Fact Sheet: The Heritage Collection

The Heritage Collection is a new exhibition featuring over 150 highlights from Heritage’s permanent collection of 12,000+ items.

Exhibit Dates: April 16 – October 10, 2016

Exhibit Facts:

- The Heritage Collection is divided into four themes that resonate in American history: sense of place, home, work and conflict of ideas. Each section contains highlights from Heritage’s permanent collection that relate to that theme.
- When he founded Heritage Museums & Gardens in 1969, J.K. Lilly, III hoped that his collection would demonstrate “the excellence and ingenuity of American craftsmen.”
- The Heritage Collection includes selections from the museum’s extensive collection of 6,000+ military miniatures. Revolutionary War and Civil War units are included, as well as a two hundred piece Civil War flag corps. The collection also includes the museum’s well-known collection of antique firearms.
- The Work section of the exhibit includes an area devoted to the work of Elmer Crowell, considered to be America’s best decorative bird carver. Highlights include a life-size Great Blue Heron and a preening Black Duck.
- The Heritage Collection contains a selection of tools belonging to Boston’s last goldbeater, Ernest Chaplin. When he donated his tools to Heritage in 1991, he was 104 years old. Goldbeating is the art of transforming raw gold into gold leaf by hand.

Exhibit Highlights:

- **Wine Cann by Paul Revere**, c. 1775-1795 - Paul Revere is America’s best-known silversmith, most remembered for his famed ride from Boston to Lexington and Concord to warn of the approach of British troops at the onset of the Revolutionary War. Our romantic image of Revere as a patriot/craftsman is what makes silver by him more valuable than similar examples by other silversmiths of his time.
- **Dentalium Dress**, c. 1890-1900 - A woman of status, wealth and power in her village would have worn this elaborate dress with pride. Dentalium shells were used as currency along trade routes from Washington State to New York, making this literally a dress made of money. Other trade materials adorn this dress including sequins, ribbons and wool. Because of its construction from precious and expensive materials, this dress was a treasured object to its owner.
• **Buffalo Bill Cody's Rifle**, 1883 - After Cody's service in the Civil War, he took the job that gave him his nickname: hunting buffalo to feed railroad construction crews. In 1883 he organized Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which proved to be an enormous success and toured throughout the United States and Europe. Also in 1883 he commissioned this extremely rare 45-125-550 caliber rifle from Freund & Co. The rifle's creators were frontier gunsmiths widely recognized for extreme quality and artistry. Due to the magnificent engraving on this rifle as well as its notable provenance, it is the best of the Freund models of its type in existence.

• **Twined Basket**, c. 1650-1700 - This rare basket is one of only three known examples of its type to have survived from the 17th century. Made by an Algonquin woman in present-day Rhode Island from local materials, its tight weave and small size may indicate that it was originally a cornmeal scoop. This basket demonstrates a combination of traditional twining techniques and false embroidery using imported wool. The basket also incorporates red wool threads, believed to have been taken from a trade blanket, twisted together with bark in a right angle design.

• **Baseball Player Shop Figure**, c. 1888-1903 - During the height of their popularity from 1850-1900, carved wooden figures advertising a wide variety of goods and services were a common sight on the sidewalks of American towns and cities. Samuel Robb was the most famous tobacco figure carver and his prosperous shop turned out hundreds of figures per year. This figure is unusual because it is signed (on the top right of the lower pedestal) and because it is in the form of a baseball player in the uniform of the period.

• **Preening Black Duck by Elmer Crowell**, c. 1912-1925 - Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) is considered by many to be the father of American decorative bird carving. He and his son Cleon (1891-1961) operated a bird carving workshop on Cape Cod for almost fifty years. Their work is highly regarded today for its naturalistic feel, which was accomplished through a combination of skillful carving and fine painting.