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## Editor's Note

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*Newport Historical Society*

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This issue, we are publishing two articles that reflect aspects of Newporters' leisure time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Robert Cvornyek's robust account of black baseball, "Touching Base: Race, Sport, and Community in Newport," uncovers a wealth of information about local African-American teams and players, the integration of baseball in Newport (long before Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947), and the visits to the city of elite Negro League teams. In thus revealing an aspect of the cultural richness of Newport, Cvornyek makes the case for the study of sport as a key to understanding the wider community. Robert Cvornyek is a professor in the History Department at Rhode Island College where he specializes in sport history. He is currently writing a book on black baseball and community memory in New England. Cvornyek recently served as co-curator and principal scholar for an exhibit at the Museum of African American History in Boston titled, *The Color of Baseball in Boston: A History of Black Teams, the Players, and a Sporting Community*. He co-directs the program, It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing: Baseball, Jazz, and Black Cultural Expression.

In her article, "From Virtuous Visions to Rubbish and Rats: A Natural History Society in Gilded Age Newport," Kathrinne Duffy reminds us of a significant chapter in the history of Newport's cultural organizations. When the Newport Natural History Society was formed in 1883, its founders hoped to attract a wide public following for their exhibits of stuffed animals, birds, and other flora and fauna. As well, the naturalists offered lectures by their members on subjects as varied as topographical maps of the area, "Our Friends the Spiders," and "Ancestries of the Dog and Its Varieties Mentioned in Shakespeare." Despite some support for the Society and its efforts to start a museum, during the years of its existence it struggled, and it eventually closed. In her article, Duffy places the narrative of the Newport Natural History Society and its museum in the larger context of natural history institutions in the country and the competition with other forms of entertainment and recreation that such cultural organizations faced. Kathrinne Duffy is a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at Brown University. She specializes in nineteenth-century American history, with an emphasis on the material culture of knowledge production. Kathrinne also works in museums and historic sites as a curator and public historian. In 2014 she was a Buchanan/Burnham Fellow in Historical Interpretation at the Newport Historical Society, where she researched the Newport Natural History Society and curated an exhibit on the history of seaweed collecting.

Elizabeth C. Stevens

EDITOR