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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Making Newport's History Available for the Public

*New online resources, "Hamilton" essay contest &
the NHS approach to practicing public history*

Newport, RI – September 2016 – Over the last several years, the Newport Historical Society has received growing recognition for its innovative approach to public history. The Society is pleased to announce its most recent activities which bring history to the public in meaningful ways: an exclusive high school essay contest, three new digital resources, and a program dedicated to exploring public history practices.

The NHS has launched a new use for a traditional school-based program. This year, its essay contest encourages young people to think about their place in history, and has a prize which is also based in its mission: the winners will see *Hamilton: An American Musical* in New York. *Hamilton*, a great example of public history through performance, brings the stories of the past to audiences where they are today, and uses a classic form of popular culture – the Broadway musical – to do so.

High school sophomores are invited to enter the NHS's essay contest by exploring the question "What is happening now in your community, or what could be happening, that has the power to change the future in Rhode Island and potentially the world?" Essays are due by November 15, 2016, winners receive a free trip to New York City, *Hamilton* tickets, and dinner. Complete details, including eligibility requirements, are available at <http://NewportHistory.org>.

The NHS recently launched a series of new digital resources that explore diverse topics on a platform that allows people around the world to visit them without leaving their homes. All are accessible through the NHS website. These online resources include:

- The Stamp Act Newport website (<http://StampActNewport.org>) uses a "chose your own adventure" approach to illustrate the complexity of Revolutionary War-era politics and includes digital copies of documents from the NHS collection. This resource is part of the NHS's Revolution House project.
- *A Resource Guide for 18th Century Dance in Newport* <http://www.newporthistory.org/collections-resources/resource-guides/>
This guide presents a collection of resources to review colonial dance practices and helps illustrate the influence of social history in the years surrounding the Revolutionary War.
- *Newport Eats* virtual exhibit -- <https://newport.oncell.com/en/the-making-of-a-newport-meal-127439.html>. The exhibit *Making of a Newport Meal* is part of the Society's *Newport Eats* history of food initiative, and is one of several virtual exhibits that can be viewed on the NHS's *Explore Historic Newport* app.

Finally, *How We Practice Public History* is the theme of the Society's **September 15, 2016 Annual Meeting**. Executive Director Ruth Taylor and Deputy Director Ingrid Peters will discuss specific aspects of this topic. Dr. Taylor Stoermer, public history instructor in several university settings and author of the forthcoming book *Public History: A Field Guide* (Rowman & Littlefield 2017), will speak about this topic. Additionally award-winning architectural historian and photographer John Tschirch will highlight his latest research, *Mapping the Newport Experience*, the beginnings of which will be shared through a series of public history programs in the coming months. Naturally this **4pm** event, which takes place at the Newport Historical Society's Resource Center (82 Touro Street, Newport, RI), is free and open to the public. For reservations call 401-841-8770.

"Newport is widely known for its history," explains the Society's Executive Director Ruth Taylor. "Millions travel from across the globe to visit our City, and many more who do not regularly visit are interested in, or connected to, our long and vibrant history. The NHS approach to providing the public with experiences of this history makes it widely and individually accessible, and allows us to explore a nuanced, diverse, and ultimately more exciting vision of our history."

About the Newport Historical Society

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

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