



*Annual Report of the
Providence Athenæum*

July 2020 - June 2021



Heracitus once said, “No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.”

2021 was a year of tremendous change and innovation at the Athenæum. The institution adapted to fulfill its mission during a global pandemic, and then it adapted again. At the same time, we engaged in strategic planning and master planning efforts, as we glimpsed beyond this unusual period in our long history. We sought to make the institution more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming, even as we were forced to shut our doors for part of the year.


The entire library has been cleaned, and our public artwork has been restored and re-curated. The ring of busts above the mezzanine now includes Frederick Douglass, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Louisa May Alcott - the first new pieces of public art commissioned for the Athenæum in more than a century.

Our virtual programs broke records this year, and the Athenæum ended FY21 with the highest membership levels in decades. Our events drew viewers from around the world, and our new media archive made our programs freely available and on-demand.

Thanks to your generous support, the Athenæum also set a high-water mark for fundraising this year, and we ended FY21 with our fifth consecutive budget surplus. We’ve established a cash reserve, replenished our building fund, and added to the Hayden Special Collections Development Fund. The Athenæum is in excellent financial shape, and we’re poised to make essential investments in our physical plant, collections, and remarkable staff.

This year, that staff worked tirelessly to deliver on the promise of the Athenæum’s mission: to enrich the mind, inspire the spirit, and elevate the public discourse.

The river looks the same, but it is different. So are we.


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FY20-21 Snapshot

17,261

Patrons & visitors served by the library

2,203

Total members

PROGRAMS

151 adult events

8,638 adult event attendees

2,746 views of recorded programs

720 kids' craft activities assembled

36 building & collections tours

LIBRARY SERVICES

174,649 items in collection

1,489 acquisitions

20,339 total items circulated

5,801 digital items circulated

2,137 curbside orders fulfilled



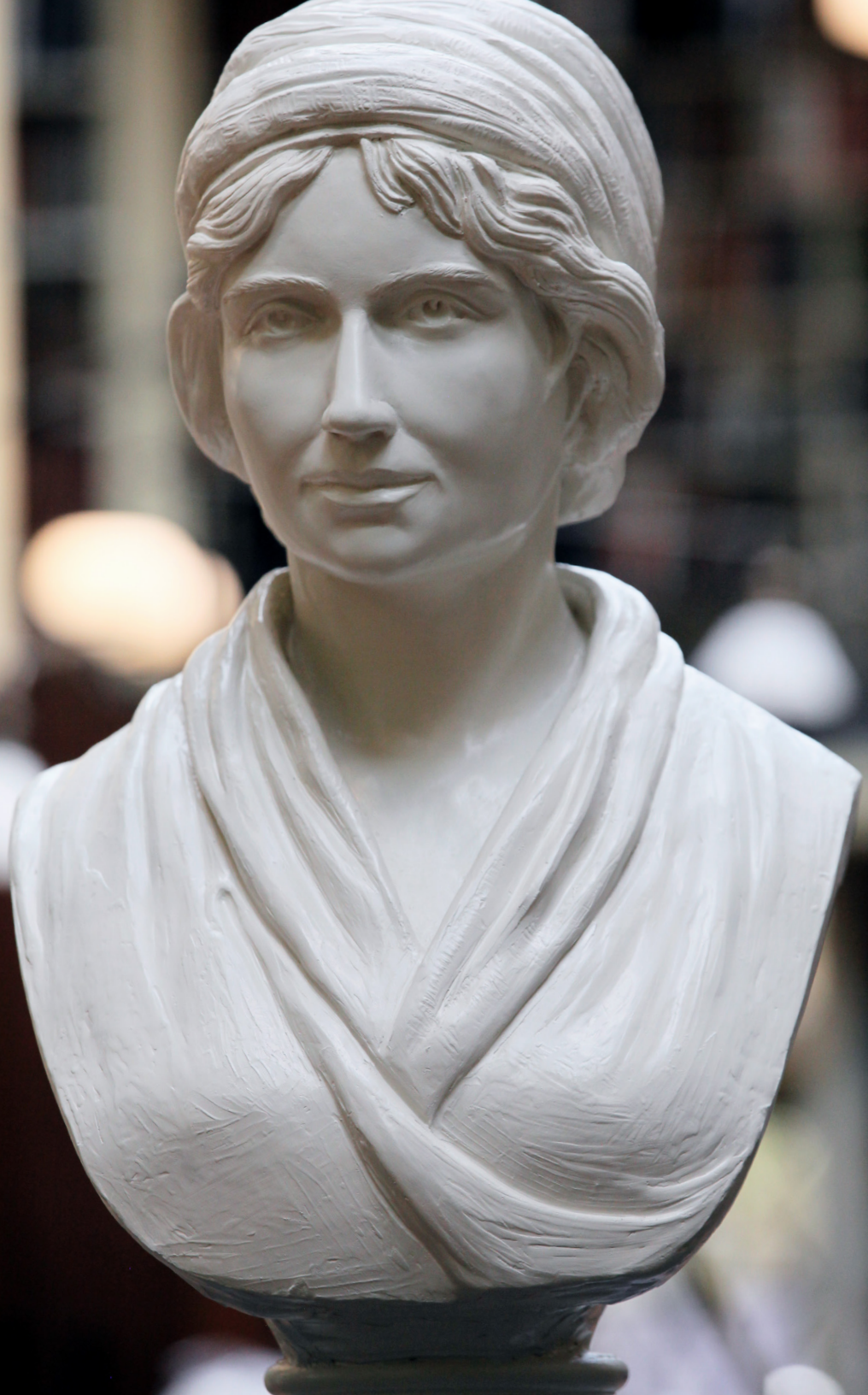
Programs

11,589 people attended or viewed an Athenæum program this year, which saw the library transition completely to virtual events. We welcomed Pulitzer Prize-winning historians Annette Gordon-Reed, David Blight, and John Matteson; United States Senator Sherrod Brown; former United States Poet Laureate Rita Dove; reparations scholars William A. Darity Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen; Chef Sean Sherman; best-selling authors Alexander Chee, Daniel Mendelsohn, and Ann Patchett; and more.

Our event with Ann Patchett drew 1,000 viewers from seven different countries, as the Athenæum's programs were made available worldwide and free of charge. The library offered more than a dozen virtual reading groups, connecting our members in a time of great isolation. For the first time in our history, we hosted our winter fundraiser virtually, and the event was a terrific success.

Our new Programs Archive allows us to make our events accessible to anyone with a computer or a smart device, and here members and the public can access a growing menu of over 100 programs from humanistic leaders around the country, free of charge.

The pandemic may have forced us to go online, but the change has allowed us to extend our mission to so many in Providence and beyond.



Collections

Although the library remained closed to the public and exhibitions were on hold due to the pandemic, library staff used this period as an opportunity for re-curation and restoration of the collection. The Bust Project, made possible by a generous gift from members Brian and Lyn Hayden, came to fruition with the acquisition of three new busts: Mary Wollstonecraft, Frederick Douglass, and Louisa May Alcott. The bust of Wollstonecraft is the only known public monument to this important philosopher in North America.

The library team also hosted behind-the-scenes programs for members and led virtual field trips for schools.

Notable acquisitions included:

- Bust of Frederick Douglass (after Johnson Mundy), Skylight Studios, 2020
- Bust of Mary Wollstonecraft, Robert Shure, 2020
- Bust of Louisa May Alcott (after Walton Ricketson), Skylight Studios, 2020
- Print of Thomas Wilson Dorr, New York, 1845
- *The Bells and Other Poems*, Edgar Allan Poe, New York, 1912
- Thanks to a successful campaign among board members and close supporters, 16 new handmade, bowback Windsor chairs were added to the Art Room

Notable conservation and preservation activities included:

- Busts of Dante, Prescott, Franklin, and Channing, restored by the Caproni Galleries
- William Strickland architectural drawings
- Sketch/self-portrait, Edward Malbone, ca. 1800
- Oil painting of Joseph Ely, 1901
- *Triumviri Americani* bronze medallion, ca. 1869
- Chinese mother-of-pearl and ebony table, ca. 1854



Buildings & Grounds

After a year of beautification and restoration projects inside the institution, the Athenæum spent much of 2021 planning for the future.

In the Fall of 2020, the Athenæum received funding to update its Master Plan. Teams of engineers, architects, and landscapers joined experts in code compliance, fire suppression, and accessibility to study the Athenæum from stem to stern. The report produced by this process will guide us for decades as we seek to preserve the institution, make it more accessible, and better serve the public.

The Athenæum will take a phased approach to building improvements, and each phase may take several years. The institution will need to introduce better systems to manage its climate, detect and suppress fires, and improve access, all while preserving the unique historic fabric of the Athenæum.



Treasurer's Report

The fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 found the library in a strong financial position, despite the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Revenues. Total revenues increased by 9.2% to \$1,659,364. The Athenæum saw a slight downturn in membership revenue (-3%), but a 14.1% increase in its total fundraising. Building rental revenue was down significantly, as the institution halted rentals as a result of the pandemic. The Annual Fund set a record this year, increasing by 6% (\$17,000), and the Athenæum took advantage of several emergency grant programs made available during the pandemic. The Athenæum also received \$237,000 from the Employee Retention Tax Credit program, and the revenue is recognized under Miscellaneous Revenue. Capital Projects funding declined by 42%. In 2020, the Athenæum completed the replacement of its roofing system, and in 2021, it received a \$202,340 grant to update its Master Plan.

Expenses. Total expenses declined by 7.8% to \$1,369,194 in 2021, largely as a result of a large capital project in FY20. Personnel expenses increased modestly (1.7%), largely as a result of increased health care costs (there was a pay freeze in place during 2021). Although the building was closed for part of the year, and many programs were suspended as a result of the pandemic, the Athenæum did not furlough any staff members during this period. The Athenæum saw reduced programming costs as a result of the suspension of in-person programs, but it invested more in its library materials, especially its digital content. General & Administrative expenses increased as a result of additional IT purchases made in order to accommodate a virtual work environment for the staff.

Total equity increased by 17.8% to \$15,959,435, largely on the strength of strong endowment performance (+21%) and change in net assets of \$290,000. Total liabilities increased by 19% to \$207,140, with increases in accounts payable, accrued expenses, and deferred revenue.

Overall, the library's financial position remains strong, and things will only improve as the library slowly returns to normal operations. The Athenæum ended the year with its fifth consecutive budget surplus.

Thomas Bryson, Treasurer

Income Statement

| REVENUE | FY21 | FY20 |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Membership | \$180,565 | \$186,215 |
| Fundraising | \$458,288 | \$401,742 |
| Capital Projects Funding | \$202,340 | \$348,684 |
| Facility Rental | \$5,400 | \$20,619 |
| Bequest | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| Trust Funds | \$40,469 | \$39,444 |
| Miscellaneous | \$247,530 | \$18,314 |
| Investment Income for Operations | \$523,722 | \$504,870 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$1,659,364 | \$1,519,888 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Personnel | \$814,350 | \$800,568 |
| Library Materials | \$57,778 | \$46,553 |
| Library Services & Management | \$33,992 | \$37,352 |
| Programs | \$29,584 | \$41,589 |
| Communications & Marketing | \$15,942 | \$8,283 |
| Membership & Development | \$26,819 | \$49,514 |
| Building & Grounds | \$59,890 | \$52,247 |
| Capital Projects Expense | \$202,340 | \$348,684 |
| General Office & Admin. | \$128,498 | \$100,836 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$1,369,194 | \$1,485,626 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | \$290,170 | \$34,262 |

Note: the above financial information presents only unrestricted operating activity before fixed asset capitalization or depreciation. Revenue and expenses for special projects are included only as net assets are released from restrictions. Further details are published in the audited financial statements available through the accounting department.

Balance Sheet

| ASSETS | FY21 | FY20 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Cash | \$918,713 | \$433,439 |
| Endowment | \$13,166,689 | \$10,858,109 |
| Receivables | \$130,461 | \$14,666 |
| Prepaid Expenses | \$22,099 | \$17,680 |
| Inventory | \$4,780 | \$2,706 |
| Fixed Assets* | \$1,923,647 | \$1,961,042 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$16,166,389 | \$13,278,642 |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts Payable | \$33,110 | \$7,743 |
| Accrued Expenses | \$29,968 | \$26,255 |
| Deferred Revenue | \$10,644 | \$5,675 |
| PPP Loan | \$13,3417 | \$13,3417 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | \$207,140 | \$173,090 |
| EQUITY | | |
| Unrestricted | \$12,787,150 | \$10,527,517 |
| Temporarily Restricted | \$1,678,890 | \$1,094,902 |
| Permanently Restricted | \$1,493,208 | \$1,492,133 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | \$15,959,249 | \$13,114,552 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | \$16,166,389 | \$13,287,642 |

*Fixed assets are listed here net of accumulated depreciation.



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The Athenæum is deeply grateful to the following supporters for their immense generosity during an uncertain year. These pages are a tribute to the people, businesses, and foundations who gave cash and in-kind contributions to the library between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

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 Phyllis D. Poor, in honor of Sidney
 L.P.Tynan's 100th Birthday
 Jennifer Quigley-Harris
 Ellen Quinn
 Mary Katherine Ragno
 Chris & Cynthia Ragona
 Rarities Books & Bindery
 Connie & George Raymond
 Bess Renjilian
 Gwen Richard
 Maxine Richman
 David T. & Jennifer F. Riedel
 Lisa Rigby
 Sophia Rizk
 Carolyn Roberts
 Lora Robertson
 Marti Rosenberg & Suwin Chan
 Andrew, Amalia, & Heidi Ross
 Debra & Kevin Rota
 Fred & Sally Rotenberg
 Cecilia Ryll
 Elaine & Robert Sandy, in
 memory of Eleanor Burriesci
 Mathies & Michelina Santos
 Scott & Ellen Sawyer
 Leah Schumacher & Julius Ferraro
 Linda Scott
 Ruby Shalansky
 Lindsay Shaw
 John & Kathleen Sheran
 Darshell Silva
 Adam Silverman & Louise Bonnet

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 Kelly Sinclair & Joseph
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 Ariana Testa-Becker & Joshua
 Becker
 Gregory Todd & Misako Litt
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 Amy & Joel VanderWeele
 Victoria Veh
 Jodie Vinson
 Destenie Vital
 Stephen Walker
 Ashbel Wall & Maria DeCarvalho
 Mike & Marcia Walsh
 Terry Ward
 Rose Weaver
 Michael White
 Peter Witkowski
 Jon & Nancy Wolston
 Alan Yuspeh

Marc Zaller & Alayne Mayer
 Steven Zick
 Michael Ziegler
 Fred & Martha Zimmerman

Committee Volunteers

Grace Farmer, *Finance, Board
 Governance, Pension Advisory*
 Lyn Johnson, *Finance, Pension
 Advisory*
 Conor MacDonald, *Buildings &
 Grounds*
 Deming Sherman, *Finance*

Reading Group Leaders

Robert Allio, *The Examined Life*
 Iain Bernhoft, *Frederick Douglass*
 Bonnie Clayton & Jonathan
 Migliori, *Spectred Isle*
 Susan Cohen, *Athenæum Book
 Discussion Group*
 Stephen Coon, *More French Kisses*
 Armistead Covington &
 Kathleen Spencer, *New York
 Times Bestsellers*
 Mare Davis, *Mary Wollstonecraft*
 Vanessa Lillie, *Reading Like a
 Writer*
 Johanna Hannink, *Herodotus*
 Nancy Kendrick, *Friendship and
 Friendlessness*
 Suzanne Scanlan, *Women, Art,
 Travel, Transformation*

Athena Society

The following individuals have generously provided for the long-term financial health of the library by including the Athenæum in their will or estate plans.

Anonymous
 Anonymous, deceased (2)
 Candy Adriance
 Alex Aho
 Kqantu Pareja Bennett
 Garrett Bliss
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 Mary Louise Kennedy
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 Cathy Lund & Peter Karczmar
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Timothy & Claudia Philbrick
 Rich Rudert
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 Deming & Jane Sherman
 Jim Sunshine
 Vicki Veh

This report highlights the operational and financial activities of the Providence Athenæum and reflects gifts made to the Athenæum over the 12-month period July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

Cover: Drawing of the Providence Athenæum, by Ralph C. Scott, 1926.





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