This past March, life slowed down. I had a bunion surgery, requiring me not only to be off my foot for six weeks, but also to forego all the activities that might require weight bearing. Getting around on crutches is difficult, so I cleared my calendar: I missed the latest production at Your Theatre and that month’s Science Cafe. I said farewell to my YMCA gym friends. I skipped post-work Happy Hours. And I certainly couldn’t go dancing at the Body Body Body monthly dance party.

So now you know a bit about how I spend my evenings. As a New Bedford resident, all these social and cultural opportunities are just outside my door.

My post-op reminded me a bit of the pandemic years, when everyone stopped going out to museums, restaurants and performance venues. It wasn’t even a choice. Of course, I chose to be home-bound, and by the time you read this, I’ll be back to my normal activities. And all those places will be there for me to enjoy.

You may not come to the RJD Museum frequently, like you would attend a music performance, pick up a book at the library, or eat out, but we’re always here for you, year-round. We’re here for the school groups that take field trips to learn about the importance of bees in the ecosystem. We’re here for couples who are getting married. We’re here for volunteers, looking to give back to their communities. And we’re here for locals and tourists, wanting to learn more about New Bedford’s maritime and Abolitionist history.

There’s a whole new season of activities at the RJD Museum, where you can see a play, hear a concert, enjoy a social hour, or even take Yoga in the garden. Exhibitions have also been refreshed with a digital guide to the collections, and a special exhibition on the three Jones sisters. You can count on us for engaging programming, educational exhibitions, and the beautiful garden. So put a date on your calendar to check out the Museum this summer or fall.

Be well,

Dawn E. Salerno
Executive Director
Museum News

RJD Welcomes New Staff and Says Goodbye to Departing

Sage R. Lamade became the Manager of Collections and Interpretation in March, filling the position vacated by Lauren Prescott. Sage received a visual arts education at the “famed” Fiorello LaGuardia High School of Music, Art, and the Performing Arts, and specialized in oil painting and mixed-media sculpture. She went on to obtain her Bachelor’s in Classics and Art History at Bucknell University in 2022. Later Sage was awarded a student grant to join the newly-developed “Digitizing the Objects of Ancient Thebes,” a project in which she worked closely with archaeological materials, applying Digital Humanities techniques to prepare recently-excavated discoveries for scholarly analysis and publication. Another highlight of her undergraduate career was her involvement as a founding member and researcher in the Heresies Research Project, which studies the historic, New York-based, Feminist zine and artists’ collective, Heresies. Today Sage remains interested in the intersection of museums and social justice. She is pursuing a Master’s in Museum Studies while also working for the RJD.

Beatrice Alder was hired as a temporary Research Fellow. Beatrice is a writer, artist, and outreach educator based in New Bedford. A Stanford history major and two-time Fulbright scholar, Beatrice has garnered awards for both historical fiction and academic research. Recently, Beatrice served as an artist-in-residence at the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, retelling overlooked queer histories of the South Coast. Their debut novel, a queer historical (not yet published), was a finalist in the PEN America awards.

We were all sad to see Lauren Prescott leave her position as Manager of Collections and Interpretation. Many of you attended her well-researched lectures about the collections, or engaged on-line with her social media posts. Lauren worked for the RJD out of a true love of the job–she held a full-time position elsewhere during her tenure here–and found she needed more work/life balance. We wish her the best, and are so glad she chose to remain on the RJD Collections Committee as a volunteer.

To our new team members, we say welcome! To our departing ones, we are so grateful to have worked with you.
The Bell of Liberty Hall

BY BEATRICE ALDER

On March 20, 1851, at six o’clock in the morning, the bell of Liberty Hall began to ring—a signal warning New Bedford’s self-emancipated Black population of danger. Men from Boston’s Vigilance Committee had traveled all night to deliver news of a possible slave-catching raid by U.S. marines. The bell tolled for an hour. The marines never came, but the incident left a lasting impression on Black and abolitionist New Bedford.

In a last-ditch attempt to appease Southern slaveholders and avert a civil war, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 had authorized the pursuit of enslaved people seeking refuge in free states. While White Massachusetts abolitionists were dismissive of the dangers to the formerly enslaved, Black families in New Bedford began to pack up and leave for Canada after the Fugitive Slave Act passed. Reports of slave-catchers in Boston soon validated their fears. In March 1851, after the false alarm at Liberty Hall, New Bedford’s community of color gathered to plan for the defense of their liberty. About nine hundred people—almost nine-tenths of the community of color in New Bedford—attended the meeting.

It was in this tense atmosphere that Sarah Hobbs, who had worked for the Jones family since 1849, considered her own family’s future. Hobbs had come to New Bedford from Maryland with her young daughter Maria in 1846. During her journey north, Hobbs was probably already pregnant; not long after her arrival in New Bedford, she gave birth to another daughter, Susan, who died in infancy. Hobbs applied to the city’s overseers of the poor to cover the cost of her child’s funeral. Not long after that tragic loss, Hobbs found employment with the Jones family.

Fugitives in New Bedford were understandably cautious about reporting their origins to the state. No known records confirm that Sarah Hobbs was formerly enslaved. But in mid-April, less than a month after the New Bedford raid that didn’t happen, Hobbs left her position at 396 County Street for Canada. Freedom seeker Thomas Sims had been captured and re-enslaved on Massachusetts soil in early April. Many formerly enslaved New Bedforders declared their intention to fight and die rather than submit to Southern kidnappers. Whether she had experienced enslavement or not, Sarah Hobbs must have wanted to protect her only surviving child from the turmoil.

No raids occurred in New Bedford that spring or summer. Either Hobbs decided that the immediate danger had passed, or finding work as a Black woman and adjusting to life in Canada proved unfeasible for her. In August 1851, she returned to her old job on County Street and stayed with the Jones family until November 1853. After 1855, her name disappears from local records.

David W. Ruggles, a prominent local abolitionist and a member of the Jones domestic staff from 1849–1853, is the only former slave definitively known to have worked or lived at 396 County Street. After seventeen years of freedom in New Bedford, he had the stability and relative safety to speak out. Most self-emancipated people had no such platform. As with the sudden flight and return of Sarah Hobbs, context can help us understand the stories that went unspoken—and what the bell at Liberty Hall may have meant to those who heard it ring from County Street.
JULY

**YOGA IN THE GARDEN**
WITH NEW BEDFORD YMCA INSTRUCTORS
Saturdays at 8am, July 6 through September 28
Enjoy a mindful morning stretch in the garden throughout the summer. Yoga can help increase flexibility, strength, stability, calmness, and focus. Bring a mat and water. YMCA Southcoast Members: Free/Other Participants: $10. Advance payment is requested.

**THE BEE’S MEAD**
HOSTED BY THE RJD’S NEXTGEN COMMITTEE
Thursday, July 11, 5pm – 7pm
Bring the family for an evening of festivities including lawn games, make-and-take crafts and refreshment. Learn more about bee keeping from the Bristol County Beekeepers Association. This event is free as part of AHA Night. HFortin@rjd.org / 508-997-1401 x103.

**MUSIC IN THE GARDEN**
WITH NEW BEDFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S EMMALEE HOLMES-HICKS AND PETER ZAY
Sunday, July 21, 12pm
Enjoy a summer selection of music from Emma Lee Holmes-Hicks, violin and fiddle, and Peter Zay, cello and guitar. They will perform unique interpretations of the classics and inventive arrangements of traditional tunes. Bring your lawn chairs to listen from the garden area. Picnickers welcome. Tickets available at the door: $15.

**FAMILY STORYTIME**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Wednesday, July 17, Noon – 12:30pm
Meet in the garden for an engaging half hour of stories for the whole family. After the stories, take home a family fun craft kit to collaborate and create together! Family Storytime will run every third Wednesday of the month, through December 18. Open to all ages with accompanying adult. Free.

AUGUST

**YOGA IN THE GARDEN**
WITH NEW BEDFORD YMCA INSTRUCTORS
Saturdays at 8am, August 3 through September 28
See July listing for full description. YMCA Southcoast Members: Free/Other Participants: $10. Advance payment is requested.

**MEMBER APPRECIATION MONTH EVENT:**
**BUBBLES & BLOOMS**
WITH LEAD GARDENER, RICK FINNERAN
Thursday, August 8, 5pm
Mingle with fellow Museum members and enjoy bubbly refreshments on the porch overlooking the rose garden. Lead Gardener, Rick Finneran, will be there to answer your questions about rose-care.

**EXHIBITION RECEPTION**
Thursday, August 8, 5pm – 7pm
See the newest exhibition at the RJD which focuses on the lives of the three Jones sisters: Sarah, Amelia and Emma. Refreshments served. This event is free as part of AHA night.

**MEMBERS RECEPTION**
Thursday, August 15, 6pm– 7:30pm
RJD Museum Members are invited to enjoy refreshments on the porch of the mansion, overlooking the parterre rose garden. Enjoy the view while sipping your Twelfth Night-themed cocktail. Reverie Theatre Group’s production of Twelfth Night follows at 7:30pm on the tented patio for those who want to extend the evening’s festivities. For the first ten members who request it, front row seats will be reserved. RSVP to Hillary Fortin by Friday, August 9: HFortin@rjd.org / 508-997-1401
SHAKESPEARE IN NB PRESENTS:
TWELFTH NIGHT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
REVERIE THEATRE GROUP
August 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 7:30pm
August 25, 2pm – Sensory-friendly Matinee
Celebrating its fifth year of bringing the Bard’s most poignant plays to audiences of all ages and walks of life at the RJD, Reverie presents a powerful and fresh take on Shakespeare’s timeless tale. Audiences will experience the iconic love triangle between Viola, Duke Orsino, and Olivia set during the 1920’s Harlem Renaissance, a cultural and intellectual revival of African American art, politics, scholarship and music. Illyria will take the form of a thriving jazz club, as Jamie Roballo directs this classic story of love, loss, deception, and identity. Donations of any amount are accepted in lieu of a fee.
This program is supported in part by grants from the Acushnet, Dartmouth, Mattapoisett, and New Bedford Cultural Councils, local agencies, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. It is also supported in part by the Wicked Cool Places grant funded by the City of New Bedford, through American Rescue Plan awards, and its Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, and is facilitated by New Bedford Creative at the NBEDC.

OPEN HOUSE AT THE MANSIONS
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE JAMES ARNOLD MANSION
Sunday, August 18, 12pm – 3pm
The two mansions connected by County Street and marriage (James Arnold married Sarah Rotch, daughter of William Rotch Jr.) are co-hosting a free day of activities. RJD features tours of the house, lemonade, and lawn games. At the James and Sarah Arnold Mansion visitors will tour the house and grounds, learn about historic trees and plans for future enhancements of the Grounds, and enjoy fruit punch and cookies. Free.

SEPTEMBER

YOGA IN THE GARDEN
WITH NEW BEDFORD YMCA INSTRUCTORS
Saturdays at 8am, September 7 through 28
See July listing for full description. YMCA Southcoast Members: Free / Other Participants: $10. Advance payment is requested.

FIVE PILLARS OF HIP HOP
HOSTED BY 3RD EYE UNLIMITED &
NEW BEDFORD WHALING NATIONAL
HISTORICAL PARK
Thursday, September 12, 5pm - 7:30pm
This last of five monthly events exploring the Pillars of Hip Hop will focus on Knowledge. The evening features live performances by creative collective, NBPAC , Xtreme Hip Hop Step, and Sleepless In New England, as well as live graffiti painting by New Bedford muralist Eden Soares, giveaways, and more! As always, this Pillars event is family friendly and free as part of AHA Night.

FAMILY STORYTIME
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW
BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Wednesday, September 18, Noon – 12:30pm
See July listing for details. Open to all ages with accompanying adult. Free.

ANNUAL MEETING & RECEPTION
Thursday, September 19, 5:30pm – 6:30pm
Join the museum’s staff, board, Corporators and fellow members for a look back at the past year of museum activities. RJD Research Fellow, Beatrice Alder, will share stories discovered about the domestic staff at 396 County Street. A reception in the garden follows the meeting and talk. Free.

OCTOBER

HOUSE TOUR
Saturday, October 5, 2pm
Enjoy a one-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion. Various RJD Docents and staff conduct tours. Free with the price of admission.

JAZZ CONCERT IN THE GARDEN
WITH AUSTIN BURNS AND ELLIOT TALLEY
Sunday, October 6, 2pm
Enjoy an afternoon listening to whimsical originals and jazz standards. Tenor Austin Burns and pianist Elliott Talley return to the RJD for this performance on the tented patio. Bring your lawn chairs. Picnickers welcome. Tickets available at the door: $15 General Seating / $10 Students with I.D.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN PARADE
Thursday, October 10, 4pm – 7pm
Visit the grounds to see a display of Jack-O-Lanterns. Inside the mansion, children can participate in a scavenger hunt with prizes. At 5:30pm, Cool Banana Wig performs, bringing kids up to play a variety of unique homemade instruments built by the band. Refreshments served. Suggested donation: $5 Individuals / $10 Family.
This event is also part of AHA night. The RJD is looking for pumpkin carvers! Carve or paint and contribute a pumpkin. Provide your own pumpkin and deliver finished pieces to the Museum by noon, October 10.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN PARADE
Thursday, October 10, 4pm – 7pm
Visit the grounds to see a display of Jack-O-Lanterns. Inside the mansion, children can participate in a scavenger hunt with prizes. At 5:30pm, Cool Banana Wig performs, bringing kids up to play a variety of unique homemade instruments built by the band. Refreshments served. Suggested donation: $5 Individuals / $10 Family.
This event is also part of AHA night. The RJD is looking for pumpkin carvers! Carve or paint and contribute a pumpkin. Provide your own pumpkin and deliver finished pieces to the Museum by noon, October 10.
**FAMILY STORYTIME**  
**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
Wednesday, October 16, Noon – 12:30pm  
See July listing for details. Open to all ages with accompanying adult. Free.

**MYSTERY AT THE MANSION**  
Friday, October 18, 6pm - 9pm  
An all new mystery is presented in this audience participation event. Guests must search for clues in the mansion and gardens in order to solve a mystery. Creative dress is welcome. Seasonal nosh is provided. Tickets go on sale in August.

**DECEMBER**

**FAMILY STORYTIME**  
**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
Wednesday, November 20, Noon - 12:30pm  
See July listing for details. Open to all ages with accompanying adult. Free.

**HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR**  
Saturday, December 7, 11am  
Visit the decorated mansion and pick up your holiday greens in one visit to the RJD! Enjoy a half-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion, where special attention will be paid to the holiday customs of the original residents of the house. The Garden Club of Buzzard’s Bay Greens Sale runs 9am to 2pm in the RJD’s Coach House. Your tour is free with the price of museum admission, or proof of purchase from the GCBB Greens Sale.

**NOVEMBER**

**HOUSE TOUR**  
Saturday, November 2, 2pm  
Enjoy a one-hour guided tour of the Rotch-Jones-Duff mansion. Various RJD Docents and staff conduct tours. Free with the price of museum admission.

**DOMESTIC STAFF OF 396 COUNTY**  
Thursday, November 14, 5:30pm  
RJD Research Fellow, Beatrice Alder, shares their research about domestics, Isabella White and Sarah Hobbs. Arrive early for some pre-holiday shopping and refreshment. This event is free as part of AHA night.

**AFTERNOON TEA IN THE PARLORS**  
CATERED BY MILWARD TEA ROOM  
Sunday, December 1, 2pm – 4pm  
Tuesday, December 3, 2pm – 4pm  
Enjoy tea, scones, tea sandwiches and sweets in the festively decorated double parlors of the mansion. Festive dress is encouraged. Fee includes tea service plus admission to the Museum. Parties of 8 guests may reserve a table; smaller parties may be seated with others. $35 Members / $40 Public; advance reservations required.

**CHRISTMAS ON COUNTY**  
Thursday, December 12, 4pm – 6pm  
Drop in to see the decked halls of the mansion and hear from docents about some of the holiday customs held by residents of the house. Wear your ugliest holiday sweater and seasonal accessories. Be a baker or be a judge in the fifth annual Cookie Challenge where home bakers bring batches of their favorite homemade cookie for sampling and judging. This event is part of AHA night. Donations are accepted in lieu of a fee.

**FAMILY STORYTIME**  
**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
Wednesday, December 18, Noon – 12:30pm  
See July listing for details. Open to all ages with accompanying adult. Free.

Please call the museum in advance or visit our website to register for programs with a fee:  
[rjdmuseum.org](http://rjdmuseum.org) / 508-997-1401
THE ROTCH-JONES-DUFF HOUSE & GARDEN MUSEUM PRESENTS

Mystery at the Mansion

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 2024
6PM - 9PM