



Left: Photograph of original Mill Building WHC collections number: M31992-116-0007. Right: Current photo of the rebuilt Mill Building

Willamette Heritage Center

2024 Annual Report

Connecting Generations

willametteheritage.org | info@willametteheritage.org

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.



Blacksmiths fire up the forge for visitors at Sheep to Shawl.

2024 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Ila McCallum, President
John Hawkins, Vice President
Emily Swart, Secretary
Lori K. Woodbury, CPA, MST, Treasurer

Board Members:

Ed Austin
Iolanda Frampton
Coburn Grabenhorst Jr.
Sean O'Harra
Rebecca (Becky) Purvine Sterup
Evan West
Jenn Winegar

2024 Staff & Support

Michelle Cordova, Executive Director
Linda Baillie, Event Reservations Support
Indigo Clingerman, Front Desk Support
Kathryn Fox, Education Manager
Leah Hoffhines, Marketing & Communications Specialist
Holly Klaus, Business Manager
Alex Lanham, Event Support
Toby Lanham, Groundskeeper
Kaylyn Mabey, Research Librarian/Collections Specialist
Jennifer Oakes, Event & Security Lead
Kylie Pine, Curator & Collections Manager
Heather Ritchie, Event Reservations Manager
Valerie Van Alstyne, Community Engagement Manager

Education

WHC provided educational opportunities to 3,055 individuals of all ages and abilities.

Group tours & school field trips: In 2024, Before Oregon Statehood (formerly Pioneer World) was the most popular experience requested by school-age groups.

- 1,854 students and 491 adult chaperones joined us for on-site field trips
- 282 visitors scheduled for tour groups

Adult classes and workshops throughout the year in partnership with OSU, Salem Fiberarts Guild and Millrace Woodcrafts.

- 8 adult students registered for woodworking
- 32 adult students registered for weaving workshops
- 15 adult students registered for food preservation courses

Grants: With funding assistance from Marion Cultural Development Corporation, we were able to renovate and revamp our education classroom with an audio system, refresh the walls with paint and display copies of images from our archives; Salem Foundation funding supported educational programming for youth groups, school field trips, adults, and educators year-round.

The Education Department planned and implemented several events throughout the year including Zooming Back to History, Oregon's Birthday Trivia Night, Low-Sensory Day, Spring Break Family Day, book lectures, documentary screenings, After Hours Mill Tour and summer Family Fun Fridays.

- 373 visitors to the WHC for education special events

WHC provided educational opportunities for 3,055 individuals of all ages and abilities.



Faith Christian School touring the Mill.

Signature Events

WHC hosted more than 5,000 individuals at our 2024 Signature Events.

Drive Thru Trick-Or-Treat



The annual Drive Thru Trick-Or-Treat aims to serve the community in an inclusive, safe environment. Attracting an average of 2,000 people a year!

Magic at the Mill



Magic at the Mill is a community favorite that connects generations through the tradition of holiday lights! In 2024 we hosted more than 2,000 visitors over the weekend!

Sheep to Shawl

This woolly wonder festival educates visitors on the journey that wool takes, from sheering of the sheep to the weavers corner. In 2024 we had more than 1,000 visitors!



Spring Gala

In this themed event, we invite the community to celebrate their heritage and support WHC in its mission to continue preserving history. About 200 people attend per year!



Exhibits

We hosted three changing exhibits during 2024 in addition to working on our permanent exhibits.

Finding Salem's Chinatown(s) concluded its run, having featured the history of Salem's Chinese American community and promoted several community projects. The exhibit will continue through an article on the new Salem History Hub. Additionally, a pop-up version of the exhibit was reprised in the Warehouse Building.

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 showcases the work of weavers across Oregon.

The PNW Community **Coral Reef Project** invited visitors to view a life-sized, walk-through coral reef constructed out of crocheted and knitted sea life. The project included a mini-exhibit of Willamette Heritage Center collections that helped document the connection between the Mid-Willamette Valley residents and businesses and the sea.



Volunteer assembles the Coral Reef Project exhibit.

In August, we opened **History in Rubble: Salem's Lost Buildings**, which showcased rarely seen materials from the WHC's collections that have documented the many buildings lost from our landscape in the post-war period.



*Demolition of Salem's City Hall September 2, 1972.
WHC Collections X2014.023.0034*

In addition to these gallery exhibits, we partnered with the Oregon State Capitol Foundation to create a digital exhibit on Caralyn B. Shelton, Oregon's first female interim governor, which debuted during Women's History Month in March. Our dedicated caboose crew also made remarkable progress in 2024 on the ADA-accessible ramp for our soon-to-be newest permanent exhibit: Caboose 507. The decking supports were completed, and the decking was laid down during the year.

New Acquisitions and Highlights



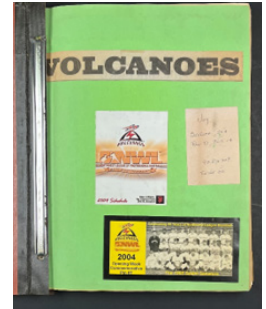
Press kit from Rajneesh International Commune sent to the Statesman Journal newspaper, 1983.
WHC 2024.033



Corn sheller used by Charles W. Reynolds, Marion County farmer.
WHC 2024.027.0002



Miles Linen Mill employees at their workstations, series of photos taken by Alice Riggs, 1953-54. WHC 2024.007.0013



Salem-Keizer Volcanoes Scrapbook, compiled by Joyce E. Gatlin, 2004.
WHC 2024.010.0022

Collections

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

Milestones:

- Updated our reproduction and use fees to match those of our heritage partner museums and historical societies.
- Hosted a research master class that highlighted our millworker project and offered valuable strategies and sources for researching working-class ancestors in the Salem/Marion County area.
- We collaborated with the Education Department to offer two new programs: Trivia Night and Museum after Hours.
- We hosted an abbreviated season of the Public Archeology Project on the northwest corner of our site, seeking out the original foundations of the Parsonage. Volunteers and partners included the City of Salem, Willamette University, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Oregon Archaeological Society.
- We held our second annual Juneteenth Community History Walk in partnership with the Oregon Black Pioneers and Just Walk Salem-Keizer. This year featured the Rev. Daniel Jones. Check out a link to the walking brochure here: www.willametteheritage.org/freedomsfootsteps/

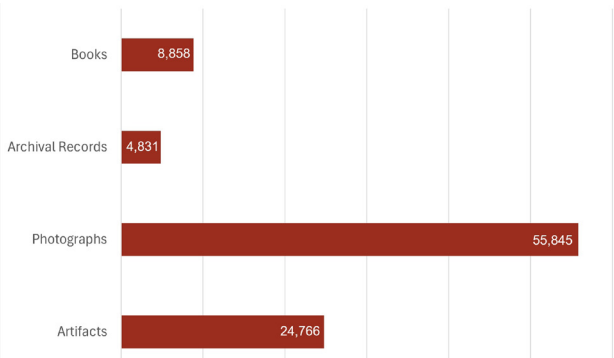
By the Numbers:

53 donations of new material were accepted into the museum’s collections, including more than 337 items.

1,272 items were newly catalogued last year. This includes new donations and materials that have never been catalogued before.

1,258 items were inventoried and rehoused by staff and volunteers.

The WHC collection management database now includes the following:

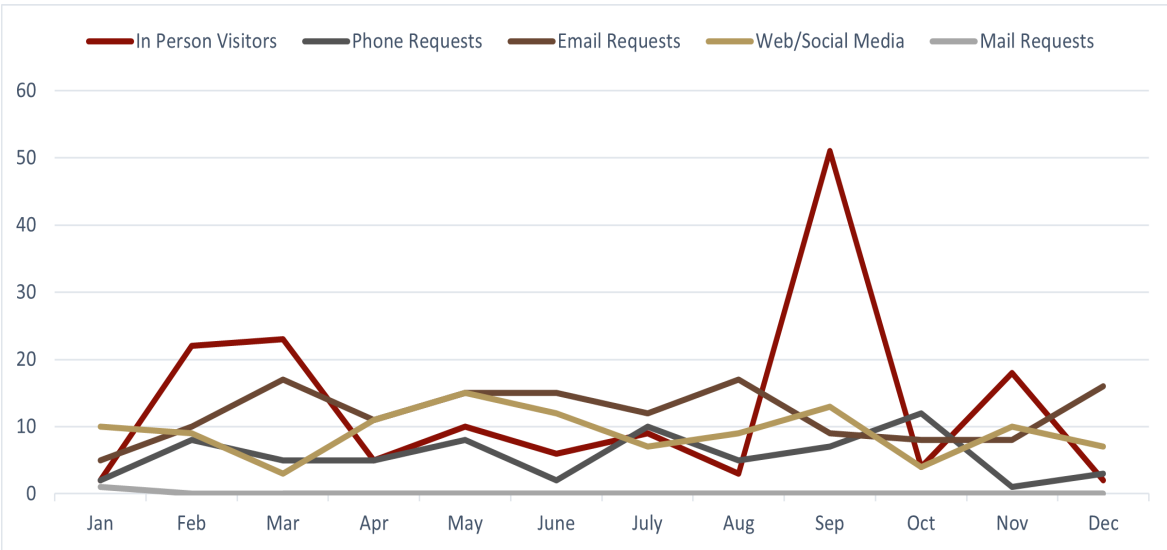


Research Services

We were able to help with 493 individual research requests – furthering scholarship and understanding of our community history.

The WHC Research Library and Archives provides service remotely and by appointment. Staff and volunteers have spent 825 hours providing reference support to help people connect with their history. We are continually expanding and digitizing our research services on the WHC website to enhance accessibility and support continued scholarship.

2024 Research Requests by Type



Volunteers

Together, our volunteers contributed just under 11,000, hours, making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

According to Independent Sector, the current value of each volunteer hour in Oregon is estimated at \$34.74. In 2024, the time dedicated by our volunteers was worth approximately \$380,000. While no dollar amount can fully reflect the true value of volunteers to the well-being of our communities and our organization, this figure helps quantify the significant impact of their contributions.



Volunteers busy helping to organize visitors during event.

Celebrating Success Together

An outstanding 225 volunteers contributed to the success of signature events, including the WHC Spring Gala, Sheep to Shawl, DriveThru Trick-or-Treat, and Magic at the Mill!

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.



Volunteers ready to greet visitors at Magic at the Mill, 2024.

Opportunities for Growth

Looking into 2025, we plan to continue strategic volunteer engagement by developing frameworks and resources to involve volunteers in meaningful ways at the Willamette Heritage Center.

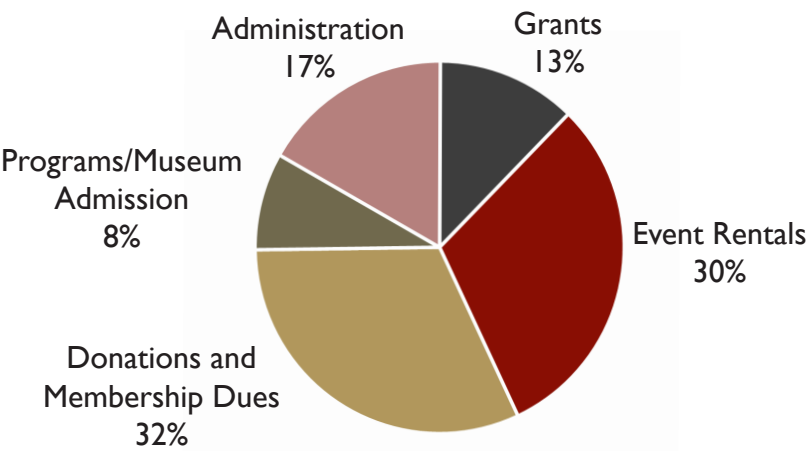


225 Volunteers
10,938 hours
\$380,000 valued labor

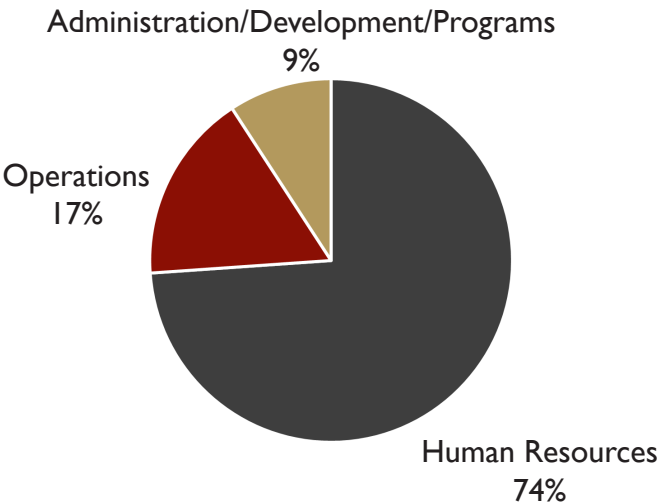
Finances

In 2024, thanks to the generous support of our members, grant funders, and sponsors, the Willamette Heritage Center successfully sustained museum operations, maintained our historic grounds, and expanded outreach efforts. This support also enabled us to start a preservation plan for our cherished historical buildings, train dedicated docents, upgrade our event rental spaces, and host our signature events.

2024 Revenue \$1,066,477



2024 Expenses \$1,003,081



Thank you for supporting us!

2024 Grant Funders:

- City of Salem
- Marion Cultural Development Corp
- Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept
- Oregon State Capitol Foundation
- Salem Public Library Foundation
- The Kinsman Foundation
- The Oregon Community Foundation
- Salem Foundation
- Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation
- Willamette Health Council

2024 Sponsors:

- Ed Austin & Assoc.
- First Interstate Bank
- Grove, Mueller, and Swank
- Kraft Custom Construction
- MAPS Credit Union Foundation
- Oregon Dept of Agriculture
- Salem Fiberarts Guild
- Salem Leadership Foundation
- The H Group
- Danner & Soli
- Select Impressions
- A Covered Affair
- Santiam Brewing

Members:

As of December 2024, WHC had 340 members.



Event Venues

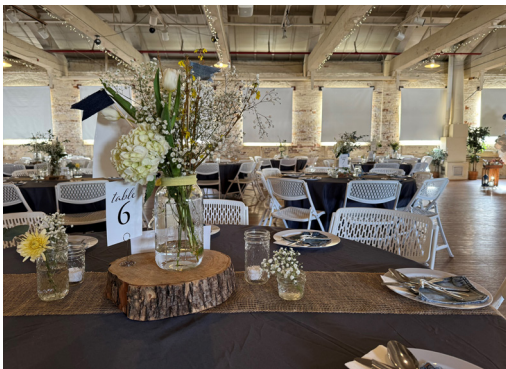
Willamette Heritage Center continues to remain a sought-out location for local businesses and private events throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley. Facility rentals accounted for 30% of our revenue in 2024. These proceeds help us fund the ongoing preservation of our unique and irreplaceable collections, historic buildings, and this beautiful site.

In 2024, Willamette Heritage Center:

- Provided venue rental space for 310 events
- Had more than 30,000 event venue rental attendees onsite
- Hosted 44 weddings

Other events hosted at WHC in 2024 included: fundraisers, club meetings, holiday parties, celebrations of life, proms, corporate events, birthday parties, volunteer appreciations, retirement parties, baby showers, church services, senior banquets, and more!

We eagerly look forward to the year ahead as we continue to celebrate alongside our local community!



Upcoming Events

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

March 24 Spring Break Low Sensory Day

March 26 Spring Break Family Day

April 4 Spring Gala

May 3 Sheep to Shawl



Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on volunteer opportunities and upcoming events!

