

DRAFT
Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential
of the
Isaac Pearson House
Hamilton Township, New Jersey
Client
Historical Society of Hamilton Township
John Abbott II House



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Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

1. Overview

This report is the culmination of a brief Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential of the Isaac Pearson House in Hamilton Township, New Jersey. It provides advice to the Township as the owner of the building, and to the Historical Society of Hamilton Township as the lessee who will run and manage the Isaac Pearson House during rehabilitation and once it is open to the public

a. Purpose of report

This Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential also focuses on the three to four-year rehabilitation period before the site is open to the public, as the historical society prepares to expand its organizational capacity to manage the building when it is open for visitors after rehabilitation is complete. This three to four-year period when the site is being rehabilitated will permit the Historical Society to experiment and begin developing its initial educational programming. This period also allows what is now an all-volunteer historical society to learn about and enhance its organizational capacity around public relations, fundraising, outreach, and initial cross marketing efforts.

The purpose of the recently completed *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* for the building by Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants is:

“to develop a preservation philosophy and treatment approach that will guide the rehabilitation of the building for use by the historical society as a center for heritage education activities and classes, as well as other cultural and community activities and meetings.... . The preservation philosophy and treatment approach are based on an understanding of the history and significance of the building, as well as its architecture and existing conditions as documented in the preservation plan.”¹

Another outcome envisioned in *the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* is that the property will be rehabilitated with the construction of an addition called the Visitor Center Kitchen Wing to support the adaptive use. The new addition “is recommended to be built at the location of the previous kitchen wing to provide space for a handicapped-accessible restroom, a fireplace for cooking demonstrations, visitor center spaces, and a stairway to serve as a secondary means of egress from the second floor.”²

Finally, *the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study*, identifies the costs for the rehabilitation and new construction will be more than \$2.5 million dollars.

¹ Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants. *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study for the Isaac Pearson House, Hamilton Township, New Jersey* October 2020 Draft, I.

² Ibid, vi.

b. Funding provided by the New Jersey Historic Trust

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which is administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust. This heritage tourism assessment is a component of the *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* for this property.

2. Life of Isaac Pearson

The National Register nomination of the Isaac Pearson House, prepared by historian Robert Craig in 2005, gives a general overview of the life of Isaac Pearson (1739-1776).³ When Isaac Pearson was 16 years old, he inherited a plantation which his father, Robert II, had purchased from John Rogers, and a tract joining the lower side of Roger's plantation on the Delaware River, which contained 400 acres, and was part of the plantation that formerly belonged to Thomas Tindall. While a youth, Isaac continued to be raised by his mother to age 21, Mary Imlay Pearson, and he was very industrious. By the time he reached adulthood he built up his farm and purchased additional land, creating a plantation of more than 1,000 acres and making him the largest single landowner in Nottingham Township.

Isaac married Elizabeth Smith in 1761 when he was 22 and entered public service for the first time the same year, being named to the township standing committee that audited accounts and assessed and levied taxes in Nottingham Township. He went on to serve in several township and county positions of increasing responsibility over the next ten years, including tax collector, overseer of the poor, township clerk, and chosen freeholder on the board of justices and freeholders. He was then appointed a justice of the peace by the royal governor, and later a judge of the Burlington County Court of Oyer and Terminer. He served as a justice until 1776. Isaac's wife Elizabeth died in 1771. In 1773, he married Abigail Atkinson, his second wife, and built the current house, which may have been part of the marriage contract.

As the events leading to the Revolutionary War began to unfold, Pearson played a role in the political events of Burlington County. In 1774, he chaired a meeting of county citizens that resolved to support the call for a congress of all the colonies and appealed to the legislature to send a New Jersey delegation. In February 1775, he was appointed to a committee of observation formed in Burlington County in response to a request from the first Continental Congress. On May 2, 1775, after the battles of Lexington and Concord and ahead of a proposed congress of the colonies, Pearson was named to the New Jersey Provincial Committee of Correspondence, which helped organize the provincial congress. Pearson then attended the New Jersey provincial congress on May 23, 1775, as one of five delegates from Burlington County. In 1775 he reviewed officers of the Continental Army and reported directly to the

³ Craig, Robert. National Register Nomination for the Isaac Pearson House, 2005, 3. The life of Isaac Pearson, the history and significance section are excerpted from this document with additions by Dr. Michael Skelly.

Continental Congress on their evaluations of fitness and recommendations for their pay. He attended four sessions as a delegate for Burlington County between May of 1775 and February of 1776 and served on the Committee of Safety that ran between the sessions. Pearson was not re-elected as a delegate after that time, but he remained the wealthy owner of a large plantation.

In December 1776, Hessian troops would cross Pearson's land several times and likely had men stationed at his house while they guarded a nearby timber drawbridge over Crosswicks Creek on the road between Trenton and Bordentown. After the battle of Trenton and the withdrawal of the Hessian troops to Bordentown on December 28th, Pearson rode out, for reasons unknown. Whether he was headed for New Brunswick or possibly New York is not known. On the way he took shelter from the snowstorm in the house of Benjamin Ward in Hightstown along with others. There was a kerfuffle, and he ran out of the house. By happenstance, he was confronted outside by an approaching party of Continental troops who then shot and killed him, claiming he was trying to escape. It was only discovered afterwards that he was a prominent citizen and was quietly returned home for burial.

The Loyalist Press in New York City reported a week later:

"Isaac Pearson, Esq; endeavoring to pass through the Jerseys in his Way to New-York, was last week murdered by some of the rebellious Banditti who infest the public Roads between this City and Philadelphia."

Research released in 2018 shows that when Pearson fled Ward's house and was confronted outside, there was such great confusion at the moment, he may have been shot by BOTH Continental Troops and civilian British loyalists. Isaac's murder was handled quietly at the time and remains mysterious to this day.⁴

Since the completion of the national register nomination in 2005, there has been subsequent research which will be important for the interpretation of the site. The *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* identified that the nomination is focused on the portions of the history of the house that relate to its significance as the center of a large plantation. Hints of life on this working farm occasionally surfaced in the newspapers of the time. In 1764, for instance, Isaac and his brother Robert advertised for sale "a wood boat, with all her sails, cable and anchor, and with a small expense [sic], will make a shallop, being almost decked." Similar boats owned by Pearson during the Revolutionary War may have been confiscated by the Americans in 1776. In addition, the operation of such a large plantation would have required the work of many people, including slaves, whom Pearson is known to have owned, and indentured servants. In 1775, Isaac advertised a reward for the return of two Dutch runaway servants.

⁴ Thanks to Dr. Michael Skelly for bringing this information to my attention.

There would have been servants working both inside and outside the house. While some would have been housed in other buildings on the property, at least some of those who worked in the house may have lived in the demolished service wing. This wing apparently had access directly to the basement under the main house, as well as to the attic via the transverse hallway that separates the east bedrooms, which allowed for circulation to these service spaces without disturbing the family.

The property continued in use as a working farm after Isaac Pearson's death in 1776. After the Revolutionary War and into the 19th century, almost all the land would be sold off. Although Isaac's son, William apparently moved to Bordentown in his later years, the property remained a farm. Records from the early 1830s show the sale of farm products, including grass and peaches, as well as other transactions including regular purchases of boards, nails, and whiskey for the laborers. The end of the farming era for the site appears to have been the early twentieth century, when the property, now down to forty acres, was sold to the Independent Brick Company and the lowlands became a brick yard. At some point apparently during the years the property was used as a brickyard, the house was divided into two apartments. The final owner before the Township bought the building was Carney Rose, whose nickname "Carney" apparently came from his involvement with a carnival. Rose is reported to have kept carnival animals both in the basement and around the house.

3. History and significance of the building

The house that Pearson built for himself and his second wife, Abigail, blended features of the popular Georgian style with those of the patterned brickwork tradition popular among Quakers in southern New Jersey. The two-story, five-bay, symmetrical, double-pile, center-hall plan brick house was a typical expression of the Georgian style on a New Jersey farmhouse. The Flemish bond brickwork was typical of the patterned brickwork tradition, as was the delineation of the date "1773" in glazed headers in the west gable end. The pent roof in the west gable end (and possibly one on the south facade as well) was an architectural element, like the patterned brickwork, associated with Quakers who emigrated from England to southern New Jersey. (Isaac Pearson's grandfather was a Quaker immigrant.) The fine interior woodwork, including full paneled fireplace walls, was also common to the Georgian style.

The building is known to have had a kitchen wing as large as some houses of the time that was likely built at the same time. This addition was demolished in the 1940s, and the barn was destroyed by a fire in the 1950s. The large stylish main house, together with the sizeable kitchen wing, would have conveyed Pearson's wealth and standing in the community.

The history of the property after Pearson's death is considered in great length in the "Historic Sites" Report (Report 12) (1986) of the Trenton Complex Archaeology project, from which the following is a summary. After Pearson's death, his widow Elizabeth [sic] retained control of the property. The house was first altered c.1835 by the removal of the original staircase and replacement with the current Greek Revival staircase. The north exterior door was replaced at the same time with a four-panel Greek Revival door and the east parlors on the first floor were updated with Greek Revival doors, door and window trim, and new marble fireplace mantels. A marble mantel was installed in the front west parlor as well. The configuration of walls at the center north portion of the center hall appears to also have been affected by the removal of the original staircase. These changes included removing the partition wall between the center hall and the second-floor front east bed chamber and the enclosure around the staircase, which appears to have been in the second-floor front west chamber.

Other alterations may have occurred as well. Changes to the house after that time appear to have been limited until the twentieth century, however. A door was added between second floor rooms in the late nineteenth century. The age of some other doorways is uncertain. The kitchen wing was demolished c.1940. Oral history relates that the house had been divided into two apartments at some point in the twentieth century but had been reconverted to a single home by the 1980s. It is not clear if there is a connection between the wing demolition and the house conversion. Finally, in the second half of the twentieth century, most of the surfaces in the house — floors, walls, and ceilings — were covered with mass-produced modern finish materials, but the original fabric was largely left in place behind them.

The Isaac Pearson House is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Under Criterion A, it possesses local significance for its association with the Hessian occupation of Trenton and Bordentown. Pearson's extensive property lies directly between Trenton and Bordentown. A timber drawbridge over Crosswicks Creek, which also runs between the two towns, bordered Pearson's property. The Hessians crossed the bridge on December 14th while marching from Trenton to Bordentown, leaving a detachment of 100 men to guard it. The men were encamped in the houses in the area, almost certainly including Pearson's own house. After Washington's surprise attack on Trenton on December 26th, the surviving Hessian troops retreated to Bordentown, again crossing Pearson's property and the drawbridge. Thus, the Pearson property and house played a small role in the "ten crucial days" (December 26th, 1776-January 3rd, 1777) during which George Washington and the American army launched an effort that changed the course of the war and United States history.

The house also possesses statewide significance under Criterion B for association with the life of Isaac Pearson, who was an important political figure in Burlington County and leader of the Burlington County delegation to the New Jersey Provincial Congress from 1775-1776. As an appointee of the royal governor and a conservative Anglican in a time when the colony was

turning away from British rule, he may have not been supportive of independence, despite participating in the Provincial Congress. In the end, although he never openly declared his loyalties, he was killed by the Continental Army who claimed he was trying to escape as he rode northeast from his home for reasons unknown. Per the national register nomination assessment of Pearson: "In the circumstances of his life and death, he was, symbolically at least, a larger figure in the American Revolution than he has ever been given credit for being, for his experience, perhaps more than anyone else's, distills the essence of what it meant as a civilian to be caught up in Trenton's "ten crucial days," when the fledgling United States came as close as it ever would to losing the Revolution."

Finally, according to the national register nomination, the house possesses "local architectural significance as an outstanding example of the blending of a vernacular Georgian farmhouse with the southern New Jersey patterned brickwork tradition." Its intact Georgian style features include: the five-bay organization and symmetry of the facades; the side-gable roof; the Flemish bond brick on the facades; the brick water table and belt course; the flat arches with popped keystones; the transom over the entrance door; the center-hall, double-pile layout; the paneled fireplace walls and bold wood cornices; and the six-panel interior doors. Features reflecting the southern New Jersey patterned brickwork tradition include the Flemish bond brickwork and the date laid out in the west wall with vitrified (glazed) headers.

The house's period of significance is 1773-1813, based on the three areas of significance which relate to the construction of the house, association with Isaac Pearson, and association with Revolutionary War events. Therefore, all remaining original historic fabric should be prioritized in terms of significance and consideration in future rehabilitation efforts.

4. What is interpretation?

Freeman Tilden, whose 1957 book *Interpreting Our Heritage* has been the bible for historic site interpreters for almost two generations, defines interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information."⁵ In the first edition of his book published in 1957, Tilden laid out his six principles for quality interpretation of historic, natural, or archeological places. These serve as a reminder of the basic ideals for educating visitors about historic sites.

I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

⁵ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill NC; University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

II. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

IV. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.

VI. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program. ⁶

Interpretation, at its essence, is the art of telling a good story. But being a skilled raconteur is not enough. “If you only list a few facts, you aren’t interpreting your historic site and the people who lived there – you’re just describing it. Interpretation, on the other hand, helps visitors connect with what they are experiencing. Interpretation does not just teach what something is, but what it means. That’s the essence of a good story.”⁷

Historic sites need to be interpreted so that “visitors can have satisfying experiences. These experiences can be emotional, physical, intellectual, or inspirational. A person’s response and connection to the heritage resource is often the most important element in the long-term protection of the resource. Creating a positive, memorable response in visitors will translate to a positive response to preservation and history.”⁸

The New Jersey Historic Trust provides guidance about what historic site interpretation needs to be:

- Accessible and understandable
- Grounded in historical facts (authentic)
- Connect people to place
- Focused on protection and preservation

⁶ New Jersey Historic Trust, Historic Site Interpretation and Education,

<https://www.state.nj.us/dca/njht/applguid/Site%20Interpretation%20with%20illustrations.pdf>

⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁸ New Jersey Historic Trust, Historic Site Interpretation and Education,

<https://www.state.nj.us/dca/njht/applguid/Site%20Interpretation%20with%20illustrations.pdf>

- Provide visitors with information and education, and
- Coordinated with other heritage tourism programs.⁹

For the purposes of this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for the Isaac Pearson House, our recommendations follow the NJ Historic Trust's guidance about historic site interpretation.

The recently completed *New Jersey Revolutionary War Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment* also discusses how interpretation has broadened since Freeman Tilden's time. The National Association of Interpreters, a professional organization for interpreters defines interpretation as "a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource."¹⁰

The NAI explains the importance of inclusion and diversity of interpreters and interpretation, stating that "[i]nterpreters are the keepers, tellers, and facilitators of stories for our natural and cultural resources. As such, interpreters hold tremendous responsibility to really understand the stories that are told and to richly represent all people, all backgrounds, and all perspectives."¹¹ This is a critical responsibility for The Pearson House interpreters, as it begins its efforts to explain how a Revolutionary War era house, once part of an extensive plantation, worked by enslaved people owned by Pearson, has relevance to people in the 21st century.

5. Rehabilitation period and potential reuse

This Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential focuses mainly on the next three to four years, when the historic mansion house preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of the kitchen wing will permit the property to be opened for visitors.

The Preservation Plan outlines an ambitious, mission based, adaptive use for this property. *The Preservation Plan* notes that the Isaac Pearson House will be used as:

"a heritage tourism welcome center for all historic sites in the area, including the Brearley House, the John Abbot II House, Bordentown City, Francis Hopkinson House, and the Joseph Borden House. The historical society plans to open the building for use with all types of interpretive, educational, and preservation-focused programming, as well as use by groups such as the Hand Tool Society of

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ National Association for Interpretation, "Mission, Vision, and Core Values," n.d., accessed March 2020, https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/About/About_NAI/What_We_Believe/nai/_About/Mission_Vision_and_Core_Values.aspx?hkey=ef5896dc-53e4-4dbb-929e-96d45bdb1cc1.

¹¹ Ibid.

New Jersey and a dance studio. It will also provide space for a New Jersey Heritage Tourism Program Development Maker Space, in which rooms would be made available for a very low-cost basis through a competitive application process for short-term residencies for nonprofit or for-profit entrepreneurs who want to develop their heritage tourism product ideas into a complete business plan. A small local history museum with changing exhibits will also be located on the second floor, and the house's history and significance will be interpreted through tours, a brochure, and a sign.”¹²

¹² Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants. *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study for the Isaac Pearson House, Hamilton Township, New Jersey*. October 2020 Draft, 7.

Chapter 2. Short term projects: Before/during rehabilitation is complete in three years

A. Organizational development before/during rehabilitation, staffing during construction

1. Recommendations on organizational capacity building for the Historical Society of Hamilton Township related to interpretation and development of the Isaac Pearson House during 3-year rehabilitation phase, including staffing and open hours/days/months

The Historical Society of Hamilton Township is facing a series of unique organizational growth challenges ahead. The plan for the rehabilitation of the Isaac Pearson House and the initiation of programming at the site during the rehabilitation phase means that far more volunteers are needed to facilitate the Pearson House's programming, fundraising outreach, and publicity. Over the next three to four years, when the rehabilitation and new construction of the Visitor Center Kitchen Wing occurs, the historical society needs to raise funds, identify, and deploy volunteers, and substantially increase outreach efforts. They also will have to hire their first paid staff members even if only part time.

This report lays out what needs to be accomplished by the historical society over the next four years. The current board of six are highly dedicated to their headquarters building at the John Abbott II House and seem interested in helping the Pearson House construction and programming get off the ground.

The scale of work to begin necessary outreach activities, for example, for the Pearson House is a vast and uphill task. Historical society volunteers will need to become comfortable with computers and online databases and establish social media accounts. If current board members are unable to work with new media, then other volunteers need to be recruited to take on these activities.

Regardless, the tasks ahead for the \$2.5 million rehabilitation and new construction at the Isaac Pearson House for use as a visitor center, as outlined here, may be overwhelming or daunting for the small group of volunteers currently involved in the historical society. We believe that the important work ahead at the Pearson House will attract new people to the historical society with active and involved leadership.

We have identified a handful of first steps that are critical for the historical society to take to position itself to begin work on the immediate tasks ahead in the Current Conditions Memo, which is attached as Appendix A.8

2. Recommend installation of portable tents for seasonal educational programming and portable restrooms

Tent for educational activities

Since it will be several years, perhaps up to five, until the Isaac Pearson House is completely rehabilitated and open for visitors, the historical society can begin to present programming for adults and children at the Pearson Park under a tent. The location for this tent can be in the back (south side) of the property on a level location. We recommend identifying a location for a large tent quickly in the spring of 2021, when plans have firmed up for the spring series of activities. The tent should be a minimum size of 10 feet by 20 feet, but the site for the tent should be larger so that the historical society can plan for additional or larger tents in subsequent years. Ideally, the tent should be white and have clear sides which can be added to create an enclosure for rainy days.

We suggest working with the Township's Parks and Recreation Department and architect Margaret Westfield to pick a site for a tent pad. This can be envisioned as a temporary location for several years. It will need solid flooring that will not be soaked with rain and mud. If the park facility staff and Ms. Westfield determine that the flooring should be cement, and thus permanent, its location may be different. Please also work with Hamilton Township Park personnel about storage and securing folding tables and chairs to be used in the tent. The tent should be large enough to host up to 60 people for a talk in audience style seating. Long tables (rather than round) to seat eight (8) people each would work for workshops for adults and children. Ideally the tent should be able to host 40 people at a workshop, including an instructor with two tables for demonstrations. The tent ideally should have clear sides that can be attached if rain is expected. Get suggestions from the Parks and Recreation Department about where and how to store the tables and chairs during the summer months when they are used frequently and then for the winter season.

Portable restrooms

A location for portable restrooms, Porto-potties, should also be identified when seeking a tent location. The restrooms should be nearby, but not immediately adjacent to the tent due to odors.

It is critical that the Porto-potties be serviced regularly, especially the day before any event to be held on site. This will be a seasonal cost to the historical society. Grant fund for programming can and should include the rental and maintenance of portable restrooms as part of your budgeting. Visitors need and expect restroom facilities. The more attractive they are, and the cleaner they are, the more likely that visitors will return. In this interim period before the

Visitor Center Kitchen Wing and its one handicapped accessible restroom is completed, the success of the historical society's programming will rely in large part on the quality and cleanliness of the portable restrooms. We cannot stress enough the importance of clean restrooms for visitors, even if they are temporary.

3. Review completed Preservation Plan and recommended any additional visitor amenities.

The Preservation Plan is an excellent document which gives guidance for the planned exhibition and new construction of the kitchen wing as a visitor center. The Preservation Plan does not identify a particular location for a tent pad or a location for Porto-potties during the several-year rehabilitation period. We suggest seeking the advice of Margaret Westfield as well as Hamilton Township Park personnel for their advice locating these essential visitor amenities for the coming three-year construction period.

4. Volunteer recruitment and retention during construction, sample volunteer job descriptions

Volunteers will be needed to help manage the Visitor Center, provide tours, and facilitate special events on the ground as they are developed during the construction period. As soon as programming is planned, volunteers need to be recruited. At first, when paid staffing might be minimal or nonexistent, volunteers will be needed to take on special tasks.

We have learned over the years that volunteer recruitment needs to be someone's job. Ideally, a volunteer coordinator might be attracted to the job because they are highly involved in all activities of the organization as it starts its work.

We supply as an appendix a sample volunteer job description and a checklist to ensure the descriptions are complete. We supply the following, shorter volunteer job description for likely tasks needed within the first year.

Volunteer job descriptions should be posted on the website and be a regular feature on the e-newsletter. When a job has been filled by a volunteer, it is a nice gesture to announce their name (with a photo) in the newsletter to reinforce the organization's thanks for stepping up.

Coordinator for volunteer corps

A current teacher or retired adult educator is needed to manage and create a new volunteer corps for the Pearson House. This program will identify and train adults to provide tour guide services. The coordinator will create a curriculum and training program as suggested in the *Great Tours!* book mentioned here. An ideal number of volunteer docents for the first year of this effort would be eight (8) to start. These volunteer docents would wear street clothes and would not be costumed interpreters or reenactors. These docents would provide guided tours

as needed for the regular tour schedule or for other groups of visitors.

We anticipate that designing the curriculum and sourcing materials for docents to read would take several months. Preparing a short training program, say four to six-hours long, would take an additional month. Working with volunteer guides as they prepare their presentations and training them on its delivery would take another few month. The coordinator would also take charge of scheduling these docents for monthly tours of the property on a selected weekend day each month of the visitor season during construction. The coordinator does not need to be present at the tours but needs to make sure that there is at least one guide available as needed. The coordinator will also schedule docents to work during large events when the public visits the site. The supervisor for this project should be a historical society Board member. Contact the Board President and include name and contact information to learn more about this opportunity.

Writer/editor of general brochure

A skilled writer and editor are needed to create one or more history brochures based on the information contained in the National Register Nomination. This project will take about a month or more and involves reading the Nomination and the recently completed Preservation Plan and writing copy and captions for the brochure(s). The writer/editor will have to identify historic and current photos to illustrate these brochures and obtain the rights to them if they are owned by others. The writer/editor should identify how many brochures are needed and the topics to be covered. This volunteer will work with a designer (see brief description below) to produce the general brochure series for visitors. The supervisor for this project should be a historical society Board member. Contact the volunteer coordinator include all contact information to learn more about this important position with our organization.

Coordinator reciprocal tourism links

A volunteer is needed to help coordinate with other area historic sites in the general vicinity (see section above) to establish reciprocal web links with their historic sites/tourism entities including the updated web links to new tourism materials on the Pearson House website. This work will involve contacting the sites listed above to seek their help in creating an appropriate web link to the Pearson House website from their website. This work might take a few months. The supervisor for this work should be the person that manages the Pearson House website. Contact the volunteer coordinator and list all contact information to learn more about this opportunity.

5. Paid staff during construction period

We provide the following thoughts about staffing of the Isaac Pearson House so that it can become the tourist destination worth the investment in it by Hamilton Township. These are

meant as preliminary suggestions. These job descriptions would be further developed in an Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide that we recommend as necessary, in one or two years.

Staffing during the three to four-year period when Rehabilitation/Construction of New Kitchen Wing Visitor Center is ongoing. 2021-2023

These jobs should be undertaken by two part time paid staff, a hired consultant, or possibly two or more highly dedicated volunteers. One staff member is needed for programming, and the other to manage construction and provide required reports on behalf of the township and historical society for the grant funded construction projects. We envision the programming job growing in scope and responsibility to become a full-time paid Executive Director of the site during the year before construction is complete and the site is scheduled to open to the public. Here, we identify these jobs in two situations: first during 2021 to 2023 when construction is underway, and then in 2024 the year before the site opens to the public. See a brief description of the duties of each position below.

Site is open one weekend day a month for public programming seasonally, March through December. Programming is scheduled for the season in advance.

1. Part time construction management, reporting

Manage construction as the owner's representative, working with contractors and archaeologists and playing a liaison role with the township, the historical society, and funders. This person or consultant is the grant writer or coordinates with the grant writer. This person provides quarterly and final reports and appropriate accounting for grants received from various funders.

2. Part time programming, outreach, fundraising, coordination, special projects

Conceive, plan, and provide programming once a month on the grounds/other locations, coordinate with craftspeople/reenactors/makers/educators. Initiate all outreach, develop an e-newsletter, write website content, start databases, create social media, develop, and implement all outreach activities. This person is the primary fundraiser and grant writer. Start initial fundraising, develop systems, and raise funds from other sources, especially individuals, corporations, sponsorships, and other grants, and initiate fundraising events. Fund and install interpretive signage. Further develop heritage tourism programming. Participate in meetings with Crossroads and other nearby sites on joint programming related to the 250th Anniversary, participate in simple joint programming activities with other sites as developed, and grow programming and fundraising over time. Coordinate with township park personnel on installation of tent, grounds maintenance, and Porto-potty management.

Staffing while getting ready to Open to the Public –one year before opening 2024

One full time paid staff person that we are calling the Executive Director to manage opening of the facility. This person plans and implements all programming, temporary exhibits, fundraising, outreach, and coordination with other sites for programming purposes.

One part time paid staff, consultant, or one or more highly dedicated volunteer(s) to manage the end of construction and opening.

The site will also need a small group of dedicated volunteers to help with programming and events.

Site is open one or two days per month, with one day being a weekend day, seasonally from March through December or programming is held at another location. Programming is scheduled for the season in advance.

1. Full time Executive Director: programming, outreach, fundraising, coordination

A full-time paid position that conceives, plans, and provides programming two or more times a month on the grounds or at other locations and coordinates with craftspeople/reenactors/makers/educators. Manage and grow all outreach, e-newsletters, website content, databases, social media development, and implementation. Further develops the volunteer corps, training, and programming. Expand fundraising efforts, especially fundraising events, and seek gifts from individuals, corporations, sponsorships, and other grants. Participate in meetings with Crossroads and other nearby sites on joint **programming** related to the 250th Anniversary and participate in all joint programming activities as planned with partners. Coordinate with township park personnel on tent installation, grounds maintenance, and Porto-potty management.

2. Part time construction management, reporting

A part time paid employee or consultant to manage construction. Be the owner's representative working with contractors and archaeologists, and play a liaison role with the township, the historical society, and funders. Work with grant writer and manage all grants, providing quarterly and final reports and appropriate accounting for grants received from various funders. The part time construction manager will finish construction and manage punch list items.

3. Part time events/social media/communication manager

A part time paid person as an event /social media/communications coordinator or a consultant to manage some programming and volunteer recruitment. This person would be hired first as a

consultant and then become part time (30 hours a week) in the year before the site opens to the public.

In Chapter 3 we identify staffing needs and a preliminary budget for the site when it opens to the public.

B. Programming options before/during rehabilitation

- 1. Recommend types of adult educational programing (using re-enactors, demonstrations, hands-on learning activities) at IPH tents during restoration (suggest one day a month April -October) or other locations planned and promoted seasonally; programs for schools.**

Adult educational activities for the Pearson House during the construction period are meant to develop a mailing list and initial audience that will grow over time. These activities, to be held on a weekend day under a tent or in another location, should be geared to telling the story about the property, its history and ongoing construction, and archeology finds at the site. We are suggesting that the first year needs only eight monthly programs, which should be scheduled and promoted in advance. Ideally an event schedule will be created for the year in advance, or at least seasonally for spring, summer, and fall with the schedule released two months before the season starts.

Below is are examples of the types of activities that can be hosted on the grounds and under a tent during the anticipated three-year construction period. Many of these events can be undertaken inside the house when construction is completed.

- Lecture about archeological finds during the first and second phases of work
- Demonstration by the archeological team during the second phase of archeology for the kitchen wing
- Lecture about the history of the house and the life of Isaac Pearson
- Demonstration by restoration craftspeople about roofing, recreating missing trim work, paint analysis, or other finds from these contractors
- Demonstration by a reenactor of the life of a soldier during the Revolutionary War
- Hardhat tour inside the building with the restoration architect (if permitted) to see craftsmen at work
- Revolutionary War reenactments on the grounds
- Citizenship swearing in ceremonies
- Black History Month lectures (February), Women's History Month lectures (March), Historic Preservation Month lectures (May)
- Small scale period music events, chamber music concerts of music of the Revolutionary

War period

- Hands on workshops, craft lessons, or demonstrations for adults or kids led by a costumed Colonial craftsperson such as quilting, crochet, leatherwork, or tinsmith
- Parent/child activities such as public archeology showcasing how archeologists work
- Author talks about recent books related to the Revolutionary War, slavery, women's history, or other themes related to the property
- Book club meetings about topics issues like history, gardening, local history, and
- Small scale theater productions related to Revolutionary War topics

We are certain that talented staff, consultants, or volunteers will easily fill the monthly calendar of events at the Pearson House during construction.

Programming for schools during construction

During the construction period, a handful of the adult activities noted above could be reworked for school programs at the site. Qualified educators would have to develop these programs, ideally geared for the grades when students are learning New Jersey history. Particularly during the construction years, schools might be able to engage with the archeology and with construction finds if the contractors would be willing to work with educators to create programs for children. Care would be needed so that class size is taken into consideration for these programs. We are not suggesting that multiple classes come to the site at one time during construction as the site is too dangerous without high quality supervision.

Bus Costs

The cost for busses to bring students to the site is a major obstacle and will need to be subsidized through grants or other fundraising. We recommend speaking with other nearby historic sites to learn how they are paying for busses and their funders.

Virtual School Programs

An alternative to bringing students to the site is to create videos for virtual learning programs. During the pandemic, some NJ historic sites have done an excellent job pivoting from having students come to their sites to offering well-conceived lessons based on the current NJ state history curriculum learning standards. One of the best examples can be found at the Old Barracks, which has created an entirely virtual school program, called Connecting to the Revolution. You can view this at [Virtual Field Trips - OLD BARRACKS MUSEUM](#). The Old Barracks charges a similar fee to an actual school visit and provides all pre- and post-visit materials. The Old Barracks offers programs for grades 5, 8, and 12.

Developing virtual school programs requires staff or consultants that are comfortable with both the technology of video shooting and editing and have the educational expertise to develop engaging programs for students that are worth the cost for the school district. We are recommending that the Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide should further develop virtual school programs as part of the overall report.

2. Implications of creating a kitchen garden or orchard at the site

Historic sites that are static, meaning they do not ever change, are ubiquitous throughout the country. This is unfortunate because visitors want to see something new, whether it is an event with reenactors, demonstrations by crafters, or a garden or orchard that has seasonal interest. In deciding about how to create opportunities for repeat visitation for area families (the most likely audience for this historic site), we encourage the historical society to think long and hard about creating a reproduction garden or orchard feature at the Isaac Pearson House because of the ongoing costs and volunteer commitments needed

The point of having a garden is to actively interpret it during the visitor season, ideally weekly, which offers a reason for visitors to come several times in the growing season. If monthly interpretation is the best that can be offered, then it is not worth the time, effort, and expense to make it a key component of the educational value of the historic site. Weekly interpretation at the garden/orchard must be part of the overall interpretive strategy if the historical society board commits to a garden/orchard feature.

First, an appropriate historic garden would have to be researched by a qualified garden historian, and a plan made for its design. Costs for installation and annual upkeep by volunteer gardeners would need to be established. If there is enough information in the literature about historic gardens at the Pearson House to recreate such a garden, it is essential to have the documentation available for anyone who is preparing to implement the garden. If there is no adequate written literature, then archeology can take a role in determining the location. Without written documentation about what was grown in the garden, it is difficult to justify the time and expense of creating a garden that is not authentic to the site. It is not clear if enough research has been conducted to determine the location and style of landscape around the Isaac Pearson House.

Most historic sites have created relationships with the county Master Gardeners organization for this kind of venture. It is essential to include this group in early planning for the garden as they will be able to provide advice about any historic planting lists you are able to find (if possible!) and update them to current conditions. Any agreement with such an organization should spell out how the garden will be interpreted, the kind of workshops or activities that the

Master Gardeners will present, and how frequently programming will take place.

Such a venture may provide a seasonal interest to area families only if the gardening staff of volunteers is interested in providing educational opportunities. Many do not, preferring to garden at their own pace without visitors asking questions or engaging them in conversation. Volunteer gardeners would have to be excited about speaking with visitors and telling them about why and how the plants were chosen for the site.

We recommend hosting a board retreat to discuss if there is enough documentation available now to create a garden in the proper location. The Board will have to decide if a garden historian needs to be engaged to conduct this research, and how to pay for this work. Finally, the Board needs to identify if there is a Master Gardener organization to tap to help create this new garden and if it has ongoing interest to create regular weekly programming and interpret the garden to the public.

C. Outreach/public relations/social media before and during construction

- 1. Recommendations on the creation or expansion of any website for IPH, recommend pages/info needed, a downloadable brochure, Spanish Translation, other historic site websites to review.**

Websites are essential for visitors

Websites are essential for any heritage destination. People planning trips look at the destination's website first to get basic information to determine if they want to make the effort to visit when there are so many options competing for their limited leisure time. Historic site website visitors look for the following information in advance of deciding to make a trip.

Base line visitor information for websites include:

- Open hours—please be specific and include dates and times. If you are open only one day a month, give dates for the entire year on the website.
- Admission fees, please note if your site is free and if donations are accepted
- Photos of the site, preferably with people having fun in the photos.
- Maps of the site
- Address for GPS use
- Written directions to the site
- Contact information including an email address and phone number that is checked daily for messages

-
- Upcoming programs with dates, times, and brief overview of each event/activity

This basic information is essential and must appear on your website centralized under a visitor information heading. It must be available 24 hours a day in an easy-to-understand format that visitors can print out if needed. If this information is buried somewhere on the website and hard to find, visitors will not come or financially contribute to the organization.

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of the historic buildings at the Isaac Pearson House will learn about this historic site via the internet.

Domain name availability for web site

It is unfortunate that there is another historical society in New Jersey, in Mays Landing, that now uses hamiltonhistorical.org as their web address. This is a longstanding historical society called the Township of Hamilton Historical Society. They have a library and offer highly active programming throughout the year. They do not appear to own a historic site as the website lacks typical visitor information (open hours, what you will see, directions, admission cost etc.).

Today, the Mercer County Historical Society of Hamilton Township only has a web presence from a page on the Township's website. While this may be fine for now, a separate web site is essential for the promotion of the Isaac Pearson House and other historical society efforts.

Domain names to purchase

You might want to purchase the following domain names and all the typical extensions: org, com, net, info, and us. It is essential to purchase all the extension names because you need to control your online name, or else another party will purchase it and can create competing websites to collect funds or supply incorrect information.

Go Daddy, a domain name supplier, has a short video about how to pick a great domain name for a business, and this video is useful for any nonprofit as well:

https://www.godaddy.com/domainsearch/find?checkAvail=1&tmskey=1dom_03_register&domainToChec.

It is unfortunate, but we have worked with other historic sites that have had good natured volunteers purchase domains or create Facebook pages in the name of the historical society and never turn over the administrative information to the historical society. Many of the websites and Facebook pages are old and cannot be removed without the administrative information from the volunteers. Having several websites is confusing for visitors looking for the organization, who see a whole page of Google listings not knowing which is "official" or complete. While this is not the case for the Isaac Pearson or the John Abbott II Houses, it is a cautionary tale.

We suggest purchasing the following domains and all the useful extensions (com, org, net, info, us). We recommend purchasing both the names of the historic houses that the society manages as well as a domain name for the historical society itself. Even if you do not use Isaac Pearson House for a website, you can redirect anyone searching for that domain to the domain name that the history society uses and point them to that website.

Below are the domain names we suggest purchasing immediately. We also recommend that the following extensions be purchased for each domain: .com, .org, .net, and .info.

1. JohnabbottIIIhouse –essential
2. Isaacpearsonhouse---essential
3. Hamiltontownshiphistoricalsociety
4. Hamiltontownshiphistorical

Role of websites in heritage tourism today

Websites have become increasingly important to all heritage destinations. People planning trips look at the destination's websites first to get basic information to determine if they want to make a visit. Historic site and recreational users visit websites to look for open hours, admission fees, current photos of the site, maps, contact information, upcoming programs, and directions in advance of deciding to make a trip. Without these basic pieces of information available on your website so they are easy to understand and available to a casual visitor at any time of day or night, they are unlikely to visit, learn more, or financially contribute to the organization (if you are a nonprofit corporation).

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of the Isaac Pearson House will learn about this property via the internet. Right now, there is little historical information about the site on the web, based on a Google search we recently conducted. There is only one paragraph about the Isaac Pearson House on the Township of Hamilton website:

<https://www.hamiltonnj.com/History#:~:text=Isaac%20Pearson%20House%20Elected%20several%20times%20to%20the,were%20angry%20with%20his%20siding%20with%20the%20British.>

Expand information about the Pearson House on the Township Website

Expanding the information about the historic building on the township website is a good opportunity to create more visitor interest in the site immediately. The Preservation Plan Executive Summary has quality information that can be used for this purpose. If a webpage was developed, we suggest that it contain the same contents as the History Tab noted in the next section below.

A new dedicated website for the Isaac Pearson House

Ultimately, we are recommending that a new, dedicated Isaac Pearson House website be created to encourage visitation to the site. We believe there is more than enough information contained in reports written about the site over the years that should be made available to the public in one place on this website. With the recent completion of *the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* and the Phase One Archeological report, these documents should be used and posted to the new website. Also include the 2005 National Register Nomination on this About Tab. Any historic photos should also be scanned and uploaded with dates, ownership credits, and captions.

Website as repository for historic reports

We recommend that the Pearson House website should become a repository for all the archeological and historical information written about this property over the decades and provide updated visitor event and trip planning information. Having these reports available on your website will help scholars as well as school children preparing reports about this property.

Recommended navigation tabs

Our suggested navigation tab/pages are: Home, About, History, Programs, Visit, Press, Contact Us, and Donate. We discuss what information should be included on each tab below.

A. Home Page

The Home page should have a good general overview of the Isaac Pearson House and the role of the Township and Historical Society as steward of this important historic site. Most websites include a brief slideshow on the home page to entice visitors to learn more. These photos need to be of excellent quality and show happy people having a good time at the House with a caption. Captions help to tell the story of the Pearson House, and help visitors understand the programs offered. We also suggest adding any historic photos with a caption.

The navigation tabs should be in a logical place (above, on the right or left) and be consistent throughout the site. We suggest that on the home page there be a brief paragraph about the significance of the site. If there is interest, you can invite website visitors to support your work through a Donate Now button located at the bottom of the paragraph on the home page. The Donate Now button should appear in several places on the website, but its placement on the home page is the most important. Ideally, it should be large and red and look like a button.

B. About Tab

This page should have basic information, which may be redundant but needs to be repeated here all in one place. This includes the street address, phone number, location on a map, written directions, address for GPS location purposes (which might not be the street address), email address, and a link to the Contact Us page.

This page can also include a brief history of the Pearson House. It should identify that the property is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and include a brief explanation of why being listed is important and a link to a PDF of the nomination form/document located under the History Tab (noted below).

The About page should also include a map showing the locations and addresses of other nearby historic sites, especially the John Abbott II House, which is the Historical Society's home. It would be ideal to have a similar page with a reciprocal link on the Historical Society website to the Pearson House website. If you eventually create a heritage tour or other effort to link all the historic sites in the county, that should be promoted in the About Tab.

Alternatively, a page could be created for the drop-down menu, called Other Sites to Visit, with additional information about nearby historic sites.

C. History Tab

We are recommending that all the reports produced about this site over the last two decades be scanned and uploaded to the website in the History Tab. By posting these reports on the website, you are making them accessible to students and scholars worldwide. It should be noted on the website that the reports and other information are a snapshot of the information known at that time and for that particular purpose. The information changes or increases over time as more is made available. Putting these reports and information on the web and encouraging students to use it for National History Day papers, videos, and websites will help promote the site and increase attendance.

We are suggesting that a History Tab be created and become the online archive for the Isaac Pearson House. The landing page should describe the variety of materials available on separate pages, which are navigated through a drop-down menu.

These documents, and others to be uncovered in the future, are important research tools for local historians and school children conducting National History Day research. Scanning and making key documents available to the public on a new dedicated website for the Pearson House will greatly expand web traffic and interest in the property and its rich history.

We suggest the following sub-pages (drop down menu) for the History Tab:

1. A timeline of the history of the Pearson House from the national

register nomination.

2. Links to a brief history page about the Pearson House, which can come from the text in the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study.
3. We suggest creating a general brochure as a PDF document (discussed below).
4. Isaac Pearson House National Register Nomination, which should explain that the nomination has an excellent description of the history and significance of the property and the important people associated with the building. Include a short paragraph about who might want to read this document such as students doing research projects about the property, genealogists, historians, and others interested in the Revolutionary War in New Jersey or Colonial history.
5. A small PDF version of the entire Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study with photos and all appendices from varied consultants. You might have to offer this document in several pieces to make the PDF size manageable so it can be downloaded. A brief paragraph should describe why *the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* was funded.
6. A link to the full copy of the Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. *Historic Sites*. Trenton Complex Archaeology, Report 12, The Cultural Resource Group, Louis Berger & Assoc., Prepared for the Federal Highway Administration and the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Bureau of Environmental Analysis, Trenton, NJ. 1998 ["Trenton Complex Archaeology"].
7. Descriptions of other Revolutionary War historic sites in the area to visit with links to their websites. If there is a map of all the sites, upload it to this location.
8. New photos with good labels/captions of the key historic features that would interest visitors.
9. Further information, or more information about anything relevant not already in another category.

You can also link each of these pages to your Contact Us page, which includes a form to fill out requesting further information.

D. Events Tab

This landing page should discuss the upcoming events offered to the public, whether they are regular or special events. Drop down menus can direct website visitors to separate pages where each special event is described in detail. Remember to use high quality photos on your event page or make photo albums of each event available on the website itself or through a photo sharing site like Instagram.

It is essential that the Home page include announcements of any upcoming special event(s) with a link to the event page where a visitor could get further information. Website visitors should also be able to sign up for a newsletter, if one is created, that contains updated

information about the event or a link to register for the event if tickets are required.

Consider using Eventbrite or another online ticketing platform if you are going to sell tickets in advance. These are easy to set up and costs for using these services should be included in the ticket price. These platforms allow the ticket buyer to use any credit card to purchase their ticket and give immediate receipts for payment.

E. Visit Tab

We have learned in our research about historic sites over the last fifteen years that 45% of visitors do not always want a guided tour. The breakdown between those that want a guided tour is often generational with older visitors more interested in a guided tour than younger people. Therefore, historic sites must offer both guided and self-guided experiences to reach the entire audience for their historic sites.

The self-guided visitor experience at the Isaac Pearson House can be undertaken with the PDF versions of the brochure that we suggested below. The brochure should be placed on this webpage with a brief description of the content. Visitors should be encouraged to download the brochure before their visit so they can visit at their leisure as noted on a regularly updated homepage. The brochure will include information about the historic site, and a plan of the property so visitors can understand the whole site.

F. Press Tab

This tab should be devoted to the articles and other press received about the Isaac Pearson House. List all the news articles by date, with article title, date, and newspaper as a click-through to the newspaper website or a PDF of the article itself. This list will grow over time, and this page will become an excellent repository of your press coverage over the years. If you wish to repost the articles on this website, be sure that the Township or the webpage host has the express permission from the publisher of each article to do so.

This page should also have high quality color digital images of the historic site with a brief caption that can be downloaded by the public and other press. Call this the Photo Gallery. These color images should be at least 300 DPI and come with a photography credit from the Historical Society or other webpage host. These images should be taken by a professional photographer who will assign their rights to the Historical Society or webpage host.

G. Donate Now Tab

The Donate Now page should go to the entity that has the nonprofit charity designation acting on behalf of the Isaac Pearson House. This might be the Historical Society. A Donate Now page is needed, because most historic sites need revenue from the public for

programming and additional development. Traditionally, a Donate Now button is placed prominently on the Home Page. A new tab is also created, simply called “Donate Now.”

This Donate Now tab should go into further detail about the reasons why someone would contribute to the further development of the Isaac Pearson House and its programming. A Donate Now button should also appear here. There should be two or three sentences about the work of the Historical Society, if that is the entity taking donations on behalf of the property with a call to action such as “Please help us restore this precious historic property” and an obvious button that says DONATE NOW on it. This button will link to a PayPal account (or other nonprofit donation website such as Network for Good).

The PayPal/Network for Good page for the Isaac Pearson House should offer a series of giving options such as: \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1000, or \$2500. Make sure there is also a “Chose your own donation” radio button with a blank space for the donor to list the amount they wish to give (in case the above amounts are not what they had in mind). If possible, automate a thank you email to the donor immediately after the gift is made, and follow up with a written thank you within a few days. Add your new donor’s name to your email list to be sure you communicate with them regularly throughout the year about events and other programming.

H. Contact Us Tab

This tab should sum up who is responsible for the Isaac Pearson House and its programming. A few sentences about the Historical Society’s stewardship would be helpful here. Tell about the volunteers who are helping interpret the site to visitors now, during the three- or four-year rehabilitation phase.

We suggest using Google Maps to explicitly show where visitors can park their car. Also add the street address (for GPS purposes) and phone number of the Historical Society’s headquarters at the John Abbott II house, to help visitors if they get lost. The website needs to have a certain amount of redundancy because visitors may be using smart phones during their journey to the site, and this kind of necessary contact information must appear on various pages on the website.

Spanish translation for website

We checked the most recent census data for Mercer County to get an idea of demographic changes. As the ten-year census will occur in 2020, the current data is estimated to 2018 on the Mercer County website. Mercer County is 18.5% Hispanic.

While the county is now 63% white (non-Hispanic/Latino), there is reason to consider translating the Isaac Pearson House website into Spanish through Google Translate. While

Google Translate is accurate, it can also be literal, so that not all words would be presented in Spanish. You could offer a link to the Google Translate website and provide instructions. If you decide to go this route, offer a disclaimer about accuracy.

Samples of good visitor-oriented web site for small historic sites

Below we list examples of websites from small historic sites in the area that we particularly admire. We note which sites are all volunteer operations.

- The Jacobus Vanderveer House, Bedminster, NJ – <https://jvanderveerhouse.org/> (part time staff)
- Woodford Mansion, Philadelphia, PA – <https://woodfordmansion.org/> (part time staff)
- Peter Mott House, Lawnside, NJ-- <http://petermotthouse.org/blog1/> (all volunteer)
- The Meadows Foundation, Franklin Township, NJ
<http://www.themeadowsfoundation.org/> (all volunteer)
- Whitesbog Village, Browns Mills, NJ-- <http://www.whitesbog.org/> (full time staff)
- Brinton 1704 House, West Chester, PA-- <http://www.brintonfamily.org/> (full time staff)
- Barclay Farmstead Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ- <http://www.cherryhill-nj.com/Barclay>, (part time staff)

General brochure for download on website

Visitors to the website looking for general information should be offered a colorful brochure to download that they can take with them to their visit. This brochure should be a simple but handsome PDF document. While prepared in color with photos, the brochure should be readable in black and white since most home printers are black and white only. The brochure should also be limited to 8.5" x 11" size to permit it to be easily printed at home. The designer should take care to make sure that the print is readable in at least 10-point type.

The brochure needs to have the following basic visitor information: the name of the house, the street address, the GPS location if not the same as the street address, phone number (a number where messages are returned within 24 hours), website address, admission fees if any, costs for event if any, and photos of happy people having fun at the site. List all the amenities currently available: tent, portable restrooms, other brochures, etc. This would be a good place to list all the events for the season with a brief description and a live link to the page on the website.

Encourage visitors to download the brochure. You may have other brochures with further information in a larger size, perhaps legal size, at the site itself. This is a good project for a volunteer writer or graphic designer. See a sample job description in Chapter 1 appendix.

2. Recommendations on creation or expansion of any social media promotion (Wikipedia, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VisitNJ.org, VisitPrinceton.org), social media management software, recommend social media schedule for years during rehabilitation

Promoting the Isaac Pearson House to visitors

Social media is a very inexpensive way to promote historic sites, but it is not the only way to reach visitors that might be interested in events or taking a tour. Both traditional and new media is necessary to promote historic sites and market them for visitors. We are suggesting the following social media channels first because they are free or inexpensive publicity tools. Later, we offer advice about joining other destination management organizations that charge fees to be listed or to be in their full color publications.

Free online publicity

Wikipedia

There is a listing for the John Abbott II House which would be a good model for the Isaac Pearson House: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Abbott_II_House. The Wikipedia page can include links to the website and all the reports published to date about the property including the National Register Nomination, the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study, and the Phase One Archeological report. Ideally, these reports should be links to the new website for the Isaac Pearson House so that visitors from the Wikipedia page seeking more information about the Pearson House find it on that website.

VisitNJ.com-- the State of NJ Tourism Website

The state's official tourism website is VisitNJ.com. Our research indicated that there is currently no listing for the Isaac Pearson House or the John Abbott II House on the state's tourism website. This is an opportunity for the Historical Society, as all listings for the VisitNJ website are free. There is a link to submit information: <https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-get-tourism-business-listed>. Tourism business listings (even for nonprofit organizations) must be submitted by email to Arion.Jamerson@sos.nj.gov.

The Isaac Pearson House events that take place during the Rehabilitation Phase of work over the next three or four years can also be listed on this statewide tourism website. The state is specific about events they want to promote, so please follow their advice. Events must be submitted well in advance and are listed within a week if approved. Please see

<https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-add-tourism-event>. To list an event, you must register using this link: <https://www.visitnj.org/listing-user/register>.

Paid publicity

VisitPrinceton/Mercer.org

We do not think it makes sense to join or pay for ads on the VisitPrinceton/Mercer.org website until the property opens to the public. The cost for membership in the Princeton Chamber is \$400 for the year. As the Destination Management Organization for the area, Chamber members are also able to pay for ads in visitor guide. The cost for these travel guide ads changes yearly for VisitPrinceton/Mercer.org. Please note that the Historical Society of Princeton (quarter page), Morven (half page), and the Old Barracks (full page) were the only historic sites to advertise in the 2019-20 visitor guide. Again, until the Pearson House is open to the public it is not recommended that the site advertise in this publication.

VisitNJ.com paid ads in annual visitor guide

If you are interested in reviewing the costs for advertising the annual state travel guide four color booklet, the costs can be found on the last page, and are extremely expensive (\$10,000 for an inside cover): <https://www.visitnj.org/sites/default/files/NJ%20Rate%20Card.pdf>. We do not recommend this for either the Pearson House or the John Abbott II House currently due to the expense.

Free Social Media Accounts for the Pearson House

We recommend that the historical society begin three social media accounts as soon as is feasible: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. All are free. See further information below on paid ads. We are recommending these three because they are the ones most used by small historic sites. Each one will attract different audiences, thus expanding your outreach beyond your website and e-newsletter. Here is a brief primer about each social media platform:

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/100215/twitter-vs-facebook-vs-instagram-who-target-audience.asp>. While it is geared to investors, it gives basic information about each platform.

Facebook

Facebook is perhaps the most used of these three social media platforms. Many historic sites use their Facebook page as their only social media or online presence because they cannot afford a

website or prefer to actively manage their social media presence by posting regularly on Facebook.

It would be ideal if you can use the same domain name for the website and your Facebook page, but if the Facebook page has already been claimed, then consider another logical name for your Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/r.php>. Consider using the same domain name for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and create them at the same time. If you are unable to use the same name for each, focus first on the website domain name, then the Facebook page name to be reused for Instagram and Twitter. If it is not possible to have the same name for each platform, make it a logical name, using Isaac Pearson House and the location.

Signing up for Facebook is easy and free. Here is a video about signing up for Facebook: <https://www.wikihow.com/Sign-Up-for-Facebook>. You can post information about events, “did you know” type of history facts, rehabilitation activities at the Pearson House, and other news about the historical society. We recommend posting a story and a photo or video at least once a week. We also suggest “following” other historic sites to understand what kinds of information they post, as well as local, regional, and statewide tourism organizations, and other Crossroads of the American Revolution historic sites.

Because Instagram and Facebook are owned by the same company it is easy to **cross post** from one site to the other: <https://www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/crossposting-from-instagram-to-facebook>. Your posts can also be **scheduled**, meaning you can create them when you have time, and then identify the date and time when they will post to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/help/389849807718635/>.

The audience for Facebook is growing older. No longer do teens and tweens use Facebook to interact with their friends. The group with the largest growth on Facebook is middle aged and older people, but it is still a dominant social media platform for historic site needs. See more about the audience for Facebook from October 2020: <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/facebook-statistics/>.

Once the historical society has posted for several months and you have gathered more than 500 fans (followers), you might consider whether you want to “**boost**” or **pay for ads** for some of your announcements or public programs. Learn about Facebook ads at <https://www.facebook.com/business/ads>.

Instagram

We recommend that you repost, meaning share the same content, from Facebook on Instagram (which is owned by Facebook). Instagram is also free, but what drives this platform is

photography/visual content. Photos published on this platform uniformly look good. Few are out of focus, or under or over exposed. Photos taken with a phone camera can be used here if they are sharp and in focus. Photos that are not perfect can be edited on the phone app to improve them. Photos posted here do not have to be professional quality, but that should not stop you from starting to post photos and content here. Stories that naturally have a visual content, like a tour, rehabilitation discovery, or progress report on construction, can easily be uploaded to the platform. Make sure you own the photos. Have a volunteer take them on your behalf or have permission from the photographer and credit them.

This platform also uses hashtags (#) to share content to other feeds. For example, if the historical society were promoting a tour to talk about roof restoration, some photos of the new shingles and the roofer doing the work would be good visuals. If you wanted to make sure that other people were aware of this work, you could include a hashtag #revolutionary Nj to ensure that this post also appears on Crossroad's Instagram feed. You will notice that many sophisticated tourism venues create a block of hashtags at the end of their posts, with sometimes 20 or more hashtags to assure that their content is seen on these feeds.

Video also performs very well on Instagram and Facebook and gets attention from people scrolling your feed. Short video clips with or without sound can be uploaded on either platform. Again, these videos do not have to be professionally produced. Most are made on a smart phone, but they should be sharp, colorful, and short enough to tell the story. Photo editing software for video is not expensive. See this article comparing these tools for beginners:

<https://financesonline.com/best-free-video-editing-tools-for-beginners/#:~:text=The%20best%20free%20video%20editor%20tool%20for%20beginners,built-in%20sound%20effects%2C%20voiceovers%2C%20and%20social%20video%20clips.>

Seeking a volunteer who might want to shoot video for social media for the organization might be a good job description to prepare.

Instagram also permits you to “**follow**” organizations and individuals that interest you so that your feed pulls in their content. Start to follow” all the Crossroads organizations that have Instagram feeds, so you see what others post. Once the historical society has shared posts for several months and acquired over 500 followers, consider if you want to offer “**sponsorship**” or **ads** when you are announcing events or activities: <https://business.instagram.com/>.

The audience for Instagram is growing, and it skews younger than Facebook. Refer to this article to learn more: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/325587/instagram-global-age-group/>.

Twitter

Finally, Twitter is a microblogging site, where your messages are less than 140 characters. Sign up at <https://twitter.com/i/flow/signup>. This platform is also free. It does not rely on visuals like Instagram, but the messages must be short. Twitter has been in the news because of the tweets shared by President Trump. We recommend posting the same content from Instagram and Facebook on Twitter. This platform tends to attract the media, who uses it to gather story ideas. Make sure that you “follow” local reporters, and the local radio and television stations. Consistently posting to Twitter will help you when you share press releases, as these media followers are more likely to notice and respond to your programming and announcements.

The Twitter audience is also growing, and trends younger than Facebook. Learn more from this article: <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/>.

Social media marketing and management software

The same stories (content) and photos can be posted on each of the three social media accounts. You can post content on each individual platform or use a social media management platform like Hootsuite, which will post content on a scheduled basis. These software platforms are not free, but they take away much of the tedious nature of posting and scheduling so that it could be a once-a-week task for a volunteer. Here is an article about how nonprofits use these tools: <https://www.wholewhale.com/tips/7-social-media-management-tools-nonprofits/#:~:text=7%20Social%20Media%20Management%20Tools%20for%20Nonprofits.%2014%204.%20Buffer.%205%205.%20Canva.%20More%20items>. Hootsuite has a 30-day trial and is \$19 a month thereafter at the lowest level: https://signup.hootsuite.com/pro-ent-na-english-r10/?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=hootsuite_na_search_selfserve_branded&utm_term=hootsuite&msclkid=912ba08f1d101849039eff3b19146e18.

3. Recommend social media schedule for years during construction

We recommend that the Isaac Pearson House consider sending press releases and posting events and activities two or three times a month over the visitor season during construction. We identified how events can generate three or four press releases or social media posts below.

We are recommending below that the Pearson House consider hosting one event/activity a month for the visitor season, April through October (total of eight events per year). This schedule creates a minimum of 24 media releases or social media postings, at three per event, which is almost one per week during the visitor season. There will certainly be other opportunities to promote the site throughout the visitor season, including opening weekend, clean up days, special guests, research discoveries, volunteer profiles, board elections, garden programs (if created), grant announcements, and other small and large items to be posted to the website and social media channels. This can easily fill up any calendar for the year and keep a

volunteer media liaison/manager busy.

4. Recommendations on creation or expansion of any e-newsletter, recommend a newsletter schedule, gathering email addresses during restoration

We recommend creating an e-newsletter for the Isaac Pearson House as soon as possible to promote its events, highlight the once-a-month educational activities (see section above), and call for additional volunteers. We recommended using Mail Chimp, a free bulk email platform with customizable templates: <https://mailchimp.com/pricing/>.

The content for the newsletter should be three to five short (never more than 750 words) articles with photos about upcoming events, volunteer job descriptions for specific roles needed by the Pearson House, short stories about specific volunteers in action, and photos of recent special events or educational activities. The e-newsletter should include a link to the email sign up form, so that if it is forwarded recipients can easily join the mailing list. We recommend that each newsletter be posted on the Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages (see section below), the Historical Society of Hamilton Township website, and others as appropriate.

We are recommending a monthly mailing to keep your followers up to date on activities. This will require having one person in charge as editor of the e-newsletter. It would be wise to advertise this volunteer position as Newsletter Editor. The editor's responsibilities would include gathering photos, articles, and email addresses on a regular basis for the monthly mailing. It would be ideal if the mailings were once a month on a fixed day, such as the first of the month.

Like many other email platforms (Constant Contact, Emma, etc.), Mail Chimp has a free component if the number of emails stored on the platform is under 2,000 contacts. Once the mailing list exceeds 2,000 recipients, the organization must pay a modest price of \$9.99 per month based on annual billing. Most of our clients are still using the free version because they have not collected over 2,000 contacts. There are other email platform plans with higher monthly or annual fees. These are paid for by credit card for each mailing. There is a 15% discount for nonprofits and charities.

Regularly collect email addresses

We understand that board members and historical society members receive information now via USPS and through advertising in the local newspaper. Dr. Federici mentioned that he has an email list of perhaps 60 names, and we encouraged him to continue to expand this list. You can ask for emails when visitors sign in if you use a visitor log. You can also ask for emails on membership renewals and at events.

There are many opportunities to collect email addresses to add to the e-newsletter database. There should be sign up forms for the newsletter on the historical society's new website. A volunteer table should be available and staffed by a volunteer at each event and educational activity at which email addresses can be collected. This table should have the general visitor brochure (see section below), event list, and any volunteer job descriptions currently being solicited. See below for further information about volunteer job descriptions. The e-newsletter, when issued each month, should also be posted to the official Facebook page each month, with a link to sign up for the e-newsletter on the historical society website.

One volunteer will need to take the paper signup sheets with email addresses and names and enter this information into the Mail Chimp database after each event or educational activity to continue growing the mailing list. This might be a good volunteer job description to solicit in the coming months.

5. Recommendation on expansion of the historical society's media list

The programming at the Isaac Pearson House will need to be promoted in both traditional and social media. If the historical society has a media list of local reporters that they send press releases to, this may need to be reviewed and updated to assure that the regional media is getting regular press releases about activities there.

Media lists change over time as reporters come and go. Many communities have seen their local newspaper go out of business in the last ten years, and local news now is either lost or has migrated online to a local media aggregator, or "Patch," or regional newspapers. Regardless, having an up-to-date media list is critical for promotional success.

We recommend that typical press releases be sent out to the media list for any event hosted at the Isaac Pearson House. If a media list needs to be created or updated, this might be a good task for a volunteer job description.

A media liaison might also be a good role to promote and recruit as a volunteer job. This person would create the list and send out releases as needed. If this person is interested in social media, they can also take on the duties of consistently posting these announcements on the website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Creating content for press releases

Most events can generate at least three or four press releases or social media posts: one when the event is announced, another right before the event takes place, another reporting on the

success of the event with photos, and perhaps a final release if the event is a fundraiser telling how much (net) was raised from the event.

6. Recommendations on coordination with Hamilton Township Parks and Recreation Dept.

The historical society is so fortunate to be in a Township that provides so many services and amenities for its residents. The Parks and Recreation Department has been extremely supportive of the efforts to restore the Pearson House and has worked closely with the historical society on the Abbott House for decades.

Early discussions with the Parks and Recreation staff should focus on where and how a tent and Porto-potties can be accommodated at the Pearson House. They should also be asked about locations for off-street or overflow parking in the future. Interim storage will be needed for portable tables and chairs for use at the tent for several years while construction is active. Suggestions from the staff at Parks and Recreation about barricades for visitor safety should also be solicited early, especially if there will be talks by rehabilitation contractors about the exterior or about the archeology of the Kitchen wing.

As construction is winding down and programming for the building is being planned, it would be wise to connect again with Parks and Recreation staff about any special events planned on the grounds and daily activities inside the building.

The Parks and Recreation public relations staff may also be willing to share their media list and provide advice about online sources and traditional media they use to publicize the historic sites they manage.

Site rentals

The staff should work with the Parks and Recreation Department to determine if you want to offer the Isaac Pearson House for rental for outside meetings and celebrations. This activity does lead to wear and tear of the physical fabric of the historic site but might be worth considering because it is being rehabilitated as an empty historic building. During construction it would be important to meet with Parks and Recreation staff, especially Patricia A. Krzywulak, Program Coordinator of Special Events for the Parks and Recreation Department, to gain her advice about the positive and negative aspects of using the space for rental use. She will offer good advice based on her longstanding experience working with the Grafton House (which perhaps might be similar in size to the Pearson House if rented out for an event).

If a decision is made to offer the building for outside rental use, it might be worth asking if the Township through the Parks and Recreation Department might take on all facility rental transactions for non-educational events. If you decide not to open the site for weddings and outside meetings, at a minimum you should gather all the Parks Department rental agreements and policies and coordinate with them on insurance matters for the maker spaces and outside groups hosting educational activities (like book clubs or musical performances) at the site.

D. Cross marketing of programming before/during construction

1. Recommendations regarding linkages with nearby Colonial era sites for cross marketing purposes and with Crossroads of the American Revolution during rehabilitation period

Mercer County is the heart of the “Ten Crucial Days” during the Revolutionary War story. In the county alone, the following historic sites are open for visitors. Below we note which Revolutionary War historic sites in Mercer County are currently visitor ready, as defined *by the Site and Visitor Assessment Report*.

Attractors (visitor ready unless noted)

The Old Barracks
Morven

Attractions with “Attractor Potential” (visitor ready unless noted)

Washington Crossing

Tour While There Sites with “Attraction Potential” (visitor ready unless noted)

Princeton Battlefield/Thomas Clarke House
Bainbridge House, no interpretation of Rev War
Douglass House, no interpretation of Rev War
Maclean House, no interpretation of Rev War
Nassau Hall, no interpretation of Rev War
Trenton Battle Monument, no interpretation of Rev War
The 1719 William Trent House Museum, no interpretation of Rev War

Other “Tour While There” Sites (visitor ready unless noted)

The 1761 Brearley House, no interpretation of Rev War
First Presbyterian Church of Trenton, no interpretation of Rev War
St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, no interpretation of Rev War
Trenton Friends Meeting House
Updike Farmstead, no interpretation of Rev War

Community Resource Sites With “Tour While There Potential” (visitor ready)*

Isaac Pearson House, no interpretation of Rev War

Isaac Watson House

Community Resources Sites (visitor ready unless noted)

Benjamin Temple House, no interpretation of Rev War

John Abbott II House

Stony Brook Friends Meeting House

All the sites noted above are potential partners for programming development and visitor referrals to the Pearson House once it is open. Attractor and Attraction sites are visitor ready now, have highly developed programming already, and are currently preparing for the 250th anniversary.

The Pearson House would be wise to attend any programming offered by Crossroads to prepare sites to become visitor ready, develop programming, and help coordinate efforts. As construction is completed, and in the year before the site opens to the public, more emphasis should be placed on developing formal collaboration plans and programming for the coming year.

“Fam Tours”

It is critical for all staff and volunteers working with visitors to make “familiarization” visits to the other key Revolutionary War sites in the county as part of their training to become interpreters at the Pearson House. These visits are critical so that Pearson House volunteers can learn about the other sites and can make high quality referrals to visitors who ask about sites to visit nearby.

It is also important to invite Revolutionary War historic site visitor service interpreters to the Pearson House so they can see the quality of the rehabilitation and programming here. Without a visit from a visitor service interpreter at, say, the Old Barracks or Morven to the Pearson House, visitors to these important “Attractor” sites will not be referred to the Pearson House. Perhaps host several free, after work events (perhaps a happy hour) at the Pearson House to show off the Maker Spaces and Craftspeople working there, for example. These events will create good will, with the goal of generating visitor referrals from other historic site interpreters to the Pearson House.

Collaboration with historic sites in nearby counties

There are many other historic sites outside the county but within a 30-minute drive that would be worth cultivating for visitor referrals and collaborative programming. Consider contacting the Attractor and Attraction sites that already have highly developed programming to learn about them. Have both staff and volunteers make familiarization visits to these sites, so staff and visitors can provide high quality recommendations to visitors looking for other sites to visit. Information about the interpretation of these sites comes from the *Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment* report.

Attractor

Batso Village, Burlington County, no interpretation of Rev War

Attraction

Monmouth Battlefield State Park, Monmouth County, no interpretation of Rev War

Rockingham State Historic Park, Somerset County

Historic Walnford, Monmouth County

Indian King Tavern State Historic Site, Camden County

Tour While There sites with Attraction Potential

East Jersey Old Town Village at Johnson Park, Middlesex County

Covenhoven House, Monmouth County

Tavern Museum at the Allen House, Monmouth County, no interpretation of Rev War

White Hill Mansion, Burlington County

Bard How House, Burlington County

Captain James Lawrence House, Burlington County

James Fenimore Cooper House, Burlington County

Thomas Paine Monument, Burlington County, no interpretation of Rev War

Pomona Hall, Camden County

Abraham Staats House, Somerset County

Old Dutch Parsonage State Historic Site, Somerset County

Again, not all these sites are currently visitor ready, especially the Tour While There sites. Regardless, the Attractor and Attraction sites should be among the first prospects to visit for familiarization tours and potential collaboration purposes.

As the initial programming is developed monthly for the Pearson House during the two to three years of construction, these events should be marketed to the other historic sites in the area and be promoted on the Crossroads website, in the monthly e- newsletter, and through social media channels. Perhaps some initial collaborative efforts with nearby historic sites could be developed during these early years. The site's own outreach activities need to begin during these years so they can grow over time. Emphasis in this early period should be on engaging

Hamilton Township residents, who will be introduced to the site during this time.

2. Recommendations on listing and events listings on VisitNJ.org and Journey through Jersey websites

As work begins on the rehabilitation of the Pearson House and a schedule of programs have been devised, it would be time then to list the site on the VisitNJ.org free website and to include the educational programs for the year on that website. Use this link to get listed:

<https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-get-tourism-business-listed>. For how to get events listed, refer to <https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-add-tourism-event>.

We also suggest that staff do the same for the New Jersey Historic Trust sponsored website Journey through Jersey with the same information. The historic site should be listed on the Journey Through Jersey website. We do not believe that they have an event listing function, but their social media feed gets updated regularly, so perhaps Pearson House monthly events can be promoted through that channel during construction.

3. Recommendations about listing on VisitPrinceton/Mercer.org

We do not think it makes sense to join or pay for ads on the VisitPrinceton/Mercer.org website until the property opens to the public. The cost for membership in the Princeton Chamber is \$400 for the year. See their literature here:

<https://princetonmercarchamber.org/membership/membership-has-its-benefits/>. As the Destination Management Organization for the area, Chamber members are also able to pay for ads in the visitor guide. The cost for these travel guide ads changes yearly. Please note that the Historical Society of Princeton (quarter page), Morven (half page), and the Old Barracks (full page) were the only historic sites to advertise in the 2019-20 visitor guide. Again, until the Pearson House is open to the public it is not recommended that the site advertise in this publication.

4. Recommendations for continued involvement with Crossroads of the American Revolution for upcoming 250th anniversary

The Crossroads of the American Revolution along with the New Jersey Historical Commission are leading the way for the state's response to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. The Pearson House should retain its membership. Perhaps as construction is nearing completion, determine if the organization should become further involved by chairing committees, returning to the board of directors, or some other means of active involvement.

5. Recommendations about installing interpretive signage and sources of funding

We understand that the installation of interpretive signs is a long-term goal of the Pearson House volunteers. There are many kinds of interpretive signs, and it would be wise to look at other historic sites to determine which is preferred. Margaret Westfield, the architect, and author of the *Preservation Plan* has produced a variety of interpretive signage for clients for decades. She can provide samples and cost estimates based on the style you prefer.

Costs for signs can range from \$2,500 to \$4,000 each, depending on the size for one sign. Please budget additional costs for an architect or historian to write the text of the signs and collect photos to be used on them. You might want to plan for three signs: one at the north elevation, one at the south elevation, and one at the site of the lost barn.

Often, these interpretive signs are framed in metal and the interpretive panel is located about waist high or three feet off the ground. They are angled for optimal visitor viewing. Typically, these signs are three or four feet long. The property may need more than one sign, but we suggest that you discuss the placement of signs with Margaret Westfield. You can cut the overall cost of installing these signs if the Township's parks ground crew can install them.

There is more than enough documentary information in the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study, the National Register Nomination, and the Archeology Phase 1 study to produce several signs for the property.

Grants for interpretive signs can be obtained from the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Other funding sources would be the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the \$5,000 Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund for Heritage Tourism from the New Jersey Historic Trust. The NJHT might be a good prospect, as they take applications three times a year and there is no match required. In 2021, the license plate fund had only \$15,000 yearly to give away. This sum will be augmented by an additional grant of \$50,000 from the New Jersey Historic Trust grant funds in 2021. The License Plate Grant fund has been routinely oversubscribed for each grant round, so having more money to give to worthy projects makes this funding source the best prospect for application in 2021.

6. Reciprocal websites with other historic sites nearby

To reinforce the connections between the historic sites mentioned above, we also suggest that the Pearson House website administrator ask for reciprocal web links when the new website is developed from the Mercer, Somerset, Burlington, and Camden County Attractor and Attraction websites mentioned above as well as the Crossroads of the American Revolution.

Reciprocal links between websites needs to be monitored annually at the least. They are passive efforts to promote additional visitation from one website to another, and if the links are broken on your website or your partner's website, no one benefits. Checking all the

external links on the Pearson House website might be a good task for a volunteer to undertake once or twice a year to make sure they work and go to the correct page on the partner's website.

Chapter 3: Conclusions and recommendations once the site is nearly open and opening celebrations

This chapter focuses on the year before the Pearson House is open to the public, when the archeology is complete and the construction work at the Pearson House is almost finished.

During the three years of construction, the Historical Society of Hamilton Township developed educational programs for adults and children, offered at least once a month. It is during this three-year period when the historical society instituted a new website and initiated social media efforts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The construction period also permitted the staff to promote the site through a monthly e-newsletter to alert followers about upcoming educational programming and events of interest at the Pearson House and at nearby historic sites that collaborate and cross market the Pearson House to their visitors. During these three years of construction, the volunteer program began, and it is an ever-growing group that works regularly on events and helps with promotion of the site.

Paid staff takes on a new role this year in planning for the grand opening. Staff leadership, the Executive Director, becomes full time position and makes all the preparations needed for the opening. We recommend that the Pearson House employ two paid staff members, a full time Executive Director, and a part time construction manager. The construction manager has been with the project since the beginning and is responsible, during this important year, for making sure the final construction punch list is completed in advance of Opening Day. Once the construction is complete this person's job is done. We are recommending another staff member be hired as the construction is complete, a 30 hour a week events/social media/communications manager.

The Executive Director works with contractors including reenactors and educators to complete plans and implement tours, events, school programs, and brochures. The Director coordinates and leads the exhibit designers and fabricators who are working to complete the Visitor Center exhibits and temporary exhibits in the second-floor hallway. The Director writes copy for the website, newsletter, and press releases and serves as the main grant writer. The Director works with the Board to set fundraising goals and coordinates with Board members to implement fundraising events and activities. The Director coordinates with other historic site colleagues in the area on joint programming as developed. There is important collaboration with the Crossroads of the American Revolution on plans for the 250th anniversary celebrations.

The part time events/social media/communications manager is a 30 hour a week position with no benefits. This person works with the Executive Director on outreach and communications and handles the logistics and ticketing for all events for the public and for school programming. Most of the social media, media list, and e-newsletter have already begun in the three-year construction phase by the Executive Director. These tasks are turned over the manager to ramp up in the year before the site opens to the public and for the opening year.

This year, the year before opening, is a big lift, and it is expensive. Staff costs increase. Exhibits must be planned and installed; we assume with grant funds. Consultants and educators are engaged to develop enticing programs for adults and children. A fundraising machine must churn to life, inviting people to support a new historic site that offers something different than other places nearby.

The “unique selling proposition” that will differentiate the Pearson House as a visitor destination is the programming of the second floor Maker Spaces for craftspeople/artisans and the storytelling and interpretation around the Pearson Plantation and the enslaved people who worked there.

1. What does it mean to be Visitor Ready for the Isaac Pearson House?

The New Jersey Revolutionary War Sites: Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment report, prepared for the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area in 2020, makes it quite clear what they consider a “visitor ready” site. They identify seven components that characterize a site that is fully ready to welcome visitors. In their *Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment*, the Crossroads consultants have also emphasized the importance of Hospitality Training for any front-line staff member dealing with the public. The Pearson House staff and volunteers should participate in any hospitality training offered by Crossroads and seek out other opportunities for front line staff to learn about visitor needs and wants.

We discuss the seven Visitor Ready components below, and how the programming and staffing at the Pearson House should be developed so that it can be a highly valued visitor attraction upon opening.

The Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment identifies the Isaac Person House as a Community Resource Site with “Tour While There” Potential. This designation acknowledges that the Pearson House, in 2020, is not yet visitor ready and that the site needs substantial investment to bring it up to “Tour While There” site.

Hamilton Township, as the long-time owner of this property, will need to make more than a million-dollar investment in the Pearson House by providing 50/50 matching funds should the historical society volunteers or staff be successful in gaining capital matching grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust or the Green Acres program to rehabilitate this building. These funds would pay for the rehabilitation and new construction of the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center, which the 2020 *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* estimates will cost about \$2.5 million. This investment to restore the building and make it handicapped accessible is the initial step towards making this site into the important visitor destination that it could be. The site will need dedicated paid staff and creative programming to harness its potential to tell stories about the Revolutionary War era and make those stories relevant to today’s visitors.

Funds for operating the site are essential, and we are recommending that the Township and the

historical society as the manager of this building create an equal partnership to support the yearly operating costs for the Pearson House. At the end of this chapter, we discuss staffing and initial budgeting for this historic site in its opening year.

Being Visitor Ready

The Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment identifies seven components that are needed to be a fully visitor ready site. We provide commentary and recommendations for the Pearson House to become fully visitor ready below.

A. Operations

1. Having a business license, permits and insurance to operate legally. While we expect that the Township as the owner of the property will hold insurance on the building, the historical society should also have its own liability insurance and Officers and Directors Insurance. The historical society's attorney can advise on licenses and permits that are needed for a visitor attraction open to the public.
2. Schedule of opening hours. We are recommending that the Pearson House be open and staffed five days a week throughout the year, including both weekend days. (see below for specifics). This schedule will give the site the broadest possible opportunity to make the best of "Visit While There" designation and permit further collaboration with other historic sites in the area to cross market to visitors.
3. Contact telephone numbers and email for emergencies and when open. The phone number needs to be one that will be answered at least once a day. Emails should be returned within 24 hours. A phone number at the Township for property related emergencies should be available to staff.
4. Prominent on-site signage. The Isaac Pearson House will need a variety of directional and interpretive signage to help visitors who come by car to locate the site, and to direct them after they park and then as they walk into the building. The staff will have to work with the Township Parks and Recreation Department about creating appropriate signage to direct local travelers to the parking on site and to the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center entrance if it is not wholly obvious from the parking location how to enter the building.

The staff will also need to work with the Public Works division to identify where directional signage is needed along the various streets and highways that visitors might take. All this directional signage needs to be planned and installed the year before the grand opening. The site will also need permanent interpretive signage, and we have already discussed that this signage can be created and installed during

the construction phase of the project.

5. Sufficient lighting for safety. Lighting for the interior and exterior will be developed as part of the construction drawings for the rehabilitation and new construction of the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center. Exterior lighting to showcase the exterior of the building and to light the path between the parking lot and the sidewalk that leads to the entrance of the visitor center will be needed as part of any landscape plan.

Finally, lighting may be needed at the tent if a permanent concrete pad is installed. Lighting of the tent will permit more flexibility for its use in spring and early fall evenings for educational programs. The Parks and Recreation Department can provide advice about other lighting that they feel is needed for early evening use of the site.

6. Emergency assistance. The construction documents will identify any emergency lighting required by the building code. Staff will need to be available on site to aid anyone if there is any kind of emergency. All staff and volunteers should be trained each year to evacuate the building for any reason. At least one person should be trained and certified in first aid.
7. Well-maintained paths and roads. In the development of the landscaping plan with the Parks and Recreation Department, staff will need to develop regulations about staff role in maintaining paths, specifically sweeping and snow removal for visitors. The plowing of parking lots and roads should be left to the Township Public Works staff.

B. Open to the Public

1. Regular schedule of days/hours open to the public. A regular schedule with opening hours from 10AM to 5PM daily will allow greatest flexibility for visitors. The staff can arrive at 9AM to set up for the day. The welcome sign at the property should list the open hours, including which holidays the site is closed. Every Monday and Tuesday, New Years, Christmas, and Thanksgiving are recommended as holidays to be closed. The open schedule should be promoted in all the literature: brochures, signs, website, social media, and in press releases.
2. Open year-round. The slow winter months can be used by staff for planning and installing temporary exhibits, and for program planning by staff and volunteers for the new year. This can also be the season for minor interior painting and repair. However, tours and events should continue throughout the winter season, giving residents a reason to visit the site, tour the grounds, and learn more about the Revolutionary War and Isaac Pearson's role in it. Fundraising never stops, not even

in the winter.

3. Open both weekend days. We recommend that the site be open both weekend days and have staffing, both paid and volunteer, in place that can cover both days. The weekends are when visitors want to see historic sites, and programming should be available each weekend. We are especially excited about the opportunities that that Maker Spaces and limited term residencies will permit for new programming each quarter for visitors.
4. ADA Compliant. *The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* identifies how the site will meet the Americans with Disability Act requirements related to grading, sidewalks, and handicapped restrooms (see further discussion about the restroom below). While a handicapped individual will be able to visit the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center, they will not be able to visit the second floor Maker Spaces or temporary exhibit space, so accommodations will be needed for those spaces. The Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide that we recommend should thoroughly discuss how these educational programs for handicapped individuals who cannot reach the second-floor spaces will be developed and launched.
5. Parking. *The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* indicates where the handicapped parking spots will be near the entrance to the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center. The historical society will need to work with the Township Parks and Recreation staff to identify overflow parking locations on the site itself for larger events. During the rehabilitation planning, there will be time to identify additional parking locations for staff and visitors on the site. These locations must be worked out with the Parks and Recreation staff. Street parking is still an option for many people, but the staff may have to work out a relationship with the nearby neighbors if events will take up street parking that neighbors use, especially on weekend days.
6. Restrooms. *The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* recommends that there be only one gender neutral, handicapped accessible restroom in the Visitor Center Kitchen Wing. This restroom will be universally used by volunteers, visitors, and staff, and needs exceptional maintenance daily. Cleaning must be someone's job, and cleaning standards need to be in that person's job description. The condition of the restroom tells visitors how they will be treated throughout their time on site, so an immaculate restroom says that the site cares about its visitors. The restroom must be sparkling all day, every day. This is part of being a good host. If this means that the historical society must hire an outside contractor who provides superb restroom cleaning service throughout the day, then it must be included in any annual operating budget for this site.

C. Staffing

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1. Two paid staff. We have identified the staffing that we believe is necessary for a well-run, full time, year-round visitor attraction at the end of this chapter, section 9. The staffing anticipated includes two paid staff, one full time Executive Director who is responsible for overall site operations, fundraising, contracts, site interpretation, collaborations, and relationship building. We are also recommending a 30 hour a week event manager/social media and communications staff who will be responsible for all the outreach to the public and schools and managing all the events at the site. There will be paid interpreters hired as consultants (1099 employees), the Maker Space residents, and volunteers that also provide regular interpretation at the site. See section 9 for a first-year budget for the site.

The Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment report mentions that the three above mentioned items are “the minimum criteria for visitor readiness at an historic site interested in hosting visitors. Certainly, the availability of a stellar gift shop, temporary exhibits and café can enhance the time spent at a site or attract locals on a more frequent basis. However, visitor readiness should include more than just opening the doors, qualities beyond the basic criteria listed above.”

Below are more four areas that *The Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment* considers important for determining visitor readiness, especially for historic sites.

D. Exhibitions

1. Quality exhibits. *The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* has identified two locations for displays. The first floor of the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center can be used as a small exhibition area to provide orientation and information about the house for those that want to “visit on their own” without taking a guided tour. This location can include a small video monitor or iPad to show any specific audio or video information to be shared.

The other location for temporary exhibits is in the second-floor hallway near the staircase up to the second floor, and the space that leads to the door for the secondary means of egress to the stair in the Visitor Center on the second floor. Exhibit panels can be mounted on the walls or small movable exhibit cases can be installed for displays of small artifacts.

2. Rotating exhibits with fresh content. This hallway space can be used for changing temporary exhibits, with new exhibits and openings held twice a year to bring new people into the building. These exhibits can build on the Crossroads of the American Revolution interpretive themes that make sense for the Pearson House.
3. Interactive and immersive (post COVID). The Pearson House will distinguish itself

by offering Marker Spaces in the second-floor bedrooms and featuring programming from these artisans and craftspeople. During their three-month residencies, these colonial era craftspeople will provide interpretation on weekend days in their designated rooms, on the first floor, and/or at the tent location in the grounds. Depending on the craftsman/artisan's craft, they can use any one of these spaces for regular demonstrations during their residency. We believe that this changing and regular programming will encourage multiple visits by area residents and other non-local visitors. This programming is critical to the success of the Pearson House and will differentiate it among other historic sites in the area.

4. Exhibit research content based on good history. The Pearson Plantation offers many other programming possibilities related to slavery in the North and the African American experience during the Revolutionary War. Much more research is needed about how the plantation was used, the people who were enslaved here, and later uses of the property as it was subdivided repeatedly. The plantation use will certainly differentiate the site from others nearby, and the possibilities for interpretation need to be fully explored in an Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide that we are recommending take place in the next one or two years.
5. Relevant stories to engage all audiences. The Pearson House can tell virtually all the stories that the Crossroads of the American Revolution has identified in its *Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment* report on pages 79 to 82. The Interpretive Plan we suggest can take these six themes and gather the historic resources to use the themes for adult tours and programs, school programs, the permanent and temporary exhibits in the Visitor Center and second floor hallway, visitor brochures, social media posts, and website pages.

The educator and interpreters working at the site should focus first on tours that appeal to family groups, as we anticipate that most visitors will come from the nearby area. Programs for kids can be developed in the tent area, especially if the craftspeople/artisans are doing demonstrations in this space that will be highly valued by parents. Care should be given to storytelling about the plantation and the enslaved people working on the property. Interpretation about this theme should be fully explored in the recommended Interpretive Plan.

6. Good curatorial practice to protect artifacts. The historical society's collections management plan and practices for protecting, storing, and maintaining artifacts will govern how exhibits at the Pearson House will be mounted.

E. Programs

1. Various delivery methods for programs. This section details the types of

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- programming that we are recommending for the site when it is finally open to the public. The staff will be building on work already accomplished during the three-year construction phase and expanding on programming for adults and children held once a month during the visitor season.
2. Self-guided tours. We are recommending that the site install two or more interpretive signs outside on the grounds during the construction period. In addition, the website should have a downloadable visitor brochure which is also available in the Visitor Center. The event listing for the quarter should be printed and available on the website and in the Visitor Center. The website should have substantial information about the property. The site should review its programming annually to make updates and changes depending on visitor feedback, new research and staff and volunteer capacity.
 - a. QR Codes. These can be used on the interpretive signs or on temporary exhibit materials to offer visitors further information about a topic of interest. QR Codes can appear on any temporary exhibits or orientation exhibits in the visitor center. Further information about QR Codes appears later in this chapter.
 - b. App for more information. The site should post information to The Clio, (theclio.org) or other application developed for the NJ Revolutionary War site if applicable. Information about The Clio appears later in this chapter.
 7. Several types of guided tours. We are recommending having trained staff, either volunteer or paid, provide several different themed tours for visitors on the weekends at regular times (on the hour, for example, from 11AM to 4PM). Further information about guided tours appears later in this chapter.
 8. Programming for children. The site should offer regular special programs for children or family groups and advertise them widely. We anticipate that families will be the main visitor group to target, so careful attention needs to be paid to offering regular programming for them. Interpreters and reenactors need to be skilled in offering children's programs.
 9. Special activities for all ages. The Maker Spaces on the second floor provide multiple opportunities every weekend to learn about Colonial life and times for both adults and kids. Maker Space activities are meant to be small talks and demonstrations by the craftspeople/artisans and others inside the house itself. Larger educational events can be held outside on the grounds and at the tent. The educational programming during the three years of construction was meant to fit into the tent. After the grand opening, the grounds provide other opportunities for larger special events that may or may not be related to educational themes. Staff can collaborate

with area schools and clubs to host events on the grounds as needed.

10. Events tied to themes, people, commemorative dates. We have recommended that small events held in the house focus on themes related to the Revolution and the role of Isaac Pearson in these events. The Pearson Plantation also provides rich interpretive opportunities that need to be developed so that they can be implemented during the first year the house is open to the public. In Chapter 2, we recommended that patriotic holidays be programmed, such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day focusing on patriotism or citizenship. These events can be expanded once the house is open to the public.

F. Tour Guides/Docents

1. Is there a program to recruit and reward docents from the community? We note that the entire educational program needs good oversight through the Executive Director. We recommend that this person serve as the chief interpreter and leader of the educational programming for the site. The Director will work with docents and other staff to create high quality training and orientation for all interpreters, whether paid, consultants or docent volunteers.

Recruitment of interpreters whether paid or volunteer is an ongoing task, and while the staff is gearing up for opening day, many interpreters will be needed to handle the crowds of people curious about the rehabilitated Isaac Pearson House. It would be wise to train more interpreters than can possibly be needed, given the anticipation for the 250th Anniversary. Consider offering at least quarterly training for new interpreters during the year before opening and use these new interpreters during the monthly educational events in advance of the opening.

2. Do docents/guides receive training at least annually? Is it mandatory? Does it include information sharing as well as honing presentation skills? The initial interpreter training is likely to be longer than one day as the staff develops the capacity to train more than a handful of docents at a time. It is recommended by the Crossroads consultants that interpreters be trained annually. Yearly mandatory training should include information for experienced guides **that** can be focused on new research, new interpretive techniques, or further familiarization with nearby sites. Hospitality training must also be updated yearly so that all interpreters know about new offerings, and new visitor amenities nearby. Interpreters should be encouraged to take advantage of other educational offerings made available at conferences, through Crossroads or other educational venues in the state and region.
3. Are tour guides encouraged to learn more about the community (e.g., participate in local familiarization tours to other attractions, restaurants, etc.) to pass along this

knowledge to visitors in the form of suggested places to eat, shop, tour, stay? We spend more time on cross marketing in Chapter 2 and identify the likely sites in Mercer, and surrounding counties with visitor attractions that interpret the Revolutionary War. This will be an important part of docent/interpreter orientation and training. Just as important is making a large effort to invite docents/interpreters/staff from adjacent sites to the Pearson House so they are thus familiar with our site and can make recommendations to visitors. This must be a yearly effort, in the Spring, just as the visitor season begins.

Interpreters need to know where the nearest bank or gas station is, the best diner, great local restaurants or shopping districts that offer a distinct experience for visitors. Maps of these visitor amenities can be prepared and handed out and might be an excellent sponsorship product.

4. Are materials and tours translated into different languages for international visitors, available in Braille and for the hearing impaired? We recommend that the website be translated into Spanish, so the general visitor brochure must be similarly translated. Take a clue from the other “attractor” sites to determine the languages they are translating their brochures for the 250th Anniversary and how they are marketing this to visitors.
5. Do guides have a staff or board member to contact in case of emergency, conflict, or area of concern? The historical society board may want to create a liaison committee for the Pearson House related to educational programming to provide some oversight for the tour program. While concerns or conflicts should be raised to the Executive Director first, this committee could act as another group to take concerns.

G. Marketing to Capacity

1. How many visitors can be hosted at one time without compromising the integrity of the site or the experience? The fire marshal will determine how many visitors can be accommodated in the Pearson House at any one time, whether for seated events/lectures or general open houses/receptions. This information will be posted in the Visitor Center.

The integrity of a newly rehabilitated house does not get much attention, but staff should consider during the year before opening, the real capacity of the house during events when people are permitted to mill about without a guide. Staff should consider what the visitor flow should be for these events and provide a “guide on demand” in each room with a cell phone for safety and interpretive purposes.

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2. Are school groups scheduled on certain days of the week, with families and adult groups encouraged to visit on other days? The Executive Director should identify when school groups are permitted on site, likely on Wednesday and Thursday if the site is closed on Monday and Tuesday. School programs should be developed for specific grade levels and meet the current New Jersey State core curriculum standards. Ideally local teachers might be good summertime interpreters, while retired teachers can be used throughout the year. If school programming is limited to two days a week, and by appointment, the staff can smooth out school visitation throughout the year. If grants can be obtained for transportation for students, then these programs can be offered during late Fall, Winter and early Spring months before the highly desirable May and June months for school visits.
 3. Can tours be rotated to different parts of the site to help reduce impact, or restrict access to certain areas during peak times of the year? As the typical guided tour route through the house and grounds is developed in the year before opening, the Director will need to identify how to segment the tour so that the narrative can be logically told if visitors start the tour outside rather than inside or the opposite. An outdoor tour might also be worth developing so visitors can explore the site of the now lost farm buildings at the property. The interpreter might have to be equipped with an iPad with historic photos or a binder of photos to show these buildings.
 4. Are timed or ticketed admissions an option for peak visitation periods? The historical society and the Township should have early discussions during the construction period about whether the site will be open free of charge all the time or an admission fee charged for tours inside the house. Self-guided tours of the grounds using the downloaded brochure should be available free as it is a public park. If it is decided that an admission fee is to be charged for everyone, then consider offering one free day a month (such as first Sunday of every month, free) and make that information widely available, especially on the website.

Look to peer sites for advice on ticket prices for regular tours. Special programs like lectures, or concerts held inside the house can be ticketed using programs like Eventbrite or other ticketing software. If the site becomes highly popular, the board can decide to offer different ticket prices for “prime time” or high season tours, versus low or free tours during the winter. The year of the 250th Anniversary will likely produce the highest visitation and there should be plans for visitors from Europe and Asia, including foreign language tours on weekends and similar foreign language brochures. Alternatively podcasts of the tour in foreign languages could be available for free on the website, so that visitors with smart phones can access them.

5. How does the current infrastructure (parking, road access, entrance, restrooms,

other visitor services) impact capacity? We have already identified that the staff will need to work closely with the Parks and Recreation Department staff on locations for overflow parking beyond the curb side spaces along the street, and near the handicapped accessible spaces near the walk to the Visitor Center. Staff parking will also need to be identified and signed.

Overflow parking on the grass, will need to be identified with cones and staff needed to guide visitors to these spaces. Staff will need to practice how to manage overflow parking with Park Department staff skilled at this. The Park Department staff will also provide advice about whether roads nearby need additional signage, and directional signage to the Visitor Center entrance.

The one handicapped accessible public restroom located in the Visitor Center may not be enough for the high season or during events, and additional restroom locations identified. Porto-potties will need to be rented and maintained daily during the high visitor season. We have already identified above that maintenance of the handicapped restroom is vital. The same holds true for the portable toilets. Staff must determine who and how these vital visitor amenities will be serviced each day during the high season.

The remaining portion of this chapter explores the components of a visitor ready site in more detail including our recommendations for developing the Isaac Pearson House into a full-time visitor attraction.

2. Recommendations on both guided and self-guided tours/interpretation

Need for Both guided AND self-guided tours

For the historical society to maximize the heritage tourism potential of the Isaac Pearson House, there must be a mix of in-person guided and self-guided interpretive opportunities for visitors. Recent studies about visitors to historic sites note that 45% of visitors prefer to visit historic sites with a traditional guide, while 55% want to visit “on their own,” using brochures, podcasts, cell phone tours, audio guides, stationary guides (called “guides on demand”), signage, and/or websites to learn about an historic place.

Below we list the interpretive methods we believe are most suitable for the initial development of Isaac Pearson House, and recommended first steps.

Interpretive staff needed

This important historic site deserves to have dedicated interpretive staff, preferably paid part-time or on a contract basis, so that the site can reach its true potential as a visitor attraction and

add to the already rich tapestry of Colonial and Revolutionary War era historic properties located in Hamilton Township. The Pearson House needs paid staff. We suggest a full time Executive Director with demonstrated skills as the leader of the interpretive effort during the year of preparations before opening and full time thereafter. The Executive Director's role as the interpretive coordinator should include the development of the entire interpretive program for the Pearson House including:

- develop and recruit the paid or volunteer docent (tour guide) corps
- create interpretive themes and work with docents to implement both general and special theme tours
- create a website, establish a social media presence, and create print and online brochures
- manage the creation of a school program
- determine visitor center logistics and welcome protocol for visitors
- develop and install temporary exhibits on the second floor twice a year
- plan and implement a handful of onsite public events each year, and
- coordinate with other historic site partners to offer joint programming opportunities.

The Pearson House site will only be as interesting as the interpretive programming and events that convey the site's meaning to the visitor. The opening of the site is a major accomplishment for Hamilton Township. The new park enables the Township to tell unique and interesting stories about the Revolutionary War period, slavery in the North, and everyday life in Colonial America, among other themes. With a strong interpretive program, the new site can bring these stories to life for residents, school children, and visitors. We encourage proponents of the Pearson House to ensure that the full story of the House and Plantation is told using a variety of interpretive methods as mentioned in this report.

Live interpretive options

The following interpretive options permit visitors to learn about The Pearson House through either a live trained (paid or volunteer) interpreter stationed in a particular location called a Guide on Demand. The job of the guide will be to tell the story of the historic site. Guides may be in modern street dress or in appropriate costumes.

We recommend training interpreters for two specific kinds of jobs:

- 1) as a tour guide for regular public tours; and
- 2) as a "guide on demand" to be stationed in one location in the house, or outside on the grounds, to provide brief interpretative remarks about that space/location, if/when approached by a visitor. We further discuss the Guide on Demand below.

Guided tours

We have already discussed the 2009 article based on national research of audiences who visit historic sites. This important research notes that 55%, more than half of visitors to historic sites, dislike guided tours and prefer to visit “on their own” and at their pace. This group consists mainly of younger people in the Gen X, Gen Y, and Millennial generations. They could be singles, couples, or parents, and programming must be developed to meet their needs.

Costumed interpreters: First person interpreters

First person tour guides provide different experiences for visitors as a living history, educational experience. Appropriately costumed tour guides who present their narrative in the first-person, meaning they are an actor impersonating a [famous] person in the past, can be an exciting alternative to third-person tours presented by a guide who dresses in modern clothes and narrates tours in today’s language.

A first-person interpreter creates an “historic bubble” where they try to reenact a past time for the visitor using props, the location, and their acting skills. First-person interpretation, as defined by Stacy Roth, is an “interactive dramatization or roleplaying...an effective, albeit controversial, method used to bring history to life at museums, historic sites, and other public venues.”

Costumed guides are the stuff of legend in many children’s lives. Most Philadelphians can recall their youth when they heard an actor portraying Betsy Ross or Benjamin Franklin talking about their lives and significant achievements. Costumed guides are helpful for both children and adults. There are reenactors who make a living portraying famous Philadelphians for tour groups. There are great opportunities to incorporate high-quality, first-person costumed interpretation at the Isaac Pearson House utilizing the rich source materials about Isaac Pearson, the enslaved workers on the Plantation, and Pearson’s family members, especially his widow and children after his death in 1776.

If the staff is interested in exploring slavery in this Colony and early New Jersey and how the Pearson Plantation was farmed as a first-person experience, they must undertake thorough research on the person’s life they are reenacting, Colonial times, and the work undertaken at the Plantation to create a believable tour. Considerable research is needed to learn about each person on the Plantation, the era in which they lived, and speech patterns/phases common in the era to create a quality experience for visitors.

Staff will need to cull information from the various old and new archeological studies and other original documents to compile a baseline of material for use by reenactors and docents to plan their tours. Care must be taken when presenting costumed reenactors to avoid “anachronisms:” modern intrusions such as watches, shoes/sneakers, visible tattoos, etc. that would spoil the intended historical impression of the reenactor’s presentation of the Pearson House. For more information about undertaking first-person interpretation, we recommend Stacy R. Roth’s book,

Past into Present: Effective Techniques for First-Person Historical Interpretation, to learn more about the pitfalls and opportunities surrounding presenting historical information in the first person to visitors.

Third person interpretation

Third-person tour guides are a common way to interpret historic sites in modern day dress. Guides can prepare tours based on historic themes, a narrative from the life of Isaac Pearson, his family, or the enslaved workers at the Plantation. Good interpretation, even when guides are in modern dress, can be highly interesting and entertaining for adults, children, and family groups. We recommend using *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, for any docent training program.

How long a tour?

Interpreters must tailor tours to their audience based on the time that visitors have available. In an outdoor setting, a tour of 30 to 40 minutes would be ideal. Time constraints can be real impediments to creating a quality tour, and families with small children might opt for a shorter tour. Well-trained docents can adjust on the spot to cut a tour short or continue answering questions if there are interested visitors.

The short, basic tour should be the basis for the “guide on demand” commentary. Interested docents can prepare longer or more specialized tours based on their specific interests or skills and offered as specialty tours seasonally based on visitor demand.

Guide on demand

A “guide on demand” provides visitors with additional information beyond a written brochure and adds to their enjoyment of an historic site, while permitting them to learn at their own speed by talking to the guide for as long (or as short) as they wish. These docents provide security if stationed inside a room or at a large event and interpret the room/area as needed.

If large crowds are expected at an event and guided tours become difficult to manage, we suggest designating specific locations inside the Pearson House and outside on the grounds for a “guide on demand.” The function of a guide on demand is to present information to a visitor as they approach the guide, presumably for further information.

The docent does not offer remarks or a “canned” recitation unless approached by a visitor, thus offering the visitor a self-guided experience. The guide would have remarks about the location in which they are stationed and be available to offer additional information based on the visitor’s questions. They do not launch into their “talk” and monopolize a visitor for half an

hour, as an example. Rather they are there to answer questions and provide guidance to the visitor about all the things going on at the site that day so they can maximize their visit

Self-Guided interpretation options

The following interpretive options permit visitors to learn about the site “on their own” without a guide by using wayfinding/directional and interpretive signage, websites, brochures, QR codes, and other means discussed below.

Downloadable visitor brochure

A gifted writer (paid or volunteer) should prepare a handsome brochure about the Pearson House as a self-guided tour. Tourists planning to visit should be encouraged to download this self-guided brochure prior to their visit. The substance of the brochure can come from the overview section of this report, or *the Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study*, or reports from other consultants. We suggest a traditional informational brochure, in an 8.5” x 11” format size, folded into three panels to fit inside a number 10 envelope. We do not encourage a legal-size brochure because most people do not have legal sized paper at home. Type size should be no smaller than 10 point. This brochure should be nicely designed and in color so visitors can print the brochure out. The brochure should also look great in black and white as most people still have black and white printers at home, and the designer will take that into account.

The brochure should contain current and historic photos with captions, a map of the complex in the 18th century, and text that gives the history and significance of the property. This brochure should be written for a lay audience with no prior knowledge of the site. The brochure should have basic visitor information: name of site, the GPS address, phone number, website, admission charge (if any), and open hours/days.

The PDF version of the brochure should be posted on any website/Facebook/Wikipedia page about the property. The staff can print the brochure as needed with a laser printer on quality paper for events or tours. Visitors to the site should be encouraged to print it out before they arrive at the site. All the information needed to create this brochure is available now from this report and could be assembled quickly. and the brochure will change over time as rehabilitation is completed and the site opening planned.

See below for other self-guiding options including having interpretive signs, a You Tube channel, using The Clío App, QR Codes on signs, and various types of user generated reviews from Yelp, Trip Advisor, and Google Reviews.

3. Recommendations about creating a docent training program

The historical society should provide interpretive opportunities for visitors that take place in groups or during events at the Pearson House. Staffing the site is the job of the Executive Director and other paid staff or volunteers.

Great Tours!

Starting a tour guide program will require inspired leadership from the paid Executive Director. One person needs to be the leader of the effort, preferably someone who is trained as an adult educator. The Executive Director would need to create the tour program and an accompanying curriculum. We recommend using *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, as a starting point for developing a curriculum and training process for the Pearson House. The Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide we are recommending should have detailed information about developing a guide program, soliciting, and training volunteers to serve, and how often to offer training for new interpreters.

4. Recommendations for additional outreach channels once site opens (YouTube, The Clio App, QR Codes, Yelp, Trip Advisor, Google Reviews)

In addition to interpretive signage, there are many other ways to connect with visitors 365 days a year, even when the building is not open for tours.

YouTube

The COVID-19 pandemic has made many historic sites pivot and decide to upload much of their video content, especially for school visits, to a YouTube channel so that it is freely available on the internet. Links to the Pearson House website will make it clear that the content was created by staff or consultants for the Pearson House. A dedicated YouTube channel can be especially useful to promote the site beyond the traditional community of historic site visitors. Several local historic sites have their own YouTube channels including the Crossroads of the American Revolution ([Crossroads of the American Revolution - YouTube](#)), The Old Barracks ([You tube Old Barracks museum - Bing video](#)) and Princeton Battlefield ([Princeton battlefield you tube - Bing video](#)). Staff will need to have good lighting, equipment, shooting, and video editing skills to create videos for a YouTube channel. Most of the content created for historic sites has been done by interested volunteers rather than paid professional video editors. Speak with your historic site peers about the time and costs needed to have a high-quality YouTube channel before making the commitment.

Clio App

A free interactive app called Clio ([theclio.com](#)) is popular with many historic sites around the county. A volunteer from a historic site associated with The Camden County (NJ) History Alliance uploaded the data for several of the history organizations to the Clio app, and this can be done for the Pearson House by volunteers or staff. This app is completely free but would

need to be promoted on the Pearson House website, Facebook and Instagram pages, and Interpretive Signs when they are installed to encourage visitor traffic. This is a simple, easy, and free way to make information available to visitors who come when the site is not open to the public.

See Greenfield Hall (Historical Society of Haddonfield NJ) entry for theclio.com app: [Greenfield Hall - Historical Society of Haddonfield - Clio \(theclio.com\)](#).

QR codes

The interpretive signs may also benefit from having a QR code (Quick Response) on them, if the historical society wishes to have further 24/7/365 information for visitors who come to the site at off hours when staff is not available. Consult the architect and fabricator of the interpretive signs to determine if they are recommending installing QR codes on interpretive signs for similar client projects.

Refer to the Cumberland County Time Traveler Interpretive Program, which won a 2013 American Association for State and Local History National Award for its 15 signs around the county that showcase historic sites that are not regularly open to the public. Each of the 15 sites has a permanent sign which says Hear Here, with a QR code symbol and a web site address. When the QR code is read by a smart phone, a podcast begins on the phone. If the visitor does not have a smart phone or if the local Wi-Fi connection is bad, the person can access the website to read about the building. Learn more at <http://www.co.cumberland.nj.us/news-display/?FeedID=4207>

Matt Pisaski, Chief Planner with Cumberland County, wrote the podcasts, a panel of historians vetted the text, and Venturi Scott Brown & Associates were the sign designers. The county hired a firm to record the podcasts, and county public works installed them. This project was funded by a \$15,000 grant from the New Jersey Commission on the Humanities.

Yelp and Trip Advisor reviews

Yelp and Trip Advisor are two websites where visitors can leave public reviews for various types of businesses. These two pages have become important for visitors seeking user generated content about historic sites. There is no Yelp page for the Isaac Pearson House now, in December 2020. There is a Yelp page for the John Abbott II house, but it remains “unclaimed” and does not have any reviews on it. We recommend that the historical society “claim” this page and populate it with information about the Abbott House.

Likewise, on Trip Advisor, we did not find a page for either the Pearson House or Abbott House. Yelp and Trip Advisor pages should be created the year before the site opens to the public and include the current information about the opening date and programming.

Both Yelp and Trip Advisor reviews cannot be managed by the site owner and are thus viewed as honest feedback by visitors. Site owners must be active in monitoring postings on these two websites. Negative reviews should be responded to as soon as possible, preferably the same day. Best practices for dealing with negative reviews are to acknowledge the negative review, apologize for not meeting the visitor's expectations (even if they seem unreasonable, impossible, or odd), and vow to be better at customer service. Since negative reviews cannot be removed, the owner must encourage positive reviews to overcome any negative or neutral reviews. This article about visitor attractions and managing reviews on Trip Advisor is helpful: [Tripadvisor Insights - The Essential Hospitality Marketing Resource Straight from Tripadvisor Insiders | TripAdvisor Insights](#)

Google reviews

On the right-hand side of a Google search for the Isaac Pearson House, there is a photo and reviews of the site. There are five reviews, all giving five stars but providing little commentary. The Google Review page does not have much information right now. It should be "claimed" by the historical society, and appropriate information should be added and updated from time to time. The link if searched on Google search engine is [Isaac Pearson house and park - Google Search](#). Visitors can leave reviews here too, so it is wise to include this on the list of websites to check for reviews on a weekly basis.

5. Recommendations about artisans to use Maker Spaces on second floor, suggested lease terms, artisan programming expectations

We have recommended that the three (3) second-floor bedrooms be used as Maker Spaces for craftsperson/artisans to provide demonstrations of various trades and crafts from the Colonial era. We are also suggesting that these rooms be made available as three-month residencies, so that there is a rotating group of artisans and makers available in the spaces for visitor enjoyment throughout the year. It will be up to the staff and the historical society to decide whether to offer these residencies for free, to provide an exceedingly small honorarium (we budgeted for \$500 a quarter for each Maker in the budget later in this chapter), or to require the makers to pay a small rental fee. The point of having a rotating group of makers is to provide variety for visitors. Reach out to other historic sites and the reenactor community for possible applicants for the residency program. You will need 12 for the year.

Each of the craftspeople/artisans will be required as part of their residency to provide lessons, demonstrations, or presentations about their trade/craft at designated times, probably noon to 4pm on specific weekend days during their three-month residency at the site. These demonstrations can take place in the assigned bedroom (a small number of visitors can be accommodated in each bedroom according to the fire code), on the first floor, or in the tent on the grounds. Ideally, there will be three or more residencies each month and the artisan will be required to lead programming four weekend days a month as part of their residency agreement

(two, two-day weekends per month or whatever combination makes sense). These will be scheduled in advance as part of the residency agreement developed in preparation for the opening of the site. The residency agreement should identify liability issues for each artisan and outline what kind of work is permitted or not (such as no fires, candles, etc. permitted).

Creating this Maker Space for Colonial era craftspeople/artisans at the Pearson House will require some effort to find models to adapt, create usable rules and procedures, and establish an application and selection process. We are unaware of other specific models across the country, and believe it is a unique effort to differentiate the programming at the Pearson House. Some initial programs to contact to learn and seek advice from are:

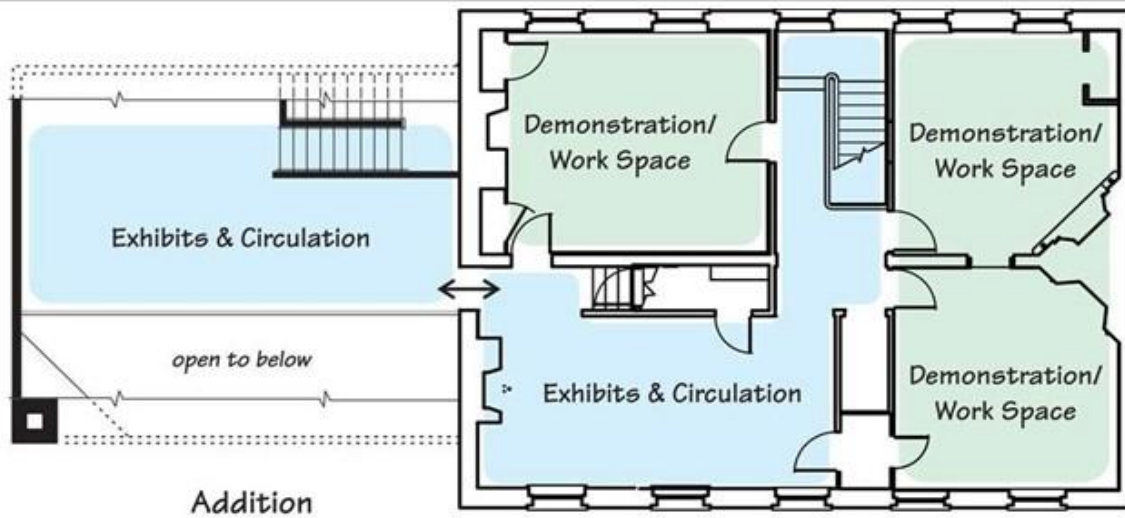
Peters Valley School of Craft, which “champions the unifying power of art, craft, and creativity; celebrates the diversity of our shared humanity; and condemns racism and violence in all forms.” This school in historic buildings near the Delaware Water Gap has existed for more than 50 years. Learn more at [Artist Residencies - Peters Valley School of Craft](#)

The Artist in Education program places professional teaching artists in classrooms throughout NJ for long term 20-day minimum residency. These residencies are customized for grade levels or arts disciplines (performing, visual, or literacy). These grants to schools provide professional development for school administration and staff, an event to engage the school with the community, and a reflection day for students to consider their achievements. Learn more at [Home - New Jersey Artists in Education Residency Grant Program \(njaie.org\)](#).

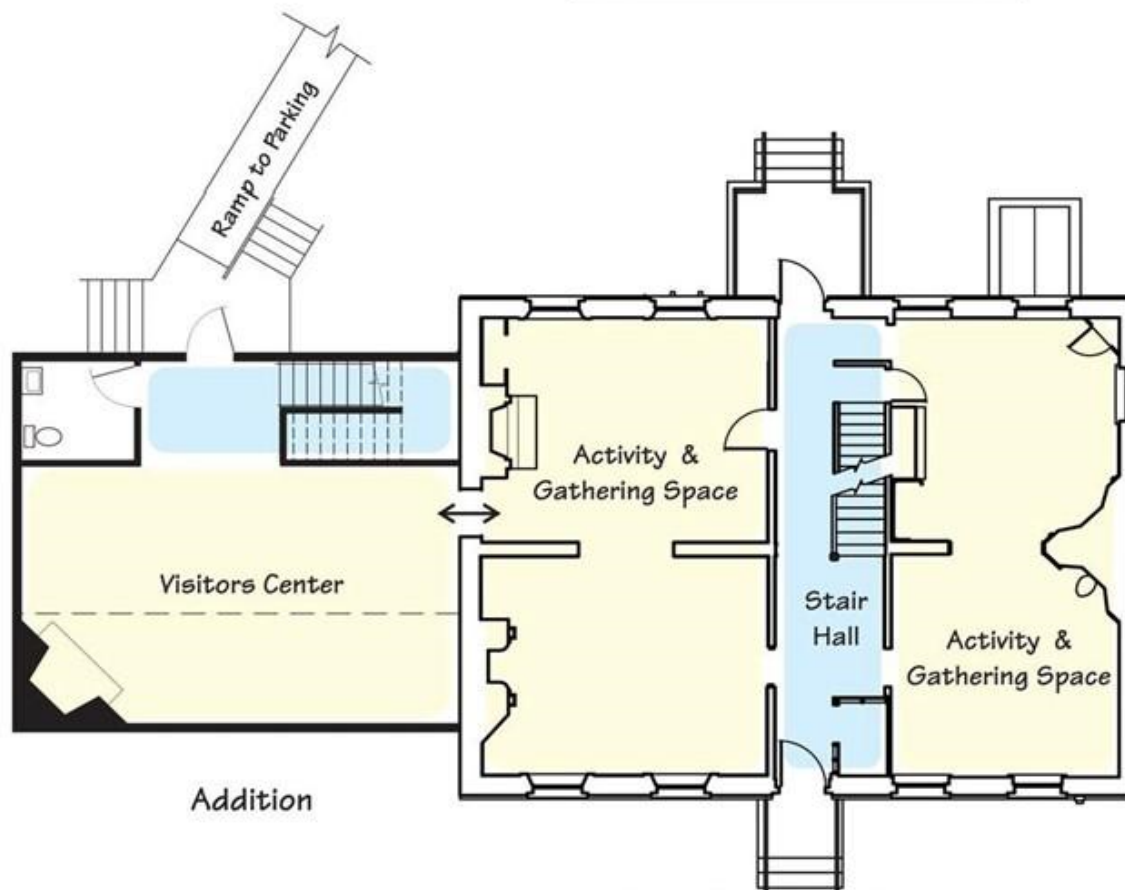
Weir Farm, a historic site run by the National Park Service in Connecticut, has an artist in residence program. “The Artist-in-Residence Program selects ten artists a year to live and work in the park. One of over 50 programs throughout the National Park Service, the residency at Weir Farm National Historic Site offers artists an opportunity to live and work in a national park, and to be inspired to create. Visual artists apply for one-month residencies in all media, representing diverse artistic points of view from traditional to experimental.” Learn more at [Artist-in-Residence Program - Weir Farm National Historic Site \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#).

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a long-standing program to promote historic sites associated with artists. They have developed a new model for the Pond Farm, founded in Guerneville, California, that enlivened that site by offering it as artist studios. See the article in *Forum Journal* from 2015. Learn more at [Artist Residencies at Historic Sites 0.pdf \(artistcommunities.org\)](#).

More research is needed to bring the Maker Space effort from an idea to reality. The program should be worked out in the recommended Interpretive Plan and Programming Guide to be created in the next two years.



Second Floor Use Diagram



First Floor Use Diagram

Source: Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants. "Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study for the Isaac Pearson House, Hamilton Township, New Jersey." October 2020 Draft, 39

6. Recommendations on types of temporary exhibitions in second floor master chamber including a yearly schedule to change out exhibits

The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study for the Pearson House includes a floor plan identifying the exhibition spaces on the second floor in blue (see next page). These spaces include the second-floor central hallway, and the hallway that leads to the exit to the Kitchen Wing Visitor Center mezzanine and stairway exit (secondary means of egress) to the first floor of the Visitor Center.

These spaces can be used for a variety of temporary exhibits. We recommend that small exhibits in this space be an ongoing effort at the Pearson House. Changing exhibits provide additional opportunities for people to come see the shows, and to their opening events. The interpretive themes and storytelling topics identified in the *Crossroads of the American Revolution's Site and Visitor Readiness Assessment* are excellent places to start to develop exhibit ideas for the Pearson House.

The archeological finds from the first phase study is an excellent exhibit option as it could be tied to lectures, demonstrations, and other talks by archeologists and historians to make the site come alive for visitors through shards of pottery and other detritus found on the site's grounds.

We are envisioning exhibit panels with photos and texts, or banners hung from the walls. Three dimensional displays or furniture could be displayed, along with small exhibit cases or vitrines to hold artifacts and objects. As highly focused exhibits using excellent historic research, these temporary and changing exhibits could highlight themes that are difficult to envision in a small 5-acre park setting.

7. Recommendations on programming Visitor Center

The Visitor Center is an incredibly important location for the site. While the space is not large, it has several functions.

The Visitor Center is the first location where a visitor can be greeted with a heartfelt welcome and oriented to the site. This will be the location for the admission desk (if a fee is charged). Visitors should be directed to the handicapped accessible, gender neutral restroom.

A free visitor brochure about the location should be offered, along with the event list for the season. Visitors should be told when guided tours are available and where and when a craftsperson will be demonstrating their craft that day. The walls of the Visitor Center might have some basic text and photos about the Pearson House, and visitor brochures from reciprocal sites.

The demonstration hearth is in this location and will permit the site to offer indoor cooking

demonstrations throughout the day on the weekends. A costumed interpreter is ideal for this role. They can prepare meals or other baked goods while explaining Colonial era life at home. This person can be the second wife of Isaac Pearson, who moved into this house when it was completed. The interpreter could also play an older version of Pearson's widow, after the Revolution and the senseless death of her husband. Finally, interpreters portraying the family's cook or other enslaved persons, or servants can use the hearth as a teaching tool. The staff will have to gather good historic evidence for all these stories to be told at the hearth.

8. Recommendations on cross marketing with nearby Colonial era historic sites

In Chapter 2, we provided a list of Revolutionary War era sites in Mercer, Somerset, Burlington, and Montgomery Counties. We were surprised and disappointed that so many of these do not currently have interpretive programs about the Revolutionary War. Perhaps with the focus on the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution coming up, more will develop interpretive programming.

During the three years of construction, the staff will have to identify the most likely partners for cross marketing and network with those sites by inviting their staff to see the progress being made at the Pearson House and the plans for programming once the site is open. These relationships need to be built during these years and when staff turnover occurs, so that the Pearson House and its innovative programming is known by interpreters at other sites who can make recommendations to their visitors for additional interesting places to see. The staff and volunteers at the Pearson House must also know about programming offerings at other sites to make visitor referrals as well.

In the year before the grand opening, these collaborative relationships with other historic sites need to be further developed. Perhaps in advance of the grand opening, staff and interpreters need to be invited to the Pearson House to get a "sneak peek" of the site and programming options to be available upon opening. Maybe a small reception or happy hour, perhaps several times around the opening date, will be needed to get these folks to come and learn about the site so they can become "familiar" and make visitor referrals.

If the nearby or Mercer County sites decide to offer a passport or other collaborative marketing program, the Pearson House should be an active partner. The Crossroads of the American Revolution NHA has only begun to consider collaborative programming, and it might make sense for the staff to become more involved with Crossroads beyond just being a Heritage Partner (member). Board or committee membership might make sense during the construction years to assure that the Crossroads staff understands the large investment being made by Hamilton Township and its plans to make this a highly valuable "Tour While There" site.

9. Recommendations on full time staffing and visitation goal

We have included a preliminary budget below for the Pearson House for the first year it is open to the public, which would likely be 2024 or 2025 depending on the timing for construction completion.

This budget assumes an ongoing relationship between the historical society and Hamilton Township for each to financially support half of the operating budget each year for this site. We are anticipating a \$200,000 annual operating budget.

The Township would also be called up to provide utilities and grounds maintenance/snow removal throughout the year. The historical society would undertake a full-time fundraising operation, hire staff, recruit volunteers, and manage the marketing and interpretation of the Isaac Pearson House as a full time, year-round tourist attraction. The staff would actively collaborate with other historic sites in the area to cross market it to visitors and participate in any joint marketing program developed for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. The Isaac Pearson House will have programming that will make it different and unique among its peers and create reasons for repeat visits for events, exhibit openings, and demonstrations throughout the year.

We are recommending that the site set a goal of 5,000 visitors per year. The first year open and the 250th Anniversary are likely to be much higher, as this is a new historic site and people will be curious to see it. We believe that regular visitation of 5,000 a year is a reasonable goal because of the programming anticipated and described here. Visitation at this level is worth the investment by the Township to create a new historic site for residents and outside visitors.

Preliminary Budget for the Isaac Pearson House, opening year

Revenue

Individual giving by board	\$5,000
Individual giving/membership/annual gifts	\$15,000
Sponsorship	\$10,000
Educational event tickets	\$5,000
School programs	\$2,500
Grants for projects	
GOS/NJHC	\$25,000
Grant for Busses	\$12,000
Mercer County CHC	\$10,000
Rentals to other groups	\$7,000
Fundraising events net	\$25,000
Cash contributions (including Township)	\$100,000
Total Revenue	\$216,500

Staff and contractors

Full time Executive Director	\$60,000
Part time event manager/social media/com no benefits	\$30,000
Payroll taxes 7.65% of total	\$6,885
Benefits for ED Stipend	\$4,000
Interns /contractors	\$3,000
Contractors: educators, reenactors, guides	\$25,000
OPTIONAL Maker Space Honorariums	\$6,000
Bookkeeping/accountant/audit contractor	\$10,000
Restroom cleaning contractor	\$12,000
Total staff	\$156,885

Operations

All utilities paid by Township (Wi-Fi, heat, light, phone, pest management, trash pickup, tent maintenance)	\$0
Grounds maintenance/snowplow/minor repairs/paint	\$0
Interpretation expenses	\$5,000
Attorney	\$5,000
Liability and Offices and Directors insurance	\$6,000
Fundraising expenses	\$5,000
Temporary exhibits	\$10,000
Marketing costs (VisitPrinceton, Crossroads, others)	\$10,000
Volunteer expenses/hospitality	\$2,000
Postage/delivery	\$750
Dues and subscriptions	\$1,000
Staff development/travel	\$1,250
Office supplies	\$750
Computer/drop box/software upgrades	\$1,000
Newsletter expenses	\$500
Printing and copying	\$1,500
Website upgrades, hosting/domain name costs	\$750
Total	\$50,500

Total Expenses	\$207,385
Surplus	\$9,115

Assumptions

- General Operating Support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission
- Grant for busses for school students (no source yet identified)
- Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission grant
- Township providing both annual appropriation in cash and grounds maintenance services

-
- OPTIONAL Fees for Maker Space assuming 3 rooms occupied by 3 Makers with quarterly changeover for a total of 12 people per year, paid for 3 months each year assuming an honorarium of \$500 per quarter; all are 1099 contractors
 - All computers, cameras, printers, scanners, video equipment, and hardware purchased during construction phase funds
 - All office furniture is donated
 - Tables and chairs for tent and for house are purchased with construction phase funds
 - Tent maintenance by Township and
 - Porto-potties for events on grounds paid for by Township for events only.

10. Conclusion

The Isaac Pearson House has so much potential ahead as an important visitor attraction for the residents of Hamilton Township and beyond. The site can tell compelling stories about Isaac Pearson and his role in East Jersey government in the lead up to the American Revolutionary War. The Pearson Plantation, although it is now lost to time, with additional research, can provide the stories for high quality interpretation about slavery in the New Jersey and everyday life in Colonial America. The short-term residencies detailed here for the Maker Spaces for Colonial era craftspeople/artisans in the bedrooms on the second floor, can provide interesting hands-on activities and lifelong learning opportunities for the public throughout the year.

Hamilton Township has already made an investment in the Pearson House by providing matching funds for a 2008 Historic Site Management Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust that has paid for this report, archeology, and mortar analysis. Another matching grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust for the *Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study* supplied baseline research to identify costs for rehabilitation and construction of a Kitchen Wing Visitor Center. Now with these figures, the Township can apply for a Multi-Year Capital matching Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust to undertake the construction work recommended in *The Preservation Plan*.

The years ahead, when more archeology is undertaken, and rehabilitation and construction is complete, allows the Historical Society of Hamilton Township time to grow and expand its organizational capacity. During this period, the historical society must create and grow a fundraising program designed to raise funds to support the new programming during construction period which we are recommending in Chapter 2. Part time paid staff will be needed to begin programming and fundraising during the three-year construction period. Chapter 3 details the work needed in the year before the grand opening and in the first year of operations. All this work positions The Isaac Pearson House to actively take part in the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution festivities to be held throughout New Jersey and bring to life a remarkable Colonial era survivor right here in Hamilton Township.

We wish the historical society and the Township the best of luck in the years ahead as this

important historic site is rehabilitated and begins to tell fascinating stories about its past.

Chapter 4: Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote this Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential for the Isaac Pearson House in Hamilton Township NJ. Helen Gassmann, a consultant with Heritage Consulting Inc., edited the document.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works nationwide in several practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation, heritage tourism, program evaluation, and nonprofit organizational development.

Prior to starting her firm sixteen years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12, and managed a budget of over a million dollars. Before her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three startups and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges.

AltaMira Press published her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* in 2007. A second edition of this book was published by Rowman and Littlefield Publishers/AASLH in November 2020. In the past fifteen years, Ms. Harris has spoken at more than 40 national, regional, and statewide conferences about historic house museums and alternative uses and stewardship responsibilities. Ms. Harris has published articles about reuse of historic house museums in *History News*, the quarterly magazine of the American Association for State and Local History and *Forum Journal*, the quarterly journal of the National for Historic Preservation. Preparing heritage tourism assessments and audience research studies has been a major focus of her practice for the last eight years.

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Appendix A

Current Conditions Memo



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November 29, 2020

To: Dr. James Federici, Dr. Michael Skelly, and James Colello

From: Donna Ann Harris

Subject: Current Conditions for the Isaac Pearson House

This memo is the first deliverable for the Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential Project, funded by the New Jersey Historic Trust as part of a Historic Site Management grant for the Isaac Pearson House in Hamilton Township, Mercer County, NJ. Below, we describe the current conditions of the site as it is to be developed into a visitor attraction and make suggestions about organizational matters, budgeting, bookkeeping and financial statements, and volunteer needs to manage the interpretation of the Pearson House for the public while it undergoes rehabilitation in the coming years. Our final document for this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for the Isaac Pearson House will contain recommendations about interpretive methods for this important Revolutionary War era historic site.

Ownership and Management of the Isaac Pearson House

The Isaac Pearson House, which is located in the park named after the building, was purchased by Hamilton Township with a loan from NJ Green Acres funding in 2000. The Pearson House and land is owned by Hamilton Township. The Pearson House is leased to the Historical Society of Hamilton Township under a 25-year agreement with two 25-year extensions for the purposes of renovating and restoring the Premises and showing or displaying the Premises to the public as a historical landmark or museum. The lease includes easements to the Historical Society on the land and exterior of the House to support the Historical Society in its civic or historic programs or activities such as historic restoration, archaeological study, museum, tours, and educational interpretation of the House and property. The Isaac Pearson House and park land are maintained by managed by Hamilton Township. Hamilton Township is responsible for the cost of heat and electricity, utilities, fire,

and security alarm service, outside maintenance and lawn service. The Historical Society is responsible for its use and interpretation to the public, the interior, restoration, and renovation of the house. This kind of relationship is called a co-stewardship agreement.¹³ It is envisioned that the Isaac Pearson House will have a similar arrangement. The historical society will also guide the rehabilitation of the Isaac Pearson House and manage the initial programming in the coming years.

Planned Rehabilitation and Use of the Isaac Pearson House

The historical society plans to adaptively use the Isaac Pearson House as a heritage tourism welcome center for the historic sites in the region, particularly those that interpret the Revolutionary War. There are several components to the welcome center concept for this property. The property will be rehabilitated on the exterior and interior, and a new two-story addition will be constructed to replace the two-story kitchen wing that was demolished in the 1940s. This new two-story addition will be the welcome center for visitors and have one handicapped restroom, a recreated open hearth for cooking demonstrations, and access to the second floor of the Isaac Pearson House. The dirt floor basement and the high and airy attic cannot be used for visitors because both lack a secondary means of egress for visitors.

The interior and exterior of the Pearson House will be rehabilitated as multi-use, flexible spaces. We understand that there will be no traditional period room displays, historic furniture, or permanent exhibits on the first floor. This floor will be the site of educational programming, orientation, temporary exhibits, and workshop spaces using movable tables and chairs, thus permitting large and small groups to use the space. The second-floor rooms will be similarly rehabilitated. Several of the bedrooms will be used as “maker spaces” for craftspeople who make and interpret making of Colonial era items such as period clothing/costumes, leather goods, tinware, or other items. We expect that reenactors or others that produce or provide heritage tourism products or services would also be likely users. These rooms will be made available for a very low-cost basis through a competitive application process for short-term residencies for individuals and nonprofit or for-profit entrepreneurs. The master bedroom will be used as a temporary, changing exhibition space where objects about the history of the building can be displayed. There will be no offices or restrooms in the historic building.

In general, the house will be interpreted through guided and self-guided tours, brochures, and one or more exterior interpretive signs. The grounds will also be used for interpretive purposes, particularly if a large tent is erected during the visitor season. The tent would be used for outdoor events and activities during the three or four years when the property is undergoing rehabilitation. Regularly serviced port-o-potties for visitors will also be needed during the rehabilitation time period, until the visitor center addition is completed, and the

¹³ Harris, Donna Ann. *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Homes*, Second Edition. (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2020, 90. See samples of co-stewardship agreements in chapters on Deadwood History Inc., and the Emmett Till Interpretive Center.

property opened to visitors.

The Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study undertaken in 2020 by Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants goes into considerable additional detail about the current condition of the historic fabric throughout the exterior and interior of the building. Please see that document for further detail.¹⁴

The Preservation Plan estimates that the rehabilitation plan and construction of the new Kitchen Wing addition combined will cost close to \$2.5 million dollars to execute. Local advocates are discussing how to position requests to funders for grants for rehabilitation, and one or more applications will be made in 2021 and 2022 if the township will supply the large sums need for matching funds for this project.

Current Organizational Capacity of the Historical Society of Hamilton Township

The Historical Society of Hamilton Township is a longstanding nonprofit charitable 501(c) (3) historical society founded in 1942 in Mercer County, NJ. The Historical Society was founded to save and open the John Abbott II House in Veterans Park in Hamilton Township for visitors. Hamilton Township owns and maintains the John Abbott II House, which is the Historical Society's headquarters. The Historical Society of Hamilton Township uses and manages the John Abbott II House for display of period rooms on the first floor.

The John Abbott II House is furnished with period furniture. One wing is interpreted as a Colonial era kitchen. The remaining portion of the first floor is an entry hall and a Victorian parlor. Bedrooms upstairs are also interpreted in the Victorian era. This building is open to the public from April through December on both Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 4:30PM. Visitors receive a guided tour. Admission is free.

Expanding Operations for the Pearson House

The three to four-year period when the Isaac Pearson House will be undergoing rehabilitation presents an excellent opportunity to begin educational programming at the site. Our final report will provide recommendations for educational programming during this period. The rehabilitation period at the Pearson House may be longer or shorter depending on how and when grant funding is secured and the phasing of the rehabilitation and new construction of the Visitor Center on the site of the former kitchen wing. It is during the rehabilitation period when the historical society must take actions to expand its overall operations so that it is ready to manage the Pearson House construction project as well as host educational programming. Organizational growth takes time, money, and leadership. We provide the following recommendations for immediate consideration.

¹⁴ Westfield Architects and Preservation Consultants. "Draft Preservation Plan and Feasibility Study for the Isaac Pearson House." October 2020.

Starting Right

We learned in our interview that the historical society is just starting to professionalize their operations. To assure that all board members understand the legal and ethical issues facing museum trustees, we recommend they read and discuss a basic book published in 1998 by the American Association for State and Local History by Gerald George and Cindy Sherrell Leo, called *Starting Right: Basic Guide to Museum Planning*. The publisher says that “*Starting Right* defines what a museum is, both philosophically and historically, discusses the pros and cons of establishing your museum, outlines where to get help, and proffers advice on all aspects of museums from the choice of a building through collections care, registration, exhibitions, conservation, staffing, financial management and fund raising.” It is available for purchase from Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Starting-Right-Planning-American-Association/dp/0761991484> . It might be worthwhile to hold a board discussion about the book, which is less than 160 pages, to understand all the components of a well-run, small museum, and to identify tasks the historical society needs to tackle during the Pearson House rehabilitation period so that it is ready to manage the restored building and welcome visitors when it is finally open.

AAM Core Documents

During our visit on November 6, 2020, I also introduced the five core documents that the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) recommends all museums create for “professional museum operations and to embody core museum values and practices.”¹⁵ The five core documents they recommend are:

1. Mission statement (the historical society already has this document)
2. Institutional Code of Ethics
3. Strategic or Long-Range Plan
4. Collections Management Plan
5. Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan

See more information about these core documents at <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-documents/>.

The AAM web page has additional information about each of the five core documents, explanations as to why they are needed, and sample documents to emulate. The historical society has just decided to join AAM as a Tier 3 member. We encourage you to dig further into AAM’s research library to find sample documents from historic sites similar in size to help you understand these documents, especially what it means to steward a collection and create a

¹⁵ <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-documents/>

Collections Management Plan. These documents do not need to be created overnight. In fact, most volunteer run historical societies take years to create them. However, the historical society should be knowledgeable about them, and begin to recruit specific types of volunteers that might want to help create them. We supply further information on volunteer recruitment and job descriptions for projects later in this document.

Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (STEPS)

During our meeting, we also discussed the other national organizations that provides guidance, publications, webinars, and technical assistance for history organizations: the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). The AASLH also recommends that history museums create the five core documents noted above. We recommend that the historical society also join the AASLH as an institutional member. Read more about membership at <https://ashore/membership/institutional-membership/>. An institutional membership is \$98 a year.

To assist small and medium sized history organizations, AASLH has created a self-study program called StEPS-- Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations. The AASLH website says that "StEPS is AASLH's self-study, self-paced assessment program designed specifically for small- to mid-sized history organizations, including volunteer-run institutions. Through a workbook, online resources, and an online community, the 1,000+ organizations enrolled in StEPS review their policies and practices and benchmark themselves against national museum standards. As your history organization makes progress in the program, you will earn certificates from AASLH that communicate those achievements to your community and stakeholders."¹⁶

"StEPS is a self-study program open to any museum, historical society, historic house, site, or related organization. It is an entry-level program intended for small- and mid-sized organizations that might not feel ready for other assessment programs. Larger museums will find the program useful as a refresher checklist and training tool for entry level staff, volunteers, and interns. Unlike other assessment programs, StEPS does not have an application period, nor does it have eligibility requirements."¹⁷ The program helps you work through the creation of these five core documents and other policies that small history organizations need.

Right now, AASLH is updating their StEPS workbook. An updated version of the StEPS workbook will be released in October 2020. Enrollment is a one-time fee of \$195, and you must be an institutional member of AASLH when enrolling. At our meeting, I showed you the old version of the workbook. This is a comprehensive assessment of the historical society based on three tiers: Basic, Good, and Better. We highly recommend this program for the Historical Society of Hamilton Township because it

¹⁶ <https://ashore/programs/steps/>

¹⁷ Ibid.

is comprehensive and offers support groups from similar types of historical societies through their AASLH StEPS Groups.

Other Organizational Issues

Board of Directors, Officers and Bylaws

We understand from our conversation with the President of the Society, Dr. James Federici, that the historical society has about 80 paid members and six board members. Officers include a president, treasurer, and secretary. The historical society usually hosts at least six events at the Abbott House during the year. Since the start of the pandemic, the Board of Trustees has not met as Dr. Federici explained that few board members have computers for Zoom meetings. The historical society itself does not own a computer.

Dr. Federici shared the bylaws, which have only had a few amendments since they were created when the historical society was incorporated. The board should meet soon to have its annual meeting, pay bills, review grants, and hear about progress to date. In an emergency, the board can meet by conference telephone or a Zoom call. The current bylaws do not permit meetings by conference telephone, but you can offer an amendment to permit this if you follow the bylaw amendment procedures.

Annual Operating Budget

We reviewed the annual operating budget for 2020. Revenue is about \$8,000 and expenses are a bit less. We understand that the historical society produces no financial statements for its monthly meetings. The treasurer reports how much is in the historical society's checkbook and identifies bills paid in the last month.

During our interview on November 6, 2020, Dr. Federici noted that the historical society had received two New Jersey Historic Trust Grants that are in process, two New Jersey Historical Commission grants currently underway, a New Jersey Committee for the Humanities grant that will begin soon, and a Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission grant in the last year. The Historical Society also previously received grants from: 1772 Foundation, Investors Bank, and Roma Foundation.

We noticed that the current budget we reviewed does not include any of the various grant funds received from these state and local government agencies, the matching funds provided by the township, or other gifts or sponsorships that the historical society has obtained from local companies to support their work. All of these grants should be acknowledged as restricted gifts to the historical society and be included on its budget and in its financial statements.

Acknowledging all the grant funds that flow through the historical society's books will also force the historical society to begin to file long form IRS 990 tax returns. Currently the historical society files the IRS post card form for nonprofit corporations with under \$10,000 in revenues. The long IRS 990 form is far more complex and should be completed by a competent bookkeeper or accountant. Non-profit organizations with multiple projects and sources of funds should follow the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Standards for non-profit accounting. This means that the historical society will also have to find a new treasurer who is able to provide this service for free, or the historical society must raise funds for a paid bookkeeper/accountant to manage the finances of the organization.

Monthly Financial Statements

We are recommending that new financial systems, specifically accounting, for the historical society are needed immediately. A hired bookkeeper/accountant or skilled volunteer treasurer can prepare quality monthly financial statements and tax returns. We hope that the new treasurer or bookkeeper will use Quicken or other online accounting software to create accounts and generate monthly reports for the historical society.

The historical society must have adequate accounting of all grant funded projects flowing through its books. Most of these grants are restricted, meaning they can only be used for the specific purpose of the grant project. Most of these grants are also matched with township funds, so it is essential that the township and your funders have confidence that this public money is being well used and properly accounted for. We not implying in any way that there is any kind of malfeasance or abuse of these funds. Rather, we are recommending that the historical society step up and provide adequate financial accounting and accurate monthly financial statements for all of the restricted funds it has received. Accurate and regularly available financial statements will inspire more confidence in the historical society by members and outside funders and will showcase that the historical society is capable of even larger and more complex construction and interpretation grant funded projects at the Pearson House in the years ahead. We understand that hiring a bookkeeper is an expense, but the historical society must undertake the formal accounting required of all organizations managing grant funds.

Annual Township Contributions

The township supplies an annual grant of about \$6,000 to the historical society so that it can pay guides to be available at the John Abbott II House to provide tours each Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4:30pm from April through December. Guides are paid a minimum wage and must fill out an application for township employment. Currently, there are 11 paid tour guides. They also undertake other tasks, including maintaining the herb garden, dusting,

vacuuming, and removing weeds during their turn at the house when there are no visitors. Other unpaid volunteers provide tours for school children when booked in advance.

The historical society is extraordinarily fortunate to have had this township financial support for literally decades, which pays for tour guides so that the house can be open regular, predictable days and hours for visitors during three seasons a year. Regular posted visiting hours is a critical component for any historic site wishing to attract visitors. Sites open “by appointment only” are not available for casual visitors, those that happen upon the site by chance. The John Abbott II House is available for anyone visiting on weekends that is interested in local history, and admission is free.

Object Inventory at the Abbott House

We learned that the historical society does not have a complete inventory of its collection at the Abbott House, nor has it accessioned any object. We understand that an inventory is underway now to create index cards about each object in each room. This is a first-time effort for the historical society, and a beginning towards having all the objects in the house and owned by it documented. It is also a move towards creating a Collections Management Policy. An inventory of all the books housed in the John Abbott II House has also recently been completed. Dr. Federici showed me a blank form Deed of Gift which would be used by the society should they agree to accept an object in their collection.

Formal Process of Accessioning Objects

Accessioning is the formal, legal process of accepting an object into a museum collection. In the process, each object is given a unique number. Because accessioning an object carries an obligation to care for that object in perpetuity, it is a serious decision. After an object is accessioned, it must be cared for, stored, and managed forever. Objects that no longer meet the objectives of the collections policy may be sold or given to another museum through a formal process called deaccessioning. This process is often fraught with concerns about being done correctly and managing any funds from such a sale properly. The StEPS program has an entire chapter about collections, accessioning, and deaccessioning, as does the book *Starting Right*. We recommend that board members study these books and identify the tasks ahead to complete the inventory, accession each object, and create a Collections Management Plan for the Abbott House.

Volunteer Recruitment and Job Descriptions

The historical society is fortunate to have a small band of board members and paid tour guides to manage its operations and provide tours to Abbott House visitors. However, the society will need many more volunteers to undertake Pearson House projects. Dr. Skelly has been highly

involved in grant writing and the Preservation Plan for the Pearson House, and he needs more helpers.

We like to think of two types of volunteers: volunteers with specific skills (photographer, newsletter editor, grant writer, graphic designer, social media/marketing, volunteer recruiter, etc.) and general volunteers willing to be on a contact list for an occasional, two-hour assignment for a project. Both types of volunteers need job descriptions. However, skilled volunteers seem to be the critical need right now.

Volunteers should be asked to take on short, discrete tasks that are described in a brief volunteer job description. We are attaching a sample volunteer job description for a newsletter editor (an upcoming need to be discussed in the final report), as well as a checklist of items to include in any job description.

We suggest placing one or two of these volunteer job descriptions in your new e-newsletter, on the new website, and on other social media outlets when they are activated. It would be ideal if a volunteer coordinator could be identified to be the contact person should a volunteer come forward, to match them to a project and get them started on the work as soon as possible. We will offer more suggestions about volunteer jobs and volunteer recruitment in the final report.

Conclusion

This memo discusses the current conditions of the development of Isaac Pearson House as a heritage attraction. We will update this memo based on comments from you. We will create our final report for the project, based on the outline already submitted and approved.