

**Evanston History Center
Fiscal Year Activity Report 2020-2021**

Tours and Rentals

- Due to COVID-19 Restrictions, the house was alternately closed for tours for several months and open for self-guided tours with attendance quotas and advance reservations required. Despite these restrictions, 230 tour guests during reduced public tour hours.
- Our outdoor walking tours were a wonderful way to stay connected with the community. 72 people joined us for tours of Evanston.
- We created a new self-guided walking tour of the North Ridge area entitled “Frogtown,” available for downloading from our website.
- The outdoor terrace was available for 9 small events, including weddings, concerts, and a company picnic. Indoors, we hosted 6 small television, video, and photo shoots.

Research and Archives Projects

- There were 229 phone, email and mail requests for information.
- 171 people visited the EHC archives for research projects.
- We had 6 interns working in the archives on various projects.
- Collections work in the archives included accessioning, processing and storing new and existing collections. We added 13 new collections to the archives, ranging from single records to large collections. We also continued adding collections to our online collection database. Unprocessed photographs and slides were processed and housed.

Collection Projects

- We received 23 new donations to the collections: including 8 collection donations, 13 archival donations, and 2 costume donations for a total of over 30 items.

Dawes House Restoration

- EHC received a \$270,000 grant from the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Capital Campaign. This grant helped fund the restoration of the front entrance to the Dawes House, including refurbishing the magnificent wooden doors and surround; repairing and replacing the sandstone balustrades; repairing the limestone stairs; and installation of new handrails.
- EHC was awarded a \$250,000 grant from The Tawani Foundation of which \$220,000 will be for the Capital Campaign. \$110,000 of this grant is a challenge, which we must raise over the next 20 months. Work to be done that will be funded includes restoration of the entrances to the east terrace plus updated electrical service. These improvements will enhance our outdoor space for activities and rentals and also increase safety with additional lighting.
- To date, EHC has raised \$3.8 million for the Capital Campaign which does not include the commitment from Tawani Foundation.

Administration

- EHC was fortunate to receive two rounds of Payroll Protection funding which allowed us to keep all our staff, open to the public when it was safe to do so, and continue to deliver high quality programs.
- We implemented new membership structures, with two-year money savings options.
- EHC’s Marketing Committee is working with Keith Glantz of Glantz Design on a new logo identity.

EHC Programs, Events, and Exhibits

- From September 2020 through April 2021, EHC hosted seven virtual *Under the Buffalo* events with a total attendance of 754.
- Curator Kris Hartzell gave a Facebook Live tour of the holiday decorations of the Dawes House and

highlighted Christmas traditions of the Dawes family.

- EHC hosted an online presentation on Martin Luther King Day with Director of Education Jenny Thompson speaking about her book, *The Takeover 1968*, connecting the Northwestern students' activism to King's work.
- The 46th Annual Mother's Day House Walk-By was a successful re-imagining of our usual event! Patrons were encouraged to walk through Evanston neighborhoods to view "The Prairie School In Evanston." We also welcomed back our sponsors including Tawani Foundation and American Vintage Home.

Outreach

- Launched in April 2020, EHC's community history project, focused on collecting items that document the pandemic, continued this year. The collection has received roughly 150+ submissions and is ongoing.
- EHC invited community members to submit artifacts reflecting the year 2020 for a Time Capsule to be opened in 2030.
- Throughout the year, EHC focused on expanding its online resources. Staff was hired to research and write several custom house histories; several new lesson plans for educators and website resources were completed, including an Oral History Guide and "Burnham in Evanston," a resource highlighting architect Daniel Burnham's work in Evanston.
- EHC's partnership with the Evanston Public Library continued this year. EHC and the EPL partnered on an outreach effort to promote EHC's pandemic survey, launched in March 2021. The survey asks Evanston residents to record their experiences and comments related to their experiences throughout 2020 and into the present. Completed surveys will be part of EHC's pandemic archive.
- EHC launched a new partnership with the *Evanston Roundtable* to produce original research and answer readers' questions in an ongoing column titled, "Evanston Dimensions."
- EHC's Director of Education, Jenny Thompson partnered with Shorefront founder Dino Robinson, to write a historical report at the request of the City of Evanston for the city's reparations program.
- EHC continued to expand its Speakers' Bureau and welcomed two new members this year.
- Custom-designed graphics and marketing materials created for special programs (special tours, etc) were sent out in press releases and through social media and email throughout the year.
- EHC invested heavily in its social media presence in 2021. As a result, EHC saw a significant rise in its engagement. As of June 2021, EHC Instagram: 1,318 (up from 735 in April 2020); Twitter: 1,280 (up from 1,151 in April 2020) and Facebook: 2,197 (up from 1,751 in April 2020).
- EHC hired a consultant to do a tech and security update of its website. The website was also regularly updated with news and events. EHC also hosts a Youtube page, and a Flickr account for images.
- EHC's regular email was sent 45 times to an email list of over 3,000 subscribers.
- Staff gave talks (online) for the Woman's Club of Wilmette, Midwest Antiques Club, Mather Senior Living, Chicago Women in Architecture, and Open House Chicago.

The Evanston Women's History Project at the Evanston History Center

- *Women's Vote 100* Evanston programs resumed online for the August 26th suffrage anniversary. Programs included - a women's history walking tour with a suffrage focus; a *Do It Yourself Suffrage March*; a program in partnership with WTTW about *American Experience: The Vote*; and a Voting Rights Symposium in partnership with the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the Woman's Club of Evanston.
- The onsite exhibit *Evanston Women and the Fight for the Vote* re-opened on August 26th and curator Lori Osborne gave a Facebook Live event that day. The exhibit was open through May 2021.
- We had two interns in 2020 who worked on various research projects relating to women's suffrage.
- Our [website](#) and the companion - [Suffrage 2020 Illinois](#) - were both regularly updated with new suffrage related research and stories throughout the year.