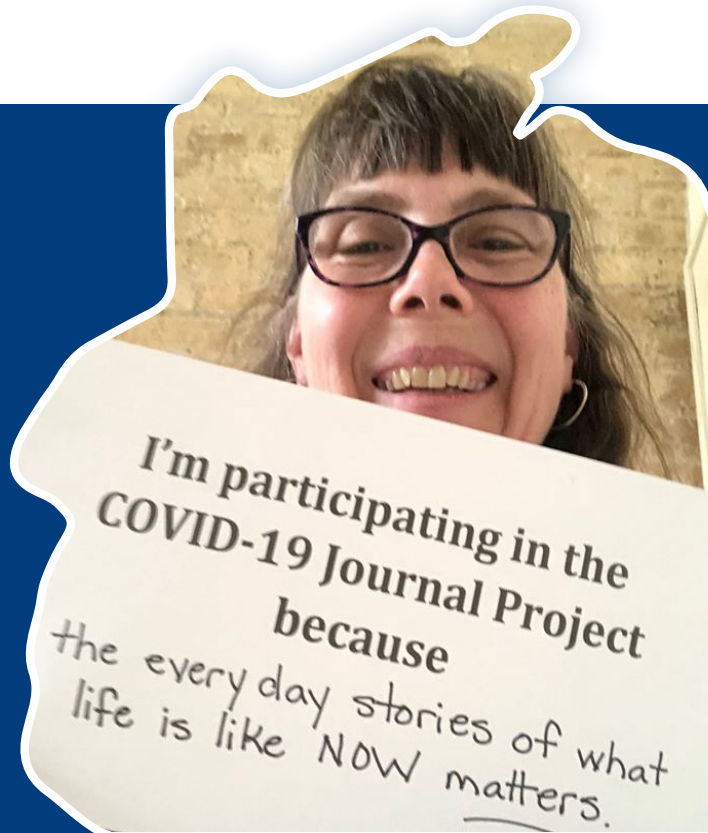


# OUR THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Wisconsin Historical  
FOUNDATION

2020 FISCAL YEAR  
ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2019 — JUNE 30, 2020

## A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

### Dear Friends,

**A**s we approach a holiday season unlike any of us has ever experienced due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, first and foremost, all of us at the Wisconsin Historical Foundation hope that this annual report arrives at your home with you and your family healthy and safe. We understand how challenging and disruptive this unprecedented time has been for you.

Indeed, we are living through a historic moment. Fortunately, as a non-profit organization in its 66th year supporting the Wisconsin Historical Society, which will mark its 175th year in 2021, the Foundation benefits from a perspective informed by having survived many daunting challenges in past decades, thanks in large part to the generosity and steadfast dedication of members and business partners like you.

Each year at this time, we send all members this annual report covering the past fiscal year. We want to highlight some of the ways your membership funds and extra donations, as well as funding from wonderful charitable organizations that partner with us, help people of all ages make meaningful connections to history through the Society's programs, services, and 12 historic sites and museums. We hope these stories fill you with a sense of pride.

To those who wonder what the difference is between our organizations: While the Society is a state agency carrying out a mission to collect, preserve, and share history through its many divisions, the Foundation is a separate



non-profit that raises funds solely for Society operations and capital campaigns. We also manage the Society's membership and planned giving programs and provide communications and marketing services that support the Society's mission to reach as many people as possible in all corners of Wisconsin and beyond. As you know, connecting our past to current events makes history more relevant in our everyday lives.

Many of you on social media may have joined conversations through the Society's dramatically increased presence on Facebook and Instagram, or made connections through upgrades to our website ([wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org)). Perhaps you've enjoyed the Society's engaging weekly e-newsletter, or the first-ever product catalog and member calendar. Thank you for supporting these new initiatives and making it possible for tens of thousands more people to interact with the Society in the past year!

We know that more significant challenges await as we face a full fiscal year in the clutches of this pandemic. A recent \$1 million state budget reduction for the Society, coupled with a projected revenue shortfall of \$2.5 million, makes your continued support more meaningful than ever. We are honored by your confidence in our work and are grateful to have you by our side at this unique moment in history.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Lussier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Julie Lussier**

Executive Director, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

# FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS

2020 FISCAL YEAR



Above photos from the Oct. 11, 2019 James Madison Lecture, featuring Australian professor and author Michael A. McDonnell (center)

## \$6.1 MILLION

TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

30,695 FOLLOWERS ON THE SOCIETY FACEBOOK PAGE (A 34% INCREASE!)

21,822 DOLLARS RAISED ON THE SOCIETY'S FIRST-EVER GIVING DAY (MAY 29)

10,680 SOCIETY MEMBERS

1,957 NEW MEMBERS

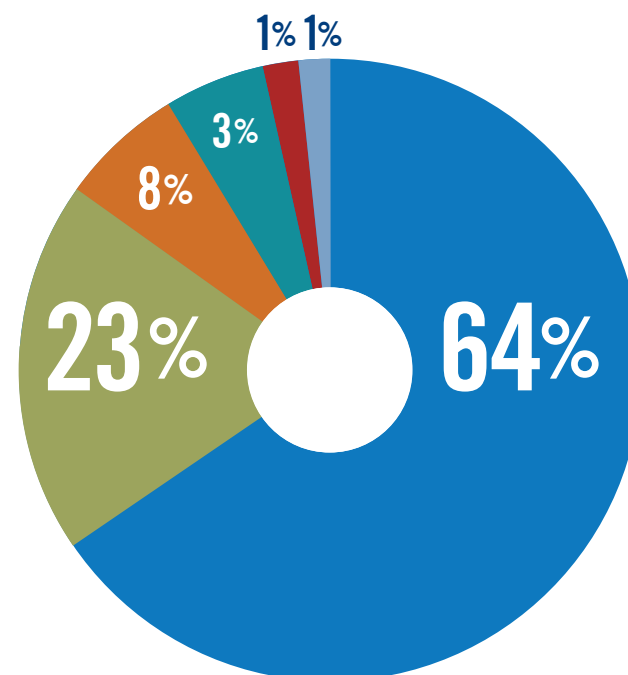
1,152 PEOPLE WHO GAVE A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

350 PEOPLE WHO HAVE GIVEN FOR 25 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS

27 PERCENTAGE OF GIFTS MADE ONLINE (A 5% INCREASE OVER 2019)

## WISCONSIN HISTORICAL FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING

JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020



### TOTAL FUNDS RAISED



**TOTAL**

**\$6,085,355**

A YEAR TO REMEMBER, THANKS TO YOU!



## LEGENDS AND LORE SCARES UP CROWDS AT OLD WORLD

### Record number of guests enjoy annual event sponsored by WaterStone Bank

A record 2,420 guests enjoyed spooky stories, celebrated immigrant traditions, and made lasting memories at the sixth annual Halloween Legends and Lore event at Old World Wisconsin.

Held in October 2019, months before anyone had an inkling of the disruptive pandemic to come, the family friendly event, which topped 2,000 guests for the fourth straight year, ended up being one of the highlights of the historic site's 2020 fiscal year.

The event is made possible thanks to continued

generous funding from sponsor WaterStone Bank.

"To have the support of WaterStone Bank is more than dollars – it's engaging with a local organization equally committed to serving our communities," said Assistant Site Director Anna Altschwager. "Thanks to WaterStone's incredible support, we are able to celebrate our deep roots and traditions while creating new memories for people of all ages."

The event highlights legends and ghost stories that our diverse immigrant ancestors brought to Wisconsin in the 19th and early 20th centuries. For the second straight year, high school students from nearby Kettle Moraine School for Arts and Performance brought the tales to life through live performances.



Children enjoy the jack-o'-lantern display while exploring the grounds of Old World Wisconsin at the sixth annual Halloween Legends and Lore event.



Guests visiting H.H. Bennett Studio & Museum have enjoyed many improvements thanks to generous gifts from the Gregory C. Van Wie Charitable Foundation.

## Van Wie Foundation funds H.H. Bennett upgrades

Thanks to tens of thousands of dollars in financial support from the Gregory C. Van Wie Charitable Foundation in recent years, guests visiting H.H. Bennett Studio & Museum in the heart of downtown Wisconsin Dells have enjoyed an ever-improving historic experience.

The foundation's generous gifts have funded much-needed upgrades in infrastructure and amenities that have allowed

thousands of guests to travel back in time and understand what it was like for the Bennett family when H.H. opened the studio in 1875.

In recent years, Van Wie contributions funded dramatic improvements in the museum store. This past fiscal year, the foundation's \$35,000 gift allowed the site to rehabilitate the second floor gallery and improve the studio experience with historic replica backdrops and the

infrastructure needed to display them. The backdrops inform interpretation during tours and are popular with guests who enjoy the site's TinType Experience.

"We're so grateful to the Van Wie Charitable Foundation for its generous support," said Site Director David Rambow. "We see in the faces of our guests every day how much they enjoy the improvements that this funding has made possible."



# Your Society support leads to recognition of African American historic places in Milwaukee

Your Wisconsin Historical Society membership helps pay for dozens of important and valuable services that span several divisions of the Society. One of those is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which, among its many services, administers the State Register of Historic Places and nominates properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

In an effort to preserve the history of all citizens of Wisconsin, SHPO used funding from the National Park Service's Underrepresented Community Grant Program to identify four properties that represent Milwaukee's strong African American history.

The Lloyd Barbee House, St. Matthew Christian

Methodist Episcopal Church, the 16th Street Viaduct, and the Jones-Hill House were all added to the State Register. The latter three were also listed on the National Register, while the Jones-Hill House is under review by the National Park Service, which administers the National Register.

"When we dig deeper, we understand how significant these buildings and structures are to our shared history," said Peggy Veregin, SHPO's National Register Coordinator. "They represent extraordinary historical events and people. These are people and places Wisconsinites should know about so we can all better understand and appreciate our shared history."

To learn more, visit [wihist.org/HistoricPlacesRegister](http://wihist.org/HistoricPlacesRegister).



Milwaukee's 16th Street Viaduct is a testament to the struggle to overcome racial divisions. It was the site of civil rights housing marches in 1967. In 1988, the city's Common Council renamed it the James A. Groppi Unity Bridge, after the priest who helped lead the marches.

## Thank you for embracing the Society's product catalog, online store!



**The Society published its first product catalog** for the 2019 holiday shopping season, featuring many Wisconsin-themed items made by state vendors and artists. Thank you to all who supported Society programs by purchasing items at our upgraded and expanded online store at [shop.wisconsinhistory.org](http://shop.wisconsinhistory.org)!

The Society and Foundation are grateful to the hundreds of members who shopped at the Society's upgraded online store last December following publication of our first-ever product catalog, which was mailed to all members.

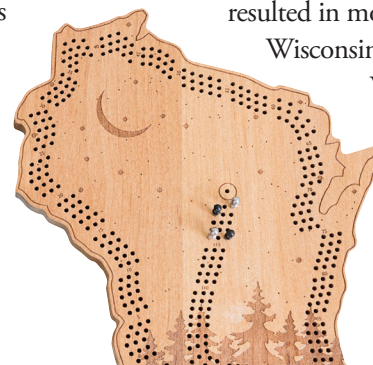
As a result, our December online gross sales increased a whopping 63% and overall 2020 fiscal year online sales jumped 74%, to more than \$37,000, with 19% of purchases being made by members.

"We are so grateful for our members and supporters," said Amanda Schultz, retail director for the Society. "We were amazed at the response to

the catalog and new store. One hundred percent of proceeds directly support the Society, so your purchases have a big impact."

Top sellers included items related to the women's suffrage centennial, the 2019 Capitol ornament, and a Wisconsin-shaped cribbage board (*below*). In addition, sales of COVID-19 Poster Project prints (*see story on Page 12*) have resulted in more than \$3,000 going back to the Wisconsin artists who created the 13 posters.

We'd also like to thank our volunteer catalog models. We are honored that you're willing to represent the Society and help us be fiscally responsible.



# ANNUAL LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE ATTRACTS RECORD ATTENDANCE

It was a weekend to remember at the Society's 13th Annual Local History and Historic Preservation Conference in Lake Geneva. The two-day event, held Oct. 25-26, 2019, at Grand Geneva Resort, attracted a record-breaking 435 attendees who enjoyed workshops, educational sessions, roundtable discussions, tours and other events. Guests came from 52 Wisconsin counties and four Midwest states.

Featured speakers included popular Milwaukee historian and author John Gurda, as well as Christian Øverland, the Wisconsin Historical Society's Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO, and Society maritime archaeologist Caitlin Zant.

While the 2020 conference was conducted entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 event is currently scheduled to be held in person in Appleton, with the 2022 conference set for the Wausau suburb of Rothschild. Watch for updates at [wihist.org/conference](http://wihist.org/conference).



**This 1596 map of America** is among 58 rare maps in the George S. Parker Collection donated to the Society by the Caxambas Foundation.

## Caxambas Foundation donates Parker maps

We're extremely grateful to the Caxambas Foundation of Milwaukee and its president, Martha Parker, for its outright donation of Parker's father's amazing collection of rare maps.

Society Archives staff had been caring for the George S. Parker Map Collection for the past decade as a long-term loan. This permanent gift is a vote of confidence in the Society, further enhances its world-class collections, and guarantees that future generations of researchers and the public will learn from the collection.

The 58 documents date to an astonishing 1596 map of America and include superb examples of the most significant maps related to New France and French exploration of the Great Lakes, early maps of Florida and Mexico, and later maps of Wisconsin. George S. Parker II, former CEO of the Parker Pen Company of Janesville, acquired most maps between 1975 and 1986.

Caxambas has provided generous funding to the Society for years to digitize maps and travel narratives. Explore the collection at [wihist.org/ParkerMaps](http://wihist.org/ParkerMaps).



## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

# Students make own history by adjusting to virtual reality

National History Day students found themselves “breaking barriers” in more ways than one in 2019-20. This year's theme, *Breaking Barriers in History*, challenged students to explore how individuals and groups overcame obstacles throughout history. With the onset of the COVID-19

pandemic in the middle of the regional contest season, students, educators, staff, and more than 370 volunteer judges – many of whom are Society members and donors – were forced to quickly adapt to a virtual environment.

In addition to several regional events, both the State and National contests were held online. Despite these unprecedented circumstances, Wisconsin NHD enjoyed great success. More than 16,000 students created projects, with 1,770 participating at regional contests, and 440 advancing to State and 61 to Nationals, where five students earned Top 10 finishes and two won special awards. See results and projects at [wisconsinhistory.org/NHD2020](https://wisconsinhistory.org/NHD2020).



**Milwaukee educator Chuck Taft** was named an NHD National Teacher of the Year award winner.

In other exciting news, University School of Milwaukee eighth-grade teacher Chuck Taft was named the Patricia Behring National Teacher of the Year for the Junior Division. Taft's students have qualified for Nationals in each of his 15 years guiding the NHD program at his school, with two finishing in the Top 10 and another winning a special award this year.

What stands out most, he says, are the connections his students make when conducting primary source interviews. “These interviews are the game-changers – the sources that turn a research project into a work of passion,” Taft said. “The look on students' faces when they talk to history is priceless.”

Your membership and special gifts make transformative programs like National History Day possible. **Thank you!**



Construction of a new **Brewing Experience building** (above) at Old World Wisconsin will begin in December. It will mark the first phase of a reimagined guest entry area.

## OLD WORLD WISCONSIN EXCITED FOR NEW LOOK

Thanks to significant private contributions, as well as additional funding from the State of Wisconsin, Old World Wisconsin is ready to launch the first phase of a multi-year project that reimagines its guest entry area, which has remained mostly unchanged since the Society's popular historic site in the Waukesha County village of Eagle opened in 1976.

The project was conceived after a 2010 tornado destroyed acres of trees at the site, leading to the creation of the Wisconsin Historical Foundation's New Arrivals Campaign to raise funds for it. Construction on the \$3.5 million first phase of the project, which includes a new Brewing Experience building, is scheduled to begin in December, with completion in summer/fall of 2021.

Phase 2, which will begin when \$2 million in funding is secured, will include restoration of a historic tavern being moved to the site, as well as an outdoor beer garden and other amenities. Future phases will add a new Guest Entrance Complex, Tram Stop, Pavilion and other restorations and renovations.

Our sincere thanks to all who have helped move this transformational project forward! For more details, visit [wihist.org/OWWNewArrivals](https://wihist.org/OWWNewArrivals).

## Toussaint's gift of papers shows women's impact on civic, business life

Fittingly coinciding with the year in which we celebrated the centennial of women's suffrage, the Society's Library & Archives division was grateful to receive a generous donation of personal papers dating to the early 1960s from Carol Toussaint of Madison, a trailblazer for women in civic and business life.



**Carol Toussaint**

Toussaint, 91, was the first woman appointed to the board of Wisconsin Power and Light, the first woman president of the Madison Downtown Rotary, and also served as the Secretary of the Department of Local Affairs and Development under Gov. Martin Schreiber, among many other significant lifetime achievements. Her papers focus on her activity serving at the local, state and national levels for 10 organizations, including the League of Women Voters, a pair of groups that reformed and modernized the state court system, and Vantage Point, a group for professional women that Toussaint founded and operated from 1988-2018.

"I 'found' the Society's archives when I needed background information on topics I was researching during my career," Toussaint said. "It made me think about what materials from my experiences might be valued by someone years from now. I realized that what I had collected might be just what someone will be looking for."

Toussaint has been a longtime Society supporter, having served on the Wisconsin Historical Foundation's board for more than 20 years. She and husband John are also members of the Society's Heritage Circle and Robert B.L. Murphy Legacy Circle.



## Madison-made COVID-19 shield among new collections objects

Society curators routinely consider the historic and interpretive value of items to add to the collections. Here's a sampling of new arrivals during the 2020 fiscal year:

**"BADGER SHIELD":** The face shield (left) was the first product developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Makerspace in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Makerspace director Lennon Rodgers began developing an inexpensive, disposable protective face shield in partnership with his wife, an anesthesiologist, staff at Midwest Prototyping in Blue Mounds, and Madison design firm Delve. Their open-source design has been manufactured nationwide.

**LA CROSSE LAGERS JERSEY:** This jersey (right) was worn by a player for the Old Style Lagers, a semi-professional football team sponsored by the G. Heileman Brewing Company of La Crosse from 1929-1937. The Lagers even played several NFL teams, including the Packers and Bears. While they lost those games, they dominated their league opponents.



**ARLIE SCHARDT'S TYPEWRITER:** UW graduate Arlie Schardt (1933-2020), a reporter for *TIME* magazine during the 1960s, covered the events of the civil rights movement. Schardt traveled with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and reported from Memphis when King was assassinated. His typewriter (left), along with the Society's Schardt archival collection, document the reporter's process from field to page.

**"THREE MUSICIANS" MOSAIC:** Gilbert Endrizzi (1923-2018) of Wisconsin Rapids made this complex mosaic (right) from pieces of laminated plastic. As the design engineer for Consoweld Corporation, he incorporated materials he designed by day into a lifelong creative passion. This piece is an example of occupational folk art, which utilizes the materials and methods of commercial manufacturing for artistic creations.







**Dozens of fans line up** at Madison's Overture Center prior to a performance of the Broadway musical "Hamilton" to view rare items from the Society's North American history collections that are referenced in the musical.

## 'Hamilton' fans take shot to see collection items

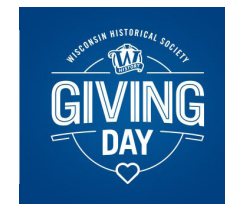
**F**ans of the Broadway smash hit "Hamilton" didn't throw away their shot to view some of the amazing documents referenced in the hit Broadway musical that are part of the Wisconsin Historical Society's world-class collections.

About 1,000 enthusiastic theatergoers lined up to enjoy the Society's pop-up exhibit at Madison's Overture Center prior to four performances of the musical in late November and early December. If you were among them, THANK YOU for coming early to visit with us!

Along with its collection of state history, the Society is also home to the nation's second-largest North American history collection. It features extremely rare items from the American Revolution, including many that play a pivotal role in the Lin-Manuel Miranda play, such as letters from Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, George Washington's farewell address to the nation, and the infamous "Reynolds Pamphlet." See these items and learn more about the real history of "Hamilton" at [wisconsinhistory.org/hamilton](https://wisconsinhistory.org/hamilton).

## \$21,822: Thank you for answering the call during the Society's first Giving Day!

**W**e couldn't be more grateful to the nearly 200 of you who answered our call and generously offered extra gifts beyond your membership to help the Wisconsin Historical Society stem the tide of a daunting \$1.5 million fiscal year budget shortfall caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Thanks to you, the Foundation raised an amazing \$21,822 for the Society during its first-ever Giving Day on May 29. An anonymous donor boosted

enthusiasm by offering a \$7,500 matching gift, while others donated \$14,322 more, by far the most we have ever raised in a 24-hour period.

Beyond Giving Day, many others stepped up to offer additional gifts as the pandemic raged during the final four months of the fiscal year. Over \$70,000 was contributed, nearly triple the amount given in spring 2019, while online giving increased to 33 percent overall, making it easier for Foundation staff to process gifts while safely working remotely.

"Wisconsin history lovers are amazing," said Hannah Hankins, the Foundation's Annual Giving Manager. "I can't thank you enough for your commitment to keeping the stories of our state alive, even in the midst of a pandemic. Thanks to you, the Society can find new, creative ways to share Wisconsin history with people across the state until we can be together again."

# WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

A message from the Ruth and Hartley  
Barker Director & CEO

Dear Friends,

There's no avoiding the reality of how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted operations across the Wisconsin Historical Society. A \$2.5 million projected revenue shortfall and additional \$1 million budget reduction certainly has created many challenges. Despite those ongoing obstacles, I am filled with pride and gratitude in how we continued to serve our residents.

The flexibility shown by staff at both the Society and the Wisconsin Historical Foundation, paired with the generosity of members and business partners like you, proved that together we can achieve anything. You not only offered extra special donations to help us stem the financial tide as the pandemic hit (*see Page 9*), but you also enthusiastically supported initiatives we launched in response to this historic moment (*Pages 12-13*). I hope you enjoy reading these examples of what you made possible.

Finally, our experience this year has reminded us that everything we do of significance, we do so in partnership with others. I know that with the Foundation and your continued support, the Society will meet the challenges ahead. **Thank you!**



**Christian Øverland**

Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO  
Wisconsin Historical Society



## NEW SOCIETY LEADERS EAGER TO HELP PLAN NEW MUSEUM

While the coronavirus pandemic severely impacted daily operations at the Society, we want you to know that planning for a new Wisconsin history museum continues, buoyed by the addition of three experienced and talented museum and historic programming professionals to our team.

Joining us were Angela Titus as Assistant Deputy Director and Chief Program Officer; Nicholas Hoffman as Administrator of Museums and Historic Sites; and Estella Chung as Chief Curator in the Library Archives and Museum Collections Division.

"These three outstanding professionals all have proven track records of success leading institutions across the country," said Society Director Christian Øverland. "Adding their expertise, leadership, and unique perspectives to our team and the next phase of the new museum planning will further enhance our ability to deliver an unforgettable guest experience that will be a national model for our industry."

In addition to corporate experience, Titus, who earned a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a master's from Northwestern, spent over 14 years in senior leadership roles for non-profit and cultural organizations in San Diego, including the San Diego Zoo.

Chung has more than 25 years of museum leadership and curatorial experience, including the past 13 at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, D.C. Hoffman, who has over 13 years of museum experience, joined us after serving in a senior leadership role at the Missouri Historical Society. He has Wisconsin roots, having earned bachelor's and master's degrees from UW-Milwaukee and serving in a leadership role at History Museum at the Castle in Appleton in addition to working at Old World Wisconsin.



**Angela  
Titus**



**Estella  
Chung**



**Nicholas  
Hoffman**

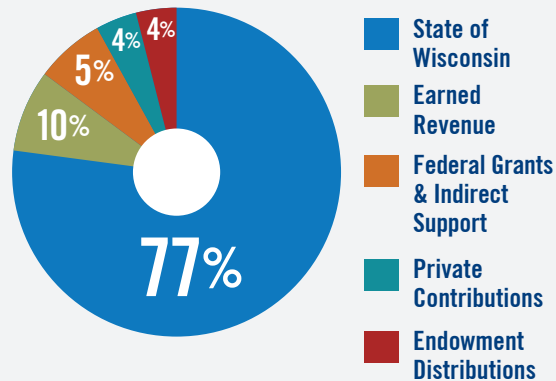


# HIGHLIGHTS

The Society has existed since 1846 to collect, preserve, and share Wisconsin and North American history. On these pages and the two that follow are highlights specifically from the Society. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

## 2020 FISCAL YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

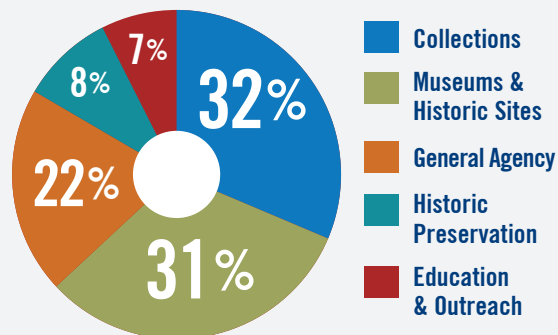
### REVENUE



TOTAL

\$24.1M

### EXPENDITURES



TOTAL

\$23.1M



### Library, Archives & Museum Collections

133,790  
99.2%

PATRONS SERVED BY  
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES  
COLLECTIONS MOVED  
TO THE STATE ARCHIVE  
PRESERVATION FACILITY



### Local History

269  
435

SOCIETY CONSULTATIONS WITH  
LOCAL HISTORY AFFILIATES  
ATTENDANCE AT THE 2019  
LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE



### Historic Preservation

390  
3,054

BUILDINGS REHABILITATED  
USING TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS  
PROJECTED JOBS CREATED BY  
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS



### Education

992  
16,000  
61

STUDENTS REACHED BY THE  
HANDS-ON HISTORY PROGRAM  
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN  
NATIONAL HISTORY DAY (NHD)  
STUDENTS QUALIFIED FOR  
THE NHD NATIONAL FINALS

5

STUDENTS FINISHED IN THE  
TOP 10 OR WON SPECIAL  
AWARDS AT NHD NATIONALS

37,162  
53,468

BOOKS SOLD BY  
THE SOCIETY PRESS  
TEXTBOOKS USED BY  
4TH-GRADE STUDENTS  
(ENGLISH & SPANISH)



### Historic Sites & Museums

142,342  
17,153  
217

TOTAL ATTENDANCE AT THE  
HISTORIC SITES & MUSEUMS  
K-12 ATTENDANCE AT THE  
HISTORIC SITES & MUSEUMS  
CITIES HAD SCHOOLS  
VISIT THE HISTORIC SITES  
& MUSEUMS

# WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Thank you for answering the call and helping us document and

**B**ig history was happening all around us as 2020 dawned. The coronavirus pandemic upended life as we know it in early March, and by the end of May, civil rights protests erupted following the death of George Floyd. At the Society, the pandemic forced our staff to pivot and quickly devise new ways of reaching and engaging our diverse audiences. Fortunately, we have passionate members like you! While our historic sites and museums had to be closed and in-person events and programs canceled, you enthusiastically joined us on numerous initiatives launched online. Together, we met the moment and found ways to connect with each other and share our experiences. These pages offer a snapshot of some of the ways we documented and discussed this moment. For more on these and other initiatives, visit [wisconsinhistory.org/BigHistoryIsHappening](https://wisconsinhistory.org/BigHistoryIsHappening).

## COVID-19 JOURNAL PROJECT

The Wisconsin Historical Society is known for collecting history as it happens. In 1861, we asked Wisconsin's Civil War soldiers to keep diaries of their experiences, to be preserved in our archives. In 1964, we did the same with UW-Madison students during the Freedom Summer. Since we're once again living through a historic moment, this spring we asked people to document their pandemic experiences and join our COVID-19 Journal Project. The response was beyond our wildest expectations. More than 1,900 of you signed up, and more than 100 journals have been submitted. They have ranged from traditional pen-and-paper diaries to videos, audio, artwork, collages and photography. Like the Civil War diaries, the records of our experiences during this once-in-a-century pandemic will allow future generations to better understand this moment.

**Note: It's not too late to sign up and start (or continue) your journal! We'd love to have more perspectives from recent months.**



## COVID-19 POSTER PROJECT

Public information posters have long been a part of American history, most famously motivating citizens in wartime. In the same tradition, the Society commissioned 10 Wisconsin artists to re-imagine those historic posters in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. They promote public health and safety or serve as a call to action. More than 16,000 people have viewed the posters at [wisconsinhistory.org/PosterProject](https://wisconsinhistory.org/PosterProject). Limited-edition prints of each poster are available for purchase on our website, with most proceeds (more than \$3,000 through September) going directly to the artists.



# MEETING OUR HISTORIC MOMENT

discuss one of the most challenging years in our nation's history

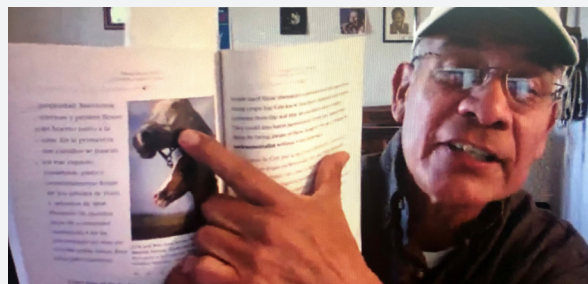
## VIRTUAL SITE VISITS: BACK IN TIME ONLINE

With our historic sites and museums closed due to the pandemic, the Society created a *Back In Time Online* series of 11 videos that allowed guests to "visit" the sites virtually. Combined, the videos were viewed more than 47,000 times on Facebook and nearly 8,000 times on YouTube. A video of the First Capitol in Belmont was viewed nearly 7,000 times while another about Pendarvis garnered about 5,400 views. We're so happy that so many people were able to stay safe and enjoy connecting with history in this way.



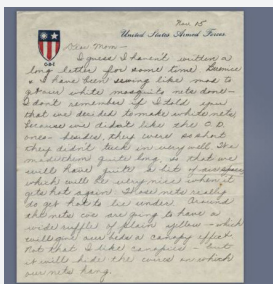
## EXPLORING SHIPWRECKS

With in-person gatherings paused, the State Historic Preservation Office launched in May a series of 20 live webinars, including several weekly explorations of Great Lakes shipwrecks with our maritime archaeologists, Tamara Thomsen and Caitlin Zant (*above*). More than 600 people (and counting) participated, including many logging in from other states and countries! You can watch recordings of the sessions, which continue through December, at [wihist.org/SHPOwebinars](http://wihist.org/SHPOwebinars).



## STORYTIME LIVE SERIES

With most schools forced online, the Society Press launched a 20-week *Storytime Live* series on Facebook, with 15 authors reading their books for children. Jerry Apps read from five of his books, with *Eat Rutabagas*, the first of the series, attracting more than 28,000 views. Cris Plata (*above*) read his book, *From Fields to Stage*, in both English and Spanish. His Spanish session tallied over 600 views.



## BIG HISTORY IS HAPPENING: THEN & NOW

The Society sought to help people connect the pandemic to past historic moments, such as the 1918 flu pandemic, with a series of posts called *Then & Now*. Topics included writing letters and staying in touch (*above*); face masks; social distancing; home delivery; food rationing and preparedness; and teaching challenges. More than 33,000 people viewed the series at [wisconsinhistory.org/BigHistoryIsHappening](http://wisconsinhistory.org/BigHistoryIsHappening).



## MARKERS, MONUMENTS & MEANING

As our nation debated historical markers, monuments, and statues, the Society showed leadership by hosting a series of webinars with national experts. Society Director Christian Øverland and Marquette University professor and Society board member Dr. Robert Smith (*above left*) moderated the discussions, one of which included UW-Madison's Aaron Bird Bear (*right*). Watch the videos at [wihist.org/MonumentWebinars](http://wihist.org/MonumentWebinars).

# WE SALUTE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Hundreds of people give their time generously every year to help the Society achieve its mission. **We're grateful for your dedication.**

## TIM BROWN

Old World Wisconsin

If you're among the thousands of parents and children who have visited Old World Wisconsin for its annual "Old World Christmas" celebration in recent years, you have probably seen or met Tim Brown.

But you'd know him as his alter ego: Santa Claus.

Brown, a fourth-generation Wisconsinite whose ancestors first settled in Brookfield in 1857, has been a volunteer interpreter in numerous roles at the Society's Waukesha County historic site since the fall of 2016, giving about 170 hours per year.

It didn't take long before he was asked if he'd play a Victorian-era Santa. "I believe it was type casting that prompted them to ask me to be Santa," he says. "The white beard, you know."

Brown loves seeing children's faces light up when they see him. Hearing what they say is always a treat, too.

"It brings me great joy to have little ones visit Santa and be all in for Christmas," he says. "The



**Tim Brown in character as Santa**

best requests I get (for presents) are for things that allow the children to express themselves, like musical instruments, art supplies and even science kits. These types of requests make for the best conversations."

Volunteering has been a part of life for Brown, who spent three decades in the electronics industry and as a volunteer fireman before retiring.

He grew up in Waukesha and first offered to help at Old World in 1977, "driving the horse-drawn wagons that were the first trams," he says. "When I retired it was natural to come back. Old World Wisconsin has always felt like going home to me."

## MIKE & SHELLY RIDER

Villa Louis

The only thing more synonymous with the Villa Louis Carriage Classic than horses and carriages, it seems, is Mike and Shelly Rider.

"To say that this event has become part of our identities would be pretty accurate," Mike admits.

The lifelong Prairie du Chien resident, now 43, first got involved as an 11-year-old volunteer for the eighth-annual event in 1988.

He was immediately hooked: "I was enamored by the spectacle of the fancy horses and carriages."

By 1999, he became the Classic's organizer at the young age of 22, and he's been serving in that role ever since. Mike and Shelly, who both work at Crossing Rivers Health, started dating the year he began managing the event and they have turned it into a shared passion project.

Each has donated hundreds of hours annually to pull off the spectacle, which has become the largest pleasure driving equestrian event in the country. It attracts thousands of people to the Society's



**Mike & Shelly Rider**

historic site in Prairie du Chien the weekend after Labor Day each year.

"I sometimes feel exhausted, but I've always felt rewarded by the experience," Mike says. "The friendships made while volunteering are worth all of the challenges."

Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic wiped out the 40th anniversary event in 2020, but they're hopeful it will return in 2021, even if it means their schedules will be packed once again.

As Shelly says, "It's rewarding to see all the work that you put into something and know that others appreciate it."



# THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The following pages recognize individuals and organizations who contributed \$250 or more cumulatively to the Wisconsin Historical Foundation from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, including pledges and gifts of membership. **It's because of your generosity that the Society has been able to accomplish so much this year. We cherish your confidence and enduring friendship!**



**Your membership and special gifts** allow the Society to connect people of all ages to history in amazing ways. Above, a young girl makes a lasting memory with an up-close encounter with a horse at Wade House. Your funds help the Society operate 12 historic sites and museums across the state, including caring for animals so they can add to the historic experience our guests enjoy. For this youngster, it was an unforgettable moment, made possible **THANKS TO YOU!**





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Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our sixth annual President's Council Dinner in June. The event recognizes the very generous support of members who contribute at least \$5,000 annually to the Wisconsin Historical Society.

President's Council leadership gifts significantly impact the Society's ability to provide consistently excellent programs and services throughout Wisconsin, and worldwide via our website, [wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org).





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**The Society meant very much to my mother, Dr. Fannie Ella Frazier Hicklin. She was a proud member for over 40 years and loved her 25 years on the Board of Curators and her term as its president. Neither of us was born in Wisconsin but we appreciated all that WHS has done for the state. I'm pleased to honor her memory by becoming a Heritage Circle member."**

**Ariel Ford**

Pictured with her mother, who passed away on Oct. 18, 2019, at age 101



**We support the Society because of its desire to grow and change with the times. Many people acquainted with the Society's world-renowned history collection may not realize the immense amount of other resources it has, or that a significant amount of it is now accessible by computer."**

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**Working for the Wisconsin  
 Historical Foundation gave me an  
 intimate look at how private funds  
 make an enormous impact on  
 people, so it was important to us  
 to continue financially supporting  
 the Society. We've also included  
 it in our estate plan because we  
 want our impact to last."**

**David Wilder**

Former Foundation Executive Director  
 (with wife Beth), Heritage Circle and Robert  
 B.L. Murphy Legacy Circle members



**The National History Day experience isn't something you can find in many other places, and Aidan and I are both extremely grateful for the things we have learned and the memories we have created. We have found NHD to be an incredible outlet for creativity and historical analysis."**

### **Simon Kissel**

Madison West High School junior, sixth-place finisher with partner Aidan Dresang at NHD Nationals

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**National History Day has always  
 been much more than a way to  
 explore history and develop our  
 researching skills. It has been  
 a reason for Simon and me to  
 stay connected. NHD has helped  
 us become better students and  
 researchers while having fun  
 along the way."**

**Aidan Dresang**

Madison Memorial High School junior,  
 sixth-place finisher with partner  
 Simon Kissel at NHD Nationals

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## STAY TUNED ...

Unfortunately, the pandemic forced us to cancel both our 2020 and 2021 Robert B.L. Murphy Legacy Circle luncheons, held each May in Madison and Milwaukee. We're exploring ways to bring this important group together virtually in 2021. We'll be in touch when details are finalized.

## OUR THANKS TO MURPHY DESMOND

We're grateful to Murphy Desmond S.C. for its longtime generous support of our annual spring luncheons for members of our Robert B.L. Murphy Legacy Circle, named after the law firm's late founder. Murphy was a founding director of the Wisconsin Historical Foundation in 1954 and served more than 40 years on the Society's Board of Curators. At right are Murphy Desmond staff members who attended the 2019 luncheon in Madison.





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