



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Division of Preservation and Access application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/divisions/preservation> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Salted, Pickled, or Smoked: Preserving and Presenting the Cultural Heritage of New Bedford's Fishing Community

Institution: New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, Inc.

Project Director: Laura Corinne Orleans

Grant Program: Common Heritage

National Endowment for the Humanities - Common Heritage Program

Applicant Institution: New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, Inc.  
Project Director: Laura Orleans  
Project Dates: January 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017

Narrative

A. What is the significance of this event to the community's members and its cultural institutions?

Once the whaling capitol of the world, today the Port of New Bedford is home to hundreds of commercial fishing vessels and is the largest and most important fishing port in the northeast. As such, New Bedford is one of the few places in New England where this industry, which was once so dominant in the region, is still a robust source of income and employment, and not simply a fact of history. While all fisheries are represented within the fleet, scalloping and groundfishing predominate. Some 4,400 men and women work in the industry, in specialty trades that range from fishermen and boat owners to fish cutters and gear manufacturers. As many smaller ports in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states have lost infrastructure due to economic challenges, New Bedford has grown as a "hub" port providing all of the services needed by a commercial fishing vessel. New Bedford's fishing community is ethnically diverse including significant populations of Portuguese (both mainland and Azorean), Norwegian, Yankee, Canadian (predominantly from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland), Irish, Polish, and more recently, Vietnamese, Mexican, and Central American (predominantly Guatemalan) heritage.

The industry has long been dominated by independent, family-owned and operated fishing boats and shore-side support businesses, with workers passing their skills and knowledge from one generation to the next, creating a culture rich in history, tradition, art, music and story. It is a significant part of the region's economy and cultural identity, yet because so much of the work takes place out of sight, this culture is largely unknown to outsiders.

The city already successfully preserves and interprets its renowned whaling history at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Rotch Jones Duff House and Garden Museum, and New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (National Park). Until recently, there was no institution dedicated to telling the story of the commercial fishing industry. The New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center (NBFHC) was established in July of 2014 to fill this void. NBFHC is a community driven organization with a board of directors made up of individuals who work in, or closely with, the fishing industry and an Executive Director who has worked with the local fishing community for 12+ years as founding director of the Working Waterfront Festival. Currently operating without a physical home, the NBFHC continues well established public programming initiated by the Working Waterfront Festival including a monthly film/speaker series, school residencies, and temporary exhibits in collaboration with other non-profit cultural organizations. Ultimately, the Center plans to develop its own permanent venue.

NBFHC has an archive of some 100+ digital audio interviews conducted with members of the fishing community over the past decade. The National Park has a small exhibit focused on the history of New Bedford's seafood auction. The Whaling Museum recently developed a small exhibit about the contemporary fishing industry. However, the vast array of material culture that resides in the homes of fishing families (and the stories that these objects tell) has yet to be documented. Among the items we anticipate digitizing are family photographs, documents (ex.

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union books, immigration/citizenship papers, documents related to family businesses, etc.), artifacts (ex. old tools and technology, foul weather and safety gear, etc.), and maritime crafts created by fishermen (ex. knot boards, boat models, paintings, etc.). Additionally we will identify “home movies” (film/video footage chronicling life at sea and on shore) for future digitization as funding allows.

This project will have a primary focus on documenting and preserving the multigenerational stories of fishing families. Interpretive programming will be organized around three broad themes: sustaining community (ex. rites of passage, customs, celebrations, social clubs, etc.), life on shore (fishing families and family owned shoreside businesses), and life at sea. Programs will consider change over time with attention to such topics as the loss of organized labor, the changing roles of women, and immigration and ethnic identity.

The goal of the digitizing event and subsequent “house calls” will be to create a digital archive of New Bedford’s fishing community that is both as comprehensive and as representative as possible. Programs will be designed to: 1) inspire a wide range of fishing community members (retired and active fishermen, shoreside workers, fishing family members, etc.) to have their materials digitized, 2) evoke memories so stories can be shared and documented, and 3) educate the general public about the rich history and cultural heritage of the fishing industry. The recent resurgence of interest in antiques, genealogy, and public radio programs like StoryCorps and The Moth suggests that the public is hungry to connect to tradition and history through objects and first-person stories. Programming that facilitates the sharing of authentic, personal experience narratives by “ordinary people” is compelling. Our programming will use the historical materials as an impetus for this type of storytelling.

B. What arrangements need to be made to digitize the public’s cultural heritage materials, to get information for the metadata describing each item, and to provide access to the digital copies?

The New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center will partner with staff from University Archives and Special Collections at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) who have over a decade of experience digitizing community history through their pioneering Mass Memories Road Show, an event-based public history project that digitizes family photos and memories shared by the people of Massachusetts. UMass Boston will provide technical services at the day-long digitizing event, including providing and setting up flatbed scanners, laptops, and hard drives, as well as bringing custom-designed registration and data collection forms for the collection of metadata. These forms will be designed to encourage contributors to record rich, first-person accounts as well as factual information. UMass Boston will provide a core group of staff and experienced volunteers and will conduct a training session for local volunteers on scanning and data collection. Following the event, UMass Boston will process images and metadata and will provide storage and public access through the University’s online repository at [openarchives.umb.edu](http://openarchives.umb.edu). These materials will be included in the Digital Commonwealth and Digital Public Library of America. Copies of the images and stories collected will also be provided to NBFHC.

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The New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center will be responsible for recording, uploading and cataloguing all audio files as well as scans and digital photographs of artifacts collected during subsequent “house calls”. This collection will be archived at the New Bedford Public Library and eventually at the NBFHC.

The day-long digitizing event will focus on digitizing photographs and documents and creating digital audio recordings of stories from participants about these two-dimensional artifacts. In addition to these materials, the “house calls” will document three-dimensional artifacts such as model boats, tools and equipment, and maritime crafts using digital photography and audio recording to capture related stories. In all cases, metadata will be collected using forms as described above. In addition, home movies (film and video footage) will be identified for a future digitization effort.

In addition to UMass Boston’s online repository, the resulting digital collection will be publically archived as part of digital collections at the New Bedford Public Library, the Massachusetts Public Library Digital Initiative, the UMass Dartmouth Archives and Special Collections, and shared as part of digital exhibits on the NBFHC website (currently under development). Those who participate by sharing their photographs, documents, or artifacts will be given a USB drive containing the scanned images of their materials.

NBFHC will purchase one Canon CanoScan 9000F Mark II Flatbed Scanner, a Macbook Pro laptop computer, and two external hard drives for use during and beyond this project to continue to digitize the cultural heritage of the fishing community in years to come.

C. In digitizing and providing access to the public’s historical materials, what plans will be in place to deal with intellectual property rights and the permissions process?  
We will employ an approach that has been used successfully by the Mass. Memories Road Show for over a decade. A Registration Form will be used to obtain "non-exclusive" rights to include the scanned materials and content as part of an online digital collection intended for research and educational use. A line crediting the digital collection and/or repository will be requested for research and educational use of collected materials. All registration and data collection forms will be made available in English, Spanish and Portuguese and bilingual staff/volunteers will review the forms with each person who shares materials as part of the project.

We will not obtain commercial rights to digitized materials; nor will we pass the right to reproduce (or publish in any way) on to 3rd parties for commercial use. Such requests will be forwarded to individual contributors. The various repositories will handle any such requests as part of the standard procedures of managing access to their collections.

D. What kind or kinds of public programming are proposed?  
Public programming will take place before, during and after the digitizing event.

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The New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center will devote its April Dock-u-mentaries program to an “Industry Antiques Road Show” in which several members of the fishing community share stories about their family photographs, documents, and artifacts as a way of modeling and inspiring others in the community to come forward for the digitizing event. Similar outreach will be done through appearances on the local radio and cable access television stations. Additionally a small travelling display about the project will be developed and loaned to key sites in the local fishing community (ex. the seafood auction, the United Fishermen’s Club, New Bedford Office of the Mass Fishermen’s Partnership, and Casa Saudade Library) to encourage community participation.

During the digitizing event, a panel of community scholars (members of the local fishing community who are particularly knowledgeable about its history) will be on hand to help determine approximate dates and identify locations and individuals in photographs. Special Collections staff from the New Bedford Public Library will present a workshop about proper archival storage of historic photographs and documents during the digitization event. Additionally, archivists from U Mass Boston will staff a Preservation Station at the event where participants will be able to get advice about preservation of their original materials.

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park will provide the venue for the digitizing event and most of the related public programs. The National Historical Park, which is generally seen as a neutral program space for community events, has large open space ideally suited for the digitizing event, a smaller conference room for the preservation workshop, and a 55-seat theater for other presentations.

Following the digitization event NBFHC will work with the New Bedford Public Library to develop a temporary exhibit showcasing examples of some of the artifacts that were digitized along with digitally recorded stories about the artifacts. Interpretive labels will be developed by the NBFHC and translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

At a culminating public event, maritime anthropologist Madeleine Hall-Arber will present an illustrated talk illuminating themes that emerge from the collection.

Over time, the digital collection created through this project will be used to develop thematic digital exhibits for the NBFHC website. This documentation will also provide a foundation for the development of temporary and permanent exhibits once the NBFHC has a physical home.

The public programming will be developed and coordinated by the NBFHC’s Executive Director, Laura Orleans, a folklorist who has worked with the local fishing community for over 12 years. Ms. Orleans has developed an archive of 100+ digitally recorded fishing community oral histories and produced a myriad of successful public programs to engage the public with the history and culture of the fishing industry. Board member Madeleine Hall-Arber, maritime anthropologist at MIT Sea Grant, will serve as an additional humanities scholar and will assist with developing interpretive labels for the physical and digital exhibits.

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E. What is the plan of work for the project?

Time Frame	Activity	Responsible Party
Jan-May	Monthly planning meetings	all project partners
March	Promotion (press release issued, e-flyer distributed) Promotional display developed and shared	NBFHC NBFHC
April	Industry Antiques Road Show presented Appearances on local radio and television	NBFHC NBFHC
May	Volunteer training offered Digitizing Event presented Preservation workshop presented	UMB all project partners NBPL, UMB
June-July	Images processed and archived Audio processed and archived	UMB NBFHC
June-Nov.	House Calls	NBFHC
July-Jan.	Images, audio and metadata from house calls processed and archived	NBFHC
October	Exhibit developed	NBFHC
Nov.-Jan.	Exhibit displayed at New Bedford Public Library	NBPL
Nov.	Illustrated talk by Humanities Scholar	NBFHC
Jan-Feb.	Complete digital archives provided to all partnering institutions	all project partners
February	Final report completed	NBFHC