

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society

2019 Annual Report to Members

A MESSAGE FROM SOCIETY PRESIDENT, RICHARD LUPINACCI

2019 was another successful year for your Society with the inauguration of our new Museum of Nevis History now on the ground floor of the Alexander Hamilton birthplace building. This expands the Nevis story to include mention of all the influences that contributed to the island we know today. One single panel alone covers our history from the earliest Amerindians to the present and shows what was happening in Europe and Africa at the same time to put things in a better perspective for our people and visitors.

For this we must thank the invaluable efforts of Ms Lorna Glover Abungu, a returning resident and her associate, Ms Louissette Rasoloniaina who came from Paris where she has been working on exhibits at the Louvre Museum. We are particularly proud of their introducing interactive applications which allow in depth study of the stories displayed. It is gratifying to see the new awareness this has created for the history of Nevis. (As a footnote, the reconstructed building itself which also houses the Nevis Island Assembly was the first major project undertaken by the Society in 1980.)

This new Museum of Nevis History has added to our 2018 restored Alexander Hamilton Museum in the Hamilton/Trott house and has created a greatly improved enhancement to Charlestown and the Nevis tourist product. Our facilities have become a must see for island visitors and St Kitts cruise passengers. We are well positioned for and anticipate increased admission fees and shop sales when visitors return to the island; both are important revenue sources for our non-profit Society. Mention must be made of the volunteer effort of Society member, Mrs. Miriam Knorr, who totally revamped the relocated Museum shop in the Alexander Hamilton Museum, which is now contributing to the Society as well.

As I write this we are in the middle of 2020 and the subsequent impact of the Covid 19 pandemic impact which has globally affected all of us. We apologize for the late production of this report which was unavoidable. However, the board has undertaken an ambitious strategic planning exercise, with a view toward strengthening and enhancing our Society. I for one would like to see us prioritize our museums which have languished with neglect in recent years. Particularly I wish to see the re-creation of our Nelson Museum into a Museum of Nevis Maritime History amplifying our traditional boat building, our shipwrecks and perhaps the story of our 17th century pirates. The Nelson Collection alone was one of the major attractions to the island thirty years ago and should be again.

Sincerely,

Richard Lupinacci

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A LOFTY AND AMBITIOUS MISSION: A REMINDER OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Founded in 1981 by a small group of history buffs, preservationists and conservationists, The Nevis Historical and Conservation Society has, for over four decades been dedicated to ***promoting & protecting the historical, cultural and natural resources of the island of Nevis for the benefit of its people.***

As the graphic below sets forth, our overarching mission, as well as our underlying Statements of Purpose have always guided our vision and our work.

Nevis Historical & Conservation Society

“Promote & protect the historical, cultural and natural resources of the island of Nevis for the benefit of all of its people.”

Museums, Collections & Archives

The Collection and Preservation of Books, Manuscripts Records, Archaeological Objects and Works of Art, including the establishment of a museum in Nevis designed to portray and/or exhibit the traditional culture and history of Nevis.

Historical Sites & Monuments

The Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Restoration of Historical and Archaeological Sites, Buildings and Monuments on the island of Nevis.

Natural Resource Management, Ecology & the Environment

The Protection and Preservation of the ecology and of all natural life forms in and surrounding the island of Nevis.

Intangible Nevisian Culture & Heritage

Traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

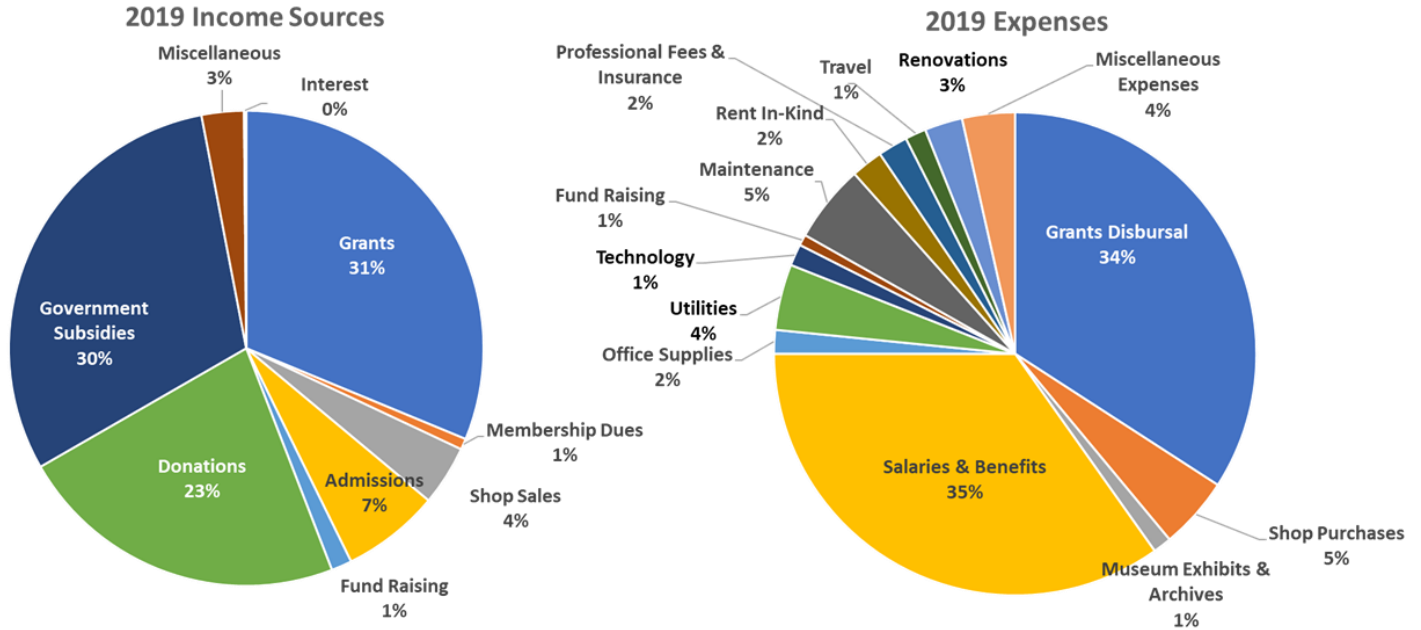
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KEY METRICS FOR 2019

The Society, which is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, derives its revenue from multiple sources, as represented in the pie chart below. Expense management continues to be of paramount importance, with financial resources always stretched to cover fixed expenses and budgets for concurrent demands of various initiatives.

Sources of Society Revenue & Expenses 2019



Source	2019
Grants	\$ 317,884
Membership Dues	\$ 7,637
Shop Sales	\$ 41,487
Admissions	\$ 67,740
Fund Raising	\$ 14,274
Donations	\$ 229,731
Government Subsidies	\$ 308,120
Miscellaneous	\$ 29,330
Interest	\$ 1,506
Total	\$ 955,285

Expenses	2019
Grants Disbursal	\$ 287,604
Shop Purchases	\$ 40,608
Museum Exhibits & Archives	\$ 10,389
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 293,358
Office Supplies	\$ 13,389
Utilities	\$ 37,131
Technology	\$ 12,195
Fund Raising	\$ 6,181
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 43,908
Rent In-Kind	\$ 18,000
Professional Fees & Insurance	\$ 16,826
Travel Expenses & Allowances	\$ 11,812
Renovations	\$ 21,372
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 29,852
Total	\$ 842,625

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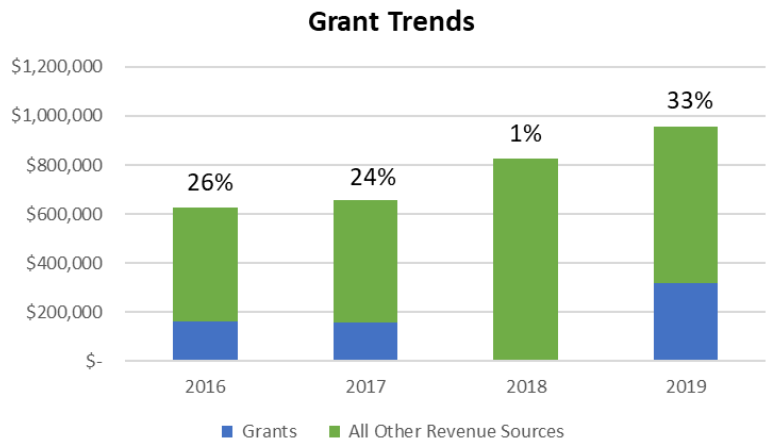
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Grants Enable Significant Projects

Grants from international grant-making institutions have continued to play an important role in enabling projects deemed significant by the Society. In the past several years, large grants from the following organizations have financed the following projects:

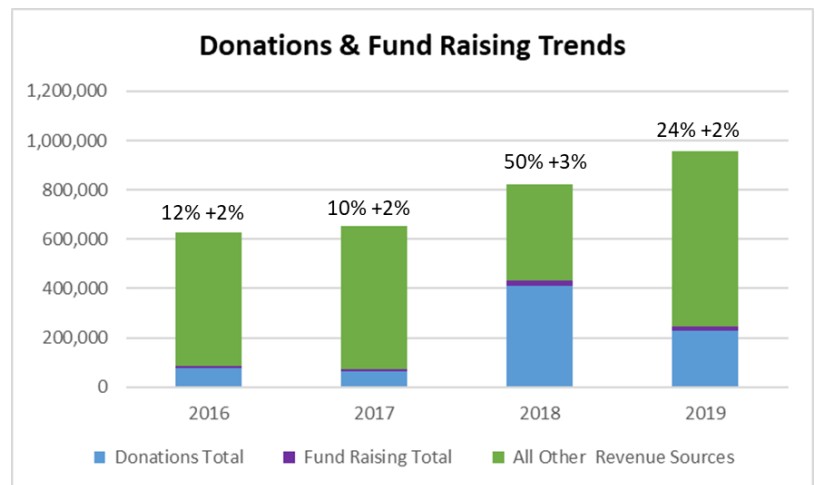
In 2019, the Society benefited from the following grants:

1. New funding of US\$150,000 for phase two of the reforestation project at New River/Coconut Walk and 10 acres of abandoned Hicks quarry.
2. The Society co-authored an Intangible Cultural Heritage proposal that led to a UNESCO donation to the Federation’s project of US\$99,000.00. As part of this grant, the Society will serve as the custodian of audio tapes and cameras, valued at approximately US\$10,000.
3. The Society received a US \$10,000 grant (through the St.Kitts-based Conserving Biodiversity Unit) to fund youth projects granted from the UNDP Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Department of Environment.



Fund Raising

As with all non-profit organizations, the Society counts on donations from generous benefactors and fund-raising activities that are organized by our dedicated and hard-working volunteer corps. Again in 2019, the Society was extremely grateful to receive a second installment of a two-year gift from Robin Sommers that made the renovation of the Hamilton House Museum possible.

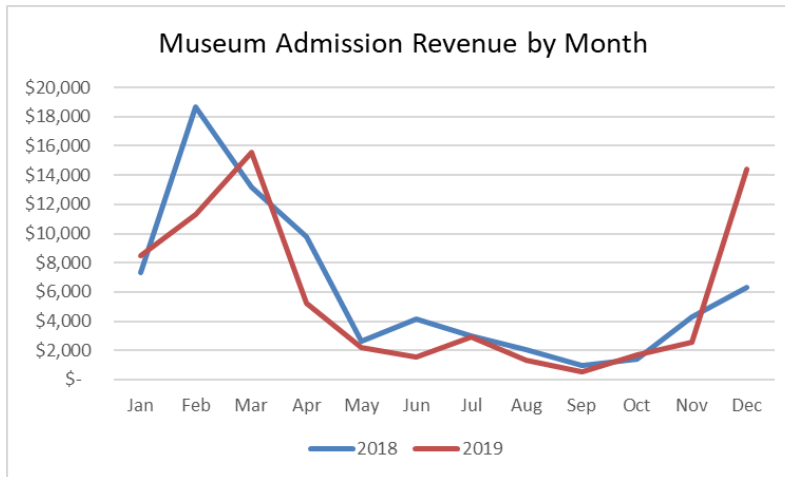


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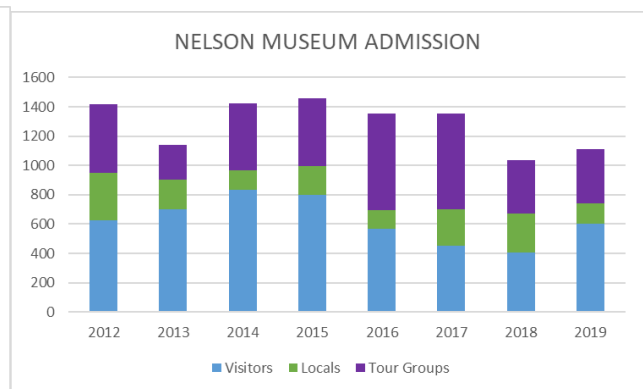
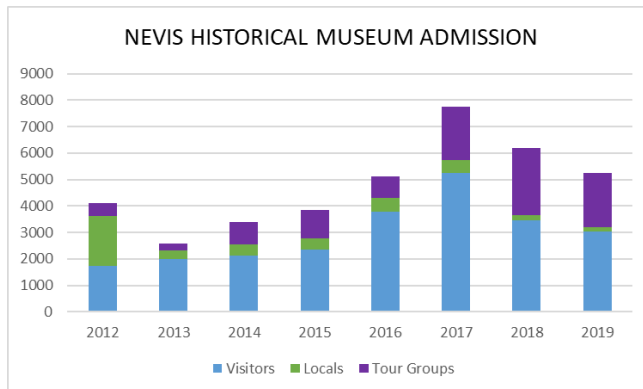
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Museum Admissions

Our on-going analysis of visitor traffic to our museum sites reflects that our admissions spike very dramatically during high season, and drop off to virtually a handful of visitors in the off season. Clearly our museums, important contributors to our tourist offerings in Nevis, are faced with the challenge of “making hay while the sun shines.”



The Nevis Historical Museum, now enhanced with the refurbished Hamilton House Museum, continues to be a much larger “draw” for visitors than does our Nelson Museum location. Tour groups represent a growing number of visitors to the Historical Museum & Hamilton House Museum, a welcomed alliance between the Society and these important tourist ambassadors.

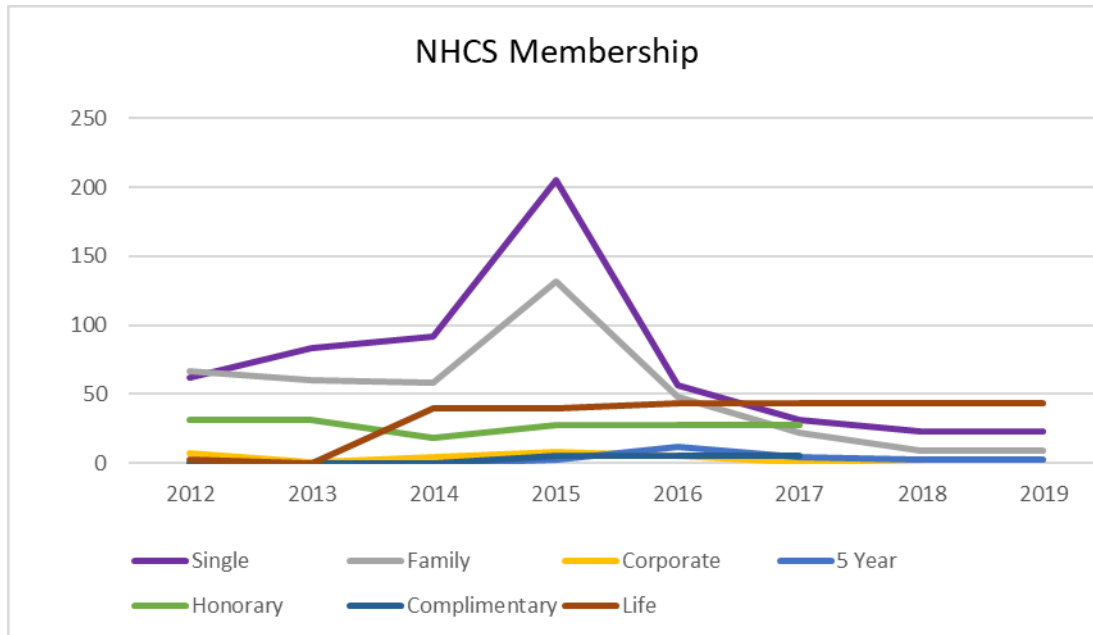


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Membership

The Society has fallen short when it comes to the growth and vitality of our membership ranks. The vitality of our Society is heavily dependent on the support and engagement of our members, and we have made Membership Services a priority in our planning efforts.



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SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2019

Museums

- An extensive overhaul and upgrade to all exhibits in the Museum of Nevis History. New augmented reality technology was incorporated to enhance visitor experiences. Two consultants, Lorna Abungu and Louisette Rasoloniaina implemented this project. They volunteered time and personal resources.
- Alexander Hamilton Museum receives international rave reviews. NBC news anchor, Kontji Anthony, travelled to Nevis to feature our newly-renovated Hamilton House. Her on location piece about Alexander Hamilton was aired on WMC Action News 5 (Memphis, Tennessee).
- Hamilton House restoration project attracted the attention of Her Excellency, Dr Tasai Ing-wen, President of the Republic of China (Taiwan). During an official visit to St. Kitts and Nevis, she toured the Alexander Hamilton Museum in July 14, 2019.
- Museum Gift Shop relocated to newly restored Hamilton House.
- Conservation and restoration of Horatio Nelson's Wedding Register to Mrs Fanny Nisbet is underway at the Borthwick Institute for Archives in York, England.
- Under the direction of renowned Canadian museum curators, Tina Bates and Phil Dunning, volunteers undertook the important work of cataloguing historical artifacts from March 11th to April 3rd, 2019.
- March 11th to April 3rd, 2019 a team of volunteers located, assessed and catalogued museum objects in the exhibits at the Museum of Nevis History and Nelson museum and in shipping containers and a shed at the Nelson Museum.
- From January 7th to 11th, Hamilton College staff and students worked with Nevis Historical and Conservation Society (NHCS) staff at the Nevis Archives/Nelson Museum to digitize manuscripts.
- In August 2019, NHCS staff member, Jonathan Ward, travelled to Hamilton College to learn more about archiving and curation. His visit was financed by Hamilton College and by His Excellency Ambassador Dr Everson Hull, St. Kitts and Nevis, Organisation of American States (OAS) Permanent Representative.
- The Society's engagement with the Federation's innovative STEP program expanded to include two new high school graduate interns. STEP has seconded four employees in total.
- Alexander Hamilton Museum Scholarship Awards ceremony/Tea Party - January 11, 2019. Four students from Charlestown and Gingerland Secondary Schools awarded scholarships.

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Ecology and the Environment

- Completed the implementation of first phase of Coconut Walk reforestation thanks to a US\$150,000 donated by GEF.
- Received a new grant of US\$150,000 through the UN GEF-IWEco project (Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States) for the continued reforestation of Coconut Walk and 10 acres of abandoned quarry at Hicks Estate. A small part of this grant is also to be used to fund a pilot initiative aimed at the eventual removal of an invasive plant species (typha or cattails) from the Nelson Spring wetland and the rehabilitation of the Spring.
- Annual International Coastal Clean-up held on 21 September.
- Earth Day lecture, “Protect our Species” coordinated by NHCS Biodiversity Committee and co-sponsored by Joan Robinson Memorial Fund and UNDP-GEF.
- Distribution of calabash seedlings donated by Jenny Lowery to primary schools during Arbour Month. The seedlings were to be distributed to communities by the students. Activity coordinated by NHCS Bio-diversity Committee.
- UNDP donation of US\$10,000 boosts NHCS youth initiatives.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

15 persons trained in video and audio documentation skills, use of archiving, software and data processing. The persons who include three NHCS staff members will be involved in the preparation of official Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) register.

Archaeology

Students from San Jose State University trained in archaeology at two locations during summer 2019: the Hamilton Estate sugar factory site and at Bush Hill Estate. Field Study led by Marco Meneketti. Report available.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Board Members issue a statement after concrete and other debris is deposited at Fort Charles. The Board Members urged persons to refrain from using heavy equipment in the area, or to use such equipment with extreme caution and under the careful watch of a suitable expert. Furthermore, any deposits of materials for stabilization purposes should be placed outside of the areas of archaeological interest.

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THANK YOUs

The NHCS Board of Directors and Staff would like to extend our appreciation to members, volunteers and friends who have contributed towards the success of our projects, events and activities.

**We say a special THANK YOU to those who went that extra mile,
as well as to our technical and financial partners in 2019!**

Keithly Amory • Virgil Arthurton • Pam Barry • Anne Bass • Tina Bates • Allerson Browne • Olivia Daniel • Phil Dunning • Christine Eickelmann • Ijeoma Ekeh • Lorna Glover Abungu • Suzanne Gordon • John Guilbert • Michael Henville • Janice Hodge • Carol & Telsa Johnson • Ajuma Kayo • Miriam Knorr • Rochelle Lamm • Jenny Lowery • Helen & Brice Marden • Cheryl Markosky • Robert Muroff • Polly & Bruce McCall • Derek 'Grant' Newton • Howard Pain • Beverly Parry • Wangechi Powell • Louissette Rasoloniaina • David Rollinson • David Small • Liz Smith • Robin Sommers • Marggi Vangeli • Ken Young

Bananas Bistro • Best Buy • Carib Breweries • Disaster Preparedness Department • Hermitage Plantation Inn • H&M Seafood Bar • Horsford's ValuMart-IGA • Slack's Jamaican Bakery • Joan Robinson Memorial Fund • Los Locos • Mansa's Last Stop • Nevis Equestrian Centre • Nevis Island Administration • Nevis Spring Water • Newcastle Bay Fisher Village • Pas Bar • Ram's • Solid Waste Department • TDC

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NHCS STAFF/SUPPORT

Pauline Ngunjiri - Executive Director • Gail Dore - Head Archivist • Gillian Hobson-Finance Officer • Edmond Coram-Gallery Attendant • Arquela Bendeito - Gallery Attendant/Assistant Archivist • Babita Seelall - Gallery Attendant/Receptionist • Jonathan Ward- Gallery Attendant/Admin Assistant • Deus Herbert - Gallery Attendant • Jamilah Clarke - Gift Shop Attendant • Almon Dasent - AV Documentation • Keithley Amory - Project Coordinator, New River/Coconut Walk Reforestation/Hicks Quarry Rehabilitation

NHCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Lupinacci - President

Todd Miller - Vice President

Warren Moving - Treasurer

Maurisha Robinson

Andrea Kaye

Marcia Myers

Isabel Byron

Gillian Hobson

Kris Liburd

Sylvester Meade