

For Immediate Release

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**National Heritage Museum
Awarded Prestigious Grant from
Institute of Museum and Library Services**

The National Heritage Museum has been awarded an American Heritage Preservation grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support conservation and archival housing for three fraternal banners in the permanent collection. The Museum is one of only four institutions in the state to receive an award.

The IMLS grant is particularly important to the National Heritage Museum due to the nature of the Masonic and fraternal collections. Many of the objects in the Museum's holdings are not widely collected by other history museums, and the staff often has to devise creative solutions to store the objects and to conserve them.

“This grant will allow us to extend our careful and creative search for appropriate storage solutions to our banner collection,” said Aimee E. Newell, Ph.D., Director of Collections. “Part of the funding will allow us to fabricate custom storage boxes for two of the banners. These custom archival boxes will not only protect these fragile silk items, but will incorporate a padded resting board allowing us to display the objects with significantly less danger of damage.”

“The Museum serves as a model for many Masonic museums and libraries here and abroad,” continued Newell. “The IMLS grant is very important in supporting our efforts to preserve parts of American fraternal history that are in danger of disappearing. We are extremely grateful for the funding.”

Banners were an important component of American fraternal activities. These colorful textiles were used inside lodges, in parades, and at cornerstone layings and other public ceremonies. Two of the banners are from the Scottish Rite Freemasons of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, the Museum's parent organization. The third was originally used by the fraternal group known as the Journeymen Stonecutters Association.

American Heritage Preservation Program grants are used by small museums, libraries, and archives to help to preserve specific items, including works of art, artifacts and historical documents that are in need of conservation. Applicants will build on completed conservation assessments of their collections, to ensure that the grants are used in accordance with best practices in the field, and underscore the importance of assessment planning. Nearly 190 million objects in U.S. collections are in immediate danger of deterioration and need restoration or conservation, according to the Heritage Health Index report.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.imls.gov.

The National Heritage Museum is dedicated to presenting exhibitions and programs on a wide variety of topics in American history and popular culture. The Museum is supported by the Scottish Rite Freemasons in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. The National Heritage Museum is located at 33 Marrett Road in Lexington, at the corner of Route 2A and Massachusetts Avenue. The Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am–4:30 pm. Admission and parking are free. For further information, contact the Museum at (781) 861-6559 or visit the web site at www.nationalheritagemuseum.org.