

Lower Adirondack Regional Center for History

President's Annual Report

13 June 2025

Introduction:

As I reflect on the past year, the Center has once again demonstrated its commitment to preserving and celebrating our mission: through a focus on the historical, scientific and social aspects of the Adirondack Mountains, Lake Champlain and Lake George regions, LARCH showcases the contributions of our region to the history of New York and the United States while preserving and promoting our unique cultural history. In doing so, we again present a strong series of informative and educational exhibits and programs that speak to our history and culture.

As we end this fiscal year, I am sorry to report we are still working through a very lengthy process of transferring the Hancock House property, Moses Fund, select collections and non-fixed assets from the Fenimore Art Museum.

This year marks the 50th year anniversary of our assuming management of the Hancock House. In reflection, as in 1975, these same items were of great interest when the officers and members of the Ticonderoga Historical Society petitioned the trustees of the New York State Historical Association (NYSHA) to transfer the then-vacant building to THS. Our stewardship was to ensure the building would be used for the original purposes that Horace Moses envisioned when he gifted the house to NYSHA¹.

Our ability to manage this series of complex transitions underscores our dedication to ensure the integrity and accessibility of the House and its important assets. Throughout this process, our officers have worked tirelessly to maintain the exact standards of care and programming that our community has come to expect. The challenges of such a significant undertaking have also provided opportunities for growth and collaboration, fostering a renewed sense of purpose among our trustees, staff, and friends.

Highlights of the Year:

- We experienced a slight reduction in visitor count. Our popular “Festival of Trees” was a continuing success with a larger number of community and out-of-region visitors.
- The Garden continues to provide great enjoyment and interest from our visitor and the community. We are very thankful for trustee Susan Hayes and the volunteers that help maintain the garden.
- Major work at our facility at 173 Lord Howe Street has been undertaken: Parking Lot pavement maintenance and repair for enhanced water run-off was completed.

¹ In 1939 NYSHA moved its headquarters to Cooperstown. In 1958, it shut down the Hancock House and leased it to the Fort Ticonderoga Association for ten years. They immediately leased the building to the “Champlain 350th Celebration Committee” for two years. They then leased the building to the newly formed Lake George Park commission who vacated the building in 1972 when they relocated to Lake George. The Hancock House then stood vacant and in November 1974, without any notification to the town officials or the Ticonderoga Historical Society, NYSHA emptied the building's contents.

Repair and repainting of the entire building is in process. A new furnace water control unit was installed. Two exterior all-weather water taps were installed.

- Education Program: Our spring “American Revolution - The Great Courses, a 24-session series, was well received and provided an opportunity to engage with several individuals who were not familiar with us.
- In 2023 a severe weather storm causes significant damage to the Hancock House and its grounds. An insurance claim was made, and a very realistic amount was settled on. A professional architect with experience in historical buildings was engaged after soliciting an RFP (request for proposals) to the building’s repair. Work began late last year and is nearing its final completion phase.
- Lord Howe Heritage Preserve: The oversight committee continues to make outreach to a number of environmental organizations for assistance in developing this property as an urban park.

Financial Overview:

Despite the challenges faced by many cultural institutions, the Center maintains financial stability. Contributions from donors and grant funding allowed us to maintain our programming and make minor repairs. Led by Treasurer Linda Bhatia, the Center has engaged a new CPA, enhanced its accounting system and streamlined the point of sale and inventory system for the Gift Shop. Linda also spent many hours working with representatives at the IRS and the NYS Tax Department to successfully complete the legal intricacies of our “Name Change” filings. A detailed breakdown of our financial performance is available in the appendix to this report.

Looking Ahead:

In the coming year, we aim to build on this momentum by launching additional community-centered initiatives, enhancing our digital presence, and continuing to safeguard our regional historical treasures.

Acknowledgements:

I extend my deepest gratitude to our staff, volunteers, and supporters whose passion and dedication make our mission possible. I also want to acknowledge the members of the Executive and Finance Committee for their tireless and thoughtful endeavors to ensure that the Center’s administrative and financial guidance and performance meets the highest standards.

Closing Remarks:

Thank you for your unwavering support. I look forward to another year of collaboration and discovery as we continue to honor the rich history of our region.

William G. Dolback, President.