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Corporate history and curatorial practice at Buffalo Trace distillery.

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CORPORATE HISTORY AND CURATORIAL PRACTICE AT BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

By

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A Thesis Approved on

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, John and Kathleen Schmidt, who always supported at every stage in my life and taught me that being happy in your career path is more important than status or pay.

I also want to thank Patrick Kelley who suffered through late nights and early mornings as I worked to complete this project.

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ABSTRACT

CORPORATE HISTORY AND CURATORIAL PRACTICE AT BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

Stephanie Rose Schmidt

November 20, 2015

This work seeks to explore curatorial integrity in public museums and corporate history institutions by discussing historic preservation and display at The Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, KY. The history of curatorial narrative in public museums begins with elitist displays of state treasures in 16th century Europe and develops over centuries into publicly held, education based institutions. Emerging in the form of factory tours during the Industrial Revolution, many corporations today have moved beyond basic advertising and toward meaningful positioning of their company, not only in the market place, but also within community and national identities. A National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Trace Distillery is the oldest continuously operating distillery in the United States. As such, it boasts a rich history with connections to early settlement, industrial revolution, Prohibition, and modern innovations in distilling. As the Archivist at Buffalo Trace, my first curatorial responsibilities began with a collaboration to develop educational interpretation of the Old Taylor House, a historic home at the distillery, and populating expanded areas of the Visitor Center with historic materials. The combination of historic preservation with new construction expansion provides a unique backdrop to discuss integrity and narrative in corporate museums.

Many doubt the voice of corporate history institutions, expecting persuasion in the place of authenticity. However, Buffalo Trace Distillery, like many museums, collects, preserves, and interprets their collection in hopes of using its materials to share its rich history with the public. I hope to demonstrate through research and methodology that these institutions value accurate historical narrative, not solely as a marketing tool, but as a way to connect with their community and build knowledge about long-standing institutions within local, regional and national history. By connecting the Old Taylor House and Visitor Center displays to exhibition standards developed by the American Alliance of Museums committee, the National Association for Museum Exhibition, and demonstrating that the facility qualifies as a corporate museum by Victor Danilov's standards. Finally, by making this claim I hope to call for increased recognition of corporate museums through the accreditation process by AAM. Though AAM has made great strides to become more inclusive in recent years, increased acceptance of corporate museums would benefit both corporations and the museum field as a whole.

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INTRODUCTION

In curatorial practice, the voice of an exhibition and its subject matter must reflect the mission of the overall institution. For public museums, this voice addresses to the public, reflecting the educational and historical needs of its community, providing a service not being fulfilled elsewhere in society. For the corporate museum, the respondent to the narrative voice is less clear. Are corporations manipulating their history for monetary gain? Can they be trusted to present an authentic experience? If this conflict of interest exists, can they be considered museums? Since the emergence of company museums, public museum professionals have asked these questions of their corporate counterparts. In this work, I hope to examine the historical displays at Buffalo Trace Distillery in order to prove that corporations are capable of presenting their histories with integrity, accuracy, and authenticity, and, therefore, deserve accreditation by professional museum organizations.

First, I will ground this argument within the history of public and corporate history museums. The origins of the public museum stem from the collections of the most elite echelons of European society, royalty and aristocracy. Later they branched into museums that function to generate national pride from citizens and differentiate their nation from their opponents. In the United States, museums evolved independent of direct government support, and the aristocracy in America was the wealthy business class which came to fund and dominate museum formation. As a result, commercial interests were inherently reflected in museum operations and display. The department store, leisure activity designed to elevate

consumers to middle class tastes, as well as nationalistic pride in American Exceptionalism became intertwined with its non-profit institutions of art, history and science.

Corporate history experiences evolved after the industrial revolution, when factories in urban areas became a part of individual and regional identity. As society became increasingly commercial the number, domination, and impact of corporations on their local, and sometimes even national history became intertwined with its particular community and so became increasingly important, even when some failed to maintain long-term success. Initially local museums implicitly supported, displayed and documented these industrial components of their local history but by the late twentieth century a large number of corporations began to establish museum-like institutions to tell their own specific story and this trend has gained the attention of the academic community. Though championed by some, others doubted the validity of information being presented, and argue against the inclusion of corporate museums into museum professional organizations, such as the American Alliance of Museums and their subsequent possibility of accreditation.

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF CORPORATE MUSEUMS

Currently, corporate museums and public museums work and interact in increasingly similar ways. In the age of social media and brand marketing, business practices are increasingly common among non-profit organizations. Corporations seeking authenticity for their consumer experience, utilize their history as American institutions. No longer a function of company anniversaries and advertising, corporate archives across the U.S. are being used to generate thoughtful, community-oriented museum displays that serve not solely to push product, but to educate visitors on their company's place in commercial history. While many of these museums use museum standards and methodology, they are still considered merely a marketing ploy.

Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, KY dedicates significant resources to implementing historic preservation and the presentation of its rich history into its visitor experience. Moving beyond simple factory tours, this National Historic Landmark is home to the oldest continuously operating distillery in the country and the oldest residential home in Franklin County, KY. In 2013, the distillery became a National Historic Landmark, recognized by the United States National Parks System as possessing "exceptional value of quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States."[1] The long application process required thorough research and rigorous documentation of the history and

[1] National Parks Service. "National Historic Landmarks Program." Accessed 6 Nov. 2015. http://www.nps.gov/nhl/

significance of the site, providing evidence of management's dedication to preserving and presenting the history of the distillery.

In July 2015, Buffalo Trace re-opened its historic Old Taylor House to the public featuring interpretation of its history, architecture, and use at the distillery, as well as the history of Col E.H. Taylor, Jr. whose relatives are believed to have built the home and who was an innovator in the distilling industry. In the same month, the distillery expanded its visitor center, complete with historic displays focusing on company history and the facility over time. These two different exhibition spaces reflect trends in the corporate history world as well as the public museum setting. By demonstrating that the methodology used to tell the story of the Old Taylor House and the historical materials used in the Visitor's Center are authentic, accurate, and go beyond pure marketing, I hope to show that corporate history displays are worthy of recognition by the larger museum profession.

Connections to Public Museums

The history of the public museum begins with the private collections of Europe's elite merchants and monarchs. In his late nineteenth century essay on the origins of the museum, Hermann August Hagan describes the development of private natural history collections resulting from expansionist voyages and growing trade routes in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He credits the discovery of alcohol's preservative properties and linen paper's accessible cost for use in dry preservation techniques as key moments in the capability for science collections storage and long-term usage.[2] The invention of the printing

[2] Hagan, H.A. "The History of the Origin and Development of Museums." In *Museums Origins: Readings in Early Museum History and Philosophy*. Edited by Hugh Genoways and Mary Anne Andrei. (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2008), 41.

press also allowed for collection lists to be printed and distributed among universities and other members of the scientific community.[3]

These early collections, now capable of housing expansive amounts of objects from across the world, were available only to those wealthy enough to house them and private individuals with the resources and status to travel to see them. Hagan notes that these collections were popular among monarchs, their collection lists dispersed not only in the interest of scientific advancement, but to achieve a certain level of fashion that had become typical in the time. He says "the Prince of Gottorf brought together an admirable collection, called, after the fashion of those times, Kunstkammer (cabinet of art), the remnants of which are still prominent treasures of the collections in Copenhagen and St. Petersburg..."[4] While *kunstkammers* would increase in size through the end of the seventeenth century, they would remain almost entirely exclusive to the elite classes of European society.

For these early collectors, the narrative to these collections was connected to global scientific and artistic discoveries, but ultimately reflected the wealth and power of its owner. For monarchs, collection lists and early catalogs presented the rewards of conquest. The more diverse their holdings, the wider their power. For merchants, their collections represented their ability to traverse trade routes and return with rare treasures. Access was limited to private university students and the elite peers of the collection owner. While these collections had many implications for the advancement of society, they had no exposure to the common man and did not reflect everyday life.

In her book, the *Curator's Egg*, Karsten Schubert traces the history of the museum after this era of closed-door elitism. For her, the British Museum is the oldest independent

[3] Ibid., 42.
[4] Ibid., 43

museum, bested only by the Ashmolean Museum; the first private collection to become an open-door institution, which Schubert claims was not truly independent due to its connections to Oxford University.[5] Opened in 1759 the British Museum was originally designed as a traditional *kunstkammer*, meant to house a series of collections donated to the British nation by wealthy families.[6] As with traditional *kunstkammers* the museum was restrictive, allowing only aristocrats willing to go through the bureaucratic process to apply for credentials. Even after a visitor was granted access to the museum, guests complained about rushed tours and begrudging staff.[7] Despite minimal efforts to allow access to the public, Schubert claims "the notion that the museum was primarily for the visitors' benefit remained an alien concept for quite some time."[8]

The French Revolution of 1792 changed not only the governing structure of France, but also the way the French presented their collection to the public. Nine days after the fall of the monarchy, the Louvre royal palace was decreed a public museum, and from then its programming "was to be the domain of the many rather than the few (aristocrats and learned gentlemen), promising all citizens a share of hitherto inaccessible private property of cultural value."[9] Along with this new accessibility, however, the Louvre became a tool for social control and development of the new Republic.

Just as early monarchs and merchants used their individual collections to promote their imperialist ventures and dominant global presence, Britain, France, and, by the late 19th century, Germany, presented cultural materials plundered from colonized nations as a

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[5] Schubert, Karsten. *The Curator's Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day.* (London: One-Off Press, 2000), 17.
[6] Ibid., 18.
[7] Ibid., 18.
[8] Ibid., 18.
[9] Ibid., 18.

demonstration of national power and reach. "The museums presented their political masters as custodians of world culture, rescuers of what had been ignorantly neglected or even threatened with destruction in the countries of origin. In effect the museum became the handmaiden of imperialism..."[10] These propagandistic displays used chronology as the sole taxonomy among ever-expanding collections. Schubert says "Nineteenth century museums were marked by an obsessive curatorial fixation on chronology that overruled all considerations, and completeness of displays dominated to the point where perceived gaps in the collection would happily be filled with plaster casts."[11] Again, these curated displays were meant to tell the story of humanity from a Eurocentric viewpoint, leading to the early 20th century orientation in which other cultures and their artifacts were collectable proof of global domination.

In his book, *The Birth of Museum*, Tony Bennett explores the development of public museums in the 19th century and their relationship to various other institutions of social control. Bennett discusses prisons, theme parks, and department stores as vehicles of "self-regulation" in which the public is exposed to and learns behavior deemed desirable by the middle-class. He says museums "embodied a new rhetoric of power which enlisted the general public it addressed as subject rather than its object."[12] In conjunction with displays of global governmental power, 19th century museums also functioned to civilize the general public. Bennett ultimately argues that representation should be more interactive and museums and their collections should be truly accessible to all public demographics.

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[10] Ibid., 23.
[11] Ibid., 25
[12] Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics.* (London: Routledge, 1995), 94.

By the turn of the twentieth century, imperialism slowed and nations previously ransacked by European nation-states began rebuilding cultural identity and, as a result, seeking out the property stolen from them. Schubert notes "the flood of objects reaching the Western museums turned into a comparative trickle, necessitating a shift from acquisition and expansion to scholarship and display."[13] Objects such as the Elgin Marbles held by the British were displayed on their own as works of art as opposed to specimens of a foreign culture. This display exemplified the overall shift from purely academic collection to aesthetic display with educational components. While the propagandistic voice was muffled by shifts in the profession, issues relating to this period of museum history continue to influence museums whose collections house objects of colonial origins.

As both World Wars ravaged nations across the globe, the public looked to museums to serve a greater social purpose. As European countries faced boundary and regime changes, they and US institutions alike sought to generate coherent national identities. This began a wave of preservation and display that celebrated the recent past. For example, in 1926 Colonial Williamsburg was founded in Virginia, offering a fully restored colonial village for visitors to learn about the early history of the United States. Williamsburg and destinations like it functioned to tell the story of the United States from its very beginning, but also to signify progress and steadfastness in the face of military threats. Though museums became more publicly aware, in the context of two world wars there remained the influence of nationalism.

At the conclusion of World War II, museums across the world responded to societal changes. During the economic boom in the US, an educated populous sought inspiration

[13] Schubert, 27

away from the increasingly commercial landscapes of their everyday lives.[14] Museums became educational leisure activities whose collections were grounded in the "real" history and environment the public had experienced prior to the devastation of both wars. In Europe, museum staff became cultural heroes, finding and restoring lost treasures hidden or damaged by totalitarian regimes. Museums increasingly gained favor with the public and became visitor attractions in every city in which they were established, contributing to local and regional economies in ways they never had before.[15]

A study of 8,2000 museums in the US in 1988 revealed that 75 percent has been founded since 1950 and 40 percent since 1970. By 1988 museums reached 566 million visitors in the US alone.[16] Museums were no longer elite institutions of control and propaganda, but popular sources of entertainment, learning, and civic engagement. Coinciding with the boom in civically minded institutions was the introduction of the Revenue Act of 1954. It established the modern tax code, including section 501(c) for tax-exempt organizations. Though the tax code would be altered several times into the 21st century, including a 2006 reform which ordered all Forms 990-T to be made public, it set the stage for museums and other public institutions to be held to the IRS standard of public trust in order to be exempt from paying income taxes.[17] To this day, the 501(c)3 tax status is a requirement for accreditation in the American Alliance of Museums and represents a perceived relationship between institutional integrity and the non-profit financial model.

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[14] Lewis, Geoffrey. "The History of Museums." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015. Accessed 10 Oct 2015. http://www.britannica. com /topic/history-398827

[15] Ibid.

[16] Arnsberger, Paul, et al. "A History of the Tax-Exempt Sector: An SOI Perspective." *Statistics of Income Bulletin*. (Winter 2008) 120.

[17] Ibid, 125.

As the financial climate in the US and other countries weather economic booms and recessions, museums and their relationship to public funding has been strained and at times non-existent. During eras of conservative governmental control such as the Reagan Era or periods of economic strife as in the 2008 recession, charitable organizations faced restricted income from public funds and had to justify their worth to societies that question their monetary investments. Increasingly, museums must use private sector tactics, such as quantifying outcomes and other quantitative measurements to present the worth of their collection or their mission to their communities. Marketing, social media campaigns, private donations, and corporate sponsorship have all become prevalent tools in today's museum world. The history of museums across the globe has deep ties with private interests, governmental control, political propaganda, and financial models which all influence the kind of narrative and content that makes it into interpretive displays.

Corporate History Display: 1900-Present

Using twentieth and twenty-first century writing on the subject of corporate history displays since the turn of the nineteenth century, this section serves to trace public and industry perception of corporate history institutions as they developed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century. Like the public museum, company museums have grown in number and responded to industry, audience, and critical trends over the last 115 years. Though early literature seemed inclusive of corporations within the museum industry, as the national economy grew and corporations became pervasive cultural institutions, their place in the museum world became the target of skepticism and critique.

Coincidentally, the earliest literature on corporate museums comes from leaders in the American Association of Museums, today known as the American Alliance of Museums. In

1925, AAM's director Charles Richards published *Industrial Museums*, a survey of European science and technology museums in which Richards predicts the potential of a similar movement in the United States.[18] Richards argues for the industrial museum in the United States saying, "Shall we leave other nations to grow wise through the study of our achievements and ourselves neglect their meaning and their inspiration? To tell the story adequately we need the industrial museum."[19]

Following Richard's publication, the number of corporate museums continued to increase over the next twenty years. Richard's successor as AAM director, Laurence Vail Coleman, continued the discussion of company museums in industry literature when he included a chapter titled "Company Museums" in the first volume of his 1937 compilation "The Museum in America: A Critical Survey." He opens the chapter with this statement, "Company museums deserve to be recognized as a separate class; they are distinct in character, purpose and management."[20] He goes on to discuss specific museums as examples of the various purposes and practices in company museums across the country.

In conclusion, he further argues for corporations to implement these museums by saying, "There are sufficient motives of self-interest to promote and sustain such museums, even through times of stress when secondary interests are temporarily dropped. And there are social benefits that should supply the needed stimulus for action in times of prosperity. When the history of modern enterprise comes to be written, many of the materials of research

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[18] Danilov, Victor J., "European Science and Technology Museums." *Museum News,* 54:5 (1976), 34.
[19] Richards, Charles R. *The Industrial Museum*. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1925), 48.
[20] Coleman, Laurence Vail. *The Museum in America: A Critical Study*. (American Association of Museums: Washington, D.C.), 101.

would be at hand if companies would meanwhile keep the material record."[21] For Coleman, the trend toward company museums is one that offers significant historic potential for both the company and the public. At a time in American history rife with change and innovation, Coleman argued for corporate museums as a way to document and preserve history. He identifies corporate self-interest not as a threat to the historical narrative, but as a valuable resource for cultural display and future research.

Five years later, Coleman expanded his chapter on Company Museums into a book of the same title. Greatly influenced by World War II, Coleman argues that corporate history is no longer just the record of the companies themselves, but of the historical moments in which they participate. In this publication, Coleman goes into greater detail in examining the relationship between profit and display in corporate museums.

He reaffirms the educational value these museums possess, and that their purpose should be to preserve the history of each company as a resource for better understanding the history of the United States and its industries. He says, "Museum exhibits should not be confused with sales displays, nor should the museum's educational work be subservient to the purposes of the selling force. Sales should react favorably to a good museum program; but museum interests suffer if sales are involved directly."[22] For Coleman, these museums should not be founded in pursuit of profit and should be managed independently of other departments.

At the time of these publications, corporate museums were fewer in number and Coleman's work was meant not only as a study of the state of the industry, but as a

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[21] Ibid., 103-104

[22] Coleman, Laurence Vail. *Company Museums.* (American Association of Museums: Washington, D.C., 1943), 32.

suggestion for best practices. In the years following publications by Richards and Coleman and after the end of World War II, corporate success and infusion into popular culture garnered little attention from AAM and other museum professionals. Outside the scope of the museum industry, company museums were interpreted as useful tools within the marketing sector of corporate structures. Newspapers like *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* discussed the positive influence of corporate history on a company's bottom line as opposed to its contribution to the larger history field or the museum profession.[23] This trend continued until the early 1980's, when public history and museum professionals revisited corporate history in relation to public museums.

In 1981, Enid Hart Douglas published an article in *The Public Historian* entitled "Corporate History: Why?" The piece was one of the first to revisit the topic of corporate history as valuable beyond its potential as a marketing ploy since the late 1950s, and Douglas adeptly characterizes the motivations behind writing about a business's history. She discusses the beginnings of business histories that were either idealized depictions of faultless institutions, truth seeking "muckrakers," or projects mired in corporate secrecy.[24] Douglas uses the American auto industry as an example of an industry that would have benefitted long-term from individual corporate histories or greater company records to be used to predict trends and prevent eventual crises. Further, she argued, "a well-written, honest, "warts on" history of a corporation is worth a lot of public relations dollars. An

[23] Gordon, Mitchell. "Company Attics: More Firms Delve Into Past, Set up Museums to Bolster Prestige." *The Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 1956.
[24] Douglass, Enid Hart. "Corporate History: Why?". *The Public Historian* 3.3 (1981), 75.

interesting history which reports mistakes as well as successes and is enriched with anecdotal material humanizes a company."[25]

She concludes the article by suggesting ways in which companies can begin to record and reproduce their histories, including oral history projects, publications, and archives. She also concluded that writing these histories should be the job of historians as opposed to company employees or journalists.[26] Douglas' piece provides support for the development of company histories and closes by saying "The question then is not "why do we need corporate history?" Rather, it should be "when can we develop corporate history?"[27] Her piece is valuable in understanding the development of the voice in corporate history. She clearly sees value in telling the story of these institutions and encouraged historians to pursue these stories in conjunction with corporations who could benefit from an honest account of their history.

The reemergence of this topic in academic circles gained more traction through the 1980s and Victor Danilov followed in the footsteps of Richards and Coleman by focusing on the status of company museums in the US. After his work at the Museum of Science and Industry, Danilov conducted a 1985 survey seeking to identify corporate museums, a task that was difficult if following AAM's definition. He published his findings in *Museum News,* discussing the distinction between AAM's definition of a museum and corporate museums. In 1986, AAM used the following for accreditation: "an organized and permanent nonprofit institution, essentially educational or aesthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible objects, cares for them and exhibits them to the public in

[25] Ibid., 77-78.
[26] Ibid., 79.
[27] Ibid., 80.

some regular schedule."[28] The inability of this definition to accommodate corporate museums led Danilov to develop a separate definition "a corporate facility with tangible objects and/or exhibits, displayed in a museum-like environment that communicates the history, operations or interests of a company to employees, customers and/or the public."[29]

In 1991, he expanded his 1985 survey and published *Corporate Museums, Galleries, and Visitor's Centers: A Directory*. a comprehensive book accounting for each corporate display across the world. In the Introduction to the directory, Danilov expands upon his previous definition of corporate museums saying "In general, they are exhibit-based facilities owned and operated by publicly traded or privately held companies as public relations, marketing, and/or personnel relations vehicles. In some cases, however, they are operated through foundations started and largely funded and controlled by companies. Others are operated with retiree and community historical groups, and a few in partnership with non-profit museums."[30] Here he acknowledges all of the motivations and management styles that differentiate corporate history and art displays across the world, and in doing so calls for an inclusive look at an portion of the field that is difficult to quantify.

Danilov also addresses the changing nature of the corporate museum world since the time of Laurence Vale Coleman's similar directory published in 1943. He writes that corporate museums in his time moved toward more contemporary display and away from the display of historical records and artifacts. In terms of the functions in the late twentieth

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[28] Danilov, Victor J., "The New Thrust of Corporate Museums." *Museum News*, (June 1986), 36.
[29] Ibid., 38.
[30] Danilov, Victor J. *Corporate Museums, Galleries, and Visitor Centers: A Directory.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1992), 1.

century museums, he says, "Most corporate museums and museum-like facilities now have one of more of the following functions:

- To preserve and convey the company's history
- To develop employee pride and identification within the company
- To inform guests and customers about the company and its product line and/or services
- To inform the public about the company and its business
- To influence public opinion about the company and/or its controversial issues
- To serve as a showcase for the company's products and/or collections
- To further public understanding of science, technology, and/or the company's field
- To house and display corporate and other works of art
- To function as a hospitality, community, and/ or educational and cultural center
- To attract visitors and tourists to the company and the area"[31]

Danilov clearly sensed the shift in voice at many of these corporate museums, due at least in part to the corporate boom and increase in consumerism after World War II in the US. In the early 20th century, Laurence Coleman watched company museums open with the hope for historical preservation of important industrial history, but by the close of the century Danilov sensed a shift in emphasis toward current practices with few history driven narratives in corporate display.

One year later, Danilov published *A Planning Guide for Corporate Museums, Galleries and Visitor Centers*, a three-part guide to establishing, using and maintaining "Corporate Museum-like Facilities."[32] In his preface, he reaffirms his position on the market-based motivations behind corporate museums, saying "Basically, they are started and operated by for-profit firms for their own purposes, rather than as community-originated cultural institutions in the public interest. Almost all seek to further the interests of the

[31] Ibid., 4.
[32] Danilov, Victor J. *A Planning Guide for Corporate Museums, Galleries, and Visitor Centers*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 1.

company... They usually are aimed primarily at employees, customers, and corporate visitors, rather than the general public."[33] Danilov dedicated a large portion of his academic work to the corporate museum and generated a well-rounded directory and manual for their operation. However, the definition of a corporate museum and its relationship with public museums would continue to change as the economic boom of the 1990s and early 2000s increased the number and style of cultural tourist attractions in the US and worldwide.

During the 1990s, nationwide economic success led to an increase in the prevalence of tourist attractions and corporate visitor experiences grew in popularity and number. In 1994, just three years after Danilov discusses the generally exclusive nature of corporate museums, Doug Gelbert published his own directory of corporate history visitor experiences. In *Company Museums, Industry Museums, and Industrial Tours: A Guidebook of Sites in the United States That Are open to the Public*, Gelbert offers "a guide to American industry on display: industrial tours, company museums and museums devoted to entire industries. Only companies that regularly schedule public tours and Company museums whose collections of products and historical items are open to the public are included."[34] Gelbert focuses not on the corporate nature of each of these destinations, but on the visitor experience offered to the public. He compiled over 300 destinations for tourists, with the overall theme "that a visitor will learn about America at work, past or present, during a visit to a particular site."[35] For Gelbert, visitor experience, public access, and industrial narrative were determining qualities

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[33] Ibid., xi.
[34] Gelbert, Douglas. *Company Museums, Industry Museums, and Industrial Tours*: *A Guidebook of Sites in the United State That Are Open to the Public.* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 1994), viii.
[35] Ibid., viiii.

for tourists wishing to learn about American history, and corporate history attractions increasingly fulfilled these public needs.

The increased infusion of company visitor attractions as tourist destinations quickly led to increased museum industry commentary. As cultural tourism increased, public, non-profit museums began competing for visitors with corporate visitor experiences, athletic events, and other leisure attractions, and, as a result, adjusted their visitor experience and marketing practices to reflect audience preferences. The pressure to provide educational and entertaining experiences for visitors was addressed by Ann Mintz in her *Museum News* article "That's Edutainment!" In the piece, Mintz discusses the narrowing gap between entertaining forums and educational institutions. While museums seek to increase funding by drawing larger crowds to "blockbuster" exhibits, leisure parks attracted wider audiences by working with educators and providing more interactive learning experiences.

For Mintz this squeeze was troubling. She said, "...Museums should learn from their competitors, not attempt to become them. Museums have a unique mission, a particular place in our society, and are an irreplaceable resource: collections of real, meaningful objects that support educational goals... If we call these places museums and they are essentially a public relations exercise for corporations, we're eroding the museum as a trustworthy source of information …I don't think we should call them museums because by doing that we're simply confusing them with something that they're not." Mintz clearly viewed the infusion of entertainment practices into professional museums spaces as a threat to the authority of museums within their communities. While funding and attendance are important, Mintz argued that they should not be prioritized over the authoritative voice of the museum.

By the turn of the 21st century, corporate museums experiences increased in popularity and, arguably, enjoyed their longest period of sustainability, as museums and archives established in the 1980s continued to stay in operation. This wave of success meant continued criticism by museum professionals, particularly questioning the authority and credibility of corporations as museum managers. In 2000, Amanda Kraus, then the Associate Editor of *Museum News*, the publication of the American Association of Museums, addressed the status of corporate museums and their use of museum practices in their everyday operations. Kraus discusses two museums, the Spirit of Ford, an "experience" run by the Ford Motor Company, and the Intel Museum, a more traditional museum model working in collections, preservation, conservation, fund raising, display, and visitor experience.

Like Mintz, Kraus was wary of the corporate museum as an institution with inherently conflicting motivations: self-promotion and credibility. Though Krauss recognized that museum professionals strive to maintain quality collections, programming, staff, and display, she argues that marketing and a perceived push for profit affects the public trust in narrative.[36] Today, like Mintz and Kraus, many museum professionals struggle to acknowledge corporate displays as legitimate, though they credit them with having a similar methodology as the public museum model. However, it is increasingly difficult to dismiss the important work done by corporate museum and archives professionals across the country, as they deliver their stories to the larger historical narrative using practices common to both public and corporate institutions.

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[36] Kraus, Amanda. "The Emergence of the Corporate Museum." Museum News, (July/August 2000) 40.

CHAPTER II

CURRENT PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION IN THE INDUSTRY

As public and corporate museums developed into educational institutions engaging with the public, museum professionals since the boom of commercialism in the mid-20th century resisted the recognition of corporate museum-like institutions as actual, accredited museums. The fear of the self-promoting narrative corrupting the credibility of corporate museums and by association that of public museums fueled this rejection despite the professional work of corporate museum staff across the country. Despite these perceptions of corporate infringement on content, public museums increasingly engage in similar business practices and corporate partnerships. These practices are legitimate and necessary to maintaining an operating budget for many museums, but few question their impact on museum narrative or display. This section will explore the false dichotomy between non-profit and corporate museums in practice and perception by exploring areas in the museum profession that blur the boundaries of these distinctions.

Perceptions and Realities of Corporate Museums

In 2006, Keri Koehler conducted a survey of corporate museums in order to "shed light on the ongoing controversy concerning the validity of corporate museums."[37] Her criteria for inclusion in her study included a space dedicated to the interpretation of the activities of a corporation, a maintained company collection, and accessibility for the public.

[37] Koehler, Keri. *Stagecoaches, Spam, and Soda: Corporate Museums in the United States*. (Master of Arts in Museums Studies Thesis: John F. Kennedy University), 35.

Of 149 institutions contacted, 38 surveys were completed and returned. While the survey gathered demographic information about each institution including facility type, governance, collections management and operations information, it also addressed issues relating to corporate museums. She found that most corporate museums operated under a mission or vision statement, were governed by a manager or director with support staff, maintained permanent collections, targeted the general public, enrolled staff in professional museum associations, and prioritize preservation and education.

When asked to prioritize objectives within their museum, only 13 percent claimed "generating revenue" as on important objective.[38] When prompted to identify their concerns, 29 percent listed public misconception issues and when encouraged to rank their needs, 24 percent listed community recognition of value as an important need. Koehler found that for-profit facilities operating under the traditional museum model reported funding and budget as their biggest concern, indicating that, like public museums, monetary restrictions limit operations despite perceived wealth. Given this information, Koehler lists four main conclusions: Corporate museums are diverse, misunderstood, well attended by the general public, and need representation by professional associations.[39] Koehler concludes by saying "In sum, corporate museums can benefit the public trust in the same way as their nonprofit counterparts. These institutions enjoy a unique and enviable position to preserve history insofar as they have proprietary access and insight in the records, methodologies, and other information relating to their industry. After all, these companies are not only the *keepers*, they are also among the *makers* of history."[40]

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[38] Ibid., 46.
[39] Ibid., 51.
[40] Ibid., 59.

Koehler's work to quantify the reality of corporate museums called for institutional recognition of corporate history institutions within professional museum organizations. The American Association for State and Local History formed a Corporate History Committee to represent and organize leaders in corporate history archives and museums across the nation. One of the main goals of this committee is to build understanding of corporate institutions. "Tracing back over a century, corporate museums are a vital repository of cultural assets. Often overlooked and misunderstood within the museum community, they have much to offer and deserve a closer look."[41] AASLH lists the reasons why "corporate archives and museums exist and are important because they:

- Contribute to an understanding of both the specific firm and the history of the local community
- Contribute to a broader understanding of American social history
- Contribute to a greater understanding of the history of the American family
- Provide a tool for management training
- Provide valuable public relations and advertising material
- Preserve an institutional memory that serves corporate planning purposes
- Provide an accurate legal record and resource for the corporation itself[42]

At the 2015 AASLH Annual Meeting, I was able to interview several corporate museum and archives professionals and ask them about their experiences in and out of the corporate world. Not surprisingly, many of them had begun their museum careers in the non-profit sector. Patrick Wittwer of the Wells Fargo Museum in Philadelphia, PA spent twelve years at university and small non-profit museums across the country before accepting his position at Wells Fargo. He says that he strives to maintain the standards and methods used in his non-profit background as the curator of the museum, pushing to discuss difficult issues

[41] American Association of State and Local History. "Overview." *Corporate History Community*. Accessed 5 Sept. 2015. community.aaslh.org/corporate/
[42] Ibid.

such as the Great Depression and the 2008 Recession.[43] Wells Fargo boasts ten corporate museums across the country, all presenting Wells Fargo's involvement in American expansion and banking.

Like Wittwer, Neil Dahlstrom, manager of Corporate History & Records Management Services at Deere & Company worked in university archives as well as with a non-profit space business archives before taking a position with the John Deere manufacturer. When asked what differentiated his experience in the non-profit sector and his current work at Deere, Dahlstrom mentioned that funding sources were the most obvious difference.[44] Dahlstrom noted that instead of annual fundraising campaigns and solicitation from private entities, corporate archives must justify their spending as a useful resource to the company. He emphasized that he and his peers were able to focus on research and preservation without having to personally raise money for facilities or acquisitions.[45]

Dahlstrom also addressed the perception of corporate history narratives as edited or overly favorable of the corporations delivering them. He discussed the balance between being objective historians and protecting the parent company. Portions of corporate archives are not available to the public due to the confidentiality agreements with employees or institutional policy. Dahlstrom noted that the public often assumes that the existence of an archives means that they have every piece of company ephemera preserved within their walls for public research.[46] While Deere & Company has extensive archives, founded in 1979, he says the public is often frustrated when there are gaps in company history. While corporate

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[43] Wittwer, Patrick. Interview with the author. Louisville, Kentucky. September 15, 2015.
[44] Dahlstrom, Neil. Interview with the author. Louisville, Kentucky. September 11, 2015.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

archives and museums are meant to serve the public as well as their internal corporate community, misunderstandings about their scope often lead to misjudgment and perceived bias.

Another common difference in practice discussed between non-profit and for profit museums, is the acquisition process. In a speech given during the Corporate History Committee Luncheon, Proctor and Gamble Company's Senior Archivist Greg McCoy presented his experience in corporate archives as it pertains to brand acquisitions and divestitures. This distinctly corporate activity greatly affects the way archivists and curators tell the story of their company and its brands and pushes archivists to maintain vigilance in their methods. When a company divests one or more brands, typically they are expected to turn over all intellectual property and rights to the brand throughout its history, meaning that archivists must be ready to accession and deaccession artifacts in order to comply with contractual obligations. This can result in display changes, future narrative delivery, and alterations to hierarchies within an archival structure and also means that corporate archivists and curators adopt large amounts of material into their collections without the ability to decipher value prior to arrival. Much like public museums or universities that inherit estate gifts or private collections from individuals, these professionals must find a place for them within the current programming and preservation structure.

Adversely, corporate collections have greater discretion when offered objects from private individuals. Few public museums, because they are non-profits held in the public trust, feel compelled to accept every object offered to their institution despite conflicts with mission or resources to maintain the quality of the object in their collection. Corporate museums often accept objects offered to them, but also have easily delineated parameters for

what belongs within their walls. Dahlstrom says that corporate museums and archives are constantly justifying their expenditures, because money is always being balanced between preservation and innovation. If an object does not directly relate to the production, services, brands, or individuals from a company's history, it does not fit within the mission of that collecting institution. Corporate institutions uniquely balance change resulting from corporate transactions while maintaining an efficient collection with a commitment to their company and its industry. They contend with many of the same collections management issues as non-profit museums, but are better able to maintain mission through stricter collections policies.

Overall, public and corporate museums are collecting, preserving, and interpreting institutions with different funding, governing structures, and professional practices. Though most company museums evolve as an attempt to affirm and present a company's identity, their engagement with brand and image is not unlike that of promoting and maintaining a public museum mission.[47] Non-profits engage with corporations for funding and exposure, creating a relationship with content that must be balanced and measured. In her survey, Keri Koehler showed other ways in which corporate museum practice overlaps with non-profits. Her quantification of these practices by museum professionals contributed to AASLH's institution of the Corporate History Committee, dedicated to the alliance and understanding of corporate museums in the United States. Further, members of this committee discuss museum and archival practice as distinct but generally equal to that of nonprofits. They feel that conceptions of concealment or glossing over of subject matter is unfounded, and that

[47] Casey, Andrea & Nissley, Nick. "The Politics of the Exhibition: Viewing Corporate Museums Through the Paradigmatic Lens of Organizational Memory." *British Journal of Management*, 13:2 (Sept. 2002), 35.

their work reflects the museum standards and accurately presented history they strive for on a daily basis.

Branding and Corporate Sponsorship in Public and Corporate Museums

In 2006, Margot Wallace published her book discussing the usefulness of branding in the museum world. In her introduction she says branding "...defines and infuses every aspect of our museum, and makes us the superlative collecting, preserving, and interpretive institutions that we are. As each of us works, not just hard but smart, to maintain our businesses, the branding tool is essential equipment."[48] She defines branding by saying it "consists of creating and maintaining a body of programs and attitudes that convey a clear promise, encourage familiarity, and generate ongoing support."[49] For Wallace, the museum's brand influences and guides every aspect of museum practice, from fund-raising to content to event planning.

Like public museums, corporate museums also brand their institution, separate from that of the brands and products available on the market. At Buffalo Trace Distillery, our vision statement reflects the overall goals for the distillery as a site for visitors. It states: "Buffalo Trace Distillery is an advanced distillery in the rustic setting of the rugged 1800s producing the best collection of bourbons and whiskies as well as being a genuine working U.S. National Historic Landmark providing employees, customers, tourists and business travelers with a unique, enriching experience not found at any other distillery in the world. While most visitors travel to our distillery because of their exposure to our 'collection of

[48] Wallace, Margot A. *Museum Branding: How to Create and Maintain Image, Loyalty, and Support.* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006), ix.
[49] Ibid., 1.

bourbon and whiskies' it is our mission to provide an 'enriching experience' that teaches visitors about our process, the bourbon industry, and the region in which we operate."

For Wallace, mission and brand must be deeply intertwined, and content must connect to both. In her chapter "Content as Message," she argues that exhibitions and their narration must reflect the museum's brand, and it is the curator's job to make those connections clear. At Buffalo Trace and many institutions like it, the vision statement for the distillery emphasizes visitor experience and education. While brands and products are present throughout tours and historic sites across the grounds, they serve as testimony to the work done at the facility. They are the finished product of a process visitors learn about on their tour through the distillery. The goal of our visitor experience is not to promote specific spirit brands, but to connect the visitor to the site where they are produced using historic methods developed in the region.

The narrative of production naturally ends with a finished product whose brand is promoted on the market, but professionals working in corporate museums are typically not responsible for creating or promoting these brands. For example, as the archivist in the Sazerac Company Archives, I am an employee of the Sales & Marketing Department, however, I am never called upon to directly market products, and any participation in branding that relates to brand history research using public and primary resources. This work, however, does not affect my ability to narrate the history of our products with integrity and accuracy. Though working in the Marketing & Sales Department does not currently affect the integrity I use in generating interpretive displays, I hope in the future to establish an Archival and Curatorial Department within the Sazerac Company. This development

would allow for greater objectivity and would grow public trust in future content and programming.

Our industry and its recent popularity have generated a wealth of regional and national scholars available to help in research and critique our work. Any lack of credibility or glossing over of difficult history would tarnish the vision of our distillery, affecting brand loyalty generated by our visitor experience. Independent public historians, local historical society staff members, and seasoned industry journalists frequently work with the distillery to expand upon facility and brand history, but also visit the grounds with a critical eye. Falsifying or omitting parts of our story would ultimately do more harm than good.

Public museums also grapple with corporate relationships and their effect on a museum's brand. When addressing corporate partnerships, Wallace describes a "symbiotic relationship" in which museums need direct funding and greater attendance and "businesses are looking for the prestige that only museums can bring, and scholarly, well-curated, prestigious brands, of any size, are what business partners are seeking."[50] While Wallace warns of over promotion of a sponsor that may cast a shadow over curatorial work, she argues that this also becomes unfavorable to the corporate partner. She says "museums that start to resemble Walt Disney World are not appealing partners for corporate America, which already has plenty of dazzle to draw on."[51]

For Wallace, and many museum professionals, this relationship is a sensitive one that requires finesse and boundaries to ensure quality exhibitions as well as a sufficient but controlled budget. However, a similar relationship pervades corporate museums as well. The business side of a corporate museum generates the funding to keep a museum or

[50]Ibid., 63.
[51]Ibid., 63.

archives in operation, and most corporate history professionals understand that it must not affect the way in which they preserve or present the culture of their company. But how much promotion is too much? Wallace is correct in stating that corporations seek authentic experiences to balance the "dazzle" they offer in advertising and to generate large profits margins, but they are also capable of internally developing those experiences. Just as public museum professionals are capable of discerning the appropriate amount of corporate promotion, corporate museum professionals recognize when product placement serves itself and when it supports the narrative being displayed.

The Sliding Scale for Non-Profit and Corporate Museums

In the museum profession, many institutions blur the boundaries between non-profits and corporate museums. Several institutions operate under the 501(c)3 tax exemption, but generate funding by means comparable to for-profit companies. Similarly, many for-profit and corporate museums adhere to museums standards and develop content with integrity.

Thomas Krens, the former director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York City, NY, famously stated about operating a museums "We are in the entertainment business, and competing against other forms of entertainment out there. We have a Guggenheim brand that has certain equities and properties."[52] His well-known formula for museum success is as follows, "Great collections, great architecture, a great special exhibitions, a second exhibition, two shopping opportunities, two eating opportunities, a high-tech interface vis the Internet, and economies of scale via a global network."[53]

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[52] McClellan, Andrew. *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao.* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2008), 223.
[53] Ibid, 221.

Though criticized during his 20-year tenure at the Guggenheim for commercializing museum spaces, Krens expanded the Guggenheim's international presence by helping the foundation establish museums across the world while consistently growing the Foundation's endowment. The economic pressures of a declining market in the early 2000s required museums small and large to increase revenue streams within the physical locations at their disposal. Though the Guggenheim Foundation and the museums it operates under various distinctions within the 501(c) tax code, they use a variety of market strategies to generate funding and operate with multi-million dollar budgets. As Andrew McClellan states in *The Art Museum from Boullee to Bilbao*, "the hard reality that museums are part of the entertainment industry and will need to innovate to survive financially cannot be wished away."[54]

In Louisville, KY, the Louisville Slugger Museums & Factory is operated by the family owned Hillerich & Bradsby Company. The museum is one of the most popular attractions in downtown Louisville, drawing almost 300,000 visitors in 2014.[55] Though the museum has a regular exhibition schedule, employs a trained curatorial staff, and maintains a vast collection of sports memorabilia, they lack formal recognition by AAM. The museum is a pillar of the cultural tourism industry in Louisville, drawing sports enthusiasts to the site as well as tourists looking for an experience unique to Louisville and utilizes museum quality techniques to preserve, interpret and display its collection. LSMF, like other corporate museums, deserve to be included in the AAM community, but are unable to do so based on their corporate status.

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[54] Ibid, 223.

[55] Jewell, Anne. Email correspondence with the author. September 22, 2015.

Alternately, corporations sometimes run historic homes or other museum-like spaces through foundations, the distinction between public museums and corporations creates a complex bureaucratic scenario for both employees and visitors at some institutions. For example, the John Deere Company, a major manufacturer of farm equipment and well-known global brand, houses a corporate archives with a professionally educated and trained preservation staff and, also. a historic site governed by the John Deere Foundation to which it was donated in 1951. Deere Company archivists are tasked with maintaining the collection, but also with running the historic site. Though the public has limited awareness of the distinction, staff members are required to split time between the two entities and commit a certain number of volunteer hours to the historic site.[56] Further, the historic site content is free of the John Deere logo and no activity on behalf of the site may financially benefit the company.[57] Though the story of John Deere and his innovations may be told without the brand graphics on text panels, the story is decidedly incomplete without a discussion of the empire that is his legacy.

Though the archives and historic site fulfill many of AAM's requirements, the separate tax statuses create a wall preventing them from acting as a cohesive whole. The staffs at Deere Company and many other corporate history facilities strive to promote public understanding about their company's role within its industry's history and current practices, and they do so without the legal public trust designation. If corporate museums employ AAM preservation and display standards, it seems that the organization should maintain the tax exemption criteria as a way to ensure all accredited institutions meet public interest. However, as discussed in previous sections, corporate history institutions are incentivized to

[56] Dahlstrom.
[57] Ibid.

truthfully discuss their history, and the professionals working in these institutions typically have the experience and education to conduct them ethically.

Does this tax exemption really instill public museum professionals with a moral code distinct from those working in the private sector? As discussed above, museums today work with corporations and private individuals to grow collections and maintain operations. The museum professional and public historian today struggle with ethical dilemmas related to funding sources just as corporate history museums employees work to maintain an honest and accurate narrative for the visiting public. AAM is able to police public museums for corruption and should be capable of doing so for corporate institutions as well. Dismissing the historical narratives of corporate history displays as inherently false or manipulative of its audience alienates an entire sector of the museum community and belittles professionals conducting themselves ethically according to AAM standards.

CHAPTER III

CURATORIAL PRACTICE AT BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

BTD is the oldest continuously operating distillery in the United States. The history of the distillery stretches back to early pioneers passing the river at the shallow pass by which the distillery sits. The site became known as Lee's Town, named for Hancock Lee, holder of the original title of the land. In 1792, the same year that Kentucky became the fifteenth state of the Union, Commodore Richard Taylor is believed to have built Riverside, now called The Old Taylor House. Distilling is said to have taken place as early as 1811, when the site was used primarily as storage for whiskey barrels waiting to be shipped to New Orleans. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, legendary craftsmen such as Col. E.H. Taylor, Jr. and George T. Stagg worked to operate a state of the art distillery that would act as a model distillery for the world. Today, many warehouses built in the 1800s are still standing and store aging barrels of whiskey.

When the 18th Amendment establishing Prohibition was ratified in 1920, the distillery received a permit to bottle medicinal whiskey and distill new whiskey from 1930-1933. In 1929, the Schenley Distillers Corporation purchased the distillery and began rapidly expanding the facility to accommodate the demand for whiskey both during Prohibition and following its repeal in 1933. In 1942, the distillery produced its one-millionth barrel since Prohibition, the first distillery in the country to do so, and celebrated by constructing the world's only one-barrel warehouse, Warehouse V. Since then, every millionth barrel has been stored alone in the building.

In 1982, Schenley, Co. sold the Stagg plant to a newly formed New York based company, Ancient Age Distilling, Co. Though whiskey had lost favor with the public in the late 1960's and through the 1970s, Ancient Age released the world's first single barrel bourbon, Blanton's Single Barrel, named for Albert B. Blanton, the former President of the George T. Stagg Distillery and an innovator who experimented with bottling batches of bourbon from a single barrel. At the distillery today, a statue stands in his honor, and the bottling hall in which Blanton's is hand-bottled bears his name.

In 1992, after Ancient Age drastically downsized the property and plant operations, family owned Sazerac Company purchased the distillery and, like Schenley, sought to expand the facility and production. In 1999, the facility was rechristened the Buffalo Trace Distillery after the 'traces' buffalo made as they migrated across the bend in the river where Leestown was settled. While the distillery continued to expand, CEO and President Mark Brown focused time and resources in integrating the site's historic past into an educational and enriching visitor experience. Repurposing warehouse space into a visitor center and gift shop and renovating the dilapidated Riverside building into the Old Taylor House both support Brown's vision to celebrate the facility and its history.

In 2013, Buffalo Trace Distillery became a National Historic Landmark and in 2014 hosted over 123,000 visitors. In 2015, the Riverside building was restored and reopened as the Old Taylor House and visitors center manager Matt Higgins was nationally recognized for his development of the VC expansion and continued facilitation of quality visitor experiences. The original one-story Riverside residence survived over two hundred years of distillery expansions, including additional wings being added and subtracted as the building fulfilled many facility needs. Currently the building contains the original ground floor and a

nineteenth century second floor expansion. In addition to its historic value to the distillery, it is also the oldest residential building in Franklin County, KY.

For many years, the building sat dormant and in disrepair, but in the process of applying for National History Landmark status, the building's rich history and value was rediscovered. In 2012 and 2013, University of Kentucky faculty, local historians, and national television programs conducted a variety of archaeological digs, architectural surveys, and primary research into the documentation of the site's history. This research was key in determining the value of renovating the Riverside House and acted as research for the development of interpretive displays. Receiving the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit, the building was restored by contractors according to preservation standards. The Old Taylor House reopened to the public July 1, 2015 in conjunction with the Grand Opening of the Visitor Center Expansion.

As tourists visited the distillery in increasing numbers during the boom of bourbon tourism, the distillery needed to expand in order to efficiently and successfully host the public. The gift shop and original visitor center, which previously occupied the first floor of Warehouse space was converted to retail, display, tasting, and office space. During the expansion, warehouse storage on the second floor was cleared to house additional tasting and office area, as well as vast amounts of wall space to display and interpret historical materials. Objects, photography and print materials from the distillery's collection were organized in each space to both welcome visitors and supplement tours. Both of these projects represent BTD's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the original distillery site and its pursuit of providing museum quality exhibitions that enrich visitor experience.

Practice in Adherence to Danilov and NAME Standards

As indicated by the Buffalo Trace Distillery Vision Statement, the distillery values its products as well as the rustic setting it works to preserve for its visitors (See page 25). The ultimate goal of the facility is to operate as a working museum by balancing efficient production and enriching visitor experience. In working to present the public with an authentic educational experience that also exposes them to its products, Buffalo Trace adheres to the standards established by both corporate museum scholars and professional museum organizations. As discussed in Chapter 1, Victor Danilov defined the ten functions for a corporate museum as follows:

1. To preserve and convey the company's history
2. To develop employee pride and identification within the company
3. To inform guests and customers about the company and its product line and/or services
4. To inform the public about the company and its business
5. To influence public opinion about the company and/or its controversial issues
6. To serve as a showcase for the company's products and/or collections
7. To further public understanding of science, technology, and/or the company's field
8. To house and display corporate and other works of art
9. To function as a hospitality, community, and/ or educational and cultural center
10. To attract visitors and tourists to the company and the area[58]

Within AAM, the National Association for Museum Exhibition, NAME, develops and maintains the Standards for Museum Exhibitions, an "outline of standards and related best practices/performance indicators representing exhibition features that generally result in success."[59] The committee identifies seven standards for Museums Exhibitions:

1. Audience Awareness
2. Evaluation

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[58] Danilov, Victor J. *Corporate Museums, Galleries, and Visitor Centers: A Directory.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1992), 1.

[59] National Association for Museum Exhibition. "Standards for Museums Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence." Accessed 2 Nov 2015. http://name-aam.org/about/who-we-are/standards

3. Content
4. Collections
5. Interpretation/Communication
6. Design and Production
7. Human comfort, safety, and accessibility[60]

Both sets of standards validate the methodology and presentation of an institution's message. By examining the Old Taylor House and the Visitor Center Expansion Displays through the lens of both Danilov's characteristics of a corporate museum and NAME's Standards for Exhibition, I argue that AAM should establish accreditation criteria for corporate museums and that BTD would be a primary model for establishing such a category.

Audience Awareness

The first standard listed by NAME is audience awareness. The committee claims that a successful exhibition "is developed with an articulated understanding of the intended audiences' prior knowledge, interests, learning styles, attitudes, or expectations about the topic and the experiences planned for visitors."[61] When developing the Old Taylor House, the Visitor's Center, or any other display at the distillery, providing engaging and educational visitor experience is a top priority. Visitors to the distillery typically have prior knowledge of our products, but their tour guide, whose job it is to customize each tour based on a group's familiarity with the industry, facility, and region, gauges their depth of knowledge. Guests who prefer not to take a tour may go on our self-guided walking tour guided by a map with brief explanations of the history of scenic areas throughout the facility. In either case, the guest learns about why the site is a National Historic Landmark, and walks away with at least a familiarity with the company's history. As Danilov suggests, providing these kinds of

[60] Ibid.
[61] National Association for Museum Exhibition. "Standards for Museums Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence." Accessed 2 Nov 2015. http://name-aam.org/about/who-we-are/standards

experiences attracts tourists to both the company and the area, helping Kentuckians learn about its longest operating distillery and more distant travelers about the history of bourbon in the state.

With the completion of the renovation of the OTH, various additional planned experiences will become available to visitors. Though not fully realized at the time of this writing, eventually the house, and the Experimental Laboratory on the second level, will be the end point for a new reformatted tour of the distillery grounds. The tour is planned to start at the Visitor Center, visit Warehouse X which houses many of our smaller batch experiments, and eventually end at OTH for a tasting of some of our Experimental Collection products. In this case, visitors will have learned about distilling and recipe craft experiments taking place at the facility, allowing the replicated lab where the tasting takes place to offer a fun and informative visualization of processes discussed by their tour guide. If guests have experience in lab work, they will be able to read about how their field applies to this industry, but guests that are drawn to the tour by an interest in the product will leave with a better understanding of experimental processes used to develop products that take place at the site.

Additionally, visitors interested in learning about the early history of the distillery or the well-preserved architecture of the building will have an opportunity to supplement their tour as they will be able to visit the various rooms after their tasting. Though the multi-themed rooms are planned to complement each other, their different themes and content allow visitors to customize their experience by focusing more on topics that interest them or areas they would like to learn more about. BTD also plans to use the space for a small luncheon or work meetings and the display rooms will provide educational opportunities for these visitors. For employees, the space reinforces the company's commitment to its history,

and provides a timeline for the early success at the site that continues under current management. Overall, the Old Taylor House is planned to provide "an articulated understanding of the intended audiences' prior knowledge, interests, learning styles, attitudes, or expectations about the topic and the experiences planned for visitors."[62]

Moving the Visitor Center to the expanded second floor provided a new space to begin and conclude tours of the distillery becomes available. The displays in this area supplement each tour with historical images and materials that also stand alone as snapshots of distillery history. More so than in the Old Taylor House, the interpretation in these areas highlights the everyday experience of employees throughout the site's history. Clippings from company newsletters, photographs from company parties and a gallery celebrating a family with three generations of employees all celebrate employees as opposed to the typical focus on distillery legends, such as E.H. Taylor, Jr. and George T. Stagg.

In the Johnson Family Gallery, the company features the contributions and achievements of one of the company's most influential families. Starting in the early twentieth century and due in large part to the enlightened attitude of Schenley owner Lewis Rosenstiel toward African Americans, this hardworking family strived to earn their titles among other early leaders in modern distilling. Jimmy Johnson, Sr. was the state's first African American foreman and close friends with Albert B. Blanton, the President of Stagg Company. His son Jimmy Johnson, Jr. worked along side his father as a barrel leak hunter, and, following in his father's footsteps, became the state's first African American Warehouse Supervisor. After making his living in sales, Junior's son Freddie returned to the distillery

[62] Ibid.

where he watched his grandfather and father work to become a tour guide. Today, he delights guests with his personal stories and anecdotes about life at the distillery.

Before the death of Jimmy Johnson, Jr., the distillery commissioned the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky to conduct interviews for the Buffalo Trace Oral History project. Both Jimmy Johnson, Jr. and Freddie Johnson were interviewed and their stories reveal much about their family lives and their experiences at the distillery through the years. To celebrate both the family's historic place in bourbon history and Freddie's excellent work as a distillery tour guide, we surprised him with the Johnson Family Gallery. The arrangement of nine framed photographs displays the men as individuals and as a family whose hard work contributed to the continued success of the facility today. The accompanied text panel explains each man's experience at the distillery and their significance. By sharing the story of the Johnsons, this part of the Visitor Center display celebrates the employees as opposed to the employers, incorporating "community voice in the development process and a diversity of perspectives" and also generates employee pride and identification with the company as suggested by Danilov.[63]

Evaluation

NAME values evaluation in generating a successful display for its ability to gauge audience impact before or after the exhibition is developed.[64] Since the opening of each of these displays, public feedback and visitor response has been vague, with no critical engagement by the museum community. Though the distillery has a well-organized visitor response search system that logs reviews on tourist consumer websites as well as feedback cards offered at the end of every tour, no specific mentions of the displays themselves were

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

found. While The Old Taylor House has had little exposure to the general public, due to a lag in development of and "Experimental" tour route, the Visitors Center is viewed by hundreds of guests everyday. However, using search terms such as "display" "sign" "newspapers" "barrel heads" "Old Taylor House" "landscapes" "Johnson family" and "photography" yielded no specific mention of the displays in either location.

Most reviews discuss the quality of the tour and their overall experience, which is typically highly regarded though not directly reflective of the historic materials I presented. This positive feedback along with any dissatisfactory comments is used to help gauge visitor experience at the distillery as a whole. Despite the lack of specific comment about the Visitor Center displays or the Old Taylor House, the general satisfaction of viewers indicates that nothing on display is overtly troubling or difficult to the degree that a visitor would include it in their comments. In the future, in-person surveys asking visitors to discuss their impression of the exhibitions will be beneficial to future design and gauging understanding of each display.

A press release was prepared by our Public Relations Manager and released the day of the Grand Openings. The well-attended event included employees, press, and invited guests. Following that event, one reporter published an article about his experience in both spaces, and though he speaks generally without pointing directly to specific aspects of each exhibition, he discusses what he learned at the site, confirming the company was achieving its educational goals. Gauging audience reaction through comment cards, public review sites, and media mentions allows the company to gauge "that the audience responded well to the completed exhibition including that audience learning and reactions are consistent with

the exhibition's intended goals and impacts."[65] Further, these evaluations help Buffalo Trace to best function as a hospitable and educational center as Danilov discusses in his criteria for corporate museums.

Content

For exhibition content to be considered up to NAME standards, it must be "thoroughly researched and vetted for accuracy, relevance to exhibition theme/s, and the current state of topic knowledge."[66] While displays in the Old Taylor House required in-depth research into the buildings history, the Visitor's Center displays involved a more general presentation using internal resources, most significantly the company's historical archives. While the Old Taylor House is rich in textual interpretation of each display, the Visitor Center lets the audience examine and decipher printed materials and objects with less guidance. These differences represent the unique context for displays at historic corporations that use both old and new spaces to discuss their past in a variety of ways.

Developing the interpretation in the Old Taylor House was a project that required a defined scope, assessment of available materials, and collaboration within the distillery organization and with local businesses. The most important and fruitful collaboration was with Joanna Hay Productions, a production company based in Frankfort that previously featured Buffalo Trace Distillery in their film "Quest for the Perfect Bourbon." Joanna Hay and her graphic designer Anna Bernard also have a special connection to the history of the Old Taylor House story, as they are descendants by marriage of Richard and E.H. Taylor, Jr. Joanna and her husband have previously loaned historic items, such ad Taylor's cane, top hat, and suit vest for display in the Visitor's Center and remain committed to preserving the

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

memory of their relative within company and community history. This intersection of company and family history is essential to the delivery of the overall history of the Old Taylor House, adding additional insight into the personality of E.H. Taylor, Jr. beyond his business dealings.

Lending another element of authenticity to the interpretation of the building and its history is the research conducted in conjunction with applying for National Historic Landmark status. The work done by archaeologists and architectural faculty at the University of Kentucky provided substantial resources for interpreting the architectural elements from the original parts of the structure as well as later changes that reflected trends in regional architecture. Carolyn Brooks' research using the Sanborn Maps of the property and illustrations of the building over time demonstrate architecture's role in the distillery's history and significance as a historical site. Joanna Hay used these resources and cites them in a binder containing Brooks' history of the home and multiple independent architectural and archaeological surveys printed for visitor reference. By providing this research for the visitor, Hay and the distillery offer support and add legitimacy to any claims made in the interpretive displays and adhere to NAME's standard for content. Moving forward, further research into Buffalo Trace's history will bolster its position in the museum industry and use it to provide the best content possible to visitors.

The best manifestation of the use of this research is in the dating of the house itself. The distillery has, for many years, publicly claimed that the Riverside house was built at the end of the eighteenth century, specifically in 1792 when Richard Taylor writes about residing in Lee's Town. However, research revealed that there is no documentation of the building itself until 1810 when it first shows up on a map. Neither Taylor's account of his home at the

distillery nor the presence of the building on a map in 1810 definitively date the building, so in discussing the inception of the building, we decided to provide a general timeline of possibility, stating the building was constructed "as early as 1792, though some say as late as 1810" (See Figure 8).[67] The vague nature of building records in the late eighteenth century allows the distillery to maintain its claim to the 1792 build date while also acknowledging alternative dating theories. NAME requires that "authorship, biases, intent, and perspectives of the exhibition are revealed, identified, or attributed," and this standard is met by acknowledging this debate within the exhibition. For Danilov's standards, The Old Taylor House preserves and conveys the company's history, the first and most important function of a company museum.

This detail in the history of the site reflects the struggle many have with company histories. Though a small detail in the overall history of the company, the 1792 date allows the distillery to make claims to architectural significance in the presence of buildings from the last four centuries. Moving the origin of the Old Taylor House to the 1800s removes any architectural connection to Kentucky's 18th century history, making reluctance to change the story understandable. However, by noting the possibility of two dating theories, the narrative becomes a discussion between historic accounts and emphasizes the connection and importance of oral tradition in the bourbon industry. For Danilov, addressing "controversial" issues within the company, in this instance a debated historical timeline, is crucial when developing the content for a museum

In the Visitor Center, displaying historic images and materials related to the distillery not only tells the historic story of the site, but also reveals the progress made in the company

[67] Ibid.

in the past 200 years. While the narrative in The Old Taylor House contained ties to state and local history and the bourbon industry overall, the visitors center focuses on specific eras within the history of the Buffalo Trace Distillery. Photography, print materials, and three-dimensional objects were selected from the collection to work in conjunction with our tour experiences. Though the Visitor Center can stand alone as a cultural experience, in its initial phases it complements the guided tours by visually stating what tour guides vocalize and emphasize in their presentation.

As visitors ascend the grand white oak staircase to the right, they face a composition of six barrel heads and ten barrel stencils mounted on the wall between two wood beams (Figure 23). These barrel heads also display text original to their construction: paint commemorating that each is a "millionth" barrel filled since the end of Prohibition. The Stagg Company was the first distillery in the nation to fill two million barrels after Prohibition, and since then the distillery has celebrated every millionth milestone since with commemorative barrels housed in the world's only single barrel warehouse, Warehouse V. After being opened, the barrel heads were previously hung downstairs in the first floor VC, but were hard to see and often hidden by products. Each barrel has the date, whiskey name, and barrel number stenciled on them, giving the visitor an indication of their significance. Though not hung by the Grand Opening, a barrel inventory detailing the dates of each millionth barrel was framed and hung next to the arrangement and this is the starting point for the Barrel Rolling tours. These objects visually demonstrate the history of production at the distillery since 1933, a subject that is "appropriate to an exhibition format, with its use of

collections, environments, phenomena, and other means of physical presentation of content"[68] as suggested in NAME's standards.

Collections

Under NAME standards, a museum's collection should be successfully utilized to further the textual content and overall theme of an exhibition.[69] In 2014, Sazerac Company established the Sazerac Company Archives and hired me as their first full-time archivist within the Sales & Marketing Department. After implementing preservation standards for storage and collections care, I began work to catalog the collection using PastPerfect 5 Museum Software. All of this activity operates under the Statement of Purpose, which states, "The Sazerac Company Archives are dedicated to the collection, organization, preservation, and interpretation of its historical records. The archives exist to explore over 200 years of Sazerac's history, culture, innovation, and leadership. Documents, photography, artifacts, art, and media detail the history of America's most venerable distilling companies and their commitment to fine spirits."

In the Old Taylor House, a recreated mid-century laboratory was constructed using objects and materials found at the distillery (Figure 4). In addition, The Experimental Collection is a ten-year series of releases executed by our Master Distiller, Harlen Wheatley, who tests many of the variables at play when distilling and aging bourbon. The Collection has 45 bottles and the only full collection is in the Experimental Lab, making them a unique display for visitors rarely seen elsewhere. The arrangement of the room allows for a guide to host tastings at the conclusion of an Experimental Tour while also discussing the history of the lab materials around them.

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.

The distillery houses a vast collection of antique lab equipment both originally housed in the Visitor Center display cabinets and stored in the archives. In addition to the equipment, a series of professional photographs commissioned by Schenley Distillers Corp., which owned the distillery from 1929 to 1982, taken of lab employees at work and supplemented by the original press release forms and proposed captions was used in interpretive display boards. It seems that a publication on lab work was developed at one time, though we do not presently have any article containing the material in our collection.

The history of the building and our current collection supported a full-scale interpretation of a mid-century lab and discussion of chemistry's role at the distillery for close to a century. We pulled items and plastic text cards already on view in the gift shop and relocated them to the OTH, and restored and inventoried a large collections of glassware and large pieces of distilling systems discovered in warehouses. A combination of cabinets found in the building and newly added shelves provided ample space for display and interpretation of distillery lab work, while also leaving space for visitors to flow around the central working table that is an important component of the laboratory.

Completing a detailed and precise inventory of the lab items using the PastPerfect 5 Museum Software Database was a top priority and tool when planning this part of the OTH project (Figure 20). Using PP5, each piece of glassware and equipment was given an accession number, object ID number, and an entry in the Objects Catalog within the software. In addition, because the displays are not behind glass, the lab and other object display spaces in the Old Taylor House are regularly inventoried to monitor for damage or theft, ensuring that "conservation and security matters have been appropriately addressed."[70]

[70] Ibid.

This room also has significant connections to Danilov's definition of corporate museums. Danilov believes that a corporate museum should showcase the corporations products and collection, and this display ties both together in a cohesive way. Though the Experimental Collection is prominently featured and discussed using small text cards, the room itself is dedicated to lab work in modern distilling. In this way the exhibition also educated the public about scientific and technical processes conducted by the company, one of Danilov's definition standards.

In the Visitor Center, a series of clippings from a company newsletter reproduced on foam board are mounted to the walls perpendicular to the staircase (Figure 21). During its ownership, Schenley Corp. published a monthly company newsletter featuring company events and industry updates for each of its distilleries. Then known as the Stagg Company, the distillery had its own column in every issue from the 1930's through 1982 when Schenley sold the company to Ancient Age. The clippings cover a variety of topics and events including floods, company sports leagues, the war effort, safety announcements and employee promotions, including those of Elmer T. Lee and Albert B. Blanton. The period of Ancient Age ownership lacks the thorough archives and records of both the previous and current owners, and the use of the Schenley newsletters highlight the uniqueness of the BTD collection as an historic asset. The layout is meant to mimic that of a newspaper and the voice offers visitors an account of life at the site in the mid-20th century.

The company's collection of these newsletters acts a resource to better understand the history and operations of the site, offering photographic documentation of events, buildings and individuals otherwise only preserved through written and oral histories. Though they originate with another company, Buffalo Trace dedicates time and resources to preserving

them and utilizing them in the interpretation of the site. In the Visitor Center, these pieces both ground the facility in a historical era and contrast the old and the new spaces, reinforcing the theme of continued progress through history and fulfilling NAME's collections standard by utilizing collections "to reflect and amplify exhibition themes and content."[71]

Interpretation/Communication

The message and information presented in the exhibition must be clearly and consistently presented.[72] NAME states that if information in unclear there must a reasonable support for the format. In the Old Taylor House, each room within the home discusses a specific aspect of the history of the building, E.H. Taylor, Jr. and the distillery. Each of these concepts is historically connected and the interpretation intersects them without being repetitive.

The interpretive boards and archaeology display interpret the architectural history of the building and the early history of the distillery. Upstairs guests are introduced to personality E.H. Taylor, Jr, a descendant of the building's founder and an early leader in the distillery's management. In the Reconciliation Room, a famous feud between E.H. Taylor, Jr. and George T. Stagg over the direction of the company is discussed using legal correspondence and maps of the distillery showing the physical distance the two preferred to keep between their offices. Finally, in the Experimental Lab, an important aspect of modern distilling is explained and the arrangement of the lab equipment is meant to recreate a lab that operated in the building during the mid-20th century. Each of these displays is "coherent,

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

easy-to-follow, and consistent formats for presenting content."[73] As seen on the Reconciliation Interpretive Board (Figure 16), guests are shown historic evidence of this feud, but are walked through the incident using clear language and an easily understood narrative style. On this board and all others throughout the building, there is "a clear idea or set of ideas expressed, and those ideas are made clear to viewers."[74]

The Visitor Center offers a cultural experience that works in conjunction with the tours most guests take at the distillery. Unlike the Old Taylor House, the voice of these displays, in their current form, is less narrative and less guided. Though text panels were not installed upon installation of these displays, they are planned for the future. Though the viewer is able to engage more critically with material, the majority of which have original, readable text, text panels would better deliver the history of each image.

For example, Over Tasting Bar A and on the walls behind it are hung previously framed prohibition era labels for medicinal whiskey brands distilled and aged by Stagg Company during the Federal ban on alcohol. The reproductions of these labels are colorful and often designed with detailed prints of landscapes or animals relating to the brand name. Their labels each read "For Medicinal Use Only," dating them as the some of the only legally distributed whiskey products during that time. Though there are no text panels explaining their significance directly, the labels themselves, like the barrelheads and newsletter articles, have their own textual content to provide context for their display. However, in order to fully adhere to NAME standards and offer interpretation of industry activities as required by Danilov, text panels will be generated and hung. Critical to the advancement of corporate museums within the profession is clear narrative and content. While engagement with

[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

materials is also crucial to successful display, visitors must walk away with a clear idea of what they have seen and the intellectual value of their experience.

Design and production

NAME requires the "selection, design, and production of interpretive media effectively and engagingly communicate content."[75] In both buildings, the media chosen to present the interpretive content was discussed in terms of long-term stability, preservation standards, and continuity within the built space. In the Old Taylor House, text panels were written and designed by Joanna Hay Productions. Because of the preservation standards used during construction and the building's historic significance to the National Historic Landmark status of the distillery, no materials used for display could be mounted to or hung from the walls. The original horsehair base and subsequent layers of plaster are essential to the building's authenticity and were intentionally left bare during construction for display and interpretation purposes. In order to best display the interpretive boards, they were printed on gator board, a lightweight but rigid material that resists bending and warping even through temperature and moisture changes. The Homeplace team then hung them from the ceiling using clear fishing line, giving viewers the impression the boards are floating two inches off the wall.

The resulting layout allows viewers to move easily through the open rectangular space (Figure 7). Four 40x60" interpretive boards hang from the ceiling, two on each side of the room, and each covers a an aspect of the distillery's history relating to early architecture, the Lee's Town settlement, and the Taylor family and their use of the building. Four freestanding stands displaying text panels that point to specific elements of the building's

[75] Ibid.

architecture, including evidence of a pre-existing mantelpiece, the animal hair plaster, the effects of proximity to the Kentucky River, and remnants of wallpaper from years of recovering the walls. In the Northwest corner of the building in a gap between the fireplace and the wall, a cabinet and shelving unit original to the building, holds interpretive boards and materials documenting multiple archaeological digs that have taken place at the distillery and displaying artifacts found as a result of those studies. The display cabinet fills an awkward dead space, improving the flow in this part of the room.

As visitors move upstairs, they pass a grid of square shelves filled with antique books and move into the Taylor Parlor. The walls directly atop the stairs and across the landing are intentionally bare to prevent foot traffic from jamming at the top of the staircase. This keeps guests moving through and interpreting the space but also prevents dangerous distractions that could cause guest to trip up or fall down the stairs. As guests move through the parlor and into the Reconciliation Room and Experimental Lab, they find rooms with centrally placed furniture and plenty of space to rotate through interpretive panels and objects displayed on shelves. Using this configuration, both rooms are furnished for either meetings or tastings while still drawing visitors to move through the space when not otherwise occupied.

In the Visitor's Center expansion, guests ascend a grand white oak staircase into the bright, open converted warehouse space. The massive rectangular space is centered around a central structure which houses men's and women's bathrooms in its interior and three tasting bars on its exterior. After tours, guests are directed to one of the bars for a tasting, but after its conclusion they are free to wander the space before exiting through the downstairs retail space. Like the Old Taylor House, preservation standards apply to the wood floors and

western wall made of exposed brick, both of which are original to the late-1800's construction. The displays throughout this space, though on view for the foreseeable future, are meant to be semi-permanent and easily removable in the event that the space is expanded further into the warehouse still operating in the Western part of the building.

As such, ¾" white core foam board and dark wood frames under glass were chosen as the two media for display in each distinct section of the overall plan. Frames were used in the Seasonal Gallery so that scenes from the grounds during each season could be rotated easily and at lower cost than multiple foam boards, and in the Single Oak Project area's inset bar space. Because the SOP area is available as an event space, the series of black and white images of company parties in the 1950's both reinforce the use of the space and playfully display a history of celebration at the facility.

Across from the Seasonal Gallery, hang four 40x60" foam core boards printed with black and white reproductions of historic photographs taken of the distillery. These images were previously on the first floor of the VC and have come to be considered "classic" images from the distillery's history. Men around a large copper still, women on a bottling line, a steamboat that used to pass the distillery on the Kentucky River, the train that ran through the distillery, whose tracks are still present under the asphalt of the distillery lanes, and the view down a line of ricks in a barrel warehouse. The boards fill the large wall white wall space and are visible from almost all points upstairs. The scale of the images draws visitors towards them, inviting them away from the staircase and into the back area of the space instead of congregating around that high traffic area.

Human Comfort, Safety, and Accessibility

Finally, NAME prioritizes "physical, intellectual, and social well-being" when designing exhibitions in order to ensure a positive visitor experience. Space must be physically accessible and inclusive of all educational and demographic backgrounds of potential visitors. Though the distillery does not officially collect demographic information about visitors, Visitor Center manager Matt Higgins estimates that during the week, Monday through Friday, guests consist of men and women between 45 and 55 years of age, and on Saturdays and Sundays, the age range widens to include 18-34 year olds and seniors. Also, many families bring young children along on visits to the distillery. Buffalo Trace makes a consistent effort to appeal to all age groups and to accommodate the physical needs of all visitors.

However, in order to maintain the historic structure of the Old Taylor House, it is exempt from the American Disabilities Act accessibility standards requiring a ramp and an elevator to the second floor. Unfortunately, an elevator would require a structural addition to the building affecting the building historic integrity, and because the distillery expanded tightly around the building, a ramp would be too graded steeply to be safe for visitors using wheelchairs. However, guests able to enter the house will find a well-lit space with easily read content appealing to all age groups and educational levels.

Though the Visitor's Center also has historic restriction, it offers a much more accessible space with a new elevator and multiple ramps from which to enter the building. Track lighting throughout the exhibition space provides direct lighting to all wall displays, making the text original to each print or object easily legible. The lack of text labels in this phase of the project actually appeals to all educational levels and forces the viewer to engage with the visual elements of each display.

Overall, both of these exhibitions adhere to NAME standards as well as fulfilling the definition of a corporate museum as defined by Victor Danilov. Though Buffalo Trace currently does not state that it is a museum, it is clear that the dedication to historic preservation, collections management and thorough interpretation of its history are up to the standards of both fields. Though exhibitions and historic preservation have uses as marketing tools, Buffalo Trace remains committed to the integrity and educational value of the site and works to fulfill the standards of professional museum organizations like NAME & AAM.

Site Specific Authenticity in the Bourbon Industry

A leader in visitor experience in the bourbon tourism industry, Buffalo Trace works hard to provide an enriching visitor experience by preserving and presenting the site itself as an interactive display, thereby lending authority and site specific integrity. As the bourbon industry continues to enjoy the benefits of an all-time high demand for the spirit in the US and across the world, established and startup distilleries alike seek to offer visitor experiences that facilitate both educational experiences and build brand loyalty. While other distilleries use new construction facilities or guided, encapsulated interpretive displays, Buffalo Trace allows the distillery to speak for itself, asking visitors to move through the visible history of the site.

As bourbon tourism continues to draw in excess of 100,000 visitors to Kentucky distilleries each year, companies like Heaven Hill Distilleries, Inc. have sought to expand their visitor experience footprint to locations that inherently have more foot traffic and are therefore able to more easily attract visitors. Though their original facility and visitor center is in Bardstown, KY, in 2014, the company opened the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience

in downtown Louisville, KY, 60 miles from its operating facility and its first visitors center. By using one of Heaven Hill's most popular brands, Evan Williams is believed to have been Kentucky's first commercial distiller, the Experience seeks to attract visitors and build its brand by providing connections to lively historical interpretations discussing the history of Louisville's river ports in the bourbon trade.

While Williams' place in bourbon history and the whiskey production process is significant, the Experience's presentation lacks the authenticity that Buffalo Trace's historic center and tour provides. Despite the Evan Williams site's construction of a small craft still that operates behind glass for visitors to view and reconstructed ricks holding barrels to demonstrate the aging process, the new construction is apparent and the lack of historic objects on display deeply connected to the property diminishes the authenticity and experience that Buffalo Trace offers its visitors through its historic preservation, thoughtfully presented displays and interpretative program.

Other examples of attempts to provide bourbon-interested Kentucky visitors with museum-like experiences also provide contrast to how BTD has gone about its collection and interpretative program. Unlike the stand-alone destinations such as the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience, many distilleries, like Buffalo Trace, have been in operation in central Kentucky for many years. The Wild Turkey Distillery in Lawrenceburg, KY was founded in 1869, closing its doors only during the Prohibition Era. Though the distillery uses interpretive displays to present this history, they limited this documentation to a single wall in a newly constructed Visitor Center. The Center, which mimics barrel warehouse architecture, is three stories high, but guests unaccompanied by a tour guide are only permitted to wander in retail space or down the hall to read the timeline of the distillery's

history. Like Buffalo Trace, Wild Turkey interprets and presents some historical materials for the visitor, but strictly limits how and when the guests experience the distillery outside of the visitor's center. This disconnect between historic buildings at the distillery and the small display that interprets their site does not consider or respond to the criteria for museums quality visitor experiences that Danilov and NAME establish or expect.

Hoping to find success in the booming bourbon industry, smaller scale startup distilleries are beginning to invest in tours and visitor experiences that focus on the production process but lack a focus on the history of the bourbon industry or the Kentucky region. In 2012, Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co, opened the Town Branch Distillery & Brewery in Lexington, KY. The distillery was an addition to the brewing operations of the company, and as such, the Visitors Center which hosts guests for both the brewing and distillery tours focuses a significant amount of interpretation and retail space to the brewery and its portfolio of Kentucky Ale brands. The Visitors Center is primarily retail space, with a tasting bar and small video screen to play introductory videos before each tour. Though several framed graphics discuss the history of Alltech and brewing in Lexington, they fail to connect the new distilling operation to the historical narrative beyond its potential to grow profits.

Each of these sites, in their current forms, provides interesting and fun visitor experiences, however none use their facility and the important objects that have been kept intact as a result of continuous operation and functioning as a company, their archives and company records, or the continuous association with their site to carry their message and provide a truly museum-like experience for their visitors like Buffalo Trace.

Through the two exhibition projects discussed in this chapter, and the general attention to their corporate history, that is apparent all across the BTD facility, guests are asked to look around them for proof of historic significance and industry relevance. Massive warehouses built in the 1800's hold as many barrels today as they did after their construction, limestone water from the location on the Kentucky River is still used as it was when distilling began at the sight in 1811, and the Old Taylor House and Visitor Center ask guests to envision the distillery at a series of points throughout history. Though many distilleries on the Bourbon Trail and beyond interpret their history and production, only Buffalo Trace Distillery prioritizes the history of the site over the history of its brands. In doing so, it offers visitors a public museum quality experience in a historic corporate setting and deserves recognition and acceptance into museum professional organizations.

CONCLUSION

THE CALL FOR INCLUSION AND RECOGNITION

Buffalo Trace Distillery strives to provide museum quality display and interpretation through the presentation of the history of the facility to the public. In other corporate archives and museums across the country, trained museum professionals are developing museum quality facilities on par with the American Alliance of Museums Characteristics of Excellence for US Museums. At the top of the list of requirements for accreditation eligibility is nonprofit tax-exempt status. For all other requirements, corporate history institutions are able to enact methodological interventions to meet accreditation qualifications. Though many corporations fulfill these standards, AAM fails to offer a category or accreditation track for these museums despite the narrowing distinction in practice between public and private institutions.

The history of public museums is a long battle to expose the public to valuable objects hidden behind the closed doors of the social, economic, and governing elite. Though museums today work to fulfill their missions as public charities, they still struggle against the perception of exclusive highbrow institutions that function to cultivate the middle class or exclude them altogether. As museums work to increase attendance and serve as many community members as possible, they increasingly use business-like strategies to maintain operating budgets and public exposure.

Corporate museums developed during the Industrial Revolution when workers began identifying with the industrial facility they worked for and those located in their region.

Tourists began visiting other factories when they traveled as a way to better understand a destination's culture. As the post-war economy increased commercialization and mass-production, the number of these corporate museums grew and companies saw them as opportunities to generate brand awareness and loyalty through experience. Since this era, museum professionals have questioned the validity of content in these displays, citing internal bias and audience manipulation. However, many corporate museums today work to implement museum standard collections care, exhibition design, and interpretive integrity.

By examining the exhibitions at Buffalo Trace Distillery through both NAME standards and Victor Danilov's definition of a corporate museum, I establish that Buffalo Trace Distillery is a corporate museum capable of implementing exhibitions with integrity. The Old Taylor House project exemplifies the company's commitment to preserving and interpreting its history and also to displaying its products and promoting knowledge of business dealings and technologies used in production. The Visitor Center expansion continues to highlight Buffalo Trace's use of historic buildings and uses a variety of display areas to visually present the past of the facility, all of which adhere to NAME's standards for access and point to the site specific integrity of the distillery. Future implementation if text panels will improve the delivery of the Buffalo Trace history and adhere even more firmly to NAME and Danilov standards. While other spirits companies build new company displays or highlight the production aspect of their operations, Buffalo Trace Distillery strives to acknowledge and abide AAM standards to provide museum quality content and displays.

In recent years, AAM has worked to increase inclusivity and collaboration, though the accreditation process remains rigorous and cumbersome. While this process maintains a level of excellence in institutions awarded the status, it works against creating a diverse

professional network. Small institutions or those like many corporate history museums with small staff may not have the resources to go through such an application process.

Though maintaining the standards that AAM delineates for accreditation would benefit any institution, the cost of doing so with no hope of recognition means that corporate museums in need of resources for better collections care, interpretation, and exhibitions may not look to AAM for guidance. In their public accreditation statistics, AAM gave no mentions of accredited institutions governed by corporate entities. While they may fall under the "Other" governance type, AAM fails to suggest corporations as a governance option, instead offering "(e.g. joint governance, trust, school district) to explain what may be in this minority group.[76]

Though museums are able to self-identify as for-profit or corporately governed, "corporate history" or "industrial" are not listed as demographic organization types. This implies that while there is a wealth of corporate history museums in the United States and across the world, they are not considered by AAM to be a legitimate network in their own right. AAM should recognize the work of these professionals, and welcome the opportunity to increase the museum community while ensuring the integrity of all institutions that call themselves museums. Establishing a corporate museum category that provides standards of operations for such institutions seeking accreditation would both diversify the museum industry and legitimize the corporate museums world. These institutions strengthen the museums community by offering well-preserved, immersive experiences which are first-hand accounts of their history. Buffalo Trace Distillery is a clear example of a company that

[76] American Alliance of Museums. "Accreditation Statistics." Accessed 1 Oct. 2015. http: //www.aamus.org/resources/assessmentprograms/accreditation/statistics

values the history of its products, processes, location, and region and prioritizes authentic content and experiences for its visitors. Its governance does not threaten its legitimacy as a museum or that of public museums, and should be recognized for its quality visitor experience and commitment to preservation and history.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – OLD TAYLOR HOUSE INSTALLATION IMAGES

All of the images used in this appendix were taken by Kristie Wooldridge, a Public Relations Coordinator at Buffalo Trace, on the day of the Grand Opening of the exhibition.

Figure 1: Southern view of the first floor exhibition space in the Old Taylor House.

Figure 2: Northern view of the first floor exhibition space in the Old Taylor House.

Figure 3: Installation image of the Taylor Parlor

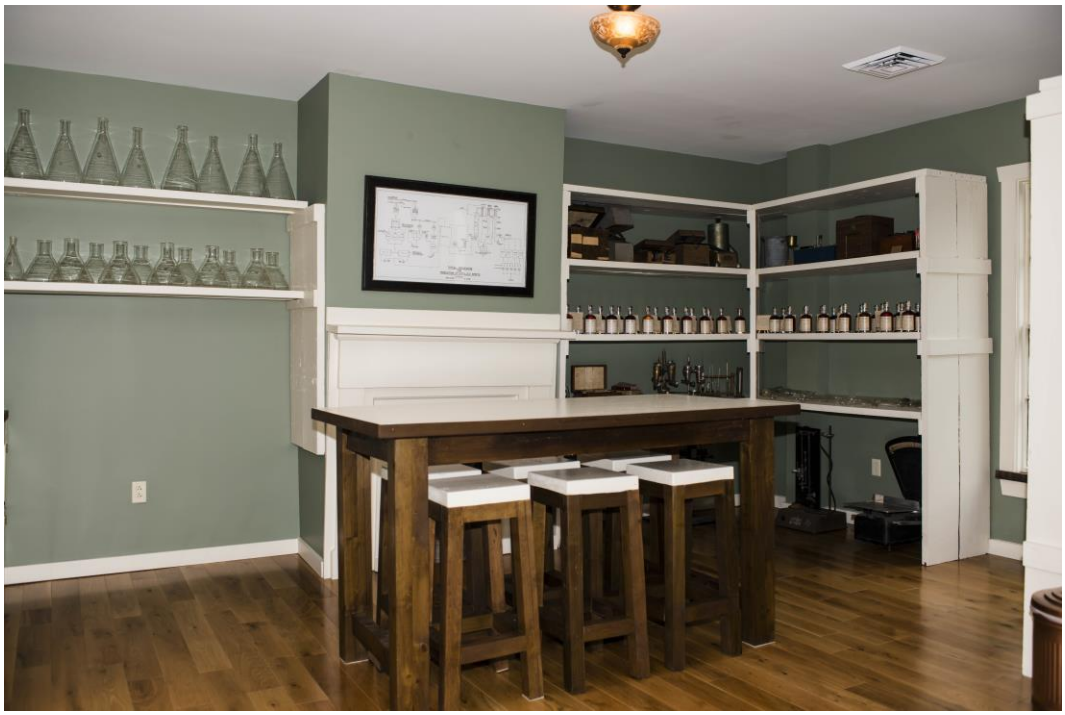


Figure 4: Installation image of the Experimental Lab.

Figure 5: Installation view of the Reconciliation Room.

APPENDIX B – OLD TAYLOR HOUSE CURATORIAL DESIGN AND INTERPRETIVE PANELS

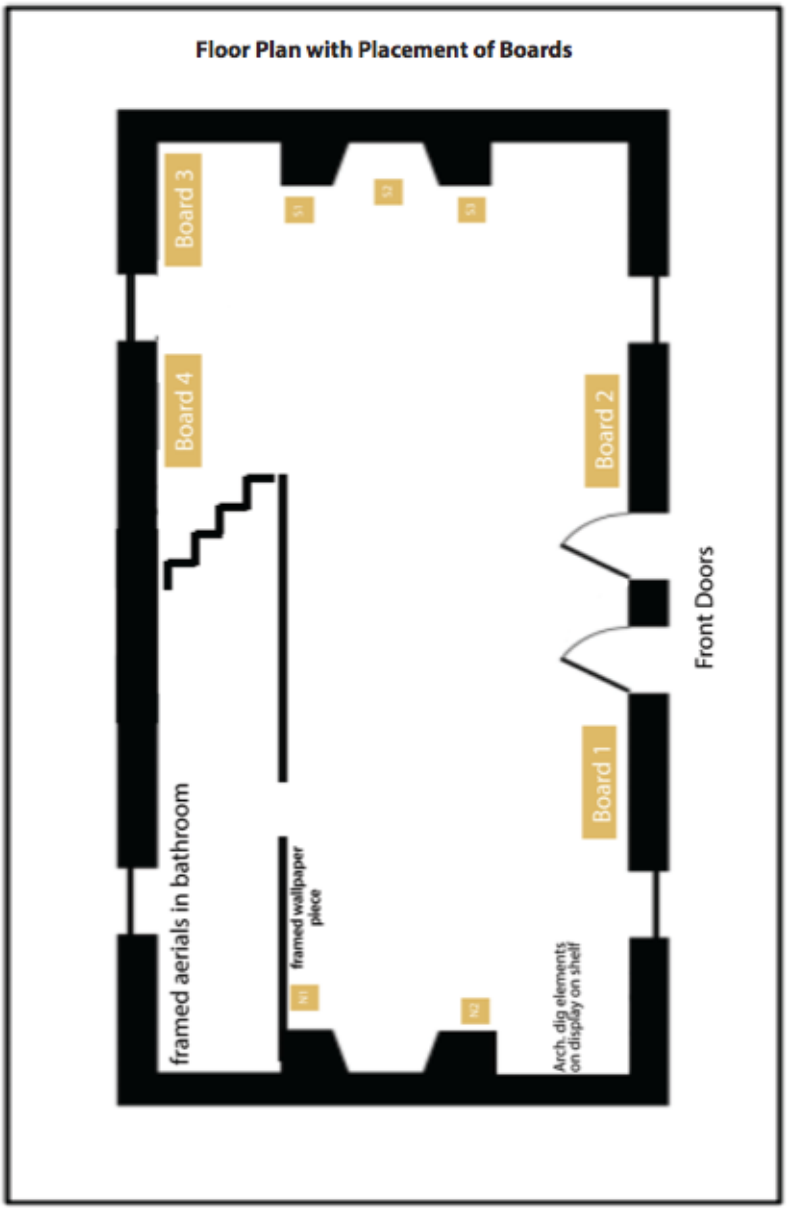


Figure 7: Floor plan layout for interpretive boards and panels on the first floor of the Old Taylor House.

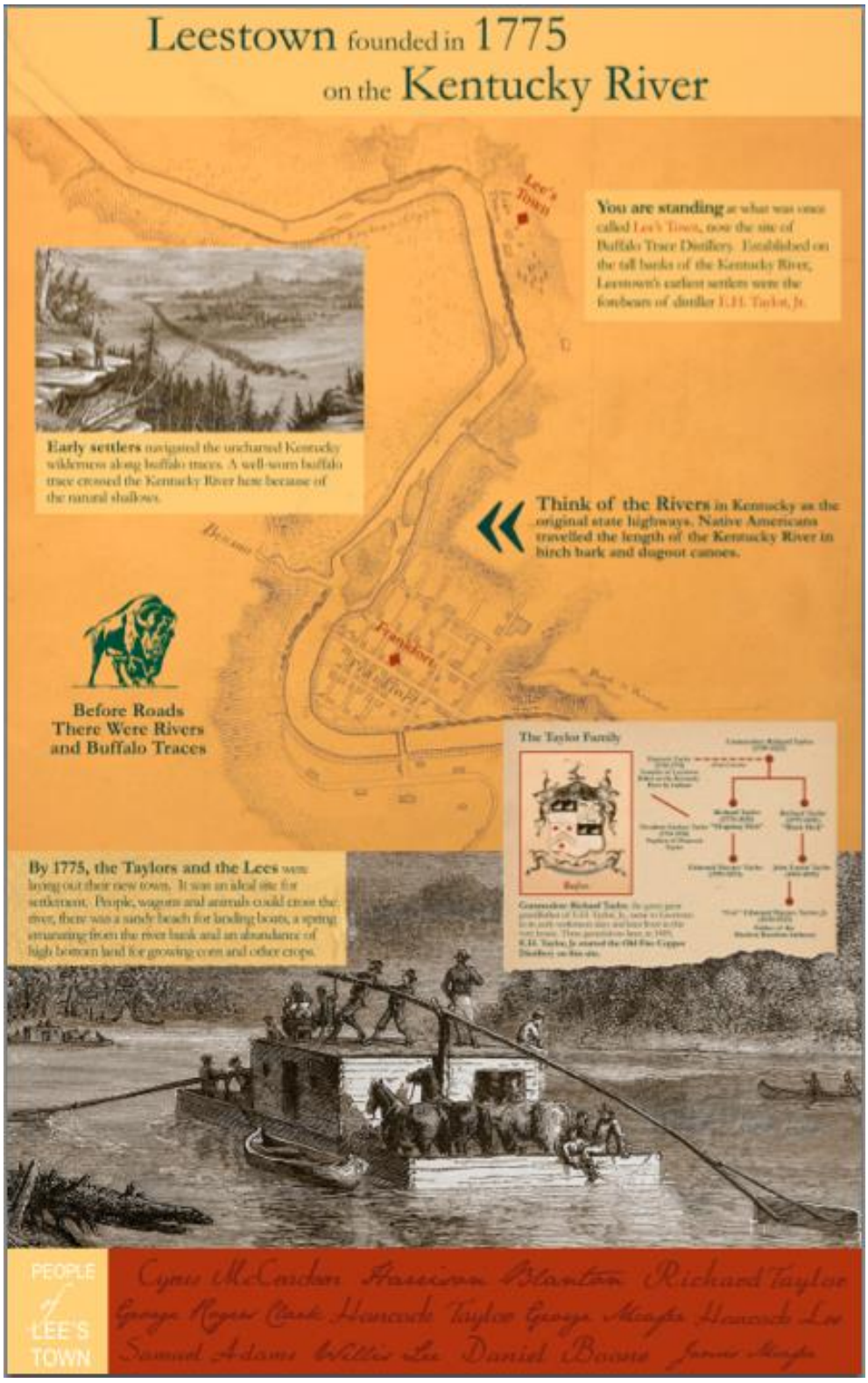


Figure 7: Board 2 - The History of the Leestown Settlement

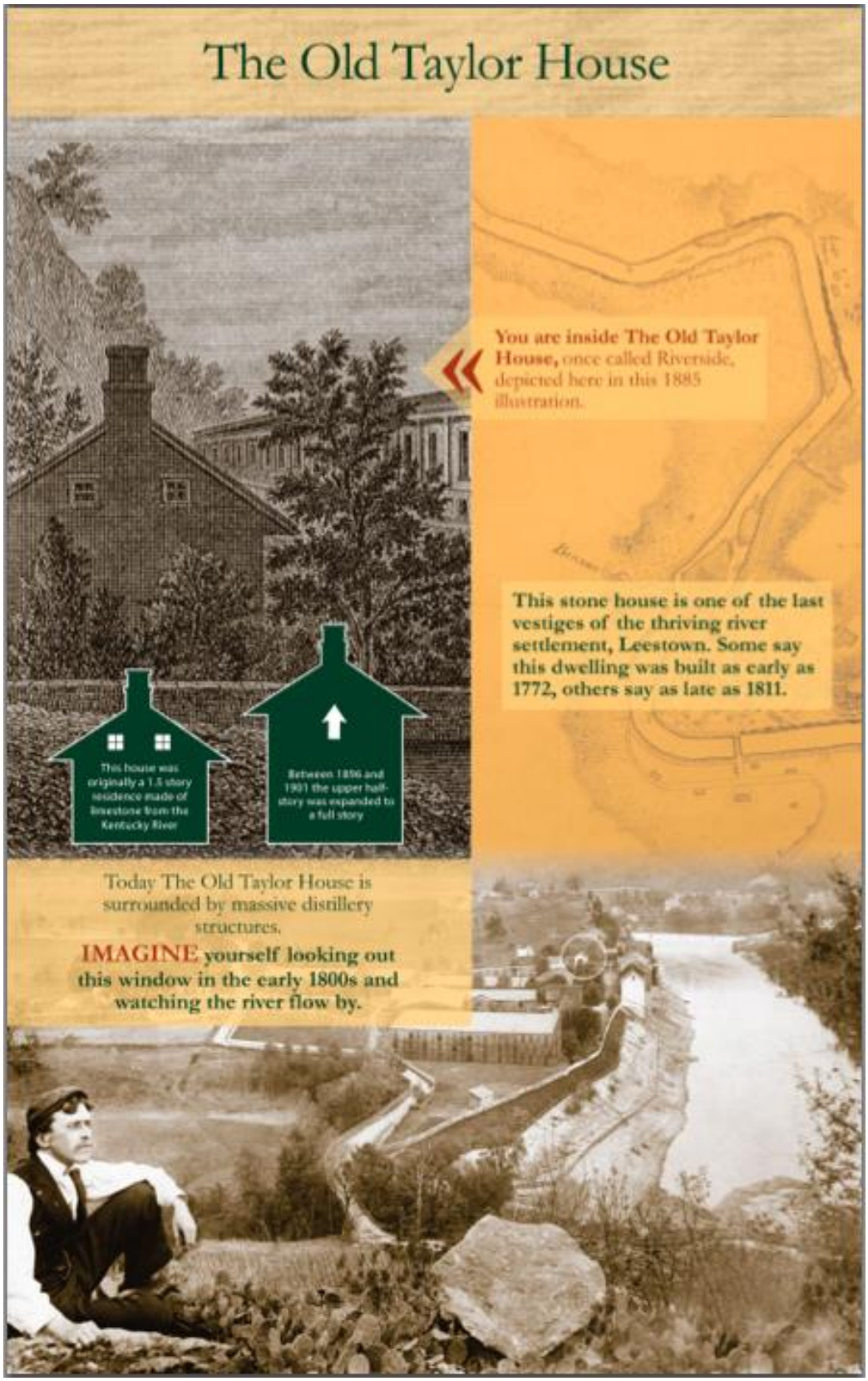


Figure 8: Board 2 – The Old Taylor House Interpretation Board

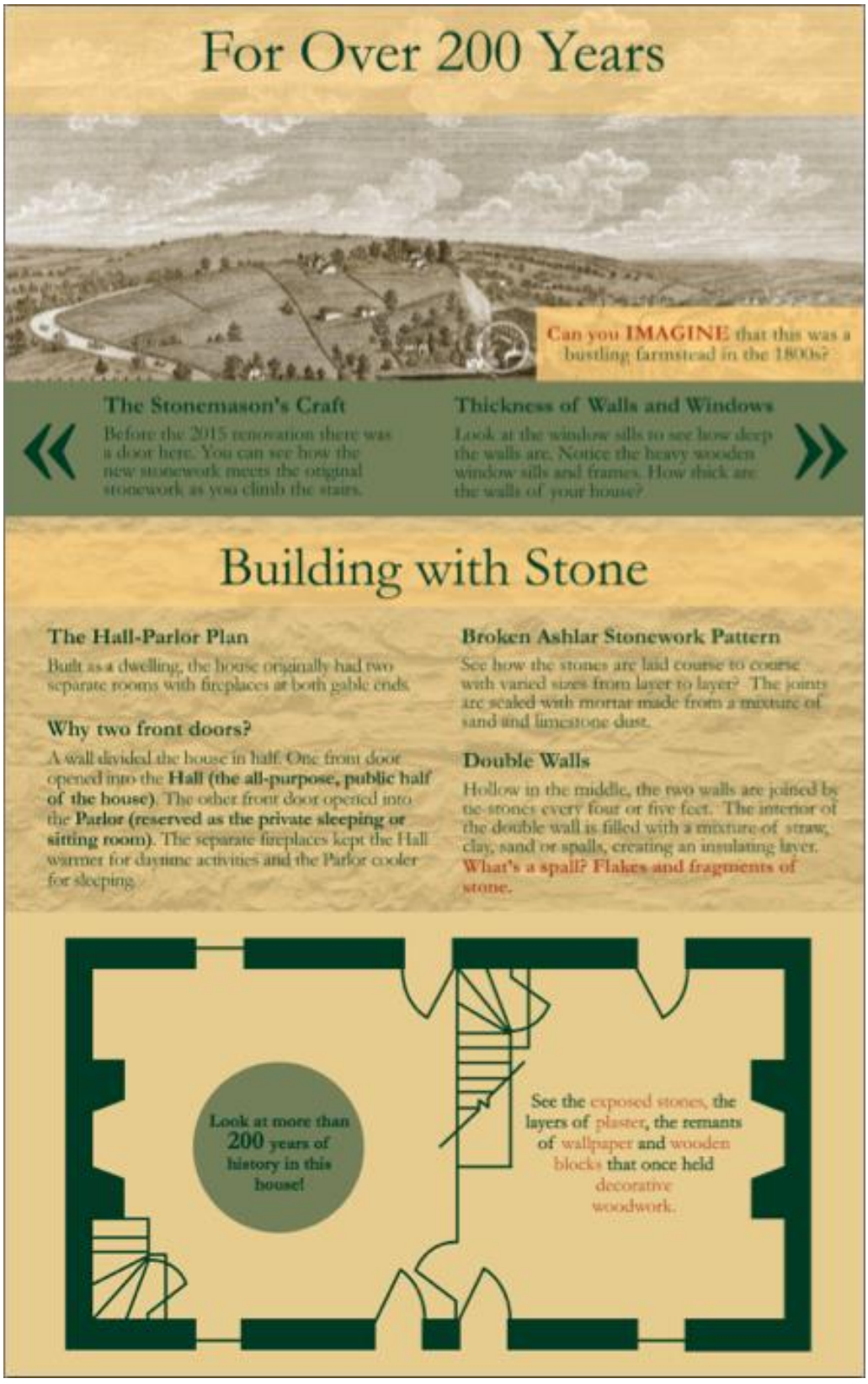


Figure 9: Board 3 – Architecture in the Old Taylor House

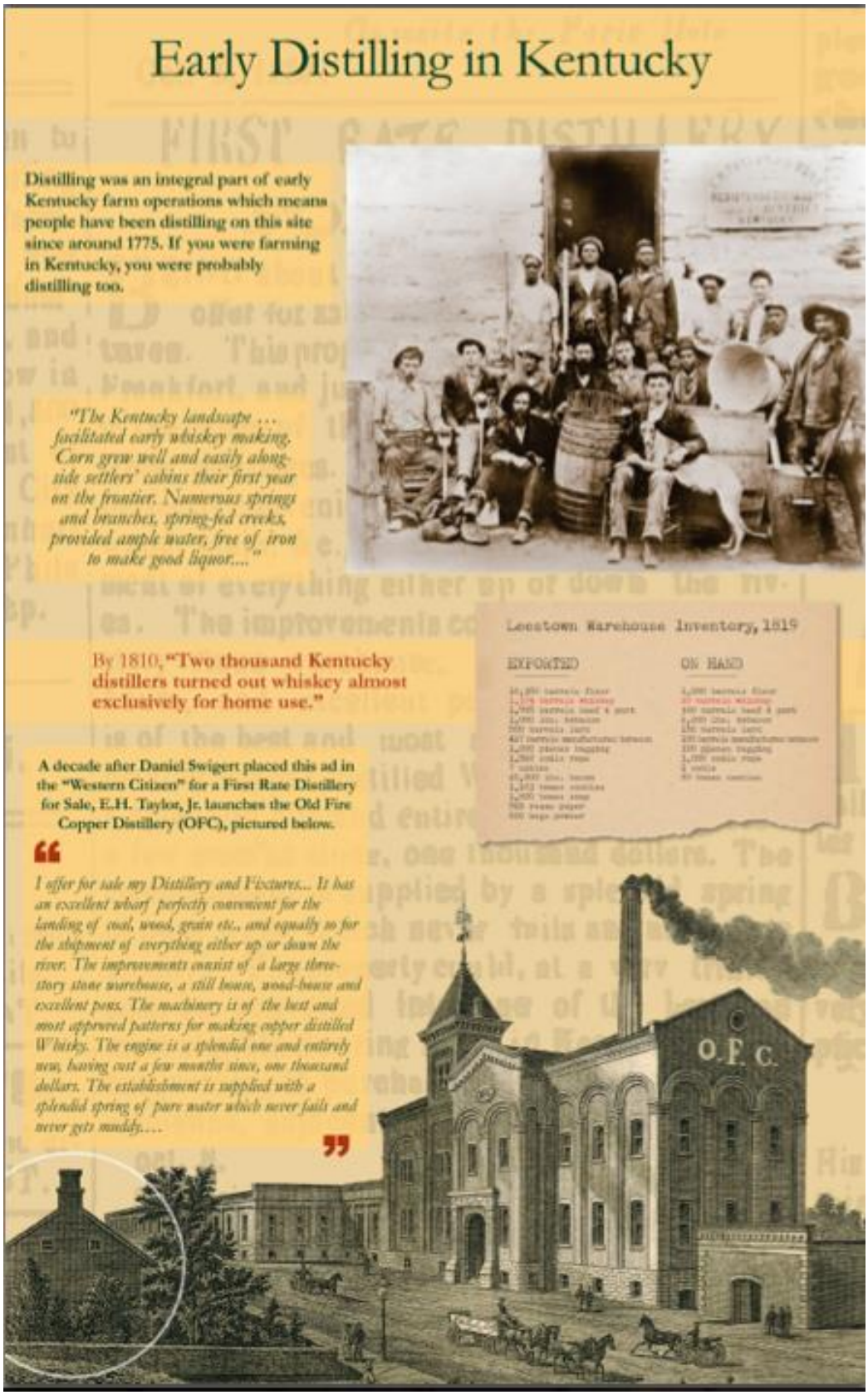


Figure 10: Board 4 – Early Distilling in Kentucky

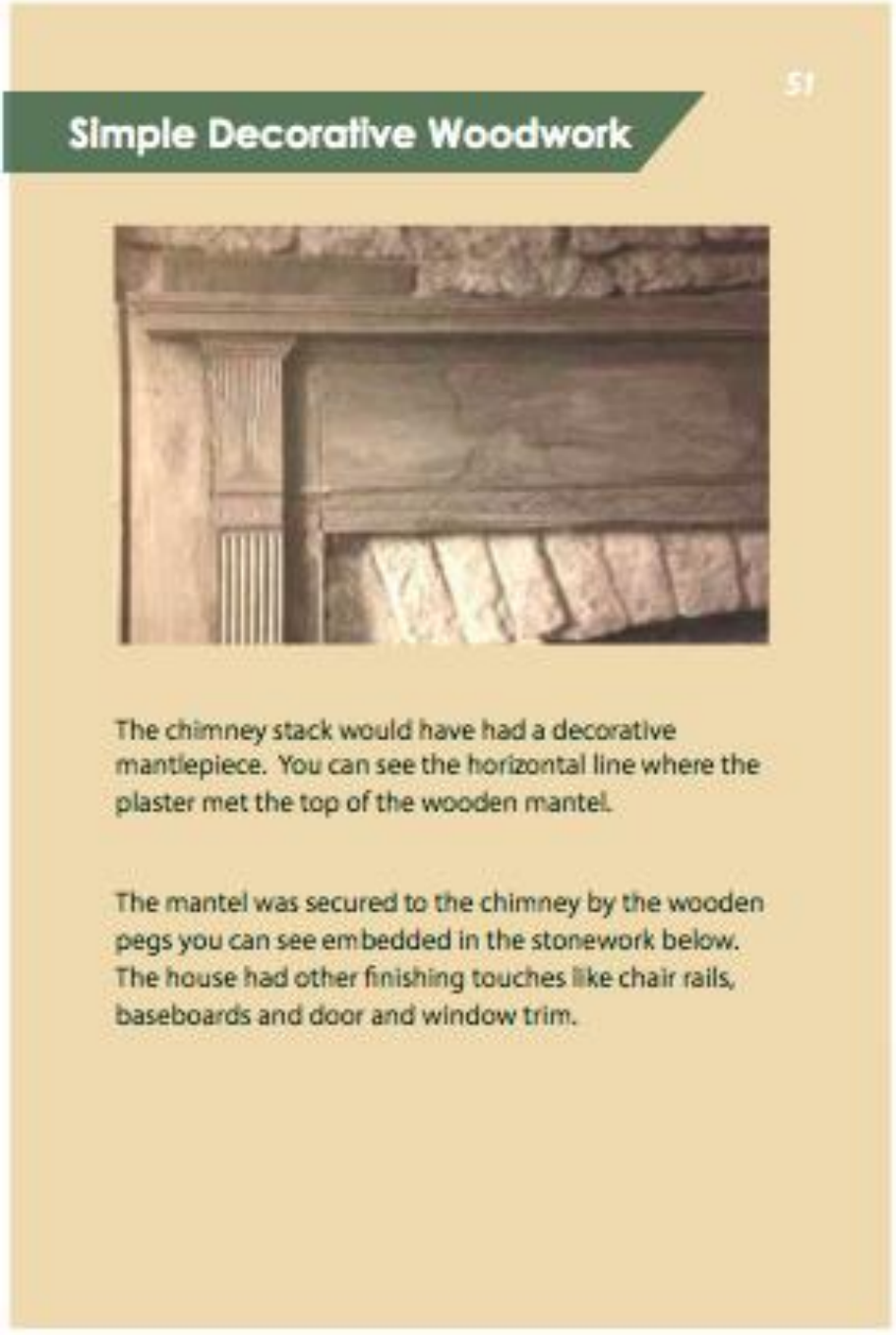


Figure 11:Simple Decorative Woodwork panel on floor stand

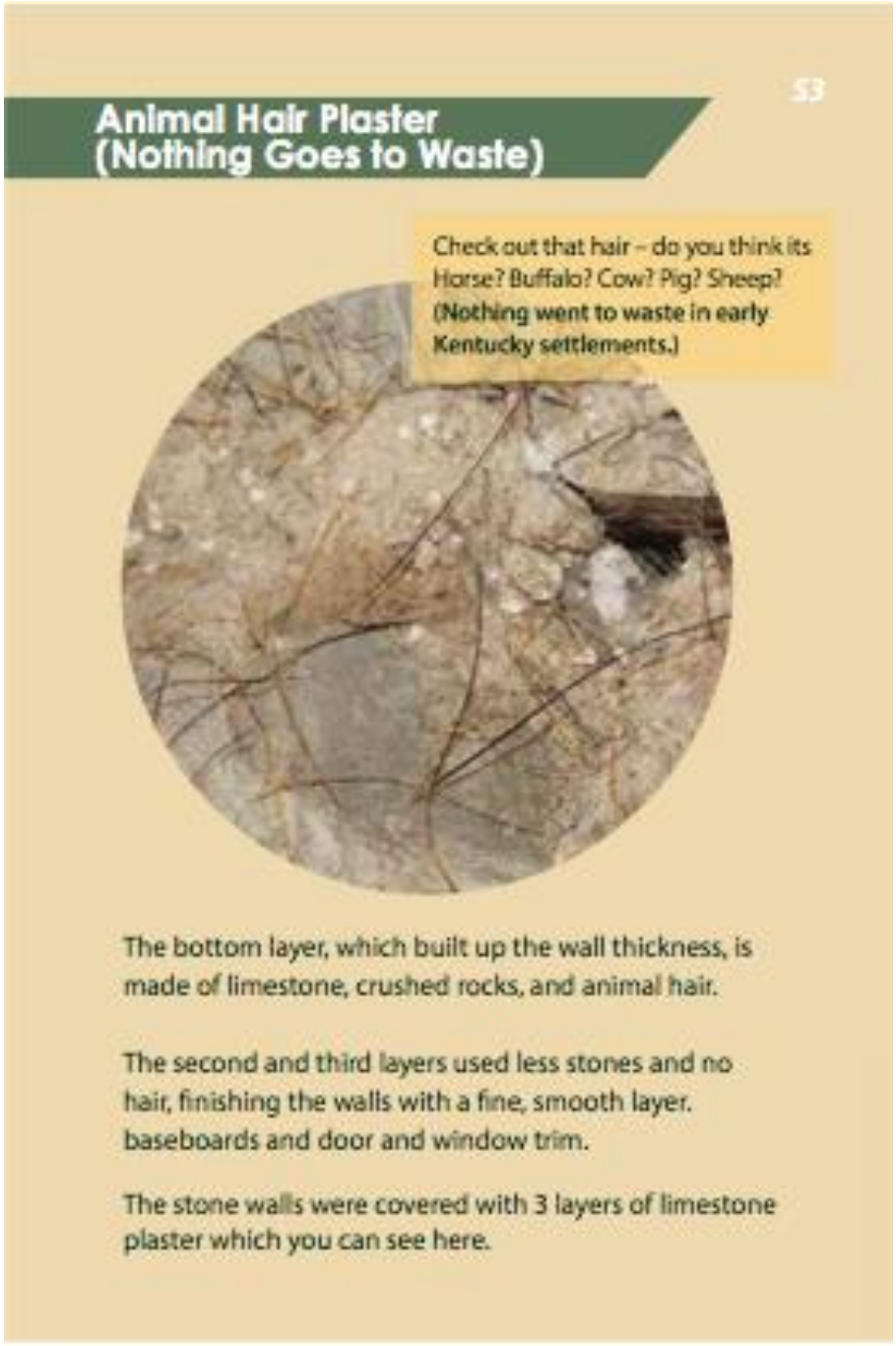


Figure 12: Animal Hair Plaster panel on floor stand

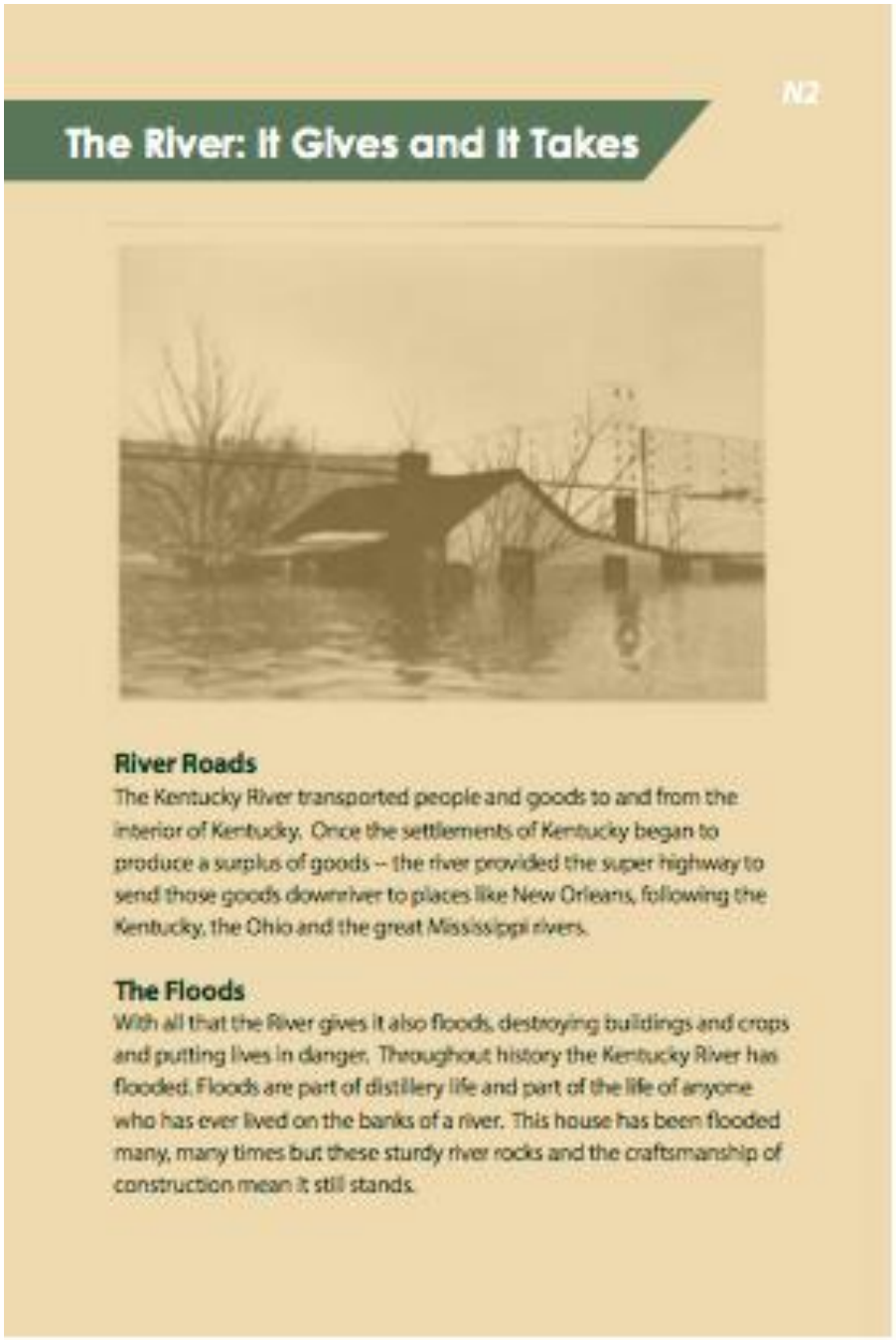


Figure 13: The River: IT Gives and It Takes panel on floor stand

Figure 14: Vintage Wallpaper and Paint

Figure 15: Archaeology Panels with text and images of the layout of artifacts

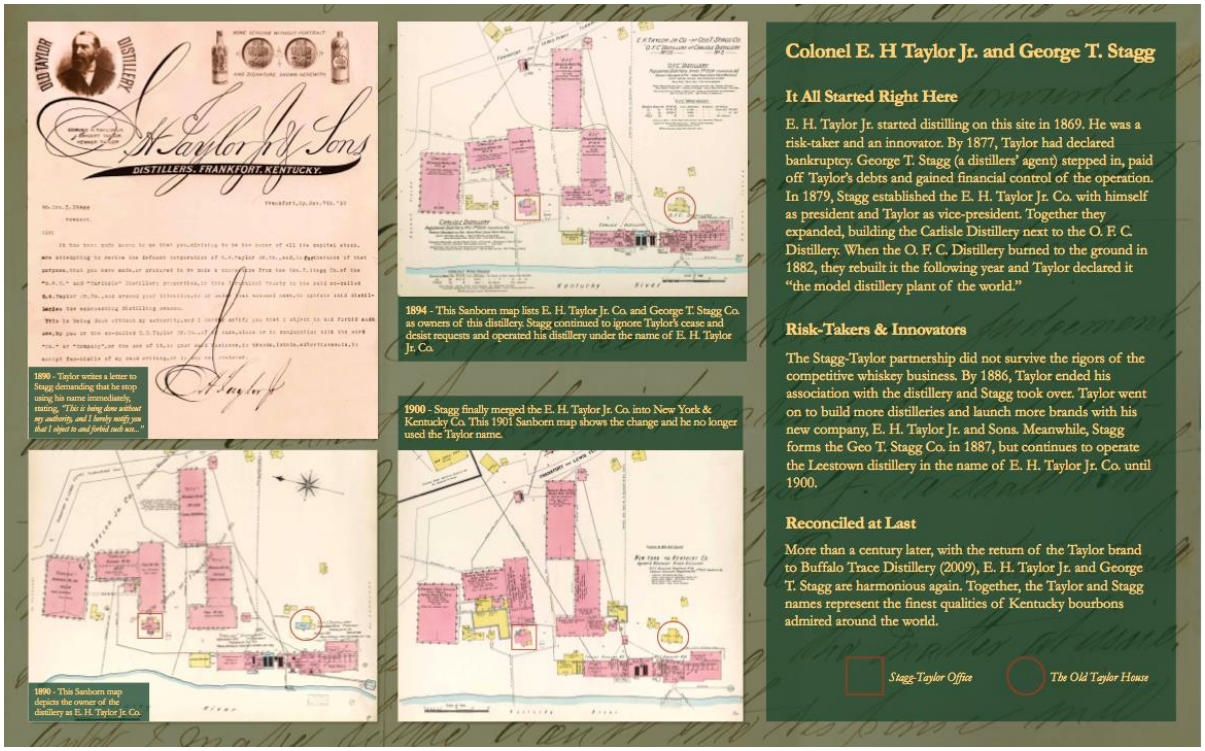


Figure 16: Taylor-Stagg Reconciliation Board

Figure 17: Lab Responsibilities Board

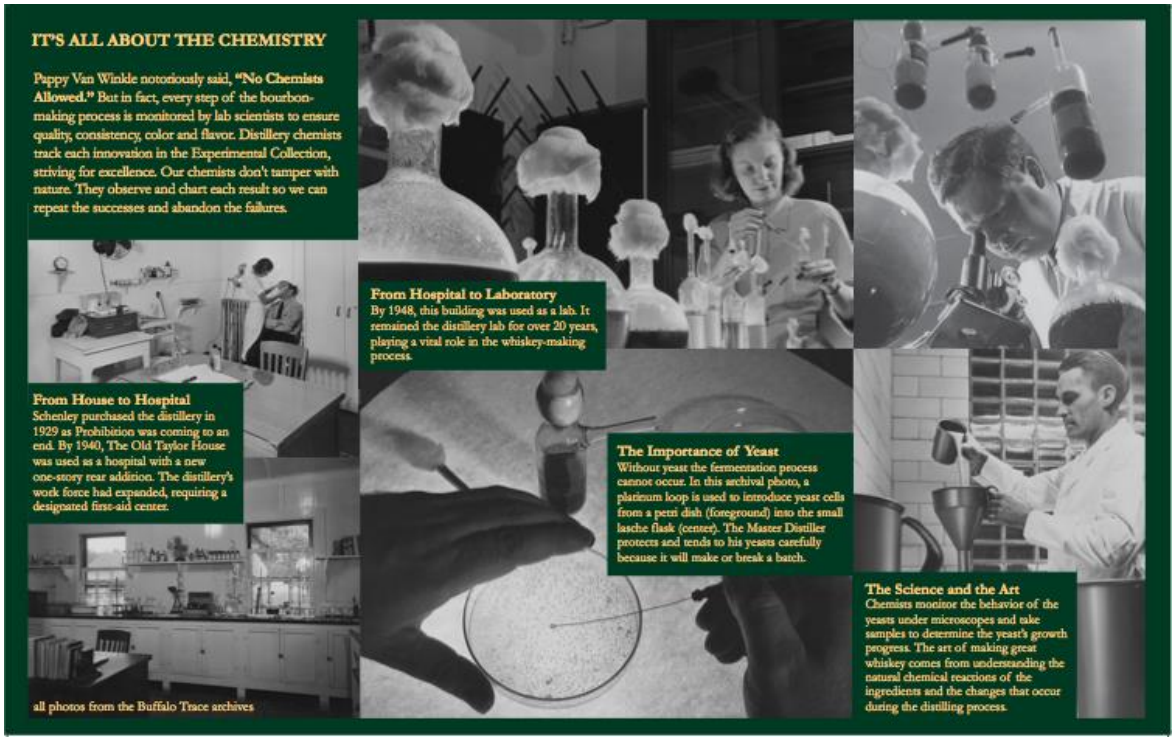


Figure 18: It's All About Chemistry Board

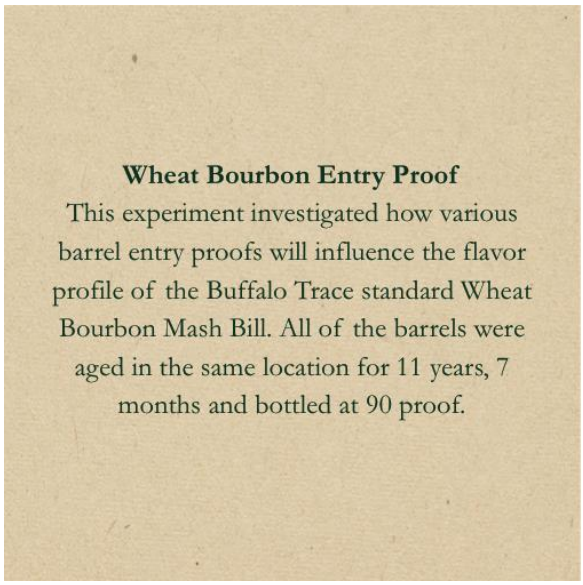


Figure 19: One of 27 4x4" text panels explaining the experiment conducted in each release of the Experimental Collections product line.

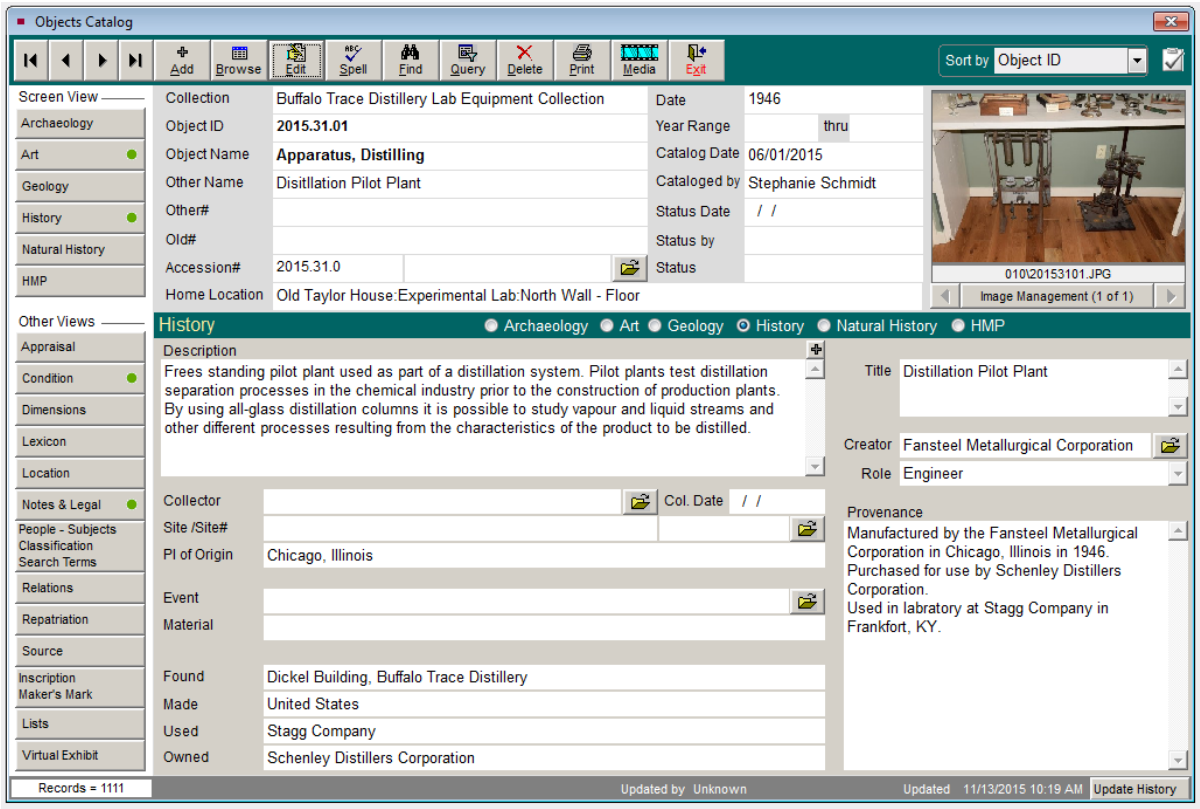


Figure 20: PastPerfect Museum Software catalog entry for a distillation pilot plant

APPENDIX C – VISITOR'S CENTER INSTALLATION IMAGES

Figure 21: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

Figure 22: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

Figure 23: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

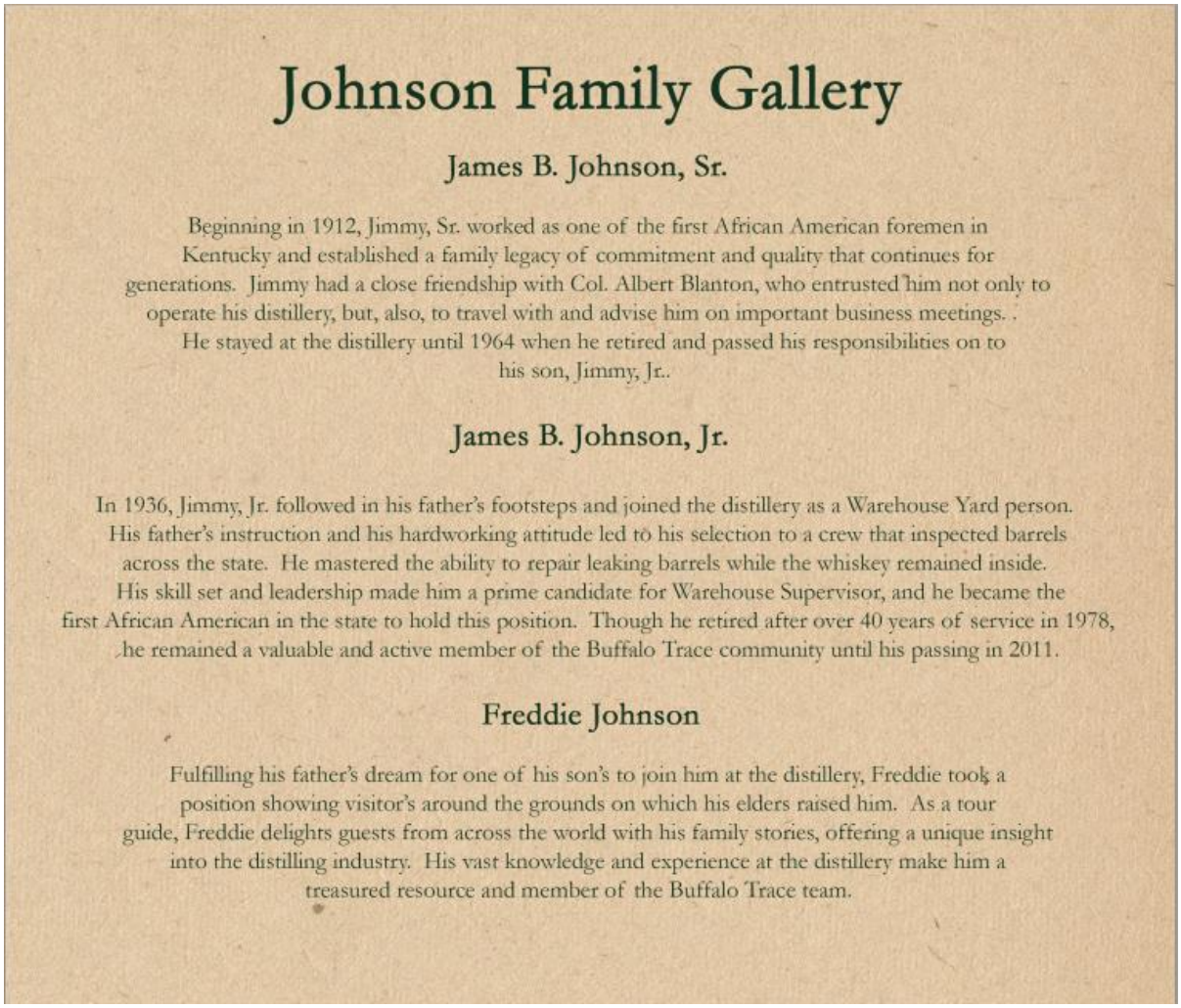
Figure 24: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

Figure 25: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

Figure 26: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

Figure 27: Installation image from Visitor Center Expansion

APPENDIX D – TEXT LABEL FROM THE JOHNSON FAMILY GALLERY



Johnson Family Gallery

James B. Johnson, Sr.

Beginning in 1912, Jimmy, Sr. worked as one of the first African American foremen in Kentucky and established a family legacy of commitment and quality that continues for generations. Jimmy had a close friendship with Col. Albert Blanton, who entrusted him not only to operate his distillery, but, also, to travel with and advise him on important business meetings. . He stayed at the distillery until 1964 when he retired and passed his responsibilities on to his son, Jimmy, Jr..

James B. Johnson, Jr.

In 1936, Jimmy, Jr. followed in his father's footsteps and joined the distillery as a Warehouse Yard person. His father's instruction and his hardworking attitude led to his selection to a crew that inspected barrels across the state. He mastered the ability to repair leaking barrels while the whiskey remained inside. His skill set and leadership made him a prime candidate for Warehouse Supervisor, and he became the first African American in the state to hold this position. Though he retired after over 40 years of service in 1978, he remained a valuable and active member of the Buffalo Trace community until his passing in 2011.

Freddie Johnson

Fulfilling his father's dream for one of his son's to join him at the distillery, Freddie took a position showing visitor's around the grounds on which his elders raised him. As a tour guide, Freddie delights guests from across the world with his family stories, offering a unique insight into the distilling industry. His vast knowledge and experience at the distillery make him a treasured resource and member of the Buffalo Trace team.

Figure 28: Text Panel for Johnson Family Gallery

APPENDIX E – PRESS RELEASE, OPENING INVITATION, AND MEDIA RESPONSE

Figure 29: Invitation to Opening of the Old Taylor House and Visitor Center Expansion

News Release - BTD Visitor Center Expansion, Old Taylor House Renovation Now Complete

June 30, 2015 2:55pm EDT

FRANKFORT, FRANKLIN COUNTY, KY (June 30, 2015) – Buffalo Trace Distillery just completed two big construction projects, having finished a 5,500 square foot expansion of its

Visitor Center and having completely renovated the historic Old Taylor House, the oldest structure on the Distillery's property.

The Visitor Center

Buffalo Trace did a vertical expansion of its Visitor Center by expanding upward into the second floor where there is more room to grow as needed.

A newly constructed grand staircase made of white oak leads to the beautiful new space, which is complete with four additional tasting bar areas and a new meeting and event space.

At the top of the grand staircase, guests are welcomed to the second floor by a huge mural of a landscape of the Distillery. A collection of historic article clippings and photos from the Distillery archives can also be viewed on the wall at the top of the stairs.

Future additions from the Distillery archives are already being planned for the second floor, including the construction of a vault. The vault will be built into the back wall to hold rare, old bottles and display them in a unique, interactive way for guests to view. Display cases featuring old bottles and artifacts will also be installed on the second floor, including one dedicated to the Single Oak Project.

By expanding upward, the first floor now has ample space for Gift Shop merchandise and features a new checkout counter and dedicated spirits space. Additionally, new bathrooms have been installed on both floors.

"We are thrilled to have completed this expansion," Marketing Services Director Meredith Moody said. "The new space looks beautiful, and having this additional space will allow us to accommodate more guests in our Gift Shop to allow for our rapid growth of tour visitors."

Old Taylor House

The Old Taylor House sits on the Distillery property today as not only the oldest structure at the Distillery, but the oldest residential building in Franklin County, Kentucky. Constructed in the late 1700s, with the second floor added in the 1800s, the house was originally built for Commodore Richard Taylor who served as superintendent of navigation on the Kentucky River and who was great-grandfather to Colonel E.H. Taylor Jr.

Since its inception, the two-story house has held many different roles, including being a residence, first aid clinic, and even a laboratory for the Distillery.

After a long life of good use, the house had begun to deteriorate, but has now been fully restored to preserve its rich history.

Evidence of that preserved history can be seen in details throughout the house down to the horsehair that was used as a bonding agent in the original construction of the walls.

The renovated house features beautiful hardwood floors and fresh paint throughout, and is lit by hanging Edison bulbs. The second floor lab displays old beakers and artifacts once used in the house.

"We're so excited to have been able to restore such a significant piece of our history," Moody said. "The restoration looks beautiful and we look forward to utilizing this space for many more generations."

The Distillery intends to incorporate the restored house into some of its existing tours. A joint grand opening for the Visitor Center and Old Taylor House will be held in early July.

Figure 30: Press Release for Old Taylor House and Visitor Center Expansion

BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

Grand Opening of the Old Taylor House & the George T. Stagg Visitor Center
External Agenda- July 2, 2015

5:00-5:30: Old Taylor House Grand Opening

4:30	❖ Candy at Old Taylor House (OTH) to greet any early arrivals ❖ Joanna, and Carolyn Brooks there to answer questions
5:00	❖ Event begins (guests mingle around front of OTH, grab lemonade or water while band plays)
5:10-5:30	❖ 5:10- Mark Brown (MB) Welcomes the crowd and Introduces Lt. Gov. Crit Luallen ❖ 5:12- Lt. Gov. Crit Luallen to say a few words ❖ 5:15-MB to speak on historical significance, thank everyone who worked on this project ❖ 5:20-Time Capsule • We would like to commemorate the Opening of the Old Taylor House by burying a time capsule to be unearthed by future generations. Its contents include an E.H Taylor bottle canister filled with (Today's newspaper, the news release for this event, a BT mini bottle, a portrait of E.H Taylor and a letter written towards the end of his life to his 'pen pal' Bernadette Kelly, (where he pronounces that there's nothing better than a KY ham!), and a note from members of the Distillery team. • MB to invite Lt. Gov. Crit Luallen, Joanna Hay, and Carolyn Brooks to help bury the time capsule (Shovels will be in place in ground where dirt will be loosened, canister to fit into ground vertically, everyone will toss some dirt onto the time capsule to bury) • Pose for quick photo • Joanna and Carolyn will stay behind for a few minutes to answer any questions after the program) • MB then invites everyone to take a moment to look around and join him back to the visitor center in a few minutes (Program will start at 5:45 in the VC)
5:30	❖ MB to lead the way to the visitor center along with the bluegrass band to encourage guests to head that direction (ENTER THROUGH FRONT DOOR)

5:30- 7:00: Visitor Center Grand Opening

5:35	❖ Guests enter through front door and grab a cocktail, enjoy passed hors d'oeuvres and music
5:45-6:05	❖ 5:45- MB and to stand behind the ribbon, Sarah will be there to release the ribbon for people to stand behind if the ribbon is difficult to 'duck' under. ❖ 5:45- MB to welcome everyone to the newly expanded George T. Stagg Gift Shop and Visitor Center! Speak on tourism growth, the visitor center layout, etc. • MB to introduce Bob Stewart, KY Secretary of the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet ❖ 5:50- Bob Stewart to say a few words about BTD and tourism impact in Frankfort and in KY ❖ 5:55- MB to thank everyone involved ❖ 6:00- MB to invite Bob Stewart, Matt Higgins, and Toby Sacre to the steps to cut the ribbon to officially (Sarah may need to open ribbon again). ❖ Pose for quick photo, then walk up the stairs, encourage guests to follow
6:05	❖ Guests mingle and enjoy the new space, music, food and beverage
7:00	❖ Event complete

Figure 31: Grand Opening Agenda

The Seat Of Blanton's, Pappy And Stagg Offers A Revamped Look For Visitors

By Richard Thomas

Perched on a scenic spot on the banks of the Kentucky River, Buffalo Trace Distillery is one of the big draws of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. Last year the Frankfort distillery saw over 123,000 visitors, a 26% increase over the previous year. Part of the reason why is the attraction of all the esteemed bourbons made at Buffalo Trace, such as Blanton's and Pappy

Van Winkle, but part is also found in the wide selection of tour formats available to visitors, all for free.

Now all those visitors can look forward to a buffed-up reception in the form of a new, expanded visitors center, and a new attraction has been added to one of the distillery's most specialized tours.

New Visitor Center

The old reception area for visitors to Buffalo Trace was essentially their gift shop with a tacked-on tasting room, and had become overshadowed compared to the more modern and expansive facilities at Wild Turkey or Stitzel-Weller, nevermind the full-on tourist attraction offered by the Evan Williams Experience. As excellent as the Buffalo Trace tour experience could be, the front of house had turned hum drum as Kentucky bourbon tourism evolved.

The distillery took that old space and expanded upwards, into the second floor. Now visitors can go up the spiral staircase from the old gift shop and into a waiting area cum tasting room, with historical news clippings and artifacts on display and greatly expanded and more attractive tasting bars. The expansion has also allowed the now reorganized first floor to expand its gift shop role, taking up the space occupied by the old tasting room.

The facelift isn't quite over, as Buffalo Trace intends to add a vault housing rare, antique bottles into the new second floor space in the near future. Yet in the here and now, the distillery visitor center is more in tune with Bourbon Trail standards for a major distillery.

The Old Taylor House

With a ground floor dating to the late 1700s, The Old Taylor House is not just the oldest building on the Buffalo Trace property, but the oldest in all of Franklin County. This is a building so old and so Kentuckian that the walls are partly made from horse hair! It was

originally built for Commodore Richard Taylor, who served as superintendent of navigation on the Kentucky River and was the great grandfather of Colonel E.H. Taylor, namesake of a now esteemed line of bourbons and ryes.

The house was off-limits for years to just about everyone due to decay, but is now thoroughly renovated. The second floor has been turned into a mini-museum, drawing on artifacts used in the house, including period beakers from its days as a laboratory.

The intention is to feature the house on tours, but at present it is included only on the nighttime ghost tour, offered at 7 p.m. every Thursday through Saturday. With Halloween just around the corner, this is just the right time to mix a little bump-in-the-night fun with bourbon and a historic fixture like The Old Taylor House.

Figure 32: Article written by Richard Thomas in the Whiskey Reviewer about the OTH & VC Expansion on September 15, 2015

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Buffalo Trace Distillery
Frankfort, KY
07/2014-02/2015, 03/2015-Present