



MANITOWOC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



2021

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.

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.

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
Matt Neu, Treasurer
Jennifer Johnson, Secretary
Bill Fricke
Angel Johanek
Jack Krause
Ryan Zunker

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we reflect upon the previous year we have experienced together, our Manitowoc County Historical Society is filled with gratitude. This year presented many challenges, but it was also filled with many blessings.

Indeed, we are living history each and every day as we confront the realities of another year of the world-wide COVID pandemic. Unlike many other arts and culture non-profit organizations around the nation, we are fortunate to be an outdoor living history museum with over 60 acres to be socially distanced. Other museums have not been as fortunate. In fact, a survey by the American Alliance of Museum indicates that the pandemic may claim the closure of nearly a third of all museums in the nation. When we think about how integral our Manitowoc County Historical Society has been in educating hundreds of thousands of students in our 50-year history, it is virtually impossible to imagine our community without our Historical Society and our Pinecrest Village.

While we long for the days of our "old normal" we are working diligently to continue to provide opportunities for learning both virtually and in-person. This past year, we successfully held 11 school tours, hosted our week-long, in-person summer camp, and inspired curiosity with 2 homeschool programs and a handful of public programs. We even hosted guests from 31 states around the country who came to tour.

Because of you, we are not done yet! We are grateful that we have been able to serve our community as an organization since 1906 – and at Pinecrest Village for the past 50 years. We look forward to doing so for the next 50 years and beyond, even as we explore new and alternative ways to fulfill our mission.

It is a privilege for our Manitowoc County Historical Society to continue to serve our mission to educate and entertain people of all ages about our shared heritage. Thank you for giving us the latitude to pilot new programs, develop virtual educational content, and provide in-person programming in appropriate, safe and socially distanced ways.

We always look forward to having you here!

Sincerely,

Amy Meyer
Executive Director

2021 HIGHLIGHTS



10 *Behind-the-Scenes* videos created

2 VIRTUAL OUTREACH programs developed



The Return of Summer Day Camp



6 DAYS OF SAFE ACTIVITIES



of large public programs

8,700 guests

Discovered the stories of our past through daily visits, school tours, and public programs

5 BUILDINGS GOT *new exterior paint* - or REPAIRS - 

Kunze Cabin—Sorenson House—
Meeme Livery Stable—Newton State Bank—Niles Church

2021 Snapshots



Pictured top: Students took part in deciding the future of Pinecrest Village by voting at the Meeme Poll House. Volunteer Cheryl Bauer gives a voting ballot to students.

Pictured bottom: Guests at the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show enjoyed the shade of the Meeme House porch before the arena show.

Pictured top: Volunteer Mark Leonhard keeps the wood stoves fired during a winter program.

Pictured middle: Ron Dvorachek was one of the many volunteers that worked to repair the porch at the Sorenson House.

Pictured bottom: Volunteers Emmy Rebitz and Marge Jehle greeted guests during Pinecrest Christmas.



Pictured top: Students in our 'Life as a Pioneer' Summer Camp constructed a Civil War tent.

Pictured bottom: Volunteer Nancy LeClair shows students how a wood stove works at the Sorenson House during a school experience.

Education

The education volunteers were able to deliver exceptional programming to the community in new and different ways that both served the mission of the museum while also addressing the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In spring we held a self-guided "Weary Traveler" program for schools and homeschool families. This self-guided education program allowed for small groups to safely perform hands on tasks with a guided booklet and the guidance of a teacher, parent, or chaperone. The "Weary Traveler" homeschool program was well received with 109 participants. There were 2 schools that took part in the self-guided traveler program as well with 96 students total. Most of the students who took part in the program decided they would indeed settle in Pinecrest Village!

The first "Virtual Trivia Night" was held on March 10 with 14 guests taking part in the contest.

In addition to our popular Civil War Days, Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, Mid-Lakes Thresheree, and Pinecrest Christmas, we were also the location for the 2021 Upper Midwest Blacksmith Association Conference on June 25-27.

Our SPARK!, Museum Mice, and Create-Connect workshops also helped to bring the stories of our past to life for a wide range of guests.

FEEDBACK FROM SOME OF THE YEAR'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

"I wanted to take an opportunity to thank the Manitowoc County Historical Society for diligent work to make summer camps safe and fun for children. Each year, my children look forward to exploring the museum, learning about the past, and making new friends at summer camp."

- Amber G.

"The woodstove cooking class was really unique and I loved getting to learn a new skill that I would not be able to learn anywhere else. The instructor was wonderful and very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and encouraging."

- Kathleen B., Participant in Create-Connect class



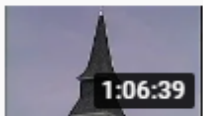
LaFollette School (GCH Collection)
Manitowoc County Historical Society



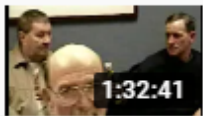
World War II and the Korean War (GCH Collection)
Manitowoc County Historical Society



Newton State Bank (GCH Collection)
Manitowoc County Historical Society



Sessler's Meeme Haus and Bar (GCH Collection)
Manitowoc County Historical Society



The History of Baseball in the Cleveland, WI Area (GCH Collection)
Manitowoc County Historical Society

Pictured top: A conservator begins evaluation of the museum's dug out canoe, on display at UW-Green Bay, Manitowoc Campus.

Pictured bottom: A screenshot of the Greater Centerville Historians Collection on YouTube.

Collections

In 2016, our museum acquired an amazing collection of oral history DVDs that were recorded by the Greater Centerville Historians. The Greater Centerville Historians was an associate group that focused on the collection of oral history. Through almost 15 years of this taping, the group accumulated over one hundred DVDs on specific topics of Centerville area history.

The Greater Centerville Historians Oral History collection can now be found on our museum's YouTube channel. The DVDs can now be enjoyed by viewers from across the globe and can serve as a wonderful educational resource for local students. Tune in to our YouTube channel to view the oral histories today!

An important item received some extra attention this year. In 1979 a dugout canoe was found in Glomski Lake in the Town of Newton, about five miles southwest of Manitowoc, by Bernard Novy. The dugout canoe was donated to our museum and was the feature of our "Archeology" exhibit from 2001 to 2015.

An exciting new project is underway through a grant from Wisconsin Humanities - in partnership with the Door County Maritime Museum & Lighthouse Preservation Society, Inc. and the Wisconsin Maritime Museum- to ensure the preservation of this important piece of our local history. The grant allows each of the museums to work with a conservator to assess each museum's dugout canoe and create a preservation plan.

Our Manitowoc County Historical Society's dugout canoe is currently on display at UW-Green Bay, Manitowoc Campus.



Buildings

It's official – the General Store is the best place to buy all your items! With funding to add public art to our museum, a reproduction of a circa 1890s advertising mural was added to our Village General Store. The advertising mural was designed by David Carpenter and hand painted by Carpenter and Erin LaBonte. The font of the mural was inspired by fonts of the era and the overall advertising billboard pays tribute to signage that was located on the Cato General Store at the turn of the 20th century. Although the Cato store was razed, pieces of it remain inside our museum's General Store.



As any homeowner knows, work on a building is never done. This past year we were fortunate to complete 3 new roofs on our structures – the Niles Church, Rockwood Fire House, and Harness Shop – totaling \$78,951.50.



The Meeme Livery Stable opened to the public during the season. The stable has already played host to homeschool and school programs, summer camp, and Museum Mice series programs. During our Mid-Lakes Threshere, presented in partnership with the Mid-Lakes Rustic Iron, guests were able to see agricultural history in action with the installed hay trolley in the Meeme Livery. Many folks commented after the demonstration that they had never seen it done before, and they were impressed. This effort took many amazing volunteers and be sure to visit our social media pages to see a video of the action! Our own blacksmith, Eugene Durben, fabricated the flat bat “C” shaped track hangers on a blacksmith forge and Bill Pauwels took the lead on bringing the hay trolley installation to life. The salvaged trolley track was from the former Frank Mayerl farm in the Township of Franklin.

Pictured top: A mural was completed on the General Store building.

Pictured middle: The Niles Church received a new cedar shingle roof.

Pictured bottom: A working hay track was installed in the Meeme Livery Stable through a partnership with the Mid-Lakes Rustic Iron Club and many volunteers.

Additional volunteer tasks included new windows in the Kunze Cabin, a new porch on the Sorenson House, and a fresh coat of paint at the Newton State Bank.

Volunteers

We thank all the corporate and service groups that assisted us with a variety of projects! In spring, a group from Kohl's Associates in Action joined us to make supplies for our youth education programs. The season of Fall had staff from Hawkins Ash CPAs visit us to assist in a wide range of projects – from painting to landscaping and archive work.

Our talented volunteers brought to life a wide array of public programs, included our in-person Museum Mice Preschool Series, Create-Connect Workshops, and large public programs.

We continue to receive a high demand for research services and our archive volunteers dive in eagerly! The team dives deep in the archives to answer questions, scans images, and enters data – all to ensure the physical reminders of our past are preserved and shared.

Thank you to our Volunteers with over 100 hours of service in 2021.

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



Pictured top: Members of the Golden K assist with car parking during large programs.

Pictured middle: Melody Meyer and Sharon Nate help guests around our grounds with our tram services.

Pictured bottom: Kohls Associates In Action helped prepare materials for our youth programs.



**142 registered
volunteers**



**593 positions
filled**



**6,200 hours
contributed**

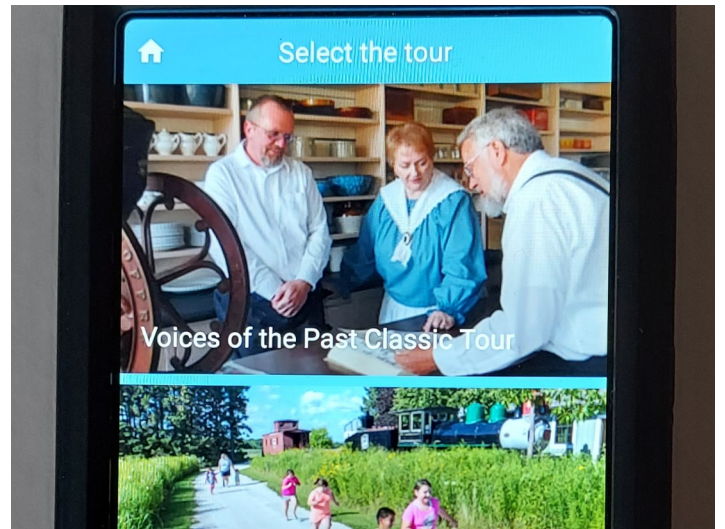
Mission In Action

Our museum's mission to preserve our local history has been a driving force behind our success for over 100 years. Each year we look to strengthen what works well and bring new, exciting opportunities for our guests to step into the stories of our past.

The Upper Midwest Blacksmith Associations' "The Other Side of the Anvil" brought many smiths to our village to help teach the historic trade to guests of all ages in June. Even our youngest guests took their turn at the anvil with clay!

New audio tour units were purchased to provide our daily guests with a more engaging self-guided experience. With the addition of a new "Creating Our Story" tour this spring, guests can now enjoy 3 different tour options full of information and visuals. The devices also are compatible with audio induction loops for guests with hearing aids.

As we rounded out our year of SPARK! programs, we had a special guest for our November program. Our topic was "Animals of the Civil War" and after we shared stories of different animals during the war, we were able to spend time with Sophie, a therapy dog, and her human Kathy! Now in our third year in the program, SPARK! is a free monthly series for individuals living with early-to-mid stage memory loss, their care partners, and family members.



Pictured top: The Upper Midwest Blacksmithing Association's "The Other Side of the Anvil" was held in June.

Pictured middle: New audio tours invite guests to take part in 3 different tour options.

Pictured bottom: Each month we welcome our SPARK! participants to take part in learning about our past and in November we chatted about animals in the Civil War. We even had special visitors - Sophie, a therapy dog, and her human Kathy!



2021 Support

Thanks to incredible supporters like YOU, we surpassed our ambitious goal for annual appeal operating support! During 2021, you shared over \$17,060 during our fall appeal drive.

You were able to join us with 40 new memberships and a total of 470 active memberships.

Corporate members and sponsors included:

ACE Building Service, Inc.
 Bank First
 Bitter Neumann
 Carron Net Company
 Cedar Crest Specialties Inc.
 Cellcom/NSight
 Community First Credit Union
 Country Visions
 CP Feeds
 Crescent Woolen Mills
 EVM, Inc.
 Fricke Printing Services
 Hamann Construction
 Hawkins Ash CPAs
 Henning Cheese, Inc.
 Investors Community Bank
 Kiwanis Club of Manitowoc
 Manitowoc Pharmacies
 Meijer
 Nelson Business Development
 Next Era Energy – Point Beach
 Pine River Pre-Pack, Inc.
 Terp Family Insurance
 United One Credit Union
 Verve, A Credit Union
 Vinton Construction



Pictured above: Blacksmith's Eugene Durben and George Baldwin are interviewed for a new marketing video.

Pictured middle: Students pump water outside the Livery Stable during a school program.

Pictured below: Volunteers Jennifer Johnson and Tia Brandt bring the Sorenson House to life during a program.

Thank you to every individual, company, foundation, and organization for keeping history alive at our museum throughout 2021!

2021 Financials

The Manitowoc County Historical Society's Endowment Fund ended the year with a balance of \$813,168. A distribution of \$23,400 was taken to add to our annual operating budget. Throughout 2021, \$27,000 was added to our Endowment Fund from generous financial gifts.

Our museum's general operating budget of \$142,000 works hard to accomplish many tasks.

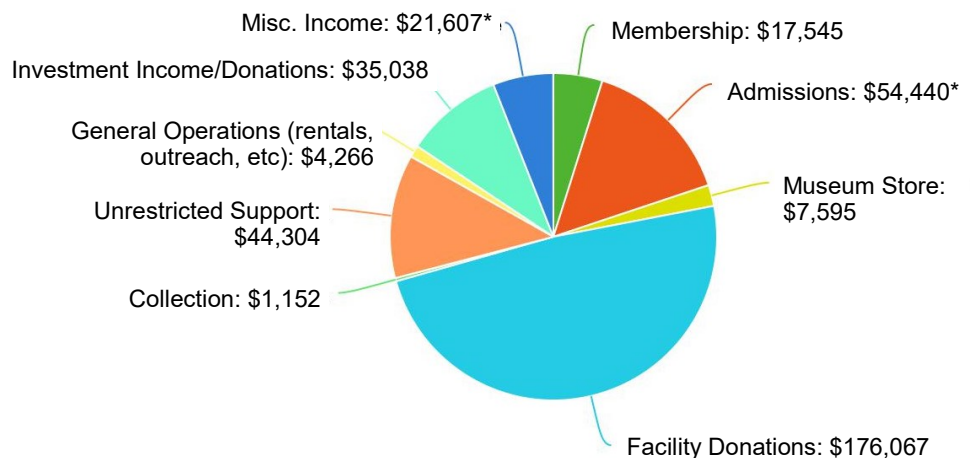
Admissions* income includes \$19,867 in program sponsorship and grants. Through daily activities, school experiences, public programs, and outreach, we were able to share our mission with over 8,700 guests.

In looking at the past year, we are very grateful for the important work of various organizations in keeping Wisconsin's arts, culture, and heritage sector alive and vibrant. Our museum was fortunate to receive a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities for COVID recovery, as well as a Payroll Protection grant – totaling a combined \$21,607.

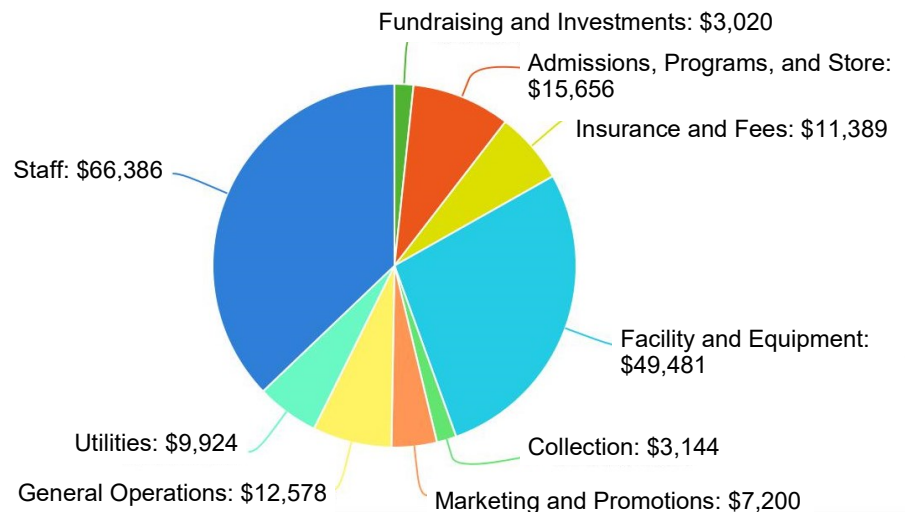
A great focus is keeping our historic structures in good condition. In 2021, our museum received restricted funds to keep our facilities in first-rate condition: \$84,485 for the Vetting Fund and \$91,582 for the restoration of the Meeme House.

Museum expenses are focused on serving guests every day by providing safe experiences; multi-disciplinary programming; and knowledgeable staff and volunteers who facilitate learning and exploration.

Income:



Expenses:



The Manitowoc County Historical Society's 990 is available upon request.



Manitowoc County Historical Society
924 Pinecrest Road
Manitowoc, WI 54220



In Memory of Ed Prigge, MCHS Volunteer and Community Historian

In 2021, our Manitowoc County Historical Society community mourned the loss of one of its most illustrious members, volunteers, and friends, Ed Prigge, who passed away from a hard fought battle with cancer. A Grimms native, Ed lived the mission of our museum by supporting and sharing his love for the stories of our past.

Ed had a generous spirit and was a true friend of our museum. But more than that, he truly lived to better our community. Ed was a proud supporter of local history who served in countless capacities, leaving an indelible mark on the strong foundation of our Board of Directors, the Meeme House, and our first rate programs.

We have so many great photos of Ed in our archives- from sharing stories during youth and public programs to shoveling horse 'poo' and cleaning up after activities. But this image is how we'd like to remember Ed most - with a smile and a wave.