifters, Ellerman Glass, and the Wisconsin Humanities Council.



Pictured are Charlie and Cheryl Bauer, outside the Meeme Poll House.

Education engagement redefined during 2020



Youth education programs are a strong pillar of our museum's mission and vision and 2020 was no different. We missed the hustle and bustle of school tour days, kids scrambling off school buses, and eager summer campers soaking up all they can about our local history. But overall we were able to offer new ways to explore the stories of our past with guests from around the globe and a safe outdoor experience for those in our community.

Museum Take Home kits were created for families in June. These kits included popular museum activities that could be done at home. Kits were given out to 30 families with topics on Laura Ingalls Wilder, Pioneer Planting, Pioneer Era Toys, and the railroad. Additional kits were also created to provide a safe Halloween experience with popular Victorian Era at-home activities to replace the popular family program *All Hallow's Eve*.



Museum Mice is a program for preschool age youth that we traditionally held in-person at the museum for 6 weeks in summer. This year, we held it for 3 individual families in-person (at separate times) who could not accommodate a digital option but still wanted to take part in the summer series. We also brought the program virtual each week through the museum's facebook page. Weekly views to the Museum Mice program would range from 200 to 450 views, for a total of 1,400 views for the 6 week summer series.

Pictured above is Linda Meyer reading a book for a virtual storytime with Ascend Services. Virtual storytimes were held weekly in spring and summer.

Pictured below is a museum at home kit, called a Pinecrest Parcel. These kits were developed to bring favorite hands-on experiences to our guests at home.

Grants offer relief during pandemic

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, state and local entities have been awarding emergency grants to assist organizations like our Manitowoc County Historical Society.

The Wisconsin Humanities Council provided rapid-response funding to nonprofit humanities and cultural organizations facing financial hardship resulting from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Our museum received funding from this effort in June to help bring outreach, virtual, and individual family programs to life. Funding for these grants was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan. In total, the Wisconsin Humanities awarded \$548,000 to 82 nonprofit organizations.

Funding was also received from the Wisconsin Department of Administration through its COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grants. Governor Tony Evers enthusiastically shared the news that \$15 million in COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grants was awarded to 385 cultural organizations across Wisconsin. The Manitowoc County Historical Society is honored to be one of the awarded organizations to receive financial assistance through the grant.

With the support from Bank First, our museum was also able to take part in the Paycheck Protection Program. The Paycheck Protection Program established by the CARES Act, was implemented by the Small Business Administration with support from the Department of the Treasury. This program provided funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs.

Locally, the Chamber of Manitowoc County helped to organize The Manitowoc/Two Rivers Non-Profit COVID-19 Relief Fund (the "Relief Fund"). This was a private grant program through the funding efforts of Bank First, Investors Community Bank, West Foundation, Formrite Companies, UnitedOne Credit Union, Cher-Make Sausage, private donors and in partnership with The Chamber of Manitowoc County. Our Manitowoc County Historical Society was fortunate to receive funds to help with the impact by restrictions imposed on operations during the pandemic of 2020.

Community partners were also able to share their support. Denmark State Bank held a "Casual for a Cause" effort this summer. Every Friday, staff wear jeans in exchange for a small donation that supports a local cause or charity.

For our museum, the grants provided financial assistance for the loss of income from summer programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While new ways of learning were developed for the summer such as the "Where is Fred B?" scavenger hunt and individual family workshops, many of the museum's large award-winning programs and school tours were not able to take place in their normal capacity.

Museum guest attendance was down this season by 73% and overall program and outreach guests were down by 93% from last year. In the first 6 months of the pandemic, our Manitowoc County Historical Society had over \$35,000 in financial loss. These grant opportunities and the generous support of our community have provided some financial relief as we look to continue our mission in the coming year.



Executive Director Amy Meyer received a check from Denmark State Bank's Joe Malewiski from the Whitelaw branch for proceeds from "Casual for a Cause".



By the Numbers: 2020

\$52,000 Shared in unrestricted donations and bequests in 2020

\$38,000 In COVID-19 pandemic relief grants received

478 Society memberships

342 Individuals and businesses that donated unrestricted financial gifts to our general fund in 2020, totaling \$52,000

189 Museum At Home Kits distributed

86 Research requests completed

16 Create-Connect Workshops held with safety and social distancing precautions

Pictured above

(left): Jacob Tienor finishes installing a fence on the south side of the Meeme Livery Stable.

(middle): Summer intern Amber Soyk and front desk volunteers Emmy Rebitz and Lia Haile pose in front of the McAllister House Welcome Center to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pinecrest Village.

(right): Volunteer Phil Stangel records a virtual field trip with the Manitowoc Public Library staff.



Your Support Made our Mission Possible in 2020

Income in 2020 focused on your generous donations to continue the work of our mission to preserve and share our local history. While general admissions and program income were down considerably, we were still able to open our doors and provide a safe space for families of all ages to step into the stories of our past.

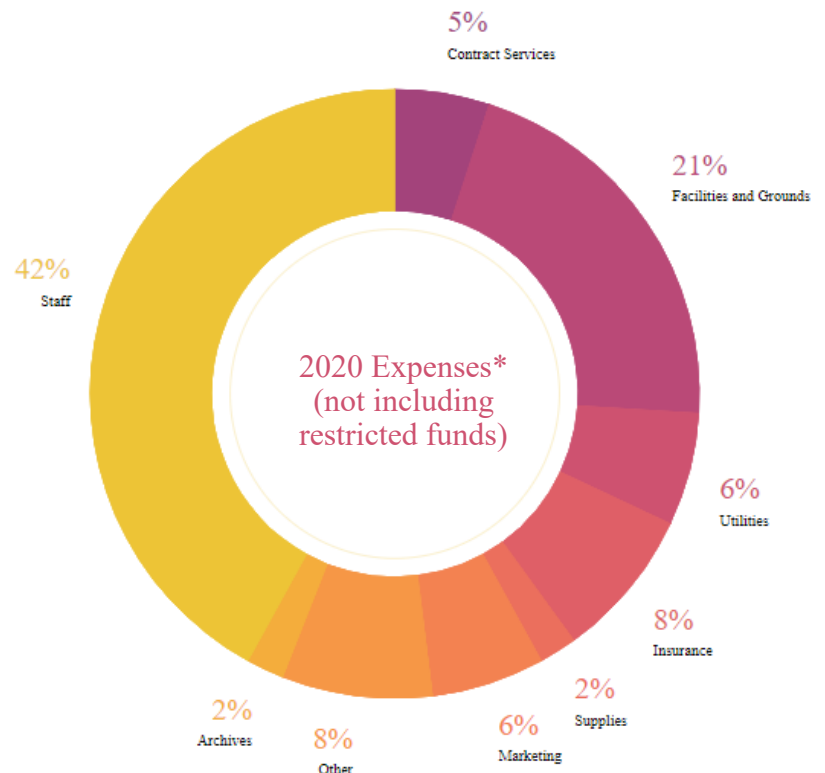
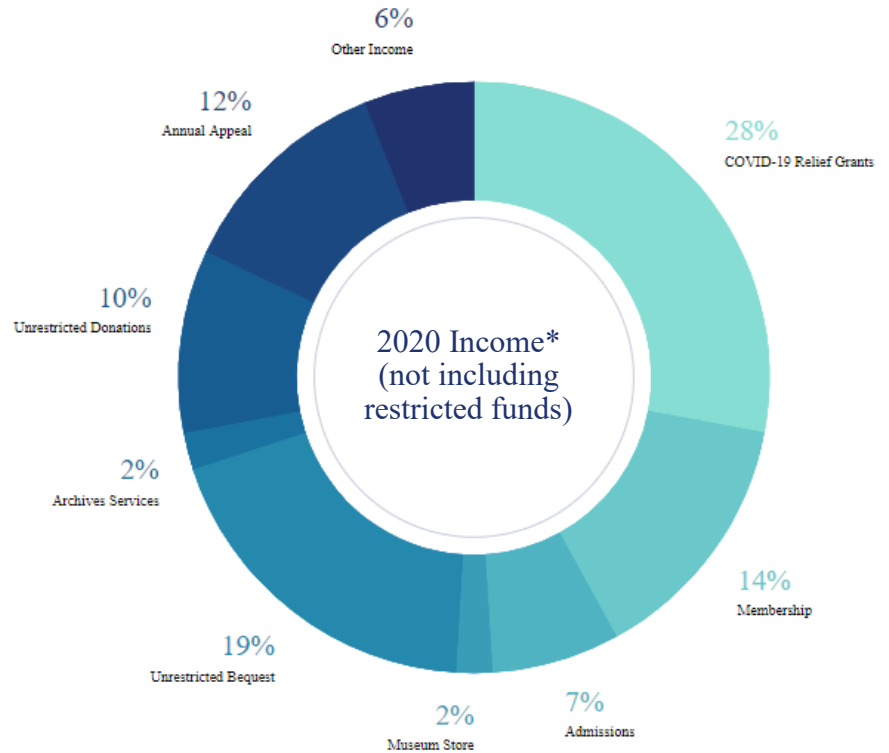
Your membership support continues to bring our museum to new heights. In spring 2020 we received a generous unrestricted bequest from the estate of Russ Gamble. His generous spirit helped to keep our doors open for much of the season.

What was most inspiring throughout 2020 was the unrestricted support of our members and donors. Our annual appeal raised an all time high of more than \$15,000. Various COVID-19 pandemic relief grants also allowed for continued public education programs, both on site and virtual.

Restricted donations also helped to make projects a reality. Over \$217,000 was gifted to the Meeme House project to assist with restoration of the historic stagecoach. Funds totaling \$30,000 were also donated to the Vetting Fund for ongoing repairs to the historic structures of Pinecrest Village.

**Does not include restricted funds.*

Based on the museum's \$120,000 operating budget



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The following pages recognize individuals and organizations who contributed financially to our Annual Appeal, Endowment Fund, and Vetting Fund in 2020. It is because of your generous gifts that our museum is able to live our mission of preserving and sharing our local history. Our accomplishments happen because of you!

It takes a
COMMUNITY
to preserve and share our
STORIES
of the past for those of
tomorrow.

Thank you to our Corporate Members.

Carron Net Company
Cedar Crest Specialties Inc.
Crescent Woolen Mills
Fricke Printing Services
Hamann Construction
Henning Cheese, Inc.
Investors Community Bank
Manitowoc Pharmacies
Nelson Business Development
Pine River Pre-Pack, Inc.
Prigge Real Estate
Vinton Construction

Thank you to our Volunteers with over 100 hours of service in 2020.

George Baldwin
John Bohlin
Anne Dirkman
Eugene Durben
Phil Groll
Dan Juchniewich
Greg Krcma
Mark Leonhard
Emmy Rebitz
Romelle Rusch

Annual Appeal

Diane Albright,
In memory of Bob Albright
Christopher and Christine Allie
Anonymous
Henry C. Arnold
Gerald and Kathy Aulik
F. and L. Balaban Families
George and Barbara Baldwin
Charlie and Cheryl Bauer
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Judi MacKove
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Mary E. Meser
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John Michaels
Mark Barkley Miller
Jane A. Moody
Nature's Own Gardeners
Diane Nelson
JoAnn Noffke

Lisa Osborne,
 In memory of Gordon Osborne
 Jeff and Sandy Oswald
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 Ruth Perry
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 Ed and Joan Prigge
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 Dan and Peg Juchniewich
 Don and Lynn Kiel

Geoffrey and Carla Liban
 Estate of Barbara Panosh
 Tim and Ann Salutz
 Gerald and Jennifer Tollefson
 Ruth St. John and John Dunham
 West Foundation, Inc
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 Shirley Schwartz
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 Ruth St. John and John Dunham
 West Foundation, Inc
 Ann Wolf, In memory of
 Paul Londo

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*Above: Volunteer Ron Dvorachek works on painting the exterior of the Meeme Poll House.
 Below: Weekend program support staff Lia Haile helps to welcome guests to the Buffalo Bill Wild West show in August.*

Our Manitowoc County Historical Society is a reflection of our community's past, present, and future due in part to the dedicated efforts and direction of our Board of Directors:

Chris Schnell, President	Jason Ring, Vice President
Jamie Lambrecht, Treasurer	Jennifer Johnson, Secretary
Bill Fricke	Jack Krause
	Mitchel Olson
	Ryan Zunker

Staff:

Amy Meyer, Executive Director



Manitowoc County Historical Society
924 Pinecrest Road
Manitowoc, WI 54220



Breathtaking beauty in all seasons

Early morning views of our museum never disappoint. This December 2020 sunrise greeted our staff and volunteers as they prepared for a Winter Lantern Stroll program.