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Press Release

For Immediate Release

HARBOR & HOME EXHIBITION SET TO OPEN AT WINTERTHUR *Landmark show focuses on furnituremaking traditions of Southeastern Massachusetts*

Winterthur, DE —February 10, 2009 — The furniture and furnituremakers of a much-storied but little-studied region of New England will receive their first serious consideration with the opening of Winterthur Museum & Country Estate’s latest exhibition, *Harbor & Home: Furniture of Southeastern Massachusetts, 1710-1850*, on March 21, 2009.

The landmark exhibition, featuring some 200 objects, is the culmination of more than five years of research by Brock Jobe, professor of American decorative arts in the Winterthur/University of Delaware graduate program in American material culture. Included among the objects on display will be 84 pieces of furniture, and more than 100 paintings, prints, historical photographs and other items drawn from 50 public and private collections. Lenders include The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Old Sturbridge Village, as well as numerous smaller institutions throughout southeastern Massachusetts. Many of the objects in the exhibition are on public display for the first time.

“The coastal Massachusetts area has figured large in terms of our understanding of significant influences in American history from the Pilgrims to the whaling industry, yet very little scholarship has been done on the rich traditions and fine craftsmanship of furnituremakers in the region,” says Jobe. “Once I began my research, I was astounded by the breadth and diversity of the furniture produced by these craftsmen, most of whom have remained relatively unknown or overlooked by scholars.”

Jobe studies the furniture made and used by residents as a means of exploring regional culture in the area extending south from Boston to Providence and east to the tip of Cape Cod, as well as the islands of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket. The exhibition focuses on the significant social and economic forces that shaped identity, taste, and evolving craftsmanship in the area during a time in which growth brought significant change.

“While many historians have actively documented the trade that came in and out of those harbors and drove the local economies, I became fascinated with what was going on inside the homes of those seamen and merchants whose livelihoods were based on the sea,” said Jobe. “As we researched, we came to realize that harbor and home were inextricably tied in a way that created a rich cultural

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identity.”

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Furniture in the exhibition ranges from relatively simple household items to extraordinary one-of-a-kind pieces such as a child’s chair made of rosewood and tropical woods and featuring elaborate South Seas mother-of-pearl and baleen (whale bone). Although such materials would not have been found in the region, they reflect the connection between harbor and home that is the basis of Jobe’s study. The chair was reportedly made for the daughter of a local whaling merchant by one of the sailors in his employ who would likely have had ready access to such rare materials.

Other exceptional pieces in the show include a needlework-covered card table, a small dressing box made of exotic woods and inlaid with mother-of-pearl and whale ivory, and chests painted with flamboyant decoration. A featured highlight will be a selection of impressive tall-case clocks notable for their exceptional cabinetry as well as complex clockworks.

Among the other artifacts featured are a selection of prints, maps, paintings, and historic photographs depicting the region, along with a selection of ceramics, needlework, and clothing. These materials further highlight the vibrant communities found throughout southeastern Massachusetts in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Catalogue

Jobe collaborated with Gary R. Sullivan and Jack O’Brien in writing the exhibition catalogue. Sullivan, based in Sharon, Mass., is an antiques dealer specializing in clocks, and O’Brien is an Americana specialist with Leigh Keno American Antiques, New York, NY. The 456-page book, ***Harbor & Home, Furniture of Southeastern Massachusetts, 1710–1850***, is published by the University Press of New England and features 321 illustrations showcasing exhibition objects and related furniture. The catalogue retails for \$75 and is available through the Winterthur Bookstore (302.888.4707).

Special Offerings

- **iPod Tour:** Winterthur will offer a custom iPod tour of the exhibition featuring Jobe as the narrator, available for download at winterthur.org/harborandhome or on loan in the Winterthur Galleries.
- **Video presentations:** Videos highlighting furnituremaking techniques and traditions will enhance the visitor’s appreciation of the cabinetmakers’ skills.
- **Furniture Forum:** The Sewell C. Biggs Winterthur Furniture Forum, scheduled for April 16-17, will highlight the topic of southeastern Massachusetts furniture as part of a larger study of coastal New England furniture. Jobe, Sullivan, O’Brien and several other noted experts will deliver lectures during the event. The two-day program, sponsored by Skinner, will be augmented with optional workshops and demonstrations on April 15 and 18. Registration is open now (\$370; \$320 Members and professionals working for nonprofits; \$250 students with valid ID; \$75 per workshop) and may be completed by calling 1.800.448.3883.
- **Spring Break Camp: Make Sail!** Winterthur will host a two-day spring break camp for children in grades 3–5 on April 16-17 from 8:30 am –5:00 pm. Hands-on activities will relate to *Harbor &*

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Home, providing participants with opportunities to try their hand at tying sailor's knots, crafting Sailor's Valentines, learning how to talk like a pirate, singing sea chanteys, and much more. A special scrimshaw demonstration will introduce students to this unique art form. *Registration required by April 3, 2009 (\$100; \$80 Members). Call 800.448.3883.*

- **Guided Gallery Walks:** Visitors will have the opportunity to learn more about the objects featured exhibition through special gallery walks offered every Saturday and Sunday. The walks take place at 11:30 am, 1 pm, and 2 pm and are free with general admission.

Harbor & Home will remain at Winterthur through May 25, 2009. It then travels to Nantucket, Mass., where it will be on view at the Nantucket Historical Association Whaling Museum from July 3 until November 2.

Principal support for *Harbor & Home* is provided by The Americana Foundation, The Chilton Foundation, The Croll Foundation, Elizabeth B. McGraw Foundation, The Wodecroft Foundation, and Anonymous.



Plate 25.

Child's chair, made at sea or possibly in New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1815–20. Unknown tropical wood, rosewood, ebony, botany-bay oak, mother-of-pearl, whalebone, baleen. Private collection.

Plate 91

Tall clock, works by Joshua Wilder, case attributed to Abiel White, Hanover and Weymouth, Massachusetts, 1807–10. Mahogany, cherry, lightwood inlays, and white pine. Hingham Historical Society.

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Winterthur Museum & Country Estate—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American antiques, naturalistic garden, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. Winterthur has been named one of the country's "10 great places of historic proportions" by *USA Today* and "one of the 10 grandest mansions in America" by *Budget Travel*.

General admission includes a tour of the Winterthur mansion as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children's garden. *\$18 adults; \$16 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11.* Tickets are valid for two consecutive days.