

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Albany Institute of History & Art

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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES CAPITAL REGION HISTORY THROUGH 50 OBJECTS

The Capital Region in 50 Objects opens September 19, 2015

ALBANY, NY— It's not often that you see a video game and a chamber pot together in an exhibition. It's even more unusual when both are highlighted as historic artifacts. But the Capital Region of New York has such a varied history that this pairing, along with forty-eight other items, will come together at the Albany Institute of History & Art to tell their stories in *The Capital Region in 50 Objects*. This collaborative exhibition was developed in partnership with area historic organizations and public input. *The Capital Region in 50 Objects* will open at the Albany Institute on September 19, 2015 and will run through April 3, 2016.



Each region of the country has its own distinctive history that sets it apart from others. The Capital Region of New York—consisting of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties—is no different.

"The Capital Region in 50 Objects is modeled on similar undertakings in the United States and Great Britain," says Albany Institute's Executive Director Tammis Groft. "In 2011, the British Museum and the BBC partnered together on a project to tell a history of the world in 100 objects and then the *New York Times* presented a feature called 'A History of New York in 50 Objects'."

"We wanted to use this very approachable format and organize an exhibition where people could come and see selected objects in person," says Groft. She continues, "As we thought

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about this type of exhibition, we asked ourselves: What is it that gives the Capital Region its identity? What historic events, people, ideas, and objects have shaped its character? And, even more challenging, it is possible to symbolize the Capital Region's distinctiveness in fifty objects?"

The Capital Region in 50 Objects represents over three years of outreach, research, and collaboration. The Albany Institute sent surveys to nearly sixty museums and cultural organizations throughout the region. Through partnership with the *Times Union*, the Institute was also able to ask readers to submit their ideas based on themes such as Arts, Sports, & Entertainment; Science & Technology; Politics; Industry, Commerce, & Transportation; Life & Society. Then, after reviewing the responses, a committee worked to select fifty topics to represent a diverse history of the region. Topics range from Uncle Sam and Henry Johnson to WGY and early radio and television broadcasting, the Saratoga Race Track, Emma Willard, and Antarctic flights.

Numerous museums, historical societies, business entities, and private individuals worked with the Albany Institute of History & Art to assemble fifty objects that tell an amazing story of the Capital Region over the past four hundred years. Some of the objects in the exhibition are immediately recognizable as Capital Region icons, such as Albany's beloved Nipper, the RCA dog that looks down from this rooftop perch on Broadway in downtown Albany. Other objects, such as the Witenagemot oak peace tree from the Knickerbocker Historical Society in Schaghticoke, may be little known to visitors, but the old oak tree represents a profoundly important event that took place in 1676 with the formalization of a peace treaty among English colonists, Mohawks, Mohicans, and Hoosacs, all of whom inhabited the area around the junction of the Hudson and Hoosick Rivers.

"The exhibition represents the voice of our region— how all of us who live and work here see our own history and identity. And it's a fantastic way to share that history with others," says Albany Institute's Chief Curator Doug McCombs.

In addition, the Albany Institute will host a variety of related special events, family programs, guest lecturers, and more so that the public will be able to connect to the exhibition content in numerous ways. *Upcoming events are listed at the end of this release.*

The exhibition, which opens on Saturday, September 19, will debut at a **special reception on Friday, September 18 from 5:30-8PM**. This reception is free and open to the public, but **RSVPs are requested**. Guests should RSVP to (518) 463-4478 ext 403.

The Albany Institute of History & Art wants to thank the participants and supporters that influenced and made possible *The Capital Region in 50 Objects*, including the *Times Union*, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Council for the Humanities, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Matthew Bender IV, and Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Marwill.

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Object lenders include: Albany Pine Bush Preserve; Bernard Brown; Nancy E. Carey; Dudley Observatory; Emma Dickson and the Rapp Road Historical Association; Emma Willard School; Empire State Aerosciences Museum; Empire State Plaza Art Collection, New York State Office of General Services; Vince Forte, Jr.; Grafton Community Library; Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway; Iroquois Indian Museum; William Kennedy; Knickerbocker Historical Society; Manchester Metropolitan University Library, UK; Jack McEneny; MiSci (Museum of Innovation and Science); National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame; New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center; New York State Museum; Old Stone Fort Museum; Port of Albany; Rensselaer County Historical Society; Saratoga National Historical Park; Schenectady Historical Society; Vicarious Visions; and Stewart Wagner.

Image lenders include: Emma Dickson and the Rapp Road Historical Association; Fort Orange Club; Gary Gold; David and Ruth Hoffman; William Kennedy; Metropolitan Museum of Art; MiSci (Museum of Innovation and Science); New York State Library; New York State Museum; Tom Nelson; Rensselaer County Historical Society; Len Tantillo; Underground Railroad History Project; and Vicarious Visions.

Members of the press are invited to an exhibition preview at the Albany Institute on Tuesday, September 15 at 10AM. Chief Curator Doug McCombs will lead a tour of the exhibition (still in installation stage) and both he and Tammis Graft will be available to answer questions. Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to Aine Leader-Nagy at (518) 463-4478 ext. 408 or leader.nagy@albanyinstitute.org.

The Albany Institute of History & Art is located at 125 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York. Free parking is available in the museum's lot at the corner of Elk and Dove Streets. The museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 10AM-5PM, Thursdays until 8PM*, and Sunday Noon-5PM. On Tuesdays, the museum is open to registered groups only. The museum is closed on Mondays and some holidays. Admission is free for Institute members; \$10/adults; \$8/seniors; \$8/students with ID; \$6/children 6-12; FREE/children under 6. *AIHA now offers free admission on Thursdays from 5PM-8PM.

For more information, visit www.albanyinstitute.org or call (518) 463-4478.

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Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 35,000 objects and one million documents in the library, it is an important resource for the region, giving our community a sense of the part the Hudson Valley played in the American story, and our own place in history. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are open year-round and create a sense of place, allowing visitors to meet the people who helped shape this region. Among the museum's best-known and most-loved collections are the 19th century Hudson River School landscape paintings by artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, the 19th century sculpture collections, and, of course, the famous Albany Mummies that came to the museum in 1909 and have been on view ever since. For more information, please visit www.albanyinstitute.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute) and Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute).

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SAMPLE IMAGES



TOP: Albany Billiard Factory, Stephen Schreiber Jr.,
c. 1900, Gelatin silver print, 9 ½ H x 7 ½ W,
mounted, 11 ¾ H x 13 ¾ W, Albany Institute of
History & Art, Main Photograph Collection

RIGHT: Hyatt Billiard Balls, Albany Billiard Ball
Company, c. 1940-60, Celluloid Balls, 2 ¼" diam.,
Box 9 ¾" x 9 ¾" x 2 ½", Albany Institute of History &
Art, gift of Mrs. Richard C. Rockwell, 1994.45.8



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TOP: *Congress Spring, Saratoga, N.Y.*, Hatch & Co., 111 Broadway, N.Y., c.1875, Chromo Lithograph, ht.15 1/16" x w.19 3/4", Albany Institute of History & Art, Gift of FleetBoston Financial Corporation, 2000.13.5

RIGHT: *Saratoga Vichy Carbonated Water Six Pack*, c. 1900, Paper, ink, glass and water, H 8" x W. 4 3/4" x L. 7", Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of June Price, 2012.2.7



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TOP: Tulip Festival Street Scrubbers, Unidentified photographer, c. 1955, Gelatin silver print, ht. 6 1/2" x w. 8 1/2", Albany Institute of History & Art Library, Morris Gerber Collection

RIGHT: Tulip Queen Crown, Designed by Christoph Hajo, Created by George Righthand, 1948, Brass, copper, rabbit fur and ermine tail, 7" x 6 1/4", Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of Katherine G. Herrick, (Mrs. D) Cady, 1985.2.1



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EXHIBITION LECTURES, FAMILY PROGRAMS, SPECIAL EVENTS

ONGOING

PUBLIC PROGRAM— **GALLERY TALKS**

SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS, and SPECIAL HOLIDAYS | 1 PM

Enjoy a docent-led tour of the Albany Institute's exhibitions. Schedule is subject to change, please call (518) 463-4478 to confirm. **Free with museum admission**

September 19, 20, 26, 27

October 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 24, 31

FAMILY PROGRAM—**Art for All**

MOST SATURDAYS | 10 AM–4:30PM

Bring your family to the museum and spend the day being creative. Activities are inspired by the current exhibitions and include techniques like painting, sculpture, collage, and more! **Free with museum admission**

September 26

October 3, 17, 24, 31



SEPTEMBER

SPECIAL EVENT—**Opening Reception**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | 5:30PM–7:30PM

Enjoy regional flavors with tasty food and local drinks. Come cast your vote for your favorite object and tell us what else you think identifies the region! RSVP to (518) 463-4478 ext. 403 **Free admission**

EXHIBITION OPENING DAY— **The Capital Region in 50 Objects**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 10AM–5PM

Come explore our new exhibition! **Regular admission rates apply**

50 OBJECTS PROGRAM – **A Capital Day Family Program!**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | NOON–4:30PM

Celebrate our Capital Region's culture and history with a 50 Objects scavenger hunt and family fun.

Free with museum admission This event is funded, in part, by Bank of America Foundation.

SCHEDULE

12:00-4:30PM:

- Scavenger Hunts in the Galleries
- Art in the Studio: Art Inspired by Iroquois History and Culture

NOON: Nipper Look-Alike Contest- Does your dog look like Nipper? Bring your four-footed family member for our fun look-alike contest. Check in starts at noon

1-3PM: Face painting by Tina Rodriguez

3PM: Traditional Native American Storytelling by Mike Tarbell, Cultural Interpreter, Iroquois Indian Museum

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SPECIAL EVENT—Annual Meeting of the Membership

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 | 5:30PM–7PM

A review of the year's highlights including new acquisitions, exciting new plans for 2016, and the Institute's 225th anniversary celebration! Also enjoy The Capital Region in 50 Objects and tasty treats.

Members only; free to attend; RSVP to Briana at (518) 463-4478 ext. 412.

OCTOBER

FIRST FRIDAY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 | 5–8PM

The Albany Institute will be open for extended hours. Explore the galleries, visit with friends, and shop in our museum store! **Free admission**

50 OBJECTS FAMILY PROGRAM—Lego® Building Challenge: Buildings, Bridges, and Boats

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 | 11AM AND 2PM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11 | 1PM

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 | 11AM AND 2PM

Bring friends, family, and colleagues together and let your imagination run wild. Share your vision, and compete for awards with teams from across the Capital Region. Basic building blocks supplied; contestants may bring their own. Teams may include as many as, but not more than, four people. Space is limited; Pre-registration is required. Register online at albanyinstitute.org.

\$5 per person This event is funded, in part, by Bank of America Foundation.



HOLIDAY MONDAY—Columbus Day

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14 | 10AM–5PM

This Columbus Day explore the galleries of the Albany Institute of History & Art for free! There will be a Gallery Talk at 1PM. This event is funded by M&T Bank. **Free admission**

SPECIAL EVENT- 1791 Club: See and Taste the History of the Capital Region

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 | 5:30PM

After-hours exploration of The Capital Region in 50 Objects leads to exploration of cocktails at a local restaurant. Register online at albanyinstitute.org. **\$10 per person; food and drink on your own**

50 OBJECTS PROGRAM—About Creativity

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18 | 2PM

William Kennedy, Pulitzer Prize-winning author

Michael Oatman, artist, curator, and professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Join us for this very special informal discussion between two of our region's most noted creative people. Seating is limited; tickets available on the day of the event on a first come, first served basis.

Free with museum admission

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50 OBJECTS SPECIAL EVENT— **New York History Trivia Night**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 | 6PM

Think you and your friends know something about New York history? Join us for an exciting trivia challenge and test your game! We will include questions from the new I Know New York Trivia Game. Prizes will be awarded. Tickets: \$25 per person; \$20 members (includes refreshments) Teams may include up to four people. Interested in playing but not yet part of a team? Sign up as a single (or a double) and we'll add you to a team for the night! Space is limited and pre-registration is suggested. This event is sponsored by Keeler Motor Car Company. ***\$25 per person; \$20 members***

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