

Rare Book School Receives \$100,000 NEH Grant to Prepare Curators and Teachers for the U.S. Semiquincentennial

Charlottesville, VA, 19 October 2021 – Rare Book School (RBS), which is based at the University of Virginia, has been awarded a grant for \$100,258 from the National Endowment for the Humanities program “Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan.”

RBS was one of 292 recipients among the 937 eligible organizations that applied. The grant supports the School’s initiative, “Living American History in Primary Documents,” which anticipates the approaching 250th anniversary of the United States by providing educational content for the cultural heritage professionals who care for our nation’s documentary records.

“We are delighted to help prepare the custodians of our nation’s heritage to mediate their collections to a citizenry eager to learn more about their history,” said Rare Book School Director Michael F. Suarez, S.J.

The NEH grant will enable RBS to sustain the salaries of staff members in 2022 while advancing its mission through in-person and online courses. RBS staff will particularly attend to the development of courses that help librarians and classroom educators to teach American history and spark the historical imagination through primary source materials.

RBS course development work will involve both refining existing courses and designing new ones, such as offerings on American children’s literature and on the African American Book in partnership with the American Antiquarian Society. Beginning next year, and continuing in ensuing years leading up to the U.S. semiquincentennial, RBS will annually dedicate at least one of its summer lectures to Living American History in Primary Documents.

This programming is intended to become an important resource for the librarians, educators, graduate students, curators, antiquarian booksellers, conservators, book artists, museum professionals, archivists, and private collectors who seek to understand and communicate the narratives of this nation with greater knowledge and facility.

Through its educational offerings, RBS is poised to support these stewards of American history as they plan their own learning initiatives in the run-up to 2026, translating what they know about their own institutional collections and the broader documentary record of the nation’s history into educational programming for a variety of American publics.

See the [full NEH announcement](#).

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov.

About Rare Book School (RBS)

Rare Book School provides continuing-education opportunities for students from all disciplines and levels to study the history of written, printed, and digital materials with leading scholars and professionals in the field of bibliography, librarianship, book history, manuscript studies, and the digital humanities. Founded in 1983, RBS moved to its present home at the University of Virginia in 1992. RBS is a not-for-profit educational organization affiliated with the University of Virginia. More information about RBS is available on its website: www.rarebookschool.org.

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