



Media inquiries contact:
Ingrid Peters
Deputy Director and Director of Education
401-846-0813 x102
ipeters@newporthistory.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Palatine Wreck: The Legend of the New England Ghost Ship
A Lecture and Talk with Author Jill Farinelli

Newport, RI – January, 2018 – Two days after Christmas in 1738, a British merchant ship traveling from Rotterdam to Philadelphia grounded in a blizzard on the northern tip of Block Island. The 105 passengers and crew on board—sick, frozen, and starving—were all that remained of the 340 men, women, and children who had left their homeland the previous spring. Shortly after the wreck, rumors began to circulate that the passengers had been mistreated by the ship’s crew and by some of the islanders. The stories persisted, transforming over time as stories do and, in less than a hundred years, two terrifying versions of the event had emerged.

On **Thursday, June 7, 2018 at 5:30pm**, author Jill Farinelli reconstructs the origins of one of New England’s most chilling maritime mysteries. The tales became known as the legend of the *Palatine*, the name given to the ship in later years, when its original name had been long forgotten. The flaming apparition was nicknamed the Palatine Light. The eerie phenomenon has been witnessed by hundreds of people over the centuries, and numerous scientific theories have been offered as to its origin. Its continued reappearances, along with the attention of some of nineteenth-century America’s most notable writers, has helped keep the legend alive, despite evidence that the vessel, whose actual name was the *Princess Augusta*, was never abandoned, lured ashore, or destroyed by fire. So how did the rumors begin? What really happened to the *Princess Augusta* and the passengers she carried on her final, fatal voyage?

Jill graduated from William Smith College with a bachelor of arts degree in American Studies and English. Determined to live near the ocean in a city steeped in history, she moved to the Boston area where, for the past twenty-five years, she has worked as a freelance writer and editor. This is her first work of historical nonfiction, on a subject that captured her imagination after spending a week with friends on Block Island ten years ago.

“The Palatine Wreck” takes place at the NHS Resource Center, 82 Touro Street, Newport, RI, and costs \$5 per person, \$1 for NHS members, active and retired military with ID. Book signing to follow. Please RSVP online at NewportHistory.org or call 401-841-8770.

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.

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