



## Annual Report to the Joel Lane Museum House Historical Society

April 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016

Numerous accomplishments marked the year ending March 31, 2016, thanks to the devoted and conscientious work of our staff and dozens of volunteers and the support of our members and the public at large. We continued to fulfill our mission of bringing 18<sup>th</sup>-century Piedmont North Carolina history to life through steadily expanding educational programming and preservation of our historic site. This year also presented a significant challenge posed by the retirement of director Belle Long.

Through tours of our historic buildings and grounds, Hands-on-History presentations both on-site and in area schools and senior centers, and presentations to civic groups throughout the region, we reached approximately 4,750 individuals, an increase of 5.5% over the previous year. Children served included more than 754 K-12 students. On-site activities for children included Camp Flintlock Colonial Day Camp in June, for the ninth consecutive year. Our Independence Day celebration and our Christmas Open House once again drew large numbers (despite rainy weather on July Fourth), accounting for almost 20% of those we reached throughout the year.

Our annual lecture series, offered September through May, is an important element of our educational programming. In our last fiscal year, beginning April 1, 2015, the series included speakers on the evolution of firearms from the late 1700s to the Civil War, North Carolina furniture from 1700 to 1850, bookbinding in the age of the Kindle, North Carolina's role in the American Revolution, and gambrel-roofed houses of northeastern North Carolina, as well as a screening of the documentary film "Colored Confederates and U.S. Colored Troops" followed by a discussion with the film's writer and producer.

In contrast to our annual lecture series held at our visitor center, which limits attendance to 25 due to its small size, in February we were able to sell more than 150 tickets for "The Inimitable Winston Churchill," a presentation by Elliot Engel held in the sanctuary of Raleigh Moravian Church. This educational and entertaining event was one of our major fundraisers, netting \$6,400. Our other major fundraising event was "Cocktails by the Pool" in August, hosted by Dolly Smith. Ticket sales were considerably lower than in 2013, the first and only other time this event was held, but an increase in the number of sponsorships and very healthy bidding during the silent auction yielded a greater net profit of approximately \$12,000. Both of the annual winter and summer/fall fundraisers are organized by the staff and board of the Joel Lane Museum House, but the largest annual fundraiser for the benefit of our historic site is the NSCDA-NC Wake Committee's Spring Party. The Spring Party in May 2015 netted more than \$33,000, for which we are extremely grateful.

Income from Joel Lane Historical Society dues, responses to our annual year-end appeal, and Museum Store sales also are essential to fulfillment of our mission. In the year ending March 31, 2016, 351 members paid dues of more than \$12,000 and members and other friends of the Joel Lane Museum House contributed more than \$22,000 in response to our year-end appeal, altogether accounting for 18% of our income. Museum store sales both on-site and at NSCDA-NC committee meetings across the state netted an additional \$6,000. Thanks to our competent part-time staff who manage our site in her absence, Director Belle Long was able to attend five committee meetings from Rowan County to New Hanover County, where she promoted the Joel Lane Museum House through sales of selected museum store merchandise. She also furthered our mission as a guest speaker at two of the meetings and at the meetings of several other organizations throughout the year, including the William Polk Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Preservation of the Joel Lane Museum House and its campus is as vital to fulfillment of our mission as our educational programming, and last year we celebrated completion of two major capital improvement projects due to special donations. A grant of \$11,500 from the Raleigh City Council's Council Contingency Fund enabled us to replace the wood shingle roof on the rear two planes of the gambrel and the rear shed wing of the museum house. (Replacement of the roof on the front two planes of the gambrel was done in the previous year.) The generosity of Edith Shepherd, Paul Castelloe, and an anonymous donor and a gift from the Frances Pendleton London Legacy Fund of the Wake County Dames funded completion of the interior renovation of the Visitor Center, which entailed the installation of additional shelving and cabinets in the Museum Store/Office. Throughout the year, numerous volunteers tended the gardens and potted plants for sale. The herb garden has never looked better.

Donations of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Piedmont walnut drop-leaf table and six Windsor chairs (five late 18<sup>th</sup>-century and one 19<sup>th</sup>-century) enhanced the museum house collection. A seventh Windsor chair was purchased with donations from the Joel Lane and Old North State chapters of the Questers of North Carolina.

The greatest challenge faced last year was the search for a new director following Belle Long's announcement last summer that she would retire at the end of April. Ms. Long became our director in 2008, and in the eight years of her service she adroitly managed our site while enhancing our programming and guiding us through many improvements in our operations and facilities. Consequently, the prospect of replacing her was daunting. A five-member search committee of board members was created in October. They updated our personnel policies and in January ran an advertisement that garnered 22 applications for the position. Five applicants were interviewed, and at the end of our fiscal year we identified a preferred candidate. Meaghan Nappo accepted our offer of employment and began as our new director on May 1. We are grateful to Ms. Long for staying on two weeks longer than planned in order to facilitate the transition, and in mid-May we bid her farewell with much appreciation for her service and best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Ms. Nappo is a Raleigh native with a B.A. in history and M.A. in public history from UNC-Wilmington. While in school, she was the weekend manager of the Latimer House and had internships at a number of other historic sites in the Cape Fear region. After graduation, Ms. Nappo worked at the University of Georgia, managing a program for incoming freshmen. She is excited about returning to Raleigh in pursuit of her chosen career and we are equally excited about her energy and creativity as we enter a new era in which we aim to attract a broader and more diverse audience in keeping with the region's changing demographics.

We look forward to continuing success in the current year with optimism and enthusiasm. And as always, we are very appreciative of the support of the Joel Lane Historical Society members and our volunteers, without which we could not fulfill our mission. The staff and board could not accomplish all that we do without you. Please welcome Meaghan Nappo and visit us often in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia R. Brown

President, Board of Directors  
Joel Lane Museum House, Inc.  
July 15, 2016