SHSMO

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

# 2026 Annual Report



*Highlights:*


**Collections**

**Educational Programs**

**Awards**

**Financial Report**

**Donors of Historical Resources**

**Gifts**

**Volunteers**




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# From the President:



Welcome to the 2026 Annual Meeting of the State Historical Society of Missouri! Founded in 1898 and authorized by the 40th Missouri General Assembly, the Society continues to serve as a leader of historical research and preservation for our state and region. If you are reading this report, you are part of the Society's legacy and, more importantly, part of its future as we study our past to further understand the present and beyond.

The Society continues to thrive with Executive Director Dr. Joel Rhodes and our home in the Center for Missouri Studies. The Center maintains a treasure trove of archival material including more than 10,900 manuscript collections, an art collection of 29,000 works, and research library with countless books and newspapers. The Center is a state-of-the-art facility that also serves as an appealing community meeting place. The Society welcomed 9,935 in-person visits and responded to over 12,000 requests for research assistance. While the Columbia facility is the principal home of the Society, our physical reach extends beyond the University of Missouri campus to our research centers located in St. Louis, Kansas City, Rolla, Springfield, and Cape Girardeau. Each facility offers research opportunities for academics, independent scholars, and graduate students, enabling opportunities for exciting new contributions to Missouri history.

The Society's staff produced and supported numerous programs on Missouri's history to make information more readily available and enjoyable to learn. The Society supported the historic Route 66 Centennial celebration as well as the America 250th celebration by offering engaging lectures and online webinars. The Society toured the state with the *Missouri's Main Street: 100 Years of Route 66* exhibit. Its holdings continued to increase; the art department acquired 367 new artworks including works by George Caleb Bingham and others to further enhance the art gallery and collection. Congressional papers amounting to 1,488 cubic feet of material have been processed and are now available to researchers including the work product of our Society's immediate past President, former US Senator Roy Blunt, the late US Senator Kit Bond, and the late Congressmen William L. Hungate and William J. Randall.

Society membership is critical to its survival. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we thank you for your past support and for your participation as we build our services for the future. Please encourage others to join in our mission of historical research and preservation by becoming a member, visiting one of our research centers, or attending one of the Society's many events. Enjoy the Annual Meeting and My Missouri lecture!

Robert M. Clayton III
President, Board of Trustees










Black Walnut
Orchard Farm
West Alton
Wood River
Roxana
Black Jack
Spanish Lake
Fenton
Oakville

# Collections

During the 2026 fiscal year, the State Historical Society's six research centers continued to collect and provide access to art, manuscripts, books, maps, photographs, oral histories, and other archival materials. The Society welcomed 9,935 visitors and received 12,245 requests for assistance at the Cape Girardeau, Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla, Springfield, and St. Louis research centers.

## Art

The art department welcomed more than 6,000 visitors and 49 tour groups to the William Guitar Little Missouri Gallery of Art, acquired 367 new artworks, and presented seven exhibitions.

### Important new artworks accessioned include:

- Three George Caleb Bingham portraits: Robert Harris Stone and Elizabeth Rodes Stone (1844) and Maria Williams Henry (c. 1878). The Maria Williams Henry portrait was acquired with funds donated by Elizabeth Aull.
- Sculptures by notable Missouri artists, including a bronze sculpture of Kansas City jazz pioneer Charlie "Bird" Parker by Edward Dwight, a preparatory plaster maquette representing John Steinbeck character Reverend Jim Casy by Thomas Hart Benton, and a bronze Western sculpture by Osage artist John D. Free.
- Several large collections of works by Missouri artists, including a donation from Marilyn Kaneaster of original watercolors and drawings by David Plank; a collection of artworks from the estate of Sidney Larson; and a collection of 13 one-of-a-kind signed monoprints by the nationally celebrated Osage artist Norman Akers.

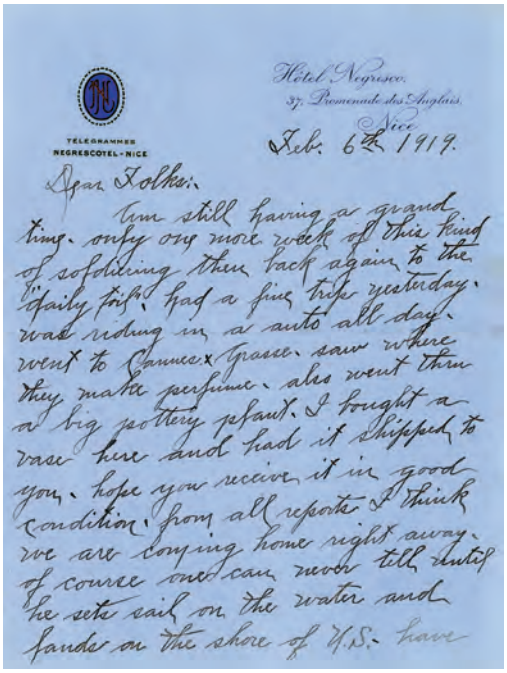
### Art exhibitions on display during this fiscal year:

- *America 250 Exhibit* showcased George Caleb Bingham's portrait of Thomas Jefferson and letters from the J. Christian Bay Collection of Middle Western and Western Americana with the signatures of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Hancock.
- *Rose and Gladys*, featuring the work of Missourians Gladys Wheat and Rose O'Neill, showcased a selection of artworks by these extraordinary women artist illustrators.
- *W[A]RN and TRANSFORMED: Uniforms as Stories of U.S.* exhibition represented stories and experiences woven within the fibers of the American military uniform. The exhibition was a collaboration with the Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection at the University of Missouri.
- *Artists in the Court* explored the relationship between art, artists, and the justice system.
- *Continuum . . . 100 Years of African American ART in Missouri* featured artworks from past and present African American Missouri artists.
- *The Politics of Water in the Art of George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton* examined artworks that celebrate the economic vitality of Missouri's waterways.

# Library

The Society's reference library collects and makes accessible print publications on Missouri history and the Midwest. At the end of fiscal year 2026, 77 new and 479 donated books, 40 maps, and 110 Missouri government documents were added to the collection of more than 97,100 titles available in the library catalog.

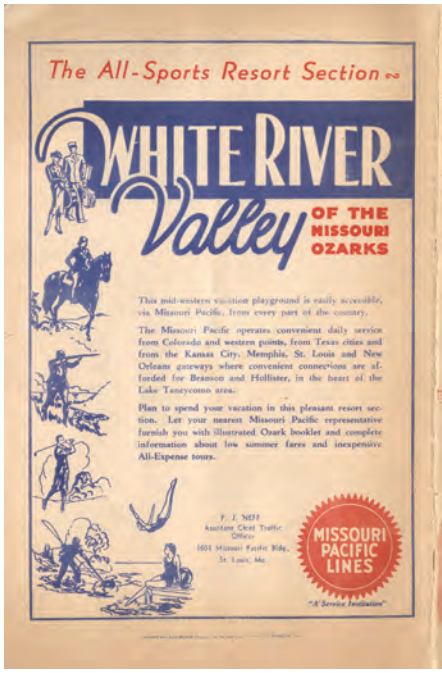
Founded in 1898 by members of the Missouri Press Association, the Society continued its commitment to the preservation and digitization of Missouri newspapers. During the 2026 fiscal year, the Society collected print and digital newspaper titles from 205 publishers and received loans or donations of historic newspapers from 19 individual donors and institutions. The Society created 431 reels of preservation microfilm and 2,330 second-generation negative reels. Expanding access to newspapers remained a crucial priority, with approximately 1.5 million pages digitized from 135 different newspapers.

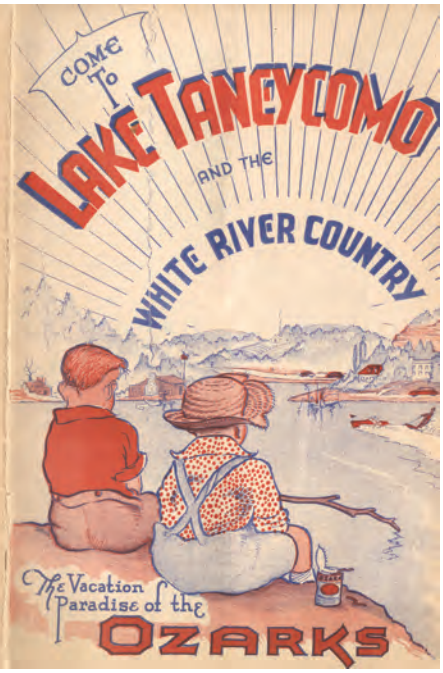

Hôtel Negresco
37, Promenade des Anglais
Nice
TELEGRAMMES NEGRESCOTEL-NICE

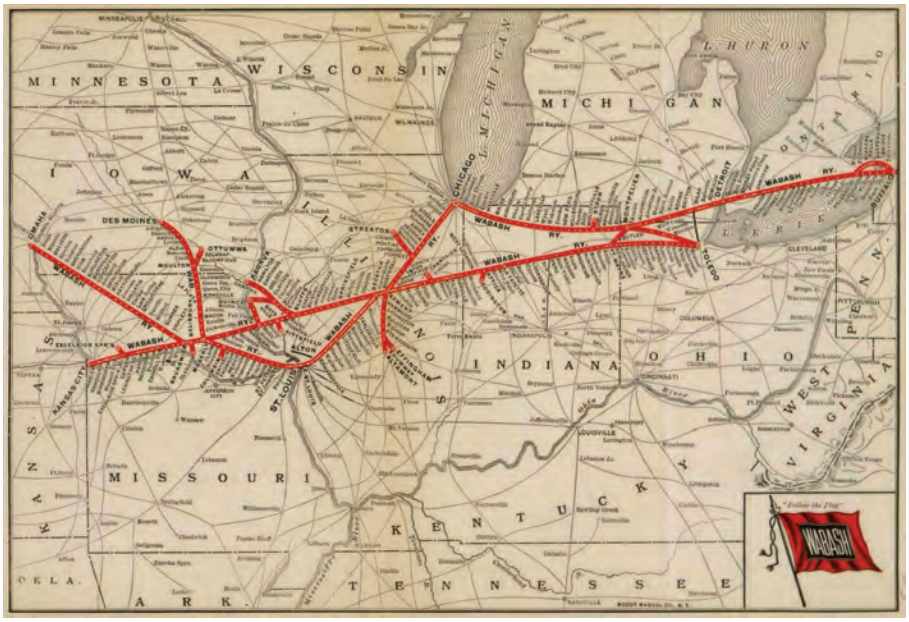
Feb. 6th 1919.

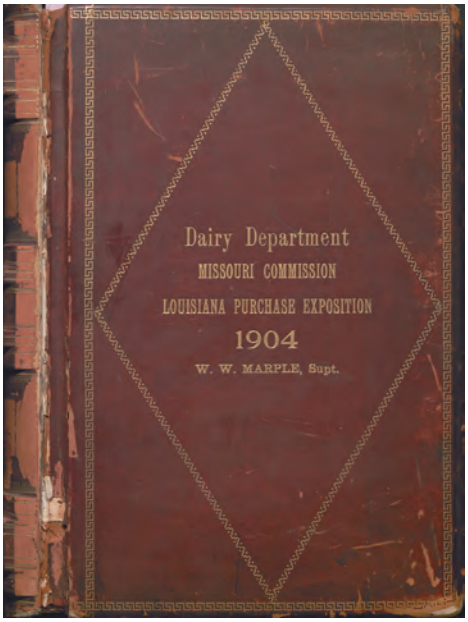
Dear Folks.

Im still having a grand time. only one more week of this kind of soldiering then back again to the daily fuss. had a fine trip yesterday. was riding in a auto all day. went to Cannes, Grasse. saw where they make perfume. also went thru a big pottery plant. I bought a vase here and had it shipped to you. hope you receive it in good condition. from all reports I think we are coming home right away. of course one can never tell until he sets sail on the water and lands on the shore of U.S. Have





Dairy Department
MISSOURI COMMISSION
LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION
1904
W. W. MARPLE, Supt.

# Manuscripts

The Society's manuscript collection consists of personal papers, photographs, oral histories, correspondence, diaries, journals, and audiovisual material, as well as the records of politicians, organizations, and businesses. In the 2026 fiscal year, the monumental multi-year National Historic Publications Records Commission Congressional Records grant was completed, making the records of US Senators Christopher S. Bond and Roy D. Blunt and US Congressmen William L. Hungate and William J. Randall available to researchers.

The Society acquired 180 manuscript donations totaling approximately 554 cubic feet. Archivists processed 129 physical collections representing 1,349 cubic feet and 14 digital collections totaling 84 gigabytes. Digitization projects added 12,145 new digital images or pages of manuscripts and photographs online. The Society's state-of-the-art conservation lab treated 534 documents, 17 photographs, 15 books, 12 maps, 284 volumes of newspapers, and 10 personal artifacts from various collections.

## Notable manuscripts acquired during the year included:

### Cape Girardeau Research Center

- Materials related to Booker T. Washington High School in Caruthersville, Missouri, documenting schools in southeast Missouri prior to desegregation.
- William W. Rhodes Collection containing letters written to his parents in Chaffee, Missouri, while serving in the US Marine Corps during the Korean War.

### Columbia Research Center

- An addition to the papers of former Columbia Mayor Darwin Hindman.
- Records of the Center Project, an LGBTQIA+ community center.
- Faye Records Collection, the business records of an independent record label in Columbia, Missouri.

### Kansas City Research Center

- An addition to the records of Western Auto Supply Company.
- Materials of poet and author John G. Neihardt.
- Records of the Menorah Heritage Foundation.

### Rolla Research Center

- Phelps Health Collection documenting the history of Phelps Health Hospital.
- A portrait of Mayme Ousley, the first female mayor in Missouri.
- Oral histories and images related to the history of the Shannondale community.

### Springfield Research Center

- Legislative papers of Roseann Bentley, former state senator and educator.

### St. Louis Research Center

- Linda Lakin Papers, which document Space Trek, a Star Trek convention held in St. Louis.
- The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc., Records, documenting the group's mission to provide young people with an outlet to contribute to their communities and cultivate leadership skills.
- Green Family Papers, which include the Green, Smith, and Van Sant families of St. Louis and Fulton, Missouri.
- The Lafayette Square Restoration Committee Records documenting the group's mission to promote and preserve the neighborhood's historic built environment.

### Oral Histories

- Interview with Bob Liebert, writer and herbalist.
- Interview with Michael Cochran, founder of psychedelic rock band Sound Farm.
- Interview with Kathy Steinhoff, state legislator and former teacher and labor organizer.
- Interview with Gene Bess, coach and member of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.
- Eight interviewees for the Politics in Missouri Oral History Project.




youtube.com
VIDEO
PHOTO


Welcome to
MUSIC
ON ELM
featuring Violet and Phylshawn
with OLYSSA
Sponsor:
Central Bank
CentralTrust




25
USA
1776 - 2026


MISSOURI'S
MAIN STREET
100 YEARS OF ROUTE 66
SHSMO
INFORM
INSPIRE

# Educational Programs

The State Historical Society of Missouri offered a robust number of educational programs ranging from book talks and lectures to exhibitions, film screenings, live musical performances, and podcasts. In total, SHSMO presented 153 public programs and events that welcomed more than 9,200 attendees at the Center for Missouri Studies and across the state. Many of the Society's outreach efforts focused on celebrating the centennial of Route 66 and America's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The Society partnered with the state of Missouri and organizations including the University of Missouri's Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy and Missouri Humanities to commemorate America's semiquincentennial. Among the Society's initiatives were a 20-episode podcast series titled *Origins: A Reflection at 250 & Beyond*, an eight-part global lecture series with noted historians reflecting on America's 250th anniversary from a global perspective, and the Declaration of Independence Festival with a public reading of the Declaration that coincided with simultaneous readings across all 50 states and 16 US territories.

In celebration of Route 66's centennial, the Society created *Missouri's Main Street: 100 Years of Route 66* exhibit. The exhibit features photographs and documents from the Society's collection highlighting the history of Route 66 through Missouri. In addition, the Society initiated a new traveling exhibit program to share select exhibits with local libraries, historical societies, and other organizations throughout Missouri.

As one of the main organizers of historic Route 66 centennial celebrations, the Society received the Missouri Library Association's Public Relations Achievement Award for 2026. Among the Society's initiatives was the creation of a free monthly webinar series, Asphalt to Archives: Telling the Missouri Story, featuring collections pertaining to the Mother Road. SHSMO also collaborated with a national Centennial Speaker Series: *Route 66 at 100–An American Story*. The online series—hosted by Research Route 66 and the US National Park Service in conjunction with 10 archives, libraries, and museums along the route—featured talks by notable authors, historians, and archivists.

The Society continued to host the popular History on Elm lecture series held at the Center for Missouri Studies and introduced the Music on Elm series of live musical performances. Sponsors of the series included Central Bank, Central Trust Company, and Shortwave Coffee. The Society's staff recorded 19 episodes of the *Our Missouri Podcast*, hosted and produced 13 virtual programs, and presented new installments of the African American Experience in Missouri lecture series.

The Society is actively followed on social media channels, including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The Society's Facebook page has over 26,700 followers and recorded more than 4.8 million views. The SHSMO YouTube channel, where many of the Society's previously videotaped programs may be viewed, was viewed 45,000 times. The Instagram page grew to just over 3,100 followers and approached 21,200 views.



## Publications

First published in 1906 by the State Historical Society, the *Missouri Historical Review* marked its 120th continuous year in publication with articles on a wide-ranging number of subjects:

- "The Evolution of a Historian," by Joel P. Rhodes.
- "'That Man Curtis': The Last Days of General Samuel R. Curtis's Missouri Command," by Thomas A. Jones.
- "John C. Bush's Book of Travels: The Expedition Up the Missouri River, 1819–1820, Part I: Shippingport, Kentucky, to Fort Osage, Missouri Territory," edited and annotated by Kimberly Harper and John Brenner.
- "John C. Bush's Book of Travels: The Expedition Up the Missouri River, 1819–1820, Part II: Fort Osage to Council Bluff," edited and annotated by Kimberly Harper and John Brenner.
- "'It's Been a Hell of a Ride': An Interview with Gary Kremer," by Senator Roy Blunt.
- "African American Lives after the Civil War in Two Townships in Johnson County, Missouri," by B. Darrell Jackson.
- "My Summer of 1921," by Lloyd Gregory, edited and annotated by Robert L. Gangwere.
- "Safe at the College? The 1918 Influenza Epidemic and the Students' Army Training Corps at the University of Missouri," by Carolyn Orbann, Erin Walton, and Devanshi Patel.
- "The Battle to End the 'Aces' System and Reform the St. Louis Police Department," by Charles E. Valier.
- "Snake County Sojourn: McDonald County, Joplin, and the Birth of the Ozarks Playground Association," by Kimberly Harper.
- "The Americanization of an Italian War Bride in Missouri: Liliana Maria Palmigiani, 1946–2015," by Larry Gragg.
- "The Strange Career of Collective Bargaining for Missouri Teachers," by Doug Genens.

The Missouri Encyclopedia added several new articles, including the German press in Missouri, Missouri writer Josephine Johnson, artist Spencer T. Banks, railroad entrepreneurs Louis Houck and Mathias Splitlog, johnboats in Missouri, and several entries on Route 66 businesses.

*Missouri Times*, SHSMO's news magazine, published three issues during the 2026 fiscal year, keeping the Society's friends and supporters abreast of the organization's latest accomplishments, acquisitions, collection initiatives, events, and exhibitions.






## National History Day in Missouri

In 2025 the National History Day in Missouri contest attracted 1,512 students from public, private, and homeschools who competed in eight regional contests exploring the theme "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History." The top three entries in each category per region advanced to the state contest held in Columbia and fifty-four students represented the state at the National History Day competition in College Park, Maryland.

Several Missouri students received national awards. Rohan Deshpande of Marquette Senior High School in St. Louis County, received the E Pluribus Unum in History special prize. Harrison Lowenstein, a student at Cameron Veterans Middle School in Cameron, Missouri, was awarded the History of Physical Sciences & Technology special prize. Amanda Moi, Siddharth Sawant, and Yvette Yaroshenko of Marquette Senior High School in St. Louis County, placed sixth in the nation in senior group documentary.

Missouri teachers Kelly Patterson, Risco High School in Risco, Missouri, and Mack Williams III, Sumner High School in St. Louis, were nominated for the National History Day Teacher of the Year Award.






## Missouri Conference on History

The Missouri Conference on History met for its sixty-eighth annual conference at the Lake of the Ozarks from March 11–13, 2026. Nearly 175 registered participants attended the conference. Walter D. Kamphoefner, professor of history at Texas A&M University, provided the keynote address, "Missouri Germans: How Do They Fit In?" Matthew Knox Averett of Creighton University won the Missouri History Book Award for *Canfield Drive: A History of Race and the American City on a Street in St. Louis*. Brooks Blevins, Noel Boyd Professor of Ozarks History at Missouri State University, won the Lawrence O. Christensen Article Award for his January 2025 *Missouri Historical Review* article, "The Missouri Scenic Rivers System and the Origins of the Property Rights Movement." The conference is administered by the State Historical Society of Missouri and rotates across the state. The 2027 conference will be held at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis from March 10–12, 2027.


Missouri Scenic Rivers Fight
1965—Gov. Warren Hearnes establishes Wild Rivers Advisory Committee.
Missouri Dept. of Conservation
Conservation Federation of MO
Leo Drey
1967—Missouri Scenic Rivers Act dies in committee in Jefferson City.

# Awards

The State Historical Society of Missouri recognizes outstanding individuals and institutions that contribute to the preservation and dissemination of Missouri history, promotes scholarship in Missouri history, and supports preservation and educational activities in local historical societies.

## Annual Awards

Awards were presented to three Missouri history scholars at the State Historical Society's 2025 meeting. Patricia Cleary, professor of history at California State University, Long Beach, received the Missouri History Book Award for *Mound City: The Place of the Indigenous Past and Present in St. Louis*, published by the University of Missouri Press.

Brooks Blevins, Noel Boyd Professor of Ozarks Studies at Missouri State University, received the James W. Goodrich and Lynn Wolf Gentzler *Missouri Historical Review* Article Award for "The Missouri Scenic Rivers System and the Origins of the Property Rights Movement," published in the January 2025 issue of the *Review*.

The biennial Mary C. Neth Prize for best *Missouri Historical Review* article on women or gender issues was awarded to Benjamin Moore for "'We Have the Grain, the Meat, the Sugar': St. Louis's Patriotic Food Show," published in the July 2024 *Missouri Historical Review*.

## Gary R. Kremer Center for Missouri Studies Fellowships

The State Historical Society awards $5,000 fellowships to promote scholarship on Missouri's history and culture. The awards are bestowed in honor of Gary R. Kremer, the Society's executive director from 2004 to 2026. In 2026, the Society awarded fellowships to Deborah Cohen, associate professor of history at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, Brian Frehner, professor and chair of the University of Missouri–Kansas City Department of History, and Cory Haala, assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point.

## Richard S. Brownlee Local History Grants

Each year the State Historical Society awards Brownlee Local History Grants to assist local history organizations with preserving historical records and providing programming activities. The awards are given in honor of Richard S. Brownlee, the Society's executive director from 1960 to 1985. Up to $500 is awarded per recipient. Awards were given to the following organizations in 2026:

- Adair County Historical Society
- Cape Girardeau County Historical Society
- Christian County Museum & Historical Society, Inc.
- Clay County Museum
- Excelsior Springs Museum & Archives
- For the People Powwow Committee of MSPTV
- Friends of Rocheport Historical Society
- Historical Society of Maries County
- Jackson County Historical Society
- Livingston County Library
- Monroe County Historical Society
- North Platte Historical Museum and Cultural Center
- Sweet Springs Historical Society
- Wentzville Community Historical Society
- Weston Historical Museum
- Westphalia Historical Society

# Financial Report

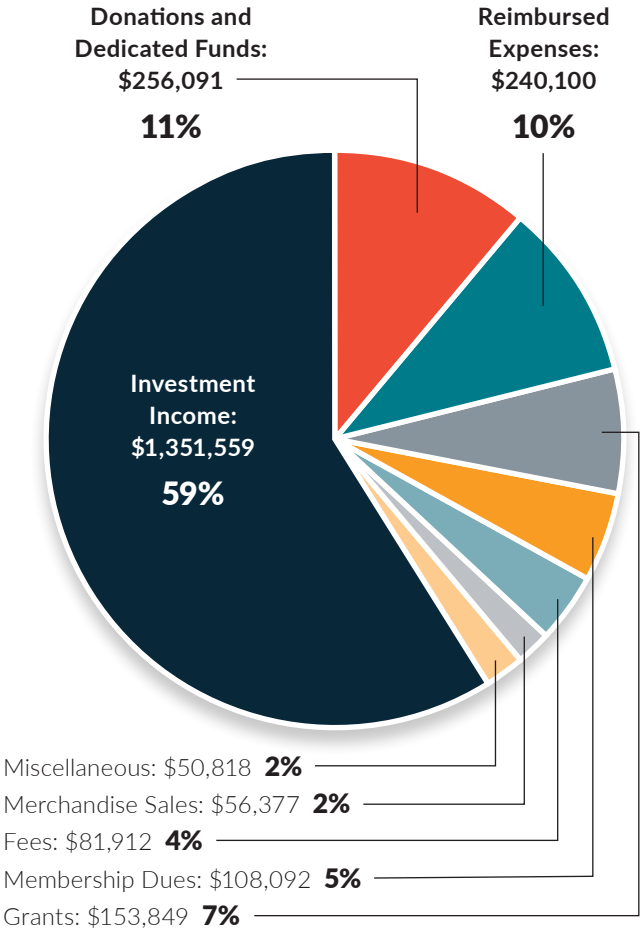
## Fiscal Year 2026

**July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026**

### Membership Trust Fund

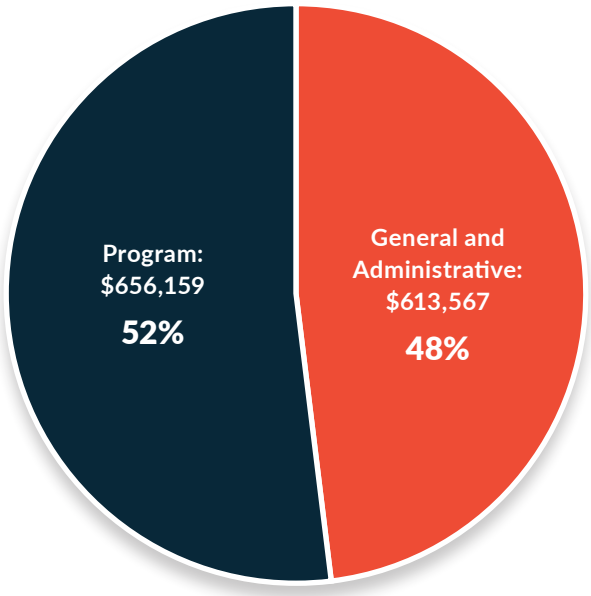
#### Revenues

| | |
|---|---|
| Investment Income: | |
| Without Donor Restrictions | $956,509 |
| With Donor Restrictions | $395,050 |
| Total (59%) | $1,351,559 |
| Donations and Dedicated Funds: | |
| Without Donor Restrictions | $177,348 |
| With Donor Restrictions | $78,743 |
| Total (11%) | $256,091 |
| Reimbursed Expenses (10%) | $240,100 |
| Grants (7%) | $153,849 |
| Membership Dues (5%) | $108,092 |
| Fees (4%) | $81,912 |
| Merchandise Sales (2%) | $56,377 |
| Miscellaneous (2%) | $50,818 |
| Net Assets released from restrictions: | |
| For expenditures that met donor's restrictions | |
| Without Donor Restrictions | $115,514 |
| With Donor Restrictions | -$115,514 |
| Total Revenues and Other Support | |
| Without Donor Restrictions | $1,940,519 |
| With Donor Restrictions | $358,279 |
| **Total Revenues** | **$2,298,798** |




#### Expenses

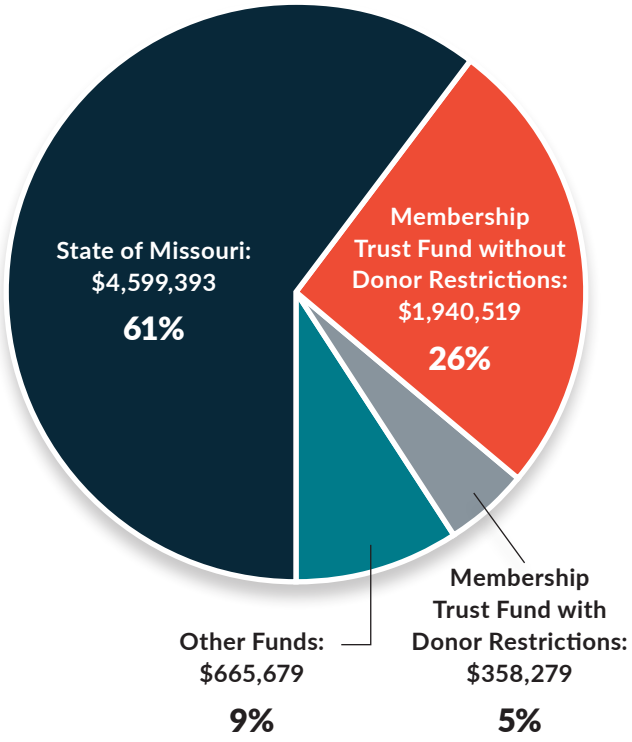
| | |
|---|---|
| Program (52%) | $656,159 |
| General and Administrative (48%) | $613,567 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$1,269,726** |



## Funding Sources

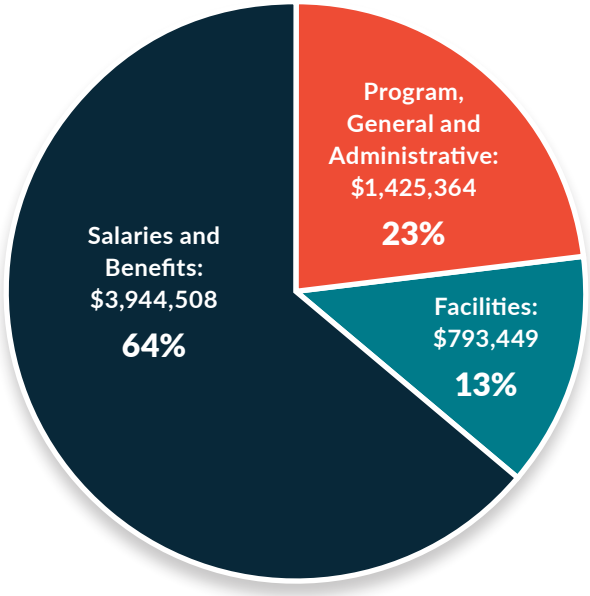
### Revenues

| | |
|---|---|
| State of Missouri **(61%)** | $4,599,393 |
| Membership Trust Fund: | |
| Without Donor Restrictions **(26%)** | $1,940,519 |
| With Donor Restrictions **(5%)** | $358,279 |
| Total (31%) | $2,298,798 |
| Other Funds **(9%)** | $665,679 |
| **Total Revenues** | **$7,563,870** |




### Expenses

| | |
|---|---|
| Salaries and Benefits **(64%)** | $3,944,508 |
| Program, General, and Administrative **(23%)** | $1,425,364 |
| Facilities **(13%)** | $793,449 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$6,163,322** |




### The State Historical Society of Missouri

is funded through appropriations from the State of Missouri, grant and foundation funding, and a contract for services with the University of Missouri as well as revenues raised through the Society's Membership Trust Fund. Revenue from the state and university is applied to the costs of salaries and facilities; other expenses such as maintaining and increasing collections, providing education and public programming, and purchasing and servicing equipment are covered by the Membership Trust Fund. A complete accounting of all funding sources is available in the audited financial statements posted online at https://shsmo.org/about/financials.



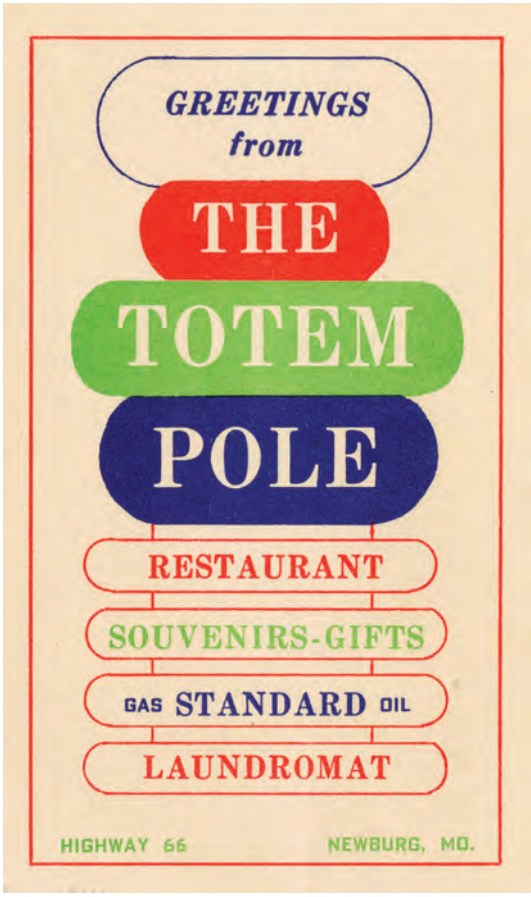







HALL PHOTO CO.
APR. 28TH 1910
TELEGRAPH OFFICE AT THE "BURN OUT"
TRUSSEL NO 105 STONE CO MO WHITE RIVER RY.




GREETINGS
from
THE
TOTEM
POLE
RESTAURANT
SOUVENIRS-GIFTS
GAS STANDARD OIL
LAUNDROMAT
HIGHWAY 66
NEWBURG, MO.





The Center for Missouri Studies, viewed from Peace Park on the University of Missouri's Columbia campus. [Photo by Notley Hawkins]

Cover: Boots Drive-In on Route 66 in Carthage, Missouri. [John F. Bradbury Jr. Postcard Collection, R1551]

SHSMO
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

605 Elm Street, Columbia, MO 65201 | (573) 882-7083 | shsmo.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU COLUMBIA KANSAS CITY ROLLA ST. LOUIS SPRINGFIELD