

# MISSION AND HISTORY

Rhode Island was the first political entity in the world to include the principles of religious freedom and the separation of church and state in its founding documents, principles that were later incorporated in the U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The history of Newport, Rhode Island's preeminent city during the colonial and early revolutionary period, when these aspirational concepts were first applied to human society, has enormous relevance to a complete understanding of both American and international history.

Over the last decade, The Newport Historical Society has made enormous progress in building an expanded and engaged online and in-person audience, stabilizing our finances, establishing museum-quality professional standards, renovating our primary facility for the 21st century and creating robust protocols to collect, preserve, interpret and disseminate the history of Newport County to a local and regional audience.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Since 1854, the Newport Historical Society has collected and preserved five centuries of history and continues to document Newport's unique contribution to our national narrative.*

The mission of NHS is also to chronicle and interpret this history for a broad audience, so that knowledge of our past will contribute to a deeper understanding of the present and better preparation for the future.

Marine Timepiece used in the race to find longitude, Collections NHS



## Vision and Guiding Principles

Collecting, preserving and supporting the study of history, while expanding and maintaining our collections, is the essence of our mission. But, an equivalent measure of our success is the relevance derived from deepening our relationship with a growing and enthusiastic public audience and donor network.

To further this vision, NHS will broaden and strengthen its brand as a public history organization that interprets many centuries of Newport history. Our tools will be the facilitation of scholarship, the creation of innovative public events and programming, effective stewardship and management of our properties and collections, and the establishment of meaningful collaborations with our colleagues. We will be the institution that people think of when they want to partner, invent, and explore new areas of relevance for history.

NHS will:

Seek to connect Newport to a broader sense of history and events whenever possible, because Newport's history is local, national and international history, and has many relevant story lines for today.

Look outward as it moves forward – focusing on the audiences (the public) and support (donors).

Seek to take a leadership role in the development of the public history field and its best practices.

Establish benchmarks and metrics for meaningful evaluation of our progress and impact.

Work intentionally with our Newport colleagues to create shared public messages and the intellectual integration of collection resources.

## GOALS

### Goal One

NHS will update our branding, including logo and tagline, to encompass five centuries of Newport's history and the full range of our assets, and to be visible within all of our activities. We will develop a program of integrated marketing including cutting-edge social media capability. In doing so, we will seek to have a voice beyond the local, while also reaching Newport's visitors and residents, and to broaden the universe of our support.

### Goal Two

NHS will assume a more integrated approach to all activities so that programs, collecting and collections stewardship, research, marketing, fundraising and collaborative work are related to each other and mutually reinforcing.

### Goal Three

The NHS must determine what a sustainable size is for an institution of its scope, and move towards creating earned and raised income streams that allow it to grow to the right size, rather than limiting the expression of its mission based on existing budget and capacity.