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## **INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW GALLERY AND SPRING EXHIBITION, FURTHERING ITS MISSION OF HIGHLIGHTING PHILADELPHIA'S RIVER OF HISTORY**

**PHOTOS:** [HERE](#)

**Philadelphia, PA | February 10, 2023** – On April 14, [Independence Seaport Museum](#) (ISM) will open the new **Richard C. von Hess Foundation Gallery**, dedicated to showcasing never-before-seen items from its collections through the new exhibition ***At the Water's Edge: Working and living along the Delaware River***. This new exhibition will highlight the history of Philadelphia's riverfront, furthering ISM's mission of encouraging visitors to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. Along with this new exhibition, guests can explore one of the largest maritime art and artifact collections in North America displayed in their award-winning exhibits before heading outside to tour their historic ships, [Cruiser Olympia](#) and [Submarine Becuna](#). ISM is a critical component of Philadelphia's waterfront renaissance and is a popular, year-round, family-friendly destination along Penn's Landing.

### **Inside the Museum**

Visitors can look forward to the April 14 opening of the Richard C. von Hess Foundation Gallery and its inaugural exhibition, *At the Water's Edge: Working and living along the Delaware River* ("At the Water's Edge"). While only 326 miles in length, the Delaware River has been home to millions of people for centuries, and is the most significant geographic feature along the eastern seaboard. With *At the Water's Edge*, guests can learn about the people who lived and worked on the river, from sailors to ironworkers, to canal boatmen to newly arrived immigrants seeking economic and religious freedom.

*At The Water's Edge* allows visitors of all ages to discover the importance of the Delaware River steps from the water's edge, featuring never-before-seen artifacts and artwork. The exhibition is highlighted by a recently acquired rare piece, a portrait of "**Alice**," a 19th-century portrait of an enslaved woman from Philadelphia. Alice managed and operated Dunk's Ferry (going from present-day Neshaminy State Park, PA to Edgewater Park, NJ), where she transported passengers, wagons, and cargoes for 40 years. *At the Water's Edge* runs through May 2025.

The [River Alive!](#) exhibition gives visitors an up-close look at the wildlife, science, and wonder of the Delaware River and encourages exploration through various engaging, interactive components. Awarded the Special Achievement in Interactivity Award in 2020 by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), this exhibit proves that the river truly is alive and how important its conservation is to the eastern seaboard.

Featuring artifacts from the Museum's collection, [Tides of Freedom: African Presence on the Delaware River](#), shares first-hand accounts detailing the history of enslavement, emancipation, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights in Philadelphia. Discover the story of patriot James Forten, who was famous for his highly-respected sail making business in the early American Republic, or learn about the ships built by African Americans at a local segregated shipyard during World War II. *Tides of Freedom* lets guests explore the concept of freedom through the lens of the African experience along the Delaware. An AAM award-

winning exhibit, *Tides of Freedom*, was curated by the Lasry Family Professor of Race Relations at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Tukufu Zuberi.

Learn about piracy and Philadelphia's connection to the founding of the U.S. Navy in the exhibition [Patriots & Pirates](#), which includes a replica 102-foot vessel Schooner *Diligence*. The ship was constructed by staff and volunteers from [The Seaport Boat Shop](#), a traditional boat shop located inside the Museum where maritime tradition meets hands-on experiences and community.

The Museum provides special programming to encourage visitors to dive deeper into its historic ships and exhibitions. Each Saturday and Sunday, ISM hosts a **Seaport Scavenger Hunt**, where guests pick up a worksheet from the front desk and fill it out as they wander through the museum. Each month features a different theme with new objects to find around the ISM campus.

The Seaport Boat Shop is dedicated to boat building and sailing skills and traditions in the Delaware Valley and New Jersey shore. Visitors can interact with ISM's boat builders as they work on various projects or enroll in programs for high school students and adults alike. The area's finest teaching craftspeople lead workshops on various subjects, such as traditional wooden boat building, metal forging, and metal casting. Prices for workshops vary. The minimum age for the program is 18 years old. Learn more by visiting the Museum's [website](#).

### **On the Delaware River Waterfront**

The Museum is proud to be continuing its efforts to educate the public about its historical vessels docked along the landing. Nearby the Museum are [Cruiser Olympia](#), the oldest floating steel warship, and [Submarine Becuna](#), a World War II-era Balao-class submarine. ISM began its stewardship of *Olympia*, a National Historic Landmark, in 1996 and has since overseen restorations that made it possible for the historic Cruiser to remain open for touring visitors.

In 2021, ISM commemorated the [Centennial Anniversary of the Return of the Unknown Soldier](#) aboard Cruiser *Olympia*. Following the end of World War I, the Cruiser was chosen to return the remains of an unknown American soldier to the United States. To commemorate the Unknown Soldier and memorialize his story for future visitors, ISM unveiled a permanent [historical marker](#) on *Olympia*, located where the coffin was laid during its transport in 1921.

The *Becuna* also brings a storied history from her 25 years in the U.S. Navy. The submarine completed five wartime patrols in the Pacific Theater of World War II and earned four combat stars for her service. In 1951, she underwent modernization as part of the United States Navy's Greater Underwater Propulsion & Power Program (GUPPY) and was refitted with a Guppy 1A modification. She remains the only Guppy 1A type submarine anywhere in the world. *Becuna* became a museum in July 1976 as part of Philadelphia's Bicentennial Celebration and became a part of ISM's collections in 1996.

Naval history enthusiasts can also look forward to another year of ISM and Battleship *New Jersey's* [Deck-to-Deck: Ship Tours](#), an experience where visitors are able to discover nearly 100 years of naval history through guided tours of three remarkable ships. Embark on a three-hour, guided tour through Battleship *New Jersey*, Submarine *Becuna*, and Cruiser *Olympia* to get an up-close look at prime naval ingenuity. Deck-to-Deck: Ship Tours are offered the first Saturday of every month, beginning in March. Tickets can be purchased [online](#) for \$100 per person.

In addition to the ships, ISM offers opportunities to explore the waterways. During the warmer months, visitors can explore the Delaware River from a unique point of view with ISM's [On-Water Programming](#) with options for all levels of experience. The family-favorite [Paddle Penn's Landing](#) will return for the summer season starting May 27, allowing visitors of all ages can paddle around the basin in a kayak, rowboat, and paddleboat. On June 17, ISM brings back the [Kayak Excursions](#), where participants can paddle out of the basin towards various destinations, all designed to connect with an exhibition in the Museum, which paddlers can visit either before or after their excursion. This year's themed Kayak Excursions include Legendary Remains, Blackbeard's Cove, Shipwrecked!, and It's Alive! ISM has announced new programming, [Starlit Paddles](#), where guests can spend a summer evening in the basin on swan paddleboat covered in bright, colored lights every Saturday, from 8 to 10 p.m., in June and July.

Before leaving ISM, visitors can stop by the gift shop to find the perfect souvenir for the nautical lover in their life. All gift shop proceeds are re-invested in ISM's programs, historic ships, and collections.

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#### **About Independence Seaport Museum**

Independence Seaport Museum encourages visitors to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. Stewards of Cruiser *Olympia* and World War II-era Submarine *Becuna*, ISM is home to a boatbuilding workshop, interactive exhibitions, and one of the largest collections of historic maritime artifacts in the world. Visitors can explore the historic and beautiful Delaware River first-hand by renting a boat from the Museum or by participating in one of our kayak excursions. The Independence Seaport Museum is the premier, year-round destination on the Penn's Landing waterfront. Visit daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see our full schedule of programs and events at [phillyseaport.org](http://phillyseaport.org).