

THIS PLACE

**"The Little Ferry That Could":
Finding Hope Today in the
History of the MV *Hiyu***

**Main Street Matters: Colfax
Business Incubator Brings
New Life to Downtown**

**Film, Fishing, and Heritage:
Behind the Scenes of
*Origins: The Last Reefnetters***

**Partner Showcase:
Black Heritage Society of
Washington State**

THE RYAN HOUSE STORY

One of the Most Endangered Places in Washington

THIS PLACE

Spring 2025

Volume 7, Issue 2

A publication of the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

- 1 | GET INVOLVED
- 2 | PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE: 2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE RECAP
- 4 | MOST ENDANGERED PLACES: THE RYAN HOUSE STORY
- 8 | “THE LITTLE FERRY THAT COULD”: FINDING HOPE TODAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE MV *HIYU*
- 10 | EVENT RECAP: NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVOCACY WEEK 2025
- 12 | GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT: THE RESTORATION STORY OF THE OPPORTUNITY TOWNSHIP HALL
- 14 | MAIN STREET MATTERS: COLFAX BUSINESS INCUBATOR BRINGS NEW LIFE TO DOWNTOWN
- 16 | ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF GOING: A PHOTOESSAY ON PLACE
- 18 | MARITIME WASHINGTON NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
Film, Fishing, and Heritage: Behind the Scenes of *Origins: The Last Reefnetters*
- 20 | ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF GOING: A PHOTOESSAY ON PLACE
- 22 | PARTNER SHOWCASE: BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON STATE
- 26 | 2024 ANNUAL REPORT
- 28 | SUSTAINING SPONSORS
- 29 | THANKS TO YOU!

Cover: The Ryan House in Sumner, one of our Most Endangered Places, fenced off with a notice posted by the City of Sumner about demolition being on hold in 2024. Photo courtesy of Save the Ryan House.

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WASHINGTON TRUST
FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization that works to advocate for and preserve Washington State’s historic and cultural places.

Here are just a few of the programs we operate:



WASHINGTON STATE
MAIN STREET
PROGRAM



MARITIME
WASHINGTON
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

YOUTH
HERITAGE
PROJECT



Washington’s **MOST
ENDANGERED
PLACES**

**THIS
PLACE**
MAGAZINE

VALERIE
SIVINSKI
FUND

GET INVOLVED

MAY 16

Goldfinch Gala

Historic *Hiyu* Ferry, Seattle

Our spring fundraiser, formerly known as Vintage Washington, has been re-envisioned as the Goldfinch Gala! The event will spotlight the many programs and initiatives the Washington Trust operates or manages (including the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area, Washington State Main Street Program, Youth Heritage Project, and more).

This year’s Goldfinch Gala will take place on Friday, May 16, from 7:00-9:30 pm, on board the historic ferry *Hiyu*. Enjoy a sunset cruise of Lake Union, hors d’oeuvres from Kaspars Catering, a silent and live auction featuring exciting items from our preservation partners across the state, and a chance to interact with and learn more about all of the Washington Trust’s programs. Tickets are going fast—don’t wait to buy yours!

preservewa.org/goldfinch-gala

JULY 14-17

Youth Heritage Project

North Bend & Snoqualmie, WA

Are you ready for an adventure that combines history, science, and the great outdoors? Look no further than the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation’s Youth Heritage Project (YHP), our summer program for high-school age students that’s FREE for those accepted. This summer’s program takes place July 14-17 at the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in North Bend. Thanks to the National Park Service and the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation for their support of this year’s program.

At this summer’s YHP, students will explore the relationship between humans and the landscape. There will be opportunities to engage in hands-on activities to help conservation efforts, visit historic sites and unique museums, and learn about co-management of cultural resources.

Good news for busy students wrapping up the end of the school year: we’ve extended the student application deadline to Tuesday, May 27.

preservewa.org/yhp

For more information about Washington Trust events or programs, please visit preservewa.org, or call our office at 206-624-9449.

2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE RECAP

By Chris Moore, Executive Director

The 2025 state legislative session began with a pall in the air, as Washington faced a multi-billion-dollar deficit. For many legislators, this session marked the first time they would be required to make programmatic cuts as part of the budget process. In the end, difficult decisions were made to reduce spending, and unprecedented sources of new revenue were proposed to bridge the funding gap.

While the final operating budget passed by the legislature in April is actually larger than the 2023-2025 one, it does represent reduced funding on programmatic levels. For us, of primary concern is the impact these cuts will have on the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), the agency responsible for managing key historic preservation programs at the state and federal levels, including the National Register of Historic Places and Historic Tax Credit Programs. DAHP also houses the Washington State Main Street Program (operated by the Washington Trust under contract), which has contributed mightily to the preservation and economic revitalization of our historic downtowns in cities across the state. As of the printing of this issue, the governor has not yet signed the legislature's proposed budget into law—he has until May 20 to do so.

The state's capital budget presents a significantly rosier picture. Appropriations through the capital budget have always served as a critical source of funding for the rehabilitation of historic places, particularly for DAHP's capital grant programs. We are thrilled to report that the following programs received funding in the 2025-2027 capital budget:

- Historic County Courthouse Grant Program: \$7.433 million to support rehabilitation of courthouses in 11 counties (up from approximately \$4 million in 2023-2025)
- Heritage Barn Grant Program: \$900,000 to support the rehabilitation of working barns (a reduction of \$100,000 from 2023-2025)
- Historic Cemetery Grant Program: \$515,000 to support cemetery preservation (equal to 2023-2025 funding)
- Historic Theater Grant Program: \$515,000 to support rehabilitation work on historic theaters (equal to 2023-2025 funding)

Collectively, this funding represents the largest investment ever by the legislature in these four programs—a testament to the fact that historic places are the underpinning of our sense of place. In addition to DAHP's capital grant program, the legislature again provided \$10 million to fully fund the Washington State Historical Society's Heritage

Right: The Showbox in Seattle (one of our Most Endangered Places) is an example of a Seattle site that was landmarked without owner consent within the past six years. Preservationists and arts advocates sought designation to avoid demolition of the Showbox. Photo courtesy of Matt McKnight, Cascade PBS.

Below: The Foss Waterway Seaport, located in Tacoma (and part of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area), is slated to receive a grant from the Washington State Historical Society's Heritage Capital Project grant program thanks to legislative funding. Photo courtesy of the Foss Waterway Seaport.



Capital Projects Grant Program. That funding will support 19 projects across the state, including six projects to support rehabilitation of key historic places situated within the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. Additionally, the legislature funded the Buildings for the Arts Grant Program at \$18 million; many of the 38 projects slated to receive Building for the Arts funding involve historic buildings or heritage-aligned programs. In total, these grant programs enable significant preservation work to take place, leveraging additional local investment along the way. As with the operating budget, Governor Ferguson has not yet signed this bill into law. Funding for these important programs will not be official until he does so.

While addressing the budget deficit took precedence this year, housing remained a policy priority for the legislature. While certain bills were preservation-neutral (if not fully preservation-aligned), one bill in particular will undo decades of preservation policy in our state. Substitute House Bill 1576 requires owner consent for designating historic buildings as local landmarks. While owner consent is already a requirement in most jurisdictions, Seattle and Tacoma serve as notable examples where landmark designations can move forward without owner consent. In Tacoma, the practice is rare. Even



in Seattle, it is uncommon—from 2019-2024, the City of Seattle designated 46 buildings as local landmarks, of which only nine were designated without owner consent (and of the nine, three were publicly owned by Seattle City Parks). Despite this data, with the state's missing middle housing legislation slated to take effect this year, legislators expressed concern that the landmark process would be “weaponized” to prevent development of missing middle housing and other housing projects. The Washington Trust believes historic buildings are part of the housing solution (and we have the data to show it!). Regardless, the bill moved forward, aimed specifically at the City of Seattle's historic preservation ordinance. If a building is more than 125 years old, it can still be designated as a historic landmark regardless of the owner's wishes, but for any building less than 125 years old, owner consent will be required. We are disappointed to see the community effectively pushed out of the process of determining which buildings are locally significant and thus worth preserving. We also believe this legislation will lead to a loss of important historic buildings in Seattle. Regardless, we will continue our efforts to work with the legislature with the goal of implementing future policies to strengthen incentives for preservation. ■



Above: The Power House Theatre Walla Walla (where we hosted our Excellence on Main ceremony at the 2024 PLACES Conference) is slated to receive a grant from the Buildings for the Arts Grant Program thanks to legislative funding. Photo courtesy of Sydnee More Photography.

Left: The Okanogan County Courthouse in Okanogan is slated to receive grant support as part of the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation's Historic County Courthouse Grant Program thanks to legislative funding. Photo courtesy of Joe Mabel.



Above: The Washington State Capitol Building in Olympia. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Capitol Campus.

THE RYAN HOUSE STORY

By Shane Riley, Park Ranger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Ryan House is the story of Sumner, from before the town even existed.

All good stories have a beginning, and this one starts in tragedy: in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1850, Nancy Jane Kincaid died, leaving behind a grieving husband and seven children. Her husband, William Kincaid, heartbroken and inconsolable, headed west for the Oregon Territory with his seven motherless children on the Longmire-Biles wagon train. I always find remarkable the courage and resilience these pioneers showed in risking everything to move into unknown territory, considering the very real possibilities of illness, starvation, or being killed by Native Americans protecting their land.

The wagon train peeled off from the traditional Oregon Trail, north towards an alleged new trail passing through the Cascades into fresh territory

near Puget Sound. This new route, called the Naches Pass Trail, was a centuries-old Native American trail not yet ready for the passage of wagons. The caravan crossed rivers, navigated old-growth forests, and at one point lowered their wagons down a steep cliff on ropes. The Longmire-Biles wagon train was the first of eight to make it across the Naches Trail. Eventually, the Kincaids made their way to the Puyallup Valley, where William filed a claim for 160 acres and built a cabin at the junction of the Puyallup and Stuck Rivers. William's youngest daughter, Laura, met Ferdinand (Fred) Seaman. After marrying in 1862, they had three daughters. William sold 40 acres of his land to Fred, who built a one-room cedar cabin on the property—the genesis of the Ryan House. Unfortunately, Fred died in 1872, leaving Laura with



Left: George H. Ryan, Sumner's first mayor, in 1891. Photo courtesy of the Sumner Historical Society.

Below: Lucy Ryan (second from left) with her children in 1905. Photo courtesy of the Sumner Historical Society.



a farm and three daughters to raise. She promptly remarried and sold the property to Mr. George Ryan.

George Ryan came to the Washington Territory from Wisconsin in 1870. In 1872, he visited the Puyallup Valley looking for business opportunities. There, Ezra Meeker introduced him to the widowed Laura who had a cabin and acreage for sale. George bought the property and in 1875 enlarged the cabin. After George's fiancé Lucy Wood joined him from Wisconsin, the two were married and raised five children in the Ryan House. Their growing family

required the house to be expanded, so in 1885 they added the main two-story section with wood from Ryan's sawmill. In the early 1900s, a hop shed was pushed against the house to become the kitchen. The Ryans themselves—as mill owners, shopkeepers, and farmers—were instrumental in establishing the town of Sumner. In 1883, the Ryans, alongside John and Nancy Kincaid, drew up the plat of Sumner on their dining room table. George built a railroad station in 1884 to ensure that the railroad would make Sumner one of the stops along its route; he



Above: The Ryan family on the porch of the Ryan House in 1888. Photo courtesy of the Sumner Historical Society.



Above: The Ryan House in 2019. Photo courtesy of Shane Riley.



Above: The “Save Ryan House” float participates in Sumner’s 2025 Daffodil Parade. Photo courtesy of Shane Riley.

was elected the town’s first mayor in 1891. George built many of the early homes downtown and helped develop a large section of the downtown business district.

In letters to her grandmother, Lucy Ryan wrote about the lack of roads, abysmal amount of mud, and difficult labor. As George was often away working on business ventures and developing the township, Lucy was left alone to manage the children, farm, and workers who arrived to gather the harvests. The Ryan hop farm was so successful that at one point they employed 50 Chinese pickers and 200 Natives representing 11 different Tribes. When the nearest post office relocated, another one was needed in Sumner, and it was established in the Ryan home with Lucy as postmistress. Unfortunately, George and Lucy Ryan divorced in 1904 after George left town (and his family) for Colorado. Lucy never remarried and lived in Sumner the remainder of her life before passing away in 1925.

In 1926, her children donated the family home to the City of Sumner to be used as a public library and park. The deed stated that should the house ever be removed, the location would become the Lucy V. Ryan Memorial Park. The Ryan House served as the library for 53 years, from 1926 to 1979. For the past 40 years, it has been home to the Sumner Historical Society, which operates it as the Ryan House Museum. In 1976, the house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Location of Local Significance.

In 1979, when the cCity built a larger library building elsewhere and could not abide by the

restrictions set forth in the 1926 deed, they gathered the Ryan heirs to approve an amended deed, with the express intent of maintaining the house as a museum. The amended deed reads as follows: “1. The above-described real property shall only be used for a library, historical museum, or a park site. 2. The house located upon the above-described real property shall only be used for a library, historical museum, or restored and maintained as an 1890 home. 3. The above-described real property and the house located thereon shall be maintained as a national historical site and kept open to the public to provide reasonable access and use by the public.”

Fast forward to now. The City of Sumner has elected to reverse course and tear the Ryan House down. They say that the bones of the house are bad, and it will be too costly to replace them. They claim its structural integrity is compromised, and it is unsafe to enter, even for a second opinion from a certified structural engineer. They believe demolition is the only solution, and their budget just doesn’t support an alternative. Meanwhile, protesters have reminded the city council that the house is the oldest in town, the founder’s house, the first post office, the first library, the first and only museum, and it contains the very space in which the city was platted. It is the birthplace of Sumner—a monument, a symbol, and an icon of Sumner’s past, heritage, cultural identity, and civic pride. If destroyed, it will be a tragic and devastating loss to many, as well as a detriment to future generations of Sumner.

Locally, the effort to save the Ryan House has been spearheaded by Nick Biermann. Nick has organized the Save Ryan House group, spoken at city council meetings, appealed to media outlets, pursued legal counsel, arranged meetings and fundraising events, brought in outside organizations like the Washington Trust, and researched the city’s own municipal code and policies. Thanks to Nick, the plight of the Ryan House is known to KIRO and KING News, the News Tribune, and even local celebrity/historian Feliks Banel of KIRO Radio, who recently broadcasted live from the Ryan House.

Nick laid the foundation, and now it is up to the citizens to pick up where the City has fallen short. The Save Ryan House group set up a GoFundMe at <https://gofund.me/a18c08a0>. All donations will be used to help save the Ryan House from demolition and restore it to its rightful glory. 🇺🇸



Above: Feliks Banel of KIRO Radio interviews Nick Biermann in front of the Ryan House in March 2025. Photo courtesy of Shane Riley.

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“The Little Ferry That Could”

FINDING HOPE TODAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE MV *HIYU*

By Abby Armato, Special Projects Specialist

Docked on Lake Union between two large vessels waiting to be scrapped floats the small but mighty MV *Hiyu*. Once a state ferry transporting passengers across the Puget Sound, the historic *Hiyu* is now an event venue that brings Seattle’s maritime history to the forefront of celebrations. But this old ferry has lived many lives before becoming an event space. In fact, the *Hiyu* earned herself the nickname “the little ferry that could” because of her many different lives supporting Washington State Ferries.

Built in February 1967, the *Hiyu* was put into service running the ferry route connecting Point Defiance and Tahlequah. She was built to replace the older MV *Skanson*, who had been working the same route since 1951. While the older vessel could only carry 32 cars and had a shorter clearance, the new *Hiyu* could carry 40 cars and had a clearance high enough to board trucks—a huge win for truckers who had been driving all the way to Fauntleroy to catch a ride to Vashon Island. With such an abundance of space, it’s clear why she was named for the Chinook Jargon word for “many” or “plenty.”

By the 1980s, the *Hiyu* was deemed too small for the Tahlequah route and was replaced by the *Olympic* and eventually the *Rhododendron*. The *Hiyu* was reassigned to inter-island duty in the San Juans, but

only a decade later, traffic on the islands had grown so much that she could no longer keep up. She was mothballed for more than 10 years at the Washington State Ferries’ maintenance facility.

But this is the “little ferry that could!” So when Washington State Ferries needed a vessel to train new hires, the *Hiyu* was brought back out to teach important job skills. When the *Christine Anderson* ferry needed emergency repairs, the *Hiyu* was put back into service to support the Anderson Island community. When the *Rhododendron* suffered a rudder flop and was unexpectedly pulled from service for repairs, it was again the *Hiyu* that was sent to provide support during times of uncertainty. And when all four Steel Electric ferries (the *Klickitat*, *Illahee*, *Nisqually*, and *Quinault*) were suddenly withdrawn from service due to hull corrosion issues, guess who was the only backup ferry in the fleet?

In May 2016, Washington State Ferries announced that the *Hiyu* had officially been retired and would be put up for sale. In 2017, the *Hiyu* was purchased by Menagerie, Inc., who restored her to her former glory. Today, the *Hiyu* carries on as a venue space on Lake Union. This year, we at the Washington Trust are thrilled to host our annual spring gala (now known as the Goldfinch Gala) on board the *Hiyu*, celebrating all the determination, nimbleness, and service she represents. We hope you’ll join us to toast all that the Washington Trust and our programs have accomplished over the past year and to support us so that we can be the “little nonprofit that could!” 🐦



Above: The *Hiyu* now serves as an events venue (and will host our Goldfinch Gala on May 16!). Photo courtesy of On the *Hiyu*.

Left: A historic photo of the *Hiyu* in service (date unknown). Photo courtesy of the Washington State Archives.

Below: The *Hiyu* docked at MOHAI at night (where it will be docked the night of our Goldfinch Gala on May 16!). Photo courtesy of On the *Hiyu*.



Above: The bow of the *Hiyu*. Photo courtesy of On the *Hiyu*.

Left: The *Hiyu* cruises the waters of Puget Sound. Photo courtesy of Washington State Ferries.



Event Recap

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVOCACY WEEK 2025

By Moira Nadal, Preservation Programs Director

Every spring, the Washington Trust advocates for preservation at the federal level by visiting Washington State's elected representatives in the U.S. Congress. This year, our delegation was second-largest of all 50 states with a whopping 12 participants, including: Center for Wooden Boats' Capital Campaign Manager Olive Theodore of Seattle; Downtown Issaquah Association board president Christina Bruning of Issaquah; Washington Trust board members Edna Fund of Centralia, Paul Parker of Olympia, and Temple Lentz and Michael Walker, both of Vancouver; Yakama Nation archaeologist Noah Oliver of Cle Elum; and staff from Asian Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP), the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and the Washington Trust.

National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week is co-hosted by the national nonprofits Preservation Action and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. As this was my second year in attendance, I enjoyed seeing friendly faces from across the country during the day of training (and inspiration) before state office visits. A slate of speakers included former congressional legislative aides, long-term lobbyists, members of Congress, and even the new president of the National Trust.

This year, there were more than 200 participants representing 45 states and territories, doing outreach to almost 250 Congressional offices. That's an increase of almost 50 office visits from last year, a number we hope will equate to stable funding for State and Tribal Preservation Offices and federal grant programs during an unstable federal budget process.



Above: Washington delegates pose in front of the U.S. Capitol after a day of Congressional office visits. Photo courtesy of Moira Nadal.

Right: Members of our delegation met with Representative Emily Randall (second from left) from Washington's 6th District. Photo courtesy of Chris Moore.



Left: Members of our delegation met with Representative Dan Newhouse (far left) from Washington's 4th District. Photo courtesy of Chris Moore.

Below: We were thrilled to cross paths with our friends and colleagues from Inspire Washington. Photo courtesy of Moira Nadal.

Bottom left: A personal highlight for Washington Trust Preservation Programs Director Moira Nadal: finally getting to ride the U.S. Capitol subway. Photo courtesy of Olive Theodore.



In D.C., we saw that many people were still reeling from the impacts of the federal funding freeze. We learned of many colleagues from the National Park Service whose positions have been eliminated and of the breaking news of the widespread elimination of preservation offices from the General Services Administration. As things are in flux at the federal level, our role as a non-governmental statewide nonprofit felt more imperative than ever.

One of the primary programs we advocate for every year is the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), which are funds that come from oil and gas lease revenues—not tax dollars—in an amount appropriated annually by Congress. These funds help states and Tribes meet their federal obligations to preserve historic and archaeological sites. Since 1976, the HPF has facilitated more than 98,000 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, enabled the survey of millions of acres for cultural resources, and leveraged more than \$199 billion in private investment through the Historic Tax Credit Program. The fund is both a testament to the federal commitment to our heritage and the primary vehicle through which formal preservation happens across the country.



For Fiscal Year 2026, we requested \$225 million in total funding, the same amount as the last fiscal year. While we are still eagerly awaiting the final numbers, we do not expect that our full ask will be met.

The formal ask developed for National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week is:

- \$70 million for State Historic Preservation Offices (2025 ask: \$70 million)
- \$34 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (2025 ask: \$23 million)
- \$40 million for the Save America's Treasures Grant Program (2025 ask: \$10 million)
- \$28 million for the African American Civil Rights Grant Program (2025 ask: \$24 million)
- \$17 million for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program (2025 ask: \$12.5 million)
- \$13 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities Preservation Grants (2025 ask: \$11 million)
- \$7 million for the History of Equal Rights Grant Program (2025 ask: \$5 million)
- \$5 million for the Underrepresented Communities Grant Program (2025 ask: \$1.25 million)
- \$11 million for the Semiquincentennial Grant Program

Total: \$225 million (2025 total: \$151.4 million)

We urge you to contact your elected representatives and voice your support for historic preservation funding! 🗣️

Grantee Highlight

THE RESTORATION STORY OF THE OPPORTUNITY TOWNSHIP HALL

By Jayne Singleton, Director, Spokane Valley Heritage Museum

In 1908, the Washington State Legislature enacted a law creating townships as a legal form of government. The Opportunity Township formed in 1909. By 1912, the district had grown considerably, with apple orchards on every tract. The Township's officers and business leaders met monthly to discuss the community's needs and challenges. Early on, the need for a permanent building where the Township could provide services to the community was identified as a priority.

In July 1912, the Opportunity Township Hall was erected, designed by local architect C. Harvey Smith. Smith was keen on the popular architectural style of Spanish Colonial Mission Style Revivalist—an unusual choice for an agricultural area populated largely with farmhouses and barns. Elegant and enduring, the hall's design captures the attention of all passersby.

The hall was also a significant center of community activity. Silent movies and later talkies were shown in the hall. Fraternal organizations met there. The Spokane Valley's first library was established in the hall. Residents congregated at the hall to vote, get vaccinated, pay real estate taxes, and

register for the draft. Family gatherings and dances filled the hall with laughter and music. It was a place where history was always being created.

Later, townships were abolished as a form of government by the Washington State Legislature, and by 1974, the Opportunity Township had dissolved. The building's ownership was transferred to Spokane County, which owned the building until Spokane Valley was incorporated in 2003. The City of Spokane Valley acquired the hall in a property conveyance. During its tenure as owners, Spokane County had not attempted restoration of the hall beyond installing a new roof.

By 2003, the effort to establish a museum for Spokane Valley was well underway. A building was sought, and the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum acquired the Opportunity Township Hall in 2004 from the City of Spokane Valley. Museum volunteers and community members performed minor repairs and painted the exterior.

A full restoration of the north face would not take place until 2024. With funds appropriated by the Washington State Legislature, a grant from the Washington Trust's Valerie Sivinski Fund, and



Left: The Opportunity Township Hall in 1925.

Above: The Opportunity Township Hall in 2004 when it was acquired from the City of Spokane Valley by the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum.

Below: A Valerie Sivinski Fund grant from the Washington Trust helped with the restoration of the building's windows and window frames.

All photos courtesy of the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum.

community donations, the front of the Opportunity Township Hall looks as new as it did when erected in 1912. The beautiful scroll sign, "Anno Opportunity 1912" ("Year of Opportunity 1912"), was unfortunately beyond restoration, and ultimately a reproduction was cast. Funds from the Washington Trust's Valerie Sivinski Fund contributed to the scroll sign reproduction.

The Opportunity Township Hall is now 113 years old. Time and weather continue to damage the remaining exterior of the building. The west, south, and east sides of the hall need to be restored to stop further damage.

According to Michael Houser of the Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, the Opportunity Township Hall is the last remaining township hall in Washington State. The Spokane Valley Heritage Museum successfully listed the hall in the Washington Heritage Register and National Register of Historic Places. Preserving the Opportunity Township Hall for future generations is the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum's mission. It goes hand in hand with our mission of preserving the history that took place in the hall and in the community. 🍷



Left: The Opportunity Township Hall soon after its construction.

Opposite bottom: The restored Opportunity Township Hall in 2025.

Photos courtesy of the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum.



COLFAX BUSINESS INCUBATOR BRINGS NEW LIFE TO DOWNTOWN

By Whitney Bond, Executive Director, Colfax Downtown Association

In November 2022, the Colfax Downtown Association (CDA) found itself standing at the precipice of an extraordinary opportunity. With a federal grant of \$2,259,820 awarded through the Washington State Department of Commerce, the CDA was given the chance to transform downtown Colfax in a way that had never been done before. The vision? A business incubator designed to nurture two restaurants and four retail or office spaces—a beacon of growth for the heart of the community.

But visions rarely unfold without trials. The CDA was initially given a mere six months to complete the project—an ambitious timeline that left little room for the inevitable obstacles that come with revitalizing historic spaces. Yet, rather than

seeing limitations, the CDA's executive team saw possibilities. Through tenacity, strategic thinking, and an unwavering commitment to Colfax's future, they turned challenges into catalysts for creativity.

It became evident that one building would not be enough to house the full potential of this project. The CDA took a bold step, seeking and securing a time extension along with the approval to pivot their strategy. Instead of purchasing a single building, they acquired two, each serving a distinct yet complementary purpose. This shift not only aligned with the grant's original intent but also magnified its impact, creating two business incubators rather than one.

Opposite: One of the CDA's business incubator buildings, housing the CDA office on the upper floor and retail on the ground level.

Right: One of the incubator spaces is home to The Cellar, which hosts beer and wine tastings as well as Trivia Night the last Thursday of every month.

Bottom left: Another incubator business is The Coco Bee, which produces small-batch beeswax candles and skin care products.

Bottom right: The CDA's restaurant incubator houses local favorite Wild Ember Kitchen.

All photos courtesy of the Washington State Department of Commerce.



The first incubator took shape as a haven for retail and service-oriented businesses, a launchpad for entrepreneurs eager to bring fresh energy to downtown Colfax. Within its walls now reside Annie Ruth and The Cellar, two women-owned businesses rooted in community values and a shared belief in fostering local connections. These spaces are more than just shops; they are storytelling hubs, places where neighbors gather, artisans thrive, and new ventures take flight.

The second incubator became a game-changer for dining in Colfax. A restaurant incubator was established, filling a long-standing need for more dining options to draw both residents and visitors into the downtown core. This space welcomed Wild Ember Kitchen, an innovative culinary establishment that quickly became a local favorite. Beyond its delectable menu, it offered something Colfax had long desired—the town's only outdoor patio for dining. The simple addition of an outdoor space transformed the restaurant into a destination,

where friends meet under open skies, families celebrate milestones, and the community finds yet another reason to gather.

With the creation of these two incubators, the CDA did more than just complete a grant project—they sparked a movement. Foot traffic increased, businesses flourished, and the downtown area once again buzzed with life and opportunity. What started as a grant award became the foundation for long-term economic vitality in Colfax, proving that when a community dares to dream big and navigate obstacles with ingenuity, transformation is not only possible but inevitable.

The story of this grant isn't just about dollars and development—it's about people. It's about resilience, the spirit of entrepreneurship, and the power of coming together to build something greater than the sum of its parts. The CDA turned chaos into creativity, and in doing so, they didn't just change the landscape of downtown Colfax; they redefined its future. 🍷



ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF GOING: A PHOTO ESSAY ON PLACE

By Steinar Goheen, Washington State University

Our PLACES' Advancing Leaders (PALs) Program provides funding for students and young professionals to attend our annual PLACES conference and then write an article about what they learned as an attendee (or other relevant topic). Look out for articles from our 2024 PALs in this year's issues of *This Place* and online at [preservewa.org/pals-articles](https://www.preservewa.org/pals-articles).



Alleyways, side streets, utility corridors, and landscaping strips subliminally shape our expectations of the urban fabric. However, due to their “gritty” nature or their relatively “low impact,” they are commonly ignored by those in the preservation field. This is a narrative that I would like to change. I believe that these spaces of egress can be beautiful or even a necessity. In analyzing how ordinary people use their city or how these transitory spaces provide shelter to visitors, preservationists and citizens alike can learn about a region's cultural landscape via these spaces. While I was at the 2024 PLACES conference, I spent some time exploring the alleys, parking lots, and side streets of Walla Walla to find some of these spaces myself.

I left for the PLACES conference from my university in Pullman. As I drove along the highway, I kept an eye on the sides of the road, not knowing what kinds of vernacular buildings I would find. (Despite



Above left: Apertures in the structure allow for Palouse views to be framed perfectly.

Left: A humble concrete masonry unit structure, as seen from Frontage Road.

Opposite (clockwise from top left):

A truck peers around the corner while pallets bask in light.

A loading dock, cast in sunlight.

The stack of pallets that I ate lunch on.

A loading dock on the Whitman College campus.

All photos courtesy of Steinar Goheen.



having multiple meanings, “vernacular” in this case means structures that were created by or for ordinary people.) By chance, I caught sight of a farm structure from the road. Though the building was not being used for anything when I explored it, I believe that its location lends itself well to composing the Palouse landscape: an *in situ* gallery. Though it didn't appear to be in use in the current day, the building certainly had meaning for local people in the past. This perspective allows us to theorize what the land was used for, while also using the structure's protection to frame our views into the immediate landscape.

Upon arriving in Walla Walla, I grabbed my camera and hit the streets. I was unsure of what to expect from the historic downtown area. After quickly realizing that the boutiques and vintners were out of my price range as a student, I explored the alleyways. Compositions of objects in alleyways can be shockingly beautiful. Light and shadow found in industrial scenes can combine to create compositions that would not be able to exist on any main street. Additionally, alleyways can be used as seating areas for those who do not necessarily feel



welcome in other places in town. Alleyways and similar spaces provide important spatial qualities for those who can embrace them. I ate lunch atop this stack of pallets multiple times during the conference, as the public plazas were often crowded. This space allowed me to relax, sketch, and photograph without the pressure of others.

Similarly to alleyways, loading docks and other utility spaces are often ignored by preservation. On the last day of the PLACES conference, I decided to walk to the Whitman College campus and spent time exploring the backsides of buildings. Like alleyways, a humble loading dock can feature objects composed in a compelling manner. Additionally, their use does not strictly need to be of a utilitarian nature. These concrete blocks have a surprising amount of uses. When I arrived here, a band of high school skateboarders were just leaving, having used the space to practice tricks and as a backdrop to a video.

In exploring Walla Walla, my biggest takeaway is just how nuanced the built environment is. The only way to truly understand it is to get out there and explore spaces that are typically not explored! 📸



FILM, FISHING, AND HERITAGE: BEHIND THE SCENES OF *ORIGINS: THE LAST REEFNETTERS*

Filmmaker Samuel Wolfe of Fishboat Media sits down with Maritime Washington staff to discuss *Origins: The Last Reefnetters*, a new documentary series on the history and culture of reefnet fishing in the Salish Sea. Funded in part by a Maritime Washington grant, the series explores the innovative reefnet fishing method developed by the Lummi Nation and other Northern Straits Salish Tribes thousands of years ago, following the 12 captains with reefnet licenses left in the world today. *Origins: The Last Reefnetters* is streaming online from Cascade PBS this spring. Some answers are shortened for publication. For the full Q&A, visit maritimewa.org/reefnetters.

Maritime Washington (MW): Can you tell us a bit about the inspiration behind this series? What drew you to focus on reefnetting specifically?

Samuel Wolfe (SW): Reefnetting is a beautiful, stubborn paradox. Beautiful in its rich mythology and the way it invites community participation. Stubborn in the sense that it still persists today despite over a century of contentious conflict and appropriation. And paradoxical in that instead of chasing fish, you're letting them come to you and even intentionally letting a portion of the catch go

free. Really, who puts a hole in their net *intentionally*? It was all those idiosyncrasies. And there's still more I'd like to learn.

MW: Why is reefnetting significant to the community and environment?

SW: For the North Straits Salish communities who originally practiced reefnetting, it was their way of life, economically, spiritually, and physically. Families with reefnet sites accumulated sustenance, wealth, and riches to trade, but those harvests were often shared with neighboring Tribes. In terms of the environment, these communities viewed sockeye as their brother, and they treated them as such.

MW: What is the purpose of this documentary?

SW: I've described the project as a conversation starter. For one, there's so much more history and context that we weren't able to cover because of time constraints. And second, I think our project provokes more questions than it provides answers. But ultimately my hope is that it surfaces an emotional response in viewers and inspires them to conduct further exploration and learning on their own.



MW: What is the production process like for this project? How does it differ from others as you prepare for the shoots, especially with a subject as “fin”icky and weather-dependent as fishing?

SW: A huge part of the production process on this project was finding creative ways to bring history to life. Archival photography of original Tribal reefnetting is pretty limited, and footage of it is virtually nonexistent. So we solved that by creating a 3D model of a reefnet and doing animation, which turned out to be a fantastic storytelling tool because it enabled us to embrace the mythological aspects of reefnetting instead of just the literal.

Preparing to shoot the actual reefnetting on Lummi Island was stressful because we wouldn't get another chance at it. The crews are subject to strict quotas from the state, so we were well aware that it could all be over in the span of one weekend. Luckily, we went out there, the weather was beautiful, and we came away with some great material.

Watch episodes of *Origins: The Last Reefnetters* at pbs.org/show/origins-docuseries.



Top: Lummi Nation Tribal members stand with a reefnet model on the shore.

Above: Tah-Mahs Ellie Kinley, the only Tribal reefnet license holder, shares her story.

Below left: Riley Starks shares about the “magic” and near disappearance of reefnetting.

Below right: A long-lost reefnetting research paper finds new life.

All photos courtesy of ORIGINS and Fishboat Media.



Left: Reefnet captains listen for signals from shore as salmon are guided into nets.

Photo courtesy of ORIGINS and Fishboat Media.



Partner Showcase

BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON STATE

We sit down with Black Heritage Society president Stephanie Johnson-Toliver to discuss her organization's work and goals.

Tell us about your organization's mission and work. Where are you located, and what communities do you serve in Washington State?

The Black Heritage Society of Washington State has always existed to collect, preserve, and share the history and legacies of Black people from across Washington State. We are stewards of a priceless archive and an advocate for recognizing historic places—which is newer to our mission in the last 10 years, maybe because we have always had our heads down in the archive, but we look outside the archive to be advocates in the community. We understand that places are vanishing, and we want to make sure those historic sites are not forgotten.

Our archive is located at the MOHAI Tom McQuaid Resource Center in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle. The collections are held in public trust for all people to access, and the archive is open by appointment on Fridays. We do offer some flexibility on other weekdays, with the capacity of the collections team to monitor that visit. All contact information on how to do that is online at our website, bhs.wa.org.

Tell us about a recent project or initiative that your organization has undertaken that represents your overall goals and values.

There's so much! I think our current and long-term goal is the evaluation and prioritization of our legacy collections for digitization. We are living in this century where digital assets are something that people want and expect. The primary sources are always available in person, but in order to make access available more broadly and conveniently, we want to digitize the collections so they can be readily



Above: Stephanie Johnson-Toliver sorts through the Black Heritage Society archive. Photo courtesy of Cascade PBS.



Left: A collection of early 1900s photographs from the Black Heritage Society archive. Photo courtesy of Cascade PBS.

Below: The Black Heritage Society archive is housed in the MOHAI Resource Center in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle. Photo courtesy of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society.

shared, whether in classrooms or in your living room. So this year and next, we're updating a collections preservation plan to include the strategy to achieve that goal. Our partners in collections preservation are national and local: the Robert Smith Foundation at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.—their digital team is supporting us—and locally, of course, MOHAI and other people who do this work of digitization.

How have you interacted with historic preservation and/or the Washington Trust so far?

I'd say all we do at BHS is preservation motivated. Number one will always be the archive. But what goes hand in hand with the archive is our strong sense and recognition of places that represent the lives of people in the community—the churches, gathering places, homes, businesses, places of recreation, and more. Organizations like the Washington Trust have supported our legacy storytelling, with the opportunity that you afforded us via the heritage tours on Revisiting Washington. You know, people today still want that link? They want to see the tour, to engage with the sites, because the tour identifies places of significance for the Black community in Seattle and King County. We have also worked together with the Seattle Architecture Foundation, facilitating conversations about preserving community character, which is very important for us, particularly as developers come into our historic neighborhoods—that they consider livability and existing residents as they develop in our neighborhoods.

We have also partnered a lot with Historic Seattle, your neighbor across the street. Working with Eugenia Woo and Jeff Murdock, who are super people, we created a workshop in 2023 to build a community preservation cohort, where we invited five people from the communities, gave them stipends, and invited them to come and learn about



the process of what it's like to preserve historic sites and landmarks in Seattle. It was a huge success for us, because afterwards the Trust for Public Land talked to me about taking this model into other counties—building awareness and knowledge, for those people who reside in or have a real connection to their neighborhood or community to learn how to be the advocates for recognizing those places. We have a list of places statewide that we'd love to recognize, and we're excited to see that there's interest beyond Seattle for something like that.

What does "preservation" mean to you, and how does it impact your organization's work?

For me, preservation is a commitment, a call, that honors our past at the same time as it protects what informs our today and our future. Particularly in these times, it's extremely critical that as Americans—not just Black people, but all Americans—we own our country's past, we recognize that all of our



Above: Stephanie and Converge Media founder Omari Salisbury in the Black Media Matters Studio in downtown Seattle.

paths are unique, and we do not hinder or restrict access to this nation's rich and complex histories. At BHS, I love to say that we are the history keepers, with no other agenda than to document, share, and preserve that history—the legacies of Black people, their significance, their role, impacts that helped and continue to help contribute to build a more perfect union.

What is your vision for your organization's future? In that future, how could preservation be a better ally and support your work more?

It's not just my vision, but the vision of the full board at BHS, that our archive exists beyond our current leadership. We know that we stand on the shoulders of those that came before us—Esther Mumford, Mary Henry, Jackie Lawson, and all of those

founders up through and to today. We're standing on those shoulders, but we are constantly looking and preparing to make sure that the archive thrives.

Our vision is to advance access to knowledge, because that's what the archive is—it's free knowledge. It's held in public trust, so it is open to interpretation and thoughtful evaluation. We are not twisting or manipulating historical facts but holding it all again in trust as a piece of American history. I think most people have a common goal, especially when we think about our humanity, but we may have different paths for getting there. When we can understand each other's paths, the commonality in them, then maybe someday, we can come to terms together and appreciate one another.

How can people get involved with your work?

I love that question. BHS has always been an all-volunteer organization, although this year, we've received some funding that might help us bring someone on part-time to help at the archive, especially now as we're working toward this new

digitization and preservation plan. But we always need volunteers, in whatever capacity they would like to give—whether with the archive or our advocacy in the community. I encourage anyone who is interested in joining us to visit the website and connect through the different options that we provide there. We also encourage people to come to the archive, because once you're in the archive and you see the treasure that's being held there, you want to be a part of it. You want to find a way to engage and keep it alive. History is alive, it isn't static, and I think you see that once you're in the archive. So I encourage people to please make an appointment at the archive.

We also believe in collective strategy. While we have a mission and a vision, we also understand that there are others who can help to influence and guide the work that we do, and some of that comes through our membership. We wholeheartedly take advice, suggestions, opinions from our members. So there are several options! Volunteer, visit the archive, become a member—please just reach out to get involved. 🇺🇸



Left: Stephanie leads a walking tour of the Central District for University of Washington students. Photo courtesy of the University of Washington.





Please join the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation for our annual fundraiser (reborn)

6:00-7:00 pm | VIP Champagne Tour
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7:00-7:30 pm | General Boarding

7:30-9:30 pm | Lake Union Sail & Evening's Program

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Information and tickets at
preservewa.org/goldfinch-gala

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

We are proudly announcing the 2024 Washington Trust Annual Report, which details our activities across the past year—including public policy successes, grassroots advocacy efforts, Washington Main Street news, Most Endangered Places updates, Maritime Washington National Heritage Area milestones, and more.

Below are highlights from the report. We hope that you will take a moment to review the full document online at preservewa.org/2024-annual-report. If you like what you see and want to support our work, consider making a donation to the Washington Trust. Not only is your donation fully tax-deductible, it makes a huge difference in helping us save the places that matter!

preservewa.org/give

Dedicated to saving the places that matter in Washington State

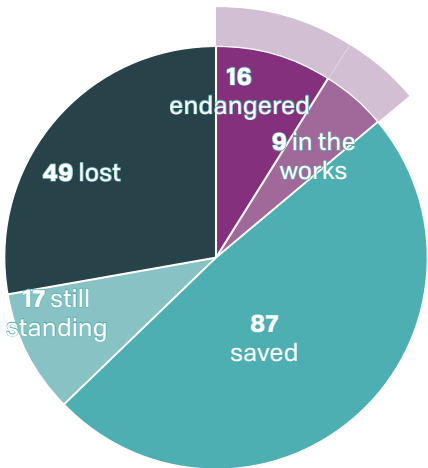
14 staff, **28** board, **600** members
85 communities supported
5,000 in-person & virtual event attendance, and
1,185,000+ in statewide impact

Advocating for policy in Olympia and Washington, DC

8 caucuses attended, **52** legislators visited, and **16** bills tracked or supported

Most Endangered Places

2 site saved, **2** sites added, and **27** ongoing campaigns



Valerie Sivinski Fund

\$20,000 awarded in 2024
\$250,000 in grants and pro bono services awarded to **200+** projects since 1992

Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

Highlights from Maritime Washington's second year as a full-fledged member of the National Heritage Areas System include:

- Convened **58** cross-sector partners in the Maritime Washington Partner Network
- Engaged **3,000+** participants in Maritime Washington events and public programs
- Awarded **\$260,000+** in subgrants
- Leveraged **\$893,000** in local match for \$500,000 in federal funding during FY24
- Welcomed National Park Service Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow to pilot collaborative project with Suquamish and Squaxin Island Tribes
- Received **REGIONAL EMMY** for "This is Maritime Washington," a video series highlighting the hardworking people who make our saltwater shores so unique

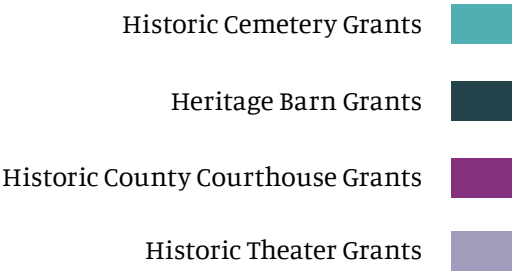


Washington State Main Street Program

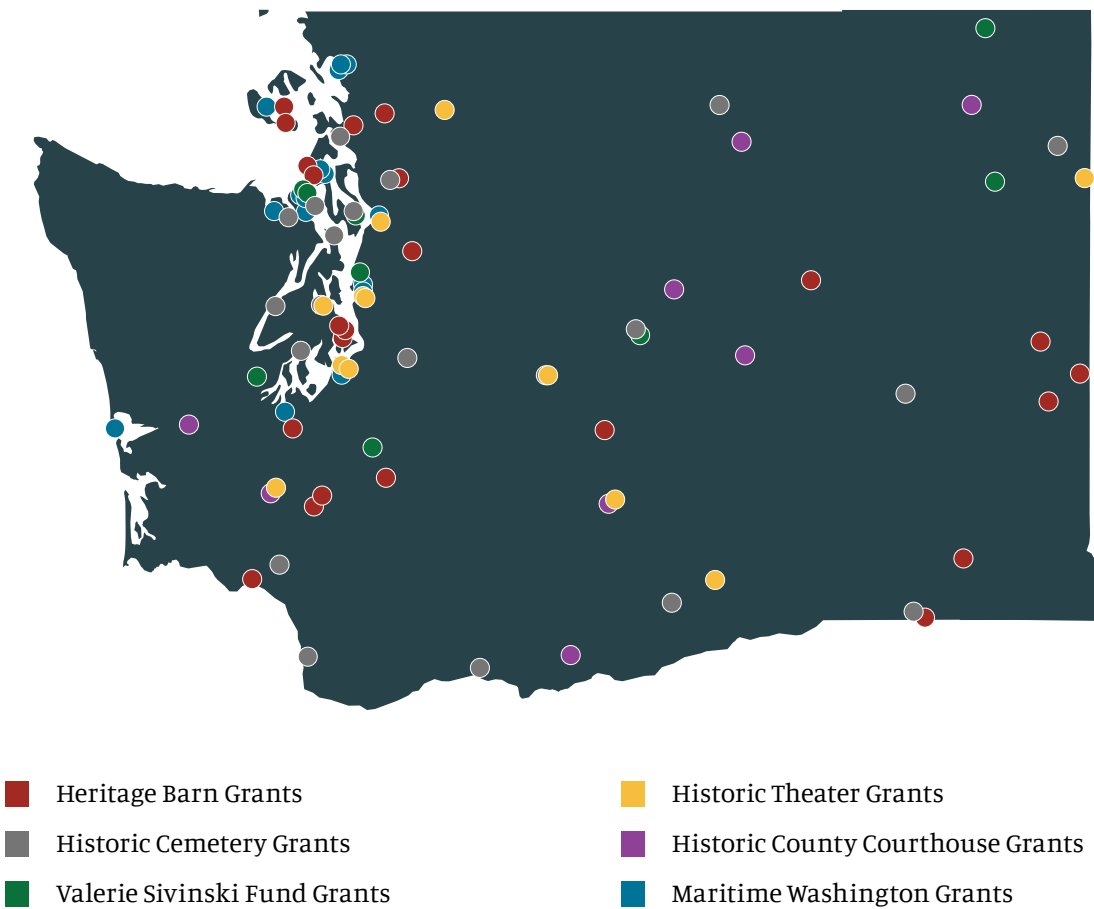
445 businesses established
105 businesses expanded
1,271 jobs created
363 buildings rehabilitated
\$137,064,437 in downtown investment
57,551 volunteer hours organized (valued at **\$2,300,000**)

State Grant Programs

\$4,984,920 total in
63 grants administered



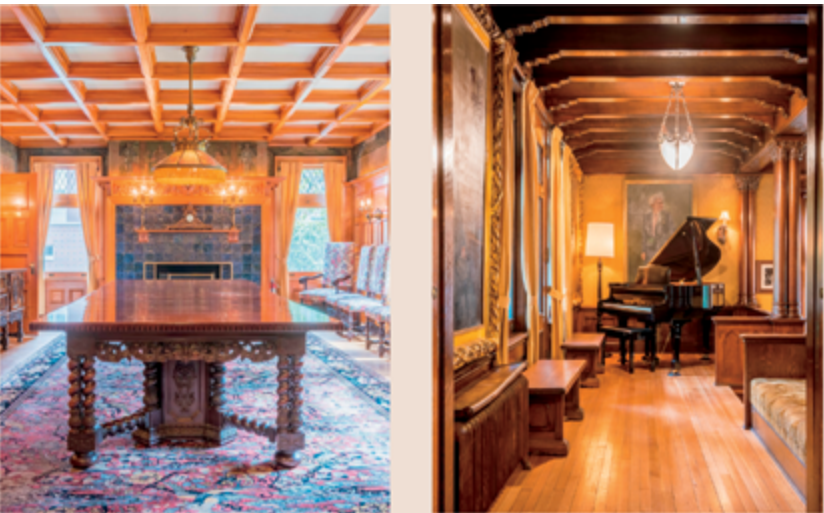
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