History of the Brick Market

Since its establishment in 1854, the Newport Historical Society has been dedicated to collecting and preserving all aspects of Newport County’s rich history. The Society possesses a priceless collection of manuscripts, paintings, furniture, decorative arts, and photographs. Many of these objects embody local, regional, and national significance. In addition, the Newport Historical Society owns three historical properties and manages two other properties located within a four block area in colonial Newport: the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House (1697), the Great Friends Meeting House (1699), and the Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House (1730). It also manages and maintains the Colony House (built in 1739 and owned by the State of Rhode Island) and the Brick Market (built in 1762 and owned by the City of Newport).

When colonial merchants entered Newport’s harbor in the late eighteenth century, the Brick Market greeted them as a monument to the city’s booming cosmopolitan center. At the intersection of Thames Street and Long Wharf and across from Washington Square, the Brick Market now stands as a reminder of colonial Newport’s active commercial history and colonial-era architecture. Many scholars consider it to be one of Newport’s architectural masterpieces. Currently, the Brick Market serves as the location for the Newport Historical Society’s Museum of Newport History. Over the past 250 years, the Market served a variety of purposes. For example, it housed shops, a school, a theater, and the City Hall. The Brick Market is a continuously changing building whose cultural heritage is immensely valuable to downtown Newport. If it were not for the efforts of twentieth-century preservationists, the Brick Market may not be standing today.

On July 24, 1760, the Proprietors of Long Wharf, those who owned the waterfront property to the west side of the Brick Market, deeded a portion of their land to the town of Newport. The General Assembly of Rhode Island proposed to finance the building of a “Market House” using money raised through a public lottery. The Proprietors of the original planning document proposed erecting a three story building about thirty-three feet wide and sixty-six feet long. The planning document also suggested specific functions for each space:

The lower part thereof for a Market House, and for no other use whatsoever, forever (unless it shall be found convenient to appropriate some part of it for a watch-house)...the upper part [shall] be divided into stores for dry-goods, and let out to the best advantage; and all the rents thereof, together with all the profits that shall arise on said building, shall be lodged in the Town Treasury of said town of Newport, towards a stock for purchasing grain, for supplying a Public Granary forever.

The proprietors proposed to use the building as a “Market House, and for no other use.” However, they added that a portion of the lower floor could be used as a watch-house. Mid-eighteenth-century watch-houses offered a place for patrolmen who would have offered protection for the town. A watch-house near Long Wharf may have been needed after an older market with a watch-house further south on the Newport harbor was sold. Yet the City of Newport never used portions of the Brick Market for a watch-house or for a Public Granary. Instead, the space was divided into stalls and offices to create a commercial center where many different business transactions could be made. These spaces served many purposes due to their versatile design.
In 1760, a committee of four prominent local men, consisting of Henry Collins, Joseph Bell, Augustus Johnson, and Joseph Lyndon, met with renowned architect Peter Harrison (1716-1775) — who many contemporary scholars consider to be America’s first architect — to discuss the building proposal. In addition to designing the Brick Market, Peter Harrison designed several other buildings in Newport, such as Redwood Library (1750) and Touro Synagogue (1763). Harrison’s positive reputation stemmed from his other well known works such as King’s Chapel (1754) in Boston, Mass. These accomplishments made Harrison a logical and ideal choice to design a building in Newport’s commercial center.

With the completion of Harrison’s design for the building, construction of the Brick Market began in September 1762. Builders added the roof a year later, but due to insufficient funds, they did not complete the project until July 1772. The Market took a decade to complete, yet it stayed true to Harrison’s original vision. Harrison owned an extensive design library, and he may have used many print sources in conceiving his design for the Brick Market. His extensive library of architectural publications included Colen Campbell’s Vitruvius Britannicus (1716), William Kent’s Designs of Inigo Jones (1727), Edward Hoppus’ Palladio, and James Gibbs’ Book of Architecture (1735-36). Through his accumulation of books concerning classically inspired forms, Harrison studied Palladian architecture, a style derived from Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508-80). For example, the Great Gallery at the Old Somerset House (1635), a Palladian-style house in London designed by English architect Inigo Jones and illustrated in Vitruvius Britannicus, may have influenced Harrison’s Brick Market design. Norman Isham, the architectural preservationist who restored the Brick Market in the 1920s, stated that the Brick Market is “the best of [Harrison’s] exteriors, not only in Newport but elsewhere, and ranks as one of the finest buildings of colonial America.” Harrison’s design of the Brick Market proved to be a testament to one of the finest extant Colonial American buildings.

The Brick Market, which combined many classical architectural elements, served many different functions. Originally built for the transaction of goods, the building was remodeled several times to serve Newporters’ changing needs. Beginning in 1772, the City of Newport rented the office space and stalls within the Market to many different vendors. There were a total of seven stalls in the arcade and two rooms each on the upper floors. On average, to rent a stall for a year it cost about two to four British pounds. Local farmers, butchers, and merchants were the majority of renters who used the lower stalls in the arcade. The upper levels mainly consisted of offices for private use. For example, from 1774 through 1784, a small school occupied one of the chambers on the second floor. Adam Maxwell rented a quarter of the east room on the second floor to teach grammar and arithmetic to thirty children who were over the age of seven. In 1793, Alexander Placide, a popular French acrobat, dancer, actor, and manager, rented the upper floors as theater space that seated 300 people. On June 26, 1793, the Newport Theater held its first performance at the Brick Market. The production included a tight rope act, a comedy, and a pantomime ballad called One Soldier performed by Alexander Placide. The Newport Theater company performed tragedies, comedies, musicals, ballets, pantomime acts, as well as acrobatic entertainment from June through
In 1913, F. E. Chadwick, Vice President for the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (now known as Historic New England), noticed the Brick Market’s disuse and brought it to the attention of the Town Council of the City of Newport. Chadwick suggested employing Norman Morrison Isham, an architect and preservationist of Providence, Rhode Island, to examine the structure and to propose a stabilization plan. Isham presented his report and suggestions for restoration to Newport’s mayor in 1915: weather and fireproofing the building, replacing the shingled roof, and repairing exterior woodwork. In making these changes, Isham argued that the Brick Market would “be seen as one that adorns and honors the city not only as beautiful pieces of human work but as reminders of the order and dignified life of our forefathers.” The City of Newport hired Isham in 1928 to perform his proposed restoration work. His team’s efforts restored the building’s exterior to its original appearance. Isham allowed one twentieth-century addition, the placement of glass in the arches of the ground floor, to weather proof the building. In 1930, John Nicholas
Brown II, a financier, philanthropist, and yachtsman of Providence who helped to restore several buildings in Providence, financed the Brick Market’s interior restoration. This local movement reflected an early twentieth-century regional and national trend that emphasized preserving colonial architecture. After preservationists restored the Brick Market, Newporters used the building as the headquarters for the City of Commerce, a souvenir shop, and a museum.

With special arrangement set by John Nicholas Brown II with the money he donated, the City of Newport leased the Brick Market as the headquarters to the Newport Chamber of Commerce. Up until 1988, the Newport City of Commerce periodically used the Brick Market as a tourist and souvenir shop. In 1962, the United States Department of Interiors named the Brick Market a Registered National Historic Landmark for its architectural and economic importance in Newport. To prevent the building from falling into disrepair again, concerned Newporters established the Brick Market Foundation. Ralph E. Carpenter, Jr. and other local benefactors and investors established the Foundation. Their objective was to restore the decaying Brick Market and to put it into the hands of an organization that would be able to continue its maintenance. The Foundation agreed to lease the building from the City of Newport for twenty years starting on June 1, 1989. This lease was transferred to the Newport Historical Society in 1991. In 1991, the Brick Market Foundation and the Newport Historical Society helped to plan a permanent exhibition in the Brick Market to function as the centerpiece of the Newport Historical Society’s educational efforts.

In 1993, the Brick Market was converted into the Museum of Newport History and Museum Shop. Today, the City of Newport owns the Brick Market and the Newport Historical Society manages and maintains it. As the permanent gallery space for the Newport Historical Society, the Museum of Newport History at Brick Market displays about five percent of the Society’s decorative arts, furniture, textiles and costumes, architectural fragments, and antiquities, and it interprets these objects within the broader context of Newport history.

Preserved as one of Newport’s historic landmarks, the Brick Market is widely recognized as a masterpiece of colonial architecture. The Brick Market served multiple functions since its construction in the mid 1700s and today serves as a site where visitors and locals alike can come to learn about Newport’s history.
Museum of Newport History Collection

Since its inception in 1993, the multidimensional Museum of Newport History at the Brick Market has examined Newport County’s history through the use of images, objects, and texts. The items on display at the Museum make up less than five percent of the Newport Historical Society’s collection, which includes over 10,000 objects, 500 paintings, prints, and maps, and 200,000 photographs. With the use of these items, the Museum interprets Newport from its colonized settlement in 1639 through the twentieth century. This catalog provides an introduction to the area’s past and present through selected objects and stories of the people who helped to create Newport’s rich and diverse heritage. The following are highlights from the collection. A complete inventory follows.

A Refuge of Toleration

Newport was founded by a group of refugees who fled Massachusetts Bay Colony. Following the example of Roger Williams, the founder of Providence Plantations, these settlers established Newport as a refuge of religious toleration, where individuals with a wide variety of religious beliefs could live without fear of persecution by any dominant religious sect. On April 28, 1639, male representatives of the group signed the Newport Compact, which established the settlement and made no mention of organized religion of any kind. One of those men, the Baptist minister John Clarke, sailed to England in the early 1660s and procured the Royal Charter of 1663, authorized by King Charles II. Implementing a policy of full religious liberty, worshiping as one chose or refusing religious affiliation or involvement of any kind, was unheard of in the western world at this time, which makes Clarke’s achievement remarkable. Rhode Island’s liberal views on the subject of religion prompted Puritan minister Cotton Mather to write in his Ecclesiastical History of New England that “there never was held such a variety of religions together on so small a spot of ground as in Rhode Island: Antinomians, Familists, Anabaptists, Anti-sabbatarians, Arminians, Socinians, Quakers, Ranters – everything in the world but Roman Catholics and real Christians.”

The policy of religious toleration, coupled with Newport’s sheltered, deep water harbor were contributing factors in the colony’s early economic success. The objects in this portion of the museum reflect Newport’s “lively experiment” in religious toleration and the town’s formative years as a profitable seaport.

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Book Box, or, Writing Desk

England, inscribed “A M 1674”
Wood and metal
Donated by Mrs. Jane Stewart Cushman
Newport Historical Society (28.4)

Very little is known about this book box, sometimes referred to as a Bible box, one of the oldest items in the Newport Historical Society’s collection. The box also features a writing surface. The date carved into the side of the box reads “A M 1674,” suggesting that the box was made or used around this time. The box may have stored any number of valuable items, such as business accounts or books.
This portrait of Benjamin Ellery (1669-1746) and the companion portrait of his wife Abigail Wilkins Ellery (1677-1742) are thought to be the work of early eighteenth-century painter Nehemiah Partridge. Mrs. Ellery holds a single rose in her portrait, which is typical in Partridge’s paintings of women. The wood frame which encases Mrs. Ellery’s portrait has been gilded, though the original frame was covered in silver leaf. The frame is thought to be original to the painting.

Benjamin Ellery was the first ancestor of the Ellery family in Rhode Island and his grandson, William Ellery, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Ellery arrived in Newport around 1700 with his wife and children and established himself as a successful merchant; the ship in the window of his portrait is a visible symbol of his commercial success. The Ellerys had six children, and their family was one of the wealthiest in Newport. In addition to his career as a merchant, Mr. Ellery was also involved in civic affairs, serving as judge and Assistant of the colony. As was the case with many Newports, Benjamin Ellery had religious as well as mercantile interests, and he used his wealth to fund a new building for the Second Congregational Church in 1733. With a subscription of 200 pounds sterling, he made the largest contribution to the construction project.

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**Ann Vernon Footstone**
John Stevens
Newport, Rhode Island, 1712
Slate
Newport Historical Society
Footstone once marked the grave of Ann Vernon, granddaughter of early settler, Anne Hutchinson.

**Bottle**
England or America, 1660-1690
Glass
Newport Historical Society (01.612)

**Letter from Benedict Arnold to Roger Goulding**
Newport, Rhode Island, 1672
Newport Historical Society (Box 123, Folder 19)
In the letter, Arnold inquired about Goulding’s romantic intentions toward Arnold’s daughter, Penelope.

**Mary Dyer Being Led to The Scaffold**
Howard Pyle
New York, c. 1905
Oil on canvas
Gift of George L. and Virginia Dyer
Newport Historical Society (90.1)
Depiction of Newport Quaker Mary Dyer being led to her execution in Boston in 1660.

**Of Human Understanding**
John Locke (1632-1704)
London, England, ca. 1690
Paper and leather
Trinity Church Collection at the Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-119-BM)
Part of a collection of books sent to Trinity Church from the Church of England’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in the 18th century.

**Photo reproduction of the Royal Charter of 1663**
Salvatore Mancini
Reproduction courtesy of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities
Newport Historical Society (L 93.31.2)
Photograph of original royal charter obtained by Newport Dr. John Clarke, which established Rhode Island as a colony of religious toleration. (L93.31.2)
Reproduction Side Chair  
England, ca. 1675  
Wood, leather, brass  
Donated by Douglas Campbell  
Newport Historical Society (83.2.1)

Seal of the City of Newport, engraved with sheep and, ‘Seal of Newport Rhoad Island Covnsel’  
Attributed to Arnold Collins  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1696  
Silver  
On loan from the City of Newport  
Newport Historical Society (L65.3.1)

Spoon  
England, 1674  
Latten (copper and zinc)  
Newport Historical Society (01.51)

Table  
England or America, 1690-1725  
Wood  
On loan from the Rhode Island School of Design (L93.67)

William and Mary Dyer land deed  
Signed by William and Mary Dyer  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1644  
Paper and ink  
Newport Historical Society (A 126 F5)  
This deed secured land for the Dyers, who were among Newport’s founding families in 1639.

Thriving Colonial Newport

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, along with Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, Newport emerged as one of the five leading ports in colonial America, prompting many scholars to refer to the eighteenth century as Newport’s Golden Age. During this era, Newport experienced economic prosperity as the colony’s center of business and cultural activity, which was distinct from Newport’s nineteenth-century status as a resort town. This section of the museum presents eighteenth-century letters and objects from individuals and institutions which contributed to and benefitted from Newport’s economic boom in the 1700s. This section also tells the story of a population who contributed to Newport’s economic success but reaped few of the benefits: the population of enslaved Africans who contributed to Newport’s colonial workforce.

Letter from Joseph and William Rotch to Aaron Lopez  
Nantucket, Massachusetts, 1760  
Paper and ink  
Newport Historical Society (MSS Book G50, 178/1787)

Manufacturing, shipping, and storing goods was a difficult undertaking in a pre-industrial society. In centuries past, before railroads crossed the nation, goods had to be transported by ship or over land and getting goods to their final destination could be a risky and hazardous undertaking for all involved in the process. Even Newport’s most successful entrepreneurs had difficulties in their business transactions, as illustrated in this letter from William and Joseph Rotch to Aaron Lopez. Lopez was one of the premiere merchants of colonial Newport and a member of the congregation at Touro Synagogue. The Rotch brothers were Quaker business rivals of Lopez from Nantucket, and this letter accompanied a bill the Rotches sent him for an order of spermaceti. Spermaceti is a substance derived from the head matter of whales that Lopez needed for the manufacture of candles. The Rotches described, in unfavorable terms, the fate of some products Lopez sent to Nantucket for sale: “thy molasses is so poor we fear we shall never sell it...thy rum is unsold...our people will not buy Rhode Island chocolate for that which comes from Boston is better and cheaper.” Rum was one of colonial Rhode Island’s chief exports and for a product to go unsold after all the trouble taken in its manufacture and shipping would constitute a financial loss.
Offering box from the Seventh Day Baptist Church  
Rhode Island, ca. 1800  
Wood and metal  
Gift of John Congdon  
Newport Historical Society (91.7.16)

The offering box dates from around 1800. It was used to collect monetary offerings at religious services in the Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House, which was designed by Richard Munday and built in 1730. The congregation which built the Meeting House was even older; it broke away from John Clarke’s Newport Baptist congregation in 1671. The first known Seventh Day Baptist, or Sabbatarian, in America was Stephen Mumford, who left England around 1664, possibly due to religious persecution. The Seventh Day Baptist religion developed out of the Baptist religion in the 1650s. Like their Baptist forefathers, Sabbatarians were opposed to infant baptism, baptizing only “visible believers.” The term ‘Seventh Day Baptist’ developed out of their belief that the Sabbath should be celebrated on the seventh day of the week, Saturday, according to their interpretation of the Ten Commandments.

In the years following the American Revolution, many members of the Seventh Day Baptist Church left Newport for Westerly, Rhode Island. Between 1840 and 1869, many different religious groups rented the Meeting House. In 1884, the Newport Historical Society bought the Meeting House from the Seventh Day Baptist Church. In 1887, the Meeting House was moved to a new lot. Today, the Meeting House abuts the rear of the Historical Society and remains open to the public for tours.

Overmantle Painting of the Potter Family  
Rhode Island, ca. 1740  
Oil on wood  
Gift of Mrs. E. L. Winters  
Newport Historical Society (53.3)

The history of a wealthy colonial Rhode Island family is embodied in this overmantle painting. This painting, which dates from the mid eighteenth century, features John Potter and three members of his family, as well as a young African boy who is likely a slave. The painting, which was created by an unknown artist in oil on a wood panel, originally hung above the mantle in the Potter family home in South Kingston, Rhode Island, for many years. It was not unheard of for slaves to be included in paintings of the period, but the slave’s dominant position in this particular painting is noteworthy. Many Newporters owned slaves who served the family and lived with them in their homes, which was common practice throughout the colonies. The painting also features a tea set and a silver tea kettle, which represent the family’s cosmopolitan gentility.

Photographic reproduction letter of manumission signed by Robert Lawton  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1775  
Newport Historical Society Reproduction (MS 1993-125-BM)

The manumission letter of the slave Samuel by Quaker Robert Lawton, witnessed by Philip Wanton and George Lawton. Manumission, the liberation of an individual from a state of slavery, was a legal process that required proper documentation. The Newport Historical Society has several manumission records, including this one, which gives an account of the manumission of a slave boy named Samuel from his Quaker owner Robert Lawton. According to this letter, which was written in 1775, Samuel was thirteen years of age when he was manumitted. In accordance with the law, Lawton agreed that he would “Manumit, Release and Discharge, him…from a State of Slavery, & hereby declare him to be henceforth Free as Amply & Fully so, as if he had been Born of Free parents.” After his manumission, Samuel continued to work for Lawton as an apprentice, until he reached his twenty-first birthday. Lawton and two witnesses, Philip Wanton and George Lawton signed Samuel’s manumission. One of Quakerism’s most important and well-known legacies is its support for the abolition movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Society of Friends was one of the first religious organizations to support the abolition movement, but before the Newport Meeting officially renounced the practice of slavery in 1773, many Newport Quakers
owned slaves. In 1760, the Newport Meeting discouraged its members from participating in “that unrighteous practice” of slavery, but it was not until 1773 that they formally required all members of the meeting in Newport to manumit their slaves.

Aaron Lopez letter book,
Bound by Francis Skinner
Newport, Rhode Island, 1767
Paper and leather
Newport Historical Society (72)

Bill from John Stevens to Aaron Lopez
Newport, Rhode Island, 1761
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-88)
Bill for masonry work.

Engraving of William Ellery Channing (1780-1842)
J. Horsburgh
Paper
Newport Historical Society (L93.78)
On loan from Channing Memorial Church, Newport
Channing was raised in Newport and became one of the founders of Unitarianism.

Inkwell
England or America, ca. 1755
Pewter
Newport Historical Society (01.129)

Letter of indenture from Sueton Grant to Thomas Vernon
Newport, Rhode Island, 1734
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-127-BM)

Letter from Aaron Lopez and Jacob Rodriguez Rivera to William English,
Newport, Rhode Island, 1774
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS Box 650, 1774, April 12)
This letter contains instructions for English, who was overseeing a voyage for Lopez and Rivera to procure slaves from the African coast.

Letter from Bathsheba Gould to her family
Newport, Rhode Island, 1780
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-85-BM)

Letter from Joseph and William Rotch to Aaron Lopez
Nantucket, Massachusetts, 1760
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MSS Book G50, 178/1787)

Letter from Lane, Benson and Vaughan to Aaron Lopez
Cork, Ireland, 1768
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (Book 630, #35)
Sent from Cork, contains information about the harvest in Ireland and that country’s reliance on foreign goods.

Letter from Rev. Mr. Gardiner Thurston to his brother
Newport, Rhode Island 1760
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-3-BM)

Miniature portrait of Abraham Touro (1774-1820)
America
Watercolor on ivory
Gift of Miss M. E. Powell
Newport Historical Society (1890.2)

Photographic reproduction advertisement for run-away Slave
Posted by Edward Perry
Newport, Rhode Island, 1773
Newport Historical Society

Photographic reproduction advertisement for run-away Slave
Posted by Tom Ninigret
Newport, Rhode Island, 1776
Newport Historical Society

Photographic reproduction engraving of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803)
Newport Historical Society (P272)
Hopkins was an early abolitionist and minister at the First Congregational Church in 1770.

Photographic reproduction illustration of Trinity Church
Harper’s New Monthly Magazine
Harper & Bros.: New York, 1854
Newport Historical Society

Photographic reproduction promissory note from Levi Meyers
Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1752
Newport Historical Society Reproduction (MS 1993-87-BM)
Signed by Meyers in English and Hebrew.
Photographic reproduction slave notice
South Kingston, Rhode Island, 1769
Newport Historical Society

Portait of the Reverend Mr. Gardiner Thurston (1721-1802)
Samuel King
America, 1758-1802
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. John Gould
Newport Historical Society (01.220)
Reverend Thurston was the pastor of Second Baptist Church in Newport from 1759-1802

Register of the Deaths of Friends
Society of Friends
Newport, Rhode Island, 1729-1732
Paper and ink
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-27-BM)
Contains the birth and death records of the Rhode Island Monthly Meeting of Friends.

The Business of Craftsmanship
With few farmlands, Newport focused its commercial activity by trading and manufacturing rum, candles, fish products, furniture, silver, and other goods. Newport’s trade connections with Africa, the West Indies, and the other colonies made it a popular location for merchants, artists, and craftsmen to open workshops and retail locations to produce and sell goods. By 1769, Newport’s population rose to 11,000 people. This robust population supported many Newport crafts and trade leading up to the American Revolution.

Coggeshall Distillery Account Book
Nathaniel Coggeshall
Newport, Rhode Island, 1764
Paper and leather
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-121-BM)
The Coggeshall Distillery was one of many distilleries that prospered in Newport before the American Revolution. This day book accounts for the distillation expenses of Nathaniel Coggeshall, owner of Coggeshall Distillery. The documented items include molasses, rum, and barrels. From the 1700s to 1770s, rum was one of Newport’s most profitable exports. It was distilled in Newport from sugar and molasses imported from the West Indies through the Triangle Trade. Newport rum was shipped all over the colonies and ports along the Atlantic. The profit from sales was then invested in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Doorway
Newport, Rhode Island, 1797
Wood and paint
Newport Historical Society (15.3)
This Georgian doorway once graced the entrance of a house on 7 Franklin Street before the house was destroyed in the early twentieth century to make room for a post office. The house was built in the 1760s, but a later owner added the pedimented doorway in the late eighteenth century during a movement in American architecture known as the Georgian period. Georgian-style architecture, so named because it was popular during the reigns of King George I and King George IV, incorporates neoclassical elements. Many homeowners added hand crafted pedimented doorways, such as this one, onto existing homes as styles changed. This was a popular architectural detail included on eighteenth-century homes.
This original engraved copper plate designed by Henry Barber, Jr. (1780-1856) was used to print labels for Holmes Weaver’s furniture. Holmes Weaver (1769-1848), a Newport furniture maker, pasted the Barber labels printed from the engraving onto finished cabinets not only as a form of advertisement but as a way to sign his pieces. The piece of Holmes Weaver furniture depicted in the engraving is a serpentine-front sideboard with a bowed front and concave bays. Few engraved labels still exist on Weaver’s furniture. Weaver’s furniture of fine craftsmanship and detail is an example of Newport’s cabinetry tradition. The Holmes Weaver shop remained in his family for four generations.
Middle-Class Interior

Newport’s prosperous seaport allowed for many merchants and artisans to accumulate great wealth through trade. It was common for family members to display their worldliness in the home’s parlor, a formal sitting room where a family’s best furnishings, works of art, and other items could be admired by guests.

Chest-on-Chest
John Townsend
Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1765
Mahogany
Made for Peleg Clarke
Gift of Helen Clarke Douglas (69.3)

This 1760s chest-on-chest is believed to have been made by John Townsend (1732-1809) for Peleg Clarke (1713-1797), a merchant in the tea trade working in Newport and Boston. The Townsends were one of the most well-known Newport cabinetmakers. Products from their shops included cabinetry, chairs, and other furniture pieces. Job Townsend (1699-1765) and his brother Christopher started the family business of furniture making. As a second generation cabinetmaker, John Townsend, who later married the daughter of portrait painter Robert Feke, built this chest-on-chest. Often showcased in an owner’s parlor, chest-on-chests were functional pieces serving as repositories for linens, papers, and other items. Scholars and collectors continue to admire Townsend and Goddard pieces as important representations of early colonial American furniture.

Dining Table
America, ca. 1750
Mahogany
Made for the Marchant family
Gift of June Cole
Newport Historical Society (2010.15)

This eighteenth-century drop-leaf dining table, attributed to being designed and built in either the Townsend or Goddard furniture shops, once belonged to Henry Marchant (1741-1796), Attorney General of Rhode Island during the Revolution. It is believed that Henry Marchant placed this table in his Newport law office. A nineteenth-century daguerreotype shows the mahogany table in the law office of Henry Marchant’s son, William. Although slightly smaller than similar Townsend and Goddard tables of the period, the table resembles Newport craftsmanship with Queen Anne legs.

Born in Martha’s Vineyard, Marchant worked as a lawyer in the law office of Judge Trowbridge in Cambridge, Massachusetts before moving to Newport to open his own practice. As a successful lawyer, Marchant was appointed Attorney General of Rhode Island (1770-1777) and was named a delegate to the Continental Congress (1777). He was later selected to serve as a member of the General Assembly and Federal Constitutional Convention before being appointed as Rhode Island’s first Federal Judge. Seeking a safe place of residency when the American Revolution broke out, Marchant moved to Narragansett, Rhode Island. He returned to Newport shortly after the war in 1784.

Portraits of Isaac Stelle (1714-1763) and Penelope Goodson Stelle
Robert Feke
America, 1740-1750
Oil on canvas
Gifts of Mrs. Mary A. Sayer
Newport Historical Society (25.1.2, 25.1.3)

These portraits are of Captain Isaac Stelle (1714-1763) and his wife, Penelope Goodson. Captain Isaac Stelle was a merchant, chandler, Warden of Trinity Church, and Captain of the Newport County Regiment. As a merchant and captain, he sailed his brigantine vessel to the West Indies trafficking
He married Penelope Goodson, daughter of John Goodson and Elizabeth Pelham, in Newport on December 23, 1739. Around 1750, Captain Stelle commissioned artist Robert Feke to paint portraits of him and his wife. It is a visible display of the wealth he made in the shipping business.

Robert Feke was one of the best known portrait artists in colonial America. Art historians consider Feke the first American born painter. Feke moved to Newport in 1742 and lived here for a short time before his death. There are only nine known works that Feke painted while in Newport, two of which are on display in the Museum of Newport Museum. Captain Stelle’s portrait is the only signed Feke painting in Newport.

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### Bowl
- China, 1775-1800
- Porcelain
- Newport Historical Society (61.1.4)

### Pair of Candlesticks
- Europe or America, 1750-1775
- Brass
- Newport Historical Society (01.284.a, 01.284.b)

### Side Chair
- Newport, Rhode Island, 1740-1770
- Mahogany and reproduction wool upholstery
- Made for the Hazard family of Newport
- Gift of Mrs. P. J. Stevens, Jr.
- Newport Historical Society (77.5.1)

### Side Chair
- Newport, Rhode Island, 1740-1770
- Mahogany and reproduction leather upholstery
- Newport Historical Society (01.258)

### Onto the Parade

The Parade, today known as Washington Square, functioned as a central meeting place in colonial Newport. The Colony House, a symbol of government, and the Brick Market, a symbol of commerce still stand at either end of the Parade. It was, and continues to be, a busy commercial and civic area in Newport. The museum gallery which concentrates on The Parade contains both eighteenth and early nineteenth-century artifacts. The exhibit depicts Newport’s Golden Age of prosperity and its decline after the events of the American Revolution left the city in dire economic straits.

### Decorative Eagle
- Rhode Island, ca.1750
- Wood and paint
- Newport Historical Society (25.3.1)

The gilt wooden sculpture of the eagle was one of a pair of eagles that adorned the gateposts of Metcalf Bowler’s Portsmouth estate in the mid-eighteenth century. Bowler was a successful Rhode Island merchant, who likely commissioned the eagles around 1750. The use of the eagle as a decorative figure predated the use of the eagle as a symbol for the United States of America. Instead, these golden eagles served as a symbol of Newport’s “Golden Age” of mercantile success and economic prosperity. Following the American Revolution, the eagles were removed from the Bowler estate and were separated. Subsequently, the eagles were used as trade signs for several different businesses over the course of the nineteenth century.

### The Parade
- Unknown
- Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1818
- Oil on canvas
- Gift of Citizen’s Bank, Washington Square Branch, Newport
- Newport Historical Society (94.4.1)

The identity of the artist behind the painting *The Parade*, which depicts a view of what is now known as Washington Square circa 1818, remains unknown. Local lore
attributes the work to a Hessian soldier imprisoned here for debt. The Hessian was allegedly allotted a period of daily exercise and he used that time to record his impressions of Newport in the Federal period (1780-1830). This painting includes buildings that are still standing on the Square. Visible in the painting are the Brick Market, now the home of the Museum of Newport History, and the Jacob Rodrigues Rivera house on the right, now Citizen’s Bank. The painting includes two groups of promenaders, walking through the Parade, dressed in early nineteenth-century costume. It provides a wonderful view into an oft-overlooked period of Newport’s history, a time when the city’s status as colonial seaport was fading and its reputation as a summer colony for the best and brightest of East Coast society was not yet established.

The Revolution

The American Revolution (1776-1883) brought political, economic, and social change to the colonies, however events driving these changes began long before actual war was declared. One of the many issues that triggered the revolution was the colonists’ animosity towards the economic and political policies of Great Britain, including the authority of Parliament to tax the colonies and to exclude the colonists from representation.

In Newport, the Revolution, and the events leading up to it, put economic and political strain on the colonists. In August 1765, rowdy colonists flooded the streets of Newport in response to the Parliament's direct tax on all paper goods, known as the Stamp Act. This public disturbance turned violent and frightened many social superiors and loyalists. The Stamp Act tax was repealed in 1766, however tension between Great Britain and the American Colonies were far from resolved. Ten years after the Stamp Act Great Britain and the Colonies were at war. From 1776 through 1781 Newporters felt the hardship of two periods of military occupation, first from the British military then the French military. During the periods of occupation both allied and opposing forces were quartered in Newport homes. Many Newporters fled the city as a result, causing the resident
population to fall from 9,208 in 1774 to 5,532 people in 1782. After the years of military occupation, many merchants left Newport’s struggling economy for Boston and Providence.

**Camp Kettle**

France, ca. 1780
Copper
Gift of William Wharton Smith
Newport Historical Society (87.1)

French aristocrat and naval officer Vicomte de Noailles (1756-1804) gifted his 1700s copper camp teakettle to the Robinson family as a token of his gratitude for the time spent in their home. In the summer of 1780, following the British troops’ departure in 1779, Newporters saw the arrival of French troops. Many of the French officers were quartered in local homes. Vicomte de Noailles resided at the home of Quaker merchant Thomas Robinson (1731-1817) at 64 Washington Street for one year after arriving in Newport with Rochambeau’s army in July 1780. Noailles was very fond of the Robinsons and continued to keep in touch with their daughter, Mary, through letters.

**Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax**

Martin Howard
Newport, Rhode Island, 1765
Paper
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-111-BM)

In February 1765, the Newport Mercury announced the printing of an anonymously published pamphlet titled *A Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax*. Newporters soon identified Martin Howard who was not from Halifax, Nova Scotia, but from Newport, Rhode Island, as the author. Martin Howard, a lawyer and owner of the Wanton-Lymna-Hazard House (now owned and operated by the Newport Historical Society as a house museum), published his loyalist views in *A Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax* in response to *The Rights of Colonies Examined*, written by Governor Stephen Hopkins. Hopkins, who believed in resisting British laws that directly affected the economy of Newport, argued that the colonists were in fact British citizens and should have a voice in all laws and taxation that Parliament implemented. In retort, Howard asserted that the colonies do not have independent rights from Great Britain and do not need virtual representation in government. Howard’s pamphlet triggered local and regional reactions causing the publication of other political pamphlets. In Newport, colonists responded by attacking Howard during the Stamp Act riots of August 1765, hanging him in effigy in front of the Colony House. Howard, in fear of his safety, fled Newport. Rioters vandalized Howard’s house on Broad Street (now known as Broadway), breaking doors, windows, furniture, and other personal items.

**Musket**

England or America, 1774
Wood, brass and steel
Owned by Elbridge Gerry
Newport Historical Society (91.7.14)

This American musket, copied from a British military musket, was owned by Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814), former Vice-President of the United States under James Madison. Gerry was both a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Article of Confederation. He is best known for his political maneuvering while Governor of Massachusetts. His policies gave rise to the term “gerrymander,” which refers to manipulating geographic boundaries to achieve electoral results for a political party by favoring a certain demographic. This specific musket was modeled after a Committee of Safety Musket and was used until the French provided Americans with newer weapons during their alliance in the Revolution.
Printing Press  
London, late 1600s  
Elm and metal  
Owned by James Franklin, elder brother of Benjamin Franklin  
Loan from the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association (L93.54.1-3)

Made of elm by an unknown artisan in England around 1650, the Franklin Press is one of only a few colonial printing presses still surviving in the United States. A machine of local and national significance, the press has long been an important part of Newport’s history, playing a critical role in how locals obtained news for afar and nearby, in times of peace and in war. For over a century, this press not only served as a source of information but also of income for Newporters. Several families earned their livelihood using this press by printing newspapers, almanacs, broadsides, laws, and currency.

As an important instrument of the colonial government, the Franklin Press was quickly targeted by the British forces who occupied Newport during the Revolution. The legend is that Solomon Southwick, the press’s owner and patriot, buried the press as a way to weaken the incoming forces. Despite his efforts, British forces discovered the press was discovered and used it to print official documents and newspapers. This press stands today as a testament to the power of the written word, to the ways in which people used machines to disseminate ideas.

Almanac  
John Anderson  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1773  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-110-BM)

The Copy of Some Queries  
Robert Auchmunty  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1734  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-22-BM)

Diorama of the Arrival of Rochambeau and His Troops  
Mme. Fernande Metayer  
Paris, France, 1976  
On loan from the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University (L93.32)

The Hand-in-Hand Fire Club Charter  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1750  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-26-BM)

Map of Defenses in Narragansett Bay  
Louis-Alexandre Berthier and Charles-Louis Berthier  
America, ca.1780  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (P1062)

The Newport Mercury  
Newport, 1762  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-104-BM)  
This particular edition of the Mercury was printed by Ann Franklin, wife of James Franklin.

Pavement Lottery Ticket  
Newport, 1767  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-5-BM)

Photographic Reproduction Advertisement for Coffeehouse  
Abigail Stoneman  
Newport, Rhode Island, Nov. 15, 1773  
Newport Historical Society

Portrait of Thomas Dring  
Franz Ludwig Hirschmann  
Europe or America, 1793  
Gift of Verner Z. Reed, Jr.  
Newport Historical Society (67.3)  
Dring was a Newporter who served in the American Revolution.

Receipt for the purchase of Paper from John Bannister  
Paper and ink  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-2-BM)

Reproduction Newport Artillery Company Uniform  
Wool, metal and cotton  
Worn by John Lauth, Commander, Newport Artillery Company  
On loan from Newport Artillery Company  
Newport Historical Society (L93.33)

Sermon on the Accursed Thing that Hinders Success and Victory in War  
Reverend William Vinal  
Newport, Rhode Island, 1755  
Paper  
Newport Historical Society (MS 1993-113-BM)
More Authors in that City than any Other

After the conclusion of the War for Independence, Newport never again regained its place as a center of commerce in America. The city entered the nineteenth century in an economic slump, but ended that century as one of the most fashionable summer resorts in the country. Among the many summer visitors to Newport were writers, painters and other artists for whom Newport’s scenic beauty and cultural heritage served as an inspiration. Many of these artists and intellectuals were members of the Town and Country Club of Newport, a social club that was founded by Julia Ward Howe and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. In 1877, the editor of the Newport Mercury wrote that of these individuals were, “The very best people here, the real crème de la crème are the few in whom social and intellectual culture unite.” Members of the Town and Country Club spent their summertime in Newport pursuing civic, political and cultural improvements.

Desk
Attributed to Duncan Phyfe
New York, ca.1830
Mahogany
On loan from Mr. and Mrs. Richard Manney
Newport Historical Society (L2009.1.1)

This desk, which has been attributed to nineteenth-century New York furniture maker Duncan Phyfe, was the property of Clement C. Moore (1779-1863), author of the world famous poem, “The Night Before Christmas.” A gifted scholar, Moore achieved his first academic success with a two-volume, Compendious Lexicon of the Hebrew Language, but he remains better known for his Yuletide verses. In 1855, Moore bought a house in Newport called The Cedars, which still stands today. Moore was a New York native who spent only summers in Newport, yet he left an indelible mark on the town; he contributed funds to help purchase the land that became Touro Park. Clement Moore died in Newport in 1863 at The Cedars.

Hanging Rock
George Quincy Thorndike
Newport, Rhode Island, 1866
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Isabelle Thorndike
Newport Historical Society (67.1)

George Thorndike was an American painter, and a member of prestigious art institutions in both the United States and Europe. Like many others in the nineteenth century and today, he was drawn to the rugged beauty of Aquidneck Island’s coastline and countryside. He chose to immortalize that beauty in art, creating the pastoral landscape, Hanging Rock. The Hanging Rock Thorndike painted is located at the present-day site of the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Middletown, Rhode Island.
Julia Ward Howe is, perhaps, most famous for being the author of “The Battle-Hymn of the Republic,” but she was also a noted suffragist, abolitionist and along with fellow writer Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a co-founder of the Town and Country Club. By establishing an organization for the promotion of intellectual activities, Howe and others like her sought to provide alternatives to what they viewed as frivolous pursuits of amusement in Newport. Caroline M. Hall, the painter of this portrait, was Howe’s granddaughter, suggesting that perhaps an inclination toward the arts ran in the family. Howe died in 1910 at her home Oak Glen in Portsmouth, north of Newport on Aquidneck Island.

Jane Stuart, daughter of Rhode Island painter Gilbert Stuart, who is best remembered for his paintings of George Washington, established herself as a respected artist during her lifetime. As part of her early artistic training, she was often tasked with finishing or copying his work and was ranked as fine an artist as her famous father. She supported herself through her artwork, which consisted mainly of portraits. This portrait is a Jane Stuart original of Sarah Hughes, a local girl. Stuart was not a member of the Town and Country Club, but she occupied the same social circle and was acquainted with a number of Club members, including one of the Club’s founders Thomas Wentworth Higginson.
Queen of Resorts

Before summering millionaires built the mansions of Bellevue Avenue, the grandest and largest structures built in nineteenth century Newport were the city’s hotels. Even before the American Revolution, Newport played host to summer residents from the deep southern colonies, particularly South Carolina. These southerners sought refuge from the heat and humidity of their plantations, prompting some to nickname the city “the Carolina hospital.” With the establishment of the Fall River Line of steamships that carried many passengers overnight between New York, Newport and Boston, Newport became a tourism hotspot, with hotels, inns and boardinghouses for the crowds of visitors who did not have their own private summer residences. Newport never developed a hotel culture on the level of other resorts such as Saratoga Springs, and none of Newport’s grand hotels from the nineteenth century remain intact today.

Lithograph of the first Ocean House
Newport, Rhode Island, 1844
Paper
Newport Historical Society (2000.43.9)

The Ocean House hotel was one of Newport’s great tourist landmarks in the nineteenth century. The first Ocean House, depicted in this lithograph, was constructed in 1841, but it burned to the ground in 1845. The second Ocean House was designed by Russell Warren and completed in 1848. Boasting one hundred and twenty-five rooms, this hotel was even larger and more elegantly appointed than the first. One writer in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper described the hotel as “the rendezvous of fashion...where nightly the world of beauty and elegance congregate to dance, to walk and be merry.” The Ocean House featured facilities for concerts and for dancing; every August, 300 guests paid $10 apiece for the privilege of attending a ball at the hotel that would last until four in the morning. In 1898, the second Ocean House burned down, and no subsequent hotel was built in its place.

Painting of the Ocean House
Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1850
Oil on wood
Gift of Dr. Roderick Terry
Newport Historical Society (91.16.11)

A mark of the opulence of the Ocean House was its private horse-drawn omnibus, from which this panel originates. The panel decorated the side of the omnibus, identifying which hotel it belonged to and giving visitors the first glimpse of the luxury they would soon experience as they got off the bus. The omnibus transported hotel guests from the ferry landing at Newport to the Ocean House, and it also served as transportation to the beaches, picnicking sites and other sites. The omnibus provided convenient transportation for hotel guests and also served as a traveling advertisement for the hotel, just as buses advertise businesses today. The panel is currently housed in a reproduction of the Ocean House omnibus. Inside, visitors to the museum can watch a video which recreates a journey down Bellevue Avenue during Newport's Gilded Age.

Water Pitcher from Atlantic House
America, 1844-1877
Porcelain
Gift of Dr. Roderick Terry
Newport Historical Society (19.1)

This porcelain water pitcher came from the Atlantic House hotel, the name of which is painted on the side of the pitcher. The Atlantic House was built in the 1840s, but it ceased functioning as a hotel during the Civil War when it was used as the home of the United States Naval Academy. Once the war was over, the hotel once again provided accommodations for individuals and families who were vacationing in Newport until its 1874 closure. Each guest room at the Atlantic House would have had a pitcher like this one and a matching bowl so that guests could use them for washing up. The Atlantic House is no longer standing.
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<td>Crock</td>
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<td>Dinner and Wine Menu, Atlantic House</td>
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<td>Lithograph of Townsend’s Hotel</td>
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<td>Old Stone Mill Souvenir Mug</td>
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<td>Oriental Vase</td>
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<td>Philharmonic Society Program and Ticket</td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, Apr. 11, 1861</td>
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Since the colonial era, sailors have found the waters off Newport Harbor ideal for sailing. Seaside residents, who were involved in commercial pursuits and owned water vessels, used their boats for recreational sailing. It wasn’t until after the Civil War that yacht racing and cruising became a large part of Newport’s maritime activities.

Economic prosperity among the wealthy in the late nineteenth century gave rise to Newport becoming an international yachting center. Businessmen with newly acquired wealth and leisure saw yachting as a status symbol. Summer residents built homes along the ocean after yachting clubs began holding annual regattas and cruises in Narragansett Bay. One of the most prestigious yacht clubs, New York Yacht Club, has sailed boats in Newport since the mid-1840s. Newport’s maritime tradition of sailing and racing continues today as one of America’s pastimes.

A figurehead is an ornamental or decorative figure placed on the prow of a ship symbolizing the name and the soul of the vessel. This figurehead is from the prow of Aloha who received her name from the Hawaiian word used for greeting and valediction. Craftsmen modeled the figurehead after Liliuokalani, the last queen of the Hawaiian Islands who led the Hawaiian revolution of 1893.

Built in 1910 for Commodore Arthur Curtiss James, the auxiliary yacht Aloha made four trips across the Atlantic Ocean and back. Wealthy passengers sailed Aloha internationally and nationally to places like Port Sudan in the Red Sea, Shabghai, China and Honolulu, Hawai‘i. In June of 1922, Aloha anchored in Newport Harbor, James’ home port. This was the Aloha’s longest voyage of over 28,000 miles completed in nine months. Aloha sailed the seven seas until she was decommissioned in 1937.
At the New York Yacht Club’s (NYYC) first annual meeting in 1845, the officers designed the club burgee represented by a red cross with a white star in the center on a dark blue background. The NYYC burgee would have flown at the top of a ship’s masthead, denoting that the owner belonged to the NYYC.

The NYYC, founded in 1844, has long been connected to Newport. Annual cruises to Newport began as early as the club’s founding year. The NYYC’s Annual Regatta has been held in Newport numerous times, including in recent years. In 1890 Clubhouse Station #6 (now the site of a local restaurant) of the NYYC was established in Newport. In 1930, the NYYC, defenders of the America’s Cup, moved the regatta course to the waters off Newport where steadier winds than the winds off the waters of New York blew. The America’s Cup regatta remained in Newport until 1983 when the NYYC lost its 132 year winning streak, the longest of any sport in history. The NYYC still has a clubhouse in Newport, located in the Nicholas Brown Estate.

This long sleeved wool sweater is monogrammed with the black letters VIM, for Harold S. Vanderbilt (1884-1970), the owner of the 70-foot, 12-meter yacht *Vim*. H. S. Vanderbilt, whose name appears on the inside label of the sweater, was the great-grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt the nineteenth-century steamship and railroad tycoon, and the inventor of the modern form of the card game bridge. He was also successful in yacht racing, victoriously defending the America’s Cup in Newport in 1930, 1934, and 1937.

From 1939 until the end of WWII, Vanderbilt owned and raced the 12-meter *Vim*. On June 29, 1940, Vanderbilt raced *Vim* in the annual New Rochelle Yacht Club regatta. Within five minutes of his sail, the *Vim*’s spinnaker, with its 3,500 square feet of canvas, ripped into pieces. Despite the setback, the *Vim* went on to win the race. In 1958, the New York Yacht Club almost selected *Vim* as the America’s Cup defender because of the yacht’s advanced 12-meter racing design. Many naval architects consider *Vim* a benchmark in racing yachts.
At Play

Newport had many amusements to offer for all seeking a holiday, especially for the successful members of New York society who built the Bellevue Avenue mansions and came to the seaside to escape the hustle and bustle of the city in summertime. The museum galleries include many examples of games and diversions visitors sought in Newport, ranging from baseball to lawn tennis to bicycling. Newport visitors and locals alike still enjoy these activities today. Here, they can still catch a baseball game at Cardines Field (1908), watch a game of tennis at the Casino (1880), or enjoy a scenic bike ride along Ocean Drive.

Penny Farthing Bicycle
Europe or America, ca.1880
Metal, leather and rubber
Newport Historical Society (91.7.37)

This particular kind of bicycle, known as a penny farthing or ordinary bicycle, was popular in the late nineteenth century. The design of the bicycle made for a difficult and potentially dangerous ride for the untrained wheelman, as cyclists were then called. Unlike bicycles of today, which employ chains and multiple gears the rider uses to propel forward, the penny farthing is a fixed gear bicycle and the rider used the pedals to directly move the large front wheel. The seat is mounted high up on the bike, directly over the front wheel. This contributed to the danger of riding the bicycle. If a rider stopped short, they had a good chance of tumbling over the handlebars. Nevertheless, these were very popular among daring young men in the late nineteenth century as both a means of transportation and a form of exercise. The design of the bicycle and difficulty of mounting and dismounting made it a challenge for women in long dresses to attempt to ride. The Newport chapter of the League of American Wheelmen was founded in 1880. Cycling continues to be a popular way of traveling and enjoying the scenery in the city to this day.
The Business of Leisure

In addition to its role as a summer resort for some of the wealthiest families in America, Newport also attracted people from the middle and working classes who hoped to partake in both leisure activities and business endeavors. The summer months were full of opportunities for local business owners and domestic workers who relied on the profit generated from summer visitors.

Copy of Photograph of House Staff at Cliff Walk
Clarence Stanhope
Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1890
Newport Historical Society (P47)

This photograph of house staff posed on the Cliff Walk at an unidentified mansion was taken during Newport’s Gilded Age in the late nineteenth century. During the summer months, socialites and aristocrats were not the only occupants of the gilded mansions on Bellevue Avenue. In the late nineteenth century, a large population of European immigrants settled in Newport and many wealthy summer residents hired the young European immigrants to do domestic work on their summer estates. House servants lived and worked in many of the summer cottages and allowed its inhabitants to enjoy their lavish lifestyle. On average, a domestic worker was only paid $20 or less a month. In 1895, over 2,000 of the 20,000 citizens in Newport worked as servants.

Milk bottle
Hammersmith Farm
Glass
Gift of Charles Perry Slocum II
Newport Historical Society (89.9.16)

Hammersmith Farm, once the childhood home to Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, is located in an area of Aquidneck Island originally settled by William Brenton, who founded the first farm on the property in 1640. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Hammersmith Farm capitalized on selling its dairy product to the surrounding population. Local Newporters bought Pasteruized Grade B milk in one-quart bottles like this one. The empty glass bottles were returned to Hammersmith Farm when they were done to be reused.

Photograph of Perry Mansion Market
Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1895
Newport Historical Society (P376)

Pictured in this photograph is the Perry Mansion Market, formally located on 29 Touro Street. Built for Peter Buliod around 1750 and occupied by Oliver Hazard Perry’s family from 1818 to 1865, the Perry Mansion is a three story, Federal-style mansion with wooden clapboards fashioned and painted to look like blocks of stone. In the early 1900s, African-American entrepreneurs and brothers, J.T. Allen and David B. Allen, converted the Perry Mansion into a restaurant with three private dining rooms. The brothers altered the facade of the building by placing large store-front windows on the first floor. This was a common practice done to many colonial homes to create retail and commercial space on street level.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a group of Newport African-American investors financed the start up of many African American businesses in the city. Many African American owned businesses thrived within the African American community in Newport, including commercial stores, such as barber shops, beauty salons, grocery stores, and restaurants. The Perry Mansion Market and Dining Rooms is an example of local African American entrepreneurial pursuits.
This advertisement for Charles G. Muenchinger’s confection and toy shop contains a list of goods available for purchase during the 1875 spring and summer seasons. Charles G. Muenchinger (1827-1925), born in Germany, came to the United States in 1848. In 1852, he opened a confectionery shop in Newport at 70 Spring Street, opposite Trinity Church. At this shop, he sold a wide variety of sweets, including both American and French candies, cakes, tea biscuits, pastries, ice creams, flavored ice, and jams. Muenchinger and his sons expanded their business to include catering and to provide private boarding for people summering in Newport. The Muenchinger family was a leading confectioner in Newport and owned several different shops, several operating at the same time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Maker/Owner</th>
<th>Date/Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakery Sign</td>
<td>William Clark Noble</td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1900</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (48.3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Model</td>
<td></td>
<td>London, England, ca.1840</td>
<td>Metal, leather, wood</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (91.7.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Bag</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1882</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (2000.43.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Badges</td>
<td></td>
<td>America, 1900s</td>
<td>Brass, bronze and silver</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (91.7.33, 91.7.34, 91.7.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Nightstick or Billy Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>America, 1900s</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (91.7.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine Chest with medical supplies</td>
<td>Dr. Abiram F. Squires (1846-1925)</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (92.44.1)</td>
<td>Wood and metal</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (92.44.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproduction Advertisement for Grocery</td>
<td>Julius Sayer</td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, 1870-1875</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproduction Call Box from The Breakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove</td>
<td>William Brownell</td>
<td>Newport, 1845</td>
<td>Cast iron</td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (2000.43.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of Andrews’ Express Company</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island ca.1900</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P376)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of a Barbershop</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1915</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P1209)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of Enos Pedro</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, 1883-1892</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P276)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of Fenton’s Candy Store</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, 1888-1898</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P278)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of Ferretti’s Fruit Market and Confectioners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1892</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P283)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of a Police Wagon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, 1905</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P288)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of House and grounds staff, estate unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1890</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of Phineas Clarke’s Carriage Shop</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1890</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P288)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Photograph of the Breakers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport, Rhode Island, 1905</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newport Historical Society (P288)</td>
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</table>
Copy of Photograph of William K. Covell’s Store
Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1875
Newport Historical Society (P1034)
Interior photograph

Copy of Photograph of William K. Covell’s Store
Newport, Rhode Island, ca.1800
Newport Historical Society (P1031)
Exterior photograph
1700s

1760 The proprietors of Long Wharf write a grant to construct a three story market house with an open air market on the first floor and a public granary to store dry goods on the top floors. Peter Harrison designed the plan for the Brick Market.
1762 Construction of the Brick Market begins.
1772 Construction of the Brick Market is completed.
1772-1842 Vendors rent ground floor stalls and upper floor offices to sell goods.
1793-1799 The Brick Market becomes home to the Newport Theater Company.

1800s

1842 The City of Newport converts the upper stories of the Brick Market into a public auditorium space and lecture hall. The second and third floors are transformed into one large room with 18 foot ceilings. The new space accommodates nearly 500 people.
1853-1900 The City renovates the auditorium space into offices to serve as Newport City Hall. City Hall in this location remains for 47 years.
1914 F.E. Chadwick, Vice President for the Society for Preservation of New England Antiques (now known as Historic New England), employs Norman Morrison Isham, architect and preservationist from Providence, to examine the building.
1915 Isham suggests a series of restoration efforts, such as weather and fireproofing the building, replacing the shingle roof, and repairing exterior woodwork.

1900s

1928 The City of Newport hires Isham to restore the Brick Market’s exterior.
1930 A grant from John Nicholas Brown II finances the exterior restoration. The building is leased by the City to the Newport Chamber of Commerce.
1962 The Brick Market is listed as Registered National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of Interiors.
1988 The Brick Market Foundation is established, who leases the building from the City and oversees its restoration in the following year.
1991 The Brick Market Foundation transfers the lease to the Newport Historical Society and organizes a permanent exhibition hall in the building.

2000s

1993-present The City of Newport retains ownership of the Brick Market with the Newport Historical Society maintains and operates the building as the Museum of Newport History and Museum Shop.