



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Herman Melville Scholars and New Bedford Whaling Museum to Launch Teacher Institute in 2018

NEH grant to fund Institute led by the Melville Society Cultural Project

New Bedford, Mass. – The New Bedford Whaling Museum, in association with Melville Society Cultural Project, has been awarded a \$136,342 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The grant will fund a two-week Summer Institute for Teachers in 2018, which will illuminate the art and context of Herman Melville’s famous 19th century American novel *Moby-Dick*, and help teachers from across the country interpret the book for 21st century students.

Six nationally recognized scholars make up the Melville Society Cultural Project, aimed at sharing an understanding of Herman Melville’s writings, life, and times. They will serve as principal faculty of the Institute: Jennifer Baker, New York University; Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, University of Connecticut; Wyn Kelley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Chris Sten, George Washington University; Robert K. Wallace, Northern Kentucky University; and Timothy Marr, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, serving as the Institute Director.

Moby-Dick is one of the most frequently referenced and adapted American novels, and it is becoming more popular and relevant with time. While the book is a classic, it grapples with current-day issues like globalism, multiculturalism, political power, and environmentalism. The distinct format of the novel – with its series of 135 relatively short chapters—calls for classroom techniques well-suited to reading habits shaped by digital encounters. Institute participants will delve into the rich world of *Moby-Dick*, gain a better understanding of Melville’s literary power, and understand how to interpret the book’s critical concepts for their students.

“The New Bedford Whaling Museum is grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for this opportunity to partner with the Melville Society Cultural Project to teach educators how to use the text of *Moby-Dick* to engender thoughtful classroom conversation on relevant and significant global concepts,” said Dr. Carol Taylor, Chair of the New Bedford Whaling Museum’s Board of Trustees. “Deepening

educational opportunities for teachers is a strategic goal for the Museum, and this Institute will expand our educational reach beyond Southeastern Massachusetts.”

The interdisciplinary Institute is particularly appropriate for teachers of secondary school literature, but teachers of history, social studies, science and other disciplines—as well as teachers at other grade levels and school administrators—are encouraged to apply once the application process begins this fall. Twenty-five teachers will be selected to attend the Institute, while thousands of educators will be able to access the curriculum online.

“Last summer, the Whaling Museum and the Melville Society offered a workshop on *Moby-Dick* to local teachers. The event was such a success that we wanted to expand the scope and include teachers from across the country,” said Sarah Rose, Vice President of Education and Programs.

“The Melville Society Cultural Project is delighted to partner with the Whaling Museum to bring teachers from around the country to New Bedford, the historical center of American whaling,” said Tim Marr, Director of the Summer Institute for Teachers. “From there we will journey forth together on Melville’s *Pequod* in quest of *Moby-Dick*, a text that swims on and is crucially relevant for understanding our human dilemmas in the 21st century.”

The Institute will be hosted at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. New Bedford, Massachusetts is a meaningful location for intensive study of Herman Melville’s masterpiece in the context of the whaling industry. Melville arrived in New Bedford on Christmas day 1840 and shipped nine days later on the *Acushnet* from Fairhaven across the harbor. Since 2000, the Whaling Museum has partnered with the Melville Society Cultural Project to offer scholarly programming, and the Museum is home to the Melville Society Archive, which constitutes one of the best collections of Melville scholarship anywhere in the world.

About the New Bedford Whaling Museum

The New Bedford Whaling Museum is the world's most comprehensive museum devoted to the global story of human interaction with whales through time, and the history and culture of the South Coast region. The cornerstone of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, the Museum is located at 18 Johnny Cake Hill in the heart of the city's historic downtown. Museum hours: April through December, daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; January through March, Tuesday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Admission is free for Museum members and children aged three and under; adults \$17, seniors (65+) \$15, students (19+) \$10, child and youth \$7. For more information visit www.whalingmuseum.org.

About the Melville Society Cultural Project

The Melville Society Cultural Project (MSCP) is a research-oriented group of scholars within the Melville Society dedicated to fostering a critical understanding of Herman Melville’s writings, life, and times. The Project, in affiliation with the New Bedford Whaling Museum, collects scholarly and artistic texts related to Melville, oversees the Melville Society’s Archive, and contributes to a wide variety of programming at the Whaling Museum and elsewhere. The MSCP seeks to promote public awareness of and appreciation for Melville and his writings and assist other scholars and teachers, as well as educational and cultural institutions, in becoming well-informed about the author and his work. In these

roles we take seriously the importance of building partnerships across communities to ensure that the humanities survive and thrive outside the academy. For more information go to melvillesociety.org.

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. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this news release do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information go to www.neh.gov.

For high-resolution images contact Tina Malott at tmalott@whalingmuseum.org



Melville Society Cultural Project Board Member Jennifer Baker (far right) led a 2016 workshop at the Whaling Museum. Participants are seen through the jaws of a sperm whale. The Melville Society is dedicated to the study and appreciation of the 19th century American author Herman Melville. The Whaling Museum is the home of the Melville Society Cultural Project and Melville Society Archive. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Education Programs will help fund a two-week Melville summer institute for teachers in 2018.