

GRANT AT WORK

SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES

MESSENGER OF PEACE At the turn of the 19th century, evangelism rode the rails in “chapel cars,” traveling from state to state like mobile churches, spreading the gospel and winning converts. “Messenger of Peace,” a car built for the American Baptist Publication Society, was donated to the Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie, Washington, in 2007. Thanks to an SAT grant, it is now the subject of major research and rehabilitation. The Baptists had seven of the cars, the Episcopalians and Catholics, three each. Their presence sometimes helped establish permanent churches in the communities they visited. “Messenger of Peace” traveled the country for 50 years, appeared at two world’s fairs, and was finally abandoned in 1948. For a while it was converted to a diner called the “Ritz Limited Café.” According to the museum’s literature, the chapel car “speaks as much to the impact of the railroad on American society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as it does to the development of modern religious evangelism.”

RAÍCES LATIN MUSIC COLLECTION In search of a permanent home, the world’s largest and most important collection of salsa music received a \$75,000 grant from the SAT program. The Raíces Latin Music Collection, heavily relied on for historical accuracy in the making of the film *Mambo Kings*, is currently housed at New York’s Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts, established in 1970 to train new generations of Latin musicians. It is composed of some 15,000 recordings, scores, posters, photos, films, and other items emphasizing the contributions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic while recognizing both African and European influences. The Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, a government-financed local development corporation, has also assisted in preservation. The hope is to open this rich history to the public.

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U.S.S. *Constellation* >>

One of the most recognizable sights in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, the U.S.S. *Constellation* is the last existing Civil War-era naval vessel and one of the last sail-powered ships built by the U.S. Navy. Tied up at its dock on Pratt Street, the *Constellation*, now a museum, is a popular attraction, but some years ago it became evident that its hull was rotting. Over the last two years,



an extensive repair job has been underway, courtesy of the National Park Service-administered Save America’s Treasures grant program. “We had rain and snow getting into the laminated hull shell, which is basically surrounding the ship’s historic fabric,” says Museum Director Chris Rowsom. During an extensive 1994 rehab, workers installed a second hull

THE CONSTELLATION STOPPED THREE SLAVE SHIPS AND FREED THEIR CAPTIVES. THE SHIP SPENT MUCH OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, PROTECTING UNION SHIPPING AGAINST CONFEDERATE COMMERCE RAIDERS.

around the original to both strengthen the ship and to preserve original material. The leaking was now not only destroying the new planking, but threatening the 155-year-old wood beneath. “We came up with a plan, and it’s working very well,” says Rowsom. “We’ll be done in 2010.” The vessel was built in Norfolk in 1854. It was constructed, in part, of pieces from a disassembled 38-gun frigate of the same name. The new ship was classified as a sloop-of-war, a 200-foot vessel armed with 25 guns. In the late 1850s, it cruised the Mediterranean to support diplomatic efforts. Shortly before the Civil War, it was designated the flagship of the African Squadron, which patrolled Africa’s coasts interdicting the illegal slave trade. The *Constellation* stopped three slave ships and freed their captives. The ship spent much of the Civil War in the Mediterranean, protecting Union shipping against Confederate commerce raiders. With steam power quickly taking over, the *Constellation* was soon upstaged by other ships, becoming a training vessel at the Naval Academy in Annapolis and at the navy’s training center in Newport, Rhode Island. It also served a stint as flagship for Admiral Ernest J. King during World War II. The *Constellation* was decommissioned and docked in Baltimore Harbor in 1955. It was designated a national historic landmark in 1963. The ship is open for tours while the work is being done.

