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Baltimore Museum of Industry Receives Grant to Digitize Helen Bentley Film Collection

BALTIMORE, MD -- Despite being temporarily closed since mid-March, the Baltimore Museum of Industry's collections department has made remarkable progress on conserving the film collection of Helen Bentley's long running television program *The Port That Built a City and State*. Bentley hosted the weekly program, which ran on WMAR from 1950-1965. Bentley was the nation's first female maritime reporter and later served as a U.S. Congresswoman.

The project to preserve, catalog, and rehouse the extensive film collection is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) through the Museums for America program. This prestigious and competitive award, along with a generous bequest from Bentley's estate, provides funding for the fragile 16mm acetate films to be preserved in a digital format. Once the project is completed in late 2021, film clips and scripts from the show will be accessible through the museum's [online catalog](#), helping to ensure their historic integrity and accessibility for generations to come.

"This project will allow us to have better physical and intellectual control over this catalog, arguably among the most important records of maritime history in the nation," says BMI archivist and project director Matt Shirko. Henninger Media Services in Arlington, Virginia, a firm specializing in the preservation of motion pictures, has been selected by Shirko and his team to handle the digitization work.

Bentley was one of the BMI's earliest champions, advocating for its inception alongside museum founder Mayor William Donald Schaefer, and was a cherished trustee at the BMI at the time of her death in 2016.

Photos available on request.

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