

Fairfield Citizen <https://www.fairfieldcitizenonline.com/news/article/Historic-mural-unveiled-at-Fairfield-Museum-14030520.php>

Historic mural unveiled at Fairfield Museum

Contributed story Updated 2:52 pm EDT, Saturday, June 22, 2019



From left with mural, Phil Blagys, Black Rock Community Council; Bruce Hubler, Bill Tommins, Southern Connecticut market president, Bank of America; Ronald Marshall, Jack Collins, Mike Jehle, executive director Fairfield Museum; Mike Tetreau, Fairfield First Selectman.

A nearly-lost piece of local history – the stunning 8-foot by 20-foot mural of Black Rock Harbor by renowned muralist Robert Lambdin – has been restored to its former glory thanks to the leading support of Bank of America as well as the generosity of the Black Rock Community Council, Bruce & Michele Hubler, Jack & Kay Collins, Ronald Marshall, and more than 70 private donors. The \$40,000 restoration of Old Black Rock Harbor, a mural painted in 1948 by the Westport muralist, has been completed and the mural was unveiled today at the Fairfield Museum & History Center.

Lambdin's work originally hung at the Black Rock Bank and Trust Co., located on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street in Bridgeport until 2017, when the long-abandoned building underwent a renovation. The Fairfield Museum worked with the building's new owner Tom Quinn to rescue the mural, which had been damaged through years of neglect. Bank of America had a special interest in this project, as the bank acquired Black Rock Bank and Trust Co. in the 1990s.

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"The Fairfield Museum has been awed by the generous outpouring



The careful restoration of this rare icon of Black Rock's history was conducted by the Williamstown Art Conservation Center in Massachusetts, one of the top art conservation labs in the country. It will be on display in the Fairfield Museum's Creating Community exhibition. The Museum is open daily from 10:00am to 4:00pm and is located at 370 Beach Road. The public is invited to come view the mural and to celebrate the collective generosity of the community.

"Bank of America is proud to partner with the Fairfield Museum on the restoration of this iconic piece of art history, The Old Black Rock Harbor," said Bill Tommins, Southern Connecticut market president for Bank of America. "The mural is a part of our bank's deep history and was originally displayed in one of our predecessor banks, the Black Rock Bank and Trust Company. We are delighted to support the restoration of this piece of our legacy and believe in the power of the arts to help local economies thrive, bring people together and create a greater cultural understanding."

During the 1930s and 40s, Lambdin (1886-1981) had been one of Connecticut's most sought-after muralists, winning several commissions through the Works Progress Administration to depict American life in public buildings such as libraries, schools and post offices. In the mid-1940s he spent two months researching Black Rock's history at the Fairfield Historical Society (now the Fairfield Museum) and then three months working on the piece. It depicts Black Rock Harbor as he envisioned it in the early 1800s, with a ship unloading its cargo onto the docks and Black Rock Harbor Lighthouse in the background. The mural was presented at an open house in 1948. Some additional examples of Lambdin's WPA wall art have been preserved in Westport and are highly valued today.

Bank of America's support is part of its longstanding partnership with the Fairfield Museum to bring the arts into local communities, through program such as Museums on Us, which provides free museum access to Bank of America and Merrill Lynch cardholders on the first weekend of each month.

The Fairfield Museum & History Center and Museum Shop, located at 370 Beach Road, is open seven days a week, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Members of the Museum and children under 5 are admitted free. For more information, call 203-259-1598 or visit Fairfieldhistory.org.

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