

2019 Annual Report



Midwest Miniatures Museum

A New Home!



On August 1st, the museum purchased a new home: the 1899 Nathaniel Robbins Mansion in Grand Haven, Michigan. Registered as a state historic site, this stunning Colonial Revival building includes several times more space than the current farmhouse. It was purchased at the price of \$625,000 paid in full from funds left to the museum from museum founder Francis Light upon her passing. Future plans for this space include improved and expanded exhibition space, a classroom, a makers' space, and a library!

Conversion of the building from a private home to a museum open to the public requires the addition of a sprinkler system, an accessible bathroom, and a temporary ramp. In Phase I of its relocation plan, to be completed in early 2020, the museum will open the first floor to the public with new exhibitions featuring some of the museum's finest collection pieces.

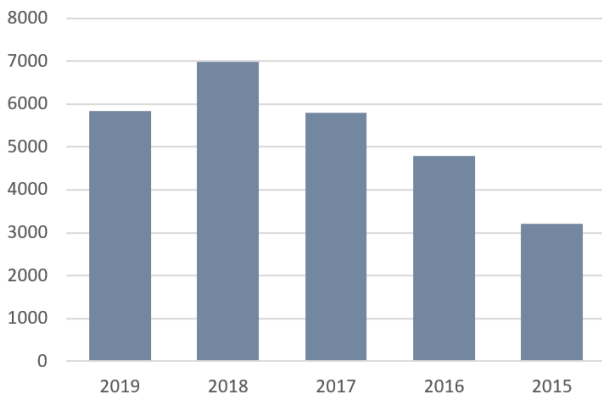
Phase II will see the addition of a four-story elevator that will open accessibility to the entire building.

The move to a new location began with museum founder Francis Light who first proposed the establishment of a new building fund almost as soon as the doors opened in Hickory Corners. The search has continued over many years. Committees chaired by Jane Carpenter and, later, by Deb Killarney worked diligently to review many options. Almost twenty buildings were toured before the Grand Haven site was approved out of the finalists.

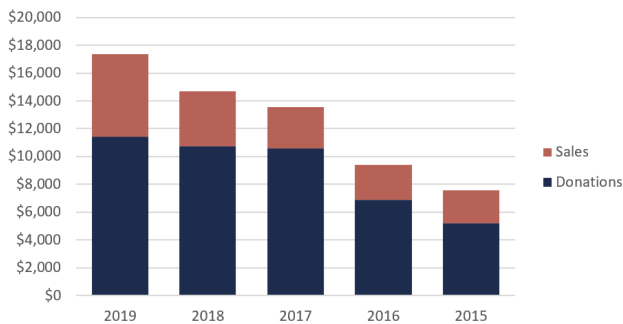
To complete the many tasks required to move, three work groups were established: Relocation and Retrofitting led by Ina Whitney, Transition led by Deb Killarney, and Closing of the Hickory Corners Location led by Holly Burke. All three groups are making good progress with the help of experts, volunteers, and staff. A heartfelt thank you to all who have assisted, including members of the Mini-Fingers Miniature Club!

Year in Review

Visitors by Year



Donations and Gift Shop Sales by Year



Most recent acquisition: *Standard Oil Station* purchased from the artists, Ron and April Gill of Wildwood Dollhouses

What's Next?

2020 will be focused on the retrofit, move, and grand re-opening. Future planning focuses on building an elevator and supporting infrastructure as well as the establishment/re-establishment of educational and outreach programs. Additional elements of the strategic plan include developing infrastructure to meet American Alliance of Museum standards and seeking grant support for both capital and programmatic needs.

A building fund will be established as the museum continues to grow and anticipates future space needs with the possibility of purchasing additional facilities for its collections and operations.

This was the last year for the museum at its original location on the grounds of the Gilmore Car Museum. Of the car museum's 125,000 annual visitors, nearly 6,000 visited the miniature museum's collection. Significantly higher attendance numbers are anticipated in Grand Haven which sees nearly 2.2 million tourists annually.

Sales and donations were up in 2019, despite seeing lower attendance numbers than the previous year. Gift shop sales were at \$5,960, an over 50% increase from 2018. Holly Burke continued to run the gift shop as a volunteer while also planning a successful garage sale at the end of August that earned more than \$1,500 over its two weekends. While the museum continued to offer free admission to its guests, it received \$11,871 in donations. It plans to charge an admissions fee in the future and expand its fundraising efforts to help cover increased operational costs at the new location. Additional revenue came from the museum's endowment and spendable funds at Barry Community Foundation and Greenleaf Trust.

In addition to the IMLS grant applied for in 2018, the museum applied for an operational grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. It will continue to seek out grants in the future as it expands its collections, programs, and professional staff.

This year, the museum acquired one additional collection item which was purchased from Ron and April Gill of Wildwood Dollhouses. Set in the 1950s, it is a 1:12 scale model of a Standard Oil building which can still be found in Lansing, MI. A collections plan is under development to assist with the expansion of the museum's permanent collection.

Board of Directors

With the long standing goal of finding a new building accomplished and having moved to the East side of the state, Jane Carpenter has elected to resign from her position as Vice President of the Board. We are grateful for her many years of service as patron, officer, and volunteer. We wish her happiness in her future endeavors.

The vacant board position has been filled by Deb Killarney, who shepherded the building search and is currently updating the website. Thank you for all that you do!

President: Ina Whitney

Treasurer: Holly Burke

Officer: Deb Killarney

Officer: Karen Hargreave

Staff

A special thanks to the museum's administrator, Hanna Steinmann, who had been involved in all phases of the relocation process while also keeping the museum humming along in its current location. Hanna plans to relocate to the Grand Haven area and continue to direct the museum from there.

As in previous years, paid docents greeted visitors at the door while also offering complimentary tours of the galleries and managing gift shop sales and donations.

The Museum plans to expand its professional staff in the near future.