



# ANNUAL REPORT



2020-2021 FOUNDING EDITION

PO BOX 1856 JACKSON, MI 49204

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**1** Letter from the President

**4** Under the Oaks Clean Up

**2** Mission & Board of Trustees

**5** County Historical Marker Program

**3** Initiatives & Partnerships

**6** Financials



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

---

In a year dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, our days were filled with adversity, tragedy, and grief. The crises we faced and the struggle for social justice demanded our attention. Through it all, the creativity and determination of our colleagues gave us strength and hope to found this fledgling county historical society.

Your continuing support and engagement helped us ensure that that our network not only grew strong but grew beyond the physical boundaries of our county and state. Our members, industry partners, legislative partners, federal and state funding agencies, and private foundations stepped up to help organizations such as ours.

Although this fledgling society is only one year old, it has initiated several educational programs, launched a major community project, partnered with other organizations and businesses to promote history, and offered several membership perks. Amazingly, most of these accomplishments were achieved during the challenging time of covid-19 restrictions. In February of this year our Society hosted our first event in partnership with Amtrak that was nationally viewed.

Just recently, our Society partnered with Experience Jackson and the Michigan Humanities to install our first historical marker "DeLand Point". This was our first of many future historical markers that will be installed across Jackson County. We ended October with an event at the Book Cottage, where attendees were able to learn about Jackson County history publications.

Jackson County history fans have greatly expressed their enjoyment of our Local History Showcase videos. These videos are primarily viewed on Facebook but are published on YouTube & Facebook as well. This has been a great way to get students involved. So far, each of our videos has been assisted by a Jackson County student volunteer. The students greatly enjoy getting the opportunity to use their tech skills and learn more about local history while being able to explore historic locations! Students can use this as a community service opportunity for school which allows us to have great partnerships with schools in Jackson County.

Briefly after our founding, our board and volunteers pursued new partnerships and resources to keep our community connected, informed, and prepared to meet the operational challenges. We vigilantly sought out the most current and accurate information to first help our community adapt to a virtual world and then to welcome Jackson County history fans with appropriate distancing protocols and safety standards at events.

On the pages of this report, you will see how, with your help, MANY faced and surmounted the difficulties of working at the intersection of multiple challenges. We remain grateful for your support and partnership and are eager to explore the ways we can work together to build a stronger, more sustainable and relevant community where everyone's voices are help up together.

With thanks,



**Maurice Imhoff**  
**President**



# OUR MISSION

---

The Jackson County Michigan Historical Society was founded in 2020 as a not-for-profit, private educational organization dedicated to perpetuating Jackson County's history. The Society's mission:

- To foster deeper understanding and appreciation for Jackson County's history;
- To stimulate and encourage the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Jackson County history through conferences, publications, awards, educational programs, consulting services, and related historical activities;
- To coordinate and further the programs with county's other local historical societies, museums and local historians by functioning as a service organization, collaboration and communication network;
- To cooperate with appropriate individuals, organizations, and institutions on the local, state, or national levels in projects and activities that will promote and sustain a general interest in history

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

---



Maurice Imhoff  
**President**



Linda Hass  
**Acting Secretary**



Scott Slagor  
**Treasurer**



Lloyd Ganton  
**Trustee**



Janette Weimer  
**Trustee**



Gerry Blanchard  
**Trustee**

# INITIATIVES & PARTNERSHIPS



## Major Initiatives

- Established an active social media presence, including a website, Facebook, and Instagram. Through social media we reached 87,549 people.
- Created several "Behind the Scenes" videos giving viewers virtual tours inside historical structures they would not normally have access to, including the Michigan Theater and the Jackson Amtrak Station/former Michigan Central Railroad Depot, thus preserving a visible slice of Jackson's history for a video archive.
- Created a local history showcase that highlights various historic landmarks and objects of interest, such as the T-33A Shooting Star Jet, on display at the Jackson County Airport, Locomotive #5030 in Jackson's R.A. Greene Park, and the Michigan Theatre of Jackson. These videos reached 41,200 viewers on Facebook, respectively.
- Initiated a program called, "Local History Trivia Questions," to foster interest in local history on our Instagram page.
- Partnered with Experience Jackson and the City of Jackson for an event called "Restore the Under the Oaks." This event was held to revamp and clean the historic Under the Oaks site. This is one of our most historic sites in the county

-Spearheaded a local historical marker program that recognizes significant sites in Jackson County that are at least 50 years old. Such structures and properties will be marked by a sign.

## Major Partnerships

- Collaborated with Experience Jackson (the former Jackson Tourist Bureau) to spearhead the cleanup of a historical landmark/public park—Under the Oaks, commonly known as the "Birthplace of the Republican Party."
- Partnered with local radio station WKHM to initiate a new radio program called "Marking Jackson's History."
- Partnered with the Ella Sharp Museum to offer mutually beneficial perks. Members of Ella Sharp Museum receive a \$10 discount on a Jackson County Michigan Historical Society Membership and Jackson County Michigan Historical Society members receive two annual passes to Ella Sharp Museum galleries.
- Established strong business partnerships with the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, True Community Credit Union, Lowe Construction Company, GLG Print, Fritz Advertising Co. & Signs and Experience Jackson.
- Received \$10,000 grant from Michigan Humanities to implement our local historical marker program that recognizes significant sites in Jackson County.
- Received \$2,000 grant from the Jackson Community Foundation to create professional local history showcase videos and support educational events.

# UNDER THE OAKS CLEAN UP

---

On July 6th of 2021 in partnership with Experience Jackson we hosted a clean up at the historic Under the Oaks site.

What a fantastic day this was! We had approximately 30 volunteers attend this event. Volunteers stained the wood, pulled weeds, cut down brush, installed a flag, washed historical markers, planted flowers, picked up trash, removed a vandalized marker, and added new mulch. Brand new LED lights were added to the site soon after this event.

This event would not have been possible without our wonderful volunteers & partners that were here early for set up and stayed after to put it all away. We accomplished so much in just a few hours!

Why did we choose July 6th? On this date in 1854, just after the anniversary of the nation, an anti-slavery state convention was held in Jackson, Michigan. The hot day forced the large crowd outside to a nearby oak grove. At this “Under the Oaks Convention” the first statewide candidates were selected for what would become the Republican Party.

United by the desire to abolish slavery, it was in Jackson that the Platform of the Under the Oaks Convention read: “...we will cooperate and be known as Republicans...” Prior to July, smaller groups had gathered in intimate settings like the schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin. However, the meeting in Jackson would be the first ever mass gathering of the Republican Party.



# Habitat for Humanity

Building homes, Building hope, One family at a time



## COUNTY HISTORICAL MARKER PROGRAM

In October we held the dedication ceremony of our **first** county historical marker honoring "DeLand Point". In the mid-1800s, the Mechanic and Franklin street intersection was a hub for the Underground Railroad, a secret system in which freedom seekers and helpers collaborated in resisting slavery. Among those assisting at that time were the DeLand family, who resided on the northeast corner of the intersection.

The marker was unveiled and can now be seen on the southwest corner of Mechanic and Franklin streets. We thank everyone that participated and attended this fantastic ceremony!

Some of our perspective markers include the following: Hague Park (Vandercook), Camp Jackson (Jackson), Jackson's Auto Industry (Jackson), Village of Stony Point (Hanover/Horton), Henry Ford Mill Pond (Brooklyn).

Why are we invested in the program? Historical markers are one of the most iconic parts of an educational family road trip. You can see them placed throughout major highways and at popular tourist spots. Some families even take road trips for the sole purpose of finding these jewels of information. Even when a vacation does not focus on history, many people still use them as stops between Point A and Point B. Needless to say, historical markers act as a crucial element of American travel.

County historical marker programs work a lot like state programs except on a smaller scale. In addition to honoring our past, we get many material and immaterial perks from having historical plaques. When we commemorate where history happened, the entire community grows stronger.

Historical markers boost the surrounding area by enhancing the following parts of a town:

- **Education:** Placing a historical marker brings attention to places and events that Jackson County residents might not know about otherwise. Creating an official historic location can even give local schools an opportunity for a field trip that enhances student learning. Visitors can learn more about the area when we can show them what parts of our community history we value. History gives us context for current events and even guides us in the future. By establishing a new source of knowledge in our area, students of all ages can develop an important connection to the monument.
- **Tourism.** Cultural and heritage tourism has a global value of over one billion dollars. Tourists who visit areas for historical or cultural reasons tend to not only stay longer, but they also spend more money at restaurants and hotels, helping small businesses in Jackson County. As a bonus, the engagement associated with cultural attractions makes it easier for tourists to enjoy and remember their trips. And if they have fun and unforgettable experiences, they'll be more likely to visit Jackson County again.
- **Jobs.** With increased tourism comes a higher number of jobs. Tourism leads to job openings created when tourists flock to historic monuments. Examples include the increased need for advertising, promotions and step-on tour guides and hospitality industry staff. Sometimes, a historical site becomes so popular that it is a crucial element of the local economy. As a case in point, demand for charter bus tours to local Underground Railroad sites recently prompted the Jackson Chamber of Commerce to publish more brochures highlighting this offering. Even businesses not geared towards visitors can benefit due to more exposure and activity.
- **Property Values:** Thanks to the previously listed benefits, revitalization can occur and property values in a designated historical area can increase compared to regions without heritage sites. For example, the historic district in Savannah, Ga., has property values much higher than the city average. This trend became important when real estate across the nation became unstable. Thanks to its inherent perks, the historic district faced lower rates of foreclosure. In turn, the higher property values led to more public-school funding, enhancing the education of local children. Historic preservation also increased the quality of life in the historic district, making the area more walkable and bikeable.

When community heritage thrives, so does the community itself. Not only will Jackson County residents better appreciate their home, but we can show visitors why our area matters. Our society hopes to bring these and other benefits to Jackson through our Historical Marker Program.

# FINANCIALS



## Account balances of November 4, 2021

---

Savings Account	\$5.00
Checking Account	\$3,311.04
Money Tree (Grant sub-account)	\$10,000.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,316.22</b>

## Fund composition to-date

---

Membership Dues	\$570.00
Donations	\$1,420.00
Grants	\$12,000.00
Marker Applications	\$25.00

## Expenses spent to-date

---

Corporate Filing	\$20.00
Check Ordering	\$26.05
Ella Sharp Memberships (pass-through)	\$30.00
Office Rent	\$396.00
Postage	\$22.00
Podium Purchase	\$224.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$718.96</b>