



# HAGEN HISTORY CENTER

MARCH 2025

## *Dear Friends,*

The last few snowy months have allowed our team much needed time to focus on multiple strategic initiatives that we have undertaken at the History Center. Together, all these initiatives are designed with you in mind as we constantly strive to improve your experience.

Through multiple design meetings, we are in the final stages of debuting our new Frank Lloyd Wright Field Office Museum. This significant expansion to our existing Wright office will be sure to delight both members of our community and those around the globe. Be on the lookout for information about our grand opening this coming summer.

In addition to our Wright office expansion, it has been a two-year goal to create an interactive visitor experience for the History Center. Digital experiences augment the traditional tour and add a level of content and context to the overall museum experience. As you might imagine, this technology comes with a significant price tag. Thanks to the generosity of New York-based business leader and philanthropist Michael Bloomberg, we have partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies to undertake this exciting endeavor. The total cost is being completely underwritten by Bloomberg Philanthropies. The design process, in conjunction with Bloomberg staff, will take us thirteen weeks, so we anticipate launching our interactive guide the week of June 30.

In addition, we have been working with the world's only sunflower distillery, the Wilds Sonshine Factory located in Kane, PA to announce our upcoming joint cooperative farm agreement at the Battles Estate in Girard. We will plant over 1.2 million sunflowers for the

region's enjoyment, creating one of the largest sunflower fields located within the tristate area. After the sunflowers are past peak and dry on their stalks, we will harvest the seeds and take them to the Sonshine Factory where they will be distilled into vodka and whiskey. We will be paid for our seeds based on the daily commodity rate at the time of harvest. History will come full circle as this will be the first time since the Battles family owned the property that we will plant and harvest our own crops.

Finally, we have resumed work at the White House in Girard and look forward to debuting the finished property at this year's Women Creating a Legacy event and the Annual Meeting/Summer Member Party. Until then, we hope to see you on April 29 at our spring lecture on the Trinity of American Architecture hosted by Kimberly N. Montague, AIA the CEO of Detroit-based Kahn Architecture.



*Caleb M. Pifer*

**Caleb M. Pifer,  
Executive Director**

# Battles White House Shines



We are wrapping up exterior and interior renovations of Charlotte Battles' White House at 306 Walnut St. in Girard.

The stunning transformation will be on display this summer when we open for Art Walk on June 6th and for Women Creating A Legacy's garden party on June 10th. The women's event will move from its former location to the White House for 2025.

Members will experience all the renovations during our 2025 Annual Member Picnic & Meeting on July 15. Stay tuned for details!

## Announcing TOM HAGEN'S BIRTHDAY BASH

Coming

SEPT. 13 2025

We are celebrating 90 years of our favorite donor's life during a special celebration that will replace our gala this year at 356 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
Sponsorship packages and tickets will be available soon

Check for details  
[90thbirthdaybash.com](http://90thbirthdaybash.com)

## A Million Sunflowers Will Light Up Girard



If you visited our Girard sunflower fields in 2024, prepare to be amazed in 2025. We partnered with the world's only sunflower distillery, the Wilds Sonshine Factory, located in Kane, Pennsylvania, to plant over 1.2 million sunflowers creating one of the largest sunflower fields within the tristate area.

After the sunflower season ends, we will harvest the seeds, sell them and take them to the Wilds Sonshine Factory where they will be distilled into vodka and whiskey.

So, history will come full circle! We will plant and harvest our own crops, just like the Battles family did when they owned the property.

Check our [events page](#) and our [website](#) for dates and times for sunflower picnics, dinners, cooking classes and a unique community Sunflower Festival in Girard.

THE WILDS  
SONSHINE  
FACTORY



# EVENTS

# 2025

We don't have exact dates for everything, so please visit our website for updates and details on each event.  
[www.eriehistory.org/events](http://www.eriehistory.org/events)

## APRIL

April 29

**"Trinity of American Architecture"**

Jefferson Educational Society Doris Becker Lecture series with speaker Kimberly Montague, President & CEO of Albert Kahn Associates

April 29

**Mushroom Mania Culinary Class, at the Yellow House with Josh Mowris**



Doing it again! Expert Josh Mowris takes the Yellow House Trail tour to identify mushrooms.

**SOLD OUT**

His Fall 2024 walk was very productive. Bring a basket and forage with us. We'll follow up with mushroom treats from local vendors and a unique mushroom infused cocktail.

Sign up for the class on our website.

April TBD

**YMCA Celebrates 165 Years**  
Exhibit opens in Erie



## MAY

May TBD

**Bicycle Tour**

## JUNE

June 6

**Art Walk, Yellow House/White House, Girard**

June 10

**Women Creating a Legacy, White House, Girard**

June 18

**Men at the Museum, Erie campus**

June 23-27

**Student Architecture Camp, Erie campus, Email Adam Macrino [amacrino@eriehistory.org](mailto:amacrino@eriehistory.org) for more information**

June 25

**"The Erie Accent" Jefferson Educational Society Doris Becker Lecture series with speaker Keelan Evanini**

June TBD

**Planting Sunflower Seeds in Girard**

## JULY

July 15

**Annual membership meeting/picnic, White House, Girard**

## AUG.

August 1-2

**Dan Rice Days White House & Yellow House open in Girard**

August TBD

**Home Tour in Erie**

**Sunflower Days/Picnics, Events, Cooking Classes, Dinners and a New Sunflower Festival**

**The Key Hunt**



*Experience the legacy*

## Coming Soon

Our Frank Lloyd Wright Field Office Museum will debut later in 2025. This will include a significant expansion of our current office with interactive media, little-known facts, artifacts, letters and Wright memorabilia that have never been seen before. Visitors from Australia and around the globe have already toured the current office and are loving the news that our exhibit will expand.

Be on the lookout for information for a grand opening.

## SEPT.

September 4

**Edinboro Bike Tour**

September 13

**Tom Hagen's Birthday Bash**

## DEC.

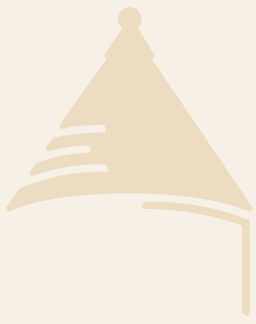
December 5-7

**Watson-Curtze Mansion Victorian Holidays**

## Coming in August



**The game returns.**



# Planned Gifts Secure the Future

We are very grateful for our annual donors. They support our operational budget in the present, and they secure our future with planned gifts.

Once a donor's family's needs are secured, they might wish to include the History Center in their estate plans. This helps the History Center continue its mission in perpetuity. There can also be tax benefits to the donor.

One planned giving donor is Doug Vicary. Here's his story:

## By Doug Vicary

Estate planning is not just about passing down financial assets, but also about preserving values, history, and the stories that shape who we are. As I considered how I wanted my legacy to be remembered, I felt a deep responsibility to ensure that the past continues to inspire future generations. That is why I have chosen to include the Hagen History Center in my estate plans.

This decision is deeply personal. My family has a long-standing connection to the Watson-Curtze Mansion. My grandmother, Margharita Curtze Vicary, and great uncle, R. Adm. Charles Curtze, used to share fond stories of wonderful family holidays spent at the house. My cousins donated the home to the Erie School District for use as a museum, and my father helped bring the museum under the umbrella of the Erie County Historical Society. He later acquired and donated the property that houses the King-Mertens Archive Building.



Along with other Curtze cousins, I have served on the board of the Erie County Historical Society and Hagen History Center.

The mission of the Hagen History Center resonates strongly with me. Through its work, the HHC doesn't just preserve my own family's stories, but the stories of families all across the county. The historical archives, artifacts, and displays provide a window into the past, ensuring that history remains alive for the

residents of Erie County. New exhibits continue to find ways to tell stories that offer an opportunity for people to find their place within the rich tapestry of our shared history.

Including the Hagen History Center in my estate planning is my way of helping ensure that the stories, artifacts, and history we cherish today continue to be preserved and shared tomorrow. I encourage others who share this passion to consider how they, too, can support this institution as it safeguards our past and enriches our future.

Please consider remembering the History Center in your estate plans. You can choose to include the History Center in your will, in a trust and/or as the beneficiary of an insurance policy.

This type of donation often provides transformational growth for the organization.

If you'd like to discuss any of the above options further, please email [gicchetti@eriehistory.org](mailto:gicchetti@eriehistory.org).

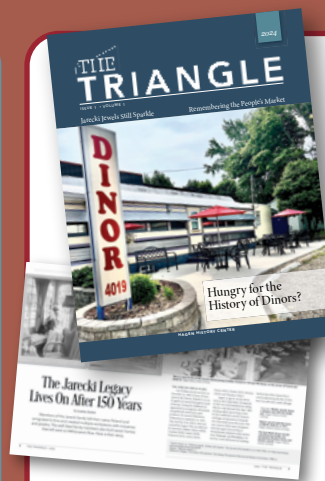
## WE'RE HALF-WAY TO OUR GOAL!



Have you seen our Iverd exhibit? Eugene Iverd, a local artist and Erie school teacher, featured Erie children as models in his paintings. They had a Norman Rockwell style and were featured on *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazine covers.

We are restoring 29 of his paintings, and we are half-way to our \$80,000 goal.

Please visit the 3rd floor exhibit and contact [gicchetti@eriehistory.org](mailto:gicchetti@eriehistory.org) to donate.



## 2025 Edition in the Works

Our 56-page, full-color magazine is in production. Last year, in our first issue, we covered Modern Tool Square, Dinors and the Jarecki family legacy.

We still have a few left for sale in our gift shop for \$10 each.

Members receive the publication free.

We also sell ads in the magazine.

For more information, email [gicchetti@eriehistory.org](mailto:gicchetti@eriehistory.org)

# Hurry! Last Chance to Pay What You Wish

Pay what you want to see all our new exhibits, but HURRY. This offer, thanks to the generosity of the Sorce family, expires March 30.



## Enjoy Our New Exhibits



### Elk Creek Township Historical Society Shares “The Little Church on the Hill.”

Founded in Wellsburg in 1855, the Universalist church had its final closing in 1957, and signed over the building to the Elk Creek Township with the request for it to be used as a community center. The building stood mostly unused until 1989 when a group of interested township residents began holding events to fund preservation projects that continue to this day. This church has now become a community treasure to the people of Elk Creek.



### Sign, Sign Everywhere A Sign!

### Nostalgia Reigns in this Walk Down Memory Lane!

Step back in time to see the magic behind the pitches of brand names that you might or might not remember in our “Made You Look” advertising exhibit open on the second floor of the Watson-Curtze Mansion.

That’s Dave Pugh pictured next to the exhibit he built to replicate Rudy Voss’ Keystone Market!



### Triggering History: Legacy of Erie Firearms

Pre-Civil War-era firearms that are either directly or indirectly related to Erie are on display in the mansion.

Some of the firearms were made by Erie firearm manufacturers Daniel Weeks and Henry S. Drake, both located on State Street at the time.

Additional firearms are linked to Henry Jarecki’s brass foundry and Hugh Lord’s family and company, the Lord Corporation.

## ROAR Into a Century of Memories With Us



### It’s a paws-itively outstanding recollection of 100 Years of the Erie Zoo.

If you visited the animals, rode the train, skated around the ice rink, and maybe even worked there, join us for some memories. We have one of the original carousel animals, benches, displays, clothing, animal photos and prints and so much more. Every corner of the room shares a memory for Zoo lovers of all ages.

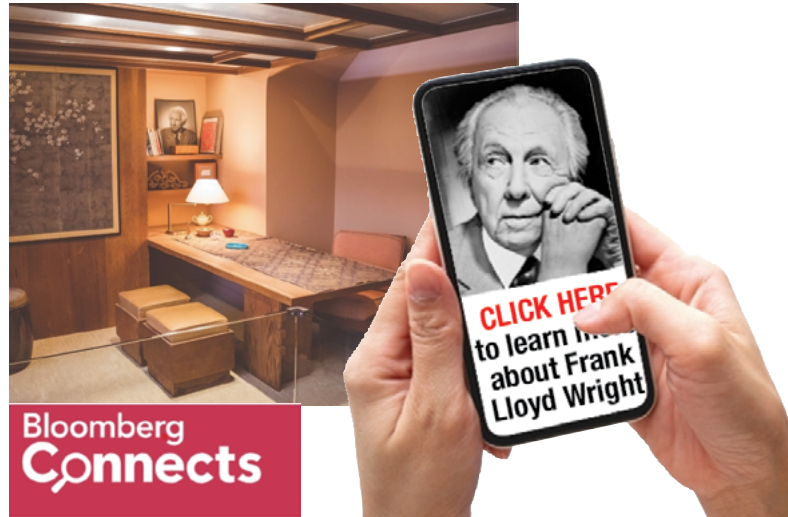
*Leaving Soon!*

## Enhanced Tours Are Coming Soon

**Big news on the way!** We are working on Bloomberg Connects technology that will transform our tours into interactive, guided experiences similar to national museum visits.

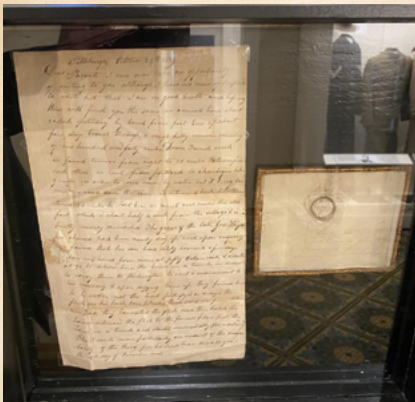
As visitors tour our facilities, they'll access multimedia content that shares audio and video insights from curators and experts – right from their phones.

Thanks to philanthropist Michael Bloomberg and Bloomberg Philanthropies for underwriting the entire program. Our team is creating content, and our launch date goal is June 30.



## New Discoveries: Mad Anthony Wayne

A lock of hair and a letter add to the story of eerie legend



Thanks to Archivist Steven Mooradian, the creepy story of Anthony Wayne's death (chronicled in our Wood-Morrison House), now showcases a lock of Wayne's hair, clipped by Mary Dobbins, the wife of Captain Daniel Dobbins, upon Wayne's exhumation in 1809.

Steven also found a letter from American soldier Henry Whitney that details the grisly condition of Wayne's body – before it was boiled. This story has fascinated everyone for centuries.



## We're in the News

Our staffers and interns share their knowledge almost weekly regarding events and history on TV, radio, social media and in print. Thanks to our media partners for sharing our many stories and to Adam Macrino and Steven Mooradian for keeping history alive for readers and viewers. Recent videos include a series on Black History Month with Jet/Fox/YourErie and multiple informative and interesting videos by interns.

*VisitErie* featured our Frank Lloyd Wright story in the 2025 guide, and we have multiple features in other print media.

To catch up, visit our [In the News](#) tab on our website or our [YouTube channel](#) to catch up on videos from staff members and interns.



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# Have You Met Our Interns?

What are our 8 talented interns doing?  
A better question would be what aren't they doing?

All of them have helped with research, volunteered at events and provided educational materials for student and adult tours.



**Caleb Badayos-Chaves** updated brochures, posted videos on social media and conducted a trivia contest on Mad Anthony Wayne.  
*Gannon University*



**Casey Bunce** helped create activities for summer camps, and she's often running our admissions counter and gift shop.  
*Penn State Behrend*



**Stella Goolsby**, our work study, helped us with exhibit upkeep, along with gift shop sales.  
*Gannon University*



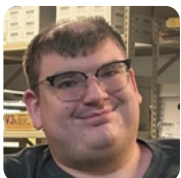
**Shelby Hoskins** shared her research on Detective James F. Hayes from our Story of Us exhibit in a video. She has her own website related to WW II research.  
*Mercyhurst University*



**Salma Mendoza** researched and wrote videos on Elizabeth Champlin Mason Perry's (Mrs. Oliver Hazard Perry) wedding dress and vintage valentines.  
*Mercyhurst University*



**Benjamin Mischler** produced videos and edited multiple articles for the new issue of *The Triangle* magazine (coming out this summer).  
*Penn State Behrend*



**Anthony Scarpino** is helping archivists catalogue our framed objects collection and our map collection.  
*Mercyhurst University*



**Roman Straub** researched, wrote, produced and filmed multiple videos on the History Center's military medals collection. He also rewrote our docent manual.  
*Gannon University*



## Let Us Entertain You

In 2024, more than 20 people chose our venues for weddings or celebrations. This year, we have 23 events scheduled with a few more in 2026!

*Here are our venue choices:*

Enjoy Victorian elegance at the **Watson-Curtze Mansion on Millionaire's Row**.

Or, have a fabulous farm wedding or event in **Girard** at our **Yellow House** with more than 120 acres of bucolic scenery.

We've also had small ceremonies, meetings, parties and more in the **President's Room in Wood-Morrison House**.

Bookings start at \$500. Visit our wedding site at [erieweddings.net](http://erieweddings.net). To view pictures and find more information, hover over the QR code. For a private tour, contact Caleb Pifer at [events@eriehistory.org](mailto:events@eriehistory.org)



*Pictured at top: The Watson-Curtze Mansion. Staff Photo*



356 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St.  
Erie, PA 16507

Non-Profit Org.  
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[WWW.ERIEHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.ERIEHISTORY.ORG)

814-454-1813



## *Save the Date*

SEPTEMBER 13, 2025

We are celebrating 90 years of our favorite donor's life during a special celebration that will replace our gala this year at 356 West 6th Street.

### Mark Your Calendar

- Festivities will begin at 6 pm with Swing Time Big Band out of Cleveland on the patio
- Red Letter will cater
- Open Bar
- 7:30 pm Birthday Bash presentation begins with a champagne toast and specialty cake confection
- 8 pm Breeze Band plays

### Coming soon:

Sponsorship packages and ticket packages