

CPAC PROPOSAL
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT COMMITTEE
PROPOSAL REQUEST FOR FY 2014
AMHERST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 4, 2012

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CPA Funding Category: Historic Preservation

Emily Dickinson's Dress

The only extant garment worn by Emily Dickinson is in the collection of the Amherst Historical Society. Rumor has it that it was last washed in a society member's bathtub approximately 25 years ago. This dress has become an American cultural icon—people come from around the world to visit Emily Dickinson's home and to see this dress.

After years of storage on a hanger and exhibition on a manikin, the dress has yellowed and the fabric of at least one shoulder is worn. After speaking with several facilities specializing in textile conservation, we are proposing having the dress cleaned by conservators at the Textile Conservation Workshop, South Salem, NY and an appropriate storage box made. This work is tentatively scheduled for June 2013.

Estimate from Textile Conservation Workshop, South Salem, NY

\$1,000.00

The Society will undertake funding the transportation of the dress to and from South Salem, NY and providing more appropriate exhibition when it returns. The cost of the project with a new manikin and reproduction foundation garments could rise to \$2,500 but the Society will raise funds from private sources to help with costs above \$1000. The funding would be expended by the end of fiscal 2014.

Collection Environment and Storage

The Amherst Historical Society accepted the plan, created by Marianne Curling, Consulting Curator, which addresses general collection care needs and ways to safely store the collection in the space offered in the Simeon Strong House. We are requesting money to modify the environment, move collection storage to a compact system on the third floor of the Simeon Strong House and to have Marianne Curling, Consulting Curator, oversee the move.

Degradation caused by both visible and ultra-violet light to collection items will be halted with the installation of ultra-violet light filtering Plexiglas on the 34 windows of the Simeon Strong House and roll-up shades for 33 windows. This improvement to the environmental conditions of the Simeon Strong House will have long term benefits for the collection.

Her work also addressed the storage needs of the current collection housed throughout the building. The plan she developed creates compact storage located on the third floor with units that, should we acquire other space in the future, can be easily transported and used at another venue. Locating the collection altogether on the third floor will allow us to properly store like items together and to provide access to those who wish to work directly with items. Collection items not on exhibit will be easily located and held in a secure manner. The searchable database, currently underway, will have updated location records as items are moved to their new storage locations.

An additional benefit of locating all collection storage and examination access on the third floor is the space freed on the second floor for exhibits. Visitors will have a better experience touring all the museum offers of Amherst history with the more feasible traffic pattern of first and second floor exhibits.

The Society has very little money, nowhere near enough to implement the storage plan. The funding that is requested will be spent by the end of calendar 2013, and we estimate completion of the database by the end of calendar 2014.

Collection Storage furniture and equipment:

Item	# needed	Basic description	Unit cost	Total
Shelving, rolling:	27 units	[72" H x 48"W x 18"D]	\$ 100.00	\$ 2,700.00
Shelving, rolling:	7 units	[63" H x 48"W X 24"D]	\$ 160.00	\$ 1,120.00
Clothing Racks	7 racks	[Single Rail 5' Base x 63" Uprights]	\$ 100.00	\$ 700.00
Storage boxes for framed pieces as needed	estimated expense		\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Ultra-violet filtering Plexiglass	34 windows size varies slightly		\$ 100.00	\$ 3,400.00
Shades	33 windows size varies slightly		\$ 12.00	\$ 396.00
Containers	estimated expense		\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Dust covers	50 yards muslin		\$5 per yard	\$ 250.00
Worktable	3 tables	30" by 96" folding tables	\$ 75.00	\$ 225.00
Hardware	6 C-clamps	6" heavy duty	\$ 10.00	\$ 60.00
Table cover	estimated expense		\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Storage Project Supply Estimate				\$ 10,901.00

Consulting Curator

Supervise implementation of Storage Plan [CPA funded 2011] including training volunteers on object handling and care.

10 hours per week @ \$70.00 per hour for 10 week move Fall 2013 **\$ 7,000.00**