



## The Erie County Historical Society

**Watson-Curtze Mansion.**

All photos ECHS.

- The mission of the Erie County Historical Society (ECHS) is to collect, preserve, and promote the history of Erie County, Pa., and the surrounding region's rich historical heritage. ECHS achieves its mission by providing an active educational program, operating an extensive library and archives, and preparing and promoting a variety of exhibits.
- The ECHS headquarters is located at the Hagen History Center, a campus of four historical buildings in downtown Erie that recently underwent a \$3.5 million renovation: the Watson-Curtze Mansion, the Carriage House, Woods-Morrison House, and the King-Martens Archives Building.
- The core of the History Center's campus is the 24-room Watson-Curtze Mansion designed by Buffalo architects Green and Wicks. The home was built in 1891 and features an assortment of stained glass windows, friezes, decorative stone, and woodwork. The mansion provides interpretation of the Watsons and the Curtzes on the first floor. The second and third floors are devoted to the exhibit, *Sacrifice, Valor and Grit: Erie County in the Civil War*, and other interpretive exhibits on the military, manufacturing, ethnic history, architecture, recreation, and a variety of changing topics. Nearby is the Carriage House with a visitor's center, reading room, gift shop, and the 10,000-square-foot King-Mertens Archives Building.
- The Hagen History Center also boasts an impressive library and archives with more than 9,000 linear feet of archival and manuscript material, 6,554 special books, 8,600+ historic maps, architectural plans and drawings, 312,775+ photographic images, and 30,000 glass-plate negatives. The King-Mertens Archives building provides temperature and humidity control for many important collections including the Theodore Karle Civil War Collection and the Robert J. MacDonald Great Lakes Maritime Collection.
- ECHS also operates The Battles Museums of Rural Life in Girard, Pa., including the C. Elizabeth Battles Memorial Museum and The Yellow House, hiking trails, and gardens. The Rush Battles family was a prominent West County family known for its achievements in farming, banking, and industry. The Battles Museums feature programs, exhibits, and special events seasonally.
- The ECHS hosts special events, programs, and exhibits throughout the year including the Heinz History Center's traveling exhibit, *We Can Do It! WWII* through November 28, 2017. Additional exhibits, public programs, and receptions are offered throughout the complex.
- In 2017, the ECHS partnered with Preservation Erie to create a list of endangered properties. The purpose was to encourage coordinated efforts to improve preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of buildings and sites in Erie County. These endangered properties have historical, architectural, and/or archaeological significance and are threatened with destruction or loss of integrity.
- Members enjoy free admission to the historical properties, access to the reading room, gift shop discounts, and invitations to members-only events.
- The Erie County Historical Society's Hagen History Center is located at 356 West Sixth Street, Erie, Pa., 16507. The Hagen History Center's Watson-Curtze Mansion is open year round. The Library & Archives Reading Room in the Carriage House is open Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., by appointment. To learn more about the Hagen History Center's activities, events, memberships, and volunteer opportunities please call (814) 454-1813, or visit [www.eriehistory.com](http://www.eriehistory.com), or visit the group's Facebook page.
- The History Center Affiliates Program, HCAP, is a membership-based network that allows local and regional historical societies and museums access to museum professionals and best practice standards through the Senator John Heinz History Center.

To find out more about HCAP or to apply for membership for your organization, please contact Robert O. Stakeley, History Center Affiliates Program (HCAP) Coordinator, at [rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org) or (412) 454-6359.



**R.S. Battles Farm House, or Yellow House.**



**The C. Elizabeth Battles Memorial Museum, or White House.**



**ECHS Library & Archives collections on new Spacesaver shelving.**