

## Exhibition Description

We live between fences. We may hardly notice them, but they are dominant features in our lives and in our history. Our past is defined by the cutting point of barbed steel and the staccato rhythm of the white picket.

Americans have fenced millions of acres and countless rivals have seized post, rail, board, and wire to stake a claim for home and happiness. The fences that skirt our properties define ownership and identity.



*Between Fences* is a cultural history of fences and land use. It examines how neighbors and nations divide and protect, offend and defend through the boundaries they build. This Museum on Main Street exhibition surprises audiences with its exploration of the multiple meanings behind this everyday icon. Whether made of split rails, decorative white pickets, or tall chain link, a fence conveys information about the people who built it, how they view and use their property, and the nature of their relations with their neighbors. Such barriers speak eloquently about how we view our communities and country as well. *Between Fences* explores the implications of fences in Colonial America, around gated communities, and at our country's borders with Canada and Mexico. These and other thought-provoking topics provide institutions and teachers with rich opportunities for local humanities-based programming that encourages exploration of issues that shape American life.

## Sample Humanities Programs and Local Activities

*Between Fences* is a humanities-rich exhibition because it asks visitors to consider personal values and American history at once, and so the

opportunities for local communities to build ancillary public programs are rife with possibilities. Stretching easily to the public policy arena, exhibition hosts can sponsor lecture series and public symposia on patterns of early settlement, as well as investigate town architecture and transportation systems, contemporary and historical immigration, and civility. Using fences as a means to broach topics of neighborliness, the exhibition serves as an obvious impetus for oral history initiatives, theatrical productions, conflict resolution training, and, of course, reading, film, and poetry discussions.

## Curator

This exhibition was developed by historian Gregory K. Dreicer while at the National Building Museum.

## Funders

*Between Fences* is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Support for Museum on Main Street is provided by the United States Congress.

## Contents and Crates

Five free-standing structures with interactive components and artifacts mounted in cases. Requires 600 square feet of exhibition space. The exhibition is packed in 15 crates with handles and wheels. Total weight is 2700 pounds.



## Availability to State Humanities Councils

Exhibitions available for tours beginning September 2009 (council participation begins Spring 2007)

## Between Fences Resources Provided

### Administrative Resources

- State coordinator manuals featuring program development strategies, sample budgets/contracts and other support materials. Provided in hard copy format and also available online at [www.museumonmainstreet.org](http://www.museumonmainstreet.org) for easy access and for quick distribution of updated information;
- Museum on Main Street listserv for state council coordinators and national organizers providing access to immediate answers to project questions and opportunities for networking and project development;
- Experienced MoMS team members assigned to each state to provide advice and assistance in all areas of program development and tour coordination.

### Workshops and Meetings

A state council MoMS coordinator must agree to attend and/or host the following workshops and meetings. Out-of-state travel expenses are covered by MoMS.

- National MoMS Orientation Workshop — for first-time state council staff members to meet with Smithsonian project directors two years in advance of the tour (state council coordinators that have completed a MoMS tour are not required to attend);
- National Between Fences Meeting — state council staff member to meet with project organizers and other participating state council personnel one year in advance of the state tour;
- State Program Workshop — MoMS/Federation personnel co-host a program planning workshop for all in-state participating venues and partners;
- State Installation Workshop — MoMS/Smithsonian personnel co-host an installation workshop at the site of the exhibition's tour opening for all in-state participating venues.

### Public Relations/Marketing

- Participation in national publicity efforts by the Smithsonian;
- Smithsonian web page, at [www.museumonmainstreet.org](http://www.museumonmainstreet.org), featuring each state's rural itinerary and homepage links to each state humanities council;
- Project press and marketing toolkit: digital press images, skeleton news releases for local use, exhibition graphic identity for marketing use, and tips for publicity and marketing at the local level;
- One multi-colored outdoor banner featuring state council name;
- Full color promotional poster with state council logo (50 per venue and 50 for each state council, total 350) and postcards (500/venue and 500/state council, total 3,500)\*

### Fundraising Resources

- Foundation proposal template;
- As required, letters of support from SITES and Federation;
- Sample press clippings and testimonials from previous participating humanities councils;
- Opportunities to provide underwriting credit on exhibition's credit panel.

### Education Materials

- Take-away exhibit brochure/family guide featuring state council credit (1,000/site, 500/council, total of 6,500);\*
- Teacher's guide (available online at [www.museumonmainstreet.org](http://www.museumonmainstreet.org));
- Educational Poster with directions to online lesson plans (100/site, total of 610);\*
- Docent training guide (20/site, 30/council, total of 150);\*
- Local Exhibition Support Manuals featuring program development strategies, local exhibition development guidelines, marketing suggestions, exhibition script and installation instructions. Provided in hard copy format and also available on-line for easy access and for quick distribution of updated information (1 per local site and 1 for state coordinator);
- Program ideas and educational resource materials compiled from previous state council participants.

\*quantities based on a six-venue tour