

**National Park Service
Independence National Historical Park**



**Report on Site Review of Interpretive Programs by
The Organization of American Historians**



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
United States Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

SEP 08 2005

H30 (INDE)

Dear Friend:

Last fall we were able to use the National Park Service's relationship with the Organization of American Historians to conduct an external review of Independence National Historical Park's interpretive programs. We brought in a wonderful team of knowledgeable, concerned historians who spent three days with us.

J. Richie Garrison, Emma J. Lapsansky Werner, Gary Nash, and Richard Newman examined every area of our interpretive operations and made many helpful suggestions. We began implementing their ideas almost immediately. Our staff analyzed the reports and developed the attached document for park guidance. The team's reports also became the basis for the park's new Long Range Interpretive Plan.

We're pleased to share this report on the OAH team's visit with you. We hope that many more parks, particularly in the Northeast Region with its rich array of cultural resources, will have the opportunity for a similar review. We thank the OAH team members for their generosity and for their continued interest in the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Bomar
Regional Director

Dennis R. Reidenbach
Acting Superintendent
Independence National Historical Park

Report on Site Review of Interpretive Programs by The Organization of American Historians

I. Background

With the encouragement of National Park Service Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley, Northeast Region's Chief of Staff, John Maounis and Historian Marty Blatt, Mary A. Bomar, Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park [INDE] determined to have an on-site review of the park's interpretive programs by members of the Organization of American Historians [OAH]. This review was facilitated through a Cooperative Agreement between the OAH and NPS (1443CA—193013). With the appointment of a new Chief of Interpretation, Steve Sitarski, the reorganization of park interpretive staff into a single district, the amalgamation of the unit sites into the main park, and the recognition of new constituencies, it was an auspicious time for a review.



*The Liberty Bell in the new
Liberty Bell Center*

Planning for the site visit began in January, 2004. The park worked closely with Susan Ferentinos of OAH to prepare for the review. We are indebted to Ms. Ferentinos for her guidance and coordination throughout this process. Complicated schedules and INDE's high level of visitation during spring and summer placed the review date in October 18-20. This permitted park staff sufficient time to make detailed preparations for the visit.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the visit were to share knowledge and ideas about INDE's present interpretive programs including orientation films, sales items and operations. The team identified areas of success, challenges and offered suggestions for new directions or improvements to existing programs.

III. Methods

Doris Fanelli, Chief of the Division of Cultural Resources Management [CRM], was designated the primary contact and planner for the review. She was joined by Steve Sitarski following his appointment to Chief of the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services [I&VS]. Susan Ferentinos worked closely with us to identify historians whose specializations were compatible with INDE's themes. The team composition was J. Richie Garrison (University of Delaware and the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture); Emma Lapsansky (Haverford College); Gary Nash (UCLA); and Richard Newman (Rochester Institute of Technology). Susan Ferentinos and Marty Blatt also joined the reviewers.

Park planners benefited from the sample materials and readings that Susan Ferentinos provided. The planners developed the agenda for the three-day visit, the pre-visit reading materials for the review

team, and provided lists of nearby accommodations for out-of-town team members. Copies of the agenda and the list of pre-visit materials are attached to this report.

Our objective was to have the review team see as much of the park as possible in a variety of ways. The scope of investigation included visitor and non-visitor areas. The latter category focused on places and programs that are critical to the park's preservation mission and that support the interpretive programs. Areas visited included collections storage, the library and archives, and the new archeology processing program that is physically situated in the same building as the park's new education program and will also share space with a public program operated by a partner, Historic Philadelphia Incorporated. We also wanted the reviewers to have the opportunity to interact with as many members of the I&VS and CRM divisions as possible. We built a series of meetings with park management into the agenda for the purposes of discussing park operations, answering questions or making course corrections as necessary during the visit. On the final day, after a close-out meeting with management, the park held an informal meeting for park staff and some of our interested partners. At the meeting, the reviewers informally presented their initial impressions. We also issued a media advisory to alert the press of this meeting. Time allowed for a brief question-and-answer period. This meeting was valuable because it injected excitement into the park staff and they have eagerly anticipated the full reports as well as the actions that the park will take on the team's recommendations.

The agenda allowed for the reviewers to tour park sites as a visitor would, beginning at the Independence Visitor Center. There, the team saw the orientation films and visited the park's sales center. After visiting the buildings within the secure area together, the park asked each reviewer to choose a personal tour from a list of thematically grouped sites. On another day, the reviewers took behind-the-scenes tours with park staff of several thematically grouped sites or programs. These peer-to-peer tours offered the opportunity for on-going discussion.

By the completion of their visit, the reviewers had seen all sites in the park with the exception of the Deshler Morris House and the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. The distance of those two houses from the park made visiting infeasible during an already packed schedule.

In addition to consultations with management and tours, the review team had the opportunity to meet informally with groups of supervisors and members of the CRM and I&VS staffs. These discussions enabled the reviewers to gain a 360 perspective on the park.

We are extremely grateful to the reviewers for their patience, energy and endurance which never faltered during a packed schedule that we know extended into after-hours conferences.



The OAH/INHP Team--from left, Susan Ferentinos, Organization of American Historians; Richie Garrison; Superintendent Mary Bomar; Gary Nash; Richard Newman; INHP Chief of Cultural Resources Doris Fanelli.

IV. Analysis

Complete copies of the reviewers' reports are in the appendix of this document. What follows are highlights from the reports, divided into three broad categories. Within those categories, the recommendations are informally grouped by operational, general, and site specific ideas. Although not always presented in quotations, many of the statements are taken verbatim from various reports with only minor changes for syntax and flow. Following the extended highlights, an abbreviated analysis of the reports is presented in the LRIP format.

A. Successes

Praise is doubly gratifying when it comes from one's peers. The following list of compliments recognizes the park's achievements and strengths. The topics identify what the park already does well and they should form the basis for future planning.

- All of the reviewers appreciated how much INDE accomplishes with very little financial resources. They understand that the park is under-funded and they have seen the park's new business plan.
- The reviewers attributed the park's accomplishments to its highly qualified, dedicated and motivated staff.
- The Park is encouraged to continue its improved communication both interdivisional and with entities outside of the park.
- The reviewers had high praise for the park's determination to develop a Long Range Interpretive Plan. Their recommendations will be folded into that plan.
- Consider obtaining grants to hold one or two meetings per year that bring the various stakeholders together to discuss one another's concerns. The October 30 President's House forum was an example of a well-run, well-attended community meeting.
- The park's new education program with its own leader is an excellent step forward.
- The Cultural Resources Management Division has been one of INDE's strengths over the years. Staff has conducted valuable research on park themes, sites and collections. Their work can be the starting point for developing programs. James Mueller's "Programmatic Vision Statement" for the park's history program clearly states the park's primary and secondary themes.



The Rising Sun Chair in Independence Hall

- The Interpretive staff cares deeply about their jobs and they are receptive to change.
- The Second Bank exhibit represents the direction that park exhibits should take. The exhibit places the park's collection in a challenging context.

- Another model for visitor services is the Underground Railroad Tour.

- The power point presentation of the President's House is an example of a nuanced, well-researched and lively presentation. More interpretation should follow this model.



The Assembly Room, Independence Hall

- The Kosciuszko House's interpretive program and Long Range Interpretive Plan are excellent examples of a nuanced, deep and broad description of this important person. INDE has the obligation to give a balanced view of why Jefferson refused the executorship of Kosciuszko's will after learning of the Polish hero's death in 1817, a decision that threw the will into federal courts where it remained until 1852. Please also include Kosciuszko's close relationship with Agrippa Hull, the free black man from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who enlisted at age 18 and served as Kosciuszko's orderly for several years including all of the southern campaigns of 1779-1782.

- The park has demonstrated remarkable strength in broadening its interpretations at Deshler Morris House and plans to use the Bringhurst House as a visitor center are admirable. Presenting programs that focus on women and slavery is a major step in making the house relevant and exciting. Do not, however, underplay how the federal government coped with the catastrophe of the yellow fever epidemic. Perhaps this can reference the "coping with catastrophe" theme to be introduced at the Todd House.

- The park library and archives are vital to the park's mission. The publication selection demonstrates the history program's currency; the archives are relevant to every division. This is where the ideas for programs emerge.



INDE Superintendent Mary Bomar with Assistant Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett and Reverend Jeffrey Leath of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church.

- The new interpretation at the Deshler Morris House and the Thaddeus Kosciuszko NM are good example of the direction in which the park should head. These new programs incorporate many facets of all of the individuals who resided at the sites.

- Reopening the former Visitor Center and offering a variety of programs, including the archeology processing program is an excellent innovation. Consider making this place a Center of Early American Life where the public can appreciate the diversity of the city and how it has changed over time. Consider beginning with Swedish settlement and bringing the period of time interpreted at the park through the Civil War.
- The tours of Bishop White and Todd Houses were “one of the best historic house tours I have been on.”

B. Challenges

Following is a list of challenges that the park faces:

- The park staff is overburdened. Help staff find time to upgrade and augment their skills.
- It will be challenging to implement change while continuously providing daily services to visitors.
- Devise ways to understand and balance multiple requests or needs.
- Security issues consume park staff’s time and budget.
- A significant part of the park’s budget must go to facilities maintenance for visitors; this does not address real preservation needs of the park’s inventory of historic structures, gardens and collections.
- Conditions in the park have changed and the park must rethink its approach. These changes break down into internal factors, external factors and visitor factors.
- The bookstore has little funds for inventory.
- Cultivate various parties interested in the park so that they become allies instead of obstructionists.
- The “park without borders” challenges tourists and residents alike to be alert to their location in a national park.
- The park is bound by the “inertia of tradition.” Find a way to give “punch” to canonical stories without diminishing the traditional themes.
- Interpretation at the park core is inflexible. Visitors get a better, nuanced tour when they leave the icons and move to the edges.



Crowds at the Independence Visitor Center

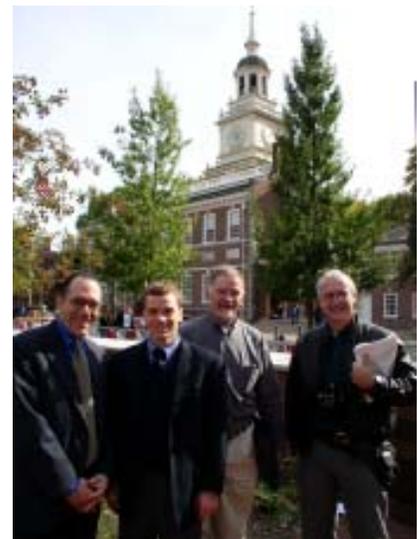
- The park must ensure that the inclusion of wider stories does not result in distortions, exaggerations, imbalances or inaccuracies.
- Find more realistic interpretive goals that empower interpreters. No ranger can possibly give an audience of 85 people the history of what occurred in Independence Hall in 15 minutes.
- Avoid interpretive tokenism by segregating diverse stories into special tours; integrate those stories throughout all of the tours.
- The underground museum in Franklin Court is the Park Service's version of EPCOT Center. This needs major rethinking. Consider making it a museum about pamphleteering and the press and Franklin's scientific experiments.
- Find ways to link the many park sites together in the visitor's mind. Walking tours are an important aid here. Consider borrowing from "Following in Franklin's Footsteps" and offer "Following in the Footsteps of Thomas Paine" or "Following in the Footsteps of the Pembertons."
- Interpreters in Independence Hall feel caught among, "Park service interpretive goals, the tyranny of time, bureaucratic inertia and public indifference."



C. Opportunities:

The reviewers made the following suggestions. Many are intended to overcome some of the challenges listed above.

- Find ways to give the public greater access to stored collections such as the architectural study collection which is currently available by appointment only.
- The opportunities to bring together groups with disparate concerns and unite them around the unified goal of invigorating and improving downtown Philadelphia are endless.
- Develop ways to bring staff together for mutual benefits of discussion and training on a variety of topics. Consider an "in-service" day during the slow months. Also consider sharing staff-written reports, book reviews and book discussions as well as discussions on challenges and tricks to presenting certain topics such as "Teaching the Presidents."



Pausing at Independence Hall during their tour are (from left) Marty Blatt, NPS Historian, Boston National Historical Park; Richard Newman, Rochester Institute of Technology; Gary Nash, UCLA; J. Richie Garrison, University of Delaware and the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture.

- Keep watch over what scholars are in town and invite them to a brown bag lunch for informal discussion with staff.
- Consider being more aggressive about contributions. Maybe a sign that says suggested amounts.
- Broaden the story of the Revolution by modernizing and “thickening” the traditional interpretations of “freedom” and “unfreedom”.
- Offer a “deeper, multivariate interpretation of discrete entities that make up the park’s [material] inventory.” There is an opportunity for the park to enlarge its audience and to bring more people into its boundaries by enlarging the stories to include contested ones. The stories need to be told from more than one voice.
- Revitalize the offerings at the bookstore. Some reviewers offered to send lists of “must have” publications that should sell well. In that same vein, it is time to rewrite and republish the park’s handbook, “Independence: A guide to Independence National Historical Park.” The present edition is 22 years old. It might also be opportune to rethink the orientation film.
- Consider offering longer, special topic tours or team-lead tours.
- Don’t ignore the two other important revolutions of the era, the French and the Haitian. Both had lasting impacts on American life and government.
- Reward staff for intellectual exploration and development. In the immediate area there are many free scholarly lectures that interpretive staff might be able to attend, particularly during the slow season.
- Use slow season for training. Suggestions were made about bringing furloughed staff back for training during this time.
- Complicate visitor thinking by shifting the ground from names, dates and founding legislation to the implications of their principles to everyday life. Consider asking questions:
 1. What does it mean to be free?
 2. Where do humans locate the balance between liberty and order?
 3. Who decides?
- Embrace ambiguity, paradox, controversy and the dark side of American History.
- All reports advocated the use of technology for supplementary interpretations. Everything from LED signs to special tours through cell phones was suggested. Cell phones can access a special website that is useful for guiding and expanding interpretation. Use technology to establish updated way stations (History Kiosks) outside Independence Hall on key issues like state



Colin Powell at the annual Martin Luther King Day Liberty Bell Ceremony

constitution-making or early abolitionism in Pennsylvania. Use way stations to guide visitors through the park after they leave Independence Square. Younger audiences in particular will appreciate use of technology to learn about the past. Use technology to present information in NPS reports in innovative, web-based programming.

- Develop a way to have visitors design their own thematically based tours through the park on such topics as military history, or African American history. Develop ways to refocus and channel the visitor throughout the park, not merely from a central place like the visitor center.

- There is an opportunity for increasing sophistication in all handouts. Consider using the “Gazette” as a vehicle for presenting interesting historical themes and ideas.

- Consider offering handouts of various staff members’ reports or publications in the bookstore.

- “There are so many landscapes to think about.” Interpret the landscapes, both evidence of the developing city (Dock Creek) and the present designs.



- Consider new approaches to the past: the restaurant metaphor in the Assembly Room; viewing the past as a complex landscape and populate it with people and objects; make the objects in the collection work as forms of evidence for you rather than function as a stage set; compare and contrast the courtrooms and public spaces to those of churches as a way of understanding the church/state relationship.

- Park sites have ties to different stories. Independence Hall is where the Pennsylvania government passed the world’s first gradual abolition law; Congress Hall was the site of the very first African American petitions to Congress on slavery and the slave trade; the Federal Patene Office was the site of the first patented pamphlet in African American history in 1794 (Richard Allen and Absalom Jones’ Yellow Fever document).

- Use the park’s many opportunities for presenting race and slavery to audiences. The President’s House site, for instance is an opportunity to present not only slaves in Washington’s household but the issue of slavery in Washington’s world.

- Bring the history of religion in America back into the story through active interpretation at the Free Quaker Meeting House, the Bishop White House and link to surrounding historic churches.



V. Conclusion

INDE has benefited by this opportunity for external peer review. We intend to make this report both the basis for the upcoming Long Range Interpretive Plan and for documentation of park needs.

Using the LRIP planning format, this is a summary of the significant recommendations made by the OAH review team:

Visitor Experience

In addition to communicating primary park themes, it is important to review our basic interaction with targeted audiences. What will the initial contact be like? How will the visitor be oriented? What activities and programs reinforce the park themes? How can visitors actively participate in learning? How can we encourage reflection and inspiration? What will create positive memories and nurture stewardship and support?

Theme Reinforcement

Interpretive programming will be most effective in reinforcing the primary park themes when we...

- *Interpret events within the context of their times.
- *Tell the story from multiple perspectives.
- *Are inclusive but balanced in our interpretation (don't replace one bias with another)
- *Reinforce links between objects and stories.
- *Use modern technology (e.g. history kiosks, cell phone tours)
- *Compliment formal tours (e.g. Independence Hall) with special topic handouts.
- *Use archeology to interpret 18th century daily life.



People of Independence exhibit in Second Bank of the United States

Orientation & Way Finding

Interpretive programming will be most effective in helping visitors with park orientation and way finding when it...

- *Offers a new orientation film at the Independence Visitor Center
- *Creates a park wide directional signage plan.
- *Develops thematic tours to link park sites beyond the Mall.

Thought, Reflection, Inspiration & Stewardship

Interpretive programming will be most effective in encouraging visitor reflection and foster inspiration and stewardship when ...

- *Founding documents (Declaration & Constitution) ideals and principles link the story with the 21st century.
- *We focus on ideas (What does it mean to be free, what is the balance between liberty and order, and who decides?).



Recharging their batteries at a local coffee bar are (from left) Richie Garrison, Richard Newman, Gary Nash and Emma Lapsansky, Haverford College.

Audiences

Existing audiences

INDE had 5 million visits in 2004. Most visitors arrive at the Independence Visitor Center and limit their tour (based on time/interest) to sites along Independence Mall.

Audience includes a cross section of people, including 400,000 school age students, commercial tour groups, families, individuals, neighbors, office workers, and international (approximately 15%) visitors.

5 Year Focus

Intended audiences for interpretive programming can have an important impact on both recommended programs and techniques. Reviewers recommended that the following groups receive priority over the next 5 years.

- *Students & Teachers - develop formal curriculum based education programs
- *Minorities - offer program topics to attract a more diverse audience.
- *Park Partners - coordinate visitor services and programming.
- *Internet - fully develop park web-site.

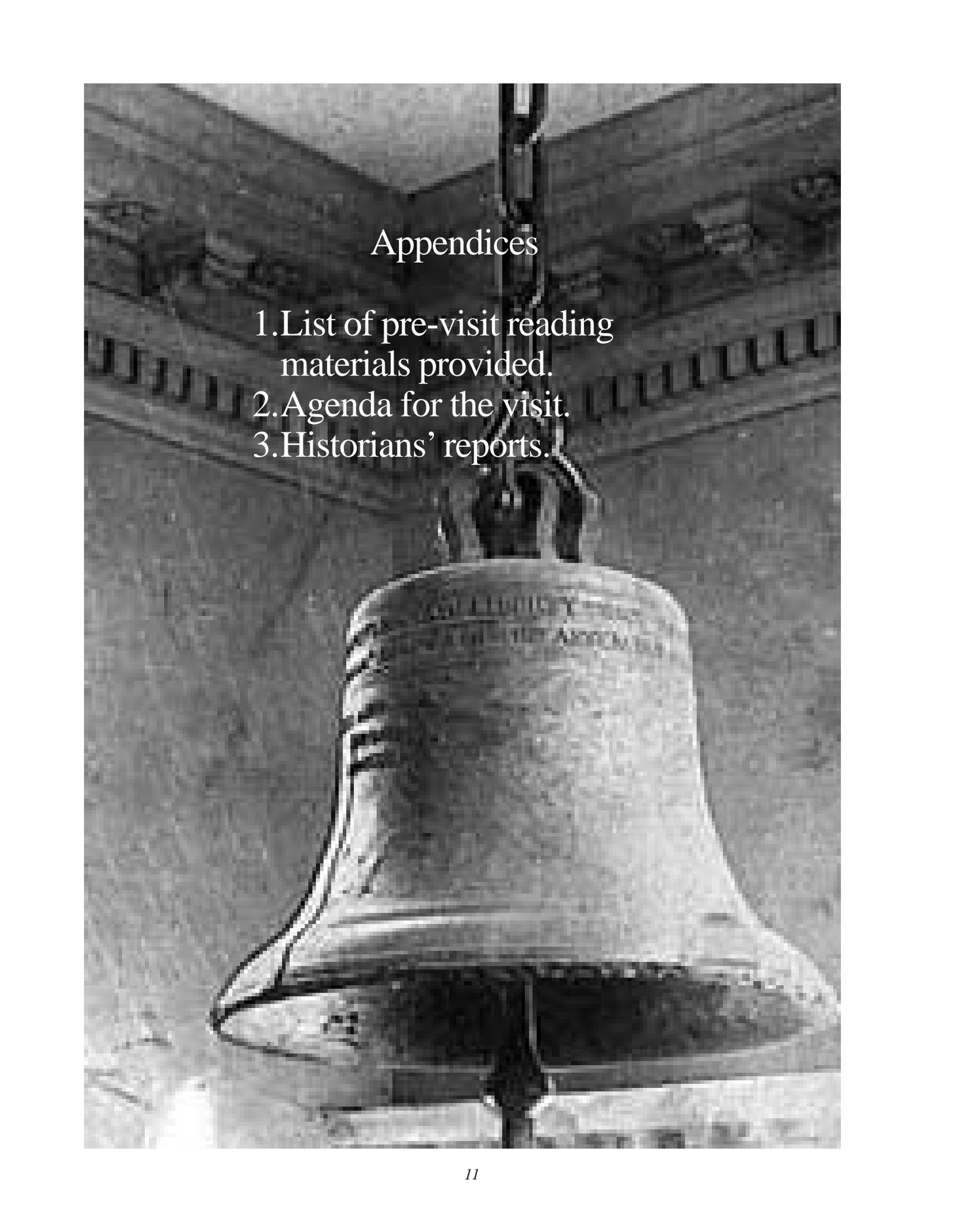
Issues

INDE has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program but faces challenges as well. New programming should inform, provoke discussion and strengthen visitor interactions with existing and potential audiences. Reviewers encourage the park to...

- *Embrace controversy
- *Diversify thematic interpretation
- *Minimize impact of enhanced security
- *Offer a seamless visitor experience with park partners
- *Effectively deal with rising visitation, limited staffing and flat budgets
- *Encourage I&VS/CRM interaction
- *Increase staff training/research opportunities
- *Replace outdated Franklin Court Museum exhibits

Submitted by
Doris Devine Fanelli
Steve Sitarski



A black and white photograph of a large, ornate bell hanging from a wooden ceiling. The bell is the central focus, with its top and sides visible. The ceiling is made of dark wood with a grid of beams. The background shows the interior of a large, vaulted hall with high ceilings and structural beams.

Appendices

1. List of pre-visit reading materials provided.
2. Agenda for the visit.
3. Historians' reports.

Appendix 1.

Dear _____ :

This transmittal documents the enclosed package of materials for you to read in preparation for your participation in the OAH review of Independence National Historical Park's (INDE) interpretive program. The following items are in this package:

- The agenda for our meeting.
- INDE's current General Management Plan
- Copies of Chapters 5 (Cultural Resources Management) and 7 (Interpretation and Education) of NPS Management Policies (2001) to give you an idea of the criteria that govern our work in the park and the division of responsibilities in the Park Service.
- Copy of an article, "The Curator as Social Historian," that I wrote for a special issue of CRMBulletin (1995) which explains the curator's role at historic sites with special reference to INDE installations.
- A plastic bag containing a sample of promotional literature by and about INDE, example pages from the Interpretive Program Data Base and sample program outlines, and Long Range Interpretive Plans for the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial and the Deshler Morris House. The last two items will give you an idea of the typical content of an interpretive plan.

From OAH:

- Copy of article by Alfred F. Young, "Revolution in Boston? Eight Propositions for Public History on the Freedom Trail," *The Public Historian* 25 (2: 17-41).
- Review of Little Bighorn National Historic Site
- Review of Valley Forge National Historical Park

We're very grateful to you for taking time away from your busy schedule to visit and offer us the benefit of your experience. Please don't hesitate to call me if I can provide further information prior to your visit.

I look forward to seeing you on Monday, October 18. I am sending an identical package to Martin Blatt, NPS Historian who will be joining us for the review.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Doris Devine Fanelli, Ph.D., Chief
Division of Cultural Resources Management
215-597-7087 (voice)
doris_fanelli@nps.gov

cc: Mary A. Bomar
Dennis Reidenbach
Steve Sitarski
Martin Blatt
Susan Ferentinos



Appendix 2.

Agenda for OAH Historians Visit

Monday, October 18, 2004

A.M.

8:30 Convene in Merchants' Exchange Building, 143 South Third Street. Please check in with receptionist and ask for Doris Fanelli.

Upon arrival, order lunch which will be delivered to building.

Introductory meeting with park staff: Mary Bomar, Superintendent; Dennis Reidenbach, Assistant Superintendent: Welcome and review of agenda; accomplishment of Park goals listed in the GMP; INDE business plan presented as an encapsulated view of the state of the park, our hopes for this review; Steve Sitarski, Chief, Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services [I&VS] will review park's primary themes, overview of visitor services, critical issues, short and long-range planning needs; Doris Fanelli, Chief, Division of Cultural Resources Management [CRM] will review cultural resources management and its interdisciplinary nature in the NPS, standards and guidelines for each discipline. Major projects projected or underway within the division.

10:30 BREAK

10:45 Meet staff [each staff person gives 5 minute presentation of a brief explanation of various areas as they relate to History and the Division of Interpretation.; then open for questions, discussion] I&VS:

Sue Glennon, Education Specialist; Missy Hogan, Chief of Operations; Coxe Toogood, Historian, Mary Jenkins, Interpretive Specialist

CRM:

Karie Diethorn, Chief Curator; Charles Tonetti, Chief Historical Architect; Jim Mueller, Chief Historian

Partnership Office: Frances Delmar

P.M.

12 noon Lunch as a group. Discussion continues.

1 p.m. – 5 p.m. Tour the park as a visitor to gain our visitor's perspective.

1. Suggested thematic half day tours for Reviewers (4 participants);

Begin by seeing the Independence Visitor Center exhibits, then see Liberty Bell Center, Independence Hall and documents exhibit on Independence Square as a group. These are our most visited sites and the core of our mission.

Then, divide for single tours (select one):

- American Revolution – Carpenters' Hall, New Hall, Franklin Court Underground Museum (and film), Declaration House. Other sites to note: Independence Square, Washington Square.

- Capital City –Congress Hall, Old City Hall Todd & Bishop White Houses, Aurora Office, Franklin Court. Note President’s House Site, home and Executive Branch of Washington and Adams See exterior of First Bank of the United States as you leave from/return to Merchants’ Exchange Building.
- Daily Life – Declaration and K houses (boarders and transiency), Franklin Court ghost structures, ruins, landscape marking archeological sites, 318 Market Street, Todd & Bishop White Houses.

Marty and Susan meet with Doris, Steve and whoever else is interested for daily wrap-up and course corrections.

Dinner: Review Team

Tuesday, October 19, 2004

A.M.

8:30 Convene in Merchants’ Exchange Building INDE staff will be on hand to answer questions you may have from Day I.

9:30 Interviews with park staff regarding the interpretive program.

Suggested staff interviews include:

Sue Glennon for the education plan, Missy Hogan for visitor services operations, Coxe Toogood as staff historian. Field staff interviews should include Mary Jenkins to explain IVC partnership and Independence Hall ticket system, Cherie Butler for daily front line supervision, Jerry Murphy for the union’s perspective, Bill Caughlin, Renee Albertoli, Terry Brown for the park rangers, Amber Kraft, Ted Johnson, Lynn Nash for the park guides.

These will be group interviews with the OAH team.. Interviews with CRM staff should include Charlie Tonetti, Karie Diethorn, Jim Mueller and Jed Levin, possibly Susan Edens to understand the full range of disciplines involved in various aspects of History in the park.



11:00 Begin behind-the-scenes tours. Pick one. Tours will begin before lunch; break for lunch and continue after lunch:

- Second Bank of the United States (the new major portrait exhibition under construction in newly-rehabilitated National Historic Landmark); architectural study collection in First Bank of U.S.; Old Visitor Center archeology project, educational programs, and future partnership with HPI. Suggested guides: Charles Tonetti, Karie Diethorn, Sue Glennon, Bob Grau, Frances Delmar.
- Underground Railroad Tour (Terry Brown); President’s House Power point presentation (Joe Becton); Steve Sitarski: Briefing on Deshler Morris Bringhurst rehab and exhibits and interpretive media; THKO exhibit project.
- Bishop White, a seven-level town house (includes basement, third floor and attic, areas normally not on tour); Todd House tour and discussion of restudy project with Isabel Jenkins, Patricia Schaffenburg, Doris Fanelli. Archives and library, Karen Stevens. Sample of INDE-specific studies on display along with copy of CRBIB. Brief explanation of NPS databases as resources.

- Designed, cultural landscapes, context, overview of present ways interpreters weave the stories with the landscapes and the sites' potential for expanding interpretive possibilities. Robert Venturi's Welcome Park (note City Tavern as you pass it) as an example of intention and reality—what was envisioned when INDE originally conceived and what we have today; park core colonial revival landscape; Robert Venturi's Franklin Court; INDE Square and its present rehabilitation project; Washington Square our newest historic cultural landscape; Rose and Magnolia Gardens; Independence Mall by Laurie Olin, our newest landscape. Includes examination of interpretive signage and acknowledgement of past landscapes using a variety of techniques. Susan Edens, Susan Ballistreri.

All tours include rest stops for coffee.

P.M.

12:30 Lunch. MEB

1:30-5:00 Continue behind-the –scene tours and/or retour parts of the park with staff

Marty and Susan meet with Doris, Steve and whoever else is interested for daily wrap-up and course corrections.

Dinner

Wednesday, October 20, 2004

A.M.

8:30-10:00 Meet with park staff and present preliminary assessment of interpretation and its relation to current scholarship and current exhibition strategies.

10:30 Independence Visitor Center Theater. INDE has issued a media advisory of this opportunity to learn about the review and the reviewers' preliminary conclusions . In addition to the press, we have invited some of our community consultants.

11:30 Conclusion



Moving the Liberty Bell for the Bicentennial, January 1, 1976

Common Sense

a
Report on
Independence National Historical Park

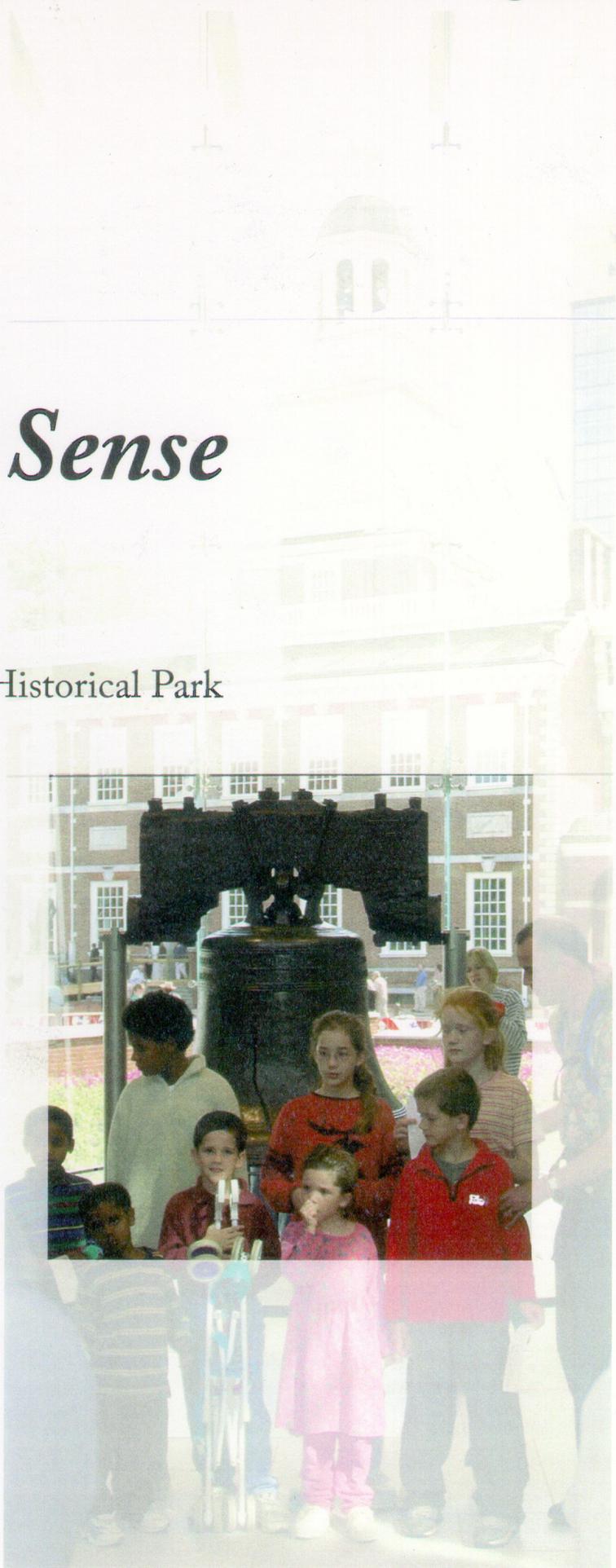
Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania

Prepared for
the
Organization
of American Historians

by

J. Ritchie Garrison
University of Delaware

November 25, 2004



**a Report on
Independence National Historical Park**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Prepared for the
Organization of American Historians**

**J. Ritchie Garrison
University of Delaware**

November 25, 2004



Preface

The following report is based on a site review of Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, conducted on Monday, October 18 through Wednesday, October 20, 2004. I joined Emma Lapsansky, Haverford College, Gary Nash, University of California Los Angeles, and Richard Neuman, Rochester Institute of Technology to take a detailed look at park operations and interpretive strategies. Park staff solicited our review as they began the process of preparing a Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP).

This planning process also coincides with a number of internal and external issues including but not limited to: the opening of the National Constitution Center, the opening of the pavilion for the Liberty Bell, the completion of a new Visitors' Center and planning for what to do about the old Visitors' Center, new security measures in the wake of the 9/11 attack mandated by the Department of Homeland Security, the controversy surrounding the interpretation of the President's house site, the appointment of a new Superintendent for the park, changes in personnel or reassignment of responsibilities, and the consequences of shrinking budgets and staffing levels. It is clear that the park cannot continue with a defensive posture of maintaining business as usual; it must change in ways that mitigate and embrace new challenges and opportunities. Painful as the new realities are, they are not bleak. There are many ways to move forward.

Our specific charge was to study Park assets and interpretation and to make recommendations that would be useful for the LRIP. The central problem is that the Park's current interpretative plan dates back to the 1940s and the expansion of the park for the Bicentennial. Park Rangers deliver essentially the same interpretive script that I remember from the mid 1970s when I was a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania. They are deeply frustrated by being caught between external pressures for change and the logistical realities of

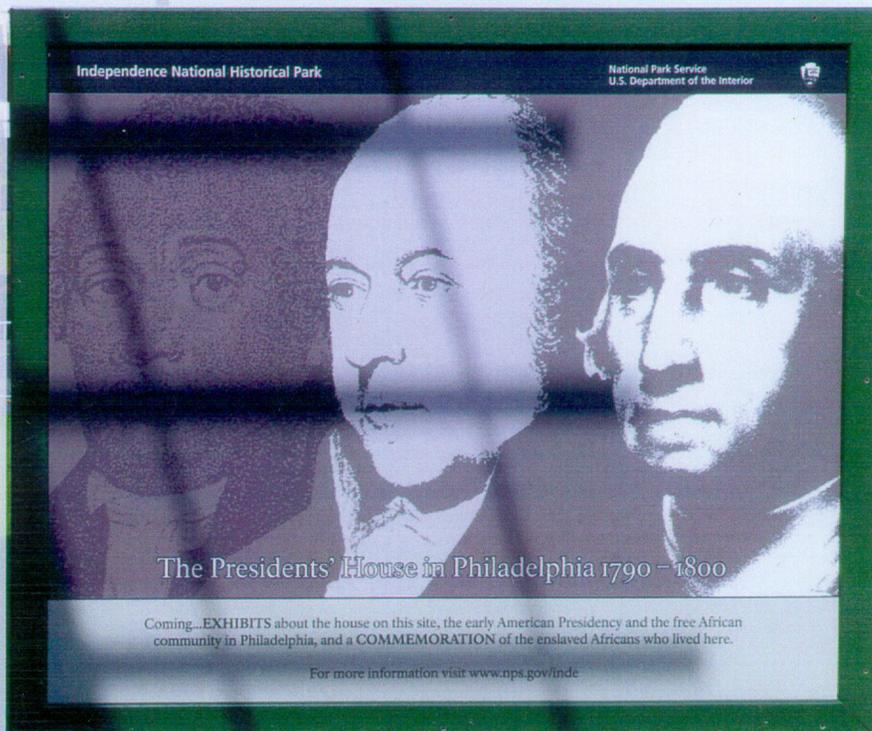
moving hundreds of thousands of people through historic buildings in increments of 15 minutes within the parameters set by the Department of Homeland Security. These frustrations echo throughout the Park staff—from those faced with managing budgets that shrink from mandated salary increases to Park Rangers and Security Officers tasked with doing more with less.

The Park's assets complicate our recommendations. Since its founding, Park staff have set national standards for the quality of restoration, collections care, and interpretation. Independence National Historical Park is in some respects a regional center all by itself given the expertise of the staff and scale of the collections. The Rangers we met and talked with were articulate, highly trained, and knowledgeable. The collections include buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, decorative arts that are important to the interpretive mission of Park buildings, and archaeological assemblages that probably represent the single largest group of excavated artifacts from one community that exist anywhere in the United States. Staff have also assembled many linear feet of unpublished reports that are housed in the library and that are a treasure trove of raw and interpreted data that could benefit scholarly study of Philadelphia and American history if scholars were aware of them.

I suspect that most Rangers would tell me that the majority of visitors come to experience an emotional connection between their lives and the relics of the past. Part of the experience is the pilgrimage to the shrine, the photograph of the family in front of the bell, and the refrigerator magnet or T shirt they got in the bookstore. That is what we observed while walking through the exhibitions. But if the pilgrimage got them to Philadelphia, it was also the hook for opening a very diverse group of people to the possibility of thinking about the ideas that informed the Revolutionary era and that still frame the discourse of civic life in this country and elsewhere. While the National Constitution Center covers many of these themes, visitors only gain access to its themes after paying an admission fee. So far, admission to INDE is free and the majority of visitors include the tour to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall in their itineraries

I now think it will not be enough to tweak the present approach by introducing new stories that reflect current historiography. The staff needs to simplify its interpretive themes before it can make much progress. The current ones imply a top-down model in which experts convened and decided what curriculum to teach. But the classroom is not a good model here. The Park's audiences (and I deliberately used the plural) consist largely of adults and families who are voluntary learners and who can enter through any number approaches and with many levels of interest. Consequently, interpretation at the Park should not pivot on an entertaining 15 minute lecture on the Declaration, the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Great Compromise because it is hard for most visitors to figure out why they should really care about those issues. The fact that Rangers regularly can start with these interpretive themes and take visitors to a much more sophisticated grasp of the era is a tribute to their skill as educators but the themes (important as they are) fail many visitors' test of what is meaningful in "my life."





The controversies that swirled around the emotional issue of slaves and quarters at the President's house illustrate why it is so important to rethink institutional and interpretive culture at the Park. Staff want to share their knowledge about the past in all its ambiguity and complexity; they might spend hours writing a report on the correct paint colors of Independence Hall or whether there really was a slave quarters at the President's house, but the bottom line for most visitors is not just whether they are getting accurate stories about the founding fathers, quarters, and paint colors, but how they might make the past they see and hear about meaningful. Learners drive this educational model, not the teachers; the ranger who told us that he thought his job was to plant seeds got it right. Things such as paint colors and buildings are part of the intellectual seed bed that visitors experience at different levels.

The rest of this report tries to articulate a way for Park staff to think about the critical issues as they work through a LRIP. It has three sections—ideas, things, and audiences. The sections are merely useful analytical categories for helping staff to think holistically about the things it cares for and the people it serves. The conclusion makes several recommendations for action or further discussion.

For me, there are three questions that inform all interpretation at Independence National Historical Park:

What does it mean to be free?

Where do humans locate the balance between liberty and order?

And who decides?

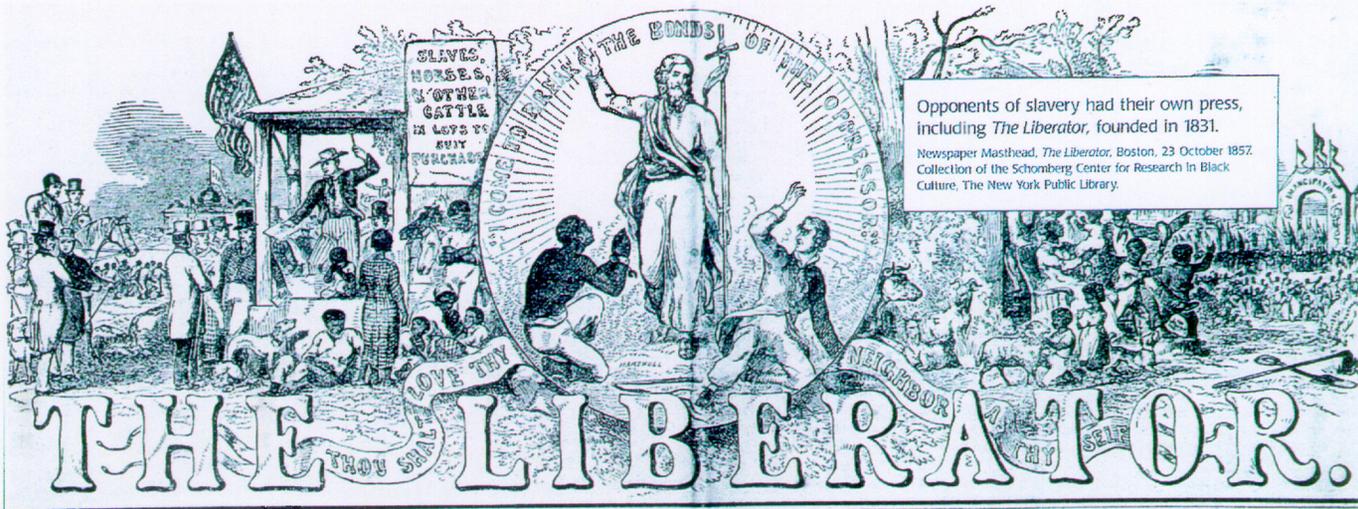
Almost all visitors can see the connections between these questions and their own experience. When they start there, it is possible to help them think about how the Declaration and the Constitution established principles that Americans have wrestled with ever since, about why their passage through metal detectors to see Independence Hall or touch the Liberty Bell is a metaphor for the meaning of liberty and order, and why the detritus of everyday life reflects the decisions of people who interacted, sometimes cooperatively and sometimes contentiously, on a landscape and community. The open ended nature of the questions permits us to regret the failure of the founding fathers to include women or eliminate slavery while recognizing that they left to future generations the possibility for change through deliberation and persuasion. The new Constitution Center reinforces and elaborates on these themes, but many visitors will not go there.

I am resigned to the fact that no Ranger can give an audience of 85 people the history of what went on in Independence Hall in 15 minutes. Find more realistic interpretive goals that empower your interpreters. My hope is that the Park Service can complicate visitor thinking by shifting the ground from the names and dates of the founders and their legislation to the implications of their principles for everyday life.

The first question, what does it mean to be free, challenges visitors to think about how words and concepts affect behavior, how it was possible for 18th century men to justify a Revolution and exclude more than half of the population because their notion of freedom was limited to specific categories of people. The Liberty Bell exhibition reminds visitors that the effort to expand and refine our definitions of freedom continue to the present. The question also sets up a larger interpretive issue that extends to other parts of the park. All Americans, some more than others, are bound by responsibilities that limit their freedom.

Hence the second question, where do humans locate the balance between liberty and order, allows visitors to think about how societies balance individual freedom of expression with an acceptable level of order. And that order is all around them in the great grid of the city, the lots on which artisans erected the park's buildings, and the interiors that people furnished to accomplish their roles. The fragments recovered by the archaeologists are the reminders of the murky boundaries between constitutional law and daily life; the law speaks in broad generalities while the things talk about particulars. Both embody principles of civilized order, improvised to accommodate changing circumstances. The law initially gave men control of politics, but law and politics were not the only places where people exercised power over others.





Opponents of slavery had their own press, including *The Liberator*, founded in 1831.
 Newspaper Masthead, *The Liberator*, Boston, 23 October 1857.
 Collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

tor. Our Country is the World, our Countrymen are all Mankind. J.
 3. BOSTON, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1857. WHC

Thus the third question, who decides, reminds visitors that many people have historically subverted attempts to limit speech and political power. They have formed associations to accomplish certain ends with or without official sanction. These associations are based on family, work, religion, education, and interest group and all are reflected in the park's preservation and interpretation efforts at sites ranging from Franklin Court to Mother Bethel Church. These associations are the foundations of American political life and what Michel de Certeau refers to as *The Practice of Everyday Life* in which ordinary people obtain an element of autonomous action and self-determination within a system of social hierarchies. Of course few visitors will approach the park via social theory, but park rangers can help some of them, perhaps many of them, think about how even the lowliest slave or female servant or young child could obtain some elements of freedom and power. Telling this part of the story helps rejoin the park's other buildings and collections to the famous white males who debated lofty political goals inside Independence Hall.

To encourage intellectual linkages staff must rethink the interpretive canon at Independence Hall and the way the twin shrines of the building and the bell work for visitors. The noisy commotion over slavery at the President's house that has grabbed headlines is in part an effort to expand the range of stories the park tells but it also a signal that the previous interpretive canon is outmoded. Park staff members are sincere in their desire to tell more inclusive stories, but they have inadvertently gerrymandered history in their effort to reach out to important constituencies.

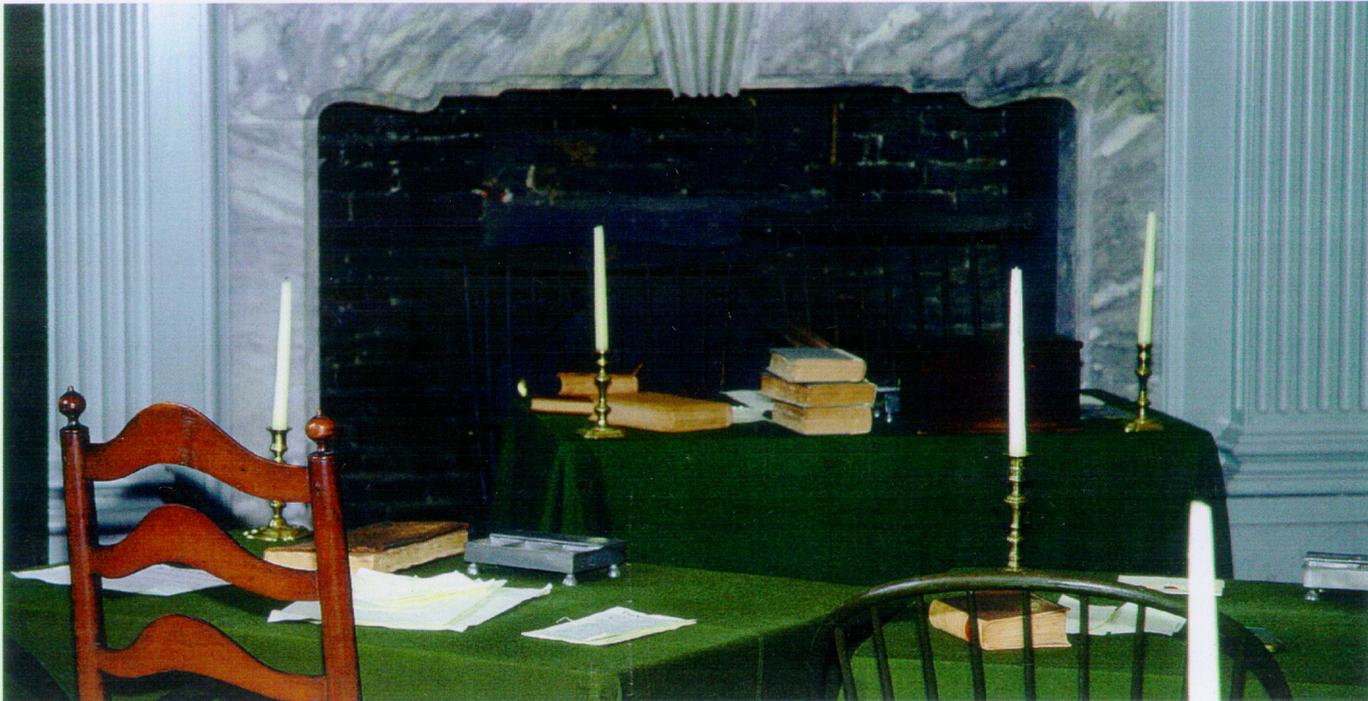
While I applaud efforts to create a more inclusive and variegated interpretation at the park via specialized thematic tours such as the one on the underground railroad, it is equally important to avoid the perception of interpretive tokenism. At present, most visitors get a form of "white history" that emphasizes the founding fathers in the last quarter of the 18th century, and "black history" that emphasizes the resistance to injustice during the antebellum era. The LRIP needs

to make certain that Black and White Americans make it into both periods and that we acknowledge the complexity of attitudes and capacity for growth. So long as interpretation is fixed on the events of the constitutional era, park rangers will struggle with how Black Americans fit into the nation's early political discourse because it is a part of history that at least some visitors find over-politicized and others find under-represented. White men, most of them willing to preserve the union by compromising on the ownership of other human beings (and ignoring women completely), failed to implement the ideals of the Declaration when it came time to write a new Constitution. But outside the windows of the Pennsylvania State House all sorts of people, blacks and whites, were already living together, some free, some enslaved.

Staff members already have promising ideas about a more nuanced form of interpretation based on historical and archaeological research undertaken when staff and architects cooperatively planned and constructed the National Constitution Center, the new Visitors' Center, and the Liberty Bell Pavilion. As they painstakingly researched the history of lots and features, they began to realize just how variegated things were. People lived together with varying degrees of autonomy and self-determination—men and women, adults and children, blacks and whites, native born and foreign. This landscape approach to history—a term that material culture scholars employ to describe the nested sets of physical and social relationships that all people live with—is a promising strategy for creating a more inclusive form of interpretation that can take place in the old Visitors Center, on wayside panels, and in other exhibition buildings. But the key insight is that staff members at all levels have to find ways to make connections with a broader array of ideas and to form linkages with the things they have to interpret.



Things



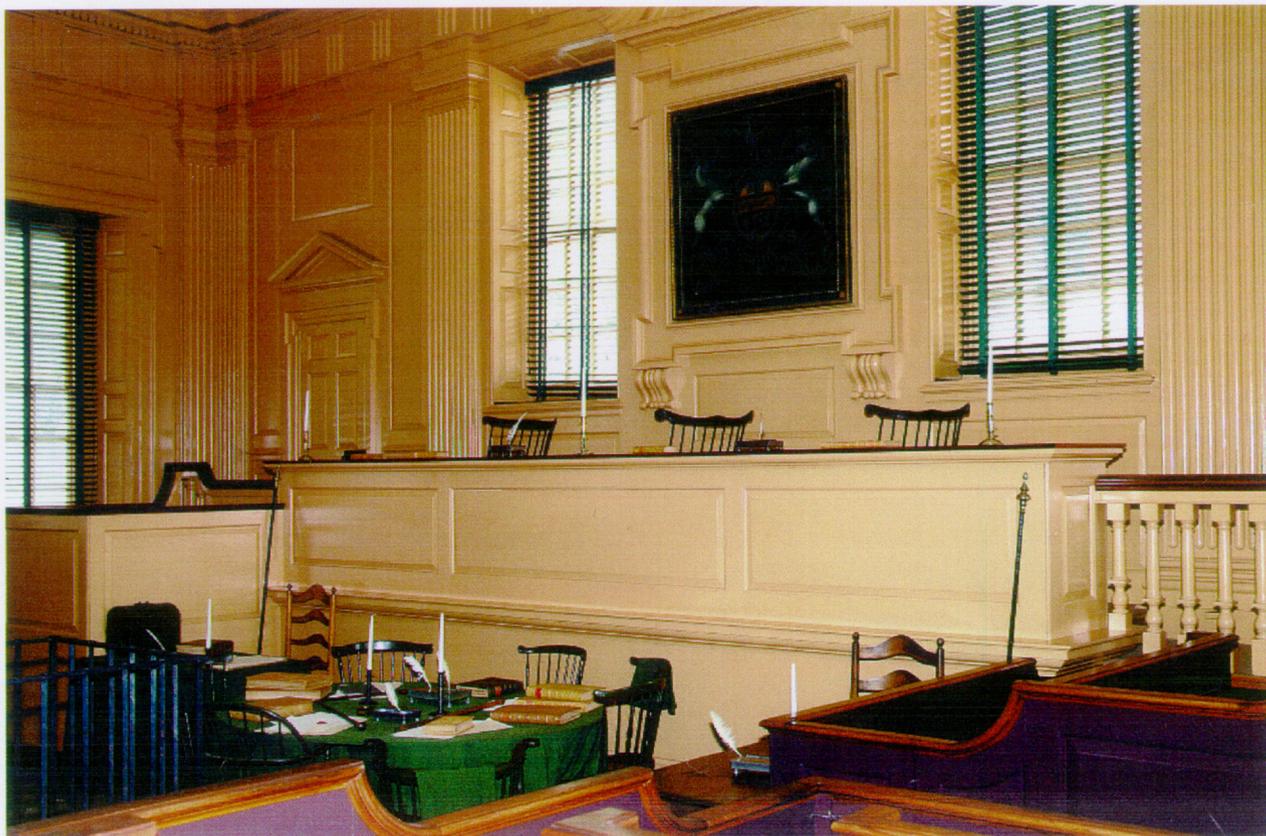
From a visual standpoint, the room in which the founding fathers debated the Constitution has much in common with a restaurant; it is a large room with small tables covered by table cloths, surrounded by chairs in which people once debated what ought to be on the menu, how much their choices would cost, and who would pick up the check. The metaphor emphasizes the point that the park's exhibits not only teach about words inscribed on paper but also immerse visitors in an environment filled with visual symbolism that they already find familiar. Visitors are accustomed to visual cues and can make connections if rangers help them understand certain relationships.

It is easy to talk about the things in these spaces descriptively rather than helping visitors think about them as forms of evidence. Description reinforces the public's sense of Independence Hall as sacred space rather than as a functioning public building in which people contested authority, showed up improperly dressed, or dispensed justice. Yet the architecture in its massive Doric classicism purposefully distanced people from the intimacy of even the most elegant domestic interiors then standing in Philadelphia. This was the architecture of state authority, linked to the authority of King and court. The LRIP must connect objects to interpretive themes. Otherwise, the objects are just stage props.



For most visitors, the initial encounter with the courtroom is strange because the arcaded opening from the hall barely screens the public passage from trial proceedings and the space is noisy, literally and figuratively. It was designed to impress the public; rangers do an excellent job conveying that theme, but on occasion the tour breaks down into simply pointing out various details of the room without alluding to their larger significance. On the tour I observed, I heard more about how a modern courtroom differed from the colonial one than I did about the implications of the room's symbolism; yet this would have been a powerful way to link the material culture to the Bill of Rights—such as the ways in which the defendant's iron cage symbolically opposed a presumption of innocence yet implicated the power of state authority.

The architectural hierarchies visible in this court room also appear in many churches where altars or pulpits, elevated above congregations, take center stage and choirs (like the court room's jury box) sit to one side. These parallels are important because part of the debates over the Constitution and the Bill of Rights focused on the relationship of church and state and because most Americans learned to tolerate a wide variety of faiths. Given the first amendment and their status as government employees, Park Service staff may be reluctant to interpret religion, but they need to think about how to include religion in the LRIP because Mother Bethel Church and the Friends Meetinghouse currently seem somewhat divorced from the Park's broader interpretive themes.





These themes echo in the Park's two historic houses. The Todd House and the Bishop White House humanize the political debates by bringing visitors down to the intimate level of individual families coping with local events, changing loyalties, and personal tragedies. After her husband's untimely death during one of Philadelphia's yellow fever epidemic, Dolly Todd, a Quaker, would go on to marry James Madison, a slaveholder. The Todd's neighbor, Bishop White was the distinguished Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America—a church that had started out as the Church of England but found an independent identity in the aftermath of the Revolution. Both houses evoke the material conditions of families at different stages of their lives, conditions that our ranger guide skillfully linked in one of the best historic house tours I have been on.

There are many landscapes to think about. The park straddles the drainage course of Dock Street, one of the few topographical interruptions in Penn's grid plan. The street was built on fill that covered up what had been a stinking waste pit and dock area. After Benjamin Franklin helped facilitate the cleanup of the landscape south of his house, the area would become the heart of the city's financial district in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Park Service pays little interpretive attention to the First and Second Banks of the United States, but these large and expensive buildings document the role of the city as a center of business and finance lodged on top of what was the eighteenth-century equivalent of a superfund site.

The redevelopment of Dock Street was also a metaphor for important changes in the political economy of the new nation. The last quarter of the eighteenth century was not just revolutionary in a political sense. It was a time of intense debate and experimentation. What now seems to be a picturesque urban greenway once contained noxious industries within sight of Benjamin Franklin's backyard. Cleaning up the wastes that once clogged the waterway required individual agitation and government action. It reflected at a local level the process of "making the world anew" that Thomas Paine called for in his political pamphlet, *Common Sense*. Here again is an opportunity to connect ideas to tangible action, to link the responsibilities of citizenship to the search for improvement in the human condition, and to help visitors understand that there were different definitions for the concept of improvement.

No individual epitomized the concept of improvement better than Benjamin Franklin and few exhibits at the park are more complicated than those at Franklin Court. Excavated for the Bicentennial, the Park Service elected not to rebuild Franklin's house on its original footprint, but treated its principal features as an archaeological exhibition and minimalist sculpture garden. Modern landscape features and ruins define the boundaries of buildings, wells, privies and yards—the material ghosts of the city's most famous man. To get at Franklin, visitors have to go underground. When they get there they find the Park Service's version of Epcot Center.

Franklin's biography seemed relegated to the periphery. In the center was a bank of phones, now so worn from nearly 30 years of use that the numbers were nearly invisible. Dailing up an eighteenth century character brought a series of random observations that at best seemed distantly related to Franklin or Park themes. No

visitors were in sight. The theater section in which visitors could look down on a miniature mechanical stage was more effective. Some visitors spent an extended period of time listening to the presentation that dealt with Franklin's experience in the Constitutional Convention. Much of the information seemed familiar from the presentation we had heard in Independence Hall.



I came away confused by the multitude of mixed messages. The exhibit often seemed more involved with the technology of exhibitions than with the message. To families with children who are brought up with digital computing, everything must have seemed hopelessly shopworn or archaic. The Park Service needs to rethink the entire space.

This area could be one of the park's most exciting exhibits. The exhibit is really about exploration, discovery, and information, about taking bits and pieces of history and cross mending them so that visitors can begin to understand what happened here and what it means. That process of cross mending is what the townhouse on Market Street and the archaeological features under the hoods on the Venturi landscape talk about, but they require persistence and a measure of sophistication. Looking at evidence and thinking about methodologies is important to scholars but not all visitors will find those things meaningful.



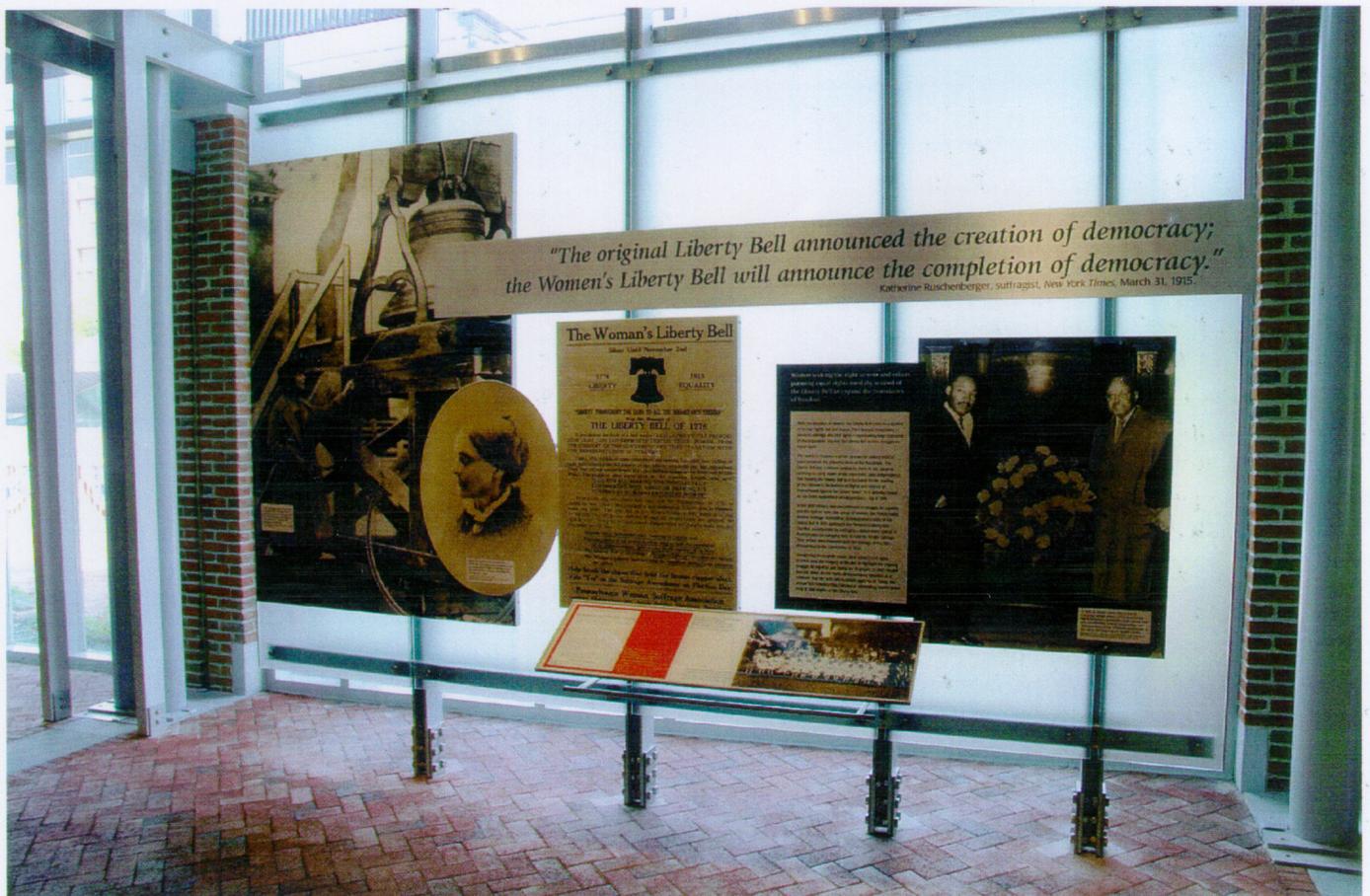
Speaking plainly, there is not much of Franklin left here except the memory of his ideas and the faint ghosts of his presence. Personally, I find the above-ground exhibits brilliant and have often used them to teach my graduate students, but the underground museum might be better if it focused on the role of printing and enlightenment thought for an audience of families and school-aged children. This approach would help reconnect eighteenth-century political pamphleteering and the press with the pragmatic scientific experimentation that Franklin was so fond of; it could be a hands-on exhibit to activate learning and it could employ the Rangers and guides to do what they do best—teach.

New initiatives at Franklin Court must wait because the park staff is working on plans to center the archaeological interpretation at the old 1976 Visitors' Center. This idea is promising on a number of levels. It puts the esoteric scholarship of archaeologist on public view. It will allow the park to tell new stories about a more diverse set of subjects. It may help spread out park visitors and make the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall sites less congested. Most importantly, it will dramatically enlarge the public's access to things and to the social history of everyday life.

By contrast, the President's house is contested ground because it is about the politics of memory. It may well be that the history of the site is best told in its archaeological context over at the old Visitors' Center. The site itself should probably become a work of art to reflect the raw emotions that are central to the nation's political life and its long struggle to define and secure justice.

Sometimes old things are inadequate for audiences seeking new understanding.

Audiences





Staff members have long recognized that Independence National Historical Park has many audiences. The diversity makes the preparation of an LRIP challenging but the Park has little hard information about its guests. Unlike the majority of large private museums that have spent the last fifteen years trying to survey their audiences to plan better services, regulations enjoin the Park Service from collecting data on visitors. The assumption is that the park will plan its interpretation for a mythical general visitor who might come with a family or in a group. Since the largest volume of visitors proceed through the Liberty Bell pavilion and then on to Independence Hall, most of the interpretive energy is expended on tours of large groups of people who want to go through a relatively small building. Since there are so many of them, Rangers can seldom devote much time and attention to individual visitors during busy seasons.

Although staff members are considering programs for school groups and more specialized tours for special interest groups, my overall impression of interpretation at the core of the park is that it is inflexible. Visitors receive a more nuanced experience when they get away from the core. The review team had high praise for the specialized tours that examined the underground railroad and the historic houses; there was less unanimity about the tour of Independence Hall. The group praised the lively teaching of the Ranger while recognizing the limitations he faced.

The Rangers and Guides are highly trained and responsive teachers who are frustrated by the present system. Staff were vocal about their frustrations with the Liberty Bell Exhibit and with the canonical tour of Independence Hall. In the former, some feel demoted to guard duty; in the latter, they feel caught between Park Service interpretive goals, the tyranny of time, bureaucratic inertia, and public indifference. Some of this was normal grumbling—turnover rates are low—but the upwelling of ideas in our session with Rangers and Guides indicated that they cared deeply about the job they were doing and wanted change. What that change might look like is not clear.

What is clear is that conditions have changed and the park must rethink its approach. These changes break down into three areas: internal factors, external factors, and visitor factors. The internal factors include new scholarship, leadership, and budgetary pressures—all three will compel change, focus, and collaboration. The external factors include new institutions in or near the park that can handle some of the interpretive load and increased security that has fundamentally altered how visitors experience the park. The visitor factors are actually exciting; the park audience is now more diverse than ever before and under-represented audiences are clamoring for greater appreciation of their roles in history. These developments have also propelled change.



The most vocal challenge has come from members of the African American Community who have a vested interest in the interpretation of slavery at the President's house site and who seek to include African American perspectives in the foundations of American political philosophy. Attitudes towards the nation's principles differ according to the side of the work yard you gaze from and most of the work yards were set metaphorically and literally behind the street facades. Public audiences may not grasp the intricate details of constitutional debate, but most people have an opinion about where power is vested and who is excluded from public conversations.

The security factors will reshape interpretation, at least for the near future. This development may be a blessing in disguise because it requires visitors to commit more time to their experience and pulls them through the Liberty Bell exhibition and Independence Hall in a sequential order that is more or less predictable. While current logistics are confusing to many visitors, park staff will sort them out in time and the captive audience makes it possible to rethink interpretation in new ways. The Rangers had a number of good ideas for exploiting this opportunity.

Given the huge scale of general visitor services, it is hard to give much priority to the Park's scholarship. But there are many opportunities for improvement because the internet has made it possible to deliver information flexibly and relatively cheaply. Park staff have generated an immense amount of detailed data about the core areas of the park and, more broadly, early Philadelphia. Staff ought to share this scholarship. At present it is available to those who have the time and money to make an appointment and search through it, but the park might solve some of its interpretive problems by getting its research up on line where anyone with access to a computer could get it. Rather than reconstructing the President's house and its dependencies to interpret slavery, for instance, reconstruct slavery in the President's house on line and tie the information to other African American house sites the archaeologists have recovered. For the cost of reconstructing a building, you could keep people employed developing web-based information for many years and build a base for some exhibitions. Web pages are not a substitute for visiting and seeing the collections, but they are one of the best ways for cheaply sharing historical data nationally and internationally.

The most exciting finding of my site visit was the realization that the park's visitors are no longer middle-class whites. We were surrounded by all kinds of people who were there to see what the park had to offer them. Many were in families; many were not. Park interpreters can reach these audiences in creative ways and have fun doing it.



Conclusions

To serve Park staff better, I have tried to keep my recommendations short. I urge that staff think about these recommendations as entry points for further discussion.

I did not elaborate on administrative or budgetary matters because I lacked time and essential information. Given the present national deficit, I see little chance of increasing the park's budgetary allocation in a meaningful way. Nor do I foresee the National Park Service closing or mothballing some of its parks to give priority to its most visited parks such as INDE. The only way forward, is to rethink and reprioritize, just as most private museums have had to do for the past five years. Money for these initiatives can only come from the enthusiasm and support of outside funding agencies. Those agencies are most likely to respond to new and creative ideas that involve various forms of collaboration.

- 1) Embrace change with deliberation and determination because it releases energy.
- 2) Focus on ideas: What does it mean to be free, what is the balance between liberty and order, and who decides?
- 3) Break up the canonical interpretation among different venues, accepting that the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall will always carry an element of sacred myth that visitors need and want to experience. Would it make more sense to talk about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in Congress Hall? Should Rangers merely reference the debates over the Constitution while in Independence Hall and direct visitors to other parts of the park for the details?
- 4) Avoid treating Independence Hall interpretation as a lesson plan in which Rangers principally deliver facts. If staff really want to write the LRIP as a set of lesson plans, let them be more creative: "After 15 minutes in Independence Hall, Rangers will help visitors understand how contentious political change was and how we are still in the process of defining the boundaries of individual freedom and social justice." Then let the Ranger pick out an object or strategy that helps the visitor reach that understanding. If that approach is too open ended, then settle on a variety of shared strategies that make sense to the staff. But stop obsessing about the Great Compromise or the Virginia Plan.
- 5) Empower the Rangers and Guides. If they want to create their own Power Point presentations in the Liberty Bell Pavilion or Visitors' Center, let them. Encourage initiative without losing quality control.



- 6) Connect the objects to the ideas. The connections help visitors become more visually literate and understand that the Park is a collection of landscapes, buildings, and things that mediate human interaction and ideas in a modern metropolis. Exploit these connections to help visitors make sense of Dock Creek, the Banks, the churches, the waterfront, and ties to the Atlantic world.
- 7) Put religion back in the picture to help visitors understand how Americans have long had conflicting notions about the separation of church and state. Give a major role to the Quaker meetinghouse and Mother Bethel Church pointing out that churches have championed progressive and conservative causes.
- 8) Continue to push forward plans for reinventing the old Visitors' Center as an area for interpreting archaeology.
- 9) Do not tokenize race by overemphasizing it at the President's house site. Instead, acknowledge the political and ideological problems of race in all areas of the park as people struggled with the question of what does it mean to be free. Remind visitors that Philadelphia had slaves and free blacks who lived and worked with each other. Archaeology at the Old Visitors' Center can help with this interpretation.



10) Remember the Ladies by incorporating women into this picture. Do not tokenize Dolly Todd or Deborah Franklin. Make links between the Liberty Bell exhibition and other objects in the park when interpreting women. Carry the story into the 20th century to help visitors remember that more than half of the adult population was disenfranchised for the majority of American History.

11) Use Independence Hall to talk about the fashioning of state constitutions, pointing out that the Federal Constitution was not the only one debated in the Old State House. The Pennsylvania Constitution was also written there. The state constitutions go directly to the question of how to limit governmental authority and keep decision making close to constituents.

12) Initiate plans to reinvigorate the interpretation at Franklin Court. Franklin is the personification of many historical themes: immigrant, scientist, rational thinker, political do-gooder, master manipulator, artful self-promoter, self-made man, iconoclast, pragmatist and so on. The underground museum could make a very interesting center for children and families with hands-on activities.



- 13) Work in the interpretation of the Banks because few issues were more controversial in the Early Republic. Remind visitors that the bank helped foster the emergence of the two party system. The banks signify and embody political debates about society and the economy and they allude directly to the process of political change.
- 14) Make the Park's scholarship more available to the public either through publication or via the internet. It might be best to "publish" information via PDF files of historic structures reports, archaeological reports, and library findings aids. A possible model is the American Memory files at the Library of Congress.
- 15) Put a catalog of the collections on line.
- 16) Continue to foster opportunities for staff to cross-disciplinary and bureaucratic borders. The recent staff changes are encouraging.
- 17) Remind visitors that the founders were imperfect. Washington was often prickly, Adams was often jealous and intolerant of others, Jefferson fathered children by his slave, Franklin was not a model husband, Hamilton had a scandalous affair, Madison was the principal author of the Bill of Rights and a slaveholder. Nevertheless, they all sacrificed their own interests and comforts to serve a larger good. Some of these themes might have to go into a PG-13 tour or Power Point presentation but I suspect that the public would welcome or tolerate a more complicated picture.
- 18) The Declaration and the Constitution were radical documents because they forwarded the idea that ordinary people could control their destiny if they acted wisely and for the common good. Put Tom Paine in the picture.
- 19) Never underestimate the public.

Respectfully Submitted

J. Ritchie Garrison
Director, Winterthur Program in Early American Culture
University of Delaware

*If you would not be forgotten,
as soon as you are dead and rotten,
either write things worth reading,
or do things worth the writing. —*

Poor Richard's Almanac



Site Review of Independence National Historic Park

Gary B. Nash

Professor Emeritus and Director of the National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles

It was my pleasure to visit the Independence National Historic Park (INHP) on October 18-20 as part of a team organized by the Organization of American Historians. Mary Bomar INHP's superintendent, requested the review team in accordance with the provisions of the OAH-National Park Service cooperative agreement signed more than a decade ago. The report that follows deals selectively with the massive operations of INHP; because none of us could delve into all its multiple aspects, the site review members agreed to split up the responsibilities, though all of us will comment on some of the most important parts of INHP's operations.

OAH's Susan Ferentinos did a splendid job organizing our visit and tending to all logistical matters.

Full disclosure: any party reading this report should know that I have been involved with INHP for a decade or more. About ten years ago, I met with INHP rangers to discuss ways of bringing African American history in Philadelphia into the presentations made to INHP visitors. More recently, I consulted with NPS historians in writing *Landmarks of the American Revolution* (2002), published jointly by NPS and Oxford University Press. Of most importance, for the last two years I have been deeply involved in criticizing the original interpretive plan for the Liberty Bell Pavilion. I was one of the two organizers of the Ad Hoc Historians group that gained publicity for our belief that INHP's interpretive staff in charge of selecting artifacts and writing a script for the new Liberty Bell Pavilion was missing important opportunities at what was expected to be one of the most visited National Park Service sites in the country. Over the last year, I have been involved at a distance in the continuing work of the Ad Hoc Historians to work cooperatively with INHP.

In the following critique, I have put concrete suggestions in **boldface**.

Accessibility: The OAH review team was given full access to division heads, though the time we were able to spend with them, in a very crowded schedule, was limited. A meeting with park rangers provided an unusual chance to get their points of views, to hear their complaints, and discuss with them matters that were on their minds. Superintendent Bomar was most welcoming and set a high-spirited tone for our deliberations. Our teams stayed together to hear ranger talks at Independence and Congress halls, but we split up for tours to subsidiary sites.

Leadership: INHP's new superintendent, Mary Bomar, has performed brilliantly, I believe, in managing a sprawling park with more than 250 staff members and composed of more than twenty mostly uncontiguous sites (one of them eight miles from Independence Hall), including about fifty landscaped acres. She arrived in the middle of full-fledged public relations crisis in

early 2003, and is now, after an important public forum on October 30, 2004 at the Visitor's Center, she is within reach of gaining consensus among many interested parties concerning the Liberty Bell Center exhibits and the plans for interpreting the President's House outside the Center. She has made shrewd staff changes, raised morale in a difficult time, reached out to academic historians who are eager to assist with long-range planning and implementation of current projects, and built partnerships outside of NPS. Superintendent Bomar has had to work under a double disadvantage in the less than two years since coming to INHP: relentless budget strain and security measures imposed upon the park that disrupt visitor flow, eat up a significant fraction of staff time, and discourage rangers and other members of the staff.

Cultural Resources Management Division (CRM): One of the strengths of INHP over the years has been a Division of CRM with a talented staff of historians, curators, archaeologists, and others. This division has conducted invaluable research at sites such as the Kosciuszko House, the Bishop White house, the Deshler-Morris House (the Germantown White House), the Todd House, and the site of the house of the free African American James Dexter, where archaeological research is providing fascinating clues to the lives of free black Philadelphians and their neighbors in Philadelphia after the Revolution. The value of this research cannot be overestimated because it is the starting point for long range interpretive planning of Philadelphia in the federal era, the origin of ranger talks, the source for pamphlets available at each subsidiary site, and the foundation of new exhibits. The 2002 draft of The "Programmatic Vision Statement" by James W. Mueller clearly states the primary and secondary themes of INHP.

Kosciuszko House: I was not able to visit the Kosciuszko House but have read the Long Range Interpretive Plan. It is carefully constructed. The primary themes—"The Struggle for Human Rights" and "Kosciuszko's Military and Engineering Expertise"—are well drawn. So are the secondary themes: "Remembering Kosciuszko" and "Philadelphia, the Capital City." In the latter regard, I was glad to see the attention to Kosciuszko's words, as articulated in his Polish Act of Insurrection and in his will leaving his revolutionary war pay in Jefferson's hands to free slaves at Monticello or others as specified by the retired third president of the United States. Many of the other "theme reinforcement" statements are wonderful, such as "providing opportunities to visually locate the many places in America and Europe where Kosciuszko made history and where he is commemorated" and encouraging "on-site visitors to explore Kosciuszko's neighborhood and connect to the Capital City theme of INHP."

One element of the refurbished interpretive plan carry great importance to the National Park Service's overall commitment to presenting multiple perspectives and allowing visitors to experience the multi-faceted American experience: the treatment of Kosciuszko's American will, drawn just before he left the country in 1798. In the new 7-10 minute audiovisual programme that will tell the Kosciuszko story and in the new exhibit to be installed in the former theater , INHP has the opportunity (in fact, the obligation) **to give a balanced view of why Jefferson refused the executorship of Kosciuszko's will after learning of the Polish hero's death in 1817, a decision that threw the will into the federal courts where it remained until 1852.**

I find one other important element missing from the Long Range Interpretive Plan and **I urge that it be included: Kosciuszko's close relationship with Agrippa Hull, the free black**

man from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who enlisted at age 18 and served as Kosciuszko's orderly for several years, including all of the southern campaigns of 1779-82. The influence of Hull on Kosciuszko's thinking cannot be precisely determined, but their relationship was very close, as evidenced by Kosciuszko's attempt to induce Hull to return with him to Poland in 1784, and their reunion in New York City after the Polish general returned to the United States in 1797.

Deshler-Morris House: None of the site reviewers were able to visit the Deshler-Morris House, but I read the Long Range Interpretive plan and spent time with Steve Sitarski, Chief of the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services to look at the mock-ups of the new exhibits. Here, INHP has shown great imagination and sensitivity to multiple perspectives in organizing the exhibits and commissioning the short film that will introduce visitors to the "Germantown White House," where Washington, his cabinet, and staff retreated from the horrendous yellow fever epidemic in the late summer and early fall of 1793. The primary theme, "A Washington Refuge," is explored through the eyes of three women: Martha Washington, granddaughter Nellie Custis Washington, and Ona (or Oney) Judge, the first lady's enslaved personal attendant. I commend INHP for this interpretive plan, which, I believe, will be received with great praise and help boost what is now a paltry trickle of visitors to this out-of-the-way NPS site. The secondary themes—"The Battle of Germantown and the Philadelphia Campaign," "The 'Urban Village'," and "Preservation and Material Culture"—also reflect the hard work and imagination of the CRM staff and the Chief of Interpretation. **I am concerned, however, that the theme of how Philadelphia and the federal government coped with catastrophe when the yellow fever epidemic brought the city to its knees is underplayed.** Perhaps this can be remedied by full attention to the "coping with catastrophe" theme at the Todd House (which I did not have the opportunity to visit). If this is so, INHP should do its best to encourage visitors at the Deshler-Morris House to visit the Todd House as a companion site.

Second Bank overhaul of the Portrait Gallery: My tour of the Second Bank, where workmen were busily installing the new exhibit titled "People of Independence," was little short of breath-taking. Guided through by Frances Delmar and Karie Diethorn, the two fertile minds behind the conceptualizing and planning of the exhibit, Richard Newman and I saw the venerable but little-visited Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank in the process of rebirth. Here is a wonderful example of fresh thinking, particularly of how to connect the mostly famous figures of the Age of Revolution painted by Charles Willson Peale with the hub-bub of the city where they walked, talked, and interacted with people of every rank. The old, gilt-framed oil portraits take on new life and new meaning so the visitor can imagine them coming out of their wooden frames and appearing as flesh and blood figures wrestling with the problems of the day. This is a feat of great imagination and courage and will take men who have long been on monuments and make them figures that visitors will want to know more about. I will not try to describe the techniques used to accomplish this, but from what we saw—the installation was far from done with six weeks to go before the opening on December 1—I believe INHP has a major new attraction on its hands and a model for other NPS curators to learn from and envy. This is a triumph of *conceptualization*.

Old Visitors Center: We did not enter the cavernous old Visitors Center, but I liked what I learned of plans for its reincarnation. That it will house some million artifacts recovered from digging the site of the National Constitution Center (and presumably the Dexter house) is very good news. The explanation given by NPS archaeologist Jed Levin of what is planned is inspiring in these ways:

a) visitors will be able to see archaeologists and their assistants at work cleaning, preserving, and cataloging artifacts; this should be a hit and should entice visitors to see other INHP sites;

b) a small rotating exhibit, perhaps not more than a case or two, showing “artifacts of the week,” where visitors can see how hidden treasures are recovered and become the material evidence from which historians work to recreate the misty past. In this case, the possibilities are huge because the artifacts uncovered from the NCC site reveal aspects of Native American life in the Delaware River valley before European contact through more than three centuries of Euro-American settlement;

c) the enlistment of volunteer archaeological assistants, which can be a public relations coup and can help in the efforts to reach out to historically-minded groups in the Philadelphia region.

The space available at the old Visitors Center and the priceless artifacts now to be housed there provides the opportunity to do something INHP has never been able to do: show how life was lived at ground level at the center of Penn’s hoped-for “peaceable kingdom” in the British colonies’ largest and most multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-racial city; in the nerve center of the American revolution, in the nation’s capital from 1790 to 1800, and in the early nineteenth century when Philadelphia was a critical site of antebellum reform. **I urge that INHP adopt as a key element in its long range planning what some of the CRM staffers already bruited--a Center of Early American Life, where the public can appreciate the diversity of the city and how it changed over time. Philadelphia has never had such exhibits for the period from Swedish arrival through the Civil War. In its long-range planning, it is important that INHP curators and interpreters break out of political and ideological strait jackets that set temporal boundaries on what can be treated and exhibited. Carrying themes from the late colonial and revolutionary eras into the federal period and the early nineteenth century can mark a new era of interpretation of Philadelphia’s history. This will require amending the General Management Plan of 1997 where 1800 is set as the terminal point of INHP’s interpretive programs.** This march across the 1800 barrier is already intended in the “Programmatic Vision Statement for the History Branch of CRM,” where the treatment of American architecture extends to 1834 and the treatment of the Banks of the U.S. and the People of Philadelphia, I infer, is meant to go beyond the artificial date of 1800.

Interpretive programs: I was very pleased to take a walk with an African American ranger on Underground Railroad sites. He was brimming over with knowledge, engaging in his storytelling, and open to questions. I am told that ranger tours include ones treating the British-occupied city in 1777-78, and I was equally glad to hear that rangers treat the yellow fever crisis

of 1793 at the Todd House. I had been at the Bishop White house on an earlier visit and liked the presentations there about material culture and the role of religion in Philadelphia in the post-revolutionary period. I also saw Ranger Joe Becton's lively power-point presentation on the history of the President's House. I found solid research supporting every one of these presentations.

On a less rosy note, I was disappointed with the talks that attract the most visitors—at Independence Hall and Congress Hall. I understand that rangers must shepherd hundreds of visitors through each day with only 15 minutes or so to convey the essence of these sites. Yet it was distressing to hear nothing at all about the significance of IH to African Americans of the late eighteenth century. In a letter to Superintendent Aikens nine years ago—I have shown this letter to Superintendent Bomar—an African American visitor expressed his gratitude to Ranger Delmar for awakening him to how Independence Hall was relevant to him as well as to white visitors. **It would be a shame to regress from this multi-perspectived explanation of IH and Congress Hall. It is not that we need color-coded messages; rather INHP rangers should be sure that all visitors understand the significance of these iconic buildings for all visitors.**

In its interpretive mission, **one of the greatest challenges in long-range planning is to find ways to link the many INHP sites together in the visitor's mind.** The map handed out at the Visitors Center tries to do this, but most visitors seem to miss the linkages. The mow, blow, and go or one-stop shopping syndrome seems prevalent to judge by the long lines at IH and the non-existent lines at places such as Kosciuszko House or New Hall. One of our reviewers, Richard Newman, suggested kiosks placed around the historic area, perhaps with sites marked with back-lighting, or walking routes promoting the subsidiary sites that have important and engaging stories to tell. A welcome step in this direction is "Following in Franklin's Footsteps," a perky, inexpensively produced handout encouraging visitors to branch out from Franklin's house and printing office to Whalebone Alley and Harmony Lane, Carpenter's Hall, Christ Church, the Liberty Bell Center, and Independence Hall. **Why not devise a similar "Following in the Footsteps of Thomas Paine" or "Following in the Footsteps of the Pembertons," where a different mix of sites could be brought to the visitor's attention?.**

An essential ingredient in further enhancing ranger interpretations is effective, robust communications between CRM and the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. It appears that there has been an erosion in this information highway in recent years, perhaps largely because of budget strain. Restarting the seminar series, where outside scholars can spend time with rangers on new historical research and perspectives and routine sessions where rangers become the recipients of research from CRM staffers has already been proposed in the "Programmatic Vision Statement for the History Branch" (pp. 12-13). I gather that these proposals, made two years ago, are in the early stages of implementation (with Professors Stephanie Wolf and Charlene Mires scheduled for visits in November 2004). **Beginning with the wintry months ahead, when rangers's visitor tours are reduced, this close contact between CRM and DIVS should be reestablished.**

Outreach: The new position that Frances Delmar has assumed is very important for long-range planning and interpretation. Looking back over forty years of visiting and conducting research in Philadelphia, I see many signs that INHP is ready to help usher in an unprecedented and exciting new era where Philadelphia can become one of the nation's greatest outdoor history classroom in matters relating to early American history. The public fascination with the buried historic treasures being brought above ground from Blocks 2 and 3, the crowds flocking to the National Constitution Center, the decent success of the "Lights of Liberty" show, the massive preparations for the tricentennial of Benjamin Franklin's birth, new programming at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, new initiatives at Christ Church and Mother Bethel, the commercial tours with horse and carriage, and plans for a Valley Forge Historical Center all point in the direction of making Philadelphia a premier history heritage destination. Even the controversy over the Liberty Bell exhibits can be counted as a plus because it indicates the intense public interest in things historical. (There is no such thing as bad publicity said Cecil B. DeMille). **It will take imagination and diplomatic finesse to help coordinate this and make INHP a bold player in a multi-party enterprise.** See my concluding remarks for further thoughts on this.

Bookstores: The bookstores at the Visitors Center and Pemberton House are neither the best nor worst I have seen at NPS sites. Mary Jenkins, who has oversight on this issue, knows they bear improvement, and she promised us that she intends to make them better. I will not dwell on this since I promised to send her a list of books that should be on the shelves and should do decently. It was particularly surprising to see that neither store had NPS's own *Landmarks of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press and NPS, 2002), which writes up and illustrates many Philadelphia area sites. (I authored the book).

Publications: The handbook titled *Independence: A Guide to Independence National Historic Park*, published 22 years ago, is apparently out of print. It has wonderful photography and many fine features; but it is very out of date, both in text and in the research that has been done at many of the INHP sites. **Publishing a rewritten version of this handbook should be a priority item because it will sell well and encourage visitors to IH and LBC to visit subsidiary sites.**

The Gazette, a new newspaper jointly published by Historic Philadelphia and INHP, is a welcome handout that spreads the word of the many subsidiary sites. This is a good innovation. I have commented above on the "Following in Franklin's Footsteps," which is another excellent innovation.

The Visitors Center: The breezy look of the Visitors Center seems to work well for the public. One of its main virtues is to encourage visitors to go beyond Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell to see some of the other rich historic sites in Philadelphia and the environs. The two introductory films provide a "warm-up" for visitors, as at almost all Park Service sites. Although short-range projects already underway rightly deserve priority, **INHP should begin thinking about putting the John Huston film on the shelf (to be replaced by a introductory film that will serve better in the twenty-first century).** The film is ingenious and fetching; it also unabashedly reflects the historical consensus school of the period in which the film was made—the 1950s. The visitor may not even notice, but the film's uncomplicated message and its picture

of a city in which anyone who is not white is whisked off the scene is out of touch with modern scholarship on the American Revolution.

Educational Outreach: I was very impressed with Sue Glennon, INHP's new head of educational outreach. She has been in the trenches with young learners and knows what they need and want. The support of the Penn Foundation in funding salary for this position is good news indeed. Of critical importance is Superintendent Bomar's redirection of much of the \$5 million Penn Foundation grant #227-01 to support the education program and rehabilitate the Declaration House and parts of the old Visitor's Center for working with the very large number of school children who visit INHP each year. The waiver from the Department of the Interior for "redirection of funds for Independence Park Institute," signed in July 2004, now sets in motion the careful plans outlined in the request for this waiver.

Concluding remarks: In several discussions during the three-day visit, the OAH site review team agreed that INHP has a talented, imaginative, hard-working staff. New staff additions and re-assignments promise to strengthen the outreach of INHP and to effect smoother linkages between different divisions of this large organization. Rich Garrison expertly expressed our admiration for the energy, vision, and passion of the organization in a wrap-up session with a goodly number of INHP personnel.

In its long-range planning, INHP should turn the migraine headache that the Liberty Bell controversy induced into clear thinking about how to move forward. As the prolonged controversy revealed, key members of the INHP leadership team distanced themselves from the initiatives launched by regional and national Park Service leaders to blaze a trail forward into the twenty-first century. The work over recent years of Park Service Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley in urging Civil War NPS sites to incorporate slavery as a major theme of their interpretative programs and the Civic Engagement Project initiated by Eastern Regional Director Marie Rust are, figuratively, a ringing of the Liberty Bell for *all* the nation's people. I doubt that it is possible to unring this tolling bell. **Rather, INHP leaders should put aside undue tenderness on the public's capacity to embrace controversy, ambiguity, paradox, and the dark side of American history. This will require the full commitment of Deputy Superintendent Dennis Reidenbach and Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services Steve Sitarski to the culture of civic engagement and its implementation.**

Nobody will argue that this will be easy, for there is still a reservoir of public opinion holding that rangers should tell simply the heroic political story of achieving independence and writing the constitution as they guide visitors through Independence Hall and Congress Hall. But this is a rearguard minority view, comparable to that of the "lost cause" Civil War buffs. There is a better way forward at INHP in what its leaders have to assume is a nation capable of mature self-reflection. As Colonial Williamsburg leaders have discovered, the public is not afraid of--or put off by--the dissonance they pick up in hearing stories that are no longer univocal and uncomplicated. In fact, the public is all the more given to reflection (and more likely to return with new curiosity rather than leaving with the "been there, done that" feeling). Engaging outside scholars and community groups in every new initiative is infinitely preferable to repeating the Liberty Bell controversy. In the Liberty Bell contretemps, the failure to embrace

civic engagement led to a civic engagement *forced* on INHP by the very people who ought to have been involved from the beginning. The INHP leadership team lost the trust of community activist groups, scholars, and local institutional leaders. Now, under Superintendent Bomar's leadership, repairing that trust is well underway and a new bridge between the park and the city, between the park and devoted scholars, is half-built. Completing that bridge should be central to long-range planning.

Organization of American Historians/National Park Service Evaluation of Independence National
Historical Park, October 2004.

Richard Newman
Rochester Institute of Technology
Submitted November 26, 2004

I would like to thank both the OAH and National Park Service for sponsoring the site review at Independence National Historical Park. My visit was stimulating and thoroughly rewarding. I took away as much as I hope to give back by way of commentary. It is clear, moreover, that many exciting changes are already underway at Independence Park. Indeed, there was so much to do that I was not able to view some of the NPS' most up-to-date exhibits (the renovated Second Bank Building, the Underground Railroad tour) until the very last day of my visit. As I expected, NPS staff and officials (from Rangers to CRM and IVS personnel to supervisors and directors), were all kind, well informed and (most important) deeply interested in remaking parts of Independence Park while improving existing exhibits and tours. As much as NPS personnel expressed concerns about this or that, there was a thorough-going dedication to providing the best visitor experience possible. I will touch more on this below but it is important to stress here: the strength of Independence Park is not merely in the cultural heritage of the buildings but the knowledge and dedication of the staff. Everyone wants to enhance the visitor's experience – that came through loud and clear. Many of my suggestions, therefore, should be taken as ways to enhance the wonderful history being preserved and presented at Independence Park.

1. Expanding NPS Stories

Let me begin by emphasizing the need to expand the historical content at Independence Park. Quite simply, the NPS needs to expand its programs and guided tours to encompass the incredible history that occurred at or around park sites. On the “bread and butter” tours which I took of Independence Hall, for example, I was struck by how much more there was to the story of the Revolution and Constitution than is currently

presented. As important as it is to give people a sense of where the Declaration was signed and where the Constitution was created (with an additional tale or two thrown in), it is also important to convey that the broader task of nation-making included a range of other issues and stories. Independence Hall was the site of the most radical state constitution formed in the wake of the Revolution; it was also the place where the Pennsylvania government passed the world's first gradual abolition law (as idealistic an act as the Declaration, one might say). Congress Hall was the site of the very first African American petitions to congress on slavery and the slave trade; the Federal Patent Office was the site of the first patented pamphlet in African American history in 1794 (Richard Allen and Absalom Jones' Yellow Fever document). One could go on but the point is clear: the NPS story needs to be expanded.

Clearly, the NPS has already established a solid framework for presenting a fuller history. The new Liberty Bell and Second Bank exhibits are vibrant and show the Revolution's expansive meaning to subsequent generations of Americans. Moreover, by noting in both Park Service literature and on the Web site that the NPS is dedicated not merely to the Liberty Bell, the Declaration of Independence and Constitution but to five very important themes, the NPS is in a wonderful position to expand the stories that comprise the nation's founding era.

Just as clearly, there seems to be debate and concern among some interpretive staff that the canonical stories of the Declaration and Constitution will be lost in any revised program. So the perennial question is how to expand visitors' historical horizons in 15-minute guided tours without losing the canonical stories. Park Service rangers and guides continually returned to this concern in our team's discussions with them. And there was no broad consensus when it came to answers. Some rangers thought NPS stories should be expanded but weren't sure how to do it; others argued that the basic story (of the Declaration and Constitution) cannot be told in the current 15-minute tour, so why try to expand things!

Although these are legitimate concerns, the NPS must find a way around them. For example, Park Service staff might try to establish updated way stations outside Independence Hall on key issues like state constitution-making or early abolitionism in Pennsylvania. The NPS might also create slightly-longer "special" tours a few times per day (30 minutes) that address such themes. Perhaps too, the NPS could inaugurate "team tours": visitor tours led by two people, one person focusing on the canonical stories of the Declaration and Constitution, the second person illuminating social and reform history in early national

Philadelphia. Documents might be distributed – the NPS “Gazette” could be utilized as a vehicle for presenting interesting historical themes and ideas every few weeks. Or the Park Service might place people in period dress at and around Independence Hall to discuss certain issues (petitions to the first congress, for instance, which ranged from economic concerns to Quaker reformers’ abolitionist agenda).

One visionary way to enhance and expand the NPS story at Independence Park would be to use technology to create “History Kiosks.” These mini-terminals, or computer portals, would *not* be designed to replace rangers or guides but to deepen visitors’ experience of key themes outside of the tours. Visitors leaving Independence Hall could thus go to a “History Kiosk” and click on “Black Founders” to get a snapshot of Richard Allen, or James Dexter’s house, or perhaps even a voice reading from Allen and Jones’ Yellow Fever pamphlet of 1794. Young visitors could send themselves an e-mail from the site on some person or theme (such a web-link could be called “MyRevolution.com”) or sign their online name to an imaginary petition. Visitors could even design their own tour of NPS sites focusing on military themes or African American history.

In short, technology could be used to portray these canonical sites as bearers of not one history lesson but a universe of fascinating and still-relevant history, from strict construction of the Constitution (“click on this site for the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, and streaming audio of a ranger’s explanation of debates over the Constitution in the 1790s”) to the meaning of nationhood. Visitors might see that Independence Park requires more study, more time – and more return visits (either on the Web or in real time). But if technology is envisioned as a bridge to younger audiences in particular – who navigate the world through audio/visual and interactive technologies – the NPS might very well be setting the foundation for future generations of visitors. And emphasizing technology a bit more may also allow for some interesting historical connections to Independence Park. For Philadelphia was in many ways a technological hub during the early republic. It was probably the nation’s print capital. As the seat of federal government, it was the site of all manner of patent applications. And it was a trade entrepot. Visitors might therefore learn about how early national Americans utilized technologies to reshape their views of government, society and identity – just as now.

In terms of African American history (my own research specialty), the Park Service has many opportunities for discussing issues relating to free blacks, slavery and race. On the issue of slavery, both

Independence Hall and Congress Hall played critical roles in the inauguration and evolution of early abolitionism. The Pennsylvania state legislature passed the world's first gradual abolition bill in 1780, using words that rang out in the dominant tones of the Revolution: "We feel it a duty to pass on the Liberty which we ourselves enjoy." For over fifty years (up to the time of Garrisonian abolitionism), Philadelphia was abolition's capitol, with European reformers, American statesmen and other abolitionists (black and white) alike utilizing the city as a nexus of reform information and advice. In my own book, for example, I showed how early white abolitionists based in Philadelphia joined with fugitive slaves and free blacks to challenge racial injustice in Pennsylvania courts – to solidify and maintain Pennsylvania's reputation as a "free state." Now this might be defined as "African American history." But it also is part of the dominant story that NPS hopes to tell: the importance of "liberty" in our national life.

The same might be said of the role of free blacks played in revolutionary and post-revolutionary America. There are several sites at Independence Park just begging for a way station, a guided tour or something more creative. Historians are now referring to these men and women as "Black Founders," early African American leaders and reformers who founded the autonomous institutions (churches, library clubs, insurance groups) that guided free black communities well into the Nineteenth century. Black Founders also sought to expand the meaning of liberty to apply across racial lines. James Forten stood behind Independence Hall in 1776 and listened to the first public reading of the Declaration. He would later write one of the most famous documents in antebellum black history, "Series of Letters by a Man of Color." What if people cannot see the wonderful "Lights of Liberty" show there? A plaque of some sort, or computerized History Kiosk, might be situated on the site, with Forten's words being read by a local actor.

Finally, it is important to talk about the President's House site, for while plans are clearly moving ahead to properly mark that area, the Park Service should use it as a gateway for issues relating not merely to Washington's slaves but to the issue of slavery in Washington's world. For one thing, it allows the NPS to tell a range of stories related to Washington, slavery and abolition in a northern context. How did Pennsylvania's abolition law apply to out-of-state slaveholding politicians like Washington? (They were granted temporary exemption, though not without a fight from abolitionists). Did northern abolition shape the choice of a new and more southern-centered capital? (It did.) What work did Washington's slaves do when not on a large plantation? How did this compare with the work-world of northern free blacks?

Finally, what routes and which allies would fugitive slaves (for example, Oney Judge) likely use to escape prior to the formation of the Underground Railroad? These issues are all fascinating in and of themselves, and I hope the Park Service will not view them as side issues at the Washington site.

Because the President's House was established in a revolutionary setting, it also allows for discussion of a final issue not really examined much at the park: the Haitian Revolution. This event touched America (and Pennsylvania) in several ways. For one thing, it was part and parcel of a revolutionary lineage ("The Age of Democratic Revolutions") that harkened back to American independence in 1776. But what did liberty and revolution really mean when Haitian slaves adopted those watchwords as their own? Then too, the Haitian Revolution brought a flood of slaveholding refugees to America. How did Pennsylvania react? Technically, it forbade them from ignoring the state's abolition law and so prevented many from settling in the state. Virginia, South Carolina and other states did no such thing. All the same, Philadelphians raised money for fleeing masters. Finally, diplomacy with the revolutionary government of Haiti proved controversial and vexing to American statesmen – and both George Washington and John Adams were the first U.S. presidents to confront the issue from their post at the President's House. There has been much good work on Haiti of late and it would make for some really gripping displays on "The Revolutionary Atlantic" or "Revolutionary Diplomacy" perhaps at the President's House site.

All of these examples are designed to show that there is no need to draw artificial boundaries around NPS history – the real history over here, then some "Politically Correct" history over there. Race, reform and revolution were part and parcel of the same story the NPS already tells. Indeed, as a caption asks on the NPS web site. "What happened here?" More than is currently seen at Independence Park. The NPS can, and must, update its story.

2. Refocusing Visitors' Attention

Discussion of the need to expand the historical vistas at Independence Park leads me to a second key point: the constant need to refocus visitors' attention. Independence Park is much bigger and more complex than I ever imagined, even though I have visited it as a tourist myself. With so buildings and so much history -- and with global technologies already fragmenting our collective attention spans -- it is clear that a one-stop

approach to visitors will only go so far. After seeing the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, people are left on their own. What exactly do they do? Return to the Visitor Center (which is away from many sites) for maps and suggestions about other tours? Thus, the NPS needs to find ways to channel people into different buildings and experiences from around the park, not merely from a central location like the visitor center.

The very nature of the park (right in the middle of an urban environment) is fragmented – people come and go from virtually all angles. Yet the current interpretive design is really linear: it necessitates starting at the visitor center, with people moving through the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall sites, and then back into the park itself to any number of sites (Carpenter’s Hall, say). Unless visitors have a pre-conceived plan about what sites to go to after Independence Hall, they just wander around. In reality – if people are like me when I visit such places – they might very well change their minds as they go. I always end up at a crossroads halfway through a tour: now what? Go all the way back to the Visitor Center for information?

So the NPS must provide updated way stations and/or other interactive formats to refocus visitors’ attention from various points in the park (“this way to the birthplace of the Revolution, Carpenter’s Hall”). Many of the current way stations are outdated. On one hand, some of them do not reflect historiographical changes in the study of revolutionary Philadelphia; on the other hand, the current way stations appear physically obsolete and not captivating for new generations of visitors. More generally, there’s not enough signage to keep visitors interested in staying around. One could have people in period dress at the exit of Independence Hall announcing (via a “gazette” or in town-crier style) other attractions. Thematic handouts or signage might also be provided (“Are you interested in the birthplace of our armed forces? Go to New Hall Military Museum...”). Just creating a new group of way stations (with some striking text and images mounted at a key site) would be an improvement.

Once again, I would urge to Park Service to think in bigger terms about harnessing technology. The NPS could have mobile “History Kiosks.” Placed at a few strategic locals around the park, these computerized portals could redirect and inform citizens as they go around. Perhaps this would create a deeper, more satisfying experience for some visitors. It would certainly create a more inter-active one.

3. Staff Communication and Morale:

One final area which needs to be addressed is that of staff communication and morale. Independence National Historical Park approximates a company or a university – it is a large operation once you go behind the scenes. Yet because “the product” revolves around public history, there is a real need to bring the many people into some sort of common focus. There is enormous talent and dedication at the NPS – but there is also frustration. Avenues of communication and creativity need to be opened up so that IVS and CRM people can talk to each other and talk about common goals. One suggestion would be to hold an “in-service” day once a year in which IVS and CRM people talk to each other and about work. I was struck by how open staffers were in the several meetings with the OAH site-review team. This tells me they are eager to talk. If the NPS can take a few days to welcome outside reviewers, then it can also make time for in-house seminars and sessions, especially during lax periods (November, say). Staffers I spoke with, for example, expressed interest in a scholar’s forum. The NPS might also inaugurate brief book reviews on a web-site (written by rangers and guides as well as others), brown bags and “New Books” seminars somewhere on site. The point here is not to allow for endless complaining about what could be but to find ways to renew and refresh staff intellectual and pedagogical energies, to make a large and often impersonal organization more personal. Bring in a scholar from a teaching college for a brown bag session, “Teaching the Presidents.” Your staff would be surprised to learn that teachers face many of the same issues about audience, time and content as the NPS.

In this regard, I want to make a strong case for the continued importance of the library and archives to the NPS mission. My tour of the library was revealing indeed. First, the collection of new books alone showed how up-to-date NPS history is – there were books on slavery, daily politics and women front and center. Second, the archives were bursting with all manner of interesting material on Independence Parks’ history -- pictures, maps and accounts that showed the growth of the park over time. Finally, the space had a wonderfully quiet quality. As much as the physical space of Independence Park should be the public’s focus, I would say the library needs to remain a vital focus for the NPS staff itself. This is where the history and ideas for exhibits, walking tours and public outreach really comes from. Again, perhaps the NPS could find ways to circulate some of the intellectual energy in there outward to the staff. For example, the NPS might inaugurate “Brown Bag” lunches in the library itself, with sessions hosted by librarians,

rangers and guides on interesting new books or articles. By compelling staff to come back to the archives in some way (in real time or, alternatively, via email announcements and/or an in-house web-site for staffers), the NPS could foster wide-ranging dialogues on key issues, from what history needs to be told to how that history can best be told.

Once again, my visit was rewarding and eye-opening. The NPS should be lauded for what it does spectacularly well – making essential parts of the nation’s founding years come alive. It should also be praised for starting a reevaluation process that will broaden the Park Service’s historical reach. Finally, the NPS should be confident that with its dedicated personnel and wonderful resources, Independence Park will indeed remain one of the nation’s most treasured historic sites.

Independence National Historical Park Site Visit, October 18-20, 2004

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Like my colleagues Professors J. Ritchie Garrison (U Del), Gary Nash (UCLA), and Richard Newman (RIT), I was delighted to have had the opportunity to visit INHP “behind the scenes,” and to be reminded how busy a beehive is needed to support the very smooth-running operation that tourists experience when they come to “see the Bell.” The energy and success with which the INHP staff helps visitors see beyond the Bell is truly impressive. The Organization of American Historians’ aspect of our team’s visit was admirably managed by Susan Ferentinos, and the amiable, hospitable, and highly-polished staff at the National Park Service end of things made me less resentful of paying my federal taxes. Clearly, at INHP, Americans are getting full value—and more—for every dollar spent there. I only wish the budget could be augmented, and much of my report will be interpreted against the backdrop of Mary Bomar’s answer to my question about finances: that every one percent decrease in the budget translates into the loss of more than a dozen of the Park’s employees.

The complexity of the Park, and of the issues attendant upon its four-part task of researching, preparing interpretive materials for, greeting/managing, and visitors within the permeable walls of an urban public space, as well as maintaining/policing the space have led me to try to organize my report under seven themes:

- the initiative to modernize and “thicken” the traditional interpretations of “freedom” and “revolution”
- multiple constituencies to be addressed
- contested narrative focus
- the limitations of resources (e.g., small staff, daunting economic challenges, overburdened staff, etc.)
- sprawling space and unpredictable but *numerous* visitors
- communication (within and among staff units, and between the Park and various constituencies and stakeholders outside the park)

Let me say at the outset that while I will make some suggestions of how responses to each of these challenges might be enhanced, everything I encountered during my visit reinforced my preconception that INHP is privileged to be staffed by a very high-quality and dedicated team, who are thoughtful, insightful, and excited about making history come alive for the public. They are all clearly capable of besting the challenges described above.

The very rich array of pre-visit materials that were provided by Park Superintendent Mary Bomar were of enormous assistance in focusing our visit, and in helping us to see what the Park has already done and is contemplating, and the logic and substructure behind that planning. I will refer to some of these materials as I proceed with my report, which I will attempt to make easily readable by arranging my thoughts in more detail, in bullet form, into the

themes outlined above. In each section, the sequence of bullets under “challenges” corresponds to the sequence of bullets under “opportunities.”

The Park’s “Business Plan” for fiscal 2003, which lists millions of discrete entities in its inventory—ranging from walkways, museums, historic houses, archeological sites, park benches, and over 200 volunteers—offers an overview of the complexity of the operation that 300 employees commit themselves (according to their mission statement) “to preserve, manage, operate, maintain, protect and interpret.” There was more to see than any dozen people could get to in two days. The Park is a massive undertaking, and I believe that by and large the staff there is doing an impressive job. It was a good strategy to organize our visit by orienting the site visit team, and then dividing us into teams, with each site visitor going off to view different aspects of the park operation. Guided by Partnership Coordinator Frances Delmar, Chief Curator Karie Diethorn, and Education Specialist Sue Glennon, I toured what I am inclined to label “the park of the future:” the exhibition new being installed in the Second Bank, and the Third Street (old) Visitor Center which is being given new life within a new partnership with the Constitution Center. Chief Historical Architect Charles Tonetti gave me a tour of the architectural study collection which, according to the 1995 General Management Plan, will soon be moved to the revamped Third Street Visitor Center.

I also accompanied Superintendent Mary Bomar to one of the planning meetings of Bethel AME Church—another of the Park’s new partners—and I attended the public meeting held November 30 to discuss the controversial issue of the house that was occupied by George Washington and his slaves during the 1790s. **These, I believe, exemplify the Park’s future: a future that must be based upon embracing a wider range of Americans, a broader story of “revolution”, easier accessibility to its research facilities (for example, due to short staffing, the architectural study collection is available by appointment only), and a deeper and more multivariate interpretation of the contextual significance of the millions of discrete entities that make up the Park’s inventory. I did not observe the Underground Railroad tour, but it, too, seems to me to be the Park-of-the-future, and everything I encountered suggests that the Park leadership and staff are moving boldly to embrace that future. But I believe it will not be a short or easy transition, and that it will require every ounce of their ample creativity to successfully steer the Park into that future. Limited resources, overburdened staff, the inertia of tradition, and the need to stay up-and-running in the *present* while simultaneously planning for the future all mitigate against rapid forward progress. Yet, even while I paint what seems a pessimistic picture, commend the Park Superintendent and her energetic, creative, and knowledgeable staff for the great strides they have made and are making. Below, I make some suggestions of small steps that might be taken toward that future.**

“Thickening the Stories”:

Overview: Like my colleagues, I was impressed with what the ranger-interpreters were able to pack into the short presentations they delivered to a mobile and not-captive audience. But also like my colleagues, I wondered if a few more dependent clauses might make the story more engaging for a wider audience. In the room where the Constitutional Convention was held, for example, one might make a passing comment: “While the Founding Fathers worked in this room, outside on the street food vendors yelled out to advertise their wares, wood-sawyers pulled carts to deliver wood, and young children worked or played in the streets. There were no

public schools, horses and farm animals were allowed in residential neighborhoods, and sewers had not yet come to the city. Imagine the real world the Founding Fathers encountered when they took a break from their idealistic debates.” Or, in interpreting the Free Quaker Meeting House, a CRM plan (p. 3-7) suggests focusing on the “religious tolerance and legacy of Quakers”, but a short addition to this theme—e.g., “but as this maverick meeting house illustrates, Quakers themselves were often divided about how much and what kind of ‘tolerance’ was acceptable.” Such a brief addition (perhaps it is already being done?) would help visitors stay alert to a complex story rather than a two-dimensional (and misleading) picture of Quakers as the bland, unblemished, and texture-less embodiment of peace and virtue.

Challenges:

- giving “punch” to the canonical stories, without diminishing the traditional themes
- helping hurried and distracted rangers find time to upgrade and augment interpretation
- assuring that the inclusion of wider stories does not result in distortions, exaggerations, imbalances, or inaccuracies
- assuring that the wider stories are inclusive, and do not just replace one bias with another

Opportunities:

- thinking of upgrades/additions to basic narratives as small “sound-bytes” not major overhauls
- using email and other quick communication tools to offer rangers small bits of new information to interweave with the narratives they already know how to tell, not volumes of new material to *replace* the familiar
- Rewarding staff for intellectual exploration and self-development. For example, with the money raised through the method outlined below under “Resources”, a small sum might be allocated to subsidize two staff people (to the tune of say, \$800 each)—chosen from across all the divisions—to petition to attend professional conference each year (e.g., the Organization of American Historians, Society of Architectural Historians, etc) This opportunity would oblige the attendee, upon return from such a conference, to send around an email report of some new idea or interpretation garnered from the conference. In addition, there are several groups of early American historians who meet regularly within five miles of the Park: the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the Society of Historians of the Early American Republic, etc. During the slow winter season, perhaps one or two rangers or other staff might be released for a couple of hours to attend such events—again with the stipulation that they bring back a few new ideas—not overwhelming volumes!--to share.
- The new interpretations at the Kosciuszko House and the Deshler-Morris site, of which Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services Steve Sitarski spoke with such pride do indeed seem to be reason for pride: they incorporate many facets of the many individuals who inhabited the site

Multiple Constituencies:

Overview: The letters in the appendix of the 1995 GMP are illuminating! From the Mayor to the American Institute of Architects, to the parking garage managers who don't want Chestnut Street closed, to numerous Center City residents associations, to the Garden Club of America, to the African-American tourist who took the time to write to the Superintendent expressing gratitude to the ranger who had taken extra time to tell the relate the part of Liberty's birth that was relevant to him, the number of individuals and groups who are—or *should* be—stakeholders in this most American of American sites, is myriad. It would seem that, because the Park is intertwined with so much else in the city's operations, a good deal of the superintendent's time is absorbed in the community-relations aspect of the Park.

Challenges:

- cultivating the various interested parties so that they become allies rather than obstructionists
- understanding and balancing multiple requests, demands, and needs

Opportunities:

- endless possibilities for forging new and advantageous relationships
- chance to bring together groups with disparate concerns, and unite them around the unified goal of invigorating and improving life in downtown Philadelphia

Contested Narrative Focus:

Overview: the public furor over the President's house-- how/whether to interpret slavery, the institution of the Presidency, and the architectural information in the footprint of the house and outbuildings--is but the most recent example of the struggle to decide whose story gets told, who gets to tell it, and who gets to have the privileged roles in the story. The Park has been re-invented multiple times since 1824, serving as Cold War touchstone, Bicentennial icon, Constitutional Bicentennial symbol, etc. This current re-invention, embracing the our country's divers social history, promises both to expand the Park's audience, and the raise the level of contention what and--and should--be symbolized there. **The current revamping of the Second Bank-- with its emphasis on streetscapes rather than on the Peale portraits of individual male leaders taken out of the context of the community they inhabit—is a striking example of what can happen if creative researchers/designers like Diethorn and Delmar are freed up to embrace, rather than shirk, multiple stories. It would be good if the Park could follow this model when future retrofit or maintenance necessities arise.**

INHP is very fortunate to have the leadership of Mary Bomar, who is experienced in managing tensions over contested stories, skillful at reaching out to diverse people and institutions, and energetic about providing vision and leadership for INHP's future in this thorny area.

Challenges:

- possibility that some group(s) will be left out
- possibility that some group(s) will be offended
- possibility that the "traditional" canon will be truncated or omitted in order to "make room for" the new themes and stories

Opportunities:

- possibility that the “left-out” group will get involved and see the Park, and this history it tells, as “belonging to them”
- possibility that engaged community dialogue will ensue
- possibility for creative “braiding” of multiple stories as short dependent clauses weave in the stories of minorities, children, mavericks, (such a possibility is already proceeding in the upcoming exhibition at the Second Bank, which maintains the importance of the Peale portraits, while weaving multiple stories around the portraits)

Resource limitations:

Overview: The team was given to understand that on any given summer day, fewer than five dozen front-line interpreters are available to greet, orient, and inform the upwards of 10,000 visitors (and in winter furlough periods, this number is greatly reduced—but then so is visitorship, somewhat). The budget materials we were given indicate powerful constraints on the Park’s stagnant economy, with only a miniscule portion of its revenue available for discretionary spending.

Challenges:

- regularly furloughed staff
- much of budget must be diverted to security issues
- another significant part of budget must go to building maintenance
- short attention span of the very mobile audiences
- bookshop has limited funds for inventory

Opportunities:

- possibility of keeping furloughed staff “in the loop” through email updates, and of using furlough time for staff-development/staff-retreat days. Furloughed staff might be brought in for one or two days’ pay, and the opportunity for furloughed and permanent staff to exchange ideas might be an inexpensive way to energize and renew both groups. Perhaps the Park could consider the possibility of using some of the newly-secured spaces (such as the Liberty Bell entrance) to install honor-system entry-fee boxes of the sort that are often found in New York City’s “free” museums. Suppose the “suggested” contribution were \$1.00/family, with a note somewhere along the way that people could read while they wait in line: “as you enter the Bell, consider contributing \$1.00, which will be used to maintain the bell, and to tell its story to the many visitors who will come behind you.” School groups who use the new facilities could be charged \$10-25. Might this revenue fund the staff-development budget mentioned above? (Or would the Park’s budgetary allocation simply be reduced by whatever amount it could take in this way?)
- possibility for using electronic messages and sidewalk displays (such as the house identification blocks along the north side of Market Street leading to the new Visitor Center) to capture public attention while they wait in lines
- possibility of using retrofit needs to conceive imaginative new interpretations (e.g., Second Bank and Visitor Center). The Park has developed mutually beneficial partnerships with other cultural institutions to assist with

reconceiving buildings, and it should continue to take advantage of such opportunities

- increasingly-sophisticated hand-outs such as those already developed on Benjamin Franklin (might more be said in such handouts, for example, to alert the visitor to the changing meaning of “urban” over time? Visitors might be reminded that, in Franklin’s time, lack of public transportation contributed to multi-racial and multi-class neighborhoods)
- bookshop could feature bibliographies (such as the one developed by Anne Coxe Toogood in her January 2004 study): using dust-jackets, scanned first pages, or photocopies, the Park could create a “What is the INHP staff reading” corner in the bookshop--and/or solicit suggested readings from academics or others who have written about related topics. A section devoted to the writings of Park staff—such as the article on curatorship and education written by Chief of Cultural Resources Management Doris Fanelli, the essay on “What’s Real?” published by Chief Curator Karie Diethorn, or sections from the historical studies so meticulously crafted by Chief Historian Jim Mueller and Historian Anne Coxe Toogood could also be featured. Could the bookshop use book-jackets and print-outs of online blurbs to help people select interesting titles, then order for patrons, and have volumes delivered to the visitor’s door? This would solve the problem of bookstore funds being tied up in titles that might not sell.

Sprawling/Undefined Space:

Overview: The latest newsletter from Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation reports that tourism is up in the city. More people are coming, they are staying longer, and they are spending lots of money. But they are diffused throughout downtown Philadelphia, and INHP does not offer a coherent, discrete experience, nor does the Park have complete control over the spaces for which it is responsible. Many people come mainly to see the Liberty Bell, and then spend those tourist dollars on the many other options located in and among the Park’s attractions. The Park’s maintenance staff and *one* horticulturalist (fortunately with many volunteer assistants) are responsible for repairing whatever damage is done by casual city-dwellers as they go about their daily business.

Challenges:

- the lack of walls or clear definition of what is “the Park” and what is just the urban spaces intertwined with the park makes it difficult to plan or discipline specifically “Park” activities
- finding ways to use old spaces and icons, while keeping the Park’s story vibrant and fresh
- capturing the attention of tourists and other passersby

Opportunities:

- a potential audience is always available if the Park can plan interesting exhibitions and events.
- possibility to work with other cultural institutions in the neighborhood (e.g., Constitution Center, Bethel AME Church) etc, with which the Park has

already built relationships and continues to strengthen them. And the March 2004 schematic of the rebirth of the old visitors' center (Ralph Appelbaum Associates) which promises a "storytelling Festival Headquarters" with a retail section right inside the Third Street glass front (and right near the nicest rest rooms in the Park) promises to bring excitement not only to new visitors, but jaded old Philadelphians. My tour of this site, and hearing Sue Glennon's creative plans for using the new classrooms, convinced me that this possibility is soon to be realized.

- The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation's September 2004 report indicates that the "Philly—You Just Can't Do It in a Day" promotion was extremely successful at bringing visitors from both near and far. Because of the hotel packages, they stayed longer and they spent more. Capitalizing on the slick and catchy advertising of GPTMC and the Delaware River Port Authority, as the Park is currently doing, seems a smart way to increase the Park's visibility. So does reopening the glass-fronted Third Street visitors' center

Communication:

Overview: stretched to capacity by their own myriad duties, staff in various divisions (CRM, I& VS, etc.) seldom have an opportunity to draw stimulation from, or evaluate operations with each other. This difficulty in finding time/ways for sharing ideas is mirrored in the Park staff's communication with constituencies outside the Park.

Challenges:

- individuals have so much to do within departments that there is little time for inter-department communication/sharing. Often good ideas from CRM don't get out to people in other departments, or to the interpretive staff who greet visitors
- It is often difficult to plan for school visitors, who may arrive unannounced by the bus-ful, to be greeted by Park staff who have no information about students' interest, capabilities, or prior learning experiences
- Collegial partner institutions, absorbed in their own daily routines, seldom have the leisure to contemplate the Park's issues
- Many constituencies pointing impatient and accusing fingers at Park management

Opportunities:

- the new arrangement which has Frances Delmar assigned to be a liaison between CRM and I & VS holds great promise for mitigating the internal snags in communication
- Sue Glennon's new position, which promises to reward teachers/schools who plan ahead, may offer new possibilities for the Park to communicate with teachers to build coherent learning experiences
- It was not clear to me whether periodic "community" meetings occur among the cooperating cultural institutions/tourism promotion units. Perhaps a grant (from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, similar to the "Raising Our Sites" grants they funded several years ago) could support one or two

workshops a year to bring together representatives from Park staff, partner institutions, tourism planning groups and some community-action groups to hear each others' concerns. The November 30 meeting to discuss the interpretation at the President's house was one example of a well-run, well-attended community airing of issues

- The possibility of creating a team of allies who have their attention focused on the Park and its activities.

Our visit to the Park ended with a meeting at the Visitors' Center, open to the wider community of Park staff. Several dozen staff members attended, and it was helpful to hear both their excitement about their work, and a bit of their frustration with some the challenges outlined above.

My final perspective comes from the November 30 meeting, where the controversy over the interpretation of the President's house embodies all of the issues raised above. There Joe Becton gave a well-researched, lively, textured and nuanced talk about black life in Revolutionary Philadelphia. Information about James Dexter, detailed in Toogood's study of Block Three, came alive in this talk. There are great possibilities for Sue Glennon to include Dexter—and others of Franklin's neighbors—in a handout that give context to Franklin's neighborhood. The Park of the future has a great opportunity to merge the stories of many different kinds of people—perhaps in the area where people wait in line to enter the Liberty Bell. One possible model for this comes out of what has already been done to mark the people who lived along the north side of Market Street on the block near the new Visitors' Center. I think these engraved sidewalk blocks are very effective. I also was intrigued, as I visited Annapolis recently, to see the outdoor statues and “sitting” park that commemorates Alex Haley's *Roots*. Like the Market Street blocks, it, too is a self-guided exhibition, eye-catching and compelling as one moves between other exhibits.

I conclude as I opened: with gratitude for the opportunity to visit the Park's talented, dedicated, and hospitable staff.