



KENT-DELORD  
HOUSE MUSEUM

## 2017 Annual Report

### **ABSTRACT**

The Delord Family's story continues when visitors enter the gate and see this home through the eyes of the Delord descendants and hear family stories and challenges that span over 100 years. The Museum's activities and accomplishments for 2017 are summarized in this annual report.

## **Introduction**

The Delord family resided for more than a century, from 1810-1913, in the house that today is the Kent-Delord House Museum. The house overlooks the scenic Lake Champlain and Cumberland Bay where in 1814, the Americans won the Battle of Plattsburgh, a strategic victory instrumental in ending the War of 1812 with the British.

One of the oldest homes in the City of Plattsburgh, it was built in 1797 by William Bailey. His sister, Elizabeth Bailey Kent, wife of James Kent, chief justice and chancellor of the New York Supreme Court later sold it to Henry Delord. The Delord story unfolds from the hundreds of letters, diaries, and artifacts written and kept by the family over a span of 100 years. The historic house contains Delord and Webb heirlooms from the last descendant, Frances Delord Webb Hall.

Fannie Hall died on October 4, 1913. In her will, she left her “historic relics” to a museum and her house to the Physicians Hospital. For the next ten years, her faithful servant Catherine Dowling served as caretaker of the house, protecting and preserving not only the house, but also historic family belongings.

Jeannette Brookings Tuttle, a civic activist and local historian, is one of the key people responsible for the Kent-Delord House Museum. As Regent of the Saranac Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Mrs. Tuttle launched a campaign in 1914 to raise a maintenance fund and asked William H. Miner, a local millionaire inventor, to buy the house to preserve it as a museum. It took ten years of convincing, but Miner bought the home in 1924 and immediately started the restoration process.

William H. Miner established a Board of Trustees to administer a trust fund he provided to operate the house as a museum. The Kent-Delord House Corporation obtained a provisional charter in 1928 as an educational institution from the Regents of the University of New York, and was later granted the absolute charter on March 18, 1938. Today the Museum remains the depository of portraits, furniture, dinnerware, books, letters, and personal items owned by three generations of the Delord family.

## **Mission and Vision**

### ***Mission***

The Kent-Delord House Museum, by preserving the grounds, structures, collections, and writings of the Delord family, aims to interpret and display the historical and cultural significance of the Delords during the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### ***Vision***

To become a nationally accredited historical museum that provides memorable, dynamic, educational experiences based on the legacy of three Delord generations.

## 2017 Board of Trustees

President	Paula Calkins Lacombe
V. President	Diane Wyand
Secretary	Sharon Bell Scarlett McBride (as of October 2017)
Treasurer	Holly Morrow
Member-at-Large	James Clute Domenica Padula (as of October 2017)
Director	Don Wickman
Members	Tom Glasgow (resigned February 2017) Craig Russell Gary Fisher Paul Miller (resigned March 2017) Marlee Bickford-Bushey Trevor Laughlin (resigned October 2017) Marta Clute (as of October 2017) Carol Lindberg (as of November 2017) Joshua Wingler (as of November 2017)

## President and Executive Committee Report

The Kent-Delord House Museum remains an asset to the Plattsburgh community. One of the oldest homes in the area, the Kent-Delord house survived many challenges and regally stands at the mouth of the river overlooking Lake Champlain. Just as the house, family, and then the Museum experienced a diverse history, this year reflects the same; successes and challenges.

Success continues with the StEPS (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) process. The Committee completed two of six sections; Mission, Vision, and Governance and Interpretation; these earned bronze and silver certificates. With these accomplishments, the Museum joins 160 other history organizations and over 800 groups working on StEPS. The Committee started the Collections section in 2017 and will complete it in 2018. This process requires commitment and a stubborn level of persistence. To date, the review process and the framework being built seems worth the pain. We are proud of these accomplishments.

The Board and the Garden Club shared another 2017 success. The solarium, now referred to as the Green Room (Betsey Delord's name for it), welcomed its first visitors in June with new paint, a new swag ceiling drape and beautiful artificial plants, most of which represent Victorian era species that Betsey would have grown. The area shows garden themed pictures and Victorian era displays. This new showcase provides a tranquil and beautiful area where visitors become familiar with another aspect of the Delord family through stories and history during that timeframe. Great work by all.

Don Wickman, in the Director report, summarizes the 2017 grant acquisitions which overall met with more success than challenges.

Attendance overall saw a reduction. However, Museum Days visitation increased by 46 or a little over 40% increase (113 in 2016 vs. 159 last year). Four annual special events (Museum Days, BOP weekend, Garden Club's holiday open house and the Delord Christmas) result in almost 69% or 862 of the annual number of 1254 visitors. These numbers overall were down by 35% (438) for adults and 40% (41) for children. Outreach efforts and special programming on these weekends to entice visitors remains an essential means for generating revenue and interest in the museum. Revenue overall remained down although the end of the year annual appeal was successful and much appreciated.

Challenges for 2017 were and continue into 2018 increase revenue sources through fundraising events and membership.

Thank you to the Board, volunteers, members, and our community for supporting the Kent-Delord House Museum in 2017, good work. We remain ready to work toward a successful 2018.

The following report outlines additional highlights from 2017.

## **Director's Report**

### **Events**

#### *Museum Days*

Normally held the first weekend in June, this event was shifted to coincide with the New York's Path through History Weekend which was held on June 17-18. The museum featured a garden railway designed to attract visitors and teach them about the Plattsburgh and Montreal Railroad. Attendance exceeded that of 2016.

#### *Battle of Plattsburgh*

Except for soggy grounds for the week preceding the event, everything proceeded quite smoothly with a new re-enactment integrated into the schedule on Saturday evening. The museum witnessed a decrease in attendance, primarily on Sunday. Weather was not a problem. However, shifting all Sunday's activities from downtown to the US Oval certainly influenced visitation numbers.

For the 2018 Battle of Plattsburgh, the museum decided to undertake its own fundraising for their activities. This was partly prompted by the city granting the normal budgeted dollars very late. Taking advantage of this situation, the Grand Encampment has been re-branded a Military Muster. It will still feature the encampment, but will be augmented with crafts/trades demonstrations and hands-on activities. Sponsorships have already been received.

#### *Veterans' Day*

On November 10, the museum offered free admission to the house. Living historians set up displays in rooms throughout the museum that interpreted various wars from United States' history. Conflicts interpreted included the American Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War II. Visitors seemed engaged.

*Delord Christmas*

This was another successful evening although attendance was lower than 2016. Performers provided an array of live entertainment including music on the hammered dulcimer, guitars, and songs from a Sweet Adelines quintet. Visitors enjoyed light snacks, conversation and views of the decorated house provided by the talented members of the garden club.

*Infrastructure Repairs/Improvements*

Volunteers removed the shutters from the front façade, so they could either be repaired and repainted or totally replaced.

In the fall of 2016, parties of volunteers from Seton Catholic High School and the Garden Club removed the deteriorating picket fence along the west border. In August 2017, after receiving approval through a city historic review, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century board fence was erected through the Lowe's Heroes program. The selected stain makes it appear much older. The new fence has received numerous positive comments.

The same group from Lowe's finished construction of a fully ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliant handicapped ramp in the back of the house. The previous ramp constructed before the passage of the ADA in 1992 was in dismal condition and not up to code. The new ramp will receive a coat of paint in 2018.

Due to sliding ice from the back roof, the window in Frances Henrietta's bedroom required entire replacement. This was completed in July. The new window is now boarded up for the winter to prevent a repeat of this event.

Seven volunteers from the Catholic Heart Work Camp worked at the house in late June. They did preliminary work on the handicapped ramp and west fence and exerted much effort in painting, tearing down old ramps and fence posts plus a multitude of other tasks.

Many thanks to Tom Wyand who removed, constructed and installed the backs on the benches that are part of the front entry.

**Exhibits**

This season the Gold Parlor remained arranged in the 1928 postcard views produced by William Miner. Except for a few alterations, nearly all the furniture/accents/pictures were found in the collections. The display allowed visitors to see how vast and well-preserved the museum's collection is by the presence of so many original small items.

On the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of James Monroe's visit to Plattsburgh and having tea in the house, a special exhibit panel was created for the year and the dining room table was set up for a presidential tea. The museum was also included in one of Monroe stops created by Monroe's home in Charlottesville, VA.

Last year, three 1814 American orderly books were traced to Special Collections at St. Lawrence University. The museum now has copies. From the entries were gleaned a number of punishments dealt out to both officers and soldiers. Excerpts of these writings were integrated into another panel of military crime and punishment.

Through a grant from the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership, three teens, Niamh Creedon-Carey, Liam Sayward and Kaddie Carter, researched, composed and created three panels and brochures

based on the theme of “Lake Champlain Corridor of Commerce.” These panels will continue to be on display for the 2018 season. Most of the documents used were part of the Kent-Delord collections.

## **Grants**

The museum has been extremely fortunate in the grant world.

Last fall, the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership provided a grant to tell the story of the Kent-Delord House through the theme of Lake Champlain Corridor of Commerce. Teens developed exhibit panels on three topics: *How the Delords Traveled*, *From Who Did Bailey & Delord Purchase Their Goods and the Construction of the Plattsburgh and Montreal Railroad* of which William Swetland served as the company’s first president. The Partnership has also provided monies towards the 2018 Military Muster.

Senator Betty Little, through the Office of State, granted monies for a capital project. This funding will permit a historic paint analysis to be conducted, replacement of deteriorating clapboards and a full exterior painting which the museum desperately needs. Work will commence in the late winter/spring.

A consolidated funding application submitted in the summer of 2016 did not win approval, but another was submitted in 2017 seeking funds for the shutter project. Unfortunately, this last grant was rejected.

Additional fundraising is still necessary.

## **Committee Reports**

### ***Governance***

The national *StEPS* (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) process remains the driving force behind updating and improving the museum’s governance. The StEPS committee of Don Wickman, Director, and board members, Craig Russell, Sharon Bell, and Paula Calkins Lacombe began the process in October 2015.

They completed the Mission, Vision, and Governance section in June and received a certificate at the bronze level. This section established the organizational framework and standards for the museum.

The committee completed the Interpretation section in July 2017 and received a silver level certificate of completion. As part of this section, the group developed a KDHM Interpretation Plan that defines how the Museum shares its stories and engages visitors and supporters. As part of these sections, the Board adopted a code of ethics and two position descriptions (Volunteer and Docent).

The committee started the Collections section in the summer and will continue work on it in 2018.

Nominations remain an important part of Governance and board recruitment actively continued throughout 2017. The Board added four new members (Domenica Padula, Marta Clute, Carol Lindberg, and Joshua Wingler). Sharon Bell agreed to serve a one year term through October 2017 and Paula Calkins Lacombe began a second three year term effective 10/2017. Tom Glasglow’s position remains open. The Board agreed that the President of the Garden Club would serve as a board member during the course of their tenure. This position will be filled in January by Sandra McNeil.

## ***Education***

Special outreach and education events remain essential to the education program. Three events in 2017 enticed 131 visitors. In February, as part of the City of Plattsburgh's Snowball event, Niamh Creedon-Carey assembled 1800's games. She was assisted by the Plattsburgh National Honor Society and 61 children and adults enjoyed the games. In March, as part of the *SUNY Plattsburgh Jane Austin and the Arts Conference*, 14 attendees visited the museum. Austen scholars from around the world attended the conference. In November, the Veteran's Day event featured re-enactors from the American Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, and World War II. Forty visitors viewed the displays and talked to the re-enactors.

Featured displays this year included military *Crime and Punishment*, *James Monroe's Bicentennial Visit to Plattsburgh* and from Niamh Creedon-Carey, Liam Sayward and Kaddie Carter, our teen docents, the *Lake Champlain Corridor of Commerce*.

As part of the StEPS process, the committee developed an Interpretation Plan, a significant accomplishment. Interpretation is a communication process that helps share the special qualities of a place with others. One can present things as "information" or "interpretation". The difference is not *what* one says, but *how* one says it. Information presents facts. Interpretation reveals the "story" or "spirit" of a place. The Interpretation Plan guides us in the best ways to present the many KDHM stories.

## ***Buildings and Grounds***

### ***Roof Project***

The last shingle was laid in April 2016 but repayment continues. The project was funded through a loan from the Museum's endowment. Fundraising helped with the remaining costs. Holly Morrow (Treasurer) presented to the Board a summary of the income and expenses for the project in December 2017:

Total project cost	\$59,680
Loan from the endowment	\$35,600
Fundraising	\$24,080

Fundraising deferred a little over 40% of the cost. As of 12/2017, \$24,000 has been repaid to the endowment fund; \$6,000 of which was paid back in 2017. This leaves a balance of \$11,600.

### ***2017 Challenges***

The window in the Blue bedroom downstairs required a costly replacement after snow and ice from the roof broke it. The window was boarded this fall to protect the new window.

High winds resulted in a very large branch breaking from one of the large elm trees in the back just missing the barn. Further analysis showed that several of the old box elders needed removal. Fortunately, the Garden Club covered the cost of this which we are very grateful.

### ***Green Room Project***

In January, a committee of board and garden club members along with Pat Loughan discussed how to make this room useable and become a showcase for the museum. This place that was once such a special place to

Betsey had fallen to disrepair and a catch all for “junk”. From Pat, the committee learned Betsey referred to it as her Green Room thus the solarium was given the name the Green Room once again. The room was emptied, repainted, and the much deteriorated cloth swag covering the ceiling was replaced. Garden Club members determined the plants that would have adorned a Victorian solarium and purchased artificial plants representing this time period. A few pieces of wicker furniture along with a rug completed the project. Unfortunately, the solarium roof continuously leaked throughout a very rainy 2017. After many tries, Gary Fisher repaired the solarium roof; we hope for a very long time!

To complete the project, historical Delord pictures and additional historical facts were featured on the walls. During Betsey’s time, plants displayed on Victorian wire shelving adorned the room.

A complete replica wasn’t possible, but through the displays people gain a sense of how it may have looked when Betsey carefully nurtured her plants. Visitors of all ages enjoyed the makeover and thanks to everyone’s hard work the room became a showcase and allowed us to share another aspect of the Delord story. Well done everyone!

### KDHM Garden Club

#### *Officers*

The KDHM Garden Club in its 31<sup>st</sup> year remained under the leadership of Carol Lindberg - President, Sue Doin - Vice-President, Linda Sabella - Treasurer, and Ruth Mary Ortloff - Secretary.

#### *The Gardens*

The Club, through a contract with Aquarius, repaired the irrigation system. The Garden Club also fixed the tutuers. Both remain an annual necessity with the North Country winters. Members rotate the workload to maintain the beauty of the grounds through weekly garden and historic fence maintenance; additionally they conduct general clean-up days.

Improvements to the gardens included plant identification stakes being placed throughout the gardens and purchase of two large black-iron urns that adorned the front porch entranceway with seasonal plantings/decorations. A new red doormat bought for the front porch further added to the décor during the holiday open house.

*Lilacs* - Members gave particular attention to the struggling lilacs around the museum. One lilac is a heritage one while others were planted in memory of a past member. A member obtained a soil analysis of the lilac sites through the Cornell Cooperative Extension Service. In the fall, a crew from Northeast Arboricultural Associates of Jay, NY provided a half-day pro bono work. This included plant reduction and restoration, fertilizing and mulching of the lilac plantings. A return follow-up visit is anticipated for spring as well as an educational session for members.

*Activities, Outreach and Education*- A community presentation reference binder has been developed for archival purposes and to use as a guide in planning future events. Members enjoyed a day-long field trip in the spring highlighting the Arcana Organics Garden and Full Circle Gardens – both in Vermont. In May, the Club offered its annual community plant swap. A community educational event was held in May featuring Kerry Mendez, well-known garden educator. This event held at Clinton Community College resulted in a net revenue of \$1,435.00. Northern Insuring made a \$400.00 underwriting donation for the event.

*Secret Garden Tour* – On July 22, 2017, the Club offered the annual Secret Garden Tour. Eleven gardens were featured and ticket sales totaled \$3,635.00.

The annual holiday Open House event held in December with the theme of “Trees” resulted in a beautiful display for the community. One of the highlights included the display of the historic Platt Family Tree loaned to the Garden Club by the Plattsburgh City Library.

*Other* - The Garden Club expanded its inventory to include four adjustable 4’ tables, two portable lightweight display easels and the 6’ red tile-design exterior doormat. Members continue to donate items for the museum store’s inventory which along with the enhanced layout led to record sales.

### ***Development/ Membership***

This Committee formed at the end of 2016. Membership data was reviewed for the period 2014 through 2016. Targets set in the 2016 and remain the same and have been incorporated into the annual goals each year. In 2017, the Committee sent two targeted mailings, one to the Museum’s surrounding neighborhood and one to area realtors. The result of over 300+ mailings was 3 memberships (2 new and 1 renewal). This remains a time-consuming process for what appears to be minimal returns. Additional methods of membership development will continue in 2018.

The 2017 *End-of-the-Year appeal* raised \$3525. All donations are greatly appreciated. This committee, in conjunction with other committees, will work on fund raising activities for 2018 an ongoing and essential aspect of the museum’s operations.

### ***Collections***

The StEPS Committee began reviewing the Collections section in July and work will continue into 2018. The Museum had many of the required documents that just needed review and updating. These will be developed into a comprehensive plan. Unique items from collections have been featured in the Quarterly Newsletter bringing attention to the Museum’s extensive collection.

### ***Marketing/Public Relations/Special Events***

At the monthly board meetings, all reviewed and updated the *monthly events calendar* for the museum. This tool has proven to be a useful tool for planning and scheduling. The museum’s Quarterly Newsletter met the targeted publishing deadlines for four issues in 2017. Regular featured sections have been established and include the President’s Message, featured artifacts, historical articles from Pat Loughan and Don Wickman. Feedback has been positive.

Several *History Happy Hours* were scheduled but low response forced them to be canceled. Many area museums offer free events; the fee charged may be a deterrent. The Director and the committee will review possible changes for 2018.

The second annual *Harmony* event took place again in September at the Harmony Golf Club. DJ Gary Peacock played music and held a music trivia game. Attendance may have been slightly higher but the money from the fundraiser was actually lower. Fundraising remains challenging!

## Statistics

2017 Monthly Museum Activity* and Revenue			
Month	Visitors		Comments
	Adults	Students	
January			
February		61	Snowball – Game Day – adults & children
March	30		14 from Jane Austen conference
April	30		
May	19	6	
June	208	8	Museum Days Sat. 99 and Sun. 60
July	75 (2 military)	11	
August	67	14	
September	487	2	Nooks and Crannies 10 included - BOP 418
October	11		
November	40		Veteran's Day event
December	285		GC open house 247, Delord 38 (+ volunteers)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>102</b>	

\*Based on sign-in at museum door, "clicker- count" during special house events, and docent reports

	2015		2016		2017	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
<b>Visitors</b>	1506	161	1696	143	1254	102
<b>Admissions</b>	\$1,923		\$2,002		\$1,481	
<b>Donations</b>	\$13,134*		\$7,556		\$7,584	
<b>Museum Store</b>	\$1,057		\$313		\$1,419	

\*Roof project donations -\$1,669

	2015		2016		2017	
<b>Business</b>	35		35		15	
<b>Personal</b>	258		262		255	
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>		<b>297</b>		<b>270</b>	

**FINANCE REPORT**  
**KENT DELORD HOUSE MUSEUM**  
**Statements of Financial Position**  
**June 30, 2017 and 2016**

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
Current assets:		
Cash - Museum	\$ 6,117	\$ 7,810
Cash - Garden Club	12,056	9,373
Investments	286,355	308,451
Prepaid expenses	503	-----
Museum collections	300	300
Buildings, furniture and equipment, net	<u>119,540</u>	<u>113,627</u>
	<u>\$ 424,871</u>	<u>\$ 439,561</u>
<u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u>		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 669	\$ 762
Grant advance	-	
Payroll taxes payable	<u>1,179</u>	<u>2,187</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>1,848</u>	<u>2,949</u>
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	384,867	400,294
Temporarily restricted - Garden Club	12,056	10,218
Permanently restricted	<u>26,100</u>	<u>26,100</u>
Total net assets	<u>423,023</u>	<u>436,612</u>
	<u>\$ 424,871</u>	<u>\$ 439,561</u>

KENT DELORD HOUSE MUSEUM

Statement of Activities

June 30, 2017

		Garden Club		
		Temporarily	Permanently	2017
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenues, gains and other support	\$ <u>60,888</u>	<u>(1,838)</u>	<u>-</u>	\$ <u>59,050</u>
Museum expenses	57,529	-	-	57,529
Garden Club expenses	<u>8,722</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,722</u>
Total expenses	<u>66,251</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>66,251</u>
Change in net assets	(5,363)	(1,838)	-	(7,201)
Unrealized gain on investments	20,790	-	-	(20,790)
Net assets beginning of year	<u>384,867</u>	<u>12,056</u>	<u>26,100</u>	<u>423,023</u>
Net assets end of year	\$ <u><u>400,294</u></u>	<u><u>10,218</u></u>	<u><u>26,100</u></u>	\$ <u><u>436,612</u></u>