

NEH Application Cover Sheet

Challenge Grants

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Field of Expertise: Arts: History and Criticism - Art

INSTITUTION

Shelburne Museum, Inc.
Shelburne , VT UNITED STATES

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Support of the construction of a year-round exhibition and education facility at Shelburne Museum.*

Grant Period: From 1/2011 to 12/2014

Field of Project: Humanities

Description of Project: Shelburne Museum requests a \$500,000 challenge grant from NEH to support construction of a new 12,000 square foot facility comprised of nine galleries and the Museum's first modern classroom and dedicated venue for lectures. This new facility will enable the Museum, which is now open just six months a year due to the limitations of its infrastructure, to become a year-round center for education and to better serve its public with humanities offerings founded on the Museum's collections of over 150,000 works of folk, fine, and decorative arts. It will also enable a year-round schedule of special exhibitions that broaden the Museum's audience, and the expansion education programs for K-12, senior, and general audiences. This project is transformative for the Museum and builds its institutional capacity by implementing central objectives of a long-term strategic plan that call for year-round access to the collections. This request represents %6 of the estimated cost of construction.

BUDGET

Fiscal Year # 1	\$150,000.00	Total from NEH	\$500,000.00
Fiscal Year # 2	\$200,000.00	Non-Federal	\$1,500,000.00
Fiscal Year # 3	\$100,000.00	Total	\$2,000,000.00
Fiscal Year # 4	\$50,000.00	Matching Ratio: 3.00 to 1	

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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Shelburne Museum NEH Challenge Grant Request: Abstract

Shelburne Museum respectfully requests a \$500,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support construction of the Museum's first year-round exhibition and education building. This new facility will be comprised of nine galleries and the Museum's first modern classroom and dedicated lecture hall and auditorium. It will transform Shelburne Museum from a seasonal attraction now open six months a year into a year-round center for education and the study and enjoyment of diverse humanities themes embodied in the Museum's collections of 18th-20th century folk, fine, and decorative arts. The new building is the centerpiece of an \$11.2 million campaign that also includes an endowment to support the building's operations and installation of a fiber-optic network that will improve communications for fire detection, environmental controls, security, and education throughout the Museum campus. This request to NEH represents approximately 6% of the estimated cost of construction.

The benefits of this project to the humanities are significant because it will for the first time provide year-round public access to Shelburne Museum's collections and will dramatically expand the Museum's capacity to produce a broad range of special exhibitions and education programs 12 months a year. Shelburne's collections of over 150,000 works are a deep resource of art, history, and material culture. Through exhibitions, public programs and publications the Museum uses the collections to communicate humanities themes that include the evolution of American (particularly New England) commerce, domestic life, and creativity; the Colonial Revival and 20th-century collecting; and Shelburne Museum founder Electra Havemeyer Webb's significance as a pioneering collector of Americana and one of the first American women to found a museum. The collections are presently exhibited in 39 buildings – 25 of which are historic – that are charming and an important aspect of the Museum experience but lack the necessary size and environmental conditions to accommodate a sufficiently wide range of special exhibitions and programs that meet the changing expectations and needs of the Museum's growing audience. Due to this unconventional infrastructure and Vermont's inhospitable winter weather, the Museum is now restricted to being open only from May through October and is closed for all but 10 weeks of the academic year.

Construction of the new facility will make an immediate impact as a center for art, history, and education; and the platform it will create for a year-round schedule of exhibitions and programs will increase the quantity and diversity of humanities themes and subjects delivered to Shelburne Museum's audience. The Museum conservatively projects an increase of 20-30% visitors annually as a result of the expanded exhibitions and programs this building will enable.

The building will be a LEED-certifiable, 12,000-square foot structure sited at the Museum entrance. Approximately 5,000 square feet will be galleries for special exhibitions. During the winter, exhibition topics will be targeted to K-12 and college audiences to take advantage of the Museum's new synergy with the academic calendar. A 125-seat lecture hall will host year-round lectures and presentations for general audiences, educators, and seniors (the fastest-growing demographic in Vermont). A classroom with seating for 40 will house education programs for adults and children and will for the first time give educators the opportunity to combine gallery and classroom time during a school group's visit.

Shelburne Museum will match this grant three-to-one with non-federal funds through a combination of individual gifts and foundation grants. At this writing over \$5.5 million is committed and the Museum is still in the "quiet" phase of fundraising, soliciting donations from current and former Trustees. Over 120 individual prospects have been identified and the Museum is now preparing applications to foundations that include the Kresge Foundation, the Fidelity Foundation, Jane's Trust, and the Lintilhac Foundation. Shelburne Museum has successfully matched five grants from NEH since 1987 including a \$175,000 challenge grant in 1987; a \$15,739 self-study grant in 1994; and grants of \$591,000, \$700,000, and \$584,014 from the Division of Preservation and Access in 1991, 1999, and 2005, respectively.

**Construction of a Year-Round Exhibition and Education Building
at Shelburne Museum**

NEH Challenge Grant Budget

Total NEH funds requested:	\$500,000
Year 1:	\$150,000
Year 2:	\$200,000
Year 3:	\$100,000
Year 4:	\$50,000
 Total non-federal contributions:	 \$1,500,000
 Total grant funds (NEH plus match):	 \$2,000,000
 Planned expenditures:	
Estimated cost of construction and interior fit-up for galleries:	\$950,000
Estimated cost of construction and fit-up for lecture hall and classroom:	\$450,000
25% of estimated \$2.5 million cost of construction for building core/shell:	\$500,000
 Total planned expenditures of challenge grant funds:	 \$2,000,000

Institutional Fact Summary – Shelburne Museum

Shelburne Museum's **mission** is to broaden our audience, engage their curiosity, and give each visitor an extraordinary museum experience. Its **purpose** is to enrich people's lives through art, history, and culture. The mission and purpose were developed by staff and Trustees and approved unanimously by the full Board on September 25, 1999.

The Museum was **founded** in 1947 by folk art collector Electra Havemeyer Webb, a daughter of sugar tycoon Henry O. Havemeyer and his wife Louisine, themselves major collectors of European and Asian art. Electra Webb established the Museum to celebrate, in her words, "the art of everyday people," and to share her collections of Americana, art, and historic New England architecture. **Facilities** at Shelburne today include 39 exhibition buildings (25 of which are historic) plus 15 buildings used for collections storage, library and archives, equipment, offices, a cafeteria, and the Museum Store. The Museum's 45-acre campus also includes 23 gardens, two ponds, and walking trails. The **collections** number over 150,000 artifacts; approximately 80% are on view and the balance is in storage. One hundred percent of the collections are in the humanities and are used to communicate humanities themes to visitors.

Humanities activities at Shelburne Museum include interpretation of the permanent collections, production of special exhibitions, education programs, and publications. Of the Museum's 39 exhibition buildings, 30 are dedicated to the display of **permanent collections** that include American folk art, quilts and textiles, European and American paintings, decorative arts, furniture, transportation, tools, toys, and artifacts of everyday life. In 2008 and 2009 the Museum produced a total of 26 temporary **special exhibitions** on diverse topics of American art, history, and culture. During the same period, the Museum administered over 160 **education programs** for children including K-12 programs, summer camps, evening programs, and hands-on activities; and 190 programs for adults such as lectures and gallery tours of permanent collections and special exhibitions. Shelburne Museum produces 1-2 **publications** per year; recent examples include exhibition catalogues for *Mary Cassatt: Friends and Family* (2008) and *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Nature by Design* (2009). Ninety-five percent of the Museum's total public offerings are in the humanities; all public offerings are included in the price of admission to the Museum.

The **success of recent humanities offerings** is illustrated by a 15% increase in Museum attendance since 2007, record-high Membership in 2009, and participation levels for education programs that exceed 80% of capacity. Each of the publications mentioned above is now in its second printing.

Shelburne Museum's **audience** is approximately 110,000 visitors per year plus an estimated 450,000 more who access the Museum's intellectual content through publications and the Web site. All of the Museum's visitors access the permanent collections and special exhibitions; about 30,000 each year participate directly in education programs for adults and children. About 55% of the Museum's visitors are Vermont residents; the balance hails from throughout the U.S, Canada, and over 20 countries.

The **staff** is comprised of 54 year-round and 105 seasonal employees, all of whom are engaged in creating and delivering humanities programs. The staff is organized into nine departments: administration and finance, buildings, collections management, curatorial, development, education, grounds, preservation and conservation, and security. Each department has a department director who reports to Museum Director Stephan Jost. The **Board of Trustees** is national in composition and includes 23 members and four Emeritus Trustees. The Board meets four times a year plus additional meetings of committees that include facilities, collections, development, education, finance, investments, and personnel.

Shelburne is an active member of several local, regional, and national **museum associations** including the Outdoor History Museum Forum, the American Association of Museums, the New England Museum Association, and the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance.

NEH Challenge Grant – Shelburne Museum Proposal Narrative

Summary of Request

Shelburne Museum respectfully requests a challenge grant of \$500,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support construction of a new exhibition and education building. This building, which will comprise nine galleries and the Museum's first dedicated lecture space and modern classroom, will restructure Shelburne Museum from a seasonal museum now open six months a year into a year-round center and destination for the study and enjoyment of diverse humanities themes. It will create a flexible 21st-century venue to exhibit and interpret Shelburne's renowned collection of over 150,000 works of 18th-20th century European and American folk, fine, and decorative arts; and the Museum's first appropriate space for special exhibitions and public education programs. The impact will be transformative for visitors, for the institution's capacity to serve its public, and for the cultural and educational landscape of northern New England.

The Museum will match the grant three-to-one with non-federal dollars in a campaign that also includes establishing an endowment to support the maintenance of the new building and installation of a fiber-optic communications network that will improve collections care, security, and education throughout the Museum campus. This request to NEH represents approximately 6% of the estimated cost of construction.

Project Rationale and Shelburne Museum's Long-Term Plans for Advancing the Humanities

Founded in 1947 by sugar heiress and pioneering folk art collector Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888-1960), Shelburne Museum is today the largest art and history museum in northern New England and Vermont's foremost public resource for visual art and material culture. Collections include folk art, quilts and textiles, paintings, decorative arts, utilitarian and household artifacts, architecture and Americana

spanning four centuries of American life. The Museum also holds Vermont's only public collection of French Impressionist art. Shelburne Museum is guided by its purpose: "To enrich people's lives through art, history, and culture," and achieves this through interpretation of the permanent collections, special exhibitions, education programs for adults and children, and publications. The Museum welcomes between 100,000 and 130,000 visitors annually during a six-month season from May through October. About 60,000 of Shelburne Museum's visitors each year are Vermont residents, a significant number given the state's population of just 625,000. The balance hails from throughout the U.S., Canada, and over 20 countries. The Museum is one of the Vermont's top five tourist attractions and contributes over \$12 million annually to the regional economy.¹

Collections and exhibitions are displayed in 39 exhibition buildings on a 45-acre campus. Twenty-five of the buildings are historic and were relocated to the Museum from elsewhere in New England and upstate New York. The campus also includes 23 public gardens that range from 19th-century vegetable and flax varieties to hundreds of lilacs, peonies, and daylilies. Approximately 90% of the Museum collections, exhibitions, and programs reflect humanities themes.

Since its founding, the Museum's long-term vision has been to be a year-round center for education. Electra Webb, at the inaugural meeting of the Museum's Board of Trustees in 1948, said "It is my hope that we can have a building or adequate space in one for educational programs and loaned exhibits ... the ultimate goal in my mind is that it is going to be of great educational value not only to New England, not only to Shelburne but to the whole world."²

¹ Figure is based on the *Americans for the Arts* economic impact calendar.

² Hewes and Oliver, To Collect in Earnest: The Life and Work of Electra Havemeyer Webb, 1997, p. 30

The historic buildings that on one hand make Shelburne Museum unique also present significant obstacles to the fulfillment of the Museum's mission in the 21st century. The Museum lacks appropriate spaces for the presentation of special exhibitions and delivery of a complete range of education programs. The realities of Shelburne's idiosyncratic facilities and Vermont's typically inhospitable winter weather now restrict the Museum to be open to the public only from mid May through October. This means the Museum is closed for more than six months a year and for all but 10 weeks of the academic year. It is not the amount of exhibition space that is the issue. The challenge is that the vast majority of gallery space is distributed among small historic structures that simply lack the necessary size and environmental conditions to accommodate substantial exhibitions. Additionally, the Museum lacks modern classroom space and a viable location for lectures and presentations to large groups.

Nevertheless, during the past 15 years the staff and Board have adapted its mission, governance, infrastructure and programming to maximize how the Museum serves its public within the limitations of the spaces available. At the core of these initiatives was a long-term project to update 14 historic exhibition buildings with improvements to structural integrity, environmental control systems, security, wiring, lighting, and fire detection. These critical upgrades were funded by matching grants from the NEH Division of Preservation and Access in 1991 (\$591,000), 1999 (\$700,000) and 2005 (\$584,041). They have stabilized these historic buildings and the collections they house for decades.

During this same period two intense sessions of strategic planning by the Board of Trustees, staff leadership, and key members of the community produced a new, audience-centric mission: "To broaden our audience, engage their curiosity, and give them an extraordinary museum experience," as well as new guiding principles, a long-range plan in 1998, and an updated Institutional Plan in 2005. The long-range plan and subsequent Institutional Plan articulate strategic priorities in the principal categories of collections and exhibitions, education and programming, the campus, marketing and fundraising, and

organizational sustainability. Chief among these priorities is exceptional management of the permanent collections and exhibition buildings, development of a robust schedule of special exhibitions and programs, increased philanthropic revenue, and – centrally – to aggressively pursue a goal of year-round educational programming for K-12 and adult audiences and the development of a year-round facility to present exhibitions and programs. (Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the 2005 Institutional Plan.)

Shelburne Museum's governance structure also adapted to the priorities of the Institutional Plan. The Board expanded and recruited new members from a broader spectrum of geographic and professional backgrounds. The staff was organized into nine departments – curatorial, education, administration and finance, conservation, collections management, buildings, grounds, security, and development – that better reflect the Museum's reshaped priorities and commitment to engaging its audience.

Today, the positive results and momentum are clear. In 1999 there were no special exhibitions at the Museum. In 2009 there were 14, on topics ranging from motorcycles to Colonial Revival quilts to World War II. Attendance and membership have each grown more than 15% since 2005, attributed in large measure to the effectiveness of special exhibitions that each year both attract new audiences and offer fresh material and perspectives for repeat visitors. Education programs for adult and school audiences were diversified and now directly impact about 30,000 visitors annually. Innovative methods of preventive conservation (a focus on stabilizing environmental conditions for collections) and treating fragile materials are restoring collections including carousel animals, American paintings, and historic clothing. From 2001-2005 the Museum conducted a \$4.5 million capital campaign to preserve The Brick House, Electra Webb's Vermont home that housed her collections before she founded the Museum.

In 2006, a season-long visitor survey administered by the University of Vermont provided invaluable data about visitors' impressions of these programming initiatives and the overall visitor experience. Notably,

survey results included a highly positive response to the overall Museum experience, with a combined 95% rating the Museum “perfect,” “excellent,” or “very good”; and highlighted the importance of special exhibitions to stimulate visitation, with 72.3% responding that interest in a temporary exhibition was their primary motivator. Survey results have affirmed that investments in exhibitions and programming succeed in better connecting the Museum with its audience. They also illustrate public demand for high quality exhibitions and programming and underscore the need for Shelburne Museum to invest more in its capacity to deliver them. (Please see Appendix 2 for an executive summary of the 2006 visitor survey.)

The Museum is better serving its public through the re-alignment of strategic priorities put forth in the Institutional Plan, a steady upgrade of existing exhibition buildings, and new initiatives for programs and special exhibitions. However, only so much can be done when the Museum is open just six months a year and is closed for 75% of the academic year. The Museum has now maximized its physical resources. A new year-round facility composed of gallery, classroom, and lecture and presentation spaces will realize the vision articulated by Electra Webb and identified by generations of Museum Trustees as the next and crucial step that will grow and improve access to the collections for future generations of visitors.

Significance of the Humanities at Shelburne Museum

A. The Museum

The Museum’s collections of over 150,000 works of Americana and folk, fine, and decorative arts embody the evolution of American ingenuity, commerce, domestic life, and creativity from the late-18th century through the 1950s. Its 25 historic exhibition buildings include houses, barns, a lighthouse, a schoolhouse, a Meeting House, a slate jail, a general store, and the National Historic Landmark 1906 steamboat *Ticonderoga*. The Museum’s collections and unconventional ensemble of historic and contemporary exhibition buildings help make Shelburne a most unconventional museum: a hybrid of

history and art museum that embodies major humanities themes including, most directly, living a life in New England in the 18th, 19th, and early-20th centuries.

The Museum is also among the first in a generation of museums born during the Colonial Revival, when major 20th-century American collectors including Electra Webb, Henry Francis du Pont, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Helen and Henry Flynt, and Ima Hogg re-discovered the cultural and artistic significance of early-American art and artifacts. This group, several of whom were friends and collecting rivals, formed collections that ultimately led to the creation of museums including Shelburne, Winterthur, Colonial Williamsburg, Historic Deerfield, and Bayou Bend that have transformed how Americans understand and interpret their material culture heritage. Through special exhibitions, public programs, and interpretation of the permanent collections Shelburne Museum consistently communicates this important narrative of how 20th-century collecting profoundly impacted popular impressions of American identity.

Electra Webb was the first American woman to create and endow a major art and history museum. She was the daughter of sugar magnate H.O. Havemeyer and his wife Louisine, who between 1874 and 1929 amassed one of the largest and finest collections of Asian art and Impressionist and Old Master paintings. The Havemeyers formed their paintings collection with the close counsel of Mary Cassatt and lived in a Fifth Avenue, New York City mansion with interiors designed completely by Louis Comfort Tiffany. From an early age, young Electra was steeped in some of the most prolific, adventurous, and influential American collecting of the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

Electra Webb inherited passion and skill for collecting from her parents, but her tastes led her towards what was at the time the untracked territory of early-American folk art including trade signs, weathervanes, ship figureheads, cigar-store figures, and quilts. This interest was further strengthened when she married (in 1910) J. Watson Webb, who was a grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt, and he

introduced her to Vermont and his family's country estate in Shelburne. The couple converted an abandoned two-room farmhouse in Shelburne into a 40-room estate they named The Brick House and which became their Vermont home. Electra Webb filled this house with her collections and used its rooms to experiment with ideas for exhibiting them.

By 1947 Electra Webb knew she would create a public museum of, in her words, "the art of everyday people." On land in Shelburne formerly occupied by three dairy farms, she constructed and imported domestic and civic buildings that encompassed the regional vernacular architecture she had grown to love, and she began to transfer her collections and ideas for exhibiting them from The Brick House to the new museum. Shelburne Museum opened to the public in 1952. Since then, over 3 million people have visited the Museum and annual attendance today averages more than 110,000 during its six-month season.

The story of Electra Webb's collecting is one of a journey from a rarefied corner of the New York City art world to a decidedly democratic but equally trailblazing point of view expressed through the objects she acquired and her decision to create a major public resource of them. This speaks to a fourth important humanities theme that is communicated consistently throughout the Museum's exhibitions, programs, and publications: the emerging role and influence of women in 20th-century American collecting, from Louisine Havemeyer's vast holdings of European and Asian art that transformed the Metropolitan Museum of Art upon her death in 1929, to her daughter Electra's shaping of the Colonial Revival.

B. The Collections

Shelburne Museum's folk art collection spotlights the intersection of functionality, commerce, and creativity in early America, predominantly the northeast. One-hundred-seventy-five trade signs, tavern signs, and cigar-store figures made between 1780 and 1910 advertised goods and services offered by

craftspeople, merchants and innkeepers, and are important visual evidence of the growth of manufacturing and industry in 19th-century New England. Over 130 copper, cast-iron, and wooden weathervanes that adorned barns across New England were important symbols of a farmer's specialty (such as dairy farmer or horse breeder) or family name. The collection includes handmade weathervanes and mass-produced examples from the most prolific factories in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Approximately 75 pieces of carved scrimshaw fashioned by sailors during the peak years of the American whaling industry, 1830-70, are intricately designed works that offer a visual record of the adventure of the hunt, one of the country's biggest industries of the mid 19th century, and life at sea. Other important folk art collections include ship figureheads, whirligigs, hatboxes and bandboxes, and carved sculpture. The folk art collection has inspired two traveling exhibitions since 1987. *American Sampler: Folk Art from the Shelburne Museum* toured seven major museums between 1987 and 1990 including the National Gallery of Art, Amon Carter Museum, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and *A Bountiful Plenty from the Shelburne Museum* toured five museums 2000-2002 including the Georgia Museum of Art, the Columbus Museum of Art, and Fresno Art Museum.

The collection of American quilts and bedcovers numbers over 800 and is one of the deepest in the world. A comprehensive range of works made 1770-1956 throughout the eastern seaboard, South, Midwest, and Hawaii are an outstanding resource of a socially, culturally, and artistically diverse art form practiced predominantly by women. The Museum's collection includes nearly all styles of quilt making: Amish, pieced, appliqué, whole cloth, crazy, chintz, and album, as well as rare Native American quilts.

As the country's economy grew in the 19th century, increased leisure time and availability of inexpensive, factory-woven cloth encouraged women to make quilts and bedcovers for their families and friends.

Quilting became, and remains, an expression of social and family networks, and quilts are often important

records of historical events. Quilts and bedcovers at Shelburne Museum are interpreted for their context in town and domestic life, as well as connections to the textiles industry and as a widespread creative outlet for women across the country. The traveling exhibition *Art of the Needle: Masterpiece Quilts from the Shelburne Museum* toured five museums between 2006 and 2008 including the National Heritage Museum, Cincinnati Art Museum, and the San Antonio Museum of Art. The textiles collection also includes over 300 hooked, embroidered, needlepoint, braided, or woven rugs. The rugs date from 1820-1950, and document how rugs evolved from being a purely luxury item in post-Colonial America to mass-produced additions to most homes after World War II.

The collection of circus art and artifacts include posters, carousel animals and rounding boards, and two extraordinary groups of hand-carved miniature circus figures. The collection is strongest in providing insight into the Golden Era of the American Circus, 1870-1940, when the traveling circus was transformative in bringing a community's residents together (particularly in rural places) and giving them an important window on the world at a time before radio and television were universally prevalent. Since 2004 major improvements in the stabilization, care, and conservation of the circus collection have been implemented thanks to grants from NEH and IMLS.

The circus poster collection numbers approximately 430. The bold, colorful pieces lavishly promote circuses including Barnum and Bailey, Ringling Bros., Adam Forepaugh, and Sells Brothers. The posters represent the pinnacle of American graphic art and advertising for their era and are an updated perspective of these themes from the Museum's collection of folk art trade signs, generally made 50-100 years earlier.

Two highlights of the circus collection that exemplify Electra Webb's prescience as a collector of Americana are the Roy Arnold Circus Parade and the Kirk Bros. Circus. The Arnold Circus Parade of over 4,000 hand-carved figures is a recreation of wagons, animals, and attractions from the Buffalo Bill

Wild West Show, Barnum and Bailey, and Ringling Bros. circuses from the turn of the 20th century. The Kirk Bros. Circus of some 3,500 pieces portrays a three-ring circus complete with animal acts, clowns, bands, sideshows, and bleachers full of spectators. Both miniature circuses provide scholars and general visitors with views of the social and economic context in which circuses operated.

The largest collection in the U.S. of working and wildfowl decoys is at Shelburne Museum. Electra Webb bought the core of the collection in 1952 from preeminent decoy collector and scholar Joel Barber. Since then the collection has grown to include more than 900, including many carved by the acknowledged master of the craft A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952). Shelburne's decoys date from 1810 to 2009. They are interpreted as illustrative of trends after the Civil War – made possible by improved transportation systems and a growing economy – of increased public demand for game birds and the growth of high-end sports, as well as a factor in the early stages of the American land conservation movement which was initiated in part by hunters concerned about preserving game habitat.

Over 1,100 American and European paintings and prints comprise Vermont's most significant resource of fine art. At the core of the collection is a group of 15 Impressionist works by Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and Mary Cassatt that constitute the only public collection of Impressionist art in the state of Vermont. Electra Webb inherited these from her mother Louisine Havemeyer; at Shelburne they are crucial in providing insights into trans-Atlantic collecting in the late-19th century and the influence of two generations of powerful women collectors in establishing major American public arts resources.

The heart of Shelburne's American paintings collection was recognized by John Wilmerding, renowned scholar of American art and a former Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Art, as "A strong survey of the major trends in American painting, primarily from 1810-65." Paintings by folk artists Erastus Salisbury Field, Edward Hicks, William Matthew Prior, and others reflect important early-American

perspectives of portraiture and patronage, and are complemented by more topical works by established artists of the same period including John Singleton Copley and Rembrandt Peale. Landscape and genre scenes by Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Winslow Homer, Eastman Johnson, Fitz Henry Lane, Martin Johnson Heade, and others document evolving concepts of national identity, westward expansion, and social and political change before, during, and after the Civil War. A small but excellent group of 20th-century paintings by artists including Grandma Moses, Carl Rungius, and Andrew Wyeth offer a broad spectrum for interpreting the impact of modernism on American art and culture.

The prints collection includes 60 by John James Audubon (1785-1851) from the seminal *Birds of America* series that served as America's first ornithological record and was central to early concepts of wildlife conservation. Over 600 Currier & Ives prints chronicle important social, political, and historical events from 1829 to 1870 and are illustrative of the democratization of art as mass-produced prints became affordable and available to the general public during this period.

Shelburne Museum's base metals collection numbers over 2,500 objects and include European and American pewter, tinware, and wrought and cast iron. They embody a comprehensive range of household implements that illustrate domestic living standards in the 19th and early 20th centuries, cross-Atlantic trade, and small-scale industry, particularly in rural New England. The pewter collection offers an overview of French, German, Dutch, English, and American styles, and is particularly strong in examples made in rural New England, including rare examples from Vermont that establish an important contrast to European pieces. Household tinware holdings include lighting devices and kitchenware. The tinsmith was as important to early American communities as the blacksmith, crafting utilitarian items from inexpensive but durable tinned sheet iron. The collection of early American wrought and cast iron includes cast-iron stoves, door hinges and latches, and trivets. The centerpiece of this collection is a group of 1,100 trivets donated to the Museum in 2004 by historian William Paley.

The tools collection numbers over 3,000 and includes both woodworking and metalworking tools. As with the base metals collection, Shelburne's tools offer comprehensive perspectives of town life and small-scale industry in New England in the 19th century. The Museum exhibits tools in historic houses and in The Blacksmith Shop, a demonstration site where visitors can watch a blacksmith at work. The woodworking tools encompass a wide variety of hand tools and machinery – including planes, saws, and froes – that craftspeople used to provide essential goods and services to their communities. Metalworking tools include iron and hand-forged blacksmithing tools that reflect a central aspect of community life in rural New England until as recently as the early 20th century. The metalworking tools collection also illustrates the shift in rural New England's local economies around 1900 from local to mass production.

Shelburne's collection of American and English ceramics is representative of manufacturing styles, domestic environments, and trans-oceanic commerce over 200 years from approximately 1700 to 1900. Mochaware and English Staffordshire and stoneware evince the form's European roots; American stoneware, chalkware, redware, and an excellent collection of Vermont-made Rockingham illustrate its manifestation in this country. A fine collection of Chinese export porcelain provides additional context.

The American furniture collection includes ornate tables and chairs designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933); high-style furniture from Newport, Philadelphia, and Boston; simpler pieces by country cabinetmakers; and the largest collection in a U.S. museum of furniture made in Quebec. Exhibited in historic house and gallery settings, the collection speaks to themes of craftsmanship, the mechanization of industry, and comparisons of regional urban and rural domestic environments. The collection's greatest strength is its painted furniture made 1790-1840 in the style of "Fancy" – an aesthetic movement during which American designers sought to make a clean break from European influences.

Collections of 18th and 19th-century toys, dolls, dollhouses, and automata provide insight into

entertainment and children's lives and supply context for the Museum's collections of more utilitarian decorative arts described above. They are equally deep: the dolls collection alone numbers over 400. Toys include puzzles, board games, wind-up toys, and trains.

An important transportation collection holds one of Shelburne Museum's most popular attractions and is a comprehensive resource of travel by road, rail, and water, primarily from 1890 to 1920. The collection includes horse-drawn vehicles, the steamboat *Ticonderoga*, a covered bridge, the 1870 Colchester Reef Lighthouse, the 1890 Shelburne Railroad Station, and an 1890 locomotive and private rail car.

The Museum's collection of 225 horse-drawn vehicles includes carriages, farm and trade wagons, stagecoaches, and early firefighting equipment. Almost every type of vehicle used in New England in the 1800s for personal transportation, farm and commercial use, and public transportation is represented in the collection. In addition to stylish, mass-marketed personal vehicles, the collection includes rural work vehicles such as horse-drawn rollers (an early version of the snow plow) and sleighs.

The 1906 steamboat *Ticonderoga* is the most popular single attraction at Shelburne Museum. As the last steamboat to operate on Lake Champlain and the last walking-beam side paddlewheel steamboat in the United States, it is an icon of the era of steam travel. Visitors explore the entire boat including the engine room, pilothouse, galley, decks, and staterooms. A video documents the effort orchestrated by Electra Webb to bring the *Ticonderoga* two miles overland from Lake Champlain to the Museum grounds in a dramatic feat of maritime preservation. The *Ticonderoga* is pivotal in illustrating themes of commerce on Lake Champlain, as well as the region's transformation, in the 1920s and 30s, from a steamboat and railroad-based transportation network to the automobile era. (Please see Appendix 3 for a New York Times article about the significance of Shelburne Museum's collections.)

C. Current Programs and Publications

Shelburne Museum interprets humanities themes through high quality exhibitions, education programs, and publications. The Museum designs and implements dozens of programs each year, many for general audiences and some targeted specifically to school, adult, or family audiences. Programs incorporate the permanent collections, borrowed works, gardens, in-house and guest scholars and experts, and partnerships with other museums and educational organizations. Shelburne Museum maintains half-price admission throughout the season for Vermont residents to ensure the local audience has increased incentive to access a broad range of programs.

Programs for general audiences reach over 100,000 visitors a year and include special exhibitions, daily guided gallery tours of the permanent collections, weekly tours of Shelburne Museum's gardens, and daily demonstrations of traditional weaving, printing, and blacksmithing.

Temporary special exhibitions each year expand upon themes of the permanent collections and give visitors fresh perspectives of art, history, and culture. Recent examples include *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Nature by Design* (2009), which explored how scientific discoveries and changing concepts of the natural world in the 19th and 20th centuries impacted American design and consumerism; and *Mary Cassatt: Friends and Family* (2008), an in-depth exhibition of Cassatt as the first American-born woman artist to achieve international acclaim, and an influential advisor to Louisine Havemeyer and Electra Webb. Since 2003 Museum has also mounted three successful early literacy-themed exhibitions based on children's books, including a 2005 show dedicated to author and illustrator Barbara Cooney that featured a Vermont Humanities Council-sponsored education program about her book *Miss Rumphius*.

Daily gallery tours offer general audiences opportunities for deeper exploration. Tours on the

Ticonderoga focus on regional transportation and commercial history. In the EHW Memorial Building – a re-creation of six rooms from Electra Webb’s 1930s New York City apartment – guided tours illustrate themes of Impressionism in America and Mary Cassatt’s association with the Havemeyer family.

A program of weekly garden tours during the summer months was added in 2007 to create more structured access to Shelburne Museum’s 23 gardens. Subjects for tours include heirloom vegetables, a settlement-era garden, and an historic apothecary garden, among others. Garden tours enhance historic and social themes that are introduced in exhibition buildings adjacent to the gardens.

Ongoing daily demonstrations of traditional weaving, letterpress printing, and blacksmithing bring these trades alive for visitors, illuminate key aspects of community life and small-scale industry in rural New England, and are an important complement to the exhibitions of tools and textiles. An 1890 Jacquard Loom used for weaving demonstrations also highlights themes of technology.

Programs targeted to adult audiences include lectures, guided tours of The Brick House (Electra Webb’s Vermont home), and workshops and symposia held at both the Museum and The Brick House.

Evening lectures during the summer and a new (introduced in 2010) series of winter lectures are given by Museum curators and outside scholars and experts. Examples of topics in 2009-2010 included Colonial Revival quilt making and the roles of nature and spirituality in American art and writing. Speakers included renowned poet David Young; Andrea Olson, professor of environmental studies at Middlebury College; and Nancy Mowll Mathews, curator at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Because there is no appropriate venue at Shelburne Museum for lectures, capacity is a major issue with demand significantly outstripping seating supply. The Museum regularly needs to seek off-site venues for lectures.

Three open houses a year at The Brick House interpret the house as Electra Webb’s incubator of ideas for

collecting and exhibiting Americana. The house is also a rare extant example of an intra-war American country estate, and is unique in being the intact home of an American woman who is a museum founder. Periodic residential symposia at The Brick House focus on topics including connoisseurship and issues facing curators and educators in the museum field today. A 2008 symposium “Conversations at Shelburne Museum” gathered 14 curators from throughout the U.S. and Canada to discuss new ways of interpreting American material culture for today’s audiences.

Family audiences benefit from programs including free daily art and craft activities inspired by the permanent collections, Family Days, and evening programs. Up to 60 different art and craft workshops onsite include quilt making, painting, doll making, and making stained glass. Four Family Days attract between 2,000 and 4,000 visitors each with themes that vary from year to year. In 2010 they will focus on gardens and landscape, the circus, and a season-ending Halloween event that temporarily transforms exhibition buildings (and Museum staff!) into sets and characters from popular children’s books. *Sunsets at Shelburne Museum* is a series of summer evening hours and activities targeted to adult and family audiences. Initiated in 2007 and attracting about 3,000 visitors annually over nine summer evenings, *Sunsets at Shelburne Museum* programming includes events as diverse as gallery tours of the Museum’s quilts to tea parties celebrating the doll collection to fly fishing and decoy carving workshops.

Shelburne’s programs for K-12 student and educator audiences produce connections between the collections and Vermont state curricular standards. The centerpiece is *Passport to Learning*, a series of 12 hands-on workshops launched in 2009. These workshops are held in Museum galleries and make direct use of the collections. For example, in the 1795 Settlers’ House students gain insight into life in the late 18th century and make johnny cakes on the hearth. In the c. 1900 General Store students “purchase” and “sell” goods through a combination of barter and cash, simulating small-scale commercial transactions a century ago and their social context. In an art gallery students analyze a painting and then use that

painting's subject to write their own stories. Museum educators developed *Passport to Learning* workshops in partnership with a panel of K-8 teachers to assure that curricular needs were being met and the Museum was using its collections and resources efficiently. Over 7,000 students participated in *Passport to Learning* in 2009. (Please see Appendix 4 for a brochure of *Passport to Learning* offerings.)

Six summer day camps for K-8 students serve between 75 and 90 children each year and are built on themes drawn from the collections. "A Week in 1795" immerses campers in the customs, foodways, and material culture of settlement-era Vermont. During "Artisan Apprentice," campers spend a week in interactive visits to the blacksmith, weaving, and letterpress printing demonstration spaces. (Please see Appendix 5 for a 2010 summer camps brochure.)

The Museum also offers programs for home school audiences (Vermont has one of the highest home schooling rates in the nation), and in fall 2009 began a free-admission pre-school program. Through innovative programming, dialogue with K-12 teachers, and creative use of existing spaces, the Museum is maximizing its educational outreach with the physical resources it has. However, the significant shortcoming remains that here is no modern classroom space at Shelburne Museum that can provide students, teachers, and Museum educators with the very basic instructional format of combining gallery and classroom time during a visit to the Museum.

The Museum produces publications each year that provide scholarly analysis of the collections and special exhibitions, and their historical and cultural context. Examples include *Folk Art from Shelburne Museum* (2002), *The Impressionists* (2005), and *Out of This World: Shaker Design* (2007), published in partnership with Yale University Press. Publications are written by Shelburne Museum curators and guest authors. Print and online publications expand the reach of the themes of the collections. Now under development is an online database of the Museum's entire collection of over 150,000 artifacts.

Impact

Through diligent maintenance and improvements to the Museum's charming but small and historic exhibition buildings, as well as a reinvigorated and creative approach to programming during the last 15 years, Shelburne Museum has accomplished as much as possible within the confines of the spaces available and its truncated season. The opening of this new exhibition and education building will expand and transform the Museum's ability to provide its public with collections- and humanities-based exhibitions and programs year-round. It will create an immediate impact as a premier regional venue for visual art and education, especially during the winter months.

The building will be a 12,000 square foot structure designed for LEED certification that will include galleries, a lecture hall, and a modern classroom. It will be adjacent to the Museum's current entrance and prominently visible from U.S. Route 7, Vermont's major north-south highway along the western edge of the state. Designed by the Boston firm Ann Beha Architects, the building will blend the visual language of the Museum's historic buildings with a forward-looking aesthetic that underscores how this project will reshape the Museum. (Please see Appendix 6 for a site map indicating the building's location.)

NEH challenge grant funds will directly support the construction of this new building that will benefit Shelburne Museum's audience in the following ways:

- For the first time, the public will have year-round access to the Museum's collections;
- It will create a modern, flexible venue for the finest special exhibitions of American art, culture, and history and will facilitate a year-round schedule of exhibitions;
- It will create the Museum's first appropriate venue for lectures, films, and presentations;
- It will allow the Museum to devote a minimum of 3,000 square feet more of its existing galleries to the display of its permanent collections (at present the Museum is forced to use permanent

collections galleries intended for paintings, textiles, and furniture to mount special exhibitions);

- It will create the Museum's first modern classroom that will be used year-round for programs in art history and cultural history for adults and children;
- It will quadruple the amount of time during the academic year that primary, secondary, and college-level educators have to utilize the Museum and its collections for their classes;
- It will redefine the Museum's marketability as a prominent year-round attraction.

From November through April the new building will exhibit highlights of the permanent collections and special exhibitions targeted to K-12 and collegiate audiences to take advantage of the Museum's new synergy with the academic calendar. From May through October – the Museum's peak season – the building will host major special exhibitions of American art, history, and culture. Attendance to the Museum is conservatively projected to increase by 20-30% as visitors access the expanded schedule, exhibitions, and educational programming supported by the new facility. The building is projected to open to the public in Fall 2011.

Nine galleries in the new facility will encompass about 5,000 square feet of gallery space. The galleries will be flexible and designed to accommodate a wide range of exhibitions. One gallery will be devoted to a permanent exhibition *To Collect in Earnest: The Life and Work of Electra Havemeyer Webb* that will explore the social and cultural forces that inspired Electra Webb's collecting, as well as her influence on 20th-century collecting and the Colonial Revival. This exhibition will set the tone for visitors to identify aspects of these themes as they visit the rest of the Museum. Concepts for special exhibitions in the new building embody diverse themes such as a survey of Vermont-made furniture, collector Louisine Havemeyer and her role in introducing the Impressionists to American audiences, and a literacy-themed traveling exhibition from the Eric Carle Museum of the children's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The new building will facilitate increased loans and collaboration with other museums; Shelburne's

curators are also developing plans for a traveling show of decorative arts masterworks from Winterthur, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Shelburne Museum.

Shelburne Museum's first dedicated lecture hall and performance space will include seating for 125 and will immediately correct space concerns that have long impeded the Museum's ability to deliver a complete range of humanities-based education programs. For years the Museum has worked to shoehorn quality lectures into inadequate spaces. While demand is high, a lack of space has clearly limited access to programs. In the most extreme case, in 2008 over 200 people attempted to attend a lecture on Mary Cassatt being held in a 60-seat room – the largest indoor space at the Museum. Shelburne Museum now is forced to schedule several of its public programs each year at offsite venues. The lecture hall will for the first time enable year-round lectures and presentations in an appropriate venue.

A modern classroom, also Shelburne Museum's first, will provide a forum for classes and activities for adults and children throughout the year. It will include “wet” workspace, seating for 40, sinks, drain boards, and large tables to accommodate hands-on work as well as presentations. The classroom is central to the improved implementation of *Passport to Learning* workshops, Shelburne Museum's successful new K-8 school education program. Teachers and Museum educators will combine students' experiences in the galleries with time in the new classroom. This combination is a fundamental pillar of administering museum education programs that has to date been absent from Shelburne and will now be available to over 10,000 students annually as a result of this project. (Please see Appendix 6 for architect's illustrations of interior and exterior components of the new building.)

The new building and the programs it supports will positively impact all of Shelburne Museum's audiences. In particular, the Museum envisions the expanded access and programming will improve the Museum's capacity to meet three of its primary educational objectives articulated in the Institutional Plan:

- Offerings for K-12 and post-secondary students throughout the academic year;
- Development of courses in professional training that will equip teachers to utilize the Museum's exhibitions and collections to support their in-class curricula;
- A new continuing education program targeted to older adults.

Educator workshops will instruct best practices in using art and artifacts – material culture – to bring themes of history, art, science, literature, and other subjects alive in ways that directly complement teachers' in-class curricular goals. Educators will become more committed to the use of cultural resources and Shelburne Museum's collections in their curricula.

The facilities will also enable a sophisticated new education program for older adults, long an institutional goal and one that serves a growing audience. The Museum will offer lectures, performances, and presentations that – while open to all – will be especially attractive to the region's growing senior population, Vermont's most rapidly growing demographic.

Evaluation

Results of the new building's impact will be measured quantitatively through attendance figures and participation levels in education programs for adults and children. Attendance is the most direct, indicative means to ascertain how the programmatic plan for the new building is achieving its goals. Zip codes collected at admissions will provide a geographic breakdown of visitors to further assess the composition of the new building's audience.

Qualitative results will be measured through a well-established system of visitor surveys and focus groups that Shelburne has had in place since 2006. Annual visitor surveys, either written or online, provide

valuable feedback that Museum staff continually use to make adjustments to programs. Surveys administered to general audiences and Museum members will measure response to special exhibitions, programs, and how the new building affects the experience of visiting Shelburne Museum. The Museum will also use focus groups of educators and Museum Members to measure the effectiveness of programs in the new building. The education department uses focus groups twice a year to solicit feedback about the goals, structure, and impact of education programs. Focus groups played a key role in the development of *Passport to Learning* and the vision for the new building, and the Museum will deploy this effective evaluation method to assess the new building and its programs.

Shelburne Museum's Financial Stability and Plans for Raising Project Funds

Shelburne Museum is in solid financial health and has an excellent record of matching grants, including five from NEH since 1987. This campaign is pragmatic and cost-effective, and is launched from a position of fiscal stability founded upon methodical increases in earned income and philanthropic revenue since 2005 driven by initiatives of the Institutional Plan, and an institution-wide commitment to containing costs. In 2009, a year in which many American museums saw significant losses and were forced to reduce staff, Shelburne Museum maintained all staff and posted a loss of just \$160,000 on a \$5,300,000 annual budget. Since 2007 the Museum's operating costs have risen just 3%, and since 2005 gifts to the Annual Fund grew 74% to a record \$615,000 in 2009. The number of donors to the Annual Fund has increased 15% since 2007, and Trustee participation is 100%. Membership in 2009 reached an all-time high of 5,360. Attendance fluctuates based in large part on the popularity of special exhibitions – since 2005 annual attendance is consistently 15-25% higher than before the Institutional Plan was adopted. Gift shop revenues have risen accordingly and now produce a net profit of over \$250,000 a year. A program launched in 2008 to rent traveling exhibitions of the Museum's collections to other museums is now bearing fruit, with four renting venues confirmed over the next 18 months.

This foundation has established the right conditions for this campaign and confidence among donors that will help assure the campaign's success and the Museum's ability to raise \$1.5 in matching funds for this grant. The staff and Trustees are aware of the Museum's requirement to adhere to the laws of the Davis-Bacon Act and the Museum has consulted with Vermont's state historical preservation officer to confirm that no historic sites, properties, or artifacts will be impacted by construction of the new building.

The \$11.2 million campaign includes \$8 million for capital costs, a \$2 million endowment to yield approximately \$100,000 in annual support for the building's operation, and \$1.2 million to upgrade the Museum's campus-wide communications infrastructure with a fiber-optic network. In 2009 Shelburne Museum received a \$600,000 Save America's Treasures grant towards the fiber-optic upgrade, which will dramatically improve how data for security, fire detection, and gallery climate conditions is transmitted and will for the first time establish Internet access in the Museum's exhibition buildings.

Shelburne Museum's record of successfully matching NEH grants includes a 1987 Challenge Grant of \$175,000 to relocate a 1901 Round Barn to the Museum and repurpose it as a visitor center; a 1994 self-study grant of \$15,739 from the Division of Public Programs; and the three previously mentioned grants of \$591,000 (1991), \$700,000 (1999), and \$584,041 (2005) from the Division of Preservation and Access to stabilize major segments of the permanent collections. In addition, seven successfully matched grants from IMLS in the last decade have supported projects in objects conservation, education, and exhibition planning and implementation. The Museum recently submitted a \$24,419 (non-matching) Digital Planning Grant to NEH to help identify the best ways to maximize the educational potential created by the new fiber-optic network. In addition to federal grants the Museum successfully matches grants from foundations, individuals, and state entities such as the Vermont Department of Tourism.

Prior to the fundraising campaign, Shelburne Museum hired the consulting firm Brakeley Briscoe to perform a feasibility study that included an evaluation of the development staff and interviews with 60 of the Museum's top donors. The consultants concluded that staff readiness and the giving capacity and interest in the campaign vision among donors was sufficient to proceed. In December 2008 a lead challenge gift from the Board Chairman stipulated that he would contribute one dollar for every three donated by current and former Trustees, up to a maximum gift of \$3.5 million. A sub-committee of the Board was formed in February 2009 to lead the fundraising effort. The committee includes 12 members, all of whom have experience in raising significant funds for non-profits including museums, schools, land trusts, and social service agencies. Brakeley Briscoe was retained as campaign fundraising counsel.

Prior to joining Shelburne Museum in March 2006, director Stephan Jost initiated and was instrumental in the success of a \$3.8 million campaign for gallery additions at Mills College Art Museum, where he was director from 2002 to 2005. Shelburne Museum's development staff of four includes two with well-established tenures at the Museum and two who joined after campaign planning began. The development director has over 10 years of experience at Shelburne and the senior development officer has seven.

The Museum is now in the quiet phase of its campaign and is soliciting gifts from all current and former Trustees. At this writing over \$5.5 million is committed from 27 donors with 20% of current Trustees and nearly all former Trustees yet to be solicited. The campaign committee and development staff have, with the counsel of Brakeley Briscoe and professional research, identified and begun cultivating 120 prospects outside of the Board. The development staff is preparing applications to several major national foundations including Kresge Foundation, Fidelity Foundation, and the Charles Engelhard Foundation; in addition to numerous family foundations with a connection to the Museum and other foundations with a local or regional focus such as Jane's Trust, The Lintilhac Foundation, and the F.M. Kirby Foundation.

While Shelburne Museum has conducted successful campaigns in the past (most recently the \$4.5 million campaign to preserve The Brick House and a \$3.5 effort 1993-98 to restore the steamboat *Ticonderoga*), this is the Museum's first truly transformative campaign that will have such immediate, widespread, and visible public benefit. For this reason it is a singular opportunity in Shelburne's history to broaden its base of institutional support by engaging new donors and constituencies in addition to current supporters. The project's multiple public benefits – educational, economic, community – offer considerably more points of engagement than previous campaigns. The staff and campaign committee are using this campaign to develop new sources of individual and foundation support that will respond to this project and remain invested in the Museum's mission after the project is completed. The Museum will also use the expanded programming this project enables as a marketing opportunity to elevate the profile of Shelburne Museum, its collections and exhibitions to new local, regional, and national audiences.

Conclusion

The staff and Board of Trustees have researched all options for furthering Shelburne Museum's capacity physically and programmatically to meet changing needs and expectations, and to meet expressed demand from its visitors. While progress has been made, present spaces limit the Museum's ability to increase access to provide a comprehensive and dynamic year-round humanities-based exhibition and education program for school, adult, and senior audiences. For these reasons, Shelburne Museum is embarking on this institutionally transformative effort. It is now time to fulfill Electra Webb's vision and the current Museum leadership's commitment to year-round education. The gains for humanities-based education that will accrue through the creation of the Museum's first dedicated venues for exhibitions and education programs and through establishing year-round access to the collections are clear, significant, and will benefit Shelburne Museum's visitors and their study and enjoyment of the humanities for generations.