

Your Museum — Your History!

McLean County MUSEUM of HISTORY

Demonstrated Excellence

Tom Eder, Board President (FY 2022)

The McLean County Museum of History has demonstrated excellence since the Historical Society was founded in 1892. It has been a foundation of historical thought and reflection for the citizens of McLean County and beyond. It has provided our people a powerful memory to inform their decisions as we shape the world we live in today and will create for tomorrow.

In the midst of a life-altering pandemic and profound social movements intended to further our nation's ongoing search "for a more perfect union" that protects our "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness," the Museum's role of historian and provider of the truth about our past has never been more important. A passionate staff, a dedicated Board of Directors, and energetic volunteers are moving the Museum and McLean County Historical Society confidently forward to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

The outstanding support the Museum has received from the County, private donations, grants, and our endowment has, in the last few years, enabled us to completely renew the permanent exhibits, and significantly improve our physical space. The beautiful former courthouse, now our home for another thirty years, has continued to evolve into a community commons space that is the center of County social, commemorative, and entertainment activities.

As one of the 3% of museums in the nation formally accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and one of the oldest historical societies in Illinois, the Museum is a jewel of McLean County life. We are proud of our past and excited about our future! Thanks, McLean County!



2020-2021 History Makers Celebration at the Museum

Circa 1990's Aerial View of Museum



Planning for Relevance in an Uncertain Future

Julie Emig, Executive Director

“We must make sure that Americans of all ages and backgrounds and in all places see themselves in history, appreciate its relevance, and understand how the diverse people of the past all contributed to the American story...” John R. Dichtl, President and CEO, American Association for State and Local History (AASLH, 2021)

The intrepid staff and board members of the McLean County Museum of History devoted many hours to laying the framework for a new strategic plan during the dark and pandemic laden winter months of 2021. The Museum’s former strategic plan, deftly implemented through 2019, culminated with the Extending Excellence Campaign that received an award from AASLH as an outstanding special project in 2020. Even so, as Elizabeth Merritt stipulates in a recent publication from the Center for the Future of Museums (AAM, 2021), the key to a museum’s resilience is in its ability to exercise strategic foresight, planning “in the context of multiple futures...cultivating an organizational culture that is agile, responsive, and skilled at navigating change” (p. 40). Museums everywhere are grappling with their core identities during a time of rapid technological advancement juxtaposed with an uncertain future and expanding, systemic inequalities.

As our priorities began to take shape, subsequent drafts of the plan were shared with Museum committee members, community groups, donors, and volunteers for additional input. We identified six strategic themes that will guide our work through 2027: Learning with communities; preserving history; investing in people; improving spaces; sharing stories; and growing assets. In the spirit of strategic foresight, the plan is designed to be nimble, undergoing continual cycles of inquiry to ensure that we are adhering to our mission of preservation, education, and collaboration in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County. The Museum’s vision to drive new conversations and engage more people to understand and be inspired by history is a vision for the future that is only made possible through knowledge of the past and the faithful financial support from our members and many contributors. **THANK YOU** for investing in local history. We are Your Museum - preserving and sharing Your History!

MCMH became nationally accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 1984. Only 3% of museums in the United States are accredited.

Historical Note



Lincoln Bench Donated to the Museum by Judy Markowitz
First Female Mayor of Bloomington (Dedicated July 1, 2000)

Financial Snapshot

Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2021

Operating Revenue

- \$ 344,275 Annual Gifts, Contributions, & Bequests
- 429,369 Grants
- 61,497 County of McLean Tax Levy
- 228,398 In-kind Contributions
- 2,606,673 Investment Revenue**
- 1,953 Gross Profit on Gift Shop Sales
- 28,993 Other Income
- \$3,701,158 Total Revenue**

***Much of the fluctuation in operating revenue from year to year is driven by investment revenue, which includes changes in the market value of our endowment assets. In fiscal year 2020, investment revenue suffered a significant decline when the markets were at their low point due to the pandemic. In fiscal year 2021, the markets rebounded with robust gains. PPP Loan Assistance from Federal Stimulus efforts also helped to positively impact the budget this year. The effects of the pandemic necessitated a larger draw on endowment earnings to retain staff and meet programming expectations of the community. Moving forward, private donor support will continue to be critical to the Museum's financial stability.*

Total Expenses

- \$1,515,023 Program
- 226,756 General & Administrative
- 138,203 Fundraising
- \$1,879,982 Total Expenses**

Vision & Mission

The Museum is in the process of finalizing an updated strategic plan for 2022-2027 that includes a new mission statement. The updated mission statement and strategic plan is scheduled to be adopted by the full MCMH Board of Directors in January 2022. The Museum staff is currently aligning its work around this **new mission: To preserve, educate, and collaborate in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County.** The vision is to drive new conversations and engage more people to understand and be inspired by the rich history of McLean County. Our tagline is "Your Museum - Your History!"

The Museum's early roots began on December 5, 1903 when the Historical Society held its first meeting in a room dedicated for this purpose in the new courthouse that was built following the great fire of 1900.

Historical Note



Museum Staff



Julie Emig, Executive Director: is responsible for the management and direction of the Museum. Emig has worked for the last 26 years as a teacher, leader, and staff developer for schools and public institutions across the country. Julie has a doctorate in literacy education and was associate director for a 20 million grant funded by the Institute of Education Sciences based at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She began her leadership of the Museum in September of 2020.



Susan Hartzold, Curator of Collections and Exhibits: manages the donation, processing, and preservation/conservation of the Museum's collection of 20,000+ objects; develops, designs, and builds the Museum's award-winning exhibits; Edits the Museum's Quarterly Magazine; and creates graphics for promoting museum programs and events. Hartzold celebrated 30 years with the Museum in September.



Chelsea Banks, Registrar: processes incoming donations to the Museum's object collection, maintains the collection database, and assists the Curator with collections research and management. She has eight years of collections care experience in the museum field.



Norris Porter, Director of Development: manages membership, fundraising, sponsorships, and grant work for the Museum. He has over 33 years of experience, 14 in development & fundraising in the higher education and nonprofit sectors. Porter began his work at the Museum in November of 2020 after retiring from a 30 year career in higher education.



Brandy Maloney, Development Assistant: supports the Director of Development with membership, sponsorship, fundraising, and special events. She has over a dozen years of experience in development and has worked at the Museum since October 2017, in her current position since January 2019.

Staff Continued...



Candace Summers, Director of Community Education: helps to educate over 20,000 people in Central Illinois through educational programs like the Evergreen Cemetery Walk and Senior Reminiscence program. She has over two decades of experience working in the field of history and museum education. Summers has worked at the McLean County Museum of History for over 16 years.



Kate Bass, Director of Adult Education: manages the Museum's Senior Reminiscence Program, which brings cost-free, inquiry-based facilitation to older adults in the surrounding areas. Bass has a background in Museum Studies and is passionate that museums can be tools for social change. She started her career with the Museum in 2021.



Hannah Johnson, Director of Youth & Family Education: creates and facilitates on- and offsite programming to engage student learners and their families in local history and foster personal connections to their community/ies and its stories. She began her professional career with the Museum in May 2014.



Bill Kemp, Librarian: manages the Stevenson-Ives Library that contains over 16,000 books and periodicals. Kemp is a noted local historian and fields numerous questions and inquiries from the community, is a regular contributor for the Museum's weekly Pantagraph historical segment, and presents historical programs on a regular basis. He has two graduate degrees and has been at the Museum for 18 years.



Rachael Masa, Director of Volunteers: manages all aspects of recruiting and coordinating the involvement of volunteers with the Museum. She also recruits college student interns as needed. Masa was hired as Director of Volunteers and Interns in September 2019.



Betty Turchirollo, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator: has been with the Museum for nearly 18 years. She has taken the lead in tracking volunteer and intern hours, maintaining volunteer and intern databases, and ensuring the success of events.



Torii Moré, Digital Humanities Curator: advances the Museum's digital footprint most notably by incorporating technology in our exhibits and managing the web presence. Moré started as an intern in 2010 and worked in multiple departments before becoming the Museum's first Curator of Digital Humanities.



Joe McDonnell, Visitors Center Manager: directs every aspect of the Cruisin with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop. McDonnell brings years of retail experience to the job, as he had managed a diverse selection of businesses over his years in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, in between his primary pursuit on Broadway, Off-Broadway, touring and regional stages as a performer, director, and choreographer. McDonnell joined the Museum staff in January of 2017.

Staff Continued...



Kathi Davis, Visitors Center Assistant: was a flight attendant with Delta AirLines for nearly 35 years, based for most of that time in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. When she retired, she bucked the usual trend and moved north to be closer to family. She was the manager of BroMenn Thrift Shop for three years and program and grants director at Illinois Prairie Community Foundation for eight years. She is the assistant manager of the Cruisin with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center and Gift Shop.



George Perkins, Archivist: manages over 2,000 linear feet of family papers, church records, diaries, pre-Civil War newspapers, scrapbooks, business ledgers, maps, architectural drawings and blueprints, and much more. Perkins was a volunteer for three decades before joining the staff as an employee in 2005. He received the Illinois State Genealogical Society's Volkel Medal of Honor in 2021.



Rochelle Gridley, Assistant Archivist: has worked at the Museum since 2018, working exclusively on the Pantagraph Negative and MCMH Print Digital Collections. Rochelle has her MLS from the University of Illinois and was previously a volunteer with the library.



Jeff Woodard, Director of Marketing and Community Relations: represents a public presence for the Museum, with responsibilities for developing marketing goals and objectives with an emphasis on promotion of educational programs, permanent and rotating exhibits, and community outreach initiatives including providing marketing support for the Visitors Center and the Museum.



Museum & Former Courthouse on a Stormy Day

Agreement signed in 1988 with the County of McLean creating a partnership to move the McLean County Museum of History into the Old Courthouse.

Historical Note



Department Reports

Education

In 2020-21, the Education Department's shared focus was continuing to engage Museum audiences of all ages through reimagined and immersive virtual programming opportunities. This mission manifested itself through the launch of MUSE 2U—a curated collection of at-home activities inspired by Museum offerings; as Futures in History Camp 2.0—a virtual camp experience for late elementary schoolers complete with online engagement, hands-on activities, and the contributions of 20+ community partners; the creation of the 10-part, exclusively online Breaking Bread in McLean County series, exploring the migration stories of McLean County residents, emphasizing shared elements of food, family, tradition, trauma, and exchange; a snail mail program to senior care facilities showcasing the Museum's archival collections; and the transition of the Museum's Evergreen Cemetery Walk, to an online platform.

Marketing

Using the tools of print, broadcast, and social media, we have been able to maintain a public presence, and in spite of the pandemic challenges, we continue to develop and maintain relationships with media partners. We have also gained some ground in terms of integration of community outreach programs that align with our mission and focus on education. Efforts continue to increase diversity of our audience with a focus on destination marketing.

Volunteers

Rachael Masa has recruited 28 new volunteers, offered remote internships during a pandemic school year, maintained strong volunteer communication with volunteers, retaining roughly 90% of the volunteer base after reopening. Masa has tightened up volunteer and intern onboarding procedures, introducing bi-annual DEAI Volunteer Trainings. She has strengthened communication with university academic advisors regarding the Museum internship experience and has now been part of three successful Cemetery Walks.

Development

Norris Porter was hired as the development director in November of 2020. With help from development assistant Brandy Maloney, Porter analyzed membership and corporate support trends and operationalized a plan to increase membership retention and the acquisition of new members. A new Corporate Alliance program was launched and a grant obtained to support the 2021 Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

The Museum opened its new exhibits in the Old Courthouse in 1992 as the Historical Society celebrated its 100th Anniversary.

Historical Note



George Perkins & Jana Kiefer sorting through items for a new collection at the Museum

Department Reports Continued

Collections

Curator of Collections & Exhibits, Susan Hartzold, with the assistance of Registrar Chelsea Banks, began the preparation of object records for online access to the public. Approximately 2,000 records have been updated and reviewed with more to be added for a planned August 2022 upload to a PastPerfect hosted website. Plans for a visible storage “Unseen Treasures” exhibit were developed for the Merwin Gallery. The non-static exhibit will feature 200+ objects that will regularly change/rotate into and out of the exhibit space. Donations of 162 new objects were added to the object collection. Over 4,000 objects were reviewed for relevance, significance, and value to the Museum’s mission. Over 1,000 were deaccessioned from the collection as a result of this review. Deaccessioning ensures that Museum resources are not spent on objects that do not fit the Museum’s mission. The process involves deep research of objects mostly added to the collection prior to 1993 and typically results in improved records for objects reviewed that stay in the collection.

Library & Archives

When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and led to closures and shutdowns, the Library / Archives staff never skipped a beat, continuing as they did to work on reference assistance; new donations; digitization and related projects; and public programming, among other tasks large and small. In addition, a small coterie of dedicated volunteers—working from home or socially distancing at the Museum—proved invaluable in keeping the Library / Archives running smoothly as possible. Primary duties include preserving and cataloging new and existing collections; offering research access and reference assistance; digitizing collections; promoting interest in local history through public programs and social media; and supporting exhibit development and general Museum programming and services. Major activities this year included acceptance of several large collections, including United Way of McLean County and Brokaw / Mennonite / BroMenn hospitals; digitizing local history publications; and making substantial progress on the digitization of the Pantagraph Negatives Collection.

Digital Humanities

During the pandemic, the staff collaborated to increase our digital offerings, uploading over a dozen digitized books and hundreds of menus to the Internet Archive. When the pandemic forced us to pivot to online programs, we seized the opportunity to save those educational programs to ensure the public can continue to discover local history online through our YouTube channel. Behind the scenes, we’ve been continuing to take steps to ensure the long term digital preservation of the Pantagraph Negative Collection.

Cruisin with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop

Though the Museum’s doors were shuttered for the entirety of Fiscal Year 2021, Joe was on hand for the construction and renovation projects on the bathrooms and lighting. During that time, he created and instituted an online store that sold Funks Grove Maple Sirup and a few choice books. That store, along with a “personal shopper” initiative, brought in \$11,736.86 in sales, including a few donations and renewed memberships. Joe also added responsibilities as an office assistant to the Executive Director.

Board Members and Museum Stats



Fiscal Year 2021 Museum Board of Directors

- Robert Watkins - President
- Tom Eder - 1st Vice President
- Russel Francois - 2nd Vice President
- John Killian - Treasurer
- Robert Porter - Secretary

Directors

- Craig Alexander
- Larry Dietz
- Rob Fazzini
- Sandra Harmon
- Susan Laiming
- Todd Lowery
- Mike Matejka
- John McIntyre
- Pam Muirhead
- Shelli Opsal
- Michelle Pazar
- Josh Rohrscheib
- Ann Sullivan
- Carl Teichman
- Paul B. Van Ness
- Bill Wetzel
- Bob Williams
- Carolyn Perry Yockey

Directors Emeriti

- Carl Behr
- Willie Brown
- Bob Lenz
- James A. Stahly
- Carol Struck
- Steve Wannemacher



The Historical Society's publications include nine volumes of transactions spanning the years 1899 - 1987 and a substantial assortment of books, pamphlets, and booklets in more recent years. Over 50 publications feature the diverse stories of McLean County.

Historical Note

In This Together

Early in the pandemic the community rallied to provide support for those in need. This graphic from the entrance to the Museum reflects this sentiment. From a free face mask fence, to online programming, and increased digital access of materials, the Museum responded to remain an integral part of the community as it dealt with the lingering effects of the pandemic. Abraham Lincoln had many significant ties to McLean County. His thoughts on education sum up the resolve of the Museum and its focus to preserve, educate, and collaborate in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County - "Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in" ...*Abraham Lincoln*

