



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-31-16-0511-16
Project Category: Collections Stewardship
Funding Level: \$5,000-\$25,000

Staten Island Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$11,715

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2017 applications differ from those that guided the preparation of previous applications. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.



The Staten Island Museum seeks funding for the conservation treatment and digitization of seven Land Indentures. These items represent a small but incredibly valuable portion of the Staten Island Museum's document and works on paper collection. Recent examination by a conservator determined that, if left untreated, the condition of each will continue to rapidly deteriorate. Once treatment is completed and digitization is finalized, the items will be placed back into the permanent collection for research use and possible exhibition use in the near future.

The Collections Stewardship project "Conservation Treatment and Digitization of seven Land Indentures" is designed to last one year, from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017. Activities include the transport of the documents to the conservation center, conservation treatment, consultation with the conservator throughout the treatment process, digitization, consultation with imaging specialists throughout the digitization process, return of the documents to the Staten Island Museum's History Archives and Library, and the compilation of treatment data for the permanent collection archival records.

The intended results of the project are the successful treatment and digitization of seven Land Indentures. Successful conservation and digitization of these seven important items will greatly further the museum's goal of treating items that is historically significant to Staten Island, New York State, the nation and the world. Long-term benefits extend beyond quantifiable conservation treatment and digitization. The seven Land Indentures which are vital to researchers and scholars, will be more accessible to the public, whether being viewed through our Museum's website or visiting the Staten Island Museum's History Archives and Library to see these primary sources physically.



1. Statement of Need

What do you propose to do?

The Staten Island Museum requests \$11,715 for the conservation treatment and digitization of seven historic English parchment documents dating between 1605 and 1722. These items represent a small but incredibly valuable portion of the Staten Island Museum's document and works on paper collection. Recent examination by Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) conservator Michael Lee determined that if left untreated, the condition of each will continue to rapidly deteriorate. Once treatment is completed and digitization is finalized, the documents will be placed back into the permanent collection for research use, made available in digital format online, and will be used in our educational programs and likely in future exhibitions.

What high-priority need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?

This project will address the conservation needs of seven historic English parchment documents. These seven items were discovered in 2012 when a researcher requested all material relating to the Land Grant collection for genealogical research. While going through the various collections the Archivist rediscovered these seven documents that had been buried within the permanent collections and had not surfaced in an IMLS funded General Conservation Survey of 2010-2011. Due to genealogical websites such as ancestry.com and familysearch.org, research into ones family has increased tremendously over the past few years. This has caused many of these early documents to become very popular with researchers and staff as they provide a great deal of information about various families and places during the early 17th and 18th centuries. Through this constant usage deterioration, which had already begun, started to occur rapidly.

While basic measures have been taken in the attempt to slow down deterioration these efforts have not been enough. Some of the preservation methods used were placing each document into protective clear plastic and then placing them into an archival folder. During the rehousing mold was discovered on one of the documents. This document was immediately placed in protective clear plastic and isolated from the remaining parchments. It was soon decided to prohibit usage of the items to researchers and bring the materials to NEDCC for a proposal regarding conservation and digitization.

Who or What will benefit from your project?

These seven land grants are historically significant because of their content. Some of the land grants are wills, indentures, and deeds of land issued under the reigns of King James 1st, Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector, King George 1st, and King George 2nd. While not directly related to New York history, these seven items are still historically significant.



They provide researchers with tremendous amounts of information relating to indentures and wills in certain aspects of England which many early Staten Island settlers had strong ties with. We believe these items are records that were brought over by the colonists of their own family members.

The Museum is the only general interest museum in NYC allowing for the interdisciplinary interpretation of art, natural science, and history. For example, a Hudson River School painting of New York Harbor (art) may be presented with information about the native plants found in it (natural science) and a historical map of the area depicted (history). The Museum also positions itself as a threshold institution, acting as a stepping stone into the cultural world, especially for young people from Staten Island and invites its local constituency of over 500,000 borough residents, school children, and visitors to Staten Island. In the past fiscal year, we served over 219,000 people at the Museum and in the community.

We aim at attracting Staten Island residents of all demographics, including recent immigrants, to the Museum and its programs, and promote diverse representation on our board and staff. For this purpose, we established a Community Advisory Council (Spring 2013), which reflects the Island's diversity and will grow to be about twenty-five members strong. Members will inform Museum staff on the interests of their community and how to reach out to them (an essential step as we continue to develop new exhibits for Building A at the Snug Harbor campus, which opened September 2015, adding 18,000 square feet to the Museum. See Organizational Profile for details).

This project will primarily target the research community. About 150 people visit the Museum's History Archives & Library per year to do research in addition to about 500 phone and e-mail inquiries.

For the past few years, the History Archives & Library has been digitizing collection items and made them available online. This strategy has increased the Archives' visibility, resulting in a growing number of inquiries. With the conservation and digitization of these seven items, the Archives will continue to maintain intellectual control and ensure continued access to researchers.

Since the seven documents also complement the inaugural and permanent "Farm to City" Staten Island history exhibition (September 2015), the materials may be used for future programming, benefitting up to 60,000 visitors of our new facility in Building A per year. In addition, our Education Department includes authentic materials in their lessons. The conserved materials would supplement lessons about immigration, the history of Staten Island, and colonial history, which are presented to 20,000 school children each year.

The seven documents come from one collection within the History Archives & Library's permanent collections. The Land Grant Collection houses English, Dutch, New Jersey, New York State, and Pennsylvania deeds and conveyances. A great majority of items arranged and described in this collection are deeds, catalogues of mortgages, inventories, leases, and conveyances relating to Staten Island property.

How will your project advance your institution's strategic plan?

One of the Staten Island Museum's strategic goals is to *Improve collections care & achieve comprehensive intellectual control of all collections (what, where, condition, value)*. This project helps us implement the following strategies:

1. Inventory, catalogue, and digitize the best of our collections.
2. Begin conservation of collection items indicated in IMLS General Collections Survey.
3. Apply to IMLS and other funders for collection care based on the recommendations above.

How will your project address the goals of this program (as described above in section A. Program Description – What is this grant program?)

By conserving these seven historic documents, we will be able to better serve the public through history programs and assist hobby and professional researchers. The project has *institutional impact* and is based on well-defined goals of our strategic plan. Our staff and NEDCC collectively have *in-depth knowledge* and a thorough understanding of current practice. The *project-based design* of the work plan is logical and with the seven treated parchments stored appropriately and accessible in digital format has *demonstrable results*.

2. Impact

Referring to your Statement of Need, describe your project's intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified.

The intended result of this grant will be to prevent further deterioration of the seven historic documents through conservation and digitization to ensure they will continue to remain accessible to researchers locally, nationally, and internationally. The seven documents will be inventoried with condition reports, conserved, digitized, and made available to the public through our website as well as through various programs and exhibitions.

This project will advance the Staten Island Museum's continued efforts to receive full American Alliance of Museums accreditation. The continued conservation efforts by the Staten Island Museum's staff will allow these unique items to be added to our digitized collection. We started the process of digitizing the most important collections in our photograph collection and at this time have 20% uploaded into our database for research purposes.

Once conservation and digitization is complete, the Museum will be able to expand its reach to researchers and the public by making the seven English parchments available online for greater access. Since the Museum is participating in Google Cultural Initiative, we hope to add the seven conserved and digitized English parchments to this exciting endeavor as well.

How will the care, condition, and/or management of the materials (e.g. objects, specimens, collections) that define the focus of your project be improved?

The seven English parchments being considered for conservation and digitization treatment belong to one collection all within the permanent collection of the History Archives & Library of the Staten Island Museum.

The proposed treatments for these items are somewhat similar: Provide before and after treatment photo documentation, front and back. Surface clean to reduce embedded surface dirt. Humidify and flatten the document by pressing between non-woven polyester (Reemay) and blotters under moderate to light pressure. Encapsulate in polyester film and provide an archival PermaDur folder for storage.

Once the seven items are conserved, digitization will begin. The items will be imaged using a high resolution digital camera with apochromatic macro flat field optics on specialized workstations. The light source will be Broncolor electronic flash, providing optimal light quality at minimal total light exposure. Imaging will be done following the Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) *Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Cultural Heritage Materials* (2010). All imaging will be performed under tight environmental control in the NEDCC imaging laboratory by highly skilled professionals and returned to the NEDCC vault when not being imaged. NEDCC performs a 100% inspection of imaged deliverables, done by Associate and Senior Photographers.

What tangible products (e.g. reports, inventories, catalogues, treatment plans, publications, presentations, and databases) will result from your project?

The Museum's database, *Past Perfect*, will house all of the new data that has been acquired since the items were conserved along with a full report of the entire grant. The Staten Island Museum's scholarly journal, *Proceedings*, will publish an article regarding this entire project from the first phase up until the final phase. Through the digitization of the items the Museum will be able to provide access to the seven English documents on our website. This will allow researchers to continue accessing the items while the originals can be placed safely in storage.

How will you sustain the project and/or its benefit(s)?

The project will be sustained by the Archivist who will monitor the usage of the materials through the Museum's website. The Archivist will also monitor the physical condition of the materials by performing monthly status reports on the newly conserved items.

3. Project Design

What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements, will you carry out?

The Archivist of the Museum's History Archives & Library photographed and sent images of the seven English parchments to the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in February of 2014 for a preliminary proposal (see supporting materials for the conditions report, parts of which are included in this narrative below). They have been properly wrapped in clear plastic archival paper and placed in archival folders and boxes interleaved with tissue paper. They have been placed in the restricted access portion of the permanent collection until conservation can be attained.

Once the Museum secures funding, we will bring them to the NEDCC (which had provided a far more comprehensive proposal than a local conservator could) for the treatment outlined in their proposal (attached with supporting materials).

Once the work is complete and the items are returned to the History Archives & Library, they will be properly stored in archival boxes and labeled. The Archivist, Cara Dellatte, will then add all entries in the Archive's database program, *Past Perfect*, for inventory purposes. More specifically, she will insert both pre- and post-conserved images to reflect the conservation project.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

Ms. Dellatte, the Museum's Archivist, will plan, implement and lead this project. She has successfully led four previous conservation projects in historic documents. Conservation treatment and digitization will be provided by NEDCC.

When and in what sequence will your activities occur?

The project will begin October 1, 2016 and end twelve months after the initial start date to ensure staff can work diligently on this project while performing other functions. The History Archives & Library will work with the NEDCC conservator to conserve the seven English parchments, which will be driven by the Archivist to the NEDCC facility.

The conservation process will begin once the documents are received. The conservators will provide an update to the History Archives & Library every two weeks informing Ms. Dellatte of all progress or issues with the work. At the half way point of the project the Archivist will visit the conservation facility to meet with the conservators and evaluate the progress of the project. All of this information will be added to the Staten Island Museum's collection management program (*Past Perfect*) to ensure a record of all conservation and digitization is kept.

What financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

As this is a non-cost sharing grant, the Museum will be using most of the requested funds towards the conservation and digitization of the seven documents. We obtained two quotes for the project. While that of Jennifer Sainato Conservation was competitive, the studio would not have been able to digitize the seven items. In addition, the proposed treatment seemed less effective in preserving the documents in the long-term.

Our request of \$11,715 is based on the total costs quoted by NEDCC (\$10,650) and includes 10% of indirect costs (\$1,065) (10% are permissible per grant guidelines) to cover parts of travel, insurance and staff time.

How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The Museum will track its progress through biweekly updates from the conservators. Every two weeks we will receive an e-mail updating the Museum on how the project is faring and what new steps have been taken regarding the conservation and digitization of the seven items.

How and with whom will you share your project's results?

After the seven items are conserved and digitized they will be picked up by the Museum's Archivist and returned to the History Archives & Library of the Staten Island Museum. The Archivist will then enter all of the necessary information regarding the project into *Past Perfect* which will be made available to researchers through our Collections Database and eventually put online on our website.

The Staten Island Museum's scholarly journal, *Proceedings*, is expected to return within the next year. An article discussing these seven items and the conservation project will be included in this journal.

Activity	2016 Oct Nov	Dec	2017 Jan Feb	Mar April	May June	Jul Aug.	Sep.
Land Grants packed and delivered to conservator	_____						
Conservator treats Land Grants and writes treatment reports After Conservation items are moved to Imaging Department for Digitization				_____			
Archivist visits NEDCC to discuss treatment progress and evaluate the progress			_____				
Land Grants packed and returned to History Archives and Library at Staten Island Museum by Archivist. Evaluation of project (was the conservation successful and are the digital images useable?).					_____		
Treatment documentation entered into collections management records. Digitized items integrated into Staten Island Museum's website for use by researchers.						_____	_____



King James 1st Land Indenture