



# **FINAL**

## **Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan for the Jacobus Vanderveer House Audience Research**



**Prepared for the Friends  
of the Jacobus Vanderveer  
House**

**August 2013**



This project has been funded in part by a grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which is administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

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## PART 2: INTRODUCTION

Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan is a project of The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House. This project has been funded in part by a grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which is administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

The Jacobus Vanderveer House is an extensively restored ca. 1772-1777 Dutch Colonial home owned by the Township of Bedminster in New Jersey. The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House were organized in 1998 to “restore, develop and operate the house as a nationally significant historic site and museum.” The Friends have undertaken a remarkable number of projects in connection with the preservation and restoration of the property. They have also recently furnished the property with a fine collection of period-appropriate objects. There are also several objects loaned from other museums. The Friends are now undertaking a comprehensive heritage tourism assessment, which will help them to better understand their stakeholders and current and future audience, so that quality educational programming can be developed for the various audiences.

This report is the culmination of the Heritage Tourism Assessment and Phase I of the larger project. The second phase will be the development of an interpretive plan which will identify the historic themes, cast of characters and story lines about this important Revolutionary War historic site. The third and final phase is an interpretive product and implementation strategies will be developed later this year. The interpretive product will enable the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House to use the house, the research archive and its historic collections to provide higher levels of visitor education and enjoyment. One of the major goals of this project is to develop programming and visitor service strategies so that the site can be open more often to the public.

Donna Ann Harris, principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., completed this report. The following work products were completed jointly with Emily T. Cooperman, PhD, a consultant working collaboratively with Ms. Harris throughout the project.

1. Historic Houses Today Presentation
2. Cohort Sites to Visit Memo
3. Project Update Presentation

Dr. Cooperman edited and supplied helpful comments on all reports for this portion of the project in advance of submission.

### **Steering Committee**

The Friends formed a steering committee made up of board members Suzanne Witt, Katy Rupert, Robin Ray (Board Secretary) and Leslie Molé (Board President). Phyllis Shapiro a consultant to the JVH Board is also a member of the steering committee. This Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan grant began in May 2011 and all three phases will be complete March 2013.

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## How This Report Is Organized

The report is a compilation of previously submitted reports and work products for the Heritage Tourism Assessment. This report is divided into a series of sections, and each section addresses a specific topic or phase of the study.

The Project Summary provides a brief overview of each part of the larger project.

The Summary of Findings is a completion of all the findings from our research. This summary describes the general audience for site (age, gender, household composition and location) and specific program interests for both adults and adults.

The remaining chapters are work products produced since September 2011 for this project.

## Project Summary

This section provides a brief overview of each part of the project.

### PHASE I: Project Start-up and Research

#### *1. Board presentation: Historic House Museums Today*

This presentation was made on May 11, 2011 at a board meeting of the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House. This presentation focused on an overview of the activities and best practices for historic sites including collections management, public relations, fundraising and budgeting. We also discussed current programming at the Vanderveer House and how this could be expanded if the house was open more often than once a month. Finally the presentation focused on the recent audience research about historic sites and history museums, by Reach Museum Advisors, a national consulting firm. Their research uncovered that 55% of visitors to historic sites and history museums dislike guided tours and would rather view the site on their own.

#### *2. Heritage Tourism Audience Research*

The Audience Research portion of this project had five component parts.

1. Interviews with Seven Current and Former Board Members
2. An Online Survey of those generally interested in Vanderveer House and Colonial Christmas Attendees
3. Interviews with Four Stakeholder Groups
  - a. Interviews with Staff and Board president at Crossroads of the American Revolution National Historic Area
  - b. Interviews with Four Somerset County Partner Organizations including Somerset County History Roundtable Meeting

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- c. Interviews with Three Revolutionary War School Program Administrators
  - d. Research on Informal Educational Programs for Children
  4. Three Focus Groups of Vanderveer Visitors
  5. Cohort Site Visits and Review of Web Sites made by Friends Board Members.
  6. Compile all reports into Audience Research Report (this report).

A discussion of the objectives of each of the component parts of the research project.

### **1. Interviews with Seven Current or Former Vanderveer Board Members**

We conducted telephone interviews with seven current or former Friends Board members to determine their interests in programming at the Vanderveer House and gain general comments about the future.

### **2. Online Survey of Those Generally Interested in Vanderveer House Including Participants in Colonial Christmas**

This survey was undertaken from November 30, 2011 to January 30, 2012 to identify programming interests for a general audience. The survey also gathered insights into the Colonial Christmas event. Volunteers and consultants administered a paper-based version of the online survey during the luncheon. In addition, the survey was heavily advertised on the organization's Facebook account and web site. We gathered 164 survey responses during this period using the Survey Monkey survey instrument.

### **3. Interviews with Four Stakeholder Groups**

We conducted telephone interviews or site visits to the following groups of stakeholders.

- a. In person interview with Cate Litvack of Crossroads of the American Revolution and Kevin Tremble, Board President of Crossroads. The purpose of the interviews was to get advice and discuss story line and messaging for Vanderveer House. We also discussed coordination options with Crossroads Heritage Area in the near term.
- b. In-person interviews with three Revolutionary War sites in New Jersey to discuss their school programs. We visited three sites to see their formal school programs in action.
- c. Phone interviews with Somerset County partner organizations on current joint programming and expansion opportunities. We attended Somerset County History Roundtable Meeting on March 24, 2012 and include notes on the meeting in this report.
- d. Additional research on informal educational programming for children. Our research focused on programs for Homeschool children; Private school

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educational programming; Boy Scout Merit Badges, Girl Scout Merit Badges and starting a Junior Docent/Guide program.

#### **4. Three Focus Groups**

We prepared and conducted focus groups held in May 2012 at the Vanderveer House. Participants were recruited from the online survey based on answers to specific questions. Eighteen people participated in three focus groups organized into the following categories.

1. Parents with children or grandchildren in their home;
2. People very interested in history and the Revolutionary War and
3. People with some interest in local history.

#### **5. Visits to Cohort Sites and Website Reviews**

Friends Board members were asked to visit other historic sites to review how they present their historic site to the public. We provided a list of ten historic sites in New York City, New Jersey and Philadelphia that have exemplary interpretive programs, which the Friends could use as models for their own efforts. Board members were asked to provide feedback on their visits to these historic sites using a short reporting form. Board members were also asked to review web sites of these historic sites if a visit could not be made, and provide feedback using a short reporting form.

#### **6. Heritage Tourism Assessment Report**

We compiled all documents already created noted above, to create the final Heritage Tourism Assessment report.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

#### *Audience for the Jacobus Vanderveer House*

Based on our interviews with current and former board members, the on-line survey, interviews with partner organizations and focus groups, the primary audience for the Jacobus Vanderveer House can be described as women between 35 and 65 years old. Half of this audience has children at home and is interested in programming for children. The audience for the site is mainly local area residents within half an hour drive of the property. This visitor profile is typical of most historic sites nationwide.

This audience is interested in programming on the following three interpretive themes:

1. The history of the American Revolution,
2. Everyday life in the 18th Century and
3. Local history

While the Jacobus Vanderveer House is significant as the probable headquarters of General Henry Knox during the Revolutionary War, not all visitors are interested in this story line

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based on our research for this project. We recommend that there be balanced programming among all three of the major interpretive themes rather than focusing solely on Revolutionary War storylines.

### *Programming Activities*

Survey respondents were interested in both guided and self-guided activities at the Vanderveer House. This is consistent with responses from the Board interviews and focus group participants. No one type of activity received overwhelming preference. Current visitors were interested in the following types of activities:

- Special events
- Seasonal events
- Monthly lectures, classes, crafts
- Partner developed tours such as Five Generals tour or Journey to the Past Weekend
- Children's activities
- Holiday activities and
- Routine weekend open public hours.

### *Staffing the Site*

Focus group participants, current and former board members, and other interviewees expressed the desire that the Vanderveer House be open more often to the public. Interviews with current and former board members and focus group participants acknowledged that the current Board of Trustees is implementing most of the current programming. Suggestions were made to broaden the volunteer participation or hire full or part time staff to undertake new activities so that the site could be open more often than the current practice of once a month. Based on our research, we recommend that the Board set a goal to be open on both weekend days from April to October, for special events at other times in the year and by appointment at other times in the near term future (three to five years).

### *Programming for Adults*

Survey respondents sought a wide variety of ways to learn about the Vanderveer House. Survey respondents wished to visit the site using the following three self-guided activities:

- A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions. The guide responds to visitor questions and does not offer a scripted "spiel" which permits the visitor to spend as much or as little time in the room as they wish.
- Printed brochures, maps and guides.
- Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, handheld device.

The following seven educational programming activities require groups of volunteers or staff to implement.

- Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases & local artists
- Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House
- Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters

- Guided tours
- Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters
- Social events
- Lectures on antiques and historic objects care

During the development of the Interpretive Plan, we will assist the Friends Board to develop specific strategies for staffing (through volunteers and paid staff) and a draft events calendar for 2012-2013.

### *The Colonial Christmas Event*

More than 97 survey respondents attended at least one of the many component parts of the Colonial Christmas events and had high praise for this multi-faced special event organized by the Friends. The majority of the focus group participants attended one or more of the week-long series of activities. Some considered Colonial Christmas the highlight of their holiday season because of the beauty of the decorations in the house, the costumed interpreters, children's activities and the high quality cocktail receptions and luncheon. A dedicated committee plans this highly anticipated holiday event throughout the year. Focus group participants offered high praise, but cautioned that changing the event from a luncheon to a gala dinner might be viewed as elitist.

### *Partner Developed Programming*

We were also interested to learn about the current partners of the Vanderveer House and how the Vanderveer House could build upon partner-developed special events such as the popular Five Generals Tour organized by the Heritage Trails Association or the Journey to the Past Weekend organized by the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Interviews and meetings with partner organizations and other historic sites/museums indicated that there was a limited opportunity to grow the current partnerships due to a variety of factors. We learned that few potential partners had paid staff, relying on volunteers to open their sites. Other obstacles to broad partnerships included some longstanding rivalries between heritage organizations. We learned that there has been poor or inconsistent marketing/advertising of special events held by partners in the past, thus making them wary of taking on new activities. Finally, we learned that there only a modest interest in joint heritage tourism product development by the historic sites in the county. This lack of interest has stymied likely leadership to move forward with new programming. If area leadership is able to organize any heritage tourism product development activity in the future, the Friends should actively cooperate. We concluded that the Friends should not depend on partner-developed tours to bring large numbers of visitors to the site in the near future.

### *Programming for Children*

Children are a significant audience for any historic site because high quality educational programming can bring history to life for young learners. While no children's activity made the top ten interpretive activities in the online survey, survey respondents suggested that hands-



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on activities for children including demonstrations were of keen interest. Formal school programs and children's summer history camp also were of interest survey respondents as well as the focus group participants.

At other Revolutionary War historic sites in New Jersey, there is extensive children's field trip programming that meets state educational standards. Implementing a new formal school program at the Vanderveer House will be labor intensive. Our research showed that it would require two part time, preferably costumed, staff members; quality hands-on lesson plans by educators that met the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and sustained marketing to build a modest program over time. Finally, there are security concerns for school groups visiting the Vanderveer House because of the small size of the rooms and the current open arrangement of the collections requiring that additional staff be available for surveillance. Another concern was the question of whether the site has sufficient restroom facilities for this programmatic use.

Given these concerns about the staffing and marketing to establish a formal school program, we conducted research about best practices from other historic sites for informal programming for children. We learned that homeschool parents and private schools are a possible audience to cultivate. Both groups are looking for quality educational programming but are not bound by strict state educational standards. Therefore these programs can be more flexible in their educational intent, include hands-on activities and demonstrations. These educational programs can be tailoring made to a particular school like the 8th grade history class at the Willow School in Spring 2012, or be offered monthly or by appointment.

Another means to involve young people and students is through Boy and Girl Scout Merit Badge activities. The Vanderveer House can advertise its availability for specific merit badges by providing specific activities. These programs can be made available by appointment to permit individual scouts or dens/troops to undertake these activities. Finally the Vanderveer House can develop a Junior Docent/Guide program for children interested in community service and volunteer opportunities. We learned that most of this informal educational program requires marketing and is best offered within the context of preexisting relationships. All of these programs need at least one person to implement them, even if they are pilot or demonstration programs.

### *Decisions to Make*

The findings from various aspects of the Audience Research project pose many questions for the Board members of the Jacobus Vanderveer House. The Friends Board must have a thorough discussion and achieve consensus on several key issues in order to implement the findings and recommendations from this report:

- How often will the house be open to the public next year? In five years?
- Are the furnishings complete or sufficient to tell the many stories of the house?
- How can technology be used for self-guided tours? What is appropriate? How much will it cost?

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- How will the site be staffed? Will it be staffed by docents/volunteers, part time paid staff or a combination?
  - How will new docents and volunteers be recruited to assist with programming and who will train them?
  - How will the new interpretive programs be marketed and by whom?
  - What is the next phase in the development of the site? Is it the landscape?

The Audience Research Report that follows contains all of the reports, surveys and memos developed for Phase 1 of Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan.

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# Part 3: Historic House Museums Today Presentation

## PART 3: HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS TODAY PRESENTATION

### Historic House Museums Today

1

MAKING  
THE VANDERVEER HOUSE  
A "MUST SEE" DESTINATION  
NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

DONNA ANN HARRIS  
EMILY T. COOPERMAN

### Agenda for tonight

2

- Authenticity and Integrity
- Best practices -- the ways Vanderveer House can continue its success and become a premier historic site:
  - Programming and what do visitors want now
  - Knowing your audience
  - Collections management
  - Public relations
  - Fundraising
- Next steps

### Authenticity

3

- Authenticity in historic sites (the "real thing") is KEY
- Anything not "real," or "original" must be absolutely clear
- Justify anything not "original"
- Don't overemphasize "original"

### Historic Integrity

4

- The "ability of a property to convey its significance"
- To be historic according to state and federal regulation (National and NJ registers of Historic Places) surviving ORIGINAL material must be related to significance

### What are best practices?

5

- Ways of conducting business both "internally" and "externally"
- Meet professional associations' recommendations and guidelines and professional practice consensus
- Consist of: Policies, plans and their implementation
- Key for PUBLIC sites -- guardians of public trust rather than a private organization -- 501(c)3 status

### Initial interpretive themes

6

- Vanderveer family history
- Dutch colonial life in America, and
- the Revolutionary War period including General Knox's time spent in Pluckemin



Current Programming	
BY JVH	With partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Sunday open house</li> <li>• School visits –Colonial Day</li> <li>• Colonial Christmas</li> <li>• Speaker series (past)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer History Camp</li> <li>• Bedminster Fall Fest</li> <li>• Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission events</li> <li>• Heritage Trail Association tours</li> </ul>

Programming goals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the site alive</li> <li>• Be open more often</li> <li>• New programming options based on current research</li> <li>• Reach Museum Advisors work</li> </ul>	

What do historic site visitors want?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% want to visit “on our own” “self curated experiences”</li> <li>• 59% Talk with costumed interpreters-- historians, docents” Staff does not direct their visit”</li> <li>• 48% want to view objects or object-based exhibits</li> <li>• 46% want to attend programs or events</li> </ul>	

What do historic site visitors want?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided tours—only 45% like</li> <li>• 55% don't like guided tours</li> <li>• Podcasts, cell phone tours</li> <li>• Hands on activities</li> <li>• Theater performances</li> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Video clips/movies</li> <li>• Interact with a computer</li> </ul>	

Guided tours are polarizing	
Like guided tours 45%	Don't like guided tours 55%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulated</li> <li>• Insightful</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Enriching</li> <li>• Articulate</li> <li>• In depth information</li> <li>• Communal interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trapped</li> <li>• Controlled</li> <li>• Pressured</li> <li>• Intimidating</li> <li>• Condescending</li> <li>• Too structured</li> <li>• Dumbed down</li> <li>• Crowds</li> </ul>

If there were no restrictions, what would visitors do?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step behind the velvet rope</li> <li>• Get up close to objects</li> <li>• Sit in a chair</li> <li>• Touch or use artifacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go “behind the scenes”</li> <li>• Talk to reenactors</li> <li>• Stay after hours</li> <li>• Wander around</li> </ul>

### Why we do tours

13

- We do them for us, not visitors sake
- Not enough staff/volunteers in each room
- Object protection/surveillance
- Efficient
- Educate/entertain



14

### If half of our visitors don't like tours, what to do instead?

- Exhibit panels to read
- Brochures so they can visit on their own
- Walking tours, podcasts—on their own visits
- Hands on activities, demonstrations
- Eating food/drink
- Music
- Social events
- CREATE A MEMORY

15

### What does this mean for JVH ?

- Self created experiences: labels, brochures
- Interpreter available, but not a tour
- Adventure cards or "day in the life"
- User generated experiences
- Participation in small group activities
- Period costumes, but watch for anachronisms

### Thing to do

16

- Create a teaching collection of real objects
- Reproduction furniture
- Overnight camps, Night in the museum
- Small group behind the scenes tours
- Demonstrations and participatory activities
- Behind the scenes small group tours
- Small group tours with the curator or director



### More things to do

17



- Small group craft activities related to collections/gardens
- Self guided opportunities in house/garden
- Guides available (in costume) but not a tour
- Collector focused small groups to discuss/view objects
- Small group tours with the curator or director

### More things to do

18

- Hands on activities—duplicates or repro objects
- Craft activities that relate to the collection
- Opportunity to take home something created
- Reenactors are well loved
- More user generated content



10

**NJHT funded project**

What we will learn and how we will find out



**Learning about the Vanderveer audience**

**Collections management**

20

- Collections management
  - a crucial "best practice"
- Comes from "public trust"
- Development of appropriate policies and procedures:
  - Accessioning and deaccessioning
  - Loans and loan policies
  - Storage, handling, exhibition conditions



**Collections management 2**

21

- Historic sites often have different kinds of collections
- In a historic site/historic house museum:
  - Most important collection items are the house and other structures and building, and landscape
  - Crafting policies and procedure for these items can, however, be the most challenging because of integrity variables

**Public relations**

22

- Both traditional and social media are needed
- Ramping up PR
- Tools needed
  - Media list
  - Regular newsletter—paper or e-newsletter
  - Web site
  - Facebook
  - Data base to collect emails/addresses

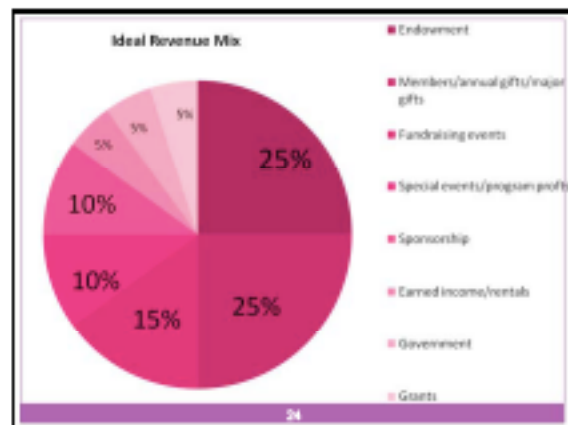


**Fundraising**

23

- The Vanderveer House is a fundraising machine
- Colonial Christmas
- Golf outing
- Revenue sources you control (red)

- Endowment
- Membership/annual gifts/major gifts
- Fundraising events
- Special events/program profits
- Sponsorship
- Earned income/rentals
- Grants
- Government support



## Program implementation



Staff	Volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having the money to hire</li> <li>- Job description</li> <li>- Hiring process</li> <li>- Office infrastructure</li> <li>- Organizational infrastructure</li> <li>- Supervision</li> <li>- Annual work plan</li> <li>- Evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commit to a robust volunteer program</li> <li>- Job descriptions</li> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Retention</li> <li>- Appreciation</li> </ul>

## Some first steps



- Developing a robust volunteer program
  - Create job descriptions for all kinds of jobs
  - Recruit, retain & recognize volunteers
- Create a decent program so the house can be open more often
  - Develop a training program (for adults and teens)
- Offer more programming at the house, so the house is open more often
  - Offer programs for adults and kids year round

## Thank you



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# Part 4: Historic House Museums Today Agenda

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## PART 4: HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS TODAY AGENDA

### Agenda

Jacobus Vanderveer House

Board meeting presentation by Donna Ann Harris and Emily Cooperman

May 18, 2011 7:00PM

### **Historic House Museums Today: Making the Vanderveer House a “must see” destination now and in the future**

1. Role and function of Historic House Museums today
2. Authenticity and integrity
3. Initial interpretive themes
4. Current programming
5. Programming goals
6. Best practices for Vanderveer House to emulate
  - a. Programming
    - i. What do historic house museum visitors want now?—national surveys by Reach Museum Advisors
    - ii. Examples of preferred programs
    - iii. Ideas for programming at Vanderveer House
  - b. Knowing your audience
    - i. NJ HT funded project
  - c. Collections management
    - i. The Public Trust
    - ii. Policies needed
    - iii. Types of collections—house, landscape, objects
  - d. Public relations
  - i. Traditional and new media
  - e. Fundraising
    - i. Typical revenue sources for historic sites
    - ii. An ideal revenue mix
  - f. Program implementation
    - i. Staff vs. volunteers
7. Next steps towards becoming a “must see” historic site

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# Part 5: Historic House Museums Today Bibliography

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## PART 5: HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS TODAY BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Brief Bibliography*

#### *Historic House Museums Today*

##### **General Historic Site Information**

Baldwin, Joan. *What Comes First, Your Guide to Building a Strong, Sustainable Museum or Historical Organization (With Real Life Advice from Folks Who've Done It)*, Museum Association of New York, 2010, found at <http://manyonline.org/2010/10/manys-latest-publication-what-comes-first/>

Durel, John and Anita. "A Golden Age for Historic Sites," *History News*, found at <http://www.aaslh.org/documents/GoldenAgeHNSummer07.pdf>

George, Gerald. *Starting Right: A Basic Guide to Museum Planning*, Second Edition. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2004.

"How Sustainable Is Your Historic House Museum?" American Association For State And Local History Technical Leaflet #244, *History News*, volume 63, number 4, Autumn 2008, found at [www.aaslh.org/hhouses.htm](http://www.aaslh.org/hhouses.htm).

Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum*, e-book found at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/>

##### **Interpretation**

Levy, Barbara, Sandra Lloyd, and Susan Schreiber. *Great Tours!: Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2002.

National Park Service. Teaching with Historic Places. [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp).

##### **Audience Research from Reach Museum Advisors Blog**

<http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/>

The following blog posts can be reviewed on the Reach Museum Advisors blog

[http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/history\\_visitors/](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/history_visitors/)

Interpretation Preferences: How 40,000 museum-goers prefer to experience museums May 19, 2010

What Not To Do (or, why I hate (most) guided tours) October 23, 2009

Random good ideas July 22, 2008

Top Ten, No, Fourteen List of Interpretation Preferences June 24, 2008

Other blog posts of interest can also be found in this section of the Reach Museum Blog.

[http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/ct-cultural-consumers/](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/ct-cultural-consumers/)

Guided Tours: A Polarizing Interpretation Method January 6, 2009

The Love-Hate Relationships with Guided Tours February 11, 2009

Why Should We Care? The Perception of a Caring Staff December 1, 2008

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# Part 6: Cohort Sites to Visit Memo

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## PART 6: COHORT SITES TO VISIT MEMO

October 31, 2011

To: JVH Board

From: Donna Ann Harris, Emily T. Cooperman

### **Re: Cohort Sites and Best Practices Research, Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan, Jacobus Vanderveer House**

We feel it is crucial for board members to experience other historic sites and their interpretation in order to enable the best outcome of the current project, and to continue to refine and improve Vanderveer House programs.

- This memo provides a list of places we recommend for visits by board members as sites that have interpretation/management practices that can inform programs at Vanderveer House.
- These sites should not be seen as the only places that board members should visit to report to their peers and inform this project, merely as a place to start.
- These sites are not necessarily “apples to apples” – not all are properties that have a house of the same date or use the same themes in their interpretation, although many have common points with the Vanderveer House. Some are recommended for interpretive and/or management approaches.
- The questions/topics below should be used as the basis of gathering information, but of course should not limit the information gathered by visiting board members.
- Ideally, this visiting effort should be part of an ongoing project in which board members gather information about peer organizations and report to the board at large in order to continue to refine and improve programs at Vanderveer House.
- Some of these historic site are open seasonally, so please check before you plan your visit to make sure they are open the day you wish to visit.

#### *Information to be gathered for Interpretation/Tour Experience*

- Name of the site you visited, date, time
- Name of person reviewing the site
- Did you use the site's web site in planning your trip? Yes/no
  - Did you have any comments about how easy their web site was to navigate?
  - Were directions to get to the site clear? Yes/no
- If you came by car, was it easy to understand where to park?
- How do you get into the site for the tour, and was it easy to find where tours start?
- How were you greeted? Was it warm, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic? Did the guide introduce his/herself and the tour experience in a clear and effective way?
- Do you feel the docent was knowledgeable, and wanted you to enjoy learning at this site? What could have been better?
- What were the major themes/concepts/ideas you learned from the visit? Did you feel engaged by these?
- What can you tell about who their intended audience(s) is/are? Can you tell if they have different tours for different age groups and people with different interests? Do these themes seem appropriate for the site to you?
- How were historic objects used, or not, in the visit? If objects were used, do you think the way they were used was effective?

- What is the more general role of collections in visitor experience/interpretation of the site?
- Did the tour make you want to come back to the site to learn more or experience a different kind of tour/experience they might offer, or was one tour there enough for you?
- Were there brochures, or other interpretive/strategies methods used (e. g.: self guided interpretive panels, exhibits, pod casts, audio guides, cell phone tours, etc.)? Please identify any you saw, and note comments about quality.
- Does the site use first-person (i.e. actors in period costume) interpretation? If yes, did you think this was effective?

## **Peer Historic Sites with Noteworthy Collections, Interpretation, Social Media or Stories for Adults and Children**

**Cliveden of the National Trust**, Site of the 1777 Battle of Germantown, in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA.

Cliveden of the National Trust  
6401 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 848-1777 phone  
Email [info@cliveden.org](mailto:info@cliveden.org)  
<http://www.cliveden.org/>

**Historic House Wyck**, Garden and Farm, an historic site that served as the ancestral home to members of one Germantown family for more than 300 years. In the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA

6026 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144  
215-848-1690 phone  
Email: [wyck@wyck.org](mailto:wyck@wyck.org)  
<http://www.wyck.org/>

**Alice Paul Institute Inc. at Paulsdale**, home of Alice Paul, author of the equal rights amendment. Honoring her legacy, preserving her home, developing future leaders, in Mt. Laurel NJ (suburban Philadelphia)

Alice Paul Institute, Inc. at Paulsdale  
PO Box 1376 (mailing)  
128 Hooton Road (street)  
Mount Laurel, New Jersey 08054  
856-231-1885 phone  
Email: [info@alicepaul.org](mailto:info@alicepaul.org)  
<http://www.alicepaul.org>

**Tenement Museum**. We tell the stories of 97 Orchard Street. In recognizing the importance of this seemingly ordinary building, the Tenement Museum has re-imagined the role that museums can play in our lives.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
97 Orchard Street (Museum)  
108 Orchard Street (Museum Shop and tour start location)  
New York, NY  
212-982-8420 phone general  
Purchase tickets by phone 866-606-7232  
Email [lestm@tenement.org](mailto:lestm@tenement.org)

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[http://www.tenement.org/Virtual-Tour/index\\_virtual.html](http://www.tenement.org/Virtual-Tour/index_virtual.html). This is their virtual tour.  
<http://www.tenement.org/> This is an especially rich web site, please take time to look through all of its component parts.

**The Old Barracks Museum** serves as an educational center for Colonial and American history, and stands as the last remaining structure of its kind. 20,000 schoolchildren visit annually.

Old Barracks Museum  
Barrack Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608  
(609) 396-1776 phone  
Email [Barracks@voicenet.com](mailto:Barracks@voicenet.com)  
<http://www.barracks.org/>

**Updike Farmstead** of the Princeton Historical Society (open first Saturday and Third Wednesdays each month)

354 Quaker Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
609.921.6748 phone  
[erin@princetonhistory.org](mailto:erin@princetonhistory.org) (Erin Dougherty is Executive Director)  
<http://www.princetonhistory.org/locations/updike-farmstead.cfm>

**Howell Living History Farm**, a facility of the Mercer County Park Commission

101 Hunter Road  
70 Wooden's Lane GPS address  
Titusville, New Jersey 08560.  
(609) 737-3299 phone  
Email: [pwatson@mercercounty.org](mailto:pwatson@mercercounty.org).  
<http://www.howellfarm.org/>

**Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms**, This 30-acre National Historic Landmark is the centerpiece of Gustav Stickley's early 20th century country estate, known as Craftsman Farms.

2352 Route 10 West,  
Morris Plains, New Jersey 07950  
973.540.0311 phone  
email: [info@stickleymuseum.org](mailto:info@stickleymuseum.org)  
<http://www.stickleymuseum.org/>

**Beth Sholom Visitor Center**, Frank Lloyd Wright's only synagogue, located in Elkins Park, PA (suburban Philadelphia)

Beth Sholom Synagogue Preservation Foundation  
8231 Old York Road  
Elkins Park, PA 19027  
215-887-1342 x227 phone  
Email: [jrosen@bethsholomcongregation.org](mailto:jrosen@bethsholomcongregation.org) tour information  
[www.bethsholompreservation.org](http://www.bethsholompreservation.org)

For another example of virtual tours:

House museums in Morristown  
<http://www.morristown-nj.org/history.html>



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# Part 7: Operating Hours for Cohort Site Visits

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## PART 7: OPERATING HOURS FOR COHORT SITE VISITS MEMO

November 17, 2011

To: Leslie Mole

From: Alexander Balloon and Donna Ann Harris

### **Subject: Operating Hours for Cohort Historic Sites**

Below are the selected hours for cohort sites. Some historic sites operate on a seasonal schedule, and are open by appointment only during the Winter. Other sites have a year-round schedule and are open regular hours. After speaking with each site, all sites recommend to phone in advance for a group and/or to schedule a visit.

**Cliveden of the National Trust**, Site of the 1777 Battle of Germantown, in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA.

Cliveden of the National Trust  
6401 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 848-1777 phone  
Email [info@cliveden.org](mailto:info@cliveden.org)  
<http://www.cliveden.org/>

*Hours: Winter schedule by appointment only. Normal schedule resumes April 1st.*

**Historic House Wyck**, Garden and Farm, an historic site that served as the ancestral home to members of one Germantown family for more than 300 years. In the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA

Wyck  
6026 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144  
215-848-1690 phone  
Email: [wyck@wyck.org](mailto:wyck@wyck.org)  
<http://www.wyck.org/>

*Hours: Winter schedule by appointment only. Normal schedule resumes April 1st.*

**Alice Paul Institute Inc. at Paulsdale**, home of Alice Paul, author of the equal rights amendment. Honoring her legacy, preserving her home, developing future leaders, in Mt. Laurel NJ (suburban Philadelphia)

Alice Paul Institute, Inc. at Paulsdale  
PO Box 1376 (mailing)  
128 Hooton Road (street)  
Mount Laurel, New Jersey 08054  
856-231-1885 phone  
Email: [info@alicepaul.org](mailto:info@alicepaul.org)  
<http://www.alicepaul.org>

*Hours: Winter schedule by appointment with selected open events. December 4th 2-4pm (Holiday Open House); March 10th 12:00 & 1:00pm; April 14th 12:00 & 1:00pm (Selected Second Saturdays thereafter)*

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**Tenement Museum.** We tell the stories of 97 Orchard Street. In recognizing the importance of this seemingly ordinary building, the Tenement Museum has re-imagined the role that museums can play in our lives.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
97 Orchard Street (Museum)  
108 Orchard Street (Museum Shop and tour start location)  
New York, NY  
212-982-8420 phone general  
Purchase tickets by phone 866-606-7232  
Email [lestm@tenement.org](mailto:lestm@tenement.org)

*Hours: Year-round schedule; purchase tickets in advance for selected programs. Only accessible by guided tour (advance purchase required/recommended). Museum open 10-5pm. 7 Days a week. Closed Holidays.*

**The Old Barracks Museum** serves as an educational center for Colonial and American history, and stands as the last remaining structure of its kind. 20,000 schoolchildren visit annually.

Old Barracks Museum  
Barrack Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608  
(609) 396-1776 phone  
Email [Barracks@voicenet.com](mailto:Barracks@voicenet.com)  
<http://www.barracks.org/>

*Hours: Year round schedule; 10-5pm 7 Days a Week Closed Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-25, & Jan 1.*

**Updike Farmstead of the Princeton Historical Society** (open first Saturday and Third Wednesdays each month)

354 Quaker Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
609.921.6748 phone  
[erin@princetonhistory.org](mailto:erin@princetonhistory.org) (Erin Dougherty is Executive Director)  
<http://www.princetonhistory.org/locations/updike-farmstead.cfm>

*Hours: Limited hours; Dec 3rd 12-4pm Holiday Shopping Event, Call for Appointments for Other Times.*

**Howell Living History Farm**, a facility of the Mercer County Park Commission

101 Hunter Road  
70 Wooden's Lane GPS address  
Titusville, New Jersey 08560.  
(609) 737-3299 phone  
Email: [pwatson@mercercounty.org](mailto:pwatson@mercercounty.org).  
<http://www.howellfarm.org/>

*Hours: Seasonal schedule. February-November 10:00am - 4:00pm Weekdays February through November Tuesday - Friday (Farm closed on Mondays) Call for Special Saturday Programs.*

**Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms**, This 30-acre National Historic Landmark is the centerpiece of Gustav Stickley's early 20th century country estate, known as Craftsman Farms.

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2352 Route 10 West,  
Morris Plains, New Jersey 07950  
973-540-0311 phone  
email: [info@stickleymuseum.org](mailto:info@stickleymuseum.org)  
<http://www.stickleymuseum.org/>

*Hours: Year round schedule; Saturdays and Sundays — 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tours depart hourly: 11:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Except during Open House events, the Log House may only be viewed via guided tour. Closed the weekends of Christmas (December 24, 25) and New Year's (December 31 and January 1).*

**Beth Sholom Visitor Center**, Frank Lloyd Wright's only synagogue, located in Elkins Park, PA (suburban Philadelphia)

Beth Sholom Synagogue Preservation Foundation  
8231 Old York Road  
Elkins Park, PA 19027  
215-887-1342 x227 phone  
Email: [jrosen@bethsholomcongregation.org](mailto:jrosen@bethsholomcongregation.org) tour information  
[www.bethsholompreservation.org](http://www.bethsholompreservation.org)

*Hours: Year-round schedule; the Visitor Center and synagogue tours begin on the hour Wednesdays and Thursdays at 10 am, the last tour begins at 1 pm; and Sundays from 10 am, the last tour begins at 3 pm, or by appointment. Groups of 10 or more by appointment only.*

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# Part 8: Online Survey

## PART 8: ONLINE SURVEY

### Vanderveer House Survey



Dear Participant:

You are being invited to participate in an anonymous survey for the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House to learn about visitors' interests and preferences. You were selected as either a recent or potential visitor to this historic site. Your participation in this survey will help us to develop programming to better match the interests and needs of current and future visitors.

This survey is expected to take 5-10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. If you choose to provide your contact information your name will be entered into a random drawing for one iPad 2 on February 1, 2012 at the end of the survey period.

**1. Have you or any member of your family attended any of the following events at the Jacobus Vanderveer House in the past two years? (please select all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Monthly Open House  | <input type="radio"/> Colonial Christmas Reception                                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Fall Fest   | <input type="radio"/> Summer History Camp   |
| <input type="radio"/> Weekend Journey Through the Past Event                      | <input type="radio"/> I have not visited the Vanderveer House within the past two years |
| <input type="radio"/> Colonial Christmas Luncheon                                 | <input type="radio"/> Other Event (please specify)                                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Colonial Christmas Vanderveer House Decorated for Christmas |   |

The Jacobus Vanderveer House is an American Revolutionary War era historic site, and also relates to American domestic life in the eighteenth century. We are seeking your opinion about possible future programming ideas. Please tell us how these potential programs and activities appeal to you.

**2. Would you be interested in any of the following programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to five)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Social Events  | <input type="radio"/> Storytelling programs for adults and children  |
| <input type="radio"/> Shopping Events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists                   | <input type="radio"/> Children's Summer History Camp   |
| <input type="radio"/> Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House                       | <input type="radio"/> School programs for K-12 students  |
| <input type="radio"/> Lectures on antiques and historic objects care   | <input type="radio"/> Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters              |
| <input type="radio"/> Guided tours   | <input type="radio"/> Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters |
| <input type="radio"/> Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree | <input type="radio"/> Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and awards ceremonies    |
| <input type="radio"/> Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults                                   | <input type="radio"/> I am only interested in self-guided programs   |
| <input type="radio"/> Hands-on children's activities   | <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)   |

**3. Would you be interested in any of the following self-guided programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to three)**

<input type="radio"/> Printed brochures, maps, and guides	<input type="radio"/> A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions
<input type="radio"/> Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar hand-held device	<input type="radio"/> Web-based virtual tour
<input type="radio"/> Cellphone tour with "audio only" interpretation	<input type="radio"/> I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House
<input type="radio"/> Exhibit panels without interactive content	<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/> Interactive kiosks	

**4. Would you be interested in participating in an instructional class offered at the Jacobus Vanderveer House on any of the following Colonial crafts for adults or children (please select all that apply)**

<input type="radio"/> Woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools	<input type="radio"/> Painting
<input type="radio"/> Needlepoint, quilting and/or embroidery	<input type="radio"/> Jewelry making
<input type="radio"/> Historic cooking activities	<input type="radio"/> Printmaking
<input type="radio"/> Horticulture-related activities	<input type="radio"/> Candle making
<input type="radio"/> Furniture making	<input type="radio"/> I am not interested in craft programs
<input type="radio"/> Metalworking	<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)

The next section asks about your personal interests as they relate to the story of the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

**5. Are you interested in any of the following topic areas?**

	<i>Not Interested</i>	<i>Somewhat Interested</i>	<i>Interested</i>	<i>Strongly Interested</i>
<i>History of the American Revolutionary War</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Everyday life in the Colonial and early National periods including the life of servants and workers</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Local history of Bedminster and Somerset County</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. How familiar are you with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area?**

<i>Not Familiar</i>	<i>Somewhat Familiar</i>	<i>Familiar</i>	<i>Very Familiar</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. Are you interested in programming specifically for children or grandchildren?**

<i>Not Interested</i>	<i>Somewhat Interested</i>	<i>Interested</i>	<i>Strongly Interested</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. What is your gender?**

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**9. What is your age?**

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 21 and under | <input type="radio"/> 45 to 54     |
| <input type="radio"/> 22 to 34     | <input type="radio"/> 55 to 64     |
| <input type="radio"/> 35 to 44     | <input type="radio"/> 65 and above |

**10. Do you have school age children living in your home?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**11. How far do you live from the Vanderveer House (in terms of drive time)?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 30 minutes or less     | <input type="radio"/> One hour to two hours |
| <input type="radio"/> 30 minutes to one hour | <input type="radio"/> More than two hours   |

**12. If you want to be entered into the random drawing for the iPad 2, please include all of the following contact information. Your responses will be kept confidential.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

One winner will be chosen at random on February 1, 2012 for the iPad 2. We will contact the winner using this contact information.



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## Part 9: Report on Online Survey Results

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## PART 9: REPORT ON ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

### *Survey Background*

The Heritage Tourism Assessment & Interpretive Plan for the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House uses a multi-method approach to better understand the audience of this important historic site. This survey was undertaken by Heritage Consulting Inc. It is part of a broader audience research effort that includes focus groups and key interviews with other area attractions and four Revolutionary War sites. These survey results provide an in-depth look at the Vanderveer House's current audience. The survey highlights information from those who are already involved with the Vanderveer House and how they want to experience the site.

The survey asks key questions such as "Who visits the Vanderveer House?" "What programs interest this audience?" "What types of guided and self-guided programming interest them most?" and "Are they interested in certain historic themes?" These key questions are essential to better match future programming ideas with current audience demand and interest at the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

### *Organization of Report*

This report is organized into sections to provide analysis and recommendations based on this audience research survey effort. It includes sections on survey design, survey overview, methodology, results, recommendations, a brief conclusion and advice on next steps. The recommendations section is meant to inform and introduce key points of discussion. Programs and interpretive efforts should be matched to the Friends' financial resources, volunteer capacity, board support and physical infrastructure. These recommendations should serve as a beginning point of discussion as the site moves ahead with its interpretive planning and programming. As the project continues, these points of discussion should be refined and incorporated into the site's future planning.

### *Survey Design*

In preparation of the survey, Heritage Consulting Inc. reviewed existing brochures, materials and information about the Jacobus Vanderveer House. Additionally, Heritage Consulting Inc. performed a thorough review of audience research survey literature for historic sites and house museums to ensure that the survey methodology was current.

### *Survey Overview*

This audience research survey emphasizes programming options for visitors, asking respondents to evaluate and choose programs of personal interest. The survey methodology incorporated the most recent audience research literature, with a particular emphasis on publications from the American Association of Museums and the American Association for

State and Local History. Programming ideas were identified from a variety of other historic sites and house museums that the consultants viewed as models.<sup>1</sup>

The consultant team advised that national research indicate that many historic site visitors prefer to explore a site on their own, and the survey asks visitors to identify their preferred method for both guided and self-guided tours using a variety of interpretive techniques.

The survey also asked questions about what the consultants, working with the board, identified as the most likely audiences for the site including local residents, families with children, those interested in colonial/military history or referred by the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area.

Finally, the survey asked key demographic questions to identify age, gender, and location. There are many possible demographic questions, but these were selected these as the most relevant to understand the respondent profile relative to the specific targeted audiences.

This survey was reviewed by the committee charged with oversight of the Heritage Tourism Assessment & Interpretive Plan for the Vanderveer House. It was edited for length and content. Committee members include Leslie Molé, Suzanne Witt, Robin Ray, Katie Rupert, Lynn Martin and Phyllis Shapiro. Emily Cooperman PhD, another consultant working on this project, also provided advice on the content of the survey. Particular questions from committee members were answered and addressed, and the consultant team included these suggestions into the survey to better address committee questions and concerns. There were concerns about survey length, so we made several compromises to reduce the number of questions to get the essential information we needed. After these collaborative revisions were completed, the survey “went live” online on Tuesday, November 22, 2011.

#### *Survey Distribution, Collection, and Bias*

The survey was distributed both digitally and in hard copy. Each survey asked the same questions: the only difference was the method of administration. The paper version was administered at the Colonial Christmas Luncheon, a major fundraising event organized by the Friends with more than 100 attendees held on December 1, 2011. Each attendee was given a paper survey at the luncheon and the consultant team and volunteers encouraged attendees to complete the survey. Paper surveys were collected by the consultant team and entered into the Survey Monkey web site/data base.

In order to promote digital participation, a prominent link to the survey was placed on the Vanderveer website, [www.jvanderveerhouse.com](http://www.jvanderveerhouse.com) to invite online responses. We posted an invitation to take the digital survey on the Jacobus Vanderveer Facebook page and reminders to

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<sup>1</sup> Key historic sites programs surveyed included Historic Philadelphia Inc., National Trust for Historic Preservation Division of Historic Sites, Wyck, 1800 House, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, and other sites.

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participate were sent several times during the survey period. Board members of the Jacobus Vanderveer House were also encouraged to post the survey to their social networks to encourage participation in January 2012.

### *Minimizing Bias*

The survey team worked to minimize possible survey bias. After discussion with the Committee members, it was decided that the best opportunity to administer the survey was at the Colonial Christmas luncheon. The large attendance at the event, combined with the event's environment made it an ideal opportunity to administer the survey. If the survey were only administered at the Colonial Christmas event, this may have led to a possible oversampling of Colonial Christmas attendees. In an effort to expand the survey's reach, we placed the survey on the Facebook page of the Vanderveer House and on the site's webpage. Several reminders were posted to encourage participation from a broader audience. The broader audience that answered the survey, when combined with the Colonial Christmas respondents, provides a rich understanding of the current audience for the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

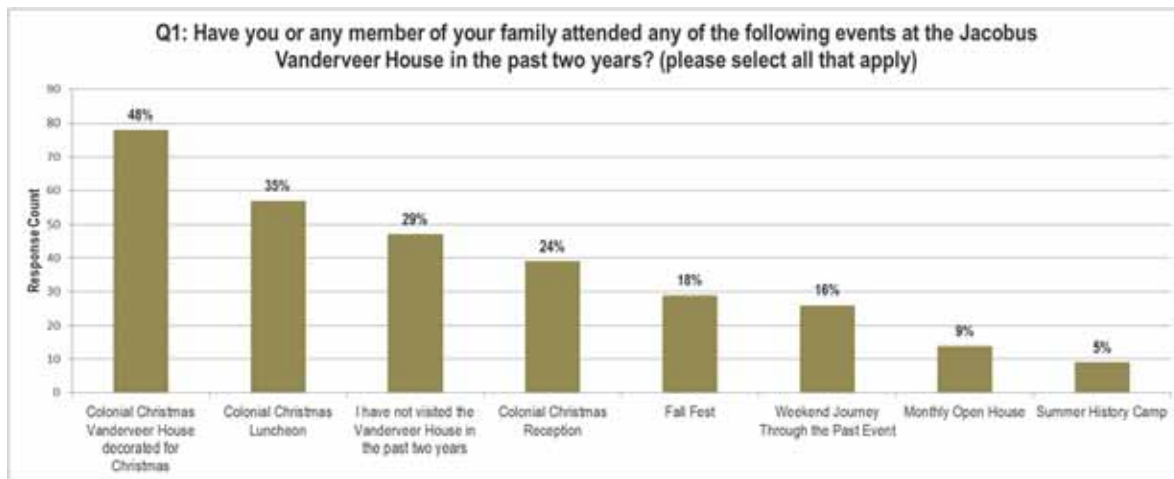
While the survey team worked to minimize bias, one major response bias in this survey is the high percentage of women who took the survey. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents were female. In order to compensate for this bias, we identify responses from males in separate categories, to better understand male interests.

### *Survey Results*

The first survey was collected on Monday, November 7, 2011 and the final survey was collected on Tuesday, January 31, 2012. Over this ten week period a total of 164 respondents participated in the survey. Of the 164 respondents who began the survey, 159 provided a complete response which was a total completion rate of 97%. Ninety seven (97) paper surveys were completed, and 67 were completed digitally. The survey elicited a strong level of participation from those who attended the Colonial Christmas event. Sixty four percent (64%) of respondents had participated in a Colonial Christmas event. While this is a strong response, it was not overwhelming nor skews the survey results in our opinion, because 39% of the responses were from non-Colonial Christmas attendees.

### *Survey Responses: Event Participation*

For the first question, we asked if people had attended events at the Vanderveer House in the last two years.



**Chart 1: Many respondents had attended Colonial Christmas and its component events.**

The most common way respondents interacted with the Vanderveer House was through Colonial Christmas programming. Respondents participated in its component events including visiting the house decorated for Christmas (48%), the Colonial Christmas Luncheon fundraiser (35%) and the Colonial Christmas Reception (24%). While many respondents had been involved with Colonial Christmas, a significant minority (29%) had not visited the house within the last two years. Participation in other events held throughout the year among respondents varied. Participation levels were significantly lower for Fall Fest (18%), Weekend Journey through the Past (16%), Monthly Open House (9%), and Summer History Camp (5%).

#### *Survey Responses: Guided Tours and Facilitated Programs*

For question #2, we asked about guided tours or other programs requiring the involvement of other people to facilitate the educational programs and non-traditional historic house museum activities.

<b>Q 2: Would you be interested in any of the following programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to five)</b>		
<b>Programs</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists	74	45%
Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House	64	39%
Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters	59	36%
Guided tours	54	33%
Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters	50	30%
Social events	49	30%
Lectures on antiques and historic objects care	49	30%
Hands-on children's activities	40	24%
Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree	33	20%
Storytelling programs for adults and children	33	20%
School programs for K-12 students	30	18%
Children's Summer History Camp	23	14%
Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and awards ceremonies	21	13%
Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults	14	9%
I am only interested in self-guided programs	3	2%

**Chart 2: Respondents expressed interest in traditional house museum activities (educational programming) and non-traditional house museum activities (social events).**

Respondents' interests were mixed with respect to programming that required facilitation. There was no strong majority interest in a particular program. Responses clustered around traditional education-based, guided historic site programming, and non-traditional social and event programming. The respondents favored educational lectures related to the house (39%), demonstrations of crafts and activities (36%), guided tours (33%), historical re-enactments (30%), and lectures on antiques and objects care (30%).

The most popular program for respondents was shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists (45%). One component of the Colonial Christmas event is a designer showcase held at the luncheon venue, which could easily have led to a high response for this activity. A significant minority expressed interest in social events (30%). The strong responses for these non-traditional programs indicate that respondents are not only interested in traditional house museum activities, but also in new activities that incorporate non-traditional programming that might have a history component.

Less popular activities among respondents included hands-on children's activities (24%), genealogy classes (20%), storytelling programs (20%), school programming (18%), Children's

Summer History Camp (14%) and book club (14%). Only two percent (2%) of respondents listed that they were only interested in self-guided programming. There was also little interest in military programming (13%). For more information on children's programming, please see Question 10.

If responses from men only are considered, the top two choices among male respondents were educational lectures (58%) and historical re-enactments (55%). Men were least interested in book club activities (10%).

#### *Survey Responses: Self-Guided Activities*

The third question focused on self-guided activities.

<b>Q 3: Would you be interested in any of the following self-guided programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to three)</b>		
<b>Programs</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions	75	51%
Printed brochures, maps, and guides	69	47%
Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, hand-held device	44	30%
Web-based virtual tour	40	27%
Cellphone tour with "audio only" interpretation	28	19%
Interactive kiosks	25	17%
Exhibit panels without interactive content	24	16%
I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House	11	8%

**Chart 3: Respondents valued interactive content for self-guided programming.**

Ranked highest (51%) in this category was personal interaction with a "guide on demand" to answer questions. A guide-on-demand is a knowledgeable docent placed in key rooms to answer visitor questions and share information. The guide-on-demand does not provide a full guided tour, but rather serves as a resource to inform, provoke thought and share brief information. For visitors, a guide-on-demand allows them to visit the property at their own pace and gain knowledge based on their own interest level. These docents can be in period attire or modern clothing. A guide-on-demand is available in each room when visitors are present. They usually provide a welcome to the room, but do not interpret the space unless asked a question by a visitor. This arrangement permits visitors to see the room "on their own" for as long (or short) a visit as they wish, without having to wait for a timed guided tour through the property.

Traditional printed materials (47%) closely followed this as a method of self-guided interpretation. These materials can be brochures maps, booklets, or laminated cards with information about the objects/history of the room that remain in the room. Technology-based self-guided programming rounded out responses with significant minorities about each of

these. Smartphone apps (applications) were the most popular (30%), followed by virtual tours (27%), “audio only” cellphone tours (19%), and interactive kiosks (17%). The least popular option among respondents was exhibit panels without interactive content (16%). Responses indicate that respondent’s value interactivity through personal exchange with a guide-on-demand or interaction through technology, and do not want passive exhibit panels without interactive content.

#### *Survey Results: Most Popular Programs*

In the chart below, we combine activities options from both survey questions two and three, to determine which interpretive methods are most popular with survey respondents.

<b>Combined Programming and Self-Guided Options</b>		
<b>Programs</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions	75	51%
Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists	74	51%
Printed brochures, maps, and guides	69	47%
Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House	64	44%
Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters	59	40%
Guided tours	54	37%
Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters	50	34%
Social events	49	34%
Lectures on antiques and historic objects care	49	34%
Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, hand-held device	44	30%
Hands-on children's activities	40	27%
Web-based virtual tour	40	27%
Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree	33	23%
Storytelling programs for adults and children	33	23%
School programs for K-12 students	30	21%
Cellphone tour with “audio only” interpretation	28	19%
Interactive kiosks	25	17%
Exhibit panels without interactive content	24	16%
Children's Summer History Camp	23	16%
Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and awards ceremonies	21	14%
Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults	14	10%
I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House	11	8%
I am only interested in self-guided programs	3	2%
Self Guided Programs=		

**Table A: This chart illustrates the relative interest in self-guided and structured programs.**



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When both structured programming and self-guided options are combined, all interpretive options can be considered together. By placing these options next to one another this chart illustrates relative interest and popularity when all activities are compared. In the previous sections, the report discussed the most and least popular activities and methods in self-guided and guided/facilitated interpretive methods.

It should be noted that as many people are interested in guided tours as are interested in social events. These activities are fundamentally different, and provide widely different environments for learning about the Vanderveer House. Only approximately one third (37%) of respondents selected a guided tour as one of their top five desired programs.

More than half (51%) selected shopping events and a knowledgeable guide located in specific rooms (51%). These two activities are largely “self-guided” where visitors engage selectively and at their own pace. In comparison, a guided tour is a fixed route on a timetable that offers less flexibility and customization to visitors. Guided tours often have scripts and are offered at set times during the day. Guided tours, if the only interpretive method available, are not flexible for the casual visitor. Guided tours can lead to disappointment if the visitor arrives at 3:45PM and the last tour is 3:30PM, and there is no other way to visit the interiors.

It should further be noted that respondents prefer printed materials and brochures (47%) to a guided tour (37%). This result is similar to those of research conducted nation-wide by Reach Museum Advisors about visitors to historic sites, outdoor history museums and history museums, as further discussed below. Nearly twice as many people want a smartphone app tour as want an exhibit panel without interactive content (17%). Book club activities for adults are clearly of no interest to this audience with a response of only 10%.

Living history and interactive/“hands-on” approaches ranked high in our survey. Interactive media also ranked high, as did social and non-educational programming. When the survey responses are considered as a whole, it is clear that respondents would not be satisfied with a traditional house museum model of static exhibits of exhibit panels, a furnished room and only a guided tour. Respondents prefer multiple methods of interpretation and multiple activities from which to choose for their visit to the Vanderveer House. We will provide recommendations later in this report on how to structure an interpretive program given these survey results.

#### *Survey Results Mirror National Trends*

These responses align closely with current research and literature on house museums. Reach Museum Advisors, a well regarded national museum consulting firm, did a survey of 40,000 museum goers in 2010 and found that visitors to history museums and historic sites prefer to

“explore on their own and interact with staff.”<sup>2</sup> This aligns closely with the top response for this survey, identifying “guide-on-demand” as the most popular means of interpretation from this survey of Jacobus Vanderveer House visitors.

With respect to guided tours, Reach Museum Advisors found that fewer than half (45%) of their survey respondents (visitors to history museums/historic sites) viewed the guided tour as their “preferred method of interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> This aligns closely with this survey’s respondents, with just 37% selecting a guided tour as their preferred interpretive method. Overall, the data we gathered from the 164 respondents aligns with the national surveys. Our survey of this audience of 164 people showed that the traditional interpretive model of the house museum offering a guided tour with furnished rooms and non- interactive, static exhibits leaves many respondents unsatisfied.

Question 4 discussed possible instructional classes offered by the Vanderveer House for adults and children.

<b>Q4: Would you be interested in participating in an instructional class offered at the Jacobus Vanderveer House on any of the following Colonial crafts for adults or children? (please select all that apply)</b>		
<b>Classes</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Historic cooking activities	49	34%
Needlepoint, quilting, and/or embroidery	45	31%
I am not interested in craft programs	40	28%
Jewelry making	37	26%
Candlemaking	36	25%
Painting	35	24%
Horticulture-related activities	33	23%
Woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools	28	19%
Furniture making	22	15%
Printmaking	19	13%
Metalworking	18	13%

**Chart 4: Interest in craft programming was varied.**

Popularity for instructional classes was mixed, with no overwhelmingly strong response for any one particular craft category. We asked about craft programs to identify if this kind of hands-on activity for adults and/or children would be an interest to this audience. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents expressed interest in a craft program, but there was no unified interest in a particular craft program. Historic cooking was the most popular option for respondents (34%)

<sup>2</sup> “40,000 Museumgoers Prefer to Experience Museums” Reach Museum Advisors  
[http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-40000-museumgoers-prefer-to-experience-museums.html](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-40000-museumgoers-prefer-to-experience-museums.html)

<sup>3</sup> “The Love Hate Relationships With Guided Tours” Reach Museum Advisors  
[http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html)

followed by needlepoint (31%), jewelry making (26%), candle making (25%), painting (24%), and horticulture (23%). A significant minority of respondents were not interested in any craft programs (28%). Craft programs will appeal to a small segment of the Vanderveer audience.

In order to compensate for the strong bias towards women, male respondents were considered separately. There was not a major difference between the two groups except in one instructional class; 47% of male respondents expressed interest in woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools. This indicates a stronger interest in woodworking among male respondents. When both men and women were considered together only 19% of respondents choose woodworking as a program of interest.

For Question 4, fourteen percent (14%) of respondents declined to select any response. If this number were added to those who selected “not interested in craft programs” the total

Q5. Are you interested in any of the following topic areas? Percent (# of Respondents)				
Topics	Not Interested	Somewhat Interested	Interested	Strongly Interested
History of the American Revolutionary War	9.6% (14)	14.4% (21)	41.1% (60)	34.9% (51)
Everyday life in the Colonial and early National periods including the life of servants and workers	6.6% (9)	19.7% (27)	46.7% (64)	27.0% (37)
Local history of Bedminster and Somerset County	11.2% (16)	18.9% (27)	44.8% (64)	25.2% (36)

**Question 5 responses showed that the majority of respondents were interested in history.**

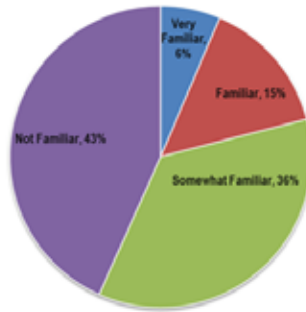
percentage of those not expressing interest in craft programs would be 42%. Thus, nearly half of all respondents are not interested in craft programs. This is significant, and should be considered in developing possible pilot programs in the future. This may be offered as a niche program, geared to very specific interests of a small audience.

#### *Survey Responses: Themes*

In this question #5, we asked about the interest level of respondents to determine in possible very broad themes that the Vanderveer House might use to organize programming.

Overall, respondents were interested in history. Respondents were most interested in History of the American Revolutionary War, with nearly 35% expressing strong interest. Interest in the other topics was similar including everyday life and local history. Local history of Bedminster and Somerset County was the weakest, with 11% of respondents “not interested” in the topic area. There was not a large disparity between interest in the Revolutionary War and other history areas.

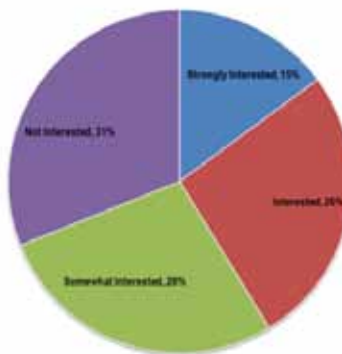
**Q 6: How familiar are you with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area?**



**Chart 6: A majority of respondents was at least somewhat familiar with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area.**

A majority of respondents were at least familiar with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area (57%). Of those who were familiar, a small minority were “very familiar” (6%), while a significant percentage was “somewhat familiar” (36%). A significant percentage of respondents, nearly half (43%), were not familiar with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area. This means they are not familiar with the activities, location, scope and purpose of the National Heritage Area and may not know what a National Heritage Area is. We believe this is a question of marketing the Crossroads of the Revolution National Heritage Area rather than lack of interest in history.

**Q7: Are you interested in programming specifically for children or grandchildren?**



**Chart 7: More than two-thirds of respondents were at least somewhat interested in programming for children or grandchildren.**

### ***Survey Results: Programming for Children***

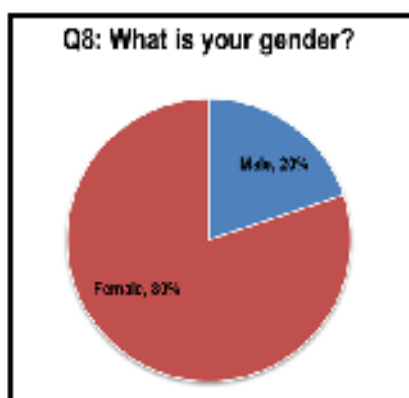
When asked about programming for children or grandchildren a majority of respondents (69%) were interested. Nearly a third of respondents were not interested in programming specifically for children or grandchildren. This is not surprising because only 47% of the respondents have children living at home (Chart 9 below). Of those who had children living in their home, hands-on children's activities were the most popular (47%) followed by school programs for K-12 students (39%), storytelling programs for adults and children (38%), and children's summer history camp (27%).

### ***Summary***

The questions in this section of the survey were designed to highlight specific interest areas among key audience groups for the Jacobus Vanderveer House. Question 5 looked at "history enthusiasts" gauging general interest in history in three key areas: American Revolution, Domestic Life, and Local History. Question 6 looked at connectivity to the National Heritage Area to understand if residents were familiar with the large and active Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area. Question 7 asked about interest in children's programs. Considered together, these questions identified key interest groups for the heritage tourism assessment.

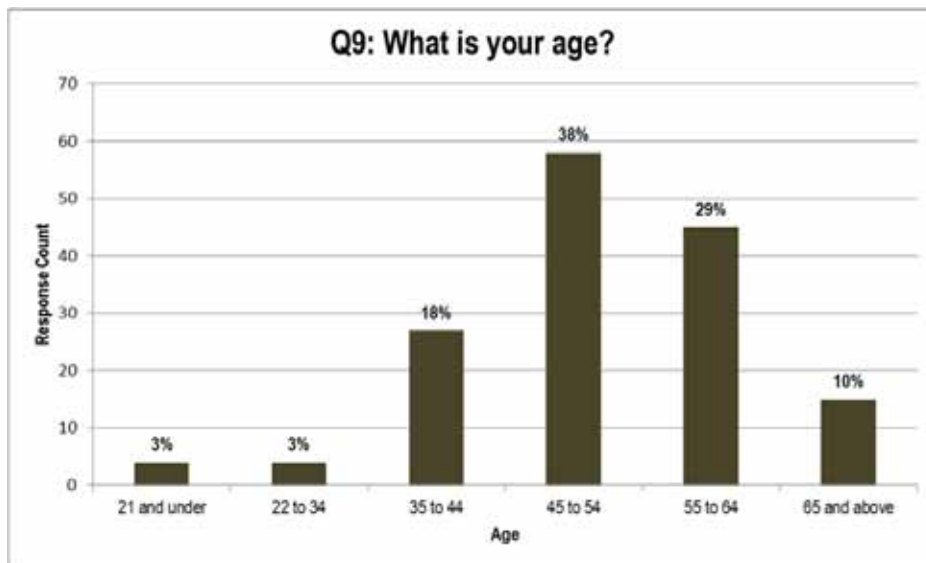
### ***Demographic questions***

The following questions ask about broad demographic questions.



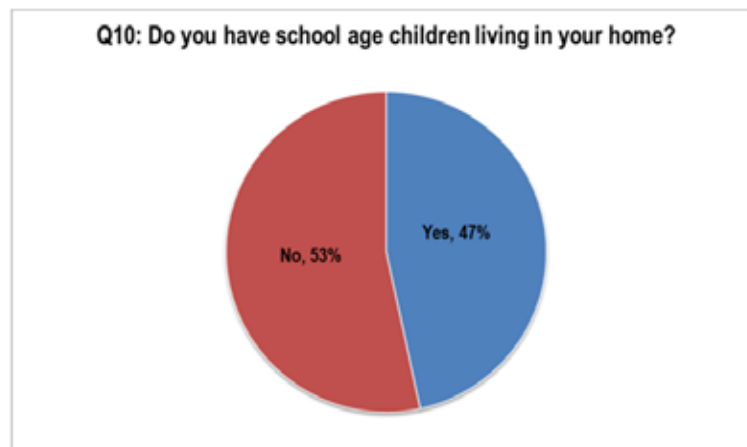
**Chart 8: Female respondents outnumbered males four to one.**

Respondents were primarily female (80%) for the survey, outnumbering men at a four to one ratio. This cannot be attributed to Colonial Christmas bias, as only 64% of respondents had participated in Colonial Christmas events. Nevertheless, the strong presence of women aligns closely with a house museum's traditional audience from national surveys conducted by Reach Museum Advisors and others.



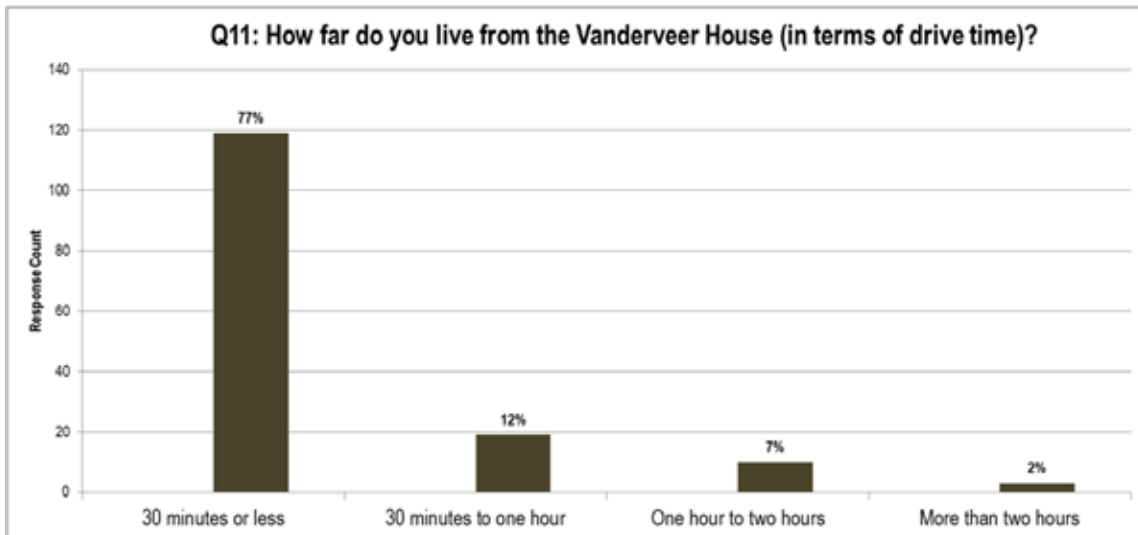
**Chart 9: A majority of respondents was between the ages of 35 to 65.**

Respondents' ages were concentrated between the ages of 35 and 65. These included age groups 35-44 (18%), 45-54 (38%), and 55-64 (29%). Only 6% of respondents were younger than 35. Ten percent of respondents were 65 and above. Overall, this age distributions mirrors house museum attendance nationwide. Middle age and older women are a major house museum audience nationwide.



**Chart 10: Nearly half of all respondents had school age children living in the home.**

Nearly half (47%) of all respondents had school age children living in the home.



**Chart 11: Most respondents lived within a half hour of the house.**

The overwhelming majority (77%) of respondents lived within a half hour's drive from the house. Very few respondents (9%) lived more than an hour from the house. Because so many visitors are local residents, this audience is likely to be the strongest source of support for volunteers, fundraising and other activities. Marketing should be concentrated on the area, and Somerset/Morris Counties to capture the greatest number of potential local visitors.

### **Recommendations**

This survey asked key questions to understand the needs and interests of respondents. Based on respondents' feedback, we can make preliminary suggestions for further pilot programming, budgeting, strategic planning and volunteer training at the Jacobus Vanderveer House. We offer these comments in order of importance based on survey results.

#### **Use the Vanderveer House as BOTH an event venue and setting for educational programs.**

Respondents identified shopping events as the top interest. This is not a typical house museum activity, but the house can be a venue for these kinds of events on site, or by continuing the designer showcase at the Colonial Christmas Luncheon. There are many opportunities to use the house as a "venue" to host a wide variety of programs and activities. For example, the bedrooms without furniture can be used as multi-purpose spaces to conduct educational or social activities. The Federal parlor is also an excellent location for lectures and larger social events. Also, consider integrating educational programming into social events. An example could be a cocktail event about historic objects care with an objects conservator from a major historic site or museum as the speaker. The respondents' top program choice was shopping events, antiques markets and showcases for local artists followed by educational lectures and programs. This survey did have a bias towards women, but men also identified with non-traditional activities such as craft activities.

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**Create new shopping events and antiques fairs at the house.** Shopping was tied for the number one activity (51%) for respondents (the other was guide-on-demand). The designer showcase at the Colonial Christmas Luncheon is highly valued and should continue, and perhaps even expand given this interest. Consider whether you wish to create another event that uses the house or grounds as a venue for antique/collectibles/crafts show or for events such as an appraisal day. Partner with dealers, designers and artists to bring an event to life at the house or on the grounds in a tent. Like the Colonial Christmas event, this activity would require considerable volunteer leadership and commitment to implement. Based on the success of Colonial Christmas, a mid-year event might be worth considering.

**Train docents to be a “guide on demand.”** Respondents preferred a guide-on-demand (51%) versus a guided tour (37%). Placing a guide-on-demand in all of the furnished rooms, requires training for volunteers to learn how to answer questions, tell brief stories and interact with a visitor. A guide-on-demand also provides good and high quality security for the objects in the room, and would permit the current arrangement of furniture and small objects to remain in their current configuration. As mentioned earlier, a guide-on-demand is different than the traditional scripted tour. The guide-on-demand preference should be incorporated into any training program for volunteers. This is an inexpensive interpretive method to implement.

**Update and add more printed materials as self-guided options.** While respondents want a guide-on-demand, they also want printed materials, to permit them to explore on their own (47%). Look for best practices from peer sites for quality printed materials for visitors. This is a low cost interpretive activity than technology-based activities (smart phones/cell phone tours).

**Hands on! Hands on! Hands on!** Shopping events, crafts and demonstrations, and historical reenactments ranked very highly. Respondents want to see, touch, make, and purchase history. This requires opportunities for active engagement like historic cooking demonstrations, craft programs, historical re-enactments and games. Appraisal days and lecture/demonstration about any kind of historic object might suit this audience.

**Continue the lecture program.** Respondents are interested in a lecture program (44%). It is an excellent means to provide educational programs on a variety of the interpretive themes soon to be identified in the Interpretive Plan. This was one of the few activities that both men and women both enjoy. Invite experts, conservators, and other speakers to create a lecture event. Invite experts to “show and tell.” Look to peer sites for best practices. A lecture series can be sponsored or cover its costs with admission fees.

**Break outside the guided tour.** Guided tours ranked fourth in terms of preferred programming below several self-guided alternatives (37%). Respondents’ desired interaction with the house spans far beyond the traditional house museum guided tour. Many respondents value interactivity and wish to see technology as a part of their interpretive experience. Use of



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technology was identified in not only structured programming, but also self-guided activities. Smart phone apps, “guides on demand” and craft demonstrations ranked highly. If the Friends only offer a guided tour as a means to interpret the house, only 37% of respondents will be satisfied. Implementing a guide on demand program is a modest cost endeavor but requires the commitment of the Board to begin such a program.

**Hands on for Kids!** Forty seven percent (47%) of respondents with children living in the home preferred hands on children’s activities. Consider incorporating hands on activities in all children’s programming, such historic cooking demonstrations, crafts programs, old-fashioned games or military re-enactments.

**Respondents are savvy.** Respondents valued technology and interactivity with smart phone apps and virtual tours. They also selected more complex activities such as shopping events and historical re-enactments. This audience seems interested in more elaborate programming, rather than a simple guided tour offered by a volunteer. The financial requirements of offering smart phone apps and virtual tours on the web site require moderate financial investment beyond developing a small docent program.

**Consider investing in a quality smartphone app mobile tour and virtual tour for the house.** Respondents were very interested in technology. Invest in a quality mobile smartphone tour--app--to create interactivity throughout the house for those who want to explore on their own. Put all of this information on the Friends web site, and call it a virtual tour. Look to peer sites for best practices. This is a moderate cost activity to develop, that perhaps could be grant funded.

**Build on Crossroads of the American Revolution Heritage Area.** A significant minority of respondents were not familiar with the Crossroads Heritage Area and many were only somewhat familiar. To reinforce this important marketing program in the Heritage Area, consider using the Vanderveer house as a gateway to a strong heritage network in Somerset County. This would necessitate that the site be open to the public during regular hours during the tourist season (April to October). By linking interpretive opportunities to programming, the Vanderveer House will build on an outstanding network of historic resources that is Crossroads. Link activities to the house to join this dynamic network of support.

**Further develop a living history program.** The Friends already host several activities a year that use re-enactors. This is a popular educational method based on the survey responses. Other living history activities such as re-enactments, cooking activities and hands-on craft demonstrations were popular with respondents. Military re-enactments were also popular. Work with interpreters to create a special “living history day,” as a seasonal activity to generate repeat visitors throughout the year. This is a high-cost activity with very high staffing and volunteer demands. Existing partnerships with the Heritage Trails Association (Five Generals), Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission (Journey Through the Past Weekend) can create memorable experiences using costumed guides and/or re-enactors.

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**Approach the Military theme with care.** While only 14% of respondents were interested in contemporary military programming such as send-off events and awards ceremonies, respondents did demonstrate interest in historical re-enactments and the history of the Revolutionary War. Our survey sample included only 20% male respondents. This may be the reason for the low interest in this theme. Respondents preferred the military theme be presented historically in the context of the Revolutionary War, and not as a contemporary linking activity. As the interpretative themes are developed for the site, this low interest level must be considered in program development.

**Consider pilot craft programs.** Fifty eight percent (58%) of respondents expressed interest in crafts programs. Consider a “his and hers” cooking and woodworking program or event. Craft museums require significant infrastructure: tables, tools, craftspeople and storage. The craftspeople guiding the experience should provide these materials. The second floor bedrooms that do not have furniture can be used for these small group activities. Costs of craft programs are minimal, and can be supported with fees from program participants.

**Connect with local residents.** An overwhelming majority of respondents lived within 30 minutes or less drive to the house. Building on this local support is crucial to sustaining the future stewardship of the historic resource. These are future volunteers, donors and visitors. Connecting using email and other social media is the most cost-effective means to reach out to this audience. Continue efforts to collect email addresses for newsletters and other announcements.

## **Conclusion**

This survey provided a good understanding of the interests of the current audience that visit the Jacobus Vanderveer House. We will use these findings to refine further our questions to focus group participants and interviewees during other sections of this audience research portion of this project.

### *Next steps*

Survey respondents are interested in a mix of activities that use both self-guided and guided/facilitated programming. This permits the Friends to tackle a variety of smaller projects in the coming months and years that will add to the interpretive value of this highly important historic site.

This audience is interested in visiting the site for a variety of programming opportunities: special events, seasonal events, monthly lectures, partner developed tours (such as Five Generals tour), holiday activities and routine weekend open public hours. One or more Board committees should invent and staff these activities. Based on volunteer interests, paid staff might be required to take on vital tasks that volunteers do not wish to undertake.

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There are many different ways to pay for these projects. Some activities are paid for by class fees or through sponsorship. Other projects might be excellent partnership programs with other heritage groups in the area. Finally, some of the highly valued interpretive programs might be excellent grant applications. None of the most popular interpretive methods is high cost in our opinion.

The Board and volunteers of the Jacobus Vanderveer House are extraordinarily creative and enthusiastic fundraisers and project managers. We hope that some of these interpretive projects will spark the interest of interested volunteers who will carry them to fruition in the near future.

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## Credits

**Alexander Balloon** is a consultant for Heritage Consulting Inc. Mr. Balloon has experience in both historic preservation planning and research design. He began work with the firm in 2008. With Heritage Consulting, Mr. Balloon has completed several major projects including historic preservation planning, Main Street program evaluation, architectural research, heritage tourism product development, public involvement and impact evaluation. He has assisted in public engagement activities, research and analysis, and provided graphic design and production. In 2011, he shared the Grand Jury Prize from the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia for his work for the Delaware County Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan. Mr. Balloon wrote the initial draft of the report, which was significantly expanded and edited by Donna Ann Harris. Emily Cooperman PhD also provided comments and editorial assistance.

Prior to his work with Heritage Consulting Inc., Mr. Balloon drafted a preservation plan for the University City area of the City of Philadelphia for the University City Historical Society. He has completed a variety of projects in the City of Philadelphia and elsewhere including documentation, feasibility, and re-uses studies for historic sites and properties. He also has experience in evaluation and research design, working with non-profit clients. Mr. Balloon has a Master of Science degree from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Design in Historic Preservation and a Graduate Certificate in Urban Redevelopment. Mr. Balloon earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Studies and History from the College of Wooster in Ohio.

**Donna Ann Harris** is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works in three practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation and organizational development. Since starting her firm and during her career

Ms. Harris has assisted citizen groups and government agencies to identify appropriate reuses for threatened historic properties that ensure the long-term preservation and maintenance of the site. Throughout her twenty-five years in the preservation movement, she has led start-up and mature statewide preservation organizations as an executive, was first staff member of a land and building conservation organization, and was project manager for a citywide preservation organization. Ms. Harris was the founding Executive Director for Preservation New Jersey from 1980-1982. Her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Homes* was published by AltaMira Press in April 2007. Ms. Harris has published articles about reuse of historic house museums in the American Association for State and Local History's quarterly magazine *History News* and the National Trust for Historic

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Preservation's quarterly scholarly journal *Forum Journal*. Her articles about advocacy, membership development and Business Improvement Districts have been published in the National Trust Main Street Center's monthly newsletter *Main Street News*. Ms. Harris speaks regularly and consults about historic preservation issues around the country

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# Part 10: Report on Survey Results Follow-Up

## PART 10: REPORT ON ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

April 24, 2012

To: JVH Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

### **Subject: Report on Vanderveer House Online Survey: Comparison between survey findings of all respondents and 30% that have not visited in last two years**

In our last conference call, you asked for information and comparison between the entire group of survey respondents and the smaller sample of the 30% of survey respondents who had not visited the site in the last two years. We have sorted the survey and made comparison charts to show if those who have not come to the site in two years have different expectations or interests than the entire survey audience.

There are small differences between these two groups, but not the vast differences that some suggested might be revealed in our last conference call. The top interpretive method desired by those who have not visited it the last two years is a guided tour rather than attending shopping events. These respondents rank children's programming (storytelling and school programs) slightly higher than all respondents do. There is virtually no difference between the two groups with regard to interest in self-guided activities. Regarding crafts, there is some difference, with needlepoint and painting receiving higher ratings for those that have not visited in the last two years. There were no 22-34 age respondents. In all other categories, they rank similarly to all respondents. Below please find the survey results for all respondents and then for the 30% of all respondents who have not attended in the last two years.

All respondents:

<b>Q 2: Would you be interested in any of the following programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to five)</b>		
<b>Programs</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists	74	45%
Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House	64	39%
Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters	59	36%
Guided tours	54	33%
Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters	50	30%
Social events	49	30%
Lectures on antiques and historic objects care	49	30%
Hands-on children's activities	40	24%
Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree	33	20%
Storytelling programs for adults and children	33	20%
School programs for K-12 students	30	18%
Children's Summer History Camp	23	14%
Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and awards ceremonies	21	13%
Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults	14	9%
I am only interested in self-guided programs	3	2%

30%, who have not visited in the last two years:

#### Vanderveer Historic Site Survey

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Guided tours	21	46%
Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists	18	39%
Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House	18	39%
Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters	16	35%
Storytelling programs for adults and children	15	33%
Hands-on children's activities	13	28%
Social events	12	26%
Lectures on antiques and historic objects care	12	26%
Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree	11	24%
Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters	10	22%
School programs for K-12 students	9	20%
Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and awards ceremonies	7	15%
Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults	6	13%
Children's Summer History Camp	5	11%
I am only interested in self-guided programs	1	2%

All respondents:

Q 3: Would you be interested in any of the following self-guided programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to three)		
Programs	Respondents	Percent
A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions	75	51%
Printed brochures, maps, and guides	69	47%
Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, hand-held device	44	30%
Web-based virtual tour	40	27%
Cellphone tour with "audio only" interpretation	28	19%
Interactive kiosks	25	17%
Exhibit panels without interactive content	24	16%
I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House	11	8%

30%, who have not visited in the last two years:

Would you be interested in any of the following self-guided programs at the Vanderveer historic site? (please select up to three)		
Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions	23	54%
Printed brochures, maps, and guides	18	42%
Web-based virtual tour	12	28%
Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, hand-held device	11	26%
Cellphone tour with "audio only" interpretation	8	19%
Exhibit panels without interactive content	6	14%
Interactive kiosks	6	14%
I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House	2	5%



All respondents:

<b>Q4: Would you be interested in participating in an instructional class offered at the Jacobus Vanderveer House on any of the following Colonial crafts for adults or children? (please select all that apply)</b>		
<b>Classes</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Historic cooking activities	49	34%
Needlepoint, quilting, and/or embroidery	45	31%
I am not interested in craft programs	40	28%
Jewelry making	37	26%
Candlemaking	36	25%
Painting	35	24%
Horticulture-related activities	33	23%
Woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools	28	19%
Furniture making	22	15%
Printmaking	19	13%
Metalworking	18	13%

30%, who have not visited in the last two years:

Would you be interested in participating in an instructional class offered at the Jacobus Vanderveer House on any of the following Colonial crafts for adults or children? (please select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Historic cooking activities	17	41.5%
Jewelry making	13	31.7%
Candlemaking	13	31.7%
Painting	12	29.3%
Needlepoint, quilting, and/or embroidery	9	22.0%
I am not interested in craft programs	9	22.0%
Woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools	8	19.5%
Horticulture-related activities	8	19.5%
Printmaking	6	14.6%
Metalworking	5	12.2%
Furniture making	4	9.8%

We skipped Questions 5 and 6 because the sample size was too small.

Question 7: Gender

All Respondents

80% Women, 20% Men

30%, who have not visited in the last two years

84% Women, 16% Men

Question 8 School Aged Children:

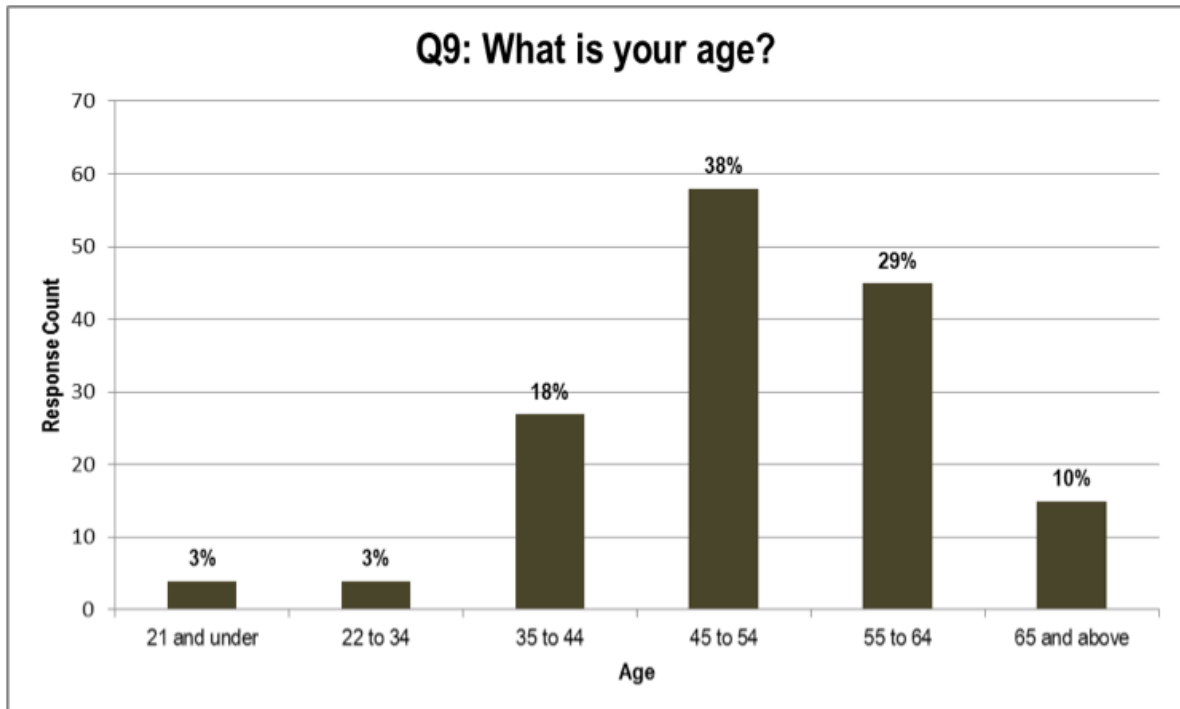
All respondents

47% Have Kids, 53% Don't Have Kids

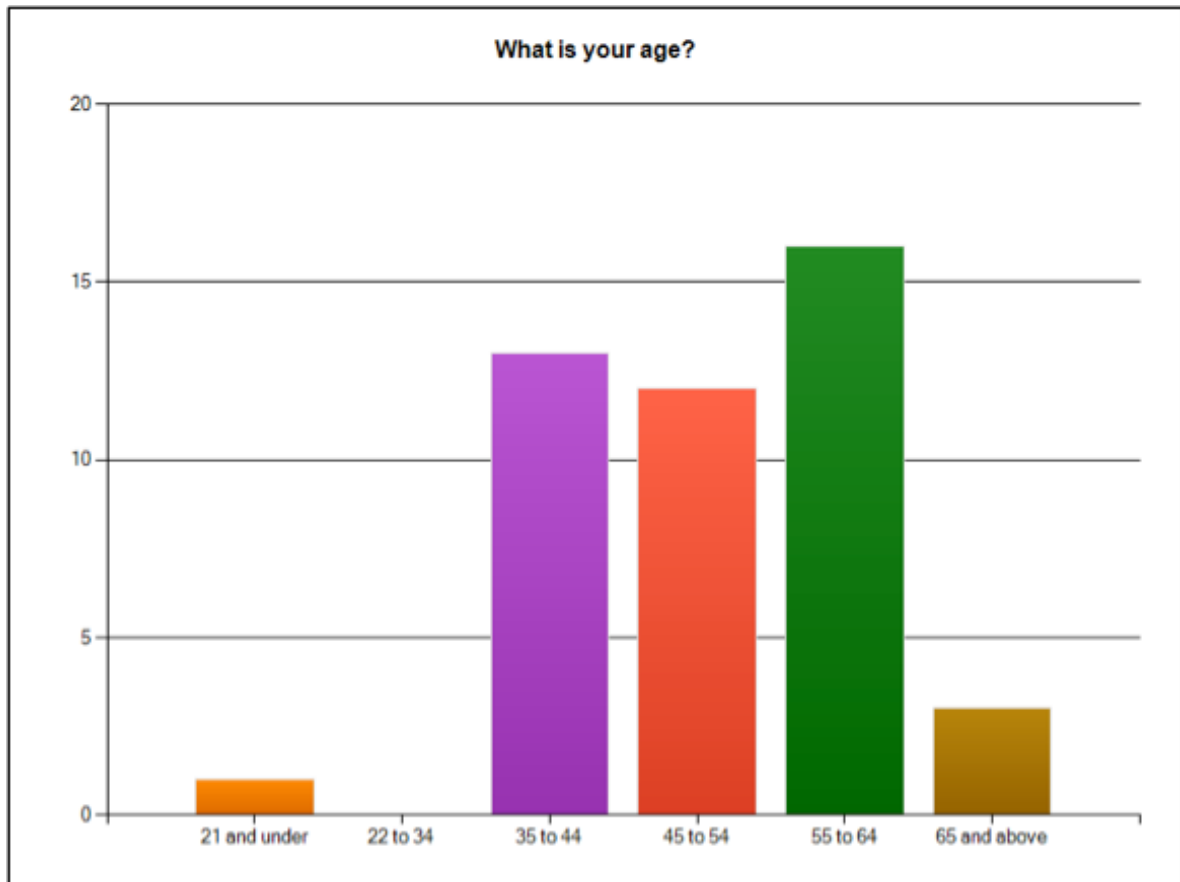
30% who have not visited in the last two years

52% Have Kids, 48% Don't Have Kids

All respondents:



30%, who have not visited in the last two years:



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# Part 11: Report on Interviews with Current and Former Board Members

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## Part 11: Report on Seven Interviews of Current and Former Board Members

### Contents

- Project Purpose and Methodology
- Major Findings
- Interview Report
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- Appendix B: Interview Script
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### Project Purpose and Methodology

As part of the New Jersey Historic Trust funded Heritage Tourism Audience Research and Interpretive Plan for the Jacobus Vanderveer House, Heritage Consulting Inc. conducted interviews with seven current or former board members to gauge their interests and concerns about programming the Vanderveer House in the future.

The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House provided Heritage Consulting Inc. with a list of seven individuals to invite to participate. Heritage Consulting Inc. sent an email invitation to each interviewee and followed up to set an appointment. The questions were organized around the programming survey posted to the web site and circulated at the Colonial Christmas Luncheon. Most of the interviewees had already taken the survey and thus were familiar with many of the interpretive methods being suggested. The interview script is attached as Appendix B at the end of this report. The list of interviewees is also attached at the end of the report as Appendix A.

A script used was treated as a general guide to focus discussion, but most interviews included new issues of interest to the interviewee, which were not found in the drafted script. All of the interviews took place on the phone and lasted from 20 minutes to an hour and a half.

For each interview, Donna Ann Harris took contemporaneous handwritten notes which were then typed up. These notes were then evaluated, summarized, and analyzed qualitatively to “make sense” of a large volume of raw notes from all of the interviews. Once all of the interviews were completed, all raw comments were reviewed to identify overarching and common themes across all interviews. From this qualitative information, this report summarizes the comments from all seven interviewees.

Comments are organized by content area and theme, and identify specific comments, concerns, and ideas shared by interviewees as representative samples or specific concerns. We include actual comments made by interviewees as bullet points under each topic heading. We begin with the major findings.

This report is organized into two sections. The first section contains the major findings, a brief narrative that describes recurring themes and concerns of the seven interviewees. The second section contains unedited, actual comments made by interviewees organized by topic in bullet format. We selected specific comments because they offered particular viewpoints, or represented concerns shared by several interviewees. We promised interviewees that none of their comments would be ascribed to them directly to permit complete candor.

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## Major Findings

This section describes the major themes and comments made by the seven interviewees, as well as our commentary about items not mentioned that seemed relevant to the topic.

### *Interpretive and Programming Methods*

The current and former Board members we interviewed were interested in a variety of methods to interpret the Vanderveer House. More programming in the form of regularly scheduled lecture series, and seasonal programming were suggested, beyond just the Colonial Christmas event. Events such as Journey to the Past and Five Generals tour were viewed as important and excellent educational programs. One board member was interested in further partnerships but this seemed to be limited to loan shows rather than multi-site theme tours (such as Five Generals tour) or annual special events programs with nearby historic sites.

Several board members believe there is no place for technology in the museum itself such as touch screen pads or computers because they are viewed as out of place in a 17th century restored room setting. Others believe that technology in the form of a touch screen display is expected by visitors today, and several locations were suggested to locate these including the kitchen and upstairs bedrooms. Finally maintenance of such technology was raised, because so often this type of equipment is unavailable because it is broken.

All but one of those interviewed said that they preferred self-guided tours themselves as a means to visit a museum or historic site. However most commented that both self-guided and guided tours were needed to cater to visitor's tastes and interests. These comments are consistent with audience research studies undertaken by Reach Museum Advisors about visitors to history museums, historic sites and restored villages.

### *Exhibits*

Several interviewees felt that the house was not yet complete, in that not all of the rooms were furnished. Two people felt that there was not enough to see inside the house. While not every interviewee expressed this opinion, it does beg the question about the broader role of furnishings at the site. Is a furnished room the only way to interpret the Vanderveer house? Few saw the "empty rooms" as flexible space to be used for programming purposes such as locations for small group meetings, book discussions, craft programs or temporary exhibits. Only two interviewees saw temporary exhibits like the current loan show from Frances Tavern as an opportunity to further collaborate and partner with other institutions and bring additional changing exhibits to the house.

### *Self-guided tours using technology*

All interviewees were very interested in using technology to interpret the site and were excited about using cell phone or smart phone applications (apps) to interpret the site for those seeking a self-guided experience. All felt that these technologies permitted visitors to drill down into subject matters that interested them and potentially provided a very rich interpretive experience for visitors who sought it. These technologies also provided flexibility for visitors; a tour could be as long or short as the person interested in the content available. Younger people (up to age 50) are viewed as the primary audience for this interpretive method. Most felt that the web site should be upgraded to include all of the self-guided materials (audio from cell phone tours and visuals/text from smart phone app).

One person cautioned that security of the objects is a concern if people are permitted to wander around the house using self-guided methods, whether cell phones, smart phone apps, wall text or brochures. This is a very valid concern, and must be addressed when any kind of self-guided program is offered. Self-guided programs are often viewed as easier to implement because fewer docents are needed to implement them. However at a minimum of two docents are needed at the site (one per floor) each day the house is open for security purposes.

### *Self-guided tours not using technology*

Interviewees suggested several other methods for self-guided interpretation including laminated cards in each room telling the story of the room/objects, story boards, wall text and brochures for visitors seeking other means to learn about the site without a tour guide. Several interviewees expressed a need for some kind of orientation to the site, and suggested the kitchen wing was the right location, where some wall text would be appropriate. There appears to be concern about the amount of wall text that should be placed in the kitchen and throughout the house. Several board members suggested that no wall text was appropriate in the restored rooms. The comments about exhibits and wall text seem to be a hang-over from the controversy regarding the exhibit design project from two years ago. Every person seemed to have a different opinion on the use of wall text.

### *Guided tours*

Most interviewees felt that guided tours or re-enactors in costume were a highly valuable way to interpret the site to the public and that this method should be used more often. One person was looking for a script for guides. No one felt that there were an adequate number of people available to be docents for the site. Several people suggested that events and demonstrations using costumed guides/re-enactors should be scheduled several times a month to create interesting programs for the public. One interviewee suggested that non costumed docents made sense for drop in visitors. The re-enactor, Lady Ellen first person character was especially praised for her ability to interact with children as well as adults. Several other opportunities are being explored to further utilize the Lady Ellen character for school programs and events this year. Re-enactors were viewed as the primary means to bring the site to life for visitors at special events or for individual programs such as demonstrations on cooking, quilting, or for encampments.

### *Garden*

All but one of the current or former board members mentioned the garden. Several were disappointed that this was not a priority project because they believed the garden offered opportunities to attract new audiences to the site. Several did not understand why this project (particularly the kitchen garden) was not moving ahead. One person suggested that the garden offered many partnering opportunities: to build it, and then to maintain it. The high interest in the garden by these board members shows that it might be elevated as a short term rather than medium term priority.

### *Lecture series*

Over the years the Vanderveer House has offered lectures either off site, before the house was restored or on site in more recent years. Lectures are viewed by these seven individuals as valuable educational programs for adults. However, uneven attendance at recent lectures has been noticed. One person suggested that these events were not well advertised and that communication about events (other than Colonial Christmas) needed to be rethought. For an all-volunteer run organization, administrative work such as collecting emails and adding to data bases is, sadly, often a low priority. Without staff to under-

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take routine and less interesting (but important) projects like data base management and sending out communications to members, programming visibility may continue to suffer.

### *Programming for children, formal and informal*

Every interviewee mentioned programming for children as being a prime audience for the Vanderveer House. Most mentioned on informal programming for children like demonstrations, re-enactors, craft and small group programs offered after school and on weekends. Most focused on Mommy and me or Daddy and Me type programming where adults and children could make things together.

The History Camp was missed this year but concerns were raised about how it is marketed. It was viewed by one interviewee as having a very small niche market. While the program is well regarded, we wonder if the History Camp for 10-15 students for five half days in the summer is really worth the effort?

Home schoolers were viewed as an excellent group to engage at the site through formal programs geared to their needs. One person made clear that any formal school program must meet NJ educational standards to be useful to classroom teachers. Small group activities for children with a costumed guide are being considered for the future. No one mentioned scout groups or other clubs/teams for children as being a natural audience for the site.

### *Craft programs*

Three of the interviewees mentioned that they liked craft programs themselves and might participate if offered. All the others said that they did not like craft programs personally, but that other people might be interested and thus should be offered. These programs were viewed as providing social as well as educational opportunities for adults as well as children. Interviewees offered many potential topics as noted in the comments below.

### *Other uses for the house*

Several people mentioned that the site could be used for other purposes than exhibits and educational programs. One person mentioned offices for historic groups could be created in the upstairs spaces. Another suggested using the house for small private events and celebrations.

### *Organizational infrastructure*

Every interviewee said that the site should be open more often than once a month. Several suggested offering more programs to make the site available to the public and offered suggestions noted in the comments below. Being open regular hours, such as weekends during good weather seemed to be the best option mentioned by a few interviewees. Most struggled with how the organization could actually be open more often because of the lack of volunteers or staff.

### *Volunteers*

All but one person felt there were not enough volunteers available to open the house more than once a month. The current Board of Trustees was viewed as the entire corps of volunteers available (except for those who work on the Colonial Christmas event.) The Trustees were viewed as too busy with work and family to give additional hours to the property. To be able to attract more volunteers to the site, the Board must commit to being open more days during the year. Offering programming geared to different audiences is a perfect first step. The board must offer volunteers specific activities (and a job

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description) such as being a docent, or opening the house for a craft program, to initiate a recruitment program.

### ***Staff***

Part time staff was viewed as the most likely solution to opening the site more often, since the current volunteers may only be available to conduct programs that interested them. While all expressed a desire for a full or part time staff member, most expressed that staff was part of an incremental evolutionary process for the organization. Staff's main duty would be to open the site, and undertake administrative work. None of the interviews had a good understanding of the organization's current finances to know if hiring staff was possible. One person said that it was not likely now. One person felt the lack of staff was holding the organization back.

### ***Other advice***

Interviewees offered other suggestions including remarks on progress towards completion of the master plan. Two interviewees spoke strongly about commercial activities (shopping events) taking place in the house. Others felt that educational programming had taken a back seat to fundraising in the organization's priorities.

## **Conclusion**

All of the people we interviewed are passionate about the Jacobus Vanderveer House. They see it's potential. One mentioned that the organization was at a cross roads and we agree. The site is not open regular hours to the public to be a viable tourist destination, which the interviewees agree is its destiny. All wish to share this important site with the public.

The interviewees agreed that public programming for the Vanderveer House should come in many forms, and be geared to different audiences. Interviewees have great ideas about what programs make sense for the Vanderveer House and what audiences they should target. Guided and self-guided tours were mentioned most often, as well as programs for small groups such as craft and children's programs.

While there are good ideas for programming, interviewees seemed to be stuck about how to implement these activities. Right now, there are not enough volunteers to open the house more often than once a month. Additionally there is uncertainty about the organization's financial situation and ability to hire part time staff to take on work that volunteers are not interested in pursuing or cannot be recruited to undertake. Over the next year, the Heritage Tourism Audience Research and Interpretive Plan project will provide recommendations for the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House on programming ideas. The Friends Board however must commit to implementing the ideas contained in that document. The seven people we interviewed are enthusiastic about the future, and we expect the Friends Board will be too.

## **Complete Report on Seven Interviews**

### ***Interpretive and Programming Methods in General***

- I am interested in all types of programming. Guided tours, cell phone tours, kiosks and displays. Need many types of methods to interpret the site.
- Yes I think that we can offer guided tours and self-guided tours successfully; both are great ways to visit.



- I do like to use my iPhone and iPad. But don't like touch screens in a museum, they get junky after a while and we have a 17th century building and this is the 21st century technology.
- We did not have a full list of our programs for 6 or 9 months out, and we need to do that.
- People expect to see touch screens in a museum space, but perhaps we can have it up in the 1813 room or in the back corner up stairs, does not have to be within a prime spot in the furnished rooms, or in the kitchen wing. Touch screens can get the information across.
- No technology in the house—no computers touch pads etc.
- I am concerned about the attendance for Five Generals tour coming up, since it is in February and the weather may be bad.
- Journey to the Past gets a broad cross section of people to come to the house, and we cannot do just things at Christmas. We need to do other things throughout the year. An old fashioned picnic or winter activities would be good.
- Could be computers screens that you scroll through –could be iPods. Advertise as Bring your iPad. Could be in the form of FAQ, Did you know? Found in the dig, or for father reading. All of this could be the web site, as deep information about or at the site. People could take as much or as little as they like. Text is important but need visuals too in the deeper information.

### *Exhibits*

- Now that the rooms are furnished, it will be easier to partner with other organizations and museums. For example the Newark Museum, they lent us pieces that were in their storage area and semi-permanent loan. Fraunces Tavern museum also lent us other pieces, this is the third time they have loaned us things.
- Thinks that too many wall panels would not be good.
- We need help with exhibits and furnishings and do tours, but half the time the house is empty. There is not enough to see. Things are not bolted to the floor, need more exhibits. We had an exhibit plan and started out with a big plan, but it was handled badly.
- But I do like the art exhibit that it is there now. We can display art in the house so people will come more often, the house feels so good, it is authentic. We can have just about any activity there as long as it is a wholesome activity.
- We have an exhibit for 8 months now, of paintings from them. This partnership is a way to stay viable and spread our value. It will help down the road to have other sites partner with us. It is a good way to interact and keep up.

### *Self-guided Tours Using Technology*

- Depending on what is going on, we can have different types of interpretation. We need to use modern technology.
- For tours inside the house I think that cell phone tours would work because the person could get as much or little as they wish from the tour.
- We have to be careful about technology in the space, because that might be jarring to the purists. No one wants to see a computer in the middle of a beautifully restored building.
- Yes that would be great [cell phone tours/apps]. That way people could get as much or as little information as they want. Could be written on a card which number to dial, they get at the entrance to show which stories in each room.
- I don't like guided tours, I like to wander myself. The problem with electronics in museums is that they are always broken, we like to push buttons but they don't work.
- Yes we should have web tours too.
- I am not adverse to that, but the technology cannot get in the way of the story. They [cell phone tours] might be a very good thing, but I have a very strong gut feeling that guided tours are better because you cannot let people wander in the house because soon enough something will get

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smashed or be missing. People are too trusting. Everyone may think that cell phone tours may be nice until something is missing, or broken. While we might have accident insurance, still have to think about this.

- Yes we need cell phone tours and apps, we have to have those. Don't favor guided tours over non guided tours at this point. But have to have technology to help as this helps those who want to see the place on their own and don't want to wait for a tour.
- Yes we should be using modern technology, such as a smart phone or iPod or apps. We can tell a larger story then, and can get deeper than just a label text. We can also get to the larger story of the Crossroads that way too.
- Suggests that any text be a snap shot; these snapshots should not be an essay—short. But there needs to be links to deeper information “long form” where there are additional stories if you are interested or on web site (if someone has brought their smart phone or iPad).
- Headphones might be novel, and need to have alternatives if you go for that kind of thing. Older people may not want to have technology on site.

### *Self-guided Tours Not Using Technology*

- I think we need more information available at the house. We could have some more story boards around, that are not permanent but we need more information. Can we do laminated cards in the rooms telling you what is there?
- Orientation in the Kitchen area is possible for wall text/orientation exhibits.
- Also thinks that there needs to be exhibit panels (but not too many) for people to read—could be laminated pages to read.
- Don't think this generation wants to read exhibit text on a wall.
- Orientation could be in the vestibule or kitchen areas need some kind of welcome.
- We could do a bit more explanatory text perhaps in the kitchen, to welcome and invite people and tell them what they will see, not a permanent exhibit, something that can be removed.
- Personally I do not like guided tours. Interpretation can be over processed. I prefer to get lay of land, before deciding what to go and see.
- At one point there was a vision to have the site full of wall panels to explain the house, Leslie and I stopped that, there was too much text, and it took away from the site.
- They don't want a guide. Docents can be a problem if you don't want a tour. But if we have big events, where there are lots of people in the house, we will need docents in the rooms for security purposes. But if it is a Mom and child, we probably don't want that (a person stationed in each room). They can go by themselves.

### *Guided Tours by Non-costumed Docents*

- We need a script for the docents.
- Guided tours all depends on the guide, if they are really good they can make the place come alive. But some are terrible; the most interesting museums seem to have the right people there.
- I would like to see seasonal activities at the house. The beauty of the seasons can be interpreted at the Vanderveer house.
- Docents need to know how to engage people cheerfully.
- This is the first time that the room [bedroom upstairs] has been presented with all the furnishings strictly according to the inventory.

### *Costumed Docents and Re-enactors*

- Just those hired to be re-enactors at event such as colonial cooking, or demonstration or military events at the site.

- Ellen Ruck (Lady Ellen) is a re-enactor and she wanted to regular schedule of events.
- We have had cooking demonstrations outside, which was a constant draw, especially students but some adults are interested too. Depends on the demonstrator, different segment of life."
- Loves costumed interpreters, which adds layers and dimensions to the house. Costumes show how people lived, and both domestic and military attired, adds layers to the interpretation of the house, and the clothes are often fabulous, they look great. The typical docent offering tours at the house would not be in costume however.
- Lady Ellen character I love her, she is a piece of work, she really lives in the 1700s, she has wonderful way with kids and how she can work with them one on one.
- I think the re-enactors are fabulous
- A two hour holiday party for 12 kids at the house with some kind of crafts, storytelling and something to eat, and that would be auctioned off. I would enjoy doing that in the Lady Ellen character. Could be for children or adults."

### *Garden*

- Partner with garden groups to start/maintain kitchen garden, much interest, how come that keeps getting put off?
- Perhaps we could get the garden work done by donation from other garden groups or by contractors or landscapers who could build the fence as a donation? We need the manpower to help manage the garden. Perhaps a local garden club could help plant, or provide plants that were historically correct, and take ownership of the garden and keep it maintained.
- I would love to see the garden project come up soon, it keeps getting pushed off because they say they have no money. We could grow crops that were in the 18th century and if we had extras give them to the food bank. We should celebrate the fact we are the garden state, and have things growing in the garden all the time
- We don't enter the house today from the original front door; we go in the back door. If the garden was there, in the traditional front of the building and had a small fence around it, people would have a better understanding of the house.

### *Formal School Visits to JCH*

- Need to make sure any school programming met the state standards for history, which makes it easier for teachers to fit the visit into the curriculum.
- School programs should be easy to do, every school child has to learn about the Revolutionary War in 4th grade. Why not come to the Vanderveer house to do that? Why can't we get the boys to help load a cannon? We also could do lessons about what the Americans learned from the Indians, such as guerilla warfare, we did manage to out maneuver the British.
- Home schoolers are a viable audience
- Yes home schoolers are a perfect audience. There are more and more of them in the area, and I am even thinking of that for my daughter next year. Bernardsville has a home schoolers group and I have friends that do it and there are environmental organizations that offer programs especially for them. Shawnee Ski Resort offering something for home schoolers and Schiff environmental education place in Mendham offers a home school program. We have to develop programs that parents need and not what we need.
- I am working with Leslie now on partnership with the Willow School, to provide school programs from March to June. To take classes through the house, in costume.
- We need to reach out to parents in the school directly and I think there is a great market niche for kids for the [History] camp.

### *Informal Kids/Parents Programming and History Camp*

- I would love to get more kids and families involved at the house, perhaps haunted stories for the fall, or a bonfire type thing. Something authentic, perhaps pumpkin carving, tours at night? That might be fun if there were authentic stories that were scary?
- Kid's programming/kids/parents, crafts, demonstrations, re-enactors, mom and me or dad and me, night at the museum, candlelight activities
- We have talked about night at the museum type thing and overnight stay at the house, but that just got dropped because they wanted to make it so that it was something to auction off at at \$1500 which is expensive. I know the museum of natural history in NY charges \$125 a night for their program and that seems affordable.
- Children's programs for the JVH site should be varied, it would be good to have mommy and me type programs like building gingerbread houses for the holidays.
- Summer History Camp at JVH went for three summers, not this past year though. Did not offer it again this summer because we were offering too many weeks (3) this last time and there were not enough students. Many kids just don't like the word history; their parents may like it, but not the kids.
- Re-enactors or costumed interpreters might have the same appeal to kids and parents. But would depend on the skill level and talent of the reenactor to be able to work with kids as well as parents in their presentations.
- Has between 10 and 15 kids per week at camp which ran from 1-4 PM 5 days a week. The first and second years we only had one week of camp and this was successful. Grew so we could spread out the weeks, but people here are so busy in the summer we could not combine weeks, so it did not work the third year.

### *Lecture Series*

- We need to pick up the pace in programming to these different audiences. We got a grant where we had to be open once a month, Phyllis is tracking attendance, but some of the activities and events are not well attended.
- Before the site was restored, we had lectures off site at the library. These were popular. We asked all of our consultants to do a lecture; it might have been part of the grant to do that. We had them on a Sunday afternoon, and some were very popular especially archeology.
- The Jan. event that Leslie did had only 4 people and three were board members.
- Generally disappointed with attendance numbers at classes.
- Need lecture series in the spring and fall. We had a save the date card, Verizon funded it so we called it the Verizon lecture series, a small grant of about \$5000.

### *Craft Program Ideas*

- Craft programs would be good, as they cast a broad net to history, the audience might be limited but it casts a wide net.
- I would not be interested in them, since I am not crafty but I imagine that some would really like them.
- Interested in the crafts programs, but thinks this would mostly be for kids. As an adult he would not be interested except if it was a program for parents and kids
- Yes crafts would be awesome. Not everyone would like it but some would, perhaps an older generation.
- I would rather put a gun to my head, than attend a craft program. But I am sure that others would really like those things.
- Need varied topics, we have had classes on silk scarf making, rug hooking, back smith, tin smith and some are interesting and some get good attendance but not many.

- We could do crafts, like knitting, felting, rug hooking, or feather painting, faux finishes, vinegar painting. We need stuff for guys. Perhaps cooking outdoors, this year we had someone outside making chicken soup using historic recipes, using early American cooking. That would be a great thing to do with kids. “
- I am a member of a wool group, and perhaps we could have meetings there on a Sunday. Could make wool animals or ornaments or knitting, we could have an open call for people to come and be social together
- Crafts program would be great. We could do Christmas arrangements, pumpkin carving and use the place as a place to learn things, and it does not all have to be Colonial. The site can be a social venue too.

#### *Other uses for house*

- We have spaces to do that [exhibits] upstairs.
- We also could rent the house out for small parties or offer wine and cheese if we have a lecture. Not large groups, small responsible groups, not groups of children for example.
- We asked Lady Ellen to bring her stuff from her camp, to sell at the house, it all is period, and looks like a mercantile general store and cool wacky stuff she has, that would make sense in the house.
- Perhaps a re-enactor group could rent space in the house, a place they could call home so that the house would be used more often, and give us more visibility and presence.

### **Organizational Infrastructure**

#### *Open more often*

- When is the house open now? Only once a month, we can do programming every weekend to give people a reason to come., perhaps programming a couple of times a month, it can be repeated, something should be going on at the site very often. But for a standard weekend day when the house is open we should have tours available. We can have events geared to specific occasions, Henry Knox birthday, Military events, cooking demonstrations, crafts demonstrations,
- Highway signage is a chicken and egg situation, cannot have it until the site is open regular hours.
- Not open enough, only one Sunday a month.
- We need a regular schedule. We have not tried other days of the week or nights as the volunteers are not available.
- The house is now open once a month on a Sunday, and it is ok for what we have to offer. Down the road it would be nice if we were open more often such as every weekend or open all the time, but we need to take baby steps.

#### *Volunteers*

- The Trustees cannot be expected to shoulder all of these programs, because some work, some have family obligations.
- They [the Trustees] are all the volunteers that we have right now.
- I think the site has plenty of volunteers.
- Got a grant last year that required that we be open once a month and we did some programming on Sundays, second Sunday from 1-4PM. It was hard to get volunteers; it is hard to get them to give up their family time to do this.

## *Staffing*

- We need a full time person responsible for managing the property. Without that, there is no way to get the schools involved, or other partners. It is a big step to hire someone but without a staff member, it is holding back the organization. We cannot finish the project, and furnish and program the space without staff.
- Site needs to be open regular hours, 3, 4 or 5 days a week. Or long weekends such as Thurs to Sunday. This is the only way to market to school groups, so they can come at regular times. We are just not there yet to be able to do this.
- Seems like we are at a turning point now. We need corporate support to help us and fund the part time person.
- Regarding staffing, all comes down to money; if we had enough to pay a person part time then that would be wonderful.
- Yes we need an executive director or whatever you might call the person. Phyllis does much of the work but not everything that is needed. She does grant applications and we are spending a lot of money and we could have a director do what she does of the organization. I don't know what we can afford right now. The person could start part time.
- A part time staff members sounds good, but at the the last board meeting Leslie said that we had to put off that idea because we have not enough money to pay someone now because we cannot hire someone and then tell them in 6 months we don't have money to pay them.

## *Other Advice*

- Ultimately and our pie in the sky hope is that the barn will get recreated and that will be used as the visitor center in about 10 years, so that the kitchen can be used as a site for demonstrations.
- We need better signage, especially on the highway and near the house. Way finding signs perhaps on the porch and then in the field to look at the house in the distance.
- I don't like shopping events at the property, where vendors bring jewelry, it just does not seem right to have it in the location.
- The people that support the house are motivated by philanthropic ends. They don't want a history lesson at a dinner.
- The shopping event at the house is not appropriate; it does not belong in the house.
- The lecture series is great, but I don't get advance notice of these events, communication is not great about events coming up. I never get any mail, I don't know who is speaking, and I don't know if the general community is getting information either.
- The educational activities have taken a back seat to fundraising.
- Better communication is needed, while it is listed on web site, we need more mail, or collect more email addresses. Need more press releases, and mailings about our activities.

## **Appendix A**

### *Interview list*

1. Chris Merton, current board member
2. Granis Allport, founding Board President
3. Robin Ray, current Board member
4. Heather Schofield, current Board member, Colonial Christmas Committee member
5. Ellen Ruck, current board member, Lady Ellen re-enactor
6. Ellen Vreeland, former Board president
7. Jeanne Gilbrath, current Board member

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## Appendix B

### *JVH Board interviews: Script for interviews on programming ideas*

As part of the Heritage Tourism Assessment and Interpretive Plan grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust, we are conducting interviews with board members, educators, Somerset area historic sites, and the Crossroads of the American Revolution Heritage Area Staff to learn about educational programming ideas for the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

You may be aware of the on-line survey we are conducting for that effort.

Have you already taken the survey? Yes/no

If not, would you mind spending five minutes to take the survey (I will give them a hard copy if I am doing this interview one on one. If doing this interview on the phone I will do the survey verbally).

If you have taken the survey, I would like to review some of the ideas for programming on the survey to learn more about your preferences. (Review the list of programming ideas question 2).

Are there any of these that you think are particularly appropriate for the Vanderveer House? Why?

Are there any that you think absolutely won't work? Why?

Let's review the self guided list of programming ideas now. We have learned from various professional articles and other surveys about audiences at other historic house museums and historic sites around the country, that 45% of all visitors prefer a self-guided experience. We included a list of possible self-guided options for the Vanderveer House and wanted to know your thoughts about them. I will read these to the interviewee.

Are there any ideas here that you think are especially useful for the Vanderveer House?

Are there any ideas that just will not work here?

Finally, we see that instructional activities for Colonial era arts and crafts for adults and children might be a good option to host in the Kitchen and second floor multipurpose rooms in the house. What do you think about this idea? Are there any craft activities that you think we are missing from this list? Read the list

When you think about programs and activities at the Jacobs Vanderveer House, that are designed to educate the public, what do you think would be ideal?

Are there any concerns that you have about broadening the educational opportunities to be held at the Vanderveer House?

Thank you for speaking with me. We will be compiling these answers from all the other interviewees that will help us make recommendations about how the Jacobus Vanderveer House should be developing its educational programs over the next few years.

## Credits

This report was written by Donna Ann Harris, principal of Heritage Consulting Inc.

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# Part 12: Report on Interviews with Crossroads Staff and Board President



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## PART 12: REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH CROSSROADS STAFF AND BOARD PRESIDENT

April 6, 2012

To: JVH Heritage Tourism/Interpretive Plan Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

**Subject: Report on Interviews with Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area staff/Board President--Cate Litvak, Noreen Bordman and Kevin Tremble**

Last month I met with Cate Litvak and Noreen Bordman (the new President of Crossroads) and had a phone interview with Kevin Tremble, who is a long time Board president of the organization. The purpose of these visits and calls was to gain their perspective about the opportunities ahead for the Vanderveer House as it develops more educational programming for adults, children and school groups. This memo is a brief overview of their comments. I am attaching specific quotes so you can learn about specific concerns or questions. These quotes are not ascribed to a specific person.

### *Greatest Opportunities*

There is great interest in the archeology collection owned by JVH. There are questions about the use of this collection for educational programming. Both Cate and Kevin understand the significance of this collection and made suggestions about sharing the collection the State Museum, other historic sites within Crossroads or other repositories because it is nationally significant. For both of them, the archeological collection from the Pluckemen site is nationally significant, and a critical educational resource that is underutilized by the Friends and other historians of the Revolutionary War.

### *Partnerships with Other Sites*

The JVH house needs to be open more days for public visitation. While both understand that the Vanderveer House is being run entirely by volunteers, both are looking for more opportunities for the site to be open when collaborating with other organizations. Both cited the such as the highly regarded Five General's tour or Journey to the Past. More theme tours or special events on weekends are needed to showcase the site. Joint programming should happen more often if local partners are willing to repeat Five Generals tour more often. Working with other Somerset County sites would be a great start. The W3R effort is another great partnership opportunity.

### *Places with Exemplary Programming for Adults in the State*

Howell living history farm; Princeton Historical Society (not specifically Revolutionary War), Hermitage in Hohokus, Morven (Just have exhibits only); Liberty Hall owned by Kane University, Longford Homestead in Monmouth County

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## *Places with Exemplary Programming for Children: Formal or Informal School Programs*

According to both Kevin and Cate, the best school programs in the Crossroads area are Fort Lee Historic Park, Old Barracks, Princeton Battlefield and Morristown. All are worth learning more about. There were some suggestions about cross marketing between sites in Somerset area or creating some kind of educational consortium like each site telling part of the Revolutionary War Story like the Five Generals tour does. Overall, in the Heritage Area, there are better interpretive/educational programs for kids/schools than for adults.

## *Themes and Stories to Tell at JVH*

Despite the focus on the military story at the Vanderveer house, both mentioned that it would not appeal to everyone who comes to the site. Knox and the Revolutionary War story should be one of the stories told but not the only one. Video may appeal to kids or younger adult visitors. Kevin mentioned Lucy Knox (wife of General Knox) and Caty Littlefield Green (wife of one of the generals associated with the Van Vechten House) as being interesting people on which to focus stories about the Revolutionary War era. Cate felt that the Knox is an important part of the whole story in the Heritage Area. Kevin thought that the French Celebration was another historic event to inspire activities with interpretation that could include food and music. Both encouraged open house type events throughout the year with area sites or in partnership with other major sites in the heritage area to encourage people to move throughout the heritage area. The open, park like setting of the Vanderveer House also gives it many more opportunities for interpretation and events than other places within the county.

## *Suggestions About Interpretive Method*

We discussed the need to engage quality interpreters, ideally actors who can be briefed about of the location, and provide engaging tours. There are challenges to do good interpretation when the audience is parents and children together.

Below please find selected quotes from these interviewees.

## **Selected Quotes from Crossroads Board and Staff Members**

### *What are the Greatest Opportunities for JVH?*

- Interested in JVH's archeological collection and wondering what is happening with it. Will it ever be displayed or how will it be interpreted? Says it is very important for the whole Crossroads story. Could it be housed in another building? Alternatively, could JVH collaborate with another organization or college to house it and display it if JVH does not have the facilities or interest? The story of the Pluckeman encampment is very important and the collection has national significance. However, it is not being used. Should be housed at a University, or given to the state museum or displayed somewhere. Do not know how it is being interpreted now, or the stories it reveals.
- Perhaps the Washington Association, which is the nonprofit partner with the NPS in Morristown, would be interested in the archeological collection.
- The main author archeologist is a good speaker, and has given talks at JVH and at Drumthwacket. Perhaps he could give a yearly talk at JVH about some aspect of the research.
- Perhaps the archeological collection could be a long-term loan to some other place so that it is seen and used if JVH cannot use it.

### *What Partnerships Should JVH Develop or Expand?*

- Site needs to be open more often, preferably weekends during the visitor season. Posted hours so they people know they can visit and the place will be open and ready for visitors. Site needs to have part time staff to do that, so that the house is open consistently. Staff can do tasks that volunteers are not interested in.
- Thinks that five generals tour is great, and a good partnership, but can the tour be offered more often? This one Feb 2012 was oversubscribed, and people had to be turned away from the Busses. Although there was a self-drive option too.

### *How should JVH work with Crossroads?*

- There is no gateway site in Somerset County for Crossroads, meaning a site that is open every day that has visitor services and interpretive staff—State run sites do this. Could JVH have staff that would coordinate with and among the other five general sites and others to do joint programming? Wallace House is a state owned site in the area, and it would be great to work together.

### *Partnership Opportunities for JVH*

- Somerset Cultural and Heritage Commission event (Journey to the Past) is a good start. Apparently, there are many re-enactors in the county. They are organized into brigades, and Richard Patterson would know most about that (he is a re-enactor). There is a council of Generals for all of these brigades and they have a yearly calendar to determine which brigade will appear at different activities.
- Excited about five general is tour, apparently he went on the tour this year. It was overbooked, and they just do not have the logistics to handle more than one bus, the script was good for each often 5 hours and the black re-enactor Ned Hector was excellent. The Lady Ellen character talked about a brick of tea, and she was good.
- Five generals tour could be offered at different times during the year, rather than just once a year. Vanderveer is a good place to tell stories because of the open land around the place.
- W3R campaign is also another great partnership opportunity.
- Should check with Will Tatum, from the David Library who last year did a “staff ride” which is a military training term, where he takes people on a tour for a whole day and describes everything in extensive detail, tactics, strategy, mostly for military people.
- Crossroads created five videos that are located at the gateway sites, in kiosks as an introduction to the heritage area, they are site specific. Goal is to link places together and get visitors to move around the heritage area.

### *Places with Exemplary Programming for Children: Formal and Informal School Programs*

- The best school program is at Fort Lee Historic Park and the Barracks. John Muller at Ft. Lee does a daylong 5.5-hour thing with classes that is very popular, and shows the life of an ordinary soldier. The kids make their own lunch; pitch a tent and then fire a cannon. They see a video when they get there, about what they are going to do. They cook their meals--there are food-handling issues with that but others seem to be more worried about that than others are. However, the tasting of food, smell of cannon, touching tent etc. is what makes the whole thing real to kids and memorable. Use of multiple senses helps the most. Parents are chaperones and they have a waiting list for chaperones to be included. This event happens only certain days of the week and not in bad weather.

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They have a waiting list. Kids write about what they did, but there has not been a real evaluation done of the program. Should have a program where one kid is the “scribe” and is embedded with the class to write and document what they did. Kids can make parallels today’s newspaper reporters in war zones. Also shows the importance of the historic record, such as diaries and other written forms.

- At the the Old Barracks where the kids sleep over. That is worth checking out. Barracks has a great school program, living history. Talk to Richard Patterson.
- John Miller at Princeton Battlefield has an ok kids program but their facilities are not that great. Morven does some changing exhibits.
- Morristown has an educational program, mostly tours, but has an extensive teacher education program
- Too bad that Morristown is just too far away to do joint school visits. In addition, they are different counties and school districts too. However, perhaps there is a partnership that can be developed for programming so that it does not overlap or is complimentary or we can cross market the two sites?
- Could create educational programming for kids, and work with the other sites to cross-market them? Create a working consortium, each site would tell part of the story, not unlike five generals’ tour.

### *Themes and Stories to Tell at JVH*

- The stories to tell are about military history but not everyone will want to hear those stories, so it has to have broader interest. A video that cross roads did is shown in Morristown, about how Washington decided to inoculate the troops against small pox. Most viewers find it barbaric (did not explain), but that the decision was a hard one for Washington. Having a video will get the attention of kids.
- For Vanderveer, critical will be the ability to connect the site to the larger stories in the Heritage Area. Knox is important. His papers are in two places, in a house museum in Maine and Guilder (sp?) Lane.
- Lucy Knox was a hoot, a spark plug. Morale builder when wives visited camps, increased morale of everyone, lifted spirits of men, enlisted and officers.
- Caty Littlefield Green is another historical figure, wonderful character, associated with the Van Vechten house, and the five general’s tour, apparently. In addition, she was a wife of one of the generals.
- Talked about how to engage people who are actors and can make a compelling presentation to people with the right history vs. historians who bore people but know the facts. Try to convince art pride that there is an opportunity for actors in historic sites for actors with paid positions doing interpretation. The challenge is how to do good interpretation when the audience is parents and children together.

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# Part 13: Report on Interviews with Partner Organizations

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## PART 13: REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

April 6, 2012

To: JVH Heritage Tourism/Interpretive Plan Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

**Subject: Report on interviews with up to four comparable Somerset County attractions and/or history organizations for discussion about joint programming.**

Last month I conducted four phone interviews to discuss how the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House could continue to cooperate with existing partner organizations or establish new relationships with other organizations to encourage visitation. My goal was to determine how the Jacobus Vanderveer House fit within the county's rich collection of historic sites now and how to further expand interpretive opportunities for the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

I spoke with Jackie Morales of the Somerset County Business Partnership; Tom D'Amico, principal planner with the Somerset County Planning Department and County Historic Site Coordinator; Tom Buckingham, Board president of Heritage Trails Association and Linda Barth, Executive Director of the League of NJ Historical Societies and Board member of the Delaware and Raritan Canal organization.

Most of these conversations focused on the vast collection of historic sites in the county and existing programming at these sites. Many spoke about existing collaborative programs such as the Five Generals tour organized by the Heritage Trails Association as being an exemplary effort, and wishing more opportunities like it and the Journey to the Past event could be developed. These interviews focused less on the interpretive potential of Jacobus Vanderveer House itself and more on opportunities for collaboration between the sites, so that the county could become a heritage tourism destination. As part of a network of sites through theme tours then, the Vanderveer House could play an important role.

### *Impediments to Joint Programming at Somerset County Historic Sites*

There were many impediments cited which prevent more joint programming from occurring between and among historic sites in the county. Some of the major reasons were:

- an aging group of volunteer historic site stewards;
- too few volunteers to open sites more often;
- few paid staff members to open sites;
- longstanding rivalries between heritage organizations;
- poor or consistent marketing/ advertising of events and
- lack of leadership for heritage tourism in general.

Compelling programming at these many sites does not seem to be an issue. There are many interesting special events and interpretive programs available. There have been some efforts to be open once a month on the same weekend day, but this needs to be expanded considerably to be effective for the historic sites to become a heritage tourism destination in the county.

Historic sites in the county have been fortunate to be able to access the Somerset County Open Space

Bond funds and NJHT grants during the last decade. Many of the historic sites are well restored. However, few are open often enough to be viable heritage tourism attractions. The only site that is a tourism attraction in and of itself in the county will be the Duke Estate when it reopens in May. New tourism products such as theme tours or weekend open houses like Journey to the Past must be created. The Vanderveer House itself is not a tourist destination, but it can be an important component in a variety of new tourism products (special events and theme tours) created to highlight the valuable heritage of the county.

### *County Tourism Realities*

The Somerset County Business Partnership is responsible for marketing the county to tourists. As mentioned previously the Duke Estate will be an extraordinary attraction when it reopens in May. The vast majority of historic sites in the county are not well organized or visitor ready. The 2011 New Jersey Heritage Tourism Inventory Analysis defines visitor ready as:

1. The site is open to the public as a tourism attraction during regularly scheduled hours, with a preference (but not a requirement) for weekend hours of operation.
2. The site is actively promoted as a tourism attraction.
3. The site supports one or more of the statewide heritage tourism themes by telling stories or providing programming related to that theme(s).<sup>1</sup>

This is a statewide issue, not just prevalent in Somerset County according to the 2011 New Jersey Heritage Tourism Inventory Analysis. Given this situation, the county has focused on other visitor attractions such as the Golf Museum, US Equestrian Team Headquarters, Somerset County Events Center, the ballpark in Bridgewater, Blues Fest, and other major events to market with their limited dollars coming from the state tourism office. Additionally, agricultural tourism (i.e. pick your own) is a huge business in the county. Finally, there are more than 6500 hotel rooms in Somerset County and they are fully booked from Monday to Thursday with business clients. There are obvious opportunities to collaborate with hotels for weekend activities. Some money is available for marketing, but the “heritage tourism product” is not well developed here. Leadership is necessary for heritage tourism to flourish in the county, and good cooperation among the sites is essential for any joint program to emerge.

These four interviewees, as shown in the comments from the interviewees below, identified a long list of potential partners. While this list is impressive, the opportunities for the Friends to develop joint programming between a small handful of sites will be difficult for all the reasons mentioned above. Instead, the Friends would be better off to support enthusiastically the efforts of the Heritage Trails Association to encourage the cooperation among all the major sites to create theme tours on various weekends during the visitor season. Please see another document with the minutes from the March 24, 2012 meeting organized by Tom Buckingham of the Heritage Trails Association that discussed opportunities for heritage tourism in the county.

## **Selected Quotes from Interviewees**

### *County Tourism Issues*

- The main attraction in the county is the Duke estate, which will be open starting in May. The whole 2700 acres will be open, and environmental center, and recreation center.
- The Golf museum is also a major draw in Far Hills. The US Equestrian Team is also in the area and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.njht.org/dca/njht/touring/NJ%20Heritage%20Tourism%20Inventory%20Analysis%20FINAL%205-14-2010.pdf>

they get a big draw in Gladstone. Natirar House property is 500 acres and is owned by the county, and the upscale spa is opening there.

- Monthly theme tours are possible. Can we get the hotels to get people to sign up 24 hours in advance, could use some kind of system for payment like PayPal or Eventbrite so people have a ticket and know they can get into the site.
- This year the funding for marketing is far more than other years, but it is money to market existing attractions not create new ones.
- There is also 1400 acres of open space with farms and spaces in the count, so in the Raritan valley agricultural tourism “pick your own” is a big business, so 90% of what has to be done is rebranding.
- Would love to implement heritage tourism products, as if audio tours, but thinks this might be jumping the gun a little bit.
- County is currently promoting, environmental, Wellness, spaces, Farm stands 87 of these.
- Ballpark in Bridgewater Mall shopping, Blues festival brings in 20,000 in one weekend; Steeple-chase Jumping also brings in people, and the golf tournaments.
- There are also 6500 hotel rooms that are booked Monday to Thursday but are empty on Fri, Sat. and Sunday. Need to do more packaging for the hotels.
- The freeholders (county) and the Biz partnerships (mostly hotels and restaurants are in this) wanted to explore more heritage tourism related activities to boost more stays at hotels during the weekends.

### *Impediments to Implementing Heritage Tourism Activities in Somerset County*

- Many sites have the same problem, they are not open. Elderly folks run most, and they are dropping out, not enough to recruit younger people, some have not been successful.
- Some houses are trying to do second Saturday or one weekend a month, April to November.
- Five generals is a great tour, good example should be done more often than once a year.
- Is there is a way to share the collective receipts? Alternatively, could the sites pool volunteers so that they could be open more often? Many need staff, part time either paid or volunteer staff in order to be open more often. Sometimes this seems like an insurmountable problem, and if there was a pool of volunteers to open the sties, it might make a difference.
- There are more than 75 sites in the county. The heritage trails association has a cd you can put into your car cd player and it gives you a brief history of the site and turn-by-turn directions to get there. It has not sold as many copies as they had hoped. However, all the content is available from that tour for a smart phone app.
- Could do joint programming among those sites open that week and the others that might be open with staff or volunteers.
- What about AmeriCorps Vista interns to staff sites on weekends? Could hire four of them, and they would rotate each weekend, and staff one house. Therefore, it would be open.
- Sees the site offerings as a chicken and egg situation. No one comes now because they site is not open regular hours, and then if staffed they complain that no one comes.
- Critical to the ability to attract tourists is having the sites open on regular hours, especially weekends in a coordinated way. Tom Buckingham is doing a good thing by getting all the sites to sit together and meet, and share goals and how they want to present themselves to the public and tourists.
- Need to come up with a catchy name second Sundays or something where they [sites] are open consistently. A decent majority of them, not just a handful. Prefer it be more like half or more. We could do coordinated events, if they are willing to buy into a branded series of events, like Open House Somerset County.
- Now that most [historic sites] are restored after 10 years, what to do now? They need to be better interpreted for the public. Need to be open more.



- Many of the sites are not handicapped accessible. Vanderveer is, but cannot use the upstairs spaces for programs where handicapped would need access. There can be more connections between sites, and all can create larger assets for all to share.
- Says there are 40 historical organizations in Somerset County. Not all get along. Apparently, there is some long time animosity.
- Struggling with how to get more tourists into the historic sites in the county. Cate Litvack and the Crossroads have 350 sites across the state and they are not being marketed well.
- Some of the events are unique, and some of the attractions are unique. However, need to promote the entire county. Need to get a broad representation of sites, more than 50% idea. Not all sites have a web site, which is the most important thing need to promote a tourist site. Some do not have their own URLs.

### *Sites in Somerset County with Heritage Tourism Potential*

- There is D and R canal, has a good for an organization that does good programming. In addition, the D and R Canal is a big draw. D and R Canal are a national resource and good venue for tourism. There are two byways, D and R Canal and Mill Creek is both state and federal scenic byway. Mill Creek gets federal funds to promote it, as does Crossroads.
- Suggest that Meadows Foundation would be a good group for joint programming and they have good programming for their various properties. At the Van Winkle house, there are concerts inside; they do them in the Federal portion of the house where they can seat about 50 people. The Meadows Foundation in Franklin Township is also an interesting organization. Township owns the houses acquired mostly for their open space values but all have an important historic house on them. All restored, using some county money, and NJHT funding to. The Wyckoff Garretson house is a prime Dutch 1735 house.
- Middlebrook Washington Campground Association, been around since 1897, land given to them; they must read the Declaration of Independence each July 4, now they get about 500 people to come the event each year. Site of the Middle brook cantonment. They do awards, kid's patriotic prizes for essay contests etc.
- Suggests we contact W3R group to see if there are opportunities to collaborate with them. W3R trail national recreational Trail, Sally Di Barton (works in County Planning department) there is some possible linkages with that organization too.
- Staats House is equally significant to the Vanderveer house, and it is South Bound Brook, and is more of a working class community, but there is a very dedicated group of people there. The friends restored it, and the exterior is done, and some of the interior. It was the headquarters of the Middle brook encampment. Tory Jack Day, an Afro American slave, who was a spy and legend. It is at the Staats house and it is fantastic, held for black History Month in Feb. One woman does a talk about stamps where black Americans are featured. Some associated with the Staats house, in Branch Brook Township.
- Besides Revolutionary War, we should be exploiting Dutch history and culture. Should join with Bergen county and upstate NY There is a Dutch Barn Preservation Society (thinks that is the name). The county has several Dutch barns to restore.
- There are plenty of organizations promoting a whole bunch of things, including Heritage Trails Association, which does bus tours. Heritage Trails has good tours, bus tours etc. they also do bus tours. They also do five generals, and churches of North and South parts of the county. The five general's tour is a good start and a way to get multiple sites to work together
- Journey to the Past is said to get 5000 visitors, but he thinks that really only 1000 people come—some people are counted several times, as they go from site to site, so that is how the 5000 figure comes about. Pat McGarry is the Weekend Journey to the past coordinator, and there are a number of historic round tables, which is how they develop programming for the year. Pat works mostly

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with the arts. The only history or heritage project she does is Journey to the Past.

- Historical Society of Somerset County has some good programming. In Somerset Hills there are lectures at the Brick Academy.
- Raritan Millstone Heritage Alliance also has links to Millstone creek. They have a guidebook, a good new one, that links all the historic sites along the Mill Stone creek.
- Kennedy Keith Farmstead is using their barn for an arts use. The Barn is their next project, to restore that so it can be used for concerts and event venue, lectures, concerts, and they will get money to restore some of the smaller out buildings too.
- One site on Middlesex in Piscataway River Road does do séances and paranormal stuff, some people really like that.
- Would like to have a walking tour of Somerville downtown, Bernardsville, like Morristown does it and it is very successful, downtown tours are popular.

### *Places with Exemplary Programming for Children: Formal and Informal School Programs in the State*

- Should talk to McCullough Hall in Morristown because they have a good and active home schoolers program. Also, check with the Montclair Historical Society because they have a home schooler program too.
- The Van Horne House has a variety of programs including Girl Scout badges.
- Vanderveer should be open to school groups; local history is taught in fourth grade. Suggest we do a facility meeting and tell them what is available. Need lesson plans that meet NJ standards. Buses are expensive to get students to the site.

### *Gateway Location for County for Crossroads*

- There is no gateway site for Crossroads in Somerset County. Suggested the two state owned sites, Rockingham at the south end of the county, and the Wallace House that is north. Both are open 7 days a week (or whatever the current situation is).
- The Van Horne House could be good for this purpose (Gateway site for Crossroads), it is right near 287. The Heritage Trail Association rents out some of the rooms for offices. That could be visitor center. They have a small gift shop, as does Rockingham.

### *Advocacy Concerns in the County*

- Apparently, the Somerset County Park District does not understand historic preservation and the value of preserving and maintaining their historic buildings. The County Open Space board has given them money to restore the exterior of some of their buildings.
- The Somerset county parks have a Dutch barn that is falling down, and a Dutch carriage barn. He hopes they would restore the barn and open it as a museum. There is no staff to interpret it at the parks department, would have to collaborate with Bound Brook township to do that.
- A German Barn in Frankford in Warren county. Only one in the state. Half-timbered, style from Eastern Europe would look normal along the Rhine River, black and white, exposed half-timbered with exposed fill in between. Could be an NHL, but has not been restored, and is of great interest to lots of people. It is now mothballed, and surrounded with a fence, some say it is 18th Century others say 1840s.

### *Email Lists to be Used for Marketing*

- Heritage Trails has about 1700 people on their email list. Crossroads has about 2000. The League of Historical Societies has about 1500 on their email list.

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Part 14:  
Report on  
Somerset  
County History  
Roundtable  
March 24, 2012

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## PART 9: REPORT ON SOMERSET COUNTY ROUNDTABLE

March 26, 2012

To: JVH Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

### **Subject: Report on Somerset County History Roundtable meeting March 24, 2012**

On Saturday March 24, 2012 I attended a meeting organized by Tom Buckingham of the Heritage Trails Association, held at their offices from 10-12 noon. Below are meeting notes.

This is the list of email addresses of the people who attended. This list was collected by Jan Ten Broeke at the end of the meeting.

Faulks, Brian <faulksbriano@gmail.com>; McGonigle, Frank <frank.mcgonigle@comcast.net>; Mitchell, Sidna <sbmcooks@aol.com>; Sullivan, Marge <hjmcs@optonline.net>; Tom D'Amico <Damico@co.somerset.nj.us>; Donna Ann Harris <donna@heritageconsultinginc.com>; Leslie Male <leslie@foxchase.net>; Sean Blinn <sblinn@optonline.net>; JoAnn Liptak <jliptak@aol.com>; Thomas Buckingham <twbuck@optonline.net>; Kathy Faulks <bkFaulks@gmail.com>; Angela Fernan <vicstaz@mac.com>; Chris Retz <ChrisFLP@aol.com>; Bob and Linda Barth <barths@att.net>; Monique Rubens Krohn <mrkrohn@optonline.net>; Barbara ten Broeke <barbaratenbroeke@gmail.com>; R. Iain Haight-Ashton <rhashton@pil.net>; Don Esposito <hikerw@aol.com>; Una Cote <una.cote@ucthesource.com>; Jan ten Broeke <tensart@gmail.com>; John Allen <jfallen4@aol.com>; Pat and Ron Morris <morrisnr9@netscape.net>; Orton, Portia <erorton@aol.com>; Else, Mark <MAElse@comcast.net>

On this list but did not attend  
Mark Else, Linda Barth

Tom Buckingham as the convener of the meeting spoke first, and asked everyone to go around the room and tell their name and the organization they represent, or if they serve on multiple heritage organization boards to tell us which ones. About 25 people attended the meeting.

Tom discussed his hope that the history community of Somerset County could be better organized. He hoped to get consent on whether these representatives would want to become involved with heritage tourism in a more organized way. Tom talked about Jackie Morales and her new role as tourism director with Somerset County Business Partnership. In addition, Tom had a series of discussions with her and there seemed to be some interest in working with the heritage organizations to better promote them. He hoped that the organizations attending this meeting would be interested in working with others, not just one time for one event, but rather throughout the year.

After the introductions, he asked Donna Ann Harris to make some brief remarks about heritage tourism and the importance of historic sites working together. He asked Donna to explain what she believed was the most important aspect of inviting the public to visit. She said that it was imperative that the sites be open both days of the weekend, every weekend, during the April to October season. However, if that was not possible, that they be open specific weekends such as second weekend or fourth

weekend. She described an effort she worked on in Delaware County PA to organize the 80 history organizations. She noted that 77% of those sites were still volunteer run, and they seemed very interested in theme tours or theme efforts. Themes were very varied and not solely Colonial architecture. She mentioned themes such as civil rights, Victorian architecture, and Colonial life as being popular in that county.

Tom asked about how fast the sites could see a difference in visitation. Donna said that sites starting a marketing effort needed to commit for a whole year, and not to expect miracles in the early days and months. Marketing takes time, and it might be months before visitation would pick up. However, consistent opening days were critical. There was some grumbling about this among the audience, and some said this was very difficult if not impossible to implement with volunteers. .

There were several questions about how to package tours with hotels. Donna replied that you have to first have something to sell, in an organized fashion. Just being open is not enough. Have to be special programs, events or theme tours. Also important to collect emails addresses and use these for new media venues. She also stressed the need to use new as well as traditional media to attract people. Tom seemed most interested in getting out of county visitors rather than local people. Donna discussed various email lists that can be used to publish local programs. Tom says he has an email list of about 1600 names. Donna noted that the NJ History L listserve has about 2000, Crossroads of the American Revolution has about 2000 and The League of Historical Societies has about 1000. These list services can be used to promote existing events. Bill Barth, Linda's husband suggested a monthly e-blast. Others made comments about joint volunteers, or joint staff members, which seems to be warmly received.

Many people at the meeting were focused on marketing their own site, but most saw at least some wisdom of marketing together. Few seemed interested in being open every weekend, or thought that was even possible.

Tom suggested four themes: Dutch Colonial, Revolutionary War, Canal Life, and Colonial Living.

Much discussion about working with school groups either to get to them to come to sites (or go to visit them with school kits/trunks). Obvious that many did not have school programs that met the NJ Standards for history. Several groups spoke about successes with local public schools, others with private schools, others with home schooler parents. Several spoke about specific themes they have developed for school programs, especially black history at Staats House. One site collaborates with United Way and they get a small grant to work as a mentor with a local school where they train students to give tours. Other groups said they had better luck working with key club, honor society clubs or debate team who have to learn to do public speaking. Some schools require public service and work with sites might be an excellent option. The in school clubs are trained and then give their presentations at the house for special occasions or on call. Others mentioned Girl Scouts or Eagle Scouts. Leslie Molé from Vanderveer House talked about their partnership with the Willow School where the kids are picking a person to research, they will dress in costume and do a play at the site and the kids are really jazzed by it. Many complaints about how hard it is to get local schools involved. Meadows Foundation has excellent relationship with local high school, especially Madrigal choir.

Bus tour of Dutch barns is coming up, and that might be a model for good cooperation. Perhaps tours once a month based on theme. Staats house does slave history --one of the few in the county. Five generals is another option, and all of the Revolutionary War sites could partner together.

Several comments about groups or people missing from this meeting, especially representatives of Duke Estate. Other organizations like Washington Campground were not represented. Mayor of Somerville

came, and said that we need to collaborate with them because they get 50,000 to come to their marathon. In addition, Warren Township was not represented or Bridgewater Historical Society. Need to reach out to those groups to see if they would be interested in being involved.

Tom explained about the existing Heritage Trails programs, the CDs, the driving tours and maps. Self-guided tours most popular, but the busses do sell out if properly marketed using list serves. Leslie said that promoting an event on the Heritage Trail List serve, made a big difference in attendance. More than 32 people come to the event, far more than any other event they had done previously in that series. She says their list serve really reaches the people that want to come to history related events.

Tom was asking to create an alliance (invitation below). Most seemed interested. Talked about the County buses and whom to speak to about having them available on a more regular basis. Tom D'Amico suggested talking with others in the county, but this seemed not to be a problem if they drivers were paid their overtime rate. Again an approach would need to be made.

Tom described the kinds of resources that might cooperate on each of the tour. He suggested that we sell a package to the hotels so they would have things to offer their guests during the weekend. Attendees did not understand that the hotels were empty on weekends, both Tom and Donna mentioned this based on their conversations with Jackie Morales. Tom mentioned even the extended stay hotels were empty on weekends because people went home. Tom also described his conversations with Carl Nittinger about the license plate moneys. About three to five thousand dollar grants are available and perhaps several sites could band together to apply. Carl said that might be welcomed (joint grant for a larger project).

Docent tour training would be needed so there would be good programming at each of the sites. Discussed how a tour might work. Explained there could be a passport for the weekend theme tour—Dutch tour for example. All the Dutch houses would be open. One ticket allows entrance to any site. Get passport stamped. Perhaps \$25 for the weekend. All the sites open would get a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales. Could use PayPal to collect revenues. Market to the hotels, Jackie would help market the tours if offered on a consistent weekend throughout the tour season. Could also pay for docents if needed. Some side conversations on getting more people interested in being docents/volunteers, new retirees. Focus for Colonial life should be family friendly activities, that have hands on elements. Interest in involving kids in research, perhaps through archeology.

Tom asked for volunteers who would head up one of the theme tours. Tom and Heritage Trails offered to organize Revolutionary War sites. Bill? Barth offered to work on Canal Days. Meadows Foundation offered to work on Dutch Heritage. Leslie Molé from Vanderver offered to do Colonial Living but only after an event in June is over. Each would contact the groups involved and ask if they might be interested in being open one weekend (two days) a month for this season. They would also gather any special events that the site produces.

Comments about needing a central organizing contact person, Tom suggested Jackie. Bill? Barth reiterated the need for a monthly eblast that would note the theme tours as well as special events that month. Discussion about driving tour cds already done by the Heritage Trails, and perhaps these could be made available at the hotels. Driving tours are fine, but people want to go inside these houses too. Package tours for new residents were mentioned, as were deals for those staying in extended stay hotels.

Tom discussed Journey to the Past weekend, and that there were only about 1500 unique visitors on that weekend. He feels that event needs more and better marketing. Donna stressed that being open one weekend day is not enough. Meadows Foundation has had great success with posting events on Face-

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book. Sean from Vanderveer House talked about reaching the press through twitter posts about events. Local media reporters are following Vanderveer House because of the twitter postings.

Tom asked for the general feeling of the room. He said we had to begin somewhere. Asked if those in attendance were interested in an Alliance, there was consensus. The groups that volunteered to lead the weekend tours would meet again on April 27 a Friday night at 7PM to discuss next steps. Some events might not fit in the weekend theme. They would be promoted separately. How to involve sites that do not fit into these themes? No one had an answer. Discussion about whether this was a rifle or a shotgun approach. Also agreed that some sites fit more than one category and they could be open multiple weekends (like Vanderveer- Rev War, Dutch and Colonial Life).

Agreed to meet again on April 27 at 7PM at Heritage Trails office to discuss next steps.

Donna Ann Harris  
Heritage Consulting Inc.  
donna@heritageconsultinginc.com

### **Email invitation from Tom Buckingham regarding Somerset County History Roundtable: “Heritage Tourism”**

Saturday, March 24th, 10:00 until noon

Van Horne House, 941 East Main Street, Bridgewater, 08812

Every history related organization in the county shares the same general goals: preservation and education. But in order to tell our story and maintain support, we have to be able to attract the public to our events and sites.

The Somerset County Business Partnership has recently launched a new effort to bring visitors to the county. They have expressed an interest in working with the history community in promoting the resources we have available. Heritage Tourism can be a positive catalyst for economic development through increased economic activity and employment. At the same time, it can build a greater sense of public pride and identification within the local community.

But in order to promote Somerset County history to the public, we have to have a clearly defined product. Sporadic events and occasional open houses are not sufficient to attract more than just the local public.

The purpose of this meeting is to exchange ideas on how we can better utilize our available historical resources to create well-defined products for the tourism market. The products should be family oriented with a educational message, attractive, and easily understood. At the same time, they should generate income for the sponsoring organizations. Some possible ideas might include:

#### ***1. Self-directed, driving tour (guidebook/CD/smartphone)***

Theme oriented tours, which 5 or 6 sites in each of three categories:

Revolutionary War

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Dutch Heritage  
D&R Canal

The sites would not be manned. Prepared information would include driving directions with intermediate points of interest and a detailed description of each site. The ongoing effort would be minimal, but the initial investment would be substantial. There would be a charge for material, but no fee at the sites.

***2. Customized driving tours on demand.***

Visitors could select any of 20 sites subject to availability. Tours would require a 24 hr pre-notification and pre-payment. Visitor would receive information package and directions. Site tours would be given by experienced docents. Ongoing effort would require a scheduling and payment management system, but would generate funds and part-time work.

***3. Clustered Site Tours - Fixed Schedule***

Offer visits to 4 or 5 nearby sites, which would be opened on a fixed schedule. The sites could have common theme. For example, five Revolutionary War sites would be open every third Saturday at a fixed times. Tours would be given by experienced docent for a fee. Tours would generate funds and part-time work.

Please send email if you plan to attend: [info@heritagetrail.org](mailto:info@heritagetrail.org). To insure that every active historical group in Somerset County is represented, please consult with other members of your organizations and encourage at least one member to join us.

Parking is available behind the Target store at 200 Promenade Boulevard or on the opposite side of Main Street in the Patriot Stadium parking lot.



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# Part 15: Report on Interviews with Revolutionary War Site School Programs

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## PART 15: REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

May 4, 2012

To: J VH Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

**Subject: Report on Interviews with Revolutionary War School programs, and observations and recommendations for starting a school program at the Jacobus Vanderveer House**

In the last two weeks, I visited three Revolutionary War era historic sites to observe their school programs in action. Cate Litvak and Kevin Tremble of Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area and Richard Patterson of the Old Barracks in Trenton recommended I visit Morristown, Ft. Lee and the Barracks because of their longstanding and exemplary school programs. While this may not represent a large sample from which to make recommendations, these three sites offer a variety of approaches to managing student visits.

According to the Management Plan of the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area, “New Jersey’s school students have been the largest and most important audience at many of the state’s Revolutionary Era attractions.” This is the case for the Old Barracks, which has more than 23,000 visitors annually, making it one of the most highly visited of all historic sites in the state and in the Heritage Area. 17,500 of its visitors are schoolchildren. Morristown has 1400 school visitors annually and Ft. Lee reaches 1800 students. School visits to a well-developed program then, could be an important potential audience for the Vanderveer House.

This memo is a summary of my observations and the advice I received during my visits to the Jockey Hollow unit of Morristown National Historic Park in Morristown, Fort Lee Historic Park in Ft. Lee and The Old Barracks in Trenton for starting a formal school program at the Jacobus Vanderveer House. Also attached are memos with my observations about each site and relevant background material. Another memo will follow with observations and recommendations about establishing informal educational programs for children.

### **Meeting Core Curriculum Standards**

The Jacobus Vanderveer House is in the midst of developing an interpretive plan, and this memo comes in advance of discussion of themes that would make sense for this important historic site. Emily Cooperman will be providing information in her reports on specific ideas for themes for school visits in the coming weeks that will meet the curriculum standards mentioned below.

**Meeting Curriculum Standards**—The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards guides educational content in all grades. Students are expected to master skills in each grade. Historic sites that align their visits with the Core Curriculum standards are more likely to have visits permitted by school administrators in public schools. Social Studies is the most common curriculum standard used at historic sites, but other topics might be possible. Most school visits take place in fourth and fifth grade when students learn about the Revolutionary War in New Jersey. Both the Old Barracks and Morristown NHP state that their educational programming meets the state standards. Ft. Lee does not

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make any claims that its program meets these standards, and yet this unique and compelling program is fully booked a year in advance.

***Teacher Preparation***— All three sites I visited have some but not all information about their school programs on their web site. All web sites encourage teachers to make reservations at the start of the school year. Morristown NHP has an extensive (170-page) teacher guide available on-line that provides pre and post visit lessons (see memo with link to this guide). Teachers receive an informational package (see attachment to memo) when they make reservations for the Barracks. Ft. Lee has a modest pre-visit packet (see attached memo). It contains instructions about what to bring, rather than educational content. Historic sites provide these lesson plans to make class preparation for the visit easy for the teacher and assure the visit meets curriculum standards.

## **Limiting Factors**

***Size of Building***—The size of the building or rooms to be used for the educational program determines the number of children that can be accommodated. For example, the Barracks has several modest sized (12' x 12') rooms used for their demonstrations of smallpox inoculation and for the recruiting sergeant presentation. In these rooms, a maximum of 25 students can sit on bunks, benches or stand around the costumed interpreter. Groups of up to 120 students (3 busses, which is not uncommon) are divided into four, 30-student groups. This is the maximum number of students that the Barracks can handle in an hour-long presentation because of the room size and paid staffing (four interpreters). In the case of Morristown, a maximum of 50 students can be accommodated (two interpreters). The Wick House at Jockey Hollow (Morristown) can handle 25 students, and the class is split if there are more than 25 in the group. At the Wick House, the group of 25 is split into thirds to visit the three rooms where they do an exercise. While the majority of the Ft. Lee program is held outside, they state that 25 is the maximum (although they will go to 30 if pressed) and four paid interpreters are present for the entire 5.5-hour visit.

***Length of School Program***—There is no set time module for lessons at these three historic sites. In Morristown, lessons are 20 minutes, 45 minutes or 1.25 hours. At Barracks, students spend 15 minutes each in the two rooms (smallpox and recruiting sergeant). The class sees both demonstrations. There is a 10-minute introduction and 20-minute send off with musket demonstration. At Ft. Lee, there are a myriad of activities but none seem to take more than half hour to 45 minutes. At Ft. Lee the entire program is 5.5 hours; at Morristown 2.5 hours and at the Barracks 1 hour for each module chosen by the teacher.

***Cost for Busses and More Students per Trip***— Field trips are an added expense to classroom instruction, and are considered enrichment to in-class activities in most public and parochial schools. All the historic sites I visited have seen school group attendance decline, and field trips are limited because of the cost of busses. Another trend noted are the growing number of students/classes that participate for every available field trip. In the past, one class at a time would typically visit. Now the entire grade comes for the field trip. This can stress the capacity of interpretive programs with 80 to 120 students visiting sites designed to accommodate 20 students at a time. Only the Barracks is able to accommodate multi-class visits. Morristown can handle up to 50 students; Ft. Lee has states the maximum is 25 (but I saw 33 students during my visit).

## **Staffing the Visits**

***Paid or Volunteer Staffing*** —All of the sites I visited have full time paid staff. The Barracks is the

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only site to have two part time staff. All the interpreters are year round, permanent staff who works a variety of weekday schedules to meet visitor demand. No volunteers are involved in any of the programming for schools. Volunteers staff the Wick House and garden during the weekends but provide no educational content.

***Training for Interpreters***—All of the staff interpreters are highly trained. Some are historians, some are educators. All have at least a BA/BS; some have master's degrees in history or teaching. New staff members are mentored by the current staff, given many books to read and curriculum guides to review. They shadow staff for several weeks/month before taking on their duties. There does not seem to be much turn over in these jobs and several interpreters made off hand comments to me that this is the best job they have ever had. None is given a script to memorize.

## **Presentations**

***First or Third Person Interpretation***—Only the Barracks uses first person interpretation (the interpreter presents him- or herself as an 18th century character). The other two programs use third person interpretation (modern day speech) but all costumes are accurate period garb.

***Accurate Costumes***—Most of the interpreters make their own clothes, and accuracy is stressed. Authenticity is key for first person interpretation (and third person interpretation in costume) and anachronisms such as wrist watches, cell phones, and inappropriate shoes are frowned upon because they “break the spell” the interpreter is trying cast in their presentation. These living history presentations rely on costumes to create the atmosphere, along with the building, to make history come alive for students during their presentations.

***Role of Demonstrations and Hands-On Activities***—All three historic sites offer demonstrations or hands-on activities for students during their visits. These make history come to life for students and stimulate higher quality learning than merely lecturing. Musket demonstration and firing of a cannon are extremely popular. Ft. Lee uses hands on activities extensively. Students chop all the vegetables for their stew lunch, which is cooked in an open campfire. They pour lead to make musket balls, dip candles and pitch a tent. They also use long axes and long saws to cut wood for the fire. Demonstrators show how cannon is fired, a musket is loaded and shot and how to fold a flag. At Morristown, students handle a series of reproduction items used in the house and tell their classmates about their use. At the Barracks, they see period surgical and dental instruments. Learning to march in formation is important part of the presentation at Ft. Lee and Morristown.

***Use Outside and Inside the House***—All sites use the visitor center or the historic site as well as the grounds for their school tour programming. This permits seasonal use of the grounds and demonstrations that need room (cooking, artillery, cannons, muskets, marching etc.). All but Ft. Lee can accommodate visits in inclement weather.

***Time Travel***—All three sites use different approaches to make the transition for students from the present to the past at the start of the visit. Students at the Barracks are told they are time travelers and they are traveling back to the same day in history in 1777 right after the Battle of Trenton. At the Barracks the new “recruits” are sworn in as soldiers with an oath to allegiance to the new country. Ft. Lee does a similar swearing in of new “recruits.”

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## **Alternate Programming**

***Travel Trunks***—A significant minority of schools will not permit students to travel on field trips of any kind due to lack of funds for busses or because they devote all instructional time at school. All of the sites I visited have travel trunks that bring the lessons to the school. Morristown provides these free of charge. The Barracks charges \$300 plus travel costs of \$25.00 (which is more than admission for an entire class of 25 at six dollars each).

## **Practical Matters**

***Restrooms and Janitorial***—All of the sites I visited had multiple restrooms (the minimum seems to be three stalls in the women's restroom) either in a visitor center or in the case of the Barracks in the renovated basement. All restrooms are handicapped accessible. All of these sites have fulltime maintenance and janitorial staff to clean restrooms frequently and pick up after visitors.

***Bus Parking***—All of the school busses parked in remote locations from the core teaching area, which was either inside the visitor center or historic building. Bus parking in a remote location helps reinforce the site's authentic placement in an earlier time (see time travel), so the 21st century yellow school bus is not visible from the historic site.

***Reservation Staffing***—The administrative assistant at the Barracks handles calls/emails for reservations, takes deposits and final payments, confirms the group a week before the trip and circulates the weekly schedule to the staff. She spends half her time on these activities. The other two programs have a similar administrative staffing, but much smaller school programs, so less time is devoted to scheduling.

***Fees***—All school programs charge a per student fee of \$5.00 or \$6.00 at the Barracks. Teachers/chaperones are not charged. At the Barracks, no fees are charged for any Trenton school. All fees are paid in advance and all require a deposit to reserve the date. Deposits of 25% of the cost are required to reserve the date for trips to the Barracks.

***Role of Teacher/Chaperones***—In Morristown and Ft. Lee, the teachers and chaperones are actively involved in the lesson. At Morristown, the teachers/chaperones are pressed into service to help students find objects in the Wick house and they use a binder with photos and descriptions for assistance. At Ft. Lee, the teachers and chaperones are considered "recruits" too and they participate alongside their students in all activities. There is page in the teacher guide for the Ft. Lee visit that tells chaperones what their role is and gives tips about how they should behave at the event. At the Barracks, teachers/chaperones are not given special tasks.

***Gift Shop***—All three locations have a gift shop, and the most extensive was at the Barracks, which is geared primarily to school students. Revenue from the Barracks gift shop has been between 95K and 115K annually. The average sale is \$5.00 for schoolchildren. There are a significant number of classes that do not permit students to visit the gift shop and this trend is increasing at all sites I visited. Reasons include lack of adequate time to visit the shop (about 20 minutes needed), or some classmates have modest incomes, so teachers decide that no student is permitted to shop.

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## Seasonality of Visitation

***Making Reservations***—All three programs permit teachers to make reservations at the start of the school year and not before. In the case of the highly popular Ft. Lee Living History program, schools are only permitted to visit every other year and the Administrative Assistant that handles the reservations keeps track. Teachers who call earlier in the year (in some cases the first week of school) get the pick of the “better” dates—which are in May and June at the end of the school year.

***Rain or Shine***—School visits to Morristown and the Barracks visits happen rain or shine. Outdoor activities can happen on the Barracks porches if rain is pelting. Ft. Lee trips are cancelled due to rain or snow because open campfire cooking is impossible. Students are advised, however, to come prepared for any weather eventuality.

## Staffing the Visits

***Full Time or Part Time Programs***—All of the school programs run during the school year, but staff work a yearlong schedule. During the summer months, the interpreters plan the year ahead, or work in other parts of the site. During the summer, Ft. Lee interpreters make their clothes by hand, gather supplies, make repairs to their buildings/garrisons at the Fort and provide interpretation to the public on the same Wednesday to Sunday schedule. The Barracks has three full time and two part time interpreters that work a year-round schedule.

***Days Open***—Staffing determines how many days a week that school programs are offered. Barracks offers programs Monday to Friday. Morristown is Tuesday to Friday, and Ft. Lee is Wednesday to Friday. Despite the immense popularity of the Ft. Lee school program, Park administration over the years has never agreed to change staffing requirements (all four-interpretation staff work a Wednesday to Sunday schedule) or add more staff.

***Use of Reproduction Objects***-- In all cases, students are shown and are able to touch reproduction objects. The interpreted rooms for students are furnished entirely with reproductions and students are allowed to touch if part of the program. At the Wick House in Morristown, there are velvet ropes in the rooms, but students are given a “Kit” that contains reproductions of five objects seen in the room, that they are supposed to identify. The lesson concludes when students tell their classmates about their kit objects in each room. At Ft. Lee, the visitor center has traditional exhibits and students participate in making lead musket balls and dip candles. In the camp, everything including the buildings are reproductions.

## Marketing the Visit

***Marketing***—All of these programs have been in existence for many years. Teachers return with their classes year after year. Morristown and Ft. Lee do no marketing whatsoever. These programs always have large crowds, and could take more students if more staffing was devoted. The Barracks does market their program. They take a table in the exhibit hall of the New Jersey Education Association annual convention in Atlantic City each year. Every teacher in the state attends that conference. They share their table with the other three sites in Trenton (all within walking distance): the Trent House, the State Museum and State House and they jointly market their programs as a full day in Trenton. Located in the center of the state, with several attractions for school children year round Trenton is a natural destination for field trips.. The Barracks administrative assistant does mailings to teachers at the start of the

school year. The Barracks is the most aggressive in marketing because its earned revenue from student fees and the gift shop represents close to a third of their operating budget in an extraordinarily tough fundraising environment in Trenton.

The real “market” for school visits—While teachers are the ultimate market for school program field trips, the school administrators (the principal or assistant principal in a small school) or a subject area curriculum coordinator (in social studies) are the gatekeepers for any school trip. The Barracks does direct marketing to these people yearly. Teachers need to pitch a trip to these administrators, and negotiate the bus costs and availability with them. In addition, teachers must gather permission slips, get fees from students (or the PTO if possible) and schedule and confirm the trip. Some school districts will not permit outside field trips due to cost or their emphasis on teaching to the standards. Private, parochial, charter schools and home schoolers do not have such gatekeepers.

## **Recommendations**

A formal school program at the Vanderveer House will be time consuming to start and costly to implement. While there is a built in audience of fourth and fifth teachers that might wish to visit the Vanderveer house, the Vanderveer Board will have to assess whether the effort to cultivate this audience is worth the cost for the small number of school children to be serviced. Starting a school program is a multi-year effort. Attendance expectations in the first years should be modest.

Staffing is the most critical decision that Vanderveer Board must address. I asked the leaders at the historic sites I visited, if a startup school program could be staffed with volunteers. All said that it would not be possible. Each one mentioned different concerns. Several noted the need for consistent personnel that are available at regular hours, suggesting that volunteers would not commit for such regular daytime programming. Others noted the need for considerable training to undertake first or third person interpretation. Other comments included the need for additional liability insurance for hands-on activities and leadership to create and market a program from scratch.

A Vanderveer school program would ideally be developed by staff in conjunction with a Board committee. This working group would develop an entirely new curriculum guide and lesson plans that meets current educational standards to draw teachers for a high quality program. Additionally, the new school program must be marketed to teachers and school administrators. There are janitorial issues, inevitable wear and tear on the building, and I am not certain if there are enough restrooms to handle a class of students.

A Vanderveer school program might begin with two part time staff members (or consultants) who would be in charge of developing the curriculum, presenting the program and marketing the program to teachers with Board oversight. The collection requires security and I believe that two staff are needed to provide the protection necessary. Former teachers might be ideal candidates for these positions.

Any school program at the Vanderveer House should meet the NJ Core Curriculum Standards. Emily Cooperman will provide advice about specific topics/lessons that would make sense based on the interpretive themes for the site. The creativity and background of the staff will determine the specific material to be taught during the program.

The curriculum-based content of a school program would determine the length of the lesson/activity units. The visit could last two hours and have a series of demonstrations and hands on activities of 45 minutes or less. A limit of 25 students per visit might be a good start. This size group (an average class size) could be divided in half so that both indoor and outdoor spaces could be used. Vanderveer school

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program planners could limit the school visits to certain weekdays, say Tuesday and Wednesday to limit wear and tear on the building.

School program planners would have to determine how the period rooms would be used and the optimum number of students/chaperones that could visit at one time. The educational content can be developed around that number. Twelve students using the period rooms at one time might be optimal.

All the other historic sites have reproductions in the rooms they use for instruction. Since the Vanderveer House has costly antiques that are currently displayed without any barriers, velvet ropes or barricades with interpretive panels may need to be installed to prevent handling of objects by students especially in the bedroom. For security reasons, it may be necessary to have more than one staff member present with students in the house, thus increasing costs. Once the subject matter of the lessons is set, integrating reproduction objects and demonstrations into lesson content will make for a richer educational experience for students. Costumed interpreters are highly popular, but accuracy of the garments is important so guidance from experts may be needed.

Starting a school program would require good record keeping. The school program staff at the Vanderveer House could serve in this administrative function until there was sufficient demand to hire a part time administrator. Cleaning of the restrooms after each visit is another function that must be added to program implementation costs. Depending on demand, and if the need arises, travel trunks can also be created to bring the lessons into the schools.

Marketing a new school program at the NJEA conference would be a logical first step, after the educational content is created and tested on a few classes. Direct outreach to area fourth and fifth grade teachers and school administrators should also be part of the school program's initial marketing. Program planners can exercise great creativity to encourage students to visit again with their family at other times during the year with free passes or other incentives.

Starting a school program at the Vanderveer House is a big step forward in sharing the site with the public. Fourth and fifth graders are a natural audience for the property. If students have a positive experience, they can encourage their parents to make a visit as a family for other special events and activities at the Vanderveer House.

## **Attached**

Morristown NHP Case Study  
Ft. Lee Historical Park Case Study  
Old Barracks Case Study  
Old Barracks Teachers Guide  
Ft. Lee Pre Visit Materials



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## **Revolutionary War Historic Sites School Programs**

**Title:** Four and five grade school program Morristown NHP at Jockey Hollow

**Location:** Morristown National Historic Park, Morristown NJ, Jockey Hollow unit.

**Pre-trip materials**--An extensive teacher guide (link below) provides excellent pre visit and post visit materials for teachers to use. These programs are aimed at four and fifth grade. There are other programs available for other grades such as high school—see below.

**Fees and Requirements**--\$5.00 per student, paid in advance. No charge for chaperones or teachers. Teachers can book these tours starting on Labor Day and the bookings for springtime fill up first. Programs are held Tuesday to Friday. One school program at Jockey Hollow per day. About 1200 children participate each year. More classes could be accommodated if Park administration added more staff, or if the program was organized as a morning or afternoon session, which it is not now. This program does NOT include the Washington's Headquarters, which is an additional fee. The Jockey Hollow program is a two-hour program that starts at 10AM goes to 12:30PM.

This new program is an innovation for the park as 50 students can now participate. Previously the maximum was 30. If there are two classes or more than twenty-five students, the group will be divided and alternate with the other group. That is, one group/class will participate in the Visitor Center portion of the program while the other group/class will participate in the Wick House portion--when each respective session is concluded, the groups will switch places. Rangers conduct the tours, and are dressed in costume of a Revolutionary soldier but speak in the third person (modern day speech).

**Meets NJ Standards**--The Morristown NHP Teacher guide for current educational program was developed through a grant from Parks as Classrooms program of the NPS. This is a 170-page document with excellent references and activities for pre visit and post visit activities. <http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/MORRISTOWN%20Farming%20Village%20to%20Log%20Hut%20City%20TG.pdf> There are three lessons in the teacher guide. Each one meets multiple and specific curriculum guides for the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

**Description of Program**--This new program was being tested when I observed the program on April 25, 2012. It is essentially lesson three in the teacher guide starting at page 3.1. This lesson discusses the role of officers, soldiers and civilians during the "Hard Winter" of 1780 when the long cold weather and snow left soldiers without food or adequate clothing and some resorted to stealing from area residents in order to survive. This lesson includes a discussion about how General Washington should treat the soldiers who have been caught stealing. This program also includes a visit to the Wick House and some military drilling at the end (this seems to be an optional portion of the program if there is time available).

The ranger gives an orientation to the Jockey Hollow area using the mural on the wall of visitor center of the Jockey Hollow campground. He introduces the lesson, saying the group will divide in half (max 25 students in each group). The ranger gives each group a series of role cards of historic figures in 1780 Morristown. These are laminated cards with the person's name and an historical quote by the person who is either a soldier/officer or a civilian. Students read the role cards aloud of their historic figure.

There are about 20 role cards, so students can share them. One student reads the card aloud. Then, each student prepares a short presentation of his or her historic figure(s)—although no one did that in the class I observed. While students are preparing their presentation, one half of the students visit the exhibit—literally they go behind the scenes, and into exhibit and walk into the reproduction hut in the Visitor Center showing how soldiers lived when in camp in Jockey Hollow.

The ranger shows them how soldiers slept and ate in the hut. When all of the students have seen the hut, the group returns to the visitor center center area. The ranger invites each pair of students to come up and read their character card. I personally saw little value in this, as they were just reading what was printed on their card. However, the ranger then asked the students questions about what General Washington should do the soldiers who were caught. He also discussed that few civilians ever received compensation for stolen items. While this lesson does not result in one conclusion, students are exposed to conflicting evidence and must make up their own minds. This portion of the visit takes the longest and is about an hour and fifteen minutes.

***Wick House***--This is a "guided discovery" activity where the teacher will lead the students in an exploration of the Wick House, with written instructions previously provided. The teachers and chaperones were highly involved here.

The class is divided into three groups, and each is given a "kit" with five 18th century reproduction objects in them. Each room has different objects. The rooms visited are the kitchen, the bedroom and the officer's headquarters. The teacher/chaperone also gets a notebook with photos of the objects and information about each item. Students go into the room to find the original object. Their goal is to be able to tell the other students about the object and its use. When the students have found all the objects and learn about their use from the teacher/chaperone, then the whole group gathers together and goes from room to room to hear from their fellow students talk about each of the objects. In the kitchen was a costumed ranger is tending a fire. He explains a bit more about the Wick family and how they lived when officers were occupying their home during the winter of 1780. The visit to Wick House takes about 40 minutes.

The classes gather back in the Visitor Center to do a final wrap-up with the Ranger.

***Military Drill***--This is not a part of the core program, but provided if there is time. This seems to be the highlight of any visit to Jockey Hollow. Students are shown a reproduction musket (rifle) used by soldiers. The ranger shows them how to hold the gun, and how to load it per instructions shouted by a drill sergeant (the ranger). Each student is asked to pick a mockup of a musket from a barrel to use for a brief drill and marching. These muskets are made of simple plywood cut out in the shape of a musket and the wood is sealed to prevent splinters. The ranger demonstrates how to hold the musket, and the steps to load and aim the musket. The ranger also drills the students in formation with their muskets at the ready. This demonstration lasts about 20 minutes. When they are finished, the students return their muskets to the barrel and depart.

There is a small gift shop at the visitor center but none of the students were permitted to buy things. Eastern National Monument Association a nonprofit associated with the NPS manages the gift shop. Profits are funneled back to the Parks from the gift shop.

This was a short but formal educational program. The teacher prepared his class for the visit. The ranger did discuss that some of the schools attending did have trouble with some of the content especially reading the character cards aloud. Some of the words and names are long and difficult to pronounce—Ebenezer, Presbyterian etc. The ranger said that some teachers did not like the discussion because it

required their students to make judgments that some felt were beyond their skill level. The ranger also mentioned that the ability to participate in this discussion might be based on the time in the school year (start of school year is harder because learning concepts are not fully formed). Other students might lag behind in reading so reading aloud might be difficult. He is toying with the idea of offering options for teachers as not all classes have the skills to undertake an exercise he believes. I found that students were fidgeting while they waited their turn to read, and even if the character card was given to one student, both went to present and some shared the duty, not all did. The students were highly engaged at the Wick House but that visit was not very long. The students showed the most excitement about the military drill.

**High School Student Programs**—There is a fundamentally different program for high school students. Students are invited to come as groups into the archives of the MNHP and use primary materials for research. Class visits are available, but only 20 people per session on Wednesdays only. It is primarily geared to advanced placement high school students in history.

The primary goal of our seminar is to provide a skill-building workshop for students of history. Archive staff members guide students through source use and analysis activities that will lead students toward effective and meaningful primary source investigation. The archives tutorial program provides students the unique perspective of working with authentic, unedited eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts from our own Lloyd W Smith Archival Collection. Attached are links to materials for high schools.

Primary Source Seminar: Information Packet ([http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/Primary\\_Source\\_Seminar\\_at\\_MNHP-2009.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/Primary_Source_Seminar_at_MNHP-2009.pdf))

Seminar Registration Form ([http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/REGISTRATION\\_FORM\\_SEMINAR\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/REGISTRATION_FORM_SEMINAR_2009.pdf))

Teacher Workshop Registration Form ([http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/REGISTRATION\\_FORM\\_PRIMARY\\_SOURCE\\_SEMINAR\\_TEACHER\\_WORKSHOP\\_FALL\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/morr/forteachers/upload/REGISTRATION_FORM_PRIMARY_SOURCE_SEMINAR_TEACHER_WORKSHOP_FALL_2009.pdf))

The Primary Source Seminar also has an extensive blog <http://www.primarysourceseminar.blogspot.com/p/student-seminars.html>, with materials for teachers about using primary sources in their lessons, whether for a visit to Morristown or not. There is a great deal of information for students that are participating in National History Day activities.

**Traveling Kits**—If schools cannot come to Morristown, then the education staff can come to the school with a travel trunk. The following information is from the MNHP web site. “What would you find in a soldiers traveling haversack? A ladies pocket bag? A Native American’s traveling bag? Or even among an enslaved person’s unique items? Using facsimiles as an activity kit, teachers can combine copies of primary source materials and replicas of items commonly carried by various types of people during the period of the American Revolution. Teachers can create a hands-on, small-group based exploration learning experience. Each of the items in the separate traveling kits forms the basis for a topic-based activity. Laminated cards that contain primary source materials and questions based on the provided readings accompany each kit. Schools within the state can request the loan of the traveling kits by contacting the Morristown division of cultural resources.”

**Marketing**—this program is perennially popular. The Park does not do any marketing whatsoever. The programs are booked months in advance.

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## **Revolutionary War Historic Sites School Programs**

**Title:** Living History Program. *“Schoolchildren studying the American Revolution can visit Fort Lee to experience life as recruits in an eighteenth-century army. This five-hour “living history” program combines discussion, demonstration and participation to give students a complete lesson in Colonial life.”*

**Location:** Fort Lee Historical Park, Fort Lee NJ

**Pre-trip materials:** scanned materials attached.

**Fees and requirements:** \$5.00 each student payable in advance. One adult is required for every eight children. There is a minimum of three chaperones, maximum of five. There is an interesting letter to chaperones on their role and “tour of duty” during the day in the 18th century army (attached in pre visit material). One school visit per day. The program has averaged about fifty-two classes per year. Programs are cancelled or rescheduled if it rains or snows before 1PM (lunch time). If it rains after that time in the day, the program continues. The yearly average is about 1,800 students per year. Teachers make calls to schedule at the start of the school year. Because the program is so popular, teachers are limited to visiting every other year by the administrative assistant who handles all the bookings. This is mostly pitched to fourth and fifth grades, but any school group can participate. John said that 10th graders had come the day before and they behaved perfectly.

Staffing of this program are four full time costumed interpretive staff members and an administrative assistant. Four interpreters are needed for the program to work. All park interpretation staff work a Wednesday to Sunday schedule, off Monday and Tuesday. On weekends, they staff the visitor center at the Historical Park and offer tours and third person interpretation at the camp for visitors in good weather. During the summer months they make repairs to the buildings, make clothes, do research, and prepare for the school year. All of the buildings and battlements are reproductions.

**Meets NJ Standards.** There is no evidence that this program specifically meets the NJ Core Curriculum Standards. Despite the fact that it is a 30-year-old program with a two-year waiting list, there is no statement that the visit meets specific educational standards.

**Visit Description**--The visit starts at 9AM with the viewing of the 15-minute film in the auditorium, which provides an orientation for the Park, and the role of Fort Lee in the defense of New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. After the film, students are told that they have just enlisted into the Continental Army and will be spending the day at camp. The costumed interpreter (John Muller) tells his recruits that they will cooperate, pay attention and learn how to undertake everyday tasks at camp as a soldier would.

The first tasks take place in the visitor center exhibit area. A small room is set aside for the making of lead musket balls and dipping candles. Much of this section is about getting students to line up, take instruction and pay attention. Each student pours the lead into the casting to make a musket ball that they later take home. Candle dipping is demonstrated and each student takes turns dipping candles. This portion of the visit takes about 30 minutes. After this, the students look at exhibits in the visitor center but are told not to press buttons, which start AV loops that are loud and distracting. If they pay attention and do not do this, John discusses some of the exhibits for 10 minutes. After this, the students

line up and then load up a large cart with all the food provisions they brought to make their lunch.

A Sargent and Corporal are identified before the visit and they are given instructions about their roles during the day. The officers march at the front, and back of the formation, and give orders to the other recruits. The officers are supposedly chosen for their leadership abilities. They are given symbols of their office to wear during the day—a sword for the Sargent and an ax for the corporal. The Sargent picks six students to push/pull the wagon and the others line up per instruction to march into camp. They have all their gear with them (coat, backpacks etc.).

Upon entering camp, they fall out and then are shown how to line up in formation. All get a reproduction canteen to bring to camp. After that, six students are chosen for kitchen duty with Jenny a costumed interpreter (camp follower). They take all the vegetables and are shown how to chop them into bite sized pieces for the stew they are going to make. After that is complete, they make Johnnycakes from corn meal and other ingredients on the griddle. Bob, another costumed interpreter cooks the stew in two large kettles over an open campfire. Spices and meat are added to the vegetables that the students brought along. Apple cider is placed in a small barrel cask for students to drink. The students also cook in the fireplace in the hut and outside where the bulk of the meal is made.

The rest of the class goes off into the woods to find felled tree branches and bring them back to camp for firewood. Students drag these branches out the paved path and then they are bundled with a rope/hook instrument and students then drag the pile to camp. At camp, students learn how to use tools. Four students take turns using a long saw to cut the larger limbs into smaller pieces for firewood. Another group of students are shown how to use the long ax to cut the smaller branches into kindling. These are real saws and real axes. Finally a pair of students is shown how to use mallets to split larger logs for firewood. All students take turn using all these tools. John and Shawn supervise. This takes about an hour all told from gathering wood to learning and using tools. By this time, everyone understands that these tools are dangerous and instruction is critical and most pays attention.

The ingredients that the class brings for their meal is to be fresh, not canned or frozen. Students bring six pounds of ground turkey or lean beef, 8 pounds of potatoes, onions, carrots, green or yellow beans, tomatoes, celery, yellow or green zucchini, corn, hard squash and rice/barley. Seasoning including salt, pepper, basil, garlic, bouillon cubes and parsley. A quart of heavy cream is needed to make butter, which is churned at the camp, and students spread this butter on the unsliced bread brought along to camp. Apple juice or cider is available for drinks and apples for dessert. Students can also make other items while in camp including bread in the Dutch oven on site, Johnnycakes, apple fritters, drop cakes and apple butter. Additional ingredients are required for these items and what to bring is included in the pre-visit kit. This is food for 32 people (25 kids and 7 adults which include the Ft. Lee Staff).

After all ingredients are chopped and cooking is done, and the wood gathered, then all students gather to learn about pitching a tent. The flag is raised in camp. John gives some orientation about the smaller cannon (3 lb) vs. the larger cannon 32 lb. Students are shown how to clean and load the cannon. Many hold the ropes, and then switch roles. Safety is stressed. One shot is fired from the small cannon. This is very popular. The cannon is placed back in the barn-like structure. Students are given some free time (about 20 minutes).

Lunch is served and eaten at picnic tables. Students eat what is served and clean up. They all bring their own cups, utensils and bowls for the stew. These are washed up and put away in their packs.

After lunch at about 1PM, they are placed in formation again to march out to another area of the park. They are shown how to march, turn, and fire a musket through a demonstration by John and Shawn.

There is more marching back and a description of the gun batteries around the fort and their role in defense. Students are shown how to climb over one of the batteries, and each student storms the wall and climbs over. There are some stragglers but all manage to do it. They march further along, and then get back to camp to break up the camp, and tote all of the remaining provisions, garbage, tools, etc. out in the cart. By this time, there does not seem to be any problem getting recruits to take on these tasks and the students are well ordered. They sing a song they learn as they march to the visitor center. They learn how to charge and attack. Where they pick up their gear and march again to another recreated structure, a guardhouse. Students take turns going up the stairs to see the view.

After this, they march back to the visitor center. This group wanted to visit the gift shop (not all do) so students were instructed about how to line up and then purchase their items. Apparently, this is a big deal for some schools with children of limited means. There are items priced from less than a dollar to twenty. Buying from the store takes time and some are on very tight schedules with the bus. To solve this problem, the staff provides a list of all the items and students are instructed to put their money in an envelope with their name and the object they wish to purchase. These will be bagged and available at the end of the trip.

If not making a purchase or after purchase, the rest of the students were taken outside in the lawn of the visitor center and shown an 18th central game called trap ball which they played for about 20 minutes, while the rest of the students finish making their purchases. At the end, they lined up to get their “pay” and a musket ball they made early in the trip. They lined up for the final time, and then shook John’s hand as they were “dismissed from service,” and got on their school bus.

The class I observed was an enrichment class from Bergan County made up of 33 fourth and fifth graders, plus two parents and two teachers. Three of the adults participated in all of the activities including marching and going over the wall. One mother did not participate in any of the activities. The lead teacher had brought her students to Ft. Lee for many years and felt it was an extraordinary, worthwhile program.

***Food Safety and Accidents***--Previously mentioned in an interview with Kevin Tremble of the Crossroads of the American Revolution, is the issue of sanitation and food safety while cooking during the event. There is a portable toilet in one corner of the camp that students can use as well as restrooms in the visitor center. It is unclear how food safety standards are met. During the weekends, when the interpretive staff does cooking, visitors are not permitted to sample the food. There is one notice about providing food for those on special diets. There is clear instruction about clothing to wear (no shorts) and how to tie back long hair so it is not caught in the fire. Apparently, in the 30 years John has been offering a program there have been no major accidents.

***Other Programs for Groups at the Park***--Scout, community service and other group programs are available but mostly in other parts of the park and relate to natural areas, trail grooming etc. Groups fill out a volunteer form and the park calls when there is a service project available. These are free.

***Guided Hiking Tours***--School groups of all ages can schedule guided hikes and nature walks within the park and led by the park staff. The Palisades are uniquely situated for studying geology and river ecology, though many topics can be covered (woodland ecology, winter ecology, history, invasive plant species, etc.). Hikes range from easy to moderate and can be offered in any part of the park. Subject to staff availability—please arrange early. Fees: \$35 nonrefundable reservation fee per class or troop + \$2 per participant.

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**Marketing**—The program does no marketing for the school program, and is sold out a year in advance. Programs are only offered from September to end of the November, and then again from the end of March until June, and only on Wednesday-Friday. These programs are long at 5.5 hours and a previsit by the teacher is necessary to review the requirements (whether you have been to the location or not). Pre visits are with any staff member.

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## **Revolutionary War Historic Sites School Programs**

*Title:* Old Barracks

*Location:* Old Barracks Trenton NJ

*Description of program*—Two programs were featured when I visited on May 1, 2012. “Meet the Past” where students “enter the world of 1777 and share the trials, tribulations and joys of ordinary people living in extraordinary times.” In addition, meet the Past New Jersey Divided where students meet a Loyalist and learn about smallpox inoculation in Washington’s Army.

Students arrive off their busses and are welcomed by an interpreter dressed in military garb of the Continental Army of 1777 who tells them they are about to undertake time travel. They are being transported to this day in 1777 the months after the Battle of Trenton. The students are being inducted into the Continental Army, and are asked to line up as “recruits” to take their Oath of Allegiance, which they recite with the interpreter. Lining up in formation helps to divide into four groups (if there are two buses of children). The welcome takes about 15 minutes. Each group is then marched to the second floor, and four rooms have been recreated as barracks or hospital rooms.

A costumed interpreter meets them and two of the rooms are used for talks about being a recruit in Washington’s Army and life in town right after the Battle of Trenton. They sit on benches and bunks in the room. In the two rooms outfitted as hospital rooms, the interpreters talk about how Washington ordered that every man be inoculated against small pox. Various periods medical and dental instruments are shown. Students stand around the interpreter and there are benches for the 25 students in each room. These presentations take about 12-15 minutes each. Then the classes switch rooms to hear the other presentation. When done, the students march back down to the front court yard where they assembled before and line up in formation. They see a demonstration by one of the interpreters about how a musket is fired, which is very popular. After this 15-minute demonstration, the class leaves or visits the gift shop if there is time and the school permits this.

Richard Patterson the site director, says that more schools are not permitting students to visit the gift shop. Gift shop revenues are important to the Barracks, nonprofit organizations that must raise 70% of its operating costs every year. Gift shop revenues are 95-115K a year, about 15% of the operating budget. The gift shop is the most extensive of the three sites I visited, and is clearly geared to kids. The average sale to a school child is \$5.00. School admissions bring in another 95K yearly. Thus 30% of the site’s revenue comes from school tours/gift shop sales. Schools also account for more than 80% of their visitation yearly. The Barracks is also working with a very diminished staff. Cuts in state funding have forced a significant reduction in staff from 21 to eight in the last two years. Total visitation is now 23,000 making the Barracks one of the highest visited historic attractions in the state. It is the highest in the Crossroads Heritage Area according to Cate Litvak. Schools account for 17,500 yearly visitation. This is down from the height of 22K before 9/11.

The chaos of over 100 children visiting at once is managed by dividing the classes into groups of 25 for very short presentations. Five-hour long programs can be offered in a day. Compare this to both Morristown and Ft. Lee that offer only one program a day. Both are government operations, not dependent on visitor revenue for their budget. Perhaps because a visit to the Barracks is but one in a series of visits to other Trenton historic sites that day, the one hour visit is broken up into four short educational units. While the presentation in the first person is flawless and the interpreters are very willing to take ques-



tions and do not give a canned presentation, they clearly have a set script to cover. While all the objects in the rooms are reproductions, there is not time for students to touch an object, or explore any issue in depth.

These programs show how mass tourism can be accomplished with a high quality (though quick) presentation. If teachers seek a longer and more in depth presentation, they can book longer programs in the exhibit gallery with a maximum of 30 participants. It was unclear if the students were prepared before the visit. I observed three sets of school tours ranging from a yeshiva, an inner city public school and a suburban public school. Behavior was excellent in all cases, but there were few questions asked of the students to gauge their preparation for the visit.

**Pre-trip materials:** Attached

**Meets NJ standards--** The Old Barracks meets the N.J. Social Studies Curriculum Benchmarks 6.1 through 6.9.

**Group Tours--**Below are the program listings for all the educational programs for the Barracks (from their website)

Tour Title	Description	Age	Duration	Fee	Notes
Meet the Past: The Battle of Trenton	Groups encounter "persons of the past" from the year 1777. Participants are recruited into the Continental Army and are introduced to military life. They will meet a soldier or townspeople who recall the events of the "recent" Battle of Trenton. They will also encounter the medical personnel who staffed the Barracks when it was a smallpox inoculation facility between 1777 and 1781.	All ages	45 minutes	\$8 adults, \$6 students and seniors.	Maximum number of participants is 120.
Meet the Past: New Jersey Divided	Groups encounter "persons of the past" from the year 1777. Participants are recruited into the Continental Army and are introduced to military life. They will meet a local soldier or townspeople who will challenge participants to remain loyal to King George III of England. They will also encounter the medical personnel who staffed	All ages	45 minutes	\$8 adults, \$6 students and seniors.	Maximum number of participants is 120.

	the Barracks when it was a smallpox inoculation facility between 1777 and 1781.				
<b>A Call to Arms Workshop</b>	This workshop takes place at the Old Barracks Museum, providing an intensive and individualized approach to exploring life in 1777. The workshop begins with your choice of one of our "Meet the Past" programs (either "Battles of Trenton" or "New Jersey Divided"), followed by two specialized subject workshops, including: "Uniforms and Clothing," "The African American Experience", "Archeology", "Architecture", "Child's Play", or "A Woman's Point of View."	Ages 9 and up	2.5 hours	\$13 adults, \$12 students and seniors.	Maximum number of participants is 30, minimum number is 15.  Available Mondays to Fridays, September through February only.
<b>Gallery Workshop</b>	The Gallery at the Old Barracks Museum displays changing exhibits that relate to Colonial New Jersey History and the American Revolution. Gallery exhibit programs are designed to supplement school tours. The process of viewing and discussing the exhibit triggers critical thinking about the objects and the time in history in which they were made and used. Pre-visit packets are provided to teachers to assist them incorporate their visit into their curriculum and lesson plans. Students receive worksheets requiring them to explore the main themes of the exhibit culminating in a group discussion led by an exhibit program guide.	Grades 4th- 6th.	50 Minutes	\$8 adult and \$6 per student.	Maximum number of participants is 30, minimum number is 15.  Available Mondays to Fridays, September through February only.

**Fees and requirements:** Children \$6.00 Adults \$8.00. Lower rates are available for combined programs. Schedule a 45-minute “Meet the Past” program and a 50-minute Gallery exhibit program at \$8 per adult and \$11 per student. One chaperone is required and admitted free for every ten students. \$8/each-additional adult.

**Reservations:** All group program visits are reserved through the Old Barracks Museum Education Office. Teachers are advised to make their reservation as soon as possible, and programs for spring are in high demand, so fall and winter visits are recommended to avoid crowds. The Old Barracks recommends that one adult chaperone be present for every 10 children per visiting school group. These chaperones will be admitted free of charge with a pre-booked tour.

**Camp Ins:** For organized youth groups, scout troops and other organized groups, The Old Barracks offers a unique new way to live history: the camp in! This is a weekend program that starts in late afternoon on a Friday or Saturday. Schools receive the “Meet the Past” program with the costumed interpreter, and do the historic weapons demonstration. Students eat the “Common Pot” of stew, cooked over an open fire (weather permitting) and then tour the museum. During the evening, they participate in a period craft activity. Students spend a night in the barracks, two to a bed as was the custom in the two barracks rooms and up to 30 students and 3 adults can be accommodated. There are six sets of bunks, others sleep on the floor (all bring a sleeping bag/pillow). In the morning, they eat a Continentals’ breakfast before departure. The price is \$33/person inclusive, and happens rain or shine. Camp In that hosts about 300 children per year).

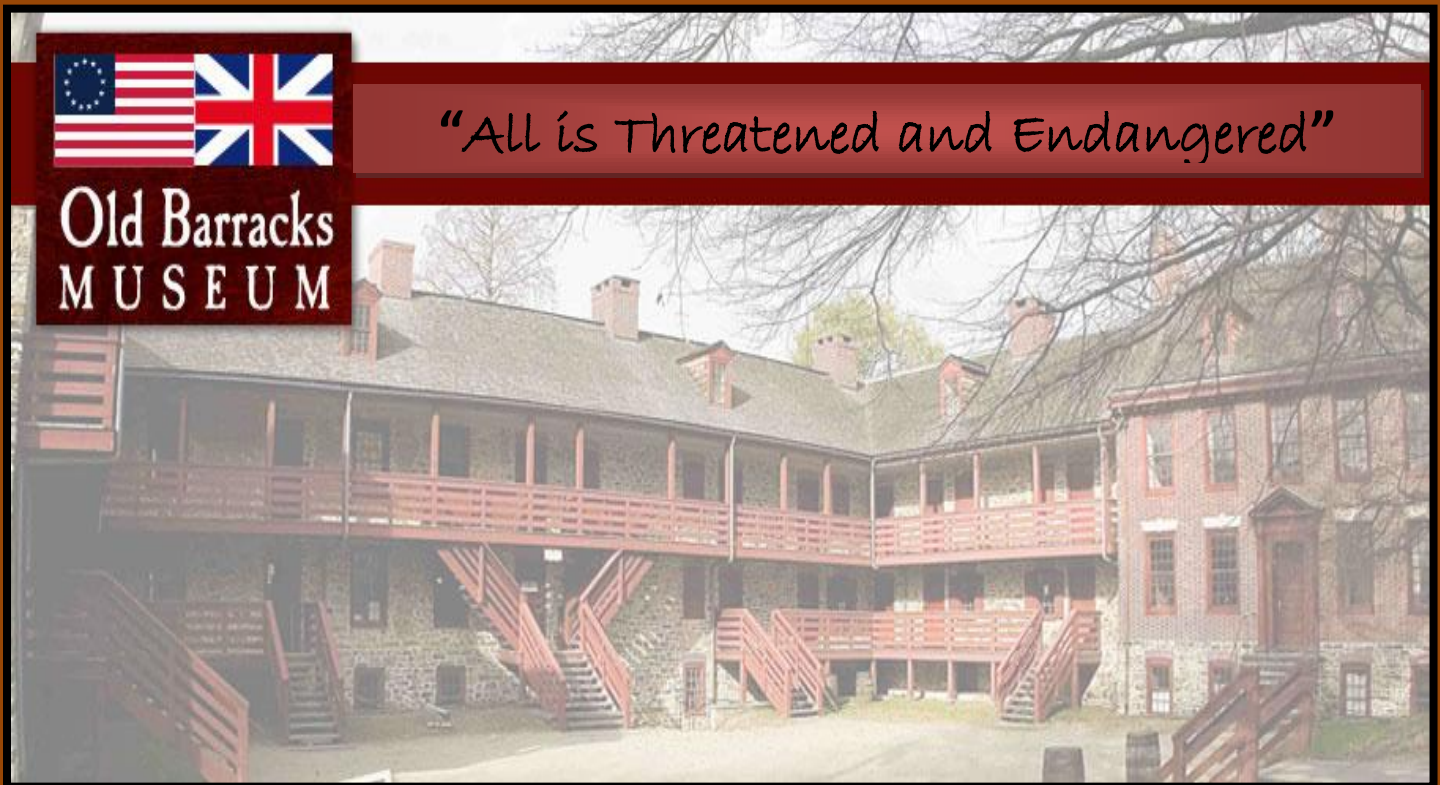
**Summer Day Camp:** Two weeks this summer where this all day camp, provides children with a rich cultural experience, as well as lots of good plain fun. Students muster into Washington’s army, and cook over a campfire. During the week students muster into formation daily, and learn military drills and weapons skills using Baron von Steuben’s Manual of Arms. Students to enhance social studies knowledge complete colonial crafts. Higher-level members of the Barracks get a preferred rate of \$120 a week; nonmembers are 220 per one-week session. Maximum of 28 children per week. This program was not offered last year (which happened in the midst of their state funding crisis). However, has been brought back this year. Richard says that there is much more competition for summer camps in the area now than 3 years ago.

**Outreach programs** go into the classroom and meet curriculum needs. These programs last approximately 30 minutes, and are available Monday-Friday, during the slower fall and winter months. Two costumed interpreters visit for most programs. Programs include: differing viewpoints of Loyalists and Revolutionaries; the soldier’s uniform and weapons during the Revolution; 18th century medical practices and treatments and games during the Colonial period. These programs are expensive. There is a two-program minimum, which makes this an expense of \$300 minimum and travel expenses of \$25.00. The outreach program is only slightly less expensive when bus cost and the per child admission is considered.

**Marketing:** The Barracks, unlike Morristown and Ft. Lee, does undertake a limited amount of marketing. The organization attends the annual New Jersey Education Association convention held in Atlantic City each year. They take an exhibition booth with The State Museum, Trent House and State House and all jointly market the four attractions to teachers. These four sites within walking distance, so teachers wish to amortize the cost of the bus rental and thus sign up for tours at several locations in Trenton. This is a very popular program and most teachers have brought their students to the site before.

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At its height in 2000, there were about 20,000 schoolchildren visiting. School visitation for the last three years has been about 17,500. Adult visitors number about 8,000 making this one the highest visited historic attractions in the state. The AA on staff also markets the program through direct mail to teachers and administrators who have come to the site before.



## Teacher's Guide





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- VI. Supplemental Materials



# General History

The French and Indian War (1753-1763) began as a conflict between Great Britain and France over claims to the Ohio River Valley. The war quickly spread throughout the Northeast frontier and Canada. It escalated to include Cuba, the Caribbean Sea and Europe, where it became known as the Seven Years War.

Both European nations had established colonies in North America in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, French and British colonies had grown and the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains were claimed by both nations.

Native American tribes, like the Lenape in New Jersey, were concerned about the growth of the European colonies. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the British colonial population of over one million was twenty times the size of the French colonial population. The British colonists had established large farms from northern New England to Georgia. Despite a few large settlements in places like Quebec, the French colonies were small and few in number. The French colonials were primarily fur trappers, traders and small farmers. As a result, many tribes viewed the French as less of a threat and sided with them in their military struggles with the British.

In 1753 the French sent a military expedition to what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and established Fort Duquesne. The French had built other forts along the major water routes in the Ohio River Valley, along the Great Lakes and in Canada.

The British felt threatened by the chain of French forts and sent a young colonial militia officer, George Washington, from Virginia to request them to leave. The French authorities in western Pennsylvania refused Washington's request and sent him back to Virginia.

In 1754, the Royal Governor of Virginia ordered Washington back with a small militia force to force the French to evacuate the region. Fighting broke out and Washington was captured. The French reminded Washington that the French had claimed the Ohio River Valley and that the British should not advance beyond the Appalachians. Washington was later released and returned to Virginia.

If war broke out, all of the colonies – especially those along the frontier – would be threatened and endangered. Benjamin Franklin realized that the colonies could best defend themselves against any threat if they banded together. He created an influential cartoon of a segmented serpent titled "Join or Die." However, Franklin's plan of colonial union was not supported by all of the colonies.

The British government realized that in order to defeat the French a large military force would be needed. General Edward Braddock was ordered to drive the French out of Fort Duquesne. Braddock arrived from Great Britain with a sizeable force of soldiers. He was supported by a colonial militia force that included George Washington. However, in the July 1755 battle, Braddock and more than half of his army were killed by a combined force of French and Indians in western Pennsylvania.

The British increased their war efforts. Military units were raised in the colonies to support the troops which had arrived from Great Britain. The Jersey Blues was the most important military unit raised in New Jersey during the war.

The British attacked French settlements in Canada. Forts were ordered to be built in order to protect vital settlements from French and Indian attacks. New Jersey built numerous small forts along its frontier in the upper Delaware River Valley.

With all of the major campaigns taking place far out in the wilderness in upstate New York, far Western Pennsylvania, and along the Canadian border in the better weather months, the armies lived in vast tent camps. Barracks in the forts in those areas were too small to house more than a few hundred soldiers during the winter months. During the winter of 1757-58, many regiments of British regulars had to be brought back to winter in private homes, taverns and out-buildings in the cities and towns along the Atlantic coast which caused great displeasure among the colonists. In 1758, the New Jersey legislature built a string of 5 barracks to house these British regulars in subsequent winters. Of the five barracks, the only one left today, is the Old Barracks.

## 2.

In 1758, the Barracks was the biggest building in Trenton and, with the other four barracks, were among the largest buildings in New Jersey. Only Nassau Hall in Princeton was larger. The building was made of stone and had dark red woodwork. About 300 British and Irish soldiers were the first to live here. There were about 20 soldiers' rooms, each with two windows, a door and a fireplace. Twelve soldiers were housed in each room, with two men sleeping in each wooden bunk.

The soldiers received rations of food, firewood, candles, cider, salt, and vinegar. There was a kitchen in the cellar, but most soldiers cooked in their rooms. In the center of the building was a little house with a staircase to the second floor and the balcony.

The Officers' House was fancier and more comfortable. Cows, pigs, chickens and horses were kept outside in the yard. The first soldiers to occupy the Barracks were two companies of Irishmen, the Inniskillings (1758-1759); two



companies of lowland Scots, the First Regiment of Foot (1759-1760); and two companies of British soldiers with Swiss officers, the Royal American (1761-1762).

The French and Indian War continued until 1763 when the Treaty of Paris formally ended the conflict. France had to yield all of its land in Canada and the territory east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain. As an ally of France, Spain yielded Florida to Great Britain. France gave Spain its North American lands west of the Mississippi River to Spain.

But the victorious British developed a large war debt. Parliament was responsible for the soldiers' pay, uniforms, weapons, supplies and food. There were costs associated with the Royal Navy as well. Furthermore, Great Britain needed money to pay for the administration and defense of its large and growing empire in North America.

In time, Great Britain decided that one way to pay off some of the war debts and generate new income was to tax its American colonies. Parliament started passing new laws in 1763. Colonists protested the new laws passed with cries of "no taxation without representation." Petitions and organized boycotts followed such laws as the Stamp Act in 1765 and the Townshend Acts of 1767.

Tensions increased between Great Britain and its 13 American colonies. New acts by Parliament were greeted with more protests. The colonists reacted to the unpopular Tea Act of 1773 by staging the Boston Tea Party. Other colonies held their own tea parties to protest the law. New Jersey had its own tea party in Greenwich in 1774.

A year later, colonists and British soldiers were engaged in combat. The Revolutionary War had begun.

When the War for American Independence started in 1775, the Barracks was used by American troops. British prisoners of war from St. John and Chambly, Canada, were imprisoned in the Officers House while four companies of the Second New Jersey Regiment of the Continental Line were raised here.

In December, 1776, British and Hessian troops occupied Trenton. Some of them stayed in the Barracks. Colonists loyal to the English king also arrived so that they could be protected by the soldiers. During the First Battle of Trenton on Dec. 26, in a miraculously successful morning raid, General Washington captured many of the Hessians. The Americans returned to Trenton and used the Barracks.

In 1777, the Barracks became an army hospital under Dr. Bodo Otto. Many soldiers and supplies passed through Trenton until the end of the war. The last soldiers in the Barracks may have been sick and wounded soldiers from the siege of Yorktown, Virginia in 1781, two years before the Treaty of Paris recognized American Independence.

The current exhibit provides many examples of the French and Indian War and New Jersey's role in the conflict.

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## **Level of Performance Activities within Bloom's Taxonomy**

The following pages will provide suggested levels of performance activities for:

- 1) The pre-visit classroom
- 2) The visit to the Old Barracks French and Indian War exhibit
- 3) The post-visit classroom.

These levels of performance activities will help students better appreciate and understand the various items on display the Old Barracks Museum's French and Indian War Exhibit. All levels of Bloom's Taxonomy – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation – are incorporated in the following three sections. Successful completion of these activities will help increase the probability of learning.

## Pre-Visit Classroom Suggested Activities

- A. Locate the 13 Atlantic-coast English Colonies on a map.
- B. Find Colonial New Jersey, the Delaware River and Trenton on a map. List the colonies which bordered New Jersey.
- C. Locate the Ohio River and the Appalachian Mountains on a map.
- D. Find Great Britain, France, Cuba and Canada on a map.
- E. Describe where colonial New Jersey would build forts if the French and Indian threat was greatest in New York State and Pennsylvania.
- F. Compare and contrast how Native Americans and British colonists traveled on lakes and rivers.
- G. Explain how dug-out canoes were constructed.
- H. Define “wampum.”
- I. Create a model Lenape lodge.
- J. Produce another version of Franklin’s “Join or Die” cartoon.
- K. Retell the meaning of “All is threatened and endangered.”

## Visit to the Old Barracks Suggested Activities

- A. Examine how the first soldier mannequin is dressed, equipped and armed.
- B. Compare and contrast the Lenape mannequin with the first soldier.
- C. Handle the sample of wampum.
- D. Identify the major colors in the uniforms of British, French and Spanish soldiers.
- E. Inspect the cannon barrel and explain how it was transported.
- F. Find the location of the five New Jersey barracks.
- G. Calculate how far away your school is from the Old Barracks in Trenton.
- H. Tally the number of forts that existed in New Jersey during the war.
- I. Determine how a powder horn was made and used.
- J. Tell the story of "The Darkest Day in Colonial New Jersey History."
- K. Find a date on the French and Indian War Time Line closest to your birthday.
- L. Identify the number of places the New Jersey Regiment fought during the French and Indian War.
- M. Examine the Pine Tree Flag and explain how it was used.
- N. Examine the portrait of Peter Schuyler and identify what military unit he belonged to.

## Post-Visit Classroom Suggested Activities

- A. Retell why Great Britain and France went to war.
- B. Explain why most of the Native American tribes sided with the French.
- C. Compare and contrast colonial Connecticut's Pine Tree Flag with the modern flag of New Jersey.
- D. Construct a map of New Jersey and identify the location of the five (5) barracks.
- E. Explain why the French and Indian War was a “world war.”
- F. Create a map showing the land Great Britain won as a result of the Treaty of Paris, 1763.
- G. Determine whether a dugout canoe or a raft would be a better way to travel on a river.
- H. Compile a list of the places where major battles were fought during the French and Indian War.
- I. Explain how the French and Indian War led to the American Revolution.
- J. Grade how well the Old Barracks served as a place to live.
- K. Compose a letter from a soldier in the Jersey Blues who survived the Sabbath Day Point July 23, 1757 Massacre.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How did the French and Indian War lead to the American Revolution?

The British Crown and Parliament always had the right to levy taxes of all kinds upon their American colonies. They had chosen, for nearly a century, not to exercise those rights and essentially allowed the various colonies to govern themselves.

The global Seven Years War of which the French and Indian War in North America was but one major theater of operations, had nearly bankrupted Great Britain.

It began to levy taxes of various kinds on the American colonists to offset some of what it had spent defending them against the French and Indians. This surprised the American colonists who had grown accustomed to self government and who assumed that these powers had long been abandoned by the Crown.

Ironically, Britain's victories had removed the French from North America, thus removing the ever-present threat they had posed to the colonists. They had begun to feel they no longer needed the protection of the British Army and Navy.

Misunderstanding and resentment on the colonists' side, as well as misunderstanding and clumsy diplomacy on the Crown side eventually led to more violent protests as well as ever-more-brutal crackdowns by the Crown and it all spiraled out of control in April of 1775.

### Why the red coats?

With most firearms having the ability to strike a man-sized target at no more than 100 yards, the need for the individual soldier to be camouflaged was not compelling. The need to be able to form shoulder to shoulder with one's messmates in order to deliver volleys of musketry, or to give and receive bayonet attacks meant that fostering and "esprit de corps" would be of value. A dull red color outer garment achieved via a dyestuff made from boiling madder roots began to see more widespread use among the regiments of Oliver Cromwell's "New Model Army" during the English Civil War of the 1640's. The various regiments would start to distinguish themselves from each other by the color of the linings of those outer garments revealed when either the cuffs were rolled up, or the lapels buttoned back. It should also be noted that the common uniform of the French and Spanish armies at that time was white.

### Why the painted face on the Native American?

Indians painted their faces (and bodies) for special ceremonies and events, like hunting expeditions or war. The color(s) provided were believed to instill power, strength and perception to the warrior. Red ochre was readily available in local river soils, and was the color most associated with the Delaware. Other colors had different meanings. It should be remembered that aside from providing for uniformity the red of British soldier's coats, the white of the French Bourbon Dynasty, etc. were chosen to instill a similar spirit of esprit de corps and confidence in those European warriors, and the distinctive tall headgear of their elite troops known as grenadiers (chosen from among their biggest men) made of stiffened, elaborately embroidered cloth, or either brass or bearskin, accentuated their height, denoted their elite status, and was also meant to intimidate their enemies.

The Old Barracks Association gratefully acknowledges the following institutions, organizations, businesses, and individuals for their generous fiscal support without which this exhibit would not have been possible:

Society of Colonial Wars in New Jersey  
New Jersey Historical Commission  
A Generous Anonymous Donor  
Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission  
The American Legion Department of New Jersey  
Greenfingers Garden Club  
Reed Smith LLP  
Scott Panneypacker & Heidi Wilenius  
Eileen Thornton  
St. Michael's Episcopal Church  
Mercer County Chamber of Commerce Renaissance Ball

The Old Barracks Association gratefully acknowledges the following institutions and individuals for lending historical artifacts, works of art, or important reproductions:

New Jersey Historical Society  
Fort Ligonier  
New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management  
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England  
New Jersey State Museum  
Ohio Historical Society  
William Trent House Association  
Mr. Timothy Cutler  
Mr. John Muller  
Mr. Howard E. Mitchell, Jr.

## 15b Ft Lee Teacher Packet



### Palisades Interstate Park Commission

James F. Hall  
Superintendent

P.O. Box 155  
Alpine, New Jersey 07620

TEL: 201 768-1360  
FAX: 201 767-3842

**FORT LEE HISTORIC PARK**  
Hudson Terrace  
Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024  
(201) 461-1776 or 3956

Dear Teachers,

We are pleased to confirm your reservation for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to participate in our **Living History** program. Our  
program is **5 ½ hours long**. **All groups** are expected to arrive by \_\_\_\_\_ and  
finish their day at \_\_\_\_\_ (unless special arrangements have been made).

Please figure your busses accordingly and if you are planning to use our Gift  
Shop, please allow extra time.

**\*\*IF YOU CANNOT STAY FOR THE FULL TIME, PLEASE CANCEL NOW\*\***

The program fee must be paid upon arrival and all checks should be made out to  
**PALISADES INTERSTATE PARK COMMISSION**

As you already know, a **pre-visit** by the teacher in charge is required to discuss  
necessary and important preparations for the program. If you are coming here for the  
first time or if you have been here before and would like to refresh your memory, please  
call and make an appointment as soon as possible. The earlier you visit, the more time  
you will have for preparing your class.

If you have participated in our program before, please find enclosed a checklist  
which must be completed by you and returned to us **AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR  
TO YOUR PROGRAM DATE**. Be advised that if you arrive unprepared, we reserve  
the right to cancel your trip rather than to improvise. For all classes, we insist that our  
guidelines be adhered to unless modified by mutual consent.

If for any reason you have to cancel, please call **us at least two (2) weeks before  
you are scheduled** so that we can arrange for another class to participate.

Thank you for your interest in our program. We're looking forward to your visit!

Thank You,  
John A. Muller Director



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# Part 16: Report on Research on Informal Educational Programs for Children

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## PART 16: REPORT ON RESEARCH ON INFORMAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

May 30, 2012

To: JVH Committee

From: Donna Ann Harris

### **Subject: Report on research on informal educational programming for children**

Previously submitted research for this Audience Research project for the Jacobus Vanderveer House indicated that formal school programs for public schools are labor intensive to implement. Any formal school program offered on Revolutionary War topics for Grades 4 and 5 would need to meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards to be of interest to public school teachers based on the advice we received from school program staff at three Revolutionary War sites in the state. They noted costumed guides and hands-on programs that permit students to use all of their senses are highly valued by teachers as well as students. These programs will require at a minimum, a part time paid staff member or a consultant to develop, lead and market such a program at the Vanderveer House.

As an alternative, you asked us to undertake additional research to determine how other area historic sites work with children in an informal setting. This memo presents five options for the Vanderveer House to develop learning activities associated with the history of the site. This memo does not present every option available for informal educational programming for children, but details some of the major programs we believe may be of interest. The memo offers observations on each option, marketing issues and recommendations about these programs at the end. An appendix at the end of the memo lists additional web sites and resources should board members or volunteers want to explore these options further.

### **Group Activities**

Based on our review of other historic sites in the region, we have identified the following options for informal educational programming for children.

1. Homeschool Programs
2. Private School Class Visits
3. Boy Scout Merit Badge Programs
4. Girl Scout Merit Badge Programs
5. Junior Guide/Docent Programs

#### **1. Homeschool Programs**

The State of New Jersey does not have any specific requirements regulating curriculum for home schoolers. The local board of education is not required to review or approve the curriculum for a child educated elsewhere than a school, and there is no reference to the need to meet NJ Core Curriculum Standards. The Department of Education website lists the statute that discusses compulsory education and “equivalent instruction” that allows for homeschooling:

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N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 requires that “every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between six and 16 to ensure that such child regularly attends the public schools of the district or a day school in which there is given instruction equivalent to that provided in the public schools for children of similar grades and attainments or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school.”

Note: The provision, “to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school” in N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, permits a parent/guardian to educate the child at home.

### *Observations*

While it is not necessary to create educational experiences for home schoolers that meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum standards, homeschool parents are looking for fun and quality educational experiences that use hands-on activities for history lessons. Many of the educational programs are similar to the formal school programs, but homeschool programs appear to be more informal in nature since they often involve the parent as well as the child.

### *Model Homeschool Programs at Historic Sites*

Several NJ museums and historic sites offer “Homeschool days” where parents are invited to bring their children once a month (for example third Friday from 10-noon) for specific age groups (5-8 years and 9-12 years) educational programs. All of these programs require advance registration and a modest cost per child (around \$6.00 and \$12.00 for adults) for materials. The following are program descriptions for some area homeschool programs that we think are exemplary.

Fosterfields, a Morris County Parks owned property, has an extensive homeschool program. Fosterfields is an historic farm, and therefore offers opportunities for children to see animals as well as learn about 19th century farming techniques. Their homeschool program is designed for children and their parents and is called Archaeology at the Farm. Children discover how artifacts help them learn about the past, and the role archaeology played in the restoration of the Fosterfields Main Barn. See <http://search.dailyrecord.com/localevents/event//26004-Fosterfields-Home-School-Day-Archaeology-at-the-Farm>.

This spring Macculloch Hall Historic Museum in Morristown offered five, monthly, two hour, home-school workshops in conjunction with their Civil War Exhibit “Gone for a Soldier: Jersey men in the Civil War.” These programs included time in the Civil War Exhibit, work with primary sources, and hands-on activities. These were highly popular and sold out. The cost was \$6.00 per student, and the program will be repeated in the fall. Information about the Spring 2012 workshops <http://www.maccullochhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Macculloch-Hall-Homeschool-Workshops-pdf.pdf>

### *Marketing to Homeschool Parents*

There are varieties of home school groups around the state that provide opportunities for parents to interact with other families and plan activities. In the Somerset Hills, area there is a list serve for home school parents called Somerset Hills Home School. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Somerset-homeschoolers/>. We made contact with them, but have not had success in getting a response. There are a variety of other associations of home school parents statewide, and this list appears in the appendix to this memo. Our research revealed that there are only a small handful of web sites that provide advice to homeschool parents on field trips based on grade level and academic subject. These two are the most useful to market any program for home schoolers at the Vanderveer House.

1. <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/trips/NewJerseyTrips.htm#.T76ZBhzoJa->
  2. [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8294312\\_homeschool-ideas-5thgraders-new-jersey.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8294312_homeschool-ideas-5thgraders-new-jersey.html)
- The Bernardsville Library also has good resources for homeschoolers in the area and would be a good resource to market any program. <http://www.bernardsvillelibrary.org/homeschool-links.htm>. Any homeschool program would need to be posted on the JVH web site; postings on various homeschool web sites and list serves (see appendix) and press releases sent out if the program is to be marketed to area homeschool parents.

## **2. Private School class visits**

### *Observations*

Private schools are not required to adhere to state curriculum standards, but many choose to do so. Standards may also vary between school districts, as local school districts are permitted to adapt state curriculum standards as they see fit. Regardless, teachers will want a quality educational experience for any class trip. Rather than developing a specific school field trip program, the Vanderveer House might prefer to offer to develop long-term relationships with select area schools to utilize the Vanderveer house for history and social studies educational activities for out of classroom experiences.

Already the JVH is collaborating with the eighth grade class at the Willow School located in Gladstone NJ. This has been a productive relationship. Students created a play based on historic research and used the house as a resource for development of their characters and life in 18th Century New Jersey. The performance took place on May 30, 2012. Ellen Ruck, a board member and highly regarded interpreter at the JVH site, volunteered to help students develop their characters for the play. Like the Willow School play, the Vanderveer house can work with a handful of private schools to stress the use of primary historical materials and imagination, not hindered by the New Jersey Core Curriculum standards.

## **3. Boy Scout programs**

Merit Badges are an excellent way to engage young boys ages 10-18 at the site. According the official Boy Scout web site "You can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business and future careers as you earn merit badges. There are more than 100 merit badges. Any Boy Scout may earn any merit badge at any time. You don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible."

### *Badges Where the Vanderveer House Can be Highlighted*

We reviewed the current merit badge list and the following ones seem to be the most likely opportunities to connect the Jacobus Vanderveer House and the Boy Scout community. In all cases, the JVH Board, subject area consultants or other volunteers will need to coordinate with the individual Scout or troop to access JVH reports, monitor activities or witness the work being undertaken by the Scout or troop to supply necessary paperwork for the merit badge application form. Merit badges have several components and not all of them may be available at the Vanderveer House. These badges offer an excellent start for any Boy Scout program at JVH..

**American Heritage**—will require a volunteer or a re-enactor to assist the Scout to access Historic Structure Reports or other documentation and reports or visit the property. <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsources/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-AHER.aspx>

**Archeology**—will require access to reports and professional archeologists associated with JVH projects and visit to site

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-ARCA.aspx>

**Architecture**—will require access to Historic Structure Reports, as well as restoration architects involved at JVH and visit to the site

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-ARCI.aspx>

**Citizenship in the Community**—Scout learns about JVH as a public education center on the role of the house and General Knox in the Revolutionary War

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-CITC.aspx>

**Citizenship in the Nation**—visits the JVH because it is on the National Register of Historic Places

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-CITN.aspx>

**Public Speaking**—gives the Scout an opportunity to prepare and present a speech, which could be a special tour at the Vanderveer house <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-PUBS.aspx>

### *Role of Counselors*

To earn a merit badge, the Boy Scout must discuss the badge with the Scoutmaster, who will give them the merit badge application and the name of a counselor who has special knowledge in the merit badge subject and helps Scouts. The Scout makes an appointment with the counselor and brings along another person to the meeting. “This person can be another Scout, your parents or guardian, a brother or sister or other relative, or a friend. The counselor may ask to meet you to explain what is expected of you and to start helping you meet the requirements. You should also discuss work that you have already started or possibly completed.”

### *Marketing Merit Badge Opportunities*

Like working with the private schools, relationships will be key to involving Scouts at the Vanderveer House. Scoutmasters and leaders will need to be contacted directly to discuss the availability of the Vanderveer House as a site for merit badge activity. Ideally if a Board member or other volunteer had a son involved in a specific Boy Scout troop, there might be a better reception by the Scoutmaster. The Boy Scout program should be marketed on the JVH web site and with the specific merit badge requirements and the activities, the Scout could undertake at the Vanderveer House to meet the requirements. Any volunteer interacting with Scouts should be aware that there are screening requirements for all adults working with Boy Scouts, which may apply. See <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors/MBCounselorGuide.aspx>.

## **4. Girl Scouts**

Badges and patches are developed for different levels of Girl Scouting: Daisies (age 5-9), Brownies (10-12), Juniors (13-15), Cadets (16-18), Seniors and Ambassadors (over 18). A new program has been instituted for Girl Scouting called Journeys, and these awards are divided into three general categories for all the different Girl Scout levels (Daisies, Brownies etc.). We have reviewed the Journeys for each level suggests that the following two Journey activities might be worth developing programs at the

Vanderveer House.

**It's Your Story** –Tell it Journey for Brownies. Tell a Story Award gives girls the confidence and knowledge to educate and inspire others. Could be learning about the house and giving a tour.

**It's Your World**—Change it Journey awards for Junior Girl Scouts. The Power of One Award girls will discover and share the powerful story of a forgotten woman or girl from around the world who mobilized others and made a difference, discover all the ways their own strengths and powers help them create change in the world, and discover what the Girl Scout Law and true “heroines” have in common. Lucy Knox is an obvious candidate for this effort.

For Brownies and above, in addition to the logical badges that the JVH site volunteers could help girls achieve, there are “making your own badges” for each age group. There are also a series of “try it” patches that girls can earn by trying different skills. Girls make their own projects up and learn a skill. See <https://www.gsmakeyourown.com/>. JVH volunteers could offer specific tasks such as creating a meal over a campfire; making Colonial inspired crafts, or learning about the archeological finds on the property as possible examples. All of this would depend on the creativity of the volunteer and their relationship with a Girl Scout troop leader.

Several New Jersey Girl Scout Councils have developed their own badges on historic themes, but they are not nationally accredited and may be worn on the back of the sash. The Girl Scout Council of Central and Southern New Jersey have two non-national badges that would excellent for the Vanderveer House to offer. The Life in Colonial Times Try-it Badge <http://store.gscsnj.org/store/product/11705/Life-In-Colonial-Times-Try-It/> and Junior Colonist Try It Badge <http://store.gscsnj.org/store/product/11704/Junior-Colonist/> These badges are models to be use for any Girl Scout badge activity at JVH.

Here are a few examples of historic sites that have extensive Girl Scout merit badge programs.

**Chadds Ford Historical Society** in the Brandywine River Valley in suburban Philadelphia restored and maintains three pre-Revolutionary buildings, which are open to the public as House Museums. Their education staff has programs for both Girl and Boy Scouts. See the extensive listing of badge opportunities here <http://chadds-ford-historical-society.org/education/scout-programs/> According to their web site “The Chadds Ford Historical Society welcomes Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Venture Scouts, and other youth groups interested in visiting our historic houses and learning about the 18th century, colonial life, historic fire starting techniques, open hearth cooking, and other activities. We offer defined youth programs and are willing to tailor programs for the specific needs of a group.” “For Girl Scout and Brownie Troops The Historical Society offers Girl Scout Badge programs, year round. Junior Girl Scout Badge programs are 2 1/2 to 3 hours long and are \$11 per participant. Brownie programs are just under 2 hours long and are \$9 per participant. Junior Programs: Fabric and Textiles; Folk Arts; Junior Colonist (not a nationally recognized badge) and Local Lore. Brownie Programs: Life in Colonial Times Try-it (not a nationally recognized badge); Listening to the Past Try-it. We have included copies of the Listening to the Past Try-it flyer and Local Lore flyers as examples in the appendix.

The **Hoboken Historical Museum** has several programs designed for Cub Scouts, Daisies and Brownies. According to their web site “Local history comes alive in the museum’s exhibitions as well as on the streets of our historic neighborhood. Whether you are looking for an engaging activity for your troop, or looking for a program that will satisfy merit badge requirements, the Museum has several educational and fun programs designed to create positive experiences in the discovery of local history and architecture. Each program runs 60 minutes and the cost is \$5.00 per child with a maximum charge of \$65.00 (no charge for chaperones).”

Brownie Try-it: Listening to the Past--The Museum's Oral History Scrapbook Project captures the history of Hoboken and its long-time residents through oral recollections. *We Did Have Wonderful Times* recounts the stories of growing up as a Girl Scout on Garden Street. A museum educator will read aloud from the scrapbook to the Scouts, who can then take the stories back home to share with family and friends. Scouts will also have fun playing some oldie-but-goodie games from the past.

Girl Scout Juniors: Architecture badge-- Scouts will take a guided tour of the local neighborhood and look at different types of buildings and styles of architecture and make sketches of their favorites. Back at the museum, Scouts will brainstorm a list of buildings they would design if they were architects. Finally, Scouts will create 2-dimensional structures out of craft sticks, toothpicks and glue. This program satisfies requirements 1, 9 & 10 for the Architecture badge.

### ***Marketing to Girl Scout Troops***

Like working with Boy Scouts and private schools, an on-going relationship through a Board member or other volunteer with a local Girl Scout Council, troop leader or other leader within local Girl Scout community, would be the best method to market Girl Scout merit badge opportunities at JVH. Program availability should also be posted on the JVH web site.

## **5. Junior Docent/Guide Programs**

Several area historic sites have encouraged young people to become guides or docents at the historic site. These programs offer young people an immersive training program to teach them about the site, Colonial Life and offer tips about giving tours. Some sites use these programs as a formal means to offer training for volunteer opportunities for young people during large events when the house must be staffed continually. Others use these youth program as a way for students to earn community service credits.

Here are two examples of historic sites in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island that have developed long-standing and well-regarded Junior Docent programs:

**Gilbert Stuart Museum** in Saunderstown, Rhode Island has an long-standing junior docent program. Their web site describes their program "Young people present interpretive tours in costume, helping Museum visitors to better understand and appreciate the famous Colonial era portrait painter Gilbert Stuart, Colonial daily life and the museum collections. Participating in this program offers boys and girls a way to earn community service hours and gain a sense of pride in their community and in themselves. Junior Docents volunteer at least once a month on weekends during the season. Students apply and are offered training." <http://www.gilbertstuartmuseum.com/ourprograms.htm>

**The Chadds Ford Historical Society** in suburban Philadelphia has an longstanding Junior Docent program. Their web site explains it as "Explore history at the Chadds Ford Historical Society by learning 18th century crafts and skills. This group of history buffs (aged 11 years through 12th grade) helps put the "story" back in history during our living history presentations. Each young person is encouraged to learn how people in 18th century Chadds Ford lived. This is accomplished with participation in hands-on activities such as sewing 18th century clothing, producing trim using lucets and tape looms, spinning, making candles and learning colonial dances. Junior guides may visit with 18th century reenactors, both civilian and military, observe bread being prepared and baked in the beehive oven, and assist with the preparation of a meal cooked on the open hearth. Other activities include learning the art of historic interpretation by giving tours of the John Chads House and Barns-Brinton House."

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See <http://chadds-ford-historical-society.org/app/download/6509914304/JrGuideBrochure2011new1.pdf>

### *Marketing a Junior Docent Program*

A Junior Docent program can be marketed on the JVH web site and on its Facebook page. There should be a long recruitment season to make schools and parents aware of the existence of such a program and when the next training program will be offered.

### **Recommendations**

The Vanderveer House Board has the exciting opportunity to create informal educational programs at the site that will engage young community members and broaden the interest in and use of the site. We offer recommendations below for each of the five programs discussed, and at the end offer broader recommendations about starting these informal educational programs at the Vanderveer House.

#### *Homeschool Program*

The Jacobus Vanderveer House can organize programs for homeschoolers based on any of the themes developed from the Interpretive Plan. A homeschool program could be made available several times in the Fall and Spring semesters or by appointment. It is not necessary for the educator to be in costume. Homeschool programs do not have to meet the NJ Core Curriculum Standards, but parents would expect a well-developed tour and hands-on activities of 1.5 to 2 hours depending on the age of the students participating. The benefit to have a scheduled program (such as monthly) is that several families might be able to participate and fill the activity to capacity (say 12-15 children maximum). Ideally, a teacher or other educator such as fourth and fifth grade, would develop the program. While these lessons need not be so constrained by the Core Curriculum standards, they still must be more than a lecture to students and incorporate hands-on activities. A small fee could be charged to defer the cost of materials.

#### *Private School Program*

Private school educational program programs depend on relationships established at the school and require a willing school administrator and a creative teacher. We understand that Marisa Marks, a former JVH board member and parent of a child then at the Willow School, first approached the Willow School principal about creating a play, and this activity has taken on a life of its own. Board members may have already existing relationships with the principal of other private or independent schools in the area and can make a similar pitch. Expect that each private school teacher may want to create a unique experience for his or her class, so any JVH volunteer providing assistance must be willing to be creative to meet that teacher's needs. Robin Ray has developed a list of all the area public, private and parochial schools, which is valuable for identifying likely school administrators to approach.

#### *Boy Scout Program*

A Boy Scout coordinator or volunteer for the Vanderveer House would be needed. That person must be familiar with Boy Scouting and merit badge requirements. It is probably not necessary for this person to be formally certified as a Boy Scout Counselor on Colonial history subjects but it would be extremely helpful. The person coordinating Boy Scout activities at the Vanderveer House will play a marketing and facilitation role to create good interactions with area Scoutmasters to help market the Vanderveer House as a location for Scouts to earn merit badges.



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### *Girl Scout Program*

Unlike Boy Scouts where merit badges are earned individually, Girl Scouting appears to encourage local leaders to identify ways for all of their troop members to earn badges in a group format, even as individual girls will earn badges based on their individual interests. Offering group opportunities to earn badges presents many opportunities for the Vanderveer House to create programs around specific badge requirements. A volunteer would be necessary to develop the badge activities and coordinate with area Girl Scout leaders.

### *Junior Docent Program*

One goal for the Vanderveer House might be to have well trained young people in each of the rooms as costumed interpreters during both weekends of the Colonial Christmas event. Other volunteer opportunities might be at other seasonal events (like the Colonial Picnic), or once a month on weekend open days.

A multi-week training program would be necessary as well as a commitment of a volunteer or two to manage this effort. Training programs could begin in the Summer or Fall to prepare young people for their duties at Colonial Christmas and the rest of the year. It is likely that at least six students will be needed for two-hour shifts if they are responsible for providing interpretation on a weekend open day. Adult supervision will be needed. A training class of 12-18 students would be ideal. This program requires serious commitment of time and and would be similar to creating a docent program for adults.

### *General Advice*

All of these informal learning programs for children require a dedicated volunteer to administer on behalf of the Vanderveer House. This person would be responsible for developing the educational content for one of the five groups discussed (or finding someone to do it), a written program outline to post on the JVH website and marketing materials. This person would also need to initiate the relationships with the groups to market the program.

We suggest that an interested volunteer begin with one program where there is an already existing relationship such as those with principals and teachers at private schools, scoutmasters and local Girl Scout troop leaders. Gather a small committee around the leader to help plan it. A work plan is an ideal way to think through all the components of a successful program (goal/results, tasks, person responsible for task completion, budget, timeline, number of volunteers needed, publicity). Later in this grant we will be providing training on developing work plans and look forward to working with JVH volunteers to help them create work plans to assure their project's success.

### *Educational Content*

Most of these programs do not require costumes, but they do require a skilled educator to plan and implement. The JVH Board may be ideal leaders for some of these programs, but we know they have other responsibilities. We encourage you to seek broader volunteer participation beyond the existing board members to initiate any one of these programs. There are many highly qualified interpreters and re-enactors in the area; they might be willing to help plan programs at JVH with supervision by a Board member. Other logical groups to involve are retired history or elementary school teachers or college or graduate students in teaching programs looking for lesson planning activities as class projects or internships.

### *Relationships*

All of these programs will take months to plan and implement and might involve some investment in educational supplies or reproductions that students can use or handle. In all cases, these initial forays

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can be called pilot programs so that there is no long-term commitment to maintaining them if they just do not find their niche in the first year or two. We expect however, that any one of these five informal educational programs for children, with the right leadership and marketing, will be highly popular and bring a new group of regular visitors to the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

## **APPENDIX**

### ***NEW JERSEY HOMESCHOOL REQUIREMENTS***

#### **FAQs on DOE website**

[http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_homeschool.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_homeschool.htm)

#### **Alternative Description of Policy**

[http://www.homeschoolfacts.com/states/sub\\_sections.php/State\\_Laws/new-jersey](http://www.homeschoolfacts.com/states/sub_sections.php/State_Laws/new-jersey)

### ***NEW JERSEY HOME SCHOOL GROUPS***

<http://www.meetup.com/NJHomeschoolHangout/>

<http://www.enochnj.org/index.php>

<http://jerseyhomeschool.net/>

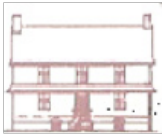
<http://checcoop.webs.com/>

<http://www.ecsj.org/>

<http://www.lwhe.org/>

<http://www.westerlylearningcenter.org/mission>

<http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/support/academic/nj.php>



## CFHS

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Phone: 610-388-7376 • Fax 610-388-7480 • Website: [www.ChaddsFordHistory.org](http://www.ChaddsFordHistory.org)

### **Brownie Scout: Life in Colonial Times Try-it 1¾ hour program at the Barns-Brinton House**

Thank you for considering the Chadds Ford Historical Society for your Brownie trip. We offer an under 2-hour program designed to help your scouts fulfill most of the requirements of the Life in Colonial Times Try-it. Badges for this program can be purchased from the Girl Scouts of Central and South Jersey. The charge is \$9 per Scout with a minimum of \$90. There are 10 potential activities associated with this pin but we focus on the following:

1. Visit a Colonial home or museum
3. Compare every day and party clothes for children and adults
4. Learn about the chores and schooling of Colonial boys and girls
8. Find out what games were played. Try one.
9. What was the size of the United States at that time? Look at a map and locate your home on it.

During our program the scouts accomplish these 5 requirements for the Try-it.

#2 & #4. Visit a Colonial home & Chores and Education: The scouts will tour the Barns-Brinton House, our c. 1714 house and tavern. They will learn about the chores and education of boys and girls and how these differed.

#3. Clothing: The scouts are encouraged to look at pictures and handle reproduction examples of fancy and everyday clothing for children and adults.

#8. Colonial Games: The Scouts will make a felt bag and clay marbles OR to learn several games from Colonial times. Weather permitting, hoops, the Game of Graces, and Quoits can be played outside. Jacob's Ladders, whizzers, Bilbo catchers, jacks, and tops can be played inside. Our Museum Shop offers several of these games for sale if the scouts want to teach them to others.

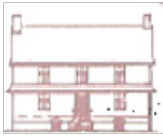
#9. Colonial Map: The scouts will compare a modern and Colonial map and locate Chadds Ford on both.

The usual schedule for this tour is as follows:

- Visitors arrive, receive an introduction and view the maps (~20 minutes)
- Scouts tour our house and learn about chores and education (~30 minutes)
- Scouts look at and discuss the clothing (~20 minutes)
- Scouts make marbles, learn games, or other craft activity (~20 minutes)
- We answer final questions.

Although most groups choose these activities, it is possible to substitute the open hearth cooking demonstration for one of the other activities. We also offer other activities which do not match the Try-it requirements as closely, but Leaders may find one which appeals to their group. These include: pot-pourri sachets, stenciled designs on fabric, weaving with a tape loom, and reading historically relevant book(s).

Lynda Gillow, Education Coordinator, Chadds Ford Historical Society



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### **Junior Girl Scouts: Local Lore Badge**

In 2001, the Girl Scouts of America published a new Junior Girl Scout Badgebook. This program targets girls from 8 to 11 years of age. All of these programs require participants to fulfill six different activities, and the Chadds Ford Historical Society's programming offers the Scouts the opportunity to finish at least four and begin work on at least one of the remaining components. These programs are 2 to 3 hours in length and are \$11 per participant with a minimum of 10 participants, or \$110. Pricing is valid from March 2011 and is subject to change.

**Local Lore:** "Every town has a story. Every town had people and events that helped make it what it is today. How much do you really know about where you live? Find out more with these badge activities." (Junior Girl Scouts Badgebook, 2001, P. 50)

#### *Components that will be completed during the program:*

- Participants will compare various Chadds Ford street maps from 25+ years ago with street maps of today. In addition, participants will compare a Chadds Ford aerial map from 1925 to aerial maps of today. Participants will discuss how the community has changed over time. (Items 2 and 3 - 40 minutes)
- Participants will tour an historic house (John Chads House) to learn more about the history of Chadds Ford and the people who lived here. Participants will also tour the Chadds Ford Historical Society's exhibits. Each Scout will share one thing she learned. (Item 7 - 40 minutes)
- Participants will learn about a Chadds Ford landmark and the story behind it: Mother Archie's Church and Mother Archie. (Item 1 - 20 minutes)

#### *Components that need to be finished by the participants at a later time:*

- Participants will review examples of stories, songs, and poems about famous people in their community. Scouts will be provided with a list of important Chadds Fordians and their milestones. They will begin to think about the person they will "praise" in order to create a story, song, or poem about him or her. (Item 6 - 10 minutes)
- Given how this community has changed over the years, participants will predict how this community will look in the next 20, 50, or 100 years. Scouts will share their predictions in a creative way, such as a drawing, map, or skit. (Item 10 - 20 min.)

#### *Plan of activities:* 10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

10:00 - 10:40 Map tasks  
10:40 - 11:20 House tour  
11:20 - 11:40 Mother Archie lesson  
11:40 - 11:50 Begin a story, song or poem  
11:50 - 12:10 Future predictions  
12:10 - 12:15 Summary

In order to complete the requirements of this badge, Junior Scouts are required to finish six of the items listed in the Badgebook.

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**Maps: From above and below (#2 and #3)**

**In the Scouts book:** How has your community changed? Locate a map of your town that's at least 25 years old. Compare that map with one from today. What has changed? What has remained the same? Are all the changes for the better? Which ones would you like to undo? Why?

Obtain aerial photos of your community made over a period of time. What story do these photos tell about changes in your community?

**The goal:** Review maps of years ago with maps of today. Learn what has changed, what has remained the same? Are the changes for the better? What story do these maps and photos tell?

**Take a Trip: House Tour (#7)**

**In the Scouts book:** Visit a local museum, historical society, library, or town hall to learn more about the history of your city or town. What new things did you learn?

**The goal:** Tour the John Chads House. Learn about the architecture of the house, learn how people lived in that time period.

**Word of Mouth (Mother Archie, #1)**

**In the Scouts book:** Find out about a story, legend, monument, or landmark in your community. Share your findings with others.

**The goal:** Learn about the African American community, the church, and its preacher who lived in Chadds Ford years ago. Learn how the church impacted a famous local artist.

**Sing Someone's Praises (#6)**

**In the Scouts book:** Create a story, song, or poem about the efforts of one person who has a major impact on your city or town.

**The goal:** Begin to create a story, song, or poem about someone in your community.

**Focus on the Future (#10)**

**In the Scouts book:** Given how your community has changed in the past 25 years, how do you think your community will change in the next 20, 50, or 100 years? Share your predictions in a creative way – use charts, maps, drawings, or a skit.

**The goal:** Predict what Chadds Ford will look like many years from now, when YOU are grandparents!

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# Part 17: Report on Focus Groups

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## PART 17: REPORT ON THREE FOCUS GROUPS

### Contents

- Project Purpose and Methodology
- Major Findings
- Focus Group Comments
- Appendix A: List of Focus Group participants
- Appendix B: Interview Script
- Credits

### Project Purpose and Methodology

As part of the New Jersey Historic Trust funded Heritage Tourism Audience Research and Interpretive Plan for the Jacobus Vanderveer House, Heritage Consulting Inc. conducted three Focus Groups in May 2012 on programming ideas for adults and children for the Jacobus Vanderveer House. The focus groups are the last element of the Audience Research portion of this multi-phased grant project. Earlier Audience Research components were:

- On Line Survey of Participants in Colonial Christmas and for General Visitors
- Interviews with Seven Current and Former Board Members
- Interviews with Crossroads Staff and Board President
- Interviews with Four Somerset County Partner Organizations
- Notes from Somerset County Heritage Roundtable Meeting
- Interviews with Three Revolutionary War Site School Programs
- Research on Informal Educational Programs for Children

During the on-line survey conducted in November 2011 to January 2012, survey participants were offered the opportunity to be entered into a raffle to win an iPad if they supplied their contact information including name, phone and email address. Of the 164 respondents to the survey, 125 people supplied all three pieces of information which we used to contact them to seek their participation in our Focus Groups. All of the survey respondents had visited the site within the last two years and thus were familiar with the house.

Three focus groups were planned and designed to gain information from specific audiences that we consider the major users of the property. These audiences are listed below.

1. Parents or grandparents with school age children at home
2. Adults living in the area who are generally interested in history
3. Adults who are highly interested in history or in the Revolutionary War

The list of 125 was reviewed to eliminate current and former board members, leaving 90 potential Focus Group participants. This list was sorted based on responses to specific questions in the survey, to separate them into the above mentioned audience groups. We were especially keen to have men participate in these focus groups to provide balance to the already gathered audience research which was predomi-

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nantly women. Of the final list of 90 potential participants, twenty-one were male.

Invitations were made by email three weeks before the specific event. Within two days of the initial email invitation, we called the participant to answer questions and encourage their participation. Two days before the event, we sent a reminder email. The following invitations were extended to participate in the Focus Groups.

- Twenty one (21) people who expressed great interest in history or the Revolutionary War were invited to participate in the May 3, 2012 7PM Focus Group
- Twenty-nine (29) people who had a general interest in history were invited to a May 10, 2012 7PM focus group.
- Finally, Twenty eight (28) parents or grandparents that had children living at home were invited to a May 3, 2012 Focus Group held at 1PM. No one was available to participate in this session, so this event was postponed until May 22, 2012 at 7PM. The same twenty-eight people were invited to participate in that event.

Sixteen people participated in the focus groups in person. One-third (6) of the Focus Group participants were men. We conducted one interview over the phone using the script attached in the appendix. Another person provided written answers to script questions. The comments included in this report include comments from all eighteen people.

The Focus Groups were all held in the second floor conference room at the Vanderveer House. They began at 7PM and ended at 8:30PM when participants were invited to look around the house at their own pace. Thank you emails were sent to all participants. A script was used to organize the discussion, and it appears in the appendix.

For each interview, Laura DiPasquale, an intern working with Heritage Consulting during the spring of 2012, took contemporaneous typed notes. These notes were then evaluated, summarized, and analyzed qualitatively to make a coherent set from the large volume of raw notes from all three sessions. The comments were reviewed to identify overarching and common themes across all focus groups and between groups. From this qualitative information, this report summarizes the comments from the three sessions. A list of all participants appears in the appendix.

This report is organized into two sections. The first section contains the major findings, a brief narrative that describes recurring themes and concerns of the participants in the three Focus Groups and phone and email interviewees. The second section contains unedited, actual comments made by all participants organized by topic in bullet format. We selected specific comments because they offered particular viewpoints, or represented concerns shared by several interviewees. We promised interviewees that none of their comments would be ascribed to them personally and so all comments are anonymous.

We begin with the major findings.



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## Major Findings

This section describes the major themes and comments made during the three Focus Group meetings, one phone interview, and one set of emailed comments.

### *Colonial Christmas Events*

All of the Focus Group participants became involved with or interested in the Jacobus Vanderveer House by attending one or more Colonial Christmas events. There was a consensus that the event has been improving each year, and is one of the most anticipated events of the holiday season. People enjoy the vendors, the interpreters (costumed or not, but particularly Lady Ellen), musicians, artwork, and the quality of the decorations.

The Friday night cocktail reception and the luncheon were favorites of several of the Focus Group participants. Some of the Focus Group participants have served on the Colonial Christmas event committee in the past, and some were familiar with the current work of the committee. There was some discussion and concern about how changing the luncheon to a high-priced evening gala would alter the nature of the event and who was able to attend. Several participants noted the need for JVH to expand its base of volunteers, and to decrease the perceived elitism surrounding the organization, which may be hindered by the high ticket priced gala event.

### *Current Programming and Program Delivery*

Consistent with the survey, the Focus Group participants expressed a preference for a variety of options when it came to educational programming at the site. There was consensus that the site is underutilized and should host more frequent programs, aimed at a range of audiences including adults and children of all ages.

Like others across the nation that visit historic sites and history museums, these Focus Group participants did not enjoy being required to take a tour, and wanted multiple options to learn about the property. There was little discussion about the use of technology, other than perhaps the use of audio guides.

### *Future Programming for Adults*

Focus Group participants also suggested that the site broaden its programming to include events with fees, such as catered dinners for clients, or tours with bagged lunches for kids. A variety of types of programs were suggested, including an interactive archaeological dig, archaeological lectures, historical culinary discussions or presentations, demonstrations of daily life in Colonial America, 18th-century military camp reenactments, military medicine discussions, and the Colonial BBQ.

### *Interpreting Regional History and the “Big Picture” of the Revolutionary War*

The only fundamental divide in commentary during the Focus Groups was about the stressing the role of the Revolutionary War. Men were much more interested in military history and the role the site played in the Revolutionary War. Women did not speak up about this connection as strongly as the men who participated. Men were interested in connecting General Knox to George Washington. Male Focus Group participants also agreed that the artillery encampment was very important part of the overall story conveyed to visitors.

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Men emphasized the importance of connecting the site to the “big picture” of the Revolutionary War and its regional context. Female participants suggested utilizing both the site’s domestic attributes as well as its broader military context to create programming that would appeal to a wide range of visitors. We wanted to hear directly from men about their preferences for interpretation because 80% of the on-line survey respondents were women. These comments indicate that there must be multiple stories told at the Vanderveer House to that the site can appeal to men, women, families, students and serious history buffs.

JVH should continue to coordinate with regional organizations such as the Heritage Trails Association, which host programs such as the Five Generals Tour, and focus on New Jersey’s role in the American Revolution.

### *Importance of Knowledgeable Guides*

A resounding thread through all of the focus groups was the importance of knowledgeable guides/docents who can talk off the cuff and answer questions without appearing to follow a script. The interviewees especially enjoy the “insider information” that is conveyed when a guide can cater to the interests of the visitor, and let the group guide the conversation. Several participants noted the benefits of a private tour with just their family members, as being a highly valued experience. The guide’s ability to tell a story and to have patience with children was also cited as important. Large tours, where the guide uses a script were uniformly deemed as unappealing.

### *Use of Costumed Interpreters*

There was a marked discrepancy between focus group participants who enjoy costumed interpreters and those who do not. The “history buff” group especially enjoyed costumed interpreters, as did parents with children. Other focus groups did not find costumed interpreters necessary, and some were even opposed to costumed interpreters. Some participants felt that costumed interpreters add authenticity to interpretive programs. Several people discussed Lady Ellen as an engaging interpreter. They were able to recount aspects of her stories, which they remembered because of the way in which she conveyed the information by using a tea brick, or showing how costumes are made.

### *Engaging Children*

The importance of engaging children in hands-on and role-playing activities was emphasized throughout the focus groups by parents and grandparents. Parents recalled active, hands-on programs and guided tours in which the tour guide paid attention to the children and made the stories they told relevant to them and encouraged questions, as being most helpful. Although authenticity of the objects in the house was considered extremely important, participants recognized the distinct need for reproductions that children (and tactile adult learners) could handle. Many parents and grandparents commented on the success of scavenger hunts at other sites. To attract boys and men, participants encouraged emphasizing the military aspects of the site, for example through cannon demonstrations, guns and musket drills.

### *History Camps*

There was some interest in a history camp at JVH. The discussion focused largely on the hours in which a history camp might function, since it would need to be convenient for working parents. One person

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suggested marketing visits to the house to the established summer camps in the area that take field trips on certain days of the week.

### ***Boy and Girl Scout Programs***

Since most participants in the focus groups did not have school-aged children, there was only a brief discussion about programming for Boy and Girl Scouts. One interviewee happened to be a Girl Scout leader and noted that, even if no badges perfectly align with JVH programming, local councils can develop their own badges. Another interviewee felt that in order for any Boy or Girl Scouts to take advantage of badge programs, JVH would have to make the program extremely easy for troops, and require little to no prep work on their part.

### ***School Programs and the Difference between Public and Private Schools***

Participants stressed the importance of involving a teacher from a local school in implementing an annual school program, such as a play, at JVH. Programs for public and private schools may need to be differentiated, as the depth of teaching and prep work varies between the two. Participants also suggested marketing to schools outside of Bedminster, especially to private schools.

### ***Broadening the Base and Racial Issues***

Many participants commented on the need to utilize more volunteers beyond the Board, and to appeal to a more diverse range of visitors. There was consensus that the site was not open often enough. There was strong sense of appreciation for the work done by the current Board and its past members. Focus Group participants can see real progress being made at the house from year to year especially at Colonial Christmas. Some participants noted that the Board is viewed as an elite and exclusive club and must broaden its appeal to a broader constituency. One person called the organization the most prestigious nonprofit Board in the township. Another person suggested the need for greater sensitivity when discussing slavery at the house. This Focus Group participant did not enjoy seeing the black mannequin in the kitchen as she entered the house.

### ***Comments about Marketing***

There were some comments about how the site markets itself. Two participants felt the web site was not professionally designed or was not appealing to the correct audience. Another participant suggested that the newsletter is not circulated often enough. Finally, another person suggested hiring professionals to undertake the camp program or design the web site.

The next section contains comments made by Focus Group participants. These are actual quotes taken from typed transcripts of our meetings. They have not been edited or changed in any way.

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## Comments from Focus Group Participants

### *Colonial Christmas Events*

- The cocktail party on Friday is my favorite thing of the holiday season because it is so intimate and special. Can't not do that event.
- I think it adds prestige to the event to have art that is on loan.
- Colonial Christmas and the luncheons are great. Wonderful social event. I look forward to them every year.
- But it's not stuffy, when the candles are lit around the house, and the decorations are so natural. And the police are out front to guide you in! (laughter)
- Time for a change with the luncheon. Do not care for the vendor situation. The event should be moved out of Hamilton farms.
- They have been repeating the same program each year. I think a little new energy and a change of venue would help.
- I stopped going to the cocktail function because it was so crowded. The last two times I went, it was too much of a mob scene. I haven't gone for two years.
- I thought the artwork this year was a very good addition. The art that was on loan from the Newark museum. Interpretation added a lot to the art.
- I like the idea of one event and combining it, but I'm gala'd out.
- A whole other sector of people might come to a night time event, but you're going to lose a group of women with children who it won't work for.
- I like the luncheon because my kids are in school, and I can have a good time with my girlfriends.
- The gift shop for the holidays is very nice but the merchandise could be a bit more varied. A bit too much jewelry.

### *Current Programming and Program Delivery*

- The picnic idea is appealing.
- When we were at Colonial Christmas there was a guide in costume in each room, and they had a brief spiel and then asked for questions. Each person had a different thing to talk about but it was mostly about Revolutionary War.
- This year, there was one costume person for each room [at Colonial Christmas], and that was good because they really knew that room.
- I think if it was open at least one day a week, and keep it steady, need a set schedule, and it has to be more than once a month.
- The guide in the room [at Colonial Christmas] mostly talked to adults and only responded to kids when they asked a question. The story seemed scripted.
- Script is fine for Colonial Christmas, but not for a tour.
- Who's going to make a special trip here until there is something going on? I don't think anyone is going to make a special trip. One of the costumed people [at Colonial Christmas] at the last event was so animated when he described the painting and what was going on, and it was so inspiring. I saw that there was an unmet need to get more teenagers involved. Really refreshing to see him so engaged.
- There was a woman in costume [at the Christmas event] explaining about tea, and I've come every year, and don't remember ever having been as engaged as I was when she started talking.
- The site is open only four times a year, and that's fine, but I think if there was something regularly, where we could say, Let's go over to the house and do such and such.
- I would encourage the house to have period music (and/or dancing) whenever possible during open houses. If this isn't possible, then how about demos of period upper-class crafts, such as fine embroidery, etc.

### *Possible Future Programming for Adults*

- Tours could be led by a history student who learns in-depth about the site. This would require extensive training.
- You could do a camp out on the property, well, probably can't because it would be a liability. You've got Eagle Scouts that are trained, maybe there would be a way to reenact the way the tents were.
- One of the draws of the site should be the archaeology. Using the archaeological record here, which is so vast, from a teaching perspective. I would want the archaeologist to speak at least once a year
- Do events the same time each year so people will put it on their calendars.
- There are lots of anniversaries of the Revolution that could be celebrated here.
- Should use General Knox's birthday as a big event (mid-July).
- The purpose of us fundraising is to make it as much a part of history as possible. Maybe more than once a year invite people to bring in their items from the period of this home, and have a discussion about it.
- I think the idea of being open on Sundays is a good idea. It should be every Sunday. This organization has to train 4 or 5 people who are willing to be docents once a month, and stay here from 11-3 or 11-2.
- Start with why is this house important, then broaden out to the area. The more you can bring an interesting anecdote, like the torches, the more people can relate. The musket is great, but might talk about what kind of havoc does the bullet leave? Then that leads to medicine. How were people treated or not treated? One thing can lead to another if you have someone who is knowledgeable.
- See what the areas of interest are. You have different targets, people who want to see the just the antiques, or the bloody feet in the snow.
- If you could have a catered dinner by the hearth and do a formal invitation, a wine tasting, could charge \$200-300 per person, for top clients.

### *Interpreting Regional History and the "Big Picture" of the Revolutionary War*

- Has the connection to General Knox been satisfied for historians? This presents such a challenge to the authenticity of the site. If it is accepted now, should take it and run with it.
- Not just the house's history, but the area's history. People have no idea. It is beyond the house. The big picture is the community. What is it known for? The artillery encampment and training. This area was critically important in the Revolutionary War. Knowing that background makes you feel special to be from the area.
- One of the things that attracted me to this house was that it was a hotbed for the American Revolution. This was General Knox's headquarters, What I'm hearing so far is good, but I think we are missing the history, that General Knox had his headquarters here. I think that is something we could jump on and make extra special. General Knox is critical to the site.
- I think that it is imperative for all the historic houses in the county to pull together and be open on the same day of the month for "day tourism" trips, with nice maps directing people from one house to the other if they choose to drive themselves. The Heritage Trail Association is working on this.
- How does the house connect with the surrounding area? Knox, Pluckemin, Princeton, Morristown and the National Crossroads area.
- Only two of the key sites in the county are open on a daily basis, and they don't have the special story that the Vanderveer house has.
- I think it is equally imperative for the county to operate small tour buses to encourage people to go from one central location, especially those tourists unfamiliar with the general area. This is especially important for the Jacobus Vanderveer house, which is unavoidably hard to get to.

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### *Importance of Knowledgeable Guides*

- High quality interpretation depends on the skill level of the person leading the tour and their interest.
- Prefer to visit on our own and have someone available to answer questions.
- In a private tour, the group guides the discussion.
- We like private tours. We feel like we get “inside information.” To keep us occupied, the guide shifted topics. He was selective about what he talked about. Tidbits of interesting facts. As people asked questions, he made notes, told an evolving story. Keep people engaged by talking about peoples’ lives.
- So many legs to a private tour. Even with the kids, you could do a bagged lunch, could work it a million ways, for a fee.

### *Use of Costumed Interpreters*

- Doesn’t make a difference to me as an adult, but for my children when they were younger, they loved the characters in costume.
- To me, I just want someone neat who is comfortable in their garb, not hokey if they are in costume.
- I like the costume thing. I think you need as much visualization as you can get. Even if you got volunteers, I think the costumes really hook people in.
- I like costumed re-enactors.
- I don’t want to speak with someone in costume. I want someone neatly dressed. Not a creepy Santa who is sweaty and whose makeup is running.
- Lady Ellen, there’s an example of someone who is engaging. Who wore what and why. I remember all this because she is engaging. There’s a difference between this type of clothing and that.
- When visiting with our children we prefer costumed people because the kids ask more questions then.

### *Engaging Children*

- You’re not going to bring school age boys here with any regularity of you don’t have guns.
- We like to do a lot of different activities with our daughters. We would want something new and different for us to come back to the Vanderveer House.
- Having objects to handle is important for kids, they like hands on things to touch.
- They like local history meaning they should know about how important their neighborhood is to American history. They go to the local public school in Bedminster.
- Younger people learn by doing. Why not learn in your own backyard? Easier to absorb. The more you engage children, they have grandparents, parents, friends, who want to come to the house and learn about the community.
- My kids like demonstrations.
- In Gettysburg, what caught our interest the most, with a group of 8th graders, was that the guides had them line up and count off-- they were so involved in the whole experience.
- [The Winston Churchill bunkers] had audio that was directed towards age groups. Could go to different parts that were meaningful for you. Tremendously insightful. In Christ Church, for a 6 year old, they had a scavenger hunt. Could go through the church and explore. Made it very friendly and open.
- You could also develop scavenger hunts for kinds. We saw a lodge, where the younger kinds had to find 10 things about the lodge they needed to know, and the older children had to find 15. This helped them learn about the site.

## *School Programs and the Difference between Public and Private Schools*

- 20% of school aged children go to private and parochial schools in the Township.
- Public schools, they're just not in-depth. Private school when they do something like that [formal school programs], it is a far different experience. They have to be treated differently. Public schools are restricted from a time schedule, but red tape for approval. Almost more for those [public school] children, need to engage them. In private school, they will have several discussions beforehand about where they're going and what they're doing.
- [Regarding a play at JVH] It is important for it to be original. Let the children and teacher use their creative energy to create a play. Each kid gets a role. Write, act, greet, costumes. Vignettes in the different rooms. Spinning wheel, fireplace, desk with a quill pen, war plans, what discussion is happening at each? Training in the backyard of the military troops. A Day in the Life Of. A local history teacher could work with the organization, repeat the program each year, gain notoriety. It would only need to be a few minutes per room.
- Would think that the Revolutionary War niche would be great for the Vanderveer House.
- Bedminster School takes field trips, science one year, history the next. There is a slave cemetery around the corner from JVH is there any way to create a bus loop for middle school students?
- Maybe the PTOs can push the board of the Somerset Hills communities to support the local history.
- The new superintendent of schools at Bedminster could be a connection.

## *History Camps*

- History camp that they do in the summer ended up having to cancel it because they did not have enough kids sign up. Maybe there are programs that are offered so you could bring your grandkids here.
- Yes my children would like that but it would have to be full time because I work, and I would need to drop them off and pick up, has to be convenient for work for me. History camp would be better for me on the weekend when I do not work, or if it was full time.
- Market visits here as a half-day or week camp, have history camp. Perfect for a school with a high academic profile.
- Robin Ray is on the Board is the Rec Director with the Township. It was her idea. Spoke with the history teacher of the Bedminster School. They did some cooking and crafts. They had a full house the first year. Dwindling since. Probably more popular if they shot guns.

## *Boy and Girl Scout Programs*

- Yes, I am a Girl Scout troop leader myself, and my two girls are in different troops. They really like it. Having some kind of badge opportunity would be great for the troop at Vander veer. There is something now called Journeys that Girl Scouts do that might be good for the house to do. There are badges or "Try it" that is about local communities. The local council can develop their own badges.
- If you could present the Girl Scout Badge things to them, you would have to make it really easy for them. If you could make it so they can just sign up and come and get the badge, they would.
- Just have to have someone who wants to do it. Has to be sold by someone. Need to talk to people involved. Can't just put it up on the website.

## *Broadening the Base and Racial Depictions*

- When you come in the door to the kitchen, the first thing you see is the mannequin of the slave girl. I am an African American woman and I found that unsettling. It should not be the first thing you see. I know that other sites like Williamsburg do talk about slave history and acknowledge it and that is ok, but I do not think that a mannequin in the first room is good. When we were there, it was the only mannequin in the house, so it stood out for me. I kept thinking to myself, I like everything about this house, except that. Can you please ask the board to consider removing it or placing it in another location in the house please?
- Time for this house to move on; take a broader position about these things. If we don't focus on Knox, a lot of the things we are bringing up are done everywhere. My son doesn't see the importance and value of the Vanderveer house and General Knox. Have to get beyond afternoon teas and garden clubs.
- The house is underutilized. Now that the space has been furnished, the opportunities to use it year round are far greater.
- It never occurred to me to bring my guests here, because most times I drive by it's locked up.
- The Friends of the JVH, Board of the House is the most prestigious in the township
- No step outside until know what's happening inside. Have to have a message. Internally, organization needs to work at what they say they were going to do. Use this building for an educational program. They were going to do 8 schools through here. Funders want to know where the money is going and what's it going for?
- You think about what is the goal of the house. The goal in my mind is: to preserve history, in order to preserve you need funding, to get funding, can go through various organizations and grants, and to get grants you need interest. How do you get interest? In something historical, it is begging to be used in education. The house is a living thing; you don't want it to be stifled.
- There are a lot of people who don't care about this site, perhaps we need to revisit our image within the community. JVH can seem like an exclusive club.
- I think one of the greatest challenges is just to broaden its base. The board works tremendously hard, but we need people who are willing to volunteer on a Sunday afternoon. I'll go work a few hours. It has to be a broader base, beyond the Board.
- You need subcommittees who are working so these Board members don't have to concentrate so much on fundraising.
- The site is at a critical point now. There needs to be more of a concentration on programming, which took a backburner. It is perceived too much as an exclusive club, so it needs a broader base.
- The ethnic diversity of our community, I don't know how much the non-white population in our community know about their connections to this history [Revolutionary War].

## *Comments About Marketing*

- Maybe you could get the newsletter out more frequently. It was supposed to be three times a year. Maybe online. Need to have both traditional and new media.
- The house does a great job in partnering with high-end merchants and designers to furnish the house for the holidays. Ditto the local newspaper. This is a wealthy part of the county and those of us with period houses in the lower end of the county, which is less wealthy, don't have access to these resources.
- The website has too much going on in the home page, and it is not appealing to the right people.
- Sometimes you have to look at the cost analysis of it and say it is worth hiring professionals to do certain things, such as a professionally designed Website or running the summer camps. If you're going to be making a profit off of it, hire someone to do it well.



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## **Focus Group Participants at the Jacobus Vanderveer House**

1. Ms. Ann Buttacavoli
2. Mr. Ciro Buttacavoli
3. Ms. Lori Carrabba
4. Mr. Al Fiore
5. Ms. Fran Fiore
6. Mr. Brian Haggerty
7. Ms. Marisa Marks
8. Mr. Matthew Mole
9. Ms. Barbara O'Connell
10. Ms. Shawna Hudson Pantozzi
11. Ms. Jodi Panniullo
12. Ms. Betty Petrillo
13. Ms. Janet Petrillo
14. Ms. Christine Retz
15. Ms. Ruthann Saenger
16. Ms. Terry Stevens
17. Mr. Dick Stevens
18. Mr. Lee Wolf

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## **SCRIPT**

### **Jacobus Vanderveer House Programming Ideas**

#### *Welcome and introductions—10 minutes*

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in these focus groups on programming for adults and children for the Jacobus Vanderveer House. We are having two other identical meetings in the next few weeks with others who are interested in history like you and with parents of children.

My name is Donna Ann Harris and I will be facilitating our discussion today. I am a consultant working with the Vanderveer House on a New Jersey Historic Trust funded project called Heritage Tourism Audience Research and Interpretive Plan. This work is part of the Audience Research portion of the project.

Laura DiPasquale will be assisting me today and taking notes of our conversation. You will not be identified in any way in any of the written reports, so we want your candid comments.

Ground rules: In order for us to get your feedback, we have some ground rules. Only one person may speak at any one time, so that Laura can hear what you have to say. There are index cards on the table for you write down any thoughts you have while someone else is speaking, until you get a chance to speak. We want everyone to contribute. 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: The restrooms are located down the hall way to the left. There is a sign in sheet going around, so please give us your contact information including your address. Please help yourself to the snacks provided throughout our meeting. Can you please turn your cell phones off or put them on vibrate mode now. We will have about an hour and a half together.

#### *Introductions 5 minutes*

We would like to start by going around the table for introductions. Please tell us your name and if you involved in some way with the organization, as a volunteer?

Has anyone been to the Vanderveer House in the last two years? Participated in any event? What event? What did you like about the event? Was there anything that can be improved?

#### *About learning at historic sites—25 minutes*

Before we get into discussing specifics about the Vanderveer House, we would like to know about experiences you have had, good or bad, when visiting at other historic sites, history museums, house museums in the US and other countries. We understand that all of you are interested in history based on your survey forms.

What historic site have you been to the in the last few years that was memorable, and why?

What about the guidebook, tour guide, brochures, exhibits etc. made it special?

Were you there by yourself or as a family? If children were involved, what made it memorable for them?

Have you had any poor experiences at historic sites? What made it poor experience?

When you go to an historic site, how do you prefer to learn about it? With a tour guide or visiting your own? Why?

Do you prefer a guided tour or having someone available to answer questions?

Do you prefer interpreters or guides in historic costume or in modern dress? Why?

Is seeing authentic objects important to you?

Do you prefer to seeing demonstrations by people or read about the site's history in an exhibit, brochure, panel? Why?

That was great, thanks. Now we will turn to the Vanderveer House.

### *Programming at the Vanderveer House –25 minutes*

All of you participated in our on-line or paper survey about programming issues and we are interested in getting a little deeper information from you about some ideas for programming for adults.

We learned that the following activities were rated highest and want to know if you agree. What I am going to do is hand out this brief list and I would be interested to know if you agree and if so, why? We will go through them one at a time in order of preference based on the survey.

### **Preferred interpretive methods from online survey**

Jacobus Vanderveer House, Bedminster NJ

1. A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions 51%
2. Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases and local artists 51%
3. Printed brochures, maps, and guides 47%
4. Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House 44%
5. Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters 40%
6. Guided tours 37%
7. Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters 34%
8. Social events 34%
9. Lectures on antiques and historic objects care 34%
10. Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, handheld device 30%
11. Hands-on children's activities 27%
12. Web-based virtual tour 27%
13. Classes on genealogy including how to do research, finding documents, and creating a family tree 23%
14. Storytelling programs for adults and children 23%
15. School programs for K-12 students 21%
16. Cellphone tour with "audio only" interpretation 19%

17. Interactive kiosks 17%
18. Exhibit panels without interactive content 16%
19. Children's Summer History Camp 16%
20. Military programming including events, send-offs, welcome home, and
21. awards ceremonies 14%
22. Book club on topics related to the Vanderveer House for adults 10%
23. I am not interested in self-guided tours of the Vanderveer House 8%
24. I am only interested in self-guided programs 2%

Hands on classes for making things, crafts and Colonial era activities

1. Historic cooking activities 34%
2. Needlepoint, quilting, and/or embroidery 31%
3. I am not interested in craft programs 28%
4. Jewelry making 26%
5. Candle making 25%
6. Painting 24%
7. Horticulture-related activities 23%
8. Woodworking such as making historic wooden spoons and tools 19%
9. Furniture making 15%
10. Printmaking 13%
11. Metalworking 13%

Are there other learning methods or topics that you would like to know more about when visiting the Vanderveer House?

### *Programs for Children—10 minutes*

Do any of you have younger children, grandchildren living, or visiting frequently in your home?

The following programs for kids were rated highest.

Formal School programs for K-12 students 21%

Children's Summer History Camp 16%

Hands-on children's activities—such as re-enactors demonstrating cooking, Revolutionary War military drills or other activities that make sense for grade school children 27%

We are also considering adding educational programs for youth in groups like Boy and Girl Scouts, church groups, or homeschoolers etc. to use the house for history projects. Would that be of interest?

Are there other ways that we should engage children?

### *Next steps—5 minutes*

Let me tell you how we plan to use the information that we gathered from you this evening. As I mentioned we are having three focus groups to talk more about programming issues for the Vanderveer House. We were particularly interested in having input from Men, as there were a slim number of them that participated in the survey. We will use this information to provide more context for the survey results and then be able to make some recommendations to the Board on the types of programming that

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would be most popular at this site.

Thank you so much for your participation this evening, this has been so helpful to us.

*Total 90 minutes*

## **Credits**

This report was written by Donna Ann Harris, principal of Heritage Consulting Inc. and Laura DiPasquale, an intern working with Heritage Consulting during the summer of 2012.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works in three practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation and organizational development. Since starting her firm and during her career, Ms. Harris has assisted citizen groups and government agencies to identify appropriate reuses for threatened historic properties that ensure the long-term preservation and maintenance of the site. Throughout her twenty-five years in the preservation movement, she has led start-up and mature statewide preservation organizations as an executive, was first staff member of a land and building conservation organization, and was project manager for a citywide preservation organization. Her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Homes* was published by AltaMira Press in April 2007. Ms. Harris has published articles about reuse of historic house museums in the American Association for State and Local History's quarterly magazine *History News* and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's quarterly scholarly journal *Forum Journal*. Her articles about advocacy, membership development and Business Improvement Districts have been published in the National Trust Main Street Center's monthly newsletter *Main Street News*. Ms. Harris speaks regularly and consults about historic preservation issues around the country.

Laura DiPasquale is recent graduate with an M.S. in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. A native of Dover, Delaware, Laura received her B.A. in Art Conservation in 2008 from the University of Delaware, where she developed a firm understanding of museum procedures, collections care, and interpretation through internships with the Newark Historical Society, and as a historical interpreter at Fort Delaware State Park. More recently, in addition to her work with Heritage Consulting, Laura has also interned with Downtown Visions, Wilmington, Delaware's business improvement district and Main Street program, streamlining their design guidelines and doing graphics for their Facade Improvement and Upstairs Fund programs. She has also been involved with brick and mortar conservation, having worked with two Philadelphia-based conservation firms, the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, and Milner + Carr Conservation.

## **Contact information**

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Part 18:  
Project Update  
Workshop  
Presentation  
June 4, 2012

## PART 17: PROJECT UPDATE WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

### Heritage Tourism Audience Research & Interpretive Plan Update

Jacobus Vanderveer House

June 4, 2012



### Agenda

- Overview of project goals
- Review actions to date
- Conclusions and findings on audience research
- Introduction to interpretive themes
- The foundation: info already on hand
- Theme basis, development and storyline
- Cast of characters
- Types of programs
- Discussion



### NJHT Grant

- \$64,000 Grant from New Jersey Historic Trust
- Start: May 2011, complete March 2013
- Consultants: Donna Ann Harris & Emily Cooperman
- JVH Board committee provides oversight
  - Suzanne Witt, Robin Ray, Leslie Molé, Katy Rupert, Phyllis Shapiro



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### Grant Objective

- A comprehensive heritage tourism assessment, leading to:
  - Better understanding of our audience
  - an interpretive plan and
  - interpretive products and strategies that will enable us to use the Vanderveer House, our research archive and historic collections to provide higher levels of visitor education and enjoyment



### Project Design

- 3 Phases:
  1. Research
    - a) Audience research
    - b) Review of existing research regarding interpretation
  2. Interpretive Plan, identify interpretive product
  3. Interpretive product implementation



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### Audience Research Components

1. Historic House Museums Today - May, 2011 Board meeting
2. Board visits to peer sites
  - If you have not yet, please visit and report
3. Interviews: 7 current and former Board members
  - Followed online survey content
4. Colonial Christmas/on-line survey



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### Audience Research Components

5. Interviews: Potential Local Partners:
  - Cate Litvak, Kevin Tremble of Crossroads
  - 4 Somerset County partners
  - Somerset Cty History Roundtable 3-24
6. Site Visits: 3 School programs at Rev. War sites
7. 3 Focus Groups and report
8. Memo on informal programming for kids



### Audience Research Work Remaining

- Compile previously submitted reports, submit final report by June 30



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### 1. Historic Houses Today presentation

- Discussed best practices:
  - What do visitors want now , programming
  - Know your audience
  - Collections management
  - Public relations
  - Fundraising
- Reach Museum Advisors national research



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### 2. Board Visits to Peer Sites

#### Sites suggested:

- Clivden, Philadelphia
- Wyck, Philadelphia
- Paulsdale, Mt. Laurel
- Tenement Museum, NYC
- Updike Farmstead, Princeton
- Howell Living History Farm, Titusville,
- Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms, Morris Plains
- Beth Shalom, Elkins Park

- Thank you for making these visits!



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### 3. Interviews: 7 current & former Board members

- Interested in variety of interpretive methods
  - guided and self guided tours
  - cell phone, smart phone tours
- Prefer self guided tours themselves
- Re-enactors help bring the rooms to life
- Children are a prime audience



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### 4. On-Line Survey

- Survey open for 6 weeks & at Colonial Christmas
- 164 responses, on line & paper surveys collected
- 80% women, ages--most between 35-64
- 30% of respondents have not visited the site in 2 years



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### 5. Crossroads Interviews

- Cate Litvak and Kevin Tremble
- New Executive Director Noreen Bordman
- Archeological collection national importance, important to Crossroads story
- JVH needs to be open more often
- Collaborations and cross marketing with area sites encouraged
- Not everyone is interested in Rev. War/Military history, need other themes too



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### 5. Somerset County Partner Activities

- Five Generals—organized by Heritage Trails Association, held in Feb.
- Journey to the Past Weekend—organized by Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission—about 5000 attend 1500 unique visitors.



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### 5. Somerset County Partners

- Vanderveer House itself is not a tourist destination
- JVH as part of a network of theme tours
- There is compelling programming in the county at many sites—mostly special events
- Getting sites to cooperate and collaborate is key
- County tourism interested in marketing historic sites, but tourism product(s) are needed



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### 5. Somerset County Partners

- Vast majority of historic sites in the county are not well organized or visitor ready.
- 6500 hotel rooms with few weekend guests
- To attract tourists, sites need to be open regular hours, especially weekends in a coordinated way.
- Role of Heritage Trails Association as convener



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### 5. Somerset County Roundtable

- Organized by Tom Buckingham, Heritage Trails Assoc.
- 25 people attended & Leslie Molé, Sean Binn, Donna Harris
- 4 Themes discussed:
  - Dutch Heritage,
  - Canal,
  - Revolutionary War and
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Century Life
- Leadership for organizing theme tours left to volunteers



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### 5. School programs

- Visited
  - The Old Barracks, Trenton
  - Ft. Lee Historic Park
  - Jockey Hollow, Morristown NHP
- Yearly attendance: 17,500 Barracks; 1400 Morristown; 1800 Ft. Lee



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### 5. School programs

- All have full time costumed interpreters
- "Living history programs" from 1 to 5.5 hours
- Focus on 4 & 5 grades
- Programming meets NJ Core Curriculum Standards (Morristown & Barracks)
- 24-120 students permitted per program
- Fees \$5 or \$6 per student



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### 5. Advice on starting a school program

- Need paid staff, 2 part time interpreters to start a school program
- Costumed interpreters are ideal
- Limit # students in period rooms--SECURITY
- Must meet NJ Core Curriculum Standards
- Stress hands on activities vs. lecturing
- Marketing at NJEA convention



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### 6. Focus Groups

- 3 groups:
  - Highly interested in history
  - Interested in history
  - Parents with children
- Used survey response list (125 emails)
- Targeted men to participate
- Major Issues:



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### Findings

- Audience
- Board
- Programming
- Partnerships
- School programs



### Findings - Audience

- Our audience is made up of:
  - 35-65 year olds,
  - half with children at home,
  - women
- Who have an interest in:
  - The history of the American Revolution
  - Everyday life in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century
  - Local history
- This audience is typical of most house museums nationwide



### Findings - Board

- There is agreement on the need for more and more consistent programming
- Board level decisions/consensus need on:
  - The role of the house
    - Are the furnishings complete? Sufficient?
  - Next phase? Is it the landscape?
  - Use of technology as self-guided tour support
  - Marketing approach and resources
  - How often to be open, when, why and staffing
  - Volunteers – need for volunteers, docents, as well as Trustees



### Findings - Programming

1. A knowledgeable guide in specific rooms in the house to answer questions
2. Shopping events such as antiques markets, designer showcases & local artists
3. Printed brochures, maps, guides
4. Educational lectures or programs on topics related to the Vanderveer House
5. Demonstration of crafts, historic cooking or similar activities by costumed interpreters (not doing/ classes)



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### Findings: Programming

6. Guided tours 37%
7. Historical re-enactments of Revolutionary War life by costumed interpreters 34%
8. Social events 34%
9. Lectures on antiques and historic objects care 34%
- 10 Smartphone app with interactive screen-based features, or similar, handheld device 30%



### Findings - Programming

- Current audiences visits JVH for a many events, no clear "winner"
  - special events
  - seasonal events
  - monthly lectures, classes, crafts
  - partner developed tours (Five Generals tour)
  - kids activities
  - holiday activities and
  - routine weekend open public hours



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### Findings: Programming

- No children's programming made the top 10
- Preferred kid's programming
  - Hands on children's activities 47%
  - Formal school programs for K-12 students 39%
  - Storytelling programs adults & children 38%
  - Children's summer history camp 27%
- Nearly half of all respondents are not interested in craft programs—could be niche programming



### Findings - Partnerships

- Limited opportunity for local museum/site partnerships:
  - Aging group of volunteer historic site stewards
  - Too few volunteers to open sites more often
  - Few paid staff members to open sites
  - Some longstanding rivalries between heritage organizations
  - Poor or inconsistent marketing/advertising of events
  - Lack of leadership for heritage tourism in county in general



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### Findings - Partnerships

- Email lists are effective for reaching history buffs and some local residents
  - Heritage Trails: 1,700
  - Crossroads : 2,000
  - The League of NJ Historical Societies: 1,500
  - History NJ Listserve: 2,000



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### Findings – School Programs

- Possible audience
- Require significant planning and structure:
  - Costumed interpreters
  - Space to handle large crowds
  - 1hr + programs
  - Hands on activities
  - Paid staff
  - Marketing
  - Formal descriptions to share with school
  - NJ Curriculum Standards – effort and consistency needed



### Findings—Focus Groups

- Coming soon



### Next Steps

- *June 4* – Development of interpretive themes
- *April – July 2012*: Implementation strategies development
- *July – November 2012*:
  - Short-, medium-, and long-term steps recommendations
  - Interpretive product development
  - Creation of calendar of public program activities for 2012-2013 visitor season
  - Determination of staffing needs A docent training guide and scripts
- *December 2012 – March 2013*
  - Interpretive product implementation
  - Development of membership plan to support audience development and interpretive plan



### Summary

- We have the materials/site to support interest in themes of American Revolution and life at that time
- There is interest in opening the house as an event venue as well as a museum/educational program location
  - We can meet this interest
- Children are a potential audience, requires more research
  - Their attendance draws the entire family
  - Consider scouts/home schoolers and select, custom school relationships



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### Discussion



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### Interpretation at the Jacobus Vanderveer House

- The goal
- The foundation
- Where we are today
- Next steps for the future



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## Interpretation at the Jacobus Vanderveer House

- Goal for the project:
- Develop interpretive product(s) and a vision for future programming, implement next year



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## Foundation

- Impressive track record of documents and studies generated since 1995
- More than most historic sites have at their disposal
- Enables work based on facts, not fiction
- Provides rich source for program development



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## Foundation – previous studies

- **1935** - Historic American Buildings Survey Report
  - Records association of General Knox with the House
  - focus on historic architecture
- [1989 – property purchased with Open Space funds]**
- **1995** - National and New Jersey Register of Historic Places nomination – Heritage Studies, Inc.
  - Repeat Knox theme
  - Articulates theme - Dutch-American “style”
- **1998** – Consultation Report and Recommendations by Philip A. Hayden
  - Recommends key steps for public site: governance, preservation, interpretation, public outreach, creation of HSR



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## Foundation – previous studies

- **1998** – William Halsey architectural report
  - Key actions recommended:
    - remove porch and dormers
    - proceed with archaeology
    - “return oldest portion” of the house “to its condition when General Knox occupied the house”
- **1999** – First Archaeological Investigation – Hunter Research



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## Foundation – previous studies

- **2000** – Jacobus Vanderveer House Contexts and Themes for Exhibits and Interpretation – Hunter Research
  - 3 themes with context:
    - 1: Bedminster and the American Revolution, the Pluckemin Cantonment, Gen. Knox
    - 2: Dutch in the Raritan Valley: the Vanderveer Family in Bedminster Community
    - 3: Dutch, English and American traditions in architecture
- **2001** – Historic Structure Report – Holt Morgan Russell
  - Extensive analysis of building
- **2001** – Supplementary Archaeological Investigations – Hunter Research
  - South side of house re. stoop and porch
  - Porch and basement entry
  - Further kitchen wing investigation



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## Foundation – previous studies

- **2002-2003** – Archaeological Investigations – Hunter Research
  - South side of house re. stoop and porch
  - Porch and basement entry
  - Further kitchen wing investigation
- **2007** – General Henry Knox and the American “Park of Artillery” Exhibition Script – Dennis Bertland Associates
- **2008** – Furnishings Plan – Jacquetta Haley
- **2008** – Historic Landscape Report and Site Master Plan



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### Foundation – work on the building



Reconstructed kitchen, entry porches, shutters, exterior

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### Foundation – work on the building



Accessible entrance

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### Foundation – work on the house



Different kinds of spaces

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### Foundation – work on the house



Different kinds of spaces

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### Foundation – work on the building



Internal reveals

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### Where we are today – the interior



Different kinds of spaces

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### Where we are today – the interior



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### Where we are today – programs



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### Interpretation – theme development

- What is a theme?
  - Not a fact
  - Theme = why facts are interesting
  - Themes link facts to human stories and emphasize and reinforce the most important historical messages of a site
  - Thematic tour (or interpretive program) allows people to learn accurate facts and be engaged



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### Interpretation – theme development

- Historic site becomes a theater for historical human dramas that connect to audience interests through storyline and themes
- Theme bases:
  - 1: Bedminster and the American Revolution, the Pluckemin Cantonment, Gen. Knox's headquarters
  - 2: Dutch in the Raritan Valley: the Vanderveer Family in Bedminster Community
  - 3: Dutch, English and American traditions in architecture



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### Cast of characters

- The leading roles:
  - Vanderveers
  - Knoxes



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### Interpretation – theme development



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# Part 19: Board Visits to Cohort Sites



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## PART 19: BOARD VISITS TO COHORT SITES

### **Cohort Site Visit Report Beth Sholom Visitor Center – Elkins Park, PA (Prepared by Robin Ray)**

#### *Name of Site:*

Beth Sholom Congregation Visitor Center designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The site is managed by the Beth Sholom Synagogue Preservation Foundation which is a non-sectarian, not for profit 501c3 organization that was created to preserve the synagogue.

#### *Site Hours:*

Tours: Wed & Thurs 10a-1p / Sun 10a-3p --215 887 1342 x157 Reservations required for groups of 10+  
--Group Tours: 215 887 1342 x227

#### *Site Importance:*

The Beth Sholom Synagogue is a National Historic landmark (listed in 2007) designed by the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright was commissioned to design the building in 1953 and construction was completed in September of 1959. Shortly after Frank Lloyd Wright's death, the synagogue was recognized by the American Institute of Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the seventeen most important projects.

#### *Mission:*

The Foundation's mission is to preserve the Wright-designed building, furniture, and landscape setting to the highest standards possible and to tell the stories of this great American synagogue to a wide variety of audiences.

#### *Method of Visit:*

Visited the site on Thursday, March 29th to find the visitor center had closed early for maintenance work. The synagogue had clear signage with an easy recognizable entrance, ample and easily accessible parking adjacent to the building. Remainder of report completed via on-line virtual tour.

#### *Observations:*

- **Visual Inspections of buildings and grounds** – The synagogue and visitor center was very clean, tidy and well maintained. The landscaping was also well maintained. Good signage, good traffic flow, ample and accessible parking. You definitely get the feeling when at the site that it is an active house of worship.
- **Website** – The website is impeccable with a clean look. Simple to navigate. Easy to read. Information tabs well organized and representative of the information contained within. Just the appropriate amount of information to make you want to actually visit. Good mix of historical photos and documents on the website to give you a sense of the scope of the project and its' construction. I noticed that the Foundation had Leonard Nimoy narrate a documentary film for the visitor center which I found impressive and lent credibility to the site.
- **Historical Importance** – I came away with a good sense of the scope of the project from the conception of the synagogue to its completion through the use of photographs and photos of easily

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readable documents. The photographs and historical documents bring the timeline to life for the virtual visitor and emphasized the difficult and innovative construction techniques which set apart this building from others. The “story” is the design and construction of the building.

- **Membership** – I particularly liked that the foundation offers visitors the opportunity to support their foundation through membership. Membership is annual and only \$50. Advantages of membership were free admission, discount at their design store and preferred group tours—all simple offerings that did not cost the foundation any money (not wasteful trinkets) but yet made supporters feel as if they were getting something special.
- **Type of Visitor** – My impression is that the site attracts visitors of all religions and those that would have a particular interest in architecture. Although the synagogue was founded as a conservative Jewish congregation, the website did not place an emphasis on religion rather on the design and construction.

RAR 5-15-12

## Peer historic site visit feedback form

Your name DGAL SANDERSON date 4/13 5/13/12 Site CLIVEDEN, Germantown Philadelphia  
 name \_\_\_\_\_ (Middle/upper class African-Amer. neighborhood)

- Did you use the site's web site in planning your trip? Yes \_\_\_ no X comments GPS
  - Was their web site easy navigate? Yes X no \_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
  - Were directions to the site clear? Yes X no \_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
  - If you came by car, was it easy to understand where to park?  
 Yes X no \_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
  - Was it easy to find where tours start? Yes X no \_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
  - Was your greeting warm and enthusiastic? VERY
  - Do you feel the docent was knowledgeable? What could have been better? Extremely knowledgeable  
could not have been better. ELEANOR SMITH
  - Were there any first person (i.e. actors in costume) interpretation? Was it effective? None
  - Were you engaged by the tour or exhibits? yes
  - Exhibits provided good intro. Bldg had only minimal furnishings  
Docents comments above
  - Were historic objects used, or not, in the visit? Yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ Was it effective? \_\_\_\_\_  
Viewed. Nothing used.
  - Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found  
Unknown
  - Check if there were any: X brochures X exhibits \_\_\_ cell phone tours \_\_\_ pod casts  
 \_\_\_ audio guides \_\_\_ self guided interpretive panels. Other interpretive methods? \_\_\_\_\_  
None revealed.
  - Would you come back or recommend this site to a friend? Yes X no \_\_\_ Why? Very interesting.  
FANTASTIC, if ELEANOR SMITH is the guide
- Other feedback you wish to share Only one other guide on duty; however, perhaps because  
it was Mother's Day, we saw only 2 other tour groups of adults-no children.  
Two shaded picnic tables + benches.  
Eleanor was so good + spent so much time with us that I expect to write  
the site, praising her.

## ***Peer historic site web site feedback form***

Your name Renee Biale date 5/20/12 historic site name Howell Living History Farm

- Was the web site for this historic site the first listing on the search engine results? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_
- Was the web site on the first page of results on the search engine you used? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_
- Was the web site visually appealing to you? Why or why not? No. Website is not visually appealing. Seems amateurish and rudimentary.
- Did the web site information have current and up to date? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ other comments  
Calendar of events is up to date and upcoming programs for the month are also on home page
- Was the web site easy to navigate? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Was it easy to find driving directions? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Could you easily find the open hours? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Did the web site have good and interesting content about the site? Please list what kinds of information you found  
Language was friendly and informative but there were typos and missing pieces of information. Historical information was good. Interesting anecdotes. Virtual tour described various parts of farm, but it could have been more visually appealing with more photos, graphics rather than just text.
- Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found  
There was content for internship programs for all ages, parent/child programs, and school groups/teachers.
- Did the site have any of the following information that you could download? Check any you found  
\_\_\_\_\_ brochures \_\_\_\_\_ pod casts \_\_\_\_\_ audio guides \_\_\_\_\_ self guided interpretive materials  
Please list other things you could download  
The Home Page offered access to an online newsletter with daily posts from the farm with photos, Facebook page, videos and photo galleries. This link was decidedly more visually modern than the website itself. Camp applications can be downloaded, but other than that, not much else.
- Other feedback you wish to share about this web site  
No online donation capability. Donor has to print out PDF form and mail check to Friends of Howell Farm.

Please return at the next board meeting or send to Leslie Molé at [leslie@foxchase.net](mailto:leslie@foxchase.net) THANKS

## ***Peer historic site web site feedback form***

Your name **Suzanne Witt** date **3/15/2012** historic site name **Paulsdale**

- Was the web site for this historic site the first listing on the search engine results? Yes **\_**
- Was the web site on the first page of results on the search engine you used? **NA**
- Was the web site visually appealing to you? Why or why not? **\_**
  - Yes, clean, simple, all the information you might want
  - A little cluttered – could be streamlined but pretty findable
- Did the web site information have current and up to date? **Yes**
- Was the web site easy to navigate? **Yes**
- Was it easy to find driving directions? **Yes**
- Could you easily find the open hours?
  - Yes – drop in one day a month or call and arrange a group tour
  - \$5 fee
- Did the web site have good and interesting content about the site? Please list what kinds of information you found
  - Had info on tours, on the Alice Paul, on the mission of Alice Paul Institute, tours, programming, gift shop, directions, all very clear, large, nice font, inviting pictures, informative but not overwhelming
- Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found
  - Yes – girl scouts, girls by age, tours or drop ins, but not all the links worked
  - Schools,
  - Group tours
- Did the site have any of the following information that you could download? Check any you found  
\_\_\_\_\_ brochures \_\_\_\_\_ pod casts \_\_\_\_\_ audio guides \_\_\_\_\_ self guided interpretive materials  
Please list other things you could download
  - Not downloadable but educational DVDs and ppts you could purchase
  - Linked to other sites on Alice Paul
  - Had a children's version of the background on Alice Paul
- Other feedback you wish to share about this web site

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  - I have a contact on the board if we want to talk to them
  - Attached are comments regarding the site – a review from a professional User Experience expert

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### **Quick thoughts on Alice Paul Institute Site:**

1. Gold on Purple background can be hard to read – suggest white wording on the purple background.
2. Page length is an issue. Many pages are very long with what appears to be valuable information well below the fold. Suggest putting the detailed content in documents (pdfs) and then just the key points or highlights that on the page with a link to the document. Example would be Alice Paul – this link takes you to several pages of information. They should put the key content on the site and then link to a document with the detail. This would also make it easier for people to print or share the attached document.
3. Information that you would think is on sub-pages (as per the links at the top of the pages) is actually on that same page just lower down. Suggest they break this down into multiple pages to reduce the amount of vertical scrolling. This also makes it easier to link to the same content from multiple areas of the site.

4. Page title information should be on the left (is on the right)
5. The have content on the bottom of the pages (Honoring Her Legacy, Preserving Her Home, Developing Future Leaders) that look like links but are not. These should be presented differently.
6. On the Leadership & Heritage Program page they have several sections where the titles appear but there is no content. If this content is actively being developed I'd say ok to leave – otherwise they should remove it until the content is available. The user may think the site is broken or out of date otherwise.
7. Email address should be links (sample would be on the Home or About APL page they have the APL wish list with the email address but it's not a link to email). Also in this message why are they asking people to call if they have purchased items? They should explain this so the user will want to call. Also is there a way to make it interactive and link the API Wish List (items they need) to an email so someone that has donated or wants to donate can easily communicate with them?
8. If they are trying to get more people to go to the institute I would make the address and direction information more prominent.
9. Support API is the last link. I'm thinking this is one of their primary goals of the site (educate and secure support). Would move more to the left
10. Events – idea would be to highlight key upcoming events (such as the Equality Awards on 4/26) right on the home page to bring this to the readers' attention (or they may not get there).

Please return at the next board meeting or send to Leslie Molé at [leslie@forchase.net](mailto:leslie@forchase.net) THANKS

## ***Peer historic site visit feedback form***

Your name Leslie Molé/Clair Martin date 4/13 Site  
name Stickley House Museum

- Did you use the site's web site in planning your trip?

Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_

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- Was their web site easy navigate? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_

comments \_\_\_\_\_

- Were directions to the site clear? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_

no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_

- If you came by car, was it easy to understand where to park?

Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ comments \_\_\_\_\_

- Was it easy to find where tours start? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_

comments \_\_\_\_\_

- Was your greeting warm and

enthusiastic? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

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- Do you feel the docent was knowledgeable? What could have been better? The docent was marginally knowledgeable – he stuck to his script. The tour would have been far better if the docent had allowed us to explore the house and furnishings and had simply responded to our questions
- 

- Were there any first person (i.e. actors in costume) interpretation? Was it effective? No
- 

- Were you engaged by the tour or exhibits? Not Particularly

• \_\_\_\_\_

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- Were historic objects used, or not, in the visit? Yes x no \_\_\_\_\_ Was it effective?

\_\_\_\_\_

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- Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found

No

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- Check if there were any: ☒ brochures ☒ exhibits ☐ cell phone tours ☐ pod casts ☐ audio guides ☒ self guided interpretive panels. Other interpretive methods? \_\_\_\_\_

- Would you come back or recommend this site to a friend? Yes ☐ no ☒ Why? ☐ One visit is enough \_\_\_\_\_

Other feedback you wish to share ☐ There seemed to be a great deal of anxiety regarding the touching of the furniture – We felt that visitors should be given white gloves in order to feel more welcomed. Because the house is, in many ways a forerunner of Frank Lloyd Wright's work, we all felt that visitors should have been allowed to explore all of the rooms even if they were not restored or furnished (closets, bathrooms, bedrooms). The kitchen should have been a highlight of the tour but was treated more or less as an afterthought after the main tour concluded. This is a fascinating house with a marvelous story to tell. Unfortunately, the story has not been updated for years. \_\_\_\_\_

Please return at the next board meeting or send to Leslie Molé at [leslie@foxchase.net](mailto:leslie@foxchase.net) THANKS!



### Peer historic site visit feedback form

Your name Karin Myraski date 2/29/12 Site name Updike Farmstead

- Did you use the site's web site in planning your trip? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Was their web site easy navigate? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Were directions to the site clear? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- If you came by car, was it easy to understand where to park?  
Yes ☒ no ☐ comments Signs were posted - easy to see
- Was it easy to find where tours start? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Was your greeting warm and enthusiastic? Yes - Friendly and welcoming
- Do you feel the docent was knowledgeable? What could have been better? Yes - explained rooms thoroughly
- Were there any first person (i.e. actors in costume) interpretation? Was it effective? NO
- Were you engaged by the tour or exhibits? Yes - however it was cold and rainy so farmland was swampy!
- Were historic objects used, or not, in the visit? Yes ☒ no ☐ Was it effective? Yes - had many fascinating items
- Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found  
Yes - they had many laminated placards which could be
- Check if there were any: ☒ brochures ☒ exhibits ☐ cell phone tours ☐ pod casts  
☐ audio guides ☒ self guided interpretive panels. Other interpretive methods? \_\_\_\_\_
- Would you come back or recommend this site to a friend? Yes ☒ no ☐ Why? Would come back for outdoor activities in spring/fall.

Other feedback you wish to share \_\_\_\_\_

In bad weather site was small like our house. I liked that they had many hands-on items to pick up. They also had many paintings on loan which depicted property/farm.

### Peer historic site web site feedback form

Your name Karen Mlynarski date 2/29/12 historic site name Uptike Farmstead

- Was the web site for this historic site the first listing on the search engine results? Yes ☒ no ☐
- Was the web site on the first page of results on the search engine you used? Yes ☒ no ☐
- Was the web site visually appealing to you? Why or why not?  
Yes - But it was very basic. Limited to only 2 pages.
- Did the web site information have current and up to date? Yes ☒ no ☐ other comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Was the web site easy to navigate? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Was it easy to find driving directions? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Could you easily find the open hours? Yes ☒ no ☐ comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Did the web site have good and interesting content about the site? Please list what kinds of information you found  
Basic information only.
- Was there content for different types of audiences such as school groups, teachers, scouts, bus tours, other groups? Please list what you found  
Not really - Basic Info
- Did the site have any of the following information that you could download? Check any you found  
\_\_\_\_\_ brochures \_\_\_\_\_ pod casts \_\_\_\_\_ audio guides \_\_\_\_\_ self guided interpretive materials  
Please list other things you could download No - nothing to download
- Other feedback you wish to share about this web site  
Informative - yet fairly boring.

Please return at the next board meeting or send to Leslie Molé at [leslie@foxchase.net](mailto:leslie@foxchase.net) THANKS