



NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Five Centuries of American History

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6

INSIDE

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Director's Note

On April 19th I was a guest at the opening ceremony for the new Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. As part of the beautifully planned event, a group of young people presented two songs from *Hamilton: An American Musical* along with an original cast member. They performed "History Has its Eyes on You," George Washington's message to Alexander Hamilton before the battle of Yorktown.

A few days later I was watching Washington sing it to *Hamilton* when the NHS brought a group of ten high school students down to NYC to see the play as a prize for success in our essay contest, "Writing Your Way to Hamilton: Big Ideas for a Changing World." Lin-Manuel Miranda's book for *Hamilton* was clearly inspired by a thoughtful grasp of both the complexity of historical understanding and the requirements of the kind of storytelling needed to communicate with the public. This is the essence of good public history.

Hamilton tells the story of the founding of our nation through the personalities of individual people whose stories are relatable -- even, or especially, when they are not simply examples of heroism or its opposite. The show also is cast in a way that reflects our country's current ethnic diversity, and it translates the words and messages of our founders into a modern vernacular style. The results are magnificent. And, I believe that the wild popularity of the musical is abundant evidence that the American public cares deeply about its history, and is willing to engage with its complexity, when the story is well told.

The Museum of the American Revolution also uses the techniques of telling individual stories to pull the visitor into the narrative. Stories of individual soldiers, wives of soldiers, and the choices made by the enslaved and by the Native Americans caught up in the conflict make a familiar, even clichéd narrative fresh and meaningful. These stories are a useful tool, but they also reflect an important fact within the study of history. While the systems of culture, economics and politics are the great wheels that move history forward, individuals are both the grease and the grit. The decisions made and actions taken by people at pivotal moments can

alter the events of the world. Can change the story. This was, I hope, a powerful message for our young contest winners as they watched *Hamilton*.

But our national narrative is defined by the cohort of those who write about it as much as by the actual events. Washington sings to *Hamilton* "Let me tell you what I wish I'd known, when I was young and dreamed of glory. You have no control; who lives, who dies, who tells your story." And this too is an important incentive to encourage people to continue to study history. The facts may not change over time, but as we uncover new information, and our understanding deepens, the narrative shifts. Ray Halbritter, a representative of the Oneida nation who spoke at the opening of the Revolution Museum, pointed out that Native assistance to the American cause was not inevitable, and it was important. This particular story has rarely been told as compellingly as it is in the new Museum. He went on to suggest that in a country as increasingly diverse as ours, the actual diversity in the history of our origin needs to be recognized.

As we study and plan for our own public history programming at the Newport Historical Society, we are focused on good data and good stories. We are, as we assemble facts and interpretations, regularly conscious of another great omission. Little of Rhode Island's documented history is part of the national narrative. And it has become an imperative for us to correct this. From the earliest experiment in full religious liberty, to important roles during the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and 20th century leisure, immigration and prosperity, important things -- world-changing things -- happened here. And the world should know, in part because one of our messages to the young Rhode Island essayists is that they still can



– Ruth S. Taylor, *Executive Director*

Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust



The Newport Historical Society is pleased and honored to announce that it has received a \$1 million grant – *the largest single grant the NHS has ever received* – from the Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust. The grant, which will support a campaign to increase endowment and support essential staffing, is also a challenge. NHS now must raise \$1 million to match this grant, which will bring its total endowment to \$5 million. Completing the Alletta Morris McBean Trust's \$1 million challenge will also complete our Challenging the Future campaign.

The first phase of that campaign supported the complete rehabilitation of our Touro Street headquarters. It is now a modern facility prepared to house, make accessible to research, and exhibit our extensive collections of Newport history. Increased endowment funding will specifically ensure that curatorial and education staff are here to facilitate the interpretation of the history embodied in the NHS collections to the public. This will permit the NHS to continue to properly serve the 160,000 people it reaches each year virtually and in real life.

**Completing the McBean Challenge
will also complete the campaign –
we have \$500,000 left to raise.**

**If you would like to be a hero and
help us make that possible,
please email rtaylor@newporthistory.org.**



In April, the Newport Historical Society took ten teenagers to NYC to see the award-winning *Hamilton, An American Musical* in recognition of their winning essays.

At the end of last year, the Society challenged Rhode Island's high school sophomores to imagine the future by thinking about the past. In a contest entitled *Writing Your Way to Hamilton: Big Ideas for a Changing World*, students were asked to be inspired by Rhode Island's history and write an essay describing what is happening or could happen in their communities that might change the world.

Alexander Hamilton was a gifted essayist, whose writings changed the course of American history. The show *Hamilton* presents individuals, many of whom were quite young, who in response to the events and issues of their day, allowed themselves to think in new ways that helped propel change and shape the future. The young essayists who caught the attention of the judges of the Society's essay contest demonstrated the deep concerns of young people in the state of Rhode Island today: the environment and energy; tolerance and diversity; the value of community; economic development; and the state of their education and the educational experiences. They thought about how, through social and political structures, we can work for change. "To produce the desirable changes," one wrote, quoting the federalist Alexander Hamilton, "may therefore require the incitement and patronage of government." This student's engagement with Hamilton's words while thinking about current issues demonstrates the relevance that history offers to young people today. The revamped essay contest was inspired and supported by Dwight and Susan Sipprelle.



Newport Historical Society

Resource Center

82 Touro Street, Newport RI 02840 | 401-846-0813
Monday – Friday 10 to 4

Museum of Newport History & Shop at the Brick Market

127 Thames Street, Newport RI 02840 | 401-841-8770
Daily 10 to 5

Properties:

Colony House, Washington Square
Wanton-Lyman-Hazard-House, 17 Broadway
Great Friends Meeting House, 22 Marlborough Street
Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House, 82 Touro Street

For more information see:

www.NewportHistory.org | www.NewportHistoryTours.org

THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Expands Program of Visiting Scholars

More than a decade ago the Newport Historical Society began what is now an endowed program to bring young history scholars to the NHS each summer for research and training in the public side of history. The Buchanan Burnham Summer Internship, funded by Helen Buchanan and Richard and Fanchon (Monty) Burnham, was visionary on behalf of the donors and transformative for the NHS. It connected NHS with emerging scholars and their research, and alumni of the program are now teaching and working in museums all over the country. The program is now heading into its 15th year with an expanded emphasis.

Renamed the Buchanan Burnham Endowment for Visiting Scholars, this program will have two components. The long-standing summer program, now called Buchanan Burnham Fellowships, will continue to focus on public history and research with competitive awards of 3-5 graduate fellows each summer.

In addition, a new program of Visiting Curators at the NHS was established under the Buchanan Burnham umbrella, replacing the traditional full-time Curator. “NHS’ collections are too comprehensive, and our programming arena too large for one person to be an expert in everything we do,” explains the Society’s Executive Director Ruth Taylor. “We function on many levels at once: fostering and collating scholarship, maintaining our museum and satellite exhibits, lectures on five centuries of history, a living history program and more. We need to stay abreast of current scholarship and to keep our vision broad, at the same time that, practically, we must remain at a staffing size that is sustainable in our community.”

These appointments will allow working scholars to take a hiatus from other work and bring their expertise to Newport and to the NHS collections, taking a greater knowledge of Newport’s history with them when they leave for other endeavors. Visiting Curators will be

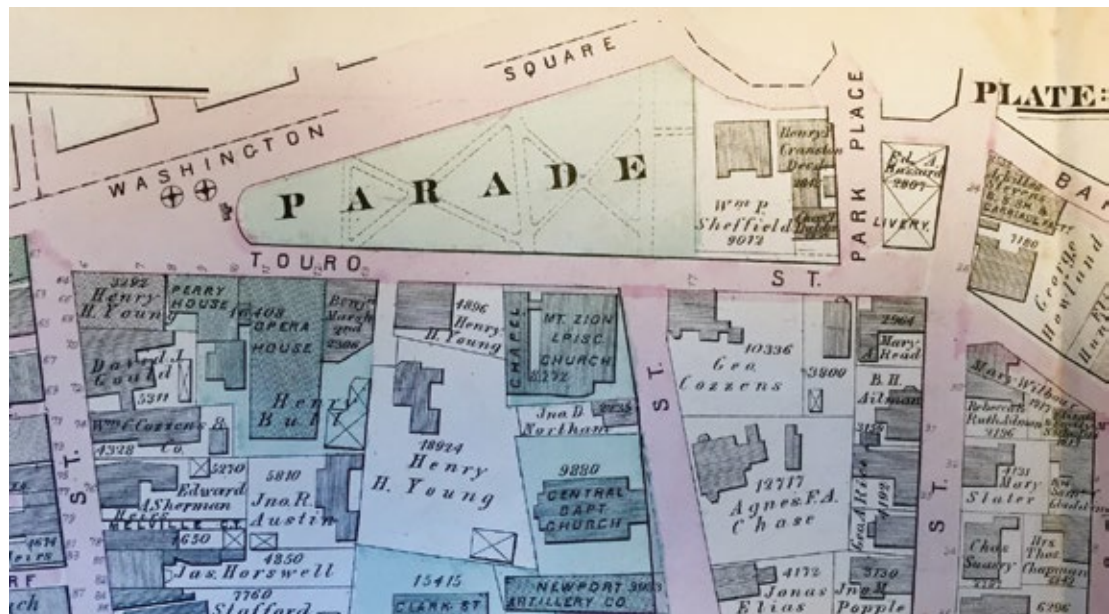


Image of the Parade, 1876 Atlas. NHS COLLECTION

mature scholars working in history in areas relevant to the NHS’ current areas of mission-related activity. Appointments will be long-term temporary, full or part-time, and will carry an appropriate stipend.

The Visiting Curators for 2017 Are:

TAYLOR STOERMER, PHD

Visiting Curator of Public History.

Dr. Stoermer is former Chief Historian at Colonial Williamsburg, in charge of interpretation, and now teaches history and public history at several regional universities including Roger Williams and Harvard. Dr. Stoermer will continue to direct the research on the recent gift to the NHS of a sword given by the Marquis de Lafayette to Newport’s Daniel Lyman. Additionally, he will assist us in the development of programs that support the NHS’ growing brand as a public history organization.

JOHN TSCHIRCH, M.A.

Visiting Curator of Urban History.

Mr. Tschirch will serve as the coordinating scholar for the project Mapping the Newport Experience. This work will create a visual timeline for urban development in Newport, using maps, photographs, and written descriptions from the collections at the NHS and elsewhere to demonstrate how the

City grew from its origins into the 20th century. A series of walking tours and lectures, an exhibit, a web presence, and a publication are planned.

MICHAEL SIMPSON, M.A.

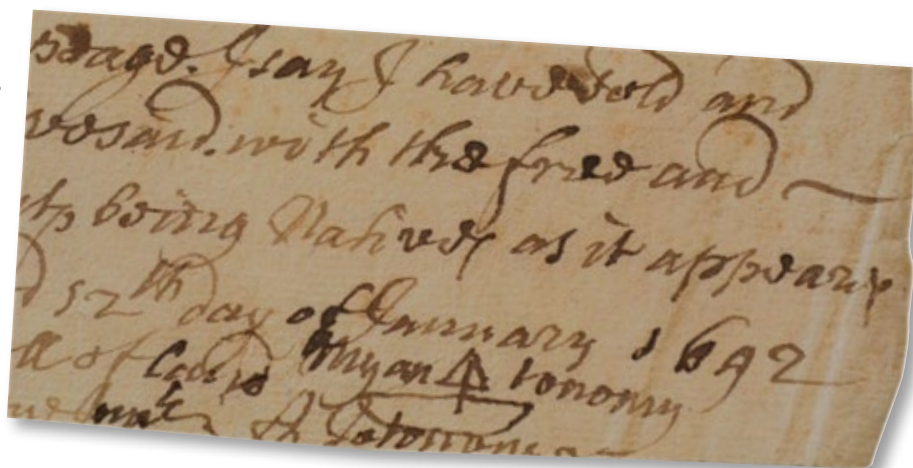
Visiting Curator of American History.

Mr. Simpson is a specialist in Native American history who served as a Buchanan-Burnham Fellow last summer. He will coordinate a program to research the role of Native peoples in Newport County. Much documentation exists in the NHS' collections and in other repositories in the state, as well as in native traditions, for the interaction of early settlers with the original inhabitants, including cooperation, conflict, economic exchanges, the role the tribes played during the American Revolution, and more. Many of these stories are currently absent from the main narrative of Newport's history that the NHS interprets for the public. It is anticipated that new programs, signage and exhibit modules, and walking tours will be created.

ELIZABETH SULOCK

Visiting Curator of Living History.

Ms. Sulock has shifted from working as a full-time employee at the NHS to focusing on developing the Society's acclaimed and growing program of historical recreations and other immersive history programs.



Copy of the signature of Miantonomi from a transcription of a document describing the boundaries of a 1642 purchase of land in Warwick.
NHS COLLECTION

MEMBER PROFILE



Lockett Ford Ballard



Lockett Ford Ballard has been a member at the NHS for quite a while, but he has only recently returned to Newport. He came to our island first in 1954 when his father became the rector of Trinity Church. Growing up in Newport, he feels he was very familiar with the seven

layers of Newport society outlined in Thornton Wilder's *Theophilus North*. A thorough Newporter, he attended St. Michael's, St. George's, and while in college served as the first footman/second butler at Bois Dore when it was occupied by Elinor Dorrance and Nathaniel Peter Hill.

He joined the Navy – it being “the most familiar opportunity” – and saw the world. It was during this period

of service that he became interested in museum work. For many years Ford worked at small museums and historic houses around the country before deciding to “get a pension” by going to work in fundraising for public radio. He has returned to Newport for semi-retirement, and currently lives in an apartment that allows the legendary Stone Mill to be in his front yard. He works 4 days a week at the Mansions as a tour guide, and brings his non-profit experience onto several local Boards.

Ford points out to all of us that one thing he learned as a fundraiser is that modest monthly gifts to a valued organization can accumulate and make a real impact. He has donated in this fashion to the Opera House (he sponsored a seat) and is now sponsoring lectures at the Newport Art Museum. He intends to keep going in this fashion. If you would like to take his example at the Newport Historical Society, please contact us!

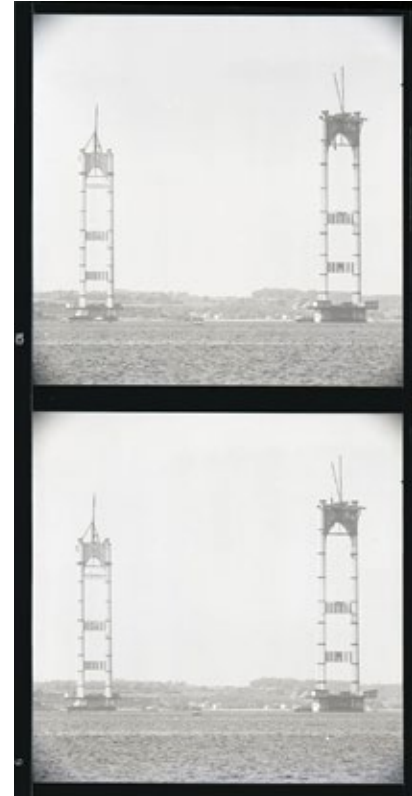
RECENT ACQUISITIONS

HOPF PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

Early this year, through a generous donation from his wife Audrey Hopf, The Newport Historical Society acquired the photographic negative collection of photographer John T. Hopf. This collection contains over 7000 images of Newport and its citizens.

A Newport native, John T. Hopf (1920-2011) was a fixture of the community working as a commercial photographer for community events and the *Newport Daily News*, as well as creating the iconic Newport Then and Now series. He also was the first to document Newport from the sky taking hundreds of aerial photographs during the 1950s and 1960s. He is best known for his postcards and souvenir books of famous Newport scenes and landmarks that can still be found in shops around town.

The John T. Hopf collection includes all manner of Newport life from weddings to festivals, family portraits to America's Cup champions. His photographs of estates, street scenes, and aerial views throughout the second half of the 20th century provide a view into modern development and the changing landscape of Newport that will benefit future historians.



Newport Bridge under construction,
October 25th, 1967

Traffic to Second Beach,
July 4th, 1959

MALBONE PORCELAIN PLATE

The NHS recently acquired a polychrome Chinese export porcelain plate, dating to the first half of the 18th century, that belonged to Godfrey Malbone of Newport. The plate was donated by Antony Underwood.

Godfrey Malbone (1695-1768) was a Virginia-born merchant who arrived in Newport around 1700. He amassed enough of a fortune to build a lavish house in town by 1728 and a large country house at the foot of Miantonomi Hill by 1741. Malbone's town house was attributed to Richard Munday and his country house to Peter Harrison. Malbone Hall, as the country house was known, was said to have been constructed of pink sandstone from Malbone's stone quarry in Brooklyn, Connecticut. Visitors to the estate remarked on the lavishness of the house and the beauty of the gardens. George Washington is believed to have been a guest at Malbone Hall during his 1756 travels through Newport.

On June 7th 1766 disaster struck at Malbone Hall when sparks from the chimney caught the roof on fire and "the whole Building (except the Walls) was reduced to Ashes. We hear the greatest Part of the Furniture was saved." (*Newport Mercury* 9 June 1766). A story passed down recounts that Godfrey Malbone was hosting a dinner party at the time and when he

HAMMERSMITH FARM LEDGER

Earlier this spring, the Newport Historical Society had the opportunity to purchase a late 19th ledger from Hammersmith Farm. The ledger accounts for working farm operations and expenses at the farm from 1877-1898.

Hammersmith Farm was first established by Governor William Brenton in 1640 shortly following the settlement of Newport. In 1877, at the start of the ledger's account, the farm was owned by Henry L. Battey. After his passing, his heirs sold the property to Joanna Russell Auchincloss, wife of John W. Auchincloss, in 1887.

The Auchinclosses built the mansion on the farm grounds in 1889 and the house served as a family home until its sale in 1977. At that point, the mansion was opened for special events and public tours. Hammersmith Farm was the childhood home of First Lady Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy and served as the site of her marriage to then Senator John F. Kennedy in 1953.

Throughout the Auchincloss' ownership, the farm remained in working condition. The ledger details the daily operations and costs of such a working farm including hay, crops, and animals as well as physical improvements to structures and out buildings. It also includes the care and shoeing of the following horses: Bismark, David, Frank and Doctor.



was told that the house would be lost "he ordered the dinner carried to an adjacent building and a table set there for the company." (*Memoir of Rhode Island*, Henry Bull, as published in the *Newport Rhode Island Republican* 1832-1858 and the *Newport Mercury*, 1854-1861, Vol III, 1906).

Godfrey Malbone passed away in Newport in 1768. His son Godfrey Malbone Jr. moved to Brooklyn, Connecticut, where he had shipping and stone quarry interests, and erected Brooklyn's Trinity Episcopal Church. His family remained in the Brooklyn/Pomfret area for generations. The burned remnants of Malbone Hall and surrounding estate became a romantic ruin until 1848, when J. Prescott Hall constructed a new Malbone Hall on the site, designed by Alexander Jackson Downing.

The plate includes an inscription stating that it was one of a set of china taken from Malbone Hall at the time of the fire, brought with Godfrey Malbone Jr. to Brooklyn, and passed down to the Fogg family.



IN MEMORIAM



DORRANCE HILL HAMILTON

Mrs. Hamilton, who introduced herself as Dodo, was a woman of various interests and achievements; her philanthropy, and her attention, touched many Newport institutions. Here at the Newport Historical Society she helped initiate, and was a foundation of the Newport Antiques Show. Inspiring and assisting her daughter-in-law – and our Board member, Anne Hamilton, she believed that the community would enjoy, support and benefit from a high-end, serious Antiques Show. Dodo always attended the Show; she came early, selected purchases,

conversed with the dealers, and was a lively and lovely presence. The Show, which has been a major driver of the transformation of the NHS, was privileged to have her serve as its honorary Chair for each of its ten years.

Dodo's interest in Newport's history was demonstrated on several occasions – she supported the research on Arthur Curtiss James' yacht *Coronet* at IYRS years ago, and we at the NHS were excited to assist with research for her amazing restoration of the Mrs. James' Blue Garden, first opened in 1913. The restored garden is a delight – an oasis of timeless beauty. And the attention to detail and to the esthetic experience of place is, it seems, a hallmark of Mrs. Hamilton's ventures. From Wildacre to Swiss Village, 41 North, and the Birdhouse, her Newport building projects and landscapes are always transcendently lovely.

I will not soon forget answering the phone and hearing "Ruth, it's Dodo." I always knew something interesting was about to happen. The NHS will miss her influence at the Antiques Show and in the community as a whole. And, while Dodo's loss is sad, we are grateful for the continued presence of Hamiltons, now three generations, in our historic City.

SHIRLEY ANNE ROOS

Former, long-term NHS Education Director Pieter Roos lost his mother this spring after an illness. Pieter credits his Mom with teaching him to care about history and to love Museums. His family decided after her loss to ask well-wishers for donations in her honor to the Newport Historical Society, for which we are grateful. A fund in honor of Shirley Anne Roos has been established here, and donations will support educational activities.

Ida Lewis' Ring

Ida Lewis gained her reputation as America's heroine after rescuing two soldiers on March 29, 1869 during a great storm. Despite having taken over many of the duties of the Lime Rock lighthouse keeper from her father at the age of fifteen, Ida was not officially appointed to the post until 1879, ten years after the daring rescue that catapulted her to celebrity. Over the course of her life, she completed numerous other rescues and was recognized for her lifesaving efforts with a medal from the Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York, a gold Lifesaving Medal of the First Class from the United States Congress, and the American Cross of Honor in 1907.

In several instances, she was the first woman to receive these awards. Ida acted as the lighthouse keeper at Lime Rock until she suffered from a stroke on October 21, 1911, while refilling the lighthouse lantern. She died three days later, on October 24, 1911.

This sapphire and pearl ring is inscribed "Robert to Ida." While Lewis was briefly married prior to her rise to fame, Robert was not the man she married. Uncomfortable with fame, Ida lived a private life. As a result, we have few records from her perspective and none with an indication of who Robert was or the nature of their relationship. What we know is that he gave her this ring along with a bible inscribed with her family history' both are in the NHS collection.

Today, you can own a tangible link to Ida Lewis and to Newport's illustrious past. A faithful reproduction of the Ida Lewis ring, with several options, will be available soon at the Brick Market Museum and Shop.



Ida Lewis' ring, which is made of gold, sapphires, and pearls.
NHS COLLECTION

Culinary Adventures

Last Fall, the Newport Historical Society presented An Evening of Culinary Indulgence & 18th Century Culture at the 1739 Colony House. Catered by McGrath Catering, the event recreated aspects of a colonial-era festive family meal using 18th century recipes. Cocktails and drinks such as Colonial Fish House Punch and the Rattleskull were served in reproduction drinking vessels. The dinner presented seasonally appropriate foods, included quahog chowder, “salat” of local greens, succotash, and apple tansey with cream for dessert. Many attendees commented on how well our forefathers ate.

The evening also featured costumed interpreters who represented specific figures from 1765 Newport. These living historians mingled with guests during the cocktail hour and after dinner, discussing their viewpoints on political and social matters that were once central to life in this prosperous seaport. The Ministers of Apollo, a musical ensemble specializing in 18th century musical entertainment, performed during the cocktail hour and after the dinner. Towards the end of the evening, one unfortunate sailor was dragged from the Colony House by Royal Navy sailors as he was pressed into service aboard HMS Maidstone; this mini reenactment represented a naval impressment incident from June 1765. Co-chaired by Elizabeth Leatherman and Susan Jacquet, with support from Holly Bannister and Doug Newhouse, An Evening of Culinary Indulgence & 18th Century Culture was a sold-out success. The Culinary Adventures were conceived by Board member Elizabeth Leatherman with help from Susan Jacquet and NHS staff; they also support and organize the events.



An Evening of Culinary Indulgence, September, 2016. PHOTOS: NICK MELE



Join Us...

at our second annual culinary adventure on September 16, 2017 inspired by the 1869 meeting between Ulysses S. Grant and “America’s bravest woman” Ida Lewis!
For details visit NewportHistory.org or call 401-841-8770 to register.

Property Updates



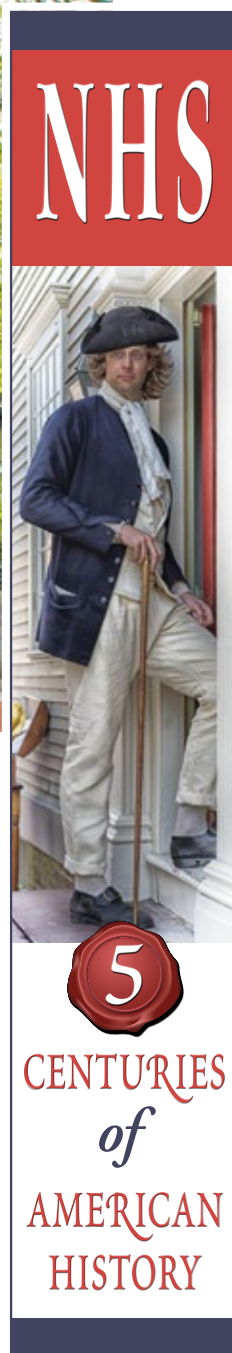
Maintenance
of five historic
properties is
a constant
component of
our activities.

This year, the Great Friends Meeting House required a paint job and some significant repairs to doorways.

A new fence was installed at the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House property. Work needed on this important structure consists of chimney repair, restoration of windows, doors, downspouts and clapboards, and a fresh coat of paint.

Fundraising for both projects is ongoing, with support from the 1772 Foundation, the Gerry Foundation, the Newport Restoration Foundation and the Sons of the Revolution already in place.

The Museum of Newport History began receiving a face lift over the winter. The ceilings and walls in the second-floor exhibit hall were repaired and painted and labels were refreshed. Exhibit updates will continue to be installed throughout the year, and will include an exploration of downtown Newport's streetscapes in conjunction



with the Mapping the Newport Experience project. In addition, a showcase of artifacts that delves into the story of the Old Stone Mill, one of Newport's most debated landmarks, will be installed, as will a modernization of the case on Gilded Age leisure activities.

The Society's Resource Center received landscape improvements and a new banner on the exterior of the building. Inside spaces were formally renamed: the Edward W. Kane Library and the Hugh D. Auchincloss Reading Room.

The self-guided walking tour signs, over 20 years old now, are also getting a face-lift.



Upcoming 2017 Events

For details visit NewportHistory.org
or call 401-841-8770 to register.

Exhibits

Trends in Collecting: Travel Souvenirs

A selection of souvenirs from the NHS collections that demonstrate the evolution of travel and tourism in Newport.

Through Spring 2018: Museum of Newport History

Ida Lewis: A Newport Story

Highlights from the extraordinary life and achievements of Ida Lewis, Lime Rock Lighthouse Keeper and local Newport legend.

Through Fall 2017; NHS Resource Center



Programs

Creative Survival: 18th & 19th Century African-American Community in Newport

Discover the early history of Newport's people of color, enslaved and free. This tour looks at the places where slaves lived and labored, along with locations where free blacks built their enterprises and supported a new local industry. It concludes in the country's oldest intact African-American graveyard, "God's Little Acre."

Saturday, June 17, 11 AM

World War II Rhode Island

Co-authors Christian McBurney and Brian Wallin will give a joint lecture on their new book *World War II Rhode Island*. The state was declared a vital war zone, and tensions were high. People panicked with the news of an imminent air raid by German bombers just two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Hear about this event as well as the sinking of a German U-boat off Point Judith in the waning days of the war during their presentation.

Wednesday, June 28, 5:30 PM; NHS Resource Center

July 4th Festivities

Starting at 10am visit the Colony House and Washington Square for a morning of patriotic activities, including a reading of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout the day celebrate religious freedom and the First Amendment when more than a dozen houses of worship will be open to the public for tours. Learn how the building or the congregation that worships there symbolizes Newport's commitment to freedom of religion and religious diversity.

The Newport Historical Society's Great Friends Meeting House, Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House, and the Colony House, site of the first Roman Catholic mass in Rhode Island, will be open from 10am – 12pm.

Other participants include: Trinity Episcopal, Newport Congregational, St. John the Evangelist Episcopal, United Baptist,

Community Baptist, Channing Unitarian, St. Joseph's Catholic, Emmanuel Episcopal, and Touro Synagogue. More information is available at 4faiths.org.

Tuesday, July 4, 10 AM

British Newport

In 1777 as the Revolutionary War officially began, 7,000 British and Hessian soldiers invaded Newport creating an occupation that lasted for nearly 3 years. This tour explores the sites and stories of the soldiers and citizens affected during this time. Meet a costumed interpreter portraying Newport resident Mary Almy. Learn why the British targeted Newport, how their presence in the 1770s changed the city in the following decades, and how this impacted the colonial architecture that Newport is famous for today.

Saturday, July 15, 11 AM

Newport Antique Show Gala

Thursday, July 27, 7 PM; St. George's School, Middletown

Newport Antique Show

**Friday, July 27 – Sunday, July 30, 10 AM– 4 PM;
St. George's School, Middletown**

A Culture of Corruption: The Apothecary's Tale

Newport was one of the earliest American seaports to engage in the transatlantic drug trade during the first third of the eighteenth century. Elaine Forman Crane, Distinguished Professor of History Emerita, Fordham University will discuss a time when both the production and sale of pharmaceuticals were unregulated on this side of the Atlantic, and Newport's unlicensed apothecaries were free to advise and dispense the most dangerous substances. Drug ingredients from several continents were compounded in London, tampered with en route to New England, and costly when prescribed locally. Even more threatening to the consumer, apothecaries often adulterated drugs, a tactic that reduced the product's efficacy while enhancing the apothecary's profit.

Thursday, August 17, 5:30 PM; NHS Resource Center

Spring Forth: A Walking Tour of Newport's Colonial Origins

Explore the earliest colonial foundations of Newport's urban planning and streetscapes. Beginning with the original settlements near Spring Street, the tour winds its way through the Historic Hill to Touro Park, investigating land use patterns and centuries of changing urban geography.

Saturday, August 19, 11 AM

Annual Summer Living History Event: The British Occupation of 1777

Over 50 costumed interpreters will recreate aspects from the summer of 1777 on Aquidneck Island during the first year of the British occupation. Reenactment scenarios will range from the capture of General Prescott by the American rebels, to a demonstration of the auctioning of scarce food items and goods, to the ever-intimidating presence of British guards. For a modest fee, visitors are invited to make history on an interactive hunt where they must collect intelligence for General Washington.

Saturday, August 26, 1–5 PM; Washington Square



A Gardner's History of Bellevue Avenue Landscapes

The manicured lawns and cultivated gardens of Newport's Gilded Age estates were as important as the famous "cottages." Maintaining them was a herculean effort. Join Frank Amaral, Newport Restoration Foundation Head Landscaper, and Harry Eudenbach, historian and author of *Estate Gardeners of Newport*, on a walking tour that explores the stories of the gardeners who worked at the estates. Tour includes a stop at a local greenhouse and a look at historic gardening tools.

Saturday, September 16, 11 AM

Grant Meets Lewis, a Culinary Adventure

Join us for our second annual culinary adventure this September inspired by the 1869 meeting between Ulysses S. Grant and "America's bravest woman" Ida Lewis!

Saturday, September 16, 6:30 PM; Colony House

Annual Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 4:30 AM; NHS Resource Center



Registrar Bridget Sullivan installs the Souvenir exhibit at the Museum.

Did you miss any of the Newport Historical Society's winter lectures?

You can now view past lectures and programs on *Newport History Videos*. Access the videos via the Society's webpage or YouTube channel. Videos include *Legacies of Slavery and Freedom*, a lecture by Keith Stokes; *A Revolution in Color: the World of John Singleton Copley*, a lecture by Jane Kamensky; as well as videos on a variety of topics such as *Colonial Newport: an American Experience*; the return of the Lyman-Lafayette sword to Newport; reenactments of Naval Impressments and Stamp Act Riots; the process of doing history, the value of history-related organizations in America today, and more!

NewportHistory.org/history-videos

[Youtube.com/user/NewportHistory](https://www.youtube.com/user/NewportHistory)

A MODERN CENTER IN AN *Ancient House*



Plans are under way for the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard property to be put to mission-oriented service, as an Engagement Center for the Newport Historical Society's public history efforts. Two projects, Revolution House, which tells the stories of the Newport and American Revolution through the people who lived it, and History Space, a collaborative public history project with the Rhode Island Historical Society, will coexist, and interrelate, at the WLHH. Rather than a house museum that reflects a moment in time, the house will be a living and breathing hub for a variety of interactive programs.

REVOLUTION HOUSE will tell the stories of the Revolutionary world of the free and enslaved people who lived there during the period of the War for Independence, and the ways in which their stories are preserved and projected. Emerging and traditional interpretation techniques will be explored.

HISTORY SPACE is an intellectual center for programming that supports the practice of public history. Three main activities are included:

- ❖ The production of high-quality living history programs and events.
- ❖ The fostering of traditional trades and crafts through demonstrations and workshops.
- ❖ Programs and seminars that assist practitioners of public history and inform the public about topics and issues in the field.

Examples of the work included are reenactment events in Newport and in Providence, the hosting of visiting craftspeople who might demonstrate for the public and conduct workshops for practitioners, and the recent Anarchist's Lunch which asked four experts in the field to talk about issues around audiences for historic sites.

A LIVING HISTORY EVENT

The 1777 British Occupation



Reenactors from Naval Impressment Reenactment, 2016. PHOTO: JOHN COLLINS

The NHS takes history to the streets each summer with our annual living history event. Past events have featured angry mobs and impressed sailors! Save the date for this year, when the British will be coming to town on the afternoon of Saturday, August 26, 2017.

Over 50 costumed interpreters will recreate aspects from the summer of 1777 on Aquidneck Island during the first year of the British occupation. Reenactment scenarios will range from the capture of General Prescott by the American rebels, to a demonstration of the auctioning of scarce food items and goods, to the ever-intimidating presence of British guards. For a modest fee, visitors are invited to make history on an interactive hunt where they must collect intelligence for General Washington.

Newport's Old Quarter is the perfect venue for living history programming, where over 300 pre-Revolutionary War era buildings survive. Newport was among the five wealthiest cities in the colonies, experiencing a Golden Age of commerce in the decades leading up to the Revolution. And its history is equally as rich: the first shots to British resistance were not fired at Lexington and Concord in 1775 or at the Boston Massacre in 1770. They were fired in 1764 in Narragansett Bay—in Newport.

This free, family-friendly event takes place from 1-5 PM at Washington Square and select surrounding sites.

Lunch with the Anarchist and Other Radicals: A Roundtable Discussion

In February, the Newport Historical Society & the Rhode Island Historical Society hosted the Museum Anarchist, Franklin Vagnone, for an open discussion about the value of history-related organizations in America today.

Vagnone, who has recently accepted the position of CEO at Old Salem Museums and Gardens in North Carolina, is the co-author of *The Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* (with Deborah Ryan), a book on innovative and community-connected approaches to presenting the past. Vagnone also is the founder and president of Twisted Preservation Cultural Consulting in New York City.

The roundtable discussion, moderated by NHS Executive Director Ruth Taylor, focused on the pitfalls and promise of curatorial heritage management in the 21st century. Topics included innovation vs. tradition in programming for house museums, what public history is and isn't, putting theory in practice, history and politics in the public arena, what the future holds for history and heritage non-profits and more.

Other roundtable participants included Bob Beatty, Chief of Engagement at AASLH and the principle of the Lyndhurst Group, a consulting firm which supports history organizations; Morgan Grefe, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society; Kevin Levin, Historian, teacher, and author; and Taylor Stoermer, Roger Williams University Professor and Visiting Curator of Public History at the Newport Historical Society, also former Chief Historian at Colonial Williamsburg.



Frank Vagnone

African Spirit Bundle

The NHS has loaned one of its most evocative artifacts to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which opened last fall in Washington, D.C. A religious spirit bundle, placed by an enslaved individual under the floorboards of his living space in Newport, is now on display on the National Mall.

The attic of the NHS' Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House escaped several rounds of restoration activities between the 1920s and today. Floor boards in several areas were undisturbed since the 18th century. Under these boards, close to the house's massive chimney, were found a number of associated objects that were clearly placed there by a former inhabitant. Several layers of cloth, beads, pins, broken glass, and most diagnostically, a carved African cowrie shell were found. Study revealed that these objects comprised some version of a spirit bundle associated with African religious practices, and were certainly placed under the floorboards by one of the enslaved inhabitants of the house in the 1760s or 70s. While we suspect that many such objects were in use in Newport in the 18th century, finding one is very unusual.



That the NMAAHC chose this object to display is a source of great pride to the NHS. The bundle demonstrates the effort to both preserve and create culture that enslaved individuals in the Americas continued to make, even in their adversity.

This religious tool – meant to protect or to divine – is evidence of a rich spiritual and cultural life which we do not often discuss or interpret. More study may reveal exactly who put it there, and why, and this story too will become part of the Newport history that we can interpret for the public. For now, millions of people from all over the world will see it in Washington, and wonder about the life of the individual who left it for us.

Newport Stories

The NHS is pleased to announce the start of a new initiative, Newport Stories. This program, will, in essence, create a catalog of the stories that make Newport's history unique and exciting, and assemble the ways in which these stories can be told using the collections at the Newport Historical Society.

This summer, interns and Buchanan Burnham fellows will conduct research, highlight items from NHS's collections, and produce narratives to tell stories from Newport's history. These narratives and associated content can then be leveraged and incorporated in NHS programming in a variety of formats, including pop-up exhibits (physical and digital), short public talks, publications, blog posts, and social media.

NHS already has a robust program of research and content development undertaken by fellows, visiting curators, interns, and permanent staff. Newport Stories is an opportunity to capture aspects of that research and reformat it in ways that are publicly accessible. To some extent, this is work that NHS is already doing (and we do it well!), but Newport Stories will formalize and organize those efforts so that the resulting content is easily accessible by our staff, and by the public.

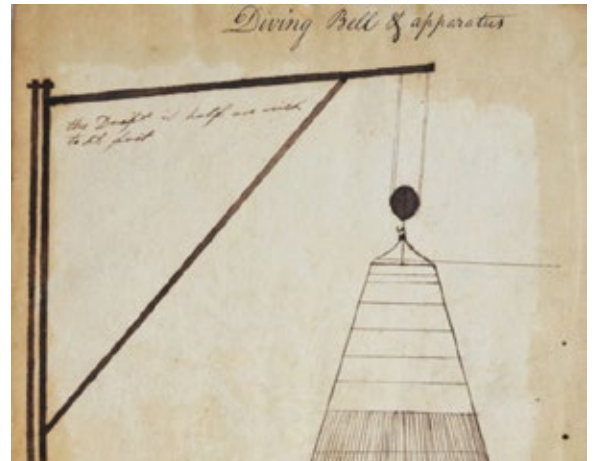
Newport Stories is an idea that arose from our Board of Directors during our ongoing strategic planning process. Support for the project is provided by director Douglas Newhouse.

FOUND | DIVING BELL SKETCH AND RECORD OF UNDERWATER SALVAGE OPERATIONS, 1815

A detailed record of underwater salvage operations in and around Narragansett Bay has been discovered in an early 19th century letter book. The operations were conducted from April to November, 1815 from the Sloop *Mary Ann*, captained by Asa Brooks. The record reveals that the salvagers used a diving bell to explore the seabed, search for shipwrecks, and recover sunken items of value—most often iron, copper, lead, anchors, or cables.

The diving bell is an ingenious piece of equipment with a long history. As its name suggests, it is shaped like a bell and open at the bottom. Air is trapped in the upper portion of the bell's chamber when it is submerged in water, enabling divers to venture underwater with an air supply. For many centuries, before modern development of submarines and submersible vehicles, humans used diving bells for underwater exploration, scavenging, and marine engineering. The earliest known record of bell diving was described by Aristotle in the 4th century B.C. It wasn't until the 17th and 18th centuries that technology was developed to pump fresh air into the bell, thereby extending the amount of time that a diver could spend underwater.

Whether the diving bell used by Newport's salvagers in 1815 was outfitted with a fresh air pump is not apparent from the rough sketch pictured above. The scale notation on the sketch indicates that quarters were cramped inside the bell, which measured about eight feet tall and five feet wide at its base. A log of "Transactions on Bord [sic] the Sloop *Mary Ann*," reports that divers were sent underwater in the bell up to a dozen times per day in efforts to scavenge metal from sunken wrecks in and around the bay. The log entry pictured below describes sailing to Point Judith, going ashore to "obtain information," and returning "with the promise of Mr Bilington to show us the Wreck of the British frigate *Serene*." According to the following log entries, the crew successfully found the *Serene* with help from Bilington and worked for many days to dislodge an anchor from the wreck.



ABOVE: Drawing of "Diving Bell & Apparatus," VOL. 152, NHS COLLECTION

BELOW: June 8, 1815 entry in "Transactions on Bord [sic] the Sloop *Mary Ann*." VOL. 152, NHS COLLECTION

the 8 These 24. hours begin light breezes from. S. W.
at 3 Am got under weight & beat out
to point Judith & came to the East of the
light at 5 pm sent the boat ashore for
obtain information returned with the
promise of Mr Bilington to show us
the Wreck of the British frigate
Serene so ends with the wind S. W.

Staff Evolutions

The following NHS staff members have left the NHS:

Debbie Carmone
Mathew DeLaire
Stephanie Poole
Jennifer Robinson

New members of the team include:

Angela Brunetti, *Development and Marketing Associate*
Emily Hughes, *Assistant Manager of Museum & Shop and Tour Coordinator*
Sarah Long, *Manager of Academic Services*
Tracey Mencia, *Bookkeeper*

PROFILE



Paul McGreevy *Board of Directors*



Paul McGreevy served in the U.S. Navy from 1982-1995, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander. During his time in the Navy, he served as a Surface Warfare Officer; worked on a NATO staff coordinating logistics planning for peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia; was the Material and

Logistics Officer on a destroyer squadron staff; and served as Chief Engineer on a Navy frigate.

After the Navy, Mr. McGreevy spent over fourteen years as a senior management and IT consultant with KPMG LLP, BearingPoint Inc., and Deloitte Consulting LLP, where he specialized in business strategic planning, organizational development, and technology architecture for federal agencies.

Mr. McGreevy served on Senator Chafee's winning gubernatorial campaign, and then, Chafee's Transition Manager. Governor Chafee appointed Mr. McGreevy to be his Director, Department of Business Regulation from 2011 until 2015. The Department Director serves statutorily

as the State Banking Commissioner, Commissioner of Insurance, Real Estate Administrator and State Boxing Commissioner. The Department's primary function is the implementation of state laws mandating the regulation and licensing of designated businesses, professions, occupations and other specified activities. The Department issues approximately 80,000 licenses and conducts administrative hearings involving issuances, suspensions or revocations.

Currently, Mr. McGreevy is an Adjunct Fellow at the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy assisting in further developing their Cybersecurity Leadership Initiative through strategic planning, partnership development and program enhancement. The Pell Center's Cybersecurity Leadership Initiative seeks to affect change and make the corporate community more secure and resilient to cyber incidents by bringing together senior leaders from the defense, financial services, technology, healthcare, energy and telecommunication industries and well as local small businesses.

Mr. McGreevy earned a BA in Foreign Affairs and Economics from the University of Virginia, an MA in International Relations from Boston University, and an MA in National Security Affairs from the Naval War College. He is a resident of Newport.

HISTORY BYTES

Old Port Days

In the 1920s, Newporters looked internally to their own origins and the birth of the nation. Colonial revival decoration and architecture were increasingly popular and the great period of the 18th century was celebrated with festivals, house tours, music and costumes.

Old Port Days began in 1929 as an all-day block party on Washington Street to raise money for the restoration of the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House, Newport's first historic house museum. The Old Port group hosted similar events through the 1930s and 40s, as well as provided educational programs about history and architecture. In 1963, Old Port morphed into Operation Clapboard, the beginning of the city-wide house restoration movement.



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IT IS THE MISSION OF THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO COLLECT AND PRESERVE 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.

Staff

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Sarah Long, *Manager of Academic Services*

Tracey Mencio, *Bookkeeper*

Asa Montgomery, *Facilities Manager*

Molly Bruce Patterson, *Collections Team Coordinator and Manager of Digital Initiatives*

Bridget Sullivan, *Registrar*

Jenna Teachout, *Manager of Museum and Shop*

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