

MARCH • VOL. 25 • ISSUE 1 • 2025

Our mission is to tell the story of Muskegon County by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history of its people and natural environment.



Workers of the Morton Manufacturing Co. located on Broadway Avenue in Muskegon Heights, date unknown.















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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ancient Footprints

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: GEORGE QUIMBY

For this issue, we are showcasing our favorite parts of Muskegon County history. As an anthropologist, my favorite part of history is the connection between our first inhabitants in Michigan and the Ice Age mammals they hunted. I am not the first Executive Director of the Museum to have this passion. The Muskegon County Museum's second museum director, George I. Quimby, also had this background. He led the museum in 1941 for just a few years, then moved on to have a 23-year career at the Field Museum in Chicago as the curator of North American Anthropology and Ethnology. He finished his career as the Executive Director of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.

Throughout his life he studied early indigenous cultures and their relationships with the environment, animals, and each other. He inspired the young Melissa to care about the cultures and ingenuity of Native Americans living in Michigan before European contact. I still have a shelf full of his publications on Early Native American Culture and the Great Lakes.

A little-known fact about Quimby is that he developed an idea called the Mason-Quimby Line in Michigan. As he was studying where humans had lived after the end of the last ice age, he and colleague, Ronald Mason, wrote two papers on the fact that there is a notable line in which we find no Pleistocene animals or evidence of humans north of it. This line starts near Muskegon County's northern border.

The relationship between humans and mastodons is interconnected and new evidence shows that they were an important food source during this period. Someday, I hope to have our Huls Mastodon, found in Rothbury, analyzed for evidence of butchering. Other notable mastodons found in the area are the Moorland Mastodon, which is part of the Grand Rapids Public Museum, and Smitty, found in Grandville, who spent some time on exhibit at our museum in the 1980s. I will always be fascinated by these long-lost creatures and how they lived and died in lower Michigan.



George I. Quimby at an archaeological dig at Stony Lake circa 1937



HISTORIC SITES HIGHLIGHTS

Stories from the Historic Sites' Team

Muskegon has such a rich history with so many interesting facets. Part of my role at the Historic Sites is to preserve the five Historic Sites buildings. The Fire Barn Museum, although it is a replica, is unique to me as Muskegon has a history of over 150 years in firefighting. The City of Muskegon constructed the building in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebration. The city wanted to ensure that its firefighting history remained a key focal point in considering where we came from and where we are today. Getting to share that with visitors never gets old.

Erin Schmitz, Historic Sites Director



Muskegon Fire Department Hose Company No. 2 on Webster Avenue and Seventh Street in the 1880s.



Fire Barn Museum and the Scolnik House of the Depression Era.

My favorite part of Muskegon County's history is its transformation from the 1890s to the 1930s. Through immersive tours, I love highlighting how families lived and entertained themselves at home—transitioning from music boxes, books, and stereoscopes to radios, Monopoly, and more in the 1930s. These moments bring Muskegon's daily life to light, from its lumbering heyday to the Great Depression. Each day, I'm privileged to walk through history and share these stories with guests of all ages.

Hannah Walsh, Historic Sites Manager

One of my favorite stories from Muskegon County's history is Helen Hume's incredible journey around the world from November 1908 to June 1909. As someone who loves to travel, I was fascinated to learn that she visited Nagasaki, Miyajima, Kyoto, and Tokyo—places I also explored while living in Japan. Studying her travels has deepened my appreciation for how journeys have changed. I love sharing these connections with visitors at the Hackley & Hume Historic Site.

To learn more about Helen Hume's travels, visit the virtual tours section on the Historic Sites tab on our website. The story map Part 1 and Part 2 will take you on her 1908-1909 travels based on her letters home.

Hannah Erdman, Program Assistant





Scan the QR Code to access Helen's travels.



I enjoy helping to preserve the five Historic Sites. Through this, I am continuing a family legacy. My great uncle, Taylor Bullis, worked for the Hackley family as a coachman for many years. Taylor Bullis married my mother's aunt, Josephine Swenor. To this day, you can see Taylor's living quarters on the second floor of the City Barn at the Hackley & Hume Historic Site. I uncovered my great-grandfather's signature in the City Barn on the chimney bricks on the first floor. His name is John Drake, and he was my mother's grandfather. Visitors are able to see his signature, which is preserved behind Plexiglas in the City Barn.

David Heisser, Maintenance Assistant

HOME FRONT HEROES

Muskegon Museum of History and Science



2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. World War II brought change for the government, the military, and everyday life. People and businesses needed to adapt, and Muskegon was no different.

A Growing Muskegon



Workers at Campbell, Wyant, and Cannon factory, circa 1940-1945.

Muskegon's manufacturing industry and population grew tremendously during World War II. Muskegon became a center for defense manufacturing and wartime production. When residents left to enlist in the war and production demand increased, local women and people from the southern United States and Mexico helped to fill the labor shortage.

The population boom caused new issues, such as a housing crisis. Federal housing projects established new units to house the growing population.

War Abroad Causes Limits at Home

World War II strained all the nation's resources. Global trade was disrupted, cargo was destroyed, and materials were repurposed for the war effort. To ensure the military and civilians both received what they needed, the U.S. government promoted salvage and gardening programs and formed the Office of Price Administration (OPA). The OPA regulated prices and administered rationing.

Civilian Programs

Muskegon County residents were vital in supporting the war effort through civilian programs like the American Red Cross, Civilian Defense, Community Chest, and the purchase of war bonds and stamps.

Prisoner of War Camps

The U.S. set up Prisoner of War camps throughout the nation. It was easier to send POWs to the U.S. and put them to work in the diminished labor force than to get supplies to them in Europe. The camps closest to Muskegon County were in Fremont, Shelby, Grant, and Hart. POWs worked on two local farms, and some exchanged letters with the families they worked for after returning to Europe.



A Post-War Muskegon

Muskegon County and the United States were changed by the war. War production boosted the economy and ushered in a golden era of industrial manufacturing in Muskegon. After the war, Muskegon continued to change.

By Jeff Bessinger, Exhibit & Collections Director

WORLD WAR I

Muskegon in the Great War



When we think of wartime Muskegon, we jump to World War II—and rightly so. Muskegon County was a juggernaut in wartime production, and our soldiers proved themselves on the battlefield. However, World War I was nearly as important to the area and, in many aspects, gave residents a precursor to what would happen before and after World War II. It is for this reason that I find the time around WWI one of our most fascinating periods.



Liberty Arch looking west on Western Avenue from Fourth Street taken in 1919.

WWI is often lost in our local history by the big events on either side of it. However, lots of growth happened during WWI. In 1916, Continental Motors began a massive expansion of their production and factory. The same can be said of Western Michigan Steel, which doubled its capacity. Lakey Foundry constructed a new building, tripling its casting output, while E.H. Sheldon, which made desks and school equipment, also saw a doubling, and the same held true for Linderman Machine Company and the Amazon Knitting Company. Shaw Walker doubled its warehouse capacity, and Campbell, Wyant and Cannon expanded to increase production by 33%. These expansions would allow those factories to later produce huge quantities of goods and make Muskegon the arsenal of democracy during WWII.

The actions taken in Muskegon County were also mirrored later in WWII. Community Chest associations and war bond drives became features in Muskegon during WWI, and the area was very successful and passionate in its support of these drives. The population also boomed during the war, as these expanded factories needed more workers. Muskegon grew from 20,000 residents in 1913 to 40,000 by 1918. Muskegon Heights, at that same time, went from 3,000 to 10,000. These numbers caused housing issues that would arise again during and after WWII.

During WW1, Muskegon was one of 47 communities, and the only one in the State of Michigan, selected by the Department of Labor for an emergency housing project. This project, which was going to be called McGraft Tract, was to be located where Muskegon Catholic Schools can be found today. However, the armistice was signed before the project got far, and it was scrapped.

One last thing that held between both wars was how the soldiers handled themselves abroad. Muskegon County had many volunteers who joined the fight, many joining the Muskegon Rifles and eventually the 126th Infantry. During the war, three Muskegon County men earned Medals of Honor: William Edsall of Montague, Archie Zavits of Fruitport, and William Liniger of Muskegon. When the war ended, two temporary arches were built spanning Western Avenue, one near the Amazon Knitting Co. and another in front of the Post Office on the opposite end of the street.

With all these parallels, I find this time so fascinating and underappreciated in the historical memory of Muskegon County.



John H. Wilson (1897-1984) U.S. Marine Corps



Peter Lappen (1894-1974) U.S. Navy

VOLUNTEERSPRESERVING HISTORY

Muskegon has such incredible history that selecting only one piece can be challenging, but I kept returning to the origins of the Muskegon Heritage Museum of Business & Industry (MHMB&I).

In the early 1980s, the Breneman-Hartshorn Rollershade Factory (now Fricano's) was set to close its doors here in Muskegon. Though the factory had been updated over the years, it still housed a 90-hp Corliss Valve steam engine. There was a popular story circulating that this steam engine had been part of the Chicago World's Fair. While this claim was later disproved, the Muskegon Heritage Association (MHA) borrowed the steam engine for exhibit in their new home at 561 W. Western Ave. It was officially donated by E. Pope Coleman in 2002.

The MHA's new building, which had previously been a boarding house, had a major fire years before and was underinsured. After the fire, the city of Muskegon took ownership of the property due to back taxes. The MHA purchased the building for just \$1, providing a new home for the steam engine on the first floor.

Over the next several years, MHMB&I grew around its steam engine centerpiece, adding everything from a Brunswick Pinsetter to a Hackley Player Piano. In 2009, a print shop was added, and by 2010, the

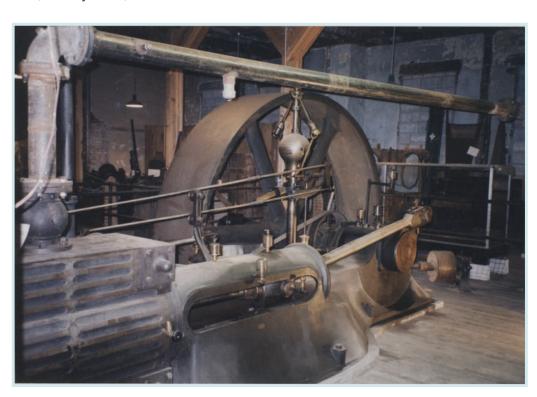
museum expanded into the space next door, which had once been a shoe store. The 2nd floor was completed in 2012, followed by the 3rd floor in 2016. What began with a single steam engine transformed into a three-story museum with nearly 12,000 square feet of display space, along with a classroom, an office, and storage areas.

At first glance, this evolution might seem like the natural course for any business or museum: as the collection grows, so too does the space required to display it. However, what makes the MHMB&I truly special is that all of this was accomplished by volunteers. This museum exists because of the dedication the MHA had to preserve a piece of Muskegon's history. The museum's growth over its first 37 years is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of the volunteers.

It wasn't until 2020, following the retirement of directors Allan & Anne Dake after 11 years of leadership, that the museum became part of Lakeshore Museum Center. Since that time, the museum has continued to grow and is now staffed with a site director, program specialist, and guest relations staff. Yet, the volunteers are still the heart of the museum. They play an essential role throughout the regular season, working with school tours and special programs in the off-season, helping us welcome cruise ship tour groups, and our "Thursday Guys" complete maintenance projects during the winter months. In 2024, volunteers contributed over 2,700 hours of service to this site.

Our organization—and our beloved MHMB&I—would not be what it is today without the unwavering commitment of our volunteers.

By Marci Dalm, Volunteer & Event Coordinator



MEMBERSHIP & GIFT STORES

Remembering Dorothy Hammer

I'd like to share the story of one of my predecessors at the museum gift store, Mrs. Dorothy Hammer. Her legacy of service and dedication to our community is truly inspiring, and her contributions continue to be felt by all who had the privilege of working with her.

Dorothy led a remarkable life, dedicating many years to serving the Muskegon community, even though she wasn't originally from the area. She made history as the first woman to join the Muskegon Chamber of Commerce and was later honored as Muskegon County's Woman of the Year.

Her legacy of service extended over three decades with the Lakeshore Museum Center, where she played several key roles. Dorothy and her husband, Richard, were instrumental in saving and restoring the Hackley House at the Hackley & Hume Historic Site. Dorothy started the Muskegon of History & Science gift store, then known as the Muskegon Mercantile.

When speaking with staff who had the privilege of knowing Dorothy, the sentiment was clear—she was known for her calm demeanor and unwavering loyalty. She had a unique ability to make both guests and staff feel at ease, earning her the affectionate title of the museum staff's unofficial "grandma." Dorothy's warm smile and always stylish appearance left a lasting impression on everyone she met.

In recognition of her significant contributions, the Lakeshore Museum Center created the Dorothy Hammer Award. This prestigious honor is given annually to volunteers who play a pivotal role in advancing the museum's mission, particularly in education and other vital initiatives.

By Graciela Alberino-Stidham, Guest Relations Manager



Dorothy Hammer in the 1950s.



Dorothy Hammer volunteering at the Muskegon Mercantile in 1986.



Reciprocal Membership Calendar

I'm excited to present to our members with the 2025 reciprocal membership calendar, highlighting our collaboration with 10 wonderful Michigan cultural organizations. As always, if you have any questions about your membership or would like to request a new membership card, feel free to reach out to me at graciela@lakeshoremuseum.org.

I'm happy to assist!

DOWNTOWN CAR DEALERSHIPS

A Century of Auto Dealerships in Muskegor

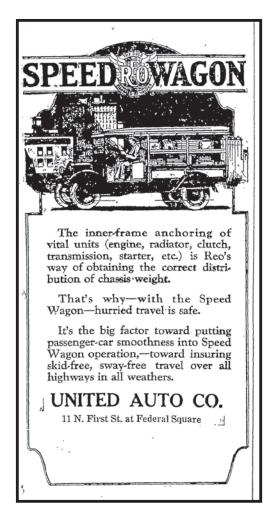
Over the past few months, we have been working on compiling a database of Muskegon County businesses as background information for a new exhibit. Currently, there are about 1,300 entries ranging back to the Civil War. There are a lot of familiar names on the list: sawmills of the 1880s, major employers of the mid-20th century, and high-tech companies of today. Those that stand out most to me are the early auto dealerships.

The first American-made automobiles hit the market in 1896. When these early cars began appearing on city streets, they were a novelty. They quickly transitioned to an aspiration and then a necessity. Businessmen in the burgeoning auto industry rushed to set up showrooms. They chose downtown retail districts to highlight the newest consumer product. The earliest dealerships here were concentrated along Western Avenue from Pine Street to 5th, Clay Avenue from Terrace to 3rd, the first three blocks of Apple Avenue, and 3rd Street from Morris to Merrill.

The first advertisement for a local auto dealership appeared in the Muskegon Chronicle in 1912. By 1914, there was a dedicated automobile section in the Saturday edition. There were about a dozen dealers specializing in new car sales by 1921. Some of the brands are still well known – Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Dodge, and Ford. Others have come and gone – Chalmers, Diamond T, Dort, Hollier, Maxwell, Napoleon, Nash, Paige, Oakland, Overland, REO, and Studebaker.

Consolidation in the auto industry began with the formation of General Motors but really took off during the Great Depression. The "Big Three" – GM, Ford, and Chrysler – came to dominate the market. Many of the remaining smaller makers merged to form American Motors. Dealerships began the move to the edge of town in the post-war years to build bigger showrooms and outdoor lots that could accommodate more vehicles. One dealer that bucked the trend was Senecal Imports. They opened a showroom on West Western Avenue in the late 1950s. Witt Buick, the last downtown dealership, had been in business for more than a century by the time they sold their franchise in 2020.

By Kirk Bunke, Site Manager



REO SpeedWagon advertisement for United Auto Company. Muskegon Chronicle 9/27/1924.



The Muskegon Auto Sales Company was located First Street and Clay Avenue in 1924. The Federal Hotel occupied the upper floors.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Calendar of Events





March 14

Coffee with Classmates-West Michigan Christian and Muskegon Catholic 8:00am

March 15

Play and Learn 10:00am

March 19

Coffee with Classmates- North Muskegon 8:00am

March 20

Knitting Workshop 6:00pm

March 21

Friday Family Fun Night: Branch Out 5:30pm-7:30pm

March 24

Women's Suffrage Presentation @Norton Shores Library 6:00pm

March 26

Coffee with Classmates-Muskegon Heights 8:00am

March 27

Play and Learn 10:00am

April 1

Coffee with Classmates-Ravenna @ Ravenna Library 1:00pm

April 2

Coffee with Classmates-Whitehall @ White Lake Library 10:00am

April 8-10

STEM Camp 9:00am-12:00pm

April 11

Spring Break Open House 11:00am-2:00pm

April 14

Coffee with Classmates- Holton @ Holton Library 9:30am

April 15

Homeschool Day: WWII and the Muskegon Home Front 10:00am

April 17

Programs, Propaganda, and Posters: How the Home Front Was Shaped in WWII 6:00pm April 19

Play and Learn 10:00am

April 24

Play and Learn 10:00am

April 25

Friday Family Fun Night: Rocks and Minerals 5:30pm-7:30pm

May 3

STEAM Along the Lakeshore 10:00am-3:00pm

May 8

Play and Learn 10:00am

May 17

Play and Learn 10:00am

May 18

Old Heart VIP Reception 2:00pm

May 20

Homeschool Day: Changes in Home Technology 10:00am

May 22

Play and Learn 10:00am

May 26

All Sites Closed

June 12

Play and Learn 10:00am

June 18

STEM Workshop- Construction 9:00am-12:00pm

June 25

STEM Workshop-Tin 9:00-12:00pm

June 25

History Walking Tour 10:00am

June 25

WWII Walking Tour 1:00pm

MUSKEGON HERITAGE MUSEUM
OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRY
of the Lakeshore Museum Center

March 13 Spring Speaker Series 6:00-7:00 pm

April 3

Spring Speaker Series 6:00-7:00 pm

April 5

Spring Break Saturday Open 11:00 am-4:00 pm

May 1

MHMB&I Open for 2025 Season

lay 3

Community Day—Popular Music of WWII

May 20

Homeschool Day: Changes in Home Technology 10:00-11:30 am June 7

Community Day – Second Great Migration



April 11

Hackley Escape Room 5:00-7:00 pm

April 25

Flashlight Tour 8:00-9:00 pm

May 1

Historic Sites open for the season

May 2

After Dark Tour 9:00-10:00 pm

May 11

Mother's Day - Free Tours to Muskegon County Mom's 1:00-4:00 pm)

May 17

Hackley Day - Free Tours to Muskegon County Residents 10:00-4:00 pm

Hackley Day Community Celebration Free for Muskegon County Residents 4:00-7:00 pm May 30

Hackley Attic Escape Room 5:00-6:30 pm

May 31

Hackley Attic Escape Room - 5-6:30pm

June (

After Dark Tour 9:00-10:00 pm

June 13

All Access 7:00-8:30 pm

June 15

Father's Day - Free Tours to Muskegon County Dads 1:00-4:00 pm

June 21

Roaring 20s Tea Event - 1-4pm

WHAT DRIVES US:

2024 Annual Report



2024 was an amazing year for fundraising, community engagement, and planning for the future. We did over \$500,000 in capital improvements, including replacing the Hackley House roof, the Fire Barn doors, the Hume House dining room window, and the Scolnik House of the Depression Era turret. We also removed the asbestos lining the pipes under the Muskegon Museum of History & Science. Currently, the board and staff are working through the strategic plan and making great strides.



Muskegon Museum of History & Science **38,732 total visitation**

Number of Visitors to the Museum 17,067

Number of School Participants 12,907

Number of Program Participants (non-school) 8,758



Muskegon Historic Sites 13,615 total visitation

Number of Visitors to the Museums 9,241

Number of School Participants 1,936

Number of Program Participants (non-school) 2,438



Heritage Museum of Business & Industry 3,843 total visitation

Number of Visitors to the Museum 1,950

Number of School Participants 1,151

Number of Program Participants (non-school) 742

Combined Museum Visitation **56.190**

2024 Volunteer Hours

6,199.32 given by 151 volunteers

2024 ACQUISITIONS IN REVIEW

Learning Together

2024 Acquisitions in Review

The Lakeshore Museum Center (LMC) actively collects objects and archival material relevant to Muskegon County's natural and cultural history. In 2024, 570 objects were offered to the museum as donations.

These items are reviewed by the Acquisitions Committee and the Board of Trustees for their relevance to Muskegon County, condition, and the ability for

Brenda Nemetz, Collections Manager and Registrar

the LMC to care for the objects. Through that process, 217 objects were selected to join the collection in 2024.

Once an object becomes part of the collection, it does not always stay in storage. Objects and archival materials are used in exhibits and programs, researched by community members, and available digitally on the public portal. 98

Research Requests

10,459

Objects Exhibited in 7 Museums

12,650

Objects Viewable on the Public Portal



A 4.25 x 8 inch artillery shell casting manufactured by Westran in the 1970s. Text on the front reads, "BOMB FRAGMENTATION U-49 A/B LOADED DATE."



Explore Muskegon County's natural and cultural history through archives, objects, and photographs of the Lakeshore Museum Center collection.



Postcard with an image of four people rowing in a rowboat on Twin Lake, Michigan. Postmarked November 7, 1911.



Photograph of four houses at the base of Pigeon Hill circa 1930s-1940s.



Hand-painted dessert plate painted by Anna McDonald Root, known as Byrde Root, in 1896. She was born in 1863 to Thomas and Anne Miller, who ran the Miller & Co. Iron Works. In 1887, she married Russell Lee Root, who died in a train accident in the Upper Peninsula in 1897. Byrde died five months later. Her mother donated land in 1902 for a park. Root Park is located at the convergence of Apple Avenue, Muskegon Avenue, and First Street.

2024 VISITOR REVIEW

Collecting, Preserving, Inspiring

2024 Visitor Reviews



What a great museum for a rainy afternoon! We enjoyed the exhibits and loved the fact that it was all rooted in Michigan history so we could relate and understand a little more. The areas for kids are wonderful and allow for imaginative educational play.

- Google Review by Eryn B.



Fantastic exhibits! Such an asset to Muskegon; a fascinating look into the past and present businesses and life in Muskegon County. Very well done; very well presented. (We spent an hour and a half in this three story museum.)

-Google Review by EA



I LOVED visiting these historic mansions, and Terry was an amazing tour guide. Both mansions have been lovingly restored, and it was fascinating learning about the families and local history. We also visited the Fire Barn. A must see in Muskegon!

-Google Review by Elizabeth M.







Thank you to our 2024 Educational Program & Exhibit Sponsors:

EVELYN GEILE





IMC PRODUCTS INC.









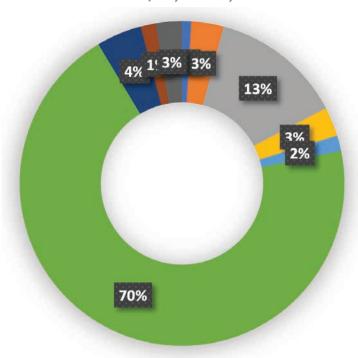


FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

2024 INCOME & EXPENSES

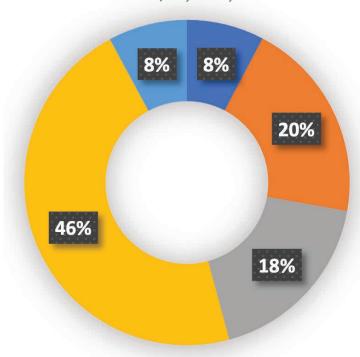


INCOME Total \$2,608,022





EXPENSES
Total \$2,179,700





Grants

- State of Michigan Grant for Hackley and Hume Historic Site: \$2,000,000.00
- Time Well Served Grant: \$2,300
- Play and Learn Grant: \$4,800
- MIWish Grant: \$368

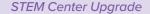
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

PAST AND PRESENT

REFLECTING Exhibits in 2024

Paleo Joe and his Dinosaur Bones







New Deal-WPA Artifacts



NEW Dream: May 2025 Millage Ask for Expansion

During absentee and early voting through Election Day, May 6, 2025, county voters can help preserve Muskegon County's history by approving a 0.31 mill construction millage—just \$31 per year for a \$200,000 home.

Your support will fund new museum space at the Muskegon Museum of History & Science, renovate archives, and create educational exhibits for all ages.

The millage will also help:

- Modernize educational spaces for K-12 students
- Ensure ADA-compliant access for all
- Secure and expand public access to Muskegon County's historical collection



NEW for 2025

Projects

- Hume House roof
- City Barn roof
- Hackley House front porch
- Tuckpointing at Heritage Museum of Business & Industry
- Chimney restoration on Hume House

Exhibits

- Muskegon County History Gallery featuring Mosaic Muskegon
- New Rosie the Riveter Mural at Muskegon Heritage Museum of Business & Industry

2025 Home Front Heroes



Muskegon Museum of History & Science 430 W. Clay Ave., Muskegon 231.722.0278

Hackley & Hume Historic Site

484 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon 231.722.7578

Fire Barn Museum

484 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon 231.722.7578

Scolnik House of the Depression Era 484 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon

231.722.7578

Muskegon Heritage Museum of **Business & Industry**

561 W. Western Ave., Muskegon 231.722.1363

www.lakeshoremuseum.org











