FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fifty Objects That Shaped Rhode Island History
The Rhode Island Historical Society and the Newport Historical Society Partner to Present The Newport Antiques Show’s 2014 Loan Exhibit

Newport, RI – (July 2014) – “Rhode Island, founded by an immigrant in 1636, has a rich, complicated history,” explains Kirsten Hammerstrom, Director of Collections at the Rhode Island Historical Society. “Its coastline encouraged a robust maritime trade and the entrepreneurial spirit of its people made it a vanguard in the industrial revolution.”

“Rhode Island has served as a haven for the religiously persecuted and an incubator for innovators and rabble-rousers, who were sometimes one and the same. Not immune to the uglier parts of history, Rhode Island has seen its share of inequalities and injustices, as its inhabitants ride the tide of shifting demographics and changing economies,” Hammerstrom describes.

The Rhode Island Historical Society and the Newport Historical Society—sister organizations with a common origin in 1822—have joined forces to create an exhibit that encompasses Little Rhody’s complex history with fifty distinct objects from their extensive collections. It will be presented at the 2014 Newport Antiques Show in the loan exhibit Fifty Objects That Shaped Rhode Island History July 25, 2014-July 27, 2104 at St. George’s School in Middletown. The exhibit includes diverse themes such as geography and tolerance.

The Newport Antiques Show is no stranger to partnerships. Since 2007, the Show remains the only high-end antiques event with two beneficiaries, the Newport Historical Society and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County, raising over $1.6 million through sponsorships and ticket sales. “The partnership behind this year’s loan exhibit is a natural extension of the many collaborations that make the Show possible,” the Newport Historical Society’s Executive Director Ruth Taylor highlights.

“In 1822 Rhode Island’s General Assembly recognized the need for an organization to collect and preserve our state’s history,” Rhode Island Historical Society’s Executive Director C. Morgan Grefe, Ph.D. explains. “In that year RIHS opened a Northern and Southern Cabinet, in Providence and Newport, respectively. In 1852 the two cabinets split because of the vast physical distances between the sites. Thus was born the Newport Historical Society. Our collections were divided and for the last 150 years we’ve both gone on protecting and sharing our state’s history. But in the 21st century, there is no such thing as too great a distance—and certainly not between Providence and Newport. The RIHS is delighted and honored to join with the Newport Historical Society at the Newport Antique Show to present, 50 Objects that Shaped Rhode Island History. Together we will tell the statewide story and bring our collections into conversation again—where they have always belonged!”

During the Newport Antiques Show’s three day run, over forty-two of the country’s top dealers will present a diverse selection of Americana antiques ranging from furniture, paintings, jewelry and many other decorative arts at St. George’s School in Middletown, RI. Admission to the weekend Show, which costs $15 per person or $20 for a three day pass, allows entrance to Fifty Objects and the following talks.

- Big History, Little State: 350 Years in 50 Objects presented by Kirsten Hammerstrom on Friday, July 25th at 11am.
- Fruits of Our Labor: Industry, Immigration and Rhode Island Road to Riches by C. Morgan Grefe on Friday July 26th at 1pm.
- Vintage Cars and Automobile Racing in Newport on July 26th at 11am by Nicholas Schorsch, CEO of the Show’s Presenting Sponsor American Realty Capital.

“For a small state, Rhode Island has a powerful reach that can be seen in the material evidence of its past,” Hammerstrom concludes. To learn more about the Newport Antiques Show visit: NewportAntiquesShow.com; to preview highlights of Fifty Objects follow the facebook pages of the Rhode Island Historical Society (facebook.com/RIHistoricalSociety) and the Newport Historical Society (facebook.com/NewportHistory).

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Thomas Howland, oil on canvas by John Blanchard c1855
Rhode Island Historical Society, 1895.6.1

Job Townsend Chair, 1735-1755
Queen Anne-style side chair possibly crafted by Job Townsend, Sr. of Newport, primarily made of walnut with a maple slip seat.
Newport Historical Society, W 1960.1.1

A proclamation, 1772
Rhode Island Historical Society, RHi X17 563

Aproclamation, 1772
Rhode Island Historical Society, RHi X17 563

Arkwright Sample book, 1815
Rhode Island Historical Society, RHiX5272

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Commodore Perry Visits Japan, watercolor cartoon
Ink on paper by Matsumoto Harushige, 1854-1856
*Rhode Island Historical Society*, 1980.43.1

Brass compass and Sundial owned by Roger Williams,
Providence, RI c1630
*Rhode Island Historical Society*, RHi X17 1147

King’s Cup Trophy by Tiffany & Co, 1908
*Newport Historical Society*, 83.3.1AB

Seal, 1696
From the City of Newport “Seal of Newport Rhode Island Council”
*Newport Historical Society*, L65.3.1

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About the Newport Historical Society
Since 1854, the Newport Historical Society has collected and preserved the artifacts, photographs, documents, publications, and genealogical records that relate to the history of Newport County, to make these materials readily available for both research and enjoyment, and to act as a resource center for the education of the public about the history of Newport County, so that knowledge of the past may contribute to a fuller understanding of the present. For more information please visit www.NewportHistory.org.

About the Rhode Island Historical Society
Founded in 1822, the RIHS is the fourth-oldest historical society in the United States and is Rhode Island’s largest and oldest historical organization. In Providence, the RIHS owns and operates the John Brown House and Museum, a designated National Historic Landmark, built in 1788; the Aldrich House, built in 1822 and used for administration and public programs; and the Library of Rhode Island History, where archival, book and image collections are housed. In Woonsocket the RIHS manages the Museum of Work and Culture, a community museum examining the industrial history of northern Rhode Island and of the workers and settlers, especially French-Canadians, who made it one of the state’s most distinctive areas. To learn more visit www.RIHS.org.

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Herreshoff half-hull model, torpedo boat c1880
*Rhode Island Historical Society, RHi X17 1723*

Torpedo earrings and ID badge, c1945
*Newport Historical Society, 97.23.2; 2003.15.2*