



YORK COUNTY
HISTORY
— CENTER —
YOUR HISTORY STARTS HERE

COMMUNITY **IMPACT** REPORT





We truly
are a
barrier-
breaking
team!

FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear Friends,

Overall I think it's fair to say that this was a year full of unexpected experiences, yet, despite all the challenges, the York History Center rose to the occasion by demonstrating adaptability and strength. Interestingly, like our theme "breaking barriers" the History Center team – staff, volunteers, and board – worked to ensure that our mission continued to be carried forward.

Culture centers were severely affected by the pandemic and museums were hit particularly hard. Despite these trying circumstances, we retained our entire team by directing them towards the Steam Plant project and developing a wide array of new digital programs. Our team created innovative digital school tours; fascinating online programs through mediums such as Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom; and socially distanced presentations when possible. Not only did the History Center team break through the barrier of not being able to host in-person museum programs, but they also found a way to bring the programs to an even wider audience. Other states and countries participated in and enjoyed over 120 York County History Center programs available online. This is 40 more programs than we typically offer in the same period!

Another challenge we had this year was a change in Board leadership. Our most recent Chair was unable to complete his term so our previous Chair, Paddy Rooney, graciously helped smooth my transition into the role before he moved to his new home in North Carolina. The staff and Board were resilient and created an inviolable foundation as the Board leadership adjusted.

Restoring historical buildings like the Steam Plant come with a unique set of obstacles, but for all of us who value history, we think the result is well worth the extra effort. We are in the Construction Document phase of development in the project, which means costs are being detailed. Funding for a major project is always a challenge and Joan and the Board have explored several funding options available to help us reach our goal. The Steam Plant will establish a new campus to serve as a major cultural anchor and community space in downtown York. To ensure this endeavor is successful, we are currently developing strategic plans to create engaging, relevant audience centered exhibits, programs and services.

The York County History Center is meeting the needs of our community through the efforts of so many wonderful people using their unique talents and gifts. We all issue a huge thank you to our knowledgeable and hard-working staff that have put in countless hours and shown great ingenuity over the past year. A special thank you to our volunteers who devoted their precious time to serving, and our Board members who are working overtime as we plan and decide the day-to-day operations of the Steam Plant. Of course, we send out a big, heartfelt thank you to our donors, who make everything we do at the York County History Center possible. This was the most demanding year in recent memory for our organization and we sincerely thank you for your continued faith and support. We truly are a barrier-breaking team!

With gratitude,



Rebecca Countess
Chair



Joan J. Mummert
President & CEO

Last year meant big changes for how the Collections Department functioned and how we thought about our role within the organization.



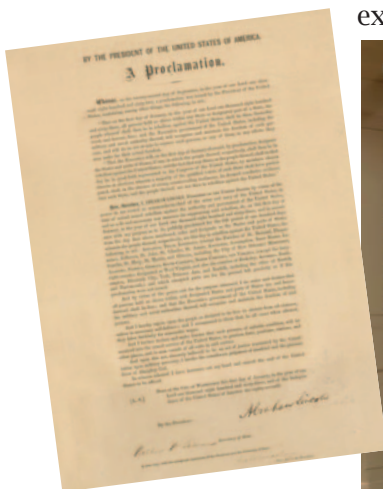
COLLECTIONS

Traditionally collections work has always been very hands-on, with our crew largely working within our 90,000+ object collection. When Covid restricted onsite access, it forced us to shift part of our focus to digital work through digital exhibitions, virtual programs, and scanning and uploading our paper object records. With the help of our IT Manager we were able to access our collections database offsite, which meant we could continue to answer object inquiries, do research, and to work “in the collection” virtually. Since last July, our team has scanned and uploaded over 25,000 documents into our database and physically inventoried an additional 12,238 objects during their days onsite. Through continued donor support we have been able to maintain our staff and have completed the inventories of the Historical Society Museum, Bonham House, and Colonial Complex with just the Agriculture and Industrial Museum and Fire Museum remaining of our full inventory.

Through funds from our Collections Endowment, we began crucial conservation work on macro artifacts that will be displayed at the Steam Plant including the Pullman Opera Car, the Waldron wallpaper press, and a York Lock & Co. safe. Conservation work will continue this Fall on pieces like our Conestoga wagon and Farquhar steam engine by Wellman Conservation LLC. Our Collections Endowment also enabled us to purchase some upgraded equipment like pallet jacks and packing cubes to help with our eventual move as well as additional conservation supplies and acid-free storage materials.

Last September we welcomed a replica of the Justice Bell and opened our Women’s Suffrage exhibit entitled “What Does Justice Mean to You?” on the Historical Society

Mezzanine. We created a virtual version of this exhibit which was also accompanied by a virtual presentation by Amanda Owen of the Justice Bell Foundation and our Librarian Emerita, June Lloyd. This Spring, we displayed an original copy of the Emancipation Proclamation on loan from the Pennsylvania Historical Society and opened a timeline exhibit of York’s African-American history in our Meeting Hall entitled “Essential Pieces” as well as a virtual version. While much has changed and will likely continue to change, we have continued our commitment to meet people where they are by providing them with opportunities to connect and engage with our exhibits and collections both in-person and virtually.



LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

The History Center's Library & Archives continues to be a place of connection and discovery.

We reopened in July 2020 with new socially distanced seating, a new reservation system, and disinfecting protocols before closing again in the fall due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. While closed, we offered a Library Zoom hour on Fridays. After reopening in April 2021, on-site attendance was lower than in previous years, but we saw an increase in online research orders, phone calls, and emails while also receiving several new donations.

Although this year was full of challenges, the Library staff continued to engage and support the public with their research needs. Our staff added new resources to our History at Home webpage, worked on digital exhibits, and hosted various webinars. We also received personal stories and digital images through our Share Your Story COVID-19 project.

We finished many important projects. The Journal of York County Heritage was published in September 2020 focusing on women's history and suffrage in York County. Thanks to a historic records care grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, we were able to hire an Archival Assistant to process and rehouse special archival collections, resulting in 40,000 new photographs being accessible to the public. Ophelia Chambliss completed her work as Community Historian for Diversity and Inclusion, conducting oral history interviews in the community, and opened a timeline exhibit of York County Black History at the History Center during June of 2021. The library staff continues to refine the building designs for the new Library & Archives at the Steam Plant location.



- 524 researchers visited the library in fiscal year 2020-2021 and staff completed paid research orders and photo reproduction orders with the help of volunteers.
- 22 regular volunteers completed over 3,000 hours helping researchers and working on collections projects including photo cataloging and scanning and archival processing. Student interns assisted in the archives and created a new digital story map exhibit.
- 745 people attended library and partnership programs both online and in-person, including the South Central Pennsylvania Genealogy Society, the York Civil War Round Table, ALLVETS, and Writers' Roundtable.
- There were 169 donations to the Library & Archives, including photos of local woman suffragists, with the leader of the "Negro Subcommittee" Etha Cowles Armstrong; architectural drawings for the Haines Shoe House; scans from scrapbooks of the Spanish American Center; a collection of personal letters from World War II; deeds from Captain Doudel's York properties; and panels from the Valencia Ballroom with photos of performers of the 1930s and 1940s.



discover

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

This has been quite a rollercoaster year for Visitor Engagement.

Still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the History Center was able to successfully present programs, lectures and webinars online rather than having these programs in person. From July 2020 through June 2021, more than 100 different programs were presented both virtually and in person engaging 40,000+ people online through our social media channels, YouTube views and

website hits. Beginning on July 7 to November 2020, the doors of the History Center were able to open once again to receive guests in person, however online programming continued to allow those who were uncomfortable with in person activities the option to still be an active participant. With the additional surge in COVID cases in Pennsylvania, the History Center was forced to close its doors in late November deciding to remain closed through March 31, 2021 and pivoted to virtual once again.

On April 1, 2021 the History Center re-opened to the public with the plan to offer programs in a hybrid format. With capacity restrictions easing, we were fortunate to once again welcome visitors into our buildings and tours of our sites have been well attended. And, while we were unable to host school tours over the past year, many school districts took advantage of our Virtual Field Trip option to bring York County History into their classrooms.

Through the earlier implementation of the Versai online ticketing/pre-reservation system, we were able to easily respond to this changing environment and continue to provide engaging programs both online and in person to the history community — adults and students of various ages.



A breakdown of our numbers:

102

Programs offered

55

“This Day in History” Videos presented

44,000

Total participants
(Virtual streaming, Zoom)

772

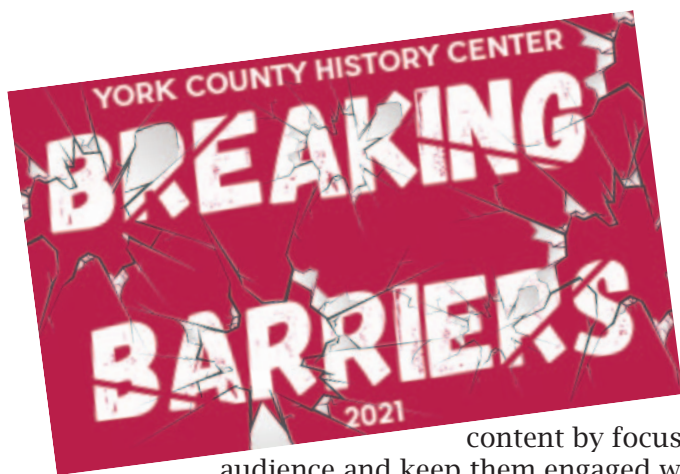
Total Pre-Registered for Programs

503

Student Participants in Virtual Field Trips

1934

Visitors to our Museums



This year's theme for the History Center is Breaking Barriers.

Developing a theme every year helps us plan exhibits and programs. Due to COVID-19, and all the stay at home orders, the History Center decided we needed to expand our digital

content by focusing our efforts on staying connected with our audience and keep them engaged with local and national history. Due to this expansion of digital content, you could say there were barriers broken in our data center. Our network storage began running out of space. Besides the capacity issue, it was time to upgrade our storage device. When increased volume of network storage (data), put a strain on backup storage space. We put out a request for quote. We accepted a plan that will be implemented in the new fiscal year. We already have our increased backup space installed and fully operational. The History Center is not immune to supply chain issues we keep hearing about in the news, there is a delay in the shipping of our new storage device. We hope to have that installed and operating in September.

We launched new virtual exhibits on our website. Thanks to Bryan Bailey, Library Registrar and Collections Inventory Assistant, for his work on two of our newest story maps; *Justice Bell and Women's Suffrage in York County* and *Following Freedom: The Underground Railroad in York County*. We also launched another new virtual exhibit, *Flowing Through History*. This was researched and implemented by Chloe Doyle, a rising senior at York College who is scheduled to graduate in December 2021. Her faculty advisor, Steve Beck is an Adjunct Professor at York College and a member of the History Center's Technology Committee. You can find these exhibits on our website under the menu item Museums.



Since the History Center has expanded digital offerings on the website, we felt it was time to give our site a makeover. We wanted to create a visitor friendly site. The team started working on this refresh before the end of this fiscal year. We can't wait to unveil the new homepage, which will offer our virtual visitors improved navigation and functionality. In the world of Technology: Stay tuned!

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



We simply can't talk about Community Impact without talking about YOU!

ADVANCEMENT

As we look back on 2020-21, we are reminded that community and connection — in person or virtual — are the greatest gifts we can give each other. To all of you: members, volunteers, friends, and supporters, you are the engine that drives York History Center's programming, projects, and passion for our County's rich and diverse history. And we are grateful.

From your participation with History at Home to Second Saturdays Lectures, from your generous support of Give Local York to attendance at Tannenberg Organ Concerts, from Oyster Festival's new Road Rally component to honoring one of our Country's most important documents, The Emancipation Proclamation, you connected with each other. You connected with our remarkable speakers, talented musicians, knowledgeable interpreters, as well as our incomparable collections and exhibits. You found a way to support the History Center while engaging with our community's greatest asset: the steadfast belief that we will continue to move forward together.



... Live in fragments no longer."

— E.M. Forster, *Howards End*

You have many choices when making decisions about causes to support. Your commitment to the History Center as we pivoted to virtual events, hybrid meetings, and socially-spaced live performances was remarkable. Indeed, in the true spirit of our community: Give Local York was a resounding success and brought in over 50 new donors and friends, raising a record of \$64,532! When our plans were revised (several times) for our annual Art & Leisure Auction,

you said, "We'll see you when it's safe to do so!" And when our beloved Oyster Festival 2020 was re-created with virtual Signature Chef Presentations and a winding Road Rally through the County, you said, "Sign me up!"

It is for these — and so many more reasons — that we share with you and the world this long list of names of members, supporters, friends, and family: we can't put your name in lights, but we can acknowledge your love and commitment to our County's people, places, stories, and history, here, in print. While there is still much uncertainty in today's world, we remain clear about this: all of us at York County History Center are grateful for the difference you make here every day!



MARKETING

The Marketing and Communications Department is committed to the ongoing mission to inspire the exploration of the history, people, and culture of York County.

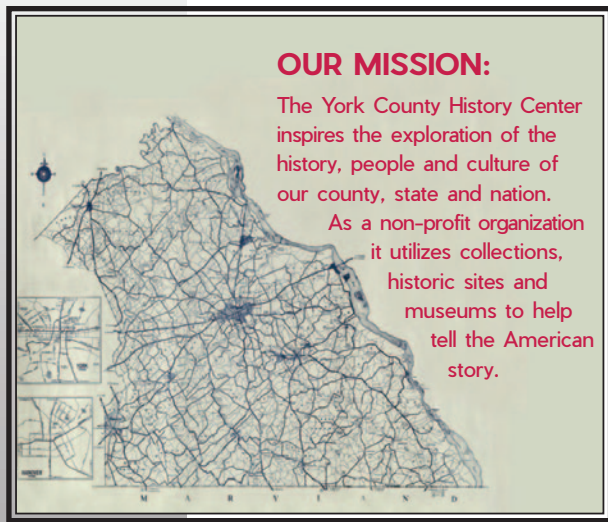
Throughout the year, we have witnessed miraculous examples of barrier-breaking initiatives that have helped strengthen the values that guide our brand-building work. The COVID-19 pandemic delivered many challenges and hardships. However, as the theme suggests, we were able to break through those challenges and successfully engage our community, deliver consistent value to our members, and strengthen the relationships between partnered organizations.

The continued resilience and compassion the community provided the History Center as we quickly adapted and delivered high-quality content through our growing digital channels was remarkable. The innovative content and delivery solutions provided visitors with live-streamed lectures and round tables, a look behind the scenes with our collections team, and a deep dive into our extensive archives across all of our social media channels; resulting in over a thousand new visitors engaging with the History Center on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Our expanding digital engagement saw a tremendous increase in email subscribers and continued interest in our virtual tours and exhibits.

We are proud of the positive role we play in helping new and familiar visitors explore the broad story of York County. Our marketing initiatives are designed to grow our audience and increase engagement by driving culture, making a difference, and creating memorable moments. Even as we continue to welcome guests back through the doors of our facilities, we will continue to strengthen our online presence and engagement. Our future strategy begins with connecting key insights from our target audiences to the multitude of benefits the History Center offers. We plan to optimize the delivery of creative and memorable communications across all advertising channels to increase awareness and engagement through a sustainable integration of our PR and social media efforts.

The passion the community shows for the history of York County and the services the History Center provides proves that we are all stronger together. We are excited to continue our journey of strengthening our relationship with the community and further connecting with diverse audiences throughout York County and beyond. We will continue to invest in extensive research to gain insight into our audience to inform future decisions regarding our messaging and creative marketing initiatives.

- Annual Fund donations exceeded \$355,000 to support the organization's greatest needs.
- Members of the Revolutionary Delegation contributed \$165,000 to the Annual Fund.
- With your help, we once again earned a "Top Ten" spot on the leader board for Give Local York. The History Center ranked #5 out of 305 nonprofits with a record-setting fundraising total of \$64,532.
- Oyster Festival, a signature community engagement event, made history as our organization's first all virtual fundraiser. Featuring online and live-streaming programs, we raised \$28,000 while providing a safe and engaging experience for families and individuals.
- Our institutional giving efforts raised more than \$12,000 in sponsorships from community businesses and organizations to support exhibits and public programs.
- The Campaign to the Restore the 1804 Tannenberg Organ successfully concluded with gifts from the Powder Mill Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, and the generosity of individual donors like you.
- Through social media, we reached more than 9,000 followers across multiple platforms—Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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FINANCE

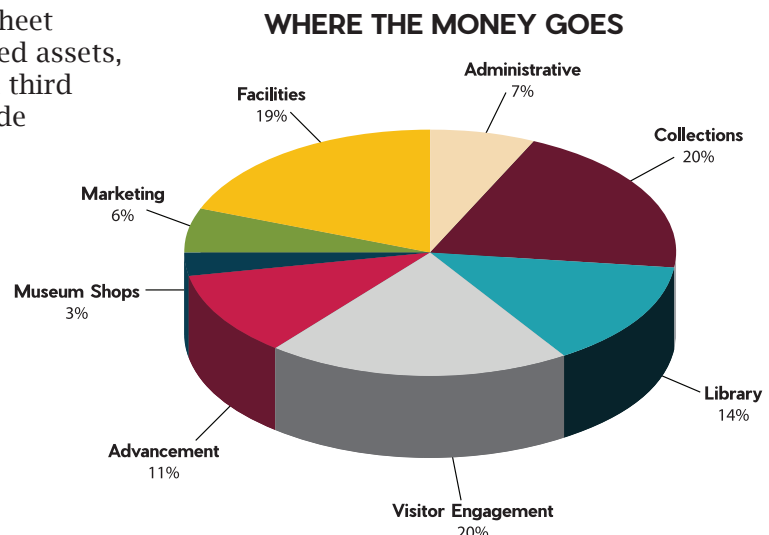
The 2020-21 operating results highlight the perseverance of the History Center's employees and its community members who have supported the Center despite another challenging year.

Our Annual Fund raised \$355,692 exceeding the budget as well as the prior year! We were able to continue to provide exceptional educational programming and exhibits virtually and in-person, through the generous support from the Cultural Alliance, EITC donations, corporate sponsorships, unrestricted community donations, and grant funding.

Fundraising events, facility rentals, shop sales, admissions, and fees & services continued to be impacted in 2020-21 by the pandemic. We are hopeful that these activities gain momentum in 2021-22.

The History Center's commitment to fund personnel extended through 2020-21 as well as during the winter closure of the museums to the public. The History Center secured funding through the Government funding of the Paycheck Protection Program and Employer Retention Tax Credits. While closed to the public, personnel continued providing virtual programming, strategizing the moving parts of the Steam Plant project, and preparing for the Spring re-opening.

The History Center's balance sheet continues to be strong. Invested assets, which include endowment and third party trusts, continue to provide a large source of operating income to the Center.



*Thank you to our community
 for making the History Center's mission possible.*