



**For Immediate Release**

Date: 01/02/2013

Contact: Chad Sirois

P: 508.753.8278 ext. 107

E: [csiros@worcesterhistory.net](mailto:csiros@worcesterhistory.net)

[www.worcesterhistory.org](http://www.worcesterhistory.org)

## Worcester Historical Museum to Unveil New Interactive Family Gallery

Worcester, MA - After three years of planning, focus groups, consultants and designs, Worcester Historical Museum is ready to unveil the next chapter in its ongoing transformation into thenew30 with the debut of the George I. Alden Family Gallery. The Alden Family Gallery officially opens on Saturday, February 16, 2013, with a Family Day full of fun and activities. Kids are invited to bring their parents free (Non-member adult admission is \$5.00). This new space is the catalyst for a host of programs and exciting endeavors that will connect younger audiences with Worcester's past. Made up of four distinct spaces that represent significant timeframes in Worcester history, the Alden Family Gallery is designed for children, families, teachers, school groups, and members to interact, explore, and discover Worcester in a whole new way.

With an investment of over half-a-million dollars into the gallery, Worcester Historical Museum turned to one of the best in the field of creative museum learning by collaborating with Boston Children's Museum. WHM utilized the expertise of Boston Children's Museum in developing design and content concepts for a new dynamic space for children and families. To further assist in content development WHM also consulted with the Alden Family Gallery Advisory Committee, a group of dedicated volunteers made up of educators from the Worcester Public Schools and faculty of Worcester State University. The Alden Family Gallery was designed to incorporate four distinct spaces: CitySquare, which represents Worcester's continued development; Salisbury Store, which connects children to late 18<sup>th</sup> century Worcester; The Factory, which focuses on the ingenuity of six Worcester residents; and Mrs. B's Diner, where the past meets the present through oral histories, music and imaginative-play.

The Alden Family Gallery was designed with the principle of looking at history in a creative and community inclusive format that will extend beyond the 30 Elm Street Museum. To this end, all

labels in the Alden Family Gallery are bilingual, with content presented in English and Spanish. Worcester Historical Museum is proud to be one of the first museums in Worcester to present its gallery space in a manner that celebrates and recognizes its Latin-American community.

Artifacts are hidden and displayed throughout the four spaces to invite exploration in the Alden Family Gallery and then throughout the rest of the museum. The artifacts illustrate the connection of everyday objects to the larger story of Worcester. The spaces in the gallery have also been designed to represent the community in which we live and play. From City Hall's Clock Tower, which greets visitors as they enter the space, to the federalist exterior of Salisbury Mansion, to the brick façade of factories that dot Worcester's landscape, these textures and buildings invite visitors to engage in a new way with the built environment that surrounds them. The suggestion of real buildings encourages visitors to expand their ideas of history and the museum experience beyond the galleries of Worcester Historical Museum.

Each space offers options for imaginative play as well as opportunities to use math building skills, problem-solving and design skills with creative thinking.

- CitySquare highlights the buildings and sites of Worcester then and now. Iconic buildings found in this section include City Hall, Union Station and the DCU Center. Interactives include videos about Worcester history featuring young historians from area schools. Families and young visitors will be able to establish their place in Worcester history and track Worcester's ever-changing community with an interactive map.
- Salisbury Store brings young visitors to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to learn how commerce was conducted before the days of VISA and MasterCard. Children and families will be able to shop, track purchases or take on the role of "gentleman-merchant" Stephen Salisbury. Young visitors will also be able to learn about the trade routes that connected Worcester with the rest of the world. This space also encourages further exploration of Salisbury Mansion, Worcester's only historic house museum located at 40 Highland Street.
- The Factory addresses the days of Worcester's industrial power and the city's continued role as an incubator of innovation. Families will learn about fascinating Worcester inventions and inventors while testing their speed and assembly skills at the workstation

or by designing their own patent for a new invention. Patents can be taken home or left to inspire other creative tinkerers.

- At Mrs. B's Diner visitors can strap on an apron and flip burgers or sit in a booth and listen to music on an old fashion jukebox. Period telephones encourage conversations with the past by listening to gossip and news from different decades in Worcester history. Families can also take a seat and discuss contemporary food trends versus the old, and the comparison between current life and the past.

The Alden Family Gallery enhances the experience at Worcester Historical Museum for visitors from that of a passive viewer into an active participant through learning and play. The Alden Family Gallery was made possible with generous support provided by the George I. Alden Family Trust, the Rockwell Foundation, Brenda Booth Clapp and George F. Booth II, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information on the Alden Family Gallery, please contact the Worcester Historical Museum Communications Department at 508.753.8278, ext.107.

### **About Worcester Historical Museum**

Founded in 1875, Worcester Historical Museum is the only organization solely dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Worcester's unique and diverse history from all time periods and subject areas. The holdings of WHM encompass thousands of documents and artifacts vital to the study of Worcester history. Worcester's history is interpreted through a calendar of exhibitions, educational programming, tours, and publications. WHM features both permanent installations and changing exhibits.

###