



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/grants/preservation/humanities-collections-and-reference-resources> 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:** Planning for "The Greatest Digitization Project on Earth" with the P. T. Barnum Collections of The Barnum Museum Foundation

**Institution:** Barnum Museum

**Project Director:** Adrienne Saint Pierre

**Grant Program:** Humanities Collections and Reference Resources

**The Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc.**  
**Application to the NEH/Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Program**  
**Narrative**

**Significance**

*Relevance of the Collections to the Humanities*

Phineas Taylor Barnum's impact reaches deep into our American heritage, and extends far beyond his well-known circus enterprise, which was essentially his “retirement project” begun at age sixty-one. An American icon whose name is still recognized around the world, P.T. Barnum was born in Bethel, Connecticut, in 1810. He is a far more complex personality than is generally known: in addition to his career as a showman and museum proprietor, he was also a newspaper editor, entrepreneur, Mayor of Bridgeport, Connecticut legislator, urban developer, community benefactor, philanthropist, abolitionist, lecturer, and author. Throughout his adult life he remained committed to the intellectual and cultural development of society, particularly in the realm of “the common man.” He was an innovator during the age of industry, infusing the public mind with imagination, inspiring curiosity and debate, and enlightening ordinary people to the marvels the world had to offer. His spirit of promotion and his acumen for business transformed popular conceptions of the era, through his creation of instructive, moral entertainment for families. A man of endless energy fueled by a desire to push beyond conventional boundaries, Barnum developed marketing strategies that are employed even today. It is no surprise that so many people continue to be intrigued and curious about this legendary figure in American history.

The City of Bridgeport has a direct connection to P. T. Barnum and to the Barnum & Bailey circus. He took an active interest in his adopted home city and made a lasting impact. Both as Mayor (1875) and as a private citizen, he initiated and implemented numerous urban planning projects and was generous in supporting projects that improved the quality of life and cultural opportunities for the people, including creating the Barnum Institute of Science and History, now the Barnum Museum. As the circus’ winter quarters were based in Bridgeport from the early 1870s until 1927, many of the performers and other employees chose to make their homes there — even Jumbo the Elephant spent his four American winters in the city.

Barnum’s vast contributions can be studied across several disciplines and among many fields of study in the humanities, including themes and topics in studies of American social and political history, archaeology, popular culture, art history, and literature. It is virtually unlimited and wide-ranging:

- the history of entertainment and 19<sup>th</sup>-century popular culture
- the formation of the young nation’s ideals of democracy
- the creation of a uniquely “American” character and attitude
- the development of new opportunities for working and middle-class people, including their participation in social causes and political ideologies
- American’s fascination with the foreign and exotic
- the social and intellectual networks of leading 19<sup>th</sup>-century authors, politicians, newspaper editors, and entrepreneurs
- attitudes toward exotic animals and treatment of captive specimens
- the “pioneering” work of 19<sup>th</sup>-century women circus performers

Materials such as lithographs, broadsides, and photographs promoting some of Barnum’s attractions (e.g., The Family of Albinos, Chang and Eng, the Tattooed Man, and others) can be used by sociologists and anthropologists in their studies of societal norms and cultural perceptions and depictions of race, ethnicity, and disability; consumer and audience culture and tastes; or American and European perceptions of Asia and Africa. Barnum’s ingenious advertising and marketing techniques, the phenomenal success of his trans-Atlantic promotions, and his personal history as an innovative

businessman offer students of business and its history a deeper understanding of the roots of today's marketing, and reinforces the excitement of the entrepreneurial spirit. Art and cultural historians could, for example, study early circus posters and promotional materials in the context of popular tastes in art, the creation of iconographic images, or the technology of color lithography and printmaking.

Collections that support and illuminate these themes are preserved at The Barnum Museum and at the Bridgeport History Center (BHC) located in the nearby Bridgeport Public Library. The P. T. Barnum collections in these two institutions provide researchers in diverse areas of the humanities and social sciences with rich opportunities for study. Artifacts (1300) and a variety of manuscript materials (approximately 1800) are the focus of this project. The collections, including personal letters, business documents, photographs, promotional materials, handbills and broadsides, decorative arts and furniture, clothing and accessories, and artifacts of daily life, are an invaluable resource of largely unique or rare materials. In addition to documenting the personal life and careers of P. T. Barnum, the collections contain material pertaining to Barnum's associates and enterprises such as "Tom Thumb" (Charles Stratton), Lavinia Warren, and other little people; Swedish singer Jenny Lind; Jumbo the Elephant; the American Museum; Hippodrome; the Barnum & Bailey circus, and others. This initiative will concentrate on the materials associated with the lifespan of P. T. Barnum (1810-1891), covering the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and including the people and business endeavors noted above.

#### *Background of the Institutions and Collections Descriptions*

As conceived by P.T. Barnum, The Barnum Museum was established to promote the cultural heritage of Bridgeport and to serve as a permanent home for the city's scientific and medical societies, and county historical society. The Museum has thus been an educational resource and repository since it opened in 1893 as the Barnum Institute of Science and History. The original societies ceased in the 1930s, whereupon the City of Bridgeport acquired the building, maintaining one-third of the space as a museum and continuing to add to the artifacts, while manuscripts and other documents were transferred to the Bridgeport Public Library. In the mid-1960s, the building was renovated by the City and returned entirely to being a museum. In 1986, The Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc. was formed as a 501(c)(3) organization to govern and operate the City-owned building as The Barnum Museum. The Museum is designated as nationally significant on the National Register of Historic Places both for the merit of the historic structure and in recognition of Barnum's importance.

Under the Foundation's stewardship the collections, exhibitions, programming, and community outreach have expanded, and are directed by museum professionals. The Foundation's mission to be a relevant institution of learning, committed to intellectual exchange, community engagement, and dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of P.T. Barnum's legacy and his genre in American history. Collaborations and partnerships are a vital component in the Museum's activities, a particularly notable one being the Museum's work with the Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford on a "Connecticut Icons" culture and tourism project celebrating Barnum's 200<sup>th</sup> and Twain's 175<sup>th</sup> birthdays in 2010.

The Museum's collection flourishes as a repository for 50,000 objects and archival materials related to P.T. Barnum's private and social life, his various business endeavors and interests, entertainment and promotional enterprises, and his adopted home of Bridgeport and its industrial history. Approximately one-third of the current holdings are original to the Barnum Institute's collections; many were donated by P. T. Barnum or his family, and their descendants. Since the mid-1970s, the Museum has substantially expanded its holdings relating to Barnum. The core of Barnum-related items, numbering over 1,300, constitutes the collection most frequently used by the Museum and requested by others.

Among the artifacts to be included in this project are Barnum's unpublished letter copy book from the mid-1840s when he was touring Europe; original copies of Barnum's newspaper, *Herald of Freedom*, published in Danbury in the 1830s; Barnum's circa 1830 rabbit-fur top hat with the Hartford maker's

label; a suite of elaborate Julius Dessoir furniture commissioned by Barnum for his Oriental villa *Iranistan*; a carved grotesque face from *Iranistan*, the only architectural element saved when it burned in 1857; large-format photographs of the interiors of Barnum's later Bridgeport mansions; a buffalo horn chair from Barnum's "wild west" trip with Buffalo Bill in 1870; rare daguerreotypes of the young Tom Thumb; and custom-made clothing and accessories worn by Tom Thumb and his fashion-conscious wife Lavinia Warren, as well as her miniature dress form with corset and gown. Also of note are three miniature carriages used by Tom Thumb and "Commodore Nutt," including a carved, walnut-shaped coach; a handkerchief printed with cartoons lambasting Barnum for "taking" Jumbo from the English people; and original programs from Jenny Lind's American Tour in 1850. A most unusual item is a slice of wedding cake in its original small box, a gift to a Connecticut guest at Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren's "Fairy Wedding" in 1863.

In many instances there are links between artifacts and manuscript materials. Examples include photographs and an early print showing Tom Thumb with miniature carriages; Fairy Wedding promotional items, the wedding cake memento, and the bride's wedding scrapbook and bridal wreath; a brass canopy bed presented to Tom Thumb by Queen Victoria in 1844 and an English oil portrait of the child celebrity from the same year, along with Barnum's letters written while he and Tom Thumb were on their European tour; a daguerreotype of Tom Thumb dressed in character as Napoleon, his actual "Napoleon hat" and tall boots, and a rare children's book from 1850 discussing his politically-correct decision *not* to appear before the French public in this particular costume.

The Barnum Museum is one block from the Bridgeport Public Library, where the Bridgeport History Center (BHC), the Museum's collaborative partner for the project, is located. The BHC operates as a research center with special collections and archives within a larger, municipal public library system. The BHC was created in 1936 by the Library and the Bridgeport Centennial Committee, in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's incorporation. Prior to 1936, the Library collected manuscripts and records in a core collection from several early sources, including the now-defunct Fairfield County Historical Society and the Bridgeport Scientific Society that were housed in The Barnum Institute of Science and History. These collections were placed with the BHC, and over the years, the collections have grown through donations and library purchases. In addition to the local history collections, genealogy collections, and a special collection relating to labor history, highlights of the BHC include the papers of P.T. Barnum, Barnum's enterprises, and extensive materials relating to circus history.

The BHC is a repository of Barnum's letters (over 200) dating from 1832 to 1890; among them, notable figures such as Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) and James Bailey were regular correspondents. These letters reveal Barnum's extraordinary business management acumen as well as personal and philanthropic activities. The BHC also has one of the most complete collections of extremely scarce circus route books that were published during Barnum's career with the circus, from 1872 until his death in 1891. Its circus poster collection includes forty-seven rare Barnum and London circus posters dating from 1882-1885. Because of the close proximity and shared interest in collections, it is appropriate and of greater value to potential users that Barnum-related items from both institutions were selected for the proposed project.

#### *Current Use of the P.T. Barnum Collections*

Normally, the Museum is open to the public six days a week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Currently, the Museum's 1893 landmark historic structure is closed to the public because structural damage caused by a tornado strike in June, 2010. Despite the ongoing disaster recovery process, and the extended time required to repair and restore the historic structure, the Museum is fully committed to advancing its educational mission and serving its audiences, including those who request access to items in the collections. After out-loading the collections from the historic structure to secure storage in an adjacent,

safe building, some collection material is on view in an adjacent gallery space on a reduced schedule. The exhibition, *Recovery in Action!*, highlights the recovery effort and has allowed for programmatic activities, some in the Museum, some collaborative, that feature artifacts and documents in the collection. Museum staff continues to work regular hours during the week, and thus collection materials can be accessed by appointment, Monday through Fridays. Ironically, since the tornado, the Museum has been working with more on-site researchers and other users (filmmakers, television production teams, enthusiast groups) than ever, averaging five such visits per month.

The Museum and BHC regularly fulfill Barnum-related requests from patrons on a national and international basis, including scholars, students, teachers, enthusiasts, genealogists, university professors, museum curators, popular writers, journalists, publishers, filmmakers, production studios, galleries, antique collectors, circus performers, and local groups such as the organizers of the annual Barnum Festival. Inquiries are made on every conceivable topic, general to specific, demonstrating how diverse and far-reaching Barnum's influence was.

The Civil War sesquicentennial has generated inquiries concerning Barnum's anti-slavery views and political activities. The Museum also receives inquiries about Barnum's support of temperance, and his 1850 play, *The Drunkard*, which served a dual purpose of entertainment and moral teaching. Other requests pertain to performers associated with Barnum's enterprises. Women's studies researchers ask about the pioneering women performers and "daredevils" like equestrian-gymnast, Rose Wentworth. Popular culture historians are interested in topics about P.T. Barnum's life and career, and about "Tom Thumb," a native of Bridgeport whose career with Barnum began as a very young child. Sociologists and anthropologists have been interested in studying the depiction of race, foreign cultures, and people with extraordinary differences, and researching famous hoaxes of 19<sup>th</sup> century America. The 4,000-year-old Egyptian mummy, Pa-Ib, which was donated by Barnum's widow to the Bridgeport Scientific Society, has been included in current research by scholars and curators at Yale University, who are examining Victorian-era popular interest in science and the "craze" for all things Egyptian, and in S. J. Wolfe's study, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts*.

Museum staff responds to an average of thirty collections-related telephone and email inquiries per month, and to twenty Facebook and Twitter responses to our collection-focused posts and programs related to collections. The Museum also frequently receives Barnum queries that would more likely be answered with the documentary holdings at the BHC, and such inquiries are re-directed to them. Currently, the Museum has no electronic research finding aids for its manuscript collections, but uses Past Perfect and Filemaker Pro to track and catalogue artifacts, documents, and bibliographic materials. Its web site, [barnummuseumexhibitions.org](http://barnummuseumexhibitions.org), features selected artifacts from the collection in video presentations and virtual exhibitions, and artifacts and documents illustrate blogs by Collections staff, but access to artifact images in the virtual exhibits is cumbersome for anyone trying to do serious research.

The BHC continually attempts to serve more researchers and expand the use of its collections by the broadest possible public. The BHC regularly conducts programming, maintains a department web [[bportlibrary.org/hc/](http://bportlibrary.org/hc/)] site and a Bridgeport labor history web site [[brideporhistory.org](http://brideporhistory.org)], installs small exhibits with collection items at the library, and engages in cooperative projects with the Bridgeport schools. The BHC is open to the public twenty-one hours a week and plans to expand public hours within the next year (2013) to meet the needs of the approximately 500 visitors each month. Electronic finding aids are not yet available for a large portion of the collections, and it is one of the BHC's primary goals to attain this level of access, especially for its most heavily requested collections.

The collection has been featured in a variety of publications. Eric Lehman, Director of Creative Writing at the University of Bridgeport, has been studying photographs and documents in preparation for his forthcoming biography of Charles Stratton, *Becoming Tom Thumb*, to be released in Fall 2013 by

Wesleyan University Press. Children's book author Elizabeth Raum recently looked at materials pertaining to the celebrated 1863 "Fairy Wedding" of Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren, in preparation for a book aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders learning about the Civil War period. Similar artifacts were examined by a New York University student working on her Master's thesis about Lavinia Warren, and her work was presented at two national conferences of academics and curators. Author Bluford Adams researched the BHC's circus collection for his work, *E. Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* and the Kunhardt family of authors and producers made heavy use of the BHC's Barnum collection for their illustration-rich biography, *P.T. Barnum: America's Greatest Showman*. Historian and noted Barnum scholar Neil Harris, who will be part of the Project Team, conducted research at the BHC for his work, *Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum*.

Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) recently filmed dozens of Barnum items in the Museum's collection for a documentary entitled *Prohibition: Connecticut Goes Dry* (a follow-up to Ken Burns' documentary on the Prohibition years) which will air in November 2012. In June 2012, a British television production crew came to the Museum to film a segment for a well-known series aired by the BBC (details cannot be publicized yet); the use of Barnum-associated documents in the segment was critical to the program's storyline.

The Museum regularly loans items from its collections to other institutions. Recent loans have gone to the Bruce Museum (Greenwich, Conn.); Mattatuck Museum (Waterbury, Conn.); Berkshire Museum (Pittsfield, Mass.); and Fairfield Museum and History Center (Fairfield, Conn.). From August 2012 to January 2013, eleven important artifacts relating to Barnum, the American Museum, and Tom Thumb will be loaned to the Bard Graduate Center (New York City) for their exhibition *Circus and the City*, and images of these included in the accompanying catalogue. In April 2013, the Museum's 4000-year-old mummy and 2500-year-old coffin will be loaned for the exhibition *Egyptomania* at Yale University's Peabody Museum; images of the mummy and coffin will be included in the catalogue.

The project will involve key activities critical to developing a comprehensive plan for a future digitization project. Digitization will allow the P. T. Barnum collections to be used by a broader audience, as they will be available through online resources that aggregate digital material from many cultural institutions and are therefore more readily discovered by potential users. Electronic finding aids and bibliographic descriptions will be created during the course of this project and made available immediately through online resources.

### **History, Scope and Duration**

The proposed project grew out of the Museum's desire to meet the expectations of today's researchers for access to digital resources, respond more effectively to queries by having greater intellectual control over its own material and better knowledge of the BHC's, and to stay connected with its audiences despite the building's closure. This has come to the forefront because of the recovery effort, a tragedy the Museum sees as an opportunity. Instead of merely fixing the structure and re-installing collections in old gallery spaces, the Museum is undertaking a re-examination of all operations, including programs, core exhibitions, and outreach. To start the process, the Museum hosted a Scholars Roundtable, funded by the Connecticut Humanities Council, whose purpose was to begin planning for new core exhibitions when the museum re-opens. Ten scholars from Connecticut, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York whose fields of interest and expertise relate to the collections participated in the discussions and responded to a summary report by the facilitator. Among scholars' recommendations was that the Museum create collections-based digital content to use in multiple applications.

To fulfill this recommendation, the Museum approached the Bridgeport Public Library and BHC since a "Barnum" digitization project would have far greater impact if both institutions' collections were

involved. A more comprehensive resource would be made available, both institutions would gain detailed, useful knowledge about the content of the other's collections, and an intellectual "bridge" between the two would be established. Both share a strong interest in creating global access to these important humanities collections by creating digital content that will be available via the internet. The staff agreed to pursue the NEH Foundations grant as a way to effectively plan for such a project, bringing together a project team with the knowledge and expertise needed to guide the planning. Further discussions identified the parameters of the material that would be the focus of the project, the need for scholarly evaluation of the collections, technical advice, and guidance on the management of a digitization project and sustainable outcomes.

The Museum staff then contacted those who could provide expertise and advice about planning for such an endeavor, and who have excellent knowledge of Connecticut's cultural heritage digital resources. They included the Project Director of Connecticut History Online (CHO), Kathleen Foulke, and Gregory Colati, the University of Connecticut (UConn)'s Director of University Archives and Special Collections at the Dodd Research Center, who also oversees the infrastructure supporting CHO. Through these conversations it was discovered that they were not only planning for an expansion of that digital repository portal (which currently includes content from only a few Connecticut institutions), but also to build the infrastructure for a Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) which would be a sustainable, state-wide aggregate of digital cultural content and serve as a preservation repository maintained by the university. Connecticut cultural content held in the CTDA could be made available to an even larger aggregator, such as the Digital Public Library of America being developed by Harvard University. UConn and CHO are also submitting a proposal to NEH for an HCRR *Foundations* grant. The projects represent two ends of the spectrum: theirs to create a larger, stronger infrastructure; and the Museum's, to create the kind of digital content they would be seeking to include in state-wide digital repository. UConn has invited the Museum and BHC to participate in a number of its planning activities, including two plenary sessions, and Work Groups that will be formed to address issues of Governance, Technology, Access and Use, and Content and Scope.

### **Methodology and Standards**

The project team will consist of Museum and BHC staff working with professionals with exceptional knowledge and expertise in curatorial, archival, academic, library information service, preservation assessment, and digitization areas. The project is designed to gather and synthesize information from all relevant facets of the institutions' operations and collection holdings, and evaluate the potential to support a future digitization and access project.

The methods will include multi-day on-site evaluations, technical consultations, and facilitated structured meetings attended by all team members. These activities will culminate in reports from the individual consultants that will be compiled and synthesized by the Museum and BHC. Podio, a project management tool that supports remote collaboration and facilitates communications with tools, such as online meetings, will be used to manage documents such as assessment tools, evaluations, and reports and to develop a collaborative approach that results in integrated outcomes. Team members will be given access to the project material that is generated throughout the course of the year. Management of the project will be the responsibility of a Project Coordinator who has directed other grant projects, such as the Museum's CT Humanities Council's grant.

Dr. Katherine C. Grier (University of Delaware) and Dr. Neil Harris (University of Chicago) will conduct on-site reviews of the Barnum-related material. Dr. Grier will focus on the artifacts (primarily at the Museum), and evaluate them using a rubric (see Appendix 1) to ensure consistency of the assessment, and to inform the preparation of a comprehensive report. Descriptions of sub-collections and identification of key items, their relative rareness and their potential utility and value to humanities research will form the

core of report. Dr. Grier will also recommend guidelines for prioritizing material to be digitized; unlike the relatively rapid digital capture processes for most flat material, three-dimensional artifacts can be time-consuming to prepare. Dr. Grier was chosen for this project because of her background in 19<sup>th</sup>-century American material culture and history, and her experience as a curator. She recently worked with The Barnum Museum to help plan, facilitate and summarize the results of a two-day Scholars Roundtable that focused on planning for new core exhibitions when Museum restoration is completed. She thus has familiarity with the overall content of the collection and the kinds of interpretive themes and humanities research topics that it would support.

Dr. Harris will assess the manuscript materials, using BHC's existing inventory for the P. T. Barnum Collection. He will produce a report containing a discussion of the research value of collection materials including the relative rareness of the materials, an assessment of their depth and breadth, the quality and diversity of potential research topics and themes, and their overall value to humanities research. Dr. Harris will also concentrate on developing a better level of description for individual collection areas, and these descriptions will be included in his report and evaluation. They will follow professional standards as outlined in the Newberry Library's in-house processing manual, which is based on archival publications such as Fredric M. Miller's *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (1990).

Dr. Harris' work may also help to identify particular strengths and gaps in the collecting activities that the library has engaged in to date for Barnum materials. Dr. Harris is familiar with the BHC collections, having used them when he was conducting research for his biography, *Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum*. He participated in the Museum's recent Scholars Roundtable and was introduced (via an overview and a tour) to the P. T. Barnum collections in the Museum's holdings. Dr. Harris's contributions to the Roundtable discussion of humanities themes and topics and interpretive approaches were brilliantly articulated, and in the Museum's opinion, he is the most qualified scholar to conduct the review of Barnum-related manuscripts.

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) will provide consulting services to assist with the identification, investigation, analysis, recommendation of workflow, software, hardware, and infrastructure components required for a digitization project. Two consultants, Jessica Branco Colati, Director of Preservation Services, and Angelina Altobellis, Preservation Specialist, will be involved in an on-site assessment for both institutions, including a full day of advance preparation for the visit, and will facilitate two focus groups to better inform the process and delivery decisions. They will produce a report that identifies strategies and best practices for the creation, capture and management of digital content and metadata, and discusses the positioning of content and data to readily produce Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids and support other discovery tools. They will also address the potential integration of digital objects produced by the BHC and Museum into the planned Connecticut Digital Archive, and their long-term preservation. During the course of the project they will produce a preliminary report with findings from the institutional assessment site visits and first focus group. After the second focus group meeting, they will revise the report to make it more comprehensive and include recommendations for additional resources to explore. NEDCC was chosen for this project because of their long experience serving collecting institutions of all sizes, types and capacities; their well-honed assessment methods that employ standards and best practices; and their responsiveness to the evolving preservation and access needs faced by cultural heritage institutions.

Paul Mutino is a professional photographer who has a strong background in working with museums to photograph their art and artifacts. The Museum has worked with Mr. Mutino on several occasions, and observed that he is aware of and respects museum practices, and is a skilled photographer, experienced in working with all types of artifacts, who is sensitive to the aesthetics of creating museum artifact images. He will consult on-site with the Museum staff after the artifact assessment has taken place and a better idea of the priorities, types, and numbers has been established. He will devise possible workflow



arrangements and address efficiencies. His knowledge of standards and best practices in creating and preserving digital objects will be incorporated in a report, which will also contain a method of calculating the time and costs relative to photographing different categories of objects. This information will be crucial to estimating what will undoubtedly be a substantial portion of the digitization costs.

Michael J. Bennett, Digital Products Librarian at the University of Connecticut and Head of their Digital Capture Unit will offer his advice and recommendations to the BHC and Museum. Mr. Bennett will do this as an outreach service of the University, in a one-day technical consultation. Mr. Bennett is the technical advisor for the Connecticut History Online project, and is thus very familiar with the variety of formats and materials of two-dimensional items in the P. T. Barnum collections.

The primary Museum project staff includes Adrienne Saint-Pierre, Collections Manager, who will act as Project Coordinator. She will be supervised by Kathleen Maher, Executive Director and Curator. Other staff members Melissa Houston, a part-time Registrar, who will provide collection materials, and John Temple Swing, Business Manager, who oversees the technical infrastructure at the Museum. They will be joined by BHC's Archivists, Mary Witkowski and Elizabeth Van Tuyl, their part-time Curator and a part-time Librarian with experience in the development of digital resources. Both are extremely enthusiastic about undertaking this planning project, which will further their goals for improving access to the P. T. Barnum collection and gaining better intellectual control over the material.

The project activities depend on communication that will take place on-site, and remotely via email, telephone, and by utilizing Podio online work platform. On-site collaborative work with staff; the overlapping of the scholars' on-site visits; and two on-site focus group sessions attended by the primary team members will facilitate the work of the entire team and be channeled toward achieving a thorough, comprehensive final product and substantive outcomes. An allowance of time for remote communications has been built into the primary consultants' work plan and the time commitment for which they are being paid, to ensure that sharing of information and ideas is not put aside. For example, the scholars may wish to add to an earlier on-site discussion that considers how items from the Museum and BHC collections might be presented together for example, in a combined digital collections presentation that would provide researchers with broad access to institutional holdings. A schedule of meetings between the Museum and BHC staff will be established at the outset to ensure regular communication, compatible scheduling of activities, and to help and inform one another regarding progress or issues. The NEDCC facilitated focus groups, occurring in the early and later phases of the project, are intended to provide a framework for broad decision-making, from agreeing on specific goals and needs at the outset, to discussing and summarizing findings and helping the BHC and Museum determine priorities and next steps for its implementation planning. The one-on-one format of the two technical advisors' consultations will allow each institution to address their particular concerns.

After the Foundations project work is complete, the BHC staff archivists will use Dr. Harris's and Dr. Grier's report and worksheets with the expanded collections descriptions to assess the processing needs and priorities of the collections, conduct a formal arrangement and description, and create collection finding aids beyond the mere inventory level. Newly formulated finding aids can be immediately converted to .pdf format and mounted on BHC's web site along with Dr. Harris's collection descriptions. Dr. Harris will produce a report with detailed descriptions of individual thematic areas of the Barnum Collection that addresses the extent and relevance of the materials to Humanities research. This report will be placed on the BHC's web site.

The BHC will prepare collection and sub-collection bibliographic records for its OPAC, WorldCat and NUCMUC. This will guide a next step, creating individual records for a small number of single items or a "sub-collection" record as test model that would have potential utility for a digital resource portal like

Connecticut History Online. BHC would likely utilize recently created digital images of early Barnum posters from a National Park Service *Save America's Treasures* grant.

### **Sustainability of project outcomes and digital content**

An immediate and highly useful outcome of the project will be that the BHC and Museum will be better able to serve researchers with increased knowledge of each other's holdings and improved access. The reports, and subsequently created finding aids and collections descriptions, will ensure that this knowledge is part of each institution's history.

The Museum will use the scholars' reports to improve object records in the collections database, add descriptive content about the Barnum-related materials to its web site, and devise an organizational tool to prioritize artifacts for digitization and build them into categories organized by photographic requirements. Using the knowledge and recommendations gained, the Museum will, following this project, produce test models of digital objects (images, metadata, and catalog information). Existing professional photography of Barnum items will likely guide the choice for the first examples, however other items will be selected to experiment with and test workflow and artifact category standards.

Staff participation in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) project planning activities over the course of the project period will establish ongoing communications with UConn/ CHO, its partners, contributors, and other institutions in the state. Museum and BHC staff will continue to attend meetings and participate in other work groups as they arise, and will make digital content available to CTDA for test instances if requested.

The BHC will use the technical advice to create EAD finding aids, and assist the Museum in creating them for their archival collections. The staff has engaged in EAD training in the past and the BHC is prepared to pay for additional training if necessary so that the library can encode numerous finding aids for its holdings moving forward. In doing so, the library will truly be able to join a world platform for collections information provision, because it will be possible to link to searchable finding aids from both local catalogs and websites and national platforms such as WorldCat and OCLC's ArchiveGrid database. The BHC will assist the Museum in creating and entering bibliographic records into WorldCat.

Sustainability will be achieved through the compilation and synthesis of consultants' reports, and ongoing (post-grant) activities designed to strengthen intellectual control of the collections and create improved levels of access. The consultants' reports, in conjunction with the acquired technical advice and recommendations, will give staff the knowledge and tools to implement the plan and manage the digitization project.

### **Dissemination**

Collection-level catalog records for different areas of the BHC's P. T. Barnum Collection will be created in MARC format and made available on the Bridgeport Public Library's online catalog which is part of a 50+ library consortium and the Connecticut-based ReQuest catalog. They will also be accessible through OCLC WorldCat, its free web portal, and the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections free web gateway to the OCLC database.

The planning activities of this project will serve as a model that will be shared with other institutions and cultural heritage organizations. In bringing together important humanities resources from a museum and

library, the project will undoubtedly be of interest to the smaller and mid-size history organizations that, in many cases, would need to partner with a library in order to make their collections accessible through digitization. To further disseminate the project's results, staff will make presentations about this project at conferences or programs such as those organized by the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO), New England Museum Association (NEMA), American Institute for Conservation of Artistic and Historic Works (AIC); IMLS's Connecting to Collections initiative, and the Society of American Archivists (SAA).

Finally, in collaboration with the BHC, the Museum will produce a "white paper" summarizing the project and will provide this to the NEH for distribution.

### **Work Plan**

A schedule of the Work Plan is attached. Starting in May 2013, the first phases include preparatory work and the first on-site visits by the NEDCC. Their second visit will occur toward the project's end, in March/April 2014. In June 2013, the Drs. Grier and Harris will begin their assessments. Their activities, including their reports, will be completed by November. Consultations with the photograph and digital librarian will occur in late 2013/early 2014.

Concurrent with these activities, staff will be attending CHO plenary sessions and actively participating in their Work Groups, updating collections records as data is received, and creating finding aids, amongst other activities. They will complete the project by synthesizing all reports for distribution to all involved, and determining next steps for implementation of the plan.

### **Staff & Consultants**

#### *Staff*

The **Barnum Museum** staff members who will be most directly involved in this planning project are Kathleen Maher (Executive Director and Curator); Adrienne Saint-Pierre (Collections Manager); Melissa Houston (Registrar, part-time); and John Temple Swing (Business Manager).

Ms. Saint-Pierre will serve as the Project Coordinator and ensure that the consultants and staff function as a team, and are unified in their knowledge of the project goals and how each person's work relates to others. Ms. Saint-Pierre will manage the scheduling of consultants' on-site visits, the compilation of consultants' reports, and internal records of the project activities project activities and meetings, conferring with BHC staff to ensure that the timing respects their mandate to serve the public. She will assist with travel arrangements and schedule regular meetings of Museum and BHC staff to monitor progress and address any issues that arise.

With Ms. Houston, Ms. Saint-Pierre will prepare the Museum's artifact collections for review and work closely with the scholars on-site; they will also structure an optimal workflow for the review process. They will continue to build to the Museum's Past Perfect collections database in order to capture data on Barnum-related items. They will attend the UConn/CHO digital archives plenary sessions and take an active role in their Content and Scope work group. Both Ms. Saint-Pierre and Ms. Houston will devote 33% of their time to the project.

Mr. Swing, Ms. Houston, and Ms. Saint-Pierre will support the NEDCC's pre- and post-visit information requests, with Mr. Swing taking primary responsibility for the communications. He will also take the lead with the NEDCC site visit assessment of the Museum, participate in the focus group sessions, and in some of the UConn/CHO digital archive planning activities. Mr. Swing will be responsible for the

management of grant monies, financial reporting, and issuing payments to the consultants. Ten percent of Mr. Swing's time will be devoted to this project.

Ms. Maher will participate in the NEDCC site visit and focus group sessions, and will be directly involved in content discussions with the scholars and other staff. She will review all reports generated during the project and regularly report to the Board of Directors on the progress, recommendations, and outcomes. Over the course of the year, she will devote 10% of her time to the project.

The **Bridgeport History Center** staff who will be directly involved in the project are Mary Witkowski (Department Head and Archivist); Elizabeth Van Tuyl (Assistant Archivist); Benjamin Ortiz (Curator, part-time); and Michael Bellacosa (Librarian, part-time).

Mary K. Witkowski will help coordinate the advisors and work with her own staff to streamline efforts to complete the work as efficiently as possible. She will be adding records to the BHC's Past Perfect collections database. Elizabeth VanTuyl will work closely with Ms. Witkowski to create a, more accurate inventory, and prepare the collections for review. Both Ms. Witkowski and Ms. Van Tuyl will work closely with Dr. Harris during his on-site review, consult with Mr. Bennett on recommendations regarding the digitization of fragile flat materials, and participate in the NEDCC focus groups and on-site assessment and the UConn/CHO Connecticut Digital Archive planning activities. Over the course of the project period, Ms. Van Tuyl and Ms. Witkowski will each devote 33% of their time to this project. Benjamin Ortiz is a part time employee (10 hours a week) and will spend 25% of his time on the project, primarily to assist in identifying images. A new part-time staff member at the BHC, librarian Michael Bellacosa is currently assisting with digital projects, and will spend 25% of his time assisting Ms. Van Tuyl and Ms. Witkowski on tasks related to this project.

#### *Consultants*

**Dr. Katherine C. (Kasey) Grier** is a Professor of History at the University of Delaware, where she is also the Director of the Museum Studies Program. She received her doctorate from the University of Delaware, and has curated exhibitions on topics of American popular culture. Dr. Grier will review and evaluate Barnum-related artifacts at the Museum as well as a few non-manuscript items at the BHC. Dr. Grier will spend five days on-site to do the assessment,. She will also participate with other Project Team members in the two focus group meetings facilitated by the Northeast Document Conservation Center consultants. Up to three additional days are planned for these activities and, as described below, for on-site discussions with Dr. Neil Harris, who will be reviewing the BHC collection. Two days of communications time, and two additional days to complete the report are included in the work plan.

**Dr. Neil Harris**, the Preston and Sterling Morton Professor Emeritus in the Departments of History and Art History, University of Chicago, is a noted Barnum scholar who received his PhD from Harvard University. The author of several books that focus on aspects of the evolution of American culture, Dr. Harris has written about American art, artists, and art collecting; American entertainment; and the development of American museums, libraries, and learned societies to name only a few topics. Dr. Harris's biographical work, *Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum* (1973), remains the most authoritative. In addition to his assessment of documentary materials and on-site meetings, he will also participate in the NEDCC focus group discussions. Up to eight days have been allotted for the on-site review, plus two half days for the focus groups. Four additional days are allotted for communications and report writing.

**Jessica Branco Colati**, Director of Preservation Services at the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, Mass holds a Masters degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons College in Boston. **Angelina Altobellis** is a Preservation Specialist NEDCC. She received her Masters degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons College. Together, they will be responsible for consultation activities designed to guide the Museum and Library in planning for a future digitization

project. They will conduct an assessment of the Museum's and BHC's capacities and needs, facilitate two focus group sessions with all members of the Project Team, and prepare preliminary and final reports. Eight days of time have been allotted for the NEDCC consultation, including a total of three days of on-site time.

**Paul Mutino** is a professional photographer based in Port Chester, New York. Mr. Mutino's clients include art and history museums in the United States and Europe. He has extensive experience with digital photography of museum objects and artwork, and in digital image capture, standards for master files, and digital preservation management. Mr. Mutino will provide two days of on-site consulting for the Museum, working with the Collections Manager and Curator to develop the standards and guidelines for photography of diverse types of artifacts, and will summarize this in a report.

**Michael J. Bennett** is the Digital Production Librarian at the University of Connecticut's Homer Babbidge Library, where he serves as Head of their Digital Capture Unit. Mr. Bennett's will provide one day of consultation and technical advice as an outreach courtesy of the University of Connecticut. Mr. Bennett will address issues associated with the digitization of fragile, primarily flat, materials, therefore the majority of his time and recommendations will be devoted to the BHC collections, which are largely two-dimensional. Mr. Bennett will also examine the Museum's unpublished 1840s copy-book containing letters by Barnum on thin, translucent pages. The Museum considers this assessment a high priority due to the richness of the content, but its fragility requires special handling during digitization that needs to be addressed. Staff will work with Mr. Bennett during the review of selected items, and will include his recommendations in the project report summary.