



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-260778-OMS-26
Project Category: Collections Stewardship and Access

Hudson River Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$67,910
Amount of cost share:	\$70,454

The Hudson River Museum will improve the preservation and accessibility of its collection by digitizing the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection of photographs. The collection documents life along the Hudson River from the 1930s to the 1970s. The photographs exist solely as fragile negatives and are accessible only through on-site consultation. The museum will hire a full-time temporary digitization technician and a part-time paid student intern to implement project activities, which will include digitizing 2,000–2,700 images and making them publicly accessible online. Key activities will include inventorying and rehousing negatives, scanning high-resolution images, creating standardized metadata, and publishing the images through the museum's collections systems and website. Educators, students, researchers, and the public will benefit from access to a photographic archive documenting the region.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Products Plan

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

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

I. Which program goal and associated objective of MFA will your project address?

This project advances the IMLS Museums for America Agency-Level Goal 3: Advance Collections Stewardship and Access, specifically Objective 3.3: Support database management, digital asset management, and digitization.

Most photographs in the Hudson River Museum's Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection exist only as fragile cellulose nitrate and safety film negatives and are accessible primarily through limited on-site consultation. This project will stabilize and digitize **2,000–2,700 images** and make them publicly accessible online, expanding the availability of a historically significant photographic archive for researchers, educators, students, and the public.

Ruth Reynolds Glunt was a historian, photographer, environmentalist, and preservation advocate whose work documented the people and maritime traditions of the Hudson River Valley in the mid-twentieth century. Through both her photography and preservation advocacy—including efforts that helped save the historic Saugerties, New York Lighthouse—Glunt helped safeguard the region's cultural heritage while creating an extraordinary visual record of daily life along the Hudson River.

Her photographs capture working waterfronts, river communities, historic structures, and domestic life between the 1930s and the 1970s, a period of significant social, economic, and environmental change in the Hudson Valley. Today, Glunt's work provides rare documentation of how communities lived and worked along one of the nation's most historically significant waterways. Her legacy is reflected not only in her photographs and publications but also in the establishment of the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Nature Preserve in Saugerties.

The Hudson River is one of the most historically significant landscapes in the United States. Designated an American Heritage River, it flows through the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The river served as a major transportation corridor in early American commerce, played a strategic role during the American Revolution, and later inspired the Hudson River School—the first major artistic movement in the United States. Artists including Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, and Jasper Francis Cropsey helped define a distinctly American vision of landscape rooted in the Hudson Valley.

The Hudson River Museum holds works associated with this artistic movement, making it a particularly appropriate institution to steward and interpret related visual documentation. Glunt's photography extends this artistic lineage into the twentieth century by documenting the river not only as a celebrated landscape but also as a lived environment shaped by communities, labor, industry, and environmental change.

Interest in the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection has persisted for decades. Over the past forty years of caring for the collection, the Museum has selectively digitized approximately **300 of nearly 3,000 negatives**. Ulster County Historian Karlyn Knaust Elia used Glunt photographs preserved in the Hudson River Museum archives for her book *Images of America: Saugerties* (1998). More recently, the Museum's exhibitions *Meet Me at the River* and *Beyond the Frame*—featuring Glunt photographs digitized through HRM's 2023 IMLS project—have generated new requests from historians, educators, and cultural organizations.

By making the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection available online, the Museum will enable educators, students, researchers, and the public nationwide to explore a photographic archive documenting the Hudson River Valley.

Digitizing and sharing this collection will expand the availability of primary visual sources documenting twentieth-century American life along the Hudson River.

As a collecting institution, the Hudson River Museum holds its collections in the public trust and is committed to preserving and making historically significant materials accessible for present and future generations.

Through this project, HRM will digitize **2,000–2,700 cellulose nitrate and safety film negatives** from the Glunt Collection, preserved by the Museum for more than forty years since its donation by the artist's son. High-resolution digital images will be inventoried, safely rehoused, and made freely accessible through the Museum's online collections platforms.

HRM is uniquely positioned to undertake this work, building on the digital infrastructure, equipment, and staff expertise developed through its **2023 IMLS Museums for America grant**. That project supported the acquisition of digitization equipment, the development of digitization procedures, and the expansion of digital storage infrastructure. The Museum now maintains established workflows, trained staff, and stable digital asset management systems—including NetX and eMuseum—that enable large-scale digitization initiatives.

Result: *The project will preserve vulnerable photographic materials while creating 2,000–2,700 publicly accessible digital images documenting American history along the Hudson River.*

II. How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?

This project directly advances the Hudson River Museum's mission to engage, inspire, and connect a wide range of communities through the arts, sciences, and history, as articulated in the Museum's **Strategic Plan 2021–2026**, by expanding digital access to historically significant collections documenting the Hudson River Valley.

A central strategic priority, “**Create Relevant Experiences that a Wide Range of Audiences Value,**” calls for developing exhibitions, collection displays, and programming that connect audiences with the people and history of the region. Digitizing the Ruth Reynolds Glunt photographs will enable the Museum to make a substantial body of visual material accessible to audiences beyond those able to visit in person.

The project also supports the strategic plan's commitment to strengthening collections documentation and expanding digital access through the Museum's ongoing collections digitization initiative. In **2024** the Museum completed an IMLS-funded project that digitized approximately **7,000 objects**, strengthening HRM's capacity to carry out large-scale digitization initiatives.

Digitized photographs will become part of the Museum's **eMuseum online collections database**, scheduled to launch in 2026, allowing audiences to search and explore the images through the Museum's public collections website.

Selected photographs displayed in exhibitions will also be interpreted through **Bloomberg Connects**, a digital guide used by cultural institutions worldwide to enhance visitor engagement with artworks on view in galleries.

Result: *The project will expand digital access while strengthening HRM's long-term capacity to digitize and share its collections, creating relevant experiences that audiences value.*

III. What need, problem, or challenge will your project address?

The Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection contains approximately **3,000 black-and-white photographic negatives** documenting landscapes, river towns, industrial activity, and community life along the Hudson River. Although the Museum has preserved the collection for more than four decades, the negatives remain accessible primarily through limited on-site consultation. Continued handling for research increases the risk of deterioration.

Digitization provides an opportunity to expand access to this significant visual record while safeguarding vulnerable materials.

Cellulose nitrate negatives require specialized care in handling and storage. While most negatives remain stable, approximately **20 percent show signs of deterioration**. Preservation standards outlined by the Northeast Document Conservation Center recommend digitization or duplication of nitrate negatives before deterioration becomes severe.

The National Park Service notes that deteriorating nitrate negatives emit harmful gases and may contaminate nearby materials. Museum staff therefore use appropriate protective equipment when handling these materials. Advanced deterioration can also make nitrate negatives highly flammable, making cold storage an important preservation strategy.

The Hudson River Museum previously received support from the **New York State Council on the Arts** to hire photography conservator Annette Manick to conduct a condition survey of the nitrate negatives. Her report determined that the collection ranges from excellent condition (Stage 1) to Stage 4 deterioration, including image fading and nitric acid odor. The report recommended improved cold storage and digitization to preserve image content before further deterioration occurs.

Advances in technology and equipment upgrades now allow the Museum to efficiently digitize these materials on site using workflows developed through HRM's previous IMLS-supported digitization project.

Result: *Digitizing the Glunt Collection will transform an archival resource preserved by the Museum for decades into a stabilized and widely accessible primary source documenting the landscapes and communities of the Hudson River Valley.*

PROJECT WORK PLAN

I. What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

The project will take place over a period of twelve months.

Project Staffing and Preparation (September–October 2026)

HRM will hire a full-time temporary Digitization Technician. Archival storage materials will be purchased and digitization equipment prepared.

Collection Inventory and Rehousing (November 2026–January 2027)

The Technician will inventory the Glunt negatives and rehouse materials in archival enclosures. Film types and physical condition will be assessed. Regular audits and spot checks will ensure data quality and accuracy.

Digitization and Image Processing (January–July 2027)

Negatives will be scanned using professional equipment to produce high-resolution master files. Metadata describing subject, location, and date will be attached. Images will be integrated into TMS Collections, stored in NetX, and published through eMuseum. Weekly quality checks by the Project Manager and Senior Manager,

Design and Content to review image quality. A Google Survey will be sent quarterly to a focus group of museum members, members of our community, educators, and museum professionals to collect data on the accessibility of the digital assets created within the eMuseum website.

Digitization Internship Support (June–August 2027)

A part-time Digitization Intern will assist with metadata entry, file organization, and preparation for online publication.

Public Interpretation and Exhibition (September 2027)

The Museum will present an exhibition featuring selected photographs and host a free public lecture discussing Hudson River history and the digitization project. Selected photographs on display will be interpreted through Bloomberg Connects.

Result: *Approximately 2,000–2,700 images will be digitized and made publicly accessible online.*

II. What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

Risk: Project timeline extending beyond the planned one-year period: Processing a large number of photographic negatives may present challenges related to varying physical condition, organization, and the time required for research and metadata creation.

Mitigation:

Project progress will be reviewed bi-weekly by the Project Director and Project Manager. Reallocating HRM staff time or hiring additional interns may occur to keep the project on-schedule, at the expense of the HRM. We plan to digitize between 2,000-2,700 negatives. We will consider the project successful when we reach 2,000 negatives digitized.

Risk: Variations in the physical condition of the nitrate negatives may affect the ability to digitize some materials safely. Some items may be fragile or deteriorated, which could limit handling during digitization.

Mitigation:

Staff will follow established collections handling procedures. Severely deteriorated materials will be documented and excluded from digitization.

Risk: Potential loss or corruption of digital files during processing or storage. Digitization projects generate large volumes of digital data that must be carefully managed.

Mitigation:

Files will be stored within the Museum's digital infrastructure, including the NetX digital asset management system, an external hard drive, and secure servers with routine backups, ensuring stable long-term storage.

III. Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

The project will be led by experienced members of the Museum's curatorial and collections staff.

- **Laura Vookles, Chair of the Curatorial Department**, will serve as Project Director.
- **Alyssa Dreliszak Habig, Registrar and Collections Manager**, will serve as Project Manager.
- **Camille Knop, Senior Design and Content Manager**, will provide project support.

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

- The project will be completed over **twelve months** using grant funding and institutional support.
- Personnel include a **Digitization Technician** and **Digitization Intern** supervised by the Project Manager.

Digitization will use equipment and infrastructure established through HRM's previous IMLS grant. **The total budget for this project is \$138,364; \$67,910 of IMLS funds matched by \$70,454 in institutional support.**

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

Progress will be monitored through structured project management tools including a **Gantt chart** tracking each stage of the project and identifying delays or emerging risks so the Project Manager can adjust workflow as needed.

A shared spreadsheet will record digitization status, metadata completion, and database integration. The spreadsheet will track each negative, including collection identifier, location within the collection, digitization status, file naming, metadata completion, and upload status within the Museum's digital systems—NetX, TMS Collections, and eMuseum.

Project staff will review progress weekly to evaluate the number of negatives inventoried, rehoused, digitized, cataloged, and published online.

At the conclusion of the project the Museum will document measurable outcomes including the number of negatives inventoried, images digitized, and records published online.

PROJECT RESULTS

I. What are your project's intended results?

At the conclusion of the project, **2,000–2,700 photographic negatives** from the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Collection will be digitized, transforming a fragile archival resource into a widely accessible digital collection. Each image will be digitized, described with standardized metadata, and made publicly available through the Hudson River Museum's online collections platforms, including eMuseum and the Museum's Digital Asset Management System (NetX).

Currently, the Glunt negatives are accessible primarily through limited on-site consultation. Digitizing and publishing these materials online will transform this archive into a widely available primary source documenting the Hudson River Valley during the twentieth century.

The project will also strengthen long-term stewardship of the collection. Creating digital surrogates will reduce handling of fragile negatives while ensuring the images remain available for research, education, exhibitions, and interpretation. The project will also refine the Museum's digitization workflows and digital stewardship practices, strengthening institutional capacity for future digitization initiatives.

As a result, the Hudson River Museum will preserve an important regional photographic archive while making primary visual resources accessible to audiences nationwide. Researchers, educators, historians, artists, and cultural institutions will gain access to materials supporting scholarship, teaching, and interpretation of the Hudson River Valley's cultural and environmental history.

II. How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the primary audience change?

Primary audiences include researchers, educators, students of all ages, historians, artists, and the public interested in the cultural and environmental history of the Hudson River Valley.

Digitized photographs will support classroom learning, historical research, exhibitions, and community history initiatives. Educators and students will be able to incorporate historical photographs into coursework and research exploring regional history, environmental change, and river communities. Researchers and historians will gain access to visual primary sources supporting scholarship on photography, maritime history, and the evolving relationship between people and the Hudson River landscape.

By making the Ruth Reynolds Glunt collection freely accessible online, the project will encourage broader engagement with museum collections and support lifelong learning through digital access to historical resources. Expanded access will foster greater understanding of the Hudson River Valley's cultural traditions, natural environment, and historical significance.

The project will contribute to measurable outcomes including increased public access to digitized collections, expanded use of primary source materials in research and education, and greater engagement with the cultural and environmental history of the Hudson River Valley.

III. What products will result from your project, and how will you make them accessible to the primary audience?

The project will produce **2,000–2,700 high-resolution digital image files** derived from photographic negatives in the Ruth Reynolds Glunt collection. Each image will include searchable metadata documenting subject matter, location, and date, allowing the photographs to be discoverable and usable for research, education, and interpretation.

These digital assets will be accessible through several platforms. All digitized images and metadata will be published on the Hudson River Museum's **online collections website (eMuseum)**, where users will be able to search and explore the photographs freely.

The images will be preserved and managed through the Museum's **digital asset management system (NetX)** and stored on secure institutional servers with routine backup procedures, ensuring long-term digital preservation.

This project will culminate in an exhibition curated by the Project Team, with printed reproductions of images created through the support of this grant. Selected photographs displayed in HRM exhibitions will also be interpreted through **Bloomberg Connects**, a digital guide used by cultural institutions worldwide to enhance visitor engagement with works on view in galleries.

Together, these digital products and access platforms will ensure the newly digitized collection becomes a lasting public resource supporting research, education, exhibitions, and public engagement.

IV. How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The Hudson River Museum is committed to sustaining the benefits of this project beyond the grant period by maintaining the digital infrastructure, workflows, and expertise developed through the project.

All digital files created during the project will be preserved through the Museum's digital preservation infrastructure, including NetX, an external hard drive, secure institutional servers, and automated backup systems. Digitized images and metadata will remain publicly accessible through the Museum's online collections platform (eMuseum). Selected photographs on view in HRM galleries will continue to be interpreted through the Bloomberg Connects digital guide.

Following the grant period, the Museum will sustain these digital access platforms through private funding and its general operating budget, which supports the ongoing licensing and maintenance of NetX and eMuseum. This institutional commitment ensures that the digital assets created through the project remain accessible to the public in the long term.

The experience and results generated through this project will also strengthen the Museum's ability to pursue additional support for future digitization initiatives, helping the institution continue expanding digital access to its collections and supporting research, education, and public engagement.

By preserving fragile materials and expanding public access to an important visual archive of the Hudson River Valley, the project directly advances the Museums for America program goal of strengthening collections stewardship and access to museum collections nationwide.

FOR COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP AND ACCESS PROJECTS

This project will significantly improve the care, preservation, management, and accessibility of the Hudson River Museum's Ruth Reynolds Glunt photographic collection.

First: The project will expand public access to the collection. Currently, the negatives are accessible primarily through limited on-site consultation. By digitizing 2,000–2,700 images and publishing them through the Museum's online collections platform, eMuseum, the project will make the collection freely accessible to researchers, educators, students, artists, and the public nationwide.

Second: The project will strengthen the physical care and preservation of the collection. As part of the digitization workflow, the negatives will be inventoried, assessed, and rehoused in archival-quality storage materials as needed. Materials will also be reviewed to identify safety film, nitrate negatives, or nitrate-contaminated materials, and appropriate handling and storage measures will be implemented, including relocating the nitrate and nitrate-contaminated materials into an explosion-proof freezer.

Third: The project will improve collections management and documentation. Digitization will involve creating or enhancing metadata records for each image, incorporating information about subject matter, locations, and dates when available. These records will be integrated into the Museum's collections management system and linked with the Museum's digital asset management system, resulting in more complete, searchable documentation.

Finally: The project will improve the long-term usability of the collection for research, exhibitions, and public programs. High-quality digital surrogates will reduce handling of fragile negatives while enabling their use in exhibitions, publications, educational programming, and digital initiatives such as the Bloomberg Connects guide for photographs displayed in HRM galleries. Together, these improvements will strengthen the Hudson River Museum's stewardship of the Ruth Reynolds Glunt collection while expanding opportunities for research, education, and public engagement with this important visual record of the Hudson River Valley.

HRM | DIGITAL PRODUCTS PLAN

What digital products will you create? The Hudson River Museum will create digital assets, content, and resources during this project. During this project, we will create between 2,000 - 2,700 original still images/data files, with associated metadata and text descriptions. The Master images will be created using the Epson Expression 12000XL Graphic Arts Scanner, previously purchased through a former IMLS grant. (1) Quality standards for the image data files will be created in TIFF format at 300 DPI and a minimum of 8 x 10 inches. This version will be what is uploaded into the NetX DAMS. Within NetX, staff have the option to choose between four download sizes, based on the purpose for the download: 1. “Original” - The original TIFF is the highest quality image. It will be used for production/printing purposes. 2. “Web” - This will automatically convert the original file into a JPEG at 2400 pixels on the longest dimension and 72 DPI. It will be used for digital PR/Marketing. 3. “TMS” - This will automatically convert the original file into a JPEG at 1500 pixels on the longest dimension and 72 DPI. It will be used as the version that gets attached to the TMS Collections database and eMuseum. Once images are added to TMS Collections and the cataloging is complete, it will be marked as “Public Access” which triggers the integration into eMuseum within 24 hours. Metadata will be produced through the NetX DAMS using fields and keywords associated with each digitized item as this metadata content is recorded in the Museum’s collection database. Metadata will be produced through the digital asset management software. The Museum will use the [IPTC Photo Metadata Standard](#) with each asset created. Additional tagging will be standardized using Library of Congress Subject Headings and Getty Vocabularies.

Workflows and project notes will be kept in .XLSX and Google Sheet format. Text descriptions will be created in the TMS Collections database. The GANTT chart will be in .XLSX and Google Sheet format.

Availability: The digital assets created during this project will be added to the Museum’s collection website, eMuseum - a digital platform that integrates with TMS Collections, the Museum’s collection database. All digital assets created during this project will be made available to the public on the eMuseum collection website. Through the inclusion of metadata, image visibility in online searches will be much more widespread. All digital assets will enable the public to download the images for personal or educational use. On each object’s page, there will be language pertaining to reproduction guidelines and contact information for requests of images in alternate sizes. The Museum plans to publicize the project team’s workflow on its “Currents” blog and on social media so that the public and other institutions can see how the project is being completed as well as the progress being made. A selection of these assets will be included as reproductions in an exhibition curated by the Project Team.

Access: Under this project, digital assets uploaded to the HRM’s eMuseum website will be free to the public to use for personal or educational use. The original images, created between the 1930s to the 1970s, are subject to copyright restrictions because they are not yet in the Public Domain. The HRM is permitted to use and distribute the images for non-commercial purposes. This access will be noted on eMuseum through the attribution of Creative Commons license [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#). These terms and conditions will be listed on each individual item’s webpage. Image ownership belongs to the Hudson River Museum for all items digitized under this project. Rights and reproductions will be explained on the collection website with information on how to request licenses for high-resolution TIFFs. Digital files created during this project will be offered free of charge for non-commercial use, including requests for the high-resolution TIFFs. Written content will remain the intellectual property of the Hudson River Museum. Copyright remains with the creator, Ruth Reynolds Glunt. Items shared online may be used by the public under the Museum’s own terms and conditions, which include captions listing the creator, title, etc., and credit lines of “Collection of the Hudson River Museum” and the

object's donor. The public digital repositories will be the Hudson River Museum eMuseum website (launching to the public in 2026)

Sustainability: The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) recommends that digital image files and associated metadata should be stored in a digital repository ([NARA Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access](#)). The Museum uses NetX, a cloud-based digital asset management software. All files will be stored and preserved in a minimum of three repositories: (1) Cloud-based NetX DAMS; (2) Master files saved on the Museum's server, and 3. Master files saved on an external hard drive. On the Museum's server and external hard drive, folder permissions will be implemented so that staff will not have the ability to change or delete Master files. All changes or updates to metadata, either through the collection database or through the DAMS, will be synced on a regular basis to keep records updated. This will allow for the metadata to live within multiple locations, instead of only within the object file.

The Museum will continue to preserve and maintain these images during and after the grant period is over through the use of the above storage solutions. Additionally, the Museum is committed to budgeting annually in perpetuity for routine backups and data transfers as more modern means of storage become available.

Sustainability regarding the workflow of assets created during this project is addressed by a comprehensive digital filing system. At the end of each day, the Museum's Registrar and Collection Manager (Project Manager) and the Senior Manager, Design and Content will review the new data files to ensure that original size and quality are maintained. Should the quality be deemed insufficient, the Project Manager will work with the Digitization Technician to rescan the items according to established quality standards. The filenames for each asset created will be descriptive and standardized according to the item's accession number, file type (JPEG or TIFF), view (recto, verso, detail), and usage type (print, web, or reference).

This digital product plan will be reviewed on a monthly basis (and as-needed) to ensure current best practices are continually adhered to, with enhancements and modifications added as necessary.