



Inspire! Grants for Small Museums

Sample Application IGSM-253111-OMS-23
Project Category: Collections Stewardship and Access

Sandwich Historical Society

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$27,400
Amount of cost share:	\$32,984

The Sandwich Historical Society will conserve five objects from its collection and curate a subsequent exhibition and associated programming to highlight these conservation efforts. Informed by a previous Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) report, staff and volunteers will work with conservators to preserve 3 paintings by artist Enoch W. Perry, an historical paper passport document belonging to Albert Gallatin Hoit, and a Federal-style wooden desk from the early 1800s. The objects will then be highlighted in a conservation-focused exhibition, alongside other previously conserved artifacts and will also include a public lecture series about conservation concepts.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Sandwich Historical Society: Narrative

Project Justification:

In pursuing the conservation of five culturally and artistically important artifacts in the museum collection, our Inspire grant will address Goal 3, “Collections Stewardship and Access: Advance the management and care of collections and their associated documentation,” focusing on Objective 3.2, “...Conservation treatment”

Our project will **advance our museum's Strategic Plan** by adhering to the preservation, education and outreach goals of the Mission statement (below) and the stated responsibilities of the Collections and Exhibits Committee in the 2022 Strategic Plan. (See Required Documents, Strategicplan.pdf.) The education and outreach goal is executed in part through public exhibitions, (as noted in the Museum Exhibits section of the Strategic Plan) which draw upon stable, well-conserved collection items, and depend upon sturdy, utilitarian display components. Display of our five newly conserved collection objects will immediately benefit from the eight requested display panels, which will be used to produce a conservation-focused exhibition. Further public outreach efforts will include a series of lectures by conservation experts.

The mission of the Sandwich Historical Society (the Society) is to collect and **preserve** the material culture and historical record of the town of Sandwich, and to use these resources in service to the public through educational experiences and outreach to the community.

Collections and Exhibits committee is “...Responsible for the receipt, cataloguing, storage, inventorying, **conservation**, and maintenance of our collections in accordance with standard museum policies as adopted by the Board of Trustees...”

Our project needs comprise object conservation, display, and public programs. First, the Inspire! Grant will allow us to address the problem of limited funding for preserving and exhibiting five valuable artifacts in fragile and poor physical condition. Second, the grant will fund the purchase of safe, re-useable exhibition panels to facilitate the conservation exhibition display and future exhibitions. The three Enoch Wood Perry paintings for which conservation funding is sought were first identified by Susan Forster, Fine Art Appraiser in a 2008 survey as needing conservation work (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc2.pdf) and confirmed in the 2020 paintings inventory and storage upgrade by professional Objects Conservator (retired) and Museum Trustee, Helen Ingalls (see Required Documents, Resumes.pdf). All have obvious condition problems, including flaking paint, tack-holes, embedded dirt, and discolored varnish. Without consolidation of paint and restitution of missing areas of design, display is prohibited and further deterioration is inevitable. An attempt in 2016 to solicit funds for conservation of the “Slade House and Eagle Cliff” painting via an Adopt-a-Painting program was unsuccessful, confirming the need for grant-based funding for collections conservation.

The paper passport used in the early 1840's by Albert Gallatin Hoit on his Grand Tour of Europe in pursuit of artistic training, is an exceedingly fragile document which chronicles his travels. Iron-gall ink has caused dropout and loss of some lettering, and will continue to cause deterioration without treatment. This poor condition was detected by our Curator, Lauren Hansen, MLIS, Archives and Preservation, Simmons University, (see Required Documents, Resumes.pdf) while surveying archival collections. The double-sided document requires cleaning, stabilization, archival housing, and high-resolution reproduction for the purposes of exhibition.

Finally, the wooden Secretary desk owned by Stephen Beede, grandson of Sandwich's pioneering settler, Daniel Beede, and recently donated to the SHS by his descendants, is in need of structural and cosmetic repair to confer stability and

Sandwich Historical Society: Narrative

enhance its exhibition appeal. This newly acquired wooden desk is one of the earliest (Federal style, circa 1815) and best-documented pieces in the collection, particularly prized for the unbroken line of its provenance. All of these five artifacts have been examined by conservators with specific material expertise (paintings, paper, and wooden artifacts) who have made condition assessments, provided treatment cost estimates, and cited realistic timeframes for timely delivery of conservation services. These reports and contractor estimates are available as attachments in the Conditionally Required Documents section, as Treatment.pdf files. The conservators selected for these projects were chosen based on professional reputation, geographical desirability (reducing potentially damaging long-distance transport), and listing as American Institute for Conservation members in good standing. Trustee/Object Conservator Helen Ingalls will monitor the work to ensure timely progress on completion deadlines. During an on-site visit, Trustee Ingalls will take in-process photographs for use in the conservation records, exhibition and programs. All conservation photographs and reports will be filed digitally (see Conditionally Required Documents, Digitalproduct.pdf) and in analog form for easy access by staff and the public.

The second part of our project needs addresses safe, stable and re-usable display panels. Existing panels consist of heavy old doors connected via iron hinges and covered with felt. The dense wood cannot be pinned into, and the felt covering must be re-applied for every exhibition. (See Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc5.pdf) Safe reusable new panels will allow us to mount the conservation exhibition as well as subsequent annual special exhibits safely and handsomely without the time-consuming jerry-rigging now commonly practiced. We assess that eight moveable panels (39 inches wide x 78 inches tall) will considerably expand and facilitate our exhibits process and presentation. The third part of our project involves the need to fund a public lecture series. This series will explore conservation methods, ethics, and quandaries, centered around the Society's conserved objects.

The target group for this conservation project is the Society's visiting public which benefits from all preservation and exhibition activities, among other programs, conducted by the Society. This visiting public includes all people from Sandwich, visitors, tourists, and researchers who are interested in the history and culture of the town. The doors are open for exhibit viewing during the prime months of summer, June, July and August, and by appointment to visitors who wish to view specific artifacts or pursue property, historical, or genealogical research year round. The items selected for conservation in the Inspire! Grant request are slated for display in the Marston House Museum's primary exhibition space. Moreover, commentary on the artifacts' conservation and interpretation of their importance in the artistic and cultural history of the town will figure prominently in an exhibition and lecture series focusing, in 2025, on conservation of the Society's collections.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project are the same as the target group, all visitors and researchers who use the Society to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the town's history and culture. The Society normally hosts 1,000-1,500 people per season, drawn by the permanent and temporary exhibitions in the Marston House Museum and by special events, programs, and our extensive archives.

Project Work Plan:

Once the funding is granted, implementation of the initial **activities** will be relatively simple matters of acquiring the eight re-useable panels from the purveyor and scheduling treatment with each of the three separate conservation studios: Northeast Panting Conservation, Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), and Allison Jackson's Frame Conservation practice. Since all three studios have already examined the objects/artifacts we are assured that the treatment can begin when successful funding is signaled and objects are delivered to the conservators. Each conservation studio has pledged to complete treatment within one year. Retired Conservator and Society Trustee, Helen Ingalls will oversee and confirm the progression of treatments on a quarterly schedule. Concurrently, planning for the major conservation exhibition using our

Sandwich Historical Society: Narrative

conserved objects and new display panels will be underway (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc6.pdf). The conservation exhibition and lecture series is scheduled for summer 2025. Even long delays in the expected completion of treatments in spring 2024 would not jeopardize implementation of the exhibition within the projected timeframe. Vetting and scheduling of potential conservator speakers for our conservation lecture series will occur throughout the grant period.

Risks to the project are small due to the expertise of the conservators selected (see Required Documents, Resumes.pdf). Illness of the selected conservators would be cause for delay but would probably not influence the eventual outcome of the project. Conservation is a tricky pursuit and unanticipated challenges may always arise, but are unlikely to derail what appear to be treatments well within the skillsets of the conservators selected. Oversight by Trustee Ingalls of the contractors' progress will allow the Society to pivot and rearrange exhibit schedules to suit the new completion date if necessary.

The conservation project will be **planned, implemented and managed** by the Director, the Curator, and trustees on the Collections Committee. The resultant exhibition will benefit by input and documentation from the three participating conservators and will have consistent and intensive involvement from retired Object Conservator Helen Ingalls, a Trustee and Collections Chair. Her thirty-year career in object conservation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum entailed collaboration in all aspects of exhibitions involving conservation, planning, installation, treatment and maintenance, lighting, climate specifications and monitoring. Her experience uniquely qualifies her to shepherd all phases of this project.

Staffing resources needed to carry out the activities will be provided primarily by the salaried Curator, Lauren Hansen MLIS, Archives and Preservation, Simmons University, 2018 (see Required Documents, Resumes.pdf). She will supervise volunteer Collections Committee trustees as they perform tasks such as transport of paintings and construction of safe transport containers. Decision-making powers will reside with Trustee Ingalls and Curator, Lauren Hansen. They will coordinate receipt and assessment of condition and treatment reports to assure professional competence, and maintain contact with the three separate conservation practices to assure timeliness and successful completion. The conservation-related exhibition scheduled for summer 2025 will incur the material costs of panels for hanging conserved works of art on exhibit, as requested in the grant application. Other financial resources requested in this grant consist of payment for conservation services, and honoraria for three expert speakers to lecture on conservation. Return transport of artifacts back to the museum will be performed by paid staff or by donated volunteer time.

To **track** the progress of the project, decision makers will solicit quarterly progress reports from the conservators as they pursue treatment procedures. The exhibition-planning process will be tracked by the Collections and Exhibition Committee, made up of staff and volunteers under the direction of Trustee Ingalls and Curator, Lauren Hansen. Planning of the conservation exhibition will begin in spring 2024, by summer 2024 the conservation treatments will be completed. From summer 2024, research and organization of previously conserved objects will proceed, and an outline and rough layout of the exhibit space will be sketched. Beginning in January 2024, exhibit production, including gallery preparation, PR materials, graphics development and photographic text materials will be underway. The conservation exhibition will open in June 2025 and signal the start of the summer lecture series.

Project Results:

The **project's intended results** are the stable condition, enhanced appearance, and improved exhibit potential of the five conserved artifacts. The three paintings will be stabilized and able to be exhibited vertically without fear of continued paint loss. Moreover, they will no longer require special storage in the horizontal position which has in the past usurped useful storage space. Interpretation of three cleaned and stabilized Enoch Wood Perry paintings will allow better understanding of Perry as an accomplished, nationally known local resident artist who worked in three distinct subject areas: portraiture,

Sandwich Historical Society: Narrative

landscape, and genre painting. The quality of his painting, particularly the sensitive Self-Portrait (1910) as an older man, aged 79, will manifest more clearly after cleaning and stabilization. The artist whose national standing warranted an exhibition of 28 paintings at the Sandwich Historical Society in 1987 will be better served and appreciated by display of newly conserved works (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc3.pdf).

Conservation of the double-sided Albert Gallatin Hoit passport will enable the Society to preserve this historically important document and enhance, through cleaning and repair, its legibility and usefulness in tracking the Grand Tour voyage and contacts of an aspiring and talented small-town artist seeking to enlarge his worldview and acumen. Hoit's importance in the lexicon of accomplished New Hampshire painters was extolled in an exhibition at the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1985, "With Faithfulness and Quiet Dignity: Albert Gallatin Hoit 1809-1856," marked by a catalog authored by Patricia Heard, noted local Sandwich Historical Society officer and scholar (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc3.pdf). High-resolution reproduction will allow the original document to be archivally preserved while offering the reproduction document to be exhibited, and its contents interpreted for museum visitors interested in the quintessentially American artistic rite of passage of the European Grand Tour so crucial to the evolution of the 19th century American artist.

The recently acquired Stephen Beede Secretary is the most important artifact of a trove of papers and objects donated by the Beede descendants in October 2021. Conservation of the Secretary will allow immediate installation of this lovely piece of furniture into the re-installation of the historical Marston House rooms and spearhead the study and interpretation of Sandwich's earliest times, from its founding by Stephen Beede's grandfather, Daniel in 1763. This exposition of the town's early history and the generations of collectors who have valued it will benefit the townspeople. Sandwich folk have always felt pride in their beginnings and continue today to show interest in their early cultural history.

The sum total of the project's intended results are to improve the stability and accessibility of the conserved objects and to provide core examples of artifact conservation for the 2025 exhibition and lecture series on that topic (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc6.pdf). This exhibition and accompanying lectures will introduce members of the public to the modern concepts of conservation and aims to enhance their appreciation for stewardship of cultural artifacts. Replacing the unsuitable display panels with the versatile, museum quality panels will result in the safe and efficient presentation of our conserved works.

Any **change in the skills, behavior or attitudes** of the targeted museum visitor would surely be enhanced pride and interest in their long-lived town, and in the extensive efforts made towards conservation and interpretation. Visitor comments will be solicited at the exhibition exit to help to assess the impact of the exhibit on visitors' appreciation and understanding of conservation. Demonstrative improvements in condition and exhibit of specific artifacts are projected to stimulate conservation-targeted donations.

Products resulting from the project will be enhanced stability and exhibit-ability of the actual artifacts (excepting the substitution, for the passport, of a high-resolution reproduction), professional condition and treatment reports, and photographs for the museum's records, and added material for interpretation of the town's history. The display panels will allow us to safely mount the 2025 conservation exhibition and will be reusable for future public exhibitions. The public conservation lecture series will support these tangible products.

The **benefits of the project** will be **sustained** by a prominent display (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc6.pdf) of some of the conserved items to be mounted in summer 2025. The utility of the new display panels will extend well into the future. The project will instruct the public on the need for maintenance of artifact collections, will provide accessible illustration of the benefits of conservation to the appearance and durability of artifacts. The Hoit passport could springboard

Sandwich Historical Society: Narrative

an exhibition to explore his European tour. This exhibition would include Hoit's only known watercolors from his sojourn in Italy, five studies purchased for our collection in 1982, which have never been exhibited with the benefit of context. We are convinced the various aspects of this project will inspire donations for future conservation.

For our **Collections Stewardship and Access** project, care, condition, management, access, and use of the five artifacts will be improved by permitting safe storage, immediate display and explication of the conserved items and the conservation process. Treatment of the paintings will allow them to be stored vertically taking advantage of our previously upgraded wire rack painting storage system. The recently installed occupancy sensor lighting in our special exhibition space and the replacement of incandescent lightbulbs throughout the Marston House Museum will minimize damage to all our conserved objects. These activities have been done in accordance with the recommendations by the 2018 CAP assessment; pages C-8, HB-15, and C-2 respectively (see Supporting Documents, Supportingdoc1.pdf). The double-sided Hoit passport will be stored in archival paper storage while the high-resolution duplicate is used in the 2025 conservation exhibition. The Secretary will serve as the cornerstone of the re-imagined permanent collection in the Marston House rooms.

Sandwich Historical Society: Schedule of Completion

	SEPT 2023	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
ACTIVITY ONE - PASSPORT CONSERVATION												
ACTIVITY TWO - PAINTING CONSERVATION												
ACTIVITY THREE – DESK CONSERVATION												
ACTIVITY FOUR – PANEL ACQUISITION												
ACTIVITY FIVE – CONSERVATION EXHIBITION PLANNING, PREPERATION AND LECTURER SELECTION												
ACTIVITY SIX – CONSERVATION EXHIBITION EXECUTION AND LECTURE SERIES												

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