

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



## SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE

### Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions Institution: Museum of History and Art

**NOTE:** This sample narrative conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. Please consult the revised guidelines for 2008 at: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>.

#### **A. What activity (or activities) would the grant support?**

With the proposed Preservation Assistance Grant, the Museum of History and Art, Ontario Associates will contract with the Balboa Art Conservation Center for conservator Beverly Perkins to conduct a general preservation assessment of the museum historical collections of approximately 10,775 items. This assessment will concentrate on three levels of recommendations: 1) short-term remedial improvements to existing storage space, equipment and conditions; 2) recommendations for physical building improvements, floor plan and equipment plan for expanding the existing 1400 sq ft. storage into additional adjacent space of 2300 sq. ft. (for a new total of 3700 sq. ft.); and 3) recommending longer-term plans including floor plans, equipment plans and environmental parameters for a possible future building addition to house collections. Also, the Museum Curator will attend a three-day series of preservation workshops presented by the Balboa Art Conservation Center's Field Service Office in March 2005. Copies of the draft syllabus for the March 2005 workshops and a 2004 registration brochure are attached for reference (Attachment A).

#### **B. What are the content and size of the humanities collections that are the focus of the project?**

All of the museum's collections are humanities collections interpreting the history and culture of Ontario and surrounding communities. The collection includes an estimated 10,775 three-dimensional artifacts, 800 linear feet of archival documents, ephemera, and newspapers (clippings and full issues), 2000 photographs, 715 large format items (maps, blueprints, photographs), 800 non-paper media items (film, video, vinyl, cylinders) and 1500 books. Most of the collection was received in six large donations of several hundred items each described in more detail below. To provide a complete picture of the museum's collections, these descriptions include both artifacts and archival material. Please note, however, the

project proposed here will focus on the three dimensional artifacts in the museum's collections to ensure an effective assessment and to meet the museum's priorities for developing long-term collections care plans.

**About Ontario.** Ontario was founded in 1882 by a Canadian engineer, George Chaffey who established an irrigation colony enhanced with socially engineered elements such as a mutual water company, prohibition on the sale of alcohol, free land for churches and an agricultural college (an extension of the University of Southern California). Ten acre agricultural plots and smaller urban plots were situated along a central thoroughfare – 200 foot-wide Euclid Avenue -- with a park-like median planted in greenery symbolizing the benefits of irrigation and the virtues of the town. Chaffey's irrigation pumps ran on hydro-electric energy which he also used to power domestic electricity – the first in Southern California. The area was among the first to have regular telephone service as well. California historian Kevin Starr says Chaffey “endowed his infant colony with the technology and symbols of the future (and) created an agricultural colony that incorporated within itself an urban/rural interplay deliberately orchestrated to preserve for middle-class horticulturalists the feel and amenities of an urban community.”

**About the collections.** Ironically, one of the earliest results of these hydro-electric efforts was not agricultural, but industrial - the manufacture of electric laundry irons – when an employee of the water company began developing electric home appliances as a way to sell electricity generated but not needed to run irrigation pumps. Called ‘Hotpoint’ because the heat was evenly distributed clear to the point of the iron, the company began in 1903 and was purchased, in 1918, by General Electric which made ‘Hotpoint’ a nationally recognized brand. The Ontario plant employed thousands of Ontarions over the years, converted to wartime production during WWII, returned to civilian products afterwards and produced over 5 million irons/year in 1973 and 1979 but closed for good in 1982. The museum's **Hotpoint Collection** includes irons and other small appliances, items produced during WWII conversion, and over 100 photographs and documents illustrating production, plant interiors, employee social and community activities and community events surrounding the plant's closing. Eventually, early hydro-electric efforts did lead to significant irrigated agricultural pursuits, primarily citrus groves. The museum's collections include items from two families representing the scope of Southern California's celebrated citrus industry. The **Latimer Family Collection** documents over 100 years of a pioneering Ontario family – Canadian immigrant contemporaries of Chaffey – whose operations included growing, packing and shipping. The **DuVall-Lawson** collection represents the genteel small family grove popular in promotional imagery. Items include clothing, furniture, radios, books, magazines, personal letters, newspaper clippings, social invitations, event programs, photographs, business records, agricultural implements and film (now transferred to dvd) of the preparation, planting and maintenance of groves, recreational gear and travel memorabilia, children's toys and school items. In contrast to the irrigated citrus groves, the region's other large agricultural pursuit was viticulture – based entirely on dry-farming techniques. The **Biane Family Collection** documents the vineyard and wine-making history of the area which was a premier wine region before World War II -- producing mostly red dessert wines. The Biane's Brookside Winery operated on the lands of the Italian Vineyard Company developed in the 1880s by immigrants and once home to the world's largest vineyard. The collection includes wine bottles, technical, recipe and promotional books, business records, scrapbooks and

promotional pieces, photographs, trophies and awards, cooper's tools, field implements, and laboratory equipment as well as curiosities such as a painting of Marilyn Monroe which was reproduced as the "Dolly Madison" wine label and a rare grape brick sold during Prohibition for home wine-making. Two other family collections document less celebrated, but equally important elements of local history. The **Barnes Family Collection** includes artifacts related to mining (pans, field scales, sifters, blasting equipment, picks) assaying (glass-stopper acid bottles, test tubes, crucibles, cement kiln and the wood and tin 10'x12' assay office), ranching and fruit-growing (tools, animal traps, fruit crates and dollys). The Barnes collection also includes hundreds of everyday items (dishes, cooking utensils, clothing, personal care items, camping/fishing gear) from 1900-1970. The **Brewster Family Collection** includes a Hoosier Cabinet, circa 1890 photos, household items, clothing, employee-related GE items and items related to WWII service. Early 20th century emigrants from the east coast, the Brewsters lived literally on the "other side of the tracks" and worked in the GE factory and at similar everyday occupations. The remainder of the collection includes photographs from 1886- 1982, textiles (quilts and coverlets), clothing and military uniforms, objects and archives related to local businesses, community organizations, political campaigns and municipal government.

### **C. How are these humanities collections used?**

Museum collections are used in permanent and changing exhibitions, educational activities and publications. The museum maintains 2800 sq. ft. of permanent exhibitions on local and regional history and culture. *Road Ways* explores local road history including the celebrated Route 66 and *Gem of the Foothills* is a broad overview of the history of the local region. The museum's collections are used extensively in these exhibitions. The museum's collections form the primary resources for changing exhibits on local topics which are presented in the 500 sq. ft. Carlson Gallery. Such exhibits have looked at the local homefront during World War II, the history of the local area during the years of the California Gold Rush, and the 100th anniversary of the birth of George Chaffey. A project developed by museum staff and Korean War veterans from Ontario's National Guard unit, *Korea: Ontario's Citizen Soldiers and the Forgotten War*, resulted in an exhibition, oral histories, and several additions to the museum's collections as veterans who had loaned items for the exhibit realized the museum was the best permanent home for their heirlooms. The museum also presents temporary exhibits on a variety of topics and collection items are used to augment these exhibitions when appropriate. School groups visit the museum and tour both permanent and temporary exhibitions. In-class outreach programs on Ontario History and local Native American populations are also available to area educators. Researchers have used the museum's collections to prepare Environmental Impact reports, public television programs, scholarly and popular publications. Artifacts and photographs from the museum's collections have also been used in exhibitions presented at the Ontario International Airport.

### **D. What is the nature and mission of your institution?**

The Museum of History and Art, Ontario is a community based museum operated by the City of Ontario with support from a non-profit volunteer organization, the Museum of History and Art, Ontario Associates. The museum's mission is to promote knowledge and understanding of the greater Ontario area in a broad context. The museum's budget for FY 03-04 was

[deleted] (this figure combines the museum's departmental budget with the city and the organizational budget of the Museum Associates). The museum is governed by a five-member, City Council appointed Board of Trustees. The museum is administered within the City's Community Services Agency and the Museum Director reports to the Community Services Director. Museum staff includes two full-time employees (Director and Curator) and four part-time staff members (Office Assistant, part-time Curator of Education and two Gallery Attendants). A volunteer corps of about 35 people staff the museum store, assist with school tours and other educational programs, plan special events, and assist with clerical tasks such as bulk mailing. Museum galleries are open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from Noon until 4:00 p.m. year-round. There is no charge for admission.

The museum serves a large and diverse population consisting of the City of Ontario and its surrounding communities. Ontario is located about 30 miles east of Los Angeles in what is popularly known as the "Inland Empire" – a region of over a dozen cities and 1 million people. To keep things manageable, the museum identifies its core audience as the City of Ontario and neighboring communities (Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, Montclair and Chino) which all share significant historical roots with Ontario. Visitors, however, come from throughout the San Bernardino-Riverside County Inland Empire and from cities in eastern Los Angeles County. A Long Range Interpretive Programs Plan, developed in the 1990s, guides most museum public programs. The museum's interpretive activities revolve around a balanced program of two permanent exhibitions on local/regional history and culture, changing exhibits of 12-18 months duration on local topics and five or six shorter venue temporary exhibitions per year on a variety of topics of interest to our large and diverse population. Education programs include scholar lectures, panel presentations, hands-on art workshops and interactive performances. School tours of permanent and temporary exhibits are available to public and private school students and exhibit and curricula materials are available to home-schooling families. A docent training program, funded by a Learning Opportunities Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services is currently underway.

#### **E. Has your institution ever had a preservation or conservation assessment?**

In 1993, the museum participated in the Conservation Assessment Program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Two consultants were engaged: John Twilley, then Chief Conservation Scientist at Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Wayne Donaldson, a preservation architect (required by IMLS because the museum building was over 50 years old). The recommendations of both consultants (Attachment B) were largely related to major building issues such as exterior site and landscaping, doors and windows, basements, security, dust infiltration, HVAC issues, fire and seismic issues. At the time the assessment was conducted, the current collections storage space (located on the second level) was leased to an outside entity – although the lease was nearly over and plans to relocate collections to the upstairs location were in the works. No conservation assessments have been conducted since that time. The museum has sought general advice from conservators for a few individual projects; however, no contracts have been let for treatment or other conservation services.

**F. What is the importance of this project to the institution?**

Since the mid-1990s, the museum's small staff has concentrated on building renovation projects and the implementation of public programs – installation of our permanent exhibitions, the temporary exhibits program and developing a Docent Program. We are now able to re-direct much of our Curator's time to collections care. During the last several years, our Curator's efforts have focused on basic management tasks – securing legal title, simple registration and obvious or severe care issues. Our collections have grown during this time, however, in both size and complexity and more concentrated effort must be made on collections care and preservation. Beginning this process now is timely for another important reason. Several private and public and development projects in the museum's neighborhood have led the Ontario Redevelopment Agency to fund a Museum Space and Program Master Planning project. The study, currently underway, includes potential renovations and/or additions including collections storage space. While basic square footage needs for collections are included in this study, the more sophisticated conservation and care elements are not. Conservator recommendations in this Preservation Assistance study will make those care and conservation needs a part of these future facilities improvement plans.

The three goals of this Preservation Assistance Grant will serve specific needs of the museum. 1) Short-term remedial improvements to existing storage space, equipment and conditions will guide in prioritizing immediate tasks as the Curator begins concentrating on collections. 2) Recommendations for expanding Collections into immediately adjacent spaces will prepare a plan for improving collections care that will be compatible with likely phased implementation of long-term facilities improvements. The adjacent spaces are currently administrative offices which are likely to be moved. A floor plan is attached for reference (Attachment C). 3) Conservator recommendations for collections considerations for a new museum addition structure to include collections storage will ensure that the basics of collections conservation and care are considered at the earliest stages of any expansion planning.

**G. What are the names and qualifications of the consultant(s) and staff involved in the project?**

Beverly Perkins will conduct the conservation assessment. Ms. Perkins is a Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and currently serves as the Vice President of the Western Association Art Conservators. She received an MA and CAS from the Cooperstown Conservation Program and an MA from the University of Chicago in Art History. Since 2001, Ms. Perkins has served as the Western Region Field Service Officer for the Balboa Art Conservation Center. In this position, she has conducted numerous preservation surveys and recommendations for a variety of smaller humanities and cultural organizations similar to the Museum of History and Art, Ontario.

The museum's two permanent staff members will be the primary staff involved in the project. Theresa Hanley, Museum Director will be responsible for general oversight of the project and all financial and grant management. Ms. Hanley has an M.A. from the University of California, Riverside in Historic Resources Management. She has served as the Director of

the Museum of History and Art, Ontario since 1990. Museum Curator, Maricarmen Ruiz-Torres, will be responsible for implementing the project, preparing for Ms. Perkins' visits and working directly with Ms. Perkins on the project. Ms. Ruiz-Torres has an M.A. from the University of California, Riverside Historic Resources Management. She has served as Museum Curator for four years and before that served as part-time Registrar for the museum for six years. Both Ms. Ruiz-Torres and Ms. Hanley will review and comment on the draft report. Ms. Perkins letter of commitment and resumes for Perkins, Hanley and Ruiz-Torres are attached (Attachment D).

#### **H. What are the plan of work and timetable for the project?**

2004

December            Award announced  
Museum Director and Curator prepare for Conservator visits  
Museum Director prepares letter of agreement between Conservator and  
Museum Associates Board of Directors

2005

January            Project Begins  
Letter of agreement between Conservator and Museum Associates signed  
On-site assessment visits scheduled for January- March  
Jan-March        Conservator makes on-site assessment visits  
Curator attends BACC Workshop Series in San Diego in March  
April-May        Conservator drafts Assessment Report  
May-June        Museum Director briefs Museum Board of Trustees; Director of  
Community Services Agency and Museum Associates Board of Directors  
on report  
Museum Curator and Museum Director comment on draft report  
July – Aug        Conservator submits Final Assessment Report incorporating museum  
comments  
September        Museum Board of Trustees Accepts Conservator's Assessment Report  
October            All bills paid; project completed

#### **Attachments:**

Attachment A. Balboa Art Conservation Center Preservation Workshop Outlines. A 2005 registration brochure is not available at this time; however, BACC Field Service staff have provided a draft description of the BACC 2005 workshop series and confirmed that the series will be presented in San Diego in March 2005.

Attachment B. Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) Executive Summaries from Conservator John Twilley and Preservation Architect Wayne Donaldson

Attachment C. Museum building floor plan

Attachment D. Letter of Commitment and Resume from Beverly Perkins, Conservator Resumes for Theresa Hanley and Maricarmen Ruiz-Torres

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Note: The use of consulting services, vendors, or other trade names is being provided for the information and convenience of potential applicants. Such use does not constitute an official endorsement, approval, or favoring by the U.S. Government, or by the National Endowment for the Humanities or any of its employees, of any product, service, or business to the exclusion of any others that may be available. The views and opinions of document authors do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Government, or the National Endowment for the Humanities or any of its employees.