



Hagen History Center will reopen this summer with four exhibit buildings with 11 new exhibits. Photo by Erie News Now / Photo illustration by Tungsten Creative Group

Welcome to the new Hagen History Center. With all of our changes, we will truly be one of America's Newest Museums. Our promise to you is to bring inspiring history to our visitors and our community. Inside you can read about our new Mission and Vision Statements and see our new goals for the present and into the future.

The past year's challenges brought us closer to our members and our community with activities we might never have accomplished without COVID-19's requirements for social distancing. Specifically, we all found ways to cope with being cooped up at home. At Hagen History Center, we knew that families craved interesting connections, entertainment and information, and our staff delivered (while working from home) with a weekly increase in free blogs, Vlogs and website content

at eriehistory.org. We also shared free content in Facebook Live events and in our speaker series via Zoom.

We were also busy finishing 11 new exhibit galleries across our campus.

I can't wait to see you on the weekend of July 17-18 to kick off our grand re-opening. Our impressive, privately funded \$11 million construction project now includes four buildings, and we are hoping to become a major tourist destination that brings visitors to Erie.

In this newsletter/impact report, we're sharing more of our activities and financial information. Thanks for your continued support.

George

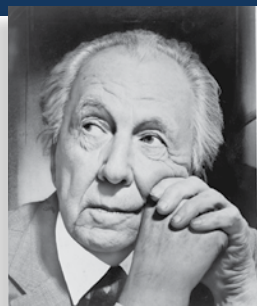
— George Deutsch, Executive Director

Frank Lloyd Wright's office comes to Erie

You'll be hearing plenty more about our latest exhibits in the next few weeks. Our most exciting news is that we rebuilt the original San Francisco office of America's most influential architect, Frank Lloyd Wright! We expect that this will be the hub of a new regional Frank Lloyd Wright Trail that will bring national audiences to our campus and community.

Frank Lloyd Wright. Library of Congress

Wright's San Francisco office is among the new exhibits that will open to the public this summer. Photo by RJ Fiorenza



Grand Opening week offers plenty of activities

Join us and see what we've been working on while we were closed due to COVID-19

Hagen History Center

members will be in for a great surprise at the Annual Meeting, on Wednesday, July 14. We will unveil new special exhibits featuring Oliver Hazard Perry for all our members to preview before they will be seen by the general public. This is a members only event.

There will be a privately sponsored ribbon cutting on July 16 at which Thomas B. Hagen will help us open the doors to reopen our campus.

The public is invited to join us on Saturday and Sunday, July 17-18 when everything will be open and free to the public.

Guests will see 11 professionally curated exhibits inside the Watson-Curtze Mansion, the Wood-Morrison House and the new exhibit building. More than 11,000 square feet will welcome tourists and guests. Highlights include: Watson-Curtze Mansion's new exhibit



The new exhibit building will open this summer with numerous exhibits. Photo by RJ Fiorenzo

of Winifred Watson's childhood room and a contrasting look at the servants' quarters.

The Wood-Morrison House features an incredible Erie Extension Canal exhibit, a gallery about Erie and the Navy, and a military service gallery.

The new, two-story, 6,000-square-foot exhibit building houses all new exhibits never seen before that show off some exciting memorabilia from architecture, real estate and industry along with some interactive displays for children and adults.

More than 100 Griswold collectors met at Watson-Curtze Mansion

Members of the Griswold & Cast Iron Cookware Association, hailing from all over the U.S. and Canada, visited the Watson-Curtze Mansion in May for the second time in four years during their national convention.

The Mansion displays hundreds of Griswold pieces in the kitchen (with a total collection of more than 700 items). The collectors spent three days in Erie for their national meeting.

Left: This is a small section of the Griswold collection inside the Watson-Curtze Mansion kitchen. More than 100 pieces are on display.



Right: Clayton Mitchell and Malinda Fontenot, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, attended the Griswold & Cast Iron Cookware Association's National Convention, held in Erie from May 13 to 16. They have the second-largest, privately held collection in the United States with more than 8,000 pieces.

Hagen History Center forms strong connection with community

Throughout the last year, we were closed, but we interacted with and inspired homebound residents with interesting connections, entertainment and information. Here are just a few of the most popular virtual events that community members told us they enjoyed over the past year:

We celebrated regional assets

Waldameer and Water World Vice President of Operations Brian Gorman, grandson of Paul Nelson, gave the community a fabulous history lesson on the amazing developments that have taken place at the park over 125 years. On January 13, ["The History of Waldameer"](#) received more than 11,000 views. One of them, Fairview resident Donna Harrington, was most impressed. "I never knew all the history and how it evolved," she said.

Warner Theatre

Another Erie icon, featured in March, was the [Warner Theatre](#). It has been closed during the pandemic, but many warm memories of this incredible theater were shared during a live Facebook discussion ["History of the Historic Warner Theatre"](#) with Casey Wells, Executive Director of Erie County Convention Center Authority (Erie Events) and Board Member of the Warner Theater Preservation Trust.

We celebrated Black History Month

In February of 2021, community activist Mabel Howard conducted a live poetry hour, ["Beauty of a Colorful Mind; Honoring the Past While Inspiring a Brilliant Future,"](#) in which she paid homage to famous African American poets and artists of the past. It was just one of the many efforts that brought community members together to share inspirational messages. So far, the video has more than 1,500 views on Facebook with additional views on YouTube.



This historic photo was one of many used in the "The History of Waldameer," a presentation that had 11,000 views in January.

Additional programs included:

[African American Heritage in Erie County](#) and a digital version of the Journey From Jerusalem. For more information, please visit: <https://www.sharedheritage.org/>

[A Pictorial View of Erie's Black Community](#) with Johnny Johnson

[Opened Eyes](#) by Brandon Wiley

Other topics included [Ada Lawrence](#), [Albert Vosburgh](#), [Harry T. Burleigh](#), [Sam "The Jet" Jethroe](#) and [The Pope Hotel](#).

Hagen History Center also collaborated with [Erie's Black Wall Street](#) to launch ["Lest We Forget"](#) with Kyra Taylor, Davona Pacley and Rhonda Matthews. This new initiative will highlight the Erie area's Black History through oral histories and the collection of artifacts.

Gary Horton donated boxes of his parents' collections of civil rights letters and newspaper clippings to inspire others. Howard and Mildred Horton's archived items are available to a new generation. The full article is available on [GoErie.com](#).

Women's History efforts were also well received. Betsy MacKrell's discussion of ["Women of Note in Erie Cemetery"](#) reached more than 1,700 viewers on Facebook with additional followings on YouTube after the live talk. [The House that Isobella Built](#) had more than 2,000 views in two posts and told residents about Isobella Morrison, who owned the brick home that still stands at 4838 West Ridge Road and is now the [Escape Game Erie](#).

LaTonya Gamble participates in a virtual presentation at the "Beauty of a Colorful Mind" for Black History Month.





Watson-Curtze Mansion is the place for special occasions

The Watson-Curtze Mansion has been a popular spot for special events for more than a decade. In 2020, even during COVID-19, people hosted private events with more than 24 expected through 2021. Emily Ernes, owner of Glass Growers Gallery held her wedding at the mansion in 2020.

"My husband and I have lived in the Our West Bayfront neighborhood for seven years and loved the idea of getting married somewhere we regularly see while we're out for walks. We have always loved the Watson-Curtze Mansion's elegance and architectural details and the museum's beautiful representation of Erie's history."



Emily Ernes married Richie Boruta at the Watson-Curtze Mansion.

Investing in digitization improves access to Erie County history

We will begin digitizing archival collections and the major collections will be available on the website, www.eriehistory.org. This project will have long-term benefits as it addresses accessibility and challenges faced by researchers with health and mobility issues now and in the future.

Applying for grants funding will allow us to conserve and preserve our collection of primary source material, much of it is exclusive to our facility. New employees will be hired for this 3-year project later this year. To date, \$65,000 has been raised with additional grants pending. Total cost is \$505,000.

Auctions offered opportunities to share history

An October 15 auction of artifacts we had in our collections offered duplicate items and pieces that had no local relevance to the public and area historical societies. The [Harborcreek Historical Society](#), [Fort](#)

[LeBoeuf Historical Society](#), [Hurry Hill Maple Farm Museum](#), [Fairview Historical Society](#), [Presque Isle Lighthouse](#) and [Crawford County Historical Society](#) were able to acquire some pieces first.

On this effort, we worked with the [Erie Downtown Development Corporation](#). The effort raised more than \$7,000 that will be used to continue our efforts in cataloging and recording historic items. Another auction will be held later this year.

What's happening in Girard?

Plenty! The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission recently approved a historical marker for the Battles Bank which will be installed this year at 12 E. Main St., in the Borough of Girard, in front of the former Battles Bank, Aug. 5 at 1 p.m., during Dan Rice Days.

Charlotte Elizabeth Battles, 1864-1952, was a college graduate and a female

Charlotte Elizabeth Battles, 1864-1952, daughter of Rush Battles, was a college graduate and a female bank president.



bank president. She inherited her father's banking business and refused to close the Battles Bank during the Great Depression despite President Roosevelt's order to close banks in 1933.

Read more about Charlotte at <https://www.eriehistory.org/blog/charlotte-elizabeth-battles-a-woman-ahead-of-her-time>.

Trails around the Battles Museums of Rural Life, 436 Walnut St., Girard, offered 8/10 mile loop, an easy walk or

cross-country ski, in a wooded setting that is accessible all year. During COVID-19, this was a popular destination.

Over the last year, we have invested over \$70,000 in repairs and improvements to the Yellow House.

The Yellow House, in Girard, was built in 1858 by Rush Battles, a Girard banker who co-founded the Webster-Battles Bank, which later became the Battles Bank. www.eriehistory.org



New Year / New Goals

It's all new!

While we were closed, our staff and board of directors worked on a new mission statement, vision, brand promise and strategic goals.

New Mission

The Hagen History Center inspires and engages through dynamic educational programs, community outreach, and with relevant exhibits and publications. We preserve our collections and archives to serve as a comprehensive, accessible resource for all.

New Vision

The Hagen History Center will be recognized as a unique museum destination; an indispensable resource that provides a link to our heritage while inspiring all to create a better future.

New brand promise:

We want to inspire our visitors, and we have adopted a new promise with The Hagen History Center — Where History Inspires.

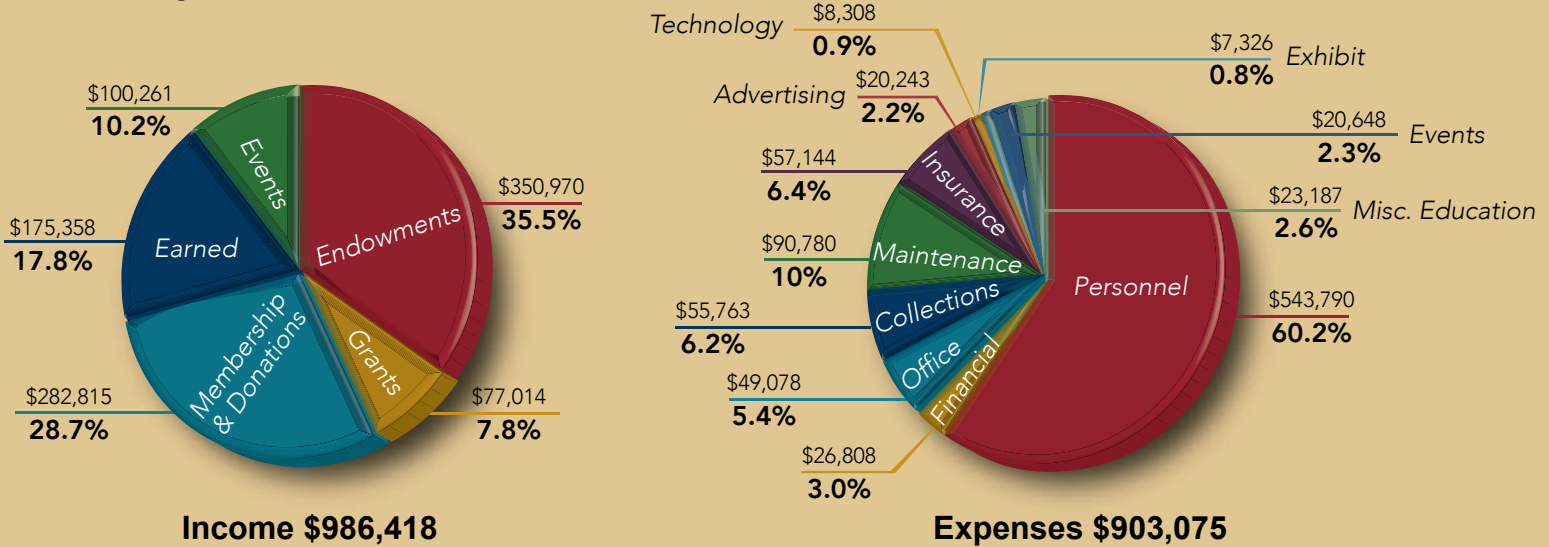
Updated strategic goals include:

- Engage more diverse supporters and visitors and extend the Hagen History Center's geographical scope by adopting and implementing a long-term brand platform.
- Be a destination of choice for a diverse audience by providing a dynamic visitor experience that educates and engages.
- Be an organization that adapts to changing economic and societal opportunities and threats.
- Strengthen the Hagen History Center's role as the primary repository for historical archives and collections for the region's diverse history.

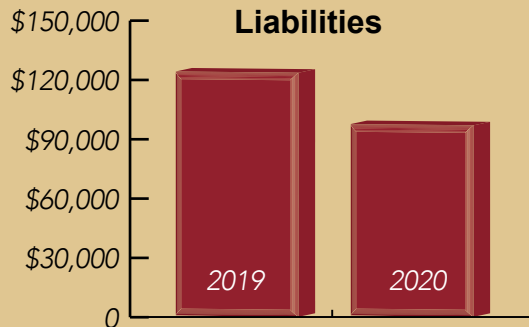
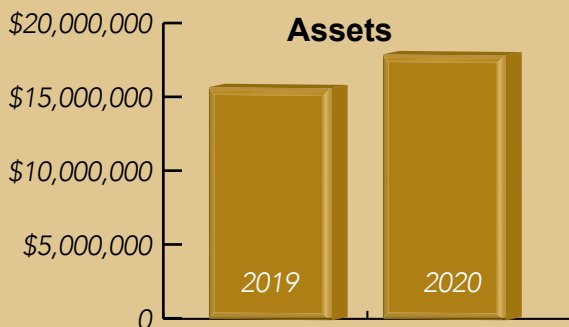
You'll see the results of this strategic plan in all our programming, outreach, education and fundraising initiatives.



By the Numbers Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020



Net Operating Income \$83,343 – Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020



Fundraising changes because of COVID-19

While 2020 saw the cancellation of in-person fundraising events, it also generated the advent of virtual events. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we raised \$84,000 even though planned events were not held. Fortunately, tax credits and grant availabilities increased for nonprofits.

Two Pennsylvania Tax Credit programs benefit Erie area students and adults with exhibits and educational programming

The goal of Pennsylvania's Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) is to encourage businesses to invest in PA projects which improve distressed areas and support, among other things, educational opportunities. A tax credit of up to 55% can be awarded. This is in addition to federal tax deductions available to the donor.

In 2020, Hagen History Center raised \$56,000 to fund the construction of exhibit galleries on the first floor of the new exhibit building which will be unveiled July 2021.

In 2021, Hagen History Center raised \$110,000 to fund the construction of exhibit galleries on the second floor of the new exhibit building which are scheduled to be unveiled May 2022.

In addition, Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program offers Hagen History Center donors either a 75% or 90% tax credit on PA taxes. This is in addition to federal tax deductions. Hagen History Center receives donations to educational programs that include campus tours, virtual programs and traveling trunk visits to schools. In the past two years, through your generosity, we raised \$28,000.

Thanks to our corporate donors for their generosity that help support these two programs: Erie Insurance, UPMC Health Plan, Marquette Savings Bank, ERIEBANK, MacDonald Illig Attorneys, Knox Law and Splash Lagoon.



Hagen History Center Education Director Jeff Sherry, back center, took 7th grade students from Leadership Christian Academy on tours of several historic sites. This photo is taken at the foot of Parade Street where multiple forts have markers. The students are in Mr. Dale Shatto's class.

Everyone can support these vital programs. For additional information and how to get involved in either program, call Geri Cicchetti at 814-454-1813 x 34.

The new CARES Act (The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) grants raised over \$112,000. These funds were critical due to the COVID-19-related lack of admissions, gift shop sales and rental opportunities on the campus for weddings and events.

To fund the next \$1.5 million operational budget and approximately \$1 million capital budget, we will continue to seek grants and additional donations utilizing NAP and EITC. Hagen History Center is also seeking sponsors for exhibit naming opportunities and utilizing Erie Gives and the Annual Fund.

We have also established a Planned Giving Program in 2021. Please remember the Hagen History Center in your will. Call us for more details at 814-454-1813 x34.

Nominate someone who deserves special recognition for contributions to local history:

Each year, Erie County Historical Society – Hagen History Center recognizes individuals who, through their own efforts, have contributed to the advancement of Erie History. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to nominate individuals they believe deserve special recognition. Categories include Media Award, Preservation Award, Local History Award and Volunteer of the Year Award. Nominations are open until June 29.



Thanks to Our Donors

Many individuals, corporations, leaders and sponsors have donated to Hagen History Center's mission to engage the public through education, community outreach, exhibits and publications. Here are just a few examples of how our donors support our efforts to bring tourists and local residents to the Hagen History Center – Where History Inspires.



COO Kelly Montefiori and CEO Michael Edwards stand inside Marquette's new Operations, Training and Innovation/Learning Center on the corner of West 10th and Peach Streets.

Marquette Savings Bank, with a slogan of empowering™ communities to be better places, has been a long-time supporter of the Hagen History Center.

Supporting exhibit construction on both the first and second floors of the new exhibit building, Marquette has utilized Pennsylvania's Neighborhood Assistance Program to fund these projects. With their donation, Marquette received a 55% state tax credit and the Hagen History Center benefited with a major donation.

Marquette has also been a regular sponsor of Hagen History Center events such as the Women Creating A Legacy event and the upcoming Grand Opening and A Night at the Museum.

CEO Michael Edwards stated, "We are pleased to be a supporter of the Hagen History Center as they prepare to unveil the newly expanded campus this summer. In addition to our financial support, the bank's chief operating officer, Kelly Montefiori, serves as the Hagen History Center's Board President. We are happy to see Kelly's involvement along with the many significant advancements that the new center offers."



Ruben and Becky Fechner have lived in numerous states and love to visit the local museums to learn about the history of their new communities. The Fechners are monthly donors to ECHS. "When you find something that's valuable and has integrity, you want to contribute to that." They choose to support an organization rather than an event. "There are lots of worthy organizations, but we're selective of whom we sponsor."

Noel Burgoyne, a retired teacher, has volunteered for many of Erie's nonprofits, but she's followed this historical museum ever since it was located in the basement of the Public Library. "I enjoy volunteering. Everyone is grateful for what you do when volunteering and it's such a worthy cause" Noel said. She wants to help keep Erie's history interesting for both locals and tourists.

"Volunteering is delightful. You meet many different people; you make friends; you get out of the house and it's a fulfilling way to live your life."



Robert Scypinski, originally from Erie, retired in 2017 from the Hilton Corporation as a Senior VP Of Sales Worldwide based in San Francisco. He now lives part-time in Erie to share his retirement years with his family.

It was Rob's wish to establish his personal planned gift in the name of his parents at the Hagen History Center. Both parents, Robert and Mary Margaret Scypinski, were teachers, and Rob was interested in education and established a scholarship fund in their name in perpetuity. Other family members are donating

currently, and Rob has included the Hagen History Center to be the beneficiary of an asset in his will.

This scholarship fund will support student field trips and the Hagen History Center's Summer History Camp which begins in July 2021. "I'm very excited to see all the development on the campus of the Hagen History Center and look forward to the Grand Opening of this downtown jewel," Robert said. "This is a wonderful asset for Erie residents and tourists alike."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, June 24, 5 p.m. - In Girard, gift of original bronze plaque for the Battles Bank during the Girard Community Summer Solstice celebration. White House open at 43 Walnut Street

Wednesday, July 14, 6-7:30 p.m. - Annual Meeting, members only, Hagen History Center Campus

Thursday, July 15, 5-7 p.m. - Volunteer Picnic, volunteers by invitation, Hagen History Center Campus

Saturday July 17, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
Sunday, July 18, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
Hagen History Center Grand Opening, free and open to the public

July 26 to 30 Summer History Camp - 20 students in grades 6-8 will enjoy in-depth tours and behind the scenes looks at how the museum works, and they'll take a few road trips to learn more about Erie County history including a look at our city from the water aboard the Victorian Princess

Thursday, August 5, 1 p.m. - Pennsylvania Roadside marker installation, Battles Bank building Route 20, Girard PA

Friday, August 6 and Saturday August 7,
- Dan Rice Days in Girard PA, White and Yellow houses open, FREE

Friday, August 6, - Happy Hour on the patio at Watson-Curtze Mansion

Wednesday, August 18, 7 p.m. - Speaker Series at the Hagen History Center: Behind the Scenes Look at the Pizza Bomber Investigation

Saturday September 18, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
- The Hagen History Center will host its first annual signature event, A Night at the Museum a campus-wide party with heavy hors d'oeuvres, multiple bars, music, dancing and a scavenger hunt like no other.

It will honor Hagen History Center patron, Thomas B. Hagen, for his commitment to the City of Erie. Roger and Nedra Richards are the Honorary Chair Couple, and they invite the community to join us for the celebration. This fundraising effort will benefit the operational expenses of the museum. Details are available at www.eriehistory.org/support or 814-454-01813 x 34

Wednesday, September 22, 7 p.m. - Speaker Series at the Hagen History Center: Architect Jeff Kidder discusses Frank Lloyd Wright. This is the first in a series of Frank Lloyd Wright discussions

Watch our website for even more activities after we reopen.



HAGEN HISTORY CENTER *Where History Inspires*

356 W 6th St, Erie, PA 16507
www.eriehistory.org

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JOIN THE HAGEN HISTORY CENTER



JOIN
US!

Be a part of Erie's downtown resurgence and learn about Erie's rich history. Membership benefits include:

- Free admission to Hagen History Center
- Family level and above receive free admission for children under 18 years old
- Research 200+ years of Erie history in Library & Archives
- Discounts on events held on campus
- Subscription to our quarterly newsletter
- 15% discount at the Carriage House Center Gift Shop on most purchases
- Invitation to the Annual Meeting & Holiday Party
- Enjoy reciprocal membership network for historical museums, sites, and societies throughout the United States.






Call Sara Little at 814-454-1813 x 27, or become a member online.



Did you know the Hagen History Center is named for Erie native Captain Thomas Bailey Hagen (USN, Ret.), chairman of the board of Erie Indemnity Company? He grew up at 341 W. Sixth St., directly across from the Hagen History Center.

Learn about all kinds of history that inspires by becoming a member here and follow us at eriehistory.org or use the QR code. Check out our social media links below.

Follow us on social media

 Facebook: [eriehistory](https://www.facebook.com/eriehistory)  Twitter: [@hagen_history](https://twitter.com/hagen_history)  Linked In: [Hagen History Center](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hagen-history-center)
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