

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Historians talk about the importance of “historical perspective” when studying the past. Using historic records and objects, historians seek to understand the various social, economic, and personal experiences that shaped people and events, documenting how and why things changed over time.

Certainly eight months is not enough historic perspective to reflect on the events that took place in 2020 on a regional or national scale, but it can serve to inform our work on an organizational level. The annual meeting and report provide an opportunity for a first glance at the previous year, to see our successes and challenges clearly as a means of planning for the future.

The Mount Desert Island Historical Society successfully navigated our own changes in 2020. Long-time Executive Director Tim Garrity moved into a new position of Historian before retiring at the end of the year; new Executive Director, Raney Bench, started just in time to close the offices and public spaces for Covid. What was going to be a two week, work-from-home break turned into over a year of remote work. Thankfully, the amazing team of staff, board, and volunteers were flexible and creative enough to develop new programs, open a new exhibit, and engage members in new ways, allowing us to continue our work.

Specifically, in 2020 the Mount Desert Island Historical Society:

- Launched a weekly on-line lecture series called *Chebacco* Chats
- Opened *Centennials*, a new exhibit in Somesville about the bicentennial of Maine statehood
- Published a beautiful edition of *Chebacco* with new scholarship about the path to statehood
- Hosted our annual Baked Bean Super with keynote speaker, historian and UMaine professor, Liam Riordan
- Continued leadership in the History Trust
- Digitized our historic resources to be freely available on-line
- Secured a Payroll Protection loan to ensure seamless operations
- Exceeded our income budget thanks to generous donors and members
- Launched a new climate change initiative with five regional partners called Landscape of Change
- Provided research support for countless citizen historians looking for information about families, buildings, graves, and businesses
- Launched a quarterly e-newsletter

I'm always so impressed by what our small staff is able to accomplish! Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Leah Lucey (Director of Operations), Patrick Callaway (Collections Coordinator), and Tim Garrity (Historian) the Society was able to make history relevant and accessible to thousands of visitors and residents, in person and online. The results of this hard work was a strong start to 2021 with a slightly smaller, but devoted team focused on making history matter.

Raney Bench
Executive Director

Capacity

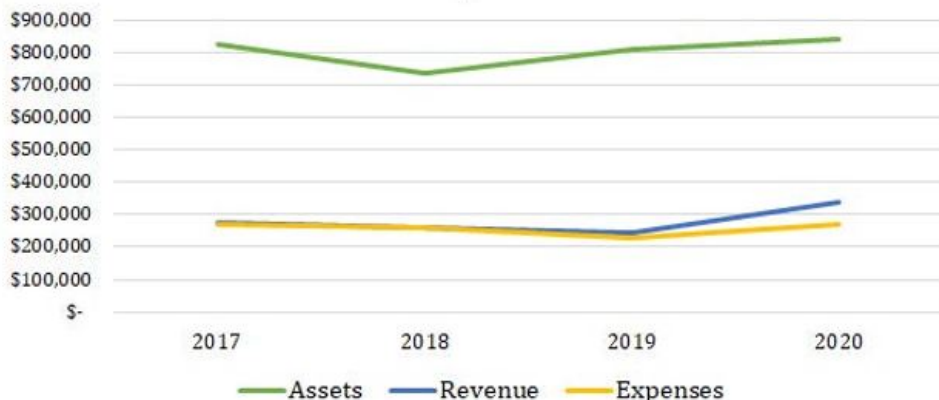
Financial Report from the Treasurer:

The Society reported a Net Operating Profit of \$58,000 in 2020 on revenue totaling \$336,000, with \$235,000 of it from membership contributions. This was driven by tight expense controls, a robust upswing in year-over-year annual giving, receipt of higher grant income, and funding via a Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan from the Small Business Administration (since officially forgiven by the Government). The COVID year of 2020 was in no means an ordinary year for the Society, but we weathered the 2020 COVID storm very well based on our financial performance.

Our Balance Sheet also remained strong during the 2020 year, with ample cash flow throughout the year. The Society's short term TIAA investment account was replenished with \$50,000 in February, 2021 from surplus cash at 2020 year-end (and now thru June, 2021 this asset account stands at over \$96,000). The two Endowment Accounts, which are managed by The Maine Community Foundation, finished the 2020 year flat at \$417,00 (but are now valued at over \$480,00 through June, 2021).

- Submitted by Ham Clark, Treasurer

Revenue and Expenses 2017-2020



Thanks to the support of over 500 members we can:

Offer free access to our archives, research materials, and educational programs.

Establish opportunities for meaningful research and service projects for students and scholars.

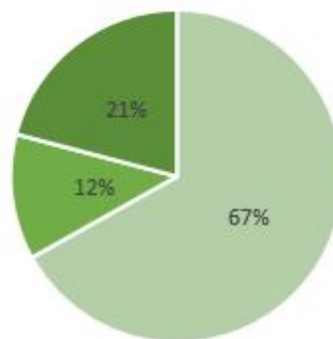
Provide every third grader in the region an opportunity to participate in Vintage Classroom, a recreation of an 1895 school day.

Collaborate with neighboring organizations and community members on public events.

Publish contemporary historical research and essays in our annual journal, *Chebacco*.

Develop seasonal exhibits and maintain two historic buildings: the Sound Schoolhouse (1892) and the Somesville Selectmen's Building (1780).

Membership Contributions by Giving Levels



- Extraordinary Members >\$5,000
- Voyager Members \$1,000-\$5,000
- Individual through Navigator Members <\$1,000

