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Naperville Heritage Society Earns Prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Grant

Naperville, IL — The Naperville Heritage Society, administrator of Naper Settlement, received a prestigious Common Heritage Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor for *Embracing Community Change: Naperville's Contemporary Immigrant Story*. The \$12,000 grant will be used to jump start the museum's efforts to collect and preserve the history of Naperville's 20th and 21st century Asian immigrant communities.

“Long thought of as a 21st century outdoor history museum, Naper Settlement's mission was expanded to tell Naperville's history through today,” said Louise Howard, Naper Settlement's Chief Curator and Project Director for the Common Heritage Grant. “As part of the museum's Naperville Memory Project, this grant effort will be concentrated on the mid-twentieth century through today, a time when Naperville's Asian population has grown from zero to 18% of the City's population. We want to give voice to their stories.”

Throughout this year, Naper Settlement will partner with the Naperville Public Library to invite the public to bring their individual or family photographs, as well as documents such as family recipes and other memorabilia, to be scanned for posterity. The museum will document the stories about the materials and the owner will leave with their originals, along with a digital copy on a flash drive. Naper Settlement will preserve a copy of the digitized materials, which then can be used in exhibits and public programs that tell Naperville's story. The Naperville Public Library will also be a repository for the digitized materials, and will add select examples to the Naperville Heritage Collection of the Illinois Digital Archives, maintained by the Illinois State Library.

A companion to the digitization programs will be the collecting of oral histories from area residents. “Naperville was built on the dreams and hard work of immigrants,” said Donna Sack, Vice President for Community Engagement and Audience. “In the 19th century, it was primarily Scottish, German and English settlers. Today, our high-tech corridor, great schools and dynamic community continues to draw people from around the world. This NEH funded project provides a starting point in which to capture these modern-day immigration stories. We are excited to be working with Naperville's Chinese and Indian communities and this project will be a model for documenting and sharing the history of other ethnic and religious communities in Naperville. As part of this project, we will listen and learn about how residents want their stories and history to be shared and woven into Naperville's narrative.”

The year and a half long project will also feature a temporary exhibit, a History Speaks lecture program and a bus tour of area locations significant to the Chinese and Indian communities. Naper Settlement is engaging the services of area scholars Dr. Dennis Cremin of Lewis University and Dr. Ann Durkin

Keating of North Central Collage, as well as Dr. Peter Alter, Historian and Director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this press release, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

About Naper Settlement and the Naperville Heritage Society

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 12 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville, where history comes to play and community comes to connect. The Naperville Heritage Society is the administrator of Naper Settlement. With a commitment to the community and a focus to the future, the mission of the Naperville Heritage Society is to collect, document, preserve and support the history of Naperville, Illinois, past and present. For more information, visit napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities



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.

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