

ANNUAL REPORT

DATE PRESENTED

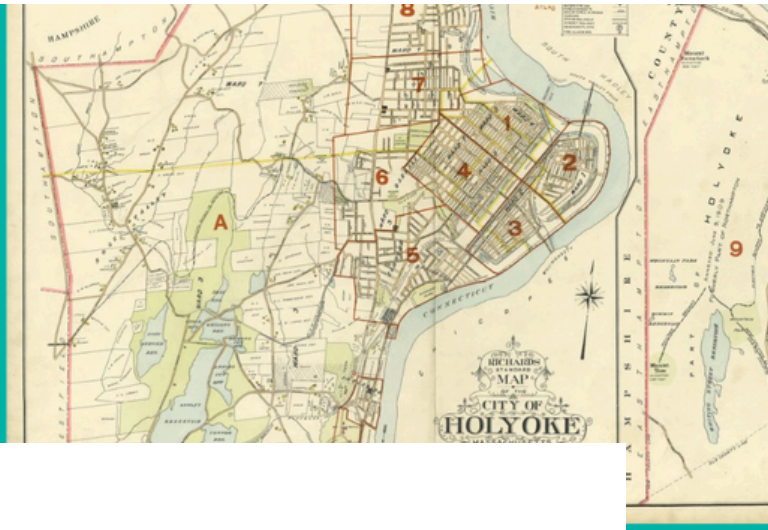
September 25, 2024
6:00pm
Wistariahurst

PRESENTED BY

Megan Seiler

a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW



As Wistariahurst continues to grow and rebuild after the pandemic and while the structure needs some major work, that progress is well underway. Our top goals for the next 5 years include stabilizing the physical building, continuing visual improvements inside the home, building new community partnerships and ensuring all Holyoke residents feel welcome, reprogramming the house to reflect an inclusive history of Holyoke, and having a consistent annual calendar.

BUILDING:

Electrical-Thanks to the Mass Cultural Council Capital Facilities Fund grant, we have expended those grant funds and update all used outlets on the first and second floor and upgraded lighting.

Roof repairs were needed to address a leak in the Music Room and it was completed by Mahan.

The Retaining Wall work for 150 linear square feet is currently developing bid docs with the plan to start work in the Spring.

Masonry/Foundation survey was completed on 11/28/23. Results showed that just under $1 million in work needed. The chimney was rebuilt and we will be putting the water damage restoration out to bid as soon as the expanded scope of work is approved by City Council.

Misc.- The service entrance railing was replaced, the trellis for the Pine St porch is being installed, the porch was restored, and the gardeners are working to replace grass in the front with more sustainable options. Wi-Fi was installed for the public spaces.

PROGRAMMING:

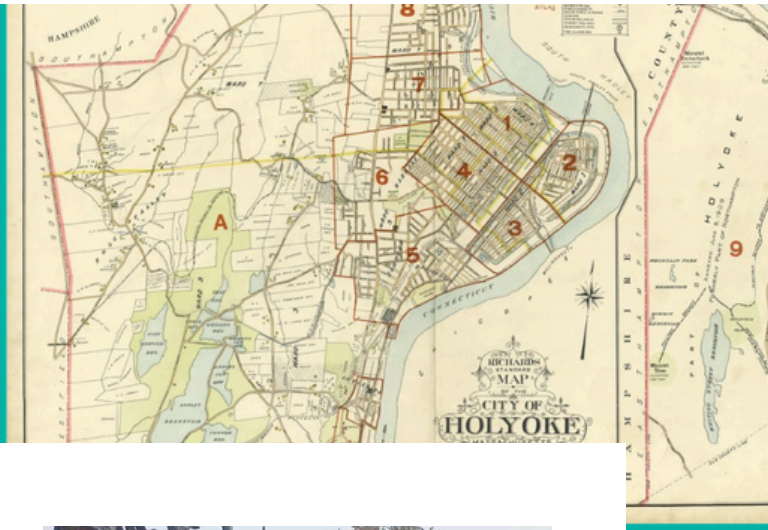
We have created a consistent calendar and are growing and shifting our priorities as we need. We have opened the tenement room on the second floor, have changed the Victorian Bedroom into the Silk Room, and are planning the Immigration Room.

VOLUNTEERS:

We have had an amazing year with our volunteers! The gardeners added a few new people, we've gained some new house volunteers as well.

a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW



BUDGET UPDATES:

This year we were able to get our Enterprise Coordinator position funded full-time. We also received more funding for our contracted services line and heating costs. We are still advocating for the Education Coordinator's position to be added back into the budget but that is yet to happen.

DEI WORK:

We hope to continue this training with our volunteers and board members. The city is moving forward with training all of its employees.

AUDIENCES:

As we have struggled to engage the schools, we have looked for ways to include more kids and families. The amazing egg hunt put on by the city provided us with the opportunity to make our space inclusive to those with sensory sensitivities. We had great success with our sensory friendly egg hunt and are doing a sensory friendly trick-or-treating and Sunday Funday the week before.

STAFF:

We have no new staffers this year and have maintained a great crew!



Faces on the Fenceline Exhibit



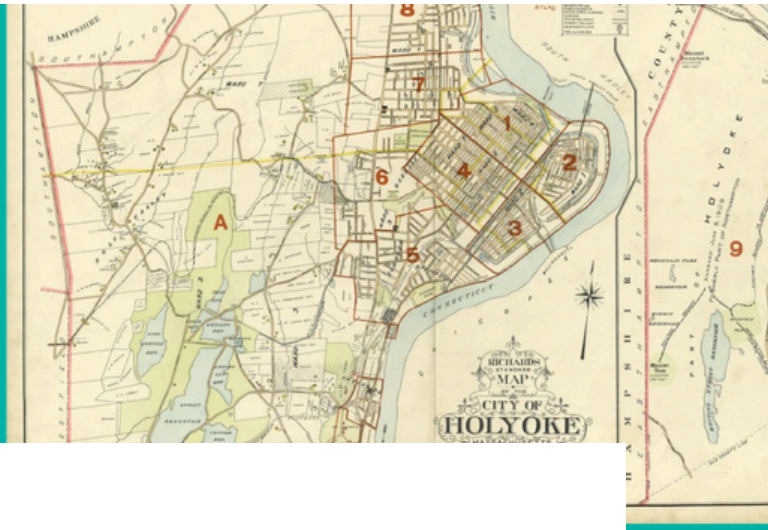
Sensory Friendly Egg Hunt



Tenement Room

a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW



ARCHIVES REPORT:

This year we had a strong focus on cleaning out and organizing. Old exhibit materials and mannequins have all been consolidated into one room on the 3rd floor. We cleared out a room on the 2nd floor to be used for interpreting an exhibit about Migration to include in our house tours.

We continue to develop more relationships with HCC through:

- Class visits for tours of the house for students to use the space for inspiration for creative works
- Class visits to learn how to access and use the material in the archives
- Visiting HCC classes to introduce oral history collecting
- Providing space for students to practice their public speaking skills by delivering class work presentations;
- Hosting paid interns who help research and organize small exhibits.

Main House Exhibits:

- Updated and consolidated Skinner Silk manufacturing exhibit to include sample textiles, payroll registers, the history of the Mill River Reservoir Flood, and Joseph Skinners desk.
- Stewart's bedroom has been reinterpreted to reflect a child's experience
- Many textiles presented on mannequins have been added throughout the house
- Received State citation from Sen. John Velis for the work done on *Wistariahurst at 150: Reflections of the Museum* exhibit

Archival Collections added to the Archive with the help of Simmons Interns.:

- The Qui Vive Club collection was added and a Finding Aid written
- The Ely/Chase Family collection have been added to the Archive
- Several small, varied items were added to the Holyoke, Textile,and Wistariahurst Institutional Collections.

Volunteers:

Betsy Woode, and Joanne Picard have been the textile mavens who help us keep track of all of the garments and materials we have, and recommend how we can best put them to use. This year with the help of Ashley Taylor, we were able to deaccesstion quite a few garments and put them into our usable costume collection for our character tours.

Deborah Long and Deborah Diamente have both taken on inventorying projects - the third floor Linenclose, and our Paintings and Prints.

Thank you to the board for supporting the work of the archives in providing re-housing supplies, funding the conservation of a few significant artifacts, and to those of you who participate on the Collections Advisory Committee.

last year's

NUMBERS & STATISTICS

We continue to grow our audiences and in addition to our Instagram and Facebook, we have added audiences with both TicTok and Eventbrite.

Our consistent newsletter on Mondays has increased the quality of engagement with Mailchimp at a 50% open rate (average open rate is around 27% for cultural institutions nationally).

Our Facebook site visits are up 158%

Instagram is up 320 followers

4,100 VISITORS

OVER 6,000 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HOURS

We had $1,200 in onsite donations.

We had $16,366 in private event revenue.

We continue to grow our reach and increase our visibility. We have had great coverage for most of our events, including Juneteenth (despite the heat), our 150th exhibition opening, and, most recently, the Faces on the Fenceline outdoor exhibit.

We also have our first official sponsor for the Holiday Open House and hope we can grow our visitation for that event again this year. We will be doing a targeted post for sponsors on social media and our newsletter starting in October.

Our gift shop continues to be a successful venture and we have so many more people visiting the shop. We had over 300 people visit the giftshop outside of our scheduled programming last year!

We continue growing and have some exciting things on the horizon, especially around re-curating the second floor. Thank you for your support!

The full social media report is at the end.

moving forward

DE-COLONIZING OUR SPACE



For the past two years, Wistariahurst Museum has held an Indigenous and Native American Heritage Celebration in November. This is an incredibly busy and emotionally draining time for our Indigenous and Native American community members. Because of this, we have shifted our priorities for this time of the year to put the work on us to learn more about the history and culture of Indigenous and Native Americans in New England.

So, we have decided to run a book discussion group featuring *Colonialization and the Wampanoag Story* by Linda Coombs. This will take place on Tuesday nights in October with the culminating event on November 9th with the author. At that event, we will also be addressing our process towards de-colonizing our space, including repatriating collection items and moving towards a meaningful land acknowledgment.

We do hope that board members will consider joining us for the book discussion group and especially the event on November 9th. We hope you all will support and engage the community alongside us as we grow and learn how to de-colonize this space for the betterment of all.