



Submitting: Association of Research Libraries
Testimony for: Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment & Related Agencies,
Committee on Appropriations
Department: National Endowment for
the Humanities

April 26, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

On behalf of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), I write to express strong support for funding of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Division of Preservation and Access. With NEH's support, libraries engage in numerous activities to preserve and provide access to our local, state, national, and international cultural heritage. ARL also urges you to support the overall funding for NEH at the level of \$232.5 million, an increase of \$65 million over FY 2010. Additional appropriations would permit the Agency to address the high level of unmet needs by supporting a greater number of humanities projects including those focused on preserving our heritage.

NEH funding is central to libraries across the country as this funding supports core activities including the preservation of unique collections, the training of librarians to preserve these culturally valuable resources, and importantly, making research tools broadly available for use by scholars and the public. For example, NEH funding supports regional field offices and academic programs in conservation as well as providing individual awards that support basic preservation activities in libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations throughout the United States. This support includes preservation training programs that reach thousands of individuals across the United States. NEH support of workforce development and training efforts is critically important as librarians, archivists, and museum professionals employ digital and networked-based technologies while, at the same time, preserve books, manuscripts, photographs, and other artifacts in many other formats. Recent examples of NEH grants in each of these areas include:

- A regional preservation field service program will provide preservation surveys, workshops, technical consultations, and educational materials to museums and historical organizations in California, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington; Balboa Art Conservation Center, San Diego, CA.

- Curriculum modules and a virtual laboratory for graduate-level coursework in preserving and enhancing access to digital humanities resources will be developed. In addition, these will be used in the Digital Preservation Management Workshop, a continuing education program by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Access to these educational resources via the Internet vastly expands the number of individuals who can benefit from this training; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.
- The digitization of 10,000 rare or unique late 19th and early 20th century musical scores and books for online access through the university's digital repository, the re-housing of original materials, and the production of preservation photocopies will be undertaken; University of Rochester, Rochester, NY.

In addition to funding training and preservation activities, the NEH Division of Preservation and Access also provides awards to support the creation of a wide range of research tools and reference works such as online encyclopedias, ancient language dictionaries, and catalogs of rare materials. Support of these diverse projects results in broad access to important educational reference works and creates new analytical capabilities that allows for widespread participation in research by students and teachers. Such projects and authoritative reference tools build the foundation for research, and in digital form, enable broad and effective access to these resources. Examples of recent awards include:

- A project to add 30,000 additional entries to the comprehensive Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings (1900-1950), which is a freely available, searchable electronic database of master recordings and published discs made by the Victor Talking Machine Company; University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.
- Digital archiving of endangered Mexican and South American linguistic materials to be made accessible by the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America; University of Texas, Austin, TX.
- The collaboration among the Autry National Center/Southwest Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Anthropological Archives, and the National Museum of Natural History to federate databases focused on Native American collections and share the data in new ways with tribal colleges and community members; American Indian Higher Education Consortium, Alexandria, VA.
- The digitization of 29 unique audio collections created on lacquer and aluminum discs and fragile reel-to-reel tape that document Native American, African American, and Anglo American oral traditions, as well as those of other immigrant populations in the United States; Indiana University-Bloomington, Bloomington, IN.

Finally, the Division of Preservation and Access has provided support to stabilize humanities collections for institutions whose collections and facilities were adversely

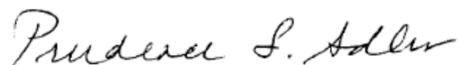
affected by disasters. Learning from the experiences of cultural institutions during and after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, NEH now funds emergency response projects so that these institutions are prepared in the case of an emergency. For example,

- The hiring of a preservation consultant to conduct a training workshop in emergency response procedures and provide advice for the purchase of basic emergency supplies for the Coachella Valley Emergency Preparedness Network. This consortium includes three historical societies, an historic home, two Native American museums, a separate tribal collection, an aviation museum, a military museum, and a modern art museum. Collectively, these institutions hold 400 cubic feet of archeological materials, 600 baskets, 150 paintings, 16,000 color slides, 1,500 photos, 100 maps, 25 linear feet of archival materials, 825 audio and video recordings, 3,000 volumes and 84 periodical titles; Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, Palm Springs, CA.

In FY 2009, the NEH Division of Preservation and Access received 512 funding applications for a total of \$68.007 million. NEH was able to support 170 of those requests for a total of \$20.462 million (some of these funds also supported We the People grants). Clearly, the need for federal funding in support of preservation and access activities far exceeds available resources. ARL urges Members of the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to consider additional funds for the NEH Preservation and Access Division activities and for NEH overall.

ARL very much appreciates the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies' support for NEH's preservation and access activities in the past and requests your ongoing support as you and other members of the Subcommittee consider the NEH Fiscal Year 2011 budget request. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please let me know if there is additional information that I can provide.

Sincerely,



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