



For Immediate Release

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### **Historic Newton Awarded Federal Grant to Transform Textile Collection**

Historic Newton has received a Museums for America grant for \$135,754 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The funding from IMLS will support a major transformation of our textile collection of over 3,500 objects, including clothing, fashion accessories, and bed coverings. The three-year project to inventory, research, rehouse, and digitize these materials will lead to an active textile collection that will enrich visitors' experience, further public programming, and directly serve our mission as Newton's history museum. Historic Newton's proposal was one of those selected from 355 applications nationwide.

"We are proud to be recognized for the worthiness of our project. Historic Newton's collections include many evocative objects with close ties to regional history, capable of engaging visitors and awakening empathy and curiosity," said Lisa Dady, Executive Director at Historic Newton. "We are eager to identify more of these 'gems' and put them to use in a full range of programs, exhibits, and online resources."

Pieces in this collection have the potential to be among Historic Newton's strongest tools for public engagement with history. Of particular interest is a stunning red and green quilted coat that belonged to abolitionist and women's suffrage activist Elizabeth Buffum Chace, whose daughter, Lillie Chace Wyman, lived in Newton, where she continued her mother's activism. A set of leg gaiters, earmuffs, and puttees tells the story of their owner, Nicolas Lombardi. An Italian immigrant to Newton, Lombardi fought in World War I and came home to raise a three-generation family in Nonantum.

Overall, our textile collection, including costumes and accessories, samplers, blankets, and other items, represents over three centuries of local and national history. Some objects also reflect cultural trends and global trade. For instance, a woman's hat trimmed with an entire taxidermy bird of paradise can be used to illustrate how hats such as this one inspired the bird conservation movement and the founding of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, whose members included many Newton residents.

The IMLS grant will support Historic Newton's work in producing a well-documented, relevant, and accessible collection with plans for optimum storage and ongoing care. Online catalog records will expand public access and empower staff to utilize the textiles for programs and exhibits in the future, including a major new exhibit about Newton's history planned for late 2025.

#### About the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage.

#### About Historic Newton

Historic Newton's mission is to connect our community with its history in order to enrich future generations. A public/private partnership between the non-profit Newton Historical Society and the City of Newton, we began operation in the historic (1809) Jackson Homestead in 1950. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Jackson Homestead houses most of the city's collections, as well as provides exhibition and programming space. Additionally, Historic Newton operates the Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds, oversees the City's three historic burying grounds, and conducts many education and public programs for groups of all ages. For more information, visit [www.historicnewton.org](http://www.historicnewton.org).