

Thomas Hart Benton Home State Historic Site

Public Meeting April 2024

Accomplishments/Happenings over the Past Year:

- CY23 attendance was 4295, an increase of 35.45% over the previous year.
- Gift shop sales of: \$5323, a decrease of 2.33% over the previous year.
- Operational changes:
 - 11/1/23 – 3/31/24: No tours on Mondays, due to cap on part-time interpreter funding.
 - 1/3/24 – 2/3/24: No tours of house while interior repainted.
- Contractor completely repainted the first-floor interior of the house: walls, ceiling, & trim.
- Contractor did a variety of small exterior carpentry repairs.
- Lewis & Clark SP staff completed re-screening of 1st-floor south porch.
- Dead Golden Rain tree next to screened-in porch removed.
- Completed Enterprise Risk Management survey. Determined top 5 risks (financial, liability, safety, and/or operational) for the site.
- Nashville guitarist Billy Kemp played an evening acoustic set in the living room, similar to the musicales that the Benton family used to host.
- Participated in PorchFest 2023. Two bands played in the afternoon for 300 visitors.
- Hosted the dessert portion of Roanoke neighborhood's annual progressive dinner.
- Purchased with Donations Fund from Campanella auction three original Benton drawings: *Studies for "Interior"*, *Study for Jessie at Piano/Seated Figure*, and *Horse & Hoof Studies*.
- Renewed loans for another year for the ca. 1913 still-life painting, the 1907 Chicago Art Institute drawing, "Cave Spring" painting, and the Elburn baby grand piano.
- Purchased Benton-illustrated editions of "Tom Sawyer" & Huck Finn". This gives us a complete collection of books illustrated by Tom Benton.
- Continued participating in a passport program with KC's Interpretive Sites Coalition. Steve continues as Board Member & Secretary for the KC Heritage League.
- Set up a booth at George Washington Carver Ntl. Historic Monument in Diamond during Carver Day. Carver's foster mother, Mariah Watkins, delivered baby Tom Benton and was his nanny in Neosho.
- Group tours for Chillicothe, Lee's Summit, & Cameron High School art clubs, Roads Scholars, Metropolitan Museum of Art, & MO Art Educators Association.
- Presented on-line PowerPoint programs to a total of 45 people; including Middlesex CT Institute for Lifelong Learning, Bay Area Art Lovers, and Mid-Continent Public Library.
- Presented 15 off-site PowerPoint programs to a total of 308 people, especially at Mid-Continent Public Library branches.
- Continued cataloging of artifacts into PastPerfect database. Currently have 9286 objects with 1663 images.

Proposed/Potential Projects for Next Year

- Redo 360° virtual tour with new contracted vendor.
- Repaint the second-floor interior of the house to complete that project.
- Repair or replace house boiler and/or studio furnace so that systems are reliable.
- Mitigate or correct the risks listed in our Enterprise Risk Mgmt survey.
- Fix wall of Visitor Center where wood rot has affected beadboard.
- Make progress toward a 2026 Capital Improvement Project to fully repaint exteriors of both buildings; with associated repairs to gutters, soffits, and fascia boards.
- Have purchased an exhibit case for “Hoosier History” printing plates. Get labels made and install in the Visitor Center.
- Catalog into PastPerfect the Bentons’ various financial & income tax paperwork.

Attendance & Sales:

	2023	2022	% increase/decrease
Total Attendance	4295	3171	+35.45%
Total Tours Given	727	641	+13.42%
Gift Shop Sales	\$5323	\$5449	-2.33%