

Chapter 1 : Telling the Stories, Part 6: National Register of Historic Places Bulletin

This is a practical guide to interpretation at historic sites. The authors argue that sites do not need a large budget or abundant resources in order to provide high quality interpretation at their site.

Compelling interpretation attracts people to historic sites. History Associates has extensive experience developing creative interpretive programming for historical sites around the world. We start with professional interpretive planning that identifies the particular challenges and objectives of every project. Our certified interpretive planner works with clients to develop a comprehensive strategy for conveying key messages to target audiences in the most effective way, while respecting and preserving their unique heritage. We bring these classical elements of storytelling to a range of different media, including traditional wayfaring signage, on the Web, via smartphone applications, or in interactive audio and video formats. Whatever the media, we unite expository text, vivid quotes, maps, contemporary photographs, illustrations, and artifacts to tell the story. Together, these resources introduce the facts and significance of historic events and add detail, color, and human elements to the stories that resonate with visitors and connect them to the place. Or call us at or contact History Associates to discuss your historic site interpretation project. What does an interpretive planner do? Interpretive planners help museums, science centers, heritage sites, parks and other places of historical or cultural significance convey their stories to the public. They guide institutions through a decision-making process to shape their message, identify their goals and objectives and plan their interpretive programs. Interpretive planners write interpretive plans, but can also help develop specific interpretive media, including museum exhibits, interpretive trails, waysides, tours and mobile apps. What is an interpretive plan? An interpretive plan is a foundational document that helps institutions tell their stories, interpret their resources and achieve their overall mission. How do you write an interpretation plan? Interpretive planning is a collaborative, goal-driven process. Here are some tips for writing an interpretive plan: Assess the existing conditions. Meet the major stakeholders and identify their challenges, goals and objectives. Learn who visits the site or institution and the experiences they have. Discuss with stakeholders who else the site would like to reach. Identify the storylines and messages around which to organize your interpretation. Brainstorm options for interpretive media to tell your story – exhibits, tours, trails, waysides, films, mobile apps, educational programs and more. What media can you implement taking into account staffing, budget, infrastructure, safety and resource management? Choose the media that matches your short-term and long-term goals. Create an action plan that sets priorities for implementation.

Chapter 2 : Heritage interpretation - Wikipedia

Interpretation of Historic Sites offers essential knowledge on how to develop and conduct interpretive programs for every historic site, regardless of size or budget. Preview this book» What people are saying - Write a review.

In reality, we see the use of interpretive techniques and principles every time we see an advertisement in a magazine or on television. Understanding the Audience One of the key areas of knowledge that interpreters must have to be effective in their presentations is an understanding of how visitors learn and remember information in a recreational learning environment. A recreational learning experience is one where the person has self-selected to attend or participate in a program for "fun". The "learning" that occurs is viewed as fun as well. Anyone that has a hobby, such as coin collecting, model making, studying aspects of history, bird watching, etc. We learn because we want to, and the process of learning and discovery gives us pleasure. I am often asked what, if any, are the differences between the three; information, environmental education, and interpretation. Information presented to visitors is just that, straight facts, figures and dates. A field guide to birds provides "information" about the bird species, but usually no interpretation. But all interpretation contains information. Interpretation is not what you say to visitors, but rather the way you say it to them. Environmental Education either the formal education process, or the hopeful result of a program or exhibit , can be presented in either an informational "instructional" approach or using an interpretive approach. Remember, interpretation is a communication process. If the process works in presenting and translating the information about the environment in a way that is meaningful for the audience, then environmental "education" occurs. I believe that true "education" occurs if the recipient of the communication: I have seen many formal environmental education programs where very little "education" occurred. I have also seen teachers in formal classroom environmental education programs use "interpretive" techniques that left their students inspired, motivated, and excited about learning more. Interpretation is not topic or resource specific. The interpretive communication process can be used for interpreting anything, any subject. If the interpretive communication is effective, then "education" can occur about that subject. Interpretation is a objective driven, and market audience focused process that looks for results the accomplishment of stated objectives. It uses marketing and advertising techniques, journalism strategies, and a host of other material integrate communication strategies to form our Interpretive Communications Strategy. Interpretation is also fun - a recreational learning experience. What is the Interpretive Communication Process? In planning the strategy as to how to provoke attention, the interpreter has to consider the answer to the question: Why would a visitor want to know this information? The answer to that questions ends up being the graphic, photo, or statement that gets the audiences attention. Tilden says that we should reveal the ending or answer of the communication through a unique or unusual perspective of viewpoint. Save the answer to last. The reveal tells the visitor why the message was important for them, or how they can benefit from the information that was interpreted to them. It means that when we plan or design our program, service, or media, that we use the right colors, costumes, music, designs, etc. Think of message unity as the stage setting and props for a theatrical presentation. This final principles means that all interpretation should address some main point or theme - "the big picture" of what is important about the park, historic site, tourism site, etc. The main theme is best illustrated by your answer to the question "if a visitor spends time going to programs, looking at exhibits, etc. The answer to this question is "the whole.

Chapter 3 : Home | Historic Sites

This Is A Trade Paperback Copy Of Interpretation Of Historic www.nxgvision.com Lean, Corner Bumps, Covers Are Age Toned, Upper Rear Cover Corner Is Creased And Has A Paperlift, And Other Light To Moderate Shopwear.

Download the PDF Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural tracts of land to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Cultural landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world. Patterns on the land have been preserved through the continuation of traditional uses, such as the grape fields at the Sterling Vineyards in Calistoga, California. A cultural landscape is defined as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. These are defined below. Historic landscapes include residential gardens and community parks, scenic highways, rural communities, institutional grounds, cemeteries, battlefields and zoological gardens. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features, such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features, such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects. Most historic properties have a cultural landscape component that is integral to the significance of the resource. Imagine a residential district without sidewalks, lawns and trees or a plantation with buildings but no adjacent lands. A historic property consists of all its cultural resources—landscapes, buildings, archeological sites and collections. In some cultural landscapes, there may be a total absence of buildings. This Preservation Brief provides preservation professionals, cultural resource managers, and historic property owners a step-by-step process for preserving historic designed and vernacular landscapes, two types of cultural landscapes. While this process is ideally applied to an entire landscape, it can address a single feature, such as a perennial garden, family burial plot, or a sentinel oak in an open meadow. This Brief provides a framework and guidance for undertaking projects to ensure a successful balance between historic preservation and change. Definitions Historic Designed Landscape—“a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates. Historic Vernacular Landscape—“a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes. Historic Site—“a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. Ethnographic Landscape—“a landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components. Lawrence Ranch, Questa, New Mexico, is an example of a character-defining landscape feature. Nearly all designed and vernacular landscapes evolve from, or are often dependent on, natural resources. It is these interconnected systems of land, air and water, vegetation and wildlife which have dynamic qualities that differentiate cultural landscapes from other cultural resources, such as historic structures. Thus, their documentation, treatment, and ongoing management require a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach. Another example of a very different landscape feature is this tree planting detail for Jefferson Memorial Park, St. Today, those involved in preservation planning and management of cultural landscapes represent a broad array of academic backgrounds, training, and related project experience. Professionals may have expertise in landscape architecture, history, landscape archeology, forestry, agriculture, horticulture, pomology, pollen analysis, planning, architecture, engineering civil,

structural, mechanical, traffic, cultural geography, wildlife, ecology, ethnography, interpretation, material and object conservation, landscape maintenance and management. Historians and historic preservation professionals can bring expertise in the history of the landscape, architecture, art, industry, agriculture, society and other subjects. Landscape preservation teams, including on-site management teams and independent consultants, are often directed by a landscape architect with specific expertise in landscape preservation. A range of issues may need to be addressed when considering how a particular cultural landscape should be treated. This may include the in-kind replacement of declining vegetation, reproduction of furnishings, rehabilitation of structures, accessibility provisions for people with disabilities, or the treatment of industrial properties that are rehabilitated for new uses. Professional techniques for identifying, documenting, evaluating and preserving cultural landscapes have advanced during the past 25 years and are continually being refined. Preservation planning generally involves the following steps: The steps in this process are not independent of each other, nor are they always sequential. In fact, information gathered in one step may lead to a re-examination or refinement of previous steps. For example, field inventory and historical research are likely to occur simultaneously, and may reveal unnoticed cultural resources that should be protected. The treatment and management of cultural landscape should also be considered in concert with the management of an entire historic property. As a result, many other studies may be relevant. They include management plans, interpretive plans, exhibit design, historic structures reports, and other. These steps can result in several products including a Cultural Landscape Report also known as a Historic Landscape Report, statements for management, interpretive guide, maintenance guide and maintenance records. A CLR evaluates the history and integrity of the landscape including any changes to its geographical context, features, materials, and use. CLRs are often prepared when a change is made. A CLR can provide managers, curators and others with information needed to make management decisions. Where appropriate, National Register files should be amended to reflect the new findings. Historical Research Research is essential before undertaking any treatment. Research findings provide a foundation to make educated decisions for work, and can also facilitate ongoing maintenance and management operations, interpretation and eventual compliance requirements. A variety of primary and secondary sources may be consulted. Primary archival sources can include historic plans, surveys, plats, tax maps, atlases, U. Geological Survey maps, soil profiles, aerial photographs, photographs, stereoscopic views, glass lantern slides, postcards, engravings, paintings, newspapers, journals, construction drawings, specifications, plant lists, nursery catalogs, household records, account books and personal correspondence. Secondary sources include monographs, published histories, theses, National Register forms, survey data, local preservation plans, state contexts and scholarly articles. Contemporary documentary resources should also be consulted. This may include recent studies, plans, surveys, aerial and infrared photographs, Soil Conservation Service soil maps, inventories, investigations and interviews. Oral histories of residents, managers, and maintenance personnel with a long tenure or historical association can be valuable sources of information about changes to a landscape over many years. For properties listed in the National Register, nomination forms should be consulted. Preparing Period Plans In the case of designed landscapes, even though a historic design plan exists, it does not necessarily mean that it was realized fully, or even in part. Based on a review of the archival resources outlined above, and the extant landscape today, an as-built period plan may be delineated. For all successive tenures of ownership, occupancy and landscape change, period plans should be generated. Period plans can document to the greatest extent possible the historic appearance during a particular period of ownership, occupancy, or development. Period plans should be based on primary archival sources and should avoid conjecture. Features that are based on secondary or less accurate sources should be graphically differentiated. Ideally, all referenced archival sources should be annotated and footnoted directly on period plans. Where historical data is missing, period plans should reflect any gaps in the CLR narrative text and these limitations considered in future treatment decisions. Inventorying and Documenting Existing Conditions Both physical evidence in the landscape and historic documentation guide the historic preservation plan and treatments. To document existing conditions, intensive field investigation and reconnaissance should be conducted at the same time that documentary research is being gathered. Information should be exchanged among preservation professionals, historians, technicians, local residents,

managers and visitors. Understanding the geographic context should be part of the inventory process. Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation. To assist in the survey process, National Register Bulletins have been published by the National Park Service to aid in identifying, nominating and evaluating designed and rural historic landscapes. Additionally, Bulletins are available for specific landscape types such as battlefields, mining sites, and cemeteries. Although there are several ways to inventory and document a landscape, the goal is to create a baseline from a detailed record of the landscape and its features as they exist at the present considering seasonal variations. Each landscape inventory should address issues of boundary delineation, documentation methodologies and techniques, the limitations of the inventory, and the scope of inventory efforts. This present-day view of Rancho Los Alamitos shows present-day encroachments and adjacent developments that will affect the future treatment of visual and spatial relationships. These are most often influenced by the timetable, budget, project scope, and the purpose of the inventory and, depending on the physical qualities of the property, its scale, detail, and the inter-relationship between natural and cultural resources. For example, inventory objectives to develop a treatment plan may differ considerably compared to those needed to develop an ongoing maintenance plan. Once the criteria for a landscape inventory are developed and tested, the methodology should be explained. Preparing Existing Condition Plans Inventory and documentation may be recorded in plans, sections, photographs, aerial photographs, axonometric perspectives, narratives, video-or any combination of techniques. Existing conditions should generally be documented to scale, drawn by hand or generated by computer. The scale of the drawings is often determined by the size and complexity of the landscape. Some landscapes may require documentation at more than one scale. For example, a large estate may be documented at a small scale to depict its spatial and visual relationships, while the discrete area around an estate mansion may require a larger scale to illustrate individual plant materials, pavement patterns and other details. The same may apply to an entire rural historic district and a fenced vegetable garden contained within. When landscapes are documented in photographs, registration points can be set to indicate the precise location and orientation of features. Registration points should correspond to significant forms, features and spatial relationships within the landscape and its surrounds. The points may also correspond to historic views to illustrate the change in the landscape to date. These include the physical features described above. The identification of existing plants, should be specific, including genus, species, common name, age if known and size. The woody, and if appropriate, herbaceous plant material should be accurately located on the existing conditions map. To ensure full representation of successional herbaceous plants, care should be taken to document the landscape in different seasons, if possible. Treating living plant materials as a curatorial collection has also been undertaken at some cultural landscapes. This process, either done manually or by computer, can track the condition and maintenance operations on individual plants. Some sites, such as the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Brookline, Massachusetts have developed a field investigation numbering system to track all woody plants. Due to concern for the preservation of genetic diversity and the need to replace significant plant materials, a number of properties are beginning to propagate historically important rare plants that are no longer commercially available, unique, or possess significant historic associations.

Chapter 4 : Why Heritage Sites Need Interp.

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It is difficult to accomplish this type of success to its fullest potential without active and powerful site based interpretation programs and services and exploiting interpretations powerful "public relations" potential. A third type of "success" is measured by the level in which the historic site mission and objectives are accomplished: The question is "what happened as a result of that contact"? In this example as well, professional interpretive planning and design is key to the successful cost effectiveness of the interpretive media or services presentation. The media must effectively motivate, stimulate, inspire, and touch visitors for them to "react" to the message. So no matter which type of success you are interested in, one or probably all, you cannot ever reach your true success potential in heritage tourism for your site without using quality, professional interpretation programs, services, media and staff to effectively communicate to your various target market groups. Why is interpretive communications so powerful? The main principles of communication used in developing any ad campaign are a foundation of interpretive communications. Professional interpreters use their understanding of interpretive techniques to develop the interpretive program, service or media to: Provoke the attention of the visitor. Relate to the every day lives of visitors. Reveal the essence of the message in a unique or interesting manner. Develop objective and outcome based media, program or services plans. Target messages to specific market groups interests, backgrounds and feelings. Have in-depth understandings of their audiences. Can make the presentations fun, inspirational, memorable and powerful. Plan for the total visitor experience. Plan for low cost per contact while getting high cost effectiveness from the communication media, programs or services. Interpretation can inspire visitors and create a sense of individual and community pride. It is the interpretation programs, living history, guided tours, exhibits, etc. Without interpretation a historic site is, in the eyes of the visitor, just another OLD site. Interpretation gets visitors to CARE about heritage theirs or other cultures. Interpretive services are the reasons visitors come back to heritage sites. Interpretive programs and services can increase visitation by increasing the perception of BENEFITS tourists receive by going to a particular heritage site. Interpretive programs and services can produce reductions in site maintenance, and related management issues when used as a management tool. Interpretive programs and services can make money! Interpretive programs and services provide added value to any heritage tourism experience, and heritage site marketing efforts. You cannot have heritage tourism without interpretation. Heritage tourism is dependent upon the story of the site and the willingness of visitors to want to travel to see, learn about and experience the site. Interpretation brings in more visitors, more repeat visitors and more income. Interpretation helps visitors create their own unique choice of ways to experience and learn about a site and its story mass customization and markets of one. Here are a few indicators that heritage sites are in need of interpretive programs or services new or improved: Visitation numbers have flat lined no growth. Visitation numbers are far below expected numbers in relationship to site location population bases , and visitation numbers to other similar heritage sites. Visitation numbers are decreasing over one or more years. Site visitor management problems are increasing or remain unresolved littering, etc. You have very poor community support image, etc. You are experiencing a reduction in grant aid support from past years. Visitors do not leave your heritage site truly understanding the story of the site, or the value in preservation of historic sites and landscapes. Memberships to your organization are flat or declining. Your agency has poor name and mission recognition. Your marketing brochures have pictures of landscapes, furniture or buildings, but no people in the pictures. You have to reduce hours of operation due to poor visitation. It is difficult to keep guides or volunteers. Staff begin to move on to other sites. On a Saturday afternoon in the summer your site looks "empty". Interpretation is an attitude. Interpretation is not just a thing, like a board or exhibit. It is a way of thinking about the quality of the communication and services you will provide to visitors. It is the desire to make sure that the presentation of the heritage site message or story is cost effective, powerful, and gets results outcome based objectives. It is a love of talking to and with visitors,

and getting them as excited about the site as you are. Without this attitude about interpretive quality and customer care excellence, the site and visit becomes stale, boring and lacks soul. The result - visitors can sense this and register their feelings by not coming back again. Summary Interpretation is an indispensable part of a heritage sites ultimate success financial, political and educational. Interpretation of the site story and message is the main reason visitors go to heritage sites, and a key element in any heritage tourism site development. Heritage sites can never truly reach their success potential without having interpretive plans, programs, services, media, and staff to relate the site stories and importance to visitors. Interpretive programs and services can help increase site visitation, increase repeat visitation, increase and improve community support, and a variety of other benefits to the heritage sites using this powerful communication strategy.

Chapter 5 : Tracing Center | Best Practices in Slavery Interpretation

You'd think historic sites and geography would be an obvious combination because they both focus on place, and yet, I didn't really see the connection until a few years ago when I started teaching at George Washington University.

Teaching the Skill of Historical Interpretation Sharon Cohen It goes without saying that history teachers try to help students improve their reading, writing, and analytical skills. I would argue, however, that many of us neglect the development of the skill of historical interpretation, especially with regard to historiography. Perhaps it is only natural in survey courses and high school classes that most of us focus on giving our students "just the facts" within our historical interpretations that may not be obvious to students. In this article, I will suggest a few reasons that historical interpretation should get more attention and offer some suggestions for teaching that skill even to our younger or less-prepared students. First, let me offer a definition of the term "historical interpretation" as I will use it in this article. Why then do many of us neglect to teach the skill of historical interpretation? Perhaps it is because, as, as Stanford University Professor Sam Wineburg has so aptly said, what historians do is an "unnatural act. Therefore, how do we history teachers move beyond the simple definition of what historians do to a description of historical interpretation that lends itself to teaching the skill? If we accept that history teachers want to encourage students to improve their reading, writing, and analytical skills, then guiding students toward recognizing that historical interpretations should be seen as another way of thinking and problem solving, rather than just memorizing "the facts", could be another important skill for students to acquire. This is where historiography plays a role. We need to show our students that all historical interpretations are rooted in what has already been argued about that historical question what many of us would recognize as the literature review. The challenge that we face is that many students in our survey courses find it difficult to accept that historians do not work in a vacuum or just present the "truth". By showing how historians construct their arguments within the context of other interpretations, we will be helping our students toward a more complex way of thinking and problem solving about other issues they confront in their lives. Now that I have offered some reasons why teaching historical interpretation as a skill is important, I will offer a few suggestions on how to teach the skill. Most of us who teach high school or college survey courses are pressed for time "to cover" the chronological periods or themes of our course. It would seem that we have no extra time to address the skill of historical interpretation. I would argue that we are constantly presenting our own historical interpretations in the selection of the order of the content, the historical questions we deem important enough to address, and the types of primary sources we require our students to analyze. As a small step toward helping students learn the skill of historical interpretation, why not be more open with them about the historians whose interpretations influenced our selection process? While it is not necessary to start every lecture or class with an admission of the influences on us, we could choose to share two or three major articles or monographs by historians who shaped our approach to the past. We also can be explicit about linking the historical background we present in our class with the secondary sources we ask students to analyze on their own. Many students in survey courses do not easily connect what they hear us say in class with what they encounter in secondary sources. Let me share a few secondary sources beyond the textbook in which my students find it relatively easy to identify the historical interpretations. It may help to know that I teach a one-year two-semester world history course for high school juniors about half of whom are trying a challenging history course for the first time. I follow the Advanced Placement World History curriculum, starting with the Neolithic Revolution and ending up somewhere in the present. I ask students to identify the other theories about the cause of inequality in wealth that Diamond dismisses in favor of his own theory. For the eleven years I have taught this curriculum, students actively engage in debating the theories he dismisses as well as his theory and recall later in the year that this exercise opened their eyes to how theories can be applied to interpreting the past. Guzman uses fairly simple language to demonstrate that barbarians got a bad reputation from ancient historians writing for "civilized" audiences. On the basis of this exercise, students become a bit more sensitive to the use of words like "barbarian" and "civilized" throughout the rest of the course. The World System A. After we have identified, simulated, and discussed the continuities and

changes in the most active trade systems in the post-classical period up to about C. After this exercise, students begin to look at even the maps in their textbooks as examples of historical interpretation. I help students see how Hansen debunks the classic Western view of the "isolated" Chinese system through her exhaustive examples of open borders in China from the time of the Shang dynasty to I give students a short quiz to make sure they can identify the arguments that Hansen challenges. The last teaching idea I want to share for helping students build their skills in identifying historical interpretations has to do with pirates. Toward the end of the first semester, my students can identify some of the major commodities and merchants in the transoceanic trade system of the s, so they are ready to read and analyze the role of pirates. A few students will have heard whatever the latest news has been on pirates, or even sometimes they have seen some television program on pirates. Contraband and Corruption in World History, to help them distinguish between merchants breaking the law to make profits and thieves stealing goods or people. Usually students can predict that Andrade will be arguing for a more complex view of pirates. It was my goal in this article to encourage teachers to show their students historical interpretations outside the main textbook they might use. There are many, many possible secondary sources available to world history teachers. One easy place to search is the Journal of World History or you could use the articles in this free online journal. Ideas from an Emerging Field. Students should then be able to identify how his thesis fits in with the main points of the other scholars. Tucker, "War and the Environment" â€”Students could explain if they agree that invading armies caused both the destruction of eco-systems as well as the restoration of ecological diversity as human populations migrated away from the military conflicts. Stephen Cote, "Drilling for Oil and Constructing Difference in Eastern Bolivia" â€”Students could rank the issues Cote identifies with developing the oil industry in Bolivia, explain their criteria for ranking and whether Cote would agree with their rankings. These are the skills of historical interpretation that I hope my students will transfer to other ways they think about their world. She can be contacted at: Oxford University Press, Journal of World History 15, Number 4, December ., Were the barbarians a negative or positive factor in ancient and medieval history? The Historian 50 , â€”70 Hansen, Valerie. A History of China to New York and London, W. Contraband and Corruption in World History. Rowan and Littlefield, Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past. Temple University Press, You may not reproduce, publish, distribute, transmit, participate in the transfer or sale of, modify, create derivative works from, display, or in any way exploit the World History Connected database in whole or in part without the written permission of the copyright holder.

SITE INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION It is important that visitors to a historic resource understand the history of the resource, whether interpreted as a museum, in its original use, or.

University of Nottingham Citation: This timely and important volume seeks to improve and suggest successful plans for historical interpretation, and contains nearly two dozen essays spanning from the colonial period to the 21st century. It embraces a myriad of research methods and strategies for interpretation, including the use of social media, archival and documentary research, outreach programmes as well as instructing interpreters how to manage conflict and difficult questions. Whilst the book celebrates exhibitions and other public history programmes, there is still a concession that this work is not finished. This is something I found all too clear when I travelled around the Deep South in the summer of I visited some fantastic exhibitions and museums dedicated to African-American history, but the interpretation of slavery at plantation sites in particular is far from meaningful, truthful or successful. The experience of slavery is either completely ignored or brushed over, and the violence faced by enslaved men, women and children is barely addressed. Tours were often empty of context and unsurprisingly silent on the brutality and sexual violence against black women. This book places a visit like mine into context: In his introduction, Max A. Van Balgooy explains the main problems and anxieties historical interpreters face, and the difficulties of navigating a past that still very much influences the present. Interpretation should be an inclusive history and tell the full story. Since people are more likely to trust museum exhibitions than academics, historical sites face a great pressure to not only tell stories accurately, but fairly. A reinterpretation of historical sites has taken place since the development of social history in the s, but this progress has been slow and in some areas, non-existent. The book is split into three sections: Seymour highlights several trends across these historic sites: Gallas and James DeWolf Perry agree and in their chapter argue for a comprehensive and consciousness of slavery at historic sites. Public education should be paramount, and the chapter includes a helpful guide to illustrate successful interpretation. Gallas and Perry argue for six components for the interpretation of historic sites. Gallas and Perry stress that it is important to know or estimate the level of knowledge a visitor has about slavery, as this often affects the quality and learning experience of the visit. These interesting discussions force the reader to consider the challenges historical interpreters face on a daily basis, and how their work behind the scenes influences the particular stories they tell and how they deal with conflicting histories. The second section focuses on research, and how public historians are fighting against the out-dated belief that African-American history cannot be interpreted if there is no information or lack of physical evidence. For example, Martha B. In most plantations and historic houses, guided tours focus on the furniture rather than the enslaved, partly because “so the argument goes” there is little material or physical evidence left of slave quarters or the enslaved themselves. Mentioning slave quarters on a map or a plaque is not enough to explain the history of slavery or recreate a life behind the statistic of how many enslaved people worked there. Archaeological records, oral histories and archival records can piece together the story of a site, although recreating slave quarters can be mired by difficulties of terminology, for example, what they would have looked like and how they were used. Educators have since involved the local community, learned of their struggles, and installed a permanent exhibition within the school to explain the difficulties faced before, during and after the Civil Rights Movement. Nash Museum at Chucalissa, Mississippi, and argue that the best form of interpretation involves a strong connection to the local community. Finally, Ella Spears and Sheila Washington discuss the fascinating story of how efforts to interpret the history of the Scottsboro Boys in Alabama eventually led to full pardons being issued to the three defendants who still have on-going convictions. This is an inspiring conclusion to the book and provides more reasons why people within the heritage profession should work closely together and with the public to enforce change and present an accurate account of the past. This volume offers a rich and interesting insight into the world of public history, but I would have liked to see a more comprehensive study or section on visitor response. Whilst I recognise the difficulties of gauging visitor satisfaction, it would be invaluable to consider community reaction to museum outreach programmes, and to hear the thoughts of

visitors on how slavery or Civil Rights is interpreted at historic sites. The volume speaks to a greater collaboration between historians, educators, teachers and the public at large, so to give a voice to the visitors even in a small way would have enhanced the book. Despite this, this volume provides an engaging and fascinating account of how African-American history is interpreted today. Historical interpreters have an opportunity to explore, ask questions, dig deeper and engage an audience whilst navigating the tensions of American history. This volume celebrates contributions and successes, but we need to recognise that many historic sites have much to improve when confronting the legacy of slavery. September Max A. I share her concern that the book lacks an adequate study of visitors and to further the discussion with the field, it is a weakness that affects all museums and historic sites, even beyond those who interpret African-American history and culture. The absence of sufficient data is indicative of the broader field. As part of the History Relevance Campaign [www. Graft](http://www.graft.org), Tim Grove Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum , and I are studying the impact of history on the lives of Americans and discovering a dearth of reliable data. Although many history organizations which includes museums, historic sites, historical societies, and archives claim their programs and activities have a significant impact on their visitors and patrons, very few have conducted an evaluation with visitors in the last five years. Among those evaluations, most measured satisfaction e. At this point, the unsettling news is that despite all of our arguments about the importance of history to society, our field is relying on anecdotal observations and hardly any reliable studies should I admit this publicly? It not only makes it difficult to improve and enhance the programs and activities at history museums and historic sites, but fails to provide a persuasive argument to funders and elected officials. Science centers and art galleries are far ahead of us in this regard. Nevertheless, we are continuing our research, both on our own and in concert with history organizations across the country, to both document the impact of history on Americans and to develop standards and best practices. I welcome your suggestions and ideas at Max.

Chapter 7 : Historic Site Interpretation

Heritage interpretation may be performed at dedicated interpretation centres or at museums, historic sites, parks, art galleries, nature centres, zoos, aquaria, botanical gardens, nature reserves and a host of other heritage sites.

By definition they are impersonal. They lack the ability of "live" interpretation to adjust to the needs of particular individuals or groups. But, like the hour teller machine at a bank, they are available whenever they are needed. While non-personal interpretation does not require continuing costs for staffing, it does involve extensive investments of both time and money during development. Like personal interpretation, it is dependent on good research to insure that it is both accurate and inclusive. Because there are many types of published materials and some of them are relatively inexpensive, they are a popular interpretive choice. Some publications are easily portable; visitors carry them as guides while touring and take them home as souvenirs. They provide both general orientation and detailed information. Publications can help visitors prepare before they arrive and provide important advice that will affect how they experience the place. When creatively written and visually appealing, publications evoke vivid images and stir the emotions. They are relatively easy to update or revise. Translations done with care and sensitivity broaden the audience to include those who do not speak English. Skillful writers can prepare a series of publications that interpret the story of a historic place at different levels, making the story interesting and understandable to a range of audiences. Uniform design can help such families of publications maintain the identity of a property or group of properties. Publications help satisfy the curiosity provoked by other interpretive programs. Visitors willingly pay and the process of learning continues when they return home. Sales can be an important extension of this interpretive medium, covering costs and sometimes even making money. Publications do not solve every interpretive problem. No site can offer a full range of free, printed items. Books and other publications that address a story at length and in-depth are expensive to produce and usually only feasible if sold. Sales entail administrative expenses and require space for both sales and storage. Published materials often lack focus. They try to do too much. They become over-burdened with too many tasks, for too many audiences. When this occurs, no one uses them, they end up only as litter and limited funding is wasted. Successful publications must address specific goals and be directed at defined audiences. Travel guides are a special category of publication that can be critical in attracting visitors by including information on properties and any scheduled interpretive events. Many potential visitors check travel guides, such as those published by the American Automobile Association AAA , when planning a trip. Many of these guides now also indicate when the places they feature are listed in the National Register. Rack Cards The glossy, full-color rack cards produced for the historic sites administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission do not try to tell the whole story. Restricting the content to the highlights makes the effective and eye-catching design possible. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has created a series of glossy, full color rack cards for the 27 historic sites that it administers. Measuring 4" x 9", these cards are designed specifically to fit in the racks at tourist bureaus and welcome centers. The theme of the site is summarized in one word, written in sweeping letters across the top of the card, where it will catch the eye of travelers. Because the card does not attempt to tell too much, it has the open space that makes for a striking design. Monticello, Albemarle County, VA designated a National Historic Landmark on December 19, This brochure, written and designed for young people is one of a series of publications Monticello has created for specific audiences. A newsletter keeps supporters informed of site-related activities. One of the most innovative ideas is a brochure specially written and designed for "young people. Young readers have no problem with the carefully written text. For those who want to learn more, the brochure includes a bibliography. Here the to horses and mules needed for fire-fighting in the Northern Rockies were bred and trained. Listed in the National Register in , Ninemile Remount Depot is both an operating ranger station and a historic site. Here the public can learn to understand the complexities of caring for wilderness and to appreciate the historic role of the Forest Service. The brochure also provides safety information for visitors to this working ranger station: We ask that you do the same. A large and glossy "coffee table" book doubles as a fund-raiser. A relatively

low-cost page spiral-bound booklet, *Tours of Downtown Rochester: Images of History*, includes six different walking tours of the city. A two-color brochure, donated by a local utility, reproduces Tour 3: Since they reach mass audiences, they can disseminate information to thousands of readers, many of whom might be unaware of the historic places in their own communities. This is one of the best ways to reach new audiences. Well-placed articles create interest, elicit support, and, at a minimum, result in widespread casual familiarity with local historic places. Publicity related to special events is ideal for these media. Preparing news releases and offering to write or help write feature articles may well be worth the time it takes. Research is as essential to effective media relations as it is to interpretation. It takes time and work to develop a list of media contacts, editors and reporters, along with notes about deadlines, style sheets, types of material used, etc. The list must be kept current if it is to be useful. Experienced historians and writers, either professional or volunteer, are essential to ensure that newspaper feature articles or magazine stories are accurate and effective. These materials can be used before or after a field trip to increase its effectiveness and can bring places into classrooms when visits are impossible. Developing educational materials is not always easy. Establishing partnerships between historic places and local educators can be difficult. Teachers may not know about the places that are available for their use, and historians are often inexperienced in dealing with educational bureaucracies. Like school tours, educational materials must meet the established objectives or outcomes required in state or local curricula. Working closely with teachers in the development of educational materials is the best way to ensure that the materials will be used. Some historic sites have developed "traveling trunks" as classroom supplements or substitutes for field trips. These are usually large boxes that contain artifacts, games, puzzles, posters, books, possibly audio tapes or videos, and suggestions for teacher activities. The trunks are shipped out to teachers that request them at a rental charge that covers the cost of shipping. Because they generally include many "hands-on" activities--artifacts that the students can touch, reproduction clothing that they can try on, possibly tools or toys that they can use--the trunks are popular with both teachers and students. Trunks need to be planned as carefully as any other interpretive technique, if they are to be effective. Like all educational materials, they should be curriculum-based. Everything in them must relate directly to the story of the place or the space and money that is invested in them is wasted. Including too many items adds to the cost of preparation and shipping, and dilutes the interpretive message. Together the partners organized summer institutes for teachers and employees of the cooperating agencies. Participants in the institutes were paid and could also earn graduate credits from West Virginia University. Everyone worked together to produce curriculum-based multi-disciplinary educational materials for each of the parks. These materials are closely tied to local school curricula for fourth through eighth grade students. The partners also produced a "how to" evaluation guide other areas could use to evaluate education programs. Teaching with Historic Places Teaching with Historic Places, a program administered by the National Register of Historic Places, has produced nearly short lesson plans that can be used to bring historic places into classrooms nationwide. They serve as "virtual field trips" when a site visit is impossible, but also can serve as effective as pre- or post-visit classroom materials. Each Teaching with Historic Places lesson links one or more historic properties listed in the National Register to broad themes, issues, and events covered in most social studies curricula. A lesson plan on Ybor City, in Tampa, Florida, for example, describes a multiethnic, multiracial community in the Deep South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students can compare the strategies immigrants from Cuba used to maintain their ethnic identity with those of the more often studied eastern and southern European immigrants in northern cities. All Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans include background information, learning objectives, maps, readings, photographs, and activities--everything students will need to attain the objectives of the lesson. Many of the lesson plans are now available for downloading on the National Register Web site. The program has also developed a curriculum framework and other guidance for organizations and individuals seeking to develop educational material based on their own historic places. Early attacked Union forces commanded by Major Gen. Although the battle was a Confederate victory, it bought critical time to organize the defenses of Washington. This small park worked with the NPS Harpers Ferry Center to design and develop an educational outreach kit for use in 5th- and 6th-grade classrooms within driving distance of the park. An introductory brochure describes how the kit can be used. The activities are flexible, taking several

hours or several days to complete. The two self-contained wheeled boxes holding the kit fit easily in vans or station wagons. They contain a large approximately six feet square vinyl floor map, timeline maps for the teacher, an audio tape, a tape player and a reproduction haversack for each student. Each haversack contains a playing piece, a name tag, a character card representing a person involved in the battle, and a read-along booklet. The character card contains background information about the person that the student is to portray, such as a soldier, a general, a young woman or man, a six-year old boy, a farmer, a minister, or an enslaved African American. Students wear the name tags identifying their characters and move their playing pieces on the floor map as they follow the taped account of the battle. Because students were bored with a traditional narrative when the kits were tested in classrooms, the tape uses a professionally written and narrated script and sound effects and sounds very much like a radio drama. The kit also includes additional background material on the Civil War, the battle, the Frederick community, and on fashions, cooking, and popular songs of the period as well. Supplemental student activities include newspaper templates, so students can prepare their own news accounts of the battle and its effects on the local population. The kit is intended to provide a model for other places that want to reach out to their local schools but do not have the staff to provide direct assistance.

Chapter 8 : Interpretation of Historic Sites by William T. Alderson

For many people the interpretation of historic places is virtually synonymous with guided tours given in historic house museums, national parks, or restored towns or neighborhoods. When well done, there is no question that people talking directly to people can compete with all other media for impact and effectiveness.

Chapter 9 : What is Interpretation

Inclusiveness, truthfulness, research, and tailored interpretation thus are principles that can serve any historic site. In the context of African American history, they can provide a framework for reaching audiences uninformed and unexposed to what many historians believe is a central theme in this nation's past-race.