

NEW DIRECTIONS IN HOUSE MUSEUM INTERPRETATION: CREATING A
DESIRED VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT THE DE MESA-SANCHEZ HOUSE

By

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To my parents and Adam for their unwavering support

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LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Goal	“Long-range and general descriptions of desired outcomes.” ¹
House Museum	A historic residence now used to interpret information to the public.
Intangible	“Abstract [ideas that] include processes, relationships, ideas, feelings, values and beliefs.” ²
Interpretation	“An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original object, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.” ³
Interpretive Methods	“Any personal or non personal media employed by an interpretive organization to connect an audience emotionally and intellectually to a resource.” ⁴
Interpretive Organization	“An agency or organization that manages a site or company that employs methods of interpretation in their daily business.” ⁵
Interpretive Plan	“The documentation of a thoughtful decision-making process that blends management needs and resource consideration with visitor desire and ability to pay to determine the most effective ways to communicate the message to targeted markets.” ⁶

¹ Division of Interpretive Planning, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1998, 20.

² Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., Interpretive Development Program: March 2007, 6.

³ Freedman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 33.

⁴ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Methods,” January 2009, 3.

⁵ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Planning,” January 2009, 3.

⁶ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Planning,” 3.

Objective	“Short-range, measureable and specific outcomes.” ⁷
Stakeholder	“A person who has vested interest in a place, program, issue or process.” ⁸
Stewardship Organization	An agency or organization responsible for the preservation, management, protection, and education of a historic resource.
Tangible	“Physical elements of a site.” ⁹
Theme	“The key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park. Themes provide the foundation for all interpretive programs and media developed.” ¹⁰

⁷ Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 20.

⁸ National Association for Interpretation, “Definitions Project,” http://www.definitionsproject.com/definitions/def_full_term.cfm, accessed March 5, 2014.

⁹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al. 5.

¹⁰ Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 13.

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Chair: Janet Snyder Matthews
Co-chair: Morris Hylton III
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This thesis examines interpretation in relation to changing visitor values and appreciation at house museums. While the number of house museums increase each year, visitation continues to decline.¹

House museums experience a wide range of interpretive issues. Many of which derive from the early history of the preservation movement. The inability of stewardship organizations to consider the needs and changing values of an increasingly diverse population of visitors further complicates the problem.

Interpretive planning affords a stewardship organization the opportunity to review the experience they offer their visitors, requiring a deep, evolving understanding of the organization's mission and the historic site's significance. Planning allows for greater visitor interest and satisfaction.

The interpretive techniques of five historic house museums were chosen for analysis. The case studies include: the Gonzalez-Alvarez House and the Ximenez-Fatio

¹ Gerald George, "Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What's Wrong", *Forum Journal* 16. No. 3 (Spring 2002) 1.

House in St. Augustine, Florida; Drayton Hall near Charleston, South Carolina; The Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York, New York; and The George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.

The history, past interpretations and current interpretation of the de Mesa-Sanchez House in St. Augustine, Florida are investigated. A framework for the interpretive potential of this house museum is established, analyzing potential interpretive subjects for the de Mesa-Sanchez House, as well as exploring various techniques for interpreting the house. The framework proposed by this study is intended to serve as a model for the development of interpretation at struggling house museums across the nation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks

In 2002 Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in an article entitled “Are There Too Many House Museums?” published in *Forum Journal*, described the financial struggles of house museums, unable to gain the attention of visitors, and recommended sale to private owners as the solution.¹ Moe had legitimate concerns ranging from underrepresented minority groups at historic sites to underfunding that resulted in historic buildings falling into disrepair. However, he missed a key point. House museums have the ability to connect with any visitor because everyone has an idea of home. Many of the issues he mentioned were derived from interpretation, and no solutions for these particular problems were discussed. Stewardship not only requires the preservation of historic structures, but public education and appreciation of these places as well.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, an “educational and nonprofit corporation” was established by Congress in 1949 “to receive donations of sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history and culture; to preserve and administer gifts of money, securities, or other property.”² While the National Trust was established to both preserve and sell historic properties, it is not in the best interest of all stewardship organizations to do the same. In many communities, state-owned

¹ Richard Moe, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" *Forum Journal* 27. no. 1 (Fall 2012). This article was first printed in *Forum Journal* in 2002 and was reprinted in 2012. Richard Moe served as the President of the National Trust from 1993- 2010.

² Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *Federal Historic Preservation Laws: the Official Compilation of U.S. Cultural Heritage Statutes* (Washington, DC, 2006) 25.

historic sites are struggling as well. Many of these sites were acquired by their state for public use.

St. Augustine, Florida, is one of these communities. In May of 1937 the St. Augustine Preservation and Restoration Association, a nonprofit corporation, was formed by the state of Florida. They were given the responsibility to acquire historic properties for preservation and public use.³ The state's involvement in the preservation of St. Augustine continued. On June 19, 1959, House Bill 774 established the St. Augustine Historical Restoration Commission. \$150,000 was granted to commence operations. The legislation gave the Commission the right to do the following:

acquire, restore, preserve, maintain, reconstruct, reproduce, for the use, education, recreation, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of this state and nation certain ancient or historic landmarks, sites, cemeteries, graves, military works, monuments, locations, remains, buildings and other objects of historical or antiquarian interest of the city of St. Augustine, Florida.⁴

In 1968, under a new state constitution, The St. Augustine Preservation Commission became the St. Augustine Preservation Board with all property titles acquired given to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF).⁵ In 1997 the St. Augustine Preservation Board, along with other preservation boards in Florida,

³ William R. Adams, "Analysis of the Management of Historical Resources in the City of St. Augustine," St. Augustine Preservation Board, 1996, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 1.

⁴ Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, *Historic St. Augustine Guide Book* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of State 1971) 8.

⁵ Adams, "Analysis of the Management of Historical Resources in the City of St. Augustine," 1-4.

was sunsetted.⁶ For a ten-year period the City of St. Augustine leased former Preservation Board properties through the Florida Department of State.⁷

In 2010 the University of Florida Historic St. Augustine Inc. (UFHSA) was authorized by the Florida legislature to assume the following responsibilities as defined by Florida Statute 267.1735.:

The goal for contracting with the University of Florida is to ensure long-term preservation and interpretation of state-owned historic properties in St. Augustine while facilitating an educational program at the University of Florida that will be responsive to the state's needs for professionals in historic preservation, archaeology, cultural resource management, cultural tourism, and museum administration and will help meet the needs of St. Augustine and the state through educational internships and practicums.⁸

Thirty-eight state-owned properties are managed by UFHSA, which receive annual operation and maintenance funds. However, funds for interpretation and education require pursuit of additional sources such as appropriations and donations. Traditional interpretive criteria may not be the most effective means of attracting visitors and funding for these historic properties.

The National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966, creating the National Register of Historic Places.⁹ This was the federal government's first attempt at recognizing significant places at the local, state, and national levels. Each place nominated to the National Register is required to be significant in one of the following

⁶ Their state appointed authority as Preservation Boards expired and was not renewed.

⁷ Paul Ortiz, "Interview with Herschel Shepard," Transcript. December 13, 2011, UFDC Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, 41.

⁸ "The 2013 Florida Statutes," http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_%20Statute&Search_String=&URL=0200-0299/0267/Sections/0267.1735.html, accessed January 25, 2014.

⁹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *Federal Historic Preservation Laws: The Official Compilation of U.S. Cultural Heritage Statutes*, 35-37.

areas: architecture, archeology, association with an important person, or association with an important event. Most stewardship organizations still use these areas of significance to drive the interpretation and education of their historic site.

While areas of significance have not changed for the National Register, societal views have. As the U.S. population becomes increasingly diverse, stewardship organizations must work to ensure that visitors can see themselves at historic sites. The criteria that deem a building significant for listing on the National Register do not necessarily reflect a visitor's views, or even scholarly views as to what is important at a historic site. The roles of everyday people in history are important and often neglected at house museums. Stewardship organizations should look outside what has traditionally been considered significant in the preservation movement to find relevance for their unique visitor populations.

Purpose Statement

Many of the problems impacting the preservation of historic house museums are derived from their interpretation. By understanding what issues plague historic sites, stewardship organizations can design solutions to improve upon their interpretation, allowing them to both attract visitors and create meaningful experiences.

Following this introduction, the second chapter of this study explores issues at house museums through a literature review and a brief history of the preservation movement. There are a number of correlations between what was important to past preservationists and what today's visitors find lacking at historic sites. By focusing only on historically significant owners or objects, interpretive organizations miss out on the greater opportunity to connect with visitors, and instead create a feeling of redundancy at historic sites, which should be avoided. Additionally, organizations need to recognize

that they are competing against modern leisure activities for visitors. Many house museums depend upon the same interpretive technique, a guided tour, which can create an impression of repetition from site to site, even if they embody vastly different histories.

The third chapter focuses on the role of interpretive planning through a literature review. The interpretive plan plays an essential role in deciding how visitors will interact with the house museum, both on- and off-site. Interpretive planning should be an inclusive process, involving all major stake holders. It addresses key themes upon which interpretation is based. It is also essential that the interpretive plan evolves to include the most recent scholarship of the site, while responding to changing visitor interests.

The fourth chapter investigates the interpretation at five house museums.

These case studies include:

- The Ximenez-Fatio House in St. Augustine, Florida
- The Gonzalez-Alvarez House (Oldest House) in St. Augustine, Florida
- Drayton Hall near Charleston, South Carolina
- The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, New York
- The George Eastman House, Rochester, New York

Each site was chosen because they represent a wide variety of house museums.

They all vary from one another in architectural style and period of significance, scale, location, stewardship organization and interpretive materials. An exploration of the location, stewardship organization, architecture, history, preservation and interpretation was addressed at each house museum.

Chapter five focuses on the de Mesa-Sanchez House, 43 St. George Street in St. Augustine, Florida. The de Mesa House is one of the thirty-eight state-owned buildings

currently managed by UFHSA. It is also one of several buildings interpreted by Pat Croce and Company as part of the Colonial Quarter LLC, which opened to the public in March 2013 under a lease agreement with UFHSA. This chapter addresses the history of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, its preservation, past interpretations, and current interpretation as part of the Colonial Quarter. Through an analysis of the literature review in chapters two and three, and the case studies explored in chapter four, a framework for the planning of interpretive subjects and methods was created. This framework establishes recommendations both for the interpretation of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, with the potential to influence the interpretation of house museums across the United States.

According to Jessica Foy Donnelly, author of *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, “no matter what age, size, or style, or what life inside and outside was like, a *residence* is a universally understood place.” Donnelly continues, “every visitor starts with the benefit of understanding this fundamental relationship--the greatest advantage of interpreting the past through historic homes.”¹⁰ House museums have the potential to reach a wide range of visitors. By constantly evolving and evaluating their interpretation, they can become vibrantly relevant to visitors and their community.

¹⁰ Jessica Foy Donnelly, “Introduction,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 3.

CHAPTER 2 A CHANGING VIEW OF INTERPRETATION

A Brief History of the Preservation Movement and Its Implications on Interpretation

The history of the historic preservation movement in the United States is well known among preservation students and professionals. The changing values in the preservation field and their effects on interpretation at historic sites have received less attention. Overtime history evolves and cultural significance changes. Cultural themes presented at historic sites should reflect change.

1850s-1890s: Era of “Republican Motherhood”

The Mount Vernon Ladies Association, founded in 1853, is often referred to as the first preservation effort in the United States. Led by Ann Pamela Cunningham, these women undertook the tireless endeavor to save the Potomac River plantation of George Washington.¹ Across the nation, countless other historic societies were formed by influential, affluent women, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, who used their social status and influence to preserve historic sites. The movement continued to grow with the founding of the Colonial Dames in 1891.² These women chose to save buildings because of the history associated with them, patriotic in nature.³ These sites were saved with the purpose of interpreting history and were later restored.⁴

¹ James M. Lindgren, “‘A New Departure in Historic Patriotic Work’: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *The Public Historian* 18 No. 2. (Spring 1996) 42-43.

² Paul Ortiz, “Interview with Robert Steinbach,” December 6, 2011, Transcript, UFDC Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, 20.

³ Gerald George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” *Forum Journal* 3. No.1 (Summer 1989) 1.

⁴ Travis C. McDonald Jr., “Restoration, Re-Restoration and Real History: Trends and Issues in Historic House Museums,” *Forum Journal* 7. No.6. (November/December 1993) 2.

These women were fueled by the idea of “republican motherhood,” the concept that women were responsible for teaching “virtue, refinement, and patriotism,” and traditional family values.⁵ As a result, the interpretation at these sites focused on the values of wealthy, white Americans.⁶

The celebration of America's Centennial in 1976, was critical in inspiring additional interests in house museums and the desire to collect and display relics from America's colonial history.⁷ Objects used to furnish these historic houses were intended to symbolize the ideals of people through a concept known as “personalism.” “Personalism meant that human attachments, in contemporary society and historical time, deserved greater notice and nurture . . . [it] placed importance on an artifact's ties to such values as individual character, love of family, respect for community, personal intimacy, and humanity.”⁸ The focus of the movement was placed on both homes of politicians and revolutionaries who represented an ideal America and objects that represented a simpler time of traditional values. This contributed greatly to the romanticism and nostalgia that characterized house museums of the past. Unfortunately, the house museums of today that still hold on to these values are less successful because they are not responding to current cultural values.

⁵ Lindgren, “A New Departure in Historic Patriotic Work’: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” 43.

⁶ George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” 2.

⁷ Patrick H. Butler III, “Past, Present and Future: The Place of the House Museum in the Museums Community,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 24.

⁸ Lindgren, “A New Departure in Historic Patriotic Work’: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” 44.

1900s-1930s: Professionalism in Preservation

The interpretation of house museums during the Progressive Era changed drastically from that of preservation's founding mothers. It was during this time that historic furnishings and objects gained the attention of preservationists for their craftsmanship as opposed to the conventional ideas once associated with them.

One explanation for a focus on antiques was the antimodernism movement. This trend began in the mid-nineteenth century but continued through the Progressive Era.⁹ Those involved with the antimodernism movement focused their interpretations on crafts, antique furnishings, and techniques because they contrasted with industrialization, a development they felt challenged traditional values.¹⁰ While not specifically stating it, preservationists felt they were protecting American values. This can be seen in the development of Colonial Williamsburg by John D. Rockefeller Jr. in the 1920s and 1930s, which focused on the absolute accuracy of reconstructed colonial buildings.¹¹ These decisions were made in a time when many Americans admired Colonial Revival-style houses and were fearful of the impact that immigrants could have on their culture. Colonial Williamsburg intended to interpret "Anglo dominance," English history, and traditional American values.¹²

⁹ Stuart D. Hobbs, "Exhibiting Antimodernism: History, Memory and the Aestheticized Past in Mid-Twentieth-Century America," *The Public Historian*, 23. No.3 (Summer 2001) 47.

¹⁰ Hobbs, "Exhibiting Antimodernism: History, Memory and the Aestheticized Past in Mid-Twentieth-Century America," 47

¹¹ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Duke University Press, 2007) 63.

¹² Hobbs, "Exhibiting Antimodernism: History, Memory and the Aestheticized Past in Mid-Twentieth-Century America," 54.

A second trend influencing interpretation in historic sites was the interest in historic preservation by men who professionalized the field. The men who took over the movement appreciated architecture, craftsmanship and development. The aesthetic quality of objects were valued and presented at house museums, and a greater appreciation of architectural styles and details developed. The traditional values that once influenced the “republican motherhood” were no longer sufficient in saving a historic structure, and objects no longer portrayed value outside of their style. Because of their inequality in society, many women were pushed out of the movement entirely, though some stayed involved as volunteers.¹³

A third factor that led to such a strict focus on stylist objects in the house museum field was the split between academic historians and architectural historians of the time. Academic historians were interested in gaining information from manuscripts, while architectural historians were principally interested in studying architecture and objects.¹⁴ Additionally, because contributions that could be made by academic historians were not viewed as relevant to the restoration process, they were not valued by preservationists in the field.¹⁵ Early interpretations of house museums were influenced by this divide, as the history and human stories of many of these locations were simply ignored.

¹³ Lindgren, “‘A New Departure in Historic Patriotic Work’: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” 42.

¹⁴ Hobbs, “Exhibiting Antimodernism: History, Memory and the Aestheticized Past in Mid- Twentieth-Century America,” 49-51.

¹⁵ Ibid. 52.

This occurred at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920’s while preservationists were focused on creating accurate reconstructions for the site.

1940s-1980s: A Public Appreciation

After World War II there was an increasing interest in preservation by the average American. Many soldiers returning from Europe, exposed to Old World architecture, learned to appreciate historic buildings and had a greater interest in their own country's history.¹⁶ Furthermore, leisure travel became an option for a growing middle class. With the development of highways and affordable automobiles, more people began to tour the country in search of entertainment and education.¹⁷ "Between the end of World War II and the year 2000, well over 6,000 historic house museums were developed."¹⁸

The changing values presented at Colonial Williamsburg during this period significantly reflect trends within the nation. Once again, the events impacting the United States influenced the interpretive themes presented at historic sites. After the Second World War, the message was one of support for soldiers.¹⁹ During the Cold War the Williamsburg Foundation's "fundamental duty [was] to teach the principles of liberty, [and] ideals of democratic government."²⁰ During the 1960s interpretation lost some of its patriotic focus as it turned toward the Vietnam War and social protests taking place during the Civil Rights Movement, connecting the site with what their visitors were encountering in their lives.²¹

¹⁶ Butler, "Past, Present and Future: The Place of the House Museum in the Museums Community," 28.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. 28-29.

¹⁹ Handler and Gable, *New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*, 63.

²⁰ Ibid. 64.

²¹ Ibid. 65.

The National Preservation Act of 1966 had an immense impact on historic sites and their interpretation. The act created the National Register of Historic Places, and for the first time anyone could nominate a historic structure of local, state or national significance. The average person could now participate in preserving their town. The act also established preservation resources, creating State Historic Preservation Offices, which could approve the formation of certified local governments, working toward the preservation of individual cities and towns. Lastly, this National Preservation Act provided preservation funding by establishing grant systems to save significant historic sites.²²

Once viewed as an educational venture, the impact of tourism on house museums grew in the 1970s. “Around the nation’s bicentennial in 1976, there was an explosion of interest in historic preservation, most directed towards homes, fueled in part by the astonishing fever to set aside local homes and turn them into museums for tourists.”²³ This continued into the 1980s as many properties in the United States turned 100 or 150 years old.²⁴ During this twenty-year period there was shift in preservation. Communities wanted to share their identity and history, while using historic preservation to attract tourists and foster economic development.²⁵

²² Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *Federal Historic Preservation Laws: The Official Compilation of U.S. Cultural Heritage Statutes*, 35-54.

²³ Donna Anne Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007), 7.

²⁴ George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

Implications for Interpretation

“There can be no question that house museums constitute the bedrock of the American preservation movement.”²⁶ The earliest examples featured homes of notable participants of the Revolutionary War and early politicians in the United States. As preservation became a business, interpretation focused less on representing historical figures and turned its attention to antiques, aesthetics and architecture. Some preservationists who chose this path based this focus on protecting traditional values; these goals were never stated in public interpretation. What were once the standard practices in interpreting house museums are now failed methods used by organizations that attempt to repeat the process. Additionally, valued as tourist destinations, house museums cannot succeed financially if they no longer draw the attention of visitors.

The greatest value organizations can gain from reviewing the history of the preservation movement is to understand that interpretation changes. The values of preservationists, historians, communities, and visitors change. If house museums wish to succeed they need to adapt their interpretive strategies to incorporate changing communities, perspectives, and practices.

The Issues with House Museums

Competing for Visitation

In the last thirty years visitation to house and history museums has been steadily declining.²⁷ While this trend is recognized among many professionals in the museum field who watch ticket sales drop, there are currently no studies measuring this development. “The truth of the matter is that nobody knows for sure what’s really going

²⁶ Moe, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" 56.

²⁷ Cary Carson, “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” *Managing Museums* 30. no.4 (2008) 9.

on. No national organization keeps statistics on museums attendance.”²⁸ House museums are not the only ones facing a decline in visitation. Other arts and humanities programs are having the same problems.²⁹ A major factor in this development is that while traditional museums are struggling for survival, “new history museums” are continuing to open and attract visitors by doing what the traditional museum does not, create an interactive environment that presents stories the public wants to hear.³⁰ “Pressures on communities to maintain visual identities, commemorate anniversaries, and increase tourism have additionally fed the expansion.”³¹ House museums need to understand that they are not just competing with each other for visitation; they are essentially competing with any other museum, entertainment, or tourist attraction in their area. “The competitions for use of leisure time have given the ‘traditional’ museum audience much greater choice. It will only visit museums if the experience obtained matches or exceeds that provided by other activities.”³²

If house museums stand a chance at raising visitor numbers it is in understanding what is desired by tourists and museums goes. When stewardship organizations understand their audience it will allow them to find why visitors have come to the site in the first place, and how they draw meaning from their visits.³³ While most

²⁸ Carson, “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” 11.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. 15-16.

³¹ Gerald George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong”, *Forum Journal* 16. No. 3 (Spring 2002) 11.

³² Graham Black, *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement* (London: Routledge, 2005) 2.

³³ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 13.

interpretive organizations should look at visitation demographics within their region, and specifically at who is coming to their site, there are some general trends that should be measured. For one the age groups interested in the traditional history and house museums should be considered.

Younger generations have become exceedingly less interested in these sites.³⁴ Visitors under the age of 35 are in decline at museums as they are a highly diverse group that desires variety and interaction. They are more demanding of the experience.³⁵ If house museums intend on attracting young adults, serious attention should be paid to the interactive opportunities on site.

Another key group of visitors to history museums are families. This group can easily be turned away from visiting historic houses when stewardship organizations ignore the needs of children and prefer their museum silent and visitors at complete attention to docents. It is important for house museums to consider providing child-friendly activities that still engage parents if they wish to take advantage of this demographic.³⁶

Without a doubt one of the main reasons house museums are failing is because they do not understand their visitors. However simply knowing about your visitors won't suffice; success resides in listening to them as well. Before diving into the vast interpretive issues associated with deterring visitors from historic sites, it is important to

³⁴ Donna Anne Harris, "New Uses for Existing House Museums," *Forum Journal* 21. No. 4. (Summer 2007) 1.

³⁵ Black, *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, 38.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 25.

consider the basic needs of these visitors. In 2001 the Visitor Studies Association (formally the Visitor Services Association) created the “Visitors’ Bill of Rights.”

1. Comfort: ‘Meet my basic needs.’
2. Orientation: ‘Make it easy for me to find my way around.’
3. Welcome/belonging: ‘Make me feel welcome.’
4. Enjoyment: ‘I want to have fun.’
5. Socializing: ‘I came to spend time with my family and friends.’
6. Respect: ‘Accept me for who I am and what I know.’
7. Communication: ‘Help me understand and let me talk too.’
8. Learning: ‘I want to learn something new.’
9. Choice and control: ‘Let me choose; give me some control.’
10. Challenge and confidence: ‘Give me a challenge I know I can handle.’
11. Revitalization: ‘Help me leave refreshed, restored.’³⁷

A key reason why house museums cannot attract visitors is because they are not providing an invigorating, family-friendly environment, leaving many potential visitors to feel unwelcomed, unenthused, and ignored.

“A Distressing Sameness”

“At first glance, they are both diverse and diverting. On closer inspection, however, the distinctions among them may begin to blur, and the frequent visitor is often left with a single overwhelming impression: there are so many of them.”³⁸ The exact number of house museums is unknown, though they are a part of almost every community in the United States. There are several factors that account for the feeling of redundancy in house museums. For one, there are more house museums than there are any other type of museum. Residences have been preserved for museum use in much greater number than commercial or industrial buildings.³⁹ Additionally, the types of houses preserved in each region are primarily of the same architectural styles; “18th

³⁷ Ibid. 32.

³⁸ Moe, “Are There Too Many House Museums?” 56.

³⁹ George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” 2.

century house museums in the northeast, antebellum mansions in the south, and Victorian or late 19th century residences in much of the rest of the nation.”⁴⁰ Despite the similarities of styles preserved in each region, there are other factors that have a much greater impact on uninterested visitors.

The pressures to professionalize. In April 2002, 27 house museum professionals gathered at the Pocantico Conference Center in Tarrytown, New York to discuss the various reasons why house museums are failing to attract visitors. One of the issues discussed was the pressure to “professionalize” within the museum community, and that an increasing number of house museums were seeking accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (formerly the American Association of Museums.)⁴¹ How great an impact this actually has on house museums should be evaluated further. As of January 2012 out of 776 museums accredited by the American Alliance of Museums only eight percent were house museums.⁴² The actions taken by many interpretive organizations with hopes for accreditation can have devastating impacts on the experience at the site. In attempts to professionalize, many collections managers will get rid of “inappropriate” objects, even if they are significant to the community.⁴³ In some cases this is a direct effect of attempting to gain accreditation. In the first step in the process towards accreditation an interpretive organization must submit a series of “Core Documents,” consisting of a “Mission

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong,” 1.

⁴² American Alliance of Museums, “Statistics,” 2012, <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/accreditation/statistics>, accessed January 27, 2014.

⁴³ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong,” 2.

Statement,” “Institutional Code of Ethics,” “Strategic Institutional Plan,” “Disaster Preparedness/ Emergency Response Plan,” and “Collections Management Policy.”⁴⁴

The time and resources required to complete these documents are immense especially when considering that at many house museums a severely limited budget may leave few people in charge of creating all of the required documentation. Additionally, interpretive organizations can barely afford the required maintenance on their historic properties, let alone expensive membership fees. While every organization should make an attempt at creating this documentation it should be done to protect historic resources, not gain accreditation. House museum professionals striving for professional recognition are turned away from significant community objects when their plans and policies are under “peer review” from professionals with no prior knowledge of their organization or community. Accreditation is not the only professional pressure put on house museums. Many organizations are pressured to professionalize in attempts to gain financial support.⁴⁵ One opinion is that “Grant-making agencies may be enforcing unnecessary standards.”⁴⁶ Financial instability, a term synonymous with house museum may leave organizations believing they have no choice but to turn away from community significance, and toward national standards.

The impacts of accreditation vary. “Historic houses that tend to be mom-and-pop operations think all they need is to show people through and tell a triumph, linear story full of fixed names and dates rather than interpretive understanding, a story

⁴⁴ American Alliance of Museums, “Core Documents,” 2012, <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/core-documents>, accessed January 27, 2014.

⁴⁵ In many cases it is easier for house museums and other interpretive organizations to receive grants and financial help if they are accredited and recognized within the professional field.

⁴⁶ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong,” 2.

unconnected with current scholarship or changing interests.”⁴⁷ In cases such as this striving toward professional standards may help an organization to update their education and interpretive approaches, improving the house museum’s connection to their community and improving visitor experience.

Connecting with visitors: subjects that suit their interests. While the diversity of each community is often evident to its tourists, it is surprising that the majority of house museums are telling extremely similar stories. This problem derives from the manner in which these historic residences were saved in the first place. “Many historic houses have been preserved for the sake of the building.”⁴⁸ In most situations how the building would be maintained over time was an afterthought, and any plans for interpretation were only considered once an organization had already taken full responsibility over the sites care. Without a doubt a historic building with no other use would be turned into a museum, but the same efforts enacted to save the building were seldom utilized to research, interpret, or understand the complex historical relationships that took place there.⁴⁹

More distressing are the types of houses preserved and the significance placed upon them by their saviors. “Much of the last half century’s growth in historic property museums involved saving an elegant mansion or the home of a historical notable as an expression of community identity and pride.”⁵⁰ While these sites become a part of the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Marian A. Godfrey, “Historic House Museums: An Embarrassment of Riches?” *Forum Journal* 22. No.3 (Spring 2008) 1.

⁴⁹ George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” 3.

⁵⁰ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong,” 1.

community's visual identity, they rarely reach a deeper significance that could be achieved through education and interpretation. As a result their value to the community diminishes until they become "mere relics from a distant past."⁵¹ Not only are the houses of the rich typically the only ones saved, their stories tend to be the only ones ever told on site. The roles of women and minorities are often ignored at many house museums.⁵² Additionally, any interpretation on the lives of servants and slaves are pushed aside with the excuse that there is not enough information to tell their story. While most house museums are focusing on the famous and politicians, everyday people and lifestyles are being ignored.⁵³ They are not just being forgotten in the great estates of elite; they are being forgotten in their communities who do not diversify the types of houses they save. Furthermore, there are very few examples of 20th century history and lifestyles being interpreted at house museums.⁵⁴ There are a vast amount of themes and eras that are not being interpreted.⁵⁵

It is no wonder visitors are not coming. As society continues to become more diverse, and the populations of ethnic minorities are growing to become the majority, the subject for interpretation at many house museums is no longer adequate. Visitors are intrigued by exhibits that they can relate too, reflect upon, that encourage an "enthusiasm for further learning."⁵⁶ A model for historic houses must be followed, truly

⁵¹ Moe, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" 58-59.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ George, "Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?" 2.

⁵⁴ George, "Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What's Wrong,"1.

⁵⁵ George, "Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?" 2.

⁵⁶ Black , *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, 133.

protecting them by addressing the changing art and cultural environment in society.⁵⁷

“We are still a very long way from what should be our ultimate goal as preservationists: the establishment and operation of historic sites that truly represent the American experience in all its diversity.”⁵⁸

A standard technique for interpreting house museums: guided tours and historic furnishings. One reason the stories at so many house museums may feel the same to visitors, is because they are being told the same way. Guided tours are common interpretation method used at historic sites. Tours are given by docents who may have limited knowledge about the site, and who has likely memorized a tour script describing the notable acts of an owner during his life time, with unbearable detail about furnishings and objects that may have been in the house during his life time. This method is most often described by visitors as, “repetitive, boring, [and] questionable”.⁵⁹ This is not to say that all guided tours are unsuccessful. In situations where guides are well trained, subjects are more relevant to the visitor, and visitors are welcomed to ask questions and participate in conversation, the experience can go quite well. The unchanging interpretation methods of historic sites such as Mt. Vernon is not working; “the number of visitors has fluctuated at times, suggesting that the traditional approach to interpretation, focusing on Washington through the experience of going through his rooms and seeing his furnishings, may no longer be sufficient.”⁶⁰ Though this issue is recognized it often goes unchanged due to a continuing conflict between visitors who do

⁵⁷ Godfrey, “Historic House Museums: An Embarrassment of Riches?” 1.

⁵⁸ Moe, “Are There Too Many House Museums?” 60.

⁵⁹ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What's Wrong,”1.

⁶⁰ Butler, “Past, Present and Future: The Place of the House Museum in the Museums Community,” 23.

not want to be bored and curators who do not want their presentations to be “superficial.”⁶¹ Interpretive organizations may also be worried that unscripted conversations may lead to visitors receiving inaccurate information or their organization being misrepresented. Though successful in some cases, guided tours should be carefully evaluated to determine if they are providing museum goers with the desired experience.

A method commonly used in historic house museums that accompanies guided tours is, the placement and focus on antiques that are historically correct for the time of interpretation. In few situations are these objects original to the house. “Houses that are intact, with furnishings that have a clear provenance to the house, may have a better chance to become legitimate tourism resources.”⁶² While interpretive organizations will have an easier time connecting furnishings to the story they are telling when they were once an actual part of the house, whether or not the object is original has less impact on the experience of the visitor when compared to how the object are used. Poor interpretation tends to occur when tours focus on the objects instead of people and how the artifacts were used, or when interpreters ignore the value of objects in creating a background for the events that took place during people’s lives.⁶³

Interpretation methods utilized in house museums are not keeping up with the desired experience of possible visitors. “Visitors to museums are demanding. They want

⁶¹ Thomas A. Woods, “Getting Beyond the Criticism of History Museums: A Model for Interpretation.” *The Public Historian* 12 No.3 (Summer 1990) 77.

⁶² Harris, “New Uses for Existing House Museums,” 4.

⁶³ George, “Historic Property Museums: What are they preserving?” 2.

constant stimulation, but they often prefer to remain passive.”⁶⁴ For this reason it is important to give visitors options. When the correct interpretation methods are chosen, a house museum can “allow people to ‘step back in time,’ understand the continuity of communities, and feel in touch with something ‘authentic.’”⁶⁵ Keeping in mind the constant competition between museums and other tourist activities, a greater effort amongst interpretive organizations should be made to utilize interpretive methods that are fun, engaging, and allow visitors to make meaning of their experiences at the site.

Summary

Throughout the preservation movement in the United States standards, practices, interpretive subjects, and interpretive methods have changed at house museums. The issue many face today is a lack of visitors. If these historic sites are to succeed they need to consider changing their strategies for interpretation, varying the activities and uses of their site. The values of the early preservation movement no longer relate to communities and an increasingly diverse population house museums need to attract today.

⁶⁴ Woods, “Getting Beyond the Criticism of History Museums: A Model for Interpretation,” 77.

⁶⁵ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong,” 1.

CHAPTER 3 INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

The Importance of Interpretive Planning

One of the first documents created by a stewardship organization should be the interpretation plan. “The plan is a blueprint for action, a clear written statement of our intentions for any given site.”¹ The plan guides all actions and decisions regarding interpretation. While in creation, the best interpretation plan will include major stakeholders and subject matter experts, including those not directly involved with the house museum.² Planning allows for long-term preservation and visitor enjoyment and education. Creating a long-term vision for the interpretation of the site allows interpretive organizations to continuously evolve and expand their interpretation. This will help avoid issues such as visitor disinterest that occurs when the same information is presented in the same ways over a long period of time. The interpretive plan is a “cost effective” and “sustainable” solution that may address future issues before they develop.

The Planning Process

“An interpretive plan should be the best possible representation of that particular planning process, that unique set of resources and visitors, that set of goals and recommendations, those contemporary conditions.”³ There are various suggestions and guidelines for how an interpretive plan should be written and what should be included. While these sources may differ, an interpretive organization is better off using any

¹ Chris Tabraham, “Interpreting Historic Scotland,” in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. Marion R. Blockley et al. (London: Routledge, 2006) 60.

² Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 6.

³ Ibid.

guideline instead of using no plan at all. The best option may be to evaluate different outlines and choose elements of each that relate best to the resources of the organization and the historic site.

The process of planning should include an explanation and evaluation of current resources. Various people should take part in the planning process from management and site staff, to volunteers, historians and potential visitors, each of whom may influence the goals of the interpretive plan. The plan should not only look at what can be implemented immediately but what can be accomplished over time. As these factors are considered interpretive subjects and methods can be developed to provide the best visitor experience.

An Inclusive Process

An interpretive organization can benefit by including multiple groups in their planning process. By including management, employees, volunteers, visitors and all major stakeholders, the most realistic idea of what can be accomplished and what challenges exist can be addressed. The best planning will also take into account the community, possible “regional partnerships,” and “subject matter experts” outside the site.⁴ Interpretive organizations responsible for house museums should communicate with other historic sites to avoid interpreting the same stories in the same way.

Potential visitors should also be considered in the planning process. This can be done through a multitude of ways including visitor surveys and focus groups. When including a large number of people, it is likely that there will be varying ideas for interpretation of the site. It is important that the plan “represent an accurate and useful version of both

⁴ Department of the Interior, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning: National Park Service Interpretation and Education Guideline*, 6.

the consensus and the diverse perspectives that emerged during the planning process.”⁵ While all of these perspectives may not be implemented at first, they may serve as a guide for changes to the interpretation of the house museum in the future.

A Goal-Driven Process

The interpretive plan for a house museum is created to facilitate how a site will be interpreted based on the organization’s goals and objectives. During planning, an interpretive organization should explore “the big picture.”⁶ Goals for interpretation should include consideration of why and how the house was saved, and how the organization envisions public use and visitor experience on the site.⁷ The significance of the structural and natural resources on the site should be explained as well. “Purpose statements” are used in the plan to describe how resources have been preserved thus far as well as explain their current use.⁸ It is extremely important that the interpretive plan paints an accurate and descriptive picture of site resources and experiences. This will not only aid stakeholders in deciding appropriate action for the property but will illustrate their importance to those reviewing the plan who are not familiar with the house museum.⁹

Goals in this document will explore the site’s mission and purpose. Goals are the big picture. An example of a goal would be for an organization to state that they would

⁵ Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 6.

⁶ Department of the Interior, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning: National Park Service Interpretation and Education Guideline*, 6-7.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 9.

⁹ Ibid. 6.

like to open a specific building on their property for interpretation and public use within the next year. Objectives are a part of a goal: they are more specific and describe ways in which the goal can be accomplished. One goal may have many objectives. An example of an objective, using the previous example, would be for the organization to state that they would like to begin an architectural tour in that building within the next 18 months. That tour may only be a piece of the overall interpretation planned for that building. Interpretive goals and objectives create a plan for action when they are significant, clear, achievable and appropriate.¹⁰ Organizations should create a goal-driven interpretive plan as part of an ongoing effort to enact cost-effective and sustainable preservation, interpretation and visitor experience at their house museum.

An Evolving Process

While an interpretive organization should strive for a complete interpretive plan, this document is meant to be flexible. What is achievable by the organization will change at least every year in response to visitor attendance and funding. For this reason the plan should be divided into different sections: the first is the “long-range interpretive plan”, the second is the “annual implementation plan” and the third is the interpretive database.”¹¹ (Table 3-1).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Department of the Interior, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning: National Park Service Interpretation and Education Guideline*, 8-11.

The long-range interpretive plan should include the organization's interpretive and educational goals for a period of five to ten years.¹² This section serves as a guide for all other sections. It includes information about the foundation and its goals, future plans for interpretation and references that guide the process. The long-range plan looks at the organization's long-term goals for interpretation and visitor experience and begins identifying what the foundation must accomplish to reach those goals, be it staffing needs, collection needs, possible partnerships and much more. This section of the overall interpretive plan will guide the interpretive organization's decision-making for a long period of time, and it is therefore essential that all stakeholders are involved.

The annual implementation plan and interpretive database are two sections of the interpretive plan that should be flexible. The annual plan should look at changes that can be accomplished each year by the stewardship organization, taking into consideration funding, the annual budget for interpretation and any work plans that may affect that budget. While the annual plan allows an interpretive organization to reflect upon interpretation once a year, driving change, the interpretive database should be constantly updated. The majority of information stored in the database should be accessible to management, employees, volunteers, and anyone involved with the interpretation of the house museum. The interpretive database will include any inventories, strategic plans, information about interpretive media, as well as a reading list for interpreters. The database should be where any information relating to the interpretation on the site is stored. Each interpretive database should contain at least

¹² Department of the Interior, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning: National Park Service Interpretation and Education Guideline*, 8-11.

one of the following: a general management plan, a cultural landscape report, or historic structure report.¹³

Planning for Visitor Experience

One factor that should come into consideration in both long range planning and short range planning is visitor experience. Interpretive plans that follow the best practices when considering visitors on site will do the following:

Clearly describe the visitor experience. Consider any safety and security issues of both the visitor and the resource. Provide opportunities for visitors to understand and appreciate the resource. Provide opportunities for visitors to connect with the resource both emotionally and intellectually. Enable visitors to make sound decisions and prepare for their experience through consideration of how to provide adequate information, orientation material and maps. The interpretive plan considers that visitors need to get questions answered easily through contact with staff. Provide opportunities for peak experiences and self-actualization. Encourage a commitment from a visitor beyond the immediate experience by provoking further thought or action. Be planned holistically to include the decision to visit (promotional materials), the entry (including the journey to the site), the connections that are made through on-site interpretive media and programs, the exit (including the journey home or to another destination), and the attitude or behaviors to support or recommend the site or organization to others.¹⁴

These considerations are often neglected at house museums that have embraced a static story, assuming visitors will be content to see the house and its artifacts. Visitors need interpretation that allows them the opportunity to make a meaningful connection with the site. Their experience needs to be relevant to their lives.¹⁵ House museums have ample potential to provide these connections. “No matter what its age, size, or style, or what life inside and outside was like, a residence is a

¹³ Ibid. 12-13.

¹⁴ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Planning,” 17.

¹⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 4.

universally understood place.”¹⁶ House museums have an advantage. Visitors at historic sites need the chance for reflection and must find interest that relates to their own personal experiences.¹⁷ Interpretive organizations, at the very least, should facilitate their visitors connecting their own idea of home with the historic house they visit.

Creating Interpretation

The interpretation plan should include important stakeholders, state the organizations goals, look at long-term and short-term options for interpretation and should consider visitor experience. All of these factors should guide the interpretive organization in creating interpretation for its house museum and historic site, as well as guide changes to interpretation. In doing so these organizations must consider what is available to interpret and the best means to do so. These subjects and interpretive methods must be planned carefully so they are both thought-provoking and legitimate. “If we try to tell visitors everything they will be overwhelmed or bored- or probably both.”¹⁸ By telling the whole story through different methods, interpretive organizations can communicate with visitors who have different learning styles and interests, allowing for a varied experience with each visit. The right combination of interpretive subjects and methods will help visitors recognize the significance and importance of the site and its stories.

In creating an interpretative program every house museum should consider these questions first:

¹⁶ Donnelly, “Introduction,” 3.

¹⁷ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 36.

¹⁸ Tabraham, “Interpreting Historic Scotland,” 61.

- What is the site about?
- Who is the interpretation for?
- How will this interpretation be communicated?¹⁹

For each exhibit, tour, furnished room, or sign in a house museum, the interpretive organization should be able to answer these questions.

Previous sections have discussed the importance of understanding visitors on site. It is equally important to understand the history of the site. While there should be an engaging entertainment factor to attract visitors, interpretation should be based on sound research. Research will guide interpreter's to themes, which allow for a more cohesive and comprehensible story to be told. Visitors expect accurate information at historic sites and house museums. It is only after an interpretive organization has identified their themes and audiences that they should make decisions about interpretive media. This process will also guide facility planners, interpreters and designers when moving past the planning stage into production.²⁰ In 2007 the National Parks Service's Interpretive Development Program created *Foundations of Interpretation*, a training manual, used to guide interpretive organizations in creating effective historic site interpretation. This process has been summarized in a chart (Table 3-2). It is important to mention again that decisions regarding interpretation should comply with the goals and objectives of the interpretive organization.

¹⁹ Barbara Abramoff Levy, "Interpretation Planning: Why and How," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 44.

²⁰ Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, 7.

Table 3-2. How to Create Interpretation

Step	Example	Importance
Step One: "Select a tangible place, object, person, or event that you want the audience to care about"	A room, a past owner, family members, an object significant to an occupant of the house.	This gives visitors something to visualize.
Step Two: "Identify intangible meanings"	For example, a vase in a room may appear to be an interesting object. When the story of how the vase has been passed down for generations and traveled with family when they came to the United States, the vase gains a deeper meaning.	"Tangible-intangible links are the basic building blocks of interpretation"
Step Three: "Identify universal concepts"	Family, war, triumph, failure, home, power, are all examples of "universal concepts."	Universal concepts allow a larger audience to connect to the story.
Step Four: "Identify the audience"	School groups, families, couples without children, academics are all examples of different potential audiences.	Different audiences with have different values and require different interpretations.
Step Five: "Write a theme statement that includes a universal concept"	The Seminole Wars had a great impact on families living in St. Augustine.	Connections made with the theme or "universal concept" will allow visitors to create their own meaning.
Step Six: "Use interpretive techniques to develop links into opportunities for connections to meanings"	One technique that could be used to illustrate the previous example would be interpreters playing the role of parents discussing their son's decision to fight in the war.	Audiences will have the chance to reflect upon the "universal concept," while learning about significant stories and events.
Step Seven: "Use the theme statement to organize opportunities for connection and cohesively develop an idea or ideas"	The statement used in the example from step five could also connect to impact the war had on other members of the family, such as a father who is worried his crops outside of the city may be burnt down.	By using the theme to create other idea, the story becomes unified, and more relatable.

Subjects for Interpretation

Important themes developed during the interpretive planning process will guide the stewardship organization in developing what subjects and stories to emphasize on site. All subjects should relate to a “central theme” and all interpretation should fit within “four sub-themes.”²¹ “A site’s central theme expresses what it is about, the topic that supports the sites significance, what is relevant to the audience and what management hopes to convey to the audience.”²² Effective learning will occur when the big ideas are recognized and smaller ideas fit into categories.²³ Interpretive organizations that have completed extensive research on their house museum will find a plethora of possible subjects for interpretation. Categorizing stories under different thematic ideas will help interpreters create a cohesive story.

Universal themes. Themes play more than an organizational role. Themes also help interpreters plan how their audiences will connect with the house museum. When planned, interpretive themes allow visitors gain meaning by reflecting upon common ideas such as family, relationships, gender roles, household activities, travel, success and failure. Visitors can relate to these and compare and contrast the situations of the past with their life. When people can make their visit to a house museum meaningful they gain a greater appreciation for the site which can lead to repeat visits, or encourage them to suggest the site to friends and family members.

Social diversity. Many interpretive organizations have a set idea of what they believe to be important about their house museum. This significance may stem from

²¹ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Planning,” 11.

²² National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Methods,”14.

²³ Levy, “Interpretation Planning: Why and How,”48.

past organizations, or even why the house was saved. For example if the house was preserved because of a notable owner, the organization may focus on his story. Despite these preconceived notions about what is important at their site, it is essential that the interpretive organization not only look at whether these subjects are attracting visitors, but if there is more to the story that hasn't been told. During the planning process the organization should be aware of their "contextual history," and they should note where gaps in knowledge exist.²⁴ Even after the interpretive plan has been completed, research about the site and its occupants should be an ongoing process. It is important to use the most up-to-date and accurate information available in storytelling, updating interpretation whenever significant information is discovered.²⁵

One reason to continue research are the neglected stories at house museums. "When visitors do appear at the door, they want engaging and meaningful tours that relate to their lifestyle--all ages, all races, [and] all political persuasions."²⁶ In the past, people were content to visit imposing historic homes and learn about the wealthy few who impacted their communities through industry or charity. Today visitors are more diverse and have varied backgrounds. These people require a greater connection with the house museums they visit. Interpretive organizations need to make an in-depth exploration of their property's history and must relate their findings to the experiences of their visitors.²⁷ Sound knowledge of the site may allow for more than one story to be

²⁴ Ibid. 45-46.

²⁵ Rex M. Ellis, "Interpreting the Whole House," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 70.

²⁶ Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, 15.

²⁷ Levy, "Interpretation Planning: Why and How," 49.

told. It is important to discuss multiple viewpoints to tell a complete story.²⁸ By “acknowledging the whole story rather than just the pretty parts” a house museum becomes more credible, and can relate to a greater audience.²⁹

It is necessary for house museums to focus on a “holistic approach to interpretation--a consideration of all perspectives, features, and activities within the context of all others.”³⁰ Interpretation should illustrate a “range of human experience” and represent the diverse social structures and relationships that depict a historic site’s history.³¹ Audiences may not be able relate to the political and industrial leaders whose estates are preserved, but they can connect to the relationships within the household. Interpreters should ask what the roles of women within the household were. How was the wife affected by her husband’s career and how did she use his success to influence her actions and relationships? What implications did their lifestyle have on their children? Who were the servants or slaves who kept the house running and what was their family and social relationships like? In many cases, the information regarding minority groups at a site is scarce; however, this is not an excuse for ignoring their presence at the site.³² Stories about women and minorities, though often neglected at house museums, will connect with a greater audience. “House Museums that disproportionately interpret the heads of their historical households do so at the

²⁸ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 13.

²⁹ George, “Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What’s Wrong?” 2.

³⁰ Donnelly, “Introduction,” 7.

³¹ Edward A. Chappell, “Social Responsibility and the American History Museum,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 24 No. 4. (Winter 1989) 252.

³² Ellis, “Interpreting the Whole House,” 68-69.

expense of other people, activities, and relationships that also distinguish their sites; histories.”³³

Art, industry and community. House museums have the potential to leave a lasting impact on visitors through interpreting the lives of past occupants, but there are other potential themes that are explored even less than holistic storytelling. These sites relate their interpretation to the house’s history but use a diverse subject matter to illustrate their significance. In many cases this may be explored through art. These interpretations are different from the goals of adaptively used properties that simply function as art galleries. The distinction is in how the art is used. A gallery may have a theme, but it almost never relates to the deep history or community relevance of the site.

One example of this is the George Eastman House in Rochester, NY. George Eastman was the creator of Kodak, and his work in the camera industry had an immense impact on the nation and community of Rochester. With one of the largest photographic collections in the world, the George Eastman House stands as reminder of the industry that continues to have a deep impact on the Rochester community. This particular property will be reviewed thoroughly in following chapters.

Another example is the Deering Estate in Miami, Florida. The Deering Estate displays community and contemporary art in both of their historic Richmond Cottage and Stone House (Figure 3-1). This not only provides an opportunity to attract audiences interested in art but it relates to their overall mission and the history of their site. It provides the estate the opportunity to tell the story of Charles Deering as a collector of Spanish and contemporary art. Additionally, by creating thematic

³³ Donnelly, “Introduction,”1.

requirements for the pieces they display, the Deering Estate uses art to teach about many of their objectives on site, such as the conservation of natural areas at the Estate.

House museums that focus on art and industry may not tell all of the personal stories visitors relate to, but they can gain the attention of visitors with diverse interests. Furthermore, the broader ideas explored at these sites allow for a greater connection from the community they are a part of. They form relevance outside of their history. People with little interest in history can still make a connection. Another positive attribute of interpreting art and industry is that costly restorations often endured to turn a house back to its previous appearance is not always necessary, and interpretive organizations can chose to restore specific rooms if they tell a significant story.



Figure 3-1. Contemporary Art Hung in the Stone House at the Deering Estate. Photo by author.

Interpretive Methods

Once an interpretive organization has identified its audiences and discussed the appropriate themes and subjects for interpretation at their house museum, the next step is to find the appropriate techniques for interpretation. Many house museums choose interpretive methods before recognizing their audience or understanding their own resources, leaving them at a disadvantage when they choose interpretive methods.

Though many organizations choose guided tours, there are an abundance of interpretive options available. Interpretive leaders at house museums should encourage multiple methods of interpretation. Exhibits, tours, signage, and other methods should accommodate a variety of learning styles to connect to their diverse audiences.³⁴ This will also provide visitors a multitude of ways to connect with the historic site.³⁵ Interpretive organizations also must realize that whenever they reach out to various audiences in attempts to engage or educate about their house museum, it is interpretation. This includes the house museum's website, publications, retail products or any special events that the organization hosts.³⁶ In best practice the interpretive plan should include accurate media descriptions to facilitate how the plan will be realized on site.

Media descriptions are included in interpretive plan and suggest target audience, theme relationship, location, and physical description. Media descriptions provide adequate detail for designers to follow in creation of construction documents. Media descriptions provide guidance for text writers and illustrators in preparing draft text and images. Media

³⁴ Black , *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, 206.

³⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 17.

³⁶ Tabraham, "Interpreting Historic Scotland," 61.

descriptions are aligned with specific goals and objectives in the interpretive plan.³⁷

Interpretation can be accomplished through personal or non-personal means. Personal interpretation is any situation where an interpreter is involved, while non-personal includes any other type of interpretation media that may be used.³⁸ There are advantages and disadvantages to every interpretive method. The best methods for a particular house museum will create enthusiasm for visitors and encourage the continued preservation of site resources.³⁹ Trends in how visitors obtain and recall information can also influence decisions about appropriate interpretation techniques (Figure 3-2).

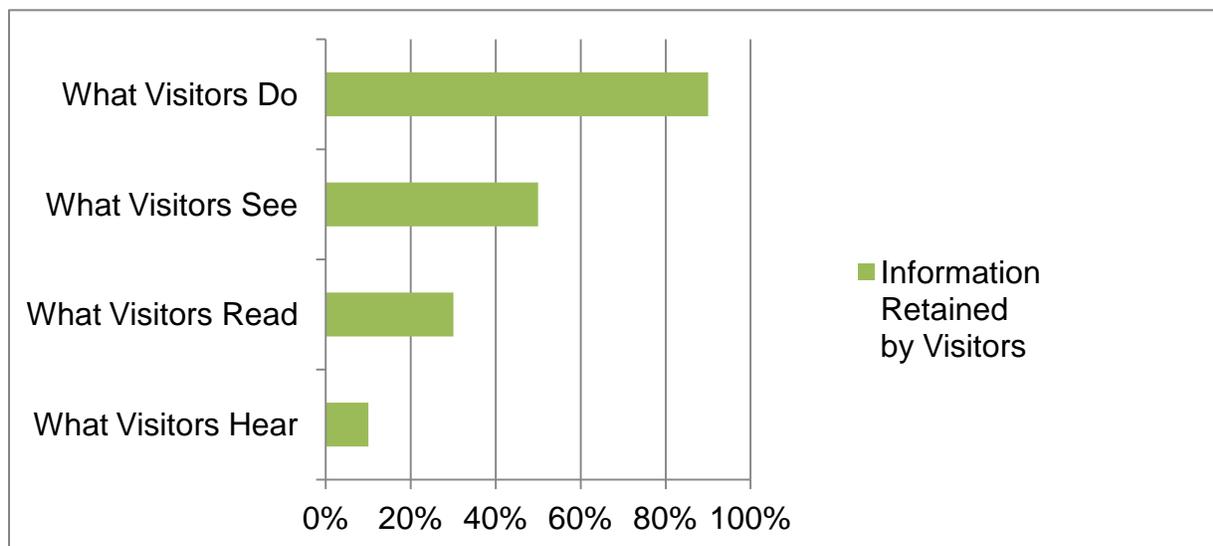


Figure 3-2. How Visitors Recall Information. Image by author.⁴⁰

³⁷ National Association for Interpretation, "Standards for Interpretive Planning," 10.

³⁸ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 6.

³⁹ National Association for Interpretation, "Standards for Interpretive Methods," 9.

⁴⁰ Tabraham, "Interpreting Historic Scotland," 61.

Guide driven interpretation. Tours are an interpretive technique often used at historic sites. There are multiple types of tours, including the interpreter acting in first person, or a guide educating in third person. Each tour type is appropriate for different subject matter. At some sites a combination of tours provide visitors with diverse experiences and may encourage repeat visits.

While some interpretive organizations may choose to have their tour guides memorize scripts, this does not provide the most personal experience for visitors.⁴¹ Tour guides should be trained on significant topics to cover, but should also be able to interact with guests to create a personal experience for each visitor. Each guide should also be aware of the reading list provided in the interpretive plan and encouraged to do their own research. Providing guidelines for tours, instead of strict scripts, will allow variety in each tour that may keep visitors returning.

A first person tour occurs when an interpreter is dressed in period costume and acts as a historical character. This tour is most effective when a house museum wants to emphasize the people who lived on the property. It is also one of the best methods for interpreting historic lifestyles. This method allows visitors to be immersed in the site's history. In combination with this type of tour, a house museum will typically furnish the historic home with period objects. It is important that when an interpretive organization chooses this method they understand what it is about the furnishings that will connect with their audience. "Visitors are drawn into realistic, richly detailed environments that may include period music or dialogue, have wonderful smells emanating from a kitchen

⁴¹ Barbara Abramoff Levy, "Historic House Tours That Succeed: Choosing the Best Tour Approach," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 193-195.

or hearth . . . interpreted by a costumed staff member.”⁴² The best examples of first person interpretation occur when a house looks lived in. It shouldn’t appear frozen in time; visitors should be able to connect with the fact that people actually lived there.⁴³ The furnished environment can be enhanced with the placement of personal items, toys laid out for children, partially finished projects such as a quilt next to sewing materials, or a messy desk with copies of old receipts or paperwork. This is a strategy that also allows the story of less prominent household members to be told.⁴⁴ With this technique, many objects speak for themselves and guides should not feel the need to explain them. Visitors can have a mixed reaction to the first person tour. Some may feel embarrassed if they are forced to interact with costumed interpreters, so they should be given the choice to participate or watch. In the best scenarios “interaction with interpreters many result in an emotional response from visitors.”⁴⁵

Third person led tours involve the interpreter interacting with visitors as themselves, instead of acting as a historic character. An interpretive organization may choose this method of tour when they are interpreting changes over time or teaching about art and architecture, as is often done in modern house museums. These guides should facilitate a discussion instead repeating the same facts on every tour. Each

⁴² Nancy E. Villa Bryk, “‘I Wish You Could Take a Peek at us at the Present Moment’: Infusing the Historic House with Characters and Activity,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 146.

⁴³ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 102.

⁴⁴ Bryk, “‘I Wish You Could Take a Peek at us at the Present Moment’: Infusing the Historic House with Characters and Activity,” 145.

⁴⁵ Adam Robertshaw, “Live Interpretation,” in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. Marion R. Blockley et al. (London: Routledge, 2006) 51.

visitor comes for a tour because of his or her own interests.⁴⁶ Third person tour guides need to reach out to their audience, understand why they came, engage them in conversation, and should be able to help them find the answer to any question they may have.

Self-guided tours. Self-guided tours occur when visitors come to a house museum and explores on their own, when they can typically visit at any time and stay as long as the site is open. Advantages to the self guided tour are that less staffing is needed on site, visitors can choose to spend more time at the part of the site they find most interesting, and visitors may make repeat visits if they find they don't have enough time on their first visit. Though interpreters do not need to guide visitors, staff or volunteers should be available to answer their questions. Serious downfalls to self-guided tours are security issues that may arise at the house museum.⁴⁷ Areas may be closed off because they are not safe for visitors to occupy on their own, or because objects in certain rooms are too valuable to be left unattended. Seldom is a self-guided tour enough to keep a visitor interested. Brochures, signage or audio tours are typically offered to enhance visitor experience.

Demonstrations. "If museums are to continue to rely on tourists, there must be a growing understanding of the nature and expectations of the cultural tourist. In particular, there must be an awareness of how those expectations are changing from passive viewing of exhibits to demands for active participation."⁴⁸ Demonstrations, though often used with various other interpretive techniques, provide a unique

⁴⁶ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 36.

⁴⁷ Levy, "Historic House Tours That Succeed: Choosing the Best Tour Approach," 199-200.

⁴⁸ Black, *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, 40.

experience to visitors. Demonstration can be performed every day at specific times, can be scheduled as a special event on site and something that is done once a month, or even annually. All of these possibilities work well, though the specific times and places should be advertised on brochures and the house museum's website so that visitors know exactly when to attend and what to expect. Demonstrations are possibly the best way to show visitors how things were actually done in the time period being interpreted. The best demonstrations will be educational, entertaining, and tactile. They give visitors an opportunity to learn through touch and activity. They should be physical, giving the visitor an experience, a memory, something that is special, important.⁴⁹

Demonstrations also give the interpretive organization a unique opportunity to do something different. House museums that typically use a first person tour can utilize third person interpreters for demonstrations, while historic sites that use self-guided tours can give their visitors the opportunity to interact with interpreters. There is virtually no down-side for visitors when it comes to demonstrations. However, interpretive organization should seriously assess the impact this technique could have on their financial and historic resources.

Technology guided interpretation. Technology, though sometimes more costly than other interpretive techniques, can solve a range of interpretive issues at house museum and historic sites. Interpretive technology is best utilized when the interpretive organization's goals cannot be met through the use of staff or volunteers. Freeman Tilden, an interpretation expert who developed his career through work with the National

⁴⁹ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 103,107.

Park Service, lists the following considerations for including technology in historic site interpretation in his book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*:

1. No device of the kind we here consider is, other things being equal, as desirable as interpretation by direct contact with the person.
2. A good device is far better than no contact at all.
3. A good result by device is better than a poor performance by an individual.
4. A poor interpretation by mechanical means is worse than a poor interpretation by personal contact.
5. A poor interpretation by mechanical means is not necessarily better than none at all.
6. No institution should install any mechanical devices until it knows that such gadgets can be adequately, continually and quickly services.⁵⁰

While these are all considerations that still ring true today, it also important to note that Tilden's work ended in the 1970s and interpretive technologies have made great strides since that time. More of today's audiences are comfortable with using technical devices; younger generations may even prefer them. Interpretive technologies can take visitors to areas of the site that not physically accessible or they can bring them back in time when an organization has found better uses for some of their spaces. When done well, they may even encourage people to visit from off-site, a virtual tour. Technology can provide many unobtrusive interpretation solutions.⁵¹

Regardless of whether or not interpretive technology is used on the site, almost every house museum has a website. While these websites are used to educate the public on the interpretive organization, their structure, events, and preservation goals, they often do not meet there full potential. They can introduce visitors to extra or introductory information not provided at the site.⁵² A website can prepare a teacher for

⁵⁰ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*,134.

⁵¹ Brian Bath, "The Use of New Technology in the Interpretation of Historic Landscapes," in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. Marion R. Blockley et al. (London: Routledge, 2006) 161-172.

⁵² Bath, "The Use of New Technology in the Interpretation of Historic Landscapes," 161-172.

a class visit or tell stories the interpretive organization has not yet been able to explore on site, and they can provide visitors with the opportunity to give feedback. The list of their benefits is almost infinite, when they are done right.

Various tour solutions are available due to technical devices as well. The most important thing about touring with technology is that they are done well, updated, and entertaining. Recorded tours are an excellent option when onsite interpreters are not feasible. However, they need to be flexible and easy to change. One of the worst ways in which a recorded tour can be used is as a single, unchangeable sound or video loop. Many visitors do not even enjoy watching videos on site.⁵³ Visitors will have no incentive to return because there will be nothing new for them to experience.⁵⁴ Video tours are best used to supplement additional interpretation, such as inaccessible areas.⁵⁵ While a stagnant audio or video tour is enough to bore any visitor, these options are becoming more customizable. Cell phone tours, as part of the “bring your own technology” trend, allow visitors to listen to what they want when it is convenient for them.⁵⁶

Interactive technology, while not in wide use at house museums, can provide opportunities for visitors to participate in demonstrations that would otherwise be impossible or too costly. The Government House *First Colony* exhibit in St. Augustine, Florida utilizes a range of interpretive technology, primarily through touch screens. House museums may not be able to provide as many of these options due to their

⁵³ Lecture by Darcie MacMahon to UF Historic Preservation Students in class DCP6715 on October 17, 2012.

⁵⁴ Levy, “Historic House Tours That Succeed: Choosing the Best Tour Approach,” 203.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 207.

⁵⁶ Bath, “The Use of New Technology in the Interpretation of Historic Landscapes,” 161-172.

infrastructure, cost or other limitations and may interpret different subject matter, but they might still consider this as an interpretive option. If objects in a house museum are interesting but do not warrant time on a guided tour, this option may enable visitors to come back, select the object they can't physically touch on the touch screen, and allow them to learn as much as they want. Does the house museum have an abundance of historic photographs that cannot be displayed due to space or conservation issues? Allow visitors to digitally flip through them. Touch screen exhibits add variety and options at mundane house museums. As with all other interpretive technologies, the interpretive organization needs to consider how easily this method can be integrated into their current interpretation, and changed in the future. Because it is a new, exciting method, solving technical issues is still more difficult than changing something on a website or audio tour.

Interpretation through signage. At many house museum interpretation is presented in the form of signage. While this method typically does not inspire an emotional, in-depth response for visitors, it does work well for providing supplemental information. Interpretive organizations should still strive to connect with visitors through the use of text and graphics.⁵⁷ When writing interpretive signage, interpreters should think about what visitors “want to read” instead of that the interpreter “wants to say.”⁵⁸ Interpretive text at house museums should be written as if the visitor is going to read a story. Interpretive writers should display enthusiasm and passion for their subject.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 38.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 92.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 193-195.

Displays should also be easily changeable so that the interpretive organization may keep them updated with the most recent research findings.⁶⁰

Not only should interpretive organizations be conscious of what they are saying with their signage, but how they are saying it. Signage should be consistent and visually appealing. Interpretive organizations should create guidelines for the use of a logo, color schemes, layouts, and text fonts on all interpretive material.⁶¹ The organization should view this as a branding opportunity and consider implementing the same standards on all documents. Additionally, house museum interpreters should be aware of possible barriers created when using signage. In some regions it may be necessary to use multiple languages on all interpretation media.⁶² Florida for example, has a large Spanish-speaking population. Because of this, UF Historic St. Augustine Inc. utilizes both English and Spanish on all interpretive signage. It is extremely important that text is accessible and should be appropriate for visitors “at multiple intellectual levels,” often accomplished by avoiding “jargon and technical language.”⁶³ The *Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibit Design* explains considerations for signage in the museum environment including the following:

- There should be contrast between the colors chosen for text and background.
- Each sentence should be a maximum of 25 words.
- Each text panel should have no more than 75-100 words in the main text.
- Exhibits should utilize graphics that compliment label text.
- Avoid using all caps when creating main label text because it is difficult to read.
- Text should be printed on solid backgrounds to increase legibility.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Black , *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, 207.

⁶¹ National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Organizations,” January 2009, 5.

⁶² National Association for Interpretation, “Standards for Interpretive Methods,” 6.

⁶³ Janice Majewski, *Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibit Design*, no date, 2, 17.

⁶⁴ Majewski, *Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibit Design*, 2, 17-25.

Furthermore, interpretive organizations should understand that, for various reasons, not all visitors will read the whole text panel. Successful text panels will use a headline, one sentence describing the main idea of the panel, followed by the main interpretive text.⁶⁵ By separating the text into three sections, visitors can choose to read or skim text that interests them. Interpretive signage and text panels are a great way to supplement other interpretive methods when addressing a variety of visitor learning styles.

Furnishings

Furnishings, especially at house museums, can play a dual role in interpretation. They have the potential to be an interpretive subject when their importance is discussed and interpreted, but they also have the ability to be used as an interpretive method when they are used to create an environment depicting past lifestyles. Interpretive organizations responsible for planning a house museum's interpretation need to understand how they are going to use furnishings. Planning should consider the relevance of furnishings when compared to other stories the foundation has deemed significant. While historic furnishings and house museums are synonymous with one another, there are other options for interpretation. When a house museum does use furnishings, a furnishing plan should be created explaining why and how they are to be used.

Furnishing plans. Furnishing plans allow the interpretive organization of a house museum to explore the best method for using furniture and other objects in interpretation. "Interpretation at museums should begin inductively with artifacts, but the goal of interpretation should be to analyze the cultural significance of those artifacts

⁶⁵ Lecture by Darcie MacMahon to UF Historic Preservation students in DCP 6711 and DCP 6716.

critically.”⁶⁶ “At its simplest, the historic house furnishings plan is a document that enumerates the objects within the museums historic furnished interiors, describes their placement, and highlights their relationship to the museum’s interpretation.”⁶⁷ The furnishing plan should also be created after an interpretation plan.⁶⁸ This will allow the interpretive organization to explore how the use of furnishings will relate to their overall interpretive goals and will allow those involved in creating the furnishing plan to utilize past research on the house museum, making informed decisions about the role of furnishings at the site. Good interpretation connects tangible objects to intangible meanings.⁶⁹ It is essential the stewardship organization understand how furnishings relate to the themes and stories explored on site.

Summary

Interpretive organizations at historic house museums should create an interpretation plan before developing any onsite interpretation, or when changing their interpretation. The interpretation plan allows major stake holders, such as employees, volunteers, managers, foundation members, historians, exhibit designers, and potential visitors, to express what they feel is significant about the site. When determining a site’s importance, it is essential that adequate and continuing research be explored to inform such stake holders. Interpretive organizations should make an effort to understand their potential visitors, what their interests are, and how they like to learn. When an

⁶⁶ Woods, “Getting Beyond the Criticism of History Museums: A Model for Interpretation,” 84.

⁶⁷ Bradley C. Brooks, “The Historic House Furnishing Plan: Process and Product,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 128.

⁶⁸ Brooks, “The Historic House Furnishing Plan: Process and Product,” 133.

⁶⁹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundations of Interpretation*, Kevin Bacher, et al., 6.

organization understands what is significant to both the community and historically about their house museum they make the best decisions about the stories they tell. Interpretive organizations should choose their interpretation methods based on their visitors and stories, while understanding what is required of each method. Interpretive planning allows house museums the diverse, interesting interpretation they deserve.

CHAPTER 4 VARIATIONS IN INTERPRETATION: CASE STUDIES

Five House Museums

Interpretation at any house museum is an essential tool in engaging visitors and establishing community relevance. While a site's interpretation as a whole may not meet the needs of their audience, specific methods may be successful in creating interest. This chapter explores five house museums as case studies. Case studies include the following:

- The Ximenez-Fatio House in St. Augustine, Florida
- The Gonzalez -Alvarez House (Oldest House) in St. Augustine, Florida
- Drayton Hall in Charleston, South Carolina
- The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, New York
- The George Eastman House, Rochester, New York

Case Study Criteria

These sites represent a range of house museums (Table 4-1). The criteria for choosing these case studies were as follows:

- Range in period, style and size
- Range of management
- Range of geographic location
- Range of interpretive subjects and techniques

Period, style and size. The house museums chosen for this study were built at various times in history, from the colonial period into the early 1900s. In addition, because they were built at various times, for people from diversely different social standings, the size and architectural styles of these houses vary greatly.

Range in management. Regardless of who owns a house museum, a historic site can suffer from low visitation if its interpretation is failing. Each of these case

studies is owned and operated by a different stewardship group. Some are privately owned by local groups, while others are part of a larger national organization.

Geographic location. These house museums are located across the eastern United States. However, there is some overlap. Of the five case studies, two are located in the state of New York, two are located in St. Augustine, Florida and one is located in South Carolina.

Interpretative subjects and techniques. Each of the five house museums chosen has different people and histories associated with them, representing a diverse group of stories. Additionally, each site has their own way of interpreting these stories through multiple interpretative methods. These range from guided tours, exhibits, demonstrations, virtual tours and games, to discussion groups and special educational events.

Common Elements

At each house museum the following elements were explored:

- Location
- Stewardship Organization
- Architecture
- History
- Preservation
- Interpretation

Table 4-1. Case Study Criteria

House Museum	Period, Style and Size	Management	Location	Interpretive Subjects and Techniques
Ximenez- Fatio House	Two-story c.1798 second Spanish period home with alterations during the American territorial period (1821- 1845)	The National Association for the Colonial Dames in Florida	St. Augustine, Florida.	Subjects: The boarding house lifestyle in the American territorial and early American statehood periods, women and business owners, and preservation Methods: video, guided tour, exhibits
Gonzalez- Alvarez House	Two- story home with Spanish and English colonial influences, restored to its appearance in 1790	The St. Augustine Historical Society	St. Augustine, Florida.	Subjects: history of St. Augustine, architectural changes, colonial lifestyles Methods: Interactive displays, guided tour, demonstrations
Drayton Hall	Two- story Georgian- Palladian style home with full English basement, built 1738-1742	The National Trust for Historic Preservation	Charleston, South Carolina	Subjects: the Drayton family, the architecture of Drayton Hall, the African- American experience at Drayton Hall, the National Trust, preservation Methods: house tour and “ Connections”
Lower East Side Tenement Museum	Five- story, red- brick Italianate style tenement house built c. 1863.	Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Inc.	Manhattan, New York	Subjects: past and present immigrants in America and their influence on society Methods: guided tour, virtual tour, online games, and “Tenement Talks”
The George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film	Two- and- a-half story Georgian Style home built between 1902 and 1905	George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film	Rochester, New York	Subjects: George Eastman, photography, film, industry, technology, art Methods: changing exhibits, guided and cell phone tours, historic furnishings, "Discovery Room"

The Ximenez-Fatio House

Location

The Ximenez-Fatio House is located at 20 Aviles Street in St. Augustine, Florida, within the St. Augustine historic preservation district. The district is bordered by Orange Street and the City Gates to the north, Matanzas Bay to the east, Cordova Street to the west and 225 feet south of St. Francis Street to the south. The Ximenez-Fatio House is one of many historic structures located in historic preservation area two, which includes the Government House and plaza, as well as structures located two blocks north and two blocks south of the plaza. (Figure 4-1)



Figure 4-1. Exterior of the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.

Stewardship Organization

The Ximenez-Fatio House is owned and operated by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Florida. The Colonial Dames is a non-profit organization, founded in 1891.¹ The Florida sector of this group was incorporated in 1899.² The goals of Colonial Dames for the Ximenez-Fatio House are summed up by the museum's mission statement: "To preserve and interpret the historic Ximenez-Fatio House in St. Augustine as an Inn depicting early tourism in Florida (1821-1861)."³ Under ownership by the Colonial Dames, the Ximenez-Fatio House has been listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and as a Florida Heritage Landmark.⁴

Architecture

The Ximenez-Fatio House is a second Spanish period home built circa 1798. The original structure was built at the same time as two warehouses and a detached coquina kitchen on the property.⁵ Second Spanish period homes combine colonial Spanish and British building techniques.⁶ The structure is flush to the street with a balcony on the façade, rear loggia, and second floor accessible only by an exterior staircase.⁷ Building materials used for its construction are native to the area and include

¹ Rebecca Yerkes Rogers and Robert W. Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, Florida, 2013, 4.

² Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 4.

³ Julia Vaill Gatlin, "The Personalization Process of the Ximenez- Fatio House," unpublished presentation created for the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Florida, 3.

⁴ "Ximenez- Fatio House Museum," current brochure, no date.

⁵ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," Updated January 2014, 1.

⁶ Elsbeth K. Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage* (Gainesville, University Press of Gainesville, FL, 2002) 160.

⁷ Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 160.

cedar wood and coquina quarried on Anastasia Island.⁸ After 1855 Neoclassical elements were added to the interior of the house during the construction of an addition.⁹

History

The Ximenez-Fatio House was constructed for Andres Ximenez of Ronda, Spain, during the second Spanish period (1784-1821) in St. Augustine.¹⁰ Ximenez resided there with his Menorcan wife, Juana Pellicer and their five children while running a tavern and general store out of the first floor.¹¹ In 1802 Juana Pellicer passed away and four years later, in 1806, Andres Ximenez died.¹² Francisco Pellicer, father of Juana Pellicer, took care of Ximenez's three living children while caring for the house on their behalf.¹³ Pellicer, a Menorcan who worked as a carpenter at Andrew Turnbull's Indigo Plantation, became a builder in the city of St. Augustine and was close friends with Ximenez before his passing.¹⁴

In 1829 Margret Cook and her second husband purchased the Ximenez-Fatio House, converting the first floor into a boarding house.¹⁵ As a tour guide for the house notes, "This was one of the few socially accepted businesses available to women in the

⁸ "St. Augustine's Ximenez- Fatio House," Florida Master Site File (SJ71). 79.

Coquina is a sedimentary rock formed of seashells. It is formed at only four sites in the world, three of which are in Florida and the other on the West coast of Africa.

⁹ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 8.

¹⁰ Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 160.

¹¹ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 7.

¹² "Supplement for FMSF Site Forms, Ximenez-Fatio House," Florida Master Site File (SJ71) 39.

¹³ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 7.

¹⁴ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 1.

¹⁵ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 7.

1800's."¹⁶ The house was known as "Mrs. Whitehurst's Boarding House," after Cook's close friend Eliza Whitehurst, who managed the business for nine years.¹⁷

In 1838 Sarah Petty Anderson purchased the property while hiring Louisa Fatio to manage the boarding house.¹⁸ Anderson moved to St. Augustine after her family's plantation, Dunlawton, was burned down during the Seminole War. She rented rooms to military officers and other families in St. Augustine displaced by the war.¹⁹

Louisa Fatio, daughter of Don Francisco Felipe Fatio, purchased the boarding house from her employer in 1855.²⁰ She expanded the structure and the number of guests she could host by adding a wing to the south side of the house.²¹ It was under her ownership that the business gained a great deal of recognition and fame among those who traveled to St. Augustine. Guests sometimes stayed for weeks or even months, bringing their own servants to tend to them.²² Visitors came from the northeast, Europe and Canada, seeking a warmer climate.²³ The house was owned by Fatio's heirs until 1939.²⁴

¹⁶ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 1.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 8.

¹⁹ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 2.

²⁰ "St. Augustine's Ximenez- Fatio House," 79.

²¹ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 2.

²² Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 7.

²³ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 2.

²⁴ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 4.

Preservation

The Colonial Dames purchased the Ximenez-Fatio House in 1939; the house was in serious need of restoration as it had been neglected and divided into various rental units for shopkeepers.²⁵ The house museum was opened in 1946 after few restoration efforts were made, using donated household items to depict both the Spanish and American periods, which created a confusing and ineffective interpretation.²⁶

In 1969 the Colonial Dames formed a committee to restore and interpret the house more accurately. This included an architectural investigation, archeology, documentary research, and consultation with historic interiors professional William Seale.²⁷ It was through this committee that the period of significance (1821-1861) was chosen, and interpretation was focused toward interpreting the lifestyles of those who lived in and visited the Ximenez-Fatio House during its period as a boarding house.

Interpretation

The Ximenez-Fatio House is open to the public from 11:00am until 4:00pm Tuesday through Saturday. House tours are given hourly beginning at 11:30am with the last at 3:30pm. Tickets are available at the museum store which also displays exhibits on archeology and preservation that has taken place on the property. An informative video about the past owners of the Ximenez-Fatio House plays before each tour. Guests of the museum are led by a docent from the museum store, through the house and its detached kitchen, and through garden with its reconstructed wash/ laundry

²⁵ Gatlin, "The Personalization Process of the Ximenez-Fatio House,"12.

²⁶ Ibid. 13.

²⁷ Ibid. 14, 28.

house. While these interpretation methods are commonly used among house museums, the Ximenez-Fatio House distinguishes itself through interpretive subjects not repeated by any other organization in St. Augustine.

Preservation and building technologies as subjects for interpretation. The Ximenez-Fatio House is one of very few locations in St. Augustine where visitors can learn about historic building preservation, historic building practices and historic reconstructions.

Visitors are first exposed to the preservation of the Ximenez-Fatio House when arriving at the museum store. One panel exhibit currently displayed is on dendrochronology, “the dating and study of tree rings,” used to date the Ximenez-Fatio addition to Louisa Fatio’s ownership during restoration efforts that took place in 2006.²⁸ No other site in St. Augustine has used or interpreted this preservation method (Figure 4-2).

The first room guests enter on the house tour is the “Coquina Room” used as a storage room during Ximenez’s ownership and possibly as a staging area during the building’s use as a boarding house.²⁹ Holes in the north wall are mentioned to visitors as evidence of wooden shelves used by Ximenez when the first floor was used as a tavern and store. Additionally, the docent points out a unique characteristic of the walls in this room. Each wall represents a different stage in the process of plastering coquina walls, a common building practice in St. Augustine’s colonial periods (Figure 4-3).

²⁸ “Dendrochronology” display at the Ximenez-Fatio House, St. Augustine, Florida.

²⁹ “Ximenez- Fatio House Tour,” 2.

Toward the end of the Ximenez-Fatio House tour guests are led to the west end of the property containing the detached colonial kitchen, interpretive garden and reconstructed wash/laundry house (Figure 4-4). This is one of the few reconstructed properties in St. Augustine interpreted as such. Visitors are clearly told that this is the one reconstructed building on the Ximenez property. It was built after the building's foundations were discovered and studied by archaeologists. The reconstruction was also aided by historic photographs. The original building stood from 1800 until 1915.³⁰



Figure 4-2. Dendrochronology Exhibit at the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.

³⁰ "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 10.



Figure 4-3. Coquina Room at the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.



Figure 4-4. Reconstructed Washhouse at the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.

The boarding house lifestyle. The interpretation of the boarding house lifestyle is unique at the Ximenez-Fatio House, and the time period chosen spans three significant owners of the house: Margret Cook, Sarah Anderson and Louisa Fatio. Instead of concentrating solely on the few owners of the structure, the furnishings chosen for each guest room allow visitors to explore how early tourists in St. Augustine lived during the 1800s. Furthermore, visitors are given the opportunity to make their own connections and experience at the site.

Women are among the many diverse groups often ignored at house museums. The Ximenez-Fatio House is one of very few examples of St. Augustine that has focused on women as owners who have significantly impacted the history and development of its site. Through both the introductory video and touring of the owner's quarters, visitors encounter "one of the few socially acceptable business ventures for a 19th century woman," who were not only able to support themselves through their work, but were able to create a valued service, with a shining reputation in the city of St. Augustine.³¹

Each room in the Ximenez-Fatio House is furnished to represent a different person who may have stayed in the boarding house. These rooms do not depict specific people but the varying types of people who stayed at boarding houses in St. Augustine during the American territorial and early American statehood periods. There is a sea captain's room, a soldier's room (Figure 4-5), a doctor's room, a family bedroom (Figure 4-6), a frail lady's room and an artist's room.³² The objects in each room tell a story

³¹ Rogers and Harper, *Ximenez- Fatio House Museum: St. Augustine, Florida*, 5.

³² "Ximenez- Fatio House Tour," 3-9.

about guests in St. Augustine. For example, the frail lady's room represents a northerner who has come south to get well, while the artist's room is filled with watercolors and pelts, representing a naturalist who has come to Florida to document the natural environment.

Through exploring these lifestyles visitors are welcome to connect with the site and its stories in multiple ways. One way in which visitors create an experience at the site is through being offered ripe figs to eat from a tree in the interpretive garden.³³ Another opportunity is through the docent's remarks welcoming visitors to make comparisons with their own life with script wording such as the following:

If your ancestors traveled to St. Augustine in the mid 1800's perhaps they slept here. Wherever they may have stayed, this house shows the living conditions of the time period from 1821 till 1861. There was no A/C, running water, phones, and the only music available was from whatever instrument you played.³⁴



Figure 4-5. Soldier's Room at the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.

³³ Ibid. 9.

³⁴ Ibid. 2.



Figure 4-6. Family Bedroom at the Ximenez-Fatio House. Photo by author.

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House (Oldest House)

Location

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House, also known as the Oldest House, is located on 14 St. Francis Street in St. Augustine, Florida. The museum is located within the St. Augustine historic preservation district which is bordered by Orange Street and the City Gates to the north, Matanzas Bay to the east, Cordova Street to the west and 225 feet south of St. Francis Street to the south. The Gonzalez-Alvarez House is one of many historic structures located in historic preservation area one at the south end of the city.

Stewardship Organization

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House is owned and operated by the St. Augustine Historical Society, a non-profit organization founded in 1883.³⁵ The society was first named the St. Augustine Historical Society and Institute of Science, meeting in private

³⁵ "Oldest House: The Gonzalez- Alvarez House," current brochure, no date.

homes and collecting curiosities.³⁶ The society purchased its first house in 1899, known as the Vedder Museum; however, the house and many objects in their collection were destroyed during a fire in 1914.³⁷ The St. Augustine Historical Society purchased the Gonzalez-Alvarez House in 1918; which had been exhibited as a museum since 1892.³⁸ “The St. Augustine Historical Society is the oldest continuously operating museum and historical society in Florida.”³⁹ Under ownership of the society the house has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a National Historic Landmark.

Architecture

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House was originally a one-story, rectangular house constructed of coquina between 1720 and 1755, during the first Spanish period in St. Augustine.⁴⁰ During the British period, Joseph Peavett and his wife Mary Evans Peavett, added a wooden frame second floor, balcony and loggia, along with a fireplace and chimney to the house.⁴¹ In 1790 Geronimo Alvarez purchased the house at auction and added a two-story addition of six rooms onto the north side of the house.⁴²

³⁶ Jean Parker Waterbury, *The Gonzalez – Alvarez Oldest House: The Place and Its People* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 2000) 33.

³⁷ “About the St. Augustine Historical Society,” <http://www.staugustinehistoricalsociety.org/about.html>, accessed January 21, 2014,

³⁸ William R. Adams, *St. Augustine and St. Johns County: A Historical Guide* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, Inc., 2009) 38.

³⁹ “About the St. Augustine Historical Society.”

⁴⁰ Gordon, *Florida’s Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 153.

⁴¹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Gonzalez- Alvarez House*. Charles Snell and James Dillon, April 1975, 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*

After Florida became a state in 1845, two other owners impacted the structure with their own additions. However, the house as it stands today represents its appearance in 1790, during the ownership of Alvarez (Figure 4-7).⁴³



Figure 4-7. Exterior of the Gonzalez-Alvarez House. Photo by author.

History

The first known occupant of the two room coquina structure located at 14 St. Francis Street was Tomas Gonzalez y Hernandez who was born in the Canary Islands in 1701. He came to St. Augustine as a sailor in 1721 and by 1723 married Maria Francisca Guevara y Dominguez. Her family had resided in St. Augustine for four generations, and the house was likely a wedding gift from her parents. The couple had

⁴³ Waterbury, *The Gonzalez – Alvarez Oldest House: The Place and Its People*, 15.

ten children, six of whom survived to adulthood.⁴⁴ When the British were given Florida in 1763, Gonzalez and his family relocated to Havana, Cuba.⁴⁵

Under the British occupation of Florida, the house at 14 St. Francis Street remained vacant for several years. In 1775 Jesse Fish sold the property to Major Joseph Peavett, paymaster for England's East Florida troops, and Mary Peavett, a prominent midwife in St. Augustine.⁴⁶ The couple lived in the second-story addition and ran a tavern out of the house's first floor.⁴⁷

In 1784, after the Revolutionary War, Spain gained control of Florida and many English settlers in the town left St. Augustine. The Peavett's remained in St. Augustine; Joseph Peavett was already Catholic and the couple had acquired a good amount of property there.⁴⁸ In 1786 Joseph Peavett died. Mary Evans Peavett converted to Catholicism and soon married John Hudson, an Irish Catholic twenty-eight years her junior, who spent her fortune and ruined her reputation in St. Augustine.⁴⁹

In 1790 Geronimo Alvarez of Asturias, Spain, purchased 14 St. Francis Street at auction after saving his earnings as a shopkeeper and baker for the government hospital in St Augustine.⁵⁰ Members of the Alvarez family owned the house for over fifty years, into the American territorial period.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 9,10.

⁴⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Gonzalez- Alvarez House*. Charles Snell and James Dillon, 14.

⁴⁶ "Supplement For FMSF Forms: Oldest House," Florida Master Site File (SJ10G) 36.

⁴⁷ Waterbury, *The Gonzalez – Alvarez Oldest House: The Place and Its People*, 13.

⁴⁸ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Gonzalez- Alvarez House*. Charles Snell and James Dillon, 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 16.

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House was sold to Mary E. Carver in 1844, wife of dentist Dr. C.P. Carver. The Carvers added a round Victorian tower to the northeast corner of the house.⁵¹ During their ownership visitors in St. Augustine became very interested in the Oldest House, and by 1855 the Carvers began charging admission for tours of their home.⁵²

In 1898 J.W. Henderson, an attorney, purchased the house from Carver to be used as a “show place” for antiques and curiosities collected by his wife. They built a two-story addition to the west end of the house for their living quarters.⁵³

Preservation

In 1918 the St. Augustine Historical Society purchased the Gonzalez-Alvarez House as a museum for their collections.⁵⁴ In 1921 the society began removing Victorian elements from the interior of the house. By 1954 the Victorian tower and two-story apartment were removed, restoring 14 St. Francis Street to its 18th century appearance.⁵⁵ Moving toward authenticity, the society utilized archeological studies to inform their restoration efforts.⁵⁶ “The society now presents the house for what it is, a structure which itself tells something of nearly 400 years of life in St. Augustine.”⁵⁷

⁵¹ Waterbury, *The Gonzalez – Alvarez Oldest House: The Place and Its People*, 28.

⁵² *Ibid.*30.

⁵³ *Ibid.*31.

⁵⁴ “About the St. Augustine Historical Society.”

⁵⁵ Waterbury, *The Gonzalez – Alvarez Oldest House: The Place and Its People*, 36.

⁵⁶ “Oldest House: The Gonzalez- Alvarez House,” current brochure.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Interpretation

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House is open from 9:00am until 5:00pm daily with guided tours of the house offered every half hour. The museum complex includes a museum store, the Manucy Museum, the Oldest House and Garden, as well as the Tovar House. Visitors may pick up tickets in the museum store, or at a window outside of the store, and are asked to wait at the Manucy Museum until the tour begins.

Interpreting architecture through low-tech interactive displays. With a half hour tour time, exhibits in the Manucy Museum allow the St. Augustine Historical Society to interpret information not included on the guided tour. One exhibit on display introduces visitors to the changing architecture of the Gonzalez-Alvarez House. This display is divided into two parts. The first interactive display allows visitors to move plastic panels outlining the stages of architecture during the colonial and American periods in St. Augustine (Figure 4-8). The second part of the display outlines the restoration of the Oldest House. In this display visitors move plastic panels to remove the Victorian Tower and two-story apartment both added to the house during the mid to late 1800's.



Figure 4-8. Interactive Display of the Gonzalez-Alvarez House Architecture. Photo by author.

Connecting children with history through the guided tour. The St. Augustine Historical Society has one script that is used to interpret to all visitors. This tour script allows docents to customize the experience of visitors based upon their previous knowledge, but also suggests ways to engage the many school groups which visit the house.

One way children are engaged while on the tour is by being asked questions. The script outlines simple questions about human needs and lifestyles the students can relate too and answer. Once the children answer, the docent can elaborate upon their answers with descriptions how things were done during the colonial periods of St. Augustine. This allows students to make comparisons with their own lives. Here is one example of how this is used: “what do people need to have in order to live? ([Answer] air to breath, food to eat, water to drink, shelter to protect them from the weather.)”⁵⁸ The docent will then describe how the early citizens of St. Augustine stored water in earthen jars (one is located in the garden) and demonstrate to students how lava rocks brought from Spain were used to purify the water.

Another way in which children connect with history on the guided tour is by the docent explaining the roles of children during colonial St. Augustine; how they worked, played and learned. Examples found in the tour script include these:

- “From an early age children worked to help their families. Boys- fishing, crabbing, gathering oysters, carrying wood and water, tending cattle....Girls- cooking, sewing, sweeping...”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Susan R. Parker, “St Augustine Historical Society Oldest House (Gonzalez-Alvarez National Historic Landmark) Tour Content,” December 21, 2009, 1.

⁵⁹ Parker, “St Augustine Historical Society Oldest House (Gonzalez-Alvarez National Historic Landmark) Tour Content,” 3.

- “Much of their play was imitating the activities of adults around them....boys would have played at being soldiers...girls would have played with dolls and imitated their mother’s childcare activities...”⁶⁰
- “Most children did not go to school, so most never learned to read and write...Children of the wealthier and more prominent people in town sometimes were taught by private tutors...Also, the priests at the church taught a few boys three days a week.”⁶¹

By asking children questions and discussing colonial children’s activities, the docents at the St. Augustine Historical Society are providing students with the opportunity to connect with the history and lifestyles associated with St. Augustine’s colonial periods. Children are engaged because they are given the opportunity to participate in their learning.

Drayton Hall

Location

Drayton Hall is located at 3380 Ashley River Road near Charleston, South Carolina. This site is approximately a thirty-minute drive from Charleston’s historic downtown, on Ashley River Road, a National Scenic byway. During the colonial and early American periods the area was home to the “Ashley River elite,” which included wealthy planters and politicians.⁶²

Stewardship Organization

Drayton Hall is a National Trust site. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded, nonprofit organization that was established by Congress in 1946. Drayton Hall is one of twenty-seven historic sites the Trust protects and promotes. The

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *History of the Drayton Family and Drayton Hall*, (Drayton Hall Training Materials, Unpublished, 2007) 5.

mission of Drayton Hall “is to preserve and interpret Drayton Hall and its environs in order to educate the public and inspire people to embrace historic preservation.”⁶³

Architecture

Drayton hall was built in the Georgian-Palladian style between 1738 and 1742.⁶⁴ The architect is unknown: however, the design reflects Andrea Palladio’s second book of Architecture, “not employed elsewhere in the American colonies until decades later.”⁶⁵ The landfront façade features a two-story portico with Doric capitals on the first story and ionic capitals on the second story (Figure 4-9).⁶⁶ Native and foreign materials were utilized in the house’s construction. The main house required over 360,000 bricks, all made on-site by enslaved workers. Regional materials included bald cypress, used for the paneled walls; yellow poplar, used for architectural details and yellow pine plank floors. Mahogany used for ornamentation in the main house came from the Caribbean Islands, while other materials such as limestone, sandstone, iron and glass were all imported from England.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Membership Training*, (Drayton Hall Training Materials, Unpublished, 2010) 2.

⁶⁴ Joseph C. Mester, *The Architecture and Design of Drayton Hall: The Main House, Landscape, and Outbuildings*, (Drayton Hall Training Materials, Unpublished, 2012) 9.

⁶⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Drayton Hall*, James Dillon, et al., August 1976, 2.

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) studied Greek and Roman architecture and wrote the Four Books on Architecture. The books were not entirely translated into English until 1720.

⁶⁶ Mester, *The Architecture and Design of Drayton Hall: The Main House, Landscape, and Outbuildings*, 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 10.



Figure 4-9. Exterior of Drayton Hall. Photo by author.

History

John Drayton, son of Thomas and Ann Drayton, was born around 1715 and spent his childhood at Magnolia Plantation, on the Ashley River. In March of 1738 John Drayton purchased a plantation on the Ashley River from John Greene. The property bordered his family home. While Drayton Hall was being built, between 1739 and 1740, his wife Sarah Cattell and their two young sons, Stephen Fox Drayton and William Drayton, passed away.⁶⁸ In 1740 John Drayton remarried to Charlotta Bull at Ashley Hall, and by 1742 their first son, William Henry Drayton, was born at Drayton Hall.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁸ *History of the Drayton Family and Drayton Hall*, 1-3.

⁶⁹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Drayton Hall*, James Dillon, et al., 2.

History of the Drayton Family and Drayton Hall, 3.

Charlotta Bull was the daughter of William Bull, the Royal Lieutenant Governor of the South Carolina colony.

couple's second son, Charles Drayton, was born in 1743: Charlotta passed away several days later due to complications from the birth.⁷⁰

After the death of his second wife, John Drayton became involved in politics. "John's first major political role began in 1745 when he won a seat in the Common House." In 1752 he took his third wife, Margaret Glen, who gave him another son, Glen Drayton, within the first year of their marriage, and a fourth son, Thomas Drayton, in 1758. By 1761 John Drayton was appointed to the Royal Council. In 1772 Margret Glenn Drayton passed away in England where she had been caring for Glen and Thomas Drayton. In 1755 fifty-nine year old John Drayton took his fourth and final wife, seventeen-year-old Rebecca Perry, who gave birth to three children, Susannah, Anne and John.⁷¹

The Revolutionary War (1775-1783) had an immense impact on Drayton Hall and the Drayton family. John Drayton's oldest son, William Henry Drayton, was a patriot who served as President of the South Carolina Provincial Congress and oversaw the formation of South Carolina's first constitution in 1776. Additionally, he designed South Carolina's great seal that same year with Arthur Middleton. In 1778 he became a delegate to the Continental Congress.⁷² In 1779 as British troops marched toward South Carolina, John with his wife and three children fled Drayton Hall. "While crossing the west branch of the Cooper River, John had a seizure and died at Strawberry Ferry.

⁷⁰ *History of the Drayton Family and Drayton Hall*, 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 4, 5, 9.

⁷² *Ibid.* 9, 11, 26.

Many Ashley River plantations were looted and destroyed. Drayton Hall survived, though it was occupied by British troops in March of 1780.⁷³

Rebecca Perry Drayton inherited Drayton Hall after her husband's death, but in November of 1783 Charles Drayton paid for her rights to the plantation through a promissory bond. Drayton Hall served as the main house for generations of Draytons until the Civil War. Ownership passed from Charles Drayton to his son, Charles Drayton II, and his sons, Thomas Henry Middleton Drayton and Dr. John Drayton.⁷⁴

The Civil War (1861-1865) did not have the same impact on the Ashley River area that the Revolutionary War did. After 1860 Drayton Hall was not used as the family's main residence. Post-Civil War photographs indicate that the house was in a state of disrepair. Windows were missing or broken, bricks were missing, crops were grown up to the landfront façade on the property, and plants were overgrown on the riverfront façade.⁷⁵

The Charleston Mining and Manufacturing Company leased the property from Dr. John Drayton to mine for calcium phosphate, which was used as fertilizer. By 1883 Charles Henry Drayton IV owned the property and began his own mining company, Charles H. Drayton & Company. It was through this business that he was able to restore Drayton Hall.⁷⁶

In 1915 Charles Henry Drayton passed away and divided his estate among his three children. Charlotta Drayton, known as "Miss Charley," used Drayton Hall as a

⁷³ Ibid. 9, 11.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 32, 40.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 53-54.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 52.

vacation house. “She used the house with only the barest of conveniences: a wood burning stove, oil lamps, and icebox. Her desire to preserve the house in an authentic condition as possible is evident from the care she took to maintain the house as virtually untouched.”⁷⁷

Preservation

In 1960, still owned by the Drayton family, Drayton Hall was nominated a National Historic Landmark. In 1969 Charlotta Drayton passed away leaving ownership to her nephews, Francis and Charles Drayton. In her will “she stated that the house was not to be modernized.”⁷⁸ The brothers realized they could not keep up the house and chose to sell it. When news of the sale became public, the Historic Charleston Foundation (HCF) and the State of Carolina began raising funds. “After HCF had accumulated a substantial trust fund,” The National Trust purchased Drayton Hall and 125 acres of land surrounding the house, while the state of South Carolina purchased an additional 540 acres surrounding the property.⁷⁹ Drayton Hall opened to the public in 1976. “The National Trust made the bold decision to preserve the site as it was received from the Draytons in 1974 in order to provide a time line showing the change and continuity through three centuries of American History.”⁸⁰ Under stewardship of the National Trust, Drayton Hall will never be restored. When the Trust acquired the house, main efforts in the 1970s and 1980s focused on stabilizing the house. More recently

⁷⁷ Ibid. 59.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 60.

⁸⁰ “America’s Oldest Unrestored Plantation House Open to the Public,” <http://www.draytonhall.org/preservation/overview/>, accessed January 25, 2014.

preservation of the Great Hall ceiling, portico masonry, and paint conservation have become top priorities.⁸¹

Interpretation

Drayton Hall is open to the public from 9:00am until 5:00pm, Monday through Saturday and from 11:00am until 5:00pm on Sundays. Tours of Drayton Hall are given every hour and begin at 9:30am every day except for Sunday when they begin at 11:30am. There are several activities for visitors on site. There is a guided tour of Drayton Hall, and visitors can participate in “Connections: From Africa to America,” a presentation and discussion group. “The Voices of Drayton Hall” DVD landscape tour is available and guests can visit “A Sacred Place: The oldest documented African-America cemetery in the nation still in use.”

Touring an empty house. Guided tours of Drayton Hall are a major component in interpreting the site. The house is completely empty, with the exception of benches for visitors to sit and a model depicting Drayton Hall when the two Flanker buildings on the landfront façade still existed. There are no objects to portray how people once lived on site or to showcase the Drayton’s wealth (Figure 4-10). It is the job of the interpreter to fill the house for visitors. This is an extremely successful method of interpretation as it allows interpreters to tell the whole story of Drayton Hall. Visitors may come to the site with varied interests including different time periods, people and lifestyles, and have all of their questions answered through a discussion with their tour guide. This can be accomplished because of the interpreter training program established at Drayton Hall. Each interpreter is allowed to create his or her own tour, organized around required

⁸¹ “America’s Oldest Unrestored Plantation House Open to the Public.”

content and showcasing what makes them passionate about the site, including the selection of a central theme. These interpreters have become knowledgeable by reading required materials that include extensive information about the site's history, architecture and preservation. Required information that must be addressed in each room generally follows the themes of: architecture, family history, the African-American experience, and the National Trust.⁸² After a new interpreter has created a tour, they meet with the lead interpreter to have their tour approved. The training materials for Drayton Hall's interpreters do not only include required readings and information, but suggestions for how they should deliver their tour including vocal techniques, animation, eye contact, word selection, body language, pace, and practice.⁸³

After going on tour with a Drayton Hall interpreter, guests should understand:

1. What the differences are between preservation and restoration
2. Why the Trust made the decision to preserve Drayton Hall
3. What the Trust has done and what the Friends of Drayton Hall have made possible since the Trust purchased the site in order to preserve it
4. Why Drayton Hall is worth saving.⁸⁴



Figure 4-10. Drayton Hall First Floor Withdrawing Room. Photo by author.

⁸² Craig Hadley, et al., *Museum Educators Training Manual: The Drayton Hall House Tour* (Drayton Hall Training Materials, Unpublished, 2011)10-11.

⁸³ Hadley, et al., *Museum Educators Training Manual: The Drayton Hall House Tour*, 3-4.

⁸⁴ *Membership Training*, 12.

Connections: From Africa to America. Richmond Bowens was a member of one of the enslaved family that came to South Carolina with the Draytons in the late 1600s.⁸⁵ After the Civil War his family grew crops on the land; his mother worked as a cook for the Draytons and another family member worked as a caretaker of Drayton Hall. After the house opened to the public, Bowens worked as a gatekeeper: when he retired in 1993 he began volunteering his time to tell visitors about the African American experience at Drayton Hall. Richmond Bowens passed away in 1998, and one year later “Connections” was established.⁸⁶

At Drayton Hall, the purpose of Connections is to highlight stories about the lives of the enslaved and the anomalies of their relationships in this place over a period of time.⁸⁷

The “Connections” program takes place under a tent near the museum shop. The program presents a general history of African-Americans from slavery, to emancipation, to the present, but also gives focused attention to South Carolina. The program also addresses changing relationships between owners and the enslaved. “The concept held in Barbados that enslaved were considered members of the family was carried into South Carolina. In the early period the enslaved had more freedom than at a later time, and in the early period masters often worked alongside their enslaved.”⁸⁸ In 1739 the Stono Rebellion led to the Slave Code of 1740, which placed higher restrictions on the conduct of slave owners, while impacting every aspect of an enslaved person’s life.

⁸⁵ Peggy Reider, et al., *Museum Interpretation Training Manual: Connections*, Drayton Hall Training Materials, Unpublished, 2011, 4.

⁸⁶ Reider, et al., *Museum Interpretation Training Manual: Connections*, 11, 27.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 20.

There is a wide range of information that an interpreter can cover during “Connections.” However, because the program is meant to facilitate discussion, interpreters may also stick to particular subjects the audience is interested in.⁸⁹

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum

97 Orchard Street is perhaps most valuable because of its lack of particular historical association. As an essentially anonymous building, it is well suited to represent a profound social movement involving great numbers of unexceptional but courageous people.⁹⁰

Location

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum is located at 97 Orchard Street in the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan, New York. The neighborhood has historically housed many of the immigrants who have come to the United States through New York City. “The street is build up entirely with nineteenth- and twentieth-century, five- and six-story tenements, all with stores at street level.”⁹¹

Stewardship Organization

The Tenement museum is owned and operated by The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Inc. which was chartered in 1988.⁹² Ruth Abram and Anita Jacobson, founders of the museum, began their commitment to interpreting the lives of early immigrants by running a tour program in the Lower East Side.⁹³ While visiting the storefront of 97 Orchard Street, looking for a location to run tours from, the partners

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street*, Larry Lowenthal, et al., October 1993, 8.

⁹¹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street*, Larry Lowenthal, et al., 4.

⁹² “Lower East Side Tenement Museum,” *Forum Journal* (October 1998)1.

⁹³ “Tenement Museum: About Us: Our Story,” <http://www.tenement.org/about.html>, accessed January 25, 2014.

realized that they had found a “pre-law” tenement building.⁹⁴ The museum opened on November 17, 1988, in the leased store fronts of 97 Orchard Street during a three-million-dollar-campaign to purchase and restore the building: the goal was reached in 1996.⁹⁵ In 1991 the organization began a self-study funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, “which included research and discussions with museum professionals, poets, immigrant advocates, scholars and others.”⁹⁶ In 1993 the Tenement Museum became a National Historic Landmark under the themes of “American ways of life” and “social and humanitarian movements.”⁹⁷ The museum is affiliated with both the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service. The following is the museums mission statement:

The Tenement Museum preserves and interprets the history of immigration through the personal experiences of the generations of newcomers who settled in and built lives on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, America’s iconic immigrant neighborhood; forges emotional connections between visitors and immigrants past and present; and enhances appreciation for the profound role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America’s evolving national identity.⁹⁸

Architecture

Between 1863 and 1864, 97 Orchard Street was built in the typical tenement style of the 1860s. It is a five-story, red brick Italianate style with a galvanized-iron cornice, with storefronts on the first floor and a centrally located stone stoop for tenants

⁹⁴ “Tenement Museum: About Us: Our Story.”

A “pre-law” tenement is one that was built before housing and building restrictions were created.

⁹⁵ *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum* (New York, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, 2004) 14.

⁹⁶ *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*, 17.

⁹⁷ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street*, Larry Lowenthal, et al., 7.

⁹⁸ “Tenement Museum: About Us: Our Story.”

to enter apartments on the top floors.⁹⁹ The second through fifth floors each originally contained a centrally located hall with four apartments, finished with wooden floors, and plaster walls and ceilings.¹⁰⁰

History

During the 1620s Dutch settlers were the first to arrive to the area known today as Manhattan, and the land were divided among eight farms.¹⁰¹ During the 1700s the British acquired New Amsterdam, and British Lieutenant Governor James DeLancy purchased approximately 300 acres of the land.¹⁰² Orchard Street was the road that once led to DeLancy's orchard. He died in 1760, but his family continued to occupy the property. They remained British Loyalists during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and at the conclusion of the war the family's land was taken from them.¹⁰³

By 1800 Manhattan was divided into equal lots, each intended to hold a single family home.¹⁰⁴ Lucas Glockner, a German immigrant, purchased the lot at 97 Orchard in 1863, and his tenement was completed by 1864.¹⁰⁵ The building had two basement shops, one of which Glockner ran as a tailor's shop, and the other a saloon ran by John

⁹⁹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street*, Larry Lowenthal, et al., 4.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 5.

¹⁰¹ Linda Granfield, *97 Orchard Street, New York: Stories of Immigrant Life* (Ontario, Tundra Books, 2001) 25.

¹⁰² *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*, 25.

¹⁰³ Granfield, *97 Orchard Street, New York: Stories of Immigrant Life*, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street*, Larry Lowenthal, et al., 13.

Schneider.¹⁰⁶ Glockner collected rent from nineteen apartments. He lived in the twentieth until 1870 with his wife Wilhelmina and their three sons. He sold the building in 1886.¹⁰⁷

The tenement at 97 Orchard Street was owned by various other immigrants. Slight changes were made to the building as housing and building laws in New York City were developed. Around 1900 gas lighting was finally installed. In 1901 the “New Law” had the six privies in the yard replaced with two flushable toilets on each floor.¹⁰⁸ In 1905 windows were added to partition walls to allow for airflow and natural light. By 1924 electricity was added.¹⁰⁹

The last family to own the tenement was the Helpern family, who purchased it in 1918. Due to increasingly strict housing and building codes, the family evicted their tenants in 1935, sealing the apartments and continuing to use the stores on the first floor.¹¹⁰ Barbara Helpern sold the building to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in 1996, eight years after they began leasing the property.

Preservation

When the vision for the Tenement Museum first began, “a historian and social activist, Ruth Abram, wanted to build a museum that honored America’s immigrants.”¹¹¹

The first apartment that was opened to the public was the 1878 restored apartment of

¹⁰⁶ Granfield, *97 Orchard Street, New York: Stories of Immigrant Life*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*, 14.

¹¹¹ “Tenement Museum: About Us: Our Story.”

the German-Jewish Gumpertz family.¹¹² Interpretation in the museum's other apartments was originally going to use fictional stories of immigrant life in tenement housing. This goal quickly changed in 1993 when Josephine Baldizzi Esposito visited the museum. Baldizzi's family had lived in that building from 1928 until 1935 when she was ages two to nine. The museum used family artifacts to recreate the apartment as it had looked in 1935, completely changing course in their interpretation.¹¹³ Six of the twenty apartments have been restored to interpret the tenement story, the newest being the home of the Moores, Irish immigrants who lived in the building in 1869.¹¹⁴

Interpretation

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum is open daily from 10:00am until 6:30pm, except Thursdays when the museum is open from 10:00am until 5:00pm. At the museum neighborhood walking tours, tenement talks, and guided tours are available. "The heart of the museum is a historic tenement, home to an estimated 7,000 people from over twenty nations between 1863 and 1935."¹¹⁵ Interpretation represents the immigrant experience by sharing the living conditions and history of the Lower East Side. The museum offers tours in multiple languages including Spanish, Chinese and Russian.¹¹⁶ The museum maintains its community significance by working with today's

¹¹² "Ibid.

¹¹³ *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*, 7-9.

¹¹⁴ "Tenement Museum: About Us: Our Story."

¹¹⁵ "Step into 97 Orchard St., step into another time," <http://www.nps.gov/loea/index.htm>, accessed January 25, 2014.

¹¹⁶ *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*, 18.

immigrant population of New York, through educational measures such as English classes.

Virtual tour. There are various ways for potential visitors to learn about immigrant life through the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. Linked to the museum's website, the virtual tour of the Tenement Museum is just one way that visitors can experience the site without actually traveling there. The virtual tour is composed of four parts: a floor plan outlining the location of the parlor, kitchen, and backroom and indicating where the viewer is standing; three-dimensional views of each apartment in which the viewer can move around each room; voiceover by the museum's President, Ruth Abram giving a tour; and a section where viewers can click to read more about each family's history or look at photographs of the family.¹¹⁷ The virtual tour begins with a historic photograph 97 Orchard Street, with Abram describing the history of the neighborhood. The next location on the tour is the stairway hall. At this location viewers can listen to Abram ask visitors where their families immigrated from, and describe the history of tenement housing and the housing laws that eventually lead to the closing of 97 Orchard. Within the virtual tour several apartments are available for viewing including the ruin apartment, Gumpertz apartment, Rogarshevsky apartment, Confino apartment, Baldizzi apartment and Levine apartment.

Immigration game. The immigration game, another online interpretation method, allows children to learn about the lifestyle of an early immigrant in the Lower East Side. During the game videos of an actress playing Victoria Confino tell the story of young immigrant life. Victoria Confino was an immigrant from Kastoria, Turkey, who

¹¹⁷ "The Lower East Side Tenement Museum Virtual Tour," http://www.tenement.org/Virtual-Tour/index_virtual.html, accessed January 25, 2014.

came to the United States in 1913 and lived at 97 Orchard Street with her family.¹¹⁸ In the first step in the game, “who do you want to be,” a passport is created. The player chooses whether they are a boy or girl, what their name is and what country they are from. In the next step of the game the player chooses what three items they would like to take with them on their journey. The options are clothes, toy, shoes, books, religious item, food, a cooking pot, or family photo. In the third step “you are on your way to America,” Victoria Confino explains what traveling to the United States was like while a boat icon travels across a map from the immigrant’s home country to Ellis Island. In the fourth step “go to Ellis Island,” the player interacts with an inspector, telling them who they are based upon the passport they created. During this step Victoria explains that it was very important for immigrants to act healthy because they were watched the whole time they were at Ellis Island. In the final stage of the game, “make a life in America,” the player makes choices how they will work, play, eat, sleep, and what housework they will do. When the game is completed the player has the option to create a post card that can be sent to Victoria at the Tenement Museum. Players also have the option to print out their passport and have it stamped on their next visit.

“Tenement Talks.” “Tenement Talks is an evening series of lectures, readings, panel discussions, films and other programs that provide historical and contemporary perspectives on New York City’s rich culture.”¹¹⁹ Most events take place at 103 Orchard Street in the museum store. There are currently eight events advertised by the Tenement Museum from March into June 2014. In March one event that is talking place

¹¹⁸ “Immigration Game,” <http://www.tenement.org/immigrate/>, accessed January 25, 2014.

¹¹⁹ “Tenement Talks,” <http://www.tenement.org/tenement-talks.php>, accessed January 25, 2014.

is a book talk for “Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking.” In April there is a scheduled book talk called “How the Other Half Lived and Lives,” which involves discussion of the novel “How the Other Half Lives,” written by nineteenth-century Dutch immigrant Jacob A. Riis. Past events are available on the Tenement Museum’s website as podcasts.

George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film

Location

The George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film is located at 900 East Avenue in Rochester, New York in one of Rochester’s eight historic preservation districts, the East Avenue Historic District. This district includes East, University and Park Avenues, as well as the streets between them, and is bordered by Alexander and Probert Street.¹²⁰

Stewardship Organization

The George Eastman House is a private non-profit organization. It first opened the public in 1949 and is the world’s oldest photography museum, and is one of the oldest film museums. The museum was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1976 and is also registered on the New York State Register of Historic Places.¹²¹ The George Eastman House has been supported through funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the

¹²⁰ “Historic Preservation: The Rochester Preservation Ordinance,” <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589939748>, accessed January 31, 2014.

¹²¹ “Restoration of the George Eastman House and Grounds,” *Forum Journal* (October 2000) 1.

Arts, and with donations from individuals, corporations and foundations.¹²² The mission statement of the George Eastman House is to:

Lead through practice and programs in the interpretation of photographic and motion picture heritage. We strive to inspire widespread recognition of how the media we collect, preserve and understand broaden and enrich life. We do so as stewards of the legacy of George Eastman, who values excellence and innovation.¹²³

Architecture

The George Eastman House was built in the Georgian style between 1902 and 1905.¹²⁴ The original house was two-and-a-half story, T-shaped plan with a full pediment portico including Corinthian columns.¹²⁵ Eastman was extremely involved with the design of his house, choosing design and architectural details based upon what he had observed at other houses or seen in photographs.¹²⁶ The architect of the George Eastman House was J. Foster Warner, while the fifty-room interior was designed with the consultation of McKim, Mead and White.¹²⁷ Landscape architect, Alling DeForest, designed a stable, garage, barn, five green houses, and eight gardens on the

¹²² George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: Visitors Guide & Map," current brochure, no date.

¹²³ "George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: Mission," <http://eastmanhouse.org/museum/mission.php> , accessed January 31, 2014.

¹²⁴ "Restoration of the George Eastman House and Grounds,"1.

¹²⁵ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: George Eastman House*, Richard Greenwood, January 1976, 2.

¹²⁶ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: George Eastman House*, Richard Greenwood, 2.

¹²⁷ "Restoration of George Eastman's 50 Room Colonial Revival Mansion and Its Four Remaining Gardens as Part of a 12 Acre Museum," *Forum Journal* (July 1992) 1.

property.¹²⁸ “The estate typifies the period in American history known as the Country Place Era (1890-1940). During this time, throughout the United States industrialists (e.g. Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, and Ford) were building country estates based on European design traditions.”¹²⁹ In 1951 Dryden Theater was added to the south wall of the former garage.¹³⁰ (Figure 4-11).



Figure 4-11. Exterior of the George Eastman House. Photo by author.

History

George Eastman (1854-1932) was born in Waterville, New York, and moved with his parents to Rochester in 1860. When his father passed away Eastman left school to work at an insurance firm, and later worked as a junior clerk at the Rochester Savings

¹²⁸ “Restoration of George Eastman’s 50 Room Colonial Revival Mansion and Its Four Remaining Gardens as Part of a 12 Acre Museum,”1.

¹²⁹ “Restoration of the George Eastman House and Grounds,”1.

¹³⁰ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: George Eastman House*, Richard Greenwood, 2.

Bank. He purchased his first camera in 1877 and while continuing to work as a banker, Eastman developed and sold an inexpensive dry plate film.¹³¹

In 1880 Eastman left the Rochester Savings Bank and by 1890 founded the Eastman Kodak Company. “His reason for going into business was simple ‘to make photography an everyday affair, to make the camera as convenient as the pencil.’ George Eastman’s marketing genius, which put his affordable camera into the hands of millions.”¹³² He succeeded at his goal continuing to make advancements in photography throughout his lifetime.

When George Eastman passed away in 1932, he left his house to the University of Rochester; it was used as the President’s house for ten years.¹³³ In 1936, due to maintenance costs, the gardens were simplified, and many rooms went unused.¹³⁴ After World War II the University of Rochester transferred the estate to a Board of Trustees and The George Eastman House Museum of Photography was chartered in 1947.¹³⁵

Preservation

By 1984 the photography and film collections had outgrown the George Eastman House. From 1985 until 1988 over thirty million dollars was raised for the restoration of

¹³¹ Ibid. 3.

¹³² “Restoration of the George Eastman House and Grounds,”1.

¹³³ “George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: History of the George Eastman House,” <http://www.eastmanhouse.org/museum/history.php>, accessed January 31, 2014.

¹³⁴ “Restoration of George Eastman’s 50 Room Colonial Revival Mansion and Its Four Remaining Gardens as Part of a 12 Acre Museum,”1.

¹³⁵ “George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: History of the George Eastman House.”

the house and appropriate collections care.¹³⁶ An archive building with a study center for the collections and exhibit galleries were constructed.¹³⁷

Fourteen months and about two million dollars went into the restoration of George Eastman's House. Completed in January of 1990, the goal of the restoration was to "present Eastman's house a three-dimensional biography and living memorial to the man who lived in it from 1905-1932."¹³⁸ The restoration and interpretation was informed by oral histories, original photographs of the house, and George Eastman's manuscripts. Furthermore, a historic furnishing plan was created by Dr. William Seale, which allowed for the replication of plaster ceilings, the repairs of marble floors, reproduction of wall and window textiles, along with the refinishing and reupholstering of vintage furniture, eighty-five percent of which is original to the house.¹³⁹

Interpretation

The George Eastman House is open on Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am until 8:00pm and on Sundays from 11:00am until 5:00pm. Guided tours are offered twice a day at 10:30am and 2:00pm. The tours are offered in English; however, sign language tours can be scheduled as well. While visiting the house, guests can also choose to participate in a guided cell phone tour. In the spring and summer Garden Tours are available. The original portion of the house primarily displays historic furnishings. However, rooms on the second floor offer exhibits about George Eastman,

¹³⁶ "Restoration of George Eastman's 50 Room Colonial Revival Mansion and Its Four Remaining Gardens as Part of a 12 Acre Museum,"1.

¹³⁷ "George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: History of the George Eastman House."

¹³⁸ "Restoration of George Eastman's 50 Room Colonial Revival Mansion and Its Four Remaining Gardens as Part of a 12 Acre Museum,"1.

¹³⁹ "Restoration of the George Eastman House and Grounds,"1.

his family and career. Additionally, a Discovery Room is located on the second floor. Six nights a week films are showed at Dryden Theater. They include archived, foreign and independent films.¹⁴⁰

Changing exhibit spaces. There are several gallery spaces in the 1990 addition of the George Eastman House where changing exhibits are displayed. These spaces allow interpretation to change and give visitors a reason to come back to the museum.

The exhibit titled *Exelis: The History of Space Photography* was displayed from October 26, 2013, until January 12, 2014, in the Brackett Clark and South Galleries (Figure 4-12). This gallery presented pictures of planets and supernovas in space, the environment and climate pictures of Earth. Through this exhibit the George Eastman House showcased a unique collection sure to interest a greater audience than is typical at house museums. Additionally, this exhibit connected with community of Rochester, as it was members of this community who built the various space cameras and telescope systems that took the exhibited photography.



Figure 4-12. Exelis Exhibit at the George Eastman House. Photo by author.

¹⁴⁰ George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: Visitors Guide & Map,” current brochure.

The “Cameras from the Technology Collection” exhibit is located in the Mees Gallery. This exhibit showcases the various forms that cameras have taken throughout history (Figure 4-13). Visitors not only see historic cameras, but can also novelty, and more recent cameras created during their lifetime.



Figure 4-13. “Cameras from the Technology Collection” Exhibit. Photo by author.

The George Eastman House shows contemporary art in its changing galleries as well. From November 14, 2013 until February 23, 2014 “Lossless” was exhibited.

“Lossless (2008) is a contemporary art installation by Rebecca Baron and Douglas Goodwin that explores the possibilities of the transformation and distortion of images- and ultimately the creations of new ones- within the digital realm.”¹⁴¹

Though “Lossless” is exhibited temporarily, it is part of the George Eastman House’s permanent collection.

Permanent exhibits. Permanent exhibits are on display on the second floor of the George Eastman House. These spaces allow visitors to learn about George

¹⁴¹ “George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film: Lossless,” http://eastmanhouse.org/events/detail.php?title=lossless_2013, accessed January 31, 2014.

Eastman through means other than viewing his furniture. Diversity in the methods used in the original house creates an interesting interpretation. The East Gallery on the second floor uses panel exhibits and a running loop video to explore who George Eastman was (Figure 4-14). It is designed to portray information about Eastman's family and business.



Figure 4-14. Permanent Exhibit in the Second Floor East Gallery at the George Eastman House. Photo by author.

Discovery room. The Discovery Room at the George Eastman House is a family friendly area for children to play and learn (Figure 4-15). Everything in the room can be picked up or played with. The room includes stereoviewers (which make pictures look three-dimensional), photograms (pictures that change in the sun), and zetropes (mini movies made by creating the illusion of motion). A Discovery Room pamphlet includes a list of suggested books, as well as information about the museum's online activities.

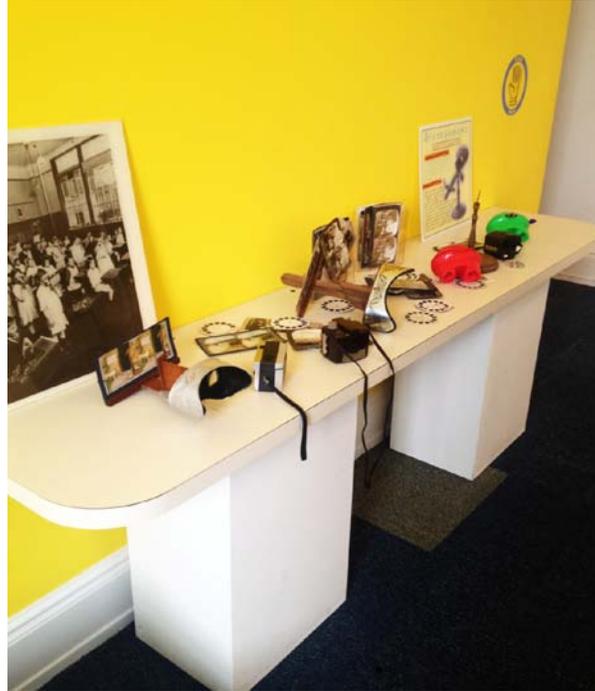


Figure 4-15. George Eastman House “Discovery Room.” Photo by author.

Summary

An analysis of all five case studies suggests that all house museums can benefit from allowing variety in their interpretation. Each house museum portrays various themes such as an important person, family history, lifestyles, architecture, industry, art, history of a region or societal trend, and preservation. The stewardship organizations responsible for these sites choose interpretation techniques based on number of factors, which include cost, staff availability and accessibility. However, it is the unique combination of stories and how they are told that creates interest. No matter if a site is privately owned, controlled by a national organization, or part of the National Trust, each must reach diverse and unique audiences to obtain successful visitor numbers and community relevance.

CHAPTER 5 THE HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DE MESA-SANCHEZ HOUSE

Introduction

The de Mesa-Sanchez House, 43 St. George Street in St. Augustine Florida, is one of thirty-six remaining colonial buildings in the city, and one of thirty-eight state owned buildings managed by University of Florida Historic St. Augustine Inc. (UFHSA). Currently the house is interpreted through The Colonial Quarter LLC. Though the de Mesa-Sanchez House dates back to the first Spanish period in St. Augustine its architecture has been adapted and influenced by owners in every period of St. Augustine, including the British period, second Spanish period, and American territorial period. The history of the site predates the house itself. The area is located in city block seven and has been a constant area of use and development throughout the history of St. Augustine.

History

The First Spanish Period: 1565-1763

Development and history of block seven. The area of St. Augustine known today as block seven was first developed in the late seventeenth century. It was used as a work camp during the construction of the Castillo de San Marcos (1672-1695).¹ Convicts from Spain and Mexico, slaves and Native Americans were housed in the area.² “Indians were enslaved as builders and were permitted to bring along their wives

¹ David Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” September 1978, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, B-2.

² E.H. Reynolds, *The Standard guide to St. Augustine and Fort Marion Practical information for tourists, descriptions of all points of interests; and an historical summary* (St. Augustine, 1885) UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 48.

and children.”³ Excavations that took place on the site during restoration efforts in the 1970s found evidence of the work camp. Structural remains consisted of a portion of an oyster shell wall and clay-packed floor.⁴ Several Native American burials were found as well, under existing houses and courtyards.⁵ Their association with the building of the Castillo was evident as the bodies were located in flexed positions and the burials were not Christian.⁶

With the completion of the Castillo, the block soon became a neighborhood. The area was drastically changed during the siege of 1702 by Carolinians. St. Augustine’s population was safely behind the walls of the Castillo; however, housing west of the fort created a challenge for the Spanish.⁷ While some of the city’s houses were destroyed at the end of the siege by fire, others were demolished by the Spanish. “The Spanish Commander ordered the destruction of all cover within a musket shot of the fort,” approximately 750 feet, obliterating the neighborhood within block seven.⁸ The area would be developed again as a residential neighborhood in the latter half of the first Spanish period.

³ Cathy Gallagher, “Human Skeleton Discovered,” *The Traveler*, March 30-April 5, 1978, in “43 St. George Street. De Mesa- Sanchez. Blk 7, Lot 6 flat file,” St. Augustine Historical Society Library, 2.

⁴ James M. Smith, “De Mesa Site, Revisited,” *St. Augustine Preservation Board*, 1981, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 5.

⁵ Paul Ortiz, “Interview with Kathleen Deagan,” April 23, 2012, Transcript, UFDC Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, 45.

⁶ Ortiz, “Interview with Kathleen Deagan,” 45.

⁷ Albert Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine: 1565-1821* (Gainesville:1992), 22.

⁸ Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine: 1565-1821*, 22-23.

Owners and architecture. The earliest known resident of the de Mesa-Sanchez House is Don Antonio de Mesa, a shore guard from Veracruz, Mexico.⁹ He came to St. Augustine in 1740, and on a civil roster in 1746 he was listed as a “Guarde de Rivera of the Real Hacienda,” he received the honorific title of Don with his service.¹⁰ De Mesa made an annual salary of 132 pesos.¹¹ His parents were Juan de Mesa and Clavaselai Guevara.¹² On September 26, 1746, de Mesa married Geronima Santollo (Santoyo) of St. Augustine.¹³ She was born in 1729 to Juan de Rosa Santoyo and Maria (Mariana) Cavcallero.¹⁴ De Mesa and his wife had seven children together, four girls and three boys, all baptized in the Catholic Church.¹⁵ De Mesa was also listed as a slave owner, though little information on this topic has been discovered.¹⁶

The exact date of construction for the de Mesa-Sanchez House is unknown. The earliest evidence of this house appears on the 1764 Puente Map where de Mesa is listed as the owner of lot six.¹⁷ The house was located on the “extreme” western section

⁹ Michael Scardaville, “Historical Outline of the deMesa – Sanchez (Spanish Inn) Site,” 1978, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 2.

¹⁰ Clifton A. Huston, “SA 7-6 the DeMesa site: Excavation of a Colonial Spanish Well in St. Augustine, Florida,” June 1977, 5.
Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-3.

¹¹ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-3.

¹² “Card One”, in “Antonio de Mesa Biographical Cards,” St. Augustine Historical Society Library.

¹³ Huston, “SA 7-6 the DeMesa site: Excavation of a Colonial Spanish Well in St. Augustine, Florida,” 6.

¹⁴ *St. Augustine Cathedral: 1st Spanish Period Catholic Marriages and Baptisms, 1594-1763*, comp. John Sallas (St. Augustine: 1993) St. Augustine Historical Society Library, 115.

¹⁵ *St. Augustine Cathedral: 1st Spanish Period Catholic Marriages and Baptisms, 1594-1763*, 72.

¹⁶ Huston, “SA 7-6 the DeMesa site: Excavation of a Colonial Spanish Well in St. Augustine, Florida,” 6.

¹⁷ Ramola A Drost, “Drost Overlays,” 1954, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection.

of the lot.¹⁸ De Mesa's neighbor to the north was Antonio Averro and Lucas Escovedo lived to the south.¹⁹ De Mesa's house was a small, one-room coquina structure, 16.7 ft by 26.5 feet, with a large tabby floored courtyard 23.3 by 35 feet, surrounded on three sides, containing a well.²⁰ The east of the house contained a loggia, the north side was enclosed by an oyster tabby wall, and the east side of the property was bound by a detached kitchen that spanned a north/south dimension of 12 feet.²¹ Manucy describes this as a St. Augustine Common Plan, which accounted for 70% of residences by 1788.²² Little about the interior of the de Mesa House is known. Excavations that took place in 1977 found no evidence of interior partitions or flooring.²³ It is highly likely that flooring during the time de Mesa lived in the house was only dirt, which was common during the first Spanish period.²⁴ Excavations also uncovered clay barrel tiles, likely the first Spanish period roofing material.²⁵ In 1764 the de Mesa family left St. Augustine and traveled to Havana where Antonio de Mesa passed away in 1766.²⁶ (Figure 5-1).

¹⁸ Fisher and Shepard, Architects and Planners Inc., "Research Report: Restoration of the DeMesa-Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," December 13, 1977, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 3.

¹⁹ Drost, "Drost Overlays."

²⁰ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 7.

²¹ Kathleen Deagan, "1977 Excavations of the de Mesa Sanchez House Interior," 1978, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 19.

Tabby is a concrete created by burning oyster shells to create lime, and mixing the lime with sand and broken oyster shells.

²² Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine: 1565-1821*, 49.

²³ Deagan, "1977 Excavations of the de Mesa Sanchez House Interior," 19.

²⁴ Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine: 1565-1821*, 116.

²⁵ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 10.

²⁶ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-3.

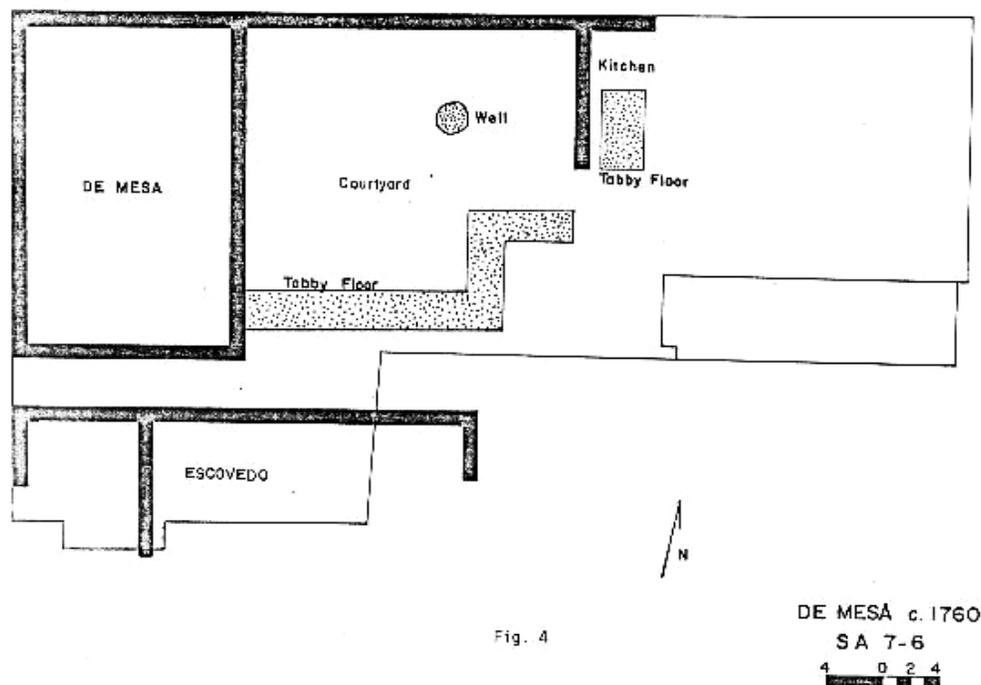


Fig. 4

Figure 5-2. "De Mesa c. 1760."

The British Period: 1763-1784

Development and history of block seven. The British gained control of St. Augustine in 1763 through the First Treaty of Paris. Few changes were made to the Spanish houses in the beginning of the British period as most of them were held by a few wealthy property owners, many of whom may never have occupied most of their houses. When the Spanish left St. Augustine their properties were left to Elixio de la Puente, who was responsible for surveying the properties left behind and selling them, sending the money back to the relocated Spanish families. As a stipulation of the Treaty of Paris, the Spanish only had eighteen months to transfer all property to the British.²⁷ When he couldn't sell to the uninterested British soldiers who first occupied the town, he transferred these properties to Jesse Fish, a native of New York. Jesse Fish came to

²⁷ Robert L. Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," *The Florida Historical Quarter* 52. No. 1 (1773) 4.

Florida in 1736 as an employee of William Walton and Company where he worked as a representative until 1736, spending the majority of his life in St. Augustine. There is little evidence that Fish ever paid the Spanish for the properties he took over and sold.²⁸

In 1767 Menorcans traveled with others from Greece and Italy to work as indentured servants at Andrew Turnbull's indigo plantation.²⁹ In 1777, after ten years of disease and mistreatment by Turnbull, an investigation by British Governor Patrick Tonoyon of the plantation led to the eventual release of the colonists from their contracts.³⁰ That summer the freed Menorcans walked north to St. Augustine, where they were granted land by the British Governor.³¹ This area became known as the Menorcan Quarter and was located in the southern portion of block seven. While there is no proof that a Menorcan renter ever occupied the de Mesa-Sanchez House, Menorcan houses were located to its south, and the Menorcan parish property directly north of the de Mesa-Sanchez House.³² The British first acted with kindness toward the Menorcans but their attitudes changed. Because the British were primarily of the Protestant religion, they believed that the Catholic Menorcans would be sympathetic to the Spanish. Problems escalated during the American Revolution when British soldiers

²⁸ Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," 2.

²⁹ Philip D. Rasico, "The Minorcan Population of St. Augustine in the Spanish Census of 1786," 1987, 162.

Menorcan is spelled in two ways. Menorcan is correct: however, the group is also referred to as Minorcans in many academic sources. While Menorcans are from the country of Menorca, many references to this group in St. Augustine include the Greeks and Italians who were indentured servants on Turnbull's plantation when referring to the group. Menorca is an island in the Mediterranean off the coast of Spain.

³⁰ J.G. Cusick, "Ethnic Groups and Class in an Emerging Market Economy: Spaniards and Minorcans in Late Colonial St. Augustine," 1993, 57.

³¹ Cusick, "Ethnic Groups and Class in an Emerging Market Economy: Spaniards and Minorcans in Late Colonial St. Augustine," 57.

³² Drost, "Drost Overlays".

would enter the Menorcan Quarter and abuse innocent citizens, convinced they would aid “American Rebels.”³³ This area remained the Menorcan Quarter into the nineteenth century.³⁴

Owners and architecture. William Walton, head of William Walton Co. located in New York, was the first owner of the de Mesa Sanchez house during the British period of St. Augustine.³⁵ His company sold supplies to patrons in St. Augustine from 1726 to 1739, and again from 1754 to 1739, earning him 200,000 pesos annually.³⁶ When the Spanish left St. Augustine, they had not paid off their debt to Walton and he became the fourth largest property owner in St. Augustine.³⁷ Walton never lived in the de Mesa-Sanchez House. He made no alterations to the house and when he died in 1768 the de Mesa property was transferred to the British crown.³⁸

In 1771 British Governor James Grant gave the property to Joseph Stout, a native of Philadelphia.³⁹ In 1765 Stout had married Mary Rolph, a native of Canterbury, England.⁴⁰ They came to Florida together in 1767 where Stout managed the estate of

³³ Cusick, “Ethnic Groups and Class in an Emerging Market Economy: Spaniards and Minorcans in Late Colonial St. Augustine,” 57.

³⁴ “Supplement for FMSF Site Forms: DeMesa – Sanchez House, 43 St. George Street,” 6.

³⁵ Michael Scardaville, “Preliminary Historic Report for the De Mesa Sanchez House (Spanish Inn) Site,” November 1977, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 2.

³⁶ Scardaville, “Preliminary Historic Report for the De Mesa Sanchez House (Spanish Inn) Site,” 2.

³⁷ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-3.

³⁸ Scardaville, “Preliminary Historic Report for the De Mesa Sanchez House (Spanish Inn) Site,” 3.

³⁹ “Supplement for FMSF Site Forms: DeMesa – Sanchez House, 43 St. George Street,” 7.

⁴⁰ “Tour Outline,” in “De House: Guides’ Manual,” no date, St. Augustine Preservation Board, UFHSA Digitization Lab, 4.

John Tucker.⁴¹ He fathered four boys while residing in East Florida.⁴² Stout was also employed as a government surveyor. In 1779 he purchased 950 acres of land near the northeast creek of Matanzas where he grew indigo, raised livestock and owned eight slaves.⁴³

The de Mesa House was never the permanent residence of Stout or his family. He instead used it as a townhouse when he visited St. Augustine with his family or as an export office for his plantation.⁴⁴ In 1780 Stout illegally expanded his property 9.8 feet to the south into the property of Jose Peso de Burgo.⁴⁵ Stout made the first extensive renovations and architectural changes to the house. The house became a three- room plan with masonry walls and tabby flooring.⁴⁶ The west and south walls were replaced with wood frame construction, and a six-foot-wide entrance to the house was built on the street façade, facing St. George Street.⁴⁷ Additionally, a chimney was added to the east wall of the north room, and there was a one-story paved loggia on the east side of the house.⁴⁸ The detached kitchen remained, though a new tabby floor was poured. Flooring recovered during the 1977 excavations suggests that the kitchen was

⁴¹ Ibid. 3.

⁴² Ibid. 4.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-3.

⁴⁵ "Tour Outline," 4.

⁴⁶ Shepard Associates, "Design Development Presentation: Restoration of the DeMesa – Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," October 20, 1978, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 8.

⁴⁷ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 10.

⁴⁸ Shepard Associates, "Design Development Presentation: Restoration of the DeMesa – Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," 8.

seven feet wide.⁴⁹ In 1783 Stout made additional changes to the property by replacing the roof.⁵⁰ It is reasonable to suggest, with knowledge that the de Mesa House was utilized as an export office and townhouse, with knowledge that Stout owned his own plantation, and that he was employed as a government surveyor, Joseph Stout and his family were very well off. (Figure 5-2).

Stout was among many British citizens who left St. Augustine in 1784 when the Spanish were given control over Florida once again. Stout moved with his family to the Bahamas where he was a merchant and cotton planter.⁵¹

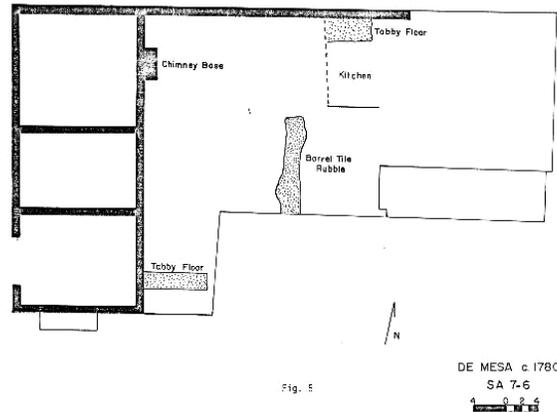


Figure 5-2. "De Mesa c. 1780."

The Second Spanish Period: 1784-1821

Development and history of block seven. Few changes occurred in the development of block seven during the second Spanish period. It remained a part of the

⁴⁹ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 11.

⁵⁰ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-3.

⁵¹ "Tour Outline," 4.

Menorcan Quarter as Menorcans became the largest population in St. Augustine at this time.⁵²

Owners and architecture. On August 11, 1784, Don Juan Sanchez purchased the de Mesa House for 450 pesos, later purchasing the land from the de Burgo property that Stout had used to extend the house.⁵³ According to a census completed in 1793 in St. Augustine, Juan Sanchez was born in 1748 to Juan Sanchez, and Catalina de Soto.⁵⁴ He was born in Puerto Real Andalusia, Spain, but moved to Cuba where he married Maria del Carmen Castaneda of St. Augustine; she was born in 1742.⁵⁵ Maria Castaneda had moved to Cuba during her first marriage to Jose Joaquin de Ortega, with whom she had one child.⁵⁶ Together Sanchez and Castaneda had two daughters, Maria Sanchez, born in 1779, and Maria de Rosario, born in 1785.⁵⁷ Their eldest daughter, Maria de los Dolores Sanchez, married Tomas de Aguilar, an official and secretary to the Governor.⁵⁸

The Sanchez family has been known as an influential family throughout the history of St. Augustine. Juan Sanchez worked as “Chief Master Caulker of the Royal

⁵² Rasico, “The Minorcan Population of St. Augustine in the Spanish Census of 1786,” 162.

⁵³ “Tour Outline,” 7.

⁵⁴ *Translated Abstracts of pre 1821 Spanish Censuses: Vol 1*, trans. Donna Rachal Mills (Tuscaloosa, Alabama and Naples, Florida: 1992) St. Augustine Historical Society Library, 91.

⁵⁵ Scardaville, “Preliminary Historic Report for the De Mesa Sanchez House (Spanish Inn) Site,” 4.

⁵⁶ “Tour Outline,” 6.

⁵⁷ *Translated Abstracts of pre 1821 Spanish Censuses: Vol 1*, 91.

⁵⁸ Lanthe Bond Hebel, *The Sanchez Family of St. Augustine, Florida* (Daytona Beach FL, 1952) St. Augustine Historical Library, 4.

works,” fixing Spanish ships, earning him an annual salary of 420 pesos.⁵⁹ From 1793 to 1794 the Royal Spanish Treasury and Treasurer’s quarters were located on the second floor of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, while Juan Chrisostomo de Acosta was treasurer.⁶⁰ 1793 census data shows that Sanchez owned four slaves, all whom were baptized.⁶¹ Juan Sanchez passed away in 1803; his wife inherited one half of his property, while the other half was inherited by his two daughters.⁶² The family stayed in the de Mesa-Sanchez house after his passing, and by 1814 nineteen people were living there; Juan Sanchez’s widow, Maria del Carmen, Tomas de Aguilar and his wife Maria, their six children, and ten slaves.⁶³

Juan Sanchez was responsible for one of the largest renovations of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. It is suspected that such grand changes were made due to the prosperity of his mercantile activities in the late 1780s, and that a majority of the first floor was used to hold his supplies.⁶⁴ Sanchez’s additions took place in two stages.

The first stage of construction took place between 1784 and 1788.⁶⁵ During the first stage two rooms were added to the house (forming what is referred to as the “east wing”) touching the north east side of the original house, extending along the north edge

⁵⁹ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-4.

⁶⁰ “Tour Outline,” 8.

Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-4.

⁶¹ *Translated Abstracts of pre 1821 Spanish Censuses: Vol 1.*, 91.

⁶² Scardaville, “Preliminary Historic Report for the De Mesa Sanchez House (Spanish Inn) Site,” 4.

⁶³ “Tour Outline,” 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Fisher and Shepard, Architects and Planners Inc., “Research Report: Restoration of the DeMesa-Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board,” 5.

of the property toward Matanzas Bay.⁶⁶ This changed the house from a rectangular plan to an L-shaped plan. The chimney built into the northwestern room of the house by Stout was replaced by a doorway into the new wing. During this phase, the three rooms used during the British period were transformed into only two rooms, and tabby flooring was poured throughout the entire first floor and over the paved loggia.⁶⁷ The kitchen was rebuilt; its location was moved 14 feet east; its new dimensions were 14.2 feet by 17.8 feet, with dirt flooring.⁶⁸

The second stage of Sanchez's construction took place between 1788 and 1791.⁶⁹ It was during this phase that the second floor of the de Mesa-Sanchez House was constructed.⁷⁰ This phase also included the construction of the balconys. One balcony was constructed on the west façade, a feature brought to St. Augustine by the British. The second balcony was built on the south side of the east wing; it included an exterior stair and covered first floor loggia with coquina piers.⁷¹ Few details about the interior of the de Mesa-Sanchez House are known, other than the inverted tea tray ceilings located in the second floor rooms.⁷² (Figure 5-3).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Deagan, "1977 Excavations of the de Mesa Sanchez House Interior," 27.

⁶⁸ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 12.

⁶⁹ Fisher and Shepard, Architects and Planners Inc., "Research Report: Restoration of the DeMesa-Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," 5.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 9.

⁷¹ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-2.

⁷² Fisher and Shepard, Architects and Planners Inc., "Research Report: Restoration of the DeMesa-Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," 5.

Though the Sanchez family remained in the house after Juan Sanchez's passing, they made no further alterations to the house. The de Mesa-Sanchez House remained their residence until 1832 when the family moved to Cuba.⁷³

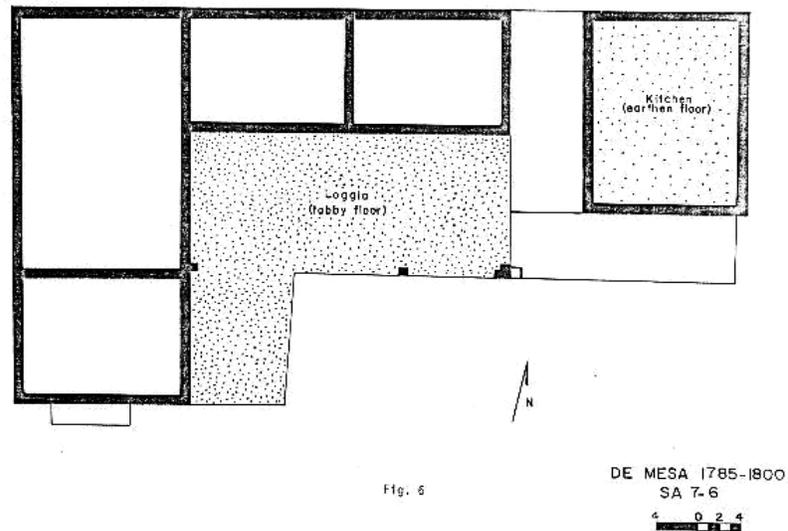


Figure 5-3. "De Mesa 1735-1800."

The American Territorial Period: 1821-1845

Development and history of block seven. During the American territorial period block seven continued to be a residential neighborhood in St. Augustine. While no documentation on this subject has been found, it is possible that there was some commercial influence in the area, considering the rise in tourism and the magnitude of commercialization that the area experienced after Florida became a state in 1845.

Owners and architecture. In 1832 the Sanchez family sold the de Mesa-Sanchez House to Lewis G. Melizet of Havana and John M. Melizet of Philadelphia. The

⁷³ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-4.

Melizets only owned the house for three years, selling it in 1835 to James Lisk of New Baltimore, New York.⁷⁴

Lisk was a carpenter; he owned the house for only two years.⁷⁵ He was a Quaker and suffered from tuberculosis.⁷⁶ Very little information is known about Lisk, and though he only owned the de Mesa House for a short time he had a great impact on its architecture. Using the masonry pillars already present, Lisk enclosed the loggia, and replaced the second floor balcony above, creating a new porch on the south side of the east wing.⁷⁷ When he built the new balcony, he enclosed part of the original, leaving the old window in place. The same was done when he enclosed the loggia, which is why there are windows on interior walls today. Lisk also rebuilt the kitchen into the house, extended the second floor of the east wing, and built the exterior stair along the south balcony. Lisk made extensive changes to the interior as well. The Neoclassical or Greek Revival details, evident on several window frames, would have been added at this time. Additionally, the interior walls of the rooms facing St. George Street were replaced with wood frame walls, giving that section of the de Mesa-Sanchez House a “Neoclassical symmetry.” The southernmost room of this wing became the living room. The chimney still located in this room was placed there during Lisk’s ownership. It is likely that the flooring of the house throughout the American territorial period was wood plank.⁷⁸ After

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Michael Scardaville, “History of the deMesa – Sanchez House,” 1981, 2.

⁷⁶ “Interpretive Furnishing Proposal for the De Mesa – Sanchez House,” no date, UFDC Historic St. Augustine Collection, 2.

⁷⁷ Shepard Associates, “Design Development Presentation: Restoration of the DeMesa – Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board,” 9.

⁷⁸ Smith, “De Mesa Site, Revisited,” 15.

renovating, Lisk finished the exterior of the house with “pink ashlor-scored stucco designed to protect the porous rock from moisture and give the impression of a grander stone building.”⁷⁹ The de Mesa House was restored to the American territorial period, and appears closely to the descriptions of work completed by James Lisk (Figure 5-4).

In 1837 Lisk’s heirs sold the de Mesa-Sanchez House to Seth Gifford of South Carolina, who was a third Lieutenant in Company G of the St. Augustine Guard during the Seminole War. Gifford never lived in the house, and there is no evidence he made any changes to it. The same year he purchased the de Mesa House it he rented it to Charles Loring, a soldier during the Seminole War.⁸⁰

The Loring family was among many early settlers in New England.⁸¹ Reuben Loring (father to Charles Loring) was born in Higham, Massachusetts, in 1787 and moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, marrying Hannah Kenan on May 19, 1811.⁸² Charles Loring was born in 1812 and in 1823 the family moved to St. Augustine.⁸³ At the age of eighteen Charles Loring married Mary Jane Cabell.⁸⁴ The couple had three daughters: Elizabeth, Catherine, and Emma (who passed away at nine months old). In 1839 Seth Gifford deeded the house to Mary Loring, and she assumed an \$800

⁷⁹ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-1.

⁸⁰ Ibid. B-4.

⁸¹ William L. Wessels, *Born to Be a Solider: The Military Career of William Wing Loring of St. Augustine, Florida* (Texas Christian University, 1971) St. Augustine Historical Society Library, 1.

⁸² Wessels, *Born to Be a Solider: The Military Career of William Wing Loring of St. Augustine, Florida*, 2.

⁸³ Susan Parker, “Historical Report for the Mesa – Sanchez and its Owners c. 1840,” September 1988, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 4.

⁸⁴ “Card One, Trinity Parish (BOA-7)” in Charles Loring Biographical Cards. St. Augustine Historical Society Library.

mortgage. A census completed in 1840 shows that Charles and Mary Loring, their two children, and five slaves lived in the household. In August of 1840 Mary Loring died from a “short and severe illness”; two months later the de Mesa House was foreclosed on.⁸⁵ Sometime after 1844 the house was purchased by Ann Hurlbert for \$550; she was the widow of Captain Daniel Hurlbert (1776-1836).⁸⁶

The only owner to have an influence on the structure of the de Mesa-Sanchez House during the American territorial period was James Lisk. The end of the American territorial period shows a trend that continues into the American period, many owners and renters staying in the house for a short time, making minimal changes.

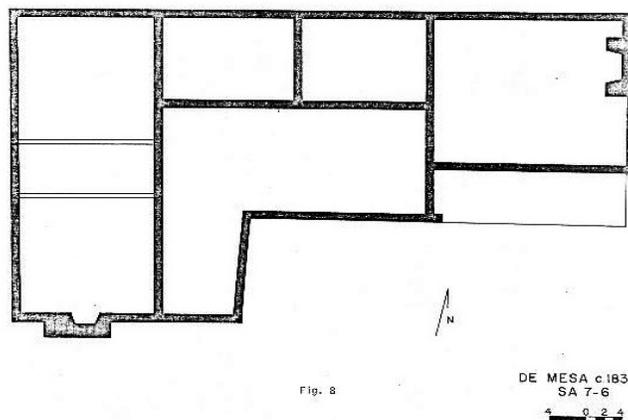


Figure 5-4. “De Mesa c. 1835.”

Florida Becomes a State: 1845

Development and history of block seven. When Florida became a state in 1845, block seven began developing into a commercial area, with shops and stores to satisfy those who moved to and visited St. Augustine from the north. “The post-Civil War

⁸⁵ Parker, “Historical Report for the Mesa – Sanchez and its Owners c. 1840,” 4-5, 8.

⁸⁶ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-5.

years brought intense commercialization to part of Hypolita Street and all of St. George Street as the main thoroughfare became lined with shops, boarding houses, and large hotels.”⁸⁷ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many historic buildings were demolished on St. George Street and replaced with brick commercial buildings. This area eventually became a “depressed business district.”⁸⁸

One invaluable resource available for understanding the development of St. Augustine during this period is the Sanborn Fire Map Insurance Company maps of St. Augustine in St. Johns County. The Sanborn Fire Map Insurance Company was founded in 1867 by D.A. Sanborn. “Sanborn Fire Insurance maps were designed to help fire insurance agents assess the degree of hazard associated with a particular property.”⁸⁹

The 1888 Sanborn Map depicts block seven as primarily residential surrounded by Fort Lane, St. George Street, and Cuna Street. At the Northwest corner of the block, the colonial site of the Gallegos house was the “San Salvador Hotel”. There are other commercial structures in block seven, north of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, including a “grocery”, “millinery” (hat maker) and “jeweler.” The rest of the block is domestic. Behind the de Mesa-Sanchez House there is a wooden structure labeled “Negro Tenement” possibly located in lot nine or ten. The block directly east of block seven, block twelve is extremely commercial. On lot eighteen of block twelve is a hotel call the “Cleveland house.” The de Mesa-Sanchez House was used commercially in 1888. In this year

⁸⁷ “Supplement for FMSF Site Forms: DeMesa – Sanchez House, 43 St. George Street,” 7. The American Civil war ended in 1865.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Sanborn Maps,” <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/maps/Sanborn/MAPNEWSANBORN.HTML>, accessed September 23, 2013.

cigars were sold in the north portion of the house and a barber shop was located in the southwest front room. Furthermore, there was a one-story, rectangular structure touching the south side of the de Mesa-Sanchez House labeled “Shooting gall’y.”⁹⁰

The commercialization in the area around block seven was again evident in the 1893 Sanborn map. In the northwest corner of the lot, the San Salvador hotel was called “the Abby.” While the north of the de Mesa-Sanchez House that once held a “millinery” and “jeweler” was converted to residential use, other buildings north of the house include a book store and cigar shop. The “Negro Tenement” that was located behind the house in 1888 still existed in 1893. Located south of the de Mesa-Sanchez House in 1893 was a “grocery,” “tailor,” and “racket store,” though the buildings along Cuna Street were residential. Furthermore, the “Cleveland House” had changed to the “Colombia Hotel,” The de Mesa-Sanchez House itself was still used commercially in 1893 with “fruits” sold out of the northern portion of the house and an “office” in the southwest front room; the “shooting gall’y” touching the south side of the house was labeled “music” and was likely a store.⁹¹

The Sanborn map of St. Augustine in 1899 shows a slight shift back to a residential neighborhood for block seven. This is also the first Sanborn map to show lot lines for the block. “The Abby” was still located in the northwest corner of block seven in lot one. One other commercial building was located north of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, a “shoe” store in lot five. The building that was labeled “Negro Tenement” in past maps was not on the 1899 map. The “Columbia Hotel” still dominated the

⁹⁰ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1893,” UF Map and Imagery Library, Sheet 4.

These streets continue to border block seven through history and still border it today.

⁹¹ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1893,” Sheet 4.

southeast corner of block twelve. The 1899 map identifies the rectangular wooden structure that touches the south wall the of the de Mesa-Sanchez house as being located within lot six; it was listed as a “bicycle” shop. Additionally, according to this map there was a one-story wooden structure in the back of lot six, used for “storage.” The entirety of the de Mesa-Sanchez House is now labeled “Pianos and Organs.” The piano and organ store was run by Frank Sulzer who purchased the house in 1892 and left it to his heirs when he passed away in 1899.⁹²

The 1904 map depicts the north portion of block as residential, though “the Abby” still stood in the same location. To the south of the de Mesa-Sanchez House is a “printing” shop and “tailor” and the “Columbia Hotel” appears in the same location on the 1904 map as it had in previous maps.⁹³ The de Mesa-Sanchez House was not in use during the creation of this map. After her father’s death, Sallie Sulzer held the property until 1905.⁹⁴

By the time the 1910 Sanborn map was created, “The Abby” on the colonial Gallegos site had turned into the “Arlington Hotel.” To the south of the de Mesa-Sanchez House there was a “printing” shop and “tailor;” however, the rest of the block was primarily domestic. Additionally, there were no noticeable changes to the exterior of the de Mesa-Sanchez House, and no use listed. The rectangular, wooden structure in lot six on the south side of the house, once used as a “shooting gall’y,” “music” store

⁹² Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1899,” UF Map and Imagery Library, Sheet 2.

⁹³ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1904,” UF Map and Imagery Library, Sheet 4.

⁹⁴ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-5.

and “bicycle” store was gone by March of 1910. There is, however, a new building in lot six. A small two-story dwelling shares the lot with the de Mesa-Sanchez House. The new building’s south side is centered on the south lot line of lot six. The building’s address is 47 St. George Street.⁹⁵

By 1924 the “Arlington Hotel” had become the “Rectors Hotel” on lot one of block seven. This was not the only hotel north of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. The “New Dixie Highway Hotel” was located at 35 St. George Street. During the time the July 1924 Sanborn map was being created there had been no changes to the de Mesa-Sanchez House and no use noted. At 47 St. George Street, a path traveled from the street east, behind the de-Mesa Sanchez House, where a small one-story dwelling was located, again sharing lot six.⁹⁶

When the next Sanborn map for St. Augustine was created in 1930, the “Rectors Hotel,” and “New Dixie Highway Hotel” were still located in block seven, north of lot six. Located south of the de Mesa-Sanchez House in block seven was a large “Cigar Factory.” The de Mesa-Sanchez site had undergone some changes as well. The house was partially unused, while another portion of the house was used as a “store.” There were now three addresses associated with it, 41-45 St. George Street. Additionally, at

⁹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida, March 1910,” In “De Mesa Sanchez Historical Research,” Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, #975.9189301 Dem. V.4., UFHSA Digitization Lab, Sheet 4.

⁹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida, July 1924,” In “De Mesa Sanchez Historical Research,” Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, #975.9189301 Dem. V.4., UFHSA Digitization Lab, Sheet 3.

the back of lot six, behind the de Mesa-Sanchez House was a large two-story residence.⁹⁷

Owners and architecture. In 1851 Ann Hurlbert sold the house to her daughter and son -in-law, Mary and Darius Allen, for \$550.⁹⁸ Over the next 100 years the house belonged to various owners and was rented to many tenants. Few changes were made to the house until Margret Butler purchased the property in 1912. Mrs. Butler had two large arched openings that faced St. George Street put in, had the west balcony removed and had a clay tile bungalow built at the back of the lot (Figure 5-5).⁹⁹

Additionally, the 1930 Sanborn map indicates that the structure of the de-Mesa Sanchez House was changed with the removal or enclosure of the exterior stairs.¹⁰⁰ After World War II Margaret Butler leased the property to Ruth Pontius, who opened the “Old Spanish Inn.” She furnished guest rooms with antiques and created a popular restaurant enjoyed by both tourists and locals. In 1952 the Wiles sold the de Mesa-Sanchez property to Marguerita Phillips, a poet and artist in St. Augustine. In 1954 Phillips leased the house to Walter B. Fraser (1888-1972), who had served as mayor to St Augustine from 1936 until 1943. Fraser was a leading force for preservation in St.

⁹⁷ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1930,” In “De Mesa Sanchez Historical Research,” Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, #975.9189301 Dem. V.4., UFHSA Digitization Lab, Sheet 4.

⁹⁸ Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-5.

Darius Allen was a carpenter and became commissioner of pilotage in 1871. One son of Mary and Darius was a sea captain, fire chief, and boarding house proprietor.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Sanborn Map Company, “St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida 1899,” Sheet 2.

Augustine. In 1958 Gerald Horton Bath, former public relations director for the St. Augustine tourist center took over Fraser's lease.¹⁰¹

G.H. Bath took responsibility for the preservation of the de Mesa site, good intentions that would not be appreciated when the city took over the building less than a decade later. Bath believed an Inn had been located at the de Mesa site during the Spanish and British periods.¹⁰² With this belief, he made every effort to restore it. Bath took photographs and building drawings to Spain. He had an antique firm, Abelardo Linares of Madrid, create all of Inn's furnishings. He reconstructed the west balcony (though made it only half as wide so that it would not be disturbed by traffic), and had a sidewalk lain in front of the building to protect it from traffic.¹⁰³ One unfortunate action was the removal of the buildings stucco, which allowed water to penetrate the coquina walls, eventually damaging original floors and wood work.¹⁰⁴ The "Old Spanish Inn" opened to the public on July 4, 1959, as a museum exhibit that did not sell food or rent rooms; the museum was not popular and had financial difficulties (Figure 5-6). In 1963 Bath purchased the property from Marguerita Philips for \$35,000, mortgaging it for the same amount, and soon after put it on the market for \$150,000. Two years later, in 1965, he sold it to the St. Augustine Restoration Foundation for significantly less than his asking price.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-5.

¹⁰² Ibid. B-6.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Herschel Shepard, Lecture to University of Florida Historic Preservation students in DCP 6711 and DCP 6716 at the Colonial Quarter on September 16, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.



Figure 5-5. "De Mesa-Sanchez House from St. George Street looking Northeast, ca. 1955."

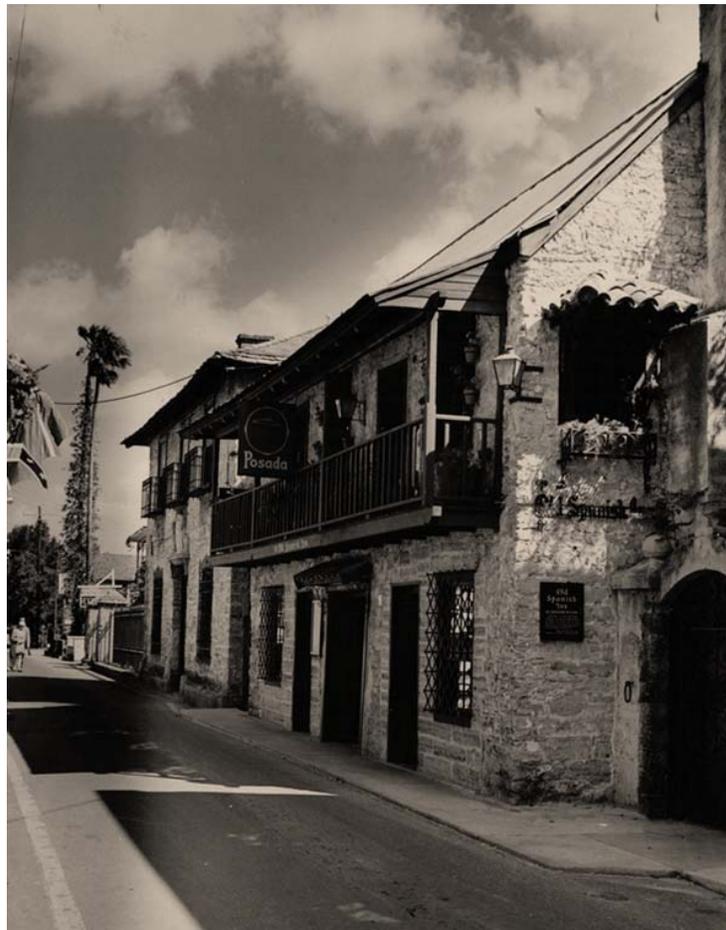


Figure 5-6. "The Old Spanish Inn after restoration work from St. George Street, looking Northeast, ca. 1960."

Pre Restoration Interpretation

The Old Spanish Inn was owned by the Restoration Foundation until 1977, and continued being interpreted as the Old Spanish Inn. Interpretation continued to include the furnishings brought into the museum by Bath. In 1971 the *Historic St. Augustine Preservation Guidebook* was released, describing twenty-eight historic buildings in St. Augustine, including the Old Spanish Inn.¹⁰⁶

Restoration

The Historic St. Augustine Preservation board purchased the Old Spanish Inn from the Restoration Foundation in 1977.¹⁰⁷ Within the next two years, extensive efforts to document, restore, and interpret the site were made.

Excavations

The first steps in the restoration process were excavations. The first set of excavations took place between March and September of 1977, made possible through a grant from the National Park Service.¹⁰⁸ Dr. Kathleen Deagan led the Florida State University Field School.¹⁰⁹ Archeological work focused in the floor of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. Trenches for climate control were strategically dug by members of the field school, gaining archeological evidence of the houses four major stages of evolution.¹¹⁰ Additional excavations included the yard of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. In June on 1977 a barrel well was excavated and dated to the first Spanish period in St.

¹⁰⁶ Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, *Historic St. Augustine Guide Book*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-6.

¹⁰⁸ Deagan, "1977 Excavations of the de Mesa Sanchez House Interior," 6.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 2.

¹¹⁰ Shepard, Lecture at the Colonial Quarter.

Augustine.¹¹¹ Archeology continued at the site in 1978 by John Bostwick for the St. Augustine Preservation Board.¹¹² Little evidence of Bostwick's findings are available. However, a 1981 report by John Smith titled, *De Mesa Site Revisited*, examines the findings of both Bostwick's and Deagan's excavations, suggesting that both were interested in researching the site's architecture and cultural artifacts.

Restoring the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Restorations of the de Mesa-Sanchez House took place between 1978 and 1980 with Herschel Shepard as project architect.¹¹³ With his expertise in restoration work, especially in St. Augustine, he knew that the best restoration would have to include more than the first Spanish period home. During this time the Preservation Board was restoring everything to the first Spanish or British periods. However, Shepard convinced the Board to restore the house to the American territorial period, preserving as much historic fabric as possible.¹¹⁴

The period the de Mesa-Sanchez House was restored to was between the years 1830 and 1840.¹¹⁵ Before restoration work began there were windows, door trim, and hardware that reflected the territorial and Greek Revival styles of the mid 1800s.¹¹⁶ Rooms east of the kitchen on both the first and second floors were demolished.

¹¹¹ Huston, "SA 7-6 the DeMesa site: Excavation of a Colonial Spanish Well in St. Augustine, Florida," 5.

¹¹² Smith, "De Mesa Site, Revisited," 2.

¹¹³ Nolan, "Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House," B-2.

¹¹⁴ Ortiz, "Interview with Herschel Shepard," 40.

¹¹⁵ Herschel E. Shepard, "'re: Design development Drawings, Restoration of the de Mesa Sanchez House, State Project N.DOS-3200', Letter to William Adams, Director of the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, November 29, 1978", in "De Mesa Architectural Research," Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, #975.9189301 Dem. V.1. UFHSA Digitization Lab.

¹¹⁶ Ortiz, "Interview with Herschel Shepard," 40.

Furthermore, the second floor room above room 104 (today's exhibit room) was demolished and replaced with a shed roof. Door and window openings were rearranged into their positions during the American territorial period; for example, the widow on the east side of the living room chimney was filled in. Additionally, fenestration on the façade of the house was taken back from three doors to one door in the center and two windows. Another change that took place during restoration was the removal of the second floor balcony stairs added after 1845. These were replaced with stairs on the south side of the east wing. Both the back balcony and loggia were restored to American territorial resemblance as well. The estimated cost of the de Mesa-Sanchez restoration on October 20, 1978, was \$109,375.¹¹⁷ This included restoration, new construction, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and demolition. An additional \$2,000 was estimated for the house museum's exhibit.¹¹⁸

Additional attempts to restore the de Mesa-Sanchez House to the American territorial period included an extensive paint analysis by Frank Welsh of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, which took place on May 1, 1979.¹¹⁹ On the exterior, paint samples were taken from portions of the building added during the 1830s.¹²⁰ Exterior samples proved that the stucco of the building was pink; the pigment composed of calcium carbonate,

¹¹⁷ Shepard, "re: Design development Drawings, Restoration of the de Mesa Sanchez House, State Project N.DOS-3200', Letter to William Adams, Director of the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, November 29, 1978".

¹¹⁸ Shepard Associates, "Design Development Presentation: Restoration of the DeMesa – Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board," 5.

¹¹⁹ Frank C. Welsh, "de Mesa Sanchez House ca. 1835 St. Augustine, Florida: Microscopic Paint and Color Analysis of Interior and Exterior to Determine the Original Architectural Surface Coatings", in "De Mesa House Reports on Interior and Exterior Finishes," Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, #975.9189301 Dem. V.3. UFHSA Digitization Lab.

¹²⁰ Robert Stewart, "The 'Pinking' of St. George Street," *Ancient City Beacon: Heritage*, June 25, 1982, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 3.

iron oxide (yellow), Carbon (black from animal bones), and iron oxide (creating red from red ochre).¹²¹ The original finish was described as “pink ashlar-scored stucco”, which once protected the porous coquina from moisture.¹²² The restored color had community members in uproar, some of whom even spray-painted the building.¹²³ Paint analysis on the interior of the building took place as well, revealing common colors of white, light and dark grays, reddish brown, and a pale green for walls, with white for first floor trim work, and dark brown stain for second floor trim.¹²⁴ Interior restorations were intensive as well. Wooden floors and base boards on the first floor were installed over the second Spanish period floors using a technique called “blind nailing,” making it obvious that the flooring was not original.¹²⁵ Some features such as the second floor wooden floor, inverted tea tray ceilings, fireplace mantels, and windows simply needed restoration and not replacing.¹²⁶

Though controversial at times, the restoration of the de Mesa-Sanchez House followed the best practices of preservation, many of which are still followed today. While restoring the house Hershel Shepard, Robert Stewart and countless others believed their work to “to be in accord with the best practice in the field of preservation as

¹²¹ Welsh, “de Mesa Sanchez House ca. 1835 St. Augustine, Florida: Microscopic Paint and Color Analysis of Interior and Exterior to Determine the Original Architectural Surface Coatings.”

¹²² Nolan, “Florida Master Site File Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Historic Properties Inventory Form: De Mesa-Sanchez House,” B-1.

¹²³ Shepard, Lecture at the Colonial Quarter.

¹²⁴ Welsh, “de Mesa Sanchez House ca. 1835 St. Augustine, Florida: Microscopic Paint and Color Analysis of Interior and Exterior to Determine the Original Architectural Surface Coatings.”

¹²⁵ Julie Anne Woodcock, “A Report: Part I, The De Mesa Sanchez House St. Augustine, Florida,” February 8, 1994, in “De House: Guides’ Manual”, St. Augustine Preservation Board, UFHSA Digitization Lab, 9.

¹²⁶ Shepard, Lecture at the Colonial Quarter.

promulgated by the National Park Service and National Trust for Historic Preservation”.¹²⁷ Since the 1978-1980 restoration no other restorations of the de Mesa-Sanchez House have been required.

Past Interpretations of the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Since the restoration of the de Mesa-Sanchez House was finished in 1980; the interpretation of the house has gone through many changes. This structure has been used as both a stand-alone house museum, as well as part of a larger museum, which incorporated other buildings in the Spanish Quarter.

San Agustin Antiquo (Old St. Augustine)

Interpretation of the San Agustin Antiquo Spanish Village began before the completion of de Mesa-Sanchez restoration in the late 1970s. During its early stages a ticket purchased at the ticket booth located on the northwest side of St. George Street admitted visitors to all of the restored or reconstructed houses on St. George Street.¹²⁸ By the time restorations and exhibits of the de Mesa-Sanchez House were complete in 1977-1982, the San Agustin Antiquo Spanish Village included only the Riberia House on the west side of St. George, the de Mesa House and all reconstructions on the east side of St. George Street. Interpretation included eighteenth century Spanish colonial lifestyles with the exception of the Pellicer-de Burgo House (interpreting British style Architecture) and the de Mesa House (interpreting the American territorial period). The

¹²⁷ Fisher and Shepard, Architects and Planners Inc., “Research Report: Restoration of the DeMesa-Sanchez House for the St. Augustine Preservation Board,” 2.

¹²⁸ St. Augustine Restoration Inc., *Welcome to San Agustin Antiquo (Old St. Augustine) A Restored 18th Century Spanish Village by the State of Florida St. George Street Walking Tour*, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 2.

de Mesa-Sanchez House gave regular house tours every hour and half hour, but was the last stop for anyone touring the San Agustin Antiguo Village.¹²⁹

This project was the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board's first attempt at interpreting domestic life in Florida's American territorial period.¹³⁰ The topics interpreted during the tour were very diverse. A slide show in the kitchen related the history of the de Mesa-Sanchez House to the history of St. Augustine and illustrated the restoration process.¹³¹ Slides included pictures of the de Mesa House before, during and after restoration efforts, the reconstruction of the Pellicer-de Burgo House, photos from excavations, and additional photos of the preservation and research that was taking place in St. Augustine.¹³²

Additional interpretation within the de Mesa-Sanchez House included traditional furnishings and museum exhibits. The themes planned by Robert Stewart, curator for the St. Augustine Preservation Board, explored the history of the house holistically, from the first Spanish period into the American territorial period.¹³³ Rooms furnished in the de Mesa House reflected the American territorial style and living conditions and did not reflect the story of any individual occupant. Plans for the early 1980s interpretation indicate that Neoclassical furnishings, to match the architectural details of the house,

¹²⁹ St. Augustine Restoration Inc. Interpretive Material. "San Agustin Antiguo Museum," UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 2.

¹³⁰ "Interpretive Furnishing Proposal for the De Mesa – Sanchez House," 1.

¹³¹ Marsha Chance, "Letter to David Scott: DeMesa House Project Proposal," July 19, 1988, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 3.

¹³² "De Mesa House Slide Show," no date, UFDC Historic St. Augustine.

¹³³ R. Stewart, "Outline of themes, information and visual materials for deMesa exhibit," July 1981, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 1.

were used along with high quality vernacular furniture. Interpretive objects in the de Mesa-Sanchez House depicted the “general characteristics of frontier life.”¹³⁴

Exhibits in the house told the stories of past owners and significant events of each historic period in St. Augustine, as well as information about restoration and archeology related to the site. The evolving architecture of the house that changed with each occupant was explored with graphics and a scale model, likely the one on display in room 104 today.¹³⁵ Early interpretation also included depictions of the roles of diverse ethnic groups throughout the history of St. Augustine such as Native Americans, Menorcans and Blacks.

1988 Re-Interpretation

By 1988 the St. Augustine Preservation Board decided to re-interpret the de Mesa-Sanchez House. It is probable this was due partially to changes in the de Mesa-Sanchez House admission practices. Previously, the house was part of the San Agustin Village Museum, and now individual tickets for only the de Mesa House were sold at the front entrance by the late 1980s.¹³⁶

As an individual house museum, interpretation changed to more traditional methods; furnishings were used to tell the story of a specific individual or family. Interpreters felt that without this there would be “no human aspect” for visitors to relate to. During the initial proposal to re-interpret the house, the St. Augustine Preservation Board did not know who lived in the house during the American territorial period. One

¹³⁴ “Interpretive Furnishing Proposal for the De Mesa – Sanchez House,” 3, 13.

¹³⁵ “These are the Topics that will be Presented in the deMesa exhibit,” no date, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 1.

¹³⁶ Amy Bushnell, “Memo to Norma Lockwood, Bill Adams, Hector Miron, Bob Steinbach, Susan Clark, Cookie O'Brien, Jimmy Smith, Gayle Prevatt,” July 17, 1884, UFDC Historic St. Augustine, 1.

suggestion was that interpreters “create a scenario” based upon the possibility that northern or Menorcan renters may have occupied the house at some time, interpreting only one story and one family.¹³⁷

Once re-interpretation was underway historian, Susan Parker researched the previous occupants of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. She discovered that Charles and Mary Loring lived in the house during the late 1830s, purchasing it in 1839.¹³⁸ The house was refurnished to depict the Loring’s lifestyle.

Current Interpretation

The Colonial Quarter, leased by Pat Croce and Company, opened in March 2013. The company’s mission statement outlines their goal for interpretation.

To preserve, educate, entertain and to interpret the story of Colonial St. Augustine spanning centuries of layered history through quality, engaging programs and the architecture and lifestyles of our nation’s oldest city; and to express through authentic and interactive museum exhibitions and immersive living history experiences the important role St. Augustine and its diverse peoples have played in the cultural and historical development of America.¹³⁹

The Colonial Quarter focuses on Spanish and British Colonial Periods, interpreting the lifestyles of the Spanish, British, Native Americans, African Americans and Menorcans through the use of “costumed interpreters,” “demonstrations,” “hands-on activities” and “immersive dioramas.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Chance, “Letter to David Scott: DeMesa House Project Proposal, 2-3.

¹³⁸ Parker, “Historical Report for the Mesa – Sanchez and its Owners c. 1840,” 4.

¹³⁹ “Colonial Quarter- Discover Centuries of St. Augustine: Interpretive Plan,” unpublished) August 22, 2012, 3.

¹⁴⁰ “Colonial Quarter- Discover Centuries of St. Augustine: Interpretive Plan”, 3-4.

Within the interpretive plan, the de Mesa-Sanchez House is labeled British colonial and located in the “18th Century British: 14th Colony” section of the museum.¹⁴¹ In this section the Colonial Quarter aims to interpret subjects such as cultural diversity, colonial architecture and historic preservation.¹⁴² According to Cindy Stavely, Executive Director of the Colonial Quarter, the de Mesa House interpretation currently focuses on the evolution of the de Mesa architecture.¹⁴³ (Figure 5-7).



Figure 5-7. Exterior of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. Photo by author.

Tour Summary

The tour (taken by this author) took place on Saturday, October 5, 2013 from 4:00pm to approximately 5:00pm. The tour began some distance away from the gift

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 5.

¹⁴² Ibid. 8.

¹⁴³ Cindy, Stavely, Conference with UF Historic Preservation students in DCP 6711 and DCP 6716 at the Colonial Quarter on September 16, 2013.

shop, where tickets are purchased, at the “Ship” (X marks the spot on the museum map). Visitors are greeted by a costumed interpreter posing as Pedro Menendez, a pirate who established St. Augustine on behalf of King Philip II of Spain in 1565. At this location the route the Spaniards took from Spain to Florida is discussed, as well as life on the sea. Next, a child is selected to hold a small anchor and act as the ocean while Pedro Menendez discusses how a ship’s speed was measured in knots. From the reconstructed ship visitors follow Pedro Menendez to the blacksmith’s shop, stopping twice to discuss tabby and coquina as important building materials in St. Augustine. While at the blacksmith’s shop, Pedro Menendez gives a short demonstration of forming iron and what would actually be made there, explaining that weapons in colonial St. Augustine could only be made at the Armory, the next stop on the visitor’s tour. While at the Armory, visitors observe the change in weaponry throughout colonial times until a musket demonstration is given. The strength and importance of the Castillo de San Marcos are explained here as well. From this location Pedro Menendez leads his guests to the home of a soldier, the Gallegos house; this is a reconstructed first Spanish Period home rebuilt by the St. Augustine Preservation Board in the 1960s. The interpreter, who was honest about the reconstruction, also discusses family life as well the influence of the Spaniards on agriculture in St. Augustine and Florida, with the introduction of crops such as citrus trees. From the Gallegos House the tourists move to their next location. The tour slows while the Gomez House is mentioned and visitors are invited to look at the printing shop after the conclusion of their tour. Outside the de Mesa Sanchez house is a cannon. At this location a cannon drill allows up to four visitors to participate, pretending to clean and ready the cannon for firing with the use of tools and a little gun

powder for theatrics. From here the tourists make it to their final stop, the de Mesa-Sanchez House. Very little of the house is explored as part of the guided tour, and visitors enter an interior exhibit room. The first owner of the house, Antonio de Mesa, and his family are discussed briefly. Pedro Menendez also presents an exhibit illustrating the architectural changes of the house over the four historical periods in St. Augustine: the first Spanish period, the English period, the second Spanish period and the American period. At this point the tour had ended, and visitors are invited to explore the house (including the balcony that overlooks St. George Street), explore the rest of the museum, or meet their interpreter outside to answer questions.

Critique of the Interpretation at the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Architecture

While the exhibit in the house gives visitors a good view at how the exterior architecture of the house has changed, it was apparent that visitors were still confused about the changes as they walked through the house on their own, despite coded floor plans available in each room. For example, there were discussions about where exactly the one-room original house would have been. Additionally, visitors cannot fully grasp the changes that occurred on the first floor because the two north rooms on the first floor (between the bedroom and the kitchen) were closed. This leaves areas such as the storage and servants rooms inaccessible, closing off portions of the second Spanish period architecture. (Figure 5-8).

History

On the tour both Antonio de Mesa and Juan Sanchez are briefly discussed. Visitors who tour the house on their own only have the opportunity to learn about de

Mesa through a sign on the wall. This prevents visitors from making a connection with past lifestyles, as they can learn very little about these individuals.



Figure 5-8. Exhibit Room at the de Mesa-Sanchez House. Photo by author.

Furnishings

Interpretive furnishings in the de Mesa-Sanchez House are not an effective tool. Room 103 is extremely confusing (Figure 5-9A). This room is furnished as a bedroom. The room may have been used in such a way during de Mesa's occupancy, while the Spanish Treasury was located on the second floor, or possibly in the American territorial period as a boarder's room, but because there is no explanation, the placing of this furniture is odd. Additionally, furnishings are not telling a story. They are placed behind rope barriers and are not arranged in an educational manner. There are no everyday objects to show visitors how people lived in any of the historic periods (Figure 5-9).



Figure 5-9. Current Furnishings in the de Mesa-Sanchez House. A) Furnishings in the northwest room of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. B) Furnishings in the dining room of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. Photos by author.

Recommendations for Interpreting the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Interpretation of the de Mesa-Sanchez House has been a constant challenge.

Each stewardship organization has struggled to fit an American territorial building into a larger Colonial setting. Considering that the de Mesa House is the only original historic building on the site, greater efforts should be made interpret the house to visitors.

Additional challenges have arisen with engaging visitors who are not passionate about the site's history or architecture.

Choosing Interpretive Subjects

The first step is choosing interpretive subjects for a house museum should be carefully researching the history of the building and its occupants. A stewardship organization may choose to start with important documents on the site such as Historic

Landmark Nominations, National Register Nominations, Historic American Building Surveys, or state inventory files. It is important for organizations to understand that reading these documents should not be the extent of their research on the site. Additionally, when re-interpreting a site, a stewardship organization should not focus on one significant period of time predetermined by existing documentation because in doing so they will miss out on other potential subjects.

Created by the author, Figure 5-10 provides a guide for choosing stories to interpret. This chart provides questions that each stewardship organization should ask while developing interpretive subjects. Following this chart will allow the organization to develop multiple viewpoints and topics of interest. Additionally, it allows stewardship organizations to consider how they can set themselves apart from other historic sites in their region.

Upon selecting possible interpretive subjects, multiple stakeholders should be involved. Members of the museum's governing board, the executive director, interpreters, school teachers and potential visitors should be included. Surveying visitors or conducting focus groups are two ways to involve visitors. Stewardship organizations should also review their museum's mission statement. It may be outdated, and should be rewritten to reflect the house museum's goals. Lastly, if school groups visit the site, some interpretive subjects should reflect state learning standards.

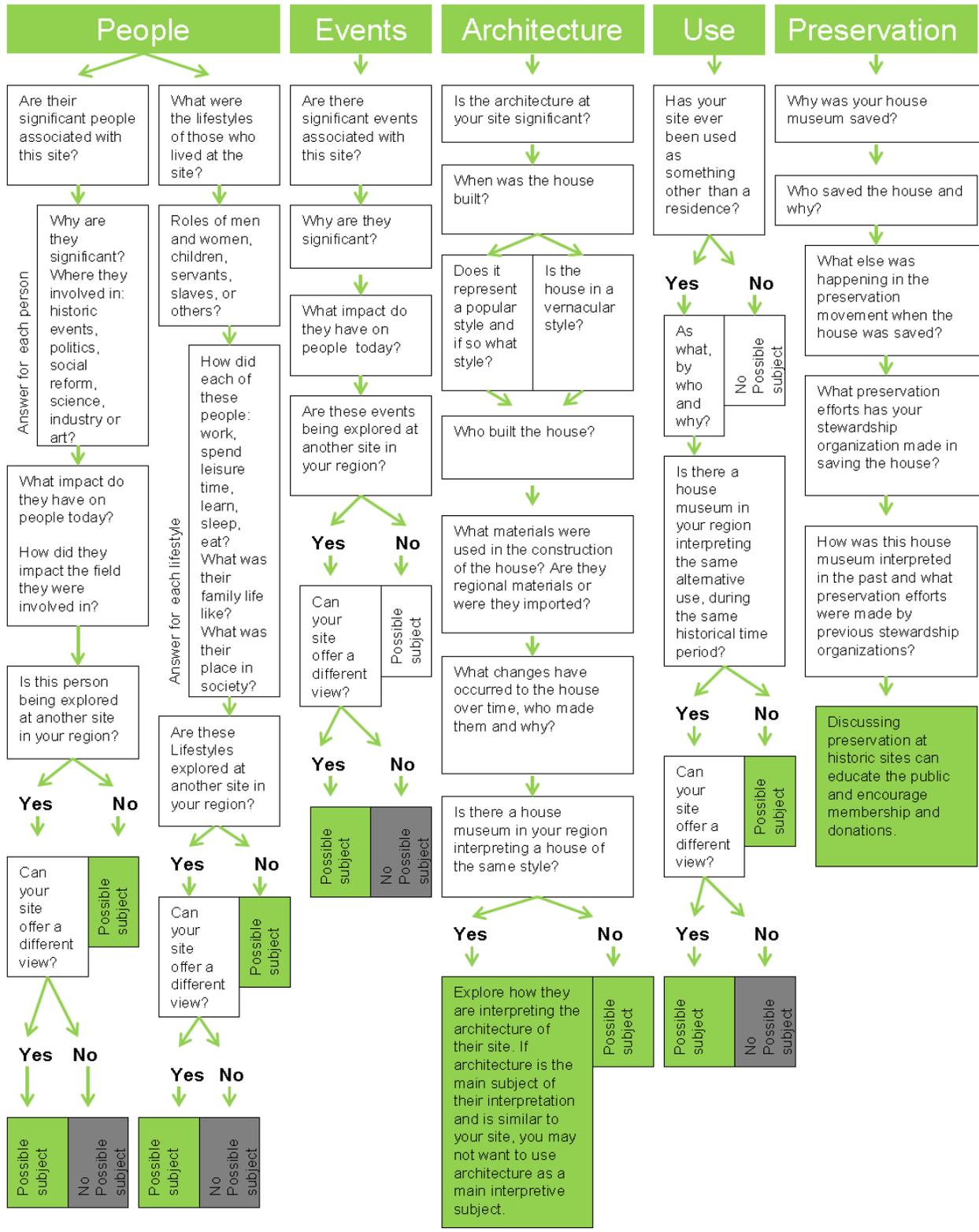


Figure 5-10. Choosing Interpretive Subjects for a House Museum. Image by author.

Choosing Interpretive Subjects for the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Important people. The de Mesa- Sanchez House is not associated with any significant owners. No one who lived in the house made any major contributions to historic events, politics, social reform, science, industry or art.

Lifestyles. There are several lifestyles that are reflected in the history of the de Mesa-Sanchez House. They include the first Spanish colonial, British colonial, second Spanish period colonial, and American territorial lifestyles. The life styles of many minority groups could be interpreted here as well.

The first Spanish colonial lifestyle is already interpreted at the Colonial Quarter at the Gallegos House, and therefore it should not be repeated at the de Mesa House as most information would be repetitive. While the British period and second Spanish period colonial lifestyles are not interpreted at house museums in the Colonial Quarter, both are explained at the Oldest House. Visitors who have been to that site may not be interested in hearing the same information at the de Mesa House.

The American territorial lifestyle is briefly discussed at the Ximenez-Fatio House in St. Augustine; however, that site focuses more on tourism during that time. The de Mesa House could focus on depicting lifestyles during that period, though the Colonial Quarter would need to revisit their mission statement.

There are several minority lifestyles that could be interpreted through the de Mesa-Sanchez House. One story that could be told is of the Native Americans who lived on the site while enslaved during the construction of the Castillo. The Castillo de San Marcos, a National Park Service site, does not explain the role of these Native Americans. The lifestyle of slaves in St. Augustine could also be interpreted at the de Mesa-Sanchez House. The roles of slaves in the city are ignored at every historic site,

not only neglecting a significant portion of the town's past population, but neglecting a subject of potential visitor interest as well. Three long term owners of the site, Antonio de Mesa, Joseph Stout, and Don Juan Sanchez, were all slave owners. While some slaves may not have lived at the house, in the 1814 census the Sanchez's are listed living with ten slaves on the de Mesa property.¹⁴⁴ Lastly, the lifestyle of the Menorcans who lived on block seven should be interpreted. Menorcans made up a large population in St. Augustine during and after the British Period. Very little is interpreted on this group throughout the city. Limited information stating that the group was known as carpenters and fishermen is often explained, while the group's history as indentured servants and impact on St. Augustine is ignored.

Events. The de Mesa- Sanchez house is not associated with any major historic events.

Architecture. The architecture of the de Mesa-Sanchez House is a fascinating subject. The house evolved with the ownership of four major owners: Antonio de Mesa, Joseph Stout, Don Juan Sanchez and James Lisk. This evolution has followed major vernacular trends, popular throughout different periods in St. Augustine history. No other site in St. Augustine has attempted to focus its interpretation on such architectural transitions.

Use. The de Mesa- Sanchez house was not always used as a residence. After Florida became a state in 1845, many residences, especially on St. George Street, were transformed into commercial structures to meet the needs of northern tourists. The de Mesa- Sanchez house had many uses including a grocery, barber's shop, and antique

¹⁴⁴ "Tour Outline," 8.

store. The commercialization of St. George Street is not interpreted elsewhere in St. Augustine, and would be a great topic for the de Mesa House.

Preservation. The preservation movement in St. Augustine has an interesting past, and while some sites focus on their individual preservation, no site focused on the movement as a whole. The first preservation efforts made by G.H. Bath, transforming the house into the Old Spanish Inn, provide an interesting aspect of the house's history, while allowing for comparison on how preservation has changed over time. The restoration of the de Mesa house was controversial though. Preservationists, such as Hershel Shepard and Robert Stewart made difficult decisions that would be applauded by professionals today. Getting the St. Augustine Preservation Board to agree that the de Mesa House should be restored to the American territorial period was a task of its own, as the board pushed for recreating St. Augustine's Spanish colonial past. Additionally, once restored to its American territorial pink, ashlar stucco finish, the house was a target for a backlash from the community. Lastly, the colonial reconstructions on St. George Street are not interpreted anywhere else. Many visitors to the historic city do not even know they are reconstructions. The Colonial Quarter includes several of these buildings and could interpret their creation through an exhibit in the de Mesa House.

Choosing Interpretive Methods

Choosing which interpretive methods are right for a historic house museum is not as straightforward as choosing its subjects. The use of multiple techniques will foster many different experiences on site. Additionally, different methods will appeal to a diverse group of visitors. Table 5-1 was created by the author to explore the potential of various interpretation methods.

Table 5-1. Choosing Interpretive Methods for a House Museum

Interpretive Methods	Pros	Cons	Considerations	Other Options
Guided Tours	Guided Tours allow visitors to interact with someone on site, giving them someone to ask questions of. Interpreters can also keep an eye out to ensure visitors and resources are safe.	Guided tours may be ineffective if interpreters are not knowledgeable about the site. Visitors may also be frustrated if their questions go unanswered. Some visitors may be uncomfortable when forced to interact with a costumed interpreter.	Interpreters should have ample training time. The most successful interpreters are those who are allowed to customize their tour based on guidelines rather than following a ridged script.	Other tour types include cell phone tours, tablet tours, or a virtual tour available through the museum's website or interactive display.
Interactive Displays	Interactive displays give visitors something to participate in. They are also a good option when interpreting subjects not covered by a tour.	Interactive displays can become damaged if used inappropriately. They are also difficult to update. An interactive display is limited in the questions it can answer based upon preprogrammed information.	Interactive displays give your visitor something to do on their own. They can be high- or low-tech. Interactive displays give visitors the option to customize their experience, especially when they are high-tech.	Interactive games, tours, or stories can be put on the museum's website. They can also be made available through a smart phone app.
Exhibits	Visitors can choose what exhibits they want to see and how much time they want to spend at each exhibit. Exhibits are a great way to display cultural objects that may make other methods, such as tours, take up too much time. Some exhibits such as text panels are not difficult to change. Changing exhibits may encourage repeat visits.	If used too often visitors may become bored by exhibits. Some high-tech exhibits, such as ones that play a loop video, may be difficult to change. It may be difficult for house museums to loan or obtain items for use in changing exhibits.	Text for exhibits should be written with visitors in mind. In some regions, such as Florida, it is essential that the text be written in both English and Spanish. Text should be easy to read, and should not use professional jargon.	Some exhibits can be replaced by scale models. Some information provided in exhibits could be interpreted through special educational events, or by adding to a tour.

Table 5-1. Continued

Interpretive Methods	Pros	Cons	Considerations	Other Options
Historic Furnishings	Historic furnishings have the ability to portray how people actually lived. Historic furnishings that are original to the house aid interpretation as significant objects and may tell a story about their owner.	Most visitors will not be interested in objects that do not aid a story; a few may be interested if they enjoy antiques. Furniture may do nothing but take up space that could be used for other interpretation methods.	In some situations it may be better for a house to be empty than to showcase furniture that has not relevance to interpretation. It should be clear what time and lifestyles the furniture is portraying if multiple timelines are interpreted in the house.	Select objects can be chosen for specific rooms to aid in storytelling or as part of an exhibit. Laser scanning, photographs, or virtual tours used on the museum's website, high-tech exhibit, or app could show visitors what the house would look like if it were furnished.
Demonstrations	Demonstrations are a good way for visitors to see how things were done in a specific time period. It is also a way for the interpreter to interact with the audience.	Demonstrations are often given a few times during the day so if they are depended upon to heavily some visitors could miss out.	The times of demonstrations should be advertised on the museum's website and brochure so visitors can plan accordingly. Some demonstrations may require a significant amount of training for some interpreters.	If staff are not available to give demonstrations, videos of demonstrations may be posted to the museum's website, or made available through a QR code on site.
Children's Play Areas	Play areas allow children to interact and learn at the house museum. They can also keep children entertained while parents read exhibit signage.	Play areas could distract other interpretation if there is too much noise. If children are not watched they could cause damage to historic resources.	When creating a play area a stewardship organization should keep specific age ranges in mind. Toys, furniture or costumes will need to be cleaned regularly.	The house museum could create games for children and develop a suggested reading list. Some interactive displays could also be geared toward children.

Table 5.1 Continued

Interpretive Methods	Pros	Cons	Considerations	Other Options
Special Educational Events	Special events are a great way to encourage repeat visits to the site. They can focus on topics not addressed in everyday interpretation. They can focus on specific age ranges to be an intellectual experience for an adult, or play day for a child.	Special events may become costly if enough people do not come.	Special events can take place at regular intervals or can be planned throughout the year. It is important that the museum advertise their event. There are various options for these events from guest lecturers, discussion groups, art show, plays, holiday events, play days, book talks, special tours (such as an architecture tour) and much more.	The museum may be able to present special interpretive information through publications, editing their tour, or creating a game. House museums could also create a temporary exhibit.
Museums Website	The museum's website is a great way for the stewardship organization to connect with a potential visitor, or encourage further learning. They also allow for interactive activates that may be too costly to integrate on site.	If a museum's website is underdeveloped people may decide not to visit. If the information on the website is the same as what is interpreted on-site, people may be disappointed when they visit.	A museum website should tell visitors about the stewardship organization, and when they can visit. It should also give visitors the ability to learn more about the site than what is interpreted. This may be done through a suggested reading list, informational videos, or historic photos. The website can also allow people to play.	At this point in time it is essential for every house museum to have a website, even if it just gives information about the organization and when the house is open.

Choosing Interpretive Methods for the de Mesa-Sanchez House

Guided tour. Most of the Colonial Quarter site is already interpreted during the guided tour, led by a costumed interpreter. As visitors have already spent an hour experiencing this method, by the time they arrive at the de Mesa-Sanchez House, this is likely a poor option for interpreting the house. Special tours on the architecture or history of the house could be given that would not require the previous tour. However, it may be difficult to obtain enough interpreters to conduct it.

Interactive displays. Interactive displays are good options for interpreting the de Mesa House. They may be useful in exploring subjects in the house's extensive history, or exploring the complicated changes that occurred to the architecture over time. They can also give families something to participate in together. There is only one other place this method is used at the Colonial Quarter, at a kiosk located next to the watch tower.

Exhibits. Exhibits may also be a good technique for the de-Mesa House. Much of the interpretation at the Colonial Quarter is constant, so changing exhibits may help develop interest and create repeat visitors.

Historic furnishings. Currently historic furnishings in the de Mesa House are ineffective. This may be improved if different rooms were utilized to showcase a specific lifestyle, though that method would likely need to be aided by an interpreter. Specific pieces could be chosen for various exhibits. For example, the St. Augustine Preservation Board acquired the Old Spanish Inn furnishings from G.H. Bath. If that collection is still present at the Government House, the Colonial Quarter could loan specific pieces to create an exhibit about his preservation efforts.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ The Government House is where many collections of the St. Augustine Preservation Board are stored.

Demonstrations. Originally, the Colonial Quarter was going to utilize multiple demonstrations on-site. This includes blacksmithing, a leathershop and the building of a Spanish ship. If enough staff were acquired to give demonstrations, they may be better placed in those areas which are currently under-utilized. Demonstrations at the de Mesa House may be useful, even if done on an occasional basis.

Children's play area. There is currently one children's play area at the Colonial Quarter. There is a children's archeological dig area set up adjacent to the Spanish ship. It may be possible to set up a children's play area in one of the north, first floor rooms. This room could have a dress-up area, have replicas of toys from the American Territorial Period or have Colonial Quarter themed puzzles, books, or toys.

Special educational events. There is ample opportunity for educational events at the de Mesa House and Colonial Quarter. They could include discussion groups on lifestyles not portrayed in everyday interpretation, lectures, special tours, play days, or book groups.

Museum website. The Colonial Quarter has a website, though very little about the de Mesa-Sanchez House is mentioned. The house is associated with the British Colonial Period section of the site, though the architecture is American Territorial. While additional information could be added, there is also interactive potential such as games about the site, as well as virtual tours and historic photographs that could all aid the website in developing visitor interest.

Summary

The Colonial Quarter site and de Mesa-Sanchez house have a long history associated with diverse people and lifestyles, as well as the preservation movement in St. Augustine. Planning interpretation that looks outside of strictly colonial history can

appeal to a wider audience. While the guided tour of the whole site functions, there is much left to be desired at the de Mesa- House. Developing different interpretive techniques and subjects can encourage visitors to stay longer and come back to the site.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

Historic house museums are not reaching their full potential. Visitor numbers have been declining at these sites because stewardship organizations are not reaching their audiences through appropriate and interesting interpretation. These organizations need to look past what has traditionally been considered significant at historic sites to reach their guests on a personal level. Interpretive planning and implementation is the only way to address these issues. Stewardship organizations need to consider not only what they are doing now, but what they could be doing in the next five or ten years. As part of the interpretation plan, a database that includes every source that may impact interpretation should be created. This, at the very least, includes management goals, themes, and visitor profiles, and should address staffing, collection and financial needs. This database should constantly be growing as interpretation evolves on the site. By incorporating a sound understanding of a site's history along with visitor interests and learning styles, and exploring the continuous evolution of interpretation with major stakeholders, house museums can become relevant in their communities. This can be seen in the case studies explored in chapter four. While these sites have significant differences, each connects with its community through education and interpretation.

Using the Framework

Chapter five of this study analyzed the interpretation and history of the de Mesa-Sanchez House at the Colonial Quarter. However, the guidelines used to make decisions about interpretive subjects and techniques could reasonably be applied to any house museum.

The first efforts to preserve the de Mesa House began in the mid-1950s. Since that time knowledge of the site's history has been growing. What is known about the site now encompasses over fifty years of research and interpretation. While it is unlikely that all stewardship organizations will have access to the same amount of information on their site, they should work with historians to continuously expand their knowledge. The more in-depth the knowledge of a historic site becomes, the more diverse and interesting an interpretation could be.

In choosing which stories to tell, interpretive organizations must look at the history of the site, whether that story is being told elsewhere, and how their visitors can make connections with the information presented to them. The analysis in chapter five includes a flowchart for how interpretive organizations can use information about their history to generate ideas for interpretive themes and subjects. Visitor connections are impacted by how a story is told on-site. The tangible objects, such as exhibits or furnishings, should connect with the intangible, stories and concepts presented. There are pros and cons to each interpretive method. Stewardship organizations should consider each while making decisions regarding interpretation. A variation of interpretive techniques is ideal; however, each method requires its own upkeep and training of house museum staff.

While the analysis of the de Mesa House demonstrates how a stewardship organization can formulate new ideas about their interpretation, further actions should be taken for successful implementation. As ideas are generated, major stakeholders should become involved. Interpreters should consult with staff and volunteers, as they are the people who must engage with visitors. A house museum's governing board,

foundation, and executive director should look at the logistics of hiring additional staff and the costs of creating new interpretation and reflect upon how new interpretation furthers the organization's goals and objectives. Furthermore, potential visitors should be included in the decision making process. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, and existing information about visitors in the region. Local teachers should be contacted as well. If the house museum depends heavily on school group visitation, stewardship organizations should consider how changing interpretation would affect these visits.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, while the study attempts to address the role of interpretation plans, few interpretive materials could be obtained. Some stewardship organizations view interpretive plans as proprietary documents and are reluctant to share this information. Another possible reason these materials are difficult to obtain is because they encompass such large amounts of information. As explained in chapter three, some stewardship organizations create an interpretation database that includes any document influencing interpretation, as opposed to reducing the information they have into one document.

Secondly, while the case studies used in this research offer a variety of house museums, additional types could have been included. There is a range of styles and significant time periods represented. However, no modern house museums were included in this study. Additionally, these case studies were primarily located in the northeast and southeast regions of the United States. It is possible that by including more types of house museums, or house museums in different geographical locations, that additional interpretive subjects or techniques could have been discovered.

Thirdly, the analysis in chapter five of this study does not represent the whole interpretive planning process. The research completed on the de Mesa-Sanchez House provides a good starting point for its interpretive planning. The next step in implementing a plan would include meetings and interviews with major stakeholders.

Future Research

This thesis can aid stewardship organizations in the first steps to creating successful interpretation at their house museum. Using the information presented here, an organization can identify what issues their house museum is facing; begin an interpretive plan that looks current, annual and long term goals; and develop possible interpretive stories and techniques.

This research could be expanded by addressing the roles of major stakeholders in the interpretive planning process. Additionally, guidelines for how and when to address each stakeholder group during the interpretive planning process would be beneficial to stewardship organizations.

While interpretive planning can help house museum visitation, this may not be sufficient for all sites. Stewardship organizations that simply cannot afford to make changes necessary may need to explore other options. In these cases research that addresses how these organizations can form partnerships with other museums, or be adaptively used as community spaces, will allow for the continued use of these sites by the public.

Closing Remarks

While there are many challenges to creating a desired visitor experience at house museums, these sites are well worth the time and effort. In many cases generations have worked to preserve and protect the cultural heritage represented

though historic homes. While the survival of these sites is significant so is public appreciation. By attracting visitors house museums receive funds to preserve the structure, memories and education on site. Appropriate interpretation insures future survival. Experiencing a house museum in a meaningful way allows visitors to gain an understanding of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Amber Caton was born in Rochester, New York. Amber is the daughter of Rick Caton and Heidi Caton, and has a younger sister, Brandi Caton, and younger brother, Stephen Caton. Amber graduated from Palmyra Macedon High School in 2008.

While obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Kansas State University her interests in preservation grew. In the spring of 2012 Amber participated in the Kansas State submission for the National Park Service's *Parks for the People* Competition. From February until June 2012 she interned at the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office, entering site documentation into the Kansas Historic Resource Inventory.

Amber began her master's studies at the University of Florida in historic preservation in fall of 2012. In the spring and summer of 2013 she took on a research position to document and analyze the repurposing of the Joaneda House at 57 Treasury Street in St. Augustine, Florida for special events and interpretation. In the summer of 2013 Amber began an Internship with the Deering Estate in Miami-Dade County, creating a historic furnishing plan. In spring of 2014 she began an internship with the Bowne House in Flushing, New York creating and interpretation plan.

Upon graduating with her Master in Historic Preservation, Amber hopes to continue working with interpretation and reuse issues at historic sites.