

2022 Annual Report



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I wrote my letter to you last year my hope was to put the challenges of the pandemic behind us and look to 2022 with a new sense of optimism. I am happy to report that the year was a great success with visitation and program participation exceeding pre-pandemic levels, solid fundraising, and plans for the next chapter in the Society's history unfolding.

Our successes were driven by the extraordinary work of the staff and board of the Society and equally from the enthusiastic and generous support we received from you our members and from the Litchfield community as a whole.

As you read this report you will learn more about our work - both in the public eye and behind the scenes. Linda Hocking, Curator of Library and Archives; Alex Dubois, Curator of Collections; Kate Zullo, Head of Education; and Sean Kunic, Visitor Services Coordinator each give their own perspective on the year. Once again, the museum staff found new and exciting ways to reach the Litchfield community. I am sure you will enjoy their reports.

Our work would not have been possible without your support. After a three-year hiatus our fall fundraiser in the meadow returned. Nearly 200 guests enjoyed great food and drink, good company, and a unique silent auction. In December the local arts community once again showed their support for our mission by donating over 40 works of art for a silent auction. Once again in 2022 our Annual Fund was a great success, and our corporate and business sponsors increased their support. Your generosity has put us in a strong financial position as we move forward.

In addition to our annual giving, we received a very generous bequest from Lynne Brickley to support our work in education. Lynne's bequest has been added to our endowment so it will continue to fund our work, in ways that she loved, for years to come.

The Society's Board of Trustees, led by President Rosie Furness, continue to give the staff unwavering support and encouragement. I thank them all for their help this year and for all my time at the Society.

As I mentioned above we are looking forward to a new and exciting chapter. I must admit that I write this with very mixed emotions. After 36 years at LHS, I am retiring at the end of June this year. And although I am looking forward to all that retirement will bring, it is hard to say good bye to such a wonderful organization. Together we have accomplished amazing things and I believe the Society is in a strong position – with a great staff, a committed board, and stable finances – to continue to thrive.

I am thrilled that Jessica Jenkins will fill my position beginning in June. Jessica began her career here at LHS as an intern and then as Curator of Collections. Since 2016 Jessica has served as Curator, Director of Collections and Vice President of Collections and Storytelling at Minnetrista in Muncie, Indiana. Please welcome Jessica and help her make this new chapter in our history a great success.

I can't wait to see what happens next!

With thanks to each and every one of you.

Cathy



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Executive Director

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April 2022 Annual Meeting

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Allison Gollenberg

Audrey Terhune

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Marilyn Tiul

Faith Morgan

Sue Weston



Painting Litchfield Exhibit Installation

Staff Updates



Linda Hocking
Curator of Library and Archives

It was another busy year for the Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library. In January, we were awarded a Connecticut Humanities SHARP grant for archival description. The grant enabled us to hire project archivist Leith Johnson to process and describe several important collections.

Two assembled collections, The Litchfield Historical Society Photograph Collection and Litchfield Historical Society Ephemera, contain material acquired throughout the Society's history and arranged by format.

In preparation for an upcoming exhibit celebrating the 225th anniversary of its founding, Johnson processed, arranged, and described two collections of material related to the Litchfield Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Margery Boyd Papers. Johnson also processed and described the Blakeslee-Foy-Crabtree families' papers, a collection containing records of a family that immigrated to Litchfield in the early 20th century and were actively involved in the community, particularly in education.

While this work was in progress, we continued to serve researchers, both in person and remotely. Researchers ranged from students to scholars studying topics including genealogy, local history, house history, Benjamin Tallmadge and other Revolutionary War figures, and many other topics. We also frequently fulfilled image requests for local businesses, organizations, and publications.

Although more of a show-and-tell than research, the library is an important component of field trips and tours. We have had several groups of judges and law students visit this year and spend time in the library looking at the Litchfield Law School student notebooks, correspondence, and other related material. In October, I was asked to bring Ephraim Kirby's manuscript of *Kirby's Reports* to Yale for a seminar series on legal history. Yale Law students viewed and discussed the volume in addition to several other volumes of published legal reports.

The library also continues to collect material significant to the history of the town and its people. In 2022, acquisitions were made by donation and purchase. You might be surprised to learn that while some of the material dates to Litchfield's early days, we also collected material from the late 20th and early 21st century like the Revitalization Plan for the Borough of Litchfield, the Region 20 report, the Records of the Connecticut Volunteer Services for the Blind and Handicapped, and a scrapbook of articles about Litchfield County Sheriff Caroline Wakefield.

I have completed finding aids for a few collections acquired in 2021, including the A.T. Van Laer sketchbooks and the Stillman II papers donated by Ann Smith Finn. I have also created a basic finding aid for the Dr. James Russell Cummings papers. These can be found by searching our ArchivesSpace database.

Finally, I spent a significant amount of time this year conducting research for our upcoming exhibit on Connecticut's Western Reserve. I spent several days at the New Milford Historical Society photographing papers from their Boardman collection. It's always challenging to research a topic such as migration as the personal papers of those involved in the stories have been scattered from their starting point to where they ended. This would have been a much more difficult task if many of the manuscripts were not available through Internet Archive and repositories who have online resources.

In addition to our Historical Society duties, we often participate in professional service. I continue as a member of the State Historical Records Advisory Board; and served as a member of the New England Archivists Nominating Committee and as a member of the Society of American Archivists Management Section Steering Committee. I also presented with Leith as part of a Connecticut League of History Organization webinar series titled "Archives 101." I attended the Society of American Archivists annual meeting and the New England Archivists annual meeting.

Staff Updates



Alex Dubois
Curator of Collections

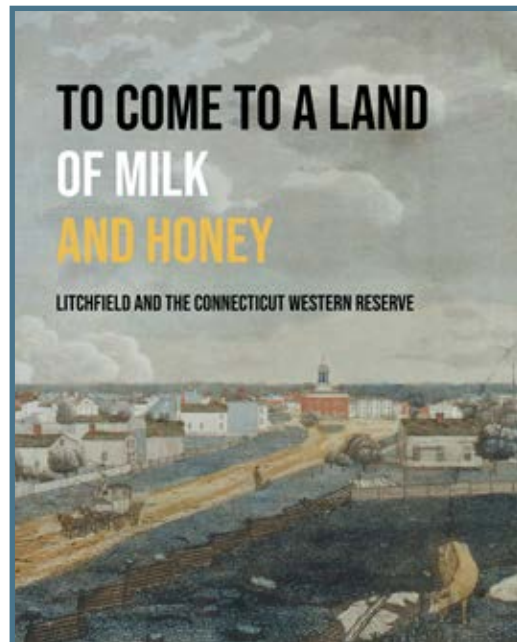
a special preview exhibit, “To Certain Western Lands: Telling the Story of the Western Reserve,” in which we shared ongoing research and tested prototypes of exhibit interactives and designs. The Society then successfully applied for a \$35,000 exhibit implementation grant from Connecticut Humanities, enabling us to complete further research, secure object loans, source exhibit materials, and develop rich interactive experiences. I completed my own “migration” to Northeast Ohio in November for a four-day research trip through Cleveland, Hudson, Tallmadge, and Warren. I photographed over 400 letters, legal documents, maps, and journals, bringing home close to 2,000 digital images for further research.

We made a number of notable museum acquisitions in 2022. Just in time for the opening of “Painting Litchfield,” the Society acquired an original acrylic on canvas painting by Thomas McKnight. Donated by the artist and his wife, Renate, and depicting their home on North Street, the painting was displayed with another McKnight original portraying the interior of the Tapping Reeve House (on loan to the Society). In the summer, the Society acquired multiple items from the Tollgate Hill Inn & Restaurant, including a large, two-sided business sign set in an ornate wrought iron frame. This type of acquisition strengthens our ability to document and interpret notable businesses from Litchfield’s past and present.

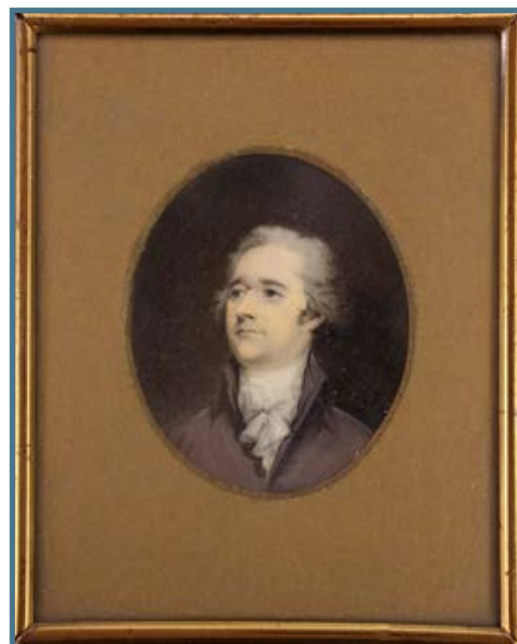
The most unexpected acquisition came in November, when John and Marion Gay brought in a portrait miniature of a noted historical figure: Alexander Hamilton. The miniature is attributed to Laura Wolcott Gibbs and descended through the Gibbs family to the donor. Laura, the daughter of Gov. Oliver Wolcott Jr. and the granddaughter of Gov. Oliver Wolcott, was a student at the Litchfield Female Academy and a talented artist, though her work remained relatively unknown before now. The miniature served as the basis for a well-circulated engraving of Hamilton marked only “L. W. Gibbs pinx,” obscuring Laura’s identity as the original artist. After donation, the miniature was sent to a specialist conservation firm for cleaning and placement in a period style frame.

While my office has remained in Litchfield, for much of the past year, my mind has been in Ohio. In 2023, the Society wraps up a four-year research project focusing on the Connecticut Western Reserve, an area in the northeast corner of present-day Ohio that was once owned, sold, and settled by Connecticut. The resulting exhibit, “To Come to a Land of Milk and Honey: Litchfield and the Connecticut Western Reserve,” opens this year and will remain on display through November 2024, supported by a two-year calendar of related lectures and public programs.

The Western Reserve is a familiar topic to anyone who visited the Society between April and July of last year. We reopened the Litchfield History Museum in 2022 with



Opening April 2023



**Portrait miniature of Alexander Hamilton,
Laura Wolcott Gibbs, c.1830s;
Gift of John and Marion Gay**

Staff Updates



Kate Zullo
Head of Education

Last year, the Society offered 143 educational programs, which were attended by over 10,000 visitors. Those numbers are huge for an organization of our size, and as the Head of Education, I'm proud of the continued growth of our educational impact. The ability to offer as many programs as we do is only possible because of teamwork. It starts with a great team in the office, and while we can be very competitive playing bocce or bridge, everyone contributes to make educational programs happen.

This year we have been able to add more programs thanks to talented educators and interpreters. In addition to keeping the garden in the Tapping Reeve Meadow looking amazing, Garden Educator Olivia Delaney is a talented teacher and is developing creative programs for families. Lead Interpreter Sue Weston has taken over Saturday Walking tours and delights visitors with her personal knowledge of the town's history. This summer, veteran Museum Guide Marilyn Tiul stepped up to assist with summer camps and share her talents working with children.

Our partnership with the Litchfield Public Schools has rebounded from the disruption caused by the pandemic. Through field trips and school visits in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th grades, Litchfield students can gain an appreciation for history and understand how their town fits into larger national and global stories. The school programs could not happen without the partnership of teachers in the schools, especially Jamie McDevitt, Emily McAdam, Shelly Hill, and Stephanie Beatz.

The Society is especially indebted to the years of work by Joanne Moore, recently retired Litchfield Center School Library and Media Specialist. Under Joanne's leadership and enthusiasm, the Society's school programs expanded from one grade to all grades at the Litchfield Center School. Her afterschool History Club, which brought students into the archives for research and culminated in a presentation for friends and family, left a lasting impact all the participants.

All of our community events, such as the 4th of July Pet Parade, Scarecrows in the Meadow, and the Holiday Stroll, would not be possible without the Museum Guide staff. This crew of dedicated Litchfield High School students and graduates staff the museums on the weekends and help at community events. Training and supervising the Museum Guide crew is one of the most rewarding parts of my job and it is always wonderful to see them go off and do great things.



Joanne Moore with History Club students in 2015

Volunteers are integral to our education programs at every level – from judging pets to helping facilitate school programs to being a part of the Scarecrows in the Meadow Committee, volunteers are key to their success.

Most importantly, no program would be successful without the participants. To everyone who visited the museum, attended a tour, took part in a community event, or logged on to a virtual lecture – thank you! It takes a village, and we are very lucky to have the support of such a great village!



LHS Staff at 4th of July Pet Parade

Staff Updates



Sean Kunic
Visitor Services Coordinator

This past year has been a year of “returns.” Returning to normal open hours; the return of so many regular visitors who had not visited since before the pandemic; and the return of our Fall Fundraiser in the Tapping Reeve Meadow after two years of pandemic cancellations.

While many pre-pandemic events and practices have happily returned, the important lessons learned have remained. Social media, active across four platforms, remains an essential connection to our community. From promoting events, showcasing exhibits, or sharing new research and acquisitions, social media posts update all aspects of our work. Between Facebook and Instagram, we reached just shy of 50,000 different accounts with at least one post. Compared to last year, that is a 51.5% increase on Facebook and 357% increase on Instagram. Through our Archivist Linda Hocking, our presence on Twitter, @judgereeve,

participates in the U.S. National Archives led #ArchivesHashtagParty, with hundreds of other institutions, sharing not only their archival collections, but also nationwide audiences.

Another exciting area of growth online is with our YouTube channel. Home to recorded lectures, kid-friendly activities and crafts, and deep dives of the collection, the Litchfield Historical Society’s channel is a wealth of resources. In 2022, our videos accumulated over 3,300 views, reaching audiences unable, whether due to time or distance, to participate in the program live.

The growth we’ve seen this past year is encouraging and confirms that our audience is interested in engaging both in person and online. Follow us in 2023 on all of our social media channels to find more content!

With the upcoming exhibit on the Connecticut Western Reserve covering hundreds of miles, the importance and potential of reaching audiences in many geographic areas only increases. This past year we have developed a strategy of hosting lectures using a hybrid format that allows our Connecticut audience to sit live at the museum while those in Ohio and beyond can watch and participate live. We look forward to rolling this system out in full in 2023.

I want to thank all who took time to volunteer with us this past year. From welcoming guests at the front desk of the Litchfield History Museum to arranging the centerpieces at the Fall Fundraiser, we are immensely fortunate to have so many contribute their time and talent to the Society!



One of our most popular posts on Facebook

Find us online!



www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org

Exhibits on Display

Antiquarian to Accredited: A Look Inside the Historical Society returned for a second year on display in 2022. Visitors were invited to learn more about our institution while viewing objects and stories from the point of view of our museum's stakeholders. This included past and present staff, board members, volunteers, community members, and exhibit contributors. *Antiquarian to Accredited* gave an insider's perspective on how the Litchfield Historical Society collects, interprets, and shares community history.



Antiquarian to Accredited

In preparation for our major 2023 exhibit, *To Certain Western Lands* introduced visitors to the Connecticut Western Reserve, land in present-day Ohio set aside for Connecticut settlement. Connecticut's claim to these lands facilitated the movement of people west.

As a prototype of a larger project, we asked for visitor input on different elements of the exhibit. From prior knowledge and level of interest in learning more about the Reserve, to giving feedback on potential interactives and label design, these surveys gave us valuable insight to our visitors' experience and expectations.

See the final product of this work in *To Come to a Land of Milk and Honey: Litchfield and the Connecticut Western Reserve*. On display April through November in 2023 and 2024.



Ohio or Connecticut
Visitor Activity



Antiquarian *to* Accredited

APRIL 30 - NOVEMBER 27



To Certain Western Lands

Telling the Story of the Western Reserve

APRIL 30 - JULY 17



Painting Litchfield

JULY 22 - NOVEMBER 27

free admission supported by

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Exhibits on Display



Painting Litchfield Opening Reception

While Litchfield was never home to the kind of formal art colony found in other parts of Connecticut, the town has a rich and lasting connection with the visual arts. *Painting Litchfield* showcases paintings inspired by Litchfield scenes and landscapes from the nineteenth century to the present. Learn about one of the earliest artist groups exhibiting in Connecticut, explore the career of a painter who served in the Monuments Men, and view works by artists living in Litchfield today.

Painting Litchfield will remain on display through July 16, 2023



Artist Thomas McKnight and wife, Renate, stand with McKnight's *Litchfield Law School*. Painting on Loan from the Collection of Harry Colvocoresses



Wedding Season Display

It was *Wedding Season* in the Liggett Gallery with four twentieth century wedding dresses on display. LHS Board Member and Curatorial Volunteer Carol Jones selected four dresses from the collection, spanning over 80 years of Litchfield weddings.

Partnership Programs

The Tapping Reeve Meadow and our experience hosting virtual events allowed us to share our outside space and online presence with several other organizations in the community.

We continued our partnerships with organizations such as the KidsPlay Children's Museum, League of Women Voters of Litchfield County, Litchfield Community Center, Litchfield Education Foundation, Litchfield Garden Club, Litchfield Park and Recreation, Litchfield S.M.A.R.T. Taskforce, and White Memorial Conservation Center.



Art is Everywhere: Spanish-English Storytime with KidsPlay Children's Museum



Litchfield Area Business Association Meeting in the Tapping Reeve Meadow



***Notable Trees of Litchfield* Walking Tour with the Litchfield Garden Club**



***Curious Minds* Summer Camp with Litchfield Park and Recreation**



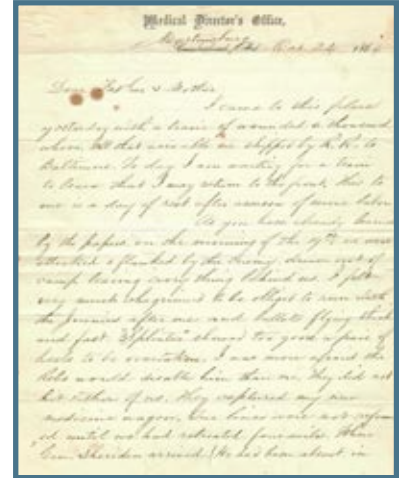
***All Honor to the Ladies: Litchfield County Women and the Civil War* with Peter Vermilyea
League of Women Voters Partnership Series**

New to the Museum and Archives

The Litchfield Historical Society occasionally purchases items from auctions, antique dealers, and private donors, but the majority of the collections are given to us through the generous donations of local patrons. It is through this continued patronage that the collections are able to grow. With each donation the Litchfield Historical Society is able to improve its interpretation of Litchfield's past and present through exhibits, programs, and research.

Donors to the Archives and Collections

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Marana L. Brooks	Deanna Marchand
Deirdre M. Caldwell	Thomas & Renate McKnight
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Bill Gerdson	Matthew Terzian
Sr. Rosemarie Greco	Msgr. Robert Tucker
Janey Hanley	Paul Wagner



**The Dr. James R. Cumming
Civil War Letters
Gift of Robert Cumming and Family**



**Litchfield Law School Student Notebook
kept by Charles B. Phelps, 1806-7
Gift of Patricia Armstrong**



**Trade sign for Tollgate Hill Inn
Museum Purchase**



**"Artist's Residence – North Street"
Thomas McKnight, 2010
Gift of Thomas and Renate McKnight**

Our Donors

Your support provides us with the resources to fulfill our mission of illuminating the rich and nationally-significant history of Litchfield. These contributions, given through the Annual Appeal, Give Local Campaign, and Membership Dues, help support our day-to-day operations and provide so much for our community.

\$10,000 and Above

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*In honor of Mark Macomber's retirement
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**Archivist Linda Hocking celebrating
 20 years with the LHS**

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 Guy Wolff and Erica Warnock
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**Barnaby Druthers Scarecrows in
 the Meadow Radio Special**

Our Sponsors

The Seherr-Thoss Foundations



Fall Fundraiser

After cancelling our fall event in 2020 and 2021, we were finally able to host in person fundraisers in 2022. Our Fall Fundraiser brought nearly 200 people back to the Tapping Reeve Meadow for an evening of live music, delicious food, and beautiful weather!



Thank you to our Fall Fundraiser Sponsors!



Talent! Art Show Fundraiser

Contributing Artists and Donors

Spencer Albana	Nina McKitty
Clayton Blick	Caitlin Messina
Audrey Blondin	Carol Thoma Moore
Al Coffill	Joan Morosani
Sara Conklin	Cathy Oneglia
Wendy Costa	Roderic Oneglia
Alex Dubois	Kristen Orr
Amy Dyer	Katherine Orr
Robert Graham	Hal Rossiter
Jean Grasmere	Avril Saunder
Bill Jones	Judith Secco
Ella Knox	Diane Stoner
Jim Lamond	Cyndi Tolosa
Laura Lasker	Copper Tritscheller
Lindsey Lawton	



Over 40 works by local artists were donated for our Talent! Art Show Fundraiser.

In the Tapping Reeve Meadow

The Tapping Reeve Meadow only got busier in 2022. Many visit the Meadow specifically for one of our programs, while others use the space for relaxation, exploration, meditation, and even the occasional band practice!

Newly installed outdoor exhibit signs share the history and context of the landscape elements in the Meadow.



New signage welcomes visitors



***Curious Minds* Summer Camp with
Litchfield Park and Recreation**



Summer S.T.E.A.M.



Children's Garden in full bloom



Annual Fourth of July Pet Parade

Scarecrows in the Meadow



Litchfield First Selectman Denise Raap joined the LHS for the Scarecrows in the Meadow Opening Celebration

In its third year, the Scarecrows in the Meadow celebration continues to flourish and over 6,000 visitors from all over Connecticut came to visit the display during the last two weeks of October. From a *Barnaby Rudge* special episode to WFSB Channel 3 Eyewitness News, the scarecrows have brought attention to the Tapping Reeve Meadow.

The almost 60 scarecrows on display are representatives of the businesses, non-profits, farms, friend groups, and families that make up our community – each as unique and appreciated as their maker.

Thank you to the many people that made this event happen, especially to all those that created a Scarecrow!



During the Opening Celebration the NWCT Arts Council participated in the Scarecrow Making Challenge



WFSB Channel 3 *Great Day @9a* went live from Scarecrows in the Meadow

Thank you to our Sponsors!



Litchfield Prevention Council
Murphy Boyz Printing and Marketing
The Clothes Tree

And Prize Donors!

Allison's Animal Academy
The Silly Sprout Toy Store
Stonybrook Golf



***The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* brought to life by Master Storyteller Jonathan Kruk**

Budget

2022 Income and Expense Summary

Support and Revenue

Contributed Income	\$185,357
Grant Income	\$73,600
Investment Income	\$403,232
Admissions / Program Fees / Shop	\$4,159
Total Support and Revenue	\$666,348

Expenses

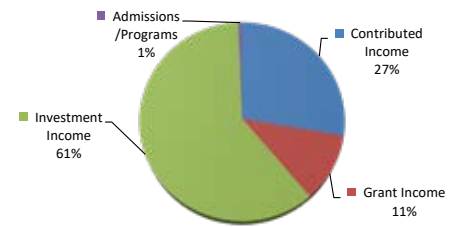
Salaries and Taxes	\$381,873
Benefits	\$24,636
Exhibits / Programs / Research	\$8,441
Utilities	\$50,365
Maintenance / Repairs	\$37,360
Operating Expenses	\$124,019
Total Expenses	\$626,694

Net Surplus \$39,654

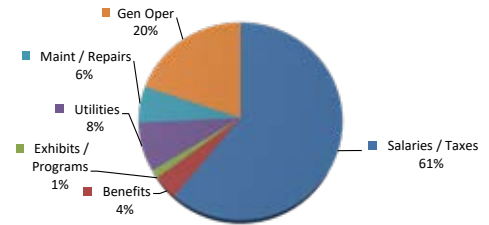
Grant Income - Restricted 2010-2022

Capital Projects	\$1,337,776
Collections / Database	\$188,785
Programs	\$200,679
Long-Term Planning	\$8,000
Total Grant / Restricted Income	\$1,735,240

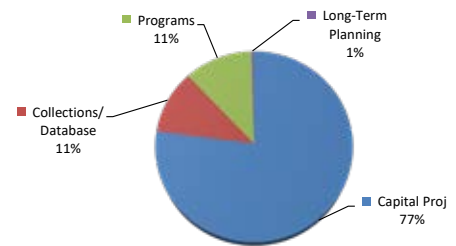
Operating Revenue - 2022



Operating Expenses - 2022



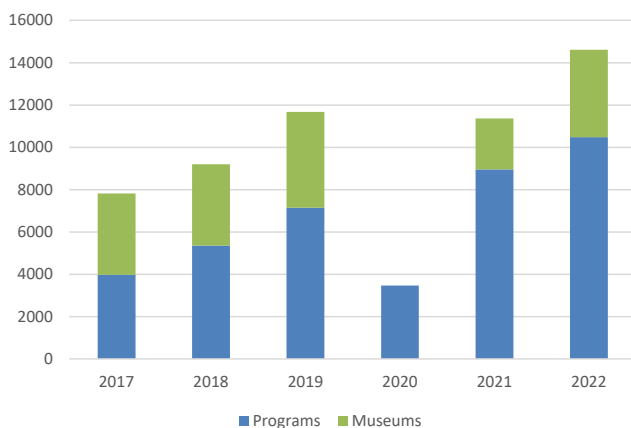
Restricted Grants - 2010-2022



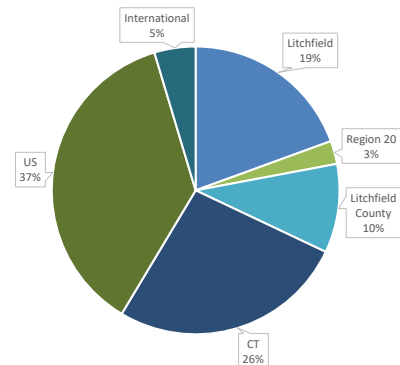
Museum Visitation

After the disruption of closing the museum during the COVID-19 pandemic, museum visitation continues its positive trend. The Litchfield History Museum and the Tapping Reeve House and Litchfield Law School continue to be a destination for the local community and visitors to the area.

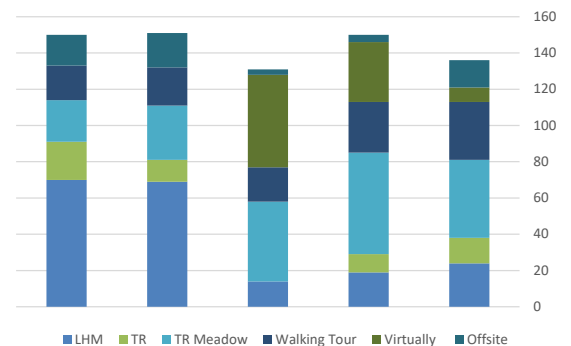
Program and Museum Visitation



Where are Visitors From?



Program Locations





American Folk Art Society visiting the museum



Litchfield Center School 1st Grade Field Trip



Scarecrows in the Meadow



***Stories to Keep You Up at Night*
Lantern Tour**



Holiday Stroll Ornament Making



Project Archivist Leith Johnson



P.O. Box 385
Litchfield, CT 06759

www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org