



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions 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 Challenge Grants application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/challenge/challenge-grants> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Challenge Grants staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, 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: *Endowment for a Fellows Program*
Institution: The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, RI
Project Directors: John Tschirch
Grant Program: Challenge Grants

Abstract

The Preservation Society of Newport County in Rhode Island, a 501(c)(3) founded in 1945 to preserve and protect the best of Newport County's architectural, artistic, and cultural heritage, seeks a \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant to expand and formalize its current Fellows Program. The Fellows Program offers graduate and post-graduate scholars the opportunity to conduct research in Newport on topics of local as well as national significance. An independent, external Advisory Committee of humanities scholars will guide us through the development and implementation of the program. Each year the Committee will select four fellows through a competitive process to pursue proposed research topics using the resources of the Preservation Society and other cultural heritage institutions in Newport and Rhode Island. During their tenure fellows will deliver at least one public lecture, participate in four seminars with senior scholars to share their research and receive critiques, present their findings at an annual Fellows Forum open to scholars and the public, and prepare a publication-ready monograph to post on our Web site.

Our goal is to foster an interdisciplinary, humanities approach to the arts and architecture, reflecting various perspectives from history, literature, philosophy, and cultural studies. Research projects will link the cultural and social heritage of Newport to a broader understanding of the humanities, exploring such themes as 18th-century arts and crafts and the master craftsmen who created them; the cultural, social, economic, and political forces that shaped Victorian-era America; the China Trade and relations with the Far East; and entertaining as an expression of social power, fantasy, and escapism. Our vision is to create a community of scholars in Newport who elevate the artistic and cultural legacy of the city by establishing its universal relevance within the context of the humanities.

Two critical pieces are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Fellows Program. The first is funding to support ongoing costs. This grant request is for challenge funds to help us build a permanent endowment for the Fellows Program. A \$500,000 Challenge Grant from NEH will be used to fund a \$2 million endowment to support four annual fellowships of \$25,000 each. Fund will be raised through a Comprehensive Campaign, currently in the quiet phase, which identifies the Fellows Program as a key priority. The second critical piece is housing for visiting fellows. Rents in Newport are well above the national average, especially during the summer tourist season. We plan to adapt The Elms Carriage House (1901) as a Scholars Center, where fellows and visiting scholars will live, work, and exchange ideas in a supportive and collegial atmosphere.

The Preservation Society is uniquely positioned to lead a research program aimed at deepening our understanding of Newport's legacy and its place in America's historical, cultural, and social development. The Fellows Program is mission driven and links to our strategic plan. We are among the four largest cultural institutions in New England; each year more than half a million individuals visit our historic properties and participate in our programs. Programming includes tours of our 11 historic properties, which preserve and interpret three centuries of American culture, from the Colonial era through the Gilded Age of the later nineteenth century; History-on-Site serving over 10,000 schoolchildren every year; a dynamic program of lectures, workshops, and study days; and since 1993 the annual Newport Symposium, a forum for scholars, specialists, and the general public to study and discuss a diverse range of arts and historical issues.

Newport has a remarkable built legacy and historic resources that reflect not just the specific history of the city, but the broader cultural and social ideas of the nation. From its inception it has been a gateway for artists, craftsmen, writers, poets, scientists, historians, philosophers, statesmen, and captains of industry. This historically rich and diverse city will make an ideal location to establish a community of scholars in constant learning and evaluation, and the work produced by the Fellows Program will represent a major contribution to our national conversation about American culture, history, and democracy.

Challenge Grant Budget

Total NEH Funds Requested: \$500,000

Year 1	125,000
Year 2	125,000
Year 3	125,000
Year 4	<u>125,000</u>
	500,000
Total non-federal contributions	<u>1,500,000</u>
Total grant funds (NEH + match)	<u><u>2,000,000</u></u>

Planned Expenditures:

Endowment	2,000,000
Rate of return to be expended	<u>5%</u>
Projected annual expendable income	<u>100,000</u>
Uses of endowment income:	
Fellows stipends (4 @ \$25,000)	<u>100,000</u>

Institutional Fact Summary

History: The Preservation Society of Newport County is a 501(c)(3) founded in 1945 to preserve and protect the best of Newport County's architectural, artistic, and cultural heritage. Today we are among the four largest cultural institutions in New England, along with the Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Science, and the New England Aquarium, all in Boston.

Mission: Our mission is "to protect, preserve, and present an exceptional collection of house museums and landscapes in one of the most historically intact cities in America. [Our] sites exemplify three centuries of the finest achievements in American architecture, decorative arts, and landscape design spanning the Colonial era to the Gilded Age. Through our historic properties, educational programs, and related activities, we engage the public in the story of America's vibrant cultural heritage. *We seek to inspire and promote an appreciation of the value of preservation to enrich the lives of people everywhere.*

Accreditation or affiliation: American Association of Museums

Governance and administration: We are governed by a 27-member Board of Trustees. We have 96 full time employees, about 250 part time and seasonal employees, and approximately 280 volunteers.

Physical facilities: We own and care for 11 historic properties dating from 1748 to 1902; 13 additional historic structures including carriage houses, greenhouses, a 17th-century burial ground, and a Chinese-style tea house; and more than 88 acres of historic landscapes. Our properties and landscapes preserve and interpret three centuries of American culture, from the Colonial era through the Gilded Age of the later nineteenth century.

Humanities staff size and composition: All staff positions at the Preservation Society support our humanities mission. Humanities programming is most directly carried out by the 10 full-time staff members of Department of Museum Affairs, which oversees all educational, curatorial, interpretive, and scholarly activities, and the 17 full-time staff members of the Department of Museum Experience, which manages house tours and the visitor experience.

Humanities collections: 100 percent of our collections are humanities related. In addition to our historic properties and landscapes described above, we have over 53,000 pieces of museum-quality furniture, paintings, textiles, and decorative arts objects; a fashion and costume collection of 5,993 objects; and an 8,000-piece archive of prints, drawings, letters, photographs, and journals; and an arboretum of over 1,800 rare and indigenous trees.

Humanities activities: Each year more than half a million individuals visit our historic properties and participate in our programs. All programs are open to both members and the public and many are free. Programs include: guided and self-guided audio tour of our 11 historic properties; a summer and winter lecture series; annual endowed lectures such as the Winslow and Drexel lectures; the four-day Newport Symposium; exhibitions using our collections and loan objects, such as the current "Aesthetic Movement Furniture & Ceramics" or last year's "Gothic Art in the Gilded Age," undertaken in partnership with the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida; brown-bag lunch presentations by staff; walking tours; and study days, such as last September's "Masterpieces and Master Craftsmen of 18th-Century Newport," which sold out two weeks before the event to an audience of 114 scholars, students, craftsmen, and the general public, from all six New England states and as far away as Texas. In spite of the recent poor economy, our visitation and membership continue to grow; total admissions in fiscal year 2011 increased 2.7 percent to almost 801,000, our fifth consecutive year of growth, and household memberships also increased 2.7 percent to 10,004.

THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY
Endowment for a Fellows Program

Introduction

Newport is a unique site. The town possesses a richer artifactual legacy than that for any other American community ... Through careful study, histories unfold that not only document this one community, but also the nation as a whole.

Brock Jobe, Professor of American Decorative Arts, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Newport is a microcosm of the American experience. In just a few square miles one can explore the full range of our diverse heritage, traditions, and history from the colonial era to the present day. Its remarkably intact physical infrastructure, its wealth of artifacts, photographs, and primary documents, and its density of organizations devoted to preserving and presenting this cultural and social heritage, make Newport an ideal place to study the early development and modern manifestations of our national life and values.

Newport has per square inch the finest collection of architecture, decorative arts, and related elements (gardens, service buildings, etc.) anywhere in the United States ... There is a tremendous treasure trove of materials in various archives and collections in Newport that is available if the means can be found for bringing scholars and students to the town.

Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History, University of Virginia

The Preservation Society of Newport County plans to expand and formalize its current Fellows Program, which offers emerging scholars the opportunity to conduct research in Newport on topics of local as well as national significance. Our goal for the program is to foster an interdisciplinary, humanities approach to the arts and architecture, reflecting various perspectives from history, literature, philosophy, and cultural studies. Using the extensive collections of the Preservation Society and of other institutions such as the Newport Historical Society and the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, fellows working for one year will link the cultural and social heritage of Newport to a broader understanding of the humanities, exploring such themes as 18th-century arts and crafts and the master craftsmen who created them; the cultural, social, economic,

and political forces that shaped Victorian-era America; the China Trade and relations with the Far East; and entertaining as an expression of social power, fantasy, and escapism. This work will contribute to the humanities by generating studies that illuminate aspects of diversity, freedom of conscience, consumerism, class, slavery, gender, immigration, and creativity. It will benefit the Preservation Society and the City of Newport by deepening the intellectual content of tours, programs, publications, and Web-based materials, enhancing the interpretation of Newport's historic infrastructure and legacy for scholars, community members, and visitors. Finally, the Fellows Program will benefit the field of humanities by providing access to Newport's rich resources for humanities studies to scholars, and by providing emerging scholars in the humanities with opportunities to advance their professional careers.

Two critical pieces are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Fellows Program. The first is funding to support ongoing costs such as stipends. This grant request is for challenge funds to help us build a permanent endowment that will fund four fellows annually. Match funds will be raised in a Comprehensive Campaign, now in the quiet phase, which identifies the Fellows Program as a key priority. (See Comprehensive Campaign below p. 22.)

The second critical piece is housing for visiting fellows. Rents in Newport are well above the national average, especially during the summer tourist season. We plan to adapt The Elms Carriage House as a Scholars Center, where fellows and visiting scholars will live, work, and exchange ideas in a supportive and collegial atmosphere. The Elms Carriage House is ideally suited as a residence. A former groom's quarters, it has bedrooms, bathrooms, and ample space for kitchens and common rooms; and it is centrally located on Bellevue Avenue on a major bus line, and within a 5-minute walk of a wide range of commercial and service businesses.

Significance and Intellectual Quality

Newport's history is nationally significant for its role as a haven for dissenters, as a colonial seaport that made major contributions to the decorative arts, as an important mercantile center with Atlantic World ties to the Caribbean and the slave trade, as a Revolutionary-era post for the British army, and as a social nexus for New York, Southern, and New England elites during the nation's industrial and post-industrial expansion.

J. Ritchie Garrison, Director, Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, University of Delaware

Established in 1639, Newport was one of four original towns of the colony of Rhode Island, one of the first secular democracies in the Atlantic World founded on the principle of the uniquely American concept of religious freedom and separation of church and state. This philosophy of toleration attracted settlers from a diverse range of backgrounds, who lived together in Newport with “fewer quarrels about religion than elsewhere, the people living peaceably with their neighbors of whatsoever persuasion.” (Philosopher George Berkeley, writing from Newport in 1729.) These included Baptists, Anglicans, Seventh Day Adventists, Quakers, and Jews, who established in Newport America's second oldest Jewish congregation in 1658, and built the country's oldest standing synagogue in 1763. Religious toleration can still be read in the urban plan where, unlike so many New England towns, no house of worship occupies a privileged position on a town square or opposite a government building.

Separation of church and state meant there was no mandatory tithing to support the church, freeing up capital for business investment. During the 18th century Newport exploited its deep port for trade, becoming one of the five leading commercial centers in colonial North America, along with Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, and a major force in the development of modern American capitalism. By 1769 the city operated up to 600 ships at over 150 wharves. Newport exported furniture, silver, rum, candles, timber, horses, meat, and cheese to the West Indies and elsewhere. Approximately a third of its ships were engaged in foreign commerce, traveling to South America and to the Far East in the China Trade. Newport was also the center of the slave trade in New

England, also known as the “triangle trade,” in which slave-produced sugar and molasses from the Caribbean were carried to Rhode Island and distilled into rum, which was then carried to West Africa and exchanged for captives. (Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860*, 1963)

As a hot-bed of revolutionary fervor, Newport helped lead the way toward the American Revolution and independence. The British occupied the city from 1776 to 1779 for its strategic port position and to quell the rebellious population. Patriot forces working in partnership with the French for the first time during the war attempted to drive them out in 1778 (the British later abandoned the city for New York). In 1781 General Rochambeau launched his decisive march to victory in Yorktown from Newport.

After the war Newport’s status as a major economic center declined, and the city transformed into a summer colony for affluent visitors who built houses in the latest styles and contributed to the cultural and social life of the city. This development came to fruition in the later 19th century during the Gilded Age, when newly wealthy industrialists built summer “cottages” rivaling European palaces. A rich material legacy from this era documents the domestic lives of master and servant and the complexities of power relationships during a time of social upheaval that led to increased labor strikes and calls for change. Other resources reveal the lives of women who used resort cities such as Newport to create spaces reflective of their social status and personality.

The complete history of American architecture, landscape design, and urban development is reflected in Newport’s well-preserved infrastructure. The city has the largest number of preserved colonial-era buildings in North America. Its 19th-century architecture represents the full range of styles, from early Greek, Romanesque, and Gothic revivalism of architects such as Richard Upjohn; through the progressive Shingle Style of McKim, Mead, and White in the later Victorian era; to the classical-revival mansions of the Gilded Age by Horace Trumbauer, Richard Morris Hunt, and others. Its 20th-century architecture explores all modern currents, from Bauhaus functionalism and

the International Style to Scandinavian Modernism to the more recent Modern Traditionalism of such architects as Robert A. M. Stern.

In 1789, Jedidiah Morse referred to Newport and its environs as the “Eden of America” in the *First Geography of the United States*. The city encapsulates the history of landscape design and plant propagation during the 18th through early 20th centuries. Nearly every major American landscape designer is represented, including Frederick Law Olmsted, Ernest Bowditch, and Jacques Greber. Newport’s urban plan captures the full spectrum of American settlement patterns, from 17th-century rural byways, to the classically inspired grid of the 18th-century Point district, to the 19th-century picturesque layout of Ocean Drive, to the 20th-century alterations of urban renewal projects that dramatically changed the character of the waterfront.

From its earliest days, Newport was a center for artistic achievement. The city is best known for its colonial silversmiths and its cabinetmakers, who, led by the renowned Townsend and Goddard families, developed furniture designs that were unique among American craftsmen and noted for their exceptional workmanship and design.

In the late 19th century many leading intellectuals believed that America had a special relationship with the Renaissance. A rebirth of the Renaissance spirit was reflected in a renewed interest in modernism and technology grounded in the rediscovery and reinterpretation of the classicism of the past. According to Richard Guy Wilson,

Across the landscape in expositions, monuments, public and private buildings, and City Beautiful campaigns, American architects, landscape architects, painters, sculptors, and craftsmen joined together to create an iconography that would represent their nation as the rightful heir to the great themes of civilization. (“Architecture and the Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring, 1983), pp. 69-87).

This vision was realized through the patronage of American captains of industry whose expenditures rivaled those of the Medici, and found its most representative expression in Newport of the Gilded

Age. In addition to the architects and landscape designers mentioned above, Newport attracted painters such as Gilbert Stuart, Fitz Henry Lane, and John LaFarge, and writers such as Edith Wharton, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Julia Ward Howe, Henry James, and Thornton Wilder, who lived and worked in Newport and frequently used the city itself as theme.

For many, this era represents the apotheosis of Newport's storied history. By the mid-20th century *Life Magazine* described the city as "fading," and urban renewal seemed poised to demolish its historic infrastructure. That's when a small group of Newport residents, recognizing the incomparable value of what they had, organized The Preservation Society of Newport County to save this remarkable heritage. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, who spent childhood summers in Newport, later said,

I have grown up seeing the wonderful things accomplished by [The Preservation Society]. So I am sure it is your work in great part that made me become so interested in the restoration and preservation of our national shrines.

Resources for Humanities Research in Newport

Newport is a scholar's dream of resources and information concentrated in a small area. Numerous heritage institutions in the city and in Rhode Island contain collections essential to the study of Newport's and the nation's history. In addition, the city itself is a document, with its remarkably intact infrastructure and wealth of carefully preserved buildings and parks.

The Preservation Society of Newport County is the largest cultural organization in Rhode Island and a leader in the field of historic preservation. Its extensive collections include:

Architecture: The Preservation Society owns and cares for 11 historic properties and 13 additional historic structures including carriage houses, greenhouses, and a Chinese-style tea house. The collection reflects major movements in American domestic architecture, from 18th-century colonial to mid-19th-century Gothic Revival to later 19th-century Shingle Style to turn-of-the-century classicism. Architects represented include nationally renowned McKim, Mead and White,

Richard Morris Hunt, and Horace Trumbauer. Seven houses are National Historic Landmarks, and ten properties are designated “Official Projects” of the federal government’s former Save America’s Treasures Program.

Historic Interiors: The Preservation Society’s collection of historic interiors represent a full range of decorative styles, techniques, and materials, from faux-grained woodwork, to Aesthetic-style stenciling and wallpaper, to gilt bronzes, marble, and stucco. Construction and decorative materials include gold, brass, tin, and platinum metal leaf, and carved or cast materials such as wood, plaster, staff, compo, and bronze. Fine arts objects such as paintings are, in some cases, glued to ceilings. Flat wall surfaces range from quarter-sawn oak or sycamore to faux marble to sheathings of gilded, embossed, and painted leather or fine textiles.

Fine and Decorative Arts: The over 53,000 documented decorative and fine arts in the collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture, ceramics, glass, metals, books, prints, lithographs, engravings, photographs, and textiles, including tapestries, rugs, wall coverings, window hangings, and costumes. These objects reflect a number of themes, such as early American arts and crafts; the China Trade and interest in the Far East; European travel and collecting in the 19th century; the artistic, cultural, social, economic and political forces which shaped America during the Victorian era; and entertaining as an expression of social power, fantasy, and escapism in the Gilded Age.

Archival holdings: The Preservation Society’s archival holdings of over 8,000 pieces include prints, drawings, photographs, letters and journals related to Newport’s cultural, social, and architectural history. For example, servant photographs, periodicals, and household management documents (caretaker timecards, breaker box labels, “opening of the house” instructions) provide insight into the daily operations of the Gilded Age mansions.

Costume and interior textiles: The textile collection encompasses furnishings, tapestries, draperies, table linens, and clothing. The costume and fashion arts collection is made up of 5,993

objects, with items ranging from gowns and bathing costumes, to hats, shoes, fans, and parasols. While the collection has a concentration of objects from the 1880s through the 1920s, a large portion are representative pieces that trace the history of dress and fashion in Newport from the early 19th century through the present day.

Landscapes: Our 88 acres of landscapes include historic gardens, an arboretum, a topiary garden, a 17th-century burial ground, and parks and open spaces. Our botanical collections contain 1,800 rare and indigenous trees representing more than 100 native and exotic species. Some of the most important American landscape architects designed our grounds and gardens, including Ernest Bowditch, Jacques Greber, and the Olmsted Brothers.

In addition to the Preservation Society, several other institutions in Newport hold significant collections of Newport-related material. The Newport Historical Society library collection contains approximately 12,000 volumes reflecting the settlement and development of Newport County. The two-dimensional collections include photographs in all historical formats, postcards, prints, architectural plans and drawings, and maps. Of these, the photograph collection is by far the largest, comprising over 200,000 images dating from the 1840s to the present. The three-dimensional collections of over 10,000 objects include fine and decorative arts, furniture, musical instruments, textiles and clothing, artifacts of everyday life, architectural fragments, and antiquities.

The Redwood Library and Athenaeum maintains a lending library of over 160,000 titles, including the nation's premier collection of printed works relating to the history of Newport. Its collections include rare books, periodicals, manuscripts, ephemera, photographs, prints, drawings, maps, and the Cary Collection containing nearly 200 English and related continental pattern books of furniture, decoration, and ornament from the late 15th century to the mid-19th century. The artifact collection includes 18th- and 19th-century paintings, especially portraits, sculpture, and 18th-century furniture.

The Newport Restoration Foundation owns and operates the Samuel Whitehorne House (1811) with its collection of 18th-century Newport furniture by the Townsend and Goddard families, Benjamin Baker, and Holmes Weaver. The Newport Restoration Foundation also owns and operates the former summer residence of Doris Duke, Rough Point (1887) with its collection of European fine and decorative arts, focusing on Louis XVI furniture, portraits from such illustrious artists as Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Hoppner, and textiles.

Salve Regina University's McKillop Library holds The Newport Collection focusing on materials that illuminate the history and culture of Newport, Aquidneck Island, and Jamestown, the Newport Map Collection, and a rare book collection that includes works on Rhode Island history.

Outside of Newport, Brown University, the University of Rhode Island, Roger Williams University, the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, and the Rhode Island Historical Society all hold archival and object collections important to the study of Newport's history. All these institutions are within a half hour's drive of Newport.

State of the Scholarship

Yet given its extraordinary resources, the town has not been a focal point of scholarly research.

Brock Jobe, Professor of American Decorative Arts, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Although Newport is included in many scholarly studies, particularly those treating the American Revolution, history of Jewish settlement in America, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the history of the American leisure class, not enough studies focused on the city, its culture, and its people exist to do justice to the rich resources available. Notable exceptions include Ralph Carpenter, *The Arts and Crafts of Newport, 1640-1820* (1954), and Antoinette Downing and Vincent Scully, Jr., *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, RI 1640-1915* (1952), written over half a century ago. The greater portion of Newport-based studies focus on the lives of the rich and powerful of the Gilded Age, such as Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, *The Glitter and The Gold* (1952), John King van

Rensselaer, *Newport: Our Social Capital* (1975), and Barbara Schreier and Michele Majer, "The Resort of Pure Fashion: Newport, Rhode Island, 1890-1914." *Rhode Island History* 47 (1989). A few recent studies address the topic of slavery, including Richard Youngken, *African Americans in Newport* (1998), and Myra B. Young Armstead, "*Lord, Please Don't Take Me in August*": *African Americans in Newport and Saratoga Springs, 1870-1930* (1999). Other studies examine the Revolutionary War, particularly the role played by General Rochambeau's French army.

The Preservation Society's Long-Range Plan for Advancing Humanistic Knowledge

The Preservation Society of Newport County plans to expand and formalize its Fellows Program and establish a Scholars Center to address the need for focused, Newport-based research. Together the Fellows Program and Scholars Center will support a community of scholars whose research and publications will inform the interpretation of Newport's heritage and promote its significance and universal relevance.

The Current Fellows Program

The Preservation Society has maintained an informal Fellows Program since 1993, hiring scholars as needed to research the documentation that supports our historic house interpretations. Historic landscapes reports by outside researchers for The Elms (1901), Chateau-sur-Mer (1852), and The Breakers (1895) have been instrumental in guiding landscape restoration work at these sites. A researcher with expertise in costume history recently worked on our extensive textile collection and assisted with exhibits on fashion history at Rosecliff (1902). Teams of researchers representing the disciplines of architectural, social, and economic history were assembled to conduct research and oral histories for our acclaimed audio tours at The Breakers, Marble House (1892), The Elms, and Rosecliff.

Many of our research reports are presented on our website for broader sharing with the public. These include a study of our acclaimed topiary garden, "Green Animals Living Art: A

Singular Expression of Portuguese-American Cultural Traditions and Values!;" a detailed account of a Victorian household in "A Study of Chateau-sur-Mer: The Wetmore Family and Their Domestics;" and "Servant Life at The Breakers: A Room with a View," an analysis of the architectural plans and communications systems of the servants' quarters at The Breakers, and a study of servant life within the larger context of the history of domestic service at the turn of the 20th century.

In 1999 we initiated an oral history project titled "Keeping House." It was a community effort, asking local residents to find and interview the people who worked as domestics at our historic houses. Documenting their stories opened a fascinating personal perspective on behind-the-scenes life in Newport's great houses of the Gilded Age and encapsulated a unique social and cultural group in Newport. Recently we used the findings of these oral histories as well as archival research conducted by independent scholars to enhance our "Behind the Scenes Tour" at The Elms, renamed the "Servant Life Tour." The tour highlights the stories of the men and women who toiled to service the social whirl of Newport during the Gilded Age. It incorporates new information about immigration, employment, and labor disputes in the early 20th century, most notably a servant strike in 1902 at The Elms, shortly after it was built. The tour also uses new documentary evidence to give voice to individual workers, presenting in detail the stories of the butler Ernest Birch, his wife, cook Grace Rhodes, and a maid, Nellie Lynch Regoli.

Proposed Expansion of the Fellows Program

Our plan is to formalize the current Fellows Program by establishing four permanent, one-year annual fellowships. Fellowships will begin in the fall and fellows will be added as each fellowship endowment is established. We will publicize fellowship opportunities to a target audience of graduate and post-graduate scholars working in art and architectural history, landscape design history, historic preservation, and social and cultural history. Publicity methods will include listservs,

such as the Society of Winterthur Fellows e-mail distribution list, which reaches more than 200 graduates of the American Material Culture and Conservation programs working at institutions worldwide; Web sites such as Cornell University's PreserveNet; the American Association of Museums job board; the New England Museum Association job board; and the College Art Association Web site opportunities listing. We will particularly target graduate programs at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library; University of Virginia School of Architecture; the Art Institute of Chicago; Yale University; the Historic Preservation Program of Columbia University; Corcoran Program, Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts in New York; and the University of California at Berkeley. These institutions have nationally renowned programs in the disciplines we seek to attract.

We will welcome applications for projects that use Newport's vast cultural resources to explore history, culture, design, and the arts within the context of broader, national trends. We seek especially to attract scholars working in the following fields of interest, which represent the core of the Preservation Society's holdings as well as significant cultural assets in need of further documentation and analysis:

- History of Architecture: Construction history and how it reflects American building practice from the colonial era to the technological breakthroughs of the early 20th century.
- History of Landscape: How Newport's rich horticultural heritage of plant collecting and propagation and garden design fits within American landscape history.
- History of Art and Design: Broadening our understanding of how the objects collected by Newport's residents reflect and influenced significant achievements in design history.
- Preservation Studies: Analyzing the evolution of Newport's urban plan, and how it reflects social, political, and cultural beliefs and practices.
- Social and Cultural History: The suffragist movement and women as drivers of social and political change, servant history and power relationships, the history of fashion, the literature of the 19th century as reflected in architecture, and other themes fall under this important category of research.

We will establish an independent, external standing Advisory Committee composed of three to five members for a term of three years each drawn from outside the Preservation Society's staff and governing body. Committee members must be established scholars with proven academic reputations specializing in these leading fields of research. The committee will meet in person each year to review applications and make awards. The Preservation Society's director of museum affairs, who has the responsibility of administering the Fellows Program, will sit as a non-voting member on the committee, assisted by the museum affairs programs coordinator. Through this process, we aim to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Selection Process: The Committee and staff will review all applications, select candidates to be interviewed, and interview candidates. The Committee and staff will then evaluate the interviews, select the four candidates to be awarded fellowships, and create a waiting list should any candidate decline an offer. The final decision of whom to select lies with the director of museum affairs.

Criteria for Selection: Candidates selected for fellowships must have completed a master's degree in a relevant academic field; demonstrate abilities in the fields of research outlined above through a combination of course work, publications and lectures, and letters of recommendation; and have proven written and verbal communication skills.

John Tschirch, our director of museum affairs and architectural historian, will oversee the Fellows Program. He will be assisted by a museum programs coordinator and a collections manager, with support from the curator, the associate curator, and the conservator. All positions are full time.

The Scholars Center: The Fellows Program will be housed at a Scholars Center, a place for fellows and visiting scholars to live, work, and exchange ideas in a supportive and collegial atmosphere. To create the Scholars Center, we will convert the Carriage House at our historic property, The Elms, which is ideally suited to the purpose. The second floor will have five private

bedrooms, separate men’s and women’s bathrooms, a shared kitchen with laundry facilities, and a common room. The third floor has the potential for two additional bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a small overnight guest room. The fellows will live at the Scholars Center at no charge, a significant benefit as rents in Newport are well above the national average, especially during the summer tourist season.

The Elms Carriage House is centrally located on Bellevue Avenue within a 5-minute walking distance of two shopping centers with grocery stores, pharmacies, dry cleaners, banks, and medical offices. It is within a 10-minute walk of downtown Newport with its wealth of restaurants and shops, and post office. It is on a major bus line, five minutes from the Newport Visitors Center where fellows can transfer to busses that will take them to Providence, the Amtrak train station, and other locations throughout Rhode Island.

We have hired preservation architects Wank Adams Slavin Associates of New York, who have previously worked with us on several successful historic restoration projects, to create a detailed Conditions Assessment Report, construction documents, and budget for a complete exterior and interior restoration of the property. Restoration of The Elms Carriage House as a Scholars Center is a priority of our Comprehensive Campaign.

We estimate the total cost to create the Scholars Center and Fellows Program at \$5.2 million:

Restoration of Scholars Center	\$2.2 million
Maintenance Endowment	\$1.0 million
<u>Scholars Program Endowment</u>	<u>\$2.0 million</u>
Total Cost:	\$5.2 million

Institutional Capacity

The Preservation Society is uniquely positioned to lead a research program aimed at deepening our understanding of Newport’s legacy and its place in American historical, cultural, and social development. The Fellows Program is driven by our mission, which states in part: “Through

our historic properties, educational programs, and related activities, we engage the public in the story of America's vibrant cultural heritage. *We seek to inspire and promote an appreciation of the value of preservation to enrich the lives of people everywhere.*" Education is one of four key objectives listed in our Five Year Strategic Plan, ratified in 2001 and revised in 2006, which identifies guided tours, lectures, symposia, original research, and other scholarly activities as primary activities. (The Strategic Plan is currently under review as part of our Comprehensive Campaign planning.)

Since our founding in 1945, education has been a priority. In 1946 we commissioned architectural historians Antoinette Downing and Vincent Scully to conduct the first professional survey of Newport's historic architecture, *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1610-1915* (1952). The book was extremely influential to the early preservation movement in America, which achieved some of its earliest successes in Newport and Providence, Rhode Island.

Over the years, the Preservation Society has become known for a diverse range of public programs aimed at specialists and general audiences alike. Our primary programs center on the presentation of our 10 historic house museums, including guided tours and interpretative programs such as lectures and workshops exploring issues in American architecture, social history, and historic preservation. We tell the story of both "upstairs" and "downstairs" with our Servant Life Tour at The Elms. We hold several lectures, workshops, and study days each year. Chief among these is the Newport Symposium, a four-day, annual event aimed at the specialist, initiated by the Preservation Society in 1993 as a forum for the study and discussion of a diverse range of arts and historical issues. A recent public education project aimed at the general public is the Bellevue Avenue History Trail, a series of 11 markers containing photographs and text that detail the breadth, diversity, and preservation of buildings from the Newport Casino to Rough Point. We have twice been selected by the National Endowment for the Arts to lead a community-wide Big Read program, particularly targeting at-risk readers and youth. Our History-on-Site program serves over 10,000 schoolchildren

each year from Newport County and other Rhode Island communities. This past spring Preservation Society staff representing all departments and perspectives co-taught a graduate course in preservation stewardship with Roger Williams University.

We are currently developing two Web-based projects that will enhance access and broaden audiences for our education efforts. The projects support the work of the fellows and will be critical tool for advancing humanistic studies.

The Newport Cultural Heritage Consortium is a collaboration of five local cultural organizations which we are leading, whose goal is to develop a shared, web-based database of objects and archival materials related to the history and culture of Newport. The goal is to engage the public in the story of Newport's vibrant cultural heritage, and to encourage scholarship by promoting open, seamless access to the historical materials documenting that story. By presenting the collections together, we will provide a context that gives a deeper understanding of Newport's history, allowing us to tell the story in a way that it has not been told before.

The Newport Historic Urban Plan Mapping Project will produce an online interactive map documenting the development of Newport's urban plan from its initial settlement in 1638 to the present day. The map will allow users to explore different layers of meaning expressed in the physical evidence, facilitating a broader understanding of how spatial practices reflect identity, social status, and power. The goal of the project is to engage the public in a continuing conversation about American history, citizenship, and democracy by providing an access point for researchers, educators, and the general public to gain information about Newport's past. The planning phase of this project is being funded in part by a grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

Advisory Council of Humanities Scholars

The Preservation Society is in the process of identifying humanities scholars holding Ph.D.s or with demonstrated expertise in their respective fields, to guide us on advancing our Fellows

Program. These scholars will identify the critical historical resources that exist in Newport and beyond for their specific research area. They will document these resources and analyze how these materials relate to Newport and broader humanities issues. They will be available to guide and offer advice to fellows during the course of the fellowship year. Finally, they will facilitate four seminars where fellows will share research in progress and receive critiques (see below p. 18).

We are currently working with an Advisory Council of humanities scholars for the Newport Urban Plan Mapping Project described above. Council members include Catherine Zipf, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Art, Cultural, & Historic Preservation, Salve Regina University; Ronald J. Onorato, Ph.D., Professor of Art History, University of Rhode Island; William McKenzie Woodward, Principal Architectural Historian and Planning & Land Use Coordinator, Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission; and Steven Semes, Associate Professor, School of Architecture, University of Notre Dame. An advisory council to guide us in advancing the Fellows Program will be modeled upon this current council, with potential overlap of members.

The Preservation Society maintains informal relationships with scholars both nationally and internationally, who participate in our programs and lectures. A few potential candidates for the Advisory Committee include (but are not limited to) Karina Corrigan, Curator of Asian Export Art at Peabody Essex Museum; Morrie Heckscher, Chairman of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; John Ochsendorf of MIT, a structural engineer with multi-disciplinary research interests including the history of construction, masonry mechanics, and sustainable design; Richard Guy Wilson, Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia; Brock Jobe, Professor of American Decorative Arts at Winterthur Museum; and Steven Parissien, Fellow at Kellogg College, Oxford, England and Director of Compton Verney Museum in Warwickshire, and an authority on 18th-century design and interiors and architectural and cultural history.

Impact on the Humanities

Our vision for the Fellows Program is to create a community of scholars in Newport who elevate the artistic and cultural legacy of the city by establishing its universal relevance within the context of the humanities. Fellows will conduct original research that enhances the interpretation and deepens the content of our tours and programs; engage in a lively series of public programs; and produce books, journal articles, and Web-based materials. Finally, the Fellows Program will strengthen the field of humanities by providing research, training, and publication opportunities for emerging scholars in the humanities.

Generate and disseminate original research in the humanities

Newport has rich, untapped resources with the potential to make significant contributions to our understanding of the artistic, social, and cultural life of America. Fellows will be invited to propose their own research projects using the collections of the Preservation Society and other institutions in Newport, and to connect their topics to a broader cultural context. We will especially encourage proposals in the history of architecture, landscape, art, and design that link material culture to a range of topics in the humanities including building practices, the history of collecting, and the mechanisms that drive urban development and settlement patterns; and proposals in social and cultural history, in particular those that examine the domestic and political roles of women and that document the history of the serving classes.

Fellows will have a number of opportunities to share their research with the scholarly community, Preservation Society members, and the general public. All fellows will:

- Deliver a lecture on their area of focus to the Preservation Society's membership and public;
- Participate in four seminars to share their research with other fellows and invited scholars, engage in open discussion, and receive critiques of their work in progress.

- Present research findings at an annual Newport Fellows Forum, a day-long event modeled after the graduate student forums held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick Collection, which offer doctoral candidates the opportunity to deliver papers of original research in a public forum and engage with colleagues in the field, both novice and expert; and
- Prepare a publication-ready monograph on their research project, which will be posted on our Web site.

Fellows will also have the opportunity to participate in the Newport Symposium, a four-day, annual event initiated by the Preservation Society in 1993 as a forum for the study and discussion of a diverse range of arts and historical issues. The audience consists of academics, collectors, major donors to and trustees of museums and arts foundations, museum directors and curators, and professional appraisers and art dealers. Between 175-220 people from a wide geographic range attend every year; last year we had representatives from 24 states and 3 foreign countries, and the year before from 23 states and 5 foreign countries.

A distinctive feature of Rhode Island is its concentration of cultural and educational institutions in a very small geographic area. Fellows will be encouraged to interact with the local scholarly community through attending or participating in public programs offered at nearby colleges and universities, which include Salve Regina University in Newport, Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, and Roger Williams University in Bristol. Other forums for scholarly exchange include the rich and diverse range of humanities-related public programming at the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, the Providence Athenaeum, the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, and the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities at Brown University in Providence.

Deepen content of tours and programs addressing humanistic topics.

Original research generated by the Scholars Center will inform and enhance the interpretation and presentation of Newport's historic infrastructure. New studies will expand the

intellectual content of our tours and programs focusing on architecture, design history, urban planning, landscape, and historic preservation practice and theory. We especially seek to expand on social history topics including servant life, gender studies, and childhood. Three recent initiatives at the Preservation Society—The Breakers Family Audio Tour, the Rosecliff Audio Tour, and The Elms Servant Life Tour—were supported by research from part-time fellows.

Provide professional and career development opportunities for scholars in the humanities

For graduate students and emerging scholars, fellowships are an important part of professional and career development. Fellowships allow students to focus full-time on their educational goals and own research, providing the time and money to delve deeply into a topic. Receiving a fellowship can enable the successful, timely completion of a dissertation or scholarly project. The faster students progress, the more likely it is they will finish, and the unfettered time devoted to research improves the quality of the work.

Fellowships are an important endorsement that can build a scholar's resume and set them up for additional grants and fellowships. Fellowships build connections that open doors and lead to conference invitations, post-doctoral appointments, and jobs. In the humanities, publications are a major factor in getting a job; fellowships support the production of books and articles that are critical to success.

Fellowships that support work in the arts and humanities are extremely competitive and not enough opportunities exist to fulfill the need. Among all the grant opportunities at the NEH, the Fellowships Program is by far the most competitive. With the help of NEH, our Fellows Program will address this need by offering four full, one-year fellowships annually to promising scholars working in the humanities.

Planned Challenge Grant Expenditures

Total NEH Funds Requested:

Year 1	125,000
Year 2	125,000
Year 3	125,000
Year 4	<u>125,000</u>
	500,000
Total nonfederal contributions	<u>1,500,000</u>
	<u>2,000,000</u>

Planned Expenditures:

Endowment	2,000,000
Rate of return to be expended	5%
Projected annual expendable income	<u>100,000</u>
Uses of endowment income:	
Scholar salaries (4 @ \$25,000)	<u>100,000</u>

Program Evaluation

Upon completion of their tenure, fellows will be required to submit a brief report on their activities and accomplishments. These activities and accomplishments will be measured against goals cited in the original application to determine progress made. Fellows will also be asked to assess their experiences, both negative and positive. We will use this information to refine the program so that it most effectively fosters quality research and a productive experience for the fellow. We will also record the number of applications received annually and the quality of proposals received, so that through analysis we can ensure we are fulfilling real needs in the field.

Experience and Long-Term Financial Stability

Our strategic direction is guided by two overarching goals: (1) to maintain a collection of 11 historic estates and related artifacts in perpetuity, and (2) to interpret them and make them available to the public. To ensure financial stability we have established, board-approved policies guiding operating funds, working capital, operating reserves, building reserves, and endowment. Our

endowment fund is currently approximately \$30 million. We have multiple earned revenue sources, including ticket sales, food sales, membership dues, and store sales, which together account for approximately two-thirds of annual operating revenue. Our annual fund has set a new record for the past six years, most recently exceeding its \$750,000 goal by 109 percent, finishing at \$816,562.

Maintaining our historic properties is the biggest challenge the Preservation Society faces. In 1999, recognizing the need for systematic management of building maintenance, we worked with a consulting firm to create a facilities database tracking every preservation task required to maintain our buildings in good condition. The database has proved to be a major cost-cutting tool, allowing for comprehensive job bidding, economies of scale, and the ability to budget decades into the future, creating a level-funding schedule that can avoid unanticipated spikes in expenses. When first implemented, the database identified \$13 million in deferred maintenance—primarily roof replacement—which we have reduced to \$1 million.

Since its inception, the Preservation Society has conducted several successful capital fundraising campaigns to build its endowments and support the restoration of its historic properties. In the past decade we twice received competitive Save America's Treasures grants from the National Park Service of \$250,000, which we were able to leverage to raise an additional \$650,954 for The Breakers restoration project, and \$764,381 for the Chateau-sur-Mer restoration project from private foundations and individuals. (Save America's Treasures grants have since been discontinued.) The Chateau-sur-Mer restoration won an Excellence in Preservation Award from The Victorian Society in America and a Rhody Award from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and Preserve Rhode Island.

Fundraising Plan: The Comprehensive Campaign

In July 2008 the Preservation Society retained independent consultant Marts & Lundy to conduct a comprehensive planning study in anticipation of a multi-year comprehensive campaign.

Study objectives included assessing internal readiness; developing preliminary messages and themes; testing attitudes and feasibility; analyzing philanthropic capacity; defining working goals; and identifying and engaging Board leaders and senior staff.

Marts & Lundy conducted a quantitative assessment of Preservation Society capacity and staffing requirements to support a comprehensive campaign. A Campaign Planning Group of selected trustees, invited volunteers, and leadership staff was formed with the charge to advance the overall strategic direction of the Campaign, and to facilitate the work necessary to prepare for and support a successful Campaign, with a focus on leadership phase gifts, Case for Support, and steps necessary to identify and build relationships and engage prospective major supporters.

The Campaign Prospectus was refined and developed in both form and substance to a Case for Support. Expanded narrative and financial details support articulation of the overall Campaign objectives and underline a sense of urgency around funding needs. Funding priorities were established and business plans for each priority completed. These include:

1. Enhance the endowment to support the houses
2. Create a Museum Welcome Center
3. Endow the Fellows Program and establish a Scholars Center
4. Expand outreach through the creation of an endowed Public Policy Coordinator position
5. Enhance endowment to support the historic gardens and arboretum
6. Establish a Conservation and Collections Center

To test philanthropic capacity, the Preservation Society uploaded 20,000 member and donor names from its database of over 118,000 individuals, and Marts & Lundy ran a wealth assessment that identifies charitable giving capacity based on public information. Marts & Lundy then conducted face-to-face and focus group solicitation conversations with 30 individuals representing varying levels of engagement with the Preservation Society—from current donors to past attendees at events—to assess the potential size and numbers of lead and/or transformational gifts, which determine the ambition of the ultimate goal. This feasibility study revealed that the raw, untapped

philanthropic capacity of the Preservation Society is substantial, with a working range of \$50-\$75 million pending further testing.

The Preservation Society faces a special fundraising challenge: although our top donors have a high giving capacity, for most of them Newport is a second (or third) home, and their major philanthropic interests are elsewhere. Because of this challenge, we have set the Campaign goal lower than the working range suggested by the feasibility study. So as not to overreach our capacity, we have divided the Campaign into two phases. Phase One comprises priorities 1-3 and has a goal of \$17 million; Phase Two comprising priorities 4-6 is in development

A Challenge Grant from NEH will be used to fund priority three, Endowing the Fellows Program and Establishing a Scholars Center. Specifically we will use the challenge money to establish four endowed fellowships of \$500,000 each, which at an annual draw of 5 percent will provide a \$25,000 stipend for each scholar, a competitive industry rate. Each year of the challenge grant period, we will offer donors and foundations the option of making a major gift of \$375,000 to create a fellowship in their name. The (b) (4)

— is a likely prospect to match the first challenge grant opportunity. They are currently supporting a portion of the cost of construction documents for the Scholars Center renovation, and have shown great interest in the Fellows Program and its potential impact on our understanding of Newport.

With organization-wide readiness developed and a formal Campaign framework defined, the Campaign Planning Group has evolved into a more formal Campaign Steering Committee comprising 10 present and former Trustees led by three co-chairs. Our CEO, CFO, and Director of Development represent key senior staff leading the Campaign. We are in the process of hiring additional staff to support the additional needs of the Campaign.

Previous NEH and State Humanities Council Grants

In 2011 we received a planning grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for the Newport Historic Urban Plan Mapping Project (see page 16). Our most recent NEH award was a Sustaining Cultural and Heritage Collections grant in 2010 to study the potential of an aquifer beneath The Breakers to be used as a passive heating and cooling system. Finding sustainable, low impact solutions to climate modification at our large houses is essential to preserving the buildings and their collections. The feasibility study was additionally designated a “We the People” project. We also received an NEH grant in 2006 for staff training in the care of paper-based collections, and in 2003 for the reinterpretation of The Breakers.

Conclusion

Newport has a remarkable built legacy and historic resources that reflect not just the specific history of the city, but the broader cultural and social ideas of the times. From its inception it has been a gateway for artists, craftsmen, writers, poets, scientists, historians, philosophers, statesmen, and captains of industry. Each has brought their ideas to bear on the community, ensuring that Newport is a window onto an age, from the colonial era through the Gilded Age. The Fellows Program will direct the study of Newport’s cultural and social legacy and place it within a broader understanding of the humanities. It will foster an interdisciplinary, humanities approach to the arts and architecture, reflecting various perspectives from history, literature, philosophy, and cultural studies. This historically rich and diverse city will make an ideal learning center to establish community of scholars in constant learning and evaluation, and the work produced by the Fellows Program will represent a major contribution to our national conversation about American culture, history, and democracy.