

## The Barry Hittner Research Fellowship at the Rhode Island Historical Society

The Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) is excited to offer the Barry Hittner Research Fellowship in Rhode Island History to support scholarly research in our library and museum collections. The RIHS owns and manages vast historical collections in the Mary Elizabeth Robinson Research Center (RRC), which houses over 100,000 volumes, 9 million feet of film, and 1,200 manuscript collections comprising 10 million pages of letters, ledgers, and archival materials. Two blocks away, the John Brown House Museum holds over 25,000 artifacts which constitute the museum collections (furniture, portraits, textiles, porcelain, etc.).

The RIHS welcomes applications from researchers at all levels of their professional careers, including—but not limited—to graduate students, public historians, academic scholars, and independent researchers. Please note that individuals enrolled in a terminal degree program are required to submit a letter of recommendation with their application. Letters should be confidentially submitted by an advisor or someone familiar with your project; see the “Application Instructions” section below for additional details. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate a convincing case for the use of *specific* collections or material artifacts in the RIHS collections. Click [here](#) to access the RIHS’s online catalog, and [here](#) for the master list of finding aids to the manuscript collections. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Robinson Research Center by email at [reference@rihs.org](mailto:reference@rihs.org) to inquire about specific collections related to their research.

Awarded annually, the Hittner Fellowship will provide a stipend of \$2,500 to support 2–4 weeks of in-person archival research in our collections during the 2023–2024 fellowship cycle. The anticipated length of in-person research should be discussed with the Director of Historical Research and should also be noted in fellowship applications. During the course of their fellowship, Hittner Fellows are also encouraged to seek out additional research and networking opportunities at nearby cultural institutions including Brown University, the State Archives, the State Library, the Providence Public Library, and the Providence Athenaeum. It is nevertheless expected that the bulk of research will be done at the RIHS. Fellows are also encouraged to contact the Director of Historical Research to discuss any questions related to housing and transportation to and from the RIHS.

At the conclusion of their fellowship period, Hittner Fellows will be asked to present their work and findings at an informal “brown bag” style luncheon attended by RIHS staff, volunteers, members, and the general public. The format of this talk can be in-person or virtual depending on scheduling and current public health guidelines. Fellows will also work with RRC and collections staff to write a reflective blog post about their time in-residence to be published on our institutional website. In addition to spotlighting the major collections and items they engaged

during their research residency, blog posts should also articulate how the Hittner Fellowship has expanded their thinking about their work or the direction of their research projects.

Interested applicants should contact Jerrad Pacatte, the fellowship program coordinator and Director of Historical Research and Content Development, [at] [jpacatte@rihs.org](mailto:jpacatte@rihs.org) with any questions.

### **Application Instructions:**

The RIHS will begin accepting applications immediately. The deadline to submit all application materials is **December 4, 2023**. The award will be announced no later than **January 12, 2024**. The residency period will be arranged with the award recipient.

To apply for the Hittner Research Fellowship, submit the following materials in one-single PDF document via email to [fellowships@rihs.org](mailto:fellowships@rihs.org):

- **Cover letter (1 page):** Summarize the scope of your project and its significance to an understanding of Rhode Island’s history. Please address cover letters to the “Barry Hittner Research Fellowship Selection Committee.” Be sure to include your email address, mailing address, and phone number on your cover letter.
- **Curriculum vitae or resume (3 pages maximum)**
- **Project proposal (2 pages):** Describe your proposed research project, how your work fits into larger historical conversations or debates, and most importantly, how the Rhode Island Historical Society’s collections are central to your work. The most successful project proposals:
  - identify the broader stakes of a proposed project
  - succinctly situate the proposed project in its proper historical and historiographical context (especially for non-specialists on said topic)
  - **make direct connections to materials in the RIHS collections**
  - provide a clear and reasonable timeline of the anticipated length of time needed to complete the fellowship
- **Bibliography of sources (1 page):** Include a brief (1 page) list of items or collections at the RIHS that you intend to consult if awarded a fellowship. For further questions, please refer to the “Sample Bibliography of Sources” document in the “FAQ” section below.
- **One confidential letter of support:** For individuals enrolled in a terminal degree program (MA, Ph.D., etc.), applicants are also required to submit a reference letter from someone familiar with your project who can speak to its significance to Rhode Island’s history. Letters of reference should be addressed to the “Barry Hittner Research Fellowship Selection Committee” and emailed to [fellowships@rihs.org](mailto:fellowships@rihs.org).