



# Stories in Bloom at Connecticut Landmarks' Museums

Nestled among the historic treasures on Suffield's South Main Street, the Phelps-Hatheway House & Garden welcomed over 1100 visitors in 2025 through its entryway designed by one of America's most influential architects, Asher Benjamin. Tours of the home's interiors engaged visitors in conversations about life in the Colonial period and the social changes that followed it.

The property's garden is a place of tranquility and inspiration for garden enthusiasts, nature lovers, and history buffs alike. The museum continues its long-time involvement with Historic Gardens Day and the Suffield Garden Club's May Market, which welcome hundreds of horticulturists. Linda Murphy guided enthusiastic crafters step-by-step to create a unique work of art on textile using flowers grown by Suffield's Willow View Farm. Museum visitors also enjoyed artwork by Gina Trusiewicz, who was inspired by nature to capture everyday moments in her exhibit, *Pastel Paintings*.

In the spring, *Mother's Day Tea* brought together over 20 mothers, family members, and friends to enjoy delectable treats and learn about the women who called the museum home. A September special event invited Board Members and friends to the 1867 barn to enjoy excellent food, reconnect with old friends, and create lasting connections under the golden light of the newly donated chandelier. And as fall foliage turned to winter snowflakes, 35 visitors of all ages joined holiday lantern tours to learn about the incredible architecture of South Main Street.

*(Continued Inside)*

## 2025 Annual Report of Connecticut Landmarks

**This print report represents a small slice of what Connecticut Landmarks accomplished this year with the support of Members and donors like you.** To view our comprehensive digital annual report for collections, preservation, and programs, scan the QR code or visit [ctlandmarks.org/annualreport](https://ctlandmarks.org/annualreport)





## Dear Friends,

In 2025, Connecticut Landmarks continued to deliver high-quality, thought-provoking programs, tours, and field trips to connect people to our state's complex past, while navigating rapidly changing funding landscapes and a country that is more divided than ever. We are proud of the role we play in bringing people together to understand the Connecticut story and preserving the past for future generations.

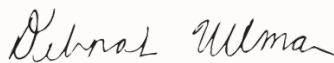
We invite you to explore our 2025 Annual Report—which includes a special section about our recently launched strategic plan—to discover how we encourage critical thinking and create spaces for connection through education, preservation, and storytelling at our historic house museums.

Our last public program of 2025 was a performance by Hartford-area musicians The Andrew Wilcox Trio, whose tunes brightened the parlor of the Isham-Terry House with a special celebration of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Children decorated the neon pink tree as they danced to merry melodies. Families enjoyed mid-century inspired decorations adorning the house. History buffs stayed after the performance to tour the home and learn about its final residents, Charlotte and Julia Isham. We like to think that the sisters would have been happy to see their family home in their beloved city so full of life on a snowy December day. **Whether you come to our museums to engage with history, to try your hand at a new skill, or to enjoy quality time in the company of others, there is always room in our homes for you.**

Our success is only possible with the generous financial support of members and donors like you, and the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees. This year marks not only the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, but also the 90th anniversary of Connecticut Landmarks. Visit [ctlandmarks.org](http://ctlandmarks.org) to explore the digital version of this report, and preview all you can explore in the 2026 operating season.

With gratitude,

  
Robert Brock  
Executive Director

  
Deborah Ullman  
Chair, Board of Trustees



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*\*\*Term ended 2025*

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*Assistant Collections Manager*

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*Bellamy-Ferriday House & Garden*

Joseph Mumley

*Gardener, Bellamy-Ferriday*

*House & Garden*

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Jana Colacino

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*North Central Region*

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Lynette Fisher

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Nicole Thomas

*Assistant Site Administrator,*

*Southeast Region*



Connecticut  
Landmarks

## Stories in Bloom (Continued from Front Cover)

A new walking tour, *Stories of Freedom: Suffield's Black History*, introduced guests to the stories of individuals of African descent who resided in Suffield, many whose histories have been untold or forgotten. The tour included the stories of Lewis and Barbara Butler, enslaved by Oliver Phelps, whose efforts ensured the safe passage of countless enslaved individuals into Canada throughout the 19th century.

This program was offered as part of Connecticut Trails Day in collaboration with the Suffield Historical Society and Kent Memorial Library.

In 2024, guests celebrated the start of conservation work on the museum's 18th-century Réveillon wallpaper. This past November, wallpaper, history, and old home enthusiasts came together once again for an afternoon of conservation education with Peggy Wishart, Steve Larson, Deborah LaCamera, and Studio TKM conservators. While this phase of the conservation project ended in December, education about the wallpaper continues, as visitors are invited to explore how the wallpapers' designs tell the history of Connecticut during the American Revolution and the lifestyle of Oliver Phelps. The conversation also continues digitally, as Connecticut Landmarks shares behind-the-scenes looks at the conservation process on our website and social media.



## Building a Better Future, Together

At Connecticut Landmarks' properties, the landscapes hold their own histories. The 17-acre Nathan Hale Homestead adjoins the 1500-acre Nathan Hale State Forest. The rural setting makes modern conveniences seem far away and helps tell the history of homesteading in the Colonial era. In May, that remoteness allowed participants in a new wellness program to momentarily detach from the rush of modern living to observe nature through the practice of *shirin yoku*, or forest bathing, with Certified Forest Therapy Guide, Professor Suzanne Hudd. Between tours and programs, staff guided over 5,800 visitors and students in conversations about the Hales' lives to not only explore the way the family supported the American Revolutionary War, but to also empower guests to make the most of their lives to build a better future through an understanding of the Hale family's service and community-building at home.



Check out our digital report to learn more about the return of Major John Hale's portrait and other collections updates!



## Fostering Inclusive, Safe Spaces

Inspired by the Palmer-Warner House's archival collections, a new exhibit titled *Letters of Unity* showcased the power of written communication in shaping LGBTQ+ identity, activism, and community. From love letters to zines and personal diaries to protest flyers, this exhibit explored how love, resistance, and solidarity have been expressed through various mediums—sometimes even through secret codes.

*Letters of Unity* was part of the museum's expanded programming in celebration of Pride Month. The first annual *Progress Flag Field* honored those who have fought for equality and celebrated the importance of unity and safe spaces. Our *Queer Independence Discussion Panel* offered the opportunity to connect with panelists Clare McCarthy, Samuel Avery Giardina, and Dean Massey as they reflected on past, present, and future LGBTQ+ resilience, self-determination, and community support. Connecticut-based transgender artist, Samuel Avery, also displayed his photography exhibit, *TRANSPARENT: Creating Advocacy Through Art*, alongside *Letters of Unity* in the historic barn. His artwork explores personal identity, transformation, and the profound impact of the LGBTQ+ community throughout history.

Our Members will experience all the special events, tours, and programs we have in store to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation's founding. Members enjoy free admission to our museums, discounts on programs and merchandise, and more. **Now through May 1<sup>st</sup>, use code JOIN to save \$10 when you join or renew at [ctlandmarks.org/membership](https://ctlandmarks.org/membership)**



## Community Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

The kitchen where Caroline Ferriday gathered with the ladies of Ravensbrück in 1958 welcomed rich conversations again in 2025. In September, the Bellamy-Ferriday House & Garden joined forces with Litchfield Distillery for a fascinating look at Ms. Ferriday's favorite cocktail, the martini, and American cocktail culture. In the kitchen, guests learned about the classic drink and its many variations. Amid the last blooms of summer in the formal parterre garden, attendees enjoyed a tasting with a newfound appreciation for the martini.

Throughout the season, the space was activated by a series of kitchen talks on everything from the stories of the survivors of Ravensbrück, World War II's only all-women concentration camp, to an overview of Connecticut Landmarks' collection care and research methods. The museum also partnered with the Litchfield Historical Society for a conversation about Aaron Burr's formative years in the area. The beauty and history of the garden converged with kitchen conversations during two garden talks in June that explored the history of the garden's roses and their care, as well as a discussion of invasive plant species and their removal.



## Moving History Forward

The *Windows on Colonial New London* shuttle bus tour took 12 guests on a journey through history visiting sites that Joshua Hempsted and his relatives frequented. Destinations included Fort Trumbull, Shepherd's Tent, and the home of Hempsted's cousin, the Thomas Lee House—significant for its architectural beauty as well as its connections to the broader legacy of slavery in the region. Returning to the Hempsted Houses, attendees learned about Adam Jackson, who Joshua Hempsted enslaved on the property, as well as Jackson's family, including his parents, Joan and John Jackson, and their three-decade long court case to free their nine children. Across the river, attendees viewed Hempsted's Stonington Farm property. Adam Jackson worked on the farm, expanding his skillset while also instructing Hempsted's grandsons who worked alongside him. Jackson was trusted to travel to and manage the property alone at times, which raises an important question: why did he stay? Each stop offered a powerful lens through which to examine the complexities of enslavement, defense, higher education, religion, and community resilience in Colonial New London.

## Preservation Update

Following significant structural work on the 1728 addition to the 1678 Joshua Hempsted House, Connecticut Landmarks is excited to announce that the museum is ready to reopen its 350-year-old doors to visitors!

Stay tuned to our website for a special 'Re-Welcoming' event this spring!

For a full look into preservation projects across our sites, visit [ctlandmarks.org/annualreport](https://ctlandmarks.org/annualreport)





# *Preserving the Past, Planning for the Future*

## *Connecticut Landmarks' 2025-2028 Strategic Plan*

In early 2025, Connecticut Landmarks' Board of Trustees adopted a new strategic plan following a year of collaboration with Odyssey Associates. This plan will advance the organization's mission, increase revenues, and evolve board and staff structures. Connecticut Landmarks will leverage its unique portfolio of museums to make Connecticut history meaningful to modern visitors, becoming the leading history organization in the state. The plan emphasizes programmatic, financial, and organizational sustainability.

### **Mission & Vision**

**Through a commitment to preservation, storytelling, and education, we connect people to the state's revolutionary contributions and complex past at our historic house museums.**

**We inspire our communities to understand the ripples of the past so they are empowered to move Connecticut forward.**

**Goal 1:** To make investments in Connecticut Landmarks' properties, programs, and visibility to maximize the opportunities to attract and engage visitors.

- Initiate the most critical preservation projects to keep them open to the public and make them more resilient to climate change.
- Identify and implement the programmatic "recipe for success" for each property.
- Build the visibility of Connecticut Landmarks.

**Goal 2:** To build Connecticut Landmarks' revenues so the organization is financially sustainable.

- Build individual giving.
- Renovate the properties to maximize their use for revenue-generating rental activities.
- Engage in an anniversary fundraising campaign that raises money for capital projects and to build the organization's endowment.

**Goal 3:** To adapt governance and staff structures so Connecticut Landmarks can achieve its programmatic and financial goals.

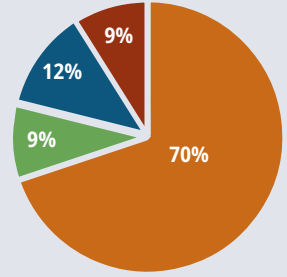
- Build the board and develop opportunities to increase its engagement with the organizational mission.
- Nurture Connecticut Landmarks' workplace culture so that there is a greater sense of connection among staff members.
- Gradually build Connecticut Landmarks staffing so that its properties and collections are adequately preserved.

# Financial Statement

March 31, 2025

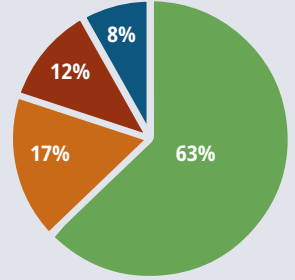
## OPERATING REVENUE

|                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ● Investment & Trust Distributions | \$1,272,262        |
| ● Contributions                    | \$164,303          |
| ● Grants                           | \$221,477          |
| ● Earned Income                    | \$162,797          |
| Other Income                       | \$3                |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>               | <b>\$1,820,842</b> |



## OPERATING EXPENSES

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| ● Museum Services               | \$1,154,116        |
| ● Restorations & Renovation     | \$315,767          |
| ● Development & Fundraising     | \$216,428          |
| ● Administration                | \$150,033          |
| <b>Total Operating Expenses</b> | <b>\$1,836,344</b> |



# Balance Sheet

March 31, 2025

## CURRENT ASSETS

|                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cash & Cash Equivalents         | \$106,428           |
| Investments & Beneficial Trusts | \$13,944,615        |
| Other Current Assets            | \$119,723           |
| Property & Equipment, Net       | \$2,828             |
| <b>Total Assets</b>             | <b>\$14,173,594</b> |

## LIABILITIES

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Accounts Payable          | \$94,681         |
| Line of Credit            | \$128,764        |
| Other Current Liabilities | \$24,630         |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>  | <b>\$248,075</b> |

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b> | <b>\$14,173,594</b> |
|---|---------------------|

## Connecticut Landmarks

Amos Bull House  
59 South Prospect Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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