

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 14, 2023

Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Press Contact: Rebecca Dawson, Director of Communications

860.443.2545 ext. 2112 / [dawson@lymanallyn.org](mailto:dawson@lymanallyn.org)

**THAMES RIVER HERITAGE PARK HOSTS 2024 LECTURE SERIES**  
**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LYMAN ALLYN ART MUSEUM**

**NEW LONDON** - Thames River Heritage Park 2024 winter lecture series, "Stories from the Park: Island Affairs of the Thames," will be held at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum.

Probing the historical impact and influence of the connections with islands near and far to the Thames River, the five-part series will explore the "power of place" from a social, cultural, political, economic and ecological perspectives along with its impact and influence on life on the Thames - historically and up to the present time through stories, song and prose.

"Our lecture series chair, Deborah Donovan, has assembled a storied cast of historians and storytellers to relate the rich connections of the Thames to islands throughout the world and their legacy and relevance to the current time," said Catherine Foley, Thames River Heritage Park Foundation executive director.

The lectures are scheduled on the first Wednesday of the month from January through May at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum and begin with a reception of light hors d'oeuvres and wine at 6 p.m., immediately followed by a lecture at 7 p.m.

**Lecture details are as follows:**

**Jan. 3 - Mariners, Whalers and Traders - Island Connections to the Thames:** Troubadour Geoff Kaufmann shares stories of mariners, whalers and traders in prose and song. His set of songs will reference connections between New London/Groton and Southeastern Connecticut to islands near and far.

**Feb. 7 - Kinship, Trade and Culture - Eastern Long Island and the Thames:** Historian Patricia Schaefer presents Eastern Long Island and Southeastern Connecticut's strong kinship, trade and cultural ties in the 18th century, using examples from the Joshua Hempstead diary as illustrations.

**March 6 - Connecticut's Sweet Tooth - New London, the Sugar Trade and Slavery in the West Indies:** Professor Matt Warshauer shares stories about the Thames River region when it was the most important port of trade in all of British North America and served as a hub for a dizzying array of goods collected via an intricate trade network and then shipped south to the Caribbean.

### **April 3 - Bound for Desolation - New London "Whalers" and Isles of the Southern**

**Ocean:** Local historian Deborah Donovan shares stories about New London "whalers," who harvested massive elephant seals for their previous oil, "owned" two of the very desolate islands in the Southern Ocean and had local firms in the oil businesses that brought large fortunes and legacies to New London, the Whaling City.

**May 1 - Whaling, Religion and Royalty - New London and Lahaina:** Steve Manuel, New London County Historical Society executive director, tells fascinating stories about New London's Elias Perkins II, a partner in the Perkins and Smith whaling firm who resided in Lahaina, the conflict between New England whalers and missionaries and the influence of whaling on New London County. Artifacts gifted to the Perkins family from the royal family of Hawaii will be on display.

Seating is limited. Advance registration is required.

A series pass for the 5-part lecture series is available for purchase at <https://bit.ly/TRHPLectureSeriesPass2024> through December 20, 2023. The series pass costs \$45 for members of Thames River Heritage Park Foundation or Lyman Allyn Art Museum, or \$65. After December 20, tickets will be sold individually for each lecture.

Registration for individual lectures opens on December 21 at <https://www.thamesriverheritagepark.org/lecture-series>. A discounted cost of \$10 for members of Thames River Heritage Park Foundation or Lyman Allyn Art Museum, or \$15 for the general public is offered to those who register at least one week in advance. The regular cost is \$15 for members of Thames River Heritage Park Foundation or Lyman Allyn Art Museum, or \$20 for the general public.

This program is made possible thanks to grants from Connecticut Humanities and Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut.

For more information, please contact Catherine Foley [cfoley@thamesriverheritagepark.org](mailto:cfoley@thamesriverheritagepark.org).

### **About Thames River Heritage Park**

Thames River Heritage Park is a collection of 21 heritage sites and 13 institution partners which promote the history and heritage of the Thames. Thames River Heritage Park Foundation connects, supports, promotes and sustains these sites and partners by operating a hop-on hop-off water taxi service between City Pier and Fort Trumbull in New London and Thames Landing in Groton, offering history-themed narrated boat tours and harbor cruises on the Thames, and private charters during the summer season. In the off-season, Thames River Heritage Park Foundation works with partner sites and institutions to develop collaborative programs, such as, the popular Docent Academy and Stories from the Park lecture series along with marketing campaigns promoting tourism and economic development along the Thames.

For more information on the Park, the Foundation, and their programs and services, contact Catherine Foley at [cfoley@thamesriverheritagepark.org](mailto:cfoley@thamesriverheritagepark.org).

### **About the Lyman Allyn Art Museum**

The Lyman Allyn Art Museum welcomes visitors from New London, southeastern Connecticut and all over the world. Established in 1926 with a gift from Harriet Allyn in memory of her seafaring father, the Museum opened the doors of its beautiful neoclassical building surrounded by 12 acres of green space in 1932. Today it presents several changing exhibitions each year and houses a fascinating collection of over 17,000 objects from ancient times to the present, including art from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, with particularly strong collections of American paintings, decorative arts and Victorian toys and doll houses.

The Museum is located at 625 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut, exit 83 off I-95. The Museum is open **Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 - 5 p.m.**; it is closed on Mondays and major holidays. For more information call 860.443.2545, ext. 2129 or visit [www.lymanallyn.org](http://www.lymanallyn.org).