

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES H. HARRIS

Robinson Research Center

Launched "Brave, Enterprising Spirits: Documenting Rhode Island Soldiers in the American Revolution." The project created over **6,400** digital images and over **1,400** item-level catalog records of manuscripts in the RIHS Revolutionary War Military Records.

Collaborated with the New England Historic Genealogical Society to digitize the **29** "Signature Books" of the Old Stone Bank Records, 1844-1897 (RIHS MSS 943). This unique database rich with genealogical information includes more than **500,000** records and more than **800,000** names with many being accounts of recent immigrants and women.

Completed *Rhode Island History Navigator*: a database of the most comprehensive collection of historical writings about RI easily accessible to all. The content is based on *Rhode Island: A Bibliography of its History*, published by the University Press of New England. Currently there are **6,870** entries and **3103** have full text attachments.

Updated "Guide to Manuscripts Related to People of Color." Begun in the 1970s, this working document to references in the manuscripts collections of the RIHS related to individuals identified as being of African, Indigenous, or Asian descent now contains over **950** detailed entries.

Highlights from across the RIHS

23,598
in-person
visitors

John Brown House Museum

Created the position of Associate Director of the John Brown House Museum in June 2024 and welcomed Elizabeth Sulock to the role.

Museum of Work & Culture



Welcomed visitors from **34** states and **11** nations including Australia, China, and India to name a few.

In September 2023, the Museum unveiled a new permanent multimedia presentation in its Quebecois farmhouse exhibit.

The Museum made **\$5,000** in revenue from an increased popularity in field trip add-on activities, with **43** schools participating.

The Museum has invested in the technology to make hybrid programs widely accessible.

The Museum collected **350** handmade blankets from 27 states for the Welcome Blanket exhibit that opened in September **2024**.



6,370

museum general
admission visitors

800

sqft storage
space gained

2,805

new *Cabinet*
records

Began the reinterpretation of the museum with the debut of the *Mahogany* exhibit based on the book by Jennifer Anderson.

Held a staff and volunteer training with the International Sites of Conscience focused on building skills related to dialogic questioning and interpretation.

Advancement & Public Engagement

We partnered with Collette Tours to offer a customized fundraising trip for November 2024 that will see us travel to the UK with John McNiff as we walk in the footsteps of Roger Williams and his associates (as well as other famed Rhode Island influence Samuel Slater). We will be joined by **38** travelers and we are anticipating raising **\$20,000**.

In September 2023, we transitioned to a new ticketing system that dramatically improved user experience, providing increased opportunities for fundraising, and saving staff time. The addition of “Pay What You Will” options and pricing options for members and non-members allowed us to earn over **\$20,000** in ticketing.

In an effort to provide richer benefits to our members we began offering member-exclusive programming, with behind-the-scenes tours of historic sites across the state and private tours of exhibits.

The 2023 Concert season proved to be our most popular since the pandemic. In total, we welcomed **1,673** guests to the five performances and earned **\$3,990** in ticket sales and **\$7,000** in sponsorship.

We have partnered with Providence Walking Tours to revive our “Mile of History Tour.” Providence Walking Tours handles the administration of the tours, while we provide the content and split the programming profits.

84

programs &
special events

5,481

public program
attendees

26%

increase in
Annual Fund

Facilities

We completed “Putting Down Roots” on the the Great Lawn of the John Brown House, with brickwork relaid for ADA access, as well as interpretative panels and new plantings installed in the landscape.

Education



In the 2023-24 school year, we increased student participation in Rhode Island History Day by **62%**.

Created the *Turning Points in RI History* gallery at the John Brown House Museum and produced the accompanying book of four lesson plans based on the 2024 National History Day theme, all supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

Successfully launched our new Rhode Island and Enslavement Classroom Outreach Program.

Transitioned *EnCompass* hosting from Providence College to the RIHS and began updating chapters to match the new RI State Standards for Social Studies.



191

educational
tours

5,090

students on free
tours

2,773

NHD program
attendees

At the Aldrich House, we repaired several exterior wooden architectural features that were in dire need of restoration thanks to the support of the 1772 Foundation.

At the Museum of Work & Culture, we installed a professional sound system with the support of the MoWC Preservation Foundation.

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July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

The Rhode Island Historical Society is grateful to our donors and supporters. By sharing your generosity, you allow us to preserve and share the stories of all Rhode Islanders.



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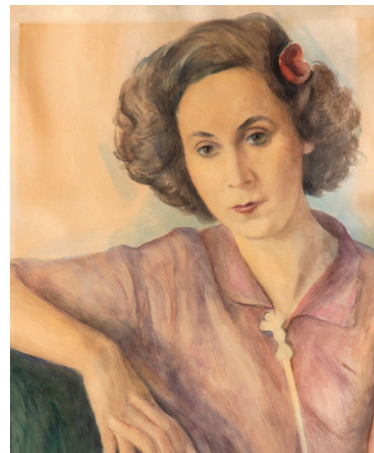
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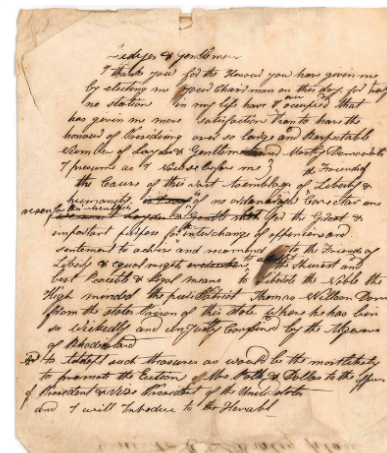
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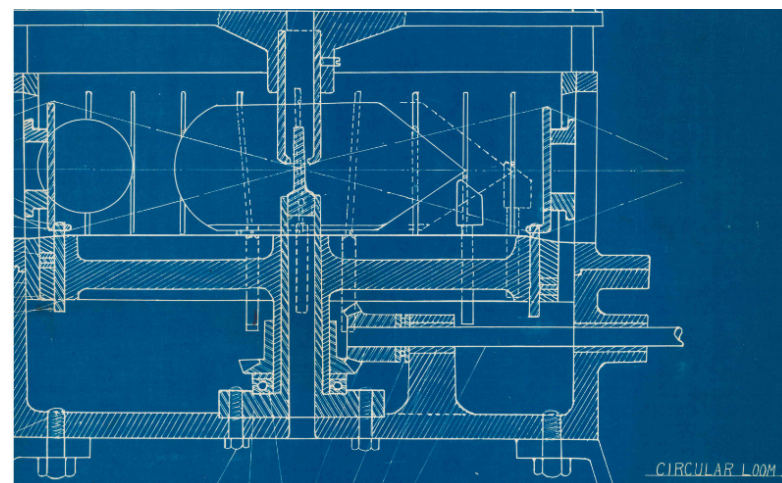
Tennis players, B&W Negative, 1910-1915.



Portrait of Tina Chernick by H. B. Tuck, 1945.



Commemoration of Thomas Wilson Dorr, 1854. Olney Ballou Collection.



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