



Connecting  
generations  
through  
gathering,  
preserving,  
and sharing  
Mid-Willamette  
Valley history

# 2023 Annual Report

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HERITAGE CENTER

503-585-7012  
1313 Mill St SE  
Salem, OR



## 2023 Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

Ila McCallum, President

Lola Hackett, Past President

Richard (Rich) Davis, Secretary

Lori K. Woodbury, CPA, MST, Treasurer

### Board Members:

Ed Austin

Aleta Ching

Coburn Grabenhorst

John Hawkins

Malissa Duniway-Holland

Sean O'Harra

Sam Skillern

Rebecca (Becky) Purvine Sterup

Jaime White

## 2023 Staff & Support

Alex Lanham, Event & Security Attendant

Amanda Larios, Orientation Center Svc Rep

David Bello, Janitorial Support (Easter Seals)

Chris Coila, Facility Maintenance Lead

Holly Klaus, Business Mgr

Jamie Garcia, Event & Security Supervisor

Jennifer Oakes, Event & Security Attendant

Jerri Griffin, Event Support (Easter Seals)

Kaylyn Mabey, Research Librarian/Collections Specialist

Kathryn Fox, Education Mgr

Kylie Pine, Curator & Collections Mgr

Meagan Morris, Event Reservations Mgr

Michelle Cordova, Executive Director

Linda Baillie, Event Reservations Assistant

Stephanie Meeks, Marketing & Comms Specialist

Toby Lanham, Groundskeeper

Valerie Van Alstyne, Community Engagement Mgr

## Outgoing Staff & Support

Danielle Green

Shirley Hamilton

Josh Henderson

Karin Holton

Shayla Young

Virgil Thorpe



Volunteer, Bobbie Clyde, making paper lanterns with visitors during Spring Break Family Day outside of the changing exhibit, *Finding Salem's Chinatown(s)*

## Mission

WHC connects generations through gathering, preserving, and sharing Mid-Willamette Valley history.

## Vision

We are a place for all to discover, engage and make history.

## Values

### Integrity

- Adhere to preservation standards
- Pursue high standards of scholarship
- Responsibly utilize and manage resources

### Inclusion

- Engage with diverse communities
- Provide educational opportunities to all abilities and ages
- Actively work to eliminate barriers to access our resources

### Inspiration

- Seek out and be responsive to our community
- Share our spaces and collections to foster empathy and critical thinking
- Collaborate and encourage community engagement

# Education

WHC provided educational opportunities to 2,889 individuals of all ages and abilities.

## Tours

Before Oregon Statehood (formerly Pioneer World) was the most popular experience requested by school-age groups.

- 1691 students and 537 adult chaperones joined us for on-site field trips.
- 283 visitors scheduled tour groups.

## Adult Classes

We host adult classes and workshops through out the year in partnership with OSU, Salem Fiberarts Guild and Millrace Woodcrafts.

- 4 adults registered for woodworking.
- 18 adults registered for weaving.
- 6 adults registered for canning workshops.



Kids playing games during Spring Break Family Day, March 2023

## Grants

With the assistance of funding from a Marion Cultural Development Corporation grant, we were able to hire a part-time education department intern.

- Marion Cultural Development Corporation Grant: \$4,500.

## Events

The Education Department continues to plan and support several events throughout the year.

- 30 people registered for *Zooming Back to History*.
- 16 visitors for *Low-Sensory Day*.
- 108 visitors for *Spring Break Family Day*.
- 46 visitors for *Jr Archaeology Day*.
- 150 visitors for *Archaeology Open House*.

# Signature Events

WHC engaged with 6,779 community members at our 2023 Signature Events.



1,200 visitors attended *Sheep to Shawl* in May.



1,550 visitors attended *Drive-Thru Trick-or-Treat* in October



4,029 attended *Magic at the Mill* in December.

# Exhibits

WHC hosted two new changing exhibits in 2023 and continued to work on our permanent exhibits.



**Finding Salem's Chinatown(s)** concluded its run. The exhibit featured the history of Salem's Chinese American community and promoted several community projects. It will continue to live on via an article on the new Salem History Hub.

We joined forces with nine museums, archives, and other community organizations to put on the **Heritage Invitational Exhibit: To Your Health!**, which explored a variety of stories of public health in our community. Examples included Emily Loveridge's nursing program at Linfield University to the day-to-day operations of the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital.

In partnership with the Salem Fiberarts Guild and the Weaving Guilds of Oregon, we were the last stop for the statewide juried textile exhibit **Filaments**, which showcased the work of weavers across Oregon.

2023 brought a lot of work on our **Permanent Exhibits**. We started our **Warp Speed Ahead** project in January, re-warping our demonstration loom. Progress has included refurbishing our 1919 Spooler and setting up our creel. Work will continue next year.

Follow along at: <https://www.willametteheritage.org/thomas-kay-woolen-mill/warp/>



The accessible ramp around **Caboose 507** is taking shape with the addition of a concrete ramp and wooden supports.

Through a grant from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, we were able to research and create our first **Backpack Buddies** curriculum as a pilot project. The project pairs families visiting the museum with a themed activity backpack to explore themes of the museum's story more closely and in a more hands on manner!

## New Acquisitions and Highlights

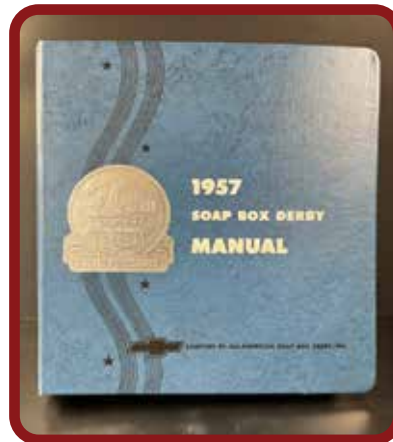


Leslie Junior High School photo, 1936-37.

Cropped image  
of Leland and  
Leonard  
Williams.  
WHC  
2023.033.0005



Plaque from dedication  
of Detroit Dam, pre-  
sented to Secretary of  
Interior Douglas McKay  
who pushed the button  
to start the turbines,  
10 June 1953.  
WHC 2023.053.0001



Soap Box Derby  
materials, 1957,  
Al Pfeifer director.  
WHC 2023.053.0001



# Collections

***In keeping with our mission, we continue to care for and provide access to extensive collections of artifacts, documents, photos, and books.***

### Milestones:

We conducted a second season of archaeological investigation on the northwest corner of our site, seeking out the original foundations of the Parsonage. Volunteers and partners from the City of Salem, Willamette University, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Oregon Archaeological Society completed the work.



Mariah Rocker and Kylie Pine at  
*In Freedom's Footsteps: Juneteenth*  
*Community History Walk*

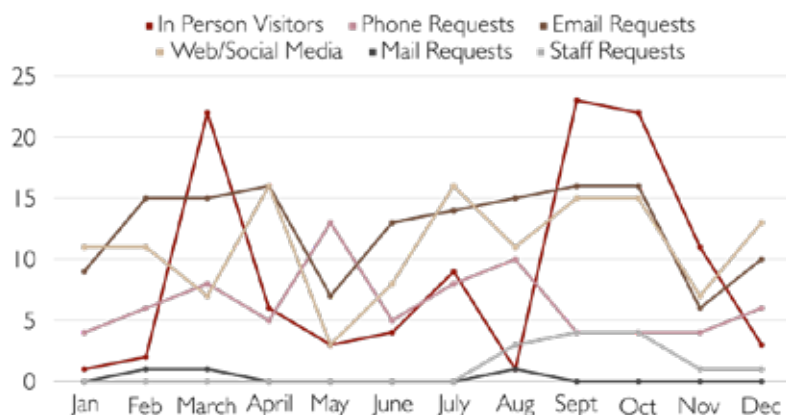
We partnered with Oregon Black Pioneers in their *Black History Quest* presentation series. Together, we also developed a Juneteenth Community History Walking tour focusing on the family of Albert and Mary Ann Bayless. Over 150 people attended!

This summer, the south side of Thomas Kay Woolen Mill got a bit of a facelift as Maintenance Lead Chris Coila worked to address paint failure on the decorative cornice and probed and inventoried windows to get a better sense of how they are holding up under our Oregon weather!

## Research Services

The WHC Research Library and Archives provides service remotely and by appointment. Staff and volunteers spent 779 hours providing reference support to help people connect with their history. We continue to digitize and add materials to the research portion of our website to support continued scholarship.

## 2023 Research Requests by Type



### By the Numbers:

**61 donations** of new material were accepted into the museum's collections, including over **4122 items**.

**1562 items** were newly cataloged last year! This includes new donations and materials that have never been cataloged before.

**2038 items** were inventoried and rehoused by staff and volunteers.

**In our collections management database we have cataloged:**

## 55,073 Photographs



## 24,486 Artifacts



## 8,763 Books



## 4,759 Series of Archival Records



## Research Services

**We were able to help with 475 individual research requests, furthering scholarship and understanding our community history.**

## Thomas Kay Woolen Mill Worker Project

This year, we marked our site's 250th entry of millworker profiles. Check them out at:  
[https://www.willametteheritage.org/tkwm\\_employees](https://www.willametteheritage.org/tkwm_employees)

### Working at the Mill



The Thomas Key Whisen Mill operated from 1827 - 1962. The mill would not have been functional without hundreds of employees to oversee the manufacturing, distribution and administrative processes. While not without industrial hazards, there was a sense of community and camaraderie among workers at the mill - many of whom spent most of their careers here and worked alongside family members through multiple generations.

The paper's intention is to clear the way of information on individuals who have worked at the Thomas & Watson Mill since its existence. Names will be added as they are identified. They will include and reference materials in our research journals. When the research worksheets are completed and posted on the TMWC blog, they will be linked to the Names Board page. If you would like to know more about what working conditions were like generally at the mill and what our research is about, click [here](#).

### Alphabetical List of Known Employees



# Facilities Updates

*Ensuring our museum is ready for the future by maintaining our historic site.*



Caboose work continued with concrete ramp pour and wooden ramp construction.



With the help of Navy Sailors from NavyWeek 101 we were able to rebuild the southside of the Machine Shop.



The City of Salem grant allowed us to clean out, repair and repaint south side of Mill Building gutters.



Jason Lee porch was repaired ensuring our guests safety.



Installed a doorbell at the main entrance to let front desk know when a visitor needs assistance.



Repaved and repaired 3 sections of walkways on grounds ensuring guests have a smooth path to travel.



We installed a new phone system across the site to upgrade technology and ensure all areas have consistent telephone access.



Upgraded elevator components to provide consistent use of the elevator for visitors and venue clients.



Recruited more volunteers to assist with daily grounds and facility maintenance and support.

# Event Rentals

*Helping our community make history on a daily basis.*



We provided event venue rental space for 329 events this year, serving close to 30,000 people.

50% were nonprofit, government, or school groups.

Community members hold events like: weddings, birthday parties, business meetings, celebrations of life, anniversary parties, fundraisers, cultural celebrations, and art shows.

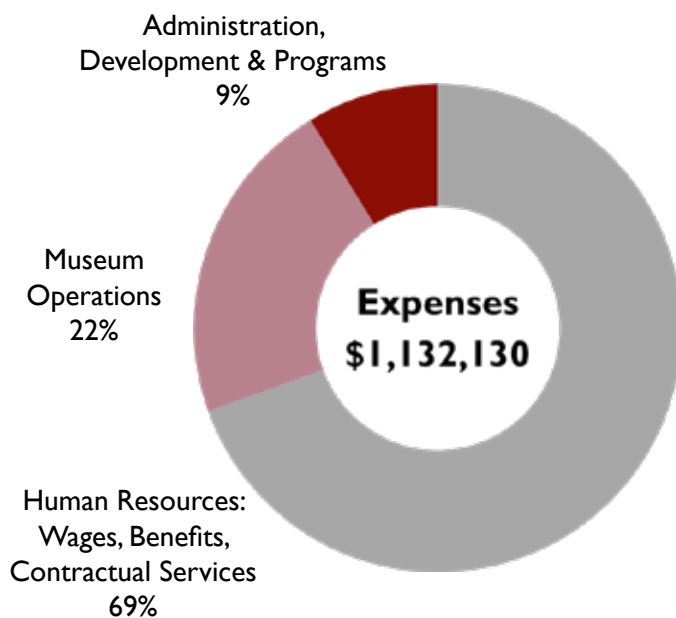
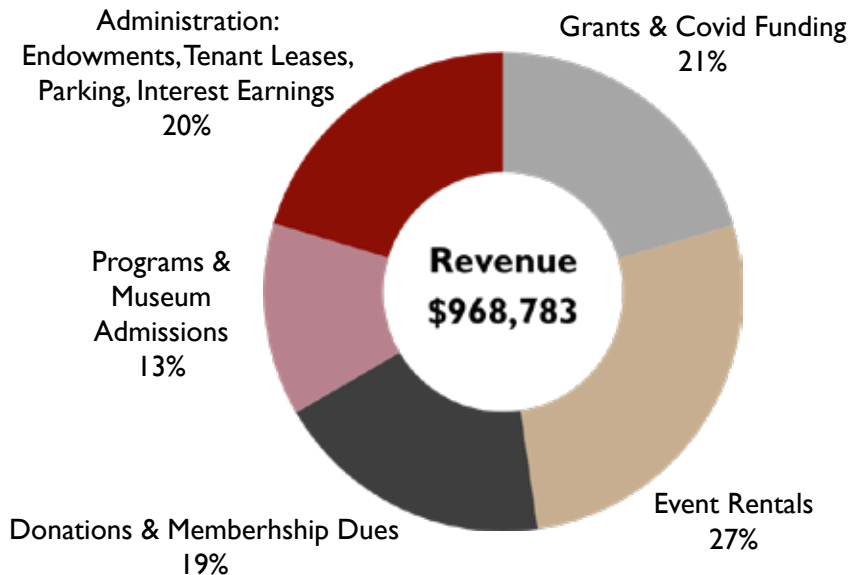
Photo Credit: Brynn M Photography, Soup Meet Soul, Simply Joyful Cookies, Happy Heart Art Co, Oregon Elevated Events, Taylored To You.

# Finances

*As we head into a year focused on preservation, we utilized past funds to begin addressing repairs in 2023.*

This year, WHC Board of Directors invested reserve funds to manage unanticipated and postponed repairs to our infrastructure and assets. Leadership believes we are in a position to utilize resources from previous surplus years to invest in programs and preservation issues to see financial payback in the coming years.

**January 1, 2023 Cash on Hand: \$364,164**



**December 31, 2023 Cash on Hand: \$215,861**

Judy Walker, Ila McCallum, Jean Cockelreas,  
and Pete McCallum at the We are Family Spring Gala 2023

## Thank you for supporting us!

### 2023 Grant Funders:

City of Salem  
Marion Cultural Development Corporation  
OR Health Authority  
OR Parks & Recreation Department  
OR State Capitol Foundation  
Salem Public Library Foundation  
The Kinsman Foundation  
The Oregon Community Foundation

### 2023 Sponsors:

Ed Austin Associates  
First Interstate Bank  
Grove, Mueller, and Swank PC  
Kraft Custom Construction, Inc  
MAPS Credit Union Foundation  
OR Department of Agriculture  
Salem Fiberarts Guild  
Salem Leadership Foundation  
The H Group, Inc  
Danner & Soli Event Rental & Design  
Select Impressions  
A Covered Affair  
Santiam Brewing

### Members:

As of December 2023, WHC had 412 members.





# Volunteers

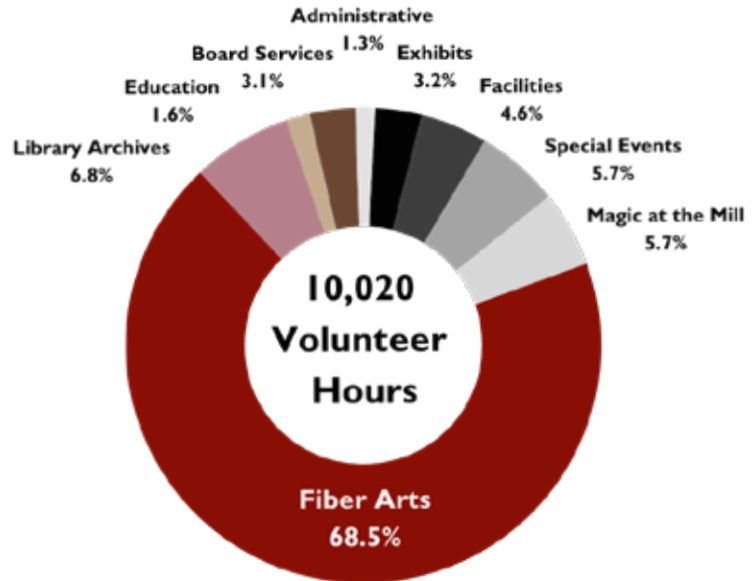
*Together, our volunteers contributed an astounding 10,020 hours of their valuable time, making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.*

As we reflect on the past year, we are excited to share the incredible journey we've had with our dedicated volunteers. Their unwavering commitment and passion have truly set the stage for the success and impact we've achieved together.

## Celebrating Success Together

In 2023, our volunteers played a pivotal role in achieving remarkable milestones, from site preservation, administration, demonstrations, historic research, education, and WHC Signature Events. Their commitment to excellence has propelled us toward greater heights.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each volunteer who has been the driving force behind our success. Your tireless efforts and selflessness have made WHC a stronger, more compassionate community.



Ed and Arianna Leber at *Spring Break Family Day* March 2023

## Opportunities for Growth

As we look to the future, exciting opportunities await. Together, we will embark on projects such as opening the Caboose exhibit and extending our outreach that will further enrich our community.



Marion County Dairy Princess Rebecca and Jessie DeJager at *Sheep to Shawl*.

# 2024 Highlights

*WHC events support our mission of connecting generations through gathering, preserving, and sharing Mid-Willamette Valley history.*

March	Changing Exhibit Opening: <i>The PNW Community Coral Reef Project</i> , <i>Spring Break Low Sensory Day</i> & <i>Spring Break Family Day</i>
April	<i>Spring Gala</i> , <i>Saving Atlantis</i> (documentary screening)
May	<i>Sheep to Shawl</i>
June	<i>In Freedom's Footsteps: Juneteenth Community History Walk</i>
August	Changing Exhibit Opening: <i>History in the Rubble: Salem's Lost Buildings</i>
October	<i>Drive-Thru Trick-or-Treat</i>
December	<i>Magic at the Mill</i>



Family "digging" for artifacts at *Junior Archaeology Day*



**Follow us to stay up-to-date on event details and volunteer opportunities**