

**APPENDIX4 — PROFILES OF EXEMPLARY
ORGANIZATIONS & PROGRAMS
History Organizations and Engagement**

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PROJECT PROFILE RESEARCH – HERITAGE PHILADELPHIA PROGRAM
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Preface to History Organization/Project Profiles

Selection and Organization of Profiles

This section contains 17 profiles of history organizations and projects that informed our assessment of national trends and directions in exhibition, public programs, and interpretation. We have come to this selection to provide more particular “snapshots” of programmatic and institutional practices that are considered strong models by field standards. The selection was made to represent a mix of projects and organizations according to four broad categories that might be considered primary features in terms of what the profile highlights:

- Exhibitions/Interpretation/Public Programs
- Collaboration
- Art and History
- Technology

The profiles are grouped and ordered in these categories on the Profiles Table of Contents. Many projects/organizations exemplify multiple categories; the right column on the Table of Contents indicates these multiple areas.

We also aimed to represent a range of types and sizes of history organizations including history museums, historic house museums, historical societies, arts institutions or projects that work with history, and historic sites. The examples are somewhat weighted toward history museums since this seems to be where the best work is being done and also because their practices are relevant to most types of organizations. Although our research included a few living history museums, they are not included in the profiles but are referenced in the narrative report.

Beyond the 17 profiles included in this section, we reviewed an additional 30 organizations and projects which are listed after the profiles as reference.

NOTE: These profiles have been compiled using substantial *excerpts* from other sources. The sources are cited at the bottom of each profile.

Maymont House Richmond, VA

Project:

In Service and Beyond: Domestic Work and Life in a Gilded Age Mansion

Summary:

Maymont House Museum, the centerpiece of Gilded Age entrepreneur James Dooley's estate, has long been a popular tourism destination for visitors to southern Virginia. The house was donated to the city of Richmond. In 1925, the site opened as a public park and museum, and has survived intact since then—featuring the residence, gardens, grounds and original architectural complex. However, unlike many house museums, the Maymont House only recently began to tell the story of *all* of its occupants.

In Service and Beyond, a permanent exhibition added in 2005 to the collections at Maymont, explores the life of servitude at the estate between 1893 and 1925. The result of five years of intensive study and restoration, the exhibit is centered around eight period rooms and a new permanent exhibition, where visitors can meet specific African-American employees and consider their lives in and outside the workplace through quotations, illustrative images, letters, recipes, songs, and prescriptive literature from the period. In addition, many rooms are supplemented by listening stations with audio excerpts from oral history interviews with the descendants of Dooley employees. Didactic panels that explore the history of domestic service in the U.S. are supplemented by simple but effective lift-up interactives. Five short on-demand videos introduce the Dooleys, their house, and both the positive and negative aspects of life in Gilded Age society.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of *In Service and Beyond* is how dramatically it reconfigures the visitor experience at Maymont. Instead of signing up for tours on the grand front porch of the house, visitors now approach the house via the service stairs. Once they have signed up for a tour, visitors are encouraged to explore the downstairs self-guided exhibit, until they are summoned upstairs by the sound of a recorded servant's bell.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Exhibition concept, design, interpretation:

In Service and Beyond exemplifies the re-visioning of a permanent collection and the story within a historic house museum. It brings forward and integrates an unexpected and neglected point of view to the *permanent* exhibitions. In working through the exhibition design and interpretation, curatorial staff collaborated with descendants of Dooley employees (service staff who were employed during the years notated in the exhibition, specifically) to deepen understanding and provide more personal perspective through recipes, letters, documents, and family stories.

The new exhibition radically redefines the visitor experience at Maymont. By integrating the servants' stories throughout the house museum, Maymont avoids trivializing the

experiences of African Americans by segregating their story only in the restored basement of the house. Although the house tour remains focused on the Dooleys and on their opulent life-style and interiors, reference is made at several points to domestic servants in general and butler William Dilworth in particular. The butler's pantry (previously inaccessible to the public) is now a featured stop on every house tour and visitors are encouraged to return to the basement to explore the exhibit further before they leave.

Sources:

Maymont House website
www.maymont.org

Dean, Catherine. "In Service and Beyond: Domestic Work and Life in a Gilded Age Mansion." *The Journal of American History*, March 2005, vol. 91. No. 4.

Japanese American National Museum Los Angeles, CA

Projects:

1. National Center for the Preservation of Democracy
2. *kip fulbeck: part asian, 100% hapa*
3. *Boyle Heights Project: The Power of Place*

Summary:

The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) is dedicated to promoting understanding and appreciation for America's diversity by sharing the Japanese American story. The museum contains artifacts, textiles, art, photographs, and oral histories of Japanese Americans and is also home to a moving image archive, containing home movies of Japanese Americans from the 1920s to the 1950s.

1. In 2000, through an appropriation of \$20 million in federal funds, the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy was established as an affiliate of JANM. It examines the rights and freedoms of all Americans through the lessons learned from the Japanese American experience. Working with like-minded institutions (such as Facing History and Ourselves, Civitas, and Teaching Tolerance) to educate middle and high school teachers and community based mentors, the Center works to provide resources and tools to help young people become active participants in a democratic society.

Fighting for Democracy, the central exhibition at the Center, is an experiential exhibition based on the lives, actions, and decisions of a diverse group of individuals who sought equal rights for their families and communities during World War II. Through the experiences of seven real people who were denied fundamental rights during the war, the exhibition explores how women and minorities have expanded the meaning of “we” in “We, the people...” Through an examination of the seven stories, the exhibit helps middle and high school students understand the conditions facing Americans before, during, and after World War II. The exhibition offers a thorough selection of multimedia resources for educators, presenting information in photographs, pull-out cards, quotes, oral history clips, educational activities and discussions. Further, the exhibition is designed to engage youth participants in the content and to provide a safe space for them to vocalize their opinions through a facilitated dialogue experience. In addition, teacher resources are included throughout the Center’s website in order to ensure that learning is custom-tailored to each class.

2. *kip fulbeck: part asian, 100% hapa*, a recent exhibition, captures the extraordinary diversity of mixed-race Asians, and illustrates how the perception of multiracial people has evolved from society’s margins to its mainstream.

Fulbeck traveled the country photographing more than 1,000 multiracial individuals of all ages and walks of life. Fulbeck’s work seeks to address in words and images the question that people of mixed-race heritage from Asia or the Pacific Rim are frequently asked: “What are you?”

Photographs in the exhibition are all taken the same way—from the collarbone up, without clothing, jewelry, glasses, makeup, or even a smile—a deliberate play upon and critique of the official photographs everyone has taken for driver’s licenses, passports and other forms of identification. Each image is paired with the participant’s response, in his/her handwriting, to the question, “What are you?”

Through DiscoverNikkei.org (an online forum which explores what it means to be *Nikkei*, or Japanese emigrants and their descendants who have created communities throughout the world), visitors have the opportunity to see video clips from an interview with Kip Fulbeck, subscribe to exhibition pod casts on *Hapa* identity, and participate in a *Hapa* discussion forum.

3. *The Boyle Heights Project* was a program led by JANM in 2002-2003. A multi-year collaboration including project partners such as the Jewish Historical Society of Southern California, Great Leap, and The International Institute of Los Angeles; *the Boyle Heights Project* researched and documented the diverse histories and experiences of the community known as “the Ellis Island of the West Coast.”

At the center of the event was an exhibition entitled *The Power of Place*, which presented the story of Boyle Heights through the oral histories, memorabilia, art, and music of past and present residents that were collected during two years of community forums, collection days, and oral history interviews. Avenida Cesar E. Chavez, formerly of Brooklyn Avenue, was the conceptual backbone of the exhibition, connecting different stories about the neighborhood’s history and community life. A survey of photographs showing the entire length of this street wound its way through the exhibition gallery—connecting key junctions and their stories, highlighting significant themes, events and neighborhood sites. Throughout the entire exhibition, past and present stories, images, and artifacts were juxtaposed to demonstrate how the lives of many different people have directly and indirectly intersected in the neighborhood. A rotating installation, which ran simultaneously with *The Power of Place* entitled *A Place Called Home*, was dedicated to highlighting different traditions celebrated in the Boyle Heights neighborhood including Sukkot, Dia de los Muertos, Nacimiento, and Oshogatsu.

An extensive teacher activity guide for grades four through 12 was created in partnership with the Boyle Heights Community Advisory Group (a group of past and present residents). The guide featured sample pre- and post-visit activities designed to help students make connections between the exhibition and their own neighborhoods. In addition, a website offered supplemental resources that enhanced the understanding of the Boyle Heights historical community through documents, images, and direct interactive links, including information on community documentation, oral history collection, and outreach and community forums.

In coordination with the exhibit, Great Leap, a Los Angeles-based performing arts organization dedicated to the principles of deepening race relations, co-facilitated a storytelling workshop for past and present residents of Boyle Heights. Co-sponsored by

the Japanese American National Museum in conjunction with *The Power of Place* exhibit, Great Leap hosted nearly two dozen residents to share and hear stories about the neighborhood during the months of October through December 2002. From these conversations, participants presented a series of six- to seven-minute stories during a series of sold-out performances in the museum exhibit space in January and February of 2003.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Institution:

JANM is a culturally specific museum with a strong, but not exclusive, focus on history. Its programmatic efforts are guided by a clear institutional vision and mission that makes relevant the Japanese American story to a broader cultural context and to contemporary issues of identity, freedom, and community. With a new three-year \$800,000 grant from the Irvine Foundation, JANM will continue to develop approaches to adapt to increasingly multi-ethnic audiences. The museum will conduct studies to define the museum's audience and to look at how to identify with the museum's original mission. It is expected that results will have implications for programming, audience development, and fundraising.

Interpretation:

Ideas of identity, democracy, and freedom underlie JANM's work. The exhibition, *The Power of Place*, examined the Boyle Heights neighborhood from multiple perspectives, considering the points of view of past and present residents and incorporating conversations among these groups in public programs throughout the project. The National Center for the Preservation of Democracy provides a place for democracy and freedom to be explored more deeply. According to Liz Sevchenko, the Center is an evolving entity which has remained flexible in order to change as it learns what works and what does not.

Community collaboration:

The Boyle Heights Project and *The Power of Place* exhibition demonstrate JANM's deep commitment to its communities—cultural and geographic. It engages community members and partnering organizations in the development of exhibitions and programs in an authentic and sustained way. David Thelen observed that “Everyone wants to work with Irene Hirano,” [the director] because she has created a culture of collaboration that is respectful, inquisitive, open, and mutually rewarding.

Technology:

Website features for the *kip fulbeck* exhibition extend the exhibition in a highly interactive way. Besides online video, a collection of pod casts updated over the course of the exhibit engages the visitor in Kip Fulbeck's artistic process and background and through themes such as *I am Hapa*, in which spoken word artists explore *Hapa* identity.

Sources:

“New ‘Artistic Innovation’ Grants Identifying Next Wave of Cultural Programming.”
Irvine Quarterly, The Quarterly Newsletter of the James Irvine Foundation. Volume 6,
Issue 2, Fall 2006.

International Coalition of Historic Sites of Conscience, Organizational Profile for
Japanese American National Museum & National Center for the Preservation of
Democracy

www.sitesofconscience.org/eng/j_american_programs.htm

Japanese American National Museum website

www.janm.org

Kwong, Dan. “Letter from an Artist: Boyle Heights, The Power of Place.” *Community
Arts Network* :

www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2003/03/letter_from_an_3.php

National Center for the Preservation of Democracy website

www.ncdemocracy.org

Field interviews with Barbara Sheppard, David Thelen, and Liz Sevchenko

Chicago Historical Society Chicago, IL

Project:

Teen Chicago

Summary:

Teen Chicago, begun in 2001 was a three-year project to investigate how teenagers have affected Chicago's history (from 1900 to present), and how growing up in Chicago can affect the way people, think, act, and feel. The exhibition featured more than 100 videotapes of oral histories of older Chicagoans telling stories of their teenage years. These were captured by a Teen Council of 15 teenagers who were employed by the museum to conduct oral histories as well as market the project to other teens. The exhibition also included artifacts, music, films, and photographs. (The exhibition has reopened in the Main Exhibit Hall at the Harold Washington Library Center in downtown Chicago.)

The exhibit creatively engaged visitors (teens especially) through video presentations, interactive games, and the examination of objects, being cautious to not overburden with too much information. Visitors can sit at school desks from the 1910s, watch clips of social guidance films from the 1950 and 1960s, and write slang they used as a teenager on the exhibit floor as they listen to music from each decade of the 20th century.

The Teen Council curated two lockers of “modern teenagers” filling them with commonly found items. In the leisure section of the exhibition, they challenged CHS curators’ interpretive labels, which teens felt placed too much emphasis on problem teens, and instead created “Teen Point of View” labels. A couple teens created a special event for the opening weekend, a play called “Coming of Age,” which was based on the oral histories and manipulated words of real people. They also planned parties featuring local bands, spoken-word artists, and dance contests which let thousands of local teenagers know that CHS was a place they could go to have fun.

In addition, the *Teen Chicago* website (www.teenchicago.org), launched in 2004, includes elements from the original exhibition and offers an opportunity for community members to post their own memories of growing up as a teen in Chicago.

A goal of the program was to increase teenage interest and attendance in CHS and between October 2002 and summer 2005, nearly 15,000 teenagers had visited the museum. Beyond this, the project provided a forum for Teen Council members to debate issues of race, sexuality, religion, the war in Iraq, gentrification and to learn to respect each other’s opinions. The exhibit made the public aware that teenagers are relevant and have a strong voice in society and in the city.

Innovative/Best Practice:Exhibition concept, design, interpretation:

- Collaboration with teens in the content, design, and interpretation of the exhibition led to imaginative formats and focuses relevant to teens and expanded the audience of the historical society to youth.
- The museum invested in preparing teens to be effective in their work through field trips to other museums and neighborhoods; presentations by speakers about a wide array of subjects such as Japanese internment camps, family trees, the history of museums, and hip-hop; and oral history training.
- The exhibition maximizes technologies (video and interactive games) to interest teen audiences.

Collaboration:

- *Hiring* teenagers, CHS demonstrated that it respects and embraces youth culture and values their contributions.
- The experience was thoughtfully designed for Teen Council member to combine an intense social component with informal and flexible learning opportunities less like school and more like real life.
- Extended time to work together enabled real-time-and-place dialogue about things that matter to teens as well as an in-depth learning experience.

Sources:

Elderkin, Claire. "Coming of Age." *Museum News*, July/August 2005.
(Claire Elderkin is an original member of the CHS Teen Council.)

Schwartz, Deborah F. "Dude, Where's My Museum: Inviting Teens to Transform Museums." *Museum News*, Sept/Oct. 2005.

Teen Chicago website:
www.teenchicago.org

Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center Pittsburgh, PA

Projects:

1. Various Public Programs
2. *Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam Era*
3. *Clash of Empires: The British, French & Indian War, 1754-1763*

Summary:

Devoted to the history and heritage of Western Pennsylvania, the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center is Pennsylvania's largest history museum and research facility. A Smithsonian Institution affiliate since 2000, the History Center has continuously served Pittsburgh since 1879 by interpreting the history of Western Pennsylvania through exemplary exhibitions with a background in scholarship and thoughtful interpretation with the museum visitor in mind.

1. Through a myriad of public programs, the History Center works to bring many different segments of the local community into the space, acting in some ways as a community center. Among the public programs planned for 2006, the following give an idea of the philosophy and approach:

Special Collections Gallery

Part of a recent expansion of the History Center includes a new special collections gallery, which allows visitors to see items in "visible storage." In the gallery, items are grouped by ethnic group, rather than artifact type because, as a result of long-range planning, museum curators found that many Pittsburghers still identify themselves by their ethnic origins (85 percent of the History Center's patrons are from western Pennsylvania).

Buy a Time Capsule

As part of the Heinz History Center's institutional support and development programs, community members have the opportunity to purchase a time capsule to be preserved within the walls of the museum. Each time capsule is sealed inside of a specially-designed wall located in the foyer of the History Center; and time capsule owners will receive archival-quality preservation materials and special assistance from History Center staff in order to prepare their items for storage.

Steelers Sundays at the Sports Museum

On rotating Sundays during fall 2006, the Sports Museum at the Heinz History Center invited Steelers fans and families into the museum to participate as part of the live TV audience for a broadcast of a pre-game Kickoff show for all away and selected home Steelers games. As part of the show, one local high school was a featured guest each week.

Italian American Cookbook Signing

In November 2006, the History Center will host a reception and book signing to commemorate the recent publication of a new Italian American community cookbook. Published by the University of Pittsburgh Italian Nationality Room Committee, the book celebrates the rich culinary heritage of Italy and is filled with recipes from Western Pennsylvania's Italian families.

2. Scheduled to open on Veterans Day, 2006, following the local Veteran's Day parade, *Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam Era* exhibits history, artifacts, and culture detailing the experiences of African-American men and women during the Vietnam War. The exhibit examines the African-American experience during both the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Era through a series of artifacts, poetry, fiction, art, and personal recollections that recall the war and the complexities of racial diversity in the 1960s. As part of the exhibition, the history center sought local Vietnam veterans and their families to contribute photographs, letters, artifacts, uniforms, medals, works of art, and personal stories to be included in the exhibition.

3. *Clash of Empires: The British, French & Indian War, 1754-1763*, an in-progress exhibit and a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution and the Canadian War Museum/Museum of Civilization, assembles the largest collection of French and Indian War artifacts ever mounted in order to explore the impact of the event as a turning point in American History and recount the story of the war that set the American colonists on the road to revolution.

With nearly 300 rare and unique items included in the exhibit, each artifact is accompanied by a dynamic caption. For example, one caption reads, "On the morning of September 8, 1755, a musket ball ripped through this leather pouch, wounding Massachusetts provincial soldier Lemuel Lyman." The graphic language helps draw the visitor into the middle of the action while connecting the artifact on display specifically to its historical context.

Dramatic juxtaposition of artifacts further enhances their meaning. Two portraits of Washington, painted only four years apart by Charles Willson Peale, face each other across the visitor's path. One shows him as a British war hero, the other as an American revolutionary. Passing between them, one is forced to reflect on the transformation.

The exhibition is arranged in 10 sections, each with a broader geographic focus than the one before. Visitors see the war expand in concentric ripples from an obscure wilderness skirmish to a firestorm that engulfs nations from Asia to the West Indies and reconfigures the globe in the process. A provocative conclusion suggests that Pontiac's War was a precursor to the American Revolution twelve years later, when allies, changed in different ways by their experiences in the war, became enemies. Yet the story always returns to the concrete experiences of real people whose lives were affected by the war.

Adding weight to the thought-provoking stories is a set of life figures, created by Gerry Embleton. They portray people—famous and anonymous—in the midst of revealing

experiences. In one, a defeated George Washington turns his face toward the wall, too ashamed to face the visitor. In another, a European child raised as an Indian is caught between the two worlds.

Innovation/Best Practice:

Public Programs:

The museum works creatively to engage different segments of the community and bring them into the exhibitions. For example, the collaboration to produce the Steelers kickoff TV shows brings members of the community who might not otherwise visit the museum into its doors.

Exhibition, Interpretation:

In *Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam Era*, the curatorial staff approaches the topic of the social and cultural ramifications of the Vietnam War—both nationally and overseas. Using the Civil Rights movement as a lens to explore the Vietnam War and vice versa, the exhibit offers fresh perspective on both events by juxtaposing artifacts to deepen and enhance meaning. Through a call to members of the local community to contribute materials and artifacts, the History Center expands a sense of expertise and shares historical authority on a historically recent topic with those who experienced the circumstances first-hand.

In *Clash of Empires: The British, French & Indian War, 1754-1763*, the History Center employed the expertise of an outside consultant, Scott Stephenson, to strengthen the project.

In the exhibition design, the viewer's understanding of the war is re-focused from section to section as they move through the exhibition in order to help the visitor understand how the war laid the groundwork for the American Revolution. Further, while providing relevant facts and information about the circumstances, the exhibition focuses first and foremost on the "real people" who were "players" in the war through dynamic captions and the incorporation of sculptures. These encourage the visitor to consider society in the scheme of the historical circumstances they find themselves in.

Sources:

Gilman, Carolyn. Exhibition Review, *The Public Historian*, June 2006, vol. 93, no. 1

Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center website
www.pghhistory.org

News section, *Perspectives*, American Historical Association, March 2005.
www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2005/0503/0503new4.cfm

Levine Museum of the New South

Charlotte, NC

Project:

Courage: The Carolina Story That Changed America

Summary:

In 2004, the exhibition, *Courage: The Carolina Story That Changed America*, marked the 50th anniversary of America's landmark school-desegregation case. It explored the story of South Carolinian citizens who brought the first of five lawsuits that would become the 1954 Supreme court case *Brown vs Board of Education*. It focuses on Rev. J.A. De Laine, an African-American minister and schoolteacher from South Carolina, who organized more than 100 of his neighbors to file suit for desegregated schools. To recount the story and timeline of the lawsuit, the museum drew on photos and oral histories assembled by Rev. De Laine's children, who became active partners in the exhibit development. The installation took visitors on a journey from rural South Carolina to the Supreme Court to issues of today.

Working with a budget of less than \$100 per square foot, exhibit designer Darcie Fohrman and museum staff created an engaging environment for visitors. The gallery entrance was mocked up as a "white school" where the door was locked and a sign directed visitors to the side entry. Towards the end of the exhibit, life-sized cutouts of current middle school students posed questions such as "Are schools now equal?" and "Where is courage needed today?" to which visitors responded using post-it notes.

The exhibition made space for citizens of Charlotte to examine issues of equity, race, and inclusion in the context of the history of school desegregation. Through a civic dialogue effort called *Conversations on Courage*, the museum invited executives and leaders from area businesses, government agencies, and nonprofits to tour the exhibit together. Then, facilitators from the Community Building Initiative, a local nonprofit that promotes race equity and inclusion, met with the groups for reflection and discussion around the ideas brought up in the exhibit and their implications for race and education today. Perhaps most impressive, the opportunity for these discussions actively attracted top decision makers from across the community including leaders from the police department, courts, media, and school system. It left a deep impression with the residents of Charlotte and earned awards from the American Association of Museum, the American Association for State and Local History, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Public Programs:

The Levine stepped up to help Charlotte meet persistent issues of race through this exhibition. Public dialogues and opportunity for post-exhibition reflection were conceived as integral to the exhibition experience and the goal of linking history to contemporary issues of race.

Conversation is integral to the philosophy of the institution and is present in other programs, such as *Global Dish*, a partnership with the Mayor's International Cabinet. The Levine Museum presents a series of quarterly educational dinners featuring cuisine, conversation and culture intended to foster interaction between long-time residents and international newcomers. *Global Dish* opens an ongoing dialogue where all residents can discuss the rapidly expanding population of the area, obtain a better understanding of why people chose to relocate in Charlotte, the issues that these new groups face, and what it is like to live here as an immigrant.

Source:

Hanchett, Tom. "Exhibition Competition: The Courage Project." *Museum News*, Sept/Oct 2005.

Minnesota Historical Society

St. Paul, Minnesota

Projects:

1. Mill City Museum
2. *Open House: If These Walls Could Talk*
3. *Dark Nights: When Theater Illuminates History*

Summary:

The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) is a private, non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1849 to preserve and share Minnesota history. The Society collects, preserves, and tells the story of Minnesota's past through interactive and engaging museum exhibits, extensive libraries and collections, 25 historic sites, educational programs, and book publishing. Exhibit development teams focus on giving visitors an opportunity to make a personal connection to the experiences of people in the past through interactives, personal accounts, and theatrical role playing.

1. One of the Minnesota Historical Society's most recent endeavors, the Mill City Museum, serves as a focal point for connecting everyday life to flour production in the upper Midwest. The central feature of a visit to the museum is its *Flour Tower* tour, in which visitors ride in a modern elevator and view simulations of the different facets of the milling process. Featuring hi-tech recreations that bring milling and its dangers to life, the visuals are accompanied by the voices and stories of former workers from both the Washburn A Mill and the Pillsbury Mill, describing what it was like to work in the mills and operate the pieces of machinery displayed.

In developing the concept and exhibits for the museum, staff wanted to blend the local social history, industrial, and urban implications of flour production. First, the exhibit development team visited several U.S. industrial history sites to identify the museum's three interpretive focal points: the industry of flour production; the experiences of workers, farmers, and others; and most of all, connecting products of the Minneapolis mill with the personal experiences of visitors. Once the primary concept was designed, the historical society engaged scholars and museum professionals as well as focus groups, to review and offer feedback on several prototypes.

2. Through *Open House: If These Walls Could Talk*, stories of families—from the first German immigrants, through the Italians, African Americans, and Hmong who succeeded them—are told through rooms (in a single house) representing different eras. Inspired by a real house in the Railroad Island neighborhood of St. Paul's East Side, exhibits invite visitors to become detectives by investigating the voices, photographs, and multimedia imagery throughout the exhibit. Visitors piece together the lives of the families who made this house their home. Further, visitors are encouraged to handle objects (almost all reproductions) and pursue interpretive information based on what interests each individual.

Within the exhibit, familiar settings produce surprises at every turn. For example, taking a seat at the table triggers Grace Tinucci's memories of meeting her future in-laws at a big family dinner (via media images projected through dinner plates). Also, by touching a silver dollar, home movies are launched recalling a family's memories of saving coins for vacations across Minnesota.

To prepare for the exhibition, Exhibit Developer Benjamin Filene and his colleagues launched a series of community-based projects and oral history sessions that built connections between the MHS and the neighborhood. Examples of the neighborhood collaborations include:

Memory Map

An oversized map was taken to festivals, community centers, retiree groups, and public markets. Current and former residents annotated it with their memories of neighborhood locations.

ViewPoints

Neighborhood youth, working with a professional photographer, documented their neighborhood through photographs.

Voices from Railroad Island

A series of oral interviews with current and former residents documented the people, places, and stories of the neighborhood.

History Happened Here

Students at HOPE Community Academy (a Hmong charter school), uncovered the history of their neighborhood and their families through a five-week curriculum.

Hop on the Bus

East Side residents received free transportation to special events and exhibitions at the History Center.

3. Through *Dark Nights: When Theater Illuminates History*, the Minnesota Historical Society, in collaboration with The Playwright's Center, explores what happens when theaters and museums meet to tell stories. This experimental series held on Monday evenings through October (Monday night being the traditional "dark night" in theaters) brings together some of the Twin Cities' most creative theater talents with Minnesota's rich, complex history and culture and reveals what occurs when history and artistry combine. The four programs include original monologues inspired by Society collections, five new plays that turn history on its head, a discussion among artists from the Mixed Blood Theater, Theater de la Jeune Lune, Theater Mu, and Theater Latté Da about why there is so much good theatre in the North Star State, and a revealing conversation with playwright Kevin Kling about why Minnesota is his muse.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Interpretation/Exhibition Design:

- Museum officials rely on scholars and consultants, in addition to staff, to develop the overall concept of exhibitions.
- The storytelling approach effectively involves visitors and creates a high level of interaction with exhibits.
- The interpretive strategy aims to respond to each visitor's own particular interests and curiosity by giving them choice and freedom to "rummage" and handle objects (reproductions).
- Innovative exhibition design encourages interaction with objects, such as the dining table at which visitors can sit and through which media images emerge from dinner plates.
- The exhibition represents a myriad of target audiences who see the neighborhood as culturally significant, and considers specifically how visitors will want to interact with exhibitions and the material.

Collaboration:

- The History Center collaborates with local schools and organizations to gain feedback. This way of working permeates programming and demonstrates shared authority and respect for community knowledge.
- Tapping the wealth of local theater artists and playwrights through collaboration with the Playwrights Center enlivens the Minnesota History Center's programming and builds audiences for off nights (Mondays).

Sources:

Open House: If These Walls Could Talk website
www.mnhs.org/exhibits/openhouse

Dark Nights - When Theater Illuminates History website
<http://shop.mnhs.org/category.cfm?Category=199>

History Matters Newsletter, September 2006
www.mnhs.org/historymatters/newsletter/sept2006.htm

Interview with Barbara Franco, September 29, 2006

Urban, Andrew. "Mill City Museum: Exhibition Review." *Journal of American History*, December, 2005, vol. 92, no. 3.

Roberts, Kate. "Rising from the Ruins: the Mill City Museum." *History News*, Spring, 2005.

Franco, Barbara. "Public History and Civic Dialogue." *OAH Newsletter #34*, May, 2006.

Presentation by Dan Spock, Philadelphia Heritage Program, October 6, 2006.

Heritage Shared

San Luis Obispo, CA

Summary:

Heritage Shared is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster inclusive, participatory community history for residents of San Luis Obispo, CA. Through a variety of activities, it aims to broaden local historical perspectives and to help residents see their history in the framework of the whole region, rather than as fragmented histories preserved by more than a hundred local history societies.

The initial effort of the program was a series of three annual community history forums funded by the California Council for the Humanities that featured formal talks, informal discussions among locals and visiting historians, content-focused theater and music, and field trips enriched by site guides. A reflective self-assessment of the early years' activities suggested that public programming and a substantial body of original work raised the level of historical expectation among its members. However, the program came up short in institutional cooperation and outreach. The lead public historians reported that they focused too much on the history and too little on the public. San Luisans generally preferred their past as it always had been—anecdotal, comforting, and close to home.

Subsequent projects have included:

Pedaling the Past: A Bicycle Tour of San Luis Obispo

As part of the Share the Bike Week, Heritage Shared and the San Luis Obispo Bicycle Club hosted a ride that lasted from ten o'clock in the morning until dusk. Promotion read: "Gather up family and friends to explore San Luis Obispo's fascinating past. Get some exercise and have fun pedaling back through SLO time. Cycle through the Railroad District and Chinatown. Pass by classic California bungalows, historic adobes, the Old Gas House, and lesser-known historic treasures. Bring your lunch or stop at one of the many eateries along the way." A 30-page booklet detailing the route and historical sites was created.

Deliveries 'Round the Back: A History and Heritage House Tour

A distinguishing characteristic of this 2002 tour of five historic houses was the emphasis on the story of the people who not only lived but worked in these distinctive domiciles.

Living on the Land

In 2001, a self-guided tour of agricultural historic sites in San Luis Obispo County was linked to a community discussion forum, Historical Perspectives on Agriculture, featuring scholars, policy makers, folk singers, and farm organizers.

Innovative/best practice:**Public Programs:**

- A public historian with a vision connects a local public to its history of place. (Heritage Shared was co-founded by Dick Miller, a historian and former professor at the University of Missouri who was also actively involved in programs of the Missouri Historical Society.)
- Public programs are grounded in scholarship (many historians and other academics are engaged), but not afraid to make history fun and accessible.
- Program development reflects public historians' commitment to "shared inquiry," i.e. working with and for community members to generate ideas and develop them toward mutual interest.
- Program staff displays willingness to take risks and to engage in critical review of the work to make it better.

Sources:

Corbett, Katherine T & Miller, Howard S. (Dick). "Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry." *The Public Historian*, winter 2006, vol. 28, no. 1.

Heritage Shared website:
www.heritageshared.org

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

New York, NY

Projects:

1. *Digital Artists Residency Project*
2. *Shared Journeys, Lower East Side Community Preservation Project*
3. *Lower East Side Community Preservation Project (LESCPP)*

Summary:

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum strives to promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan's Lower East Side. At the center of the Museum's programs is its flagship tenement building at 97 Orchard Street. Built in 1863, this structure is the first homestead of urban, working class, poor and immigrant people preserved in the United States. Visitors can take guided tours of 97 Orchard Street's carefully restored apartments to interpret the lives of actual residents from different historical periods. Through the range of its programs, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum interprets historic immigrant experience to illuminate the present. By stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues as a means of promoting humanitarian and democratic values, the Museum has established a new model for the museum and preservation professions.

1. *The Digital Artists Residency Project (DARP)* is a relatively new initiative of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. An off-site residency program, *DARP* offers artists the opportunity to complete a new web-based exhibition that explores an aspect of the contemporary immigrant experience. All residencies must enhance the Tenement Museum's mission and end when the web exhibit is launched (six months after the contract date); artists are compensated with a \$5000 stipend and visibility for their project, promoted by the museum. Past projects are compiled on the website and include *Banana*—an on-site installation which reconstructs the apartment of a second generation Chinese American family in New York City and examines the influences that shape the lives of Chinese American youths in the U.S.

2. *Shared Journeys* offers free two-hour workshops to adults from ESOL classes in New York which include a tour of the tenement galleries, followed by an educator-facilitated conversation around one of six topics related to pressing concerns of immigrants today. Developed as a new model to expand the museum audience to recent immigrants, the initiative began by offering a free workshop series that existing ESOL classes could integrate into their curricula. After hosting a series of focus groups with ESOL teachers from immigrant-serving organizations to learn how the museum could best serve as a resource, the museum launched the initiative. Since then, it has served more than 1,500 ESOL students in more than 150 workshops, immigrating from countries all over the world. Student responses to the workshop indicate that *Shared Journeys* has had significant impact on participants. "I learned a lot of history about people who immigrated from different parts of the world, and [it] is interesting because sometimes I see myself reflected."

3. As a focal-point of the Lower East Side, the Tenement Museum serves as a neighborhood leader and key collaborator. In 2002, as part of its partnership with St. Augustine's Church to restore and interpret the church's slave galleries, the museum founded the *Lower East Side Community Preservation Project* (LESCPP). The intention of this initiative was to gather a coalition of diverse community leaders, called "community preservationists," who would work to identify, restore, and interpret local historic sites as foundations for dialogue on common community experiences and issues. The interpretation and restoration at St. Augustine's Church was their first endeavor.

Over the course of the project, LESCPP began to earn a reputation as a vibrant, diverse force for identifying and interpreting community histories as starting points for dialogue. *Place Matters*, an initiative of the Municipal Art Society and the nonprofit City Lore, approached LESCPP to help develop innovative markers for neighborhood places that are valued for their history, as well as their importance in the lives of people today. Through this project, *Place Matters* selected two artists to work with community preservationists to identify places and issues that should be marked. In November 2002, artists met with community preservationists to collect ideas for stories and places that should be commemorated. In dialogues that included break-out groups and brainstorming, participants talked about why these stories should be told and how telling these stories can help raise issues their communities are facing today, including challenges of immigration, struggles over housing, and interethnic relations.

After a thorough feedback and review process between artists and LESCPP participants, an exhibition of eight site-marker proposals was held in March and April 2003 at the Municipal Art Society. As part of the exhibition, community preservationists presented their experience to over 50 people at a public panel presentation about the dialogue-based approach to developing public art and history projects. Members of the Slave Galleries Committee and Tenement Museum Project staff have established themselves as a resource to those in the field who want to learn from the grassroots preservation model and dialogue approach.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Technology:

In the *Digital Artists Residency Project*, the museum works beyond the boundaries of the museum space to interpret its collection and focus through the creative eyes of artists. Artists provide new perspectives on contemporary issues of immigration and expand the museum's audience.

Collaboration:

In *Shared Journeys*, the collaboration with ESOL programs in New York represents a genuine approach to shared authority. The museum worked closely with social service partner agencies and ESOL participants to refine the program and provide ongoing feedback.

Through the *Lower East Side Community Preservation Project*, the museum both takes a leadership role and empowers members of its community to preserve its local historic treasures—thus making the preservation process a public collaboration rather than a private, museum-led project.

Sources:

Lower East Side Tenement Museum website
www.tenement.org

Russell-Ciardi, Maggie. “Immigrant Voices: A New Language for Museums.” *Museum News*, May/June 2006.

Sevcenko, Liz, The Reverend Deacon Edgar W Hopper and Lisa Chice. “The Slave Galleries Restoration Project Case Study.” *History as Catalyst for Civic Dialogue: Case Studies from Animating Democracy*, Washington D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2005.

The Andy Warhol Museum

Pittsburgh, PA

Projects:

1. *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*
2. *Inconvenient Evidence: Iraqi Prison Photographs from Abu Ghraib*

Summary:

The Andy Warhol Museum is a vital forum in which diverse audiences of artists, scholars, and the general public are galvanized through creative interaction with the art and life of Andy Warhol. The Warhol is ever-changing and constantly redefining itself in relation to contemporary life, using its unique collections and dynamic, interactive programming as tools. Opened in 1994, the Museum features extensive permanent collections of art and archives on one of the most influential American artists of the twentieth century.

Projects:

1. In 2001-2002, The Andy Warhol Museum presented the traveling exhibition, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, comprising 100 photographic prints and postcards from 1870 to 1960 that document the history of lynching in the United States. Racially motivated killings in Pittsburgh had heightened existing racial tensions, and the exhibiton provided a potent context for refocusing dialogue about race in the city. In the planning and implementation of the exhibition, The Andy Warhol Museum worked with a Community Advisory Group to determine how the exhibition should be presented and interpreted both within and outside the museum. Further, these advisors served as a point of contact between their individual communities, most particularly the African-American community, and the larger planning group. The museum also partnered with the YWCA Center for Race Relations to advise and train about dialogue and to co-facilitate dialogues.

Open Forums, artmaking dialogues led by artist/educators, provided visitors with expressive, reflective, dialogic, and informational outlets to process and learn from their experience of viewing the images. A range of other dialogue opportunities included daily facilitated public dialogues, group tour discussions, public lectures, panel discussions, performances, use of the museum as a space for community groups to hold meetings and dialogues around race relations, and artist/educator outreach projects that extended the dialogue into the community. A timeline depicting African American achievement and resistance set against the history of lynching in America was developed in collaboration with the community advisors and later reproduced for distribution to all high schools in Allegheny County. The museum's marketing staff was engaged at a deep level in understanding the exhibition's and public programs' intent, content, and potential reverberations, reflecting a deliberate team approach within the museum as well as with external advisors and partners.

2. In 2004, the museum presented a smaller-scale exhibition focusing on the digital photographs of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. *Inconvenient Evidence: Iraqi*

Prison Photographs from Abu Ghraib examined these highly charged digital photographs of torture, highlighting the ability to see the Iraq conflict through the eyes of the men and women empowered to fight it. The exhibition design sought to concentrate the images in an intimate viewing space and to present them with simple immediacy—17 small four-by-six-inch images from various websites on 8.5 x 11-inch paper, hung side by side with thumbtacks. Curator Tom Sokolowski contextualized these photos with other news photos. He wanted the exhibition “to take the form of a debate...a sort of op-ed page,” and posted on the walls written opinions on the war from the perspectives of veterans, torture scholars, religious figures, and Sokolowski himself. Also including interpretive text panels, newspaper headlines, and historical materials; the exhibition examined the impact of amateur digital photography on the public’s view of the Iraq War, and the human rights issues at Abu Ghraib prison. A visitor comment book garnered 1,000 pages of commentary.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Collaboration:

The museum’s approach to partnership is based on genuine sharing of authority and openness. In *Without Sanctuary*, the museum demonstrated its commitment to ensuring community buy-in and feedback to the exhibition as it implemented the program through a group of community advisors. The group—including local leaders and other community leaders—gave advice, reviewed the exhibition concept and design and offered feedback, presented programs, and accessed their own networks to promote the program and talk up the project to friends, family members, and other community allies. The institution accepted its vulnerable position as a primarily white institution and was open to critique and learning from African-American partners.

Public Programs:

The Warhol is not afraid to take risks and has learned to take steps and prepare for negative reaction or controversy. Dialogue as a regular part of public programming is proving to be a way to enable divergent viewpoints to be heard.

Without Sanctuary emphasized a multitude of opportunities, such as *Postcards for Tolerance*, which fostered personal interpretation of the images. After viewing the exhibition, visitors reflected on the themes raised and wrote a message on a postcard which was pinned to a bulletin board (the postcard was then mailed to the visitor at the close of the exhibition, as a reminder of the perspective the exhibition brought forward). Daily civic dialogues were held in which artist/educators facilitated conversation in the light of response and reflection to the exhibit.

Exhibition concept, design, interpretation:

The museum seizes opportunities to respond in a timely way to current issues in order to tap the potency of the issue. In *Inconvenient Evidence*, The Warhol took initiative to organize an exhibition as “an emerging present” in order to open community dialogue and deepen perspective on the American war in Iraq.

As an art museum, The Warhol is conscious of how putting images not intended as art into an art museum context may influence interpretation and meaning. It works deftly and sensitively to take advantage of what this new context may spur in viewers but also not exploit the images.

Programs are thoughtfully reflective of the mission of the museum. The museum experiments with such exhibitions to creatively operate in the cultural sphere as “civic engager,” using its social space, as well as its traditional position as arbiter of taste, to focus attention on civic issues.

Sources:

Gogan, Jessica. “Museum as Artist: Creative, Dialogic, and Civic Practice / The Andy Warhol Museum Case Study.” *History as Catalyst for Civic Dialogue: Case Studies from Animating Democracy*, Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2005.

“The Warhol to Present New Exhibition, *Inconvenient Evidence: Iraqi Prison Photographs from Abu Ghraib*.” Press Release.

Beizer, Julia. “Under Your Skin: ‘Inconvenient Evidence’” *Museum News*, Jan/Feb 2005.

Timber Lake & Area Historical Society

Timber Lake, SD

Project:

Reading America Project

Summary:

The Timber Lake & Area Historical Society project was supported by *Reading America*, a multi-year program of Libraries for the Future (LFF), a division of the Americans for Libraries Council. *Reading America* was designed to award grants of \$5,000 to collaborative projects between teens and older generations that:

- use literature, film, and the neutral ground of the library to spark cross-cultural, cross-generational discussion;
- expand outreach to new communities;
- build partnerships among libraries and community organizations;
- become true community centers in communities experiencing significant demographic change.

Each project is anchored in an intergenerational book and film discussion that helps participants speak to each other about topics of cultural relevance. Those discussions lead to broader cultural exchange projects ranging from oral history interviews and family scrapbooks to community gatherings.

Timber Lake, South Dakota is a small community on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Indian Reservation and includes a culturally diverse population. Local sites include a former coal mine, a one-room school house, and the homestead of author Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Based on an idea brought forth by students in a seventh-grade problem-solving class; the Timber Lake & Area Historical Society, the local library, and a local school collaborated to bring together youth and native elders to tell the stories of historically relevant sites in their communities. Dialogues between the students and the “living historians” energized such historic themes as: life on the prairie, the influence of railroads, the history of agriculture, and the growth of industry. Oral histories were videotaped during visits to historical sites, and a video was created to describe the project and tell the stories. Teachers, librarians, and the historical society staff provided historical context and reinforced the field trips with book discussions and a summer reading program.

The project continued for at least a second year and the same students met regularly with historians, artists, authors, and other experts to learn more about the Native American and immigrant frontier history. In addition, the students, their parents, and other community adults are taking part in an intergenerational book discussion series featuring local authors at the public library.

Students gained an awareness of the cultural history of the area and a deeper understanding of the life experiences of their older neighbors. One teacher explained that the school and historical society came closer together because of the many hours of interaction between students and historical society members that would not have happened if not for the project.

Innovative/Best Practices:

Collaboration:

- Institutional partners met the challenge to step beyond their own walls and expand competencies, audiences, and resources within their reach.
- *Libraries for the Future* capitalizes on the public library, as a widely used and democratic public institution and therefore as an effective partner with many kinds of institutions.
- The project exemplifies how collaboration can enable an effort that no one institution could do alone.

Public programs/education:

- Students were exposed to real-life situations and hands-on learning. Local residents were touched and validated through the process of sharing their stories. Mutual respect between generations was achieved.
- Youth were empowered at the earliest stage to contribute to project concept.

Source:

Schull, Diantha and Thomas, Selma. "Planting Seeds of Community." *Museum News*, July/August, 2006.

Additional information about Reading America:

Since 2002, *Reading America* has funded 45 library-community collaborations designed to promote intergenerational and intercultural communication. At least 10 communities developed museum-library collaborations that led to innovative uses of staff, resources, and collections. By recognizing their shared civic and educational goals, museums and libraries have expanded outreach, leveraged resources, and developed meaningful and lasting partnerships. (Note: Two Pennsylvania Libraries have received *Reading America* grants: Franklin Country Library System, Chambersburg; and Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia).

The Field Museum

Chicago, IL

Project:

Cultural Connections

Summary:

Cultural Connections operates out of The Field Museum's Center for Cultural Understanding and Change (CCUC). CCUC was established to create a bridge between the public and its collections and scientific research, as well as to help the Field serve its Chicago and neighboring communities and enrich its own knowledge of contemporary urban life. Out of a convening of anthropologists and community organization members, the Field learned that the public wants safe environments to explore race, ethnicity, and diversity.

Cultural Connections, a collaboration between The Field Museum and 22 local partners, is dedicated to fostering cultural understanding and the value of cultural differences in Chicago. Launched in 1998, *Cultural Connections* is based on the premise that cultural organizations of all sizes, including history organizations, collaborate to serve as sites where diverse audiences can talk about contemporary common issues. To that end, *Cultural Connections* stimulates open conversation by providing substantive information about the cultural practices reflected in first-person perspectives, and in museum collections and exhibitions. Activities are presented jointly, take place at the partners' locations, and are open to the general public—particularly Chicago Public Schools teachers and parents. Partners range from mainstream cultural institutions to ethnic-specific museums and cultural centers.

Cultural Connections is defined annually by a series of educational events in the fall and spring—each one presented jointly by two of the partners and reflecting a theme agreed upon by all partners. For example, under the theme “Traditions of Transition: Understanding Rites of Passage,” the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum and Cambodian Association of Illinois highlighted celebrations honoring ancestors, and the Spertus Museum and the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture explored coming of age through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Quinceanero rituals.

Comparative presentations are developed through a guiding framework titled “Common Concerns, Different Responsibilities,” that is based on the premise that people respond to problems differently depending on their specific circumstances and constraints. At a recent *Cultural Connections* presentation, the DuSable Museum of African American History and the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture compared the work of muralists in their communities. A presenter from the latter institution talked about the struggles surrounding fair housing, bilingual education, Puerto Rican independence, racism and gentrification as depicted in the mural art form. Whereas a presenter from the DuSable explained how murals inspire and educate African-American audiences about their ongoing contributions to the development of the American landscape.

Innovative/Best Practices:**Collaboration:**

Cultural Connections represents a sustainable program that has increased the visibility of each institution outside its own community. Partners sought (and succeeded) to convey the message that “you don’t have to be Swedish or Filipino to find those community-based museums education, relevant and of value.” Further, the program demonstrates how a large-scale institution can responsibly connect to its communities by ensuring representative inclusion in its exhibitions and programs.

Public Programs:

Cultural Connections uses an anthropological relativistic approach, i.e. looking across cultures to explain the various ways humans deal with the common concerns of life within the context of shifting environmental and historical circumstances.

Interpretation:

The program addresses a common and critical mainstream museum challenge of collections rooted in the colonial era that have limited contemporary relevance to many cultural groups and the sometimes contentious relationship with the groups represented by its exhibitions and collections.

Source:

Cabrera, Rosa. “Beyond the Museum Walls.” *Museum News*, July/August, 2006, p. 34-38.

Phillipsburg Manor

(owned and operated by Historic Hudson, a nonprofit organization)
Sleepy Hollow, NY

Project:

Pretends to Be Free: Imagining Runaway Slaves

Summary:

Phillipsburg Manor is a historic site that explores slavery in the colonial North and its relationship to the commercial and cultural development of New York.

Staff designed an art contest around runaway slave advertisements published in newspapers in the colonial period. Teens who participated in the project were asked to choose an ad and reconstruct the enslaved individual or individuals it described in a creative manner. After reading an essay about the biases inherent in these advertisements, the students worked with their teachers to develop their ideas. Each student was required to submit a commentary describing his or her artwork and stating the reasons for choosing a particular advertisement. Jerry and Gloria Pinkney, award-winning children's book illustrators, judged the artworks along with a local teacher and artist. Jerry Pinkney said he was genuinely affected by the students' artwork, their "articulate expression of something they did not live through and the clarity with which they tried to express this difficult and horrendous time."

Innovative/Best Practice:

Interpretation:

- The project employs an approach that enlivens historic documents through artistic interpretation and interpretation from a youth perspective, and taps the power of art to re-imagine the past.
- The program design shows risk-taking on the part of the Manor's African-American Advisory Board—which initially felt young people might submit thoughtless or intentionally offensive works (the risk was ameliorated by carefully constructed guidelines that encouraged only serious submissions).

Education:

- The project asked high school students to confront highly charged primary historical documents on an intellectual, emotional, and creative basis.
- The design of the project helped make historic sites more engaging to high-school students.

Sources:

"Chronicles." *Museum News*, May/June 2006.

Pretends to Be Free: Imagining Runaway Slaves website
www.hudsonvalley.org/runaway

Museum of Chinese in the Americas

New York, NY

Projects:

1. *Mapping Our Heritage*
2. *The Virtual Salon: Chinese Transnational Photographers in the Digital Age*

Summary:

The Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) is the first professionally staffed museum dedicated to reclaiming, preserving, and interpreting the history and culture of Chinese and their descendants in the Western Hemisphere. MoCA began as a community-based organization founded in 1980 by Jack Tchen and Charlie Lai and Chinese American artists, historians and students who felt that the memories of first-generation "old-timers" would be lost without oral history, photo documentation, research, and collecting efforts. Now a focal point of the community's cultural life, the Museum has evolved into not only the keeper of the community's documented history, but the community's cultural history as well. Since its inception, MoCA has been committed to honoring community knowledge and engaging community members in the development of programs and exhibitions and to making the museum of, by, and for the Chinese community.

A 2003 IMLS Learning Opportunity Grant demonstrates MoCA's ongoing efforts to engage the community. It has made efforts to be accessible to its community by expanding bi-lingual services within the museum. The museum hired a bilingual-biliterate public program associate and a community connections associate and set up an in-house translation to typesetting system to create bilingual educational, exhibit, and community outreach materials—including portable exhibits. Further, the museum developed a process for collection of historical information and artifacts from the community.

1. *Mapping Our Heritage* is a collaboration between the Museum of Chinese in the Americas, New York University's Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program & Institute, the Environmental Simulation Center, and Resolution Seven. *Mapping Our Heritage* is a three-dimensional, interactive map of New York's "Old Chinatown." Through a virtual kiosk which maps the eight-block neighborhood, visitors can "visit" an historic address by clicking and entering in the address. They can learn statistical and biographical data, view historical photos, artifacts, and documents, and hear individual oral histories connected to the place. In addition, the kiosk offers the opportunity for viewers to submit their own personal accounts and memories of Chinatown.

2. *The Virtual Salon: Chinese Transnational Photographers in the Digital Age* presents a collection of works by four artists from the Chinese Artist Network (CAN), an international organization that connects and promotes emerging Chinese artists based in the United States and China through the faculties of the internet. The *Virtual Salon* is an exploration of a new kind of Chinese transnationalism which has been made possible by

new technology. With its members located throughout China and the United States, CAN functions completely through the internet—its artists critique, communicate and collaborate with each other primarily through email and online photography forums, exchanging ideas thousands of miles apart. Virtual art communities such as CAN have enabled emerging artists—many of whom have not had any formal art training and feel less constrained by conventional aesthetic standards—to engage in debates about the nature and potential of photography across national borders, and to even expand discourses within China’s own professional art circles.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Collaboration:

Mapping Our Heritage demonstrates an institutionalized commitment to sharing authority with its community that pervades program and interpretive approaches. It enables community members to interpret history on the spot through the opportunity to share histories connected to a specific place within the map. In doing so, the museum deepens the connection between community members and their neighborhood and taps the potential of technology to expand its local and global reach.

Technology and interpretation:

In *Virtual Salon*, the museum operates outside its traditional limitations of a history museum to present an art exhibit exploring issues of international identity. Further, technology (the internet, specifically) acts as a communication tool connecting artists of Asian-descent across the globe and facilitates collaboration and idea exchange between artists.

Sources:

“Cultural Reviews/Multimedia Reviews; The Virtual Salon: Chinese Transnational Photographers in the Digital Age.” *China Rights Forum*. Issue No. 2, 2006.

The Virtual Salon: Chinese Transnational Photographers in the Digital Age. Press Release — February 28, 2006.

Museum of Chinese in the Americas website
www.MoCA-nyc.org

explore Chinatown nyc website
www.explorechinatown.com/Gui/Content.aspx?Page=Event&Type=329

IMLS Grant Search
www.imls.gov/results.asp?State=0&city=&description=on&inst=&keyword=&program=1049&sort=year&year=8

New York Historical Society

New York, NY

Project:

Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery

Summary:

The second of a three-part series of exhibitions on slavery in New York, the New York Historical Society presented *Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery* in 2006. *Legacies* brings together the work of distinguished African-American artists including Faith Ringgold, Kara Walker, Fred Wilson, Betye Saar, Carrie Mae Weems, Fred Wilson, and Jacqueline Tarry; to reflect on how America's history of racially-based slavery has shaped our society. Throughout the museum, exhibited works are juxtaposed with historical objects from the Society's collections in order to deepen the historical significance and message of the artists' intent. From the exhibition catalogue, Lowery Stokes Sims (President of The Studio Museum of Harlem) writes: "...the visitor is invited to experience history as art, while meditating on art as history."

The exhibition embodies provocative interpretations that capture the tension between the reprehensible past and the emotions of the present. This exhibition complements the historical exhibitions mounted by The New York Historical Society from 2005 to 2007, emphasizing how history affects our current day concerns and perceptions.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Exhibition design and interpretation:

- A major history museum worked with a notable art curator for its first contemporary art exhibition to enable well-known artists' reinterpretation of pieces from the museum's collection.
- Multiple artists (and artists of different generations) enable a diverse range of aesthetics and politics related to the subject.
- Images and messages are deliberately evocative and provocative on different levels to prompt intellectual and emotions response to the subject.

Sources:

Cotter, Holland. "At Historical Society, Emancipation Remains a Work in Progress." *The New York Times*, June 20, 2006.

New York Historical Society, *Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery* exhibition website

https://www.nyhistory.org/web/default.php?section=exhibits_collections&page=exhibit_detail&id=9192668

Eldridge Street Synagogue

New York, NY

Summary:

The first great Synagogue built in the United States by Eastern European Jews, the Eldridge Street Synagogue is in the process of a major restoration project to develop the site as a historic museum and place of religious importance, to be completed in 2007. The Eldridge Street Project, a non-sectarian, not-for-profit organization, was established with a dual mission: to preserve the Eldridge Street Synagogue and to interpret it with cultural and educational programs for a diverse audience.

In this powerful setting, programs for adults, school children and families explore cultural continuity and change, instill respect for Jewish traditions and practices, and draw analogies between the Synagogue's immigrant founders and contemporary immigrants. As steward of this National Historic Landmark, the Eldridge Street Project uses the building as a learning center for exploring architecture and historic preservation, synagogue life and customs; a gathering place for inter-group experiences; and a showcase for art and cultural experiences that draw on humanistic themes.

Examples of its diverse and lively public programs include:

Art Sanctuary

The art and exhibition program showcases visual, audio, and mixed-media artists whose works enhance the emotional impact and help communicate the story of the Eldridge Street Synagogue.

Building & Rebuilding Architecture Series

This program offers perspectives on architecture and historic preservation that are of interest to both specialists and the general public. Lectures and workshops explore the visual, social, and cultural meanings of architectural and decorative styles; the properties of traditional building materials; the deteriorative processes they undergo; and the processes by which they are best conserved. Sessions are led by distinguished guest speakers, including members of the Eldridge Street Project's own restoration team. They include slide-illustrated discussions, demonstrations and case studies, from Eldridge Street and other great buildings around the world. Programs in this series are free to Eldridge Street Project and other museum docents.

The Garden Cafeteria Literary Series

Named for a famed Lower East Side eatery which was once a hotbed of literary and political discourse, this literary series offers readings, lectures and discussions featuring writers whose work touches on themes relevant to Eldridge Street—including tales of immigration, spiritual journeys, the tension between cultural legacies and modern life, and the continuity of family and faith.

Lost and Found Music

This program seeks to “reclaim” musical works at risk of disappearing by presenting and interpreting them for a general audience.

Community Programs

Programs that celebrate the diversity of the Lower East Side such as the *Egg Rolls & Egg Creams Festival*, an annual spring block party which celebrates Chinese and Eastern European Jewish cultures (the all-day festival features storytelling, music, hands-on crafts and activities inside, outside and all around the Synagogue).

Innovative/Best Practice:

Public Programs:

- The preservation effort and architecture of the building and Jewish culture remain a central programming departure point but programs spin off in interesting ways that emphasize art and culture and draw upon and capitalize on the multiple cultures of the Lower East Side Neighborhood.
- Interesting and fun connections are made between cultures in program concepts.

Source:

Eldridge Street Synagogue website

www.eldridgestreet.org

Historic Deerfield

Deerfield, MA

Project:

The Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704

Summary:

Marking the 300 year anniversary of The Raid on Deerfield in 2004, Old Deerfield created two new projects to present and interpret this contested history: an online exhibition and a specially created opera telling a specific story related to the Raid.

The exhibition: Through the perspective of five cultures (English, French, Wendat, Kanienkehaka, and Wobanaki), The Raid on Deerfield Online Museum presents the story of the settlement at Deerfield and its contentious history, specifically regarding the 1704 attack by French and three Native peoples on the English settlement of Deerfield, Massachusetts. The website begins with a brief video background on the 1704 attack. Visitors then have the opportunity to explore the area and meet the five cultures through several 2,500-word essays supplemented by artwork, maps, charts, and audio clips. Alternately, visitors can proceed through ten "scenes" which narrate the Deerfield Raid, its origins, and its consequences from 1550 to the present. In examining the site, it is important to note that each event is presented with multiple perspectives in mind. Each scene is like a website in itself and encourages the visitor to decide for themselves the events and their implications.

The opera: Since 1704, the Old Deerfield historic site has inspired many retellings of the story. One of the most well known retellings is *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* by John Putnam Demos. It recounts the story of Eunice Williams who, post-Raid, was adopted at age seven by a Mohawk woman and years later refused to be ransomed by her father. Having read the book after moving from Mexico to Amherst, Harley Erdman, chair of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst theater department, was so moved by the story that, with Linda McInerney and Paula Kimper, he wrote a libretto for an opera: "The Captivation of Eunice Williams." Following the life of Eunice Williams, the opera strives to present both the Native and English sides, in order to provide the widest perspective to the audience. It was presented in full production to the local community and was later presented in Washington, D.C.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Technology and interpretation:

The award-winning website, *The Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*, addresses contentions surrounding this historic event. It features a multitude of information about the raid, including a deep exploration of the events leading up to and circumstances of the Raid. Featuring audio and video clips in addition to flash-based interactive panels, the website offers multiple perspectives throughout and works to appeal to the visitor's curiosity through a number of venues. Further, the online exhibition provides an alternative, participatory dimension to the museum and its permanent exhibit on the 1704 Raid located in the physical museum of Old Deerfield.

Sources:

Wolf, Faye. "Setting the Record Straight: The Truth about the 1704 Raid on Deerfield." UMassMagOnline, spring 2004.

http://umassmag.com/Spring_2004/Setting_the_Record_Straight_661.html

Rabinowitz, Richard. "Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704." *The Journal of American History*, September 2005, vol. 92, no. 2.

**Museum of History & Industry and the University of Washington
Libraries** (lead partners)
Seattle, WA

Project:

King County Snapshots Program / Crossing Organizational Boundaries

Summary:

Through a collaboration of 12 museums, libraries, and historical organizations in King County, WA, *King County Snapshots* is a searchable web-based database which presents more than 12,000 historical images cataloging 19th and 20th century images portraying people, places, and events in the county's urban, suburban, and rural communities. Representing only a fraction of the partner organizations' collections, the online database divides images into categories (such as "disasters," "food and eating", "sports" etc) to facilitate an online search; or visitors can set their own search parameters, if necessary. Throughout the program (and presently), each organization maintains ownership and control over their images (the website also facilitates rental of the images for personal or commercial use by the community at-large); and a version of the searchable database on their own website, specific to their own collections.

In addition, the searchable database website also includes all of the background information on the *Crossing Organizational Boundaries* grant program (of which the *King County Snapshots* database is a program) including the grant narrative, abstract, and final report information.

Innovative/Best Practice:

Collaboration:

King County Snapshots illustrates sustained cooperation between 12 partnering museums, libraries, and historical societies. The project enabled selected organizations to use technology and work together to house their collections in one repository and to share their collections online, while still maintaining ownership of the images. In fact, the repository becomes an earned revenue opportunity for the collections to support the site, by facilitating download, rental, and usage of the images for commercial and personal use (each picture is tagged with the relevant information for contact and identification within the partner organization's archives). Further, in developing the model, the partnership has made it easy for other historical organizations who are interested in re-creating this program by providing the proposal and final report information for the project online.

Source:

King County Snapshots website
<http://content.lib.washington.edu/imls/kcsnapshots/>

Additional Projects and Organizations Researched

This table represents additional exemplary organizations and projects. For more information about each of the projects below, visit the organization or project website.

Organization	Organization Type	Project(s)	Innovation/Best Practice
Interpretation			
Brooklyn Historical Society Brooklyn, NY www.brooklynhistory.org	History museum	<i>Brooklyn Works</i>	Interpretation Exhibition design Technology
Connor Prairie Museum Fishers, IN www.connerprairie.org	History museum	<i>Follow the North Star</i>	Interpretation Public programs
New York State Archives Albany, NY www.archives.nysed.gov	History museum/archives	Actors as historic figures	Interpretation (of documents)
Plimoth Plantation Plymouth, MA www.plimoth.org	Living history museum		Interpretation
National Museum of the American Indian	Historic and Cultural Museum	Collections Development and Institution Design	Interpretation Exhibition Design Recent History
Public Programs			
National Underground Railroad Freedom Center Cincinnati, OH www.freedomcenter.org	History museum	Various programs <i>Dialogue Zone</i>	Public programs Exhibition design
Pratt Museum Homer, AK www.prattmuseum.org	Natural history / cultural museum	Various programs	Public programs
Spoletto Festival USA Charleston, SC www.spoletousa.org	Arts festival	<i>Evoking History</i>	Public programs Art Heritage Tourism
Alfred P. Sloan Museum Flint, MI www.sloanmuseum.com	History & science museum	<i>A View From the Front Porch</i>	Public Programs Interpretation
Collaboration			
Imagining America Ann Arbor, MI www.ia.umich.edu	College/univ consortium	NA	Collaboration Art, artists
Vermont Historical Society Montpelier, VT www.vermonthistory.org	Statewide history organization	<i>Community History Project</i>	Collaboration
The Wing Luke Asian Museum Seattle, WA www.wingluke.org	History/cultural museum	Overall organization <i>New Dialogues Initiative</i>	Collaboration Public programs

Exhibition Concept			
Maryland Historical Society Baltimore, MD www.mdhs.org	History museum	<i>Looking for Liberty</i>	Exhibition concept, design, interpretation
Mattatuck Museum Waterbury, CT www.mattatuckmuseum.org	History museum	<i>Neighborhoods Project</i>	Exhibition concept, interpretation Collaboration
National Civil Rights Museum Memphis, TN www.civilrightsmuseum.org	History museum	<i>Wounded in America</i>	Exhibition concept Public programs
US National Archives and Records Administration Washington, DC www.archives.gov	History museum	<i>The Public Vaults</i>	Exhibition concept, design Technology
Technology			
Chicago History Museum Chicago, IL www.chicagohs.org	History museum	<i>Studs Terkel</i>	Technology
Monticello Charlottesville, VA www.monticello.org	Historic house museum	<i>Monticello Explorer</i>	Technology; web site
Heritage Tourism / Marketing / Adaptive Reuse			
Pennsylvania Heritage Society Harrisburg, PA www.paheritage.org	History organization	<i>Civil War Heritage Trail</i>	Heritage Tourism Visitor studies
Steel Industry Heritage Corporation (w/ NPS, and Commonwealth of PA) Homestead, PA www.riversofsteel.com	Heritage Area	<i>Rivers of Steel Heritage Area</i>	Heritage tourism Marketing Collaboration
Place Matters New York, NY www.placematters.net	History organization advocacy	<i>Census of Places that Matter</i>	Marketing Public Programs
Boylston Historical Society Boylston, MA www.boylstonhistory.org	Historic house museum	<i>Hillside Restoration Project</i>	Adaptive reuse
Art			
Spoletto Festival USA Charleston, SC http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/spoletto.pdf	Festival	<i>Evoking History</i>	Art Heritage Tourism Public Programs
Anna Schuleit www.anna-schuleit.com	Public art	<i>Habeus Corpus Bloom</i>	Art Interpretation Public Programs Recent history
Hawai'i Alliance for Arts Education Honolulu, HI http://www.americansforthearts.org/animatingdemocracy/reading_room/case_studies/interdisciplinary.asp#haae	Public art, conservation	<i>Kamehameha I Statue Conservation Project</i>	Art Public Programs Heritage tourism

Save Outdoor Sculpture! Washington, DC www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/SOS/index.html	Public art, conservation		Art Public Programs
Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) Ventura, CA www.sparcmurals.org	Public art, perm	<i>The Great Wall of Los Angeles</i>	Art
Brooklyn Philharmonic Brooklyn, NY www.brooklynphilharmonic.org	Music, opera	<i>The Death of Klinghoffer</i>	Art Public Programs Recent history
Junebug Productions New Orleans, LA www.junebugproductions.org	Theater, story circles	<i>Color Line Project</i>	Art Public Programs Interpretation