



Beyond the Mall: **National Outreach**

As the only national museum of American history in the country, it is our goal to give all Americans the opportunity to discover their cultural, historical, and scientific heritage and to consider what being an American means to them and thereby explore their own American identities. We work to achieve this goal outside our Museum walls, as well as within them.

We are reaching out electronically through the Internet and physically through facilities in other communities. In so doing, we are helping to fulfill the vision of Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence Small to engage new segments of the population and become a visible, active, constructive force in communities all over America.

Objects—and More—on the Move

National Museum of American History (NMAH) affiliations are moving beyond simply loaning objects and writing exhibit labels to collaborating with the affiliate to develop programs and activities that relate to the exhibition. Communities across the nation are tapping into NMAH resources, and more than ever before, affiliations are allowing NMAH to serve new audiences. Without traveling to Washington, D.C., people can view NMAH objects they might not otherwise see, and hear the stories that resonate within their own communities. This year's active affiliations exemplify NMAH's efforts to broaden outreach initiatives.

George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens

NMAH has lent objects to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens since 1959, so NMAH is pleased to welcome the Estate as a formal affiliate this year. New facilities are being built at the Estate—including an education center and an interpretive museum relating to George Washington's presidential and military life—and NMAH will provide objects and programmatic support for these endeavors.

Chabot Observatory and Science Center

The Chabot Observatory in Oakland, California, dedicates itself to providing innovative education to area teachers and schoolchildren in physical, biological, and other natural sciences. When the new Chabot Observatory debuted in August 2000, NMAH provided six telescopes from its collections, and NMAH specialists provided research and advice. The original observatory was a teaching institution and it has worked with area public schools throughout its 115-year history. By continuing to serve schoolchildren, particularly those in minority and at-risk school districts, Chabot provides a stellar example of an affiliation furthering the outreach mission of NMAH.



George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens became a formal affiliate this year

The Blackhawk Automotive Museum

Treasures of the Smithsonian, which opened in October 2000, marks the first of many collaborative exhibitions supported by the Affiliations program at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, California. NMAH served as the coordinator of this dynamic Smithsonian Institution project, working with the Postal Museum, National Air and Space Museum, the Museum of American Art, and the National Portrait Gallery to bring together artifacts, expertise, paintings, and other significant objects for the exhibition. In this snapshot telling of the history of the nation, *Treasures of the Smithsonian* highlights the contributions and careers of notable Americans and U.S. presidents.

Rock 'n' Soul: A Unique Collaboration

Due to a unique funding opportunity, NMAH branched out beyond traditional affiliations this year in order to create an exhibition in the Rock 'n' Soul Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. Housed in a new Gibson Guitar factory one block from Beale Street, Memphis's historic tourist district, the Museum features an 8,000-square-foot exhibition called *Rock 'n' Soul: Social Crossroads*. A team from NMAH collected objects, researched and wrote scripts, produced videos and an audio tour, designed,

and installed the exhibition in the museum. The Rock 'n' Soul Museum is now administered by Memphis Rock 'n' Soul, Inc., and is operated under the auspices of the Memphis city government. Charlie McGovern, one of the exhibition curators, observes, "It's the first time the Smithsonian has created an entire exhibition and turned it over to the community where it began."

The museum attracts diverse audiences who desire to learn about the incredible musical heritage of Memphis. *Rock 'n' Soul: Social Crossroads* traces the emergence of rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues music in Memphis from 1930–1975, from its rural traditions and working-class influences.

Rock 'n' Soul: Social Crossroads explores the evolution of the music and the history of business and technology that made these new musical revolutions possible. The exhibition demonstrates important musical technologies, such as how a record is pressed, and

Kenneth E. Behring holds Ulysses S. Grant's sword from *Treasures of the Smithsonian*



illuminates the lives of the people involved with the music—including musicians, record producers, and a jukebox operator—using the oral histories that have been collected over many years.

In September 2000, Smithsonian Productions premiered “Cradle of Rock ‘n’ Soul.” This 13-week radio documentary spotlights the oral histories and music from the Museum’s collection of recordings. The oral histories will also be made available to researchers through the Museum’s Cultural History Division. The *Rock ‘n’ Soul: Social Crossroads* exhibition catalog is scheduled for publication in 2001.

NMAH Internship Program

In addition to its dedicated docents, the Museum relies upon the work of interns, who in return are provided with a valuable learning experience. In 2000, more than 200 individuals joined the Internship Program from 38 states, the District of Columbia, and nine countries. The inclusive program draws from high schools, colleges, universities, and outside academe. The Internship Program serves the



entire Museum, with interns contributing to research, exhibition design, public program planning, and collections work.

Reaching Farther

At the National Museum of American History, we are constantly reaching out to share our collections and the collective awareness of being an American. Through our national outreach efforts, we hope someday to be able to engage every person in the nation, in any location across the country, to explore what it means to be an American.

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—Charlie McGovern,
co-Curator, *Rock ‘n’ Soul:
Social Crossroads*

Sam Phillips, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Knox Phillips at the opening of the *Rock ‘n’ Soul* exhibition

