



Manchester Historic Association 2025 Annual Report



2025 Annual Report

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Kristy Ellsworth, *Director of Education*
Ashley Holm, *Collections Manager*
Aurora Levesque, *Guest Services Coordinator*

Part-time staff

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Barbara DeFrancisco, *Education Assistant*
Nathaniel Diers, *Visitor Services Associate (2025)*
Kirsten McPherson, *Visitor Services Associate (2026)*

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Please note: Unless otherwise noted, this Annual Report includes financial data and lists covering Fiscal Year 2025 (October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025). The Audited Financial Statements and Form 990 IRS tax filings for Fiscal Year 2025 are available for review upon request. Please call (603) 622-7531 to make arrangements.

Published April 2026

FROM THE PRESIDENT



The Manchester Historic Association has enjoyed a year of growth, excellent and diverse programming, and is poised to deliver even more quality education to students in our community and beyond. The wonderful exhibits highlighted throughout the year are a testament to the increasingly broad reach of the MHA in attracting visitors.

All Bottled Up presented a segment of a Manchester industry not always revealed, but which gave rise to reminiscences of such things as by-gone “beverages” of all kinds. For the 50th anniversary of its premier, the iconic photography of urban renewal in Manchester’s Millyard, poignantly displayed in black and white, revealed the inner eye of famed architectural historian, Randolph Langenbach. For a more personal introspective, the Discovery Gallery showcased an historic display of undergarments, A Brief History of Briefs. A very poignant presentation, Letters from Home, recreated the fear, the devotion, and the love evident in letters between family in Manchester and their loved ones fighting abroad during World War II.

In addition, many Saturday mornings brought standing room only crowds for presentations on such topics as Pine Island Park, soda bottling in Manchester, the Hareven-Langenbach Amoskeag Project, and local brick making. The Research Center was updated with the front doors now welcoming members more safely. The major financial item for the year was the full payment of the mortgage, a major priority for the Board. The final payment was our greatest financial success.

Collaborative efforts also increased this year, with the Manning House Christmas Tour and Black Heritage Trail being two such successes. While the Board has been extremely supportive and proactive, it is the small but mighty staff that contributes mightily each day, always with a smile and willingness to reach beyond their job description to ensure that the MHA is as successful as possible in all it does. Under the expert leadership of Executive Director Jeff Barraclough, the staff works cooperatively and collaboratively. Kristy Ellsworth, the Director of Education, is a multi-faceted, creative, and exuberant staff member. Ashley Holm, Collections Manager and an expert in textiles, floats from one building to the next, adding her talents to every project. Aurora Levesque, the Guest Services Manager, has shown that her talents well exceed that title, and Barbara DeFrancisco works expertly with all the student groups. Of course, the many volunteers who cheerfully welcome visitors show their dedication to the Museum each day. I am especially grateful to a dedicated Board of Trustees for their willingness to commit to the mission of the MHA in all that they do, supporting it by their actions and financial underpinnings.

As a young child, I recall walking up Amherst Street and stopping to look in the basement windows of the Research Center, imagining a past world and what it must have offered. As an adult, to be able to be a part of this amazing organization is truly the stuff of dreams. It has been an honor to serve as President of the Board these past three years.

As a Manchester native, I believe in the greatness of our city, in its rich heritage, its dynamic present, and its shining future. The mission of the MHA will continue to serve Manchester for the next 130 years and beyond.

Selma Naccach-Hoff, President, Board of Trustees

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2026 is a year of anniversaries! First, as a nation, we celebrate the semiquincentennial, or 250th Anniversary, of the founding of our nation. I hope you have an opportunity to join in the celebration by attending events and visiting exhibits that recognize this milestone and reflect on our nation's past and the contributions that all Americans have made to this country. At the MHA, we are joining in the celebration through our special exhibit, "Reflections of the Revolution" that features stories, images, and artifacts telling the stories of Derryfield (Manchester) residents involved in America's fight for independence.

This year also marks the 130th year of the Manchester Historic Association – one of the city's oldest institutions. The Association itself was founded on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Manchester being established as New Hampshire's first city, and Manchester is marking the 180th anniversary of that event this year. Fearful that the history of their community was being lost, our founders established the MHA in 1896, and began to collect, preserve, and share Manchester's history so that the growing, changing city would retain ties to its past.

Finally, it is the 25th anniversary of the Millyard Museum, a milestone in the history of the MHA when we were able to greatly expand our space for programs and events, and to have a much larger exhibit space to display our collection and tell the story of Manchester's history. In the last 25 years, the museum has become an important cultural landmark in the city, welcoming in thousands of visitors each year. Children who came to the museum on field trips when the museum first opened now visit with their own children!

Today, the Manchester Historic Association continues the legacy of our founders 130 years ago, ensuring that the history of Manchester is preserved and shared so that today's citizens, both old and young, can be inspired by the men and women who lived and worked here in past generations.

I hope you enjoy reading this annual report that highlights the events and programs of the past year. I want to give a special thank you to everyone named in this report – each name listed represents a person or business that has helped make this organization a success: our members, volunteers, donors, event sponsors, staff, and many others who have given their resources because they believe in our mission. We are so grateful for everything that you do and appreciate your continued support as we work together to collect, preserve, and share Manchester's history.

Jeffrey R. Barraclough, Executive Director

2025 PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND TOURS

School Programs

In 2025, the Manchester Historic Association hosted students from the widest range of grades we have ever seen! This year, the MHA received grants from Amoskeag Industries and the Manchester Rotary Club to help pay for the buses and admission for Manchester school children to attend programs at the Millyard Museum. The Millyard Museum welcomed nearly 2,500 students from towns all over New Hampshire including Manchester, Concord, Bow, Nashua, Sunapee, and the Kearsarge School District. The Millyard Museum also welcomed several high school foreign exchange classes as well as exciting programs with Girls at Work, St. Paul's School, the Derryfield School, Exeter High School and Saint Anselm College's incoming freshmen.



Girls at Work showing off their "Women in History" trading cards

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Lecture: The Amoskeag Ledge

Guests heard stories from MHA Trustee and Past President Ed Brouder as he presented an illustrated talk about the Ledge. In the 1870s and 1880s, a flourishing Manchester required tons of granite for mill foundations and street curbing. It came from what was known as the Amoskeag Ledge, near Derryfield Park. When underground springs filled in the granite quarry, the Ledge became a popular swimming attraction. A group of year-round outdoor swimmers – The Brownies – put on public exhibitions four times a year, drawing thousands of spectators, even in freezing cold weather. The City took steps to close the Ledge many times and about a dozen people are known to have drowned there. *(January 18)*



Ed Brouder gives a talk on the Amoskeag Ledge

Lecture: All Aboard for Pine Island Park!

For 60 years, Manchester had its own Coney Island, Freedomland and Old Orchard Beach all rolled into one. At this informative lecture, guests were invited to revisit the glory days of Pine Island Park. Manchester Historic Association Trustee and Past President Ed Brouder gave an illustrated presentation at the Millyard Museum. *(March 15)*

MHA 129th Annual Meeting

The Manchester Historic Association's Annual Meeting coincided with the opening of the new exhibit, "All Bottled Up! The History of Bottling in Manchester". Following the annual business meeting, guests heard about the history of bottling from local historian Dennis Sasseville, followed by a first look at the exhibit. *(April 16)*

2025 Historic Preservation Awards

An event honoring individuals, organizations and businesses that preserve Manchester's history was held at Manchester Community College. *(May 20)*



*Historic Preservation Awards reception at
Manchester Community College*

Family Event: Fire Truck Day 2025

Guests came to the Millyard Museum for fun family activities, including a touch-a-truck with the Manchester Fire Department! *(May 31)*

Presentation: World War II, Letters from Home

In this new program, guests enjoyed dramatic readings from costumed actors retelling the events of World War II from the perspective of Isabel Morse, a longtime Manchester resident, and her son Tony, who served as a bombardier and was captured and held as a prisoner of war for almost two years. Taken from actual diaries in the MHA collection, Isabel records everyday life amidst the turmoil of WWII. She recalls news of D-Day, frustration over rations, and the pain only a mother can feel having her son deployed across the ocean. Accompanied by the musical stylings of Jeff Rapsis, this was an evening to remember! *(June 12)*

Lecture: Manchester Fizz - the City's Proud History of Soda Bottling

In connection with our special exhibit "All Bottled Up!", historian Dennis Sasseville, author of "Granite Fizz: The Untold Story of Spring Water and Flavored Tonic in New Hampshire", spoke about the soda bottling industry in Manchester by companies including Lafayette Beverages, Silver Brothers/Cott Beverages, and many others that bottled millions of cases of soda a year. *(June 21)*



Stitchers work on the NH Panel of America's Tapestry

America's Tapestry

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Manchester Historic Association was excited to partner with America's Tapestry.

America's Tapestry is a unique exhibition that will feature 13 hand-embroidered panels, one for each of the original colonies. The embroidery is being conducted by talented artisans from New Hampshire to Georgia and each panel illustrates the diverse stories of individual contributions—many overlooked—that reveal each colony's struggle for Independence. Museums from across the states have volunteered to collaborate on the panels' historical imagery and host the stitchers as they work.

The Millyard Museum was pleased to be hosting the stitchers of the New Hampshire panel as they create this artwork that celebrates the state's pioneering revolutionary spirit. Visitors to the Millyard Museum were invited to come and watch the stitchers as they worked in the museum's galleries. *(Fridays and Saturdays throughout 2025)*

2025 New England Museum Association Conference (November 5-8)

The New England Museum Association (NEMA) held its 2025 annual conference in Manchester from November 5–7 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown.

Centered around the theme “Wellness Check: A Holistic View of Museums in the First Quarter Century,” the conference brought together museum professionals from across New England to explore the evolving role of museums in today’s world. Sessions addressed a wide range of topics, including climate impacts on collections, inclusive storytelling, indigenous collections stewardship, and strategies for supporting staff well-being.

The event provided valuable opportunities for networking, collaboration, and professional development, fostering conversations about how museums can become more sustainable, accessible, and responsive to their communities. The Millyard Museum and the SEE Science Center hosted the opening night reception complete with a welcome from Manchester Mayor Jay Ruais.



Chuck Clark (Castle in the Clouds), Shana Hawrylchak (SEE Science Center), and Jeff Barraclough (MHA) at the NEMA opening night reception

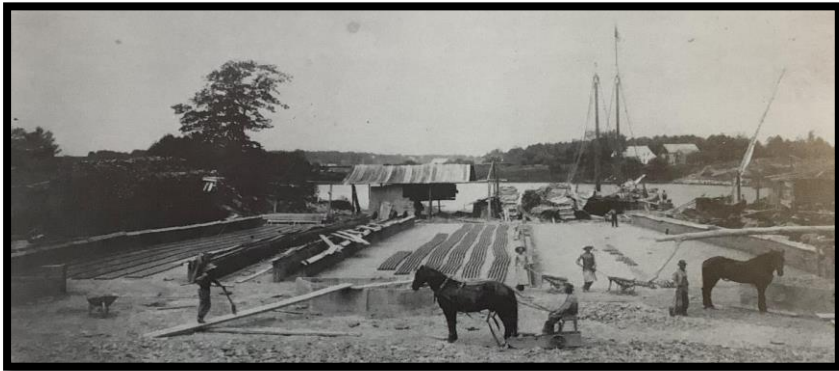
A Revolutionary Approach to the Study of History of Manchester: The Hareven-Langenbach Amoskeag Project in the 1970s

In connection with our special exhibit “Amoskeag Revisited”, the Millyard Museum hosted a special talk by historian Robert B. Perreault.

Perreault spoke about the Amoskeag Project and the relatively new methods employed in the study of local history during the previous century.

Although traditional history featured important people, events, and movements, the roots of the “new social history” dated back to the Depression-era WPA interviews with average citizens who related aspects of their everyday lives and work.

Based at the Manchester Historic Association’s Research Center in the 1970s, the Amoskeag Project relied upon the Association’s vast archival body of Amoskeag Manufacturing Company records, and especially its approximately 75,000 individual employee files, in an effort to identify, locate, and interview former Amoskeag textile workers and company administrators as resource persons in the production of journal articles and books by Tamara Hareven and Randolph Langenbach. *(October 11)*



Brick making in Hooksett, New Hampshire



Former mill workers interviewed as part of the Amoskeag Project

Lecture: Bricks that Built Amoskeag and Beyond

Did you ever wonder where all those bricks came from that built the mill buildings in the Manchester millyard? Do you know how red bricks were made 175 years ago?

This presentation covered the discovery of clay, the raw materials for the bricks, the process of making the bricks, the people who made the bricks, where they were made and the transportation of the bricks to Manchester.

Guests learned about the fascinating connection to Hooksett as part of the entire process and how their contribution was so significant to Manchester’s history. Presented by MHA Trustee Jeffrey Myrdek. *(November 15)*

Holiday Open House

Free and open to the public, guests enjoyed time spent with neighbors and friends on this festive day of shopping and fun family activities in the Millyard Museum, as well as a visit from Santa Claus. *(December 6)*

American Girl Tea Party

Guests and their dolls enjoyed exclusive programming and crafts featuring beloved American Girl doll's holiday traditions. They enjoyed authentic food and crafts from many eras gone by. Guests sampled Kirstens' saffron buns and Kit's impossible pie and much more. *(December 6)*

Christmas at the Manning House

The MHA partnered with Brookside Church this year to present "Christmas at the Manning House." Guests experienced Christmas 100 years ago at this historic Manchester landmark, guided by MHA staff reenacting Mrs. Mary Manning and her servants. *(December 13)*



MHA Staff in costume at the Manning House

EXHIBITS

Manchester Inspired: The Life and Works of Marylou Ashooh Lazos

Organized by the Manchester Historic Association and her family, Marylou Ashooh Lazos: Life and Works of Manchester explores the local designer, artist, and curator who drew inspiration, energy and purpose from her beloved hometown.

This exhibit showcased a diverse array of works by Marylou Ashooh Lazos (1957-2024), from early commercial art and design to later fine art, illustration and assemblage.

(On Exhibit December 5, 2024, through March 1, 2025)

Mentioning the Unmentionables: A Brief History of... Briefs and other Underthings

This unique exhibit displayed a variety of undergarments worn by women throughout Manchester's history, spanning two centuries. Visitors saw how styles changed in this rare look at everyday, familiar pieces of clothing. *(On exhibit November 2025 - June 2026)*



Undergarments on display at the Millyard Museum

2025 Exhibits

All Bottled Up: The History of Bottling in Manchester

Bottling was a prominent industry in Manchester for many years. In the early twentieth century, wines, liquors, and beers were bottled and sold at over twenty businesses in the Queen City, including Quirin Brothers, P. Harrington Sons, and N. J. Pichette. By the 1940s, larger companies like Lafayette Beverages and Silver Brothers/Cott Beverages operated bottling plants in the city, bottling millions of cases of soda a year.

With over 100 glass bottles from Manchester on display, this exhibit took a look at the history of the many liquor, soda, dairy, and other bottling businesses in the city over the years.

(On Display April 2025- September 2025)



"All Bottled Up" Exhibit at the Millyard Museum

Amoskeag Revisited: A Fifty-Year Retrospective

In September 1975, a special exhibit opened at the Currier Gallery of Art called "Amoskeag, A Sense of Place, A Way of Life". The exhibit was designed by Randolph Langenbach, an architectural historian, and featured historic images of the mills, along with contemporary photographs taken by Langenbach before and during the urban renewal project, which had recently been completed with the filling in of the canals and demolition of about 25% of the mill space. Also featured in the exhibit were machinery and architectural components of the mill buildings that had been salvaged by Langenbach, as well as recollections of former millworkers who told what it was like to work in the mills and live in corporation housing. This exhibit at the Millyard Museum examined the lasting impact that the mills have had on Manchester and featured elements of the original 1975 exhibit as well as never-before-seen photographs taken by Langenbach.

(On exhibit September 2025-March 2026)



Randolph Langenbach at the opening reception of "Amoskeag Revisited"

2025 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS
May 20, 2025 — Manchester Community College

Amoskeag Sponsor - \$5,000

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Our financial position is very strong again for 2025. We have just under \$4 million in investments and over \$7 million in total net assets. We were fortunate to be able to pay off a long standing \$250,000 note payable that we had been paying down on for over a decade.

Our operating expenses for the year were just over \$600,000 which were down slightly from the prior year. These are made up primarily of staff expenses of \$250,000, the lease on the Millyard Museum space of \$53,000 and \$56,000 for utilities at both of our locations.

As a member-driven organization, we rely heavily on you to sustain the organization. Donations, grants and membership dues from all sources total about \$300,000 (or only about half of our expenses). This is why our major fundraiser, the Historic Preservation Awards, is such a critical event for this organization. Other revenue sources are from programs, museum admissions and store revenue.

We would not be where we are today financially without the generous past support of our benefactors. Thank you to our endowment donors listed in the annual report for their generous contributions over the years. We are very fortunate to be able to cover a portion of our expenses with the income from our endowment. We are also lucky to have such a knowledgeable, wonderful and dedicated staff and to have such interesting programs.

Walter P. Milne, Treasurer

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
		2025	2024
Assets			
	Current assets	\$ 82,096	\$ 115,591
	Investments at market value	432,081	663,358
	Beneficial interest in trust	2,566,107	2,474,614
	Investments allocated for restricted purposes, at market	3,460,487	3,363,406
	Land, buildings and equipment, net	377,984	398,203
	Donated use of facility, net	299,329	463,355
	Operating lease, right-of-use asset	105,360	138,831
	Finance lease, right-of-use asset	14,042	17,627
	Total assets	\$ 7,337,486	\$ 7,634,985
	Current liabilities	\$ 24,150	\$ 21,707
	Notes payable	0	354,141
	Lease liabilities	121,611	156,981
	Total liabilities	145,761	532,829
	Net assets		
	Without donor restrictions	721,457	662,209
	With donor restrictions	6,470,268	6,439,947
	Total net assets	7,191,725	7,102,156
	Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 7,337,486	\$ 7,634,985

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
		2025	2024
Public support:			
Contributions	\$	107,742	\$ 59,204
Grants		59,006	158,194
Special events		128,339	112,840
Donated services and in-kind donations		11,032	518,725
Total public support		306,119	848,963
Other revenues:			
Program revenue		51,396	48,527
Membership revenue		44,143	42,082
Sales - less costs		15,056	14,814
Appropriation of endowment assets for operations		217,115	230,485
Other income		5,710	7,531
Total other revenues		333,420	343,439
Total public support and revenues		639,539	1,192,402
Operating Expenses		759,915	789,938
Depreciation & amortization		42,600	37,746
Total expenses		802,515	827,684
Increase (decrease) in net assets from operations		(162,976)	364,718
Non-operating activity:			
Contributions for capital assets		0	0
Investment (loss) return		378,167	795,538
Appropriation of endowment assets for operations		(217,115)	(230,485)
Change in beneficial interest in trust		91,493	390,577
Increase (decrease) in net assets		89,569	1,320,348
Net assets, beginning of year		7,102,156	5,781,808
Net assets, end of year	\$	7,191,725	\$ 7,102,156

FULLER ENDOWMENT FUND

The Manchester Historic Association's endowment holds donor-designated funds to be maintained in perpetuity with the income used to support the organization's operations. The endowment consists of gifts from the following individuals:

Henry Melville Fuller	Frank P. Carpenter
Maria Stevens	Victor Stevens
Robert Stevens	Anabelle Schiller
Patricia S. Meyers	
David G. and Barbara J. Stahl	

MASON ENDOWMENT FUND

The Manchester Historic Association's board-designated endowment fund is maintained with the income used to support the organization's operations. The endowment consists of bequests from the following individuals:

Dr. Francis M. Mason
Virginia Doherty
Dwight R. Morrison

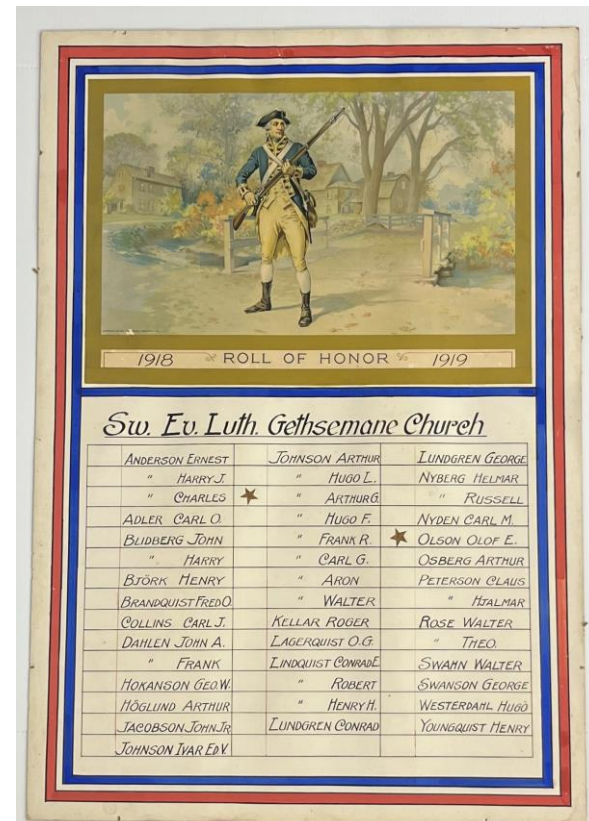
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**Wooden crate for Squirt soda, ca.
 1940s. Bottled by Gustave Schneider.
 Beneath paint is lettering "Ski-Club
 Beverages / Gustave Schneider /
 Manchester, N.H." that had been
 painted over.**
Gift of Michael Duffy



**World War I Roll of Honor from the Swedish
 Evangelical Lutheran Gethsemane Church**
Gift of Gethsemane Lutheran Church



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