



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Katie MacDonald OCHM – Executive Director
66 Church Green – Taunton MA 02780
(508) 822-1622 • kmacdonald@oldcolonyhistorymuseum.org

**OLD COLONY HISTORY MUSEUM RECEIVES STAFFING THE
HUMANITIES GRANT FROM MASS HUMANITIES**

TAUNTON, MA— The Old Colony History Museum is pleased to announce it has received a \$20,000 grant from the Staffing the Humanities initiative from Mass Humanities. Alongside the OCHM, Mass Humanities announced grants to eleven organizations with humanities programs. Totaling more than \$196,000, the grants will help support humanities program staff costs for past Mass Humanities grantees with annual operating expenses between \$50,000 and \$350,000 and with five or fewer Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTE).

With this grant, the OCHM will be able to hire a part-time archivist in order to create a comprehensive digital archive documenting the history of Reed & Barton Silversmiths. In the future, this archive will be a valuable educational resource and the heart of new, innovative programming to share the materials with the public.

Southeastern Massachusetts has been the source of metal-working for centuries. Its natural resources of bog iron permitted both indigenous peoples and European colonists to develop tools and, eventually, skilled machinery. By the early 19th c., sophisticated metalsmithing centered in the Taunton area came to provide metal production as diverse as ball-bearings and high-quality pewterware to support industrialization throughout southeastern New England region. The formation and expansion of Reed & Barton Silversmiths, the earliest privately-owned silver manufacturing company in the United States, which was in Taunton from 1824 until 2015, provide the opportunity for a case study of the complex economic, social, design, and local stories to be told. This work is nationally-important and central to the history and growth of this region. The ultimate goal of this work is to add new humanities programming to the museum's dynamic and busy calendar of events throughout the year.

“This museum’s mission revolves around a vigorous commitment to outreach and education,” said Katie MacDonald, Executive Director of the Old Colony History Museum. “We are thrilled to have the support of Mass Humanities which will allow us to add to our team and make this ambitious and important project a reality. The story of Reed & Barton is a perfect example of how local history shines a lens onto greater historical topics and themes, and we are excited to focus that lens on these important historic materials and on the Greater Taunton region.”

WILLIAM F. HANNA PRESIDENT

KATHERINE M. MACDONALD DIRECTOR

Organizations interested in learning about future grants should follow Mass Humanities on social media @masshumanities and visit their website.

###

About the Old Colony History Museum

The Old Colony History Museum houses significant collections which chronicle lives lived, wars waged, fortunes won and ingenuity rewarded. We encourage visitors to walk among our exhibits and discover regional history. The Museum's parent organization is the Old Colony Historical Society, one of the oldest organizations of its kind in New England. Founded in 1853, it serves the region of southeastern Massachusetts that was once part of the Plymouth Colony.

The Old Colony History Museum is located on historic Church Green in Taunton. The Museum has its headquarters in the former Bristol Academy, designed in 1852 by the New York architect Richard Upjohn. Regular Museum hours are Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the Museum is \$5 and free for Museum members.

About Mass Humanities

Mass Humanities, a non-profit based in Northampton, conducts and supports programs that use history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines to enhance and improve civic life throughout Massachusetts. Since its founding in 1974, the organization has provided millions of dollars in support of thousands of humanities projects across the Commonwealth. Established as the state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Mass Humanities is an independent programming and grant-making organization that receives support from the NEH and the Massachusetts Cultural Council as well as private sources. For more information, visit www.masshumanities.org.