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“Courageous Women of the Revolutionary War”

WMHO Presents Living History Performances at Historic Properties

Stony Brook, NY – The critical roles women played during the Revolutionary War and the rich history of the Stony Brook area will be showcased through unique living history theatrical performances at four of Ward Melville Heritage Organization’s (WMHO) historic properties **September 28 from 10 am to 4 pm** (rain date September 29). Each of these homes is listed on the ***National and State Register of Historic Places***, and each has its own connection to the American Revolution.

“The Courageous Women of the Revolutionary War” is for all ages. Based on historical literature and oral histories from Stony Brook, the general public will be invited to take a guided tour on a journey back in time to the years that also helped spearhead the Women’s Suffrage Movement and eventually pave the way for women to vote in the country they fought diligently to liberate. The setting for the performances will take place in the middle of the conflict, forcing guests to consider, “What would you do during these treacherous times?” The British have taken hold of Long Island. Husbands and young men are arrested and enslaved on prison boats in New York Harbor. Innocent boys are forced into service for the British Army. Wives, mothers and daughters are alone, protecting their children and property...surrounded by a merciless militia.

Visitors will be greeted by a character in the first person who will dramatize their personal fears and tribulations learning to survive during the war:

The Brewster House, c. 1665: It is 1778, and the home of **Rebecca Mills Brewster** has been taken over by British troops. Meet Rebecca, a relative of Caleb Brewster, member of George Washington’s Culper Spy Ring. Alongside her husband, Joseph Brewster, she operated the house as a tavern and general store, entertaining British troops.

Hawkins-Mount House, c. 1725: Jonas Hawkins was a militia officer and messenger for the Culper Spy Ring. Jonas and his wife Ruth Mills ran a store and tavern here during the American Revolution. Famed American genre artist William Sidney Mount also lived in the house in later years. Meet **Ruth Mills**, who tells of her loyalty to the Patriot cause.

Thompson House, 1709: The Thompson House was home to American patriot and physician, Doctor Samuel Thompson and his wife, **Phoebe Thompson** who will tell the fascinating story of the patients he treated, including members of George Washington's Culper Spy Ring.

Stony Brook Grist Mill, 1751 The British army defeated the Patriots in the Battle of Long Island in August 1776, and a seven year occupation followed. Audiences will experience the Mill during a time when British soldiers were using it to grind grain to feed their troops. Meet a **young woman** whose husband was recruited by Loyalists as she visits the Stony Brook Grist Mill.

This extraordinary program was made possible by a grant from the **Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation** to inspire and educate the public about the contributions of these valiant women through live performances while fostering an appreciation of the Stony Brook Village region and its cultural heritage. **Gloria Rocchio, President of WMHO** says, *"We are very thankful to the Gardiner Foundation for giving us the opportunity to share our vision that we've had for so long with the general public."*

Guests will be transported to the performances in each of the historic properties by shuttle motorcoach. For further information call 631-751-2244.

Photo Credit Brewster House/Grist Mill: WMHO

Photo Credit Thompson House: Helen Badoyannis

Founded in 1939, the WMHO is a privately funded not-for-profit corporation that protects and preserves historic and environmentally sensitive properties deeded to it by Ward Melville. By enhancing and interpreting its properties, it creates educational and cultural experiences that integrate ecology, history, art, theater, music, dance and technology. The Ward Melville Heritage Organization provides educational and cultural programs throughout the year for children ages three through adult and works with both public and private schools that include a range of socio-economic statuses and underserved communities. WMHO presents over 70 multidisciplinary performances of music theatre, drama, dance, art and music year-round. More than 18,000 people attend these performances as well as many exhibitions, lectures and children's programs throughout the year. These include both free and paid admissions.