Friends of Salem's Phillips Library

#savesalemshistory and #savethephillipslibrary
friendsofphillipslibrary@gmail.com
www.savethephillipslibrary.com

August 15, 2018

SALEM—The Friends of Salem's Phillips Library recently launched a website to affirm their position and to provide information as they advocate for the return of the Peabody Essex Museum's world-renowned research library to the city of its creation, Salem, Massachusetts. The #SavethePhillipsLibrary movement began in December 2017 after the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) announced it was moving the entire Phillips Library, Salem's largest and oldest archival collection, to a collections center 40 minutes away in Rowley.

Currently, the library sits in a 120,000-square-foot warehouse used to house 1.8 million objects presently not on display at the museum in Salem. Besides the distance, the Rowley reading room is not accessible by public transportation, limiting its availability to local students, visiting researchers, and Salemites.

The library's collections are central to fulfilling the PEM's mission "to inspire the public by fusing art, culture, and history in innovative ways," but for this fusion to occur, the library must return to Salem. Just as Salem served as the port that fostered so many cross-cultural connections in the 18th and 19th centuries, the library should serve as the point of access for people interested in these connections and their ongoing impact.

Until the library's return, the Friends are eager to support and provide guidance for several initiatives that came out of Working Group meetings, organized by Mayor Driscoll and PEM leadership. In these meetings, the Peabody Essex Museum committed to:

- designate a new gallery for the Phillips Library collection in the new wing at the main PEM campus that will allow materials and artifacts from the collection to be regularly on display
- create an exhibit and experience using multimedia, objects, works of art, and documents that celebrate Salem's history in Plummer Hall
- determine priorities for the order in which Phillips Library materials are digitized
- carry out numerous museum education and other programs and activities at Plummer Hall
- make Plummer Hall accessible to the public during regular museum open hours, including the Saltonstall Reading Room, fitted with workstations that provide free online access to digital Phillips Library materials without paywalls and fees
- maintain history books and historical publications produced by the Essex Institute and the Peabody Museum of Salem, plus historical materials and publications PEM has produced, including extensive information on the museum's large and important collection of historic buildings, in the Saltonstall Reading Room
- provide a voucher program to help provide transport for Salem residents who wish to use the Phillips Library and find it difficult or impossible to drive to Rowley

As we continue to advocate for the return of the Phillips Library to Salem, we strongly urge the public to use the Rowley facilities to show their interest and support for the Phillips Library.

For more information, visit https://www.savethephillipslibrary.com/.