

# BY THE NUMBERS

Thank you for all you've helped us accomplish this year!

In 2020, the WNCHA had:

- 1 Copper Roof Installed
- 1 New Exhibit Mounted
- 1,685 Visitors Welcomed
- 4 Digital Exhibits Created
- 2 Lit Cafes Hosted
- 2 Historic Tours Led
- 4 Self-Guided Tours Published
- 1 Symposium Organized
- 1 Film Screened
- 2 Awards Presented
- 246 Event Participants Hosted
- 8 Traveling Trunks Loaned
- 1 Tar Heel Historian Club Operated
- 7 History at Home Activities Created
- 150+ Students Served
- 1,000s of Artifacts Protected

With the help of:

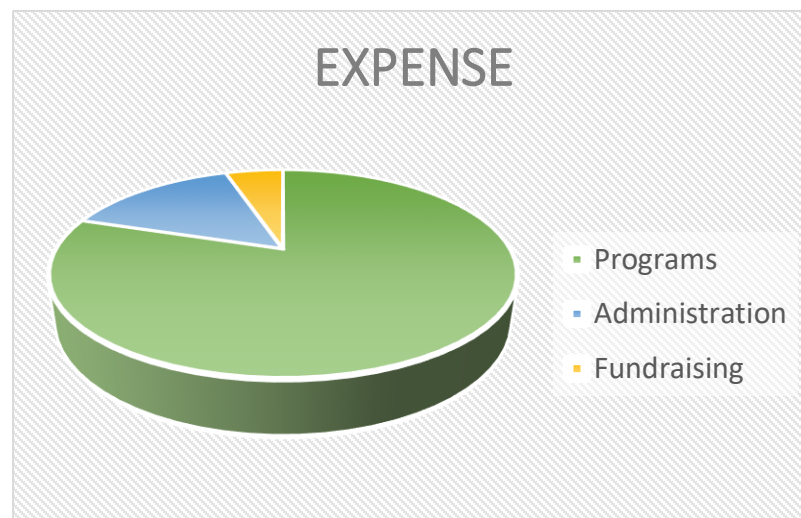
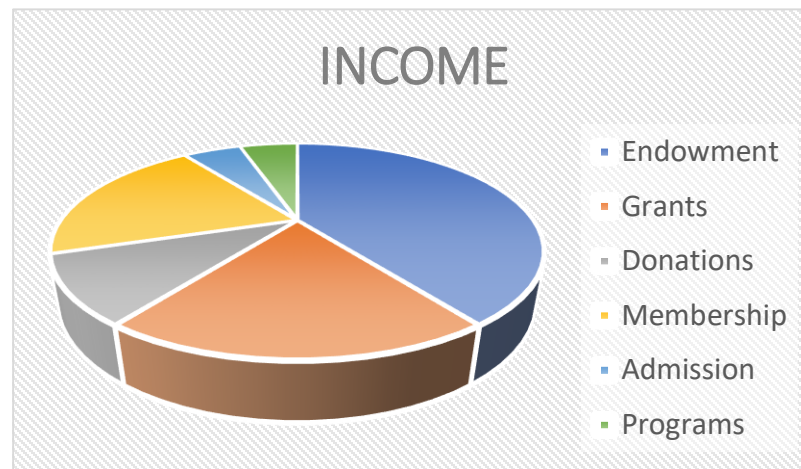
- 3 Staff Members
- 13 Trustees
- 65+ Volunteers
- 5 Granting Institutions
- 350 Members and Donors

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Geoff Cantrell, *Vice President*  
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With annual operating expenses of **\$200,000**, we rely upon the support of our valued members.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



At the beginning of 2020, I walked into Asheville's oldest home—the Smith-McDowell House, the headquarters of the Western North Carolina Historical Association (WNCHA)—to begin my first day as Executive Director. WNCHA had just wrapped up a successful exhibit on the history of tea a few months prior, but having been without a director since the spring, did not have an exhibit planned for 2020. Thankfully, we have a tight-knit and supportive museum community here in Western NC.

The Western Regional Archives loaned us a traveling exhibit entitled “NC in the Great War,” which included additional materials from the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University. We designed a few supplementary panels of our own, which were printed on short notice by our friends at the Mountain Gateway Museum.

Just as other local historical organizations helped us pull together a compelling exhibit—a portion of which, coincidentally, focuses directly on the 1918 flu pandemic and seems especially timely as we all contend with COVID19—people living across WNC continue to come together to create, maintain, and grow charitable organizations to meet specific community needs.

Certainly the spirit driving our local nonprofits existed long before the turn of the 20th century. We often see these ideals exhibited in histories of our early schools and churches, but also in stories of barns raised and fires fought. Incidentally, the WWI exhibit also provides historical details which highlight the beginnings of charitable organizations as we know them today. It was during the 1910s, as Americans at home united to provide supplies for the war effort, to care for wounded soldiers, and to fight a global flu epidemic, that the U.S. government began to incentivize this support in order to help fund U.S. participation in the war. The Revenue Act of 1917 for the first time established individual income tax deductions (income tax had only been reinstituted four years prior) for contributions made to charitable organizations.

But beyond the financial incentives of giving to charitable organizations, the U.S. government also touted volunteerism as a patriotic duty. Propaganda encouraging Americans to do their part proliferated magazines, newspapers, and window displays. By the end of the war, nearly 1/3 of the U.S. population had become a donor to the Red Cross or served as a volunteer.

Volunteerism and charitable donation numbers have ebbed and flowed over the more than 100 years since the end of WWI—a reflection of not only economic and political changes, but societal changes, too. Nonprofits are constantly adjusting and readjusting the way we operate in order to best serve our communities.

Despite our adaptability, 2020 has been a challenge. A month after opening the WWI exhibit, as the pandemic began moving across the country, our exhibit galleries closed to the public. With stay home, stay safe orders, we were no longer able to generate earned income from in-person programming, and our volunteer base dropped.

But at the same time, 2020 became a year of innovation—not only for us, but for nonprofits across Western North Carolina. There's no more “business” as usual. In WNCHA's case, we've created virtual programming. We've digitized exhibits and collections, making more of our resources freely accessible to more people. We've found new ways to fulfill our mission of history preservation and promotion. And as we resume in-person visitation, we will also continue our new digital programs, allowing us to reach a much wider audience than ever before.

- Anne Chesky Smith  
Executive Director



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## Individuals

Renee Alexander  
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Rod Baird  
Meg Barbour  
Clove Barrett  
Danny Bernstein  
Louisa Berry  
Fred & Cleone Black  
Elaine & Dan Blake  
Courtney Blossman  
Douglas & Connie Bradshaw  
Buck & Nancy Bragg  
Sandy Brauer  
Anne Rose Brooks  
John Brown  
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Thomas & Linda Bushar  
Emily Cadmus  
Stuart Camblos  
Al & Libby Campbell  
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Catherine Carter  
Jennifer Cathey  
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Gay Coleman  
Virginia Colwell Trust  
Elizabeth Colton  
Jerry Cook  
Ross & Ellen Craig  
Tom Crown  
Lisa Cutshaw  
Andra & Bruce Douglass  
Christine Dowd  
George & Kathy Drake  
Kelly Dunbar  
George & Elizabeth Ellison  
Mary & David Evers  
Sharon & Victor Fahrer  
Lucian Holt Felmet  
Catherine Ferandelli  
Francis Figart  
Marian & Larry Fincher  
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Marshall Fisher  
Diana Ford  
Catherine Frank  
Richmond Frederick  
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Anne Fitten Glenn  
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Rene Greene  
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Richard Halliwill  
Judith Hamill  
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Daniel Huger  
George Hunker  
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Bryan J. Johnson  
Leslee Johnson  
Brooks Johnston  
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Peter Koch  
Linda Kooiker  
Caragh & John Koon  
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Gerald Ledford  
Bentley Leonard  
Peter Lewis  
Ken Linker  
David Madden  
Richard Mathews  
Janet McCue  
Michael McCue  
Michael McFee  
Gordon McKinney  
Lou Carollo &  
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Shirley McLaughlin  
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Meredith Miller  
Michelle Minks  
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William Swann  
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Sarah Van Gunten  
Kevin Broadwater &  
    James Vaughn  
Margaret & Jimmy Vestal  
Christine Westfeldt  
Mary Ann Wharton  
Lisa & Cliff Whitfield  
Dirk & Kathryn Wilmoth  
Brenda Wingo  
Gwen Wisler  
Suzanne Wodek  
Gaye Woods  
Nora Worthen  
John & Sandra Wright  
Amy Yarsinkske  
Greg & Marjorie Zack

## Organizations & Businesses

Dogwood Health Trust  
Epie's Electrical Service  
Friends of the Buncombe Co. Library  
Little & Lattimore, PA  
The National Society of Colonial Dames  
Thomas Wolfe Memorial Advisory Committee

## Granting Institutions

Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College  
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority  
Community Foundation of Western North Carolina  
GoFundMe  
Institute of Museum & Library Services  
Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe County

# WE APPRECIATE OUR MEMBERS, DONORS, & VOLUNTEERS!

## A few highlights of what you've helped us accomplish in 2020 include:

- Negotiating the transfer of the Smith-McDowell House to WNCHA's ownership, ensuring its continued protection and preservation;
- Completing a Conservation Assessment on the Smith-McDowell House and museum collections;
- Installing a new standing-seam copper roof on the Smith-McDowell House, replicating the roof that protected the house for most of the 1800s;
- Hiring a full-time Executive Director and Public Programs Director;
- Awarding the Outstanding Achievement Award to Rob Neufeld and the 65<sup>th</sup> annual Thomas Wolfe Memorial Literary Award to *Eastern Cherokee Stories: A Living Oral Tradition and Its Cultural Continuanace* by Sandra Muse Isaacs; and
- Creating new, freely-accessible virtual programs and exhibits.

And we're planning to do even more in 2021! Now that WNCHA owns the Smith-McDowell House, we are beginning much-needed restorations to the over 180-year-old structure, which is the oldest extant home in Asheville and our headquarters.



2020 Outstanding  
Achievement Award  
Rob Neufeld



2020 Thomas Wolfe Memorial  
Literary Award Winner  
*Eastern Cherokee Stories*  
by Sandra Muse Isaacs

