

2021 Annual Report

of The Lewes Historical Society

The Lewes Historical Society's mission promotes and advocates for the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of the Lewes region, through museum exhibits, educational programs, historical research and publications.

The challenges around the continued pandemic encouraged the Lewes Historical Society staff to think and act cooperatively and creatively to ensure success in advancing our mission.



The Ryves Holt House is Delaware's oldest building on its original foundation. Lewes's early history from 1631–1787 is revealed here including the story of Zwanendael, the first European settlement in Delaware, the Mason & Dixon Line, and Lewes's role in the journey to ratifying the Constitution in 1787.

Preservation

Regarding preservation, the Historic American Building Survey is nearing completion of its long-awaited study of the 17th-century Ryves Holt House. Using technology similar to that of GPS mapping systems, the HABS architects and researchers continued to document all aspects of this important structure. Though stopped for a time due to Federal Government COVID policies, the finished report is expected in February of 2022. LHS intern Lucie Allen has continued research on the c. 1830 Ashlar block wallpaper discovered in a closet of the house, and world-renowned historic paint analyst Matthew Mosca provided identification of certain paint and plaster finishes on the primary floor.

The Society's on-going preservation of the Menhaden Fishing Net Reel, which has been given a place of distinction and honor on the main campus of the Society, is continuing. Working with the City, the Society is hopeful that a resolution regarding the reel's exhibition is near at hand.

Interpretation

Throughout 2021, the Society's interpretive programming expanded exponentially, seeing a record year for the department. Living History Interpreters welcomed visitors to both Cannonball House and the Lewes History Museum weekly through Seaport Saturday and Museum First Fridays sharing Lewes' rich maritime past. First-person interpreters brought the campus to life at the larger events, celebrating our rich history through innovative interpretation.



Cultural Enrichment

The Lewes Historical Society Archive has remained active during this second year of the pandemic, answering queries as they arrived. Archivist Denise Clemons continued training sessions for administering oral histories and an introduction to the general holdings of LHS to members of the Lewes African-American Heritage Commission. Ms. Clemons has continued to make herself accessible to all, expanding her pool of dedicated volunteers.

In 2021, the Volunteers of the nine-year old Wooden Boat program completed another award winning replica of a historic boat—a 17-foot Delaware Sharpie. Competing at the 37th Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels MD, they came home with First Place in the Traditional Design – Professional Build category and the People's Choice Award.

Museum Exhibits

Additionally, the Society oversaw the installation and opening of the exhibition “Boy, Man, Hero: Jacob Jones, Lewes’ Own” in the first floor gallery of the Ryves Holt House. Co-curated by LHS Director of Interpretation and Curator of Maritime History Andrew Lyter and Navy scholar and Society volunteer Bill Manthorpe, this permanent exhibition explores the life and career of Lewes’ own Jacob Jones, from his youth on Second Street, through his Naval career, to his lasting legacy as an important voice in America’s early years. The exhibition includes



period documents, maps, decorative objects identifying with Jones and the evolution of his once-owned

Ryves Holt House, as well as contemporary representations of the celebrated seaman.

Education

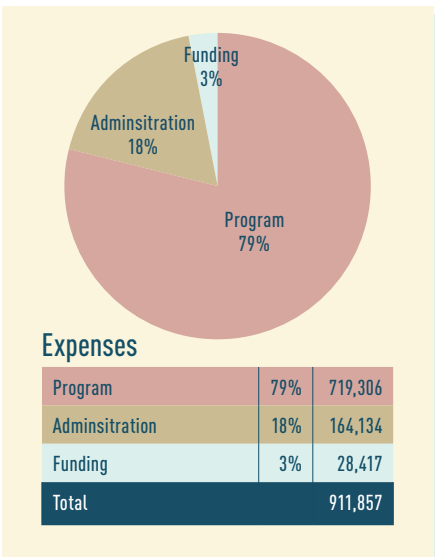
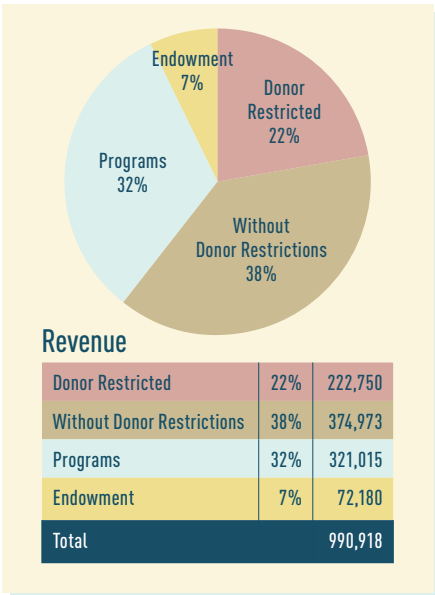
Under the leadership of Director of Education Marcos Salaverria, our tours sold out in record numbers with offerings from April–October. Additionally, fall 2021 saw the return of field trips to our museums and campus, and welcomed rising high school principals through the Governors Institute for School Leadership. These administrators were introduced to new curriculum, focusing on the War of 1812 and African-American History.



Historic Research

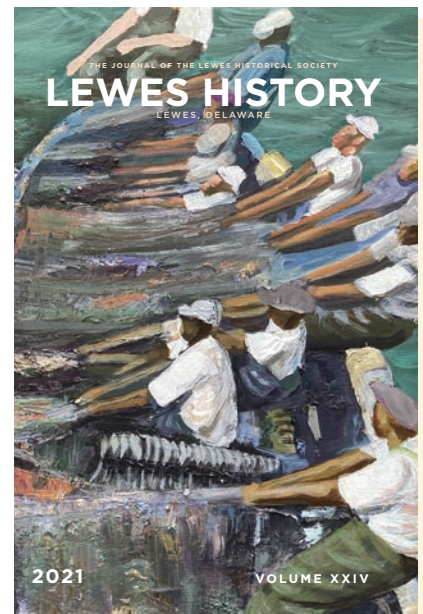
Emphasizing the importance of scholarship to fulfilling our mission, LHS hosted its first symposium on November 13. “A long and lasting shame: Slavery in Delaware 1700-1865,” addressed the complex history of Delaware’s dependence on and eventual denouncement of slavery.

Participants included academics, independent scholars, and graduate students in multiple disciplines. Presented lectures addressed political, social, cultural, legal, literary, biographical, bibliographical, and economic themes. Sold-out, the program proved an amazing success.



Publications

Regarding publications, the 2021 edition of “Lewes History: The Journal of the Lewes Historical Society” is ready for distribution. With 101 pages, it is a remarkable endeavor, representing the expanded publishing program introduced to the Society by historian and Editor Bill Meehan. This edition celebrates the 70th anniversary of Lewes’ DAR Chapter, as well as poet Stanford E. Davis, the Rehoboth Beach Patrol, Belltown, one-time Delaware slave Solomon Bayley, 17th-century Delmarva-focused maps, and much more.



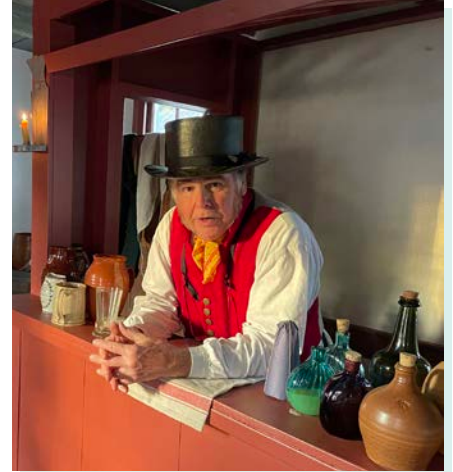
How are we able to fulfill our mission?

In order to support our mission, the Lewes Historical Society hosted its annual Antiques Show and the Mid-Atlantic Sea Glass Festival, as well as both spring and fall craft fairs. As in 2020, by responsibly limiting the number of attendees at any one time, the Society was able to offer the Lewes community safe and engaging events.

Although the Christmas House Tour again stood as a challenge for the Society, it proved to be a great success. Under the direction of our Christmas House Tour chair, Jeff West, the tour went virtual for the second year in a row, reaching regional and global audiences celebrating the holidays in Lewes. The Lewes Historical Society staff and volunteers, alongside community partners, Ship Company Inc. and Brittingham Farms, welcomed over 1,000 visitors to a holiday market on our Shipcarpenter Street campus. The campus was brought to life with historic demonstrations, interpret-

ers, and holiday sales—working in tandem, with our Education and Interpretation Departments.

In the area of fundraising, the Society secured gifts for the ongoing restoration of and general project development for Ryves Holt House. The Richard C. Von Hess Foundation awarded LHS a grant for the exhibition “Boy, Man, Hero: Jacob Jones, Lewes’ Own”—Ryves Holt House’s welcome to visitors to Lewes, as well as for an accompanying book on Jones’ early years by William Manthorpe. The Red Wagon Foundation generously contributed additional monies for restoration of Ryves Holt House, directly. Additionally, we were able to fulfill our mission thanks to funds from the following organizations: State of Delaware Grant in Aid Award, State of Delaware Bond Bill, State of Delaware SBA Relief Grant, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Longwood Foundation, M&T Bank, PNC Bank, and Delmarva Power/Exelon.



LHS staff and volunteers constructed an 18th century cage bar in the Rabbits Ferry House.

Local community grants and individual donations allowed us to continue to bring our museums to life through two historic projects. With these generous donations, Lewes Historical Society staff and volunteers constructed an 18th century cage bar in the Rabbits Ferry House—the first step to recreating one of the taverns that once lined Second Street. Additionally, interpretive staff completed the construction of a late 18th c.–early 19th c. ropewalk—now allowing visitors to learn how rope was made in Lewes during the age of sail.

In addition to fundraising, the Lewes Historical Society has opened an antiques shop in the former Zwaanendael Women’s Club at Third and Savannah, which raises monies for the general support of the Society through the sale of donated materials deemed not relevant to the collecting interests of the Society. Administered by Michael Furnari and a group of dedicated volunteers, the shop opened in October and has become a destination for visitors to Lewes.



LHS staff and volunteers, alongside community partners, Ship Company Inc. and Brittingham Farms, brought our Shipcarpenter Street campus to life with historic demonstrations, interpreters, and holiday sales.

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2022...

The Lewes Historical Society has achieved a great deal in the last twelve months and will continue with this momentum through the New Year. As we enter the early months of 2022, we look forward to furthering our mission and continuing to advocate for the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of the Lewes region.

Following the direction of the Historic American Buildings Survey report, the Ryves Holt House will continue to undergo restoration and preservation beginning with a new roof.

Living History Interpretive initiatives will continue to expand bringing our campus and museums to life through Museum First Fridays, Seaport Fridays and Saturdays, Tavern Talks, and our new interpretive program—*Hearty in the Cause, Lewes 1776*.

The Lewes History Museum will once again open its doors to our younger visitors as the Children's Discovery Center will reopen with new and innovative exhibitions for families. Additionally, newly designed exhibitions will open including Leadership in Lewes and the Rotating Exhibit Gallery.

The creation and adaptation of more inclusive tours will continue with the inauguration of "In their

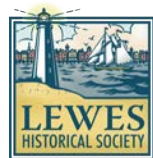
Voices—African American History and Legacy of Lewes" walking tour and mobile app. Additionally, efforts are underway for a tour to be offered in Spanish, thus expanding our cultural reach.

Spring 2022 will celebrate the release of publications including Bill Manthorpe's book, *Jacob Jones: A Boy's Life in Lewes during the American Revolution*. Additionally, we will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Lewes Historical Society through a special edition of *Lewes History: Journal of the Lewes Historical Society*.

To continue fulfilling our mission and ensure the sustainability of the society for future generations, the Lewes Historical Society Board of Trustees will be embarking on an endowment campaign to strengthen the existing endowment.

The celebration of our success in 2021 and ambitious initiatives for 2022 would not be possible without the unwavering dedication and commitment to the Lewes Historical Society by the membership, volunteers, community partners, and donors. Only with your support can we continue to fulfill the Society's mission to promote and advocate for the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of the Lewes region.

— The Staff and Board of Trustees of the Lewes Historical Society



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