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Spotlight on a CAPped Museum

Avery Memorial Association

While The Ebenezer Avery House survived a bloody battle of the American Revolution, since then it has had to fight the forces of neglect and deterioration. The House has stood in Groton, CT since at least 1757. During the forty minute Battle of Groton Heights on the grounds of the American-held Fort Griswold on September 6, 1781, thirty-five men, severely wounded and dying, used the House as a hospital. House owner Ebenezer Avery was one of the wounded. Over the next two hundred years, the house was owned and occupied by many families, and by 1970 it was in disrepair.



Ebenezer Avery House, before (left) and after (right) recent building improvements

Avery family descendant R. Stanton Avery of California saved the house from demolition by purchasing it in 1970 and donating it to the Avery Memorial Association (AMA) in 1971. Since then, the House has been preserved jointly by the AMA and the State of Connecticut Parks Division. In 1971 it was moved to the grounds of Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park in Groton, CT. In addition to the building itself, the Avery House preserves and presents furniture, portraits, paintings, domestic items, textiles, photographs, and archives from the Avery family dating from 1620 to the nineteenth century.

For the past five years the trustees of the Avery Memorial Association have been making incremental improvements in their collections and building care practices. In 2006, the board resolved to address museum stewardship issues by creating collections policies and procedures and a building maintenance plan. In 2007 the Association hired its first part-time curator, Alice Sheriff, who identified the key areas in which to improve collections care policies and practices. A local architect was consulted to obtain initial recommendations about caring for the building. Knowing that they needed further professional advice and recommendations, the AMA trustees applied for the Conservation Assessment Program in 2009.

It's Fall!

Have you...

- checked the outside of your building for anything that could blow around and cause damage in high winds?
- had a fire drill and reviewed emergency procedures?
- changed dirty HVAC filters?

In spring 2009, CAP collections assessor David Mathieson and building assessor, the late Roger Clarke, completed their reviews of the Avery House and its collections. Since then, the AMA board and staff have been quick to act on their recommendations, achieving many short-term tasks and incorporating longer-term ones into their long-range organizational plan. After receiving a \$20,000 grant from a private foundation, the AMA was able to repair exterior clapboard and flashing, and restore the historic windows. Next they plan to move on to the assessors' mid-term recommendation to monitor light levels and the interior environment.

The Association will raise funds to implement the rest of the CAP recommendations through a capital campaign, which will be implemented from 2012-2013. In addition, they have effectively marketed their cause, most recently by contacting the local online magazine "Groton Patch" to publicize the 40th anniversary of the House's being moved to Fort Griswold. Groton Patch ran not only a story, but also a video on their website (<http://groton.patch.com/articles/video-preserving-a-historic-house-in-groton?ncid=M255#video-7278835>) featuring AMA board members speaking about the House, its history, and the restoration efforts. Avery Memorial Association board president Stephanie Lantieri said, "The CAP recommendations have guided the AMA Board of Directors to effectively plan for the historic house's future, and have been incorporated into the Association's strategic plan to address both building preservation and collections conservation. Our Board is now more aware of the condition of the house and its collections, and how to incrementally improve the condition of both, thanks to our CAP assessment."

Thanks to Stephanie Lantieri for her help with this article.

Tell Us Your Story!

Did CAP jump-start collections care efforts at your museum? Heritage Preservation and your small museum colleagues across the U.S. are interested in learning from your efforts in implementing recommendations from your CAP report, long-range planning, fund-raising, or community outreach. Send your story to cap@heritagepreservation.org.



**Find us on
Facebook**

www.facebook.com/HeritagePreservation

Connecting to Collections Online Community Will Provide Easy Access to the Best Collections Care Advice

You are invited to join the Connecting to Collections (C2C) Online Community! Register at www.connectingtocollections.org. The C2C Online Community, a partnership of Heritage Preservation, the American Association for State and Local History, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), is a dynamic interactive resource that aims to connect collections care staff at small museums, archives, and libraries with solid information about collections care and preventive conservation.

The C2C Online Community's features include:

- a Meeting Room which regularly hosts free Webinars with leading conservation professionals;
- a Featured Resource that highlights new or particularly helpful print or online information resources;
- a Discussion Board where online community members can post questions and assist one another;
- a Calendar with announcements of upcoming C2C Online Community events, online preservation training opportunities, and grant deadlines;
- an archive of past C2C Online Community discussions and presentations sorted by topic.

You can also connect with the Community on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/C2Ccommunity>.

Focus on Fundraising – Funds for Building Preservation

Trying to identify funding for building preservation projects? Visit the Find Funding web page of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (<http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/>).

This page has been streamlined and improved, making it easier for organizations to identify the kinds of National Trust funding they may be eligible for based on their type of organization. Different funds and grants are listed along with their descriptions and deadline dates. There are also links to useful resources such as preservation books and information sheets on historic buildings and fundraising activities.

One Thing You Can Do: Visit the *Saving Your Treasures* Web Site!

Have you just accessioned a new object made of an unfamiliar material? Do you have collections that need cleaning, but are you unsure of the correct method to use? You may find the answer at the *Saving Your Treasures* web site (<http://www.netnebraska.org/extras/treasures/glass.htm>). *Saving Your Treasures* is a comprehensive clearing house of collections care information, assembled and organized in one place through the efforts of Nebraska Education Telecommunications, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Funding was also provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Saving Your Treasures features videos on common conservation techniques, links to readings on popular topics, and in-depth care, handling, preventive conservation, and deterioration information for many different types of collections objects, organized by type of object. The information can be useful to museum staff just learning about preventive conservation, seasoned professionals in need of quick reminders, and individuals interested in preserving their family heirlooms.

2012 CAP Application Release Date: October 3, 2011

If you are considering applying for a ReCAP, or if you are recommending the Conservation Assessment Program to another small museum, the 2012 CAP application will be made available on Heritage Preservation's website (www.heritagepreservation.org/CAP/) on October 3, 2011. Heritage Preservation generally receives about twice as many CAP applications each year as we are able to fund. Therefore, it is in museums' best interest to submit their completed applications as soon after the release date as possible. Applications are reviewed as we receive them, and awards are made on a rolling basis. The deadline to submit CAP 2012 applications is December 1, 2011.

This year, the CAP application will be made available as an online form, as well as downloadable PDF and Microsoft Word fill-in forms. Those on the mailing list will receive an e-mail notification when the application is available. Paper applications will be mailed only to those who specifically request it. To confirm whether you are on the CAP application mailing list, verify your e-mail address, or request a paper application, contact CAP at 202-233-0800 or cap@heritagepreservation.org.

Do's and Don'ts: When Moving Textiles . . .



- DO have clean and dry hands
- DO wear gloves if appropriate for the type of fabric
- DO lift and carry rolled textiles by the ends of their tubes
- DO remove textiles on top of a stack first to avoid pulling threads or leaving wrinkles
- DO NOT pull the textile on the bottom out from under a stack

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Grant Deadline Announcement: Conservation Project Support Applications due October 3

Conservation Project Support Grants, offered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, may fund surveys, environmental improvements, conservation treatments, and training for museum staff in preventive conservation practices. The grant application and guidelines are made available each year in early August, and the 2012 applications are due on October 3, 2011. For more information about how to apply, contact Connie Bodner, Senior Program Officer at 202-653-4636 or Mark Feitl, Program Specialist at 202-653-4635.

Additional Dates and Deadlines

Below is a list of upcoming grant deadlines. For a complete list of preservation workshops and national conference dates, visit www.heritagepreservation.org/calendar.htm.

- November 1** Museums for America grant deadline, Institute of Museum and Library Services, www.ims.gov
- December 15** National Medal for Museum and Library Service nomination deadline, Institute of Museum and Library Services, www.ims.gov
- January 1** Museum Assessment Program application deadline, American Association of Museums, www.aam-us.org
- February 1** Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries and Museums deadline, Institute of Museum and Library Services, www.ims.gov
- February 1** National Leadership Grants deadline, Institute of Museum and Library Services, www.ims.gov

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