

Where History Inspires



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



HAGEN HISTORY CENTER 356 W. 6TH STREET, ERIE PA 16507
WWW.ERIEHISTORY.ORG 814-454-1813

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

We've had an inspiring couple of years at the Hagen History Center.

While we were closed during COVID-19, we built numerous new exhibits and expanded our campus to include 37,000 square feet of space on our 2.4-acre downtown Erie campus.

When we reopened in July, 2021, the ribbon cutting started an exciting era as civic leader and philanthropist Thomas B. Hagen said, "We've never seen so many people at the Hagen History Center."

Thanks to Mr. Hagen, Frank Lloyd Wright's original San Francisco office and multiple artifacts are on display in the new exhibit building.

On the cover:

Top left: Rose Massing dressed in period clothing for her visit to the Watson-Curtze Mansion. Photo by Dana Massing

Top right: The Hagen History Center campus includes four buildings that are open to the public. Photo/Illustration by Erie News Now & Tungsten

Bottom left: Tom and Colleen Brennan examine drawings in the Frank Lloyd Wright San Francisco office inside the new exhibit building. Photo by Frank Stumilia

Bottom middle: The Frank Lloyd Wright's original San Francisco office opened with one of Wright's vehicles, a 1930 Cord Cabriolet, and a Crosley Hot Shot. Staff photo

Bottom right: Winifred Watson's bedroom is one of the new exhibits. Photo by Michael Nesgoda

We are now among the public buildings listed on Wright sites along with Fallingwater, Graycliff and international Wright landmarks. Our associations with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and Frank Lloyd Wright Trust have given our entire campus national recognition.

As a regional museum and one of Erie County's lead assets, our July grand reopening invited local patrons to return to a museum that many hadn't visited since they were in school.

Our visitors brought their children and grandchildren to see the new campus, and families shared stories of their previous visits during art classes, Harry Potter Camps, weddings, family outings and school trips.

The guest responses were registered in superlatives.
"Unbelievable."
"Over the top."
"There's so much to see. We'll be back."

With an overall investment of more than \$11 million, our reopening coincided with a neighborhood renewal as the Canalside development and historic building restoration are taking place along West Sixth Street.

Our success is also a tribute to retired Executive Director George Deutsch. During his 5-year tenure, the museum expanded from the Watson-Curtze Mansion to four buildings, and the staff increased from six to 18.

We are still growing.

We're updating current exhibits on a regular basis, and we are introducing short-term popup exhibits like our recent Vintage Valentines and Maple syrup displays that brought in hundreds of visitors in 2022.

We've introduced monthly Community Days in which generous sponsors that include Erie Federal Credit Union, Erie Community Foundation, Erie Insurance and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield have ensured that people can enjoy free admission to the museum.

We've also introduced Second Saturdays every month, in which children have opportunities to participate in art projects they can take home.

This summer, we hope you'll join us as we open our newest gallery that shares the Story of Us: Coming to Erie and Erie at Work.

In the meantime, you can stay up to date on all the happenings by becoming a member, volunteering and/or subscribing to our weekly email newsletter. Sign up via email to Sara Little slittle@eriehistory.org.

Thanks for sharing in our journey Where History Inspires.



Mark Squeglia
Interim Executive Director



Kelly Montefiori
President, Board of Directors

NEW EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

After we kicked off the 2021 introduction of our Frank Lloyd Wright exhibit, guests from all across the nation took notice.

For example, 40 Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy members traveled to Erie from an annual October conference in Buffalo to tour the entire campus.

Our central location has put us on the national map for visits from the Buffalo-Cleveland-Pittsburgh corridor and far beyond. Tom Hagen and office curator Jeff Kidder connected with Jan Novie, who was a protege of Aaron Green, the architect who worked with Wright to open the San Francisco office. Novie visited in September and provided many personal items from the office. He said that he felt he had been "transported back in time" when he visited.

The exhibit is part of the [Great Wright Road Trip](#), thanks to Visit Buffalo Niagara. The inclusion has given us national exposure in major media including [Forbes magazine](#).

The area outside the office included a few of Wright's favorite vehicles and his expansive model of the Butterfly Bridge. The entire space gives visitors a look at designs the iconic architect, who lived from 1867 to 1959, created during his career.

For 2022, bus tours are planned in cooperation with Frank Lloyd Wright sites in western New York and Laurel Highlands with a goal of expanding to national tours and highway directional markers.

The new building that houses the office was constructed specifically to match the original office dimensions. This addition to the campus highlights goals detailed in our mission and vision statements.

VISION STATEMENT

The Hagen History Center engages the community through dynamic educational programs, inspiring exhibits, community building programs and relevant publications. We preserve collections representing over 200 years of our history. Our archives and collections serve as a comprehensive and accessible resource for researchers, educators, students, and the public.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Hagen History Center engages and inspires a diverse audience by exhibiting links to the past, understanding the present and guidance for the future, while preserving the history of Erie County, Northwestern Pennsylvania and our national heritage.



Jan Novie, who worked in the Frank Lloyd Wright office visited Erie and described the office reconstruction as "perfect."



Frank Lloyd Wright's 1930 Cord and a Crosley Hot Shot are pictured outside Wright's office.



In contrast to the main drafting room, Frank Lloyd Wright's private inner office has a more intimate setting.



Frank Lloyd Wright's Butterfly Bridge model, featured in the movie "Die Hard" is in the exhibit.

POPULAR EXHIBITS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Something for everyone

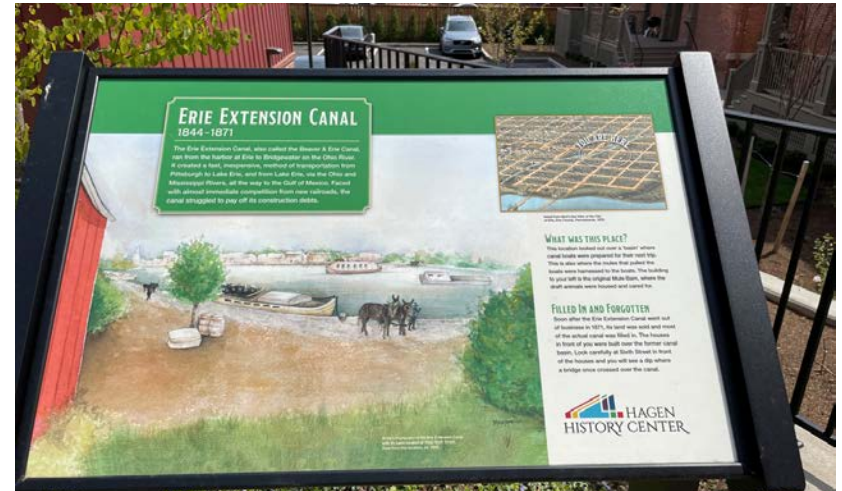
No matter how young or old our guests are, they find something to tell us they loved. Here are just a few of the most popular exhibits:

- Winifred Watson's childhood bedroom
- Waldameer exhibit
- Perry Welcome Gallery
- Erie Extension Canal
- Changing Silhouette of Women's Fashions
- Civil War room
- The never-before-seen Servants' Quarters in the mansion
- The Griswold exhibit, which has drawn national collectors to the mansion and to Erie
- Erie and the Navy
- Popup exhibits
- Architecture in the Watson-Curtze Mansion

One exhibit has been a part of Erie history for centuries. The power of the Mad Anthony Wayne story continues to awe visitors.

In 1796, Wayne, known for his exuberant bravery, died in Erie and was buried here. More than a decade later, his family wanted his remains transferred back to his eastern Pennsylvania home. The effort to make it happen required boiling the incredibly well-preserved general's body in a cauldron to remove the bones for transport. The cauldron and more of the story are on display in Wood-Morrison House.

Many visitors remember seeing the Wayne pot as children and ask about it as soon as they arrive.



The Erie Extension Canal was located next to the Wood-Morrison House. Informative displays about its history are inside and outside the house.

Carriage House Gift Shop becomes shopping destination

While some servants lived in the Mansion, others lived in what is now The Carriage House Gift Shop.

Manager Sara Little completely revised its contents with hard-to-find Frank Lloyd Wright home decor and clothing along with assorted locally-made items, books, candles, jewelry and more.

In less than six months, the shop had over \$24,000 in sales with the biggest sellers being Frank Lloyd Wright socks and tea towels, our own Wolverine coffee blend and Waldameer Mystery Files Series of books. Over 1,600 items have been sold.

"Our guests have commented on the wide variety of items sold and that there is something for everyone. Repeat guests have noticed that there is something different every time they come," Sara said.



The Carriage House Gift Shop reopened with an incredible array of gifts and souvenirs.

EDUCATION

History intrigues and entertains youngsters and teens

In the fall of 2021, school tours started up again after the pandemic. Since that time, busloads of students participated in interactive history projects that were educational and fun. Best of all, these are free to students.

The entire St. Gregory student body visited along with classes from Erie Day School, North East High School, Millcreek School District, Christian Alliance Academy, Ohio Buckeye Schools in Ashtabula, and many others.

Multiple Girl Scout groups have visited the campus, and one group earned their Women's History Month badges as a result of a program we created especially for them.

We also hosted more than 20 middle-schoolers in a summer History Detectives Summer Camp with Curator Becky Weiser, Education Director Jeff Sherry, Curatorial Assistant Amanda Rockwood, Assistant Camp Director Abbie Harrington and Intern Lydia Lane. The campers even created their own exhibits, and parents visited while students explained what they learned. A similar camp begins this summer.

Our staff members have also taken history into the classroom with artifacts and presentations that engage elementary pupils to college coeds in inspiring and interactive programs. Our staff created a clever presentation for 200 students in Kindergarten to 8th grade at Erie Day School. To book a tour, contact Jeff Sherry jsherry@eriehistory.org.



Seventh and eighth grade students from Ohio Buckeye Schools in Ashtabula, Ohio, visited the entire campus. They are standing on the front steps of the Watson-Curtze Mansion.



Students from St. Gregory School in North East visited during the winter.



A class from Erie First Christian Academy visited during the holidays.



Middle schoolers from Erie County took part in a week-long History Detectives camp in 2021.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES



The reading room in the library includes more than 5,800 books with rare items among the collections.



The archives building houses more than 800 separate collections and 8,200 linear feet of material.

Research inspires and engages our community

Our research staff has handled more than 220 research projects since we reopened. Library & Archives Director Theresa Gamble works with Reference Assistant Pauline Stanton, Processing Archivist KayAnn Warner, Accessioning Assistant Jeanne Kidder, Researcher Claire Varrieur and multiple volunteers and interns to assist people on their projects.

In addition, 69 researchers have visited our Carriage House Library where the reading room opens the door to 200 years of history and multiple collections.

What do people research?

Family histories, historical projects and plenty of books. Authors who have visited us include:

- Judge Dan Brabender while compiling his book "Erie's Sensational Murder Trials"
- Bill Welch and an entire team working on an upcoming WWII book that focuses on Erie County veterans
- Jennifer Sopko, who is writing a book on amusement parks, carousels and roller coasters in Western Pennsylvania
- Michael Berlin and multiple researchers for the new WQLN "Erie Chronicles" video series
- Hans Myers, who wrote about Strong Vincent in a recently released book called "The Lion of Round Top"

The reading room of the library houses more than 5,800 rare books published in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

In-person research is a terrific benefit for members, but we know a personal visit isn't always possible.

To make history accessible to everyone who can't visit us in person, we are currently digitizing collections.

The project was funded with more than \$325,000, thanks to Erie County government, Erie Community Foundation, Kern Family Foundation and Marquette Savings Bank.

Many of the popular collections will soon be available on our website starting with back issues of "The Journal of Erie Studies."

These publications, dating back to 1972, are the result of our collaboration with the Jefferson Education Society.

Behind the reading room, our 10,000-square-foot archives building includes thousands of photos, documents, letters, diaries, books, reports and other historical resources.

Built in 2015, the building houses more than 800 separate collections and 8,200 linear feet of material that was once housed in the former location of the Erie County Historical Society in downtown Erie.

This year, to assist researchers in finding information, a dedicated computer station has been set up in the library.

For more information on research or to schedule an appointment, contact Theresa Gamble tgamble@eriehistory.org.

CURATORIAL UPDATES



The Changing Silhouette of Women's Fashions is one of the many exhibits that opened in 2021. It is in the bedroom that was once the guest room of the Watson-Curtze Mansion. It traces women's fashions from the 1840s to the 1890s.



In one of the social media curatorial video segments, Gannon Work Study student Molly Begeman, left, and Becky Weiser discuss the silver fruit compote made for Annie Scott Strong. It has Strong's image in the sterling silver.

The curatorial team installed multiple new exhibits in 2021, and the staff continues to amaze.

In addition to all their duties on the Erie and Girard campuses, Curator Becky Weiser and Curatorial Assistant Amanda Rockwood were invited to speak at the American Association for State & Local History Annual Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas. The association includes more than 5,500 organizations in the United States and Canada.

For the presentation, Becky, Amanda and volunteers David Jakubowski and Jenny Martin created a hands-on, interactive teaching tool and fantasy board game "Deaccessioning – the Quest."

Deaccessioning is the proper procedure of removing things from a museum collection. The game has since been copyrighted, and the team has been asked to participate in additional conferences.

This department has been active in education with a camp for kids and multiple speaking engagements for students and adults. This year, Becky and Amanda have been letting the public know what's behind the scenes with popular 2-3-minute videos that appear on social media. So far, the curatorial staff members and interns have introduced viewers to interesting stories behind clothing, embroidery, old underground pipes, carvings, curious artifacts, skates, and other items in our collections.

Becky also conducted multiple classes, open to the public, in cross-stitch and embroidery. She works with donors of personal memorabilia that are now on display. The new exhibits dedicated to Bobbi Hovis and Colonel Ross Anthony "Tony" Snow are in the Wood-Morrison House.

Bobbi Hovis, originally from Edinboro, is a nurse who served during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Dr. Snow was active during Desert Storm. He and his wife Kathy Iorio also host a television show called "Wellsville."

The curatorial team accepted many donations from community members including paintings and additional 3-D objects. For example, the Harry F. Sanner Jr. family donated a painting of their father by done by famed Erie artist Joseph Plavcan.

For the new exhibit set to open this summer, our curatorial staff and library and archives staff have been busy searching through our 3-D and 2-D collections to illustrate the story of us: Coming to Erie and Erie at Work. These galleries on the second floor of the New Exhibit Building will feature a look at immigration and Erie's industrial growth.

If you would like to donate something to our collections, please contact Curator Becky Weiser or Library and Archives Director Theresa Gamble by calling 814-454-1813.



Bobbi Hovis' memorabilia and her book are on exhibit in the Wood-Morrison House. She is a flight nurse from Edinboro.



Colonel Ross Anthony "Tony" Snow, M.D. shared his story, uniform and 22 years of military service with us.

EVENTS IN ERIE AND GIRARD



During our grand reopening and ribbon cutting in July 2021, Thomas Hagen cut the ribbon to kick off a new era for the Erie campus with four buildings open to the public.

Most events had been on hold or cancelled for the bulk of 2020 and part of 2021, but our grand reopening and ribbon cutting changed all of that. The opening cocktail party hosted 400 people on a Friday night in July followed by 2,000 more visitors during the subsequent free weekend.

During A Night at the Museum Gala in September, 450 guests enjoyed an evening on the campus. The event had been rescheduled multiple times due to COVID-19, and it raised more than \$390,000 to support operational expenses. The 2021 gala honored Thomas B. Hagen for his outstanding philanthropy to the City of Erie. Roger and Nedra Richards served as a honorary chair couple.

The 2022 event is scheduled for Friday, September 16.



Hagen History Center gave the restored Battles Bank sign, at left, to Jon and Gina Welsh, new owners of the Battles Bank building in Girard, which is now Full Circle Winery.

Honorees will be Teresa Brugger and the late Leo Brugger. Mike and Susan McCormick will be the honorary Chair Couple for 2022.

December holidays were truly something to celebrate in 2021 when staff and volunteers handled all the decorating duties in the Watson-Curtze Mansion. A record 2,660 visitors toured the Mansion and enjoyed Victorian Holidays, an annual event sponsored by the Erie Federal Credit Union.

Other popular events include sold-out Sunday tea parties in October and December.

The Erie campus also hosted more than 40 private weddings, meetings and other gatherings.

In Girard, our Battles properties held multiple celebrations with hundreds of visitors.

We participated in Girard community events with the donation of the original Battles Bank sign to Jon and Gina Welsh, new owners of the Battles Bank building that now houses Full Circle Winery.

We also celebrated the installation of a new historical marker dedicated to Charlotte Elizabeth Battles.

Charlotte will be the subject of a WQLN documentary that airs in October 2022 as part of the new Erie Chronicles series.

Staff and volunteers also welcomed visitors during open houses, Dan Rice Days and a birthday party for Charlotte Elizabeth Battles. Volunteers decked out the interior and exterior of the White House in holiday finery for the first time in years.

More events are planned for this summer and fall. Visit <https://www.eriehistory.org/events/>



More than 450 people attended A Night at the Museum gala in September 2021.

ADVANCEMENT

Our loyal donors helped us continue to make history inspiring, and in the year from 2020 to 2021, we brought in more than \$1.4 million to help fund staff salaries, exhibits, and much more as you can see on page 11. Here are a few ways our donors chose to support us.

Planned giving secures the museum's future

Leaving a gift in your will is one way to support a nonprofit. One of our supporters is Doug Vicary, a teacher at Cathedral Prep. He is a member of the Curtze family who donated the Watson-Curtze Mansion to the Erie School District in 1942.

The Curtzes had a vision that their former home would serve to educate. The mansion later was transferred to the Erie County Historical Society and became the keystone of the Hagen History Center.

Curtze family members have been generous in their donations of property, memorabilia, and endowments to guarantee that future generations of students will experience inspiring history on our campus.

Curtze Family Leadership Giving Circle

Thanks to the generosity of our Curtze Family Leadership Giving Circle members, (\$1,200 and above), we are making history for years to come.



Local Attorney Tom Tupitza, former board president of the Erie County Historical Society, and his wife, Carol, have long supported the Center's mission and have been members of the Curtze Circle since 2019.

Businesses, individuals sponsor exhibits

Many of the popular exhibits in the Hagen History Center are funded by sponsors. For example, PNC sponsored the Erie Extension Canal Exhibit in the Wood-Morrison House.

Additional sponsorships include:

Kern Family Foundation: Perry Welcome Gallery in the New Exhibit Building; Ronald McDonald House Charities: Second-floor foyer of Wood-Morrison House; Women Creating A Legacy: Meeting room in Wood-Morrison House.



The Perry Welcome Gallery display includes multiple items that belonged to Oliver Hazard Perry.



The PNC Erie Extension Canal Gallery inside the Wood-Morrison House features the entire story of the Extension Canal including a diorama.

Grants, tax credits help fund operating budget

To fund operational expenses and special projects, we have applied for and received multiple grants totaling \$423,095 from the Erie Community Foundation, Erie Insurance, the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission, Erie County, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Erie County Institute of Museum Library Services, Marquette Savings Bank, Erie Arts & Culture and American Rescue Plan Act funds.

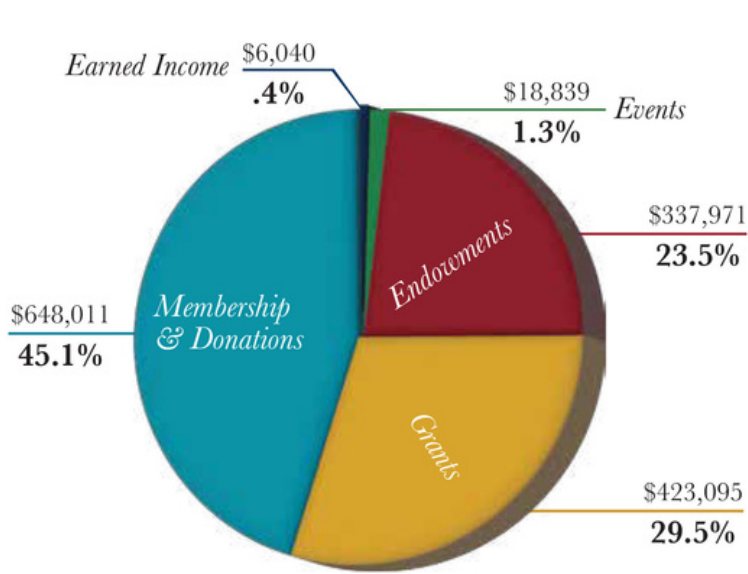
We have also participated in Pennsylvania's Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), which encourages businesses to invest in Pennsylvania projects that improve distressed areas and support, among other things, educational opportunities.

We are a qualified recipient of NAP funds. A tax credit of up to 55% can be awarded. This is in addition to federal tax deductions available to our donors.

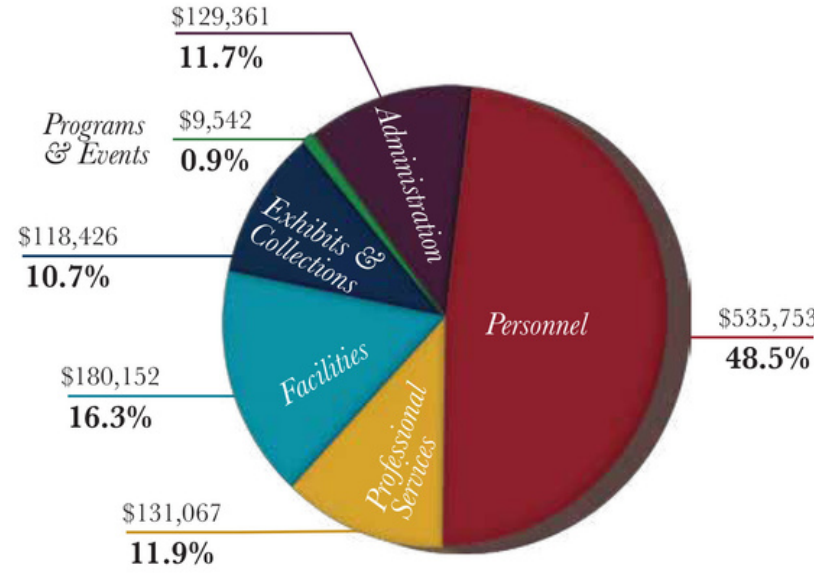
Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program offers our donors either a 75% or 90% tax credit on PA taxes. Again, this is in addition to federal tax deductions. Hagen History Center receives donations for educational programs that include campus tours, virtual programs, educational videos and traveling trunk visits to schools.

For more information on funding opportunities, call Geri Cicchetti at 814-454-1813, ext. 34.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021

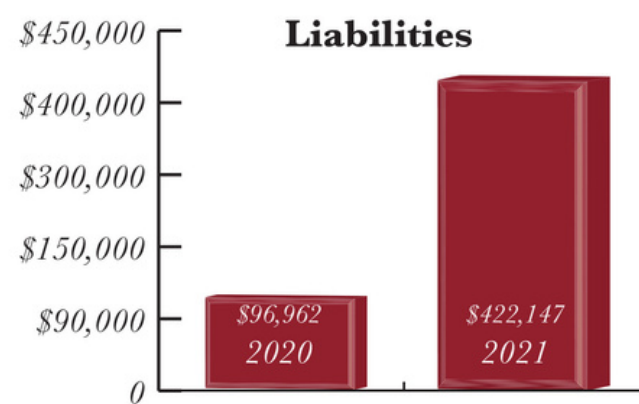
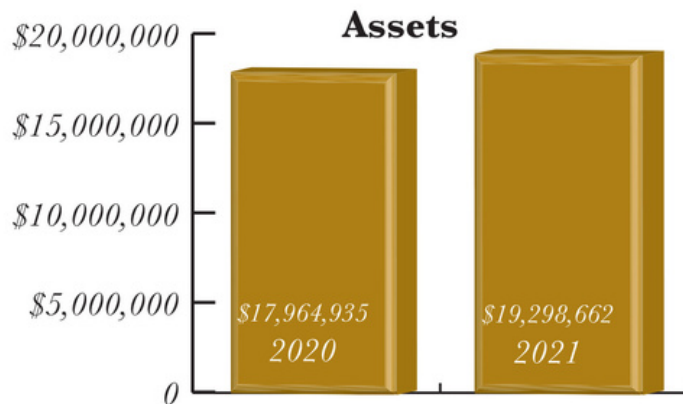


Income \$1,435,956



Expenses \$1,104,301

Net Operating Income \$331,655 – Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021



VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS



Volunteer, donor and docent Gwendolyn White is now a board member.

Gwendolyn has been involved in many of our volunteer efforts and serves as a docent. She welcomed thousands of guests during our grand reopening. She has been an active member of our annual gala committee. She was also one of our featured speakers during a Facebook Live event where she shared her experience of tracing her family tree and ancestry.

Glenn Chichester, at right, is a retired pharmacist and dedicated Frank Lloyd Wright fan. He has been a volunteer for more than a year and works with student groups and all guests.

He noted that visitors often stop to see the campus when they're on their way to another event but choose to stay and see more of our campus once they arrive.

You can view our list of volunteers on page 2. Would you like to volunteer? Contact Jeff Sherry at jsherry@eriehistory.org

Members often become volunteers

Our team of more than 100 volunteers are our front line, and they help guests discover all that we have to offer in every building.

Ranging in age from teens to retirees, they graciously handle daily tours, events, summer camps and educational and community programs.

Some serve as docents while others are always available "just in case."

Volunteer Gwendolyn White moved to Erie in 1985 from Lexington, Kentucky, when she started her career at Erie Insurance. She adopted Erie as her hometown and volunteers with multiple nonprofits.



Meet one of our new members

Many of our members join for the convenience of returning to see new exhibits whenever they want without paying a separate admission fee each time.

Blogger Erin Nemenz Phillips is one of those members. She writes "[Old Erie on Foot](#)" and lives in the Hagen History Center neighborhood. She has been "discovering the beautiful old places by foot, stroller, bicycle, papoose, and occasionally minivan," according to her website.

Here's why she and her family joined in 2021:
"I have always been interested in local history, and have fond memories of visiting the Watson-Curtze Mansion when I was a child.

These formative memories of touring the house on field trips and with my family definitely helped shape my love for history and architecture.

Becoming members allows me to pass that love onto my own children. And with the grand reopening, especially with the addition of the servants' quarters (which I found particularly moving), I knew my family would want to spend more time at the museum and so we chose to become members.

We live just down the street, so knowing we have the option to visit whenever the mood strikes, to explore the homes, discover some new details, and learn something more about where we live: becoming members was a great choice for us.

We are so grateful to have such a dynamic, beautifully preserved piece of Erie history right in our backyard."

You can join more than 600 of your friends and neighbors by becoming a member. Scan the QR code at right.



Erin Nemenz Phillips and her family bought a membership in 2021. Erin is pictured with her daughter in the Watson-Curtze Mansion.



DONORS AND MEMBERS

Thanks to all of our generous donors and members for continued support of the museum Where History Inspires

\$100,000+

Thomas B. Hagen

\$25,000-\$49,999

Leo J. and Teresa M. Brugger
Bruce and Bonnie Kern

\$10,000-\$24,999

Bruce and Sarah Hagen McWilliams
Roger and Nedra Richards
Roger and Laurel Taft

\$5,000-\$9,999

The Family of Alvin L. Irwin
Bruce and Nancy Kern
Lynn and Dale McBrier

\$1,000-\$4,999

Anonymous
Cle and Penny Austin
Estate of Paul and Janice Baker
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James Beatty
Mark Becker
Peep Brereton
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Brinling
Mary Lincoln and Charles Brock
Sheila Brugger
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COMING SOON

The Story of Us will open to the public this year on the second floor of the New Exhibit Building. It is designed to express pride in our community for all of us who call Erie home.

It will educate visitors with "Coming to Erie," which will show how our ancestors were pioneering immigrants who created neighborhoods, churches, and ethnic clubs.

In "Erie at Work," we'll see how residents made a living in farming, fishing, lumbering, industry, service professions, healthcare, education and retail from our past to the present.

