



Annual Report 2023





From the President and Executive Director



If we had to sum up this past fiscal year in one word, we'd use the word "momentum". Momentum is that feeling – and the evidence – that present efforts are being propelled forward by past efforts in a continuum of vision. Overall participation has risen this year, the buildings and grounds have been restored, and community awareness of RJD is at an all-time high.

How lucky we are to have such a rich cultural landscape in New Bedford. We're grateful to be able to work with these colleagues throughout the year. The list of our partners grew in FY23, including organizations like New Bedford Food Tours, Third Eye Youth Empowerment, and the Bristol County Bee Keepers Association, to name a few. These organizations helped us introduce RJD to an entirely new audience and in turn, we helped them deliver their mission-based programs and services. Together with our partners, we are the rising tide that lifts all boats.

A majority of visitors to the property were drawn specifically by the historic garden. As popular as it is, the garden represents only one of our five collections. The other four include the 1834 mansion itself, the historic objects in the house, the archives, and our teaching collections. With such an extensive range of collections, our part-time collections manager, Lauren Prescott, was still able to complete an inventory of the historic objects: a collection estimated at about 2000 items. This inventory was recommended by our 2019 Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) report. The CAP continues to be our checklist for the stewardship of these important collections and the property.

This spring, we watched excitedly as the installation of Abolition Row Park progressed, and we enjoyed its official opening on June 23. It anchors the north

end of 7th street, while RJD anchors the south. Together with the Park, and the newly designated Abolition Row Historic District, we will continue to work on telling a more complete story of abolition efforts in the city. While writing this letter, we are at the same time writing grant requests to fund the work needed to better tell the abolition story of the historic house and grounds.

This momentum has come from a shared vision. The Museum's trustees and staff have worked diligently on the strategic plan's initiatives. We thank them for their time and dedication this past year. We also want to thank you for supporting our leadership; this will be our last letter to you as the team of President and Executive Director. The teamwork will continue with a new President of the Board, and the vision will be carried forward.

As members, donors, participants, volunteers and supporters, you've had a part in the last year's activities. In so doing, you also have a part in the momentum gathered from our successes this year. Let's keep the momentum going.

G. Stewart Young,
President of the Board of Trustees

Dawn E. Salerno
Executive Director

Leadership

In Year Two of the Strategic Plan, Executive Director, Dawn Salerno, together with staff and Trustees, have moved the needle forward on four strategic goals:

- 1. To leverage RJD’s history to develop new programs highlighting ethics, racial justice, domestic life, and horticulture
- 2. To enhance and unify the visitor’s experience of Abolition Row
- 3. To develop sustainable financial strength
- 4. To grow our capacity as a diverse and inclusive organization

The RJD is led by a stellar Board of Trustees who were engaged with all four goals, and especially Goal Four. From January through March, six trustees participated in Leading Equitable Organizations, with equity trainer, Angela Park. Park returned for the Board retreat on May 4, helping to articulate the leadership’s equity agenda for the subsequent year.

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NextGen

Amelia Alburn, Chair Andrew Armstrong Kayla Connor Von Marie Moniz	Leonardo (Leo) Reis Staff: Hillary Fortin, Lauren Prescott
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Thank you to this year’s outgoing Trustees!

Individuals volunteer their services to the RJD board.
We thank them for their gift of time, knowledge and support.



Steven Anderson



Janet Coquillettte



Ruth Oliver Jolliffe

Staff

Our wonderful staff is behind every Museum operation, from fundraising to the latest preservation project. Without any turnover in staffing, we were able to build momentum, developing deeper relationships with our constituents, greater institutional knowledge, and a stronger team.

FY2023 Staff & Contractors



Rick Finneran
Facilities Manager
and
Lead Gardener



Hillary Fortin
Development and
Administration
Coordinator



Lauren Helley
Events Assistant



Loredana Mello
Events Assistant



Claudio Pereira
Functions and
Sales Manager



Betsy Pinho
Bookkeeper
(Contractor)



Lauren Prescott
Manager of
Collections and
Interpretation



Dawn E. Salerno
Executive Director

Exhibitions

Curated by Lauren Prescott, Manager of Collections & Interpretation.



Home is Where the Hearth Is,
January 2, 2023 – present.

This exhibition reclaims this room for its original function as a kitchen dating to the Jones era (1851 – 1935). The display features kitchen implements from that era, and aims to show what the kitchen looked like, who worked here, as well as explaining how it functioned as a work and gathering space for staff.

Hats Off! A History of Fashion in Headwear,
December 1, 2022 – Present.

Hats and headwear have a history that dates back to ancient civilizations. This display aims to highlight some of the more interesting hats and headwear in the museum's collection, from Quaker bonnets to a World War I doughboy helmet.

Right: Tintype of William Rotch & Annie Beard, c. 1871. Rotch's glengarry is on display in exhibition. Gift of Pat Jackson, 2022.4.



Collections

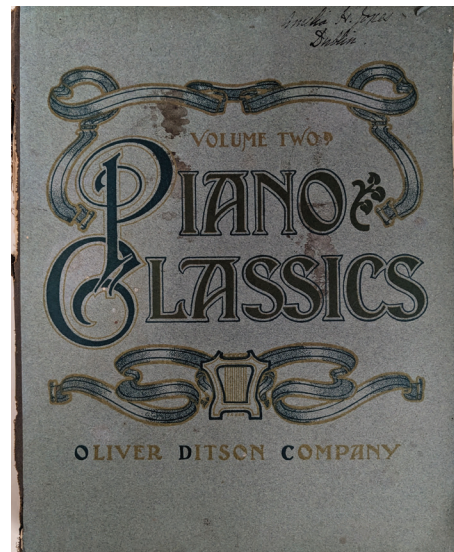


- A new Collections Management Policy was written in June 2023.
- Volunteer Catherine Adamowicz conducted an artwork inventory.
- Museum guide updated to incorporate additional information on the families and social history.

Acquisitions

This year, the RJD accepted several donations into its collections.

- Cooking school textbook & housekeeper's guide, *Pamela Sherman* (January 2023)
- Piano Booklet belonging to Amelia H. Jones, *Jane F. Young* (March 2023)
- 19th century wallet belonging to Thomas Rotch, son of William Rotch Jr., *Laura Jackson*, (May 2023)
- Books owned by descendants of William Rotch Jr., *Laura Jackson*, (May 2023)



Audience Engagement

The RJD worked with these organizations to deliver annual programming:

AHA! New Bedford
Bristol County Bee Keepers Assoc.
BuyBlackNB
Cinema New Bedford
The Collective
DATMA
Garden Club of Buzzards Bay
James Arnold Mansion
New Bedford High School
New Bedford Food Tours
NB Free Public Library

NB Whaling National Historical Park
NB Preservation Society
NB Symphony Orchestra
P.A.C.E.
Preservation Society of Newport County
Reverie Theatre Group
School of Yoga New Bedford
Third Eye Youth Empowerment
YMCA South Coast



Black in Business: Juneteenth Vendor Market



Concert in the Garden



Mother's Day Tea



Valentine's Concert



Surveying the Furniture of Jules Allard

Marketing

Programs Throughout the Year

AHA Nights @ the RJD, Monthly second Thursdays, year-round
Family Story Time, With NB Free Public Library, Monthly Wednesdays & Thursdays
Office Al Fresco, Wednesdays, July through September
Appraisal Day, July 16
Playwright on the Patio, With Your Theatre, July 23 & 24
Members Reception, August 10, January 22
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, With Reverie Theatre Group, August 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, & 20
Open House at the Mansions, August 21
Annual Meeting & Reception, September 15
Walking Tour of Abolition Row, September 24
House Tours, October 1, November 5
RotchtoberFest, October 12
Friday Night Brights, November 25
Children’s Tea, November 27
Afternoon Tea in the Parlors, November 29
Valentines Concert, February 12
Finding the Spark to Light the Fire, February 15
Dr. Marie Equi’s New Bedford 1872-1892, March 15
Open House at the Mansion, March 18
Chamber Music in the Parlors, With New Bedford Symphony Orchestra Musicians, April 16
Surveying the Furniture of Jules Allard, With Newport Preservation Society Fellows, April 20
Mothers’ Day Tea, May 13
Yoga and Breathwork for Seniors, With School of Yoga NB, May 11 – June 1
Concert in the Garden, With New Bedford High School bands, May 16
Rose Garden Tour, June 8
Yoga in the Garden, With YMCA South Coast, weekly Saturdays, starting June 10
BuyBlackNB Pop-Up Vendor Market, June 16

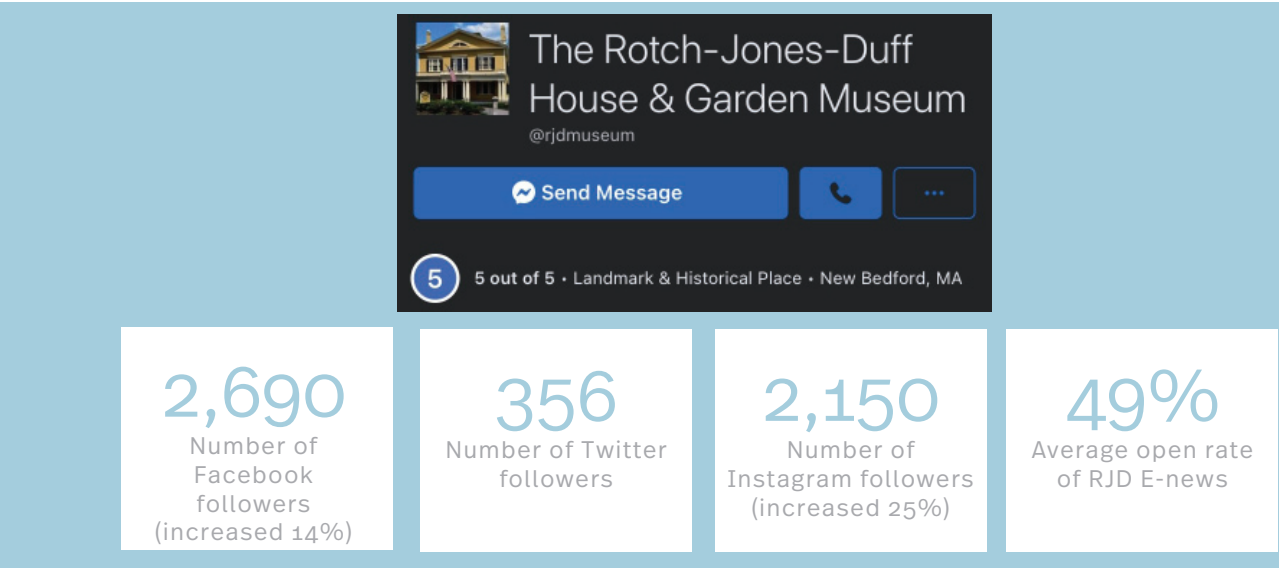


Shakespeare in NB: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

RJD partnered with its cultural colleagues to improve awareness and drive admissions from both locals and tourists. RJD offered a joint ticket with the Whaling Museum, or a three-for-one ticket including the Fishing Heritage Center and New Bedford Art Museum. Our colleagues from other museums are admitted free out of professional courtesy. We believe that affordability should never be a barrier to participation in history and culture. Therefore, the RJD offered free admission through these programs:

- Blue Star Museums
- ConnectorCare Card
- EBT Card
- Museums for All
- Passport to History
- Wunderfund

The Museum receives no subsidy to cover these lost admission fees.



Events



Nothing But Trouble

Major events to build community and support for the Museum were held under the tent in the fall and spring.

Mystery at the Mansion, October 21 and 22, 2022: The collaboration RJD has with The Collective resulted in a new mystery to solve in this participatory theatrical event. About 100 attended the two performances. This was the most financially successful of the M@M's, netting over \$8,000 for Museum programs, preservation and outreach.

Nothing But Trouble, June 9, 2023: The annual June garden party featured Prohibition Era décor and cocktails. Over 110 people participated and the event generated over \$24,000 in net operating income for the Museum. This amount exceeded goal by over 50%.

Thank you to those who supported these events with their attendance, donations, and sponsorships!



Nothing But Trouble

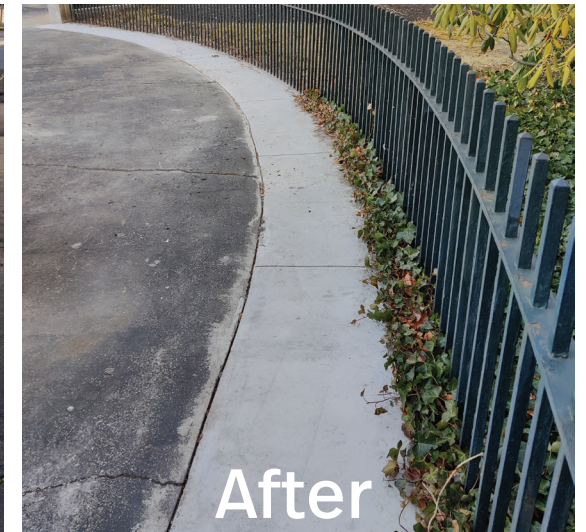


Mystery at the Mansion: Gala

Preservation



Before



After

Facilities Manager, Rick Finneran, conducted several maintenance and repair projects in FY23. The Apiary interior was painted, a few minor roof leaks were repaired, and the basement floors were repainted. In addition, he helped with several small “beautification” efforts in the Coach House that included painting, lighting and the installation of curtains. As a result of two semi-annual all-staff “cleaning days”, a room was cleared for better storage of the collections and museum shop stock was moved to make room for the kitchen exhibition.

With grant funding from the Community Preservation Act, C & L Construction leveled granite staircases, repaved pathways on the north side of the building with blue stone, and replaced some cracked concrete in the driveway and garden. The 2012 Olmsted Report was consulted for the proper treatment.

The lift had a necessary repair to the “shoes.” A new canopy and side poles were purchased to replace ones that had reached their end-of-life. The City took down two Madison Street trees that were dying and presenting hazards to parked cars and pedestrians. Replacement trees will be planted by the city as well.

Preservation



Capital Improvements

Capital Investments Total: **\$167,469**

\$142,900 Masonry	\$22,932 New canopy & poles	\$730 Repair to the lift	\$907 Computers & Software
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Support

Volunteers & Interns

A new cohort of New Bedford non-profits was formed around the topic of volunteer programs. The RJD is one of many organizations like Buzzards Bay Coalition, NB Whaling Museum, NB Whaling National Historical Park, Our Sisters School and the Zeiterion, focused on recruitment, training, and stewardship of volunteers.

The Museum’s volunteer corps saw a reduction of about 50% over the pandemic years. A new grant from Mass Service Alliance aimed at pandemic recovery allowed us to hold two informational open houses for prospective volunteers.

Summer Intern, Lexus Rakowski Calvin, assisted the work of exhibitions and collections throughout the months of June, July and August. A student at UMass Dartmouth, she was able to gain experience with the RJD in cataloguing museum collections and exhibition research.

Membership

The Museum Members Perks Program concluded this spring of 2023. Perks were coordinated in partnership with local businesses so that Members could explore all that New Bedford has to offer. Membership Shopping Night was reintroduced in November. For the upcoming year, the “perks” concept has been refitted into Member Appreciation Month. RJD also piloted a “Welcome to New Residents” program, sending new New Bedford home owners the option for a free dual membership to the RJD.

46 Number of active volunteers in FY23	1,413 Number of hours donated	200 Current museum members
\$138,396 FY23 Annual Appeal total		9% % dollars above appeal goal

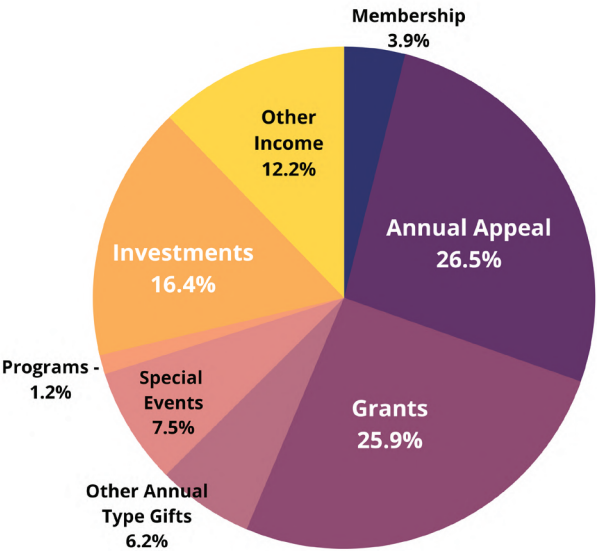
FY 2023 Operations Financials

Revenue From Operations	FY 2023	FY 2022	% Change vs. '22
Membership	\$21,110	\$20,535	3%
Annual Appeal	\$142,595	\$125,821	13%
Grants	\$139,599	\$95,922	46%
Other Annual-Type Gifts	\$33,380	\$37,300	-11%
Special Events	\$40,578	\$36,915	10%
Programs	\$6,667	\$3,880	72%
Investments - Annual Draw	\$88,509	\$82,880	7%
Other Income	\$65,894	\$38,947	69%
Total Revenue	\$538,332	\$442,200	22%

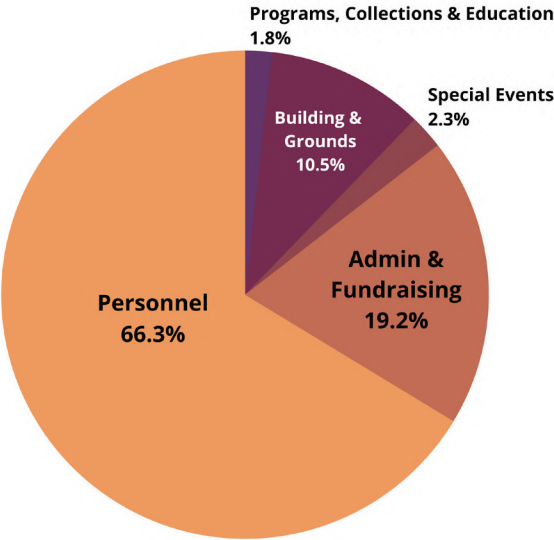
Operating Expenses	FY 2023	FY 2022	% Change vs. '22
Programs, Collections & Education	\$7,123	\$7,337	-3%
Building & Grounds	\$41,969	\$58,727	-29%
Special Events	\$9,046	\$8,208	10%
Admin. & Fundraising	\$76,838	\$63,230	22%
Personnel	\$265,915	\$247,017	8%
Total Operating Expenses	\$400,891	\$384,519	4%
Net from Operations	\$137,441	\$57,681	18%

FY 2023 Operations Financials

FY2023 Revenue from Operations



FY2023 Operating Expenses



Thank you to this year's supporters!

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Mr. and Mrs. Michael Walker
Ms. Jillian Walsh
Ms. Anna Sutton Whitcomb
Mr. and Mrs. James Whitt
Mrs. Eusie Zane



Bringing History Home

Since its founding in 1985, the role of the RJD has expanded from steward of an historic building to a proactive member of the cultural community, offering a variety of programs for a diverse audience. Today this National Historic Landmark offers house tours, a variety of cultural programs and changing exhibitions, and curriculum-based educational programming to more than 7,000 people annually.