

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**For more information** please contact [kathleen@portsmouthhistory.org](mailto:kathleen@portsmouthhistory.org)

**For furniture images** please see <http://portsmouthhistory.org/2017-furniture-media/>

**\*\*\*Please note:** Portsmouth Historical Society will open its Welcome Center and Museum Shop at Discover Portsmouth on Saturday March 18, 2017. It will be open seven days a week 9:30am-5pm through December 23, 2017.

Portsmouth Historical Society presents

# Four Centuries of Furniture in Portsmouth —with the NH Furniture Masters

**Discover Portsmouth, Friday, April 7 – Sunday, June 18, 2017**

**Members Opening Gala: Thursday April 6, 2017 5-7:30pm**

Organized by Gerald W.R. Ward and Lainey McCartney, with the NH Furniture Masters

*Portsmouth, New Hampshire...* Portsmouth Historical Society is preparing dual exhibitions for the spring to celebrate and document the important history of furniture in Portsmouth during the past four centuries, and to present outstanding work by some of today's premier woodworkers.

**Furniture**—one of the most commonly used artifacts of everyday life—helps us understand shifts in taste and style, evolving social customs and behaviors, and changes in technology and economics. On the first floor of Discover Portsmouth's galleries, a loan exhibition of about 50 objects will interpret furniture made and used in Portsmouth as both art and history, starting with the joined furniture of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, through the colonial and federal periods of Portsmouth's heyday of cabinetmaking, and finishing with the revival styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition will conclude with examples from the Arts and Crafts and studio movements, including an important rocker from Rock Rest, furniture used at the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in 1905, and a few modern examples of locally owned and retailed works of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries—perhaps even an IKEA chair for contrast. Changes in how furniture has been regarded over time will be explored, including the transition from its role as a symbol of status and wealth, as well as the evolution of Portsmouth from a furniture-making center to a primarily retail market.

Featured objects in the exhibition will be drawn from distinguished private and public collections, including several works from Portsmouth Historical Society's holdings. While furniture will be the focus of the exhibition, the display will also include some paintings, prints, and smaller objects to provide visual variety, as well as a few carefully selected documents.

Concurrent with the main floor exhibition, the balcony gallery will include a display of works made by 15-20 members of the New Hampshire Furniture Masters (NHFMA), an elite group of woodworkers from throughout New England including Jon Brooks, David Lamb, Richard Oedel,

Jeffrey Cooper, and others. This NHFMA display will be accompanied by works in other media, and will also include examples of the NHFMA's important Prison Outreach Program. According to Curator Gerry Ward, "We're excited about the broad, diverse audience this two-part show will bring – the first floor exhibition may more likely draw the traditional decorative arts crowd of collectors, dealers, and scholars, while the contemporary craftsmanship and woodworking featured in the balcony would draw craftsmen, decorators and interior designers."

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

An accompanying exhibition catalogue has been generously underwritten by Craig & Alison Jewett, and the Jewett Family. For more information, please call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433); or purchase online: <https://discoverportsmouth.wufoo.com/forms/p1r4g2dxoezixh9/>

## **Members Opening Gala**

An opening celebration of The Portsmouth Historical Society's newest blockbuster exhibition. Come help us celebrate the beginning of our 2017 season with a members' tour of the furniture exhibition before it opens to the public. Have a glass of wine, savor delicious refreshments, and relax and mingle to the music of the popular Ben Baldwin Trio. Not yet a member? Head to our website and Join Today! <https://discoverportsmouth.wufoo.com/forms/p1is75xsos1rkcc/>

### **Season Sponsors**

Portsmouth Rotary Club; Portsmouth Painting Company

### **Exhibition Sponsors**

Mr. & Mrs. Craig Jewett, and the Jewett Family; Ronald Bourgeault; Hollis Brodrick; Antiques & Fine Art Magazine; Peter Eaton; Donald Koleman & Joanna Brode Koleman; Mr. & Mrs. David McCartney; Peter Sawyer Antiques; Aileen Dugan-State Farm Insurance; Jonathan & Paige Trace; Gary F. Yeaton; Melissa Alden & Jack Kane, and Sharon Platt; Bernard & S. Dean Levy, Inc.; Nathan Liverant and Son Antiques; The Meader Family; Doug Nelson-Wells Fargo; New Hampshire Antiques Dealers Association; The exhibition catalogue has been generously underwritten by Mr. & Mrs. Craig Jewett, and the Jewett Family.

## **Exhibition Lecture Series**

### ***Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture Lecture Series***

**"From Joiner to Cabinetmaker: Early Furniture from the Seacoast"**

**Gerald W.R. Ward and Hollis Brodrick**

**Thursday April 20, 2017 5:30-6:30pm**

**Doors open at 5pm; galleries open during the evening**

**Portsmouth Historical Society @Discover Portsmouth**

**10 Middle Street Portsmouth, NH**

**Free and open to the public. For information, call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433)**

Gerald W.R. Ward, curator of the exhibition, and noted Portsmouth antiques dealer Hollis Brodrick will present an overview of the show in a brief lecture followed by an informal gallery tour. The evening offers an opportunity for close and in-depth study of several key pieces in the exhibition, particularly those from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, from several perspectives.

### ***Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture Lecture Series***

**"Perspectives on Contemporary Studio Furniture: An Afternoon with the New**

**Hampshire Furniture Masters”**  
**Sunday, May 7, 2017 2-4pm**  
**Portsmouth Historical Society @Discover Portsmouth**  
**10 Middle Street Portsmouth, NH**  
**Free and open to the public. For information, call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433)**

An Afternoon with the New Hampshire Furniture Masters PechaKucha-style: What Inspires Us? The New Hampshire Furniture Masters Association is a select group of artists devoted to fine design and craftsmanship. In this event, several of the Masters will explore the inspiration and process behind their works in a fast-paced and concise format of 20 images x 20 seconds each. An event not to be missed by furniture makers and enthusiasts, amateur and professional alike.

***Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture Lecture Series***  
**"Collecting Portsmouth Furniture within a Changing Marketplace."**  
**Brock Jobe, Professor of American Decorative Arts Emeritus, Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, Winterthur, Delaware**  
**Thursday May 18, 2017 5:30 to 6:30**  
**Portsmouth Historical Society @Discover Portsmouth**  
**10 Middle Street Portsmouth, NH**  
**Free and open to the public. For information, call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433)**

Since the Bush recession of 2008 and even before, the market value of much antique furniture has plummeted. What happened? Why did it happen? What does the future hold? Brock Jobe will bring his unparalleled knowledge of the field to bear on a review of the antiques scene of the past two decades and offer hope to those of us who collect or are simply interested in early American furniture, especially from the Portsmouth area.

***Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture Lecture Series***  
**"Sixty Years of Antiquing in the Piscataqua Area”**  
**Ron Bourgeault, Northeast Auctions**  
**Thursday June 15, 2017 5:30-6:30pm**  
**Portsmouth Historical Society @Discover Portsmouth**  
**10 Middle Street Portsmouth, NH**  
**Free and open to the public. For information, call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433)**

Ron Bourgeault, the legendary figure and principal of Northeast Auctions in Portsmouth, will offer a look at the collecting and connoisseurship of Seacoast-area furniture and other works of art, based on his unique perspective and unparalleled experience in the New England and national marketplace.

***Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture Lecture Series***  
**"Master and Apprentice: The Mystery of Who Trained Portsmouth Cabinetmaker Langley Boardman.”**  
**Johanna McBrien, founding Editor-in-Chief, Antiques & Fine Art Magazine**  
**Sunday June 4, 2017 2pm**  
**Portsmouth Historical Society @Discover Portsmouth**  
**10 Middle Street Portsmouth, NH**  
**Free and open to the public. For information, call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433)**

Johanna McBrien has served as a contributing author on several books, and an authority on American decorative arts for major auction houses, antiques dealers, and *The Antiques Roadshow*. She is a regular lecturer at major museums across the country, and her discoveries about Portsmouth's cabinetmakers have changed our understanding about the transfer of style and skill from one craftsman to another.

**Portsmouth Historical Society @ Discover Portsmouth**

Portsmouth Historical Society will open its Welcome Center and Museum Shop at Discover Portsmouth on Saturday March 18, 2017; the Academy Gallery on Friday April 7; and the John Paul Jones House on Memorial Day, Monday May 29. Open to the public from 9:30-5pm daily, Discover Portsmouth is located at 10 Middle Street. For more information please call [603-436-8433](tel:603-436-8433) or visit [www.portsmouthhistory.org](http://www.portsmouthhistory.org)