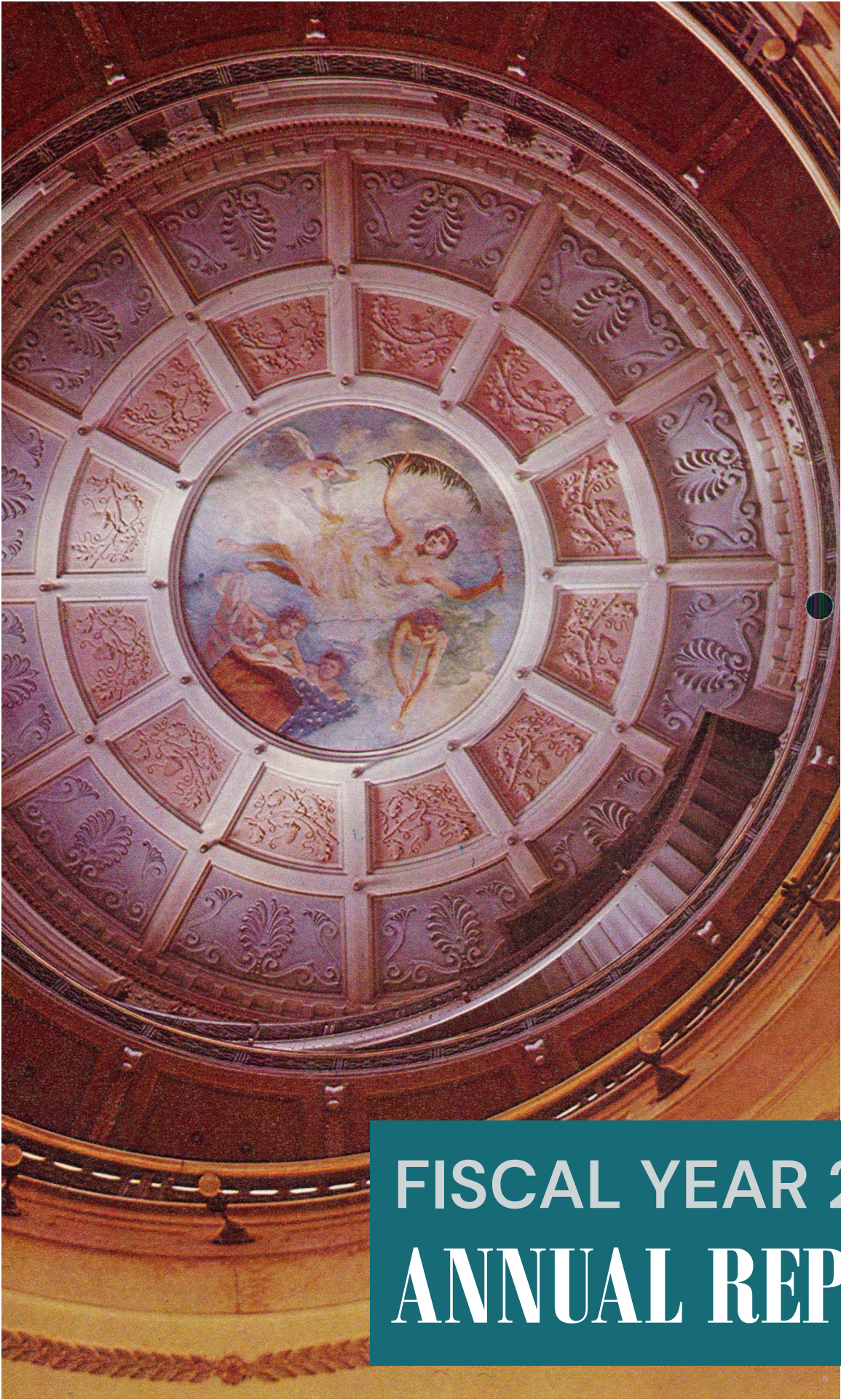




MCLEAN COUNTY MUSEUM of HISTORY

FISCAL YEAR 2025
ANNUAL REPORT

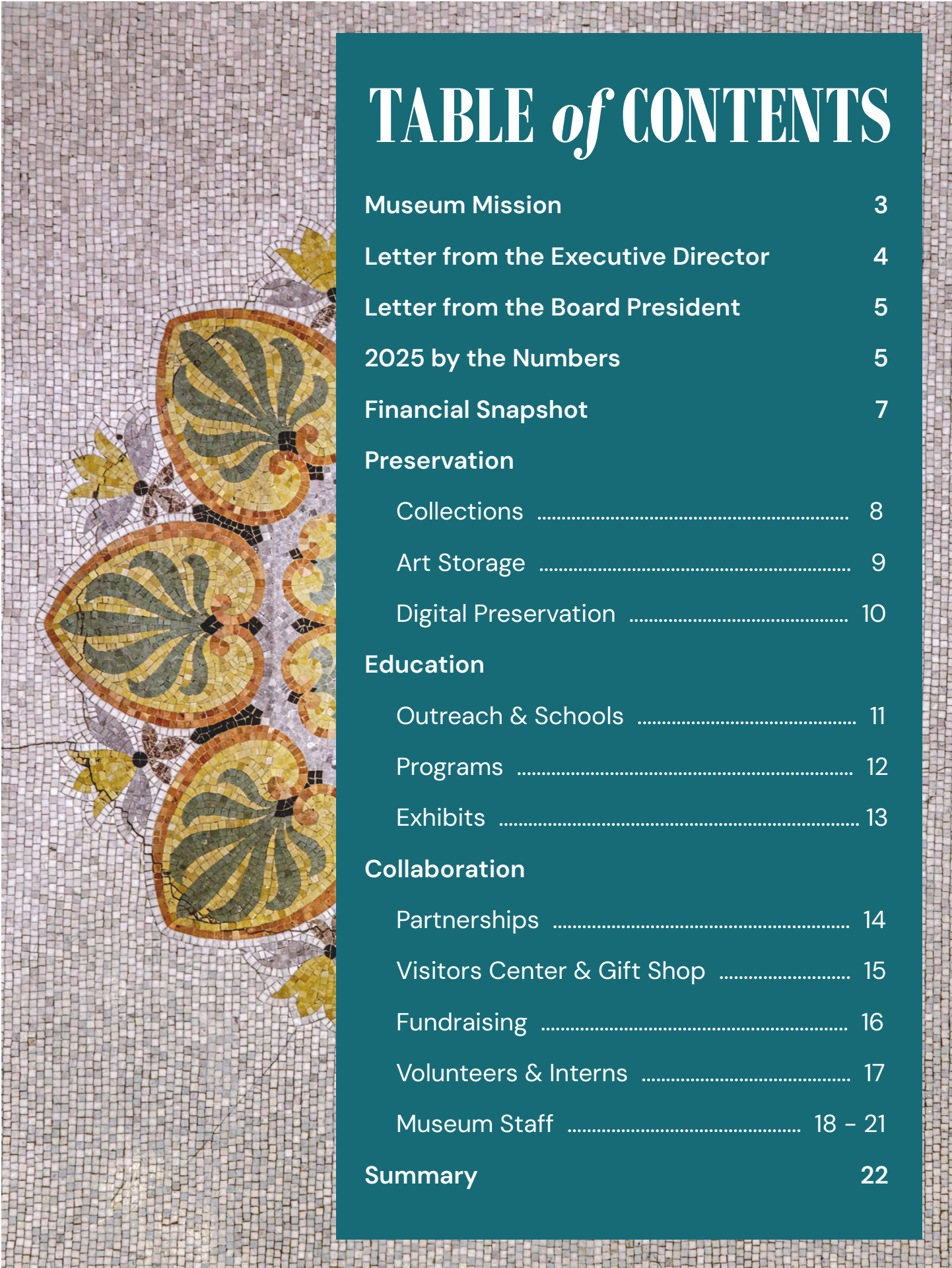


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MUSEUM MISSION

Our mission is to preserve, educate, and collaborate in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County.

We are stewards of McLean County history — discovering, researching, and sharing the tangible evidence of the past.

We are a cornerstone for learning and civic engagement through programs, exhibitions, and enrichment.

We are inclusive, seeking ideas and valuing multiple perspectives.

We endeavor to drive new conversations and engage more people to understand and be inspired by the rich history of McLean County.

The McLean County Museum of History traces its roots back to 1892, the year the McLean County Historical Society was founded.

The Museum is an AAM nationally accredited, independent 501(c)3 nonprofit, featuring eight exhibit galleries, preserving more than 20,000 objects, 15,000 rare books, and over 2,000 linear feet of historical papers and images in the archives.

AAM Accreditation recognizes museums for their commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement. Only 3.3% of museums in the country are accredited.



FROM THE DESK OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMIG

We are halfway through this decade, five years out from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am in my fifth year as the Executive Director of the McLean County Museum of History. These last five years have been marked by change and growth, which aptly aligns with the traditional acknowledgement for fifth anniversaries: gifts of wood.

From my second-floor office window, I can see one of the burr oak trees donated to the Museum during the last grounds renovation, its branches swaying with the whim of the wind. Wood symbolizes growth and endurance, which is very fitting for these times.

In this last year, our staff, with abundant support from our board and volunteers, brought history to life, while navigating funding challenges, new partnerships, and unforeseen changes in our world.

What is documented in this annual report highlights these efforts. From adding historically inspired public art in Downtown Bloomington to hosting innovative new programming, we educated thousands of people, created new ways for people to engage with local history, forged new partnerships, and preserved the stories of the past for future generations.

Museums are at the forefront of cultural upheaval in the United States. This reality calls us to advocate for the value of preserving and sharing collective history all the more.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, an American journalist, claims that “history is important” because it “helps us understand what we are capable of doing....if we can finally be truthful about who we are, we can then create this country” (*New York Times* interview with Wesley Moore, November 2025).

History provides us with roadmaps for learning, for the re-emergence of our founding ideals. This is pertinent at this moment.

In the American Alliance of Museums’ 2025 “National Snapshot of United States Museums,” directors from across the country report a disconcerting downturn in museums’ funding and attendance. Respondents identified the following reasons: shifts in philanthropy (63%); inflation (53%); financial instability (52%); changes to travel and tourism (48%); reduction or elimination of government funding (47%); ideological and political polarization (33%); and a crisis in trust (19%).

Despite these trends, we are on track for an uptick in attendance and membership. Even so, we join our museum peers in feeling the impact of philanthropic shifts, unstable markets, and high inflation. Our costs are far outpacing our revenue.

The support we receive from our community fuels our mission. Our work is rooted in the community’s penchant for preserving truth, and we remain steadfast, striving to serve you, and to be **YOUR MUSEUM**, dedicated to educating, collaborating, and preserving **YOUR HISTORY**.

Sincerely,


Julie Emig, E.d.D



BOARD of DIRECTORS

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* *Past President*

Now in our 122nd year, the McLean County Museum of History continues to play a vital role in preserving, educating and collaborating to share our collective heritage. We can't do that without our community's support.

2025 was a challenging year for many museums across the country. Significant losses in government funding, increased partisanship, and inflation are just a few of the headwinds museums face.

Despite those challenges, the staff and volunteers at the McLean County Museum of History continue to do amazing work every day. They consistently provide diverse educational experiences throughout the year, launched new temporary exhibits, and are working hard to plan for future exhibits to share with our community. Several new strategic partnerships have been formed and the focus on digitization and preservation of new objects continues.

It comes as no surprise that our museum is one of the only 3% of museums nationally to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. This feat could not be accomplished without the support of our community, which we need now more than ever.

Whether your family has been in this community for generations or your history in McLean County started more recently, everyone has a story to tell.

We want to hear yours. After all, it is your museum, your history.

Please come visit the beautiful building we call home and enjoy the cultural treasure that is the McLean County Museum of History!

– *Board President Michelle Pazar*





2025 *by the* NUMBERS



14,000
Social Media
Followers



60,000
Visitors



730
Members

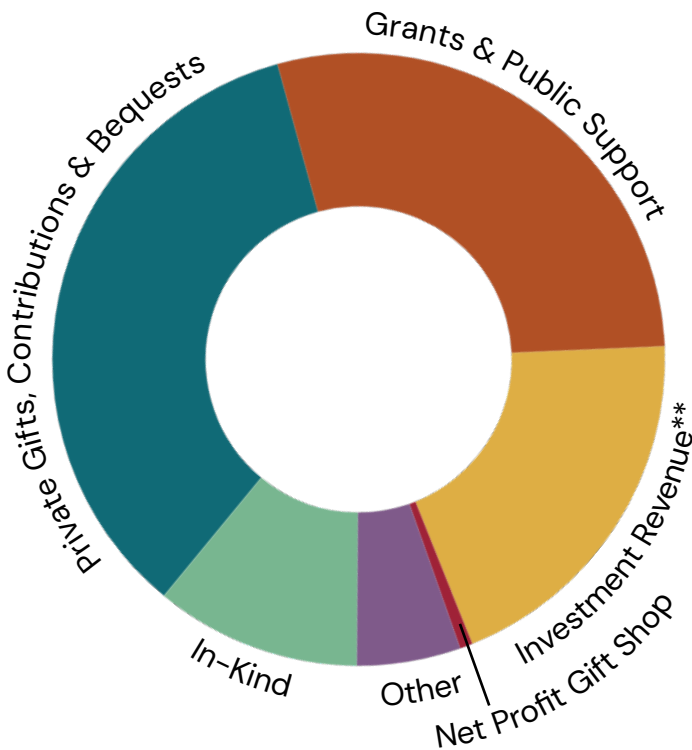
20,089
Program
Participants



\$1,840,000
Estimated
Economic Impact

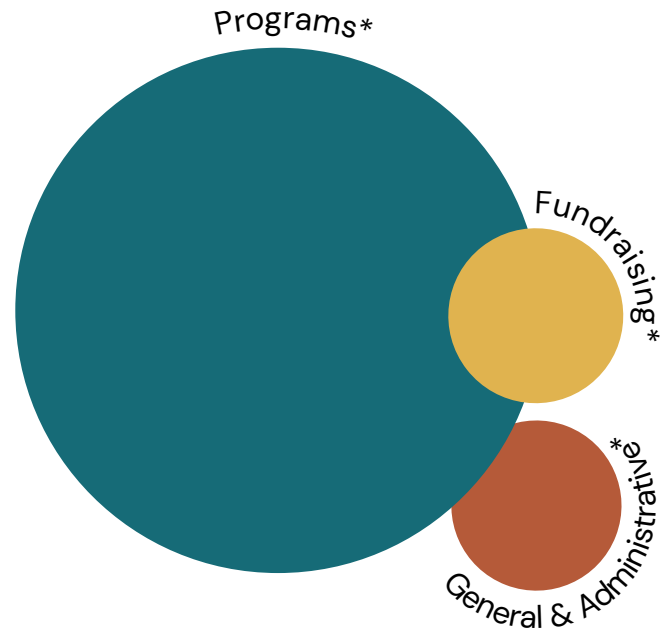
Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Snapshot

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025



OPERATING REVENUE

Private Gifts, Contributions & Bequests	.....	\$629,150
Grants & Public Support	.....	\$517,329
Investment Revenue**	.....	\$355,319
Net Profit Gift Shop	.....	\$12,093
Other Income	.....	\$99,112
In-Kind	.....	\$196,674
Total Revenue	.....	\$1,809,860



EXPENSES

Programs*	.....	\$1,972,543
General & Administrative*	.....	\$210,525
Fundraising*	.....	\$214,935
Total Expenses	.....	\$2,398,003

Moving forward, private support, including estate gifts, will continue to be critical to the Museum's financial stability. Growing the pool of invested assets to offset economic instability is a long-term priority.

*** Much of the fluctuation in operating revenue from year to year is driven by investment revenue and grants. This includes changes in the market value of our endowments. Timing of our fiscal end of year in 2025 resulted in a subpar return on our invested assets. The first quarter of calendar year 2025 was marked with the worst monthly return of the S&P 500 since December of 2022. This economic contraction was driven by tariff fears, an AI bubble burst, a market correction, and a defensive shift by investors. Markets rebounded later in the calendar year resulting in improved earnings by mid-fiscal year 2026.*

** Includes associated staff salaries*

PRESERVATION

Each item donated to the Museum has a story to share. We sit down with every donor to hear their stories and document them before processing the donation. Once accessioned, each item is cataloged and rehoused in one of our climate-controlled storage areas.

The Museum's mission of preservation is largely achieved through the development and care of our vast collections of historical artifacts, and archival materials.



This year, the Library & Archives processed 205 individually signed donations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben

Kriegsgefangenen-Stammlager: Stalag Luft 7 (Fr. 4) Nr. 115 Lager: Stalag Luft 7

Name: HALL, Robert S. Staatsangehörigkeit: USA

Vorname: Robert S. Dienstgrad: Sgt

Geburtsort und -zeit: 31.5.15, Normal, Illinois, USA Truppenteil: ROAF Komp. ufw.

Religion: Protestant Zivilberuf: Verkäufer Berufs-Gr.: R 158 758

Vorname des Vaters: Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatortes): R 158 758

Familienname der Mutter: Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): Antwerpen 5.6.44

Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert: gesund

Photobild

Nähere Personalsbeschreibung

Größe: 1,73 Haarfarbe: d-braun Besondere Bemerkungen: Kleines Mal unter dem rechten Auge

Fingerabdruck des rechten (l.) Zeigefingers: Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen: Charles W. Hall (Bruder), 102 North St., Normal Illinois

8/87 Menden!

These gifts included many historically invaluable items, including Dorothy Sieberts' 4-H scrapbook from the 1940s and early 1950s, and Normal resident Robert S. Hall's diary from his time in a German WWII POW camp.

The Museum accessioned 49 objects from 25 donations this year.

These physical items dated from 1860 to 2024 and included a handmade dulcimer, an Illinois Central Railroad train conductor's ticket punch, and eclipse glasses — just to name a few.

We preserve **20,000+ objects** in our permanent collection, which tangibly illustrate a multifaceted view of life in McLean County, Illinois, throughout time.

There are currently over 1,100 of those objects available to anyone, anywhere, at any time via our Online Object Database. This database allows visitors to access information about the Museum's permanent object collection, including photos, descriptions, historical context, and biographical information about the objects and the people who engaged with them.



Over the next several years, we will continue to grow this publicly accessible database, adding at least 500 object records per year.

Visit mchistory.pastperfectonline.com to begin exploring!

PRESERVATION

We were lucky to receive IMLS grant funding in September 2024, before it was terminated, to renovate our art storage. The grant helped pay for SpaceSaver storage in our art storage location, along with a full inventory of our entire art collection.

Once installed, the SpaceSaver storage system **doubled** our capacity to preserve and store artworks.

The Museum's art collection consists of over 550 pieces of locally significant art, some dating back to the 1800s, and some as recent as the 2000s.

However, Curator of Collections Jackie Cain estimates that over 50% of said art needs conservation work. The IMLS grant also provided funds to support conservation work and, more notably, to compensate student interns learning how to conserve these artworks for future generations.



PRESERVATION

In this unsettled age of artificial intelligence, when students, teachers, genealogists, and others increasingly depend on digital tools for research and composition, it is imperative that the Museum plays an active role in this new world. The digitization of Museum materials — including photographs, publications, and selected manuscripts and collections — continues apace, and we are dedicated to adapting to emerging technologies.

In 2025, we added over 20,000 images to the Illinois Digital Archives from our Pantagraph Negatives Collection. We now have 200,000+ images available online!



Hopedale Mennonite Church Sunday School class visits the new armadillos at Miller Park Zoo in 1960.



Chin Yee Lem (left) and Pearl Gee's (right) wedding day, July 6, 1960. This photo was taken inside the McLean County Courthouse (now Museum) after the nuptials.



Chester Wonderlin rings in 1955 at Wonderlin Gallery, located at 405 Main St. (where Coffee Hound is now) in Bloomington. This image also illustrates the time sensitive nature of digitizing photo negatives before they disintegrate further.

Investing in the Future

Doing more digitally requires space to do so! This year, we completed a large server upgrade and migration project to increase storage capacity and speed. Our new server environment has aligned us for long-term success and growth. Updates will continue to be made to optimize our infrastructure for long-term, archival-quality digital preservation. This work is a part of our strategic plan, and is expected to take years, if not decades, to complete. Year after year we'll have more of our collection online, but it will always be available in person, too.

Our daily interactions with visitors, students, and researchers highlight the fact that there's still no substitute for visiting the Library & Archives to examine primary source materials firsthand. And there's no doubt that a great deal of the Museum's holdings are still beyond the ken of AI and large language models such as ChatGPT.

Visit bit.ly/McIDA to explore more photos like these via the Illinois Digital Archives.

EDUCATION

Starting in the spring, we had an influx of requests for field trips, loan kits, and school programs. In doing these programs, it was clear that Making a Home was our most requested field trip, and that our Settler and Kickapoo Kits were our most requested loan kits.

This prompted discussions with local educators about how to make our resources more applicable to their classrooms and provide direction for updating our content. From this, our relationships with local schools and districts grew stronger, creating more opportunities to integrate local history into classrooms across the county.

Our mission to educate is met largely through field trips, public programming, and community outreach. This year the Museum helped educate 20,089 people of all ages.

Schools & School Groups Served in 2025

Bent Elementary School	Jessica Leman Home School
Bloomington Career Academy	Kindercare
Bloomington High School	Kingsley Junior High School
Bloomington Junior High School	LeRoy Elementary School
Calvary Baptist Academy	LeRoy Jr. & Sr. High School
Calvary Kid Connections Pre School	Lexington Jr. High School
Caritas Home School	Little Jewels Learning Center
Central Illinois Bridge Academy	Metcalf School
Cheer 24- Crossroads Area Home School Association	Miller Home School
Chiddix Junior High School	Netzer Home School (Classical Conversations)
Christian Life Academy	Normal Community High School
Classical Conversations Mock Trial	Normal Community West High School
Cornerstone Christian Academy	Oakland Elementary School
Countryside School	Offerman Home School
Davis Home School	Parkside Jr. High School
Epiphany School	Pontiac Twp. High School
Evans Jr. High School	Prairieland Elementary School
For a Better Tomorrow	Reeg Home School
Fox Creek Elementary	Secular Home Schoolers of BN
Graymont Grade School	Sharing Tree Preschool
Harshbarger Home School	Shelley Leeman Home School
Heartland Community College	Slagel & Haney Home School
Heyworth Elementary School	St. Mary's Elementary School
Herrarte Home School	St. Mary's School - Pontiac
Home School Friends	St. Paul's School
Illinois State University	Steidinger Home School (Classical Conversations)
Illinois Wesleyan University	Tri-Valley Middle School
Inclusive Secular Home Schooling Community of Central Illinois	Washington Elementary School

EDUCATION

Outside of the classroom, we provided hands-on summer learning opportunities for kids through our Futures in History Day Camp.



One parent shared that her son “absolutely loved this camp. It’s so unique and provides really cool experiences not otherwise available for kids. It was probably his favorite camp this summer. I love that there was so much focus and thought put into it.”

We also developed and implemented several programs for adults in response to community feedback this year. Some of our most popular programming included:

- Mourning in McLean: The Story of Death, Grieving, and Funerary Customs
- Miller Park: An Illustrated History
- The French Empire in Central Illinois: The Meskwaki Siege of 1730
- Artists, Advocates, Acrobats, and More! Women Who Made McLean County History
- Downtown Architecture Tours
- Wild Weather Stories of McLean County
- Dirty Laundry: Film Screening & Panel Discussion

These programs added to the rich tapestry of programming offered by the Museum, nicely complementing long-running series such as our Knit In and Senior Reminiscence programs. Additionally, our open-house-style community events, Día de Muertos Celebration and Christmas Under the Dome, brought a combined 1,000 visitors into the Museum for free, family-friendly fun.



Live theater returned to the Museum this year! Nomad Theatre Company brought short plays into our historic courtroom, entitled Order in the Court. This unique set of plays explored themes of justice, power, identity, and resistance. One play, The Indignant Ladies of Towanda, based on a true story from Towanda, Illinois, grounded the lineup in local history. All five performances sold out, and we are already discussing further collaborations with the troupe.

Earlier in the year, the courtroom also hosted a handful of free concerts, including one by an internationally touring Japanese artist, a pop-up exhibit on the Harlem Renaissance, and a slew of presentations on a variety of topics.



Visit mchistory.org/events for information about all of our upcoming programming!

EDUCATION

Exhibits are educational spaces designed to spark curiosity, create connections, and foster meaningful conversations.

We have EIGHT exhibit galleries for visitors to explore.

At the beginning of 2025, longtime Curator of Exhibits, Susan Hartzold, retired after 31 years of service. Susan is irreplaceable, and the Museum restructured to adapt to her departure. Maria Mears transitioned from Director of Adult Education to be the Curator of Historical Interpretation. In addition to

supporting programming, Maria now develops exhibit and display text, manages the exhibit development process, and helps coordinate related programs. She spent most of the year collaborating with various staff members and subject matter experts on **More Than a Game! A Community History of Baseball & Softball**, which will open in July 2026. This forthcoming exhibit is set to be our most interactive temporary exhibit yet.

A Deadly Deception: The Asbestos Tragedy in McLean County, the Museum's most recent temporary exhibit, won a national award of excellence this year. The Association for State and Local History (AASLH) honored the exhibit for its powerful storytelling. Susan and the exhibit's co-curator, labor historian and board member Mike Matejka, accepted the award on the museum's behalf at the annual conference in Cincinnati.



Extending exhibitions beyond the Museum's exterior walls, we've amped up our efforts to use various media for storytelling — namely, art. Our Sculpture on the Square Initiative has brought two giants to downtown Bloomington: the **Iconic Livingston Santa** and Herb Eaton's **Star-Crossed Pollinators**.



EDUCATION

In 2025, we focused on creating intentional, engaging, opportunities to ***experience history***.

Whether on a guided tour or using **Tourient**, nearly 1,000 people engaged with one or more of our tour offerings this year.

Our mobile tour platform, Tourient, lets users take a tour on their own time. To date, over 1,500 unique visitors have used this web-based service. We currently offer three tours in English and one in Spanish on Tourient:

- Social Justice Walking Tour
- Downtown Architecture Tour
- Looking for Lincoln in Bloomington-Normal
- Construyendo Un Hogar

Visit tourient.mchistory.app to take a tour!



COLLABORATION

Partnerships expand our capacity to serve and lead to innovative results. In 2025, some of our partners included

WGLT — Together, we create the McHistory podcast, which aired its 100th installment in 2025.

Bloomington Public Library and Strong Towns BloNo — Together, we improved pedestrian safety and brought more public art downtown through the Sidewalk Mural Project.

Looking for Lincoln Association, Cindy Anet, and Generous Donors — Together, we created a 45-foot-tall by 25-foot-wide mural depicting Abraham Lincoln delivering his famous “Lost Speech” on the east wall of Rosie’s Pub.

Prairie Pride Coalition — Popup Harlem Renaissance Exhibit and World AIDS Day Awareness Afghan

Letitia Green Chapter of the DAR — Together, we installed a historic marker on the northeast corner of the Museum Square to remember local Revolutionary War veterans.

COUNTRY Financial — Together we marked 100 years of COUNTRY with a pop-up exhibit, a series of programming, and a historic marker recognizing their Centennial Business status by the State Historical Society in Springfield. COUNTRY also generously sponsored Free Tuesdays at the Museum and our tri-annual member magazine, *On the Square*.

The Museum’s mission of collaboration comes to life through the relationships we’ve built with people and organizations across the community.

COLLABORATION

A decade ago, collaboration among the Museum, the **Bloomington-Normal Convention & Visitors Bureau**, the **City of Bloomington**, the **Town of Normal**, the **Public Building Commission of McLean County**, and the **Illinois Office of Tourism** created the **Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop**.



We celebrated the Visitors Center & Gift Shop's 10th Anniversary with a Chamber of Commerce Milestone Ribbon Cutting, cookies, a classic car, and of course, Abe Lincoln.

Ahead of the celebration, we also redesigned cruisinwithlincolnon66.org to better showcase its resources, such as our Historic Route 66 map, downtown mural information, and details on our robust selection of carefully curated local products.

During this milestone year, the Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop:

- Earned proceeds of \$18,234 from admissions fees
- Grossed \$34,116 in gift shop sales during this fiscal year
- Welcomed visitors from 55 countries and 47 of the 50 states



COLLABORATION

Sponsors

We are grateful for our 2025 Presenting Sponsors, whose support empowers us to continue preserving, educating, and collaborating in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County. Contact Norris Porter if you, or your organization, wants to partner with the Museum.

Ace World Wide Moving
Livingston Santas' Reindeer

Anonymous
Speakers Bureau, Fieldtrips, Onsite Tours

Avanti's
Volunteers

Bridgestone
Futures in History Camp

COUNTRY Financial
Free Tuesdays at the Museum
On The Square Magazine

Cumulus Radio Bloomington
Christmas Under the Dome

Illinois Farm Bureau
Museum at the Farmer's Market

Jeffrey Alans & the Wandell Family
Livingston Santas

Lamar Advertising
Museum News E-Blast

MCK CPAs & Advisors
Lunch & Learn Series

Pontiac Granite Co.
Mourning in McLean

The Pantagraph
Rotunda Installations

WGLT
Live Stream Programs



Grants

The Museum replaced the roof on the historic Miller-Davis Building through support from the **Merwin Foundation** and the **City of Bloomington's Harriett Fuller Rust Matching Grant Program**.

Work continues on the \$550,000 **National Historical Publications and Records Commission** grant to digitize the Pantagraph Negatives Collection. Our archivists are currently adding metadata and uploading photographs from the 1960s to the Illinois Digital Archives.

Grants from **Normal Township** and **Bloomington Township** also allowed us to retool and strengthen our Senior Reminiscence program.

End of Year Appeal

Our fiscal year-end fundraising initiative to support the refurbishment and display of the historic Livingston Santas raised \$90,392.17, surpassing our \$85,000 goal. Thank you to everyone who contributed to preserving these jolly old giants for future generations.

COLLABORATION

People make it possible.



Members

Museum membership increased by 29.4% over the past five years. This year, membership remained stable with a 1% increase. Our long-term goal is to bring our rolling average membership total closer to 800. We currently average approximately 730 members.

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Volunteers

The Museum couldn't function without the support of our incredible volunteers. From helping with refreshments during events to greeting folks from around the world in our Visitors Center & Gift Shop, our volunteers do it all.

We are fortunate to have over 140 volunteers who dedicate an average of 700 hours a month to the Museum. This is around a 16% increase in volunteer hours over last year.

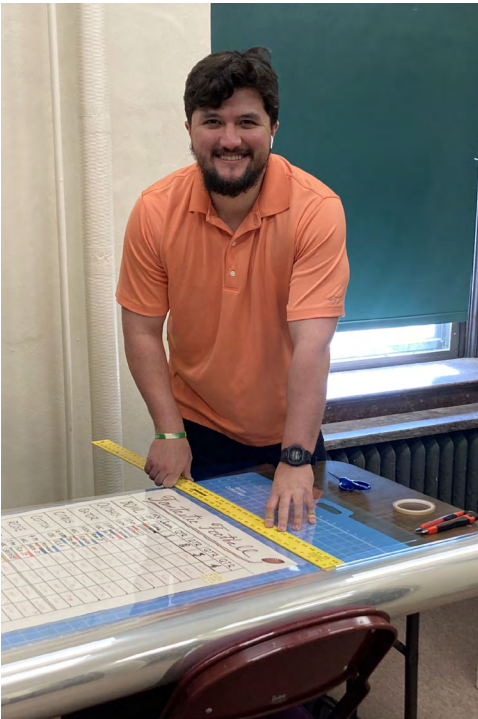
New volunteers are always needed, especially for library reference volunteers, who are in high demand. Please visit mchistory.org/about/volunteers-interns, or contact Eric Hansen, to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

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Interns

In 2025, we had 22 interns that spent 3,465 hours researching, writing, designing, cataloguing, and of course, learning at the Museum.

Of those 22 interns, 10 interned with us for more than one semester. All 22 of the interns we worked with in 2025 came from diverse backgrounds and shared their unique perspectives with us. They came from six different universities, three different states, and seven different disciplines including Anthropology, Graphic Design, Library and Information Sciences, History, Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Art History.



STAFF



Bailey Babbitt | Collections Technician

Assists with object processing, database management, installations, rehousing objects, and general collections care. Bailey interned with the Museum from 2023 to 2024, and officially joined the staff part time in 2025.



Jackie Cain | Curator of Collections

Manages the donation, processing, and preservation/conservation of the Museum's collection of 20,000+ objects, along with managing the development and implementation of the Museum's Online Collections Database — She has an M.A. from IUPUI in Museum Studies, and 8+ years of collections care experience. Jackie joined the staff in 2022.



Julie Emig | Executive Director

Leads and directs Museum operations — She has worked for the last 30 years as a teacher, leader, and staff developer for schools and public institutions across the country. Julie has a doctorate in literacy education from Boston University. This is her fifth year of leadership at the Museum.



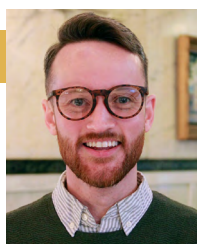
Kathi Davis | Visitor Experience Assistant

Assists in managing the operations of the Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop — Kathi joined the staff five years ago.



Rochelle Gridley | Assistant Archivist

Assists in digitizing photographic negatives and making them accessible — Rochelle began working part-time in 2018. She has a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois.



Eric Hansen | Director of Volunteers

Recruits, trains, and supports volunteers in their many roles within the Museum — He has a background in volunteer management and received his B.S. in Political Science from Illinois State University. Eric is a proud Central-Illinois native, having grown up right across the McLean and Tazewell County border in Minier. He joined the staff in 2023.

STAFF



Micaela Harris | Director of Communications

Creates various visual and written communications — Micaela collaborates with nearly everyone on staff to creatively tell the stories of the people of McLean County. She grew up in the area and returned after graduating with her B.A. in Journalism & Mass Communication from Drake University in 2020. She joined the staff in 2022.



Jana Kiefer | Assistant Archivist

Assists in digitizing photographic negatives and making them accessible — Jana began working part-time in 2019, but was a volunteer for many years before that. She grew up on a farm near Minonk and worked at GROWMARK for 32 years as a photographer and video producer.



Bill Kemp | Librarian

Heads the Museum's Library & Archives and has done so for the last 22 years. He has graduate degrees from the University of Illinois Springfield and Illinois State University — Bill is known for his in-depth knowledge of McLean County history and informative presentations to the community.



Brandy Maloney | Development Assistant

Supports the Director of Development with membership, sponsorship, fundraising, and special events — Brandy has a bachelors degree in Political Science & Legal Studies, and a graduate degree in History from ISU. She has over 20 years of experience in development. Brandy joined the Museum in 2017 and has been in her current position since 2019.



Emily McCusker | Director of Youth & Family Education

Oversees youth programs and family activities — Emily also works to connect with local educators to bring Museum resources in to the classroom. She has worked with multiple museums in the Chicagoland area and graduated from Lake Forest College in 2022 with her B.A. in History. She joined the staff in 2022.



Maria Mears | Curator of Historical Interpretation

Oversees exhibit development and directs the Museum's college internship program — Maria has a Ph.D. in American Studies and brings extensive knowledge in historical research and interpretation. She also has experience working in museums and taught Interdisciplinary Studies at the college level for over 4 years. She joined the staff in 2022.

STAFF



Torii Moré | Curator of Digital Humanities

Advances the Museum's digital footprint, most notably by incorporating technology in our exhibits — Torii started as an intern in 2010 and worked in multiple departments before becoming the Museum's first Curator of Digital Humanities in 2012. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology from ISU, and an M.S. in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois.



Lisa Novak | Director of Visitor Experience

Manages the Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop. Lisa brings over 15 years of extensive experience to her role — A seasoned marketer and entrepreneur, Lisa's creativity, business acumen, and dedication to cultural appreciation are reflected in her leadership and innovative contributions. She joined the staff in 2024.



Norris Porter | Assistant Executive Director & Director of Development

Manages membership, fundraising, sponsorships, and grant work for the Museum — He has over 36 years of experience, 18 in development & fundraising in the higher education and nonprofit sectors. Norris has been with the Museum since November of 2020, after retiring from a 30-year career in higher education.



Candace Summers | Senior Director of Education

Organizes and implements programming for a variety of ages to educate over 20,000 people in Central Illinois annually — Candace is passionate about fostering an appreciation for history while promoting community involvement and lifelong learning. She holds a B.A. in Archaeology, an M.A. in History from ISU, and has worked at the Museum for over 20 years.



Katie Sutrina-Haney | Archivist

Oversees the Museum's archival collection — Katie holds a bachelor's degree, a museum studies certificate, a master's in labor history, a masters in library and information sciences, and a P.h.D. in U.S. Twentieth Century Labor History. Her rigorous academic background provided opportunities to teach, present, and curate before joining the staff in 2025.



Jeff Woodard | Director of Marketing & Community Relations

Develops and maintains regional and local relationships, representing the Museum at events, on various boards, and professional organizations — Jeff also serves as a liaison for the Bloomington- Normal Black History Project, conducting several oral histories each year. Jeff holds an A.S. in Electrical Service Engineering. He has been on staff for over 20 years.

STAFF



Greg Koos | Executive Director Emeritus

Led the Museum for 39 years before retiring in 2016 — Greg oversaw three major historic site development projects and led the transition and move into the Museum's current home in the old courthouse. He continues to help the Museum in retirement, and is the celebrated author of *Freedom, Land & Community: A History of McLean County 1730 – 1900*.

Visitor Experience Specialists: Barbora Dirmontaitė, Tucker LaHaiv, Victoria Lavarier

Please visit mchistory.org/about/staff to contact any of our staff members.

**Museum staff do a lot of different things,
but one common link in all we do is getting people to think
about the past — to think about it not as an object of study
encased in amber, but rather as a living, breathing, often
messy thing that continually shapes the present and by
extension our very selves.**

- Bill Kemp





In 2025, we accomplished many goals aligned with our strategic plan and mission.

We increased the accessibility of our **20,000+** object collection and welcomed over **60,000** visitors.

We created new ways to engage with local history, partnered with an increased number of community organizations, and served over **20,000** people through experience based programming.

In 2026, with continued community support, we look forward to advancing our mission, creating new ways for people to engage with local history, and celebrating two historic milestones: the Route 66 Centennial and the Semiquincentennial of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.



McLean County Museum of History

200 North Main Street, Bloomington, IL 61701

mchistory.org | 309-827-0428 | [@mchistorymuseum](https://www.instagram.com/mchistorymuseum)

