



For Immediate Release

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Henry Whitfield State Museum Receives Grant from National Park Service to Preserve National Historic Landmark

Guilford, CT – The Henry Whitfield State Museum is pleased to announce the award of a \$500,000 grant from the National Park Service (NPS) for the historic preservation of the Henry Whitfield House. A National Historic Landmark and Connecticut State Archaeological Preserve, the Henry Whitfield House (1639) is recognized as the oldest house in Connecticut and the oldest stone house in New England.

“The Henry Whitfield House is one of the oldest landmarks in New England, and its legacy serves as an historic reminder of the settlement of Connecticut as a colony and the story of how our nation was built,” Governor Ned Lamont said. “For more than a century, the state has been operating the house as a museum and working to preserve it so that the story of its legacy can be told for future generations. This grant will have a critical role in aiding in that preservation process. On behalf of the State of Connecticut, I thank the National Park Service for recognizing the importance of this landmark here in our state and its role in United States history.”

“The evolution of the Henry Whitfield House through nearly four centuries illustrates our nation’s complex history,” said Museum Curator, Michelle Parrish. “Its construction in the 17th century is a physical reminder of European settler colonialism and the relationship between the area’s Indigenous peoples and English colonizers. It was later the home of a British Loyalist who sold the Whitfield House to a Patriot who housed his refugee family from British-occupied Long Island during the American Revolution. When the Henry Whitfield State Museum was founded in 1900, the Whitfield House was preserved for future generations, but it also became a physical reminder of the Colonial Revival era of the 1800s-1900s that celebrated and glorified European ethnocentricity and superiority.”

The Henry Whitfield State Museum is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Economic and Community Development. The proposed preservation project will mitigate critical threats to the building, including repointing the exterior and interior of the stone walls, improving drainage to prevent moisture and water infiltration, and replacing the antiquated and failing electrical and heating systems. The project will also update the building’s existing National Register of Historic Places nomination with a more inclusive narrative to better understand and document the relationship between the Guilford settlement and its Indigenous neighbors as well as how the Henry Whitfield House illustrates the history of other underrepresented groups. This project will not only preserve the integrity, significance, and safety of this 383-year-old historic resource into its fifth century, but ensure that visitors may

HENRY WHITFIELD STATE MUSEUM

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Department of Economic and
Community Development
State Historic Preservation Office

Connecticut



continue to expand their understanding of the site, its complex role in our nation’s history, how it impacts our nation’s society today, and how it impacts their lives personally.

The Henry Whitfield House Rehabilitation Project is being supported in part by a Semiquincentennial grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the NPS, Department of the Interior. The NPS awarded a total of \$7 million in the inaugural round of funding for the Semiquincentennial Grant Program commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Created by Congress in 2020, this round of grants will support 17 cultural resource preservation projects across 12 states. The museum’s application to the Semiquincentennial Grant Program included letters of support from Guilford First Selectman Matthew Hoey, State Representative Sean Scanlon, State Senator Christine Cohen, U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, U.S. Senator Christopher Murphy, and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal.

“National parks and NPS programs serve to tell authentic and complete history, provide opportunities for exploring the legacies that impact us today, and contribute to healing and understanding,” said NPS Director, Chuck Sams. “Through the Semiquincentennial Grant Program, we are supporting projects that showcase the many places and stories that contributed to the evolution of the American experience.”

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