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## THE SCOOP

# Hidden Treasure

The second story of a stone building in Peace Dale houses a museum with over 15,000 artifacts

By Cheikh Higgs



Polychrome jar, Acoma style,  
New Mexico; ca. 1860-1880

**N**estled in the quaint village of Wakefield, the Peace Dale Museum of Art and Culture stands as a living, continuously expanding reminder of the region's diverse history and anthropological legacy. Established in 1892 by Rowland Gibson Hazard II, a visionary textile mill owner and community leader, the museum has evolved from a personal collection into a repository of human creativity and heritage over its 131 years.

Hazard's deep passion for archaeology and cultural preservation laid the foundation for the museum's inception. He was equally as interested in Eastern cultures as continental discoveries, and the museum contains a diverse range of artifacts spanning the globe. "We have objects from Bali, a cuneiform tablet from what is now Iraq, and poi-pounders from Hawaii," says Mary Brown, museum board vice president. Hazard's initial exhibit of indigenous antiquities in the Arrow Head Room of the Hazard Memorial building ignited a community-driven effort to collect and preserve artifacts from around the world.

The museum's journey continued under the stewardship of Hazard's widow, Mary Pierrepont Bushnell Hazard. In 1928, she secured a permanent home for the growing collection in the granite Peace Dale Office Building. Renovations transformed the second floor into a stunning Southwestern-style gallery, reflecting the museum's commitment to honoring diverse cultural traditions; in two years the collection was installed in the gallery.

### ANTIQUES RHODE SHOW

One of the museum's most anticipated events is the annual Trash or Treasure fundraiser, where attendees can have belongings appraised by expert and trustee Tom Tomaszek. "People bring everything from valuable paintings to 18th-century silver to Rhode Island historical items, watches, rings – fabulous stuff," says Tomaszek. Cocktails and buffet included. *September 29: The Dunes Club, Narragansett; PeaceDaleMuseum.org*

## THE SCOOP



Bone needle and blades,  
La Madeleine, Dordogne, France;  
Upper Paleolithic period,  
ca. 15,000 BC



Pendant to ward  
off the evil eye,  
Sudan, Africa; late 19th  
or early 20th century



Mask and raffia cloth, West Africa

Over the decades, dedicated curators like Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh meticulously expanded the museum's offerings and today, the collection boasts over 15,000 archaeological and ethnological objects, spanning continents and epochs – from Rhode Island arrowheads and Native American wood splint baskets, to

Babylonian tablets and Peruvian textiles.

“We’ve been here for so long that people who visited as elementary students will come back as parents and bring their children,” trustee Louise Weaver enthusiastically shares. The museum’s educational initiatives, led by Brown, underscore its commitment to

engage the community with history. Since 1978, children have been invited to explore through hands-on programs, guided tours, and interactive exhibits; the museum also holds evening lectures. *To schedule a visit, contact museum administrator Julie Wardwell: 401-783-5711 or pdmoac@aol.com*