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Contact: Katy Fuller, Marketing, Membership, and Events Manager

Address: 59 School Street, Edgartown, MA 02539

Phone: (508) 627 -4441 x123

URL: <http://www.mvmuseum.org>



MUSEUM OPENS TIMELINE EXHIBIT OF ISLAND HISTORY

Enchanted Isle: The Story of Martha's Vineyard

Edgartown, MA – September 6, 2012 – Following a planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Museum is unveiling a timeline exhibit of Island history. *Enchanted Isle: The Story of Martha's Vineyard* will open to Museum Members on Friday, September 14th and the general public on Saturday, September 15th and become a permanent feature at the Museum.

In 2008, the Museum was awarded an NEH planning grant designated as a “We the People” project, which aims to encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture through the support of projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation’s history and advance knowledge of the principles that define America. Over the course of the following three years, Museum staff met with a group of consultant scholars, solicited suggestions from the community through forums in each town, and visited other museums to gather ideas. The curators used all of this new input to craft an exhibition that gives an overview of Island history with a fresh perspective.

Enchanted Isle tells the story of Martha's Vineyard, from its geologic beginnings to the summer resort of today. Included in the exhibit are a pewter Communion Cup from the Christiantown Indian Chapel, highlights from the Museum’s scrimshaw collection, a women’s bathing costume, excerpts from a recently donated film of an Island visit from 1934, and much more. Oral histories related to specific themes are woven into the exhibit. They cover such topics as swordfishing, Shearer Cottage, shipping, Zeb Tilton, and Moshup. New audio guides allowing visitors to listen to these stories will be available

The main challenge that faced the Museum curators was how to condense centuries of history into one small exhibit space. To help alleviate the problem, a slideshow of rotating images will be featured in the exhibit, and QR codes will be included on many of the exhibit panels that will allow visitors to learn more about an object, theme, or era in Island history using their smart phone. Audio guides allowing visitors to listen to oral histories will also be available.

Says Chief Curator Bonnie Stacy, “This may be a permanent exhibition, but it’s not static. We plan to switch out many of the objects and documents over time. Our collection is so large and rich, and most of it is stored the majority of the time. This will protect the collection and at the same time keep the exhibit fresh. We are packing a lot of stories into a relatively small space. We hope and expect that visitors to the new exhibit will come away with an appreciation of the Vineyard’s history and its people, and a desire to come back again and again.”

Enchanted Isle will open to Museum Members for a special complimentary preview on Friday, September 14th from 5-7pm. To become a member, visit www.mvmuseum.org/membership.php. The general public is invited to come see the exhibit beginning on Saturday, September 15th.

Visit www.mvmuseum.org for more information about upcoming programming and exhibits. The Martha's Vineyard Museum is dedicated to furthering an interest in, experience of, and appreciation for the history and culture of the Island and its environs. The Museum is open year round, 10am to 5pm Monday through Saturday. Admission is free to Members; admission for non-Members is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$4 for children 6 to 15 and free for children under the age of 6.