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The logo of the Newport Historical Society is a circular seal. It features a central figure, possibly a Native American, holding a bow and arrow. The text "NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY" is written around the perimeter of the seal. Below the seal, the year "1857" is visible.

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## **The Newport Historical Society Expands Program of Visiting Scholars** *Continued Support by the Buchanan and Burnham Families*

**Newport, RI – (December 2016)** – More than a decade ago the Newport Historical Society (NHS) 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 practice. 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 15<sup>th</sup> year with an expanded emphasis.

The Burnham family and the Trustees of the Helen Buchanan Trust have recently agreed to increase both the funding and the purview of the Buchanan Burnham program. Now called 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 fellowships each summer. **Applications for the Summer 2017 program can be found on the NHS website.**

**In addition, a new program of Visiting Curators at the NHS will be established under the Buchanan Burnham umbrella,** replacing the traditional full-time Curator. “NHS’s 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 mature scholars working on topics in history 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 NHS is preparing to appoint three Visiting Curators in 2017:

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

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the Marquis de Lafayette to Newport's Daniel Lyman. Additionally, he will help develop programs that support the NHS' growing brand as a public history organization.

John Tschirch, M.A. Visiting Curator of Urban History. Formerly at the Preservation Society of Newport County, 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 Native 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.

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