

Bishop Hill Heritage Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Stucco Repairs on the Steeple Building

Bishop Hill, IL
February 7, 2026

Mission

Resolution adopted at regular meeting of the Board of Directors, February 10, 1970:

1. Retain Bishop Hill as a living community and do everything within its resources to enhance its development as an historic site and a desirable place to live by maintaining a natural environment.
2. Encourage all efforts to restore historic properties and maintain our cultural heritage.
3. Develop within our young people a sense of pride in their community for its past, present, and future.
4. Develop and maintain an archive and research library of material related to the area and make this available for study.
5. Maintain and encourage an active interchange of ideas with organizations of common interests and goals.



Bishop Hill Heritage Association
Steeple Building, Bishop Hill IL

Hours: April-December Mon-Fri 10-4, Sat 1-3
January-March Mon-Fri 10-4

Tel.: 309-927-3899

Email: bhha@mymctc.net

Website: www.bishophillheritage.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bhheritageassociation>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqKS9GgGjs8oJ99VjnlAZg>

BHHA Annual Report format first created by Brita Butler-Wall

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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends of Bishop Hill Heritage Association,

2025 was a good year for the Heritage. Our events were well attended despite some weather problems.

We may have to cut back on a couple events this year because of a lack of grant monies. Grant money is getting harder to come by. Thank you Todd DeDecker for writing the grants so that we can run a majority of these events.

Our pre-civil war buildings are in good shape thanks to the volunteers that give their time and energy. If you are interested in helping out, talk to Todd at the Steeple Building.

Thank you to my board for making responsible decisions that have kept the Heritage running. A big thank you to Todd DeDecker for managing our events so that they run smoothly. Todd also does a great job on the displays in the Steeple Building.

A big thank you to all our supporters, contributors, and volunteers. I would also like to thank the State Site for their continued support.

We are looking forward to another great year, preserving our Swedish heritage and educating the public as to the hardships the colonists endured.

Thank you all.

Lou Lourdeau
President of the BHHA

Administrator's Report

PROGRAMMING

This past year, the BHHA continued to provide a variety of educational, folk art, and musical programming. Listed below are the 2025 events that were solely sponsored or cosponsored by the BHHA, with the date and location listed. Overall, the Heritage organized or sponsored a total of sixteen educational programs and festivals:

- **Bishop Hill Quilt Show**; May 16-18; Colony School and Steeple Building
- **Gunsmiths of Henry County, IL program**; May 17; Blacksmith Shop
- **Doodle Folk Music Festival**; May 31; Village Park
- **Midsommar Music Festival**; June 21; Village Park
- **Indigo Dyeing workshops**; July 9-11; Dairy Building
- **Dancing Queen: An ABBA Tribute concert**; July 12; Village Park
- **Bishop Hill Chautauqua**; August 9; Village Park
- **Jordbruksdagarna**; September 27 and 28; Village of Bishop Hill
- **Basic Wood Carving Workshop**; October 18; Dairy Building
- **Dala Julbock Painting Workshop**; November 1; Dairy Building
- **Mountain Dulcimer Workshop**; November 15; Dairy Building
- **Julmarknad**; November 28 thru 30; Village of Bishop Hill
- **Julmarknad**; December 6 and 7; Village of Bishop Hill
- **Kongero Vocal Folk Music Workshop**; December 6; Dairy Building
- **Lucia Nights**; December 12 and 13; Village of Bishop Hill

BUILDINGS AND OTHER FACILITIES



Carpenter Building

This 1851 structure was purchased by the BHHA in 2016. During Colony times, furniture, wagon frames, implements, and much more were made here. One of the oldest remaining Colony brick buildings in existence, it currently holds the U.S. Post Office and Garden Thyme, a gift shop. The BHHA finished an exterior historic restoration of this structure in 2019.



Steeple Building

The 1854 Steeple Building Museum was initially used as a school, offices, and living quarters for the Colonists. Today, it is the main museum, archives, and offices for the BHHA. This past year, we did some stucco repairs and touched up some worn spots with Keim, a special paint/sealant. We also replaced the furnace.



Colony Store

During Colony times, this structure was a general store for the Colonists and outsiders, with the storekeeper and his family living on the second floor. Today, the Colony Store is the gift shop for the BHHA. Swedish foods, Dala horses, Tomten, and other Swedish items are sold in this 1853 Bishop Hill Colony Building.



Dairy Building

The 1855 Dairy Building was the dairy processing center for the Colony. Today, the first floor may be rented for meetings, concerts, bridal showers, reunions, and other programs. The south apartment continues to be rented. The beautiful second floor is being leased as a photography studio by Bettertogether Photography.



Cobbler Shop

This 1905 building was used not only as a shoemaker's shop but was later used as a coffee shop and gift shop. This building is currently leased as a pottery workshop by J Goard Pottery. This year, the BHHA repaired the soffit on the front side.



Blacksmith Building

Six blacksmiths worked in this structure during Colony times. Today, the first floor of this 1857 structure is leased by the Prairie Arts Center. Pottery, rugs, and brooms are some of the items being sold by the artisans on this floor. The second floor has been rented by Wisteria Farms for a retail shop. This year, the Heritage repaired the soffit on the northwest corner of the building.



Livery Stable Museum

The 1908 Albert Krans Livery Stable continues as a stand-alone museum. In addition, volunteers once again planted historic crops next to the Livery Stable. The broomcorn and sorghum from these fields were used for decorations and demonstrations. The Albert Krans Livery Stable Museum is open April to October.



Spets Stuga

This property, located south of the Dairy Building, was acquired in 2017. The red building, called the Spets Stuga, has been converted to an early 1900's children's playhouse that was first opened to the public in September 2018. In 2022, a wooden play ship was added to the area. The Spets Stuga is open April to October.

MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

Collections

BHHA has a repository of artifacts on the third floor of the Steeple Building (not open to the public). People from all over the United States donate items from Bishop Hill's past. For example, a small box brought over from Sweden by a Bishop Hill Colonist and a large Ljuskröna was donated this year. We greatly appreciate all donations about the Bishop Hill Colony and its legacy!

Research

The Heritage had over twenty research requests concerning genealogy, Bishop Hill Colony history, and Bishop Hill history. Archivist Cheryl Dowell answered many of these requests and also maintains the genealogy files for the Heritage. In addition, high-resolution photographs are being made of our genealogy materials for preservation purposes, courtesy of Bob Nelson.

Archives

The scanning of historic documents and the accessioning of artifacts are ongoing. The first and second floor archives (open by appointment only) house an extensive collection of Colony documents, letters by and interviews with former colonists, obituaries, secondary sources, family genealogical information, news accounts, maps, scholarly reports and articles, unpublished manuscripts, post-Colony pamphlets, and photographs.

EDUCATION

Exhibits

Two temporary exhibits were displayed on the first floor of the Steeple Building Museum this year:

The first temporary exhibition was *19th Century Clothing*. This display had articles of clothing from the Bishop Hill Colony era to 1900. It included a suit, wedding dress, boy's vest, hats, quilts, and much more.



Swedish Christmas Traditions was again the theme for the winter holiday display on the first floor of the Steeple Building Museum. This exhibit briefly described some of the Swedish customs and legends associated with the holiday season. As always, the display included a working model railroad set.



Visitors also enjoyed the permanent exhibits on the first and second floors, complete with Colony furniture, tools, and many other artifacts.

Museum Visitorship

Visitor count is based on the Livery Stable guest book and the counter system at the Steeple Building. It does **not** include the number of guests who visited the Spets Stuga. These figures reflect the **minimum** number that visited each museum.

- Steeple Building Museum: **2,582**
- Krans Livery Stable Museum: **88**

Tours

This year, the BHHA hosted ten school field trips and other tours. A total of **287** students, teachers, parents, and other adults participated in BHHA's walking and step-on tours of Bishop Hill.



Crafts

In the Dairy Building, the BHHA organized a variety of workshops that reflect our rural and Swedish roots: natural dyeing, Scandinavian vocal folk music, woodcarving, dulcimer playing, and Julbock painting. During Jordbruksdagarna in the park and behind the Bjorklund Hotel, the Heritage was able to host outside demonstrations on rope making, woodcarving, brickmaking, and many other 19th century crafts.



Historic Presentations

At the Blacksmith Shop, the BHHA hosted a program called *Gunsmiths of Henry County, IL*. This free program was presented by Curt Johnson, author of *Gunmakers of Illinois 1683-1900*. Guns made by area gunsmiths were also on display.

BHHA Acting Troupe

Our volunteer acting group was able to perform numerous times this year at area libraries, local churches, and the QC Botanical Center. This year, the Acting Troupe performed *On the Road Again*. This skit was written by Cheryl Dowell and was performed by Cheryl Dowell, Jean Combites, Dianne Lindbom, and Vicki Massie. Thank you to our volunteers for all of their hard work and for teaching the public about the Bishop Hill Colony!



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers keep the BHHA running – helping with programs/workshops, creating displays, painting, cleaning, performing maintenance duties, gardening, fundraising, and so much more. Without the assistance of the volunteers, many of the BHHA’s activities would not be possible. **BHHA volunteers worked over 1,510 hours in 2025.** The BHHA greatly appreciate all the time and hard work provided by over seventy-five volunteers!



OPERATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

BHHA published the *Newsbulletin* twice this year. Press releases, radio and TV interviews, advertisements, announcements, and articles have generated publicity for BHHA in the following outlets this past year:

Radio

SuperHits 93.5, The Coyote 102.3, WJRE, WKEI, WOC, WVIK, WRHL, WAAG, WYOT, WGIL, and WZOE.

Television

KWQC-TV Channel 6 (Davenport, IA), WQAD-TV Channel 8 (Moline, IL), and WHBF-TV Channel 4 (Rock Island, IL).

Online

Our BHHA website (www.bishophillheritage.org) contains not only Bishop Hill event information but also history of the Bishop Hill Colony has a Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/bhcolonystore>. The online store was discontinued due to rising costs. The Bishop Hill Heritage Association also has its own Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bhheritageassociation>. By the end of the year, the BHHA Facebook page had over 6,900 Followers. The BHHA YouTube channel is located at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqKS9GgGjs8oJ99VjnlAZg>. This channel contains interviews of Colony descendants, lectures on Bishop Hill topics, and videos of Bishop Hill events.

Following is some of the websites that BHHA and Bishop Hill events were publicized on: kewaneevoice.com, wgil.com, regionaldailynews.com, qctimes.com, visitquadcities.com, qconline.com, KWQC event calendar, Experience Galesburg, Around Ptown, and Henry County Tourism Bureau.

Emails announcing special events were sent to BHHA members and past guests. Finally, many of our events have been posted on other organizations' Facebook pages including but not limited to the following: Kewanee Voice, Around Ptown, Super Hits 93.5, The Coyote 102.3, and Regional Media.

Newspapers

Prairie News

Galesburg Register-Mail

Peoria Journal-Star

Nordstjernen

Rock Island Argus

Daily Dispatch

Morton Courier

Quad City Times

MEMBERSHIP

This past year, the BHHA received over **\$19,294** in dues and renewals. BHHA currently has over **450 members** registered, of which over 30 are institutions such as museums, colleges, and local organizations. Members come from over 35 different states, including all corners of the country—Oregon, Washington, Florida and Maine, as well as members from Sweden and Mexico. At least 70% of our members reside in Illinois.

Colony Store Manager's Report
by Ronda McQueen

Considering all of the ups and downs that was 2025, the Colony Store had a great year. We welcomed visitors from all over the country and more than a few from overseas. Our events were well attended sometimes despite the weather. We said goodbye to some employees and hello to new. We have a great team in place and are looking forward to the coming year and celebrating the 180th founding of Bishop Hill. As always, we enjoyed serving our visitors and helping to spread some of that Bishop Hill magic to all who enter our door.



PEOPLE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The BHHA Board meets bi-monthly to do planning and oversee the work of the staff.

President Lou Lourdeau, Bishop Hill IL

Lou and his wife Janene moved to Bishop Hill from Kewanee in 2011. Lou retired from Walgreens. He enjoys photography, gardening, growing bonsai and traveling. He also enjoys doing community service in Bishop Hill.

Vice President Vicki Rabas, Bishop Hill IL

Vicki is a Colony descendant and pretty much a life-long resident of the village. She and her husband Mike have lived in Bishop Hill since 1989 and raised their two children here. Her family has contributed countless hours to volunteer activities in Bishop Hill. Vicki also is a member of the Old Settler's Association and has served as its secretary in the past. She is a regular volunteer at the Galva Food Pantry. After 39 and a half years as a registered nurse, Vicki retired from OSF St Luke's Medical Center's Surgery Department in December 2018. Vicki enjoys traveling, and especially her trips to Sweden. Gardening and antiquing are some of the activities that she enjoys in her spare time.

Treasurer Vicki Massie, Dahinda IL

A legal assistant at Massie & Quick Law Office, Vicki also serves as Treasurer of Xi Kappa Gamma sorority (Beta Sigma Phi), Treasurer of the Galva Senior Citizen's Foundation, and was past President of the Galva Rotary Club. Of Swedish descent, Vicki lived in Bishop Hill from 1968 through 1978, when she married her husband Mike and moved 20 miles south. A graduate of Knox College, she works in Galva and spends a lot of time in Bishop Hill. Also, Vicki portrays "Anna," a Bishop Hill Colonist in the many skits that the Heritage Acting Troupe performs. She enjoys spending time with her five children, twelve grandchildren, one great granddaughter, and traveling.

Secretary Marcy Strand, Bishop Hill IL

Marcy and her husband Ben have lived in Bishop Hill for over 20 years. She is a Spanish teacher at Cambridge High School. Ben and Marcy have 2 boys, Corben and Axel. They are very active in sports and many other interests so Marcy spends most of her spare time driving them to where they need to be, coaching a youth team, or helping with one of their other activities. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, baking, gardening, and helping with the boys' activities.

Kerstin Lane, Glenview IL

Kerstin was the founding executive director for the Swedish American Museum, Chicago from 1986-2006. She was also appointed Honorary Consul General for Sweden in 2003. Kerstin is active on a number of boards: SWEA, Center for Scandinavia Studies at North Park University, and the Swedish American Historical Society. In 2007, Kerstin was presented with the Swedish Order of the Seraphim medal by King Carl XVI Gustaf at an awards ceremony in Stockholm. In 2011, she was named Swedish American of the Year by the VASA Order of America. Kerstin Lane and husband, Joseph Lane, have three children and seven grandchildren.

Cheryl Wexell Dowell, Bishop Hill IL

Cheryl is a Bishop Hill Colony descendant of ancestors from Halsingland, Sweden. Her Great-Great Grandmother, with a clan of about 13 arrived in Bishop Hill with the first Bishop Hill Colonists on the brig, The Charlotta, under the leadership of her Great-Great Uncle Jonas Olsson.

Attending the Bishop Hill Colony School for her early education, first grade through sixth grade, are years of pride for Cheryl. She feels the country school setting offered much more than education. It was a place of becoming an individual as well as being in a large family atmosphere while teachers gave their best to each student.

Cheryl was employed by the State of Illinois, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, at the Bishop Hill State Site for 28 years retiring in 2005 as Assistant Site Manager. She began a Bishop Hill Colonist's genealogy program and cared for the artifact collection. Upon retirement, she was invited to be a volunteer at the Bishop Hill Heritage Association and continued the same specialized work.

A high-light in 1996, the sesquicentennial of Bishop Hill, as Bishop Hill Old Settlers' President, Cheryl hosted Their Majesties, King Carl Gustav XVI and Queen Silvia on their visit to the event. She has visited Sweden many times and received the Olov Isaksson award in 2008, given by the Bishop Hill Society in Biskopskulla, Sweden. The award is given annually to someone who has helped bridge relationships between the two countries.

Bishop Hill has been Cheryl's home with the exception of her first three years when her parents were farming near Ulah, Illinois. She has four children who are proud of their Bishop Hill Colony heritage as well as her 8 grandchildren and in the near future, her five young great-grandchildren will learn of their special heritage in Bishop Hill.

Bette Themanson, Kewanee IL

Bette and husband, Jim, live in Kewanee, IL. She is a retired registered nurse having worked at Kewanee Hospital, Proctor Hospital and United Healthcare. Bette graduated from Black Hawk College and Western Illinois University. Bette and Jim have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. She enjoys her family, friends, golf, reading and cooking.

Deni Menken, Bishop Hill IL

Retired from Country Financial after 27 years as a Sr. Lease Rep. Moved to Bishop Hill 15 years ago from Bloomington, IL. Member of the BHHA, VASA, and the First United Methodist Church of Bishop Hill. Regular volunteer in town activities. Deni and her husband Eldon have 6 grown children, 12 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

Stephanie Taylor, Cambridge IL

Stephanie and her husband John have lived in Cambridge for over 14 years. A Henry County native, graduating from Geneseo High School, she left rural life for a life in the big city-graduating with her B.A. from Dominican University. After pursuing a career in stage management, she fell in love and moved back to her rural roots. She attended the Institute of Therapeutic Massage and Wellness and is the Owner of Hand Taylored Massage. She teaches Irish Step Dance and competes regionally. In her free time, she can be found attending concerts, traveling, and attending all of her kids' activities.

John Asplund, Oneida IL

John earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Augustana College. After teaching in Ecuador and working briefly in Minneapolis, he moved home and earned his teaching degree from Monmouth College. He began his education career as an English teacher and coach at Knoxville High School. John later earned his Master of Science and Education Specialist Degrees from Western Illinois University and his Doctor of Education degree from Illinois State University. He has been a school administrator in several districts throughout the state of Illinois. He is currently the Superintendent of Schools at Galesburg District 205. John and his wife Julie are the proud parents of Isaac, Eli, and Clara.

Jim Nolan, Bishop Hill IL

Jim worked 50 years as a union carpenter. He also retired from 20 years of police work in Arizona. When his wife retired, they moved to Galva IL. Later, Jim moved to Bishop Hill when his wife passed away. He continues woodworking today and enjoys rehabbing antiques.

Jim Asplund, Oneida IL

Jim was born and raised on a farm near Oneida, IL. Following graduation from ROVA H.S. and Monmouth College, he served with the U.S. Army in Japan. After discharge and brief employment in Chicago, he worked for 35 years in Human Resources for Butler Manufacturing, working primarily out of Galesburg as the Plant Personnel Manager. He also served as the Company's Corporate Labor Relations Manager for the Company's 14 domestic and 2 Canadian plants. Since retirement, Jim and his wife Wanda have enjoyed spending time with their 3 children and 6 grandchildren, plus traveling to Europe multiple times, including a visit to Smaland, the province of his grandparents. Jim has recently served on the boards of the Ontario Township, Faith Lutheran Church, Oneida Cemetery Association and the Oneida-Wataga Fire and Ambulance Districts.

Warren Schulz, Bishop Hill IL

Bishop Hill resident, Warren Schulz, spent his youth in Varna, Illinois. He attended Western Illinois University and graduated with a degree in Agricultural Education. After teaching for several years, Warren was then employed by Eagle Enterprises. At that time, through being exposed to recycling methods, he was able to help many schools with thousands of dollars for needed items.

Warren is a member of the local VASA Lodge, the Galva First United Methodist Church, Galva Lion's Club, and is a diligent volunteer for the BHHA. He has served as BHHA President in the past and has been a member of the Building Committee for several years. He still loves his farming roots and helps farmer friends with the harvest each year. Warren's great grandmother, Emma Charlotte Johnson, came from Sweden in 1871 as a teenager and lived in Andover, IL until moving west.

Warren and his wife, Sue, have a son, Dr. Steven Schulz, living in New York. Steven and his wife, Narina, have provided Warren and Sue with a grandchild, Cullen.

Jean Combites, Moline IL

My ancestors on the Olson side were some of the original Colonists. My Great-Grandmother was Mary Malmgren Olson, the first child born in the Colony. She was born in a dug-out that

first winter of 1846, just a few months after they left Sweden! Andrew Arnquist came with his family in 1870 and established the Arnquist General Store.

Both of my parents, Howard Sundberg and Mildred Olson Sundberg, were born and raised in the Bishop Hill/Galva area. I spent summers staying and playing at Grandma and Grandpa Olson's farm south of Bishop Hill. I even rode horses through the park before the fence was put up! I grew up in Geneseo, graduated from GHS, University of Iowa, and taught in Rock Island, Chicago suburbs, and the last 24 years in Cambridge. I retired in 2007. After raising our two sons, and living in Orion for 40 years, we moved to a condo in Moline in 2014.

Many aunts, uncles, and cousins grew up in Bishop Hill and were teachers, carpenters, shop keepers, and farmers. I'm especially proud of the importance and value my Swedish ancestors put on education, especially for women, so many years ago! I've always felt that Sweden is "ahead of the times" in so many areas, and I'm proud to say, "I'm Swedish"!

Krista Peck, Bishop Hill IL

Krista and husband, Greg, live and farm just north of Bishop Hill. Krista received her Bachelor of Arts from Monmouth College and master's in education from Indiana Wesleyan. She taught 1st grade in Galva for several years before becoming a stay-at-home mom. She enjoys working with and supporting youth in various community organizations. Greg and Krista are the parents of Matthew, Jackson, Hannah and Samuel.

STAFF

Todd DeDecker, Administrator

Todd DeDecker became the administrator for the Heritage during the summer of 2012. He was raised in Henry County, graduating from Cambridge High School. After college graduation, he taught secondary social studies for sixteen years in southeast and south-central Iowa. Todd also earned a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from Western Illinois University and worked at several museums. He has six children and four grandchildren. During the summer of 2018, Todd married Janna Miller of Colona, IL. They currently live outside of Geneseo.



Heath Rodseth, Facilities Manager

Heath grew up in Princeton, Illinois and lives in Cambridge. He enjoys contributing to the work of preserving Bishop Hill's historic buildings for future generations.



Ronda McQueen, Colony Store Manager

Ronda McQueen was hired as a clerk in April of 2015. She assumed the Manager position in May of 2021 after the passing of Glenda Wallace. She graduated from ROVA High School and attended Carl Sandburg College. She began her retail career at Brooks Fashions in the Sandburg Mall. She then spent six years working at The Altona Shopping Center. After the Shopping Center closed, she spent the next twenty-five years working at the convenience store in Altona, IL. She spent four of those years as Assistant Manager. Ronda currently lives in Altona and has two children: Kaitlyn, who is married and lives in Lexington, SC and Connor, who works for the railroad. She also has two fur babies, Izzy and Oliver.



Allies and Supporters

LOCAL

- Bishop Hill Arts Council
- Bishop Hill businesses
- Bishop Hill Community United Methodist Church
- Bishop Hill farmers
- Bishop Hill Old Settlers' Association
- Bishop Hill State Historic Site, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Bishop Hill Village Board
- Bishop Hill Volunteer Firemen
- Henry County Historical Society
- Prairie Queen Quilt Guild
- Vasa National Archives

MUSEUMS

- American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN
- Erlander Home Museum, Rockford IL
- Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA
- Norwegian American Museum, Decorah, IA
- Swedish American Museum, Chicago, IL

HISTORICAL

- Andover Tourism Council-Historical Society, Andover, IL
- Cambridge Historical Society, Cambridge, IL
- Communal Studies Association, Amana, IA
- Galva Historical Society, Galva, IL
- Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, IL

- Illinois Association of Museums, Springfield, IL
- Kewanee Historical Society, Kewanee IL
- Landmarks Illinois, Chicago IL
- Lindstrom Historical Society, Lindstrom, MN
- Midwest Open Air Museums Coordinating Council
- Swedish American Historical Society, Chicago, IL
- Swedish Heritage Society, Swedesburg, IA
- The Swedish Historical Society, Rockford, IL

TOURISM

- Galesburg Visitors Bureau, Galesburg, IL
- Henry County Tourism Bureau, Cambridge, IL
- Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Western Illinois Tourism, Macomb, IL

ACADEMIC

- Augustana College, Rock Island, IL
- Black Hawk College, Moline, IL
- Knox College, Galesburg, IL
- Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College
- Univ. of Southern Indiana Center of Communal Studies, Evansville, IN
- North Park University, Chicago, IL

CULTURAL AND CIVIC

- American Daughters of Sweden, Chicago, IL
- American Scandinavian Association at Augustana, Rock Island, IL
- Dalesburg Scandinavian Association, Vermillion, SD
- Galva Lion's Club, Galva, IL
- Illinois Arts Council, Chicago, IL
- Illinois Humanities Council, Chicago, IL
- Swedish Club Foundation, Lake Forest, IL
- Swedish Women's Educational Association (SWEA) Chicago
- Vasa Lodge #683, Bishop Hill, IL
- Vasa Brage Lodge #29, Germantown Hills, IL
- Vasa Lodge Jubilee #692, DeLand, FL
- Svithiod Verdandi #3, Chicago, IL
- Svithiod Hall of Peoria County, Peoria, IL

GENEALOGICAL

- Bishop Hill State Historic Site
- Henry County Genealogical Society, Kewanee IL
- Knox County Genealogical Society, Galesburg, IL
- Vasa National Archives

SWEDISH

- Bishop Hill Sällskapet, Biskopskulla, Sweden
- Consulate General of Sweden, Chicago, IL
- Embassy of Sweden, Washington, DC
- Emigrantinstitutet, Växjö, Sweden
- HRM Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden
- Migranternas Hus, Alfta, Sweden

FINANCES

The Bishop Hill Heritage Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization registered in the State of Illinois. Members have the opportunity to review the annual report, with a summary of financial information, in February and can review our 990 form on the IRS website. In addition, each year, the BHHA conducts an independent audit.

INCOME

BHHA strives for a diverse income stream. Ongoing sources include Colony Store sales, annual membership dues, rentals, and fundraising events in Bishop Hill. Memorials are also much appreciated. Grants continue to be a major source of funding. The following is an overview of some of the Heritage's income sources for 2025.

Memberships (New Members and Renewals)= \$19,294

Other Donations (not including Bequests)= \$127,188

Tours= \$662

2025 Foundation Grants and Business Sponsorships for 2025/2026 Activities

- Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation -\$8,000 grant for educational programming
- Bishop Hill Vasa Lodge #683- \$100 for Midsommar Music Festival
- Community State Bank-\$2,600 for Chautauqua, Dancing Queen Concert, Julmarkand, and Lucia Nights
- Galesburg Community Foundation- \$2,000 for 2026 Civil War Days
- Geneseo Foundation-\$2,500 for 2026 Civil War Days
- Henry County Independent Insurance Agents-\$430 for Jordbruksdagarna
- Illinois Arts Council-\$12,950 grant for 2025 general operating expenses
- Illinois Arts Council-\$15,000 grant for 2026 general operating expenses
- Minneapolis Foundation- \$2,693 for educational programming
- Wilbur and Marilyn Nelson Farms-\$500 for Jordbruksdagarna
- River Valley Cooperative- \$500 for Jordbruksdagarna
- SWEA Chicago-\$1,400 for Swedish workshops
- State Bank of Toulon- \$500 for Jordbruksdagarna
- Terraform Power- \$500 for Jordbruksdagarna
- Vasa National Archives- \$50 for Midsommar Music Festival

EXPENSES

In 2025, the BHHA had one full-time employee, a part-time store manager, part-time facilities manager, and several part-time store clerks. Building maintenance, educational programming, exhibits, and archives constitute other expenses. To save costs, BHHA relies on volunteers for custodial work, landscaping, event setup/teardown, and many other tasks. BHHA also collaborates with other organizations to co-sponsor events.

HISTORY

In the summer of 1961, the village of Bishop Hill demolished the abandoned Colony Bakery/Brewery building, which had partially collapsed. This was the catalyst that led to the formation of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association (BHHA) in the fall of 1962. A small group of Colony descendants and town residents met to preserve the rich history of the Bishop Hill Colonists and began to acquire threatened Colony buildings. The founders were: Ron Nelson (President), John W. Bogren (V.P.), Merrill Nystrom (Secretary), Berenice Florine (Treasurer), Janet Nystrom, Frieda Boland, Mrs. William Henry, Gilbert Swanson, George Swank, Reynolds Everett, Sr., and Sam Mendel.

The following is a brief timeline of the major building acquisitions of the Heritage:

- ✚ 1963 – Steeple Building; BHHA museum, offices, and archives.
- ✚ 1966 –Colony Blacksmith Building; houses craftspeople, artisans, and shops.
- ✚ 1969 –Colony Store; now the BHHA gift shop, a major source of renovation revenue.
- ✚ 1971 –Cobbler Shop, now a pottery workshop
- ✚ 1976 –Colony Hospital (now in private ownership)
- ✚ 1976 –Poppy Barn (now in private ownership)
- ✚ 1985 –Colony Dairy Building; education center, photography studio and apartment
- ✚ 1987 –Colony Apartment Building (now in private ownership)
- ✚ 2011 –Albert Krans Livery Stable; second BHHA museum.
- ✚ 2016 –Colony Carpenter Building; now a gift shop, apartment, and U.S. Post Office
- ✚ 2017- Spets Stuga; pioneer children playhouse



Make a Difference

*Help preserve the unique and rich
architectural and cultural
heritage of
Bishop Hill, Illinois*

BHHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please print your information as you wish it to appear on your membership card.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email address _____

Telephone
number _____

Make checks payable to the BHHA.

Visa Mastercard

Exp. Date _____

Card Number _____

CVC or CVV number _____

Name as it appears on the
card _____

Signature of cardholder _____

A BHHA Membership fee can be as little as \$10, but for \$50 or more you will receive a 10% discount at the Colony Store. For \$75 or more, you will receive your 10% store discount, workshop discounts, and a special Colony Store coupon.

Dollar amount of membership _____

Make a Donation...

Mail a check to PO Box 92, Bishop Hill IL 61419

Make BHHA part of your estate planning

Give gift memberships to family and friends

Ask your employer about corporate matching funds

Make a donation in memory of a loved one

Donate family documents or artifacts

Volunteer to Help

Clerical work or installing exhibits

Fund-raising events

Town festivals

Greeting visitors or guiding tours

Maintenance, carpentry or grounds keeping

Publicity or photography

Speaking to groups