

# Annual Report

## Old Barracks Association



Photo by WMB Photo

FY 2023





## Letter from the President

As the new president, it I could sum up the past year in two words, those words would have to be positive change. This was a year of significant, positive changes and a renewed vitality at the Old Barracks Museum. We were fortunate to find our new Executive Director, Michelle Doherty, from within our ranks. We have welcomed several new and returning staff members, transitioned from the Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of the Treasury, and said goodbye to our former Executive Director of twenty-nine years, Richard Patterson.

The extended period of COVID-19 was a time of regrouping and retooling. We used that time to rebuild our programs, both in-person and virtual, created an entirely new organizational structure, ensured salaries reflected today's competitive labor market, and increased our state funding. In addition, Tavern Night made its triumphant return in FY 2024.

As we approach the upcoming 250th anniversary, our leadership team is working hand-in-hand with the historic community and our state partners to coordinate programming and complete necessary repairs and renovations.

Finally, this year also saw the addition of new board members and a collaborative relationship between our talented staff and dedicated trustees. If I had to guess two words to describe the upcoming year, they would be...exciting times.

*Lisa M. Willever*

Lisa Willever

Board President, Old Barracks Association



## Letter from the Executive Director


This past year brought with it a myriad of changes, challenges, and opportunities at the Old Barracks Museum. In the past year, the museum has seen changes to staff and structure, events and programming, and has risen to each challenge.

While a number of staff members moved on to different opportunities, we are excited to welcome our new staff members, each of whom bring their own skills, interests, research, and creative energy that help to reinvigorate the programming at the Old Barracks. In addition to Historical Interpreters, we welcomed new positions including marketing, custodial, and a new Assistant Director who works closely with the Director to coordinate the interpretive and curatorial aspects of the museum to create a more entertaining, educational, and cohesive guest experience.

In February, Executive Director Richard Patterson left the Old Barracks Museum. Richard helped guide the museum through major renovations, built a staff of well trained and educated historical interpreters, and helped to create many of the events that we continue to provide today. He was a dedicated member of the Old Barracks staff for over 29 years and we wish him well.

The next year will be full of challenges, with capital projects that include a new HVAC system, as well as work beginning on the new roof and railings. It will also be a year of planning as the staff will work with local sites to coordinate and promote the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Revolution in 2026.

I am very proud and humbled to have become the Executive Director and to be fortunate enough to work with the talented, educated, and inspired staff at the museum as we reimagine what the museum has to offer. Over the past year, the staff have worked to bring back our keystone events. As a result of all of their hard work, in 2023 we saw a return to Summer Camp, the May Tea, the Author Lecture Series, and Four Centuries. New events were also created including Art at the Old Barracks and All Barracks Eve. We are planning a full calendar of events for 2024, including the return of Tavern Night, the Colonial Ball, and the Battles of Trenton reenactment. The work and talents of the staff allow the Old Barracks to continue to be regarded as one of NJ's premier Revolutionary War sites.



Michelle Doherty

Executive Director, Old Barracks Museum



## Tours & Visitation

The museum was able to offer the ever-popular on-site Meet the Past program in the fall and spring group tour seasons, with full capacity tours offered this spring for the first time since COVID. The museum welcomed approx. 75 groups throughout the year and provided programming for over 2,300 participants. This is a 64% increase in participants and 200% increase in groups from FY 2022.

The museum was open for on-site visitation Wed-Sat and hosted over 2,100 visitors, up from 1,400 the prior year. Shop revenues increased 48%, from \$12,000 in FY 2022 to \$17,700 in FY 2023. Total visitation & shop revenues rose by 124%, from \$20,000 in FY 2022 to \$44,800 in FY 2023. The shift from virtual to in-person visitation greatly increased our figures, and we anticipate continued growth in FY 2024 as we increase marketing and outreach efforts.



## Special Events

The museum was happy to offer a wide range of new special events, as well as revisit and reimagine several long-standing events that had not taken place since before the pandemic.

The Old Barracks revived Summer Camp, May Tea, Four Centuries, and the Author Lectures Series, and added new events such as All Barracks Eve, Patriot's Day, and Arts at the Old Barracks.

The museum welcomed 300 guests and raised \$8,500 in net income from these events, and we expect these figures to increase as we expand our offerings for FY 2024.

## Collections & Preservation

The Old Barracks worked on several exciting curatorial projects during FY 2023.

The museum received a generous donation from the Kleiner family of six Queen Anne-style chairs (top right) which were owned by Joseph Moulder, Captain of an artillery unit for the Philadelphia Associators. It is believed that these six walnut chairs are those listed in Moulder's 1779 estate inventory.

The Old Barracks reframed the wax silhouette of General George Washington (bottom right), done by Patience Lowell Wright of Bordentown, New Jersey. It is thought she created it while in Europe in 1780 to show her support for the continental cause. She is considered one of America's first sculptors, but unfortunately many of her pieces have been lost. Only two of these wax silhouettes are known to remain in existence. This piece is currently featured in an exhibit titled "Making Her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400-1800" at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The museum completed its first collections inventory in ten years. The collection is well-maintained, well-organized, and will provide a strong foundation for projects and programming as we prepare for the 250th anniversary of the Revolution.

## Research

The Old Barracks received an Inclusive History Research Grant funded by the New Jersey Historical Commission which allowed researcher Christopher Minty, Ph.D., to conduct a thorough investigation and identification of Black and Indigenous soldiers at the Battles of Trenton. He has found 70 possible soldiers who may have been present at the battles, and 31 have been verified.

The project is set to be completed in December 2023. We eagerly anticipate his findings, as his research will inform future exhibitions and programming related to the Battles of Trenton.





## Grants, Donations, & Contributions

The Old Barracks was awarded several generous grants from organizations and individuals during FY 2023, including but not limited to those listed below:

- General Society of Colonial Wars - \$14,900
- Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission - \$1,385
- Meta A. and William S. Griffith Foundation - \$4,000
- New Jersey Historical Commission - \$24,500
- Nicky Fifth Foundation - \$3,000
- NJ DEP - \$789,000
- Society of Colonial Wars in NJ - \$7,700
- Sons of the Revolution - \$2,500
- State of NJ - \$205,850 (\*in-kind)

In addition to supporting our operations and educational needs, these grants helped fund special projects and events such as History Summer Day Camp and the acquisition of a researcher for our expanded Battles of Trenton exhibit.



## Finances At-A-Glance

The museum's net income increased by 47% year over year.

### FY 2022

Total Revenues -	\$1,058,299
Total Expenses -	\$ 938,165
Net Income -	\$ 120,134

### FY 2023 (unaudited)

Total Revenues -	\$1,179,787
Total Expenses -	\$1,002,867
Net Income -	\$ 176,920

## Membership

The organization saw a 27% decrease in membership revenues year over year. We believe this is due to the focus on reopening at capacity rather than growing our membership base, as well as a temporary reduction in development staff for a portion of the year.

We are now fully staffed and planning more engaging membership events and initiative. As a result, we are confident that membership will continue to grow as it had done in prior years.

FY 2022 Membership Revenues - \$13,676

FY 2023 Membership Revenues - \$ 9,971



## 250th Anniversary

The Old Barracks is positioned to be a keystone site in the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In 2023, the Old Barracks created a panel of Trenton sites to help increase the focus on the importance of Trenton's role in the Revolution and to build a more cohesive historical tourism destination. The staff continues to design new educational programs, new interpretive programs, and new exhibits that will be available throughout the celebration and well beyond.

## Maintenance

The museum has been continuing its ongoing repairs and maintenance of the building.

The elevator has been repaired and is under a quarterly maintenance plan with a reputable elevator company that was recommended to the museum by the state.

The damage caused by the tree which fell into the building during the summer of 2022 was assessed and paid for by the state, and we are looking forward to the completion of the repairs in early FY 2024.

## Looking Ahead

The Old Barracks has made much progress in the beginning of FY 2024.

The museum was awarded \$1,000,000 from NJ Treasury for our FY 2024 Grant-In-Aid, which is a 27% increase from our prior year award amount. These funds will allow us to expand our staffing, grow our programming, and plan new exhibits ahead of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Revolution.

The museum was awarded \$750,000 in funds from the National Park Service which will be utilized to make much needed repairs to our roof, railings, and fence.

The museum is planning to bring back a full slate of events for FY 2024, including the Colonial Ball, Battles of Trenton, and the Beulah Award.



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