



# Heritage Consulting Inc.

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July 16, 2021

To: James Kirkland, New Jersey Council on the Humanities

From: Donna Ann Harris and Dr. Michael Skelly

Subject: Final Report on "Isaac Pearson Mansion House and Park, Experimenting with Programming for Diverse Audiences during Restoration" Incubation Grant

We are attaching the final report for the New Jersey Council on the Humanities \$5,000 grant awarded to the Isaac Pearson House in 2019 for the project "Isaac Pearson Mansion House and Park, Experimenting with Programming for Diverse Audiences during Restoration" Incubation Grant. The grantee was the Historical Society of Hamilton Township.

This project had four component parts:

1. Prepare an Annotated Bibliography
2. Prepare for and Host Two Focus Groups
3. Prepare for and Host Four Educational Programs
4. Prepare and Implement a Survey of Program Participants and write a Final Report.

We began work on this grant in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in October 2020, with the hope that the pandemic would not linger after the New Year. We planned our work over nine months according to a spreadsheet (attached) which was optimistic at the time, given the uncertainty of the COVID-related social distancing measures enacted by Gov. Murphy.

The following is a brief overview of the four grant components.

1. **Prepare an Annotated Bibliography.** The first deliverable was an Annotated Bibliography of academic literature published in the last five years, to explore how museums and historic sites engage in interpretation of diverse history at historic sites. We chose this topic because the owners of the house, the Pearson family, owned slaves in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We believed that slavery would be an important interpretive theme for the historic mansion house in the future. The documentary literature from Isaac

Pearson's will notes the names of the enslaved people at the Pearson House, but much more research is needed to fully bring these individuals to life for visitors.

Ms. Harris and her intern were looking for examples of "how" other historic sites have interpreted slavery. The articles, books, and dissertations included in this annotated bibliography provide best practices, exemplary programs, and examples of historic sites engaging with the history of diverse and marginalized groups. The examples provided in the bibliography are wide reaching, from smaller interventions to strengthen guided tours to in-depth conversation series that bring the past into the present. The final bibliography dated February 3, 2021 (attached) includes annotations for three books that are especially helpful about the interpretation of slavery and notes how these books could be useful to the Pearson House in the future.

- 2. Prepare for and Host Two Focus Groups.** Planning for this component of the grant was undertaken in January and February of 2021 when social distancing mandates were still in place. We planned for two focus groups to be held through the Zoom video platform using their webinar feature, which provided transcriptions of the webinar. Dr. Michael Skelly searched for millennials and African American parents to attend the focus groups. He found it difficult to identify potential stakeholders because organizations with which he had ongoing relationships, such as African American churches, had been closed for months at this point and were unlikely to reopen soon. Organizations geared to millennials, such as sports leagues and community organizations, were also closed. Dr. Skelly made a good faith effort to encourage attendance in these two focus groups.

We used Event Brite for the webinar registration and used the Event Brite integration with Zoom to present the focus group webinars. This was the first time the consultant used Event Brite and Zoom together, and she made some errors in posting the first invitation for the focus group. Only one person signed up, so the event was cancelled. Another evening date, February 17, 2021, was chosen. Nine people signed up, again using Event Brite. We used Zoom for the video webinar. Again, the consultant was not experienced using the Zoom webinar features and as a result some, but not all, of the attendees could view the program. All attendees were able to hear it. Again, due to inexperience, we were unable to use the transcription feature for Zoom webinars. As a back-up measure, Ms. Harris had an intern take minutes during the focus group, which are complete and attached to this final report.

- 3. Prepare for and Host Four Educational Programs.** Volunteers associated with the Pearson House met on March 9, 2021, to review the focus group minutes and pick four possible educational programs that could be presented in April before the end of the grant period. Again, Dr. Skelly found identifying four speakers for these educational programs to be difficult during the pandemic. Dr. Skelly was able to identify two high quality speakers. Regina Fitzpatrick, the Genealogy Librarian at the State of NJ Library, made a presentation on June 21, 2021, entitled "Researching Your Pre-May 1848 New Jersey Ancestors." Sean McHugh, Senior Archaeologist at Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., a cultural resource consulting firm, spoke about the Phase One Archeological Study for the Pearson House undertaken in 2019. His presentation on June 24, 2021, was entitled "Recent Archeological Finds from the Isaac Pearson Mansion House, Hamilton Township NJ (c 1773)."

Due to social distancing requirements, we decided to host these educational programs on Zoom and used Event Brite for registration with a "pay what you wish" donation. We got good advice from

another nonprofit organization about how to use these two platforms for their respective strengths—separately-- and to seek donations from attendees. Both programs went off without a hitch, and we received close to \$200 in donations. We had ten attendees on June 21 and 11 attendees on June 24 and were very pleased with both presenters. Attached are all of the promotional materials (flyers, press releases) we produced for these two events, and where these materials were posted to gather an audience.

4. **Prepare and Implement a Survey of Program Participants and Final Report.** Immediately after the presentations, we asked participants to fill out a ten-question online survey hosted through Survey Monkey. We asked participants three times to fill out the survey within two days of the presentations and received over a 50% response rate for both presentations which we thought was good. Attendees at both events were complimentary of each presenter, and they noted that the time of day and length of the program were just right for their interests. We asked several demographic questions and found out that the majority of the audience for each program was white, over 65, had no children living at home, and lived in Hamilton Township or neighboring areas.

There is a more extensive summary of the survey results in the attached report about the educational programs. We also detail the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the grant program, and how the pandemic influenced or limited our options to present these programs. The report also identifies mistakes we made based on our inexperience working with some of the technological platforms we chose to use.

Finally, this report provides conclusions for the grant and its usefulness for the Isaac Pearson House as it begins programming for this Revolutionary War-era historic site. We are highly grateful that the NJ Council on the Humanities chose to invest in this historic property so early in its development as an historic site. The Isaac Pearson House volunteers are literally and figurately starting from scratch in their effort to have the site become a Revolutionary War-era visitor attraction with interesting programming for visitors. This grant made it possible for the organization to offer educational programming to the public in its own name for the first time. Despite the fact that the building today is unrestored and is currently not able to accommodate visitors inside, we can use quality programming to build excitement about the building and its future. These incubator programs showed that the public will participate in programs conducted by the Isaac Pearson House during the restoration work. Again, we are grateful to the New Jersey Council on the Humanities for their investment in the Isaac Pearson House with this grant.

1 version	2 version	3 Version	Task	Notes
Monday	Monday	Monday		
8/3/2020	10/5/2020	10/5/2020	Historical Society signs contract with Council on Humanities	DAH is Donna Ann Harris, MS is Michael Skelly
8/10/2020	10/5/2020	10/5/2020	Heritage Consulting Inc. signs contract with Historical Society, intern starts work on Annotated bibliography	2 weeks to prepare bibliography, 1 week to review, 1 week copy edit
8/17/2020	10/12/2020	10/12/2020	Intern continues work, checks with DAH on progress on Annotated bibliography	Intern from Heritage Consulting Inc.
8/24/2020	10/19/2020	10/19/2020	Intern completes work, DAH to review work to date. Historical Society Joins AAM, Gives sign in info to DAH , so she can add to biblio	Editing, finalize
8/31/2020	10/26/2020	10/26/2020	Intern finishes Biblio, DAH adds to Biblio from AAM sample docs, send final Biblio to copy editor	Final
9/7/2020	11/2/2020	11/2/2020	Bibliography completed, sent to MS, Discuss possible programming for focus group opinions, with MS, with Team?	Goal is to gather up to 24 names/emails per Focus group for invites
	11/12/2020	11/9/2020	Vacation period including Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years; MS to contact other historic sites in area over holidays about names/emails for AA and Millennials for Focus groups and program invitations	
9/14/2020	1/11/2021	1/4/2021	MS continue solicitation for up to 24 African American parents; up to 24 Millennials for Focus Groups, MS to post to FB groups for Millennials, get names, email addresses	
9/21/2020	1/18/2021	1/11/2021	MS to continue solicitation: AA other historic sites, get names, email addresses, DAH writes first draft of script; MS to do final FB posts for Millennials, get names, email addresses to MS, Give minimum of 48 potential attendees/email addresses to DAH	
9/28/2020	1/25/2021	1/18/2021	DAH confirm attendance for all, finish, final review of scrip with MS; DAH and MS host both African American Focus Group, Millennial Focus group Zoom Meetings this week, interns take notes, interns begin sorting notes, show drafts to Donna	Ideal participation is 8-12 people on each call
10/5/2020	2/1/2021	1/25/2021	Interns work on draft of report	
10/12/2020	2/8/2021	2/1/2021	Interns finish draft, DAH review draft report, make revisions, send to copy editor; MS begin to gather names for Program invites	Interns from Heritage Consulting in on the Zoom call for notes
10/19/2020	2/15/2021	2/8/2021	DAH finishes focus group report, send to MS, make presentation to other consultants, discuss possible programming ideas with team	3 weeks to write report week review, 1 week copy editor
10/26/2020	2/22/2021	2/15/2021	DAH to gather ideas and samples of similar programming mentioned in Focus Groups; MS to begin to gather names for programming invitations	
11/2/2020	3/1/2021	2/22/2021	DAH to gather ideas and samples of similar programming, DAH and MS meet to begin to plan for programming, identify programs	
11/9/2020	3/8/2021	3/1/2021	DAH and MS more planning the prototypes for programming, set dates for April/May; MS to identify locations for each	Final FG report, presentation
11/16/2020	3/15/2021	3/8/2021	MS to gather names and emails to invite for programs, DAH start work plans for each program, share with MS as completed	
11/30/2020	3/22/2021	3/15/2021	MS to gather more names and emails to invite for programs, DAH finish work plans for each program, share with MS as completed	
	3/29/2021	3/22/2021	Holy week, MS continue to gather more names emails for invites, DAH begins work on survey draft, MS sends DAH all possible names for invites	
12/7/2020	4/5/2021	3/29/2021	More development of program content, DAH revises work plans for programs	
12/14/2020	4/12/2021	4/5/2021	DAH emails invites to first two programs	Four programs to be developed, 2 for each audience based on FG responses
1/4/2021	4/19/2021	4/12/2021	DAH to send confirming emails for first and second program, DAH finishes survey draft	
1/11/2021	4/26/2021	4/19/2021	DAH and MS host first and second program this week, DAH hands out/collects surveys, DAH emails invites to final two programs	
1/28/2021	5/3/2021	4/26/2021	DAH emails survey to participants, sends out confirming emails for third and fourth programs	
1/25/2021	5/10/2021	5/3/2021	DAH and MS host third and fourth programs, DAH hands out/collects survey	
2/1/2021	5/17/2021	5/10/2021	DAH emails survey to participants at 3 and 4 programs.	
2/8/2021	5/24/2021	5/17/2021	DAH gathers all survey responses, sorts, outlines report contents	
2/15/2021	6/7/2021	5/24/2021	Memorial Day, DAH to begin writing survey report	
2/22/2021	6/14/2021	5/31/2021	DAH work on report, revise, send to copy editor	
3/1/2021	6/21/2021	6/7/2021	DAH completes survey report, Review with MS and team	
3/8/2021	6/28/2021	6/14/2021	MS sends completed reports to NJHC, and sends financial reports	
	7/5/2021	6/21/2021		
3/15/2021	7/12/2021	7/5/2021		
3/22/2021	7/19/2021	7/12/2021		
4/5/2021	7/26/2021	7/19/2021		3 weeks to write report, 1 week review, 1 week to copy editor
4/12/2021	8/2/2021	7/26/2021		
4/19/2021	8/9/2021	8/2/2021		
4/28/2021	8/16/2021	8/9/2021		FINAL compilation of all reports to date
5/4/2021	9/1/2021	8/16/2021		



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February 3, 2021

To: Dr. Skelly, Dr. Federici and Jim Colello

From: Donna Ann Harris and Chelsea Beroza

Subject: Final Literature Review of Diverse History Programming for Historic Sites

We conducted a survey of academic literature published over the past five years which reveals a depth of material exploring how historic sites and museums engage in interpretation of diverse history at historic sites. Many articles we reviewed, focus on theories and frameworks for incorporating inclusive practices into every facet of managing a historic site, from hiring diverse staff to determining an exhibition's content. These articles, while interesting did not focus on stories on how historic sites are interpreting slavery and other diverse histories, so they do not appear in this bibliography. This version of the bibliography includes annotations for three books about the interpretation of slavery and how these books could be useful to the Pearson House in the future.

Current events, including the Black Lives Matter movement, have contributed to a rise in museum programs engaged with social justice themes. Current events have also forced historic sites and museums to revisit how difficult histories such as slavery are discussed at their individual institutions. Due to the significant lag time for publishing peer-reviewed articles, our annotated bibliography does not include many articles published since the pandemic, during which demands for racial justice have grown louder in the museum community. We are hopeful that there will be articles showcasing new interpretive methods in the next few years.

The articles, books and dissertations included in this annotated bibliography provide insight into best practices, exemplary programs, and interpretation for engaging with the history of diverse and marginalized groups. The examples we provide here are wide reaching, from smaller interventions to strengthen guided tours to in-depth conversation series that bring the past into the present. The educational programs can be organized under several themes that represent current trends in current practices of interpretation at historic sites:

**Conveying a more multidimensional and individualized history of enslaved persons**

Historic sites and museums are revising their program content to flesh out the individual experiences of enslaved persons. Interventions include naming enslaved individuals whenever possible, conveying the painstaking labor they undertook, and complicating dominant narratives. These changes typically manifest in exhibition wall text, guided tours, and website content.

### **Celebrating the full scope of the African American experience**

At historic sites managed by African Americans, they engage with topics of slavery, but tend to do so as part of a broader discussion. The goal is to instill a sense of pride back in the community through events such as the Emancipation Day Celebration and by being a resource for residents seeking refuge.

### **Inspiring visitors to act**

Several historic sites (especially Lincoln's Cottage in Washington DC) and museums have introduced methods for inspiring action after audiences visit. This includes postcards sent to attendees providing additional information on what they can do to raise awareness of contemporary issues.



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**Annotated Bibliography: Diverse History Programming for Historic Sites**

*Prepared for The Isaac Pearson House*

*February 3, 2021*

Amakawa, Jonathan, and Jonathan Westin. "New Philadelphia: Using Augmented Reality to Interpret Slavery and Reconstruction Era Historical Sites." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 24, no. 3 (March 16, 2018): 315–31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1378909>.

The possibilities of virtual reality programming are explored through the lens of the New Philadelphia (in Pike County Illinois) National Historic Landmark's attempts to incorporate this new technology into their public offerings. VR experiences allow for digital reconstruction of site elements no longer extant, thus providing an opportunity to recreate histories of marginalized groups whose heritage is not well documented. This technique might have relevance to interpret the Pearson Plantation buildings since none now exist.

Chew, Elizabeth V. "Institutional Evolution: How Monticello Faced and Interpreted A Legacy of Slavery." *Museums*, September/October 2013. [Institutional Evolution: How Monticello faced and interpreted a legacy of slavery – American Alliance of Museums \(aam-us.org\)](#)

"Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty," a collaboration between the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, D.C. The show opened in 2012, The research that culminated in this exhibition began in the 1950s but required the leadership and courage of Monticello staff members in the early 1990s to bring it to public attention. The exhibit at The Museum of American History on the Mall in DC had over a million visitors and is touring the US. Much of the exhibition, however, focuses on six enslaved families who lived and labored at Monticello from the early 1770s to the late 1820s and their descendants. Research begun in the 1950s by Monticello historians, along with archeology, and oral histories provided in depth documentation. (See [monticello.org/mulberry-row](http://monticello.org/mulberry-row).) It was not until 1986 that slavery became part of the "overall public narrative" at Monticello, especially in advance of the 250 anniversaries of Jefferson's death in 1993.



Clair, Marianna, Kris Morrissey, Seth Margolis, and Shirley Yee. "The Social Justice and Societal Impact of Public Programs in House Museums," 2016.  
<https://digital.lib.washington.edu:443/researchworks/handle/1773/36383>.

Among several examples of programs described that have a societal impact, the Tenement Museum hosts "Tenement Talks," a "free series of lectures by historians, storytellers – focusing on larger issues of immigration, New York history and culture." In addition to tours of the tenement buildings, the museum offers walking tours that provide a more holistic view at immigrant life and highlights how the neighborhood has evolved.

Another case study of the Hermann-Grima House in New Orleans, which was built by a Free Black man, has an extensive school program, but there is little information given about how their program discusses slavery with children that participate in their educational programs for adults.

Gallas, Kristin L., and James DeWolf Perry, eds. *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield/AASLH, 2015.

This book of eight chapters bills itself as a "how-to manual" for historic sites wishing to expand or embark on teaching about slavery. Chapters at the front of the book focus on the need for enthusiastic institutional support to change any current interpretive narrative to add slavery in interpretation. One chapter offers six components of a comprehensive and conscientious interpretation of slavery, another chapter talks about narrative storytelling and provides guidance on teaching interpreters about how to talk about slavery.

Throughout the book there are brief discussions about historic sites that have integrated slavery into their interpretive narrative, which we highlight in this annotated bibliography.

In the chapter "So Deeply Dyed into Our Fabric That It Cannot Be Washed Out: Developing Institutional Support for the Interpretation of Slavery," the author discusses the following sites:

- Gunston Hall, the home and vast plantation of statesman George Mason, in Mason Neck, VA, began a process to introduce interpretation of the enslaved with some first-person interpretation, a weekend dedicated to Black history themes and some generic signage. Gunston Hall made further efforts to interpret slavery when it changed its mission statement during a strategic planning process.
- Monticello began its efforts to teach about slavery when it changed its mission statement to acknowledge that it was an academic institution rather than just a tourist attraction, in 2009. In 2012 it began a series of facilitated conversations with its guides, held at the Levine Museum of the New South, on race and identity. This training gave guides more confidence and comfort to discuss slavery at Monticello. Guides get three hours of training about slavery at the site. Those that give the specific tour "Slavery in Monticello" get 16 more



hours of training about the slave trade and its economic basis. Traveling exhibit “Slavery at Monticello: Paradox of Liberty,” helped focus an expanded tour narrative.

- At Mt. Vernon, a gradual process began to introduce slavery into the main tour narrative. The author references the 2013 study (see in van Balgooy’s book) about the grateful slave/happy master first person narration there and discusses recent conversations with Mt. Vernon’s board about a more inclusive interpretation. Much more archival and archaeological research created a database of enslaved people on the plantation but fundraising for that research was not robust compared to other fundraising efforts to restore or purchase objects, for example.
- Phillipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow, NY, began its efforts to integrate slavery into its narrative in about 1995, with the creation of an African American Advisory Board to help with the reinterpretation project. Historic Hudson Valley (owner) believes the committee was an essential tool, as interpreters and staff were primarily white. This case includes an interesting commentary about the need to prepare for media reactions to change in narrative, including slavery, as it can put trustees on the defensive.

Another chapter, “Institutional Change at Northern Historic Sites: Telling Slavery’s Story in the Land of Abolition,” focuses on case studies of six historic sites/museums and lessons learned in their efforts to start interpretation of slavery at each of these sites.

- Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, CT—From 1933 until the 1970s, an articulated skeleton was exhibited at the Mattatuck Museum. In fact, the skeleton was an 18<sup>th</sup> century articulated skeleton of Fortune, who died in 1798, enslaved by Dr. Preserved Porter. Family members passed the bones down over four generations, when they were donated in 1933. When the remains were finally removed from display in the 1970s, the museum began a collaborative research effort, the African American History Project Committee; made up of scholars, anthropologists, and others; to research the history of Fortune. The museum presented its historic research as papers, built an exhibit, created teacher programs, and eventually decided that they would bury Fortune after lying in state in the rotunda of the Connecticut State Capital in 2013 before a proper burial.
- Linden Place, Bristol, RI—This handsome Greek Revival property was built in 1810 with one year’s worth of profits in illegal slave trading of General George DeWolf. The family members were prolific and illegal slave traders from 1769 until 1820, when they brought more than 12,000 Africans to the US and Caribbean as part of their importation of rum, sugar, textiles, and slaves. The property remained in the DeWolf family for eight generations until it was purchased by the state for a house museum in 1990. The site was used for traditional house museum activities and as a wedding venue until 2001, when a descendent began exploring her slave trading family. A 2008 PBS documentary was made about the family, but there was little interest in changing the primary decorative arts narrative of the site. However, by 2012 the organization offered a walking tour of Bristol’s

connection to the slave trade, talking about the community's complicity in the slave trade. The tour, only offered six to eight times a year (which always sold out), was funded by the RI Council on the Humanities. The DeWolf family as slave traders has had little impact on the interpretation of the house itself, but the walking tour and occasional lectures do discuss the topic.

- Royall Mansion and Slave Quarters in Medford, MA, has been a house museum since the local Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapter opened it in 1898. They purchased the house in 1908 for restoration. The Royall family were wealthy merchants enriched by the slave trade when the house was built in 1732. The family left the site prior to the Revolution, as they were Loyalists. The site had a remaining slave cabin, the only one extant in the Northeast. The organization's effort to add slavery to its narrative began in the 1980s with a large archaeological effort that turned up more than 5000 pre-Revolutionary artifacts. As older donors passed on, further work began in 2000 to change the narrative and identify an interpretive story that would be interesting for a particular niche of visitors. The museum removed furniture that was extraneous to its new narrative, and placed objects so visitors could see the presence of enslaved people in the house itself. In slave quarters, there were further exhibits. Teacher and guide training for the new interpretation was funded by NEH. The house tour still focuses on traditional themes of objects and wealth, but slave families are mentioned.
- Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Hartford, CT, has seen its visitation decline since the 1990s and changed its focus to social justice and positive change. In 2008 it began "Salons at Stowe" to discuss and commentate on social justice issues, such as human trafficking, race, and gender, and raised funds to pay for an annual Stowe Prize award on writing to advance social justice.
- At Cliveden in Philadelphia, PA, the author notes that connections to slavery remained buried until investigation of family papers showed direct evidence of the Chew family wealth from the farming labor of slaves. Staff began new interpretation in 2012 with an exhibit, website, and programs to tell the whole story of the Chew family through "Cliveden Conversations" with primarily Black neighbors. The house tour has seen some changes, and the staff has worked with other groups to present dramatic performances based on information contained in the family papers, such as the award-winning "Liberty Go to See."

The remaining chapters in this book focus on the need for community involvement, visitor research, perceptions of race and identity in both visitors and interpreters, and training of interpreters so they feel competent and confident of their ability to host visitors on tours.

Garcia, Maria. "At the Worcester Art Museum: New Signs Tell Visitors Which Early American Subjects Benefitted from Slavery" August 8, 2018. [At the Worcester Art Museum, New Signs Tell Visitors Which Early American Subjects Benefitted from Slavery](https://www.aam-us.org/2018/08/08/at-the-worcester-art-museum-new-signs-tell-visitors-which-early-american-subjects-benefitted-from-slavery/) [American Alliance of Museums \(aam-us.org\)](https://www.aam-us.org/)

Article discusses how the Worcester Art Museum in Worcester Massachusetts added additional language in exhibit labels describing how slavery impacted fortunes of people in exhibited paintings. New labels were installed without fanfare.

Getz, John, Christina Hartlieb, and Abigail Zhang. "Visiting *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: University-Style Discussions in a Historic House Museum." *Journal of Museum Education* 45, no. 3 (July 2, 2020): 263–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2020.1762154>.

This article describes the program developed by the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati Ohio in collaboration with a former university professor. The semester long series transformed the site into salon-like setting to discuss the historical context and contemporary relevance of the classic novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The hour-long lectures and seminar discussion were designed to reflect on the contemporary relevance of the book, cultivate repeat visitorship, and attract new members. An annual focus on teaching about a key book, or series of books related to the interpretive themes of the Pearson House might be worth considering.

Grim, Linnea, K. Allison Wickens, Jackie Jecha, Linda Powell, Callie Hawkins, and Candra Flanagan. "Taking the Next Step: Confronting the Legacies of Slavery at Historic Sites." *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 54–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2016.1275468>.

New programming at Monticello, Mount Vernon, and Lincoln's Cottage attempts to take a more nuanced approach to interpreting slavery:

- At Monticello, programs explicitly draw connections between slavery and contemporary dialogues, including the 2016 summit "Memory, Mourning, Mobilization: Legacies of Slavery and Freedom in America;" an oral history project elevating the voices of descendants from the enslaved community; special tours focused on the role of race on the plantation; revisions to the general house tour; and a brochure for children on the topic of slavery.
- At Mount Vernon, "Washington the slaveholder" is one of the primary stories told through its programming. There is a tour dedicated to the enslaved people of Mount Vernon; a daily wreath-laying ceremony at the Slave Memorial and Cemetery; additional first-person interpretations of enslaved individuals; a self-guided tour focused on slavery; and an exhibition entitled *Lives Bound Together: Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon*. In addition, Mount Vernon provides educational resources for teachers online and through a five-day residency program entitled *Slavery in George Washington's World*, which prepares teachers to facilitate conversations on race.
- At Lincoln's Cottage, programming engages with milestones in Lincoln's presidency to catalyze conversations on current events. Following the murder of Freddie Gray, students from a Baltimore City middle school visited the room where Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation to collectively reflect on the legacy of racism in America.

Hack, Sheryl, Barb Nagy, and Aileen Novick. "Finding Community: Hempsted House Hosts a Panel on Northern Slavery," September 2014 [Finding Community: Hempsted House Hosts a Panel on Northern Slavery](http://findingcommunityengagingaudiences.blogspot.com) ([findingcommunityengagingaudiences.blogspot.com](http://findingcommunityengagingaudiences.blogspot.com))

Hempsted House in CT struggled with ways to interpret enslaved workers at their historic sites. A panel of experts on Northern Slavery suggested approaches.

- Go global. Share that slavery was a global business and show places throughout the globe where enslaved people were sent to work for others. Convey that slavery was a global system of incredible cruelty and places in North America, like New London, represent just a very small piece of this global story.
- Present a typical day in the life of the enslaved at the Hempsted House. This will help share the realities of slavery in the colonial north. Show some of the places "disobedient slaves" might be sent if they became known for insubordination.
- Focus on the role of Native Americans and African Americans in the maritime world. New London is a port city, and it is important to show what many people of color were doing at sea. Historically, New London was approximately 6-10% people of color, while at sea approximately 20% were non-white. At sea, society was often merit based and there was a very different sense of power.
- Move away from documents written primarily by white men by using Museum Theater to give voice to the enslaved. Theater provides an opportunity to show how someone whose voice wasn't recorded could have reacted to and resisted the system of slavery. (For example, Joshua's diary provides a list of everything Adam Jackson breaks while working for him.) Reader's Theater can be a great way to get school groups involved in these discussions.
- Create a visitor experience that focuses on a specific year in the life of the Hempsted House. Focus on different historic events that happened during that year. Every few years, the visitor experience can be changed by moving to a new year and focusing on different historic events. This allows visitors to participate in living history, as seen through the eyes of the people associated with the Hempsted House.

Lerch, Sarah. "Changing the Conversation: Diversity at Living History Museums." *Theses and Dissertations*, University of South Carolina, June 30, 2016. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/3468>.

The author critiques and offers recommendations for diverse interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village, a living history museum in Massachusetts. She suggests reintroducing a costumed performer portraying an impoverished woman who explains the concept of economic diversity. Other recommendations include incorporating Marge Bruchac (Algonquin Indian) and Tammy Denease (slave who petitioned for her freedom) into the daily costumed performances, rather than relegating them to occasional appearances. This example of diverse narratives might be

useful for interpreting the Plantation if documentation can identify the variety of people who worked there.

Melton, Jennifer. "Complicating the Narrative: Using Jim's Story to Interpret Enslavement, Leasing, and Resistance at Duke Homestead." *Theses and Dissertations*, October 1, 2019. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/5615>

The author advocates for telling a more multifaceted story of labor at Duke Homestead in South Carolina. Specifically, she urges programming staff to describe how middle class, yeoman farmers often leased slaves as a cheaper alternative to owning an enslaved person outright. Ideas for conveying this narrative include a program focused on the system of leasing enslaved people as seen through the experience of Jim (an enslaved person working on the Homestead), digital interpretation, and information on the history section of Duke Homestead's website.

Merritt, Elizabeth. "Touring 'Slavery at Monticello, A Small App with a Big Responsibility,'" November 5, 2015. [Touring "Slavery at Monticello": A Small App with a Big Responsibility – American Alliance of Museums \(aam-us.org\)](https://www.aam-us.org/touring-slavery-at-monticello-a-small-app-with-a-big-responsibility)

In 2015 Monticello launched a new online app called "Slavery at Monticello" to introduce visitors to life at Mulberry Row, the 1,000-foot path south of Thomas Jefferson's home. Visitors can use the app to access more than 100 types of content based on twelve biographies of people who were either enslaved, employed, or residents at Monticello. A \$10 million grant from philanthropist David M. Rubenstein made it possible for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation to give greater attention to building up Mulberry Row while also restoring Monticello. App also uses 3D imaging to show how long demolished structures would have looked along with interpretation about the activities happening inside. Offers a bibliography at the end with older books about interpretation of slavery.

Moody, Jessica, and Stephen Small. "Slavery and Public History at the Big House." *Journal of Global Slavery* 4, no. 1 (February 27, 2019): 34–68. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2405836x-00401003>  
The publisher charges \$30.00 to download this article.

This article critiques historic sites that passively address slavery instead of meaningfully engaging with the topic. Additionally, the authors provide programming examples that better convey the complexities of the enslaved experience:

- At the Oakland Plantation, interpretation focuses on the individual livelihoods of the enslaved in two original slave cabins, a cellphone tour, and in the guided tour of the main house.
- At the Whitney Plantation, the narrative emphasizes "brutality, violence, and economic exploitation" and how the lives of the enslaved were intertwined with their masters.
- At historic sites managed by African American staff (the River Road African American Museum, the New Orleans African American Museum, and the Odell S. Williams Now and Then Museum) slavery represents only one facet of the story being told. Emphasis is placed

on the “panorama of African American life.” Some sites exhibit works by African American artists, and all identify and discuss slaves as individuals to restore pride within the black community.

Rose, Julia. *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2015.

This book is the outgrowth of the author’s work at the Magnolia Mound Plantation (MMP) outside Baton Rouge LA from 1999 to 2015. She describes her efforts to use the historic research she amassed on the lives of the many enslaved workers at the plantation and in the house, to create more a robust and representational interpretation of the Big House (the historic house museum) tour offered there by volunteer and paid interpreters.

This is a book about “how” to train history workers (docents, paid interpreters, and volunteers) to deliver stories about “oppression, tragedy, and suffering” so visitors can understand, empathize, and not reject the difficult history supplied by the guide as wrong, irrelevant, or not believable.

Rose introduces us to three building blocks for ethical representation of difficult history. Rose calls these three building blocks the Face, the Real, and the Narrative. These themes can bring the history of the “oppressed, victimized and subjugated individuals and groups,” to life for visitors in a tour or exhibition. Rose discusses in Chapter 4 how history workers must create multidimensional representations of the individuals/groups in history beyond merely a name and job title such as “American Will, an enslaved carpenter at MMP” (the Face). Rose explains that the historical record being used must be impeccable so that learners can create a real connection to the documentation and the person in the past (the Real). Finally, the documentation must be distilled into a narrative format, through storytelling, for the history worker to get their point across to visitors either in a tour or through an exhibition (the Narrative).

While undertaking this research, Rose obtained a PhD in curriculum development from Louisiana State University, leading her to create the Commemorative Museum Pedagogy (CMP), a learning strategy for history workers to develop “ethical representation of difficult history.” The CMP methodology noted in Chapter 3 encourages history workers to help learners (visitors) to work through the difficult history’s anxious moments on a tour or in an exhibit, where the information might trigger visitor defense mechanisms against the painful knowledge. Rose defines five observable processes that history workers can use with visitors as the 5Rs: Reception, Resistance, Repetition, Reflection and Reconsideration.

Rose acknowledges that before a history worker can offer a tour, they must confront their own reactions to the difficult history that they will relate on their tours, using the 5 step CMP to absorb the information. Rose offers methods that history workers can use to approach the difficult history by emphasizing hope, courage, comfortable entrances into the information, phrases like “Just Imagine.” Dialogue with visitors or by using facilitated conversations can involve visitors in processing the difficult history in a safe, empathetic, and respectful learning environment.

Chapter 5 goes into detail about Rose's actual experiences working with history workers at the MMP to revise the Big House tour, warts, and all. The four guides chosen for the tour revision effort initially agree to include multidimensional representations of enslaved workers throughout the Big House tour. But as they start absorbing the documentation, and begin drafts of the tour script, there is considerable resistance to the documentation. Two of the guides eventually leave the tour revision effort, unable to reconcile their own emotional investment in the old tour narrative. Rose says that the "new tour script was not fun or empowering for the team members; rather the tour with expanded representation of slave life recalled the enslaved population's oppression that has previously been alluded to in the MMP's interpretation of plantation life. The experience of learning the difficult history at MMP for the team members, to varying degrees was informative, yet also disruptive, humbling, hard and at times painful"<sup>1</sup> The new tour script does get completed and implemented in 2009. In 2015 Rose returns to do a review of the Big House Tour to determine if the tour script included more multidimensional references to the enslaved workers on the Main House Tour, even as staffing has changed. She notes how "deeply complicated the individual history worker's resistance is to interpreting slave life."

The book reinforces the need for institutional commitment to including difficult history in exhibits or tour narratives. The organization must also commit to its own history workers, who are relaying difficult history to visitors. The history workers need training and support to do their jobs. Their tour script narrative can break through to learners, if the guide is confident in what they know and how to present the difficult information so that it can be absorbed by the historic site visitor.

This book is relevant for the Pearson House as a baseline for the staff charged in the future, with creating and training interpreters (either paid or volunteer) to talk about slavery. Right now, the site does not have enough information to undertake educational programming on slavery. But over the next few years, as the site gathers enough documentary information about the enslaved workers and the workings of the plantation itself, to produce tours, exhibits or other educational programming about slavery, this book will be essential for anyone who leads interpreter training.

Seitz, Philip. "When Slavery Came to Stay." *Museums*, May/June 2011.

[When Slavery Came to Stay – American Alliance of Museums \(aam-us.org\)](http://www.aam-us.org)

Cliveden is a 1767 mansion filled with Chippendale furniture on five-and-a-half heavily wooded acres that were the site of a 1777 Revolutionary War battle. This article talks about the experiences at Cliveden a 1767 high-style historic mansion located in the Germantown neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia towards the family's slave owning past.

The curator tells how he dug into unprocessed papers deposited at the American Philosophical Society 20 years earlier and discovered the family's slave owning past. The article also discusses the methods they used to forge ties with its surrounding African American neighborhood for the first time

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<sup>1</sup> Rose, Julia. *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers/AASLH, 2016, 163.



in 40 years.

van Balgooy, Max, ed. *Interpreting African American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers/AASLH, 2015.

Twenty-one chapters by various authors, including nine case studies of museums and historic sites with exhibits, interpretation, or educational programs on African American history. Notable case studies or chapters which might have relevance for the interpretation of the Isaac Pearson House in the future are:

“Developing a Comprehensive and Conscientious Interpretation of Slavery at Historic Sites and Museums.” The chapter provides six components for the interpretation of slavery. The authors note how Phillipsburg Manor in Hudson Valley, NY, used an African American advisory board when it decided to add interpreting slavery in the North to their historic site’s narrative.

“Pride and Prejudice: Interpreting Slavery at the Homes of Five Founding Families,” discusses how the enslaved have been interpreted over time at the homes of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. The author describes her research project undertaken in 2012-2013 on how the interpretation of slavery at these Presidential homes can create a skewed version of history, and how “false nostalgia and historical amnesia can creep into interpretation.” The case suggests that lack of research, fear of discussing sensitive or unfamiliar topics, or inability to see the site from a visitor’s perspective, prevents these presidential sites from doing anything more than superficial history about slavery.

- George Washington’s Mt. Vernon has offered a first-person interpreter posing as Washington’s personal valet William Lee, who talks about Washington as an “enlightened slaveholder.” The author describes how this interpretation could be far better if the interpreter had spoken about Lee’s own life experiences rather than Washington’s conduct and attitude. The author notes that “if personal information about the life of the valet is unknown, then first-person interpretations should be abandoned, as it belies the experiences of slavery and can create a version of American history in which visitors are more likely to look back on with a sense of nostalgia rather than hindsight-fueled caution and sorrow.”
- John Adams and his family did not own slaves. At his home, Peachfield, in Quincy, MA, the author notes that the National Park Service (the agency that owns and manages this property) only focuses on John Adams’s efforts to foster compromise on the matter of slavery in the creation of the Constitution. The author believes there is a missed opportunity on the part of the NPS to describe John Adams’s feelings about slavery as an institution and the reasons why he did not own slaves. While John Quincy Adams (his son and the sixth US president, who also lived here) might be considered an abolitionist, his father John Adams was not. The author notes that the current interpretation may lead to a false nostalgia about John Adams’s historic environment.

- Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home in Monticello, VA, presents the most nuanced detail about slavery related to the third president. However, the author believes that most visitors do not engage with or access Mulberry Row (the row of slave quarters on the estate) or take the "Slavery at Monticello" tours. The author believes this might "risk promoting false nostalgia during the visitor experience." Because slavery is not interwoven into all aspects of the site's interpretation (especially in the house), visitors might not get a complete understanding of Jefferson and his slave-owning history, as the interpretation about the enslaved varies from guide to guide. The author cautions that guides must be well trained on how to talk thoughtfully and sensitively about the enslaved at the property, so visitors can be "self-reflective, realistic and unapologetic about the history of slavery in our country," because of their visit.
- At James Madison's Montpelier, interpreters only talk about Paul Jennings, a household slave and Madison's manservant, even though there were scores of enslaved people on the farm and in the house. There is a space underneath the house where there is a thoughtful exhibition about slavery, but the author is concerned that few visitors see this location. The author suggests that focusing only on Paul Jennings gives visitors a "false narrative" about the number of enslaved people needed to manage the plantation. The author recommends broadening the context where slavery is mentioned and offering further information to paint a "more truthful and contextualized picture of the site and era."
- James Madison's Ash-Lawn Highland does not offer guided tours of the service yard where the enslaved lived and worked. Only one building in the service yard has an exhibit about it as an enslaved family's home. This building is a 1985 reconstruction from a 1908 photo. The reconstruction lacks archaeological evidence and features a fireplace and a loft that may not be historically accurate, thus creating a "false nostalgia." The author also notes that the interpretive plaques should be rewritten with "more sensitive and agent-oriented language while still presenting the facts" about the enslaved who lived there.

In summary, the author says, "failing to give a detailed or realistic presentation of slavery at these historic sites may keep visitors (subconsciously or otherwise) unaware of slavery's structure, prevalence, and nature, potentially promoting a rosy view of the Founding Era and perpetuating a false nostalgia for the period."

The range of interpretive methods used at the homes of the first five presidents, as illustrated in this case study, is instructive of what NOT to do at the Isaac Pearson House in the future. The case study reinforces the need for high-quality history about the enslaved persons working on the plantation, and why excellent training for interpreters is essential so they can confidently discuss slavery in the North. For the Pearson House, visitors will need to understand how the wealth generated from the plantation permitted the Pearson family to construct a high style mansion in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War.

"Asking Big Questions of a Small Place" is a case study about Drayton Hall's efforts to go

beyond the traditional tour of the house (which is unfurnished, and just outside Charleston, SC) to explain slavery on this plantation.

- Drayton Hall relied on local resident Richmond Bowens, grandson of emancipated slaves, who was hired as an interpreter to offer his commentary about his family at Drayton Hall in the 1990s. Mr. Bowens provided his tours and talks until 1997, when he was no longer able to work. Other interpreters took up the subject of slavery by offering walking tours of the gardens and of the African American history related to the site. They transitioned to using mobile devices to showcase photos of people, places, and artifacts. Other experiments included a program called “Connections,” hosting an interpreter at a table under a tent offering interactive activities and copies of photos and historic documents about African American history at Drayton Hall. Drayton Hall’s enslaved workers came directly from Africa, and the site’s educational programming highlights the slave trade and the Middle Passage to the US along with the work of the enslaved on the property. This was a popular program, as it catered to various learning styles. This program was recycled for use as their school program.

For the Pearson House, perhaps the use of an interpreter hosted at the anticipated tent to showcase research undertaken about the enslaved people at the property is worth considering. As we learn more about the enslaved people on the plantation, and from the Kitchen Wing archaeology, there will be more documentation. Also consider adding a walking tour with a map once locations are identified for the outbuildings on the plantation grounds.

“Power in Limits: Narrow Frames Opens Up African American Public History” is a case study that discusses three class projects undertaken by the author, a University of North Carolina at Greensborough professor, with his Public History graduate students.

- One project, the “Class of ‘63,” focused on alumni of the Rosetta C. Baldwin school, a private African American grammar school in High Point, North Carolina, affiliated with a church. The segregated school was open from 1942 to 1969. Students used primary sources and oral histories to gather biographical information about people identified in the Class of 1963 photo. All but a few of the 40 students in the class were found, and information, photos, and oral history collected about their lives. The exhibit at the High Point Museum attracted new audiences.
- Another class project called “Community Threads: Remembering Cone Mill Villages,” was about a textile mill in East White Oak, NC, where African American workers at the mills faced segregation and their houses in the village were demolished in the 1960s. The program focused on obtaining oral histories of the African American mill workers. Students created a Memory Map, a walking tour, a public van tour of the former neighborhood, a printed map of the walking tour with interpretation, and a website.
- Another project documented the African American workers in the Pamona Terra Cotta Manufacturing Company’s segregated community. A local resident returned to the community to create the Terra Cotta Festival. The students were engaged to create oral

histories of the African American workers at the factory. This turned into a full exhibit at the Greensborough museum. Photos were collected to create a Memory Map, helping to recreate a lost landscape and populate it with stories from the oral histories. The exhibit was titled *Past the Pipes: Stories of the Terra Cotta Community*.

This case study talked about the importance of gaining the trust of community elders to obtain oral histories and photos to undertake these projects. Perhaps solicit Rutgers Public History program professors (or other history professors) for class projects to research the enslaved people at the Pearson House, and create other programs such as tours, brochures, or interpretive signs based on their research.

Zalut, Lauren. "Interpreting Trauma, Memory, and Lived Experience in Museums and Historic Sites." *Journal of Museum Education*. Taylor and Francis Ltd., January 2, 2018.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2017.1419412>

Zalut conveys the importance of emphasizing lived experience as a strategy for engaging visitors with difficult, complex topics and for promoting understanding. She provides the following examples of embedding lived experience in programming:

- The Japanese American National Museum and United States Holocaust Museum have programming led by survivors of World War II concentration camps.
- Eastern State Penitentiary History Site hires formerly incarcerated individuals as tour guides.

All the articles and dissertations mentioned in this annotated bibliography can be reviewed in this Google Drive folder.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1C1xXataznxY7y2MywDwAStjaaFTCFVjp?usp=sharing>  
[other things](#)

## Meeting Notes Zoom Webinar Community Conversation for Isaac Pearson House

Humanities project February 17, 2021

Welcome and introductions—5 minutes Donna Ann Harris Thank you for your participation in this community conversation being undertaken by the Historical Society of Hamilton Township, and the Isaac Pearson House for a New Jersey Council on the Humanities grant-funded project to gather background information about program ideas for this historic site.

My name is Donna Ann Harris, and I will be facilitating our discussion today. Evan Hertzog is here today to take notes of our conversations. Your comments will not be ascribed specifically to you in any way, in the written reports. All we will do is acknowledge that you participated.

Your comments will be anonymous, so we really want your candid comments. Dr. Michael Skelly is also here, he is a historian and community member who is actively working to restore the Revolutionary War era Isaac Pearson House as a visitor attraction for community residents and visitors. He will tell us more about that project in a few minutes.

For us to get all the information we need from you today, we have a few ground rules. Only one person may speak at any one time, so that the note taker can hear what you have to say. You may want to make notes of your answers to questions, so that when it is time to speak you have your comments ready.

We want everyone to contribute to this conversation, so we will be asking each of you to speak at several points in this focus group. Please unmute yourself now or when you are ready to speak. We may ask you to clarify or give an example, so we fully understand your point. If you do not wish to answer a question that is ok, too.

Housekeeping: We already have your email address so we will be sending you a thank you note for attending this community conversation. Can you please turn your cell phones off or put them on vibrate mode now? We will have about 45 minutes during this zoom call.

Donna Introductions—10 minutes We would like to start by asking everyone to introduce themselves: Please provide your name, the community you live in, how many children you have living with you at home and their ages, and your age. You can say late 30s if you like, we don't need your actual age, just to understand your age, relative to others in this community conversation.

Brain Boyle: 65 years old, lifelong resident of Hamilton Township, attended the local schools of Hamilton Square, Sign School, Klockner School, Reynolds, and Steinert, history major undergraduate, and student of Dr. Fedirici's during his sophomore year at Steinert.

Dr. Jim Fredrici: President of the Historical Society of Hamilton Township and I am working with Dr. Skelly and Jim Collelo on the renovation and restoration of the Isaac Pearson House.

Sam Stevens: Trenton resident, born and raised in Oregon but made it out here, Trustee and volunteer staff of William Trent House Museum in Trenton, 4 kids, 5 grandkids, 72 years old.

DAH: You don't have grandchildren that live with you? Sam Stevens: Grandchildren live in the same neighborhood; I don't know if that counts.

DAH: The reason that we ask is you as a grandparent will have some input of what your grandchildren might like to do.

George Ott: Lifelong Hamilton Square resident, went to school with Brian Boyle, remembers when Dr. Fredrici was a teacher, retired chemical engineer, longtime member of Hamilton Historical Society, on the board of directors for the Roebling Museum in Roebling, NJ.

DAH: I think that is all we have for attendees today. I'd like to have Dr. Skelly introduce himself. Michael will give you some background now about Isaac Pearson and his house—if you have questions, please wave and we will call on you.

Dr. Skelly: I have been working with Jim Fredrici and Jim Collello on restoring, preserving, and presenting the Isaac Pearson House. We're deep into this project and we're looking forward to hearing how you all would like us to take the next steps to make it interesting for the public and families in the area.

Michael Skelly-- HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS This historic site focuses mostly on the time in our local history transitioning from Lenni Lenape woodlands people to New Jersey being an English farming colony and early days of the American Revolution. We recognize that the land where the Pearson Mansion and Park lies was once part of the Lenape lands.

BEGINNING Isaac Pearson's mother and father, Robert, and Mary, emigrated from England to the British American colonies. Their ship crossed the Atlantic, sailed up the Delaware River and landed in Burlington City. They purchased land and settled in Nottingham Township, Burlington County, now part of Hamilton Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. He was born on August 3, 1739 along with his twin brother, Robert.

PEARSON FAMILY His father owned and operated large farms and died when Isaac was 16 years old. Isaac inherited a vast plantation of 500 acres and Isaac added to it until he had more than 1200 acres, Isaac was raised by his mother. At age 22 (1761) he married Elizabeth Smith, they had sons William and Robert. Unfortunately, Elizabeth died about 1771. At age 34 (in 1773) Isaac married Abigail Atkinson. He built this fine brick house in 1773. We believe that it was part of his contract of marriage with Abigail that he should have a new house.

PLANTATION/FARM The plantation had animals: sheep and cows; orchards of peaches and apple trees; meadows for straw, wheat, barley, hops, and flax; forests for lumber; kitchen gardens for vegetables, flowers, spices, and medicines. We know Isaac Pearson and his parents had enslaved people that lived with them on this site and nearby because they were listed in

their Wills. The enslaved men were named: Tony, George, James, Robin, and Dorcas; and the women were named: Hagar, Nance, and Hannah.

**GOVERNMENT POSTS** In addition to being a farmer, Isaac Pearson was very active in his town, county, colony government and early days of the Revolution. He was elected Town Clerk, in Nottingham Town Council; served as tax collector; oversaw services for the poor; and was appointed to oversee repairs of bridges and roads; was named commissioner of bridges - constructing a draw bridge and collecting tolls to make travel easier between Bordentown and Trenton; elected a County Freeholder; in 1774 he led the call in Burlington County for a Continental Congress for the united colonies. In 1774 he was elected to serve in the shadow government and opposed to British authority as a member of the Committee of Correspondence and Observation; in 1775 he was elected to the state legislature/ Provincial Congress and Committee of Safety that deposed the last Royal Governor of New Jersey. In 1770 he was appointed Justice of the Peace in Burlington County. Isaac Pearson was known statewide to be a very fair person He was also appointed by the legislature a special judge to resolve disputes over the Passaic River water rights. He was justice of the peace and oversaw the building a new jail and finally became a Court Judge.

**PATRIOT OR LOYALIST?** There has been confusion as to whether Isaac Pearson should be regarded as a Loyalist or as a Patriot. Thorough research of the public records shows he was a Patriot early on and then in the last half of 1776 took steps to protect his Church and family from the impact of war in the colonies. Unfortunately, it did not work out well for him. In 1774 Isaac Pearson publicly led the committee in Burlington County calling for forming Continental Congress. 1774 he was elected to serve in the shadow government and opposed British authority as a member of the Committee of Correspondence and Observation; in 1775 he was elected to the state legislature/ Provincial Congress and Committee of Safety that deposed the last Royal Governor of New Jersey; in October 1775 he led the committee to review 3 minuteman militias and their officers and reported to Continental Congress.

**CROSSING THE DELAWARE and BATTLE OF TRENTON** 1500 Hessians and Colonial Troops crossed Pearson's draw bridge, in front of his tavern, and across his land and farm to and from the Battle of Trenton December 25 – 27, in 1776. They fought at Pearson's drawbridge as they retreated. This must have been terrifying.

**TRAGIC DEATH** A day after the battles at Trenton, Isaac Pearson left his house and rode his horse North. The weather changed to snow, he made it as far as Hightstown and stopped at the house of loyalist for cover from the weather. Due to the harsh weather, there was a mix of people there and tempers flared. A dispute occurred and he fled from the house with Loyalists shooting at him. A passing patrol of Colonial Troops ordered him to halt and he kept running from the gunfire. The Troops took their own shots thinking he was trying to escape them. In the confusion Isaac Pearson was killed by bullets from both sides. He died on December 29, 1776. When the troops and Loyalists realized that he was a prominent member of society and not a



threat, his body was quietly returned home and laid to rest in the family plot. He's buried in the Methodist church yard a few blocks away from his house.

**PEARSON MANSION HOUSE AND PARK** On December 17, 1997 Hamilton Township acquired the 5.4 acres of land and the house to save the historic house from demolition for a highway and save the land as a park from housing development. Today the Pearson Mansion House stands in its original location.

**NEXT CHAPTER** In 2017 the Hamilton Township Historical Society entered into a long-term lease with the Township to preserve, restore and present the Mansion House for the public. The historical society has received grants for planning for its rehabilitation as a visitor attraction. We want to highlight the house during upcoming its 250th Anniversary. The property built in 1773, should be open during the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, and beyond. Our meeting tonight is one step in getting your input on how we can offer interesting programs in 2021 and beyond while we continue the work.

**RECENT EFFORTS** In the last 3 years we have hired historic architects, preservation consultants, museum and tourism experts, archaeologists, engineers, masonry and materials experts, draftswoman, estimators, and skilled trades people to prepare estimates, plans, analysis, budgets, and indepth reports that will serve and guide us for years to come. We've done an initial archaeology study in the kitchen-wing area. We've also done some historic research, basic security, removal of asbestos, and cleaning out projects. Some masonry work has been done.

**PLANS** We are hoping to fully restore the house on the inside and out, and to reconstruct the two-story Kitchen Wing which was demolished only in the 1940s to create a visitor center, and a recreated kitchen hearth to demonstrate Colonial era cooking. There will be a stairway to permit visitors to enter the second floor of the house where we will have artisans demonstrating various Colonial era trades and crafts and small temporary exhibit space to tell stories about Pearson, the house, or Revolutionary War themes.

**WORK AHEAD** There are several house-museums and historic sites in the nearby area that feature colonial history to the early years of the American Revolution.

What could make Isaac Pearson's House unique? Several of the sites highlight military people and battles. Isaac was not a military man. He did not fight in the battles, although he was killed in wartime. His land was not a major battlefield, even though it was affected by the war. Some of the nearby house-museums highlight historic furniture and objects. We found that there is no authentic living-history visitor experience for that era in our local area.

So, we are do not plan to create a traditional "do not touch" house-museum with furnished rooms and historic objects behind barriers and ropes. We have decided to feature colonial life - "living history", activities, and events for nearby communities and visitors; and to act as a tourism hub where people can be referred to the other great sites that are in the area. Our idea is

to share our history and create lively, interactive programs that people can visit, participate, and enjoy again and again in-person and digitally. Community, family, and visitors will come back year after year to participate in and celebrate Colonial Days, Spring Fest, Fall Harvest, holidays, and traditions. They will dance, enjoy music, play games, make things, do real activities, learn, and take part in understanding how our history connects with and enriches our lives today. Community and friends will gather together gaining strength and joy from the past, as we face the future together.

DAH: We have some specific questions, but sort of just overall, feedback, comments, from anyone? Can you see us?

DAH: No, but you'll just have to speak, and we hear you. I didn't want to interrupt.

First of all, I'm excited because I see lots of ways for Trent House and Pearson House to connect with each other, and in the sense of what was happening at the houses during the revolutionary war. There were different things happening. The Trent House was also not a site of a particular battle. The battles of Trenton didn't take place on the grounds. There were some ancillary roles that we play which have some potential relationships. So, I think there's some interesting ways in which the Trent House and Pearson House can sort of talk about the impact of war on the everyday operations of these kinds of plantations in the states because of what happened.

DAH: Excellent. Excellent.

The other thing that I really liked, was that you looked at what some of the other sites and houses were doing in the area and were looking for a way to be distinctive. Maybe not unique but definitely distinctive. I'm particularly interested in the living history side of things because that is not a pathway we've taken directly (Trent House). I don't know whether you're speaking of first-person interpreters. Is that what you think of when you think of living history?

DAH: We could do both. The thing about doing first person history, is that we have to have superb documentation about the individuals whether they're enslaved folks, workers, family members. Right now, we don't have enough to do it well. But that is obviously a really important activity for us to be doing while the restoration is happening cause that will probably take 3 years. But please go on.

Well actually there is another real challenge with doing first person. That is the challenge of trying to provide contextual framing that a first person wouldn't necessarily be telling you about. That being aside, you know, I do think people are very interested in what everyday people experience. What might so and so have said. I want to offer you an example: we just did a video of Mary Coveington Trent who was the 2nd wife of William Trent. We knew enough about her history to be able to do a script speaking to the cameras as if she was speaking to a visitor and say my grandfather did this, I was born here, etc. We framed it in terms of a particular point in her life that A. people could identify with that and that B. was a point of tension (2 years after Trent died without a will, Mrs. Trent was suing oldest son from first

marriage to get her rights from the estate) she was talking from a point of tension, and people can identify with that.

So, one of the things I think is interesting to do is to find those twists in the story that people can identify with. People can identify with having a second wife who is now challenged with having to deal with older children, adults who are tussling over how to divide up an estate. It can also allow us to frame that with intro and extro, whatever you want to call it, that talks about women's roles and women's rights during that time that were able to kind of put her situation into context.

The last thing I want to say is that I think it's very interesting for people to be posed questions, which is not something we've (Trent House) been very good at until we're trying recently. Pose things as a question, "What do you think?" It's a little bit hard because sometimes people come to a museum and just want to look, tell me the story. Asking questions is particularly engaging for younger people, I'm talking teenagers, young adults. What do you think really happened? What was the dynamic behind this?

DAH: Thank you. What about from others. A little feedback.

First of all, I think it's wonderful that this house is being preserved, renovated, and will be available to the public. I was glad to hear Dr. Skelly say the approach might be a little different than the typical house museum where you furnish it, and people walk through. While that type of museum may be very interesting, it gets people to attend once because you walk through, see it, and are done. You might bring your kids or grandkids but it's not something that becomes part of the community. So, I think the challenge is how to use it as a base for programming, so people come back throughout the year that engage different parts of the public, so it becomes a resource for the whole community.

DAH: Great. Thank you. Excellent.

As one of those traditional, historic house museums, it is a challenge and we're trying very hard to move away from that model. (Trent House) That's not to take away from that traditional house museum approach. People come and it's a one and done kind of thing. Where you've come through, you've seen it, and there's nothing to draw you back again and again frequently.

DAH: Others, do you have anything to add?

Piggying back on that, I'm wondering if it would be analogous to how a farm is set up, different events at different times of the year. I'm not saying you have to do the same events or anything like that, but they have harvesting, they have a working farm so they can do that kind of stuff. You might want to look at what they're doing to see if that's something you can do. What would be relative to the Pearson House. I think you said they had animals and grew grains. You could have a harvest weekend in the fall. If the Pearson family had animals, you could have an

animal thing, where kids can come for a period of time. Outdoor things. When you're talking about it that's what came to my mind, how you could farm different things that they do.

DAH: Great. Alright that's really great feedback for us. I appreciate all 3 of you with those comments. I have a couple other scenarios and types of programming to get some feedback from you.

The pandemic changes some of these things, but if you feel like you're really interested and want to see them, we can do our best to create programs that fit these times safely. Would you enjoy visiting with a historic architect or archaeologist to ask questions and see artifacts dug up here? What about that would be interesting? As opposed to just a lecture.

Well, the Trent House has done a lot of archaeology at the site. Public archaeology events are extremely interesting. We get families that come because that's what they kind of do in the summer, they go from archeology dig to archaeology dig and kind of see what's going on. Trent House works with Hunter Research, which is very open to having people come. We put out (Trent House) examples out of artifacts we've found before. We've had adults and children screen and wash under the supervision of someone to make sure they don't move it around or mess it up. Very much I think that would be an interesting thing.

Now the other thing about observing construction. I think it would be interesting and have a similar appeal but not as much to younger children because you would have to be very careful about safety issues. There you would find Old house buffs be fascinated and intrigued with what decisions were made such as what color they would paint things and whatnot.

DAH: Right, okay. That's good to know. Does anyone else have an opinion on that?

Dr. Federici: Not particularly an opinion, but I have a couple of people who wanted to join tonight but were unable, and they emailed me. One person would think it would be nice for furniture and other items of the period to be in the house and I know we're talking about it not being a house museum. That was this one individual's idea. Same person thought part of the building could be used as a library with materials pertaining to the American Revolution, or colonial history. Not sure how feasible that would be and if you'd need full time staff. There's already a library in Hamilton, however it was just an idea this person submitted.

Dr. Federici: Another woman suggested spring or fall festivals on the grounds, including crafts, food, demonstrations, and so on. Again, you could bring in colonial craftspeople depending upon if you could get a good interpreter, someone who would speak to what farm life was like in fall or spring, whenever you had this festival. You might be able to get some people to go around to groups and talk to them. Another suggestion was to take some of the rooms to turn them into display centers. Where people who collect historic materials might want to come in and display their materials in the Pearson House.

Dr. Federici: Obviously lectures by writers. Children's storytime using the Garden State Storytellers, readings of historical themes. That could be done at different times of the year. Black History lecturers. There could be something of what life was like for an African Household in the 18th century. We have at least 1 known underground railroad site in Hamilton, so one could do programming around the Underground Railroad for instance. This person also mentioned cooking demonstrations.

Dr. Federici: Also, the fact that this house sits on the Abbott farm, the historic site, should have some display or programming on Charles Conrad Abbott because he was first NJ archeologist and did a great number of books. There's some way to tie Charles Conrad Abbott into that house as another facet here. This person also mentioned that Hamilton Trenton Marsh is nearby, so you might do programming with the Trenton Marsh.

Can I interject right there?

DAH: Sure.

We (Trent House) have been doing a collaboration with Tulcohooking Nature Center in Hamilton Marsh and of course the Watson House is there. Again, this is sort of 3 very close colonial-era homes all on land that was inhabited for thousands of years by the Lenape People and rich in archaeology. So again, thinking about being a hub to help visitors identify other sites to flush out the picture. I think that that is something that collectively we all ought to do. Because none of us are interpreting the full story and I really like that idea. I want to say one quick thing about the library idea.

Because you have a library in town, what about having the library have a certain set of books that would be at the house around a specific theme, month, season, etc. and have a librarian or someone else do a book reading with kids. That's another link that you could do to another community institution.

DAH: Yeah, great. Excellent. All good. Who did we miss? Anybody? No, alright.

Let me go on to another couple things... What about a program on learning to do our family genealogy?

Yes, because there was, before COVID-19, a very active genealogy society in Hamilton, a group that met regularly in the Hamilton Township library. I'm not familiar with what they were doing but they met regularly, and they dealt with helping people research family and family genealogy. Yes, could be tied in with the genealogical society and do some type of programming.

DAH: Okay, great. I don't know if there are places... There are a limited number of places where organizations can meet. Like the historical society meets in the basement of the library, the genealogical society meets in the basement of the library, the civil war group has no place to

meet so they meet in the basement of the library. I don't know if it would be feasible to offer them space to meet in one of the rooms in the Pearson House.

DAH: Yes. It's all a matter of scheduling. Having someone with a google calendar to book those rooms. If we are going to beautifully restore those rooms and basically use them for demonstrations or meetings, book clubs, whatever it may be, with moveable tables and chairs, that would be the perfect reason to have it populated with those kinds of groups that have some affinity with history or heritage in the county.

DAH: We have about 15 minutes left and just a couple more questions.

Can I say something very quickly about genealogy? Because this is a very important thing to African Americans. The fact that you have enslaved people on the site, gives you an opportunity to kind of "make up for that" by offering resources potentially or help, and there are people you can bring to talk and do workshops or whatever.

Would you be interested in learning more about slavery in this area in the colonial era? Absolutely. I know for a fact that there has been concern for a long time from the African American community in Hamilton, which is sizable living over in White City, Broad Street Park, Forest Valley Section of Hamilton Township around Hamilton High West. There is really nothing that has been done as far as research or any kind of programming for that particular community. I'm sure that that would be welcomed. Let me throw my experience in here. I think you're right, but there's a lot of caveats around that, as I'm sure you are aware.

We have been concerned about balancing the presentation/interpretation of slavery as an institution with helping young people in particular recognize that the individuals who were enslaved, were not just slaves and part of an institution. They were individual people, they had feelings, they resisted. How do we balance that, particularly when presenting it to young people where young African American children may feel...? To ask them to identify with enslaved people is really sort of a lot. One of the things that we've tried to do and have not been as successful as we would like to be, is to ask people from that community to help us frame how we do this. To be good listeners. I agree with you entirely, but it will take a little bit for that community to feel you're genuine and safe.

DAH: Excellent advice, thank you. What about meeting an expert on colonial taverns, or colonial life?

DAH: Would there be an interest if we had a colonial brewer? Or if we had someone talking about libations in colonial life?

Yes! What was last called the White Gropps Tavern, before that the Whitehorse Tavern, before that the Pearson Tavern.

Dr. Skelly: The role of taverns has changed a lot over time. It was the meeting place and crossroad for the community, so when talking about colonial life, it actually is different than what we have now. Like sports bars, that's a whole different way of looking at a tavern as compared to how it was viewed at that time. The question we're raising tonight is, do we feel their would-be interest, that people would come to a program about that topic.

Think about how popular the Old Barracks Tavern night is. They do that as a big fundraiser. To have a time when people can come and enjoy different beers, play tavern games, dance, music and so on. You don't want to do it exactly like Old Barracks, but I think that would be great.

Donna, I see that Matthew Leilich has a question. Says he has been here the whole time. While he's typing, let me throw out the idea of women. We've been talking a lot about Issac what about his wives? They need to be featured.

Dr. Skelly: We do want to feature that; I just don't want to overwhelm people with names. We don't know much about wives. Well, that in a fact is an interesting thing- why don't we? It's the same reason why we don't know about the enslaved people. They were invisible to a large extent in terms of having a legal standing or whatever. But the fact that there were two wives. Would they both have had children? The idea of blended families is very relevant to people today, which is very relatable. New person has started speaking - been here the whole time.

DAH: Sorry, I want to apologize. This is very new technology for all of us. We have made mistakes regarding how to use this platform combining Event Brite and Zoom, but we would love some feedback.

Could have docents there like at the Abbott House. She (Mary) would volunteer for free. She loves working at Abbott house. I could donate some time; I know there probably isn't a large budget. Same for the Abbott House. I love working over there.

Dr. Skelly: We are going to be doing a couple of pilot programs at the Pearson House in the next couple of months as part of our overall project. Tonight, we are getting ideas and trying to figure out what ideas bubble up to the top.

Very quickly, in the next few months we are going to be putting on some programs and would love to have your help. My sons would love to help. One who is 16 is very interested in history would love to help and my other son, Billy. Both would help. There's three of us here and my mother. She grew up on a farm, well her mother did but she spent a lot of time learning about how farms are run. My great grandmother was born in the 1870s and she saw a lot of how she cooked. I think cooking programs are good. Maybe even a spinning wheel could be demonstrated.



Dr. Skelly: We have several friends who would be interested in following through on that. Do we have your contact information?

Dr. Federici has their contact information. We could be in costume, it's a nice touch. We have several costumes at Abbott house. Even men's costumes but we may need to get some more. Or participating in a live demonstrations of cooking, or music performances?

DAH: It was mentioned that in the new 2 story kitchen wing/visitor's center, we'd have a demonstration kitchen. A few of you have said that would be very popular.

I'm wondering if things like how timber frame houses were constructed be of interest? What about how to build a timber frame house? Yes, I think it's interesting myself. Especially young people are interested in building. The one thing you might think of on something like that, it might be expensive, so film it. So, then you have it on tablets and share it to get multiple uses of it by having a program then having something you can share.

DAH: Having it on Youtube or have a connection. Like that kind of stuff. Here's just one big last question... Do you have other ideas about how we can talk about these 8 enslaved men and women who lived and worked at the Isaac Pearson House in the 18th Century? Not sure if you can talk about them specifically working on the Pearson House, but it would be interesting if you can just generalize what life would be like for an enslaved person in a Northern state like New Jersey in their life, the types of things they did, and their treatment, as opposed to what everyone knows about southern slavery. I also echo that. I know for African American visitors, the fact that you have their names is very very important to have their names instead of just saying "2 negros." Even though you may not know much about each individual, you can ask people what are the kinds of jobs that a woman who was enslaved would have been doing? At her age? Her skills? Begin to get them to put it in the bigger context but to make it specific to them as a person. What thoughts do you have on our plans as we have described them so far?

Conclusion 5 minutes

DAH: I don't want to keep you over at 8:02. I want to thank you. This was far better than what I thought it would've been. Thanks for sharing comments, Dr. Federici with people's emails.

We'll be sending out thank you notes and will contact you when we start putting together pilot programs over the next several months.

Dr. Skelly: I'd just like to say thank you very much. This is a community project. I'm so happy we're so close together that we'll be able to work on it together.

Total 60 minutes Meeting ended 8:02PM

Evan Hartzog, scribe

REVISED script

African American Parents February 17, 2021

Zoom Webinar Community Conversation for Issac Pearson House Humanities project

Donna--Welcome and introductions—5 minutes Thank you for your participation in this focus group being undertaken by the Historical Society of Hamilton Township, and the Isaac Pearson House for a New Jersey Council on the Humanities grant funded project to gather background information about program ideas for this historic site.

My name is Donna Ann Harris, and I will be facilitating our discussion today. Evan Hartzog is here today to take notes of our conversations. Your comments will not be ascribed specifically to you in any way, in the written reports. All we will do is acknowledge that you participated. Your comments will be anonymous, so we really want your candid comments.

Dr. Michael Skelly is also here, he is a historian and community member who is actively working to restore the Revolutionary War-era Isaac Pearson House as a visitor attraction for community residents and visitors. He will tell us more about that project in a few minutes.

For us to get all the information we need from you today, we have a few ground rules. Only one person may speak at any one time, so that the note taker can hear what you have to say. You may want to make notes of your answers to questions, so that when it is time to speak you have your comments ready. We want everyone to contribute to this conversation, so we will be asking each of you to speak at several points in this focus group.

Please unmute yourself now or when you are ready to speak. We may ask you to clarify or give an example, so we fully understand your point. If you do not wish to answer a question that is ok, too.

Housekeeping: We already have your email address so we will be sending you a thank you note for attending this community conversation.

Please turn your phones off or put them on vibrate mode now. We will have about 45 minutes during this zoom call.

Donna Introductions—10 minutes We would like to start by asking everyone to introduce themselves: Please provide your name, the community you live in, how many children you have living with you at home and their ages, and your age. You can say late 30s if you like, we don't need your actual age, just to understand your age, relative to others in the focus group.

Donna and Michael, Michael will give you some background now about Isaac Pearson and his house—if you have questions, please wave and we will call on you.

Michael = HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS—20 minutes This historic site focuses mostly on the time in our local history transitioning from Lenape woodlands people to New Jersey being an English farming colony and early days of the American Revolution. We recognize that the land where the Pearson Mansion and Park lies was once part of the Lenape lands.

BEGINNING Isaac Pearson's mother and father, Robert and Mary, emigrated from England to the British American colonies. Their ship crossed the Atlantic, sailed up the Delaware River and landed in Burlington City. They purchased land and settled in Nottingham Township, Burlington County, now part of Hamilton Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. He was born on August 3, 1739, along with his twin brother, Robert.

PEARSON FAMILY His father owned and operated large farms and died when Isaac was 16 years old. Isaac inherited a vast plantation of 500 acres and Isaac added to it until he had more than 1200 acres, Isaac was raised by his mother. At age 22 (1761) he married Elizabeth Smith, they had sons William and Robert. Unfortunately, Elizabeth died about 1771. At age 34 (in 1773) Isaac married Abigail Atkinson. He built this fine brick house in 1773.

PLANTATION/FARM The plantation had animals: sheep and cows; orchards of peaches and apple trees; meadows for straw, wheat, barley, hops, and flax; forests for lumber; kitchen gardens for vegetables, flowers, spices, and medicines. We know Isaac Pearson and his parents had enslaved people that lived with them on this site and nearby because they were listed in wills. The enslaved men were named: Tony, George, James, Robin, and Dorcas; and the women were named: Hagar, Nance, and Hannah.

GOVERNMENT POSTS In addition to being a farmer, Isaac Pearson was very active in his town, county, colony government and early days of the Revolution. He was elected Town Clerk, in Nottingham Town Council; served as tax collector; oversaw services for the poor; and was appointed to oversee repairs of bridges and roads; commissioner of bridges - constructing a draw bridge and collecting tolls to make travel easier between Bordentown and Trenton. In 1775 he was elected to the state legislature/ Provincial Congress and Committee of Safety that deposed the last Royal Governor of New Jersey; Isaac Pearson was known statewide to be a very fair person. He was a justice of the peace and oversaw the building a new jail and finally became a Court Judge.

PATRIOT OR LOYALIST? There has been confusion as to whether Isaac Pearson should be regarded as a Loyalist or as a Patriot. Thorough research of the public records shows he was a Patriot early on and then in the last half of 1776 took steps to protect his Church and family from the impact of war in the colonies. Unfortunately it did not work out well for him. In 1774 Isaac Pearson publicly led the committee in Burlington County calling for forming Continental Congress. In 1774 he was elected to serve in the shadow government and opposed to British authority as a member of the Committee of Correspondence and Observation; in 1775 he was elected to the state legislature/Provincial Congress and Committee of Safety that deposed the

last Royal Governor of New Jersey; in October 1775 he led the committee to review 3 minuteman militias and their officers and reported to Continental Congress

CROSSING THE DELAWARE and BATTLE OF TRENTON 1500 Hessians and Colonial Troops crossed Pearson's draw bridge, in front of his tavern, and across his land and farm to and from the Battle of Trenton December 25 – 27, in 1776. They fought at Pearson's drawbridge as they retreated. This must have been terrifying.

TRAGIC DEATH A day after the battle at Trenton, Isaac Pearson left his house and rode his horse north. The weather changed to snow, he made it as far as Hightstown and stopped at the house of loyalist for cover from the weather. Due to the harsh weather, there was a mix of people there and tempers flared. A dispute occurred and he fled from the house with Loyalists shooting at him. A passing patrol of Colonial Troops ordered him to halt and he kept running from the gunfire. The Troops took their own shots thinking he was trying to escape them. In the confusion Isaac Pearson was killed by bullets from both sides. He died on December 29, 1776 . When the troops and Loyalists realized that he was a prominent member of society and not a threat, his body was quietly returned home and laid to rest in the family plot. He's buried in the Methodist church yard a few blocks away from his House.

PEARSON MANSION HOUSE AND PARK On December 17, 1997, Hamilton Township acquired the 5.4 acres of land and the house to save the historic house from demolition for a highway and save the land as a park from housing development. Today the Pearson Mansion House stands in its original location.

NEXT CHAPTER In 2017 the Hamilton Township Historical Society entered into a long-term lease with the Township to preserve, restore and present the Mansion House for the public. The historical society has received grants for planning for its rehabilitation as a visitor attraction. We want to highlight the house during upcoming its 250th Anniversary.

RECENT EFFORTS In the last 3 years we have hired historic architects, preservation consultants, museum and tourism experts, archaeologists, engineers, masonry and materials experts, draftswoman, estimators and skilled trades people to prepare estimates, plans, analysis, budgets and in-depth reports that will serve and guide us for years to come. We've also done some historic research, basic security, removal of asbestos, and cleaning out projects. Some masonry work has been done.

PLANS We are hoping to fully restore the house on the inside and out, and to reconstruct the two-story Kitchen Wing which was demolished only in the 1940s to create a visitor center, and a recreated kitchen hearth to demonstrate Colonial era cooking. There will be a stairway to permit visitors to enter the second floor of the house, where we will have artisans demonstrating various Colonial era trades and crafts and small temporary exhibit space to tell stories about Pearson, the house, or Revolutionary War themes.

Our meeting tonight is one step in getting your input on how we can offer interesting programs in 2021 and beyond while we continue the work. We may need some photos to screen share, of the exterior house and the Park area, if there are a few interior photos (nice but not necessary) Now we want to get some feedback from you.—please wave, and stop me if you have any questions –

20 minutes SOMETHING SPECIAL MARKET POSITIONING There are several house-museums and historic sites in the nearby area that feature colonial to early American Revolution.

What could make Isaac Pearson's House unique?

Several of the sites highlight military people and battles. Isaac was not a military man. He did not fight in the battles, although he was killed in wartime. His land was not a major battlefield, even though it was effected by the war. Some of the nearby house-museums highlight historic furniture and objects. We found that there is no authentic living-history visitor experience for that era in our local area.

So, we are do not plan to create a traditional “do not touch” house-museum with furnished rooms and historic objects behind barriers and ropes. We have decided to feature colonial life - “living history” activities, and events for nearby communities and visitors; and to act as a tourism hub where people can be referred to the other great sites that are in the area.

Can you tell us if you have visited other living history type visitor museums or historic sites that do living history? What were they? Was it interesting to you and your family?

The pandemic changes some of these things, but if you feel like you're really interested and want to see them, we can do our best to create programs that fit these times safely. Would you like visiting with a historic architect or archaeologist to ask questions and see artifacts dug up here? What about that would be interesting?

What about a program on learning to do our family genealogy? Would you be interested in learning more about slavery in this area in the colonial era? What about meeting an expert on colonial taverns, or colonial life? Or participating in a live demonstrations of cooking, or music performances? What about how to build a timber frame house?

Do you have other ideas about how we can talk about these 8 enslaved men and women who lived and worked at the Isaac Pearson House in the 18th Century? What thoughts do you have on our plans as we have described them so far?

Conclusion 5 minutes Donna--We are getting to the end of our time together. But we wanted to know if there anything else you would like to add. Is there anything else you think we should know? Thank you.

Donna --Thank you for your participation in our community conversation today. Your comments will really help us as we continue planning for the rehabilitation of the Isaac Pearson House and its educational programming.

Total 60 minutes

Order #	Order Date	First Name	Last Name	Email	Quantity	Ticket Type	Order Type	Total	Eventbrite	Attendee	Home Address	Home City	Home State	Home Zip	Home Country	Would you describe yourself as
1.59E+09	2021-01-2	Amanda	Irlle	irleama@yahoo.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 169 Ruskin ave	Hamilton	NJ	8610	US	Millennial
1.59E+09	2021-01-2	Donna Ann	Harris	donna@heritageconsultinginc.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 422 S Cam 422 South	Philadelph PA		19147	US	Millennial
1.59E+09	2021-01-2	Linda	Biondi	linda.biondi@verizon.net	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 603 paxson	Mercerville NJ		8619	US	Millennial other
1.59E+09	2021-01-2	Donna	Harris	donna@heritageconsultinginc.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 422 south Camac st	Philadelph PA		19147	US	Millennial other
1.6E+09	2021-02-0	Matthew	Leilich	m.leilich@yahoo.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 7 Wolfpack Road	Hamilton NJ		8619	US	Millennial millennial
1.6E+09	2021-02-0	John	maleski	john.maleski@gmail.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 330 EXTONTVILLE RD	Allentown NJ		8501	US	Young Fan other
1.6E+09	2021-02-0	LATOYA	WILSON	latoyawilson94@gmail.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 1201 Klock Apt 9	Mercerville NJ		8619	US	Person of millennial   person of color
1.61E+09	2021-02-0	Lauren	O'Neal	maryfrancesoneal@outlook.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 47 West Upper Ferry	Ewing Tow NJ		8628	US	Millennial other
1.61E+09	2021-02-0	Samuel	Stephens	sstephens@capd.org	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 1622 Riverside Drive	Trenton NJ		8618	US	Millennial other
1.61E+09	2021-02-1	Evan	Hertzong	evanehertzog@gmail.com	1	General Admission	Free Order	0	0	0	Attending 422 S Cam 422 South	PHILADEL PA		19147	US	Millennial millennial   other





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July 16, 2021

To: James Kirkland, New Jersey Council on the Humanities

From: Donna Ann Harris and Dr. Michael Skelly

Subject: Final Report on "Isaac Pearson Mansion House and Park, Experimenting with Programming for Diverse Audiences during Restoration" Incubation Grant

We are attaching the final report for the New Jersey Council on the Humanities \$5,000 grant awarded to the Isaac Pearson House in 2019 for the project "Isaac Pearson Mansion House and Park, Experimenting with Programming for Diverse Audiences during Restoration" Incubation Grant. The grantee was the Historical Society of Hamilton Township.

This project had four component parts:

1. Prepare an Annotated Bibliography
2. Prepare for and Host Two Focus Groups
3. Prepare for and Host Four Educational Programs
4. Prepare and Implement a Survey of Program Participants and write a Final Report.

We began work on this grant in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in October 2020, with the hope that the pandemic would not linger after the New Year. We planned our work over nine months according to a spreadsheet (attached) which was optimistic at the time, given the uncertainty of the COVID-related social distancing measures enacted by Gov. Murphy.

The following is a brief overview of the four grant components.

1. **Prepare an Annotated Bibliography.** The first deliverable was an Annotated Bibliography of academic literature published in the last five years, to explore how museums and historic sites engage in interpretation of diverse history at historic sites. We chose this topic because the owners of the house, the Pearson family, owned slaves in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We believed that slavery would be an important interpretive theme for the historic mansion house in the future. The documentary literature from Isaac

Pearson's will notes the names of the enslaved people at the Pearson House, but much more research is needed to fully bring these individuals to life for visitors.

Ms. Harris and her intern were looking for examples of "how" other historic sites have interpreted slavery. The articles, books, and dissertations included in this annotated bibliography provide best practices, exemplary programs, and examples of historic sites engaging with the history of diverse and marginalized groups. The examples provided in the bibliography are wide reaching, from smaller interventions to strengthen guided tours to in-depth conversation series that bring the past into the present. The final bibliography dated February 3, 2021 (attached) includes annotations for three books that are especially helpful about the interpretation of slavery and notes how these books could be useful to the Pearson House in the future.

- 2. Prepare for and Host Two Focus Groups.** Planning for this component of the grant was undertaken in January and February of 2021 when social distancing mandates were still in place. We planned for two focus groups to be held through the Zoom video platform using their webinar feature, which provided transcriptions of the webinar. Dr. Michael Skelly searched for millennials and African American parents to attend the focus groups. He found it difficult to identify potential stakeholders because organizations with which he had ongoing relationships, such as African American churches, had been closed for months at this point and were unlikely to reopen soon. Organizations geared to millennials, such as sports leagues and community organizations, were also closed. Dr. Skelly made a good faith effort to encourage attendance in these two focus groups.

We used Event Brite for the webinar registration and used the Event Brite integration with Zoom to present the focus group webinars. This was the first time the consultant used Event Brite and Zoom together, and she made some errors in posting the first invitation for the focus group. Only one person signed up, so the event was cancelled. Another evening date, February 17, 2021, was chosen. Nine people signed up, again using Event Brite. We used Zoom for the video webinar. Again, the consultant was not experienced using the Zoom webinar features and as a result some, but not all, of the attendees could view the program. All attendees were able to hear it. Again, due to inexperience, we were unable to use the transcription feature for Zoom webinars. As a back-up measure, Ms. Harris had an intern take minutes during the focus group, which are complete and attached to this final report.

- 3. Prepare for and Host Four Educational Programs.** Volunteers associated with the Pearson House met on March 9, 2021, to review the focus group minutes and pick four possible educational programs that could be presented in April before the end of the grant period. Again, Dr. Skelly found identifying four speakers for these educational programs to be difficult during the pandemic. Dr. Skelly was able to identify two high quality speakers. Regina Fitzpatrick, the Genealogy Librarian at the State of NJ Library, made a presentation on June 21, 2021, entitled "Researching Your Pre-May 1848 New Jersey Ancestors." Sean McHugh, Senior Archaeologist at Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., a cultural resource consulting firm, spoke about the Phase One Archeological Study for the Pearson House undertaken in 2019. His presentation on June 24, 2021, was entitled "Recent Archeological Finds from the Isaac Pearson Mansion House, Hamilton Township NJ (c 1773)."

Due to social distancing requirements, we decided to host these educational programs on Zoom and used Event Brite for registration with a "pay what you wish" donation. We got good advice from

another nonprofit organization about how to use these two platforms for their respective strengths—separately-- and to seek donations from attendees. Both programs went off without a hitch, and we received close to \$200 in donations. We had ten attendees on June 21 and 11 attendees on June 24 and were very pleased with both presenters. Attached are all of the promotional materials (flyers, press releases) we produced for these two events, and where these materials were posted to gather an audience.

4. **Prepare and Implement a Survey of Program Participants and Final Report.** Immediately after the presentations, we asked participants to fill out a ten-question online survey hosted through Survey Monkey. We asked participants three times to fill out the survey within two days of the presentations and received over a 50% response rate for both presentations which we thought was good. Attendees at both events were complimentary of each presenter, and they noted that the time of day and length of the program were just right for their interests. We asked several demographic questions and found out that the majority of the audience for each program was white, over 65, had no children living at home, and lived in Hamilton Township or neighboring areas.

There is a more extensive summary of the survey results in the attached report about the educational programs. We also detail the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the grant program, and how the pandemic influenced or limited our options to present these programs. The report also identifies mistakes we made based on our inexperience working with some of the technological platforms we chose to use.

Finally, this report provides conclusions for the grant and its usefulness for the Isaac Pearson House as it begins programming for this Revolutionary War-era historic site. We are highly grateful that the NJ Council on the Humanities chose to invest in this historic property so early in its development as an historic site. The Isaac Pearson House volunteers are literally and figurately starting from scratch in their effort to have the site become a Revolutionary War-era visitor attraction with interesting programming for visitors. This grant made it possible for the organization to offer educational programming to the public in its own name for the first time. Despite the fact that the building today is unrestored and is currently not able to accommodate visitors inside, we can use quality programming to build excitement about the building and its future. These incubator programs showed that the public will participate in programs conducted by the Isaac Pearson House during the restoration work. Again, we are grateful to the New Jersey Council on the Humanities for their investment in the Isaac Pearson House with this grant.