

EXPLORING THE HUMAN ENDEAVOR
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES
ANNUAL REPORT

2016



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

November 2017

Dear Mr. President,

It is an honor to present the 2016 Annual Report for the National Endowment for the Humanities. The period covered in this report ran from October 2015 through September 2016, when NEH was under the leadership of Chairman William D. Adams.

As the 50th anniversary year of NEH came to a close in 2016, the Endowment examined its role in leading the way for the future of the humanities, especially in the public sphere.

The public's great appetite for substantive programming in the humanities was demonstrated at NEH-related events over the year. Crowds lined up to hear authors such as Junot Díaz and Salman Rushdie give talks at a four-day public conference last September in Charlottesville, Virginia, called Human/Ties. More filled auditoriums to learn about popular new podcasts in the humanities and to hear how the humanities help us understand war.

NEH is helping authors bring forth important stories through a Public Scholar Program that is funding well-researched books in the humanities intended to reach a broad readership. One of the first books in this category, published in 2016, is *One World Trade Center* by Judith Dupré, a beautiful and deeply researched “biography” of the rebuilding of the World Trade Center after 9/11. It is a complicated story that Dupré delivers accurately and accessibly.

Bringing the humanities into the lives of all Americans is an ongoing mission of the Endowment. This mission is fulfilled in part through a partnership with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to give second lives to important out-of-print books by offering them as free e-books to the public. The first round of grants in the Open Book program supported 10 institutions in their efforts to digitally publish these outstanding works, widening access to the ideas and information they contain.

A great tool for gaining knowledge is *Chronicling America*, a joint project of NEH and the Library of Congress to provide searchable, digital access to more than eleven million pages of historic newspapers from across the country. During the past year, the scope expanded from its original time window of 1836–1922 to include digitized newspapers from 1690 to 1963. In these pages, called the first draft of history, people are able to see themselves and their communities in the context of their times.

In NEH's *Chronicling America* Data Challenge, six grantees came up with prize-winning new ways to explore and tell the stories found in *Chronicling America*, from Virginia's George Mason University's biblical-quotation referencing program to a word-frequency analysis developed by A.P. history students at Sunapee Middle High School in New Hampshire.

Access to cultural programming opens up greater economic and educational possibilities for everyone in a community. A program called Humanities Access Grants is helping institutions build humanities resources and programming where they are needed most. With one-to-one matching grants of \$50,000 or \$100,000, these grants reach populations with fewer opportunities to participate in quality humanities programs.

For many veterans, a connection with the humanities is life changing. NEH is finding ways to help veterans and promote understanding of the military experience through academic boot camps for soldiers returning to school, theater performances based on veterans' personal experiences, and literature programs for medical caregivers. One recent program, *Dialogues on the Experience of War*, brings veterans together with classic texts and scholars to discuss the meanings and repercussions of combat and war.

As NEH embarks on its next 50 years, it is clear that the work of preserving, disseminating, and understanding our history and cultural heritage is a continuing mission—the success of which can be measured through civic and cultural engagement with our communities and the world.



Jon Parrish Peede
Acting Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
SUMMARY OF GRANTS AND AWARDS, FY 2016

Division/Program	Number ¹	Amount Obligated ²		
		Outright	Matching ³	Total
FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP	67	\$42,566,972	\$447,300	\$43,014,272
EDUCATION PROGRAMS	136	\$15,339,908	--	\$15,339,908
PRESERVATION AND ACCESS	218	\$16,054,272	\$535,475	\$16,589,747
PUBLIC PROGRAMS	131	\$16,938,857	\$450,000	\$17,388,857
RESEARCH PROGRAMS	264	\$15,272,140	\$1,050,000	\$16,322,140
CHALLENGE GRANTS	79	\$100,000	\$8,836,549	\$8,936,549
DIGITAL HUMANITIES	37	\$4,747,437	--	\$4,747,437
AGENCY-WIDE PROJECTS	13	\$920,716	--	\$920,716
Total	945	\$111,940,301	\$11,319,324	\$123,259,625

FOOTNOTES:

^{1/} New grants, supplemental awards on previous years' grants, transfers to other agencies, and program contracts.

^{2/} Totals include obligations for new grants, supplemental grants, program contracts, and other program-related purposes. Included are awards that are (a) made by NEH using appropriated funds, including funds appropriated to the We the People, Bridging Cultures, and Common Good special initiatives, (b) made by NEH using program funds transferred to the Endowment by other federal agencies, and (c) made by NEH using funds contributed by nonfederal entities.

^{3/} Totals include definite program funds used to match gifts raised by grantees.

Note: Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

In fiscal year 2016, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded \$123,259,625 to 945 humanities projects through seven separate funding offices (Education Programs, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, Research Programs, Challenge Grants, Digital Humanities, and Federal/State Partnership). After reviewing the grant recommendations of 928 peer review panelists and a 26-member presidentially appointed council, NEH Chairman William D. Adams made all final decisions on the awarding of grants.

As the year started, the NEH and NEA's 50th anniversary was marked with "A Celebration of American Creativity: In Performance at the White House," on October 14, 2015. The PBS special, which aired in January 2016, featured music selected from American genres such as jazz and blues that NEH has helped preserve and research. In addition to performances by Queen Latifah, Usher, James Taylor, and others, there were readings of a poem called "Civil War Letters," featured in the NEH-funded documentary *The Civil War*, and the work of writer E. L. Doctorow, a recipient of the 1998 National Humanities Medal.

In April, NEH Chairman William D. Adams joined a delegation of distinguished American writers, artists, and leaders in a U.S. government cultural mission to Cuba. The goal was to facilitate collaboration between the U.S. and Cuba's cultural institutions and foster understanding of common artistic and scholarly pursuits. One result was a project, funded by NEH, by the University of Delaware, in partnership with the Winterthur Museum, to bring a group of U.S. art conservators to Cuba to meet with their counterparts on conservation methods and challenges.

Ken Burns delivered the 45th annual Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities on May 9 before a packed crowd in the Concert Hall at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Burns, the maker of 27 documentaries, 15 of them supported by NEH, spoke about his early influences and inspirations to tell the American story in such films as *The Civil War*, *Jazz*, and *Baseball*. Burns recounted that slavery and race figure prominently in our story. "My own work is suffused with its presence and horrific, seemingly unending half-life. I don't necessarily go looking for it. It's there, everywhere," he said. When our differences as Americans fray our social fabric, Burns suggested "memory permits us all to have an authentic relationship to our larger national narrative."

Continuing the Endowment's anniversary year was a four-day celebration of talks, symposiums, panels, and performances called Human/Ties, held in September at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The program featured dozens of speakers, including Salman Rushdie, Alice Waters, and Jill Lepore, and also a presentation with a cast member from the musical *Hamilton*.

As the fiscal year neared its end, the White House honored the newest class of National Humanities Medalists on September 22: author Rudolfo Anaya, chef José Andrés, writer and historian Ron Chernow, poet Louise Glück, radio host and producer Terry Gross, composer and musician Wynton Marsalis, author James McBride, author and educator Louis Menand, religion scholar Elaine Pagels, the Prison University Project, physician and author Abraham Verghese, and journalist Isabel Wilkerson. Chairman Adams praised the recipients, saying, "This year's medalists showcase the power of the humanities to change the world and improve our understanding of one another."



TEACHERS STUDY HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATURE AT CARROLL COLLEGE IN HELENA, MONTANA. —*Courtesy Carroll College*

Division of Education Programs

The goal of NEH’s Division of Education Programs is to strengthen the teaching of the humanities at all levels, from K–12 classrooms to community colleges and the halls of great universities. Through intensive summer programs with recognized scholars, teachers deepen their understanding of humanities subjects. Other grant programs support the development of new curricula and other educational projects and the enhancement of existing course content.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

A three-week Summer Seminar for School Teachers at Carroll College in Helena, Montana, explores the human relationship with nature through study of religion, philosophy, literature, the fine arts, and cinema. The seminar, which received a grant of \$90,707, is an interdisciplinary survey organized around four themes: exploring origins; nature and commerce; defining wilderness; and modern tensions. The first two weeks are hosted on the Carroll College campus and the final week is at Yellowstone National Park.

A grant of \$97,406 went to J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Virginia to support a three-year curricular development series incorporating resources from local historical and cultural institutions in Richmond into humanities classes. These resources include those from the American Art Collection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Valentine Museum, the Edgar Allan Poe Museum, and historic sites such as Shockoe Bottom, which dates to 1737, and Jackson Ward, which became known as the “Black Wall Street of America” following the Civil War.

Central Arkansas Library System received a grant of \$99,772 as part the Dialogues on the Experience of War initiative to support four discussion programs for Arkansas veterans and others. The discussions focus on the themes of battlefield and home front, World War I, Vietnam, and war and witness. The programs provide opportunities for veterans to reflect on war and homecoming experiences through scholar-facilitated discussions based on humanities sources, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, film, art, museum exhibits, and oral histories.



PHOTOGRAPHS, LETTERS, AND DOCUMENTS ARE BEING SAVED TO CHRONICLE JAPANESE INTERNMENT DURING WORLD WAR II.
—Courtesy California State University Japanese American Digitization Project

Division of Preservation and Access

Projects funded through NEH's Division of Preservation and Access help ensure the longevity and accessibility of the nation's cultural heritage. Much of our cultural legacy resides in books, serials, manuscripts, sound recordings, still and moving images, works of art, and digital collections at museums, libraries, and archives. NEH helps institutions preserve these collections and make them accessible to the public.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

The California State University (CSU), Dominguez Hills Foundation in Carson, received a \$260,000 NEH grant for the digitization and cataloging of Japanese-American materials in 15 CSU archives. The collections consist of 5,000 personal writings, photographs, poems, artwork, organizational records, and audiovisual recordings concerning Japanese internment during World War II and Japanese-American experiences more broadly. Seventy-five oral histories and 500 internment camp publications will also be transcribed and digitized—all will be accessible and searchable online.

A \$39,383 planning grant was awarded to the University of Oklahoma in Norman to develop protocols for preserving and digitizing audio and audiovisual recordings of Native-American music held in various community archives and at the university's Sam Noble Museum. The project's team will consult with Native-American communities to ascertain the logistics of a large-scale digitization and preservation program for Native-American music recordings in Oklahoma. The final product will be a set of recommendations for implementing the preservation of the recordings.

A \$260,000 grant to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston will provide global access to its extensive and treasured collection. Through cataloging, digital photography, and item-level description of 2,600 works of art, furniture, books, photographs, letters, and artifacts on permanent view at the museum, this project will create a comprehensive record of the full collection to be made freely accessible through the museum's management system and a redesigned website.



WALDEN, A GAME, LEADS PLAYERS THROUGH THE LIFE AND CHOICES OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU.—*Courtesy Game Innovation Lab, University of Southern California*

Division of Public Programs

NEH's Division of Public Programs supports projects that bring a variety of humanities topics to a diverse and wide audience through museum and library exhibitions, reading and discussion series, television and radio documentaries, the interpretation of historic sites, digital media projects, and history and literature programs at hundreds of local libraries and cultural organizations.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

The Levi and Catharine Coffin House in Fountain City, Indiana, received \$300,000 to support an exhibition about the experiences of those who escaped slavery through the Underground Railroad, as well as abolitionists, such as the Coffins, who operated safe houses along the route. Opened in the new visitor center in December 2016, the exhibition illustrates the economic impacts of slavery and strategies for economic opposition employed by abolitionists. The exhibit includes an orientation film, narratives of escape, and a touch-screen activity to explore the decisions in planning an escape.

Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, directed by Stanley Nelson, Firelight Media, chronicles the full sweep of HBCU history and the contributions these schools made to the struggle for freedom and equality for African Americans. Through archival material and on-camera contributions by scholars, educators, and students, the film presents a critical perspective on the people and events that shaped higher education for African Americans and sparked social change. The project received an NEH grant in 2016 for \$600,000. The film was screened at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2017, the Full Frame Documentary Festival in April 2017, and will broadcast nationally on PBS's Independent Lens series in February 2018, accompanied by a national public engagement campaign.

Released in July 2017 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Henry David Thoreau's birth, *Walden* is a first-person digital game from the USC Game Innovation Lab. The game, which received an NEH production grant of \$350,000, follows the narrative of Thoreau's first year living in the woods next to Walden Pond, with each season holding its own challenges for survival and possibilities for inspiration. *Walden, a game*, was designed in consultation with scholars, and includes a wide array of textual and digitally rendered artifacts from Thoreau's archives: manuscripts, journals, clothing, and even the desk Thoreau used in his cabin at the pond.



WORLD'S WONDROUS VOYAGES FROM PRAIRIE TO PALACE, BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW POSTER, 1894. —A. Hoen & Co. Baltimore, Maryland. Gift of the Coe Foundation. 1.69.167, courtesy Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming

Division of Research Programs

NEH's Division of Research Programs supports scholarly research that advances knowledge and understanding of the humanities. Awards are made to individuals and groups of scholars for projects of significance to specific fields and to the humanities as a whole. Through grants for research, translation, scholarly editions, and archaeological work, NEH-funded projects bring forth knowledge that has long-term benefits for humanities education and public programming.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

The Buffalo Bill Memorial Association in Cody, Wyoming, received \$200,000 to publish materials related to the world-renowned cowboy, entrepreneur, and showman. While more than 60,000 documents related to Buffalo Bill and his "Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World" have been edited and published, the current grant will be used to gather and edit materials related to his European tours, which began in the 1880s and continued for approximately 19 years. The new volumes will help scholars and general audiences better understand how Cody's show shaped European views of America.

The Endowment awarded a \$50,400 Public Scholar fellowship to Matthew Klinge, associate professor of history at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, to write a pathbreaking history of diabetes, a disease that now affects more than 29 million Americans. The project grew out of his classroom teaching, but to prepare for the project, Klinge enrolled in four years of postdoctoral study at Harvard University in epidemiology and biomedical social science, and he conducted archival research at more than 20 medical archives. Klinge's history of diabetes will be published by Yale University Press in 2018.

An NEH \$6,000 Summer Stipend to Kate Merkel-Hess, assistant professor of Asian studies at the Pennsylvania State University, will be used for her study of early twentieth-century warlords in China and their role in the modernization of that country. In particular, her work presents new perspectives on an important phase of modern Chinese history when, in the wake of the disintegration of the Chinese republic, regional warlords and their families stepped in to create stability and to fill power vacuums. Upon doing so, Merkel-Hess argues, family networks within and across warlord families laid the groundwork for the modern Chinese state.



THE MUSEUM OF IDAHO'S "EAGLE ROCK, USA" EXHIBIT IS A WALKTHROUGH REPLICA OF A STREET IN THE LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY TOWN THAT BECAME IDAHO FALLS. —Emma Lee for the Museum of Idaho

Office of Challenge Grants

Projects funded through NEH's Office of Challenge Grants help local, state, and national institutions plan and implement new approaches to humanities education, and secure their humanities resources and activities for the long term. Recipients of challenge grants match every federal dollar with one to three nonfederal dollars. These funds have been used to support changes to graduate education in the humanities, and have also supported endowments for staffing or programming, and have enabled organizations to purchase equipment and upgrade technology, to build or renovate facilities, or to increase a library's holdings or a museum's collections.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

The Lawrence Public Library Foundation in Kansas launched a "Greatest Expectations" endowment with a \$275,000 challenge grant to match \$825,000 in gift funds. Annual earnings from the endowment will bring dynamic speakers to the library, support community reading programs, and enhance humanities experiences through technology. The Lawrence Public Library, which was one of the only racially integrated public buildings in Lawrence in the early twentieth century, was a favorite haunt of a young Langston Hughes, who lived in Kansas between 1902 and 1915.

The Museum of Idaho in Idaho Falls is expanding its facility with a \$500,000 challenge grant, for which it is raising three times that amount in outside funds. The expansion will house new galleries for temporary exhibitions, provide storage space for care and preservation of collections, and increase overall gallery space devoted to Idaho history. These "Idaho Experience" spaces will support new programs focused on promoting discussions about contemporary issues, such as ongoing conflicts over water rights.

Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, is using a \$350,000 Next Generation Humanities PhD Grant, matched by \$350,000 from nongovernment sources, to create new professional development opportunities and career paths outside of academia for humanities doctoral students, and to promote pedagogical innovation on campus. With NEH support, a new graduate student advising position has already been created and filled, an external internship program has been launched, and new alumni networks have been fostered.



ILLUSTRATION OF A COLORED CONVENTION IN NEW ORLEANS, 1879. —*Library of Congress*

Office of Digital Humanities

NEH's Office of Digital Humanities supports efforts to use computing tools for research and teaching in the humanities. Funded projects have involved data visualization, putting searchable archival material online, and crowdsourcing transcriptions of texts. The field is changing the ways material can be searched, mined, displayed, taught, and analyzed. These grants often facilitate partnerships with other funding bodies in the United States and abroad.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

Cornell University Press received \$82,235 in NEH funding to make 20 outstanding works of scholarship freely accessible to the world as e-books. The grant will support the methodology for selecting out-of-print titles for the program, the process of digitization, delivery, rights clearance, dissemination of monographs, and the analysis of the usage of e-books across multiple digital platforms.

The Colored Conventions Project at the University of Delaware received an NEH grant of \$75,000 for a website to document more than 120 conventions organized by African-American communities from the 1830s to the 1880s. The project collects, for the first time, rare and scattered minutes from these meetings that began before the Civil War and continued long after, in which free and fugitive African Americans discussed how to achieve educational, labor, and legal justice, and meet other national challenges. The project will create 15 new exhibits based on original research, amass a database of more than 4,000 convention attendees, and crowdsource the transcription of convention minutes in order to better understand this nineteenth-century movement for social justice.

With a \$300,000 NEH grant, the Modern Language Association and the Columbia University Libraries will augment the work of an earlier project that built a prototype social repository, Humanities CORE, and connected it to MLA Commons, a social networking platform that enables humanists to communicate, collaborate, and share their digital scholarship. This new phase will concentrate on increasing interdisciplinary work, collaboration, and data sharing among humanists, and on making such work available to a broader public.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE CITY PROJECT CALLED CHESTER MADE: FURNITURE-MAKER L WARD, THEATER DIRECTOR DEVON WALLS, PENNSYLVANIA HUMANITIES DIRECTOR LAURIE ZIERER, AND VINTAGE DESIGN SHOP OWNER KENYA ABDUL. —*Courtesy of PhillyVoice.com*

Office of Federal/State Partnership

Through the Office of Federal/State Partnership, grants are made to 55 state and territory humanities councils for operating costs and special projects. This partnership helps make humanities education and lifelong learning available to serve local interests and needs. The councils—operating in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa—employ more than 500 staff members and engage more than 1,000 board members.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

Pennsylvania Humanities Council supports Chester Made, a humanities-based initiative to promote arts and culture for community revitalization in Chester, Pennsylvania. Funding has helped develop a Chester Made Exploration Zone that offers a space for community members to engage with one another, learn more about the city's cultural assets and history, rebuild their downtown, and change perceptions about Chester. The Council is also engaging Widener University faculty, who are leading efforts in the collection and interpretation of the community's history.

The Michigan Humanities Council's Heritage Grants Program supports projects that explore local histories of race, ethnicity, and cultural identity in the state. In 2016, George Bayard, director of the new Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives, interviewed women for a project called "Grandma's Voice." The project used oral history to record the memories of the oldest living African Americans and their families, focusing especially on women. In total, 28 nonprofit organizations across the state have received heritage grants to support exhibits, digital projects, oral history programs, documentaries, cultural ceremonies, community conversations, and other activities that share the history, experiences, and authentic voices of Michigan.

Kentucky Humanities was one of 46 state humanities councils taking part in the Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires Initiative, a partnership between the Pulitzer Prize Board and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. In Kentucky, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and editor Maria Henson gave a master class to 300 high school students and a public interview with radio host Bill Goodman at the Kentucky Book Fair. The Guam Humanities Council celebrated the Pulitzer centennial with a traveling exhibition and a month-long series of events with its sole winner, photographer Manny Crisostomo.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent federal agency created in 1965. It is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States. The Endowment serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. NEH-supported grant programs foster scholarship and research, enrich all levels of education, preserve cultural treasures, and encourage public understanding of the humanities.

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COVER:

EL JALEO, 1882, BY JOHN SINGER SARGENT, ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM, BOSTON



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