

SITES Reaches Rural America

through its Museum on Main Street Program

Now in its 14th year, Museum on Main Street is an innovative partnership of the Smithsonian, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and individual state humanities councils that serves small-town museums and residents of rural America.

The response from small-town America has been overwhelming: new and reinvigorated museums, libraries, and historical societies; surging attendance; and a host of enriching cultural experiences in communities across the nation.



A "main street" in rural Ohio

Paul Sewell

Museum on Main Street is a one-of-a-kind program that addresses the compelling cultural needs of rural and small-town America. It combines the prestige and exhibition expertise of the Smithsonian, the programming know-how of state humanities councils, and the remarkable volunteerism and unique histories of small communities.

One-fifth of all Americans live in rural areas and nearly one-half of all U.S. museums are located in small, rural towns. These vital communities enjoy an enviable quality of life. Their museums are often labors of love, filled with collections of artifacts from industries or events that have shaped the character of the community. Museum on Main Street provides these institutions with access to resources they may not otherwise have and assists them in making lasting improvements to advance their museums' objectives. To date, MoMS exhibitions have traveled to nearly 700 towns (with populations generally ranging between 400 and 20,000) in 43 states and territories. See pages 99 for a list of participating state council partners.

Museum on Main Street exhibitions focus on broad topics and give host museums the opportunity, with support from state humanities councils, to create their own educational programs, activities, and exhibitions that center on their local culture and heritage. Consisting of freestanding units and objects, exhibitions are specifically designed to address the space and staffing constraints of small cultural institutions. Exhibition units travel in easy-to-handle wheeled crates and can be assembled and disassembled with minimal effort. Program planning and installation workshops, in addition to exhibition support materials, are provided to venues hosting the exhibitions.



Girl Scouts try on Wisconsin cheesehead hats while visiting Key Ingredients at Delta State University in Cleveland, MS.

The Museum on Main Street website (www.museumonmainstreet.org) has detailed information, including exhibition tour schedules and educational resources, for potential venues, the general public, and members of the press. State and local MoMS coordinators may also use the site as a key administrative assistance tool. And the new Road Reports blog provides an "on-the-ground" look at the latest activities and accomplishments of MoMS participants.

Museum on Main Street has been made possible through the generous support of the United States Congress.

For more information, contact Museum on Main Street (www.museumonmainstreet.org, moms@si.edu) or your state humanities council.

We live between fences. We may hardly notice them, but they are dominant features in our lives and in America's history. Our past is defined by the cutting point of barbed steel and the staccato rhythm of the white picket. Rivals have seized post, rail, board, and wire to stake a claim for home and happiness. The fences that skirt our properties define both ownership and identity.

A cultural history of fences and land use, *Between Fences* examines how neighbors and nations divide and protect, offend and defend



Warsaw Collection, National Museum of American History

In this advertisement for Page Fence, the manufacturer touted the safety and security of its product.

through the boundaries they build. Audiences are intrigued by the multiple meanings of this familiar icon as they simultaneously consider personal values and American history. The exhibition also provides institutions and teachers with rich opportunities for local humanities-based programming that encourages exploration of issues that shape American life.

Between Fences is generously supported by the United States Congress.



John Vachon. Library of Congress

Residents of Laurium, MI, share a conversation across a fence in 1941.



Visitors at the Carnegie Visual Arts Center in Decatur, AL, use interactive spinning photo panels to compare and contrast the northern and southern borders of the United States.

Contents

6 freestanding units, panel-hung vitrines, 20 objects, interactives

Supplemental

Poster, brochure, postcards, banner, docent material, curriculum material, educational and promotional resources

Participation fee

This is a special program available only through the Museum on Main Street collaboration with state humanities councils. Not available for general booking

Size

600 square feet

Security

Limited

Shipping

SITES-designated carrier
2,700 pounds
15 lightweight crates with handles and wheels

Scheduling

For more information, contact Museum on Main Street (202.633.5335, moms@si.edu) or your state humanities council

Contents

7 freestanding units, panel-hung vitrines, objects, audio components

Supplemental

Poster, brochure, postcards, banners, docent material, curriculum material, bibliography, film guide

Participation fee

This is a special program available only through the Museum on Main Street collaboration with state humanities councils. Not available for general booking

Size

600-700 square feet

Security

Limited

Shipping

SITES-designated carrier
Weight and crates TBD

Tour begins

May 2009

Scheduling

For more information, contact Museum on Main Street (202.633.5335, moms@si.edu) or your state humanities council

Mobility is part of our American identity, and journey stories—tales of how we and our ancestors came to this country—are central to the personal heritage of each of us. From Native peoples to new American citizens, everyone has an account of how they got here.

Journey Stories examines the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to move. Our transportation history is much more than trains, boats, wagons, cars, and airplanes, however. For most, it reveals a yearning for a promised land, for personal fortune, for stable employment, and for pure enjoyment on the open road. But that sense of freedom is offset by the experiences of African slaves and Native Americans forced to leave their homes.

Focusing on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom, this complex story lends itself to a variety of public humanities programs including local exhibitions about the growth of immigrant communities, the personal narratives of transportation workers, and methods of transportation as depicted in literature, film, and music.

Journey Stories is generously supported by the United States Congress.

Opposite: This engraving, Mayflower Approaching Land, was published by John A. Lowell in 1905.



Two migratory workers, traveling from farm to farm during potato season, walk along a North Carolina road in 1940.

John Vachon. Library of Congress
Opposite: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-3046

Journey Stories



Key Ingredients

America by Food

Contents

6 freestanding units, panel-hung vitrines, 60 objects

Supplemental

Poster, brochure, postcards, educational website, banner, docent material, curriculum material, educational and promotional materials

Participation fee

This is a special program available only through the Museum on Main Street collaboration with state humanities councils. Not available for general booking.

Size

900 square feet

Security

Limited

Shipping

SITES-designated carrier
3,475 pounds
19 lightweight crates with handles and wheels

Scheduling

For more information, contact Museum on Main Street (202.633.5335, moms@si.edu) or your state humanities council

What are kolaces, spaetzle, and pierogies? How do you make burgoo and gumbo? Who brought yams and pigs to America? Most of us eat without giving a thought to the wealth of history and culture that shapes our dining habits and taste preferences. Our recipes, menus, ceremonies, and etiquette are directly affected by our nation's rich immigrant experience, the history and innovations of food preparation technology, and the ever-changing availability of key ingredients.

Key Ingredients: America by Food provides an entertaining and informative overview of our diverse regional cooking and eating traditions, investigating how culture, ethnicity, landscape, and tradition influence the different foods and

flavors we enjoy. Food on the American table is rooted in centuries of continuous borrowing and sharing between people, across generations, across cultures, and across the land.

Host institutions can create activities and events that are both fun and informative: cook-offs, oral history projects, folk demonstrations, publications, chili and barbecue festivals, and ancillary exhibitions to name a few. The exhibition website (www.keyingredients.org) invites people across the country to share their family recipes and food stories and learn about other customs.


Key Ingredients is generously supported by the United States Congress.



Minnesota Historical Society

In this exhibit photo, three boys enjoy hot dogs at the 1947 Minnesota State Fair. In 1916 Nathan Handwerker, a Polish shoemaker, opened a hot dog stand on Coney Island and thus launched the career of the popular fast food.

Key Ingredients



Diverse local programs and complementary exhibitions form the heart of the Museum on Main Street experience in host communities like Acoma Pueblo, NM. At the Key Ingredients opening at Sky City Cultural Center, volunteers recreate a food throw, a traditional Acoma Nation way of giving back to members of the community.

New Harmonies

Celebrating American Roots Music

Contents

8 freestanding units, panel-hung vitrines, musical instruments, interactives, central listening station, 3 audio stations

Supplemental

Poster, brochure, postcards, banners, docent material, curriculum material, discography, film guide

Participation fee

This is a special program available only through the Museum on Main Street collaboration with state humanities councils. Not available for general booking

Size

800 square feet

Security

Limited

Shipping

SITES-designated carrier
3,900 pounds
19 lightweight crates with handles and wheels

Scheduling

For more information, contact Museum on Main Street (202.633.5335, moms@si.edu) or your state humanities council.

Whether called blues, country western, folk, or gospel, the sounds are as sweet as mountain air and as sultry as a summer night in the Mississippi delta. American music, both sacred and secular, reveals distinct cultural identities and records the histories of peoples reshaping themselves in a new and changing world. *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* explores the growth of American music, as rich and eclectic as the country itself.

The instruments vary from fiddles to banjos, from accordions to drums, and the origins of the sounds are just as diverse, from Africa to Europe to Native America. Still, all of these rhythms merge, as do the melodies and harmonies, creating completely new sounds—new American music.

The main beat of the exhibition is the ongoing cultural process that has made America

the birthplace of great music. An inspiring and toe-tapping examination of America's multi-cultural exchange, *New Harmonies* is full of surprises about familiar songs and instruments while exploring the continuity of musical roots—from the flourishing of sacred music to the emergence of commercial folk and country.

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is generously supported by the United States Congress.

Opposite: New Harmonies examines the great diversity of American music and how we use it to celebrate our cultural heritage. This image from the exhibition shows a group of Native American drummers performing at a National Museum of the American Indian powwow in 2005.



Many host communities for New Harmonies invite local musicians to perform popular varieties of roots music. Meridian, MS, kicked off the state's tour of the exhibition with an outdoor performance in a local park.

Opposite: Walter Larrimore, National Museum of the American Indian

New Harmonies

