

For Immediate Release

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Museum of American Finance Showcases Rare 18th Century Documents in “America’s First IPO” Exhibit

New York, NY – On Wednesday, September 15, the Museum of American Finance will open “America’s First IPO,” an exhibit on the country’s first public company, the Bank of North America, and the origins of the US stock market featuring some of the nation’s most important founding financial documents. The exhibit will occupy a new 1,500 sq. ft. gallery on the Grand Mezzanine level of the Museum’s home at 48 Wall Street.

“America’s First IPO” will include such unique pieces of American history as the earliest known American stock certificate, the earliest known American bank check in the public domain and a certificate from the first US federal bond issue. Two touch screen interactive displays will provide a fun, educational way to explore the relationships between the key players involved in laying the foundations of America’s modern financial system.

Becky Laughner, the Museum’s assistant director of exhibits and archives, co-curated the exhibit with Robert E. Wright, the Nef Family Chair of Political Economy at Augustana College, SD, and the author of more than a dozen books on financial history.

According to Wright, “Americans need to understand that solutions to our most pressing problems require governments and corporations to work together and not to pull in opposite directions. The formation of the Bank of North America as a joint government-private venture during the Revolution’s darkest hours show that the Founders understood that getting the right things done, and done right quickly, should trump ideological and partisan bickering.”

Many of the documents displayed in “America’s First IPO” are on loan to the Museum from Ned W. Downing, a former Wall Street executive and long-time collector of documents from early American financial and business history. Downing also authored the book on which the exhibit is based. *The Revolutionary Beginning of the American Stock Market*, published by the Museum, is due out in September 2010 and will be available for the exhibit opening.

All are welcome to attend a reception to open “America’s First IPO” on Wednesday, September 15, from 5 – 7 pm. For information and reservations, please contact Lindsay Seeger at 212-908-4110 or lseeger@moaf.org. Working members of the press should contact Kristin Aguilera at 212-908-4695 or kaguilera@moaf.org. “America’s First IPO” will be on display through March 2011.

About the Museum of American Finance

The Museum of American Finance, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is the nation’s only public museum dedicated to finance, entrepreneurship and the open market system. With its extensive collection of financial documents and objects, its seminars and educational programming, its publication and oral history program, the Museum portrays the breadth and richness of American financial history, achievement and practices. The Museum is located at 48 Wall Street, on the corner of William Street, and is open Tues–Sat, 10 am – 4 pm. For more information, visit www.moaf.org or connect with the Museum on Facebook or Twitter.