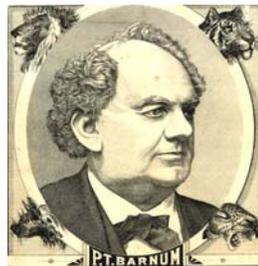


The BARNUM



MUSEUM

Barnum Museum Awarded Grant to Film Unveiling of Unusual Artifact

September 24, 2015: Bridgeport, CT – A grant of \$9995 awarded to The Barnum Museum by Connecticut Humanities will enable the museum to present a public program on Nov. 7 in which a rare and unusual artifact, in storage for decades, will be revealed for the first time and thoroughly examined by a team of experts as it is filmed by Firelight Media Group, LLC, of Monroe, CT.

The Barnum Museum has partnered with the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History in New Haven, Conn. to present the program during their current special exhibition, also funded in part by Connecticut Humanities. Experts from Yale University and The Barnum Museum’s Curator will be talking with the audience about what they discover. The program will take place on Saturday, November 7, 2015 in the Great Hall at the Yale Peabody Museum.

“We are thrilled to have such a perfect opportunity to finally learn about a rare artifact which has been in our collection for a number of years but never examined,” said Kathleen Maher, Executive Director of The Barnum Museum. “It is an honor and pleasure to be working with the staff of the Yale Peabody Museum to present this public program, tapping into the expertise of the curatorial and conservation team.”

The artifact has been in the Barnum Museum’s collection since 2003, when it was donated by another museum that no longer focuses on history as part of its educational mission. The artifact has never been examined by the Barnum Museum staff because it was believed to be too fragile and the chance of causing inadvertent damage required the guidance of a knowledgeable conservator, according to Adrienne Saint-Pierre, The Barnum Museum’s Curator. “We knew we needed a conservator familiar with such artifacts to guide the difficult process and also felt it would be wise to document it,” she said.

Knowing the fascination with “behind-the-scenes” programs, Ms. Maher and Ms. Saint-Pierre spoke with Richard Kissel, Director of Public Programs at the Yale Peabody Museum, and David Heiser, the Museum’s Head of Education and Outreach, about a real-time discovery presentation when it was examined for the first time. “Figuring out an artifact’s history begins with asking questions, and ‘reading’ the



physical clues in an object,” notes Ms. Saint-Pierre. “Many schools now emphasize inquiry-based learning in their curricula, and this is a perfect example of that process as it occurs every day in museums. Exhibitions involve a lot of research, which usually begins with a thorough examination of the objects that are to be shown,” she said.

The team of experts from Yale University examining the artifact will include Dr. Robert George Wheeler, Harold Hodgkinson Professor Emeritus of Engineering and Applied Science and a Faculty Affiliate at the Yale Peabody Museum; Catherine Sease, Senior Conservator at the Yale Peabody Museum; and Dr. Roger Colten, Senior Collections Manager in the Division of Anthropology. Dr. Wheeler co-curated the Yale Peabody’s current exhibition with Drs. Fabian Drixler and William D. Fleming.

Connecticut Humanities, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supports cultural and historic organizations that tell the state’s stories, build community, and enrich lives.

Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, located at 170 Whitney Avenue in New Haven, is dedicated both to advancing understanding of the Earth’s history through geological, biological, and anthropological research, and to disseminating the results of this research to the public through publications, exhibitions, and educational programs. The museum collections range across time, species, and cultures.

The Barnum Museum, conceived and built by showman P.T. Barnum, has proudly served Bridgeport and Connecticut since 1893. The ornate landmark building at 820 Main Street is owned by the City of Bridgeport and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Museum’s mission is to inspire curiosity, creativity and confidence through its public programming. A portion of the museum’s collection, including carriages and furniture that belonged to P. T. Barnum and “General Tom Thumb,” is on view to the public in the Peoples United Bank Gallery located behind the historic building. Hours are Thursdays & Fridays from 11 to 3.

Details about the November 7, 2015 program will be available on The Barnum Museum’s web site, barnum-museum.org, beginning October 6, 2015.

