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Adults "making meaning" at Colonial Williamsburg: A descriptive study of planners' intentions and audience members' constructions of the 1996 History Forum

Joan Ellen Casey
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ADULTS "MAKING MEANING" AT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG:
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PLANNERS' INTENTIONS
AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS' CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE 1996 HISTORY FORUM

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Joan Ellen Casey

October 1997

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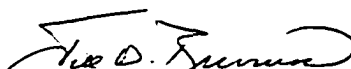
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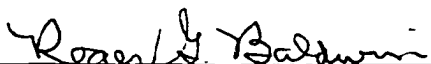
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Dedicated to:
Lifelong Learners

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ABSTRACT

Forecasts reveal an increase in the percentage of mid to older adults in the U. S. and the need of educational programs for lifelong learners. In recognition of changing demographics, the American Association of Museums urged its member institutions to place a high priority on adult programs and research into learning. While museums have experienced changes in adapting to environmental conditions and more explicit educative mission, professionals have noticed the emergence of a meaning-making, constructivist paradigm.

Previously, no study dealt with the mental constructions adults have or form as they interface with a multi-faceted museum program such as the History Forum at Colonial Williamsburg. Using a conceptual framework based on Mezirow’s (1991) work, this study explored, described, documented, analyzed, and interpreted the meanings intended by program planners and constructed by audience members. Furthermore, it interpreted changes in meaning audience interviewees reported. The study was phenomenological in orientation and employed various qualitative methods, such as a questionnaire, multiple interviews, and an evaluation form.

Findings indicated that the planners wanted to provide diverse opinions so that the audience could increase their perspectives, form their own opinions, and become more

intelligent contributors in dealing with modern-day problems. The audience interviewees spoke of similar program aims, but they also variously addressed finding little diversity of opinion, difficulty in expressing their opinions, and no way to take further action in their everyday lives based on what they had learned.

Whereas the content of the forum provoked participants' thoughts about the program's topic and an eighteenth-century way of thinking, it also raised concerns about race and gender and political and religious issues. Throughout the interviewees' almost paradoxical statements about similarities and differences between now and then, a strong theme emerged -- namely, that there has been very little change in the last 200 years. The findings also revealed some audience interviewees' uncritical attitudes, the importance of visual materials, and the power of interpretive drama. Although inferences should not be made about other audiences, this study may be enlightening to all educators concerned with andragogical strategies and who wonder what meanings adults form from a particular program.

JOAN ELLEN CASEY

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA

ADULTS “MAKING MEANING” AT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG:
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CHAPTER I. THE PROBLEM

Introduction to the Problem

Due to an extended life expectancy of adults over 75 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, p. 47) and the maturing of a generation known as the “baby boomers,” by the year 2002 the majority of adults in the United States will be over the age of 50 (Wolfe, 1993). Educational statistics revealed that from 1980 to 1995 the percent distribution of people over 65 having some college almost doubled, and in 1994-95, 30% of those 45 and older participated in adult education (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, pp. 47, 196). A trend already established for mid to older Americans is to be better educated and to continue to seek education.

Recognizing the future impact of demographic forecasts in the 1980s and realizing the potential of museums, which had grown in unprecedented numbers since mid-twentieth century, the American Association of Museums (AAM) urged its members to “pay new attention to their programs for adults” (AAM, 1984, p. 71). A report from the Task Force of Museum Education clarified the educative role of museums (AAM, 1991); however, the adoption of education as a primary purpose (Malaro, 1994; Munley, 1994) effected further changes in the museum field. Constructivism was noted as an emerging epistemological paradigm (Hein, 1995; Roberts, 1994) that had profound implications especially for history museums because “the meaning-making paradigm offers a powerful reminder that history, when viewed as a process, is an *interpretation*” (Silverman, 1993, p. 8). Silverman focused on history museums, but the facts are: a) of the 8,200 museums

in the United States, 55% are historic sites or history museums (Grogg, 1994), and b) according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1996), in comparison to 1988-89 the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in 1993-94 in the social sciences and history increased more than in any other field of study (p. 172).

The AAM also stressed the need for research into learning (AAM, 1984). Visitor studies, which date back more a century (McManus, 1996) have traditionally dealt with observing visitor behavior or evaluating a program from the stated aims of the museum (O'Connel, 1990; Yellis, 1990) rather than assessing what the audience might have experienced in their own terms. No theory of learning has arisen from the museum profession due to a lack of training within the museum field (Borum and Korn, 1995) and the use of rigor driven from a theoretical perspective (Munley, 1992). What is ideally needed is research aimed at understanding the visitors' perspective, the meanings they have already formed and the meanings that may change as a result of a program (L. H. Silverman, June - July, personal communication, 1996). Robert Wolf (1980), a spokesman for the use of naturalistic strategies in a museum, wrote that smaller case studies can be an illuminating force especially if they are responsive to the "needs, interests and concerns of those involved in museum practice" (p. 39). The purpose of this study was therefore to document (provide program materials), describe, and compare the meanings intended by the planners of a specific educational program in a specific history museum (namely, the 1996 History Forum [HF] at Colonial Williamsburg [CW]) and the meanings constructed by adult participants in that program. Furthermore, it was the intent of the researcher to describe, compare, and analyze whatever changes in meaning selected

audience participants reported at the beginning, during, and at various times after their experience with the program.

Background

The need for this study was established by examining adult demographics and trends and changes occurring within the museum field and specifically CW. Also, a review of adult education and museum evaluation literature indicated a shift in emphasis - one to the learner's perspective. Pertinent data and relevant concepts are provided for the reader's understanding along with a review of the events surrounding "The Last Act," a script prepared for an exhibit involving the Enola Gay at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum that went through five revisions before being cancelled (Harwit, 1996; Kohn, 1995). The controversy was long and costly and extended itself into an international arena, but it was representative of a problem facing all museum educators. To meet the needs of today's adult learners, museum personnel must understand the meanings, personal interpretations, constructed by individual members participating in a specific program. However, to date, no study has dealt with meaning making from the perspective of an individual adult learner in a history museum (L. H. Silverman, June - July, 1996, personal communication). The researcher ascertained that there is interest in this kind of research from various conference members of the AAM Annual Conference in 1995. Additionally, museum evaluators are advocating for and beginning to approach studies from this perspective in art museums (Doering, Pekarik, & Kindlon, 1997) and science museums (McManus, 1996).

Adult Demographics and Trends

By the year 2002, the majority of adults in the United States will be over the age of 50 (Wolfe, 1993). They will probably represent the most educated group in American history since trends indicate that enrollment in institutions of higher education will increase by adults aged 30 and over (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1993, Fig. 15); and statistics show that an increasing number of people have received degrees from high school, college, and graduate schools (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, p. 47). There is every indication that these adults will increasingly seek more education because the number of years of schooling is the single biggest predictor of participation in organized adult educational activities (O'Connell, 1990). There is also an indication that adults seek subjects that provide a sense of meaning, such as history (Collins, 1981; Fischer, 1982; Leon & Rosenzweig, 1989; Ventura & Worthy, 1982). A mid to older (over age 40) adult's "search for meaning" is also indicated by the popularity of seminars (such as that sponsored by Duke University bearing that title, which was repeated three times and drew high evaluation ratings [D. W. Fowlkes, Jan. 3, 1996, personal communication]), and the subject's treatment in popular literature (Naylor, 1994; Sheehy, 1995) and in academic literature (Bruner, 1990; Jarvis, 1992; Kegan, 1982; Stevens-Long, 1990).

Changes Within the Museum Field

Since 1965, history museums have been established at unprecedented rates (Danilov, 1994; Grogg, 1994) representing a unique resource for adult educators and adult learners (AAM, 1984; Carr, 1995; Eisner & Dobbs, 1986a; Grogg, 1994); but more recently their budgets have been cut dramatically due mostly to a 40% budget reduction

to the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities from which museums draw funding (AAM, 1996). Whereas the fear that these agencies would be eliminated completely has recently subsided and there is hope that some funding will be returned (AAM, 1997), museums are in need of support if they are to continue providing educational experiences for this growing segment of lifelong learners. Support can be measured by the number of dollars received from public or private funding sources, the number of volunteers offering their resources or services (even though volunteer training raises the cost of operation), and/or the number of admission tickets sold. Ultimately, however, all of these sources are tied to the continued satisfaction adults achieve from their learning experiences in museums. If the learning experience is meaningful to them, they will give of their time and attention, admission price, and contributions; they will more likely communicate their word-of-mouth satisfaction and indicate their approval of public support for these institutions (Wolfe, 1993). Undoubtedly, some of these factors can be measured; whereas other factors, such as the meanings audience members construct, how their meanings compare to those of program planners, and how meaning develops for adults participating in a program must be understood from an in-depth perspective of particular participants. Such an understanding is important for museum educators, for without it they can only rely on their own intuition and learning experiences to provide appropriate programming. Planners must be aware of the specific difficulties that audiences encountered and the learning problems they resolved. These educational issues become more important as the educative mission of museums becomes more explicit. Through direction provided by the AAM (1984, 1991), the educative mission of museums has shifted from "collecting" for

education to "educating" through the collections (Ames, 1988; Franco, 1994; Malaro, 1994; Museum Education Roundtable, 1992). However, reports indicated that although museums provided a tremendous opportunity both for learning and research into learning, educational theory was either absent or incredibly diverse (AAM, 1991; Eisner & Dobbs, 1986a, 1986b; Museum Education Roundtable, 1992).

Since their beginnings as educational resources, museums have undergone various changes in the variety of programs they offer, their exhibiting practices, the content of programs, and their interpretive techniques (Alexander, 1979; Shapiro, 1990; Solinger, 1990). Program offerings have been diversified and the museum's environment has become more accessible; but this has left many people even Knowles, an adult educator with self-directed learning capabilities, frustrated (Knowles, 1981a).

Exhibit practices that formerly emphasized the form of an object now focus on the context within which the object is found (Jacknis, 1985). Furthermore, the ideas surrounding an object's use have been promulgated (Carson, 1992), but these approaches to exhibiting have made professionals concerned about the audiences' ability to think within the context of the past or within the framework of a person who lived in the past (Wineburg and Fournier, 1993) especially where first-person interpreters (see Definitions) are used (Deetz, 1981). Research into adult learning was especially encouraged by the American Association of Museums' report, Museums for a New Century (AAM, 1984), and the need for research has been reiterated by professionals in the field (Borun & Korn, 1995; Munley, 1992; O'Connell, 1990; Serrell, 1997).

In order to make the content of programs more easily understood, themes, such as "Becoming Americans" at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF, 1985), were

adopted. However, audience research indicated that a particular theme was often not comprehended, and, in fact, different themes were important to its audience members than the themes adopted by the Foundation (Korn & Associates, 1994). Interpretive techniques, while theoretically associated with constructivism ("building new knowledge, values and beliefs upon each individual's earlier constructs of knowledge and values" [Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995, p. 135]), are often practiced in a unidirectional or didactic manner primarily to convey information (Knudson, et al., 1995); so what is "learned" by audience members is often unknown. Thus, misunderstandings about the meaning of concepts or the appropriate context of a situation which influence future learning and actions can take place. Professionals need to understand what meanings adult audience members are constructing (Carr, 1995; Silverman, 1995) to better serve the learner's needs.

The history museum chosen, CW, is accredited and operates within guidelines established by the AAM, the accrediting agency. Since its founding in 1926 by J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's educational programs have undergone changes that reflect its founder, administrators, outside consultants, and audience (Ellis, 1989). These changes relate specifically to those discussed as generally occurring within the field. Additionally, CW is prominent with an educated adult audience (CWF Marketing Services, April 26, 1996, personal communication; Market Researchers & Analysts, 1995), it is receptive to academic research (Ellis, 1989; Gable, Handler, & Lawson, 1992; Handler & Gable, 1997; Krugler, 1991; Trampusch, 1985), it exerts an innovative influence within the field (Ellis, 1989), and it provided a convenient and familiar location for the researcher.

The 1996 HF was chosen because no study had been done of this program which began in 1987, and it has had a suitable but declining audience profile (D. Chapman, November 15, 1995, personal communication). Due to findings of a study of a similar program (Market Researchers, Analysts, 1995), it was assumed that the HF attracts an older, well-educated audience. Additionally, the researcher has attended the program for five years. But most importantly, the HF provides the atmosphere for an open forum of ideas that is purposively sought by its planners; and the 1996 subject -- "First Amendment/Second Thoughts" -- was conducive to an inquiry of this nature.

Relevant Adult Education and Museum Evaluation Literature

Museum literature in adult education and evaluation. A thorough review of museum literature sources concerning adults has not revealed any model of adult learning proposed within the profession. (This fact was also substantiated by a review of the museum literature on adult education by Dufresne-Tassé in 1995). The most referenced work concerning adult education in the museum field is Collin's Museums, Adults and the Humanities (1981), selections of which were reprinted by the AAM in 1997. Dufresne-Tassé referred to the work of authors such as Allen (1981a, 1981b), Heimstra (1981a, 1981b), Knowles (1981a, 1981b), and Knox (1981a, 1981b), who contributed to the Collins volume. The concepts they espoused, namely self-directed learning, lifelong learning, and active learning directed toward community living, posed problems for Dufresne-Tassé, who suggested that museums in dealing with adults should increase their focus on the concept of pleasure (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995). Her emphasis may be understood in the light of the research and theory in leisure studies and adults' needs for recreational activities that dominated the museum field in the 70s and 80s (Yellis, 1990).

The work of Falk and Dierking (1992) was instrumental in refocusing leisure from recreation to the social experience that is available in museums. Silverman (1990) also emphasized the need to study the social functions that take place in a museum and the need to understand how meaning is made (Silverman, 1990, 1995).

However, with the recent emphasis on the constructivist paradigm (Cole, 1995; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995; Silverman, 1995), namely, "that each person's new 'construction' may differ from those of other people" (Knudson, et al., 1995, p. 135), and the emphasis adult educators have put on the individual's activity (Carr, 1985a, 1985b, 1990; Knowles, 1980, 1981b), a study from the perspective of individual audience members was much needed (L. H. Silverman, June - July, personal communication, 1996). Very little research had been conducted from the perspective of the visitor in a museum (Allard, 1995; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Hein, 1995; McManus, 1996; Munley, 1992; O'Connell, 1990). Previous and current studies have concentrated on observable behavior (Bitgood & Shettel, 1996; Serrell, 1997; Yellis, 1990) or have evaluated programs to document that a funded project achieved its stated objectives and reached visitors in appropriate numbers (O'Connell, 1990).

Generally, a museum's teaching function -- and specifically CW's teaching function -- is described as interpretive (Alexander, 1971; CWF, 1993; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995; Tilden, 1977). Thus, a model of adult learning that addresses interpretation would be most useful.

The Theoretical Basis for This Study. After examining the literature in the adult development and the adult education fields, the researcher chose Mezirow's (1991) work to provide a framework for this study because he dealt with a constructivist paradigm, he

incorporated concepts and strategies from various sources, and he specifically addressed the interpretive process and its relation to learning. Also, his was not a stage model which might have necessitated the researcher to judge either the merit of an idea or the cognitive or psychological level of a participant. (Please see the corresponding heading in Chapter II for a more detailed presentation of the researcher's choice.)

Mezirow's Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning (1991) provided a theory in which interpretation is at the core of the adult's learning experience. For Mezirow, learning occurs when a new or revised meaning of one's experience is constructed to guide future action. According to Mezirow, "meaning is making sense of or giving coherence to our experiences. *Meaning is an interpretation*" (p. 11). However, he noted that not all learning is transformational, leading to a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Transformational learning is influenced by the processes of critical self-reflection and the limitations that occur because of previous perspectives. Limitations of previous perspectives may be due to one's assumptions about the nature and use of knowledge, one's understanding of society and language, and one's awareness of earlier experiences that may be interfering with one's idea of adult functioning. These various perspectives affect the interpretive process (Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 1990).

Mezirow's (1991) theory provided both an organizing image of the phenomenon to be investigated and the various concepts in the meaning-making process. However, the researcher did not want to impose undue structure on the participants by instructing them in specific terms. Therefore, six primary functions, which have been defined by Mezirow and which can be understood by a generally educated audience, were selected to begin

this exploratory study: remembering, reflecting, doubting, imagining, validating, and constructing a new or revised meaning. Thus, the researcher was able to compare what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one found in the field and further analyze what emerged from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The Grand Questions

This study explored:

- What differences and similarities in meaning were there between those intended by planners of a HF and those reported by various audience participants?

Furthermore, it addressed the question:

- How do the meanings reported by selected audience participants change as a result of their experience with the program?

The Methodology

In choosing a methodology suitable to an inquiry about intended and constructed meanings the researcher was guided by the epistemological view called constructivism. This view is becoming more prominent in educational research (Lincoln, 1990; Schwandt, 1994), in theories of adult education (Driscoll, 1994; Mezirow, 1991), and in museum education (Cole, 1995; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995; Silverman, 1995); and it is most closely associated with the researcher's own view, especially in its "moderate" form (Goodman, 1978; Goodman & Elgin, 1988). (Goodman and Elgin expressed their view as one that "rejects both absolutism and nihilism, both unique truth and the indistinguishability of truth from falsity ... reconstruction over deconstruction, and

tolerate[s] neither the noumenal [known to exist but cannot be experienced] nor the merely possible nor any ready-made world” [Goodman & Elgin, 1988, p. 3).

This study was exploratory. Open-ended, semi-structured questions were used for questionnaires, interview formats, and evaluation forms to allow the respondents to choose what they wanted to talk about and to describe their thoughts, feelings, and actions in their own words. Follow-up probes in the first and subsequent interviews were framed from the participants' responses. Although Mezirow's (1991) conceptualizations of the interpretive process provided a basis from which to begin this investigation and to make appropriate deductions, the researcher looked for conceptualizations that might emerge from the data. Thus a method of analytic induction was also employed to attain a greater breadth of purpose and extent of comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Data was organized by categories related to the researcher's inquiry about functions the audience participants were performing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, the data was constantly revisited to identify the themes that emerged from each participant's response and the responses of the group as a whole.

In order to facilitate data reduction, methods suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) such as checklist matrices and networks were created. These visual devices along with "rich descriptions" are included for the reader's perusal. The reader may thus become aware of the audience's perspectives and be in a better position to assess the value of the interpretation that the researcher has provided, to form their own interpretations of what was occurring, and to determine what is specifically transferable to their circumstances.

Access to the history museum chosen (CW) and the program chosen (the 1996 HF, November 7-9) was obtained in 1994. In 1995 the researcher completed a pilot study

(in fulfillment of course requirements) without any planners and with different audience interviewees at two CW programs to determine the appropriateness of the questions and the usefulness of the responses to CW. The researcher found that the data gathered was substantial and the interest in talking about meaning was high, but that there was only a loose fit between the program's content and what the audience participants found meaningful. Thus, many particulars of the site and the program were familiar to the researcher. The audience participants chosen for this specific qualitative study were selected from a list of enrollees who filled out a pre-forum questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed. The planner participants included all those who agreed to be interviewed and who took part in the planning process. Thus the sample was essentially a convenience one. However, where a choice was possible -- namely among audience participants -- a purposive sampling strategy was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher interviewed fifteen audience participants who (as a group) represented some of the diversity found within the whole group of audience enrollees. The selection was based on the responses received from the pre-forum questionnaire to which the researcher paid attention to many factors such as gender and geographical location, previous attendance, and interest and/or depth of response. Triangulation of data was sought in order to insure internal validity (Merriam, 1988). For this study the multiple sources of evidence consisted of: a pre-forum questionnaire, interviews with planner participants and audience participants (and member checks for interview content verification), responses to evaluation questions (please see Appendixes A - D for all of the question formats used), audio-visual tapes made on site by the host museum, audio tapes made by the

researcher, review of documents concerning the program, and non-participant observation.

In summary, this research was an exploratory phenomenological study, using a specific program at a specific time and place. It employed a constructivist paradigm, used qualitative methods to collect the data which was triangulated, relied on both analytic induction and deduction to produce the findings, and concluded with interpretation to develop summaries and recommendations.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of this study arise from the delimitations: a specific number of participants, a specific program (1996 HF), and a specific living-history museum (CW). Thus generalizations about the findings cannot be made to other audiences, other programs, or other museums. The researcher specifically delimited her inquiry in the hope that insights may be gained about individuals in this exploratory study. These insights may provoke inquiry about and different attentiveness to the researcher's and others' future program planning, audience interaction, and research.

The Significance of the Study

Because this study provides comparisons between the intended meanings sought by planners and those constructed by audience participants, it may enable planners at this specific site to determine if there was an appropriate fit between the educational offerings of the institution and the audience's needs. Because this study also provides the differences in the content of meanings and the processes as reported by the audience participants, it may enable readers to appreciate some of the individual perspectives presented by the audience, their questions, their problems, their insightful moments. What

may be gained is an in-depth understanding of a specific program, and what may be illuminated are the patterns of expectation between planners and audience participants and the patterns of thought each reader or practitioner brings to their practice.

Museums and institutions of higher education are increasingly collaborating on the use of museum sites for college credit, internships, pre-service and in-service teacher training, and training of museum professionals (Danilov, 1994; Solinger 1990). Both types of institutions are interested in developing their potential to maximize their resources. Many older learners return to institutions of higher education as a result of interests sparked by museum visits. Both institutional facilities also commonly provide educational services to Elderhostel and alumni groups. What may be learned, by both learners and educators, in a museum environment, represents, "a veritable gold mine of untapped possibilities" (Eisner & Dobbs, 1986b, p. 49) and interests. At the very least, this study suggests future directions for research.

Personal Bias Statement

What especially attracted and qualified me for a study of this nature was my own position as a lifelong learner in higher education institutions and museums. Personally, the pursuit of knowledge has been and is a very satisfactory endeavor. After one career in educational publishing and at the beginning of a second, in museum education, I returned, in mid-adulthood, to pursue a doctoral degree. Of necessity, my studies had to be self-directed because there is no doctoral program available in this country that concentrates on museum studies (Danilov, 1994; Tramposch, 1985). (However, there are several programs at the doctoral level in different disciplines that have a museum studies

component [Danilov, 1994]). Also, I readily identified with the programmatic needs of a growing group of museum goers who are increasingly educated, increasingly older, but increasingly motivated toward a learning journey along paths that are less explored or developed.

My experience in working with individual and collaborating authors and in testing educational materials in the field made me realize how easily misinterpretations can be made. Through museum roles as an intern, volunteer, visitor-studies interviewer, educator, and participant, especially in the HF, I realized my own and the audiences' need to question, interpret, and make meaning of the various program offerings. I also became aware of their impatience with evaluation questionnaires that demanded precision or fitting their responses to a predetermined, highly structured format that did not match their needs. Even though programs peaked audience interests, the avenues to pursue more learning, particularly from an educated adult perspective, remained unclear.

My interests in history museums grew out of my own interdisciplinary background and my cross-cultural experiences, but crystallized as the result of preparing a package of educational materials for students and teachers visiting CW. I truly became excited about the teaching and learning opportunities available in such an environment. In Lincoln's (1990) words, I became a "passionate participant" (p. 86). My enthusiasm and research further sparked my need to have quality, continuing educational opportunities available in museums and to make these resources more available to other adults. Thus, my own need to know, understand, and express the visitors' views comes out of a need to continually strive for and have available even higher quality programming. I bring with me to this project what I have become -- a product of an educational tradition in which

quality learning comes from a personal relationship between teacher and student and programming presents a continuing quest for education goals that benefit the learner, the institution, and society.

Definitions

Constructivism: "building new knowledge, values and beliefs upon each individual's earlier constructs of knowledge and values" which takes into account "that each person's new 'construction' may differ from those of other people" (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995, p. 135).

Critical reflection: "challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning" (Mezirow & Associates, 1990, p. 12).

First-person interpreter: individual staff members who actually take on the roles of historical characters and talk to visitors as if they (the staff members) are in that time period (Anderson, 1984).

Imagining: "thinking of alternative ways of seeing and interpreting" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 83).

Intuiting: "having immediate direct knowledge without the use of language or reason" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 14).

Learning: "a process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience as a guide to awareness, feeling, and action" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 35).

Living-history museum: "one in which costumed interpreters 'animate' a restored site and invite visitors to involve themselves in the daily activities of the time the site represents" (Anderson, 1984, p. 12).

Meaning: "Meaning is making sense of or giving coherence to our experiences. *Meaning is an interpretation*" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11).

Meaning perspectives: "are sets of habits of expectation that filter perception and cognition. These habits of expectation may be predominantly sociolinguistic, epistemic, or psychological" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 33). "Meaning perspectives are groups of related meaning schemes" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 35).

Meaning schemes: "are sets of related and habitual expectations governing if-then, cause-effect, and category relationships as well as event sequences." An example of a meaning scheme is the expectation one has that walking will take more time to get somewhere

than if we run. "Meaning schemes provide the implicit rules for interpreting" (Mezirow & Associates, 1990, p. 2).

Museum: For the purposes of a report (Grogg, 1994), the following characteristics were adopted:

- is organized as a public or private nonprofit institution, existing on a permanent basis for essentially educational and aesthetic purposes
- cares for or owns and uses tangible objects, whether animate or inanimate, and exhibits these on a regular basis
- has at least one professional staff member or the full-time equivalent, whether paid or unpaid, whose primary responsibility is the acquisition, care, or exhibition of objects owned or used by the museum
- is open to the general public on a regular basis (the general public can or may arrange to visit on at least 120 days per year).

Further categorization of history museums and historic sites depends on the nature of the collection, specifically whether it has historical significance (Grogg, 1994, pp. 18-19).

Reflection: "process of critically assessing the content process or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 104).

Remembering: "an imaginative reconstructing of one's past reactions or experiences plus a limited amount of detail that appears to us in the form of words or images" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 29).

Social history: "history which first deals with ordinary people, rather than the elite and extends to interactive networks including events affecting the group, community, locale, region, state, and the nation as a whole" (Gardner & Adams, 1983, p. 4).

Third-person interpreter: individual staff members who interpret the past for visitors from a twentieth-century perspective (Anderson, 1984).

Transformational learning: "The process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights" (Mezirow & Associates, 1990, p. xvi).

Transformational psychology: "A branch of psychology concerned with expanding the field of psychological inquiry to include the study of optimal psychological health and well-being. An inquiry into the essential nature of being. It recognizes the potential for experiencing a broad range of states of consciousness, in some of which identity may extend beyond the usual limits of ego and personality" (Henry, 1988, p. 35).

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents demographic information and trends related to the mid to older adult population. It also reviews changes occurring within the museum field regarding institutional building and support, mission, and practices, and changes occurring at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, here also referred to as the CWF, the host organization for this study. Finally, this chapter provides a review of relevant adult education and museum evaluation literature and the work of Mezirow (1991), which was used as a conceptual basis for this study.

Adult Demographics and Trends

Although the population of the U.S. as a whole is increasing, a more dramatic change is occurring and forecasted for the population of mid to older adults (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, p. 15). This is due to the aging of the large cohort known as the "baby boomers." Also, an extended life expectancy especially for adults over 75 is projected to effect the percent distribution of this group in the year 2000 by 7% over 1980 figures (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, p. 47). In 1989, for the first time in U.S. history, the majority of adults were over the age of 40; but by the year 2002, the majority of adults will be over the age of 50 (Wolfe, 1993).

From an educational perspective, mid to older Americans demonstrate a trend already established, that is, they have reached higher levels of education before the age of 24 than previous generations (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, p. 176). From 1980 to

1995 the number of people over 65 having some college education almost doubled (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, p. 47). Yet, mid to older Americans continue to seek education throughout their lifetimes. Since 1970, the number of students aged 30 and over enrolled in institutions of higher education has increased fourfold (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1993, Fig. 15). Whereas traditionally the age to partake in adult education had been from 17 to 24, less than half of that segment of the population participated in adult education in 1994-95. At the same time, more than half the population between the ages of 25 to 44 participated and more than 30% of those 45 and older participated in adult education (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, p. 196). Although not calculated by age, the number of museum visits per person, per year rose from 1.5 in 1979 to 2.3 in 1988 (Grogg, 1994). At Colonial Williamsburg (CW), where visitation has substantially increased since 1970 (Ellis, 1989), more than 75% of the visitors were over the age of 40, 33% of them were 55 years and older, and 15% were at least 66 years of age (CWF Marketing Services, April 26, 1996, personal communication). Whereas the figures were based on incomplete general-admission data for 1994, similar findings for the Hampton Roads area were reported by Pelay [1993], in which case 63% of visitors were over the age of 45). Also, many of those attending adult seminars had graduate degrees (Market Researchers Analysts, 1995). Generally, programmatic innovations to accommodate the older members of the learning society, such as Fordham University's "The College at Sixty" (R. A. DeJulio, January, 1996, personal communication) and Elderhostel programs (located at institutions of higher learning and museums, such as CW) are enjoying growth nationally (C. P. E. Burgwyn, Jr., December, 1997, personal communication; O'Connell, 1990).

Another factor worth noting about some of these aging Americans is that their early retirements due partly to recent trends in organizational restructuring. Downsizing and corporate buy-outs may have left some of the population with sizeable nest eggs; however, many others have been less fortunate. “Between 1977 and 1989, three-fourths of the gain in pretax, real income of all American families went to the wealthiest 660,000 families. However, the median money income for the other families (in constant dollars from 1974 to 1992) either remained flat or declined” (Naylor, 1994, p. 73). Sklar reported in 1997 that there has been further marginalization of income nationwide: “The rich have gotten richer while the real weekly wages of average workers have fallen 16% since 1973” (pp. H1, H4).

Today, many adults of all ages seek second jobs to maintain their life styles, but also the “retired” of various ages seek second careers and enter higher education to acquire new skills. A great number of those in their "second adulthood" (late forties and beyond) also seek the stimulation that comes from pursuing their education (Sheehy, 1995). As studies confirm how much can be learned by older adults and how beneficial mental stimulation is to overall health and well being, our culture is experiencing an added intensity to the pursuit of lifelong learning (John, 1988).

The field of adult education has historically been described in terms of a variety of changing goals and objectives (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). Looking back, it is easier to understand how the growing number of adults entering higher education overwhelmed practitioners' questions of how to deal with theory building appropriate to “andragogy” (the art and science of helping adults learn) rather than “pedagogy” (the art and science of teaching children) (Knowles, 1980, p. 42). Cross (1981) noted the importance of

Maslow's ideas. Maslow (1954) maintained that most individuals could not be concerned about higher needs for self actualization or "development" (fulfillment of individual creative potential and acceptance of self, nature, and others [Stevens-Long, 1990, p. 139]) until lower needs for survival and safety had been met. His work accounted for adult-education marketing strategies which emphasized opportunities for upward mobility and status. Consequently, many scholars opted for a pragmatic approach, one that provided "service" to its "customers'" needs (Cross, 1981, pp. 110-112). A qualitative study by Houle (1961) to determine what distinguished the motivations of adult learners indicated that the greatest number of adults who pursued continuing education could be categorized as being goal oriented (having some goal to work toward). Smaller numbers were activity oriented (wanting to learn with other adults) or learning oriented (loved learning for its own sake). Houle interpreted his study to mean that smaller numbers of adults were willing to invest their energy in something for which they saw little practical use (Knowles, 1981a). In the 1970s, surveys made by Carp, Peterson, and Roefs (1974) and the Commission on Non-Traditional Study (1973) showed that a majority of respondents designated knowledge goals as "Very Important" [highest category] reasons for learning (Cross, 1981). More recently O'Connell (1990) reported that Elderhostel members at Old Sturbridge Village were motivated to pursue their intellectual growth over social welfare and social contact.

Another researcher, Yinger (1977, 1982), posed the following question to more than one thousand college and university students of various ages in sixteen countries: "What do you consider the one most fundamental or important issue for the human race; that is what do you see as the basic and permanent question for mankind, the question of

which all others are only parts?" (Bee, 1992, p. 367). Yinger (1977) did not control for the variable of age, but he did find a relationship between educational level (which he partly attributed to age) and the individual's response to the question. He suggested a future study address the question of meaning over a life span. Overall, Yinger found that "60 percent believed that problems of meaning were the most fundamental issues facing humanity" (Yinger, 1982, p. 81).

Studies have also indicated that older students prefer to take courses that provide a sense of meaning or encourage connection to a "school" of thought or discourse -- courses in history, anthropology, philosophy, religion, and language arts (Fischer, 1982; Ventura and Worthy, 1982). Although not broken down into age levels, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in 1993-94 in comparison to those conferred in 1988-89 has increased in social sciences and history more than any other field of study, and psychology lagged only slightly behind (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1996, Fig. 17). The preference for humanitarian program studies was noted in three museum case studies as well; however, efforts were made to also indicate the usefulness of humanitarian studies within the program (Arth, 1981; Katz, 1981; Mandle, 1981; Parks, 1981). Whereas the above museum programs drew serious learners (committed to 6-8 week programs), more casual learners (the cultural tourists) -- 46% of them -- included historic sites in their plans (Adams, 1995).

The preference for more meaningful or humanitarian programs is also indicated by the popular "College at 60 Program," which actually begins with four liberal arts seminars (R. A. DeJulio, January, 1996, personal communication). Also, seminars such as "The Search for Meaning" sponsored by Duke University have drawn learners,

primarily from the 55-65 age range, who have rated their experiences very positively (D. W. Fowlkes, January 3, 1996, personal communication). In the popular press, Sheehy (1995) noted, through questionnaires and interviews, that "The search for meaning in whatever we do becomes the universal preoccupation of Second Adulthood" (p. 148). She labeled this "The Meaning Crisis" and attributed it to the lack of satisfactory models of maturity available to those in the 1990s. Sheehy's work does not constitute proof of the occurrence of a meaning crisis. However, the trends in demographics, and changing roles in the family, workplace, and community -- with "off-season" experiences like retiring in early years and parenting in later years -- do warrant consideration in light of the research and theory emanating from higher education.

In a meta-analysis of research in adult development, Stevens-Long (1990) indicated that research has focused on hard and soft stage models predicated on ego, cognitive, or emotional development in mostly males and/or those in formal educational settings. The preponderance of the work has dealt with young adults and the last years of life, leaving much speculation as to what change, if any, occurs in mid to older years. Stevens-Long found a lack of theoretical models available for the later, mature years. However, by reviewing the writings of Erikson (1963, 1968, 1982, 1983), Jung (1933, 1960), and Edestein and Noam (1982), she found a commonality regarding the following goals:

- behavior -- reciprocal sharing
- cognition -- a sense of autonomy
- emotion -- toleration of conflict
- motivation -- integrity, the need to accept one's past as meaningful. (Stevens-Long, 1990).

Kegan (1982), an adult developmentalist, argued that meaning making is important at any age. What is experienced physically and concretely by an infant is the grasping of an object and what is experienced metaphysically and abstractly in later life is the grasp of comprehension. "At the bottom is the same thing: the activity of meaning" without which we would not survive or develop (Kegan, 1982, pp. 18-19). Kegan noted that from one perspective meaning making is one among many functions, all of which make up the self, the ego, or the person. From another perspective, meaning making is the very ground of personality itself -- "it *is* the person" -- and various other functions of a human being are considered in its context (pp. 2-3, 11). Building on the work of Erikson and Piaget, Kegan described life as a series of transformations in which the individual emerges from his or her embeddedness, a condition in which one is not individuated from an object of attention (namely, the impulsive, imperial, interpersonal, or institutional self). Each stage is an evolutionary truce between wanting to be included, joined, or integrated with others and wanting to be separate, independent, and differentiated. Kegan used the image of a helix to make clear the way we revisit old issues is with a whole new level of complexity to "re-solve" (p. 106) or "re-cognize" them (pp. 18-19).

Noting the similarities between descriptions of adult development espoused by soft-stage developmentalists (such as Kegan) and transpersonal psychologists (see Definitions) (such as Wilber), and educators involved in the concept of lifelong learning (such as Brookfield, Knowles, and Mezirow); Henry (1988) concluded that a new model was needed to guide the work of adult educators. By examining the language and concepts apparent in each of the three areas of study regarding transformation to yet a higher level of being (the self, or consciousness), Henry decided that a structure for

organizing common goals, objectives, and philosophies was important to open the dialogue between these disciplines in order to better serve the educational and developmental needs of tomorrow's adults. Her model proposed three levels of adult development: self-control, self-actualization, and self-realization. In the highest level, self-realization, which "human evolution appears to be at the point of providing more individual access to ... than every before, ... individuals are on an internal search for meaning and purpose" (Henry, 1988, p. 165). If museums are to serve the needs of tomorrow's adults, changes and problems that have and are occurring within the field need to be understood. These issues will be dealt with below.

Changes Occurring Within the Museum Field

This section addresses the dramatic changes that occurred in museums' institutional building and support, the more subtle shift in their mission, and the gradual changes and problems resulting from those changes with regard to programs and their content, exhibitions, and interpretive techniques. All of these factors have some bearing on the cancellation of an exhibit script, "The Last Act," which is representative of the challenge museums face today. In addition, changes experienced by the CWF are reviewed, especially regarding education and interpretation. This section ends with some critical and supporting views of how the past is perceived with regard to history museums.

Institutional Building and Support

The structures and infrastructures of higher-education institutions and museums went through a phenomenal growth period following mid-century. In fact, the fastest growing period in American museum history came during the second half of the

twentieth century (Danilov, 1994); since then 75% of our museums were founded (Grogg, 1994). Although much of this growth can be attributed to learning centers, called science museums, and children's museums whose collections are fabricated for educational purposes, a large number of traditional museums utilize original artifacts and may be categorized as history museums or historic sites (see Definitions). Of the 8,200 museums in the United States, 55% are historic sites or history museums and 56% of these have been established since 1965, accounting for the use and/or improvement of more than six million acres of land (Grogg, 1994).

Carr (1995) suggested that adults may be more fascinated with history museums as we approach the end of this century with a common search for understanding it. But adult's fascination with history museums may also be due to their accumulated personal histories which they seek to understand. "In museums, people attempt to place what they encounter -- be it object, fact, perspective -- within the context of their experience. ... Visitor studies as well as informal observation in galleries suggest that, through memory, visitors bring forth past experience" (Silverman, 1995, p. 162). One of the past experiences remembered among a group of 128 individuals interviewed was their school field trip recollections. "The most frequently recalled field trips were to historical sites or farms" (Falk & Dierking, 1995, p. 11). In the words of one director, Archibald, "History is not a museum. ... [It is] active participation in an effort to understand" (Archibald, 1994, p. 10).

Studies conducted by People, Places and Design Research (1990) have revealed that adults attending historic sites tend to think of history in terms of the "beginning" of a period with which they identify. Their survey at the Minnesota History Center revealed

that adults' strongest associations refer to the period of early settlement and development; whether they are in the Northeast or Midwest, adults are interested in the early development of their locale. The study also found that most people favored an interpretive style which emphasized the everyday life of ordinary people, associated with social history (see Definitions). Bruner (1990) argued that the use of story-telling, history, and biography are particularly useful to humans in their making of meaning. All of these features are available in a living-history museum (see Definitions).

Despite the popularity of history museums, these institutions as well as other educational institutions are caught in a quandary of where to turn next to relieve the strain of diminishing dollars. Effective December, 1995, The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a major funder for history museum incentives, received a budget reduction of almost 40% (American Association of Museums [referred to as AAM], 1996). Recently, the AAM reported that there is hope of only some funding being restored (AAM, 1997). Philanthropic giving, whether from private donors or corporations, has also dropped off dramatically (Jahnke, 1993; Naylor, 1994), especially for social and cultural history (Jahnke, 1993). Figures reported to the AAM showed a drop of 5% in earned income from 1979 to 1988 (Grogg, 1994) despite an ever-increasing charge for admission (Harney, 1992). As a result museums have turned to relationships of corporate sponsorship, one in which they produce a benefit for the promotional departments of corporations from which they receive funds. The "win-win game" has a downside in that corporations seek to be affiliated with only those programs that will generate mass appeal and admiration. This restricts museums from dealing with certain

educational issues and further compromises a museum's reputation while enhancing the image of companies whose reputation may be a bit tarnished (Jahnke, 1993).

Corporate sponsorships have also caused tax problems for museums. The IRS has ruled that in some cases corporate sponsorship amounts to advertising, not a contribution, and therefore must be taxed. And a competitor of museum stores, the Museum Company, threatened a lawsuit to contest the issue of unrelated business income tax (Roth, 1992). Another evolving trend for nonprofits concerns property taxes. As tax revenues decreased in certain communities, nonprofit educational institutions have been threatened or compelled to make up the financial loss to the community (Leland, 1994).

Museum support can also be viewed as a contribution of volunteer hours. According to a study of volunteer teachers (called docents or interpreters) in a museum, there was a high dropout rate due to the volunteers' lack of commitment to the goals and values of the institution and the lack of concern from the staff for the volunteers' growth and development (Arthur, 1988). These issues, when addressed through intensive training sessions for the Aztec exhibit at a Denver museum, left many of the 2,100 volunteers for the exhibit with a feeling that their time was meaningfully spent and useful (Pinkston, 1993). Unfortunately, even though history museums and sites attract the largest numbers of volunteers (Grogg, 1994) appropriate training increases the cost factor of programs.

Undoubtedly, the growing adult population has demonstrated an increasing interest and involvement in the programs at history museums; but, problematic support systems may jeopardize the meaningful educational experiences adults encounter at a critical time in their lives when they are seeking more meaning due in part to the changes occurring in our society and institutions. Paradoxically, the educational institutions which

are established to provide both a stabilizing influence and the direction for change based on learning are caught in the forces producing change. The paradox lies in the fact that "learning is both at the heart of all social conformity and also at the heart of all social change" (Jarvis, 1992, p. 24).

Mission and Implications

Dating back to ancient Greek schools, museums have always served as repositories of collections for learning (Solinger, 1990). Recently, however, there has been a shift in emphasis from "collecting" for educational purposes to "educating" through the collections. Since 1984 when the AAM published its report Museums for a New Century (AAM, 1984) and shortly after bimonthly updates in Excellence and Equity, the museum community has moved to adopt education as a primary purpose (Munley, 1994), even their main mission (Ames, 1988; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Malero, 1994).

Additionally, museums have and are encouraged to continue to establish new dialogues with *their* communities. In fact, Karp and Lavine (1993) argued that museums cannot even claim that museums have *their* communities since "The easy assumption that museums 'possess' communities can be easily reversed" (p. 44). The authors stressed the importance of the quality of the museum experience which is not indicated by the quantity of audience numbers. They related quality to the communication that takes place between exhibits and programs and audience members.

In Museums for a New Century (AAM, 1984), the uniqueness of the museum's informal environment and the importance of finding new ways to reach especially adults and foster their development was noted:

We urge that museums continue to build on their success as centers of learning by providing high-quality educational experiences for people of all ages, but in recognition of the increasing median age of our population, that they [museums] pay new attention to their programs for adults. Museum professionals must consider ways to introduce their institutions to the adult public as sources of intellectual enrichment, as places where learning can be spontaneous and personal and as opportunities for growth and thinking as well as seeing.

(AAM, 1984, p. 71)

In 1986, The Getty Center for Education in the Arts published a report prepared by two qualitative researchers (Eisner and Dobbs) from an institution of higher education, which aroused controversy within the profession (Staff, 1987). The authors regarded the field of museum education: "as a veritable gold mine of untapped possibilities, a unique resource for the creation of first-rate research and theory, and an important avenue for developing genuinely creative approaches for education" (Eisner & Dobbs, 1986b, p. 49). What they found however was: "a state of ignorance or confusion on the part of some museum directors concerning what museum education is and, at the other, museums in which the scope of what is offered is limited only by the imagination of the person in charge of museum education" (Eisner & Dobbs, 1986a, p. 11).

The work of Eisner and Dobbs attracted the criticism of Zeller (1987) because their quotations, according to him, were anonymous, out of context, and used for dramatic effect. In response to the lack of educational philosophy, Zeller cited the voices of early twentieth-century directors John Cotton Dana and Ives Gilman who led the way to open access and the museum's role in public education. However their philosophies of education were loosely structured and could be defined in Zeller's terms: "learning in museums is a random, spontaneous, individualized, and informal process" (Zeller, 1987, p. 18; see also Zeller, 1989 for a fuller treatment of this issue). It is interesting to note that

in selecting comments to publish for their 1992 compendium, the Museum Education Roundtable included White (1992), who although she was working in a zoo's education department wrote, "I forgot that I was reading about art museums and felt the report was describing my own situation" (White, 1992, p. 51). White cited four cogent points from the report that struck a chord for her:

- "There is a lack of consensus among museum professionals regarding the basic aims of museum education."
- "Museum educators perceive themselves to be without much political power."
- "Museum education lacks a sufficient intellectual base and theoretical foundation including that of scholarly models in the universities."
- "Museum educators have little or no technical training in research or evaluation methods relevant to their professional tasks." (White, 1992, p. 51)

In 1991, The Task Force on Museum Education noted that:

Museum professionals have few models of organizational structures and exemplary programming that encourage an expanded educational role for their institutions. They are further restricted by the absence of a body of professional literature, lack of contact with the broader field of education, and limited availability of training for staff and volunteers. (AAM, 1991, p. 7)

As a consequence of the shift in mission emphasis from collecting to educating, museums are seeking to redefine the role of educator and curator. Traditionally, the curator, as the subject matter specialist, was solely responsible for the educative message. However, as educators are taking their place on the team approach to program planning, an epistemological shift, noted by Roberts (1994) is emerging:

This shift has seen traditional views in which knowledge is objective and absolute overturned by the notion that knowledge is socially constructed, shaped by the interests and values of the knower. Museum educators, with their concern for audience diversity and multiple meanings, have been at the forefront of this shift in museums. (Roberts, 1994, p. 3)

However, museums in general represent the many disciplinary voices of historians, anthropologists, and art and literary critics who have questioned their approaches to the historical moment, their cultural bias, and the social influences on truth and aesthetic value. Thus the epistemological shift may not be due to the educators who have traditionally held a lower economic or political position in the field of museum education (Franco, 1992). Whatever the cause, an epistemological paradigm shift has, as Silverman stated, profound implications for history museums because: “the meaning-making paradigm offers a powerful reminder that history, when viewed as a process, is an *interpretation* -- a story or perspective that is crafted, albeit with expert documentation by certain people for certain ends” (Silverman, 1993, p. 8).

Teams, which share authority for program planning, have also included "front-line" personnel, that is first-person interpreters (those who reenact the life and persona of a historical person and view the past from the past) and third-person interpreters (the educators, docents, teachers, or even costumed staff who view the past from the present) (Leon & Piatt, 1989, p. 86). Because the interpreters come in daily contact with the visitors, frequently as a result of visitor studies, they bring the visitors' perspective to the team. This, undoubtedly, will put greater emphasis on a socially constructed reality and interpretation as a personal activity.

Museums' Practices

Variety of programs. In a museum, the word "program" is used to correspond to the term "curriculum" in higher education. (Note, it was the Curriculum Committee that drafted the interpretive program at CW in 1977.) Programs now available range from an exhibit with minimum signage (labels) to the multiple offerings such as those of a History

Forum (HF) at CW; namely, lectures, seminars, exhibits, hands-on activities (doing crafts, role-playing, using interactive technology), first-person and third-person interpretation, and access to resources (books and original documents and stored objects and their catalogues). How the visitor makes meaning of various program experiences has not been subjected to a serious study; when, in fact, there is indication that however popular museums are, their visitors are uncertain of a program's intended theme (Korn & Associates, 1994).

A recent focus group study with visitors at a leading museum¹ revealed that the visitors typically began their comments with descriptions of being overwhelmed and overstimulated by the collections. Visitors wanted to leave with more knowledge; they wanted collections to be better organized, signage to provide critical keys to understanding. They wanted a historian's suggestion of how important the object was in its context and connections to be made among interpreted exhibitions. The report concluded that the museum's educators and interpreters are likely to be the primary contributors to constructions of meaning.

Knowles (1980, 1981a), an adult educator who espoused the concept of a self-learner, nevertheless succinctly articulated his frustration: "Often I've walked in, gone through the exhibits and really felt talked down to, lectured at, sermoned at. ... I felt overloaded with information. I didn't know what it meant, how I could use it, how to interpret it" (Knowles, 1981a, p. 59).

¹ Request for complete confidentiality was made by the museum's personnel.

Exhibitions – objects and people. Before the turn of the twentieth century, objects were commonly exhibited by placing them in categories of like form with signage indicating where and by whom they were found. Through the work of anthropologist Boas, who put objects back into their context so that the visitors could view the objects from the perspective of a native of the culture, a "contextual" approach to exhibiting became more popular. The signage accompanying Boas' exhibits emphasized the function of an object -- how it was used by the members of a particular culture (Jacknis, 1985). As the field of object or material culture grew, scholars related objects to the men, women, and children who made, sold, bought, and used them. Studies progressed from things to people and their actions and then to the exploration of ideas about behavior. However, as Carson (1992) noted, "most exhibits at museums and historic sites do not utilize this approach. They fall short of establishing these relationships; they fail to search for explanations" (p. 129); and thus do not address historian's interest in change over time and help others explore why people and their actions differ from one decade to another (Carson, 1992).

This progression from dealing with objects to dealing with them in the context of ideas of their time is referred to as "thinking in time" or "contextualized thinking." Wineburg and Fournier (1993) described contextualized thinking as the "ability to perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at that time" (p. 26). It requires the development of historical empathy as opposed to being engrossed in the here and now. "Empathy here is the ability to transcend one's experience and embrace ideas and concepts that are foreign to one's world, using them to recapitulate the logic of people remote in time and space." The authors went on to say that contextualized thinking

"is one of the fundamental disciplinary understandings we want teachers of history to possess [so that] their students will learn from them to do so" (p. 26).

Boas also introduced the use of natives of a culture to add authenticity to his outdoor ethnographic exhibits. For example, he had a group of fourteen Kwakiutl Indians brought from British Columbia to perform ceremonials and live "as normally as possible" (Karp & Lavine, 1991, p. 349). Thus, the natives became a part of the exhibit. Without having the use of living personages from a culture of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, living-history museums adopted the use of first-person interpreters and "started calling the interpreters *informants*" (Deetz, 1981, p. 32). It soon became obvious that the visitors became the interpreters who came into an exhibit as anthropology fieldworkers to experience a community and elicit from it what they could (Deetz, 1981). From his experience at Plimoth Plantation, Deetz suspected "that we are often too hesitant to place visitors in the role of interpreter" (p. 33). He also noted a critical factor to consider whenever anyone is interpreting the physical world of the past. What is needed is "an *emic* [insider's] perspective, which looks at the physical world in terms of categories used by the people who lived in that world. Otherwise we make dreadful mistakes" (p. 31).

Content of programs. As museums reach out to diverse audiences to fulfill their educative mission in communities, the "curriculum" content issues have involved those also found in higher education: multiculturalism, the incorporation of different perspectives (Karp, Kreamer, & Lavine, 1992; Levine & Cureton, 1992), and integration, the use of a thematic approach (CWF, 1985; Jacobs, 1989).

In order to establish a multicultural perspective, efforts are still being made to authenticate exhibits and reach out to various audiences by inviting members of a specific

culture or age to become a part of programs. At CW, African-American interpreters are in charge of and give presentations of African-American programs (Lawson, 1995). Another technique in use is oral history, in which personal participation is given of an historic event (Ruffins, 1992).

To help the visitor make sense of their museum experience at CW, the Curriculum Committee chose themes, such as "Becoming Americans" and "The New Consumers" to accompany a storyline which had always served to convey the high ideals of the political history of the American Revolution (CWF, 1977). In 1985 the "Becoming Americans" theme was adopted and explained in Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg (CWF, 1985). Then, storylines, or sub-themes, such as "Choosing Revolution" and "Buying Culture," were placed within the framework of the larger theme, "Becoming Americans" (CWF, 1994).

In a 1994 study that looked at how visitors were identifying themes, it was found that although story lines helped the experimental-group visitors, the control-group visitors were less able to identify "Choosing Revolution":

Only two visitors understood the issue of choice and the concept that the Revolution was not inevitable. ... the most prominent theme for experimental group interviewees, other than Revolution, was slavery. ... [Additionally,] the theme of class was mentioned more by control group interviewees than by experimental group interviewees. (Korn & Associates, 1994, p. xii)

Clearly, what themes were intended by program planners and what themes were perceived by even experimental-group members were different. More important, what personal meaning, interpretation, was made of these themes by individual audience members was not probed.

In an informal investigation at another CW educational program, the researcher noted that visitors referred to themes of slavery and class although the program's emphasis was archaeology (Casey, 1995). The participants' responses to these as well as other themes provided further impetus for this research.

Interpretive techniques. The writers of A Report from the American Association of Museums Task Force of Museum Education noted that "a 'quiet revolution' in the philosophy of interpretation is underway" (AAM, 1991, p. 5). This statement can be understood by tracing the use of the word "interpretation" as an educative technique adopted by museums to its source, Enos Mills. Mills, who worked in the National Park Service at the turn of the century, was disenchanted by methods of formal education which he considered too rigid and structured. He advocated inspirational rather than informational means for reaching visitors (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995). In 1957 Tilden expanded on Mills' ideas of inspiration and spiritual meaning in Interpreting for Heritage (a book that remains in popular use among interpreters today) to describe this "newer device of education" (Tilden, 1977, p. 4). Tilden defined interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (p. 8). While not claiming any definitive statement, Tilden wrote a chapter on each of the six principles he thought germane to interpretation:

- must relate to the personality or experience of the visitor
- is revelation based on information
- is an art that is in some degree teachable
- has a chief aim of provocation not instruction
- must address itself to the whole person
- must be different for adults and children. (Tilden, 1977, p. 9)

Alderson and Low (1976) and Alexander (1979) (all of whom have worked at CW) carried Tilden's suggestions further for different ways in which the interpretive message could be carried out with film, live actors, lectures, publications and merchandising (Alexander, 1979), and ways for selecting and training interpreters (Alderson & Low, 1976).

In 1993, at the CWF, there was an examination of the written objectives for their programs to determine what functions were promoted to use with visitors. It was discovered that the word most frequently used was "interpret." The word least frequently used was "teach," and just above that occurred the word "educate." The following definition was given: "Interpretation is a communication process, designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural heritage to the public through first-hand involvement" (CWF, 1993, p. 2). Considering the lack of emphasis placed on the word "educate" it is no surprise that there is a relatively small amount of adult educational theory available in museum literature. This will be addressed in a later section.

Knudson, Cable, and Beck (1995) put a great deal of emphasis on the interactive-communication aspect of interpretation and discriminated between seven different structures of communication that may occur in any one program. The first, didactic, is unidirectional from the interpreter to a group of visitors. The second and third forms of interpretation are still unidirectional but more tutorial in that they involve one-on-one personal interactions. The last four structures are seen as multidirectional in which either a task, a problem, the visitors, or a combination of all three become center stage. The authors noted, however, that out of practicality and necessity, "most impersonal and much

personal interpretation use the didactic approach" (p. 139). Richards and Menninger (1993) also observed that, "Educational services for adults have traditionally been characterized by a one-way flow of information and a structured format" (Richards & Menninger, 1993, p. 6). Additionally, Knudson, Cable, and Beck (1995) noted the philosophical similarities between the work of Mills and Tilden and the approach of educational teaching theory today called "constructivist." Put simply both involve "building new knowledge, values and beliefs upon each individual's earlier constructs of knowledge and values" and both take into account "that each person's new 'construction' may differ from those of other people" (p. 135). Although the constructivist philosophy, which acknowledges that individuals will form their own interpretations based on personal experience and prior knowledge, has been noted in museum education circles (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Hein, 1995; Roberts, 1994; Silverman, 1995), these same individuals acknowledge that little is known about the interpretations or meanings visitors construct or the use of learning theory which incorporates interpretation. (Personal communication with approximately 50 educators and evaluators attending the American Association of Museums' annual convention, May 21-25, 1995, and people they suggested the researcher contact supported this observation.) The problem facing museum educators can be understood by reviewing some of the prolific writings provoked by multiple scripts for an exhibit of the Enola Gay.

An interpretation problem -- the Enola Gay. As museums reached out to different audiences and attempted to place their objects within a cultural context, they have increasingly attracted controversy (Bunch, 1995). A recent battle, over the exhibit of the Enola Gay to have been shown in "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of

World War II," resulted in the dismissal of the National Air and Space Museum's director, Harwit, after five revisions of the script for the exhibit (Harwit, 1996; Kohn, 1995). Harwit's dismissal involved congressional intervention, where it was decided that the exhibit would include the Enola Gay's fuselage, a minimum amount of descriptive labels, and a videotape of the crew in the cockpit of the B-29 that carried the A bomb called "Little Boy." The Secretary of the Smithsonian, Heyman, noted this would allow the plane and the Air Force personnel "to speak for themselves" (Noble, 1995, p. 75). Additionally, Secretary Heyman promised the exhibit catalogue would never be published (Harwit, 1995).

The event was reviewed by ex-Director Harwit as primarily a conflict in the museum's mission -- commemoration v education (Harwit, 1995) in which the Enola Gay was a symbol of peace to some veterans groups and a symbol of war to some historians and curators (Harwit, 1996). A culture critic, Wallace (1996), who read the scripts, reduced the battle over the Enola Gay to a culture war that ended in historical cleansing and political censorship by a conservative faction that claimed it was liberating the masses from political correctness. An historian, Kohn (1995), who also criticized "The Last Act," cast the conflict as a twenty-year-old culture war between scholarly standards and standards of a celebratory institution, military v university historians, and a political shift from a Democratic to a Republican congress. According to Kohn:

What most bothered the critics, including some historians, and led to the public campaign of opposition by the Air Force Association, other veterans' groups, politicians, and commentators were not the carefully crafted statements of interpretation, virtually all of which were consensus scholarship. (A very few statements, mostly taken out of context, were used publicly to accuse the museum of an anti-American and pro-Japanese portrayal.) The problems with the script were the omission of material, the emphasis on other material, the order and

placement of facts and analysis, and the tone and mood. Taken as a whole and read with the emotional impact on viewers in mind, the exhibition *was* in fact unbalanced; it possessed a very clear and potent point of view. On a level of feeling that could be reached more powerfully through the senses of sight and sound than through the intellectuality of words the exhibit appealed to viewers' emotions, and its message could be read to be tendentious and moralizing [emphasis added]. (Kohn, 1995, pp. 1043-44)

Further in his commentary, Kohn noted the exhibit "could be read" to swing the weight of sympathy clearly to the Japanese side (Kohn, 1995, p. 1044). Furthermore, "the text also took every opportunity to pose alternatives and raise doubts. Viewers of the exhibition could not help but walk away believing, as the planning promised, that a different outcome was possible and preferable. ... the script as a whole emphasized how hindsight could differ [emphasis added]" (Kohn, 1995, p. 1045).

Throughout the article, Kohn continually brought up his fears about raising any doubt concerning the decision to use the bomb. However he left this reader wondering how an exhibit that includes only a previously rusting artifact now restored with minute attention to the smallest bolt, complete with a new and shiny encasement of what held an enormously large bomb can be seen as balanced by the audience of the most visited museum in the world. How will visitors construct their meaning of the Enola Gay? Will it be only from a personal historical context, one that is particular if not absent? Or will it include the scholarly reconstruction of the past, one that is more universal and critical? Another historian, Sherwin, offered a succinct comment, "Memories may contribute to the construction of history, but history does not necessarily validate memory" (Sherwin, 1995, p. 1091). What is needed in presenting history is "its dark as well as triumphant sides" (Sodei, 1995, p. 1123) because such considerations can do more than deepen our retrospective understanding of decisions made in the past. "They also can help us better

appreciate the complexities of crisis policy making in general" (Dower, 1995, p. 1126), thus helping adults buy into the vision of leadership.

In a very real sense, our history now includes the fact that the controversial crisis involving "The Last Act" has been put off instead of seizing the opportunity to deal, publicly, with various perspectives both from the context of the past as well as the present. As for the future, Washburn, then Director of the American Studies Program at the Smithsonian Institution, wrote that museums must

chart a careful course ... emphasizing education (as in science museums) where the museum educates better than our problem-plagued schools, emphasizing research (as in natural history museums) where the advance of knowledge depends upon collections maintained over long periods, and emphasizing preservation (as in historic house museums) where maintenance of unique examples of our architectural history is the principal reason for a museum's existence. (Washburn, 1996, p. 63)

Unless we can accept learning as an activity to enlarge our understanding by accepting new facts, perspectives previously unknown, and premises not tested within a present context, education becomes a meaningless endeavor both for the educators and the learners. All of our decisions, are time bound, limited by the perspectives, information, and amount of time we have available to use when we are making that decision.

Hindsight, reflection, and new information may engender a new interpretation and a new decision, but essentially, is that not what education, especially in history, is all about -- namely, gaining an increasingly informed perspective of the past to guide us into the future? The motto adopted by the CWF is that "the future learn from the past" (CWF, 1985, p. 6).

Education and interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg. In 1989, Ellis completed a Doctoral thesis, Presenting the Past: Education, Interpretation and the Teaching of Black History at Colonial Williamsburg, which provided some of the basis for the following review. In 1926 J. D. Rockefeller, Jr. was convinced by the vision of W. A. R. Goodwin, Rector of Bruton Parish and teacher at the College of William and Mary, to restore the town of Williamsburg, Virginia to every extent possible that it existed in colonial times. Rockefeller authorized the first purchase of Williamsburg property and commissioned Goodwin to hire an architectural firm. He communicated his desire to A. Woods, the first President of the CWF and the Williamsburg Holding Corporation, to create "a great center for historical study and inspiration" (Ellis, 1989, p. 21). Initially, the extensive research program that ensued to rebuild the town dwarfed the museum's education and interpretation programs. However, Kopper (1986), in Colonial Williamsburg, noted that Rockefeller opposed efforts to make Williamsburg "educational" in the first place (Ellis, 1989). According to Ed Alexander, the term "interpretation" was adopted because it had less of an educational connotation, which Rockefeller regarded as too didactic and structured (Ellis, 1989). Despite these obstacles, Rutherford, Goodwin's son, produced the first informational booklet for visitors in 1932 and CWF's first publication, Brief and True Report of Williamsburg in Virginia, in 1933; he also experimented with educational programs for VIPs and school groups, initiated hospitality training for the tour guides (called hostesses), devised an interpretive methodology (based on "accurate" answers to visitors questions), and even introduced recorded voices in the Capitol Building (Ellis, 1989).

Just before W. W. II, 200,000 visitors (many in chauffeur-driven limousines) were attracted annually to the restored buildings and gardens and the amenities of southern hospitality. However, the dramatic changes taking place in Europe made Rockefeller realize an even greater value in his Williamsburg investment: "the lesson that it teaches of the patriotism, high purpose, and unselfish devotion of our forefathers to the common good" (Ellis, 1989 p. 32). In the following years, interpretation was reorganized to focus on patriotic themes, servicemen were accommodated, and sessions on the roots of democracy and the accompanying privileges and challenges of citizenship were conducted for both nationals and internationals. In 1956, the film, "Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot" was produced, which is popular even today. The film depicts John Fry, who after intense emotional conflict decides to give up his loyalty to the King and side with his patriot friends.

During the postwar years, the number of crafts demonstrated increased to seventeen, a new site (at Carter's Grove) was acquired and a new building (for the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection) was constructed. CW received national acclaim on the televised "Today Show," and was chosen for an annual meeting of the AAM. Nevertheless, funding, as Rockefeller, Jr. requested, was still allocated to completion of the construction process -- not for education. And, in fact, a fundamental difference of opinion concerning the education goals of the CWF led to the resignation of John D. Rockefeller, III, who finally left his position as chairman of the board in 1953 (Ellis, 1989).

In 1954, Arthur Goodfriend completed a confidential report, based on the impressions he and his wife and daughter personally collected from CW's visitors, with these words:

Williamsburg, to fulfill its interpretive function, needs someone, in its inner counsels, who speaks for people. ... If he listens well, and evaluates shrewdly, and reports honestly -- Williamsburg will become part of the people -- not a relic of a distant past, but warm, alive, strong and sentient. Williamsburg can give the people inspiration only to the degree that Williamsburg, and all it is and does, is inspired by the people, and responds to their felt and unfelt need. (Goodfriend, 1954, pp. 15-16)

However, Ellis (1989) found no evidence that any part of Goodfriend's report was acted on, nor that it was seen by more than one member of the Foundation.

The CWF did respond to two reports however that specifically concerned educational matters. Cresap, McCormick, and Paget (1952) noted a competition for credit, as well as funds, between the Public Information and the Interpretation Divisions (Ellis, 1989); lack of agreement on objectives in the planning of education projects within the Division of Interpretation; conflict between education and sales objectives (Ellis, 1989; Ware, 1979); and an emphasis on "special events" for selected audiences without similar efforts to improve presentations overall. The Foundation responded with a reorganization (Ellis, 1989).

The research firm of Child and Waters, Inc. (Waters, 1960) conducted a survey of 735 visitors (62% females). The bulk of the report represented raw data with little analyses and primarily concluded that a high proportion of those visitors could mention specific Williamsburg experiences and could express some educational correlate especially when they accompanied children. The Foundation responded by putting greater emphasis on family programs (Ellis, 1989).

The historical story to be told at CW finally took precedence over the restoration through the long tenure and patience of E. P. Alexander. During his 25 years at the Foundation he was instrumental in developing the research, publications, and audio-visual departments, the Antiques Forum and Garden Symposium (programs which enjoy popularity today), what is now called the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture with the College of William & Mary (and its major publication, The William and Mary Quarterly), the Seminar for Historical Administrators (first museum-based program created to teach museum administrators and professionals courses in museum education and administration), and school programs and workshops. Most notably, Alexander influenced craft demonstrations and the interpretive program by gradually introducing suggestions from three consulting firms: Newsome and Company (1948), Teague and Harper (1948), and Cresap, McCormick, and Paget (1952). His purpose was:

to re-create accurately the environment of the men and women of eighteenth-century Williamsburg [and] to bring about such an understanding of the lives and times of the men and women of eighteenth-century Williamsburg that present and future generations may more vividly appreciate the contribution of these early Americans to the ideals and culture of our country. (Alexander, 1971, p. 8)

But Alexander framed the value of learning about the colonial era in terms of the individualism that was evident in American culture:

The whole idea of individualism with its related concepts of individual worth or human liberty, responsible leadership of public service, belief in self-government, individual rights, and opportunity were well understood in eighteenth-century Williamsburg and still undergird the American system of government. (Alexander, 1971, p. 15)

Alexander also realized that CW was not emphasizing "Negro" life in its interpretation and proposed to do so through books and films. Productions, however, were few. In

greater use were message repeaters, proposed by Alexander, which delivered prerecorded historic information about Williamsburg's Black population (Ellis, 1989).

By the mid seventies, more than one million people per year visited the Foundation -- including many heads of state who were safely accommodated and entertained on their way to the White House. Additional restored buildings were opened to the public and sites were developed to interpret Black history, archaeology, and family life. The Foundation enjoyed the support of the largest endowment fund of any history museum in the United States and continued to attract corporate support. For those who could not visit, "A Williamsburg Sampler," a 30 minute color film, was shown on national television and made available to clubs, schools, and various groups (Ellis, 1989).

However, from the decade before 1975, but especially the decade after, the Foundation went through changes in its research program and historical symposia to provide the interpretive materials for its growing educational programs -- namely, crafts, music, drama, films, publications, and living-history. In response to its public's increased awareness and demand for topics dealing with social history, Black history, and women's studies, the Foundation once again became an innovator, a model that other museums would come to respect and imitate (Ellis, 1989).

During those years, an "old guard" (represented by Alexander) who talked about the importance of educational areas, was replaced by a "new guard" (represented by P. A. G. Brown, C. Longworth, C. Carson, R. Birney, D. A. O'Toole, and W. J. Tramposch), who implemented new programs. The "new guard" aimed at introducing more participatory learning and continued to ask new questions of the past (Ellis, 1989). The questions and answers were related to a "kind of social history" described by C. Carson

as one that “pays primary attention to the associations that *every* person in a *community* [emphasis added] formed with his fellow men and women in the cause of raising families, earning livings, making laws, practicing religion, and whatever else cannot be done alone” (CWF, 1981, p. 7). Thus the educational thrust of the Foundation moved from an interpretation of buildings and objects, from the lives of leaders and the elite of eighteenth-century Williamsburg to a more holistic understanding of the colonial community, the impact individuals had on each other, and the relationship eighteenth-century Williamsburg experienced within a larger context (Ellis, 1989).

Ideas that were developed in an 82-page report prepared by the Curriculum Committee (CWF, 1977) finally became the basis of Teaching History at Colonial Williamsburg (CWF, 1985): “The object is not to extort from the eighteenth century ill-fitting parallels to twentieth-century situations, but rather to give visitors a framework of ideas and the analytic skills they need to ask how any community works” (CWF, 1977, p. 13).

Ellis' recounting of educational and interpretive endeavors at CW were chronologically dealt with as two separate evolving thrusts. Although he cited the work of individuals such as Goodwin and Alexander who influenced both educational philosophy and interpretation programs, the fact remains that separate departments had been maintained for these endeavors and no overriding philosophy or theme was prevalent. “The only prerequisite was that it [education/interpretation] had to be established fact” (Ellis, 1989, p. 221). It was not until 1979 that a Department of Interpretive Education was formed to: “expand the organization's training endeavors and to create pertinent and consistent programs for the five departments comprising the

Divisions of Historic Area Programs and Operations” (Tramposch, 1981, p. 10). Later, in 1983, a new interpretive training program was implemented that offered Preliminary Interpretive Education and a Core Curriculum division-wide. However training for separate sites, emphasis on factual material, lack of presentational-skills training, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation of interpreters still resulted in a great deal of variety in interpretation (Ellis, 1989).

At the end of his dissertation, Ellis (1989) noted that part of the "new guard" had left, namely, Brown and Tramposch, and that major restructuring of the Foundation was in effect. President Longworth was quoted: “Success at Colonial Williamsburg is, however, best measured by the quality of our educational acts, whether in research publication, or interpretation for the public. ... 1988 is notable for significant advances in our black history program and the acclaim for our second History Forum” (CWF, 1988, p. 1). Since its preceding president, Humelsine (part of the "old guard"), the educational mission of the Foundation had been more clearly established and a fourteen-page "Education Strategic Planning Document" was produced in which D. A. O’Toole set out the following goals:

- To Preserve and Present the Heritage of America's Beginning.
 - To Teach the History of Early America.
 - To Provide Visitors with Hospitality, Service, and Products of Quality and Value.
- (CWF, 1989, p. 2)

In 1990, a team of anthropologists began a two-year ethnographic case study of the CWF to which O’Toole and Carson (two of Ellis’ “new guard”) had helped them gain access (Carson, 1994). Together or separately they produced several articles (Gable & Handler, 1993, 1994; Gable, Handler, & Lawson, 1992) and a thesis (Lawson, 1995).

Lawson (1995) focused her attention on the African-American programs, the “Other Half” tours and the interpretation at Carter’s Grove, which she found presented the relationship between the races as either co-dependent or one in which equality could be presumed (because 90% of the White population were presented as living just like the Blacks), thus the issue of slavery was either “diminished” or “invisible” (Lawson, 1995, pp. 356-57). Lawson felt CW “not only reflected the hegemonic relationship which exists between blacks and whites in American culture, it often reproduced, unconsciously, the racism inherent in that hegemonic relationship” (p. v).

Gable and Handler (1994) criticized an internal pedagogic practice that they found was not conducive to critical analysis in spite of a “rhetoric of openness” which CW espoused. They saw the main task of interpreters in “the bureaucratic museum ... was not to construct meaning out of evidence, but to enliven and embody meanings already established by their superiors” (Gable & Handler, 1994, pp. 120, 136). Carson (1994) retorted that in his opinion, “these views are becoming increasingly anachronistic” (p. 139). He noted that “program planning at CW provides the fundamental rhythmic and harmonic structure. Beyond that basic chord pattern, all is improvisation” (p. 145). Also in 1994, a draft of Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to Be Both Free and Equal: A Plan of Thematic Interpretation was widely circulated and “elicited over thirty written responses representing the opinions of two to three hundred employees” (CWF, 1994, Acknowledgments).

In 1996, a Training Edition providing a Plan of Thematic Interpretation was published under the title Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to Be Both Free and Equal (CWF, 1996a). It presented six storylines (“expropriation of the western frontier, the

growth of slavery, the spread of store-bought culture, the redefinition of family relationships, the developing political and constitutional crisis with Great Britain, and the separation of church and state” [p. 17]). Each storyline included key points, a narrative, its relationship to the “Becoming Americans” theme, connections to other themes, and suggested readings. A team of four writers -- C. Carson, K. Kelly, C. Matthews, and W. White -- complemented by the efforts of 60 more of CWF’s staff, hoped to bring “historical perspective to values and attitudes that still provoke controversy in American society” (p. 17). It was further hoped that the overall plan would reaffirm “our commitment to explore the forces that have simultaneously divided and united the nation,” and define “Becoming Americans” as the “story of our unending endeavors to resolve the paradox between personal liberty and the pursuit of individual happiness and the equally potent ideals of social justice and opportunity for all” (p. 16).

Korn and Associates (1996) offered 39 visitors (age 9 and over) \$30 for agreeing to an interview after spending at least two days visiting 5 out of 8 sites in the historic area where the “Choosing Revolution” interpretations were taking place. Korn referred to this as a “cued testing” sample (pp. 2, 17). Korn found that about 3/4 of the interviewees talked about the tension in the relation between Virginians and the Crown, but some “focused their remarks either on the tax issue or on the time period” (p. 3). Some interpreters interviewed relayed visitor disappointment at having to hear the words “choosing Revolution” one more time (p. 19). Korn suggested using a variety of words “because there is also a danger that visitors will hear ‘choosing Revolution’ but not really understand the intended meaning behind the words” (p. 20). However, “Visitors’ understanding of ‘Becoming Americans’ is less evident in the visitor data” (p. 20).

Nevertheless, Korn and Associates felt there was an improvement, in comparison to their 1994 study, in the visitors' grasp of themes.

As of 1997, all of those Ellis referred to as the "new guard" except Carson had left CW, and its leadership has been provided by President R. Wilburn. Wilburn in the 1996 Annual Report wrote the following:

We are a business -- an educational business, but a business nevertheless. Like any business, we have strategic plans. Our major objectives are:

- To ensure a meaningful and memorable experience for Colonial Williamsburg visitors
- To use outreach to inform visitors and new audiences of the Colonial Williamsburg experience
- To increase organizational efficiencies and build revenues through new ventures. (CWF, 1997, p. 6)

Although there was a slight increase in visitors over the previous year, it was under the visitation figures that surpassed one million in past years. There were declines in hotel and restaurant and conference sale revenues, but increases of 9% in gifts. It was primarily through a gift of the Annenbergs that the Bruton Heights School Education Center was built, opening in 1996. From the center's studios, CW Productions reached 2.2 million students in one school year via satellite and telephone links. Additionally, 1/4 million people from 50 different countries visited an Internet web site (CWF, 1997).

In The New History in an Old Museum, Handler and Gable (1997) described the new history as one based on a constructionist theory of social history and progressive realism or mimesis. For them a constructionist theory "stresses that history is more than the sum of the available facts; the construction of history depends on the viewpoint of historians, on the messages or meanings that historians choose (perhaps unconsciously) to convey. History, in short, is a story with a moral, with a meaning that cannot be adduced

from the facts alone” (p. 59). Both Handler and Gable considered themselves more radically constructionist than the CW historians. As for progressivism, the authors saw the use of facts, which were increasingly uncovered at CW to shed new light on old stories and used “to make the past come alive” (a metaphor used by CW), as somewhat “ahistorical” because “only one significant event -- the discovery of new evidence -- occurs again and again” (p. 75). Handler and Gable found that the employees who came into contact with the public on the “front line” used “just the facts” to defend themselves against management and the visitors. They claimed that as a result of having to appear primarily sociable and not having an equal voice in a hierarchical corporation, the front-line staff eroded the constructionist message. The authors in a few brief closing statements suggested that “the intelligentsia at CW need to be more responsible for the museum’s historiographical end product” (p. 223), and “make simultaneously a special effort to empower the least enfranchised” (p. 235).

Some perceptions of the “past” at history museums. Changes are evident in the museum field and indeed can be expected because a “permanent exhibit may remain in place for as little as five years, change is the norm” (Leon and Rosenzweig, 1989, p. xiv). However, the critics of especially living-history museums have accused these institutions of changing the past in order to preserve established hegemonic relationships in society and/or to appeal to visitors’ needs for nostalgia with safe, simple, and sanitized pictures of the past that can be cherished in communal memory (Handler & Gable, 1997; Huxtable, 1963; Lawson, 1995; Leon & Piatt, 1989; Wallace, 1989, 1996; Walsh, 1992). The critics contended that an idealized or an artificially constructed reality of the past is presented, one with which visitors can find similarities and establish a common identity.

However, Lowenthal (1985), through the use of literary quotes and examples of recent growth in the preservation movement, contended that the past has increasingly become a “foreign realm” because:

new historical perspectives have outmoded once customary ways of feeling and using it [the past]. ... [And] wholehearted faith in tradition, the guidance of past examples, empathetic communion with great figures of antiquity, the solaces of a golden age, evocative ruminations over ruins and relics – these modes of engaging with bygone times have largely ceased to be credible. History has made them obsolete. (Lowenthal, 1985, p. xxiv)

Voices within the museum profession (Deetz, 1977; Yellis, 1991) have stressed the need to use research to recreate as accurately as possible the time period being interpreted so that visitors could appreciate the differences in the culture they encountered at a historic site. Yellis claimed that to encounter the alien worldview of the past is to be disturbed out of the “lazy,” comforting notion that one understands the past and is somehow connected to it. “The visitor may in fact be connected, but he will have to struggle to earn that connection, and he has to be disconnected first to experience confusion and disorientation” (Yellis, 1991, p. 20). “Moreover,” added Yellis, “because the cultural assumptions and mores are so different between now and then, the visitor can find himself in situations he finds awkward or uncomfortable” (Yellis, 1991, p. 26) in as much as we begin to find ourselves in what we reject as the “other.”

Relevant Adult Education and Museum Evaluation Literature

Museum Literature in Adult Education and Evaluation

After systematically examining bibliographic references and computer listings relating to program evaluations in museums at historic sites, Allard (1995) reported finding “no works, articles or reports specifically relating to the evaluation of educational

programmes (also known as interpretation and communication programmes) developed by staff at historic sites for the general public or a specific category of visitors” (p. 235). Allard found “slim pickings indeed” and referred to an earlier search by Shettel (1989), “one of the pioneers of museum evaluation,” who identified 325 museum evaluation studies, very few which dealt with the evaluation of public programs (p. 235). Generally, the greater number of evaluations are performed in museums of science and technology, followed by art museums and then history museums. “Historic sites are at the very bottom of the list” (Allard, 1995, p. 236). Because the researcher also found few examples of program evaluations, the evaluation-literature review, which in this chapter evolves from the adult-education review, covers the museum field in general. Other evaluation works are noted where they are specific to a site (that is, Education and interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg). However, several studies which helped prepare the researcher for this project, may also enlighten the reader.

Waldorf (1995) used an interview format with 80 visitors at the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science to determine what visitors’ conceptions were about plantations and slavery. Waldorf reported that “While visitors have generalized ideas about plantations, they will need the specific historical context provided for them, especially in the areas where Bellevue’s [the plantation where a new interpretation including slavery was being planned] story conflicts with the impressions they have collected from popular culture” (p. 21). In a sample that included 78% Whites and 20% African-Americans, the findings revealed that the visitors were interested in the topics to be discussed, especially as they would relate to the “stories of people” in the past and to their own present-day lives. However, most of the participants believed “other visitors

will be uncomfortable with the subject” (p. 17). Whereas this study was not performed on a program, it does show that importance was being attached to visitors’ prior assumptions in setting up the interpretive program.

The purpose of Hirsch’s (1992) study was to obtain, analyze, and interpret the structure and restructure of schemata or thought structures of the Holocaust as depicted in concept maps generated by gifted adolescent students visiting the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. The students were instructed on how to construct concept maps, which they made: before entry to the museum (indicating prior knowledge), after participation in one advance-organizer treatment (with two different levels of exposure to instruction), after exposure to the exhibit and eyewitness presentations, and after interaction with their peers. Hirsch reported that advance organizers and exposure to a museum exhibit influenced the individuals to modify and restructure their schemata. Contrary to previous research reported by others, even experts (those who indicated a wider knowledge base) did not show as much of an increase in their schemata as the intensive advance-organizer group did; however, there were more expressions of feeling in the less intensive treatment group. Hirsch concluded: “the meaningfulness of exhibits is enhanced when a museum takes into account the [conceptual] developmental characteristics of its audience” (p. 258). Also, because students used various means to express themselves on topics sensitive in nature, “teachers need to be equally sensitive to opportunities of expression of feeling during a period of study” (p. 260).

O’Connell (1990), a museum educator at Old Sturbridge Village, did his study with Elderhostel groups that enrolled there for two programs, one of which was craft oriented and the other, was similar to a graduate-level history course. O’Connell

incorporated ideas from the Chain of Response Theory by Cross (1984) and used the Boshier-Riddell Education Participation Scale for Older Adults. It is interesting to note that several items on the scale were changed after a pilot study because “the irrelevance of the items had a negative influence on the participants’ faith in the validity of the survey and on their willingness to complete it” (p. 129), and because “research on Elderhostel participants demonstrates that they are motivated more by meaning than by the vocational/career change goals of younger adults” (O’Connell, February 3, 1996, personal communication). Some substitutions made in the scale were: “To get something meaningful out of life” and “To become more interesting as a person.” O’Connell’s results indicated that the motivation to pursue intellectual growth was the highest ($M = 2.76$), followed by social welfare ($M = 2.36$) and then social contact ($M = 2.10$). The weakest motivator was what Boshier (1978) called “escape/stimulation ($M = 1.51$) (p. 146). As for the items that were substituted, they had either “Much” or “Moderate” influence ($M = 2.60$ and $M = 2.50$ respectively), and O’Connell wrote that the items “should be included in future research” whenever using the scale (p. 148).

O’Connell (1990) also based his research on Kolb’s (1984) Theories of Experiential Learning and Learning Styles. In testing the groups, he found that the crafts group had a stronger motivation for social contact than the group that signed up for the lecture-type program. On the whole, “Divergers (29%) and Accommodators (28%) exceeded Assimilators (22.1%) and Convergors (21.3%) by a margin of nearly 60% to 40%” (p. 149). A post-hoc analysis revealed that “there were significant differences between the two groups with respect to their preferences for grasping information, but

there were no significant differences between the groups in their preferences for transforming information into meaning” (p. 163).

O’Connell’s (1990) research convinced him that the programs at Old Sturbridge Village needed to continue to be targeted and designed for specific audiences with the planners’ understanding of the audiences’ motivation and learning styles (O’Connell, February 3, 1996, personal communication). He was originally motivated to perform his investigation because of the growing percentage of the elderly in the United States’ population and the potential of museums to fill this cohort’s educational needs (O’Connell, 1990).

Two recent studies were similarly motivated by the “elder-boon” interest in lifelong learning. Waring (1996) was concerned that teachers of adults were trained not as adult educators but as subject-matter experts in their fields. Nevertheless, she found that the characteristics and practices encouraged by the adult education field (namely, enthusiasm for teaching their subject, respect and concern for their students, and patience) were the same as those stressed by the teachers who had learned to be effective in their own fields. Through the use of interviews in a case study approach, Waring determined that the effective teachers often reflected on their teaching. She concluded that the ability to reflect on their own experiences as students and to think and react to their own teaching may have been a key to these teachers’ effectiveness.

Whereas Waring (1996) considered various institutions (including museums) that offered adult programs, Sachatello-Sawyer (1996) surveyed only museum educators to assess the types of formal adult programs taking place, to delineate the educators’ teaching styles with adults, and to determine how principles of adult education were used

in program design. Using the Principles of Adult Learning Scale developed by Conti in 1985, Sachatello-Sawyer reported that the data revealed that museum educators were receptive to the principles of adult education and had developed links with adult community members. She recommended that seminars be conducted by museum professionals (in collaboration with experts in adult education) for museum professionals on how to launch and maintain a “robust” adult education program in a museum setting.

It is too soon to ascertain if the last two studies have had any impact on adult museum educators; however, it is interesting to note that researchers are attending to the field of adult education in museums. Generally, the field of museum education has drawn on the work of theorists in higher education (Berry & Mayer, 1989; Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). With specific regard to adult education, writers from academia (most notably Allen [1981a, 1981b], Carr [1985a, 1985b, 1995], Hiemstra [1981a, 1981b], Knowles [1981a, 1981b], and Knox [1981a, 1981b]) have contributed articles on ideas they felt were germane to the museum profession. With the exception of Carr, writings from these authors are included in Museums, Adults and the Humanities (Collins, 1981) which remains a much referenced text in museum adult education literature. A review of the adult education literature has not revealed any model of adult learning in a museum proposed from within the profession. The thoroughness of the researcher’s review can also be substantiated by the literature review of Dufresne-Tassé (1995). Dufresne-Tassé presented four principles which she felt embodied the work of the writers available in the museum adult education literature:

- the principle function is to foster learning
- the goal is to satisfy needs or help solve problems

- learning requires multiple activities and should orient itself to the community
- activities must not be primarily inspired by the museum's collections, but rather the needs of the population served. (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995, p. 245)

Dufresne-Tassé found each of these principles posed problems and offered the question, "Is this because, in academic or popular education, adults study to satisfy a need to solve a problem, while in the museum setting they act for pleasure?" (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995, pp. 246–47). Her analysis, while ignoring concepts such as the self-directed learner, learning based on prior experience, and lifelong learning developed by the authors cited, led her to focus on the concept of pleasure. Accordingly, she developed five opposing pairs of pleasures: contemplation v action, outer manipulation v introspection, revelation v frustration, emotion v intellect, novelty v habit. She proposed that these pleasures lead the adult to "intense affective functioning," which is the most obvious benefit of a museum visit, but not afforded by learning. (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995, p. 251).

The fact that no theoretical model of adult learning in museums has arisen may be attributed to the fact that so little rigorous educational research has been conducted in the field (Borun & Korn, 1995; Munley, 1992). However, the emphasis Dufresne-Tassé placed on pleasure may be better understood by reviewing some seminal ideas related to adult educational programming which have come from several disciplines.

In Museums, Adults and the Humanities by Collins (1981), Knowles (1981a) noted: "The psychological definition of an adult is a person who has come to perceive himself or herself as being essentially responsible for his or her own life" (Knowles, 1981a, p. 57). Because adults have a broader and deeper accumulation of experience from living from which they also have learned, they view life as having opportunities for

lifelong learning (Knowles, 1981b). Adults are motivated to undertake education in the hope or expectation of learning something that will enable them to cope more effectively with life (Knowles 1981a; Knox, 1981a) or enjoy life more (Knowles, 1981a) in a world of accelerating change (Knowles, 1981b). These premises led Knowles to draw distinctions between the underlying assumptions of educators in pedagogical and andragogical models of learning. Please see Table 1.

Table 1.

Comparison of assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy made by Knowles (1981a, p. 54).

Subject of Assumption	Pedagogical Model	Andragogical Model
Direction of the learning process	Teacher-directed learning	Self-directed learning
Concept of the learner	Dependent personality	Increasingly self-directed organism
Role of Learners' experience	To be built on more than used	A rich resource for learning
Readiness to learn	Dictated by curriculum	Develops from life tasks and problems
Orientation to learning	Subject-centered	Task- or problem-centered
Motivation	External rewards and punishments	Internal incentives, curiosity

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Knowles (1981a) and Hiemstra (1981b) were impressed with the research of Tough (1971, 1979). Tough stressed adults' internal motivation to build on their experiences to pursue not only a teacher's but also their own objectives. Tough found that adult learners did not start with "terminal behavior objectives. They start by examining why they are dissatisfied with something or with themselves -- sort of a consciousness-raising step" (Knowles, 1981a, p. 51). Whereas some adult learners, may be more "field

dependent," requiring more structure and guidance in their learning activities, they are capable of learning, and unlearning and restructuring some of their values if given supportive, meaningful instruction (Hiemstra, 1981b). However, "Adults learn best when they take an active part in the teaching-learning process" (Hiemstra, 1981b, p. 63).

Neither Knowles nor Hiemstra ignored the role of the teacher, rather they emphasized the role of the responsible learner in the process of learning. Since many museums provide exhibits without interpreters, or interpretations that are unidirectional (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995), the concept of a self-directed learner was easily adopted. Note the comment offered by Borun (1992): "The visit is a self-directed learning sequence; the visitor is free to determine his or her own pace, to linger and backtrack, to explore items of particular interest, to pose questions and search for answers" (p. 13). A problem arose however from the assumption "that the public sought the same benefits the museums were offering" (Yellis, 1990, p. 172).

The need for museum professionals to understand the community in which the adult presently lives, encounters problems, and learns was stressed by Allen (1981b) and later by Perry, Roberts, Morrissey, and Silverman (1996). Hiemstra (1981a) gave this idea concrete form by proposing that the museum become a community resource center.

Dufresne-Tassé felt this posed

as many problems as the adult educators' other recommendations. Indeed, this change would cause the museum to neglect activities for which it possesses important and even unique resources in western society and to venture into areas where other institutions have already demonstrated their pertinence and effectiveness. (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995, p. 246)

However, Karp (1992) argued that museums are an essential part of the community

because they provide "places for defining who people are and how they should act and as

places for challenging those definitions" (Karp, 1992, p. 4). To substantiate his position Karp cites cases of controversy over which community (which cultural identity) owns the museum (Karp, 1992; Karp, Kreamer, & Lavine, 1992). He felt the challenge facing museums is "to fashion inclusive ways of going about their work" (Karp, 1992, p. 10), while operating as a community of workers, bound by a mission statement, who nevertheless open their doors to visitors. Visitors, who through their attention or inattention, criticism or appraisal, or contribution of money or resources become temporary, if not permanent, members of the museum community (Karp, Kreamer, & Lavine, 1992). Within a context of communal learning and learning about the community, both museum learners and educators are not only self-directed, they are involved in a shared social process (Carr, 1985b; Freedman, 1985).

The social process involved in learning became more apparent to the museum profession through the use of, and research into, the field of leisure studies. As museums found themselves in a more competitive market for visitors' dollars and leisure time, they became more interested in leisure studies and in studying visitors' motives and behavior in recreation. Yellis (1990) noted: "What such findings suggest, and in fact what Rolf Meyersohn argued as early as 1969 in The Sociology of Leisure in the United States, is that people rarely adopt new leisure habits in the absence of a social support pattern of some kind, since recreation generally occurs in the context of individuals sharing a social bond" (Yellis, 1990, pp. 178-79).

Noting the importance of the social context through their own visitor studies and that reported in the literature, Falk and Dierking (1992) proposed an "Interactive Experience Model" as a lens through which to view and try to make sense of museum

visits and experiences. The model can be visualized as a three-dimensional image of three interacting spheres:

- physical context -- the collection of structures and things of which the museum is comprised
- personal context -- experiences and knowledge of the visitor (including motivations, concerns, agendas, and goals for self fulfillment)
- social context -- interaction with other visitors and museum staff.

(Falk & Dierking, 1992, pp. 2-3)

Falk and Dierking (1992) stated, "The visitor's personal context is perhaps the single greatest influence on the visitor's museum experience" (p. 37). This places emphasis on understanding the individual's expectations and perspective and what the outcome was for the individual within the context of a constructivist paradigm. It draws attention to the crux of the problem. As Hein (1995) indicated, "We still face the dilemma posed by an effort to determine both the outcome of teaching and the outcome of learning" (p. 192).

While considering the concept of an adult self-directed learner, we need to ask what have the adults learned? Virtually few attempts have been made to comprehend the museum visit from the visitors' perspective (Allard, 1995; Doering, Pekarik, & Kindlon, 1997; Hein, 1995; McManus, 1996; Yellis, 1991). Shettel (1989), a pioneer of museum evaluation, suggested that lack of funds as well as passive staff resistance may explain the situation. However, Borun and Korn (1995) claimed that problems arise from the lack of training for visitor studies professionals. Whereas, Munley (1992) attributed the problem to the lack of understanding and use of "research." She distinguished among various forms of research: the most practiced form, namely institutional self-analysis; a less popular form, namely audience research from the perspective of the visitors; and the least

used research model, conducted with rigor and driven from a theoretical proposition and a researcher's desire to know more.

Historically, museum visitor research has worked from the inside out (Yellis, 1990) especially with regard to history museums and historic sites (Allard, 1995). Thus, researchers looked at observable behavior of visitors (time spent and even eye movements in front of an exhibit, flow patterns, and so on) (Serrell, 1997; Yellis, 1990). Or, researchers evaluated programs to document that a funded project achieved its stated objectives and reached visitors in appropriate numbers (O'Connell, 1990).

In the AAM's report (1984), the authors emphasized the need to research education as it takes place within an "informal environment." However, no specific description of this was given. Allen (1981a) noted that "adults learn much more effectively in an informal environment" (p. 77). He described it as being nonthreatening and comfortable. Borun (1992) described the atmosphere as "relaxed." After an exhaustive survey of the literature of leisure science and sociology, Hood (1981) examined museum visitors in Toledo and found that infrequent visitors, like non-visitors, "perceive museums to be formal, formidable places, inaccessible to them because they usually have had little preparation to read the 'museum code,' places that invoke restrictions on group social behavior and on active participation" (Yellis, 1990, p. 181). Thus what constitutes an informal environment has various and loose connotations in the museum field and to its visitors.

Formal versus informal education can be simplified to mean highly structured learning that is institutionally sponsored compared to less structured learning that is in the hands of the learner (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). However, the simplification of terms

makes understanding learning in the museum environment more complex. In an event such as the HF at CW, informal learning may take place in a formal environment such as a lecture, and formal learning may take place as a visitor enters into a dramatic presentation. Additionally, when formal programs with stated objectives view outcomes in their own terms, powerful outcomes from "incidental" and "tacit learning" may never be noted. Marsick and Watkins (1990) defined incidental learning as "a byproduct of another activity" (p. 7). It is unintentional and occurs in an indeterminate, unsystematic, uncontrolled context. Incidental learning is often tacit; it is solely influenced by the context, that is, the particular situation in which something happens. People may learn new behaviors almost unconsciously by observing others and modeling what they say or do. Where education does not help learners make explicit what they are learning, education can reinforce error for it "leaves each individual often strengthened in accepting their greatest fears or accepting their most comfortable but arkane [sic.] thoughts" (p. 14).

An informal environment, one that is comfortable and relaxed is powerful (Allen, 1981a), appealing for its pleasure (Dufresne-Tassé, 1995), but especially vulnerable if it does not allow both the educator and the learner to make their views explicit, thus leaving the most challenging issues facing us all in a thick fog where anyone's quest for truth or objective reality is purely an individual groping. Perhaps Lindemann best captured the challenge of andragogy when he described adult education as:

a cooperative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique

of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life and hence elevates living itself to the level of adventurous experiment.

(Lindemann, 1926, p. 546)

The fact that adult museum goers are more educated than in the past, come with more formal and informal educational experiences collected over a longer life span, makes it imperative to understand their perspectives in order to provide meaningful educational experiences for their future and their increasing numbers. Adults may involve themselves in leisure activities in which they seek pleasure, but positive "happiness ratings" on exit evaluations will not indicate what sense, if any, they have made of their experience. Pleasure can be derived whether or not learning takes place. The link between pleasure and education is rooted in the satisfaction that comes from a sense of growth and development, which is personal.

If learning is to be felt as a positive experience, then the products of learning must be effectively integrated into a wide and flexible array of subsequent thoughts, feeling and actions. The learning must become personally significant. (Thomas & Harri-Augstein, 1985, p. 14)

Carr (1995) stressed that meaning making can take place in a museum in the context of memories evoked, concepts presented, and active participation with the thoughts of others and personal thoughts.

Although Dufresne-Tassé's (1995) results are not yet available, she described five pleasure benefits as a result of her previous studies that are related to visitors' cognitive and intense affective functioning. Accordingly, she monitored thirteen functions: manifesting, noting, identifying, situating, evoking, comparing-distinguishing, grasping, explaining-clarifying-justifying, transforming-modifying-suggesting, solving, anticipating, verifying, judging. Silverman (1990) analyzed visitors' talk in which visitors

actively negotiated meaning with their companions through a mass media framework. She noted functions that are performed in a museum to fulfill the need for individuality (resting, contemplating, restoring, and expressing self through reminiscence, reflection, and evaluation) and the need for community (sharing and storytelling) (Silverman, 1995). From the position of an adult educator, Carr (1990) was much more specific about various functions:

In the museum, the pursuit of knowledge involves framing the unknown; determining relevance and connection; applying critical thoughts to relationships and structures; exploring memory; sorting objects from context; understanding taxonomy, chronology, function; reaching for insight among the resources of the self; looking for information beyond the museum; making tentative judgments and revising them; considering closure; and planning future learning.

(Carr, 1990, p.10)

However, Carr (1990) stressed that "consideration of the adult learner in a museum begins with -- and returns to -- the moment of decision and reflection" (p. 7). He contended that, "The museum is a setting for critical choices and acts of mind; the construction of meaning is the most important of these" (p. 13). He supported his position by paraphrasing Knowles from a taped conversation between Brookfield (1987b) and Knowles:

learning requires a moment when people redefine themselves and their roles. They change from passive to active, from spectators and recipients to creators and actors. They become determined self-facilitators and critical receivers of information; they become individuals in the process of transforming their experiences. (Carr, 1990, p. 11)

In a later work Carr (1995) wrote of his own transforming experience in connection with the exhibit Remember the Children: Daniel's Story -- a Child's-eye View of the Holocaust. While talking to his class, Carr remembered a guide in his late 60s who had reminisced about his ghetto experiences, his fears, his lost parents and siblings. The

guide had pointed to a wall-sized camp photograph and to himself in the picture. Then he had rolled up his sleeve to show a tattooed number just above his wristwatch. For Carr, "the presence of a witness and the authority of his voice had filled my experience completely" (p. 4). In recalling his memory, Carr's voice faltered in front of his class, "not with new knowledge of my own, but with the sudden transformation of the narrative, the change in information I had experienced that day through the eyewitness memories of my guide. ... No narrative I had command of, either on my shelves or in my thoughts had the weight of this encounter." In words of his own and those of another Carr described a transforming experience as seeing into memory:

as if into a mirror [and finding] a sudden, entire world of intimate connection [which can] make possible a leap from one's own fear and dread to insights and reflections, and even lead to overcoming fear with the help of what one was most afraid of. (Carr, 1995, p. 4)

Not all museum experiences provide such dramatic transforming experiences, but they can arouse questioning, reflecting, imagining, and communicating which may reinforce previously held meanings, leave visitors in a state of confusion, or lead to different personal constructions of meaning. A study dealing with all of the variables presented by the many program features and the various perspectives brought by each of the audience members would be beyond the scope of any individual researcher. However, a research project that focuses on the intended meanings of program planners and the meanings sought and constructed by individual attendees may provide insight and direction for further studies into areas that are most troublesome or valuable to visitors. Furthermore, by framing the inquiry in the context of the functions involved in

interpretation, a study deals with the very process that is at the heart of any museum visit, that is, interpretation.

The lack of evaluation studies using the visitor's perspective may be one reason why there is no theory of adult learning that has arisen from museum professionals. But, Mezirow, an adult educator virtually unknown to the museum field (established through personal communication with various American Association of Museum's conference members, May 21-25, 1995), synthesized many concepts in adult education and adult development in his Theory of Transformative Learning that offer some valuable conceptual tools to begin studying adult audience members.

The Theoretical Basis for This Study

Because the researcher has had an interest generally in adult development and specifically in adult cognitive development for over 20 years, the consideration given to a theorist who could provide a conceptual framework for this study was extensive. The search became one of identifying a scholar whose model would deal with the adult functions the researcher expected to encounter as a result of working in the field and a scholar whose insights would harmonize with the ideas the researcher had formed. In order to simplify the options considered for this study, several categories that are generally recognized as functional or life stage versus hard or soft structural stage models are used (Boucouvalas & Krupp, 1989). The functional or life stage models address different roles, responsibilities, and tasks but do not deal with the structure of consciousness or cognition. This category includes the work of such authors as Baltes and Schaie (1973), Gilligan (1982), and Kohlberg (1971), which were not considered for this study because they covered an expanse of life experience or focused too specifically on

one aspect of development which would be consequential but tangential to making meaning.

Hard and soft stage models which provide distinct properties in a sequential and hierarchical progress for cognitive functions (for example Arlin [1975]; Horn [1982]; King & Kitchener [1994]; Perry [1990]; Riegel [1973]; Rybash, Hoyer, & Roodin [1986]) or ego functions (for example Erickson [1980], Kegan [1982], Weathersby [1990]) were rejected because the researcher did not want to be judgmental about the meanings formed or the person forming them. However these writers as well as others prominent in the adult education field such as Brookfield (1985, 1987a, 1990), Cross (1981), and Knowles (1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1984), helped enrich the researcher's understanding and made her aware of certain issues important to the adult with regard to being a critical thinker, being self-directed, and having special needs.

Another group of writers, who emphasized the social construction of knowledge (such as Bruner [1986], Sternberg [1985, 1988], and Vgotsky [1978]), were rejected as foundational theorists for this study because the researcher intended to view each participant individually for their particular constructs. She was more interested in how experiences become internalized and became social agencies in the mind, much as was described by Minsky (1986). Besides, the social experience of visitors has been and is continuing to be investigated in museums by Falk and Dierking (1992) and Silverman (1990). Although the works of Csikszentmihalyi (1989, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) and Gardner (1983) have attracted attention within the museum field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992), these authors address optimal experiences.

However, ascertaining or categorizing these experiences was not the purpose of this research.

The writers mentioned above in addition to anthologists who focused specifically on learning and development in the older years (such as Craik & Trehub [1982]; Howe & Brainerd [1988]; Marton, Hounsell, & Entwistle [1984]; Merriam & Cunningham [1989]; Nemiroff & Colarusso [1990]; Sinnot & Cavanaugh [1991]) are some of the many who influenced the researcher's understanding of the complexity involved in the formation of a mental construction. One of the appeals of Mezirow's (1991) work was his ability to deal with the cognitive areas in relation to epistemological, social, and psychological issues and to draw on and synthesize the work of others. But, most of all, the functions with which he concerned himself all involved interpretation, which is the basis of the museum's relationship to its public.

Several adult educators have placed an emphasis on learning as a meaning-making experience (Dahlgren, 1984; Jarvis, 1992; Mezirow, 1990, 1991; Thomas & Harri-Augstein, 1985). However they did not provide a model whereas Mezirow (1991) did, and he incorporated meaning-making, interpretation, into the core of his theory in Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning. He wrote, "*Meaning is an interpretation. Meaning is making sense of or giving coherence to our experiences*" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11). Our experiences, and what we construct of them, the meaning we attach to them, depends on the psychological, social, cultural, and physical context of the event in which we are involved at that time. Mezirow elaborated: "Remembering is a reconstruction of past events. ... [It] may be reproductive, constructive, or reconstructive and can involve a copy of an experience, the construct of the meaning of a new experience, or the

reconstruction of a meaning previously assigned to an experience" (p. 10). Thus, the meaning we construct also depends on our memory of previous meanings. As events and their context continue or change, human beings continually construct or reconstruct meanings.

Within the constructivist paradigm, Schwandt (1994) identified various philosophies, most notably those of Gergen and Gergen (1991), Goodman (1978; Goodman & Elgin, 1988), and von Glasersfeld (1991). According to Goodman (1978), "worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking" (p. 6). Cognition is reconceptualized as the advancement of understanding in which we begin:

from what happens to be currently adopted and proceed to integrate and organize, weed out and supplement, not in order to arrive at truth about something already made but in order to make something right -- to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention. (Goodman & Elgin, 1988, p. 163)

A more radical view of constructivism was taken by von Glasersfeld (1991); he stated, "I claim that we cannot even imagine what the word 'to exist' might mean in an ontological context, because we cannot conceive of 'being' without the notions of space and time, and these two notions are among the first of our conceptual constructs" (p. 17). A primarily social view of constructivism was emphasized by Gergen & Gergen (1991). Accordingly, "accounts of the world ... are not viewed as the external expression of the speaker's internal processes (such as cognition, intention), but as an expression of relationships among persons" (p. 78).

In consideration of the probable age (over forty) and the educational level achieved by the audience participants in this study (many of whom may be at the

graduate level [Market Researchers and Analysts, 1995]), and due to the fact that each participant will be individually interviewed the researcher considers Goodman's (Goodman, 1978; Goodman & Elgin, 1988) moderate view of constructivism as the most appropriate and most closely associated with her own position. Goodman and Elgin (1988) reject a radical view. They reject both absolutism and nihilism, and stress reconstruction over deconstruction. Furthermore they state:

Empiricism maintains that knowledge depends on experience. This contention, although true enough, may be misleading. For it neglects to mention that the dependence goes both ways – that experience likewise depends on knowledge. Our expectations and beliefs about a situation affect the character of our experiences concerning it. They guide our investigations and structure our perceptual field. (Goodman & Elgin, 1988, p. 5)

This view is also compatible with Mezirow. According to Mezirow (1991), "Learning may be understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construct a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 12). The significance of meaning in determining future action was also noted by Dewey (1933), "Only when things about us have meaning for us, only when they signify consequences that can be reached by using them in certain ways, is any such thing as intentional, deliberate control of them possible" (p. 19).

Mezirow (1991) referred to this understanding of learning and memory as the "contextual approach" (p. 9). His view is consistent with a constructivist theory which "rests on the assumption that knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their experiences" (Driscoll, 1994, p. 360). Although constructivists are divided as to how much an individual's subjective view of reality actually corresponds to reality, most constructivists agree that limits to subjective differences are imposed by

human biological characteristics as well as by what is possible in reality. Furthermore, many constructivists adhere to notions about the social negotiation of meaning, "That is, learners test their own understandings against those of others, notably those of teachers or peers" (Driscoll, 1994, p. 361). As Bruner commented:

So if one asks the question, where is the meaning of social concepts -- in the world, in the meaner's head or in interpersonal negotiation -- one is compelled to answer that it is the last of these. Meaning is what we can agree upon or at least accept as a working basis for seeking agreement about the concept at hand. (Bruner, 1986, p. 122)

For Mezirow (1991), there are also limits on the correspondence between one's constructed view of reality and reality itself. These limits are imposed by the assumptions that adults hold which may not have been fully developed or critically evaluated.

Mezirow referred to these as "premise distortions" because they represent a selected or partial view of reality. He described three varieties of premise distortions: epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological.

1) Epistemic premise distortions are distorted assumptions about the nature and use of knowledge (Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 1991). Mezirow (1991) referred to the theoretical perspective of Guess (1981) and Knox (1977) and the research of Kitchener and King (1991). Guess identified three common types of distorted epistemic assumptions: (a) propositions are meaningful only if they can be verified empirically, (b) phenomenon (the Law, the Church, the Bomb, the Government) produced by social interaction are immutable and beyond human control, and (c) concepts that are descriptive (life stages, learning styles, personality characteristics) can be used as prescriptive (Mezirow, 1991). Knox (1977) described the concept of "cognitive style" as being composed of nine dimensions ranging from tolerance of

perceptions that differ from conventional experience to preference for a category range that is broad and inclusive rather than narrow and exclusive. King and Kitchener (1994) proposed a model of Reflective Judgement after their research with students in high school, college, and graduate school. Their model includes seven stages in which individuals move away from the assumption that every problem has a correct solution if only the right expert could be found, and toward a provisional consensual judgement based upon critical discourse (Kitchener & King, 1991; King & Kitchener, 1994). Kitchener and King (1991) concluded that movement toward reflective judgement continues into the young adult years as long as individuals continue their formal education. They and Mezirow (1991) make a strong case for educators helping learners overcome epistemic distortions by fostering critical reflection to assess the validity of problematic assumptions.

2) Sociolinguistic premise distortions include all the mechanisms by which society and language arbitrarily shape and limit one's perception and understanding. These may relate to our parents' location in the social structure and their own personal biographies and idiosyncrasies which may influence one's perception of reality (Mezirow, 1991) or to existing ideologies such as Sowell's (1986) identification of the "constrained" or "unconstrained" visions of society. In the constrained view, humans are hopelessly flawed; in the later, the notion of inherent limits is rejected (Mezirow, 1991). What we interpret as the realities of our social life are also the products of our linguistic use. As an example, Mezirow referred to our understanding of the meaning of "big." "Each of us associates 'big' with somewhat different dimensions and things. The total meaning of big thus includes many different meanings for different people. In a descriptive sentence

beginning 'Big things are ...' someone can be in error or resort to superstition, stereotypes, or other distortions" (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 59-60). Thus what we really have is an ambiguous text that is constantly in need of interpretation.

3) Psychological premise distortions are artifacts of earlier experiences that block necessary adult functions. They produce ways of feeling and acting that cause us pain because they are inconsistent with our self-concept or sense of how we want to be as adults. Among other premises, psychological distortions may include concepts of the self, tolerance of ambiguity, inhibitions, defense mechanisms, avoidance, and characterological preferences (Mezirow, 1991).

Mezirow (1991) maintained that learning in the early years is formative, whereas in later years it is transformative. Its chief aim is to overcome the limited personal and social meanings we have constructed and move toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning of our experiences.

Mezirow stressed that:

Not all learning is transformative. We can learn simply by adding knowledge to our meaning schemes or learning new meaning schemes with which to make interpretations about our experience (Mezirow, 1991, p. 223). ... [However,] learning involves using thought processes to make or revise an interpretation in a new context, applying the knowledge resulting from prior thought and or prior tacit learning to construe meaning in a new encounter. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 13)

Mezirow (1991) identified many functions involved in an individual's interpretative, meaning-making, process. For example he discriminated between reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection in order to explain further the difference between changing one's meaning schemes and transforming one's meaning perspectives. However, he stated that all reflection implies an element of critique and that

critical reflection would be reserved to refer to challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning. Overall, the researcher is comfortable with his assumptions and constructs. He has provided a pattern theory, that is, "something is explained when it is so related to a set of other elements that together they constitute a unified system" (Kaplan, 1964, p. 333). However, Mezirow's model is not a predictive one (Kerlinger, 1986); rather his purpose is to "provide a firm foundation for a philosophy of adult education from which appropriate practices for goal setting, needs assessment, program development, instruction, and research could be derived" (Mezirow, 1991, p. xii).

Because the field of museum education is in need of theory to inform its adult education practices, the researcher used some of Mezirow's constructs as an "organizing image of the phenomenon to be investigated" (Riley, 1963, p. 5), and "as a catalytic element in the unfolding of theoretical knowledge" (Eckstein, 1975, p. 100). Thus findings will be reported in a manner suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) "to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field" (p. 253).

Concepts derived from Mezirow have been used outside of the museum profession in research endeavors. Three authors were investigated: Keane (1985), Dudley (1987), and Henry (1988), whose work was reviewed earlier in *Adult Demographics and Trends*. Keane (1985) conducted a phenomenological analysis of his experience and that of five other men. He found that several processes occurred: doubt, a search for meaning, learning more effectively, and integration of thought and action. His findings refined and reinforced a pattern of learning that has emerged from other studies. Dudley (1987) also found similarities in her findings to the work of Mezirow. She characterized a

transformational process as having these overlapping themes: separation from routine patterns, transcendence over ordinary pattern, mindful and willing participation, validation, integration, and sensitivity to a universe of pattern and meaning.

This study dealt mostly with adults over forty years of age. Thus a note on adults' ability to remember is in order. With regard to remembering, Mezirow (1991) wrote, "[it] involves an object or event that usually has been associated with an emotion influential in our initial learning. How well we remember depends upon the strength of this emotion" (p. 29). Mezirow defined emotion as an interpretation of the meaning of feeling because "feelings and impulses become transformed into emotions as we learn how to interpret what they mean in relation to others and to ourselves" (p. 13).

Aside from difficulties that arise with disease and advanced ages (70s and 80s), there is no evidence for a systematic decline in sensory memory, and evidence for only slight declines in short-term memory (Bee, 1992). However, as a result of Sinnott's work (1986) with adults aged 23 to 93, who were part of a longitudinal study testing their ability to recall events that were salient to their everyday life, she found: "the older adults did just as well at remembering the highly salient material but much less well at the less salient information" (Bee, 1992, p. 178). Thus, the researcher is encouraged that in asking adults what is meaningful to them will, in fact, be within their capacity to respond. Additionally, Driscoll (1994) noted that despite the fact that certain kinds of information may be irretrievable, there is a net gain in the cognitive structure following meaningful learning. Or, as Ausubel (1963) put it, there is "memorial residue of ideational experience" which enables the concept or proposition to be "more functional for future learning and problem-solving occasions" (p. 218).

A review of the literature led to a consideration of the choices that were available and led to the selections that were made for this study. Chapter III will present the methodology and procedures used.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Paradigm

In choosing a paradigm which was most suitable to an inquiry about meanings intended, sought, and constructed, the researcher was guided by the epistemological view called constructivism, a view currently held by many educational theorists (Driscoll, 1994; Mezirow, 1991). For this study, constructivism is defined as "building new knowledge, values and beliefs upon each individual's earlier constructs of knowledge and values" (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995, p. 135). Schwandt (1994) noted that constructivists generally share "the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (p. 118). The importance of understanding learning from the constructivist position has been noted in the museum field by Cole (1995), Roberts (1994), and Silverman (1995). Although the constructivist paradigm is linked with the educative technique used in museums, namely interpretation, program time constraints may inhibit getting to know the audience's constructions (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995). The constructivist viewpoint has been typically missing in museums' evaluation studies, but is essential to understanding and planning programs for adults who have many years of formal and informal education (Hein, 1995; McManus, 1996).

In consideration of the expected age (predominately over forty) and the expected educational level achieved by the audience participants in this study (many at the graduate level [Market Researchers & Analysts, 1995]), the researcher considered

Goodman's and Elgin's (1988) moderate view of constructivism as the most appropriate and most closely associated with her own position. According to Goodman and Elgin, we do not perceive a ready-made world, one in which there is an absolute and unique truth. They rejected the idea that there is a world that we know to exist but cannot experience. On the other hand, they did not maintain that the pursuit of truth was useless. They stressed a reconstruction rather than a deconstruction of traditional values and beliefs. In order to be open to the accounts of each of the participants and acknowledge that readers will form their own constructions, the following was kept in mind: "They [constructions] do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some 'objective' world that exists apart from their constructors" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 143). Also, because constructions are resident in the minds of individuals, "the findings or outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation or construction of the inquiry process" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 128).

Methodology

In order to understand what constructs individual participants were forming, it was important to give them an opportunity to speak in their own words. Thus it was necessary to use semi-structured open-ended questions to begin the inquiry and to allow follow-up probes to be phrased that would take into account each participant's responses. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was chosen, and appropriate techniques were used to triangulate the data collection. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noted that "three data gathering techniques dominate qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing, and document collection" (p. 24). For further explication of these techniques as they related to this study, please see Data Collection Methods.

Furthermore, in order to understand fully the audience participants from their own perspective, this study was not driven by theory (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), which is commonly associated with the positivist or empiricist tradition. Guba and Lincoln (1994) described an empiricist tradition as one characterized by the following: "An apprehendable reality is assumed to exist. ... The investigator and investigated 'object' are assumed to be independent entities ... [and] questions and hypotheses are stated in propositional form and subjected to empirical test to verify them" (pp. 109-110). In other words, theory was not used "as a set of propositions that explain and predict the relationships among phenomena" (p. 19). However, Mezirow's theory (1991) was used to frame the categories of questions for interviews with the audience participants, and deductions were made to his theory as applicable. Six functions related to the meaning-making process were addressed: remembering, reflecting, doubting, imagining, validating, and constructing a new or revised meaning. These functions were defined by Mezirow (1990, 1991). (Please see Definitions.)

Design

This research was designed as a descriptive and exploratory study of meaning making by adults planning for and those attending the 1996 History Forum (HF) at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF). It was the researcher's intent to investigate as many aspects as possible that went into planning the program and to explore with the audience participants their reactions to the many facets of the program in order to provide descriptive documentation of the program by the participants and the researcher. However, the researcher also collected, reviewed, and included documents that were prepared by Colonial Williamsburg (CW) for the program. The study investigated some

of the contemporary, real-life context in which meanings are made, however the boundaries were not clearly evident nor within complete control of the researcher. For example, the researcher did not enter the field with a predetermined notion of what aspects of the program the participants would address. The initial questions only began the inquiry to the 1996 HF. In as much as the study involved only one event, it was phenomenological in general orientation.

Site

Choice of site. The CWF currently operates four museums and Carter's Grove (plantation and slave quarter) along with the recreated colonial capital of Williamsburg in Virginia (referred to as CW), which contains 88 original structures, 50 reconstructions, and 40 exhibition buildings that cover 173 acres and serves a public of nearly three million annually. (These figures also include non-ticket holders because much of the space in the historic area is open to the public.) The Foundation typically conducts 40 tours and activities daily and performs outreach services nationally through programs and productions in various media (Stuntz, 1996).

Since its founding in 1926 by J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., who responded to the visionary ideas of W. A. R. Goodwin, the Foundation's educational programs have undergone changes that reflect its founder, administrators, audience, outside consultants, and the emphasis placed on social history by academic historians (Ellis, 1989). According to its General Information Statement (Stuntz, 1996), the mission of the Foundation is:

- To engage, inform and inspire visitors in this authentic colonial capital where they encounter historic events and the diverse people who helped shape a new nation.
- To preserve and restore eighteenth century Williamsburg so that the future may continue to learn from the past. (Stuntz, 1996, p. 1)

The site was used because of its convenient location and because of its familiarity to the researcher and because of its public prominence especially with an adult audience. In 1994, more than 75% of the visitors were over the age of 40, 33% of them were 55 years and older, and 15% were at least 66 years of age (CWF Marketing Services, April 26, 1996, personal communication). Whereas these figures are based on incomplete general-admission data for 1994, similar findings were reported by Pelay (1993) for the Hampton Roads area, in which case 63% of visitors were over the age of 45. Also, the CWF has demonstrated a spirit of cooperation in academic research (Carey & Schubert, 1980; Ellis, 1989; Gable, Handler, & Lawson, 1992; Handler & Gable, 1997; Krugler, 1991; Lawson, 1995; Tramposch, 1985). Additionally, while CW operates as an accredited living-history museum within the guidelines of the American Association of Museums (AAM), the CWF also exerts an educational influence within the museum profession. For example, the CWF co-manages a training seminar for museum professionals, produces and disseminates professional publications and other media productions, and shares its professional staff with other museums. It is also a site with which the researcher has knowledge and familiarity due to her interest in its history, the period it interprets, and her past experience there as a full-time employee, consultant, and program participant.

Boundaries of site. The document research took place on CWF property.

Whenever feasible, interviews were conducted on site or in nearby Williamsburg in a place that was determined by each individual involved to provide comfort and protect the interviewee's anonymity. (For a map of the historic area, please see Appendix E.)

Program

Choice of program. The HF was initiated in 1987, at the suggestion of broadcaster David Brinkley, who was then a CW trustee. Cary Carson has moderated the HF annually since then. Generally, the HF takes place for three days in early November and offers many program features (including lectures, small-group discussions, and first- and third-person interpretations). The registration fee for the program was \$235 in 1996. (Some meals were included, but not room.) Because financial aid and discounts are available, approximately 80% pay the full price. Each HF has been attended by at least 100 adults (with characteristics similar to attendees at other CW adult seminars; that is, many are returnees, over the age of forty, and have graduate degrees [Market Researchers & Analysts, 1995]). Through personal participation in the HF over a five-year period, the researcher noted that participants were given access to and make use of many of the foundation's facilities and sites before, during, and after the HF. Outside presenters were selected from various professions, and in-house presenters were selected from various positions within the CWF.

Typically, the HF begins with a session in which the president of CW and the moderator of the program address the audience. A speaker presentation or an historic enactment follows. (In 1996, the opening session included the Thomas Jefferson-Ben Bradlee interview and took place in the auditorium of the DeWitt Wallace Gallery.) During the following days, lectures and other events and question/answer periods took place there as well. These events were preceded and followed by receptions or coffee breaks in that museum's cafe. The Grand Ballroom in the Williamsburg Lodge was, as typical, the scene for a lunch which concluded the HF. Locations for small-group

discussions and historic-area interpretations vary from year-to-year. All of these locations, however, are subject to change based on the needs of the CWF and the program planners. (The sites used for the 1996 HF are circled on the map of the historic area, Appendix E.) Additionally, many other interpretation areas at the historic site are visited by HF participants; the document and artifact archives and libraries are less frequently used.

Although the topic for the 1996 HF -- "First Amendment/Second Thoughts: Hindsight on Freedom of the Press and America's Earliest Communications Revolution" - - was chosen more than a year before the 1996 HF took place. The exact wording of the title, the program's emphasis, and the specifics involved in each of the HF's features evolved since the beginning of 1996. Meetings were scheduled to determine speakers (February, 1996) and then enactments (September, 1996), which the researcher attended, and reading lists were generated and sent to the HF enrollees before their visit. During and after the HF, the topics introduced by the audience participants through memories of personal experiences involved many specific subjects and contexts. It was up to the researcher to determine what was and was not relevant to this study. Thus some content boundaries were established by the purpose of the study but they became more fixed as the data-processing and analysis stages proceeded.

This particular HF was used because the topic and the atmosphere of an open forum of ideas, especially sought by its planners, were conducive to a qualitative inquiry of this type. No study of any kind of the HF had previously been done (D. Chapman, November 15, 1995, personal communication), except an abbreviated pilot study performed by the researcher in 1995. However, data collected from similar programs

indicated that the audience participants were educated older adults (Market Researchers Analysts, 1995), a population in whom the researcher was specifically interested.

Time boundaries of program. The HF took place between November 7 - 9. Prior to this program the researcher attended planning meetings, conducted most planner-participant interviews, and performed document research at times that were partly determined by the program's moderator, coordinator, and specific participants. Although tentative plans for this program were already underway, the researcher's involvement commenced with a planning meeting in February, 1996 aimed at discussing what speakers should be invited. After the HF, follow-up participant interviews continued until April of 1997. (The last reinterview with a program planner occurred on April 23, 1997; the last one with an audience participant took place on February 26, 1997.)

Access to program (and site). Permission to do a study of this nature was originally granted by the moderator of the program in 1994 and was extended again in 1995 and 1996. (Please see Appendix F.) Before a copy of the research proposal was given to CW for perusal however, it was submitted and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee at the College of William and Mary. In a further discussion of the particular elements of the study, permission was also granted to attend planning sessions as they occurred as a non-participant observer. Details were worked out with the HF's moderator.

Participants

Access to audience participants. A pre-forum questionnaire (requesting a number at which participants could be reached) was mailed when a substantial list of attendees was available -- October 7, 1996. Six other mailings up to October 29, 1996

accommodated later registrants. Those registering too late to receive the pre-forum questionnaire in the mail, received it with their registration packet. (This allowed all attendees to have a chance to respond to the questionnaire.) Anticipating some difficulty in obtaining permission from audience participants, the researcher intended to interview seven people. However, the response indicating willingness to participate was so great, the researcher decided to increase the number to 13. This number grew to 15 because the spouses of two interviewees also requested interviews. Although the researcher had previously decided to interview only one member of a family, it seemed prudent to gain the perspective of a few couples that were attending together. Participants selected for this study were contacted by telephone beginning at the end of October. (For a format of the telephone introduction, please see Appendix G.) The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study and its potential benefit to program planners of the HF and adult educators in museums, and the approximate duration of the interview (one hour). Additionally, the participants were insured that their identities would be held in strictest confidence and be known only to the academic chair of her research committee. They were told that they could withdraw their participation at any time or refuse to answer any question, and this choice would not impact any future participation in a CWF event, and no ill feeling would be engendered. These particulars were spelled out in a cover letter that accompanied the pre-forum questionnaire. (Please see Appendix H and A respectively.) Nametags worn by all participants to gain entrance to the program events facilitated personal contact with the participants. Before the interview proceeded the participants were asked (1) to sign a consent form for an interview and for taping of the interview (Appendix I), (2) to provide an address to which a copy of the transcription

could be sent for their perusal and verification, and (3) to indicate a time for a follow-up interview to clarify any existing questions or determine if changes in thought may have occurred.

Choice of audience participants. Enrollment in the HF has gradually dropped from 194 in 1987 to 115 in 1995 (at which time 63% were returnees [Chapman, November 15, 1995, personal communication]). The 1996 forum was advertised as a tenth-year celebration of the HF. Possibly this influenced enrollment as 180 participants were listed on the forum's program. In consideration of the fact that the most valuable information for program planners would come from a diverse group of audience participants who were willing and able to share their perceptions of meaning-making, the selection of audience participants was based on their response to the pre-forum questionnaire and their willingness and availability to participate. Given the nature of the study, it seemed appropriate to employ purposive sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The only instrument employed to select audience participants was the pre-forum questionnaire to which 84 responses were received, and of these, 55 enrollees offered to be interviewed. Consideration was given to the length of an individual's response (indicative of their interest), coherence of response (indicative of their ability to express themselves), and content of response (indicative of their understanding of their self-directed learning goals that either conflicted or fit with the purpose of the planners or were indicative of some confusion). The researcher also attempted to maintain a balance of participants regarding their gender and geographic location. In order to avoid bias, past and present employees of the CWF were not chosen for an interview nor were any

individuals chosen with whom the researcher was familiar or who had participated in a preliminary study. These criteria reduced the available sample by ten.

Most of the registrants were returnees to the program and indicated some of their satisfaction with it. Thus, it was hoped that some of the participants could articulate the meaning they had made of the 1996 HF, and their expressed learning journey could help planners anticipate their future needs. On the other hand, if frequent returnees or first-time attendees were experiencing problems with making meaning, their difficulties could point to problem areas that need to be addressed in the program or in future research.

Practical factors also influenced the selection of participants, especially availability. Given the length of each participant's stay (which varies from several days to a week) and choice of interview time (which was sometime specified on the pre-forum questionnaire), the researcher selected those audience participants who expressed a desire to contribute what time they had available. However, the researcher's time was also a factor. A schedule in which she was able to accommodate the selected participants was a consideration. Therefore, the sampling procedure entailed a convenience component and the sample was further skewed. Note: no attempt was made to contact participants to refuse their participation. The cover letter to the pre-forum questionnaire specified that participants would be chosen according to availability of time on the part of the participants and on the part of the researcher.

As responses to the questionnaire were received, a data table was established and updated with entries for each respondent regarding their willingness to participate, their sex, state of residence, attendance record at the HF, employment connection to CW, donor status (from the Colonial Williamsburg 1995 Annual Report), and other

information (such as their relationship to an employee at CW, their occupation, or program cancellation). In order to obtain a sample that was geographically representative of all the enrollees, the addresses of all those to whom pre-forum questionnaires were sent were examined. This analysis revealed the following about the 209 addressees in 25 states and the District of Columbia:

- 23 questionnaires were sent to Williamsburg and another 34 to different parts of Virginia.
- Audience participants were attracted in larger numbers from PA (21), NY (20), MD (17), CA (11), and NJ (9).
- Five or six questionnaires were sent to each of the following states: FL, KS, MA, MI, and OH.
- Smaller numbers of questionnaires went to each of fifteen other states and the District of Columbia.

These details were kept in mind while choosing interviewees, in spite of the fact that the respondents indicating a willingness to be interviewed no longer represented a proportionate geographic distribution of the total enrollees. In fact, the response rate from other parts of Virginia was relatively high, 50%; but the response rate from Williamsburg specifically and the states of New York and New Jersey was remarkably low (12%). At this point twenty respondents were immediately rejected for an interview because they were familiar to the researcher, related to a foundation member (information offered on their response) employed by CW (information requested on the questionnaire), or the selected time of interview was before the forum began. All other respondents were considered possibilities.

A second data entry table was set up based on a code of when the response was received. This table had 4 columns for each individual's response to questions regarding what was or was not meaningful about past forums and the present forum and the respondent's expectations. Each of these four columns was preceded by codes the researcher assigned as a result of reading and rereading the responses. The table facilitated the eventual analysis of the pre-forum questionnaire and the choice of participants. It helped the researcher identify respondents who were receptive or not receptive to elements of past forums, those who were generally interested in history or only the 1996 topic, those who were attracted or not attracted to advertised elements, and those who articulately answered the questions or provided only sentence fragments or even questioned the meaningfulness of the researcher's questions about meaning. So many choices and variables to deal with made decisions about interviewee selection difficult. So the researcher initially concentrated on ideal candidates (outliers) or unusual categories of candidates. (For example, the number of newcomers to the program who returned the questionnaire and who were willing to be interviewed was small, and the number of scholarship recipients was small. Also, there were only a couple of people who wrote that they had no expectation of finding meaning in the program.) A third data table was constructed indicating the factors that each individual could satisfy to insure diversity for the sample. Subsequent selections became easier as it became obvious what characteristics were needed (such as gender, geographic location, or occupation) to fit an audience profile that was balanced and not biased. The researcher encountered no problems in gender selection because the number of males and females interested in the interview was equally distributed. No problems were encountered in establishing a time

for the interview because almost all of the people contacted were flexible, nor in establishing a place on CW property or in eateries contingent to it.

Access to planner participants. Access to planner participants was determined by the program's moderator and the specific participants who were willing to contribute their time. A letter (Appendix J) was sent to all those who participated in the planning meetings that the researcher attended and one informant (recommended by a planner) was contacted by phone. The letter was accompanied by a form on which each planner could indicate their interest in participating. (Please see Appendix K.) Before any interview took place, these participants were similarly informed as to the purpose, significance, and duration of the interviews (about one hour), the protection of their identity, and their right to withdraw at any time without engendering anyone's ill feeling or endangering their position. Each planner was also asked to sign the form granting permission for the interview to take place and to be taped (Appendix I).

Choice of planner participants. The researcher chose to interview all of the planner participants who attended at least one planning meeting and consented to be interviewed (6 out of 7) plus one informant, who was recommended to the researcher by a planner. All interviews took place at times mutually convenient on CW property both before and after the forum.

Limitations concerning all participants. The participants of the study can be categorized as planner participants or informants who were interviewed, and audience participants who were interviewed and those who were not interviewed. Planner participants and the informant were invited to participate because of their involvement in the program or because of their referral by a planner. Audience participants were selected

as described under Choice of Audience Participants. Non-interviewed audience participants included those who registered for the forum and chose to submit a pre-forum questionnaire and/or evaluation form. Please see Illustration 1 for further clarification of the groups who participated in this study.

Procedures

The chronology of the procedures involved in this study fell into three main categories: pre-forum, forum, and post-forum.

Pre-forum (February, 1996 to November 7, 1996).

- The questions on the interview formats and on the questionnaire and researcher's evaluation form were pretested with individuals who had age and educational characteristics similar to those who were expected.
- Approval was sought and obtained from the Human Subjects Review Committee.
- An academically approved form of the proposal was submitted to the moderator and coordinator of the HF for their approval. Minor modifications were incorporated regarding the wording of questions.
- The researcher maintained contact with the moderator and coordinator of the program to:
 - gather specifics of the program as they unfolded,
 - gain access and observe planning meetings (as a non-participant observer) as they occurred,
 - search through materials of past or present History Forums to acquire a better perspective of the program.
- Planning meetings were attended and notes were taken and transcribed.

- Books on the recommended reading list to the forum's enrollees were read. (Please see Appendix L.)
- Letters were sent to planners requesting an interview and interviews were held as they could be arranged (some of these did continue and in one case commenced after the forum).
- The pre-forum questionnaire was mailed to those participants as the lists of enrollees were received.
- Data tables were constructed to categorize, simplify, and preserve the data as it was received from the pre-forum questionnaires.
- At the end of October, audience participants were selected and contacted for an initial interview. Times and sites were negotiated at that time.

Forum (November 7, 1996 to November 12, 1996).

- Interviews began on November 7, following the first session. Additional interviews took place at various times throughout the HF, and nine interviews were conducted after the program was officially ended. After the initial interview, the researcher again informed the participants that a transcript of the initial interview would be sent to them for their comments, and a time for a follow-up telephone interview was arranged.
- When the researcher was not engaged in interviews during the HF, she took the role of a non-participant observer. She did not interact in the program activities (that is, she did not engage in programmed small-group discussions or in question/comment sessions). She did however take notes on events and discussions.

Post-forum (after November 12, 1996).

- For each audience-participant interview, the researcher reviewed her interview notes and highlighted observations she had made on the interview format or in notes made immediately after the interview. The tapes were then transcribed. (Note: every interviewee agreed to be taped.) Additional notes were made in the transcribing process regarding, for example, inflections in voice. For each individual the tape was reviewed at least twice and then the transcript was read for overall consistency. If there was any doubt about a passage, it was marked for the interviewee's attention.
- Each transcript was returned to the interviewee with a cover letter restating the time they suggested to be called. Stamped return mailers were included. All of the audience-interviewee transcripts were mailed before December 23, 1996 and all of the planners, before the end of the year.
- Each returned transcript was reviewed, noting the changes made. (Only 2 of the 22 transcripts were not returned, and only one of these two individuals did not want to be reinterviewed because of time restraints.)
- Before any person was contacted, a thorough reading was made of the verified transcript, additional item-by-item summary notes were made in order to thoroughly understand the interviewee, and questions were noted that needed to be addressed. (Again, all interviewees agreed to be taped for the reinterview.) At this time, each audience interviewee was asked if they spoke to any of the planners about the program's meaning and the interviewees were questioned as to any changes in thought that may have occurred since the last interview.
- All of the second interviews were transcribed following the procedure stated above.

About half of the interviewees said they did not think it was necessary to receive a second transcript. The others accepted the offer and returned it with their changes, in which case a similar procedure was again followed as with the second transcript.

- The interview-transcript process was either completed with a call or a note from the researcher thanking the interviewee for their help. In some cases, correspondence continued to take place after that. This phase officially came to a close at the end of April, 1997.
- The researcher periodically reviewed her field-asides and observation notes made as a non-participant observer.
- Evaluation forms filled out by attendees were reviewed and data tables were constructed to simplify the material. The researcher also reviewed a summary report of the evaluations made by CW. Although the interviewees agreed to anonymously mark their evaluation forms, many were interviewed after they had already handed them in to CW. (Other problems occurred with the return of the researcher's evaluation form which might have been avoided by simply supplying these to the audience interviewees and asking them to return the forms directly to the researcher.)
- Audio-visual tapes of the event (made by CW) were reviewed two or three times. Particular attention was paid to content of the presentations, manner of presentation, audience reaction, and type of questions asked and by whom.
- Throughout the research process, a researcher's journal was kept to record evolving questions and analytic procedures about the study.
- The researcher also reviewed the current literature throughout the study.

- After all the data was collected, the final stages of analysis commenced. Although preliminary analysis had already begun with the choice of a conceptual framework and the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the final stages of analysis became more specific and complex as the study proceeded as Miles & Huberman (1994) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested it might be. For example, themes began to emerge from the data, but how these themes related to a participant's expectations and discussions was more difficult to sort out.

Data Collection Methods

The multiple sources of evidence used included:

- a pre-forum questionnaire
- interviews with audience and planner participants and one informant (subsequently supplemented by the data obtained)
- member-checks (returned data from the interviewees with their verifications [Merriam, 1988])
- written evaluations submitted after the program
- audio-visual tapes made on site by the host museum
- audio tapes made by the researcher
- review of documents concerning the program's planning and advertisement
- non-participant observation notes.

Thus, triangulation was achieved, that is, using multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm the “emerging findings” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 24), the “trustworthiness of the data” (p. 24), and the “internal validity” (Merriam, 1988, p. 169).

While taking the role of a non-participant observer (that is, taking part in the events being studied but maintaining a professional distance [Fetterman, 1991; Yin, 1989]) for the events surrounding the HF, notes were made concerning the content of the presentations and the involvement, enthusiasm, and questions generated by the audience, particularly by those who were to be interviewed. Research field asides made during interviews included these factors as well as other appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses to the questions.

The questions appearing on the questionnaire, interview formats, and those chosen by the researcher to be added to the HF's evaluation form were evaluated in a pilot study, using similar age and education background characteristics of the adult participants anticipated, to enhance rigor and check for language. These questions were also reviewed by the moderator and coordinator of the HF. Terminology was chosen that did not impose unnecessary structure on the participants' responses. The order of the six functions (remembering, reflecting, doubting, imagining, validating, and constructing a new or revised meaning [Mezirow, 1991]) determined the sequence of questions asked during initial audience-participant interviews. Probing questions however involved the respondents' answers and their own sequencing. Undoubtedly, the six functions listed are limited, and the questions relating to them were asked in a sequential order whereas the audience participants were engaged in each of these functions throughout the program and throughout the interviews. However, the inquiry was directed at what they reported as meaningful to them and in terms of what they reported as thinking, feeling, and doing.

The researcher was fully aware that "the open nature of qualitative inquiry precludes the ability to know either all of the important selection criteria or the number of

observations or interview sessions necessary to gather adequate data" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 25). Thus the selection strategy regarding probes and questions did become more definitive as the study proceeded.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data Analysis. As previously discussed, analysis had already begun to the extent that a conceptual framework had been chosen at the outset, that pertinent literature had been summarized, and that questions had been formed. As recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), analysis continued throughout the study and basically involved two processes: deduction and analytic induction. Gay (1987) noted: "Although neither approach [induction or deduction] is entirely satisfactory, when used together ... they are very effective" (Gay, 1987, p. 4).

"Deductive reasoning involves essentially ... arriving at specific conclusions based on generalizations" (Gay, 1987, p. 4). Inductive reasoning is the reverse process. When the researcher became more intent on pursuing her line of inquiry with regard to the research, she brainstormed her interpretive process, defined terms, and displayed them visually in an interactive design. She moved from a specific understanding of her own mental process to generalized concepts. Upon studying Mezirow's (1991, 1990) generalizations, she was able to refine her own conceptualizations and further discriminate other processes. In understanding her own and accepting some of Mezirow's theoretical assumptions, the researcher did not enter the field as a blank slate. With due respect to those generalizations that had been developed, she has reported what she found in relation to some of them.

In The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967), Glaser and Strauss proposed an indirect strategy whereby a researcher discovers concepts and hypotheses through a constant comparative method which allows for many hypotheses to be synthesized at different levels of generality through the research process. The authors also described "analytic induction" as a process by which a researcher combines two approaches. A researcher not only establishes a code for the data (relating, for example, to the functions of the audience participants and the events of the HF), collects it, and then analyzes the data that will constitute documentation for a given proposition; but a researcher also makes constant comparisons with a greater breadth of purpose and extent of comparison. With the combination of these procedures all available data are used, and the data are not restricted to one kind of clearly defined inquiry.

Each of the audience participants reported on their interpretive process in the terms they used. On the other hand, the researcher's questions were framed using functions Mezirow defined. In order to understand the participants, the researcher remained open to the terms the participants used. She attempted to explore with the participants what they meant. Here the process moved from a specific context to a general understanding and this was repeated for each of the participants. As the study moved further into the stage of making comparisons, between audience participants and planner participants, generalizations were found that reflected initial conceptualizations. However, others emerged upon closely examining the data for whatever else was embedded in it.

Both induction and deduction are further facilitated by employing different techniques of data reduction. "Data reduction" is defined by Miles & Huberman (1994)

as the "process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions" (p. 10). Miles and Huberman suggested the use of visual devices to organize and rearrange data, which fall into two basic categories: a checklist matrix, a format with defined rows and columns, and a network (or concept map), a visual display that presents information with a series of nodes with links between them. Several checklist matrices or tables were constructed in this study for each participant and then again for all the participants. Building such checklists helped visualize, for example, what kind of discussion-type activity took place at the HF. (Please see Table 2 in Chapter VI.) With similar checklists the researcher was able to see what patterns emerged and if they were dependent on specific kinds of memories or experiences. Glesne & Peshkin (1992) noted that this progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting the collected data leads to the identification (reduction) and logical order of themes (often referred to as chunks) for the arrangement of the final document.

As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), visual networks were also constructed. (For an example please see the Schemas in Chapter V.) Such a network helped the researcher determine what connections the audience interviewees were reporting with regard to themes that emerged and the events of the HF. The information for a strategy such as this arose from an examination of the data, but led to a re-examination of the data with specific questions as to why this might have occurred. Another review of the transcripts and of the audio-visual tapes made by CW revealed data that was not initially apparent to the researcher. Throughout the analysis the researcher put herself in a conscious "learning mode," and remembered that with each

effort of data analysis she could enhance her capacity to analyze further (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

In order to identify themes, the researcher started establishing codes in an attempt to correlate the 84 responses received from the pre-forum questionnaires. After reading over all of the responses, categories were created relating to the elements of the program (for example, speaker(s), enactor(s), topic(s)), the respondents' interests (for example, historical versus contemporary issues), experience (for example, job, education, personal involvement), opinions, and questions. More than 50 codes were established in the process of transferring the data to a table for easy reference. This work was completed before any of the audience interviews were conducted. The process gave the researcher an idea of the scope and topics that might be found in the data from the interviews; and the table helped in compiling data from the questionnaires.

As each tape was transcribed, the researcher kept notes about what was discussed at different intervals on the tape and what questions came to her mind about what was said. Each tape was listened to at least twice to insure accuracy. Because the researcher also made copious notes during the interviews, the transcriptions and the original notes were then compared. Observations made by the researcher or a rephrasing of the interviewee's remarks were then highlighted for further reference. Before contacting any of the participants for a second interview, each verified transcription was carefully reviewed. Whenever there might have been a misunderstanding, the subject matter was rephrased in the researcher's words and read back to the interviewee in order to insure that the interviewee had meant what the researcher understood. Only in two cases, where the researcher was calling the same household, was more than one reinterview handled in

one day. In situations that required a recall or a third interview, all of the notes were reviewed again. This technique allowed the researcher to get closer to the interviewee's thoughts and to them as individuals.

This time consuming but rewarding process paved the way to reviewing the transcripts in a deliberate search for themes. At this next reading another colored highlighter was used to mark out quotable passages. Key words were circled or added to indicate content regarding who, what, when, where, and why. What Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to as checklist matrices were constructed for each category mentioned. This eventually amounted to 90 categories for the audience interviewees and 42 categories for the planner interviewees. Separate sheets were kept for what seemed to be outliers. Each category on the log sheets specified the interviewee and page number on the transcript where the reference was made.

It was then easy to group certain elements to describe who interviewees were, what they read, what they thought about a particular speaker, and so on. It also became obvious that certain categories such as "fundamentalism," "Christian Right," "Protestantism" could be grouped together as "religion"; whereas others such "similarities" needed to be teased apart because the references (40) were too numerous and complex. While teasing out categories, it became obvious that certain categories were connected to certain events. For example, "truth," "idealism," and "philosophy" were discussed in relation to the Jefferson-Bradlee interview, but participants also talked about "an eighteenth-century way of thinking." Thus it became very reasonable to adopt a word such as "mindset," which was actually used by one of the audience interviewees.

Techniques similar to those described above were employed for analyzing (breaking down or teasing out) and synthesizing (building up) categories for the pre-forum questionnaire, the evaluation forms, the CW audio-visual tapes, and the researcher's own observation and journal notes.

Interpretation. Embedded within the constructivism paradigm is the notion that each construct represents a personal interpretation (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretation, through personal meaning making is used to develop conceptual categories (Mezirow, 1991). To the extent that prior conceptual categories are used, qualitative studies may be differentiated as descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative (Merriam, 1988). This study was primarily descriptive and interpretive. It presents the researcher's conceptualizations and interpretations but also the participants' interpretations as they were created through a subject-object hyphen "that both separates and merges personal identities with inventions of Others" (Fine, 1994, p. 70). Participants were approached with an attitude indicating they were deserving of the researcher's respect and patience, graciousness for their time, interest in their dialogues, and concern for their comfort. Thus empathy and trust were established so that a process could occur that Guba and Lincoln (1989) referred to as "hermeneutic-dialectic." Guba and Lincoln (1989) wrote that a process "is hermeneutic because it is interpretive in character, and dialectic because it represents a comparison and contrast of divergent views with a view to achieving a higher-level synthesis" (p. 149). This process did not justify the researcher's own constructions or cause criticism of the participants' constructions but did allow a connection between the participants and researcher to be made.

Comments Supporting the Rigor of the Study

Although qualitative research has increasingly been accepted in academic circles, the issues of criteria with which to judge it have not been well resolved (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Possibly, many of the ensuing arguments could be traced to each writer's own epistemological and ontological positions, making it all the more necessary to reveal to the reader, the researcher's own position and allowing for the fact that, "the data are what speak for themselves" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72).

For this study, credibility (internal validity) has been established by the prolonged engagement in the field. Prior to this study, the researcher had eight years experience in the museum profession (some of this specifically at CW) and five years experience with the HF. She developed trust with contacts on site and familiarity with the facilities. Contact with the audience participants covered a four-month period, but had already begun and continued throughout the study with some of the Foundation's personnel. A reflective journal documenting observations and referential materials was kept. Triangulation of data was achieved and contacts with professional peers has continued. The researcher has also maintained communication with notable directors, educational specialists, and evaluators in the history-museum field.

Generic applicability (external validity) was established by transferability. The researcher accumulated and presented evidence about contextuality through the use of thick description so that judgements would be possible for the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Complete replication, under even the tightest controls, is dubious and unwanted in a qualitative design. Qualitative research draws its strength from dealing with changing situations and human conditions and by constantly taking those changes into account and

by noting them in a journal and in the final document produced. Furthermore, purposive sampling seeks to maximize the range of information obtained about the context (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) and to present this for the reader. Thus complete documentation, including what did not go according to plan, can fully inform readers and alert future investigators of possible pitfalls to consider before entering the field. Some suggestions are made for future research in Chapter VI.

Consistency and neutrality were established by the use of an audit trail. Work was chronologically recorded, and whenever possible, materials were transferred to computer files, that were later searched. Separate and duplicate discs were maintained for each interviewee and each chapter, and the journal, tables, and illustrations. Separate files for raw data (from each participant and each documentary source and observation), data analysis, and data reconstruction were also kept. The journal categorically stipulated whether comments referred to participants, referential materials, peers, committee members, or the researcher. These materials were reviewed by designated readers of the study, most specifically by the researcher's Doctoral committee members who can attest to the researcher's consistency and attention to detail. The Doctoral committee members also provided their critiques and suggestions about the work through all phases of planning and execution.

Delimitations

The researcher chose the site (CW) and the program (HF), a theoretical model for the investigation, and the questions to be asked of the participants. As the study evolved the researcher selected the participants to be interviewed, the content to probe, and the sites to use for interviews and artifact investigation. The researcher also chose the

citations most appropriate to her interpretation. But in order to compensate for any lack of control implicit in the study, the researcher made explicit what choices were available, what choices were made and why. When those decisions were less than fortuitous, in hindsight, notations were made to provide the reader with guiding considerations for future investigations.

Limitations

The limitations of this study, namely the number and variety of participants, the selection criteria (purposive and convenient to get the data needed), and the duration and specific sites used for one adult program -- the 1996 HF -- make the findings of this study inappropriate for generalizing to a larger or different audience, to another HF, or to a similar program. In essence, the data is limited and this has limited the researcher from drawing conclusions. However, the principles guiding education and marketing strategies have increasingly become more selective, differentiated or segmented, and personal. Thus, insights and suggestions concerning particular programs, with particular participants of particular age groups with particular meaning-making capacities can be useful in imagining, targeting, and dealing with groups from a perspective of specific needs.

Writing the Report

Wolcott's (1990) advice to the qualitative researcher was: "You cannot begin writing early enough" (p. 20). One of the reasons given was: "Writing is a great way to discover what we are thinking, as well as to discover gaps in our thinking" (p. 21). Thus, the researcher continued throughout the research process to keep "field-asides" (notes on data collected [Glesne & Peshkin, 1992]) and a more formal reflective journal to note

logistics, insights, and reasons for methodological decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each of these entries was dated to preserve the chronological flow (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Merriam (1988) suggested that before writing the investigator must decide for whom one is writing. She referred to a phrase coined by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) -- audience conjuring -- a process whereby the writer tells the real or imagined reader what that audience would want to know about the study. Here, the audience is the researcher, the researcher's committee members, the moderator of the HF, and those readers with whom they and she will share the final product.

The following chapters concentrate on the findings of the study. In Chapter IV descriptive findings are presented about the planner and audience participants, the planning meetings, and the program. These are generally presented in the chronological order in which they occurred. What the participants found meaningful or not meaningful about the program was organized thematically. Other topics that were generally important to their educational experience at the HF were included. Whenever possible these sections use the participants' words so that readers can form their own interpretations. In Chapter V, the similarities and differences found between the planner and audience interviewees' definitions of "meaningful" and "interpretation" are presented first so that the readers can use the information to understand what follows. Then, comparisons are presented between the planners' intentions and the audience interviewees' perception of the intentions. An analysis and interpretation of the themes precedes vignettes for each of the audience interviewees, which presents what change in thought they reported or the researcher perceived. The chapter concludes with a summary, the researcher's comments

on the grand questions. Finally, in Chapter VI, programmatic suggestions are made and flow charts are provided which relate specific suggestions to the researcher's analysis and interpretation, the audience interviewees' comments, and the planners' intentions.

Suggestions for future studies are also included.

CHAPTER 4. THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides descriptive overviews of the participants, the events, and the main ideas involved in the 1996 History Forum (HF). The descriptive comments come from the program materials, the interviewed participants from Colonial Williamsburg (CW), the audience participants, and the researcher. For the most part the findings are presented in the chronological order in which the data was collected so that the reader can understand how certain perspectives were developed not only for the audience participants but also for the researcher. In many cases the audience interviewees described their reaction to the program in the same chronological order, event by event. However, the reader will notice that not all program events are fully described. (More explanatory information is available in the Appendixes and will be referred to subsequently.) Please note that no attempt was made to garner each audience interviewee's reaction to each program event. The researcher's questions asked what was meaningful to the interviewees; thus, the descriptive comments are indicative of what and to what extent the program elements were meaningful to them. In order to better understand the interviewees and their experience with the HF, selected spoken thoughts concerning past forums are also included.

The second section of this chapter begins with the planner- and audience-interviewees' definitions of "meaningful" and "interpretation." It is followed by the planners' intentions for the program and the interviewees' perceptions of those intentions.

The main part of this section, however, deals with the themes that emerged during the audience interviews. Unlike the first section which first introduced the program elements from the planners' perspectives, the thematic presentation of findings first addresses what was brought up by the audience interviewees. However, whatever comments planners made regarding that theme are reported after the audiences' views. The choice to present the constructed meanings thematically was made because various themes, sometimes interrelated, were woven throughout the interviews. In Jethro's words, "See I'm answering the question you asked me before." Additionally, these themes were frequently developed with the interviewees' talk about their life experiences. Length of dialogue and connection to other themes are noted. Where available from the data, individual remarks are given with contrasting views.

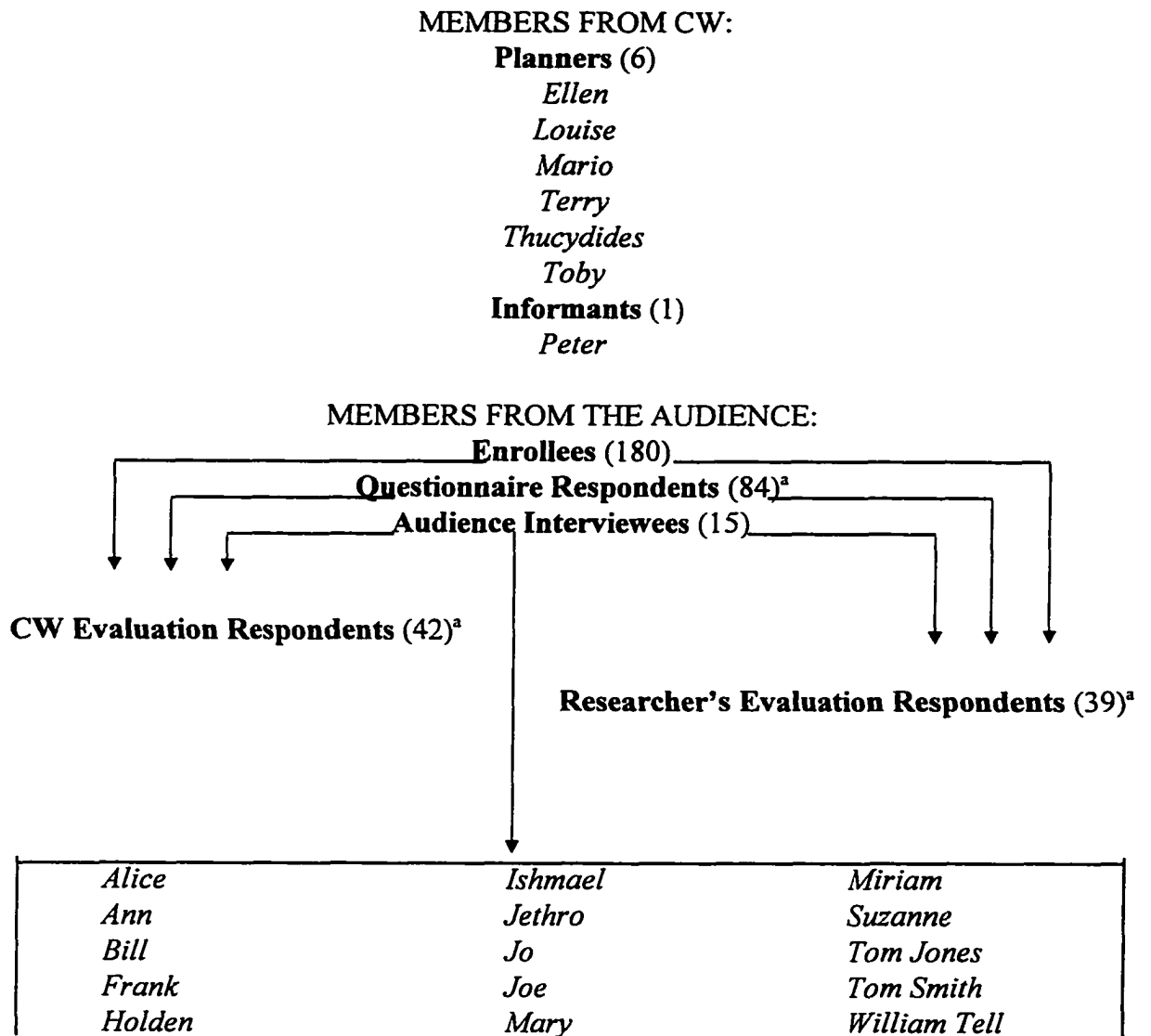
The third section provides answers to questions which were asked of the audience interviewees to ascertain: if changes in thought did occur as a result of attending the forum, what was most influential, and what future actions may be provoked. This section is referred to as Topical Findings because it also includes thoughts the audience interviewees provided concerning their questions, their educational needs, their feelings, and whatever else they found germane to this study. Whenever these ideas were also brought up by the planners, they are presented.

People participated in this research project in various and sometimes multiple ways. Throughout the next three chapters, terms are used to describe a particular person's or group's involvement. The following list was constructed to help clarify these terms:

- Enrollee - anyone who signed up for the 1996 HF.
- Participant - anyone who took part in this research project.
- Planner or planner interviewee - a member of the 1996 HF planning team who was interviewed.
- Audience interviewee - an enrollee of the 1996 HF who was interviewed.
- Questionnaire respondent - an enrollee who returned the questionnaire.
- CW evaluation respondent - an enrollee who filled out the CW evaluation form.
- Researcher evaluation respondent - an enrollee who filled out the researcher evaluation form.
- Informant - a staff member of CW, not on the 1996 HF planning team, who was interviewed.
- Visitor - a general term used to signify anyone attending a HF or CW or a museum.

Illustration 1 is provided in order for the reader to see the relationship between the groups of people involved in this research. The names used for the interviewees are pseudonyms that either they or the researcher chose to protect their identity.

Illustration 1.
The participants involved in this research.



Note. Illustration 1 indicates the groups of people (in boldface) that participated in this research, the numbers (in parentheses) that were involved in each group, and the pseudonyms (in italics) of the interviewees.

^aSome individuals did not give their names (or pseudonyms) on the questionnaires or evaluation forms. Also the numbers of questionnaires returned was double the number of evaluations returned.

Section 1. Descriptive Findings

The Planners

The six program planners and one informant interviewed perform various roles for CW throughout the year. Most of this group also took active roles in the HF, for example as a moderator of a session and/or as an attendee who interacts with the visitors. Each member of this group is also a research historian although not all of their academic work was done in this discipline. Some individuals spoke of their master's degree and/or doctoral training, however the researcher presumes that each member has at least a bachelor's degree and estimates their ages range between the late thirties to the late fifties.

Most interviewees described their planning meetings as brainstorming sessions and emphasized their individual role as that of a team player or a consultant. Not all of the planners of a HF are the same each year; some variations occur due to the subject matter of the program. However the people involved in the 1996 forum have worked together at CW for some time in one capacity or another. One individual commented on being the last person to be hired on and having worked with other group members since 1979. As an observer of three planning meetings, the researcher noted a free flow of dialogue that was terse with little explanation of point of view. When Louise was questioned about this she commented, "We all respect each others opinions." The planners also operate within guidelines established through practice by members of the group at large (both administrators and interpreters at various levels). (The researcher was exposed to some of these views through readings produced by, for, and about the CW Foundation, but she doubts she was exposed to all the documentation or decisions

pertinent to this History Forum.) However one planner commented: "you [the researcher] were also attending the planning sessions, so in a sense you've been privy to the whole process. We quite literally don't do much beyond what you saw. I write letters, but you're going to look at those."

The planners had few specific comments to make about the audience, citing the fact that no research has been done on this group. In general they described the visitors to the HF as well informed and educated with at least a strong interest in, if not academic training in, history. A couple of planners also thought that many teachers attend. The audience was presumed to be older and middle class. In Ellen's words they are the "Mercedes Benz" group who present a challenge to the planners in that they want "sirloin instead of pap." Mario, however, didn't think the audience would be able to understand some of the historical context. Mario said, "To be honest there obviously is a cynic in me, the realist says no, not really." As for the audience's view of the past, Terry described it as "Victorian," and Thucydides as "parochial." Several planners referred to "the polls" which indicate that Americans, particularly those in high school today, know so little of the country's history.

At the beginning of each interview with a planner, they were asked the same question that appeared on the questionnaire for the enrollees: What is it about the subject of this year's forum that is (and is not) meaningful to you. Three people spoke to this question from their personal interests. Louise liked the concept of the HF because "it's always relevant to modern life." Ellen was concerned about "who shapes, forms, creates, galvanizes public opinion." Mario has been interested for some time in print culture and how it "came late to the colony." In Mario's view, although government control of the

press diminished in the eighteenth century (and a sense of awareness among printers of what could or could not be printed increased), "there was more control on the press from the government in the eighteenth century."

Three planners spoke to this question as a matter of wanting to enlighten the audience. Louise's tone was very serious as she responded. She looked down and gently rubbed her hands on the table. Because the press appeared overpowering especially during the 1996 election, Louise thought "it would be very interesting and important for the participants ... to reconsider or to consider the sources of the free press and its part in what it means to be an American." Toby, too, thought of the topic in terms of fostering civic responsibility. Leaning closer, Toby said, "I believe that the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of expression, particularly speech and printed speech, have always been fundamental to the successful operation of our democracy." He added that these rights, as articulated by the First Amendment, "grew out of a historical context -- the rise of public opinion emerging in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. We thought that would prove to be an interesting, in your [the researcher's], terms meaningful background to understanding something that continues to be both important and controversial in modern American life."

Thucydides, with his arms folded and smiling, spoke specifically as an educator who "always tries to emphasize":

that in many ways the present, for good or ill, is totally -- is connected to the past in ways in terms of continuity that they need to appreciate in order to not be so parochial -- that there's not this idea that there was once a time when society was homogeneous, when people were civil, and when social harmony prevailed. In the case of the American experience, there was not a time when there were these great founding fathers, all men of virtue and good sense and kindness and intelligence

and courageous. And then somehow we fell from grace and the history of America is a declension from this era of the great founders. (Thucydides)

All except one of the planners did not think there was anything about this year's topic that was not meaningful. However Thucydides commented: "What's not meaningful to me is the way contemporary members of society will try to project their own desires and recreate an image of the past that is totally inconsistent with the reality of the past." As an example, he referred to the Christian Right which "likes to propound about this era saying that all founding fathers were deeply committed Christians. This is absolute nonsense. Many of them were deists, they were less committed philosophically to a concept of a Christian God than the Unitarians might be today."

The Visitors of the 1996 History Forum

The audience interviewees live in states that are proportionately distributed to the areas in which the program's enrollees as a whole reside. Accordingly, five reside in Virginia, six in the next group of states with high attendance figures (PA, NY, MD, CA, NJ), two from states with low attendance figures (FL, KS, MA, MI, OH), and two from 13 other states or the District of Columbia, each in which one or two enrollees live.

Seven of the interviewees were women, and eight were men. Although the percentage of female to male enrollees and questionnaire respondents was about the same (60% to 40%), one male requested an interview along with his wife and one woman had to cancel because of her schedule.

The researcher estimated that the audience interviewees range in age from their late thirties to eighties, however more than 1/2 of them are probably in their sixties and seventies. As for educational level, four people spoke about a terminal degree, six about a

master's degree or professional positions requiring it; and of the remaining five, only one did not talk about at least a bachelor's degree. Three audience interviewees were teachers (but only one was a history teacher), three had some experience as museum interpreters, and three had professional links to journalism; however some of the retirees did not talk about their previous jobs. Because they made frequent references to newspapers, it was noted that *The Wall Street Journal* was mentioned by five individuals, *The New York Times*, by three, *The Washington Post* and *Pravda*, by two, and *USA Today*, by one. They referred to many media broadcasters, but only the names of Limbaugh and Murdock drew negative criticism. For the most part the audience interviewees identified themselves as avid readers; literary references were made from Sophocles to F. Scott Fitzgerald and to historians such as Ivor Hume, Dumas Malone, Leonard Levy, and Thatcher Ulrich, all of whom were mentioned several times. Historical personages were also referred to 28 times; six people made reference to Madison, three each to Franklin and Hamilton.

Several other characteristics are remarkable about the group of audience interviewees. Many of the individuals described themselves as lifelong learners. "Education is an ongoing process," said Suzanne, "that's probably something that is very positive to come out of a conference like this." William Tell said, "You never stop. Learning is fun." Whereas words such as "fun" and "entertaining" were used to describe the program, the meaning was often qualified. For example, Holden said, "I don't think these people sit here waiting for the yuk a minute. ... I think we appreciate the humor, but I also think for a lot of folks it is a way to fulfill their intellectual capacity." Others, such as Ann, saw the satirical elements in the program as entertaining: "That was mentioned

by the panelists. Our present life is a satire . . . Sort of like the ultimate irony, and this is pretty far afield. The ultimate irony of all time is Gulliver's Travels -- this bitter outpouring from this immensely thoughtful person becoming a children's story." Other remarks from the group indicated a serious educational intent. Seven individuals commented on reading at least some of the books on the list provided by the Foundation (Appendix L), and several complained about the list arriving too late or books being difficult to procure in their communities. Five individuals referred to their taking notes, and Miriam even talked about typing them out to make better sense in conveying ideas to her husband, who is too elderly to attend.

As a result of participating in the HF for several years, the researcher assumed that the participants might have had conversations about the program's meaning with the program planners who are accessible during the events. In order to determine what influence such talk might have had on an interviewee, questions on that were specifically posed during follow-up interviews. Where conversations did take place, they were predominately social in nature. "We chatted with them a few times, told them we liked it," said Joe; and Tom Jones talked "basically just to thank him [a planner]." However Frank added, "just off the top of my head right now, I think it's a good idea." Frank had a conversation with one of the interpreters whom he described as a "walking history book." Referring to that conversation he said, "So in that case, some time after the History Forum, I did try to get a meaning established."

Many of the audience interviewees expressed that they did not want to be critical. At one point, Suzanne explained her keen observation of eighteenth-century characters by saying, "Not because I was looking to question, Oh, you didn't do that right." In fact,

most audience interviewees spoke positively about their experience, like Bill, "I'm very happy with the overall program." They responded to the questions in an open and friendly manner and in some cases felt that it was an honor to be selected for an interview. They were grateful for the opportunity to express and obtain more focus for their views which they might have discussed later with family or friends or not at all. Several people emphasized the need for research "like this," and admired CW and/or the researcher for pursuing it. Bill ended our interview by saying, "So I'm looking forward very much to next year's [program] and probably a little more so by realizing how thorough and by how your research is helping them better."

Several audience interviewees made remarks or talked at length about the HF audience in general. Ishmael said, "They [CW] figured they pulled together a group of fairly intelligent human beings that can think." But William Tell thought, "Most of those people in there don't feel free to speak." Jo described the audience as "mostly White [The researcher noticed one Black person in attendance.] ... probably lived more than half their lives already so that they're not older elderly but experienced and wealthy. ... it could be the upper 5% of society that's mirrored in the people who could afford to come to Williamsburg for a weekend and learn about history." Jo felt that the audience was insulated because they "probably live in homes like this ... they could very easily see themselves in that role as the legislators, as the treasurers of the state. I mean that some of these people have functioned in these capacities so it's easy to insulate yourself from the rest of society." Jo thought that a lot of people in the audience don't understand the context of the eighteenth century and that individuals would think "I would be the wealthy one. I wouldn't be somebody who would have to struggle."

The HF attracts return visitors. Approximately 2/3 of the 84 who responded to the questionnaire had enrolled in a previous forum. Thus the researcher sought 2/3 of repeat visitors to be part of the interviewed sample. However not as many newcomers responded to the questionnaire (approximately 1/4), and it was subsequently learned that all of the newcomers interviewed had been exposed to other programs of the Foundation. One interviewee had attended all ten forums. Jethro attended three, but when he was asked what meaning he gained by attending this forum, he answered, "I would say none that I did not already possess. I mean the fact that I'm here means I'm already one of the converted."

According to the questionnaire respondents, what attracted returnees to the HF were the speakers, the discussions that ensue, and the historical interpretations, in that order. When asked what was it about the subject of the forum that was meaningful, most respondents wrote about the format of the forum. Only twelve people chose to respond in terms of their interest in history. At the beginning of each interview, returnees were given the opportunity to elaborate on their questionnaire remarks. Jethro "put Professor John Demos at the top" because "his insights into the social and economic history of the time are very penetrating and very clear and very easy to understand." Demos "had a great deal to say about witchcraft," one of Jethro's interests. However, most of the returnees elaborated on the historical enactments of past forums. Mary remembered the forum in which a scene took place in one corner of the parade field with one tree where a rag-tagged looking renegade Baptist minister came on his beaten-up looking horse. "The group scattered around to listen and they were told under threat of arrest to disperse. ... It was not freedom of religion." Alice spoke of a scene in the House of Burgesses which

was memorable because she participated, ever so simply by sitting down because as a woman she did not have the right to vote. Ann felt "great pity and sympathy" for the young slave who had been accused of murdering her master. At the same scene Jethro "experienced what Wordsworth called 'the willing suspension of disbelief.' I knew they were acting and yet I felt that I was there."

When asked what about the subject of this year's forum was meaningful to them, most questionnaire respondents (including some of the ten who did not give any names) wrote several sentences indicating one or more of the following in this order: relevance to today's life (16 enrollees), the colonial origins of the press (15), the question as to whether a free press was the founding fathers first mistake (11), their concern that the press is biased (9), the importance of free speech (7), and wanting to see the Thomas Jefferson-Ben Bradlee debate (6). Two people indicated the position of the press in political life was meaningful to them; one was concerned with the past and one with the present. Some remarks were unique or could not be categorized; such as, "We enjoy the forum regardless of the topic."; "I'm not sure what you mean by 'meaningful'."; "I am particularly interested in hearing Dr. Robert Gross speak," which was the only time a 1996 HF speaker was cited in the questionnaire. During the interviews with the last two people mentioned, Miriam had no trouble talking about what was meaningful to her, and Terry's remarks centered on Dr. Clark and her opportunity to speak to him.

Almost all of the respondents wrote that there was nothing that was not meaningful to them or left the space blank. One negative remark was made about Bradlee, and Jo wrote, "I think such impersonations [Jefferson's] silly and trite. How can an actor provide any depth or portray the complexity of Jefferson? It removes the man

from his context which permits misinterpretation of actions." But during the interview Jo commented, "I think he's very, very good. ... He's obviously studied a whole lot ... but to a certain extent it does pull the historical characters out of their context and it's a context that a lot of people in the audience don't understand." One individual questioned, "What meaning? If there are 'goals,' the 'Forum' will develop them."

Finally on the questionnaire, the enrollees were asked what meaning if any they expected to develop. The breakdown of themes here was remarkably similar to the last question reported. An equal number of respondents expressed interest in developing a better understanding and even wisdom for living life today, versus those who wanted to increase their knowledge of early American history with regard to free speech, a free press, the media, or government. The word "evolution" was used in several responses in order to resolve questions about the press or government. Three new visitors and one repeat visitor enrolled just out of curiosity about the program. Only one person declared, "I attend for the interest rather than to develop any signification."

In order to understand the enrollees' remarks about the program prior to its occurrence, please see the brochure that advertised the program (Appendix M).

The Planning Meetings

The researcher attended one planning meeting in February of 1995 and two in September of 1996. All of the planner interviews were held after these meetings so that the researcher had opportunities to question various planners about what was said and had taken place.

Although the topic was chosen before the forum adjourned in 1995, the three planners involved in selecting four presenters for the 1996 Forum were not bound to

anything but the topic. They met in mid winter around a table that took up most of the space in a small, rather barren conference room to "begin talking about ... scholars and their work, either trying to fit a scholar who is known to be working on this topic together with one of the four pieces into which we've divided our theme for the forum. Or if we are unable to come up with somebody who is exactly right for the way we've defined these subtopics, we then, as I think back, we then begin to adjust the subtopic to fit somebody who's working in something near by." According to one of the planners, "we don't pick topics that are so unresearched that new research is necessary," and speakers are chosen because they have already "made something of a reputation on the subject." About twenty possible presenters' names were brought up at that winter's meeting. Having noticed that many of them had published in the journal and press of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture (a cooperative effort between Colonial Williamsburg and the College of William and Mary), the researcher queried the coincidence. One planner referred to the Institute, "if they don't have a lock on colonial American history, they certainly are the pre-eminent Institute."

Terry described the speakers as "carefully chosen." Besides their work, comments were made about a speaker who was young because the audience likes to feel they can stay up with the young, about a speaker whose manner was austere and reticent and of whom the audience might not be able to ask questions. At one point during the discussion, a planner spoke of a Black History community program that proved to be "offensive" to Foundation employees, visitors and their children because of a speaker's views. When questioned about boundaries concerning the ideas of presenters under consideration, Toby responded, "I don't think it is the opinions they express so much as

the way they might express them." And Thucydides felt that one speaker might have been considered questionable by another planner not because of his ideas but because of the way he presents himself physically like a reincarnation of Foucault, "He comes with an earring, he's all leather"

Thematic ideas that became a part of the program's content were introduced during the February meeting. Issues that the planners wanted to address were: the irresponsibility of the colonial press and its use as a political weapon in the election of 1800, and the press emerging as a powerful new force shaping public opinion. The one-hour meeting adjourned just after a suggestion to use the Henley affair (to demonstrate how a flamboyant issue was played out in the colonial press) and cartoons (to lighten up an evening program) to be presented by CW staff.

Subsequently, letters (for an example, please see Appendix N) were sent to selected speakers giving them an overview of the forum and a suggested title for their presentations, which could be changed by the speakers themselves. According to one planner, "You never know what they're going to say when they get out there." But he did remark, "To a certain degree, I guess when I recommend people I think of how they would treat the subject, and you might say that's an implicit kind of agenda."

Short remarks and quips were made in congenial tones by the planners present. This was explained by one member who attended the meeting: "It's very streamlined, the planning process at this point, because we know what works and we really just have to find the right themes, ... the right co-producers in guest historians. ... A lot of the original planning has to be done differently each year -- really lies in the -- in designing the tour and the evening program."

Two meetings to design the tour and evening program took place during the second and fourth week of September. Due to the length of time between meetings and the other functions planners perform, one planner said, "to keep some continuity I sometimes have to make notes to myself after a meeting so that I can pick up those threads again at the next one."

The next one took place in an employee lounge that was outfitted with a collection of unmatched tables and furniture for seating. At opposite corners there was a large Coke machine and a small kitchen alcove with an ever-ready coffeepot. The 1996 HF had undergone changes since its conception so a more substantial program announcement (the one reproduced in Appendix M), now with the selected presenters and their topic titles, was distributed for perusal to the five planners in attendance, three of whom were not present at the first meeting.

After briefly discussing several eighteenth-century incidents in which there was a free-press issue or in which the press was used to explore an issue, the conversation focused on the Reverend Henley, an eighteenth-century personage who was refused a rectorship at Bruton parish because some members of the vestry considered him to be a professed deist. Between suggesting sites for historical interpretation and considering the logistics of guiding about 150 people whom they anticipated attending several scenes, the planners recommended various actors to play roles in the vignettes. After 1 1/2 hours, the meeting came to a close with encouragement for all to go over the sections that dealt with the Henley issue in Rhys Isaac's (1982) The Transformation of Virginia: 1740 - 1790, and three people were assigned to further work up the interpretive program before the next

meeting. (Note that Isaac's book was not included in the 1996 History Forum recommended-readings list for the program enrollees, shown in Appendix L.)

It was a sunny day in late September when two members who attended the first and second meeting, one member who attended only the second meeting, and a "replacement" planner, who was more familiar with the religious aspects of the Henley incident, sat on the terrace of the Horseshoe Club for their lunch meeting. At the request of one planner for background notes, another planner spoke of some of the known details of the Henley incident: the characters involved and their actions, the use of the local colonial paper. The group began talking about specific scenes, where the reenactments would take place, how many visitors could fit on site, could the scenario illustrate a press issue. They spoke about reenactors stomping on the stairs and giving someone an evil eye, about putting women and a journeyman in the scenes, and about recreating dialogue. A smaller part of the two-hour meeting was spent discussing the evening program: setting the stage for various enactors to read clippings from the colonial press. The researcher noted that their dialogue was rarely interrupted even though the conversation level from the surrounding lunchtime crowd was rather high, including that of a bunch of ducks and geese whose quacks and honks rafted up from the pond below on the warm breeze.

Later, Ellen said of this meeting and those that followed with the enactors who would play the scenes (which the researcher did not attend), "You know people bring so many different talents and perspectives and bits of information together. It's really fun. We feel those juices flowing. It's just great. It's one of the things we do best together." Peter noted that much more time was spent on the evening program, in rehearsing, than the afternoon tour, which involved the Henley incident. Additionally, according to Ellen

the enactors in the afternoon tour generally portrayed characters they regularly interpret at CW, whereas the character roles for the evening program were created, said Peter.

The Program

Opening event - the Jefferson-Bradlee interview. When the 1996 History Forum was officially opened with a welcome from the Foundation's President, Robert Wilburn, and an introduction from the moderator, Cary Carson, the Hennage Auditorium was filled to capacity as some individuals signed up only to see Ben Bradlee interview Thomas Jefferson. (Bradlee was noted in the advertising brochure for the program as "the redoubtable editor of the *Washington Post*.) Spotlights focused on the center of the stage that was bare except for a coffee table with a plant and three chairs. The chairs were occupied by a reenactor, with a striking resemblance to Jefferson, Ben Bradlee, and a character interpreter of Martha (Patsy) Jefferson, who sat between the two men. According to Toby, the index cards Bradlee referred to were written, "about three minutes before the program started. He [Bradlee] was terrified. He said as much." Bradlee thought, "he was going to find himself out on a limb knowing too little about the period and about the man he was interviewing to ask intelligent questions." In planning the event, Toby thought "it was important to set ... a famous journalist against a famous president with two hundred years separating them so that that we could see how differently we approach the issues, how different our values are." The issues relevant to today that Toby talked about were the "newspapers, and their truthful or untruthful presentation of political opinions and political events," and a "widely held opinion among contemporary Americans that the private lives of public figures have public implications that we the voters have every right to know." Mario, another planner, believed that "what

they certainly intend to show with the Ben Bradlee-Thomas Jefferson interview is that the press actually turned around and did have an influence. Whether or not it's true, that's one of the points they would like to bring up and be explored and investigated." Mario felt that the format, which is different than a standard lecture, sometimes makes people pay attention a little more. Louise laughed heartily as she wondered what was planned for the evening. "If it comes out that Jefferson ... was raked over the coals for his religious beliefs and various scandals involving possibly his slaves, and so forth ... those kinds of things open people's eyes a bit ... when they think of this kind of scurrilous press in their reviews and so forth as being fairly modern, but it's been going on for quite some time."

All of the audience interviewees commented, some to great length, about the Jefferson-Bradlee event except Mary who was sorry she missed it. Suzanne got "totally distracted" by looking at the eighteenth-century characters, "and looking for differences in the way they talked, the way they acted." She was trying to put herself "backward in time and trying to understand about that era," and so didn't follow all the conversations. But she did think that the scene provided "a sense of play" in which Mr. Jefferson "won in the sense that he showed us how the eighteenth-century gentleman thought far more than how the twentieth-century gentleman thought." (The opinion that Jefferson was better prepared and more astute and had the ability to stand his ground was also held by Alice, Bill, Holden, Joe, Tom Jones, and William Tell.) Suzanne assumed that the planners "had this theme of the freedom of the press and whether or not Jefferson saw that he was slanting the press just as much as any of the Federalists were slanting it against him." As a journalist, Tom Jones was disappointed with three-fourths of Bradlee's presentation, whom he expected to attack Jefferson for the " 'do as I say, not as I do' kind

of thing." He thought Bradlee was out of his element, "he's certainly not up on Jefferson," and he may not have wanted to appear too rude. As a result of the interaction Tom thought Jefferson "would have been just fine even with the electronic media today. ... The cameras look a little different than the printing presses and work a little differently, but the political interaction, the human interaction, and the way that journalists of any day interact with politicians of any day hasn't changed in two hundred years. And I like that."

Ann shared the view that "really nothing is new. The same thoughts, the same prejudices, the same inequities, the same outrages are simply present in different forms. And not to be completely negative, the same joys are." Although she, like Tom Jones, came away from the whole forum with this idea, they started talking about this perception in recalling the Jefferson-Bradlee interview.

Jethro also supported Jefferson, but as he explained, "you can't spend very many years at Charlottesville without learning that many people consider Mr. Jefferson as an American saint or the closest thing to it." Ever since his undergraduate days at William and Mary, Jethro was impressed with Douglas Adair's (author) argument and distressed with Fawn Brodie (author) who treated the rumors of Jefferson's affair with Sally Hemmings as fact. Jethro referred to the political ads on TV "which mercifully ended on election day, [which] were not quite as bad as that, but they're in the same group." Frank, too, alluded to political advertising today when he said about the 1800 election: "I knew that the election was hard fought, but I never knew it was as nasty as it really was, and you know I really liked that. Again, it showed me that the political system hasn't progressed all that far." Whereas Holden referred to Bradlee as a lion, he felt he was not well prepared and just did not understand the eighteenth-century point of view, which

Holden described as "the deistic concept that truth is self evident in that it comes from a benevolent creator Jefferson and others were predisposed to an optimism that was based on the fact that there is a benevolent God that gives all things even to the most ungrateful of people and that the best way we have on earth to serve this God is to serve our fellow men." For Holden, Bradlee attempted to force twentieth-century views on Jefferson. "It never works," he said, "when we move the eighteenth century into the twentieth century at least we know in a utopian sense what could have been possible and maybe we could work towards it."

It was this very optimism in the character of Jefferson that had made him less appealing to another audience interviewee. According to Tom Smith, Madison had a much more realistic view about how human beings could be governed through self-interest, not through a rational approach and reasonable judgments. "Jefferson's view was, I think, very naive -- problems of epistemology," he said, "that's what I meant when I said I think Bradlee had the better case Now consider what Bradlee said tonight, sedition or treason, either one, is a crime and ought to be punished. But it should not be punished ahead of time by prior restraint. In other words, he put the burden of proof on the editor." The opinions that Tom held were reinforced by the "incredible performance" of the enactor during the interview with Ben Bradlee, with whose work Tom was impressed. Tom thought of a question weeks before the forum that he would have liked to ask Bradlee; namely, if he could tell all the truth that he thought the public ought to know. He never asked his question.

For Jo that was the problem with the Jefferson-Bradlee interview. "Asking questions of Thomas Jefferson is silly," she said, "[it's] as if they were speaking different

languages You can't ask eighteenth-century people the questions that are really on your mind." Furthermore, she felt that Jefferson projected an attitude, "why would I have to answer to you," and wasn't responding to Bradlee's questions, but just kept saying, "'it's not appropriate'," which Jo felt "is the way he would have probably treated somebody two hundred years ago -- just the way he needs to deal with it because you don't have to."

William Tell wanted to ask Jefferson "Why did he mention God in the Declaration of Independence?" but he never did. He felt that even if Jefferson's contemporaries interviewed him, the mores and the courtesies among the people would probably have dictated that they treat him with kid gloves.

Robert Gross presentation. According to Toby, Robert Gross was selected because he "is now very deeply involved in the history of the book and the dissemination of popular learning. Hence we thought he was the perfect person to, or certainly a very good person to, address the whole matter of the information revolution of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." (For a presentation summary prepared by the speaker, please see Appendix O.)

No other speaker received more acclaim than Robert Gross. Frank found him to be an "outstanding scholar"; and Tom Smith, after returning home, discussed with a colleague, who knew of his work, how impressed he was with him. Although William Tell disagreed with Gross on a curtailment of political advertising, he said he was "exceptional," and he "admired his ability to construct a short and complete sentence which carried the whole idea." He compared him to a professor he had, "When he opened his mouth, write down what he said because it's meaningful." Joe, too, "felt very good

about many of his remarks, but to specify them is escaping me and yet I would vote for him. ... He took a little different view of it [the subject matter] than just a true historian on facts that got into the inner self more than just the surface."

Jo was more specific about Gross's approach: he would read little sections to the audience and then show how it fit into the big picture; he would make some sort of comparison to today and show us how close we are. "I could hear him explaining this is you, this is us, we've done this forever. Human beings don't change." Jo noticed that usually the audience reacted with a laugh and then remarked, "sometimes when people are uncomfortable they laugh." But she felt that history is often taken too seriously and that people need to "lighten up" because "this stuff is really funny ... kind of enjoyable."

Tom Jones, who left the forum reconfirmed in his belief that nothing really changes, remembered Gross remarking that maybe the difference today (with regard to education, for example), is we're expecting a higher standard, so we don't have to despair totally about our situation. We simply have raised the bar higher. For Tom and Bill, the Gross presentation made an impact on them in terms of ideas that evolved throughout the forum. Bill was impressed at historical facts presented about people at Concord who "weren't even aware of what went on in Lexington, and they acted very independently so that it was almost by coincidence that some of these things happened. That's what impressed me the most...How in the world, with lack of any type of communication and what they had was so terrible, could the Revolution be organized?"

Joanne Freeman presentation. Freeman was the first graduate student ever asked to be a speaker; but she, according to one planner, "had just published a very significant article on public opinion, so we thought she was the ideal presenter for that." Another

planner predicted her work would "fit in beautifully because she's dealing with reputation." (For a summary prepared by the speaker please see Appendix O.)

Of the seven audience interviewees who commented on this presenter, three talked only of their surprise in finding out a) that mail would often be opened by the postmaster and its news disseminated orally, and b) newspapers provided space for readers to write their comments before sending their copy onto family or friends. Others referred to Freeman as "very interesting," and Jo felt that she had a "manner similar to Bob Gross." Frank said Joanne was "fascinating. I couldn't take notes because she was going too fast . . . Her concept of public opinion and how that was being formulated I thought were insightful ... because I'm beginning to connect the twentieth century and the eighteenth century and seeing that over the course of two hundred years, the way we do things has remained relatively the same."

William Tell, however, felt that Freeman "was weak. I think she's knowledgeable and demonstrated that a couple of times in the course of the discussions, but she's not a driver. She doesn't project to a group like this. Might be great in a seminar."

Box lunch. The enrollees were given an opportunity to sign up for one of three lunchtime discussion groups. (For a description of these please see the program brochure in Appendix M.) Actually five groups were formed: two each for the "Food for Thought" and "Table Talk," and one for the "School Lunch Program," which had an attendance of seventeen. Four audience interviewees out of the nine who attended them talked about these sessions.

Tom Jones enjoyed his session with the presenters Freeman and Lienesch which "was very much just a group discussion," in which he got a chance to ask some questions.

However Suzanne was disappointed with hers. She expected the discussion would be more academically slanted. In her words, "I was looking for more meat, and all I got was some lettuce." There were no ground rules for the conversation and at one point "we took a tactical turn and we started talking about teaching history and primarily focusing on the secondary level"; although this was not the "School Lunch Program." According to Suzanne, "Dr. Gross" made an "incredibly important point" about taking three years instead of one of American history; and she hoped the discussion would take another turn before they ran out of time, but it didn't.

Joe commented that his session "wasn't even a sociable lunch break." Alice said of the same group, "people weren't friendly or conversational." Although Joe came prepared by having read the book, he "couldn't relate to his [the moderator's] questions," and Alice thought that the moderator had a problem with the book recommended for discussion. Joe said, "It was nothing. ... It was not meaningful except what Charles Clark added ... a great deal to it in comments and thoughts" when he wandered into the room.

Walking tour -- the Henley incident. Judging from evaluation forms of past forums, the members of the audience, said Toby, "always like the character interpreters. The custom-made walking tour of the historic area has become one of the signature events. Obviously they like that." Toby was not satisfied with the tour last year and "wanted to see a more polished dramatic production. Something with a beginning, a middle, and an end to it." Peter noted, however, that less rehearsal time was given to the enactors for the walking tour than the evening program this year, and some of the enactors who generally portray characters involved elsewhere in the historic area were ad libbing their lines whereas others, who were unfamiliar with their particular role, did not

have much preparation to understand the religious complexity of the incident. According to Ellen there is no script for the walking tour. There is an outline (available in Appendix P). Reenactors who usually portray characters such as Henley are given "the content of each scene and overall our objectives, and then the two, three, however many actors would work out how they want to play it," said Ellen. "And one of the historians ... is in on that. But you let the electricity between the actors really do most of it, once they know what the goals are." As for the goals, Ellen said, "Overall, reason we think we want to do this scene is to show Henley as blank, Page as blank, here's the documentation we're basing it on."

In this case, some of the documentation included a letter that the printer published and Henley's rebuttal. But a section in The Transformation of Virginia: 1740 -1790 by Rhys Isaac (1982) was also referred to as "this capsule of that event," said Ellen. "He's [Isaac has] got a different argument than the purpose, the issues of the History Forum. ... His is about authority and modernization. We were using it specifically as it relates to self justification in the press." Ellen explained self justification: "Henley then goes into print justifying himself, explaining what his training, background, beliefs, et cetera are -- he is justifying himself in print."

Toby talked about the tie-in of the Henley incident with the earlier presentations of Gross and Freeman in which "two men with different views on a subject of importance to the community found themselves in a controversy, the center of a controversy, that was for one of the first times played out in the paper for an audience or to public opinion." Toby "wanted them [the audience] to understand that issues that we had already been talking about in the morning session and that we wanted them to take home and think

about in their own lives -- we wanted to show them how these issues had first emerged in the period we portray here."

Using the Henley incident as an example of a controversy over differing religious views that were played out in a newspaper was also mentioned by Louise, Terry, and Peter. As far as learning a lesson that was relevant to their lives today, Louise thought the audience would have a "good chance ... if they accept the fact that these religious questions were strongly enough held at the time to actually find their way into a public forum." However, Thucydides thought that "if we did a conference on religion and the American Revolution, then that would be one that would hit hard at contemporary notions of the past. What exactly did the founding fathers -- what types of religious beliefs they held, and how misrepresented they are."

Peter described the controversial incident as one in which Samuel Henley, an interim director previously appointed by his predecessor at Bruton Parish, was denied permanent rectorship in 1773 because he was considered by some vestrymen to be a deist. "He was very outspoken and sometimes didn't follow the orthodoxy of the church ceremony." In his stead, the Reverend John Bracken was chosen; his election was supported by an "extremely powerful man" in the community, Robert Carter Nicholas, whose views on religion were conservative. The "newspaper war" that ensued until 1775 in Purdie's non-partisan press implicitly involved many complex issues such as church hierarchy, religious toleration, and loyalty to the Church and crown of England that were being questioned by pre-Revolutionary Virginians. Among Henley's admirers was the young Thomas Jefferson, with whom Henley maintained a long relationship, and other prominent figures, such as James Madison and George Mason. According to Peter, "What

we were trying to do in the scenes was to get the participants of the forum actively involved, actually becoming spectators to people of the eighteenth century who were portraying characters that would have expressed different emotions about this, pro and con." The audience was suppose to be like reporters going out to get the sides of the story, said Peter.

Some of the planners expressed distinct views about Henley. Although finding it difficult to label people from the eighteenth century as "opportunistic," Mario thought perhaps the label was appropriate because she heard "what Henley was leaving and what he was selling, and it sounded to me, based on all the material goods he had in his possession, that he did rather well here." Louise thought of Henley as opportunistic and condescending at times. She referred to a paper he had published in England years after in which he claimed Mrs. Nicholas, who had testified against him at the vestry meeting to chose a rector, was not a good witness. Louise said, "He felt that women weren't qualified to speak about whether a statement was theologically sound or orthodox or unorthodox." Concerning Henley, Ellen said, "He was certainly an opportunist. ... Smart aleck. ... had no self-control. ... He should have kept his opinions to himself if he expected to keep the job. ... He was a show off, and it's too bad that the actor who portrays Henley is getting a little long in the tooth, because Henley was actually about twenty-five years old at the time. ... That is not interpretation," continued Ellen, "it's fact."

At a planning meeting, Terry expressed concern about "kind of stacking the deck against Henley." She questioned, "Is there any body we could bring out on Henley, not just be turning all the big guns on him, but who was defending Henley?" Peter also felt that the scenes on the walking tour "didn't give a fair play to Henley's side."

At one meeting Ellen expressed a desire to give a fair play to women, "So far characters are all male and all White? They'll be no women then." During our interview she said, "I was cautioning that we not omit that. It's always great to have gender and racial balance. Since we had material [documentation] on these women." In order to include a slave's perspective said Ellen, "Harvey comes center stage and steals the scene. The White guys are really incidental. It's really a way to get a Black perspective on this which was completely interpretation because obviously we have no written records about a slave's information on the Henley case."

For logistical reasons in dealing with the number of audience members, the afternoon tour was broken into six scenes that took place in six different sites. (For the location of these sites, please see the map of the historic area in Appendix E.) Groups of twenty-five people were scheduled to see four of the six scenes. A contextualist was assigned "to set the scene, to set up the action so people would know what was going on," said Toby. Additionally each group had a tour leader to answer questions.

At the end of the walking tour, audience members reconvened in the Hennage Auditorium for a session in which a moderator (in modern dress) and then the audience questioned five enactors. It was not the purpose of the moderator to pull all of the scenes together, Ellen commented, "he's to ask each of those characters questions that will make them squirm, just as, at his best, Sam Donaldson or Ted Koppell can do on a real news show or talk show The audience then can make its decision based upon how that character or the actor gives the answer."

Groups of twenty-five people were formed as the audience left Bruton Church after witnessing the first of the Henley scenes; therefore, it was highly unlikely that all of

the interviewees saw the same three or four scenes. Of the fifteen people interviewed, nine people talked at various lengths about some of the things they had seen. (Two people mentioned not attending the event due either to a previous commitment or difficulty in walking.)

Jo spoke at great length about the Henley incident. She felt that not enough contextual background was given to understand Henley. "They could have given us a biography of Henley, a resume, talked about the difference in his age, about his being a recent immigrant. Also, he had just finished his schooling. They could have talked about the sensibilities of the past. The fact that the church provided an intellectual outlet for the people and that it centered around religion." Because of the lack of information and documentation, Jo experienced confusion rather than the ability to make her own decision. "It would have been better if we could have read primary sources first. Maybe then the controversy would have come out. I never got to see the controversy, why or what. I felt they were shielding us from that. We needed to deal with what created the controversy Then we can make our own decision." Jo found the scenes distracting, because of the accents, and disconnected, and thought the tour guides were wasting her time. At one point she commented that someone else from the Foundation took over and used the word "deist," but he could have talked to us a lot more. "Things like this would have made the program more meaningful." Instead of having some explanation of the incident, the final question and answer session added to her confusion. "There were people I had never seen before and I had no idea what kind of point of view that person had. But the moderator from Colonial Williamsburg seemed to know very well and I kept

thinking, 'I'm missing something.' And the other people in my group kept saying, 'what's that, what are they here for. I don't get it.'"

Bill was perplexed about the connection between the afternoon events and the evening program. "After they came back from the trip, then the minister and his wife and the printer were on the stage, and that dumb bell in the middle who was kind of a patsy for the parishioner Seems to me there should have been some linkage with what all that meant." Bill was expecting to see some connection to revolutionary ideas considering the time period. "Most of Jefferson's and Madison's friends were Baptists. The Baptist Church had been a very revolutionary church. I'm sure that if the program had been structured around the influence of religion in the revolution -- that way we would have had a lot more detail than this, but as it happened, it came about as sort of a side bar through freedom of the press."

For Miriam, Ishmael, Alice, and Mary the portrayal of the Henley incident was of special interest. Each of these women talked about understanding the event in terms of similar experiences in the Episcopal Church today and/or having a background in religion. (Ishmael had previously read The Transformation of Virginia: 1740 - 1790, which helped her understand the scenes.) Although Mary thought Henley was a meek character, she thought his "ideas were excellent. I mean there was a departure from the state church to a degree and he was not beholding to the vestry." But it was Mary's understanding that the vestry "has the responsibility of looking after the property and things like that more than a supervisory role to the rector." The performance "caused" her "to think through changes in church organization that have taken place through the years and reasons for those changes." Even though Mary had an understanding of what was

happening during the walking tour, she felt "the experience was greatly strengthened by having a discussion at the close of the field trip. This emphasized the purpose of the field trip in relation to the theme in a way that was impossible out-of-doors during the field trip." For Miriam, the first scene in the church was confusing. "There was simply what we just saw as action in the church without understanding what meaning at that point was going on until we got outside." Then she compared the controversy to one taking place in her church which was withholding support because one Episcopal bishop does not believe in the trinity. "It is exactly the same reason as Henley not being made a minister of Bruton Parish. So it's a sense almost of maybe we don't learn anything from history or it never changes, one or the other."

With her background in religion, Alice helped explain the issue to another person in her group. According to Joe, "She already knew it, and she's taught me a little bit, but there were other people that were trying to explain, additionally, information that would be worthwhile. I found it fascinating that several people supplemented what was given to us." William Tell also volunteered background information to his group (although it was not ascertained if this was the same group Alice and Joe were in), which he better understood as a result of reading, by "sheer luck," Leonard Levy's Blasphemy: Verbal Offense Against the Sacred, from Moses to Salman Rashdie. So, in his words, "I think we overdid the Trinitarian fight. I thought 'OK we got that problem solved, now let's go to something else,' but we didn't ever go to something else. We kept beating the same dead horse. Well, it wasn't then dead, but it got dead after a while. It was worthwhile. I've never been to a forum that wasn't worthwhile." William Tell realized after asking a question regarding theological opinion and policy in the eighteenth century, which in his

view the presenters were not prepared to answer, that the whole point was "to understand how the press worked." Several months later, Frank came to this same conclusion after revisiting Williamsburg and having a lengthy talk with one of the reenactors.

Most of these interviewees also talked about the character of Henley, the presence of women in the scenes, and a small portion of one scene that involved a slave. The last two commentaries will be reported thematically in the next section because the interviewees were dealing with perspectives relating to their overall History-Forum and/or their life experiences. As for Henley, only Joe felt he portrayed the part "quite well"; others felt Henley was weak. Mary said, "[Henley] was kind of small and meek with his head down all the time and hardly speaking in a low tone, like he was afraid to speak." In contrast, "[the] protester was a great big, burly looking character." William Tell said, "It may have been bad casting. He struck me as a mousy little guy. Not a forcible fellow. He may have been sincere in his beliefs but he didn't assert them very ably. He was whining about needing the job, and he didn't outline in four or five first sentences exactly what it was he stood for." In terms of ideas, Alice did not think that Henley represented a radical force at that time. She said, "it was the age of enlightenment, and that really wasn't emphasized."

Evening program. Unlike the walking tour, all of the five character enactors were created for this event. They were informally seated on stage, without a moderator, to read the news that interested them. "This was a complete departure from the afternoon program," said Peter. "The whole theme was different. ... It was light-hearted and it was meant to be entertaining ... to show the audience that the newspaper became a vehicle of communication." In Ellen's words, "[the] after-dinner program, after a heady day of

issues, was intended to be light and enjoyable; but, to also highlight the importance of the press in the eighteenth century, for *The Virginia Gazette* printers of covering the waterfront, all kinds of news from the ridiculous to the sublime."

Two audience-interviewee comments about the evening program were brief. Alice thought the performances were excellent and Ishmael said, "the interpreters always give you a rich feeling." Jo elaborated on the reading of the snippets which she said were very useful "because that really set the tone for what they were doing, different people's points of view, different people's interests, different kinds of levels It reinforced the idea that the newspapers were for everyone or no one. That they were there and they were a forum for people in the eighteenth century. It's not that different than today."

Bill, however, found

the reading of umpteen ships that were going out with twenty barrels of tar got kind of repetitive. One thing that you might have concluded is that here is this issue that is kind of tearing the town apart [the Henley incident], but never gets reported in the press, or very little. I don't remember one reference that referred to the afternoon. ... Seems to me there should have been some linkage with what all that meant last night. Even though they did it very well. (Bill)

Charles Clark presentation. The summary Charles Clark prepared for his presentation is in Appendix O. One of the planners said about him, "Chris -- Charlie Clark is somebody who's been writing on newspapers, the origins of the eighteenth-century newspaper for a long time." Another planner, Thucydides, thought that first Lienesch and then Clark would be able to speak to the subject of this year's forum. Specifically, Mario commented that Clark deals with how the press gathered its news and where it came from by comparing development on this side of the Atlantic with what was going on in English newspapers operating at the same period.

For Suzanne, Dr. Clark's lecture was a focal point of the forum. She folded her hands on the cafeteria table as she explained her keen interest in the founding fathers' original intention. She wondered if it was in fact necessary or possible to understand the eighteenth-century mindset in framing the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. Whereas Suzanne felt that no presenter spoke to this directly, she wrote, after referring to her notes (which she found easiest to take from Clark), that he "did discuss the breakdown of issues such as prior restraint and seditious libel that were challenged in the American colonies and changed in the court of public opinion. These attitudes have to have been reflected in the framers' attitudes." Suzanne was glad she got a chance to talk to Dr. Clark at the closing luncheon when she sat at his table. She said, "I would jump at an opportunity to take a class with him."

William Tell referred to Clark as "the old prof who was doing this so long that he's forgotten a lot of things he learned a long time ago. Well, he still knows his trade, but." Jo merely commented that Clark and Lienesch "were not as confident with the twentieth century."

Michael Lienesch presentation. Michael Lienesch is "an historian on the one hand, but something else more contemporary on the other, a political scientist, a journalist, a public intellectual," who was known to planners through his work on the Alien and Sedition Acts in the 1790s. "We knew that that was a period that we wanted to focus on," said Toby, "because like the 1990s it was one of great political upheaval." Lienesch was placed last on the rostrum of speakers deliberately to "pull all of this [the forum] together and to say 'well, what does this mean for us?'" In Thucydides' opinion it would be Lienesch who could best enlighten parochial audience views of the eighteenth-

century press, which he found far less responsible than the press is today. For this reason "many of the founding fathers did not think the press, a free press, was a good thing." For the speaker-prepared summary, please see Appendix O.

Both Miriam and Suzanne remembered that Lienesch alluded to Jefferson as having been ultimately ambivalent about a free press. Suzanne elaborated, "Dr. Lienesch said something about the fact that the people at that point in time had to constantly defend themselves. ... to protect those rights from the government. I don't think that -- that certainly isn't what we're doing today."

Closing luncheon. The forum's audience dined in a ballroom of the Williamsburg Lodge. Unlike previous years, this event ended with just a few, very brief remarks by the moderator. A couple of interviewees were expecting more, but thought it wise to have had the program finished with the discussion following the last speaker to keep interest high so they would leave thinking about it all. Two others commented on the discussion that took place at their tables. It was mostly social intercourse said Joe, and Ann said we "talk about where have you come from and that sort of thing." Ann, who has attended the forum for four years, generally does not get into discussions because "it's awkward. Some of them are in groups. Some of them seem welded to their husbands or their friends and I think I hesitate to intrude."

Program Evaluations

All of the members of the audience were requested to hand in a CW prepared evaluation form at the end of the HF. An additional sheet with three of the researcher's questions was attached to the CW evaluation form distributed. The researcher received 42 of the CW evaluation forms although the "Conference Evaluations Summary" (which

was not based on the researcher's questions) reports receiving 45. (The researcher's questions for the History Forum evaluation form, the CW evaluation form, and the "Conference Evaluations Summary" may be seen in Appendixes D, Q, and R respectively.)

Of the 39 researcher-question forms received, 1/3 were either too brief to comment on or blank. Of those interviewed, only Miriam did not answer any questions. The reader may remember that she wrote on her questionnaire that she had difficulty in answering the questions, but spoke quite easily and for some time about the program's meaning. The forms received from the other identifiable interviewees did not reveal any additional or different views. For the most part, respondents focused in on one particular aspect that was stripped of the context in which they spoke of it. Thus, Jo was still unfavorable to the use of reenactors (along with another enrollee who expressed this opinion), Jethro said he would be less judgmental, Ishmael was disappointed that the question posed by the planners concerning the original intent of the founding fathers was not addressed, and Frank wrote about using what he had learned in his classroom (as did six others).

Overall, the respondents expressed delight at gaining new knowledge or perspective with the program. What did emerge for the group as a whole however were concerns for press influence, particularly in politics, and a sense that there is more continuity than change between the eighteenth century and today. For example one non-interviewed attendee wrote: "Found it most interesting to compare colonial freedoms to modern political freedoms and their usage. Discouraging that media will ever be thus – necessarily controversial because people will always be people." Only a couple of people

wrote about change or differences in the eighteenth century and today. Atypical

comments included:

. The subject contributes to my general fund of knowledge. No specific meaning to my life other than general enrichment.

. How people aired their personal differences in the public press and the impact this had on their lives. Honor and pride were placed above privacy.

As with the questionnaire, the question as to what was not meaningful was most often left

blank.

Section 2. Thematic Findings

“Meaningful” and “Interpretation” as Defined by the Interviewees

All of the interviewees were asked to define the words “meaningful” and then “interpretation.” As a group, the planners chose synonyms such as “relevant” and “significant” for the word “meaningful.” Three planners used the word in an historical context; the other three, in terms of personal life experience. Mario and Louise said the concept had an emotional level or component. In Mario’s words, “it can be felt as well, as opposed to just having some logical impact.” For all but one of the planners, the word “interpretation” was defined in terms of “meaning.” For example, Mario said to personally interpret is “to create something that has a sense of meaning to you,” and Terry said, “to come up with their own slant on what that means.” Toby articulated a very distinct interrelationship between the words. For him “interpretation” was the process and “meaning” was the product: “[interpretation] is a process of making sense, and out of that process comes meaning.” For each of four planners, facts were analyzed in light of personal experiences to come up with a point of view or a construction of reality. For Toby those experiences were grounded in history:

I think for everyone meaning is profoundly grounded in our understanding or misunderstanding about what has preceded. We expect the world to work in the next ten minutes much as we have become to understand how it worked in the last ten minutes, or in the last ten years, or in the last ten centuries. ... With each passing second, the present turns into the past and indeed we -- our actions, our expectations for the immediate future and the further future are -- what can they be informed by if not by our experience of the past. In fact, the word experience is inconceivable in any other context but historical, it seems to me. (Toby)

In talking about the word “interpretation,” only one planner did not refer to the perspective of an historian or a professional museum interpreter. Terry’s definitions were

expressed in lay terminology, and she did not preface any of her remarks with “as a historian” or “as a museum interpreter.”

Perhaps because the group of audience interviewees was larger, 15 as compared to 6 planners, and they spoke more extensively about “meaningful,” their remarks were easier to categorize. Like the planners, the audience interviewees came up with synonymous adjectives such as “relevant,” “significant,” “substantive,” “enlightening,” “interesting”; but, unlike some of the planners, the audience interviewees (in eleven cases), related “meaningful” more to themselves: “that *I* am interested in,” or “it becomes a part of *me*.” A few audience interviewees also spoke of the context of “meaningful” to the larger society or world. Only Ishmael prefaced her remarks with “as an historian.” Also unlike the planners the audience interviewees (six of them) spoke of “meaningful” in terms of usefulness to them, either in their future thinking or actions.

Although three audience interviewees found the terms “meaningful” and “interpretation” to be somewhat interchangeable, the other twelve did not define one word in terms of the other. For five audience interviewees, “interpretation” was a process of translating something to oneself or abstracting from a set of objective facts. As with “meaningful,” “interpretation” for nine audience interviewees had a very personal aspect to it. (This number included the three audience interviewees who talked about the use of the term in relation to their background as museum interpreters.)

Three audience interviewees commented on the abstract qualities of the term instead of drawing on specific life experiences. Ann defined “interpretation” as a “vision, how a person perceives a subject. I think perception is the best synonym.” She went on to say that “interpretation tends to be a little bit more personal, meaning is sort of out there,

but it's sort of arbitrary" and depends somewhat on the outer world and people. Jethro, too, thought that "meaning is an area within which most people agree." He bent over the coffee table between us and with his finger drew a circle. "If you consider it as a circle, interpretation might extend somewhat outside the circumference of the circle." In a follow-up interview Jethro elaborated that meaning is closer to one's core and includes the kind of assumptions that we as human beings have together. In speaking about "interpretation," Ishmael also referred to it as being in a different place as apart from the core. For Ishmael, interpretation, her years of experience with history, stood between her and the original source or document she was attempting to understand.

Planners' Intentions

After defining the terms "meaningful" and "interpretation," the planners were asked: What meaning do you wish the audience to get or come away with from this particular History Forum? At first Toby put his elbows on the table, rested his face on his hands, and said, "frankly I don't care," but then he lowered his eyebrows and continued:

That's not entirely honest because as an advocate, as a participant in the society in which I live and work, it's -- it seems to me it's not possible for me to divorce my work as an historian from the ends that I hope this work achieves, which is to say then that "yes" I hope that my interpretation of the past leads some people to share with me the meaning I take from my interpretation or my understanding of the past. And what is that in this case? Well, I think I gave it away at the beginning when I said "I believe that democracy thrives on more rather than less freedom of expression." (Toby)

Toby stressed the importance of the articulation of diverse opinions. In fact, he laughingly said, "If I can't seem to get an argument going, I will actually try to pick a fight." Whether or not comments are objectionable is less important to Toby than free expression: "Because who knows, not among the pornographers necessarily, but from

somewhere comes an unpopular idea that grows on us and eventually becomes something that we think is important.”

Most of the planners stressed their desire to have the audience understand diverse opinions in order to have a wider or different perspective of the past and then to draw their own conclusions. For Terry, this desire was generally expressed: “that we don’t need to be afraid of conflicting interpretations,” For Ellen, too, the intent was general: “to raise the issues ... so that all those who participated could have these questions posed ... then they could make their own decisions.” Others, such as Louise, framed their intent in terms of “a new reference point from which to look at issues involving the press and the Internet -- censorship of various kinds” And Mario constructed a wider perspective in terms of the power and the influence of the press vis-à-vis that of the government. But, Mario did not expect the audience would always find meaning in a HF: “I mean you learn something but it isn’t always meaningful -- it’s useful, it’s entertaining, it’s educational. ... It’s wonderful if it’s meaningful for them afterwards, but that may be just a rung up.”

Thucydides was the most specific about the perspective that he felt needed to be embraced by the audience. He thought about the question for a few moments, holding his hands so tightly that his knuckles went white. Then his voice became animated as he gestured with his hands and said that he thought it was important to understand the evolutionary concept of a free press and how the concept of a free press was used in the bargaining process of constitutional ratification. Although the eighteenth-century press was scandalous enough so “that the partisanship was so intense, that the contestation was so vitriolic, that the lack of the personal exposés were so common place”; yet:

they were political philosophers too, and they did have a broader vision of society and saw the necessity for protecting an institution that they both deplored at one level because they knew it would always be bringing them bad news, but yet they thought it was important to protect it nonetheless because it was vital to the maintenance of a free society. (Thucydides)

Audience Interviewees' Perceptions of Planners' Intentions

When asked, "What meaning do you think the program planners of this year's History Forum had in mind?" seven interviewees responded in very general terms, namely to give contrasting views and to enlarge our perspective. Miriam was the only one of these seven who spoke about conclusions:

I can't see as anybody really attempted to draw any real conclusions from here of these. I doubt it will really be of any particular point to any of us to try and draw any real conclusions. They are simply things -- perhaps because they have been brought up, one is simply going to be more aware of as they try and continue to keep up. (Miriam)

As for contrasting opinions, Jethro said, "[there] was not, in fact, as much controversy as the organizers would have liked," and Tom Jones commented about "the uncanny agreement of all four historians on major points."

Five interviewees expressed some confusion about the meaning of the overall program or the reason for raising the question in the promotional material about whether a free press was the founding fathers' first mistake. After the first interview Jo wrote: "My understanding of this year's History Forum topic changed while I was there. From the title, I thought that the topic was freedom of the press. It seemed to me that the topic really was the role of the press in the 18th century. It seemed as if one group developed the title and another group developed the content." Jo also commented that she found it difficult to draw her own conclusions because not enough primary documents were presented. Although the question as to the founding fathers' first mistake was "very

surreptitiously dealt with in the forum,” Ishmael wondered, two months after the forum, why CW posed the question.

For Frank the meaning of the program centered on the role of the press and how it becomes predominate especially in an election year: “I think they’re very, very subtle in doing this. I think they had this in mind all the time. What a great time to say this type of thing about the press. I think they’re pretty sneaky.” Three months after the forum, Frank was still ambivalent about a free press but he thought, “although our twentieth-century press seems to have a little more latitude [for the editors], I think the eighteenth-century press was perhaps a little more free.” Frank went on to talk about the fact that anyone could have their letters to the editor printed back then. Holden was more definite in his view of the planners’ intentions:

I think they had two things in mind: one, we can learn from this eighteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth century struggle with a question of the abuse of power in the press. And I think they wanted us to be aware of that, at least as I interpret it. And secondly, to give us good and valid scholarly background for this. (Holden)

Suzanne, too, was very specific: “I assume that they had this theme of the freedom of the press and whether or not Jefferson saw that he was slanting the press just as much as any of the Federalists were slanting it against him.” As a result of his experience in planning programs, Tom Smith said:

Well, I could hazard a guess that what they were confronted with was the problem of getting a session for another History Forum to have a good hook. And this notion of having one just after an election was really a stroke of genius. I don’t think they have anything -- look, I’ve been on a lot of planning committees setting up things like this, and they don’t ask what meaning. They just don’t ask that question. They ask the question, how can you put on another successful History Forum. I don’t think the question you’re asking entered their heads at all. (Tom Smith)

Themes from the Interviewees

For an explanation of how the researcher isolated these themes, please see Chapter III. The order in which the themes are presented here approximates the “meaningfulness” the audience interviewees assigned to them by: 1) the number of interviewees who spoke about the theme, 2) the length of their dialogues, and 3) the extent to which they elaborated on the themes using stories and analogies from their personal experiences (which is consistent with their definitions of the word “meaningful”).

Information explosion and technology. References were made to the Internet and a “media-saturated society” by introductory materials to the forum. A few of the audience interviewees made reference to these matters. Holden spoke of the importance of people being able “to discriminate what is good, what is bad, what is truth, what is untruth, what is a group of people who are able to make a worldwide web page and spread Nazi propaganda.” Tom Smith, months after leaving the forum, thought that the presence of the computer would make a huge difference to our understanding public information. He said he would have liked to pursue that issue further.

Among the planners Louise made a reference to the Internet, but Mario and Thucydides talked about the deluge of information that bombards us through various media sources. Mario compared today with the eighteenth century when books were rare and oral communication and letters sufficed to carry information. Thucydides took this a step further: “However when they saw it [the press], it was kind of an exotic dimension of society I think. Nothing terribly relevant to a lot of lives and so I think they were less -- that their involvement in the press was less emotional.”

Public opinion. Two interviewed members of the audience mentioned the issue of public opinion. Miriam, dressed in a suit and walking shoes, was ready to go back into the historic area after our evening interview. She said, “all the way through [the forum] has occurred over and over again -- what is public opinion?” But she immediately pondered over getting all this information thrown at us [from the media], “but is there really any connection between that and true knowledge?” Miriam felt that societal problems lay in the fact that so much information is from a national not a community level where local groups can become involved and act. Furthermore, she felt that this condition has led to the break down of community. Frank thought a meaningful issue of the forum was “the similarity between the eighteenth-century press and its role in public opinion, and how it sometimes is misused.” He also noted the resemblance between the accusations made against Clinton and Jefferson.

How a press and/or the First Amendment was linked to public opinion was brought up by two planners. Toby said, “The First Amendment grew out of a historical context, the rise of public opinion emerging in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.” Mario, in a lower voice when speaking about this, said that the forum intended to explore whether the press in the eighteenth century influenced public opinion.

Politics and leadership. The 1996 HF began on November 7, just days after a presidential election. Considering the proximity of time and Bradlee’s role in breaking the Watergate story during the Nixon administration, it was no surprise to hear two women and five men make references to immediate past presidents and/or incumbent leadership. However, the audience interviewees did not discuss individuals as much as they were concerned with drawing inferences from the past that helped them understand

contemporary politics and society. Frank's response to the question about what was meaningful to him about the program articulates what several others spoke about with shorter allusions:

Thomas Jefferson accused of being an infidel and infidelity and being a coward strikes me as being similar to the present president, William Jefferson Clinton. I find that to be ironic that the same type of accusations, the same type of scurrilous material -- then again I'm using scurrilous not in terms of supporting one candidate over another but the printing of scurrilous material, is still -- was being done back then and is being done now. The only difference between now and then is the amount of people that are being reached by it. I just find that to be truly fascinating that history repeats itself. (Frank)

As the reader will note, Frank concluded that "history repeats itself." Because continuity and change were brought up by all of the audience interviewees, this theme will be dealt with later, separately.

Although the advertising brochure made reference to the topic being timely, following the November election "by only two days," the only planners to speak to the issue of politics and leadership were Louise and Mario. Mario said: "Well, we just had a presidential election, maybe that's coloring my statements today. But certainly if you followed that discussion, there's a question of who do you want to lead the country and what direction do you want it to go and making a choice from that point of view." Louise thought the audience might see relevance to their lives in terms of choosing leadership because "people are having to adjust their thinking away from always turning to the men in a situation and consider finding their leaders from among other groups [women and minorities] and going on qualifications that are ... more broadly applicable than they might previously have thought."

Rights (Guns and Religion). In association with freedom of expression, four audience interviewees brought up the right to bear arms and eight discussed religion. For Frank, William Tell, and Bill it was a matter of how the amendment is interpreted today. Putting himself back in the eighteenth century Bill said, "I don't think I could have foreseen the change in the interpretation or the advent of all these sophisticated weapons really of war to have had any different thoughts on what everybody presumes was the reason for the right to bear arms of the militia rather than the general population." Holden, too, expressed concern for moving the document into the twentieth century. He said:

If we have that faith in the thinking of the founding fathers, in their arguing these points, we should be bright enough to interpolate and move it into a twentieth-century perspective. It's a very elastic document, but the emotional appeals that the people make about the second amendment, I want my gun, that's so foreign to eighteenth-century thinking of using ethos and using various other emotional appeals to deal with a rational argument. They don't get it. (Holden)

Ishmael referred to the "drastic differences" between when the constitution was written and the conditions under which we live today. Ishmael feared a "very vocal minority" who are "trying to press on us an oppressive moral right." William Tell said, "the Christian Coalition frightens me. ... Religion has its place and it should be a standard of private and public morality. It should not be something by which other people are condemned if they don't agree with you. And that's the Christian Right." Although a "very religious" person, Ishmael commented further: "Moral right is one thing but to have to justify the fact that if somebody at fourteen smoked a joint of marijuana and inhaled and was of that generation, I'm amazed if there's somebody that didn't. But they'll come down on that poor person, male or female, like a ton of bricks."

Whereas Ishmael and William Tell spoke of experiences with contingents of twentieth-century society which are oppressive, Mary felt that freedom of religion was oppressed in the eighteenth century, but she added:

it's [the freedom is] so different from the freedom we have enjoyed ever since. I think sometimes so much freedom, that we sometimes are -- like the press that we studied this time -- so many splinter groups have split off from the major denominations and weakened all of them. Although, in certain times, it seems to me that some of these that have split off have become strong. Maybe there's nothing wrong with that perhaps, but it's so foreign to my belief. (Mary)

Regardless of their understanding of rights or to what extent an individual or group can practice or impose their beliefs on the society at large, religion remained one of those issues for many of the audience interviewees which is used to understand both an eighteenth-century and a twentieth-century mindset. (Mindset will be presented separately as a theme.) Eight interviewees mentioned their religious study or religion (Episcopalian) that helped them understand the enactors' interpretations in the program. Tom Smith captured the interrelationship between mindset and religion when he said, "I am concerned that moral education is really the formation of conscience, conscience is reflexive judgment, and reflexive judgment is the acquisition of norms" which can be used to govern a society.

None of the planners brought up the right to bear arms and only Thucydides talked about religion in the context of a right to practice by choice that the founding fathers were attempting to protect. Thucydides was concerned that the entire agenda of the Christian Right was "to impose a kind of uniform Christianity in America, in the United States, that would have been anathema to people like Jefferson and Washington and Paine. ... You have to really torture people like Franklin and Washington and

Jefferson to make them come out as Christians or even Evangelicals ... when any elementary textbook would correct it. But they don't want to know that for obvious reasons."

For women only. Only one male interviewee made reference to the role of women in the eighteenth century as portrayed by the female enactors, but six female members of the audience talked about it more extensively. Holden was fascinated by the interrelationship of Jefferson and his daughter, whom he felt had a "Margaret Thatcher appeal." "We don't get it," he said about the eighteenth-century roles, and then he quoted the enactress of Martha Jefferson, "We are two different spheres. I do my work; he does his."

Jo, probably the youngest interviewee, saw the same scene as being "repressive." She envisioned men and women in the eighteenth century as operating as a team because the family was the unit of society. "The husband was the captain, but the woman would certainly have had a voice." To support her opinion, Jo referred to Martha Ballard, an historical character researched and described by Thatcher Ulrich. Jo was concerned that the audience would come away confirmed in some of their beliefs, "that women were subjugated, didn't have a voice." In fact, Mary, probably the most senior interviewee, thought the wife of Carter Nicholas appeared "brain-washed" when she spoke publicly. "Whatever her husband said, that was what she said." Mary appeared meticulously dressed in her gray suit for an early breakfast interview. Over the clanking of flatware on dishes and the chatter of other patrons, she admitted, in a low voice, to not writing letters to the editor in her younger years because of family disapproval. But she felt more

confident, now, as the family matriarch, and she talked about her granddaughter who was involved in women's studies, with whom she shared many enlightening conversations.

Ann also thought that eighteenth-century women were "vastly more subservient. Martha Jefferson was her father's dutiful daughter. And Mrs. Nicholas was a faithful and dutiful wife, who was concerned with keeping her observations and her feelings private." Miriam admired "the woman who was playing Jefferson's daughter ... because not one word out of her mouth and this was spontaneous because the questions were coming from the audience, it was right strictly staying within the eighteenth-century womanhood." A younger woman, Suzanne, was "disappointed that they didn't allow more play with conversation with Martha Jefferson, that sort of thing. But it was pretty funny."

The strangest scene of all to Jo was when two sisters were talking to each about the Henley incident, "how passionate they were about all this stuff." One woman seemed "to be almost a girl, over reacting, and you're wondering what's the deal between her and Henley and her husband ... this wife got so upset because the minister was leaving and she just was throwing herself in the bushes practically over this incident. ... A little over done I guess." Jo thought, "what it does, it sort of separates reality. It's very easy to make judgments about people that 'I'm not like them, I don't act like them.' The greater way that that's broken down is by showing how people are the same."

Alice did not address the role of women in the eighteenth century, but at the end of our interview she turned to her husband and said, "You speak for me, just like the wife -- was it last night?"

To which her husband replied, "Carter Nicholas' wife."

Alice smiled at us both. "Whatever you say, dear."

Even among the planners, it was the women who talked about the woman's role. Ellen expressed her wish at one of the planning meetings to include women in the Henley scenes. When questioned, in a probe, about how she wanted the audience to view women of that time, Ellen said, "That's not the point of that at all. We know quite a lot about Mrs. Nicholas' testimony before the vestry about Henley because of Richard Bland's letter as printed in *The Gazette*. I was cautioning that we not omit that. It's always great to have gender and racial balance. ... So, since we had material, for God's sake, get the scene in there. That was my perspective." At the end of the tour Mrs. Nicholas was up on stage. Ellen said of this scene, a woman simply did not go to print, "absolutely not. And she should have said, 'My husband shares my opinion; my husband has printed many letters in *The Gazette*. Just as he votes for me, his letters in *The Gazette* reflect my opinion.'" Louise, another historian, described Mrs. Nicholas:

She was the wife of the treasurer of the colony so she had been a keen observer of the political situation for a number of years, but really didn't have a particular role in all of this. ... She's a strong supporter of the establishment – she thinks the state church ought to stay in place and it ought to be Anglican/Episcopal. ... I am hoping that the audience sees her as a woman of education who has some understanding of these issues, and therefore is qualified to speak on -- to relate what she has heard. ... I hope they don't take it as the beginnings of women being included in decision making, having a public role in decision making. I think women wielded a great deal of power behind the scenes, but not in a public way. (Louise)

Terry also felt that it was important to bring women into the scenes "because we don't want people to think that women were just sitting there simpering." Terry has a keen interest in researching eighteenth-century women before they got married because there was a lot more than learning how to be housewives, she said, "it's actually the time of their greatest independence," and a time in which they did a lot of traveling.

The eighteenth-century mindset. Seven male and three female audience interviewees spoke of the need to understand the eighteenth-century mindset in connection with the founding fathers' intentions in framing the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. However, as the majority of the people expressed their thoughts, they focused on the intellectual idealism that they felt was prevalent in the eighteenth century particularly in the mind of Jefferson. According to Mary, who spoke in general, "People at that time who were planters and other people had time, because of free labor, to cultivate their minds. Some were educated in Europe and spoke other languages, so they had an international interest." For Mary this provided a stimulus for her own learning. She continued, "The more you know about every subject, the more interested you are. That's why I'm going to be more interested in early newspapers and the things that I hear about early communications, and read about it."

Although William Tell had been exposed to a "little bit of Plato and a little bit of Socrates," he was impressed with the classical education of Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison and the fact that they understood Latin and Greek. "That'd make them about twenty-five times smarter than I am. The education I had was pretty good, but it certainly wasn't classical nor did it teach me, except from a legal point of view, how to think. Jefferson was a man who understood concepts, abstract concepts, and how to articulate them." William Tell would have liked to know what classical readings Jefferson had perused over his career to develop the "decent respect" he had for the opinions of others and for ourselves. He admired Jefferson's selection of words which "were such that other members of the Continental Congress couldn't complain because he'd already taken the

high moral ground, and so the implication was that if they didn't agree with his -- what he wanted to do, that they were somehow not on the side of the angels."

Along with William Tell, six other men expressed strong support for the character of Thomas Jefferson both as he is reported in his own and others' writing and by the enactment of Bill Barker, who portrayed Jefferson. In the words of Tom Smith: "So if I ask what was meaningful to me, here is another accretion, another sort of addition to understanding what Jefferson thought. I find that very important and very valuable." However only Tom Smith criticized Jefferson. He thought Jefferson was naive in the sense "that he really did believe in the enlightenment notion, that human beings could be rational; and, therefore -- they could govern themselves if they were given appropriate evidence and grounds and so on. What they believed in would be the truth."

While not considering Jefferson as an ideal or hero, several women in addition to the men talked about "truth." This came up in connection to Barker's performance in which he took a very strong objective view of truth in contrast to Ben Bradlee who probed "Jefferson" during his interview to rationalize his absolute rather than subjective view. But Suzanne wasn't consciously thinking about the Bradlee-Jefferson interview when she wrote, "I think that I would describe the intent of the eighteenth-century framers as a desire to print truth." This was ascertained on a reinterview when the researcher asked Suzanne if the Jefferson-Bradlee interview influenced her thinking.

While smiling with her eyes down she said:

I think that it's possible. I feel that in looking back at the conference that I was looking at Jefferson as more of a character actor than I was as a person in the eighteenth century. If I were reading Jefferson's words, I would be more likely to accept them than if I heard someone interpreting Jefferson's words. ... But I may have been more influenced than I thought. (Suzanne)

Holden was impressed with the Jefferson-Bradlee interview. For him it reaffirmed his view of the eighteenth-century mind. In his words: “Well portrayed. The frustration with which Bradlee and others and you and I would have in arguing with Jefferson -- the fact that we have gone through a very sloppy twentieth-century way of thinking where might makes right and all of that.” Holden said he was going to look at presentations of the Forum for the seeds of destruction which he felt were present in the society then, that are plaguing us today. As for the idealism present in the eighteenth-century mindset, Frank thought it was now “worn away” or “out of style.”

None of the planners spoke of the eighteenth-century mindset. However, Toby brought up the dialogue on “truth” in the Jefferson-Bradlee interview: “I felt their discussion of truth was very revealing in that respect [in terms of how different our values are]. How for Jefferson there is no such thing as relative truth, and yet I imagine Bradlee spoke for most but not all of us when he questioned the possibility of perceiving any ultimate truth, any eternal truth, but that was incomprehensible to Jefferson.”

Slavery and race and diversity. Whereas some interviewees commented on several scenes they had witnessed in the Henley incident, one section of one scene prompted attentive recall and thoughts that continued, in the case of William Tell, for months afterward. The scene involving a slave, which was at most seen by 2/3 of the entire audience, was recounted by Jo: “A slave of Peyton Randolph’s was there. Randolph said ‘be careful of what you say in front of the slave.’ The slave commented that we see and hear and understand what is said. The slave talked about being Anglican and being baptized in the church. Everyone had an opinion at this scene, but the scene was not

supported elsewhere,” although we have similar racial problems today added Jo. Miriam noted that the slave was baptized and had a soul. “If they had a soul, they were human and therefore you had no right to hold them as a slave. So you get into this very controversial thing. But he [the slave] was saying you stand there with an absolutely blank expression on your face but you’re hearing everything that is said. ... So that he was fully aware of what was going on.” Later Miriam talked about a visit to Carter’s Grove where “the fellow who was describing the situation there [at the slave quarters] was doing an excellent job.” She came back to town with a Black cab driver and heard that at first the Blacks in town were against the interpretation, but now were accepting of it and work in the portrayals. Miriam remembered being in Peoria where her social studies teacher “was so glad I had not studied the Civil War in Washington, DC because I would have gotten the Southern viewpoint.” She also told a story about her teaching in North Carolina where she wanted to do some work in the Black school. “I was told that if I so much as set foot in that school that I would not be welcomed in a single White home in that community.”

William Tell thought: “A high point in the dramatic presentation was when the slave spoke to us saying, ‘They don’t pay any attention to us. We’re just immobile people, we’re just like the post. But we hear. And [when] we don’t know what the words mean, we find out.’ That struck me as being significant in the seminal development of racial relations in this country.” William continued, “racism is something that bothers me,” and that scene

brought home to me that here was an underclass of people who knew everything that we knew, but were invisible; and they were able to manage their lives or go for their goals knowing what their masters thought, but we never knew what they

thought. They always told us what we wanted to hear, not what we didn't want to hear. And I noticed here's a guy with his stack of grain or cotton and even though he was really visible to the rest of the White people there, he was invisible. He wasn't involved with our interests. He wasn't taking care of the press. It was quite an enlightening thing. I thought that it was well done. Whoever thought of that, did well. (William Tell)

Four months after the forum, William Tell wrote:

This had a profound effect on me. Until just then, I never realized but that what was said in the play was true in fact. It is demeaning to the black man to [be] regarded as being so insignificant that people conducted important business in his presence. This "superior" conduct by the White people helps to account for some of the attitude of black people today.

Some White people still act that way. (William Tell)

Six other interviewees recalled slavery or race issues and or related experiences from past forums. Holden and Frank attended the forum which dealt with immigration (1995). Frank described himself as a young man who once was very idealistic and disliked quotas of immigration, who grew up with the melting-pot metaphor of American society. The forum changed his ideas. "I think that what is happening is that my awareness of a homogeneous culture versus a heterogeneous culture is becoming a little more clear." He referred to a friend of his who escaped from Poland and denied her culture to become American. "I said, 'Wow, here in the melting pot.' But yet when I look around objectively and I take a look at all the cultures and subcultures that are now making up America, I call it a tossed salad." Frank continued to talk about the forum in which he learned that German immigrants in the eighteenth century attempted to maintain their own culture and concepts; these gradually diffused into the main culture and yet retain a "taste of Europe."

Holden described a powerful group of Hispanic members at his place of business.

While he was talking, he used his fingers to sketch out various shapes and lines on the table:

The entrenched European point of view at this stage would have been something like: these ingrates; they don't quite get it. They're here because we set this elaborate banquet for them. And I heard those attitudes and I said, no, no, wait a minute -- when the Scots were coming into Williamsburg and you had the business people taking full advantage of them, selling them land in Staunton, Virginia -- when you had husbands and wives that had to be separated because the skills levels were different. (Holden)

As a result of his experience at the forum on immigration Holden said he worked to establish a mentorship program and raise funds to help support the Hispanic group. "So that's how I put into action -- I was able to convince people that this is a good path."

Joe, Mary, Ann, and Jethro described memorable scenes in past forums in which slaves took part. Ann said, "It was so dramatic that I have some dim notion this type of social interaction took place, but actually seeing this woman in chains -- it really made the entire process and situation extremely vivid. I keep talking about it to my friends now of days." As for any effect of the same scene on his actions, Jethro commented, "No, I don't honestly thing so. I certainly wouldn't call it a turning point, but I would have to say that having served on juries and such ... I used to think I knew it all and I used to be more judgmental than I am now. I am now much more inclined to side with the underdog." Later in the interview Jethro talked at length about his hero, a general raised in the South and schooled at West Point, whom he "would have undoubtedly ended up like":

He was there, right in the middle of the Nat Turner insurrection which must have made a great impression on him. But he chose to stay with the Union. His reasoning was very simple. He said that he had sworn an oath and he would not

break it. His sisters cut his name out of the family bible and turned his pictures to the wall. Nor would they ever speak to him again. (Jethro)

Except for one planner who wanted to include a Black perspective in the program and one who talked about a controversial and exceptionally good program that dealt with slavery, only one discussed racial issues. For Thucydides, “Washington is one of my heroes”; he quoted, ““He gives to bigotry no sanction and to persecution no assistance.””

Thucydides admonished Jefferson:

We can say that attitudes regarding race and racial discrimination still persist. And they persist in a trajectory that can tie from Thomas Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia right up to the present. Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia, for example, is in many ways the first belief expressed, articulating, arguing in behalf of scientific racial inferiority. It’s terribly ironic. It’s Jefferson of all people who would make that argument. (Thucydides)

Thucydides introduced the example of race in relation to continuity and change, a theme which will be reported on later.

A free press. The reader may recall that many people who responded to the pre-forum questionnaire asserted their concerns for press bias today and their interest in the question in the promotional literature that framed the forum for them: Was a free press the founding fathers’ first mistake? These concerns and interests were brought up by 14 of the 15 respondents during their interviews. For the most part these people expressed their opinion about whether the press was or should be free and expressed their disappointment in that the CW posed question was not addressed.

Mary, who was 82 and no longer reluctant to write to the editor, was the only interviewee who said that today the press has “so much freedom.” During her lifetime she has experienced changes in the press. Years ago many small papers expressed strong opinions, but now since there are fewer and larger newspapers, “they usually aren’t so

biased,” she said. Although not implicitly against freedom of the press, both Holden and Frank talked at length about unfavorable experiences with the press. Holden is presently involved in litigation to see “how far we could go to protect our rights” from the press; and Frank came away from the forum still ambivalent about a free press. Although not in favor of censorship Frank expressed mistrust in what is reported and said, “The press in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was a bit of a counter weight. And I think we’ve gotten away from that.” Frank was generally disappointed at not having heard about the ethics of a free press “outside of some innuendo or hinting.”

Miriam talked about an event that occurred while growing up in a large city. Her teacher accused her of lying when in fact she was quoting an historian. “After that,” she said, “I simply recited and went cold.” She realized while talking about the incident that her freedom of speech was really challenged at a very early age but, “I just simply wasn’t aware of things.” Today, she can’t imagine anyone questioning whether or not we should have a free press, but she wonders “how free the particular press that you’re reading is. In other words who is -- the government’s not controlling it, but who is?” This question of control was also raised by Ann who along with Jethro and Tom Jones expressed a need for a free press but saw the pitfalls and abuses.

Suzanne, William Tell, Bill, and Jo saw some distinctions in how the press operated in the eighteenth century versus today. Suzanne said, “I think in the eighteenth century they were looking at clarification of the ability -- who would be considered libel for the things that were printed and so forth. And today we think of it as being an excuse almost, an ability to say almost anything.” For William Tell and Bill the local press in the

eighteenth century was a gossip pot or a community bulletin board. However, the forum did make William Tell think about the function of the early American press:

The thing I got from the History Forum this time was the mechanics of opinion and news being disseminated through the press at this particular calendar period. And I believe they slighted the printers a little bit. ... He [the printer] didn't get credit for being a reasonably bright guy, even well read considering the circumstances. Because how could you be a printer if you couldn't read? And if you did read the things that were available they were the same kind of classics that made Jefferson and Madison and Adams brilliant men. (William Tell)

Besides discussing the issue of a free press, five people implicitly stated their disappointment that the forum's question -- Was it the founding fathers' first mistake? -- was not addressed. In Jo's words: "We took up a lot of time with something that seemed tangential to the topic as it was advertised." Suzanne, who came specifically to deal with original intention said during the first interview: "But right now, sitting here, I don't think I have any more clear an idea of what the original intention of the framers was than I did when I went in there." After reading over her notes and her transcript she wrote:

I think that I would describe the intent of the 18th century framers as a desire to print truth, not controlled by government in any forms of censorship. This truth was probably perceived as being able to stand alone, unchallenged in understanding. During the early years of the republic, however, even some of the people who helped frame these ideas used (and misused) the ability to print the "truth" for their own manipulation and purposes. The freedom of the press thus lost this purpose of truthfulness even in the lifetime of the framers. (Suzanne)

During a second interview, after thinking about the issue some more, she said, "perhaps original intention is too enigmatic to understand, and that what we need to do is to look at the words more at face value rather than trying to read into them what we think they saw." However, Tom Smith thought it was most important to read documents considering the view of the people who wrote them. "That's why I came here," he said, "because I'm interested in what historians say about this." His experience as a teacher led Tom to

appreciate the difficulty students have in reading and interpreting primary sources from the past. He continued: “That’s my experience as a teacher. What is their understanding of this as historians? That’s what I want to ask.”

Ishmael was also intrigued by the question posed by the promotional literature advertising the program. Ishmael’s interest was not in the answer to the question: Was the first amendment the founding fathers’ first mistake; she wondered why freedom of the press was even included. She explained:

Rights were an accepted part of the British attitude, ideas; therefore, we don’t need to enumerate them. And, two, if we enumerate them, how do we enumerate them all? ... Why did they pick the press? ... Everything else is the individual’s rights. The right to bear arms is an individual’s right. The right to religion is an individual’s right. Everyone of the other rights of which they speak pertains distinctly and only to an individual. The press was becoming the fourth estate, a business. (Ishmael)

As with the audience interviewees, the planners frequently offered their opinions on whether or not the press is or should be free and several also made comments on differences between the eighteenth-century press and today’s. Ellen was not “perfectly sure if today’s press is free. ... It’s an issue that each individual has to decide for himself.” However, earlier in the interview, in response to what about the subject of this year’s HF was meaningful to her, Ellen did say: “As a subscriber to *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, *The Economist* and a few other things, it’s amazing how the press controls what we know and how we read it.”

Mario, Terry, and Toby explicitly expressed that today’s press is biased or slanted, but they, along with Louise and Thucydides, emphasized the need either for a free press or diverse opinions. In spite of an unfavorable run-in with one reporter’s questions, which were in bad taste, Thucydides nonetheless “would defend his right to

ask the questions of me.” Toby was even more emphatic. Despite “thorny” problems with pornography and the access to youth of value-laden information that may be contrary to community values, Toby would “defend to my last breath your right to be really objectionable.”

Three planners addressed a difference between today’s and the eighteenth-century’s press. Then, both Louise and Mario thought that the printers often took the government line too often. For Thucydides, the eighteenth-century press was more scurrilous and less civil or responsible. Thucydides hoped the History-Forum audience would be able to appreciate a comparison: “If they understood that, they would understand that you have to take the past and try to see it on its own end terms rather than as a fictionalized representation of how you would have liked it to have been in order to justify what we today should emulate.”

Differences and similarities and relevance to today. All of the audience interviewees made comparisons between the eighteenth century and today. Some, like Mary, came specifically because the 1996 topic had relevance to contemporary life. In Mary’s words: “I made an effort to attend this time because it is so much more provocative than some of the other subjects. I think the previous themes have been almost entirely on the colonial times, while this had a modern day import to an age-old problem.” However, Mary saw dramatic differences in the way our independence and early governance were influenced by the media. “Some of them [ideas] -- very revolutionary for the time. Then their audience was a fraction of what it is now because of our explosion of population for one thing. And I think women’s issues, that whole realm is so different from then and now.”

Six other interviewees talked about differences in the press, people, living conditions, philosophy, and/or the need of a welfare system and strong power for the states. According to Ann the program was meant “to convey the subtle and fascinating difference between now and then and the subtle and fascinating similarities. [Then] the social hierarchy was a great deal more formalized, stratified, more publicly acknowledged. The role of women was presented as being entirely different.” However, for Ann, as will be presented later, the similarities were much more profound.

Although not spoken of in dramatic terms, Frank noted that idealism today “has maybe worn away,” whereas in the eighteenth century “there was an innocence. ... Jefferson and Washington ... they’re saying man’s basically good -- that if given all the information, he will make the right decision. I think that we’ve become so cynical that that’s not necessarily true.” Holden and Tom Smith also noted an optimism in Jefferson’s thinking. Tom Smith found it naive whereas Holden found power in the idealism:

We can learn much more from the eighteenth century than the eighteenth century can learn from us. ... So what can we learn from that? We should have, I think, at least a chance to see that thinking clearly. When I teach deism, for example, in some of the classes, the fundamentalists call me an atheist, the Catholics say I’m condemned to hell, the Muslims think that I don’t get it. To recreate the eighteenth-century mind and to use it as a benefit for us and just to get that notion that we’re on earth to do just one thing -- to do good to one’s fellow creatures. ... And this is what I think is at the basis of Jefferson’s thinking that the universe provides us with the answer. Why do we insist on the wonders of the stuff that may not exist -- the mystical, three-person God, the virgin birth -- when we can just take a look straight ahead and say, “Wow, this is powerful.” That’s a universe that we don’t have, I guess, in the twentieth century. (Holden)

However, Holden felt that the “seeds of destruction” were there in eighteenth-century society and he was going to be on the look out for that in the conference. “And I think the seeds of the inevitable dissolution in that society happened, in fact, because we’re a very

big and great country. People could just move west, and they did. And the power began to move with them. ... That's that materialistic business which undercuts principle. Today, I think we inherited that."

"There are a great many signs of decay as far as democracy is concerned," said Alice. She talked about people now who are "selfish and vote for what will be to their advantage rather than the common good. ... And this was expressed in some of the reading that was suggested [for the forum]." As far as democracy is concerned, Joe thought of people in the eighteenth century as "trail blazers." Now, it's a matter of keeping it going rather than running the risk of having it run down. Then, the questions were different. "And they did not have any place to look back and say this is how it worked somewhere else. It really was true trail blazing. ... I think that's one of the points that Bob [Gross] made somewhere along the line that to me was meaningful."

What was kept going for Ishmael since the Revolution was the status quo. Before the Revolution the attitude was one of "let's upset the status quo completely." Publishers were pressured to publish other's people's opinions. Ishmael wrote on the transcript of the first interview: "Prior to the Revolution, 1773, it was Henley and Nickolas [sic] using the press to air their opinions. Post Revolution, it was the press itself (in the Jefferson campaign) that influenced, or at least tried to, the public." Then the whole paragraph following was crossed out from the transcript and in its place was: "Meaning may therefore be that human nature has not changed."

Bill, too, centered his comparisons around the time of the Revolution; he was bemused by how the Revolution even got started or proceeded considering the poor communications available then. But he imagined many similarities in human interaction,

in the way negotiations took place or rivalries ensued between different branches of the military.

For most of these six interviewees Revolutionary time was one of great change and differences were noted. However more similarities with life today and the eighteenth century were consistently talked about by more than ten of the 15 audience interviewees. Furthermore, their comments often involved sweeping generalizations. For example:

- “Over and over and over again, in different times, people are so similar.” (Ann)
- “Human nature has not changed.” (Ishmael)
- “We haven’t changed people very much.” (Joe)
- “I’m beginning to connect the twentieth century and the eighteenth century and seeing that over the course of 200 years, the way we do things has remained relatively the same.” (Frank)
- “The meaningful topic is that people don’t change very much in two hundred years.” (Jo)

Tom Jones talked about the similarities between today and the eighteenth century and the fact that nothing changes in human interaction politically, personally, and socially at least eight times during the course of our interview. The continuity issue was meaningful to him because it reinforced his hypothesis that nothing changes in history. This fact gave him comfort “to know that we may finally have hit on the right experiment ... the best form of government that human beings can hope for.” The fact also gave Tom “a lot of experience to call on.” As he explained: “You learn best from your own experiences, but you’re still not necessarily sure that -- well that was the right thing for that time for me; but then when you start seeing that other people also did this and believed this and it goes back and back and back, it just gives all that much more credibility to whatever the issue is, in this case freedom of the press.” In a lower and less

animated tone of voice, Tom continued: “You know we all moan about things were better in the old days. You know and that’s kind of -- not that we should give up and not try to change the course of things and say, ‘well shouldn’t we keep some quality standards on this or that’; but even when you get over ruled all is not necessarily lost. You know people pretty much felt the same way.” For Tom, this meant that things weren’t necessarily getting worse. His voice regained some momentum as he said:

Then you know you can be a little happier about where we are and then the new trap becomes, well then we don’t have to worry, let’s just sit back and not say anything. But I think another thing that was brought out in describing the actions of those being reported on back then is that one of the things that keeps things good is people trying. You know you never give up, you just try making it a little bit better. (Tom Jones)

Tom felt that his view “that nothing changes in history, at least not in personal reactions ... seemed to be pretty much the view among the historians.” The fact that the four historians (presenters) agreed added credibility to Tom’s hypothesis. At one point during the forum he brought up his question:

I said, look I haven’t heard anything new. Am I missing something? Can you all think of anything? And then Michael Lienesch came up with one that he said was new; but frankly I kind of dismissed that as not being too new. It was spur of the moment, but you know I took -- that cemented it for me. And their analyses along the way then, they not only gave us facts, but the historians also gave us their interpretation of it, and they pretty much said that. I mean I don’t think that was their theme necessarily, but that emerged as a theme for me. So it’s just everything confirmed. But then when I challenged them directly at the end to knock that down, they didn’t. They couldn’t. (Tom Jones)

The reader may remember that Ann thought the program was meant to convey the subtle and fascinating differences between the past and today, and she did find a difference in social inequities. However, in her words: “I think probably the single thing is that really nothing is new. The same thoughts, the same prejudices, the same inequities,

the same outrages are simply present in different forms. And not to be completely negative, the same joys are equally.” Ann did not talk about the continuity issue as much as Tom Jones, but she did get a “great sense of continuity” from the 1996 HF. Although this has been her perception “for a long time” and makes it easier to deal with her world, coming to places like Williamsburg reinforces the continuity issue for Ann. However, when viewing social inequalities, like the Black woman in chains, Ann felt disempowered.

Jo, who is a museum professional, thought that the audience would find the past quaint which would make visitors separate themselves further from people “back then” with whom they may not want to identify. “The distance makes the history more comfortable,” said Jo. As for Jo, “The fact that things are the same gives me confirmation. Human beings are the same, they interact the same way. This is reassuring to me.” Jo thought that the presenters, that is, Robert Gross and to some extent Joanne Freeman, were instrumental in pointing out similarities: “He’d read it or give a modern example or he’d make some sort of comparison to today to show us how close we are. And usually there was an audience reaction and generally it was a laugh. ... Sort of like ‘Oh, we’re just the same. This is the national part, we’re closer.’ And he did that over and over and over again.” Frank felt that the way Freeman formulated her thoughts, especially her concept of public opinion was “very insightful.” About this, Frank said, “and you could take that and transcribe it to the twentieth century and see the same process at work.”

The researcher did not directly question the interviewees about the notion of continuity which was reinforced for them as it was for Tom Jones and Alice and Joe.

Thus, no figures can be reported for the group in general. Alice did say however that the forum made a difference in her thinking: “Before the forum I would have said it’s very different. After the forum, I think it’s more similar.” The similarities all of these audience members saw ran the gamut from race and immigration to church and politics; but generally each segment of the society to which they were referring involved human relations and interactions -- even those that were “ugly.” The following words of Holden capture some of the sentiments of the interviewees: “It’s nice to know that you walk in the footpath, the footsteps of people who have been there before. This is what history is.”

As reported earlier, three of the six planners spoke of differences in the eighteenth-century and today. Additionally, a couple of planners commented on female role differences and the fact that religion is not as much a part of society today. In our first interview, Toby “wanted the audience to be ... reminded that much is different about the eighteenth century.” When prompted specifically about differences in a second interview, Toby looked aside as if to collect thoughts in private and then spoke while maintaining good eye contact with the researcher. Toby talked about the different attitudes people had then; for example, how society should be organized:

Most were still believers in a deferential society in which there was in a sense a god-given order. One was born into one’s place in society. That came with rules, rules that governed your relationship with those both above and below you. Now, we know that the eighteenth century was also a time when that order was challenged, but it still was a pervasive social attitude. An extension of that was the way most people regarded slaves and slavery and racism. (Toby)

Toby added that he felt sure that there are places in the United States today where racism is “alive and well.”

But even though those people probably do not -- can hardly any longer regard their attitudes about their superiority and other peoples’ inferiority in the same

sort of open accepted, that's-the-way-the world-is way that most people did, or a great many people did in eighteenth-century America, so they were astonishingly different from us today in that respect. (Toby)

For Toby, the differences are easy to overlook:

because people from the eighteenth century more so than earlier centuries appear familiar and are engaged in many activities that got their start in the eighteenth century that we still are engaged in today. I am thinking of all those consumer activities, making meals into performances, dressing for success, measuring one another by the way we look, the way we talk, the kinds of stuff that we own and give. ... Williamsburg I often say by way of provocative analogy is actually more like twentieth-century New York City than it was like seventeenth-century Jamestown. Just because it had become and so had thousands of other provincial English and European towns -- they had become emporiums for the sale, display, and use of consumer goods in the same way that towns are commercial today. (Toby)

Thucydides used the race issue as an example to elaborate on some of the similarities and differences apparent in American society over the last two hundred years:

“Economically the condition of Black people in American society is better than it was. I mean, at least statistics show that over 50 percent of all Black families in the United States are in the middle class. That’s a vast improvement. Conversely, we can say that attitudes regarding race and racial discrimination still persist.”

Although not elaborating as to the similarities and differences Terry thought that an important aspect of museum education is:

Helping people to understand not only how the past was the same, but how it was different. ... I think culture in general is an evolutionary process, it builds on what comes before. But if you have no knowledge of what comes before the immediate before, then you’re missing a piece of how you got to be what you are as a social animal, if you will, as part of modern society. (Terry)

Louise was speaking of understanding the difference religion played in eighteenth-century life when she said, “If they [the audience] accept the fact that these religious questions were strongly enough held at the time to actually find their way into a public

forum ... I think they could accept that, they might well recognize themselves or ourselves in this production [of Henley].”

For most of the planners the topic’s relevance to the life of the audience members was important. It was Thucydides, however, who emphasized the audience’s need to see the continuity that is there in today’s society with the past. “It was a sense of continuity over time that energized a lot of what I did as a teacher and historian.” Thucydides explained his view:

When people don’t appreciate fully the nature of the past, they make very -- in some cases they advocate policies that are retrogressive, but that’s my own perspective. Yet I can also think there are scholars, good scholars, whose understanding of the past equals my own and yet they would have different political sensibilities than mine. They would read what should be done in the contemporary period much differently than I might read it. So it’s not automatically a prescription for intelligent decisions. (Thucydides)

Thucydides added that a sense of continuity doesn’t necessarily provide one with a way to deal with current societal problems in terms of correcting them or solving them.

Section 3. Topical Findings

Feelings

The decision not to question the interviewees about feelings was made prior to data collection; however, it was decided follow-up probes could be used if the audience interviewees brought up emotions that were aroused by the program. Feelings, such as the following examples indicate, were reported and ran throughout the interviewees' conversations:

- Happy with the program. (Bill)
- More confident with similarity found. (Tom Jones)
- Disappointed with lack of handling of First Amendment issues. (William Tell)
- Confused by the Henley event. (Jo)
- Disempowered by the slave enactment. (Ann)

Although no attempt was made to analyze the feelings talked about or to report on each of the audience-interviewees' "feeling-laden" remarks, several dialogues are worth mentioning. Bill, Tom Jones, and Alice talked about patriotism either directly or indirectly. Bill said he got "a greater depth and appreciation of what a fantastic country this is" by attending the program. Alice thought the program planners' intention was to arouse patriotism. For her, patriotism means "loyalty to your country." In her words: "It's like I can't go to Washington, DC without having great feeling of patriotism. I can't come to Williamsburg. I mean it has almost the same sort of effect. I can almost feel my hoop skirts around my ankles."

Miriam leaned forward in her chair and her voice became very animated as she described an event during a previous visit that gave her a strong sense of belonging:

The last time I was down here was one of the strangest experiences I have ever had in my life. We came up the back path, past the windmill, and suddenly here

you are on Duke of Gloucester Street. And it was just this strange sense this is where I belong. Not that I want to live here. I mean that didn't cross my mind. It wasn't the sense that this is where I want to stay, this is where I want to make my home, but this is where I belong. I've never forgotten it, and I suppose I never will have another feeling quite like that. (Miriam)

When asked what inspired the feeling Miriam continued: "Well, probably a sense of history, a sense of continuity. ... That you are a part of what has come before you and to some extent, because you are here, you are a part of what's coming after you -- hopefully, a part of civilization."

Ann experienced "great pity and sympathy" after witnessing a Black character interpreter in chains during a previous forum. She also empathized with a feeling of powerlessness that nothing could be done for the woman since the manner in which her crime was viewed was "a formula, an established formula, for something that I suppose we still have echoes of in contemporary society." Nevertheless, she thought the situation was "atrocious."

Jo, who talked about the audience and herself being cut off and insulated by character interpreters, found it difficult at times to understand the feelings that motivated the enactors; she also indicated that it was important to "hear the feelings coming through."

Use of Primary Sources and Social History

Holden, Jo, Ishmael, and Jethro stressed the need for using primary sources in teaching and learning history. Jo voiced criticism that primary sources concerning the Henley incident were not offered to the audience: "I felt they [CW] were shielding us from that. We needed to deal with what created the controversy, even language is revealing. Then we can make our own decision." Jo also emphasized the importance of

the social aspects of history and the amount of work CW has done to present not just the wealthy people, but the “Other-Half” through their African-American programs. “I think,” said Jo, “it’s difficult and it’s uncomfortable to teach people about indentured servants. That’s as uncomfortable a topic as, maybe not as, but it’s uncomfortable just as slavery is uncomfortable.” But it made Jo realize “That we, in a sense, don’t have a difference ... that in the eighteenth century similar racial problems and class problems and a lot of those same issues are ones that people wrestled with 200 years ago.”

Tom Jones, Joe, and Ishmael had a special interest in the people and human relations -- in social history. For Ishmael, the original documents bring her closer to the person. She offered an example: “It was thrilling. It was really thrilling. One man was writing from Massachusetts in the middle of the winter and you could almost feel him at his desk and the cold outside and the fire burning in the fireplace and no heat in the house. It was really thrilling, really fascinating.” Besides, if there was any mistake in interpretation it was her own: “I had the original letters in my hands, so there was nobody who could work the word or misinterpret it. If I did it, I did it on my very own.” Ishmael also commented on CW’s being “meticulously careful” in their interpretation of primary sources because: “realizing one, they’re getting resources and two, they’re getting more critical of themselves. Which, not being mean to themselves, not saying they were wrong, but saying we can make this even better, we can be more meticulous, we can be more careful.”

Ishmael mentioned using primary sources to check out the accuracy of the interpretation of the program, but this topic was not in her specific area of interest. Plus, she felt no need to do so. When asked if they felt a need to check the accuracy of the

interpretations given, seven interviewees said, “No.” Four other interviewees wanted either to read more or check into facts about Jefferson. As of the second interview, which generally occurred a couple of months after the forum, no one but Mary had pursued any more reading related to the forum. Mary dug up some of the eighteenth-century papers in her home state to compare them to what she had seen in Williamsburg.

However many of the respondents reported leaving with unanswered questions, for example:

- Why was the free press the founding fathers’ first mistake?
- What was said in the eighteenth-century press about the Revolution?
- Given Jefferson’s known atheistic beliefs and aversion to organized religion, why did he make references to God in the Declaration of Independence?
- How did the Revolution get organized with such inadequate methods of communication?
- What led up to the Henley controversy?
- How do people acquire standards to govern their behavior?

Changes in Thought and Influences

On the first interview, each of the audience members was asked how their understanding of the topic of this year’s History Forum changed as a result of being there. About half of the members said there was no change; some added that their ideas were reconfirmed or their knowledge of the period expanded. Bill, Mary, and Miriam were surprised at the lack of communication in the eighteenth century given some of the realities, for example, that newspapers reprinted articles for publication from England or from other cities in the New World sometimes months later. Jo learned that the role of the press was very different in the eighteenth century than today. William Tell responded:

I expected a lot of argument with legislatures and church leaders coming up and trying to muzzle the press and what occurred during that time. This apparently did

not occur because I asked that question specifically and the legislatures at that time and bishops and ministers didn't decry the press and declare that they were stepping out of line. I expected a contentious issue. (William Tell)

On the second interview, about two months later, the audience members were asked if there was any change in their thoughts about the forum. Again, about half responded "No." Six other interviewees reiterated some thoughts they had and also digressed into new areas. This will be dealt with in the next chapter because the points are subtle and will involve more researcher interpretation.

In response to what influenced them some audience interviewees rephrased the question as to what impressed them the most. If the reader has followed each of the individual's comments, one will realize the remarks below are linked to what was in fact discussed:

- Uncanny agreement of all four historians on major points. (Tom Jones)
- Film clips of a political ad as it might have been paid for by the Adams-for-president committee. (Jethro)
- The Bradlee thing. (Ann)
- The knowledge that you get. There's no such thing as useless information. (William Tell)
- Primary sources, the reading sources, more so than the historical interpreters. (Jo)
- Lectures in general. Dr. Clark's was a focal point. (Suzanne)
- Meeting different people. (Bill)

Future Actions

After discussing the meaning of the program the audience interviewees were asked what effect, or impact, their thoughts might have on their future actions. Three interviewees said, "None." One of the actions mentioned by five audience interviewees was to read more in the topic's domain or with greater understanding. However, when

questioned specifically in a follow-up interview about reading what they intended, 3 of the 5 people had not done so.

Jethro and Ann commented that they were even more inclined to talk or write letters to advocate free choice in terms of library use, something with which they have been actively involved. One participant thought that the background information he gleaned from the forum would be useful in lectures and in a book he is writing.

Frank, Jo, and Holden, who are involved in schools or museums, said they would definitely find use for the material they learned in their positions. Holden was the person who reported a change of perspective due to last year's forum on immigration which helped him initiate and activate a proposal to solve some hotly-contested issues in his workplace. In fact, during follow-up interviews, both Frank and Jo spoke about educational programs which they had just begun that deal directly with eighteenth-century newspapers. Furthermore, both of them had contacted different personnel at CW for additional information. Jo had also spoken to a group of people she was training about the researcher's project. She was impressed with the fact that it was being done and thought that teaching and its evaluation should be centered around what is meaningful to the learner.

Mary, William Tell, and Tom Smith were prompted by the forum to pursue further study or reflection. Whereas only Mary's project was directly connected to the subject matter of the forum, all three did in fact indicate by follow-up letters their subsequent thoughts. Four months after the forum, Mary even sent along a copy of an eighteenth-century newspaper with the following comment: "[Mr. X's] five reasons for starting the *X Gazette* were very practical and interesting. When I contrast them with

much of the sensationalism, over emphasis on sports etc. of today, I fear we suffer regression.” (Note: specific names were withheld to protect the interviewee’s identity.)

The planners were also questioned as to what effect they wanted their interpretations to have on the audience’s future actions. Overall the planners’ responses were remarkably similar in that they wanted the audience to “think in new ways.” Some of the planners’ intentions were even more general than those of Toby and Thucydides.

Toby wanted the audience:

to think in new ways about the issues that are raised, in this case freedom of expression, and bring that thinking to bear in real life. Bring it to bear on those events and those choices that they participate [in] in their own communities. ... There are all kinds of local and national issues that raise freedom of speech issues. Everything from community mores as they either restrict or don’t restrict the selection of library books for example. Or, much larger questions that are being debated in Congress about Internet access to all opinions, or do we want it restricted for a certain number of reasons. (Toby)

Thucydides wanted people to appreciate that the First Amendment “was the product of a bargaining process,” whenever they “criticize the press and sometimes call for greater restraints.”

Mario and Louise stressed that they wanted the audience to be open to different points of view and interpretations, and in Louise’s words “that they will not accept at face value what they’ve been taught or what they’ve been told, that they will apply some thought and questioning to the prevailing viewpoint.” Both of these remarks indicate critical thinking abilities, but when the researcher used these terms in the interview with Ellen, she felt that this was jargon of the education field. She preferred to use the word discernment, which was not “judgmental” or “negative.”

Education

There were comments made by the audience members about education that will help the reader understand their needs and perspectives as lifelong learners. Although not questioned about education, eleven people spoke positively about educational experiences and always wanting to learn. The fact that “education is an ongoing process” is something that Suzanne wants to perpetuate in her family. She described that process as taking away a fragment, hanging onto it, and then coming back for more information.

Tom Smith, Ann, and Joe spoke about coming to an event with an open mind. Tom comes with “no intention on my behalf. I don’t think that learning occurs that way. Well, sometimes it does, but fairly rarely. My experience is that I go places and talk to people. I go to libraries a lot and read things, and I haven’t the faintest idea what’s going to happen.” Joe felt that the HF was organized for history teachers, but that he got the educational benefit. For Joe, education is “not only the facts, but the meaning of the facts.” He added, “even though the disagreements of meaning -- which I think is especially important in these days of disagreement as to what history is telling us.”

Ann, Alice, Joe, and Miriam not only described scenes that had a visual impact on them, as did many interviewees, but also talked about the importance of a visual image. Joe said it was simply easier to remember things that way and research has proved that fact. Alice said, “it [a visual image] takes you back,” but Miriam spent some time talking about a side trip she took to Carter’s grove at CW. She remembered being surrounded by beautiful gardens, walking through boxwood hedges, and suddenly coming to an open space that was “spectacular. I absolutely gasped out loud. Two couples that were close to me apparently were not noticing at all and were making comments about how dead the

flowers were. At this time of year, what can you expect? As though the river didn't even exist." Besides visual experiences, having advanced reading materials in a timely matter to avoid a "crash course" was important for many audience interviewees.

Although made in reference to the intellectual quality of a lunchtime discussion, Suzanne noted, "I was looking for more meat and all I got was lettuce." This remark bears an uncanny resemblance but in a reverse perspective to a remark made by a planner in describing the History Forum's challenging audience: "They don't want pap, they want sirloin."

Of the planners, Terry was the only one to talk about education and what it meant to be a teacher. This occurred at the end of the interview:

I think Colonial Williamsburg really takes very much to heart how best to educate our visitors, how best to help them see the past, how best to present them with controversy about the past. ... It's hard for people to understand that the way they learned history isn't the history of America, and that was someone's interpretation who wrote their textbook, and that because people have continued to look at evidence, people have continued to ask questions about those things. There are other interpretations out here. So, all of those things, all of those objectives, and all of those ideas about educating and history are really out there a lot as we plan programming at Colonial Williamsburg.

A good teacher is someone who understands as much as possible her students, her audience ... someone who wants to help people to synthesize for themselves, to think for themselves. That may mean spoon feeding them some facts. If they don't have those, give them whatever tools they need and however you need to do that. ... I think a teacher is just someone who has the outcome firmly in mind, and the outcome is giving people the tools to be able to think for themselves. (Terry)

Discussion

The opportunity to have a discussion about the forum with other participants was not important to Ann because she has a group at her community library with whom she is more comfortable talking. Even though 3 out of 9 audience interviewees reported having

unsatisfactory experiences with their box-lunch discussion groups (because people could not respond to the questions as formed by the moderator), these and seven other audience interviewees thought that being able to discuss issues and hear others' opinions at the forum was very important. Their remarks included activities such as asking questions, debating, and talking to enactors. Alice said about the History Forums in general: "The ones that are more memorable it seems to me is where the enactors, or actors, get to talk to the audience on an individual basis somehow."

Two people mentioned that meeting with the researcher was one of the highlights of the forum and Holden thought that it would be "nice to have more conversations like this." When asked what effect the researcher had on them by asking them questions, twelve respondents claimed it helped them focus their thoughts and/or reflect more on the program. For example, Miriam said, "By asking the questions, you made me stop and think and analyze my own feelings." Jo said too it made her think about the program more; "I couldn't tell what was happening. I feel more confident. I was trying to make sense of it all." Except for the interview, Tom Smith said about the program in general, "I'm afraid I don't think of it very much as a forum; I think of it as I might think of visiting another library." For him the experience had been one of getting information instead of interacting with people.

Three planners talked about the need and desire for discussion opportunities at History Forums. Ellen said about the audience: "They want to be stimulated to have their thoughts provoked, and they want to give their opinions. Of course that's the purpose of it; that's why it's a forum rather than a lecture series."

According to another planner, Toby, the HF was designed to provide the audience with an opportunity to speak because “many of our participants, the ones who return, tell me that they are just as interested in hearing other members of the audience talk as they are in learning what the historians have to say. ... These are people who have a high opinion of their own opinions and enjoy hearing others, not just professional historians on these same subjects.” In the past, said Toby, “if I can’t seem to get an argument going, I will actually try to pick a fight.” Toby places a value on people being able to express different points of view because sometime, “from somewhere comes an unpopular idea that grows on us and eventually becomes something we think is important.” For Toby, museums can provide a service in dealing with unresolved issues from an historical perspective and they “need to be forums.” In any earlier interview, Toby talked about the importance of having an historical perspective: “the only way to judge it [innovation] is by some measure drawn from experience in the past.”

This chapter presented the findings about the program elements, the participants, and the themes that emerged primarily in the participants’ own words. It also provided the participants’ definitions of “meaningful” and “interpretation” and some of their direct answers to questions concerning change in their thoughts in addition to the topics that they felt they wanted to address. The researcher has tried to present as much diversity and range of opinion as possible in order for the reader to have some understanding of the event and its participants before reading the next chapter which will be more analytic and interpretive in nature.

CHAPTER V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Section 1 of this chapter deals with the similarities and differences found between planner and audience interviewees regarding the definition of the terms “meaningful” and “interpretation.” This section also compares the program intentions as stated by the planners and as perceived by the audience interviewees, and compares what was meaningful about the program to both the planner and audience interviewees. In Section 2, two sets of schemas are presented which depict the connections the audience interviewees described regarding the main themes they discussed (presented in Chapter IV) and the particular events of the History Forum (HF) that they attended. The analysis and interpretation of the themes follows. Section 3 begins with a review of the concept of change as it was used by the audience interviewees and by the adult educator, Mezirow (1991). Then, a profile for each of the audience interviewees is presented in which each interviewee talks about the change they perceived in their thoughts as a result of the program. In each of the profiles, comparisons are made to Mezirow’s (1991) theory and to the interviewees’ other expressed thoughts and actions. Where possible, attention is paid to their perception of change in general and other experiences which may have influenced them. The chapter concludes with Section 4 which deals with reflections and comments on the study’s grand questions.

Section 1. Comparative Analyses of Definitions, Intentions, and

What is Meaningful

Comparative Analysis of “Meaningful” and “Interpretation”

Each of the planner and audience interviewees was asked to define the words “meaningful” and “interpretation.” If there was some discrepancy between their definitions and how they used the words in a specific context, or if the interviewees defined one word in terms of the other, clarification as to how the two words might differ was requested. During analysis of the transcripts, data entries of key words were noted for each interviewee. Classifications of synonyms, modifiers, and usage (that is, whether a product versus a process were being referred to) became obvious.

The synonyms that were most used (by 5 of the 15 audience interviewees and 2 of the 6 planners) for “meaningful” were “significant,” “important,” and “consequential.” Both groups were also similar in that when they did further clarify these words, they viewed “meaningful” as a product and “interpretation” as a process. This distinction is compatible with Mezirow’s (1991, 1990) view. Although Mezirow defined “meaning” as an interpretation, he added that “to make meaning is to construe or interpret experience -- in other words to give it coherence” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4).

The groups differed in how they related the term “meaningful” to themselves. Eleven of the 15 audience interviewees used phrases such as “something that *I* want to know,” “it becomes a part of who *I* am,” or “closer to *my* inner core” (italics added for emphasis). Among the planner interviewees, only 3 of the 6 made such personal references. The use of such personalized phrases does support Kegan’s (1982) position. He claimed that meaning making is the very ground of personality itself, “it *is* the

person” (pp. 2-3, 11). Other phrases used by the audience interviewees included: “consequential to what you do or how you understand,” “cornerstone in logic which determines direction,” and “becomes a part of whom I am.” These phrases indicate that a central part of the personality and thinking are involved in making meaning. They also indicate, through direct or indirect use of the word “perspective,” that the constructs (or, in one audience interviewee’s remark, the “assumptions”) formed are used to further view the world and analyze experiences. Mary said, “it is the way you put into your own thinking what you have learned,” and then added, “something that becomes part of your life and part of your thinking and your philosophy, and part of your recognition of material and actions of people and so on in the future.” In any case, the phrases used, especially by the audience interviewees, are very close to the definitions cited from Mezirow for “meaning schemes” and “meaning perspectives.” (Please see Definitions at the end of Chapter I.) The planner and the audience interviewees, differed more widely when it came to defining “interpretation.” In fact, 5 out of 6 planners spoke of it as a process of putting out to the public or an audience, only two of whom made any personal reference.

The word “interpretation” has been used to define the technique between visitors and guides in museums since the 1930s (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995). Since then it has been the object of much writing and discussion (Alderson and Low, 1976; Alexander, 1971; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995; Tilden, 1977). Although Mills (Knudson, Cable, and Beck 1995), Rockefeller (Ellis, 1989), and the CW staff polled in 1993 (CWF, 1993) preferred the term “interpret” over “educate,” Mezirow (1991) hypothesized that

interpretation and meaning were basically synonymous and at the heart of the educational experience for the learner (Jarvis, 1992).

The definitions given during the audience interviews suggest they are interpreting to themselves all the time in an effort to make sense of the experience (Ishmael) or move the idea through their own experience (Holden). Many interviewees made reference to a translating process, one in which the individual connects or determines what is relevant to himself or herself in the context of the situation (William Tell). For the most part what is relevant is meaningful to the audience in a personal way; it becomes part of who they are. Jethro called this his “core” and positioned that core on the inside and placed interpretation on the outside. In fact, Ishmael talked of herself as an interpreter, as the historian “standing between myself and the original source.” The historian in her has more information and expertise to critically sift through new material and make sense of it to her “self” in terms of other life experiences. Thus, while “interpretation” and “meaningful” are definitely linked for the audience interviewees they are not necessarily synonymous as Mezirow implied (1991). They are, however, so closely aligned that one term is often defined in terms of the other. Additionally, both terms are central to a personal learning experience. This is demonstrated by choice of words such as “relevant,” “important,” “central to self,” and “interest.”

Noticeably, almost all of the interviewees, both planners and audience members, who had experience as museum interpreters or historians prefaced their remarks in such a way as to differentiate the use of the word “interpretation” professionally and personally. Both Jo and Terry thought they “should” mention that they were museum interpreters, and Ellen asked specifically if the researcher meant “historical interpretation” when

defining it. For Ellen the word is “almost jargon of the trade.” Professionally, “interpretation” means, said Ellen, “taking a program, ... a scenario described in someone’s diary and putting this out to the public in a meaningful way.” Otherwise, she said, the term meant to translate as from one language to another. Mario expressed discomfort at the use of the word “interpretation” and did not like to define it. “I mean in a museum there’s that sort of technical term. ... [It’s] technical museumese.” Mario thought “presentation” was a better word and went on to describe personal interpretation as “pulling together the facts that are presented ... absorbing that information ... and probably adding your own ideas to it to create something that has a sense of meaning to you.” From the above descriptions one might gather that professionally interpretation means putting out to an audience whereas from the audience perspective or the personal perspective it means taking in or putting out to oneself.

Possibly, because the interpretation process as it is practiced in museums has been characterized as a one-way flow of information (Richards & Menninger, 1993), emphasizing what must be communicated to the audience or provided for them (Alderson & Low, 1976), the audiences’ own interpretive process has not become part of the museum’s dialogue. Training and suggested readings for museum interpreters emphasize what the guide or enactor should do for the audience. The focus has been on preparing staff to do their job, on the activities they must perform, often with little understanding of what individual visitors are doing with the information they receive or the perceptions or perspectives they form as a result of all the other stimuli that are embedded in a museum event -- be it an exhibit, enactment, lecture, whatever.

Considering what is entailed in a professional interpreter's role, that is putting out to an audience, taking in to oneself, and understanding what a visitor takes in, it is difficult, if not impossible, to perform these activities at the same time since a didactic approach is most often used (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995). This may account for some of the problems with exhibits such as that for the Enola Gay, which as a script certainly only provided a one-way flow of information.

Even though the museum director's account (Harwit, 1996) of the struggle to exhibit the aircraft was filled with correspondence between museum personnel and interested members and retirees of the Military Forces, the meaning that the Enola Gay symbolized became polarized. For one group it was a symbol of peace; for another, it was a symbol of war. It took several years of defending curatorial positions before Harwit realized the implications of certain exhibit signage to the veterans. By that time, in his words, it was too late. All along, the museum's staff of historians was cognizant of research and information that had since become part of the public domain. They viewed the event in which the Enola Gay had played a central role in the context of history to the present day; their actions were not personally involved in dropping the bomb. What the staff hoped was that a previous exhibit would introduce the public to the ethics of strategic bombing. However, this was not enough for the living members of the Armed Services who had established their justification for using the bomb from the information they were aware of in 1945. In a sense, their perspectives were parochial or provincial, that is limited to the time, place, and amount of information they needed to perform their particular jobs. If the exhibit had begun with the sensibilities of those involved in 1945 and proceeded in the order that information became declassified, it might have been a

learning experience for all. Then, the nonmilitary public might have better understood the veterans' perspectives, and the veterans might have been able to view their own participation and perspective in the light of the information that was made available to them. The public as a whole could have learned more about the decision-making process. Instead, the veterans felt they needed to defend their 1945 position. They lobbied Congress for a celebratory exhibit, instead of using their experiences and influence to seek balance between personal responsibility and loyalty which is part of the military's training agenda for its officers today. United States Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan, retired, claims that up to ten years ago information in the army was controlled, channeled, and classified. Today, the emphasis is on sharing information in order to make someone more powerful in their role, and decisions are based on an understanding of shared values (Jordan, 1995). However, there was no understanding reached. In the battle of exhibiting the Enola Gay, "The losers in this drama were the American public" [Harwit, 1996, p. vii].

With any one-way flow of information the staff member is doing one thing and the audience member (or reader) is doing another. There simply is no time allotted for each to understand the process, or the development of the thought in the other. A situation like this is compounded by the degree of diversity in viewpoints, and further complicated by the various sources of information that are brought into play. Undoubtedly, in the future, with the increase in the amount of both primary and secondary sources of information and new media tools and methods to convey information, the interpretation process as presently practiced by professionals may lead to even more polarized views on the part of the professional interpreters and visitors. Mezirow's theory of transformative

learning and this study indicate that the interpretive process must either become more focused on a two-way communication or a third party must act as a mediator. Some audience interviewees did not understand the importance of the religious issue in the Henley scenes nor the motivations of the characters portrayed. At one point during the researcher's attendance at a planning meeting, the role of a "contextualist" (that is someone to explain to the audience what was happening during the Henley scenes) was reintroduced. Unfortunately, according to the audience interviewees, not enough explanation was provided by a contextualist.

Mezirow (1991) referred to Habermas' (1984, 1987) theory of communicative action and Bruner's (1973) concept of "decontextualization." They focused on using language without dependence upon shared perceptions or actions thus permitting one to conceive of information as independent of the speaker's point of view and to communicate with those outside one's experience. Mezirow used Habermas' theory and Bruner's research to emphasize the need for two-way communication to take place in making meaning:

Our common language bonds us into a dialogic community. It is through the dialogic process of consensually determining the conditions under which a sentence or an expressed idea is true or valid that its meaning is substantiated. Consequently, participation in dialogic communities is profoundly important for anyone who wants to understand and facilitate adult learning, autonomy, responsibility, and freedom. (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 56-57)

As presented in the next section, Mezirow's goals for adult learning are embedded in the intentions of the planners to foster the autonomous thought necessary for citizens partaking in a democracy.

Comparative Analysis of Program's Intentions

The planners' intentions as to what meaning they wanted the audience to get from this particular HF can be captured as follows: to appreciate free expression from which may flow diverse opinions so that the audiences' perspectives may be increased or enlightened and they may form their own opinions and be more intelligent contributors to dealing with modern-day problems. Although the first phrase is specific to the 1996 topic, the freedom of the press, the rest of the statement is appropriate to any HF at Colonial Williamsburg (CW), all of which are "dedicated to exploring these fundamental building blocks in American society and American government" (Toby). The program was established as a forum, and Toby's goal was to "get a wide and free exchange of opinions on whatever is being discussed." Several planners and audience interviewees spoke to a greater extent about the planners' intentions, but basically there was a remarkable consistency between the planners' intentions and those that the audience interviewees perceived.

However, throughout the course of the interviews, the audience interviewees also spoke of the following:

- Not being able to make a decision because of the lack of primary sources supplied to the audience. (Jo)
- Uncanny agreement of the presenters (Tom Jones) and the lack of diverse opinions. (Jethro)
- Confusion over the topic, especially with regard to the question raised by promotional and introductory materials: namely, was a free press the founding fathers' first mistake. (Jo, Ishmael, Suzanne, Frank)
- Not expressing opinions (Ann) or not having appropriate or enough opportunities to express opinions. (Ishmael, Tom Smith, Jo, Alice, William Tell, Holden)

Clearly, although the audience interviewees wanted to be and, in fact, were positive in their reactions to the overall program, there was some dissatisfaction. Their dissatisfaction was not with the planners' intentions, but with the extent to which they, the audience, could achieve what they perceived as personal or programmatic goals.

The planners' intention to enlarge or enlighten the audiences' perspectives so that they could form their own opinions is consistent with Mezirow's (1991) stated objectives for adult education. Mezirow defined goals for adult educators in terms of a perspective transformation. In using the term "transformation" Mezirow indicated a much more dramatic change, one that involves a rejection of a past perspective and an integration of meaning schemes into a new perspective from which decisions will arise. But before one can experience transformation, less dramatic or incremental change may occur. The similarity between Mezirow's goals and the planners' intentions is in the emphasis on change in perspective (be it only enlargement or enlightenment) which will lead to decision making (be it only to have a formed opinion). The difference between the planners' and Mezirow's view may be to the degree in which meaning is changed. Certainly, words such as "enlightenment" or "enlargement" don't necessarily imply transformation. However in consideration of Toby's remarks, transformation is not out of the question because "this right to express all opinions, no matter how repugnant, is fundamental to this process of change and our -- the capacity of our government as described by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to be responsive to an ever-changing society." The changes the audience interviewees discussed and the changes the researcher perceived in them will be presented in the next section. However, because of the limited

exposure to the interviewees, the researcher will make no attempt to categorize change as transformational.

What was most obvious throughout the data collection and analysis of this study was the limited intentions of the planners vis-à-vis the broad scope of the audience's remarks. Most of the planners spoke briefly and when elaboration was made with regard to a specific perspective, as in the case of Thucydides, the comments dealt with issues involving the press. On the other hand, the audience interviewees discussed many perspectives on many themes which extended far beyond the topic or themes presented by the planners.

Comparative Analysis of Responses to Question: What is Meaningful?

All of the interviewees were asked a two-part question: What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is meaningful to you and what is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is not meaningful to you? Because almost all of the interviewees said there was nothing that was not meaningful to them, this segment of the question will not be dealt with further. In analyzing the responses to this question in relation to all the data collected for each person, it was realized that some people expressed thoughts that they continued to address throughout the interviews, whereas others shifted their concerns, interests, analogies, and storytelling to other areas (as is apparent from the multiple themes reported in Chapter IV). However the researcher analyzed these responses because the interviewees answered with thoughts that first came to mind. In isolating the data for both groups, categories emerged that were very similar to the definitions given for "meaningful." In fact these two questions served as an internal validity check -- the interviewees were in fact talking about what was

“meaningful” in the way they defined the term. The interviewees spoke on a personal or a communal level, about “meaningful” as an action or an object (about people or ideas). Putting all of their responses together was similar to a product of a brainstorming session, and resembled the analysis of the word “meaning” written by Jarvis (1992) who claimed that the word is difficult to define because it is used in various contexts and as both a noun and a verb.

As was presented in the planners’ definitions of the word “meaningful” proportionately fewer planners than audience interviewees related the word to themselves in a personal way. Mario found the topic meaningful because of her personal and professional interest in print culture. Louise’s, Thucydides’, and Toby’s responses were action orientated; they wanted audience members to understand the position of a free press historically and, in two cases, what this meant to a person who was living in a democracy (a communal concern). In other words, what was meaningful to them was expressed in their goals in roles as educators, in their “putting out” to an audience. Also, in response to what was “meaningful” to them, three of the six planners wanted the audience to question the efficacy, the sources, and the control of the press. When questioned about her personal position, Ellen simply commented, “I’d rather not say.” Thus, generally, the planners were not speaking about what was personally significant to them outside of their professional roles; however, their comments did focus on the topic of a free press and free expression, in its historical context and relevance to life today.

In response to the what-was-meaningful question, none of the audience interviewees spoke of taking action. Even in the cases of teachers who planned to use the information in their classes, action was not mentioned until later in the interview,

especially in response to the question that posed that to them. More than half of the 15 audience interviewees related this question to their personal lives. Four of them spoke directly of feelings, either of ease or unease. Jo and Tom Jones felt comfort in noting the similarity in the past. Ishmael expressed fear at a strong executive government, and Holden talked in an angry tone about being personally attacked by the press. Ishmael and Holden, along with Bill, Mary, Tom Smith, and Miriam were seeking answers to questions. Three of these questions concerned the press (one of which was communal: Is the press giving us adequate information to function in a democracy?), two concerned the Revolution, and one concerned Jefferson. Of the audience interviewees, six referred to Jefferson. They were seeking to understand Jefferson or uphold his image. Alice's remarks suggested she was reinforcing her own identity. She was accused of being a heretic, but positively pointed to Jefferson as one who asserted his own religious beliefs. For the audience interviewees, "meaningful" was explained as an object, either a person or an idea that had subjective implications. The themes that emerged from this early question in the interview were the press, religion, Jefferson, and the notion of similarity, which was discussed by four of the audience interviewees.

Considering all of the interviewees' comments together, it is interesting to note the elements that have been involved in both the definitions and the specific content remarks for "meaningful." These elements include the following:

- something which evokes feeling
- something or someone with which we can identify
- something that has both personal and communal aspects
- a question we wish to verify or for which we seek answers
- something that is of interest to us

- something that bears a resemblance to our established meaning schemes
- something that evokes intent.

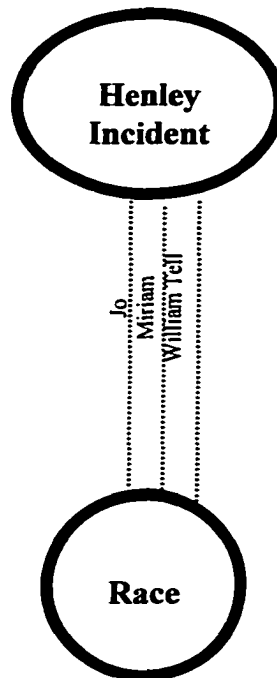
Section 2. Analysis and Interpretation of Themes

Thematic Connections

Before interpreting the most prominent themes, all of the transcripts were carefully reread, on which the program events, characters, and some themes were already highlighted. (Please see Chapter III for a description of how themes were identified.) When an audience interviewee talked about a theme, attention was given to what, if any, speaker or event was associated with the theme the audience interviewee was discussing. Schemas 1 and 2 present the findings of this analysis. They indicate the connections of the major themes of the 1996 HF to the speakers and the enactments. The figures of Schema 1 show each theme in a center circle. (Similarities and differences have been separated to better understand the complexity involved.) Each line in each figure indicates the audience interviewee's pseudonym. Each line connects a circle, which states the theme, to an oval, in which a speaker's name or an enactment was mentioned by the individual interviewees. (Note: their comments regarding their appraisal of the person or the performance are not included here.) The interviewees offered this association. They recalled what was said and/or described what was occurring. In situations where the researcher was unclear, she asked specifically to what or whom they were referring. In some cases, the interviewee was not certain which speaker or in which event the idea was presented, in which case it is not noted on any of the figures in either Schema 1 or Schema 2, which will be presented shortly.

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

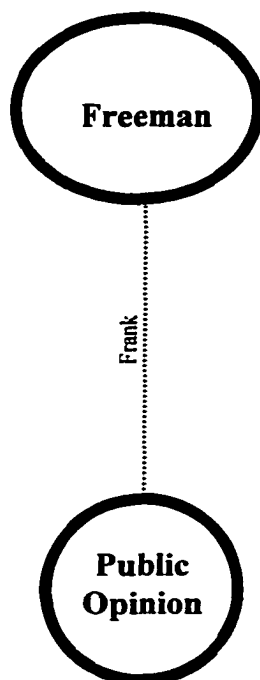
Figure A. The theme of race.



Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

Figure B. The theme of public opinion.



Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

Figure C. The theme of politics and leadership.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

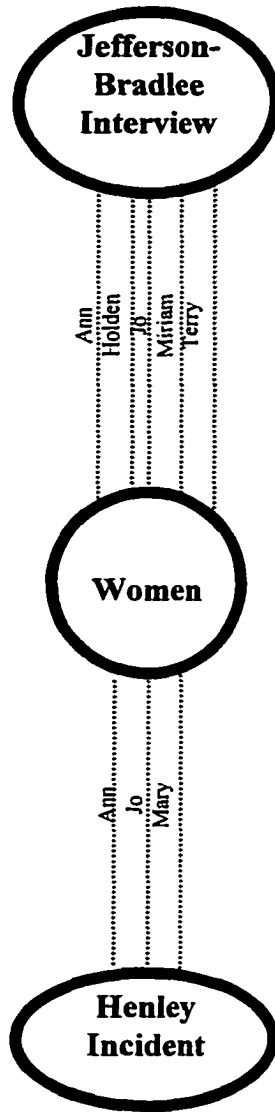
Figure D. The theme of rights and religion.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

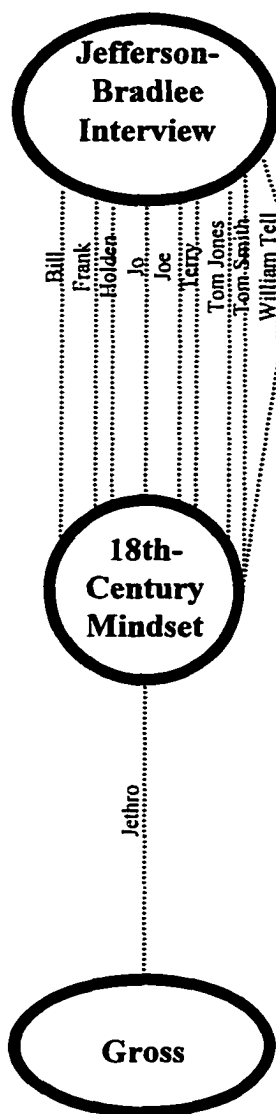
Figure E. The theme of women.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

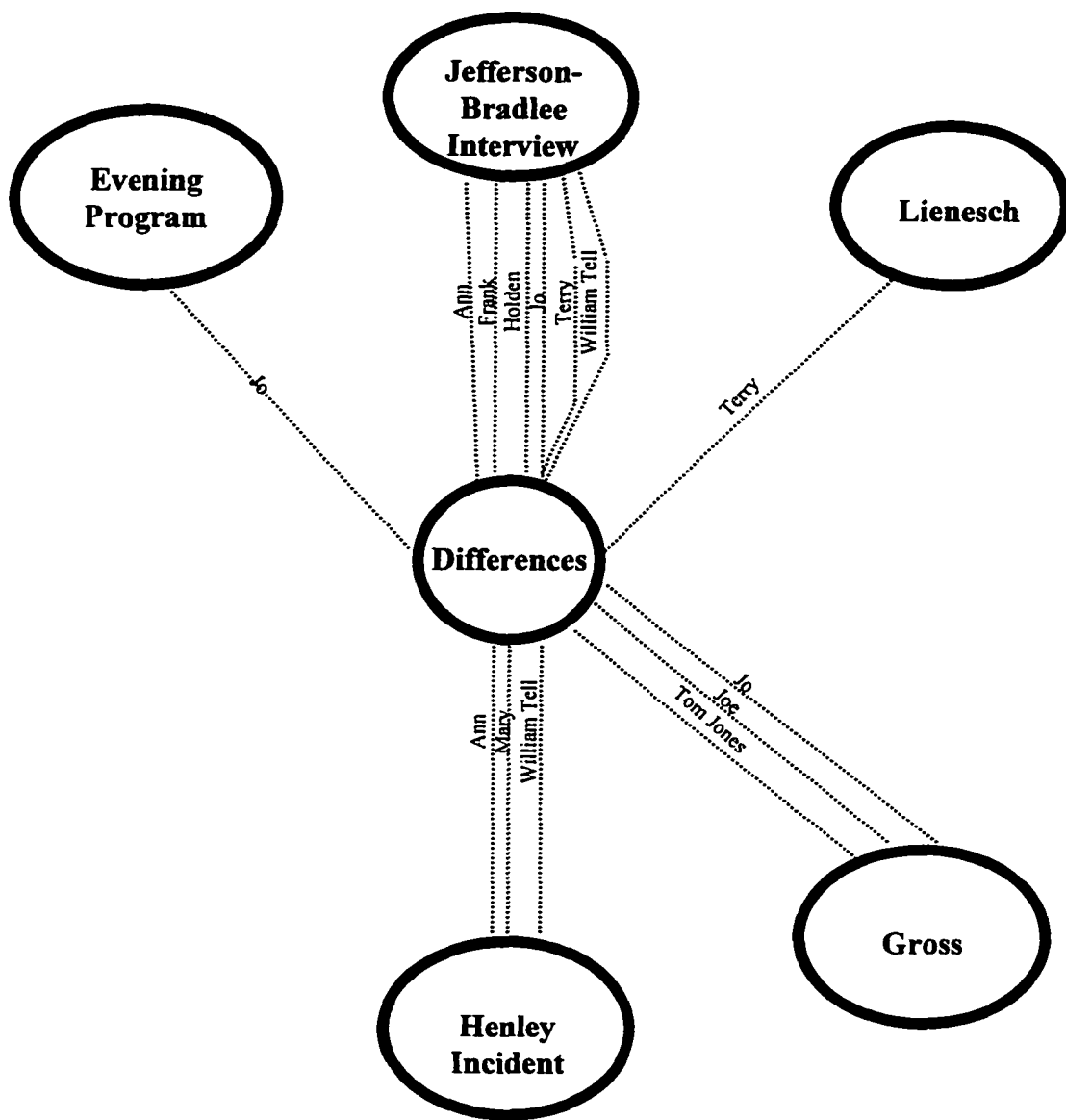
Figure F. The theme of the eighteenth-century mindset.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

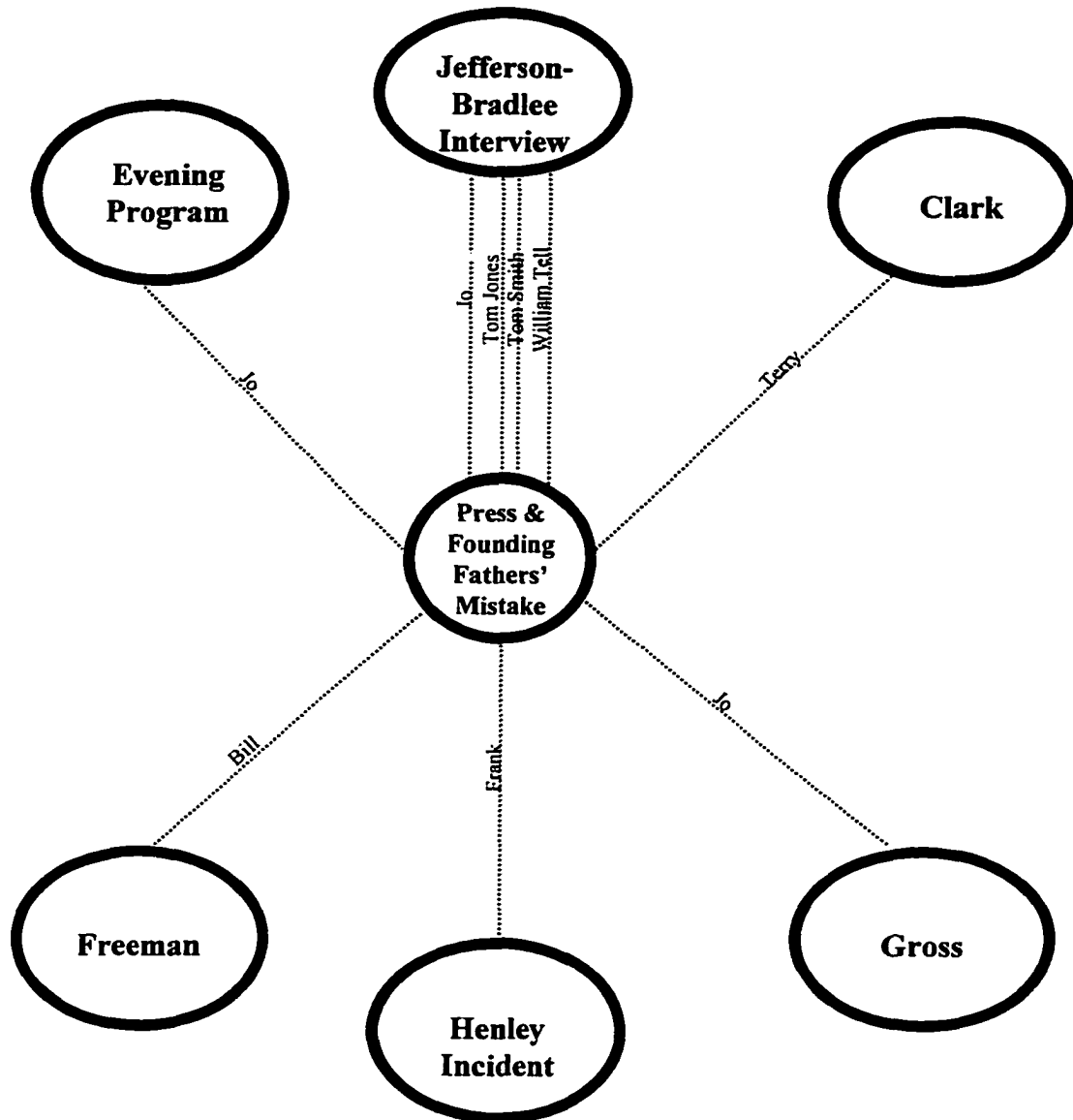
Figure G. The theme of differences.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

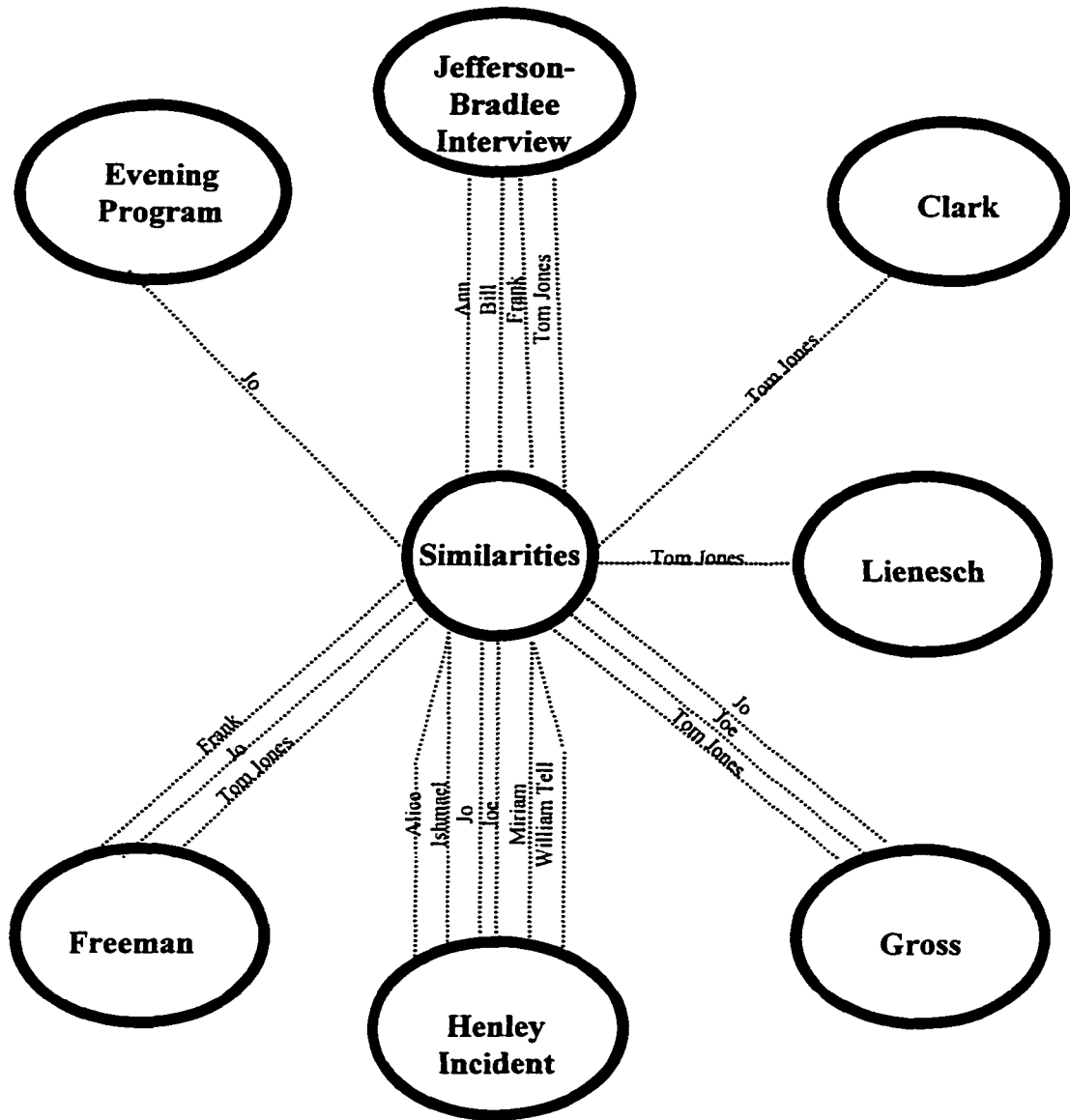
Figure H. The theme of the press and the founding fathers' mistake.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 1. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the inner circle.

Figure I. The theme of similarities.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

By comparing Figures A - I of Schema 1, it can be noticed that the most complex figures (that is, those with the most references to speakers or enactments) are Figures G, H, and I. Figure H represents the theme of the press and the founding father's first mistake. This theme was connected with 6 program elements. The differences theme (Figure G) was connected to 5 speakers or enactments and the similarity theme (Figure I) was associated with 7 program elements. The audience interviewees not only talked about these themes as being meaningful, they also remembered more specifically the event that had provoked their thoughts. (Note these figures do not include references made to speakers and enactments from previous forums because not all of the audience interviewees attended past forums. If these references had been included they would have effected the following themes: race, religion, and gender in that order.) The analysis depicted in Schema 1 revealed the following data:

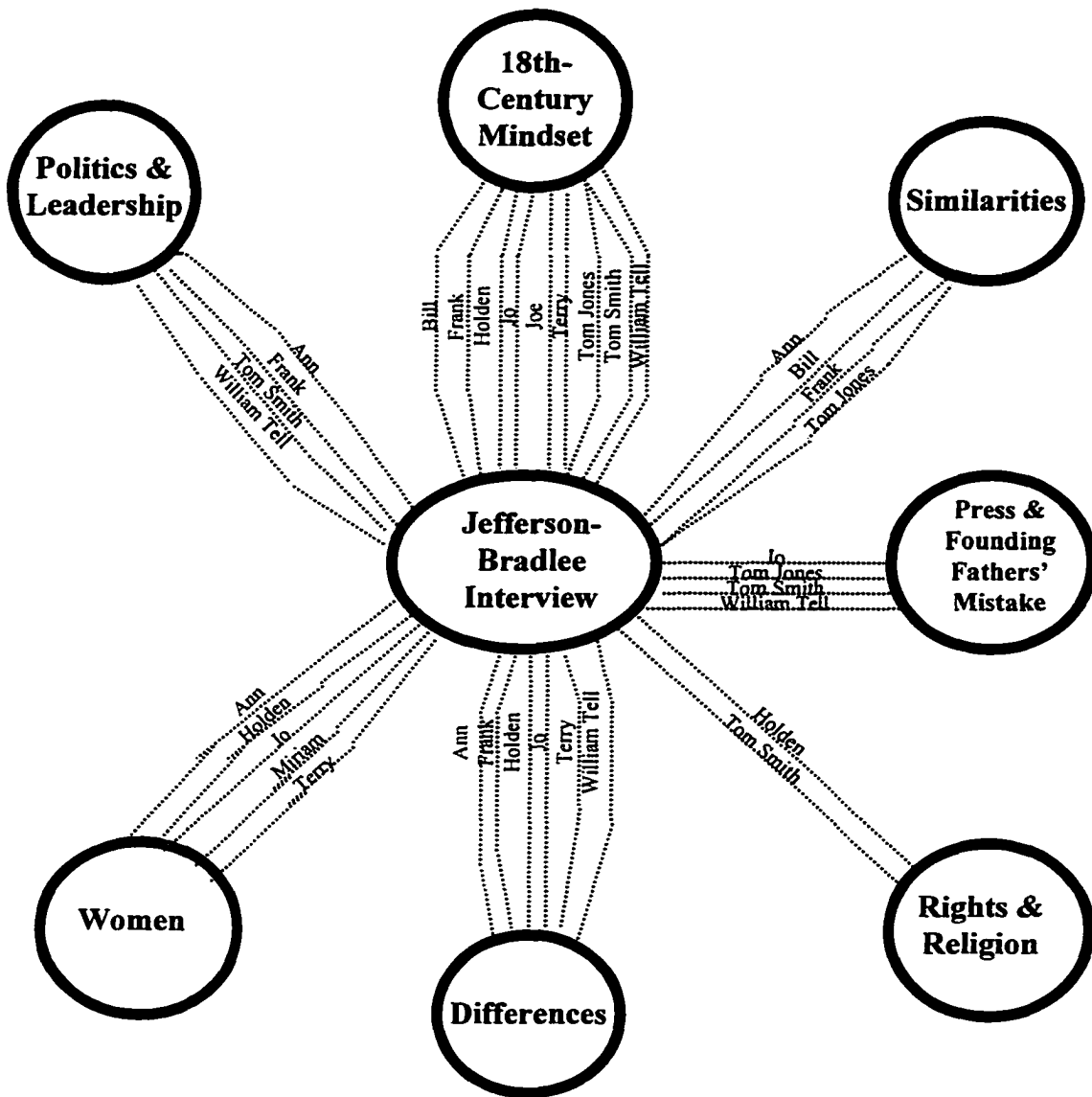
<u>Event and Speakers</u>	<u>References Made</u>
Jefferson-Bradlee interview	34
Henley incident	21
Evening Program	<u>3</u>
<u>Total</u>	58
Gross	9
Freeman	5
Clark	2
Lienesch	<u>2</u>
<u>Total</u>	18

Although the Jefferson-Bradlee interview was the opening event to which many people were drawn because of Bradlee's reputation, it also remained the event which provoked a great deal of reference concerning the many facets of its thematic content from the greatest number of audience interviewees. This becomes more obvious by comparing Figure A with the other figures in Schema 2. In Schema 2, each line in each figure also

bears the pseudonym of the audience interviewee, but in Schema 2 the event is noted in the center oval and the themes are noted around it, in circles. Thus, in Schema 2, Figure A, the Jefferson-Bradlee interview occupies the center oval and the themes it provoked are in circles.

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

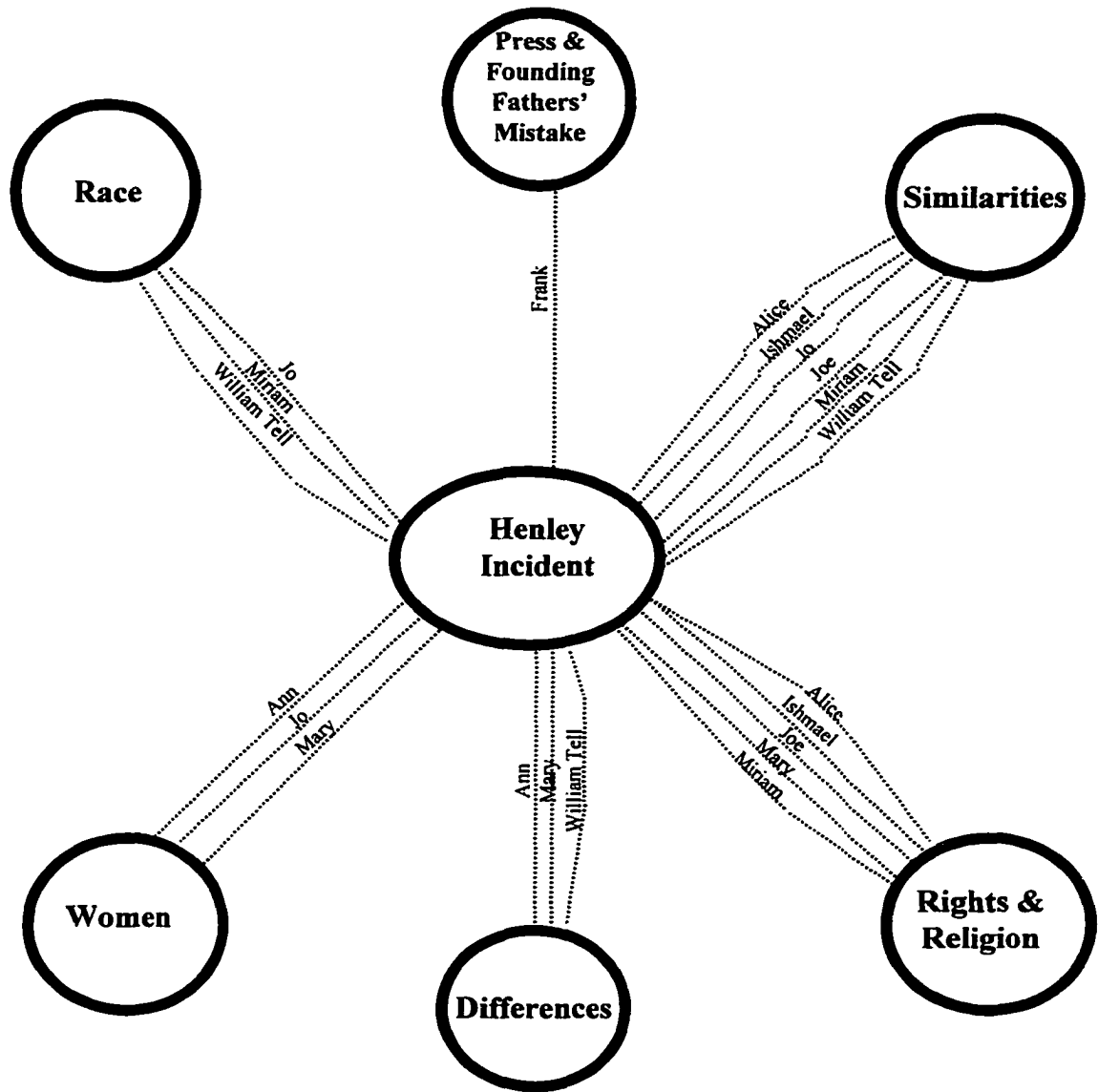
Figure A. The Jefferson-Bradlee interview.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

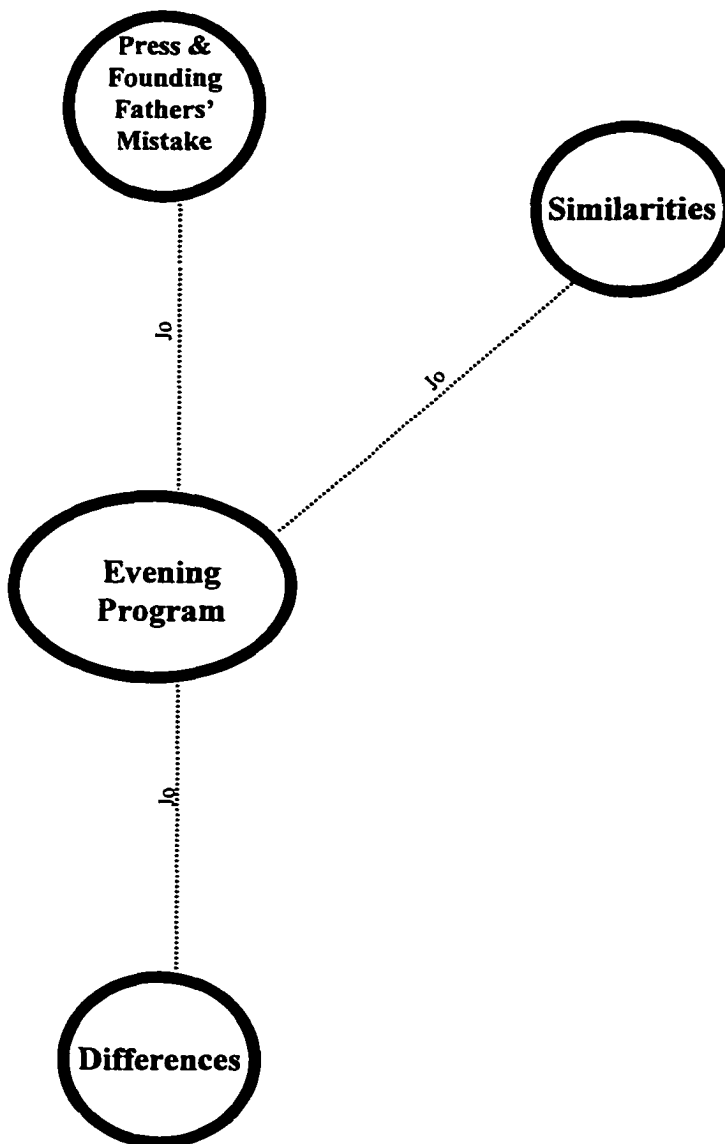
Figure B. The Henley incident.



Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

Figure C. The evening program.^a

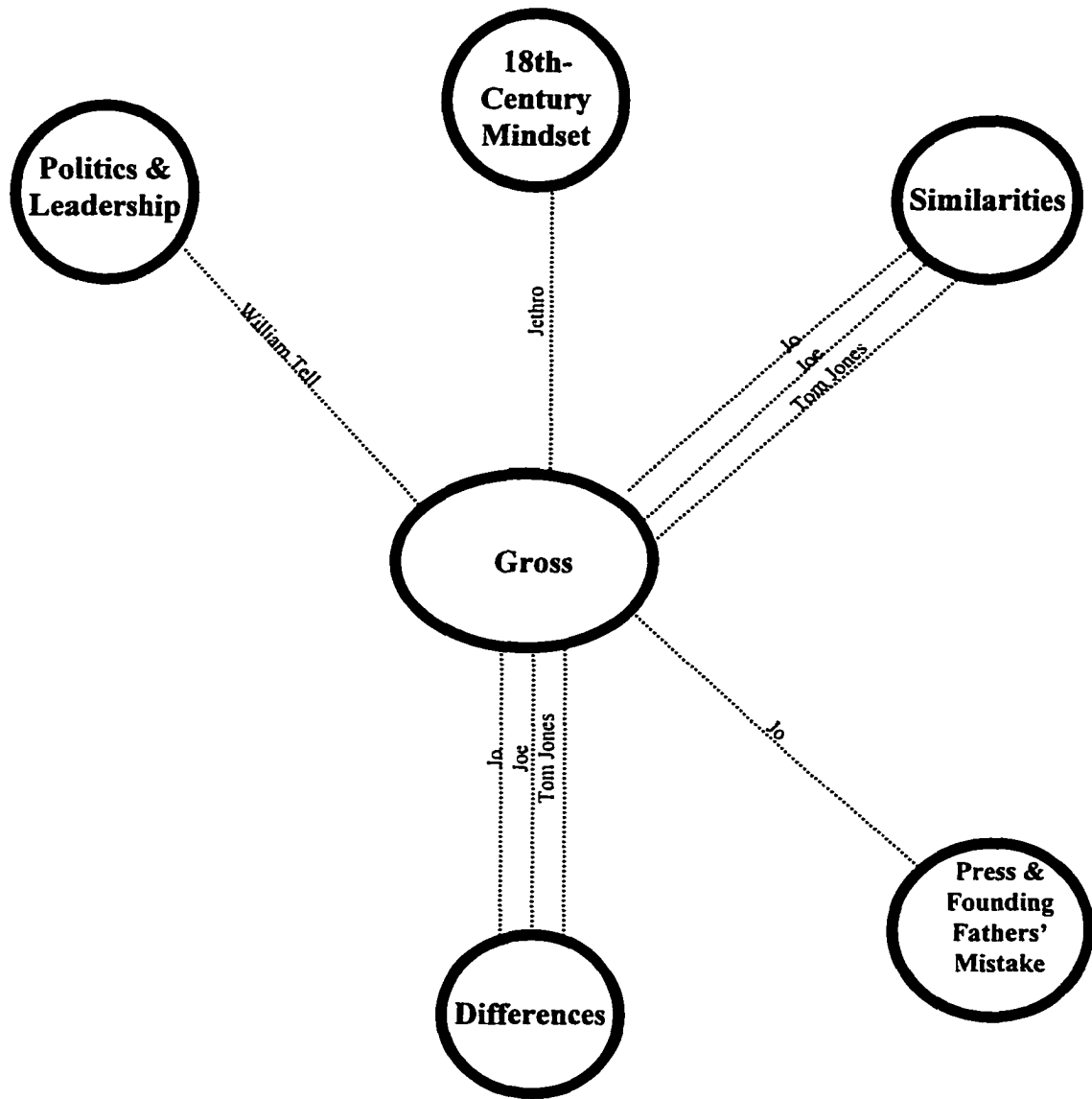


Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

^aNote: All connections to the evening program, in which costumed interpreters read clippings from colonial newspapers, were made by the same person, Jo.

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

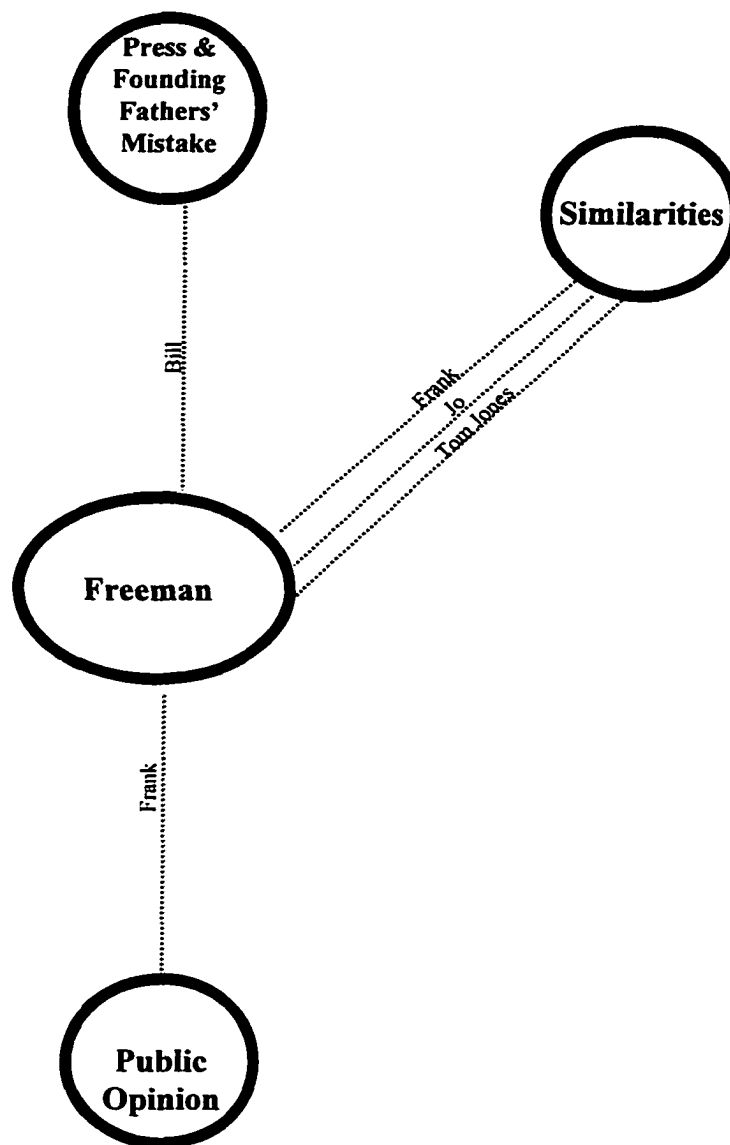
Figure D. The Robert Gross presentation.



Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

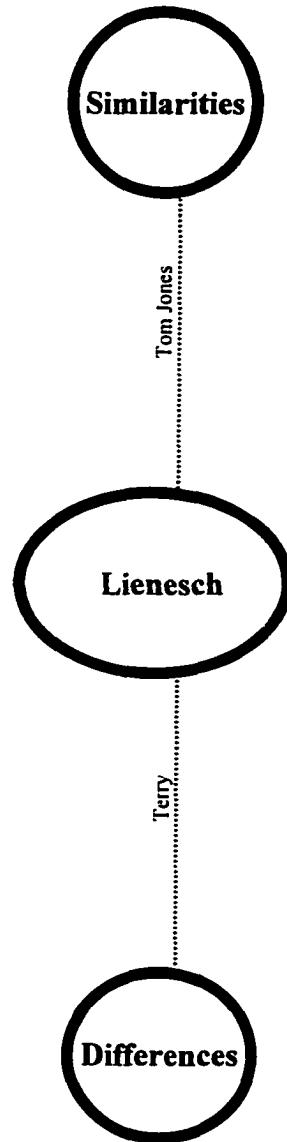
Figure E. The Joanne Freeman presentation.



Key to Schema Elements:
 Ovals = speakers and events
 Lines = individual audience participants
 Circles = themes

Schema 2. Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in the outer circles.

Figure F. The Michael Lienesch presentation.

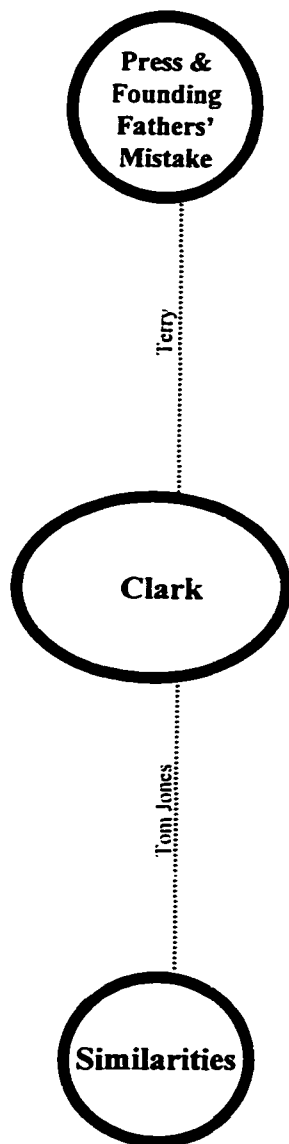


Key to Schema Elements:
Ovals = speakers and events
Lines = individual audience participants
Circles = themes

Schema 2.

Connections made by individual audience participants to speakers and events while they were discussing themes, indicated in outer circles.

Figure G. The Charles Clark presentation.

**Key to Schema Elements:**

Ovals = speakers and events

Lines = individual audience participants

Circles = themes

The Evening Program (shown in Figure C of Schema 2) did not have the same impact as the other interpretive programs. In fact the same person, Jo, made all three references. However, it was a performance in which characters, dressed in eighteenth-century costumes, were reading newspaper clippings. Comments were made about the event being entertaining, but several interviewees wondered what connection it had to the afternoon performances. Even according to the audience interviewees, the event did not have the same dramatic appeal.

The analysis indicates that overall it was these two enactments (the Jefferson-Bradlee interview and the Henley incident) that provoked thoughts which were meaningful to the audience. Some audience interviewees also spoke of the enactments as being more “dramatic.” Certainly their descriptions of even past enactments at previous History Forums were very vivid; whereas the comments made about past presenters were brief, such as they were “good.” As Joe pointed out it’s easier to remember things with a visual image. Note, however, that enactments suggest drama, as does literature, in which case the audience may be educationally and culturally predisposed to look for themes.

The results of the pre-forum questionnaire indicated that what attracts returnees to the HF are the speakers, the discussions that ensue, and the historical interpretations in that order. However, this analysis of the audience’s dialogues indicates that that order may be reversed when they are speaking about meaning.

Bruner (1990) theorized that narratives, whether they are from the historians’ “empirical” account or the novelists’ imaginative one have a powerful influence on conveying meaning. Stories add authenticity or importance to one’s life experiences. They endow experience with legitimacy or authority. Bruner contended that narrative

schemas or images are manipulated, not the words or the sentences or the grammars they employ. Besides, the narrative invokes feelings and attitudes that can change the meaning of a whole scheme. Bruner referred to the work of Ricoeur who drew a distinction between “being *in* history” and “telling *about* it.” Jethro’s comment suggests that the sympathy he was feeling for a slave woman in chains helped him momentarily suspend the reality of the situation. “I know they were acting and yet I felt that I was there.”

Bruner (1990) brought up another factor that is worth considering regarding the meaning people construct from narratives. It is only when constituent beliefs in a folk psychology are violated or challenged that narratives are constructed. It is this very conflict that engages the mind in search of meaning. The reader may also recall that a number of interviewees overtly spoke about the confusion they experienced with the costumed interpretations, especially in the Henley incident. For example, one visitor did not understand why an eighteenth-century woman was “throwing herself in the bushes” over Henley, and others wondered why a religious matter was so provoking in colonial times. These incidents may have represented a difference in cultural assumptions. The audience interviewees were seeking but were not prepared to understand the eighteenth-century mindset or deal with eighteenth-century contextuality. They were certainly not prepared to understand or accept the importance of a particular theological question to people in the eighteenth-century as a planner, Louise, had hoped. Louise said:

religious questions were strongly enough held at the time to actually find their way into a public forum. ... I think if they [the audience] could accept that, they might well recognize themselves or ourselves in this [Henley] presentation. ... But I don’t know that the sort of fine points of theology that this question, this eighteenth century controversy, involved is something that I would see raising the emotions to the heights that they did in this particular newspaper war in colonial Williamsburg. (Louise)

It was the intensity of emotion that a woman enactor portrayed over Henley's leaving that "closed the curtain" for an audience interviewee, Jo. In her words, "it seemed very, very strange to me." She wondered about the relationship between the woman and Henley and her husband. The scene for Jo, "sort of separates reality. It's very easy to make judgments about people, [like] 'I'm not like them, I don't act like them.'" For Jo, the beliefs, the values, and the behaviors of the characters (in other words, the cultural assumptions) were different and this made her feel "insulated" or distanced from the characters.

Bruner's hypotheses about "narrative" may account for the larger number of references being made by audience interviewees to the dramatic enactments in talking about themes they considered meaningful. But what about the speakers? By comparing Figures D - G in Schema 2, one can see that the most themes and most references were evoked by the speaker, Gross. He also received the most acclaim from the audience members interviewed. By reviewing the tapes of the presentations made by CW, the researcher verified that both Gross and Clark posed more questions to the audience than the other speakers, presumably a technique to arouse their interest. Whereas Clark's questions had an academic flavor (such as: is this an example of prior restraint?) those of Gross were personal. Gross used introductory phrases such as "if you were in the eighteenth century"

The audience interviewees talked about difference and similarity between the eighteenth century and today separately; however, they also considered comparisons as one theme, as one which lead to thoughts of "no change." Please note again Figures G and I of Schema 1. Both the theme of differences and the theme of similarities were

connected more to Gross than any other speaker. In fact, Gross made many more references to especially similarities between eighteenth-century life and life today than any other speaker. He also did it in a humorous way with references to adult life (for example: *The National Enquirer* began in historical Boston). Gross may have in fact aroused more “familiar” (a word he frequently used) feeling for the eighteenth century based on cultural assumptions. Certainly this would be an area worth investigating in pursuit of program elements that help adults make meaning.

Interpretation of Audience Interviewees’ Themes

Is there a gender preference? In a breakdown of which audience interviewees were making references to the Henley incident as compared to the Jefferson-Bradlee interview, it was noted that 6 females and 3 males referred to the Henley incident whereas almost the exact opposite, 7 males and 4 females, referred to the Jefferson-Bradlee interview. This may have been due to the characters portrayed and the subject matter content. The Jefferson-Bradlee interview evoked thoughts about the eighteenth-century mindset and the character and idealism of Jefferson. On the other hand Patsy, Jefferson’s daughter, was seen as “subservient.” The female role, although portrayed in greater numbers in the Henley incident, did not come off much better than Patsy, but their more visible presence evoked thought about the eighteenth-century woman’s position. Certainly, the female audience interviewees did not speak of Mrs. Nicholas as an educated, responsible person as one of the female planners, Louise, had hoped.

Another fact concerning gender arose as a result of analyzing the thematic breakdown emanating from the speakers. Here, 6 males and 2 females made mention of the speakers with regard to meaningful themes. However, 2 females and one male

referred more extensively to the speakers than the rest of the group, and these same individuals were also greatly involved in the enactments. Anything further is inference. The researcher is not inclined to attribute this fact to gender preference or learning-style preferences as researched and documented by O'Connell (1990) because so many more interviewees were provoked by the enactments. This is not to say that the concept of learning styles is to be dismissed. It is simply hard to imagine that the HF audience interviewees were primarily concrete learners; besides they said they were attracted to the speakers in the program. Without further study it would seem that the difference can be attributed to the audience interviewees' stated need for timely reading materials, more detailed speaker summaries, and visual aids during speaker presentations to help them remember and provoke meaningful thought. However, this study certainly indicates the power of the enactments and the use of drama in evoking themes, including those that are gender related. This fact is no surprise when we consider the preponderance of visual drama available through various sources to today's audience, such as movies, TV shows, and news broadcasting.

While reviewing the CW-made tapes of the speakers and the following question-and-answer periods, the researcher noted that 75% of the questions and remarks were made by male audience members although roughly only 40% of the audience members were male. One could conjecture that the women just quietly accompanied their spouses, however one male questionnaire respondent said he was just coming to accompany his wife. With regard to the questionnaire respondents, slightly more than half of the women consented to be interviewed. It seemed that the women may have felt more comfortable

talking on a one-to-one basis, but more research is necessary to determine why the women responded the way they did.

Is Thomas Jefferson an icon? By comparing all the figures of Schema 2, one can see that Figure A of Schema 2, representing the Jefferson-Bradlee interview, is the most complex. More audience interviewees were involved in this event and more themes were evoked. Although the interviewees spoke positively about the excellently portrayed character enactment of Jefferson, several groups of comments taken together bear consideration. Most of the audience interviewees talked about their interest in Jefferson. Some spoke with great admiration, and some openly spoke of him as a hero. They wondered about the accusations made against him and were even in disbelief that the accusations were made. Whereas only two people's remarks bore an aura of uncritical devotion, other interviewees considered Jefferson an exemplar of the eighteenth-century mindset (William Tell), of rational thought (Holden), of religious expression (Alice), and of the founding fathers (Suzanne). In the case of Suzanne, she generalized statements about the nature of "truth" made by the character interpreter portraying Jefferson and attributed it to the founding fathers. When questioned about this directly she said she might have been influenced by the performance.

Although some interviewees admired Jefferson for some time, in the case of Jethro the admiration goes back to his undergraduate days, the performance of the enactor further elevated the persona of Jefferson. Interviewee remarks such as "Jefferson won," "Bradlee just did not understand," and "Jefferson was winding him [Bradlee] around his little finger" indicate the power of an enactor to accentuate certain character traits, for example, the portrayal of Jefferson's adamancy about not answering or speaking to

certain questions. Some audience interviewees perceived this adamancy as strength. It enhanced their view of Jefferson as an ideal and being able to consequently deal with any present-day journalist or situation. Several interviewees were also quick to note that even Jefferson was ambivalent about a free press.

Idealization of eighteenth-century life or persons, especially the founding fathers, was a concern for two planners, Terry and Thucydides. Thucydides thought that the founding fathers were “inherently interesting men and they led interesting lives,” and they could speak to us in the twentieth century in ways that we can understand; but “the mythic imagery that has built up around them needs to be put in proper perspective so that we can see both where we differed and where there are continuities.” Jo was the only audience interviewee who voiced difficulty in seeing Jefferson as a character instead of a “charicature.” She thought that “to a certain extent it (an enactment) does pull the historical characters out of their context that a lot of the people in the audience don’t understand or make assumptions about.” Certainly, one assumption was that “Jefferson” was better than Bradlee. Bradlee, who was dressed in twentieth-century clothes and portraying himself, was “not prepared” to stand up to Jefferson. In this case, the icon of Thomas Jefferson may have cast a shadow over the issues that were really involved.

Is the need to understand the eighteenth-century mind a twentieth-century cognitive agenda? By referring back to Figure F of Schema 1, one can see that all but one of the connections made with the mindset theme were to the Jefferson-Bradlee interview. No doubt the audience interviewees who were intrigued by the question of the founding fathers’ intentions were looking to the character enactor of Jefferson for clarification. No references were made to the Henley incident with regard to mindset, not to understanding

the thinking, philosophy, position on truth, or even morality. It is interesting that Jefferson and Henley did in fact correspond for some time; but this factor was not brought up during the Henley scenes (Peter). The Henley incident remained one that many audience interviewees grappled with: “what was the point?” For those who did not have a religious background or did not read materials in the history of religion, it was hard to understand the eighteenth-century perspective on this religious issue.

The question of the founding fathers’ intent, however, did attract many people to the forum. Although the question was not dealt with to their satisfaction, most interviewees felt it was very important to understand the mindset, the perspective, of the eighteenth-century person, especially of the founding fathers in order to understand the documents which they left as a legacy. In the case of Mary and William Tell, they were impressed by the classical reading of the forefathers, and William Tell wondered just what readings led Jefferson to conceive of things the way he did. Tom Smith went so far as to say that the historian must be engaged in trying to recapitulate the mind of the age so that we can infer in some orderly way and begin to appreciate the way people thought about matters. But Suzanne left the forum wondering if understanding intent was necessary or possible. Finally, she shrugged understanding intent off as “an academic thing to throw around.”

Mezirow (1991) referred to Bruner’s (1973) illumination on the Piagetian (1967) concept of decentration to support his own views that people in adulthood make an intentional movement to resolve contradictions and to move to developmentally advanced conceptual structures by transforming meaning schemes and perspectives through critical reflection. By “decentration,” Mezirow (1991) was referring “to the process by which an

egocentric cognitive position is replaced by a more ‘objective’ one in order to reconcile disjunctions between conceptual schemes and empirical evidence” (p. 147). By Mezirow’s definition, the meaning schemes one has constructed include cultural assumptions and shared beliefs. In the case of Henley, those that did not already have a knowledge base to understand the eighteenth-century religious perspective were left confused; whereas others drew on their own knowledge base to confirm their assumptions. This may be one situation in which an enactment became a missed opportunity to understand the complexity of any mindset, either an eighteenth-century one or a twentieth-century one. Certainly, one of the benefits that may be derived from understanding a historical character in their context is to appreciate and categorize some of the factors that come into play, the threads that are woven into the fabric of the culture. Historical analysis can be used for any time frame. Given the number of interviewees who expressed dissatisfaction in not dealing with the founding fathers’ intent, the researcher hopes that Suzanne was the only one to walk away thinking that the question was simply “an academic thing to throw around.” Hopefully the others’ curiosity to understand the eighteenth-century perspective, or any other perspective, is piqued enough so that they will be open to other perspective transformations. Indeed their cognitive agenda to understand the eighteenth-century mindset may be the means by which they can better understand their own thinking, a curiosity that many audience interviewees displayed in grappling with their own thoughts.

Is race a troublesome issue? One interviewee implicitly said, “racism is something that bothers me.” Another interviewee, Jethro, indicated that slavery was a “distressful” topic, but he also talked about indentured servants being “treated worse

than slaves” because their masters had not made financial investments in them. Jo found both topics, slavery and indenture, difficult to teach and “uncomfortable.” The fact that not all of the interviewees saw the scene in the Henley event in which a slave was portrayed and yet Jo, Miriam, and William Tell talked about this scene extensively is remarkable. Also, Holden, Frank, Joe, Mary, Ann, and Jethro spoke vividly about scenes incorporating race from previous forums. Most of these people concurred that racial prejudice is active in American society today.

Given the predisposition to the similarity theme and the need to see continuity, and some of the interviewees’ feelings of disempowerment at witnessing these scenes, the researcher thinks that further research is definitely indicated. Furthermore, if one interviewee can associate the concept of “truth” as spoken about a character enactor with the thinking of the founding fathers, can another associate racial attitudes with Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia as did the planner Thucydides? Does a racial attitude become justifiable because of the way one perceives Jefferson, namely as an icon? This was one of Thucydides’ stated concerns. For others at the forum who did not see the scene, were race relations one of those human relations that has not changed in 200 years? William Tell described his enlightening experience in realizing the damaging effect that the Black man’s invisibility can have on subsequent generations. Cultural, underlying assumptions that disempower a people may also be held concerning gender and class relationships, politics and the press. Certainly seeing Jefferson attacked by a scurrilous press, which Frank found hard to even believe, could foster an opinion that “the press” is “powerful,” “biased,” “controlled,” and “controlling.”

Is the past a foreign country? Not everyone saw only similarity between the eighteenth century and today. Figures G and I of Schema 1 illustrate that the interviewees talked about differences, although not as extensively, as well as similarities. This going back and forth between similarities and differences, between the past and the present may be indicative of the interviewees' engaging in their own interpretive processes. Mezirow (1991) referred to Hans-Georg Gadamer's (Wolff, 1975) concept of the hermeneutic circle as a "mediation between whole and parts and between past and present" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 83). In this process, movement is toward an interpretation of the whole in which our detailed knowledge of the parts can be integrated without conflict. What we know suggests the next step in the process. "What we see depends in part upon what we have seen in the past" (p. 28). Furthermore, the process has a distinct logic, termed "metaphoric abduction," in which thought moves from the concrete to the abstract through the use of metaphors. Therefore, if someone has a new experience, he or she will be inclined to view it with concrete associations from his or her life. Thus, the interpretative process itself can account for the extent of similarities and differences the interviewees thought they were encountering.

However, some interviewees talked about making a choice in viewing so many similarities; for example, for Tom Jones it provided a greater base of experience from which to draw, and for Ann it provided comfort (not conflict). These are some of the benefits they saw. In his work, Lowenthal (1985) presents many benefits for embracing the past: the past renders the present as familiar, it reaffirms and validates our attitudes and actions, provides identity, guidance, enrichment and escape, and a sense of continuity and even immortality. Lowenthal argues in The Past Is a Foreign Country that "the past,

once virtually indistinguishable from the present, has become an ever more foreign realm” (p. xix). Lowenthal claims that although they did things differently in the past, this perspective is of recent vintage:

Only in the late eighteenth century did Europeans begin to conceive the past as a different realm, not just another country but a congeries of foreign lands endowed with unique histories and personalities. This new past gradually ceased to provide comparative lessons, but came to be cherished as a heritage that validated and exalted the present. And the new role heightened concern to save relics and restore monuments as emblems of communal identity, continuity, and aspiration. (Lowenthal, 1985, p. xvi)

Lowenthal presented a strong case for his argument that the past is a foreign country with literary quotes and examples from the movement for historic preservation. However, this is not a perspective that the researcher found in these audience interviewees, who appeared to embrace the similarities, some even finding “similarity” to be the main theme of the forum. While it is extremely doubtful that Lowenthal’s book may have been read by the interviewees, it is possible that the book influenced some of the planners because the text was recommended to the researcher at various times by museum professionals. If Lowenthal’s convincing argument appealed to history-museum programmers, there may have been an effort to overcome what was assumed to be the audience’s perception of differences in the past. Although none of the planner interviewees was questioned about Lowenthal’s work, when Toby was prompted in a reinterview to talk about the differences he saw in the eighteenth century versus today, he responded:

There are so many [differences] that it’s easy to overlook because people from the eighteenth century more so than earlier centuries appear familiar and are engaged in many activities that got their start in the eighteenth century that we still are engaged in today. I am thinking of all those consumer activities, making meals into performances, dressing for success, measuring one another by the way we

look, the way we talk, the kinds of stuff that we own and give. ... Williamsburg I often say by way of provocative analogy is actually more like twentieth-century New York City than it was like seventeenth-century Jamestown. Just because it had become, and so had thousands of other provincial English and European towns, they had become emporiums for the sale, display, and use of consumer goods in the same way that towns are commercial today. (Toby)

Then, in talking about differences, Toby mentioned the different attitudes and ideas eighteenth-century people had about how society should be organized: “Most were still believers in a deferential society in which there was in a sense a god-given order. ... An extension of that was the way most people regarded slaves and slavery and racism.” The researcher inferred from Toby’s comments that he believed that the similarities outweighed the differences. One could easily assume this was also Lowenthal’s (1985) position. When writing about the past he enumerated various benefits but only one burden of overrating the past’s importance: “A past too much esteemed or closely embraced saps present purposes, much as neurotic attachment to childish behaviour precludes mature involvement in the present” (p. 65). Lowenthal then advocated for a moderate position: “Stability and change are alike essential. We cannot function without familiar environments and links with a recognizable past, but we are paralyzed unless we transform or replay inherited relics; even our biological legacy undergoes continual revision” (p. 69).

In proposing his theory of transformative learning, Mezirow (1991) advocated for being able to differentiate similarities and differences:

Interpretation for comprehension calls for analysis -- that is, for determining the perceived similarities and differences between a learner’s symbolic models and the learner’s experience. Such similarities and differences determine the relevance and fit of the experience within the learner’s symbolic frame of reference. ... The analysis involved in the learning process begins with an analogy, likening an unfamiliar phenomenon in its entirety to a familiar one. It proceeds through an

assay of the specific elements of an unfamiliar object or event through further analogies. This process often is expanded as we encounter the same phenomenon in different contexts. We learn not only from our experience but by shaping things to our existing categories of understanding, interpreting the unfamiliar to fit the psychological, cultural, and linguistic constraints of our current frame of reference. (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 25-26)

It is this very kind of analysis which can lead to changing our meaning schemes and perspectives (about the past as well as the present), and free us from assumptions that no longer work for us as maturing individuals or individuals in a changing environment.

Section 3. Change

A Description of How the Word “Change” Was Used

During the course of this study, the word “change” was used with the interviewees without any attempt to define it. However, as the complexity of the interviews and analysis evolved, the various ways in which the term was used make it necessary to further describe the categories about which the interviewees spoke and those that Mezirow addressed. Some interviewees talked about a change in their perception of what the topic was when asked how their understanding of the topic of this year’s HF changed as a result of being there. With hindsight the researcher would reword this question to read: Have you experienced any meaningful change (or alteration) in thought (or feeling) as a result of this program? These interviewees used this question to address their expectation in dealing with the founding father’s intentions and their finding that the program actually focused on the press and how it was used around the time of the Revolution. The interviewees also spoke about historical change, that is the differences they perceived in the past in comparison to today. Additionally, they spoke about a change in their own expectations or assumptions about the content of the subject matter.

For example, Alice was surprised that things were as ugly back then with regards to accusations that the press made. But Alice did not think that what she learned would make any difference in the way she did things now. Alice provides a concrete example to further explicate Mezirow's views.

For Mezirow (1991), "learning may be understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 12). Mezirow described action as decision making, forming an association, revising a point of view, reframing or solving a problem, modifying an attitude, or producing a change in behavior. All of these actions involve change, but not all learning involves transformational change, that is leading to a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience and acting on those insights. According to Mezirow (1991), "Normally, when we learn something, we attribute an old meaning to a new experience. In other words, "we use our established expectations to explicate and construe what we perceive to be the nature of a fact of experience that hitherto has lacked clarity or has been misinterpreted" (p. 11). In the case of Alice's understanding of the historic press, she took her expectations based on her experience with today's press and the new information she received, and revised her interpretation of the historic press. In transformative learning, however, we reinterpret an old experience (or a new one) from a new set of expectations, thus giving a new meaning and perspective to the old experience (Mezirow, 1991). It does not appear that Alice's perspective was transformed. If anything, she became more convinced that the press was biased, and she felt she had no different course of action to take. However, Alice's

assumptions about the historic press were changed. One could categorize this change as a change in a meaning scheme.

Mezirow (1991) made the following distinction between a “meaning scheme” and a “meaning perspective.” Meaning schemes are made up of specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience. During learning, meaning schemes become more differentiated and integrated or transformed by reflection on the content or process of problem solving in progressively wider contexts. Meaning perspectives are more extensive; they “are groups of related meaning schemes” (p. 35). A transformation can involve either a particular meaning scheme or a cluster, set, or structure of meaning schemes, that is a meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1985). Transformative learning involves a perspective transformation or a paradigm shift, but learning can also result in an elaboration, confirmation, or creation of a meaning scheme (Mezirow, 1991). In the case of Alice, her specific knowledge and beliefs about the historic press were changed by the program. Thus, this was interpreted as a change in a meaning scheme. However, it is not the intent of the researcher to categorize each change that might have taken place in each of the audience interviewees, but simply to describe and hypothesize about change in the light of Mezirow’s theory which helped the researcher better understand the interviewees’ experiences. The theoretical framework with which the researcher began this study was helpful in formulating the questions for the study and analyzing the changes that were reported and that became apparent. The six functions Mezirow described, which are part of the interpretive process (that is, remembering, reflecting, doubting, imagining, validating, and reconstructing), were not only helpful in phrasing the questions for the interviewees, they provided a sequence in

which the interviewees could engage in their own interpretive process. It was the researcher's hope that these functional questions would draw forth what the audience interviewees were perceiving. It was also hoped that the questions and probes would help the researcher better understand and analyze the process that the interviewees were going through. The researcher did not anticipate that some interviewees did not have a chance to reflect on the forum until they talked to the researcher. Thus, to some extent, the researcher's questions directed the flow of thoughts of the interviewees and helped them make meaning through the interaction.

Mezirow's (1991) theory was also useful to help explain the interviewees' passage from a prelinguistic or intuitive perception of what had happened to using language to articulate what they had experienced. Mezirow used the term "presentational construal" to refer to a prelinguistic perception. This kind of construal

refers to construing immediate appearances in terms of spatio-temporal wholes, distinct processes, and presences: an entity is construed from its unique form or movement, its form is construed from serial occurrences, or its shape or size is construed by its appearance. Presentation construal also includes construing dimension, direction, sequence, and event punctuation [beginning and end] by interpreting cues evoked by sense perception. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 24).

On the other hand Mezirow uses the term "propositional construal" which involves comprehension or cognition and involves experiencing things in terms of the concepts and categories that come with our mastery of language, although we may not consciously name or describe to ourselves what we construe. In very simple terms, one may have a feeling or intuition about something. This would approximate a presentational construal.

Once this “awareness” becomes associated with language categories it becomes a propositional construal, but it may not yet be fully articulated.

Mezirow’s (1991) treatment of premise distortions was useful in understanding the audience interviewees’ attitudes toward change. Mezirow stated: “A distorted assumption or premise is one that leads the learner to view reality in a way that arbitrarily limits what is included, impedes differentiation, lacks permeability or openness to other ways of seeing, or does not facilitate an integration of experience” (p. 118). He described adults who for reasons related to stages of epistemic development (here he referred to the work of Kitchener and King, [1990]) or conation (cognitive choice) select a premise or knowledge structure that is convenient, comfortable, or confirmatory. This premise or meaning perspective can then determine how the individual views experiences. By way of explanation Mezirow quoted Nisbet and Ross (1980):

Once formulated or adopted, theories and beliefs tend to persist, despite an array of evidence that should invalidate or even reverse them. When “testing” theories, the lay person seems to remember primarily confirmatory evidence. ... When confronted forcibly by disconfirmatory evidence, people appear to behave as if they believed that “the exception proves the rule.” (Nisbet and Ross, 1980, p. 10)

In the case of Alice, these were the very words she used regarding the fact that nothing changes: “the exception proves the rule.”

As the interviews proceeded and were analyzed it became clear that the main emergent theme for the interviewees was one of continuity. Some people came seeking to support their idea that very little had changed over the course of 200 years. Others acquired that view as a result of the program. Although Joe said about his “nothing-changes” view, “It really is an observation, it’s not a founding principle,” it became clear that such a view could in fact determine what the participant was perceiving. Thus, each

interviewee's comments regarding change are considered where applicable in proceeding with the analysis and interpretation in the individual profiles presented.

In two cases a follow-up interview did not occur, and in some cases the interviewees talked about no change in their thoughts since the first interview. In a few cases the interviewees seemed to want to bring the interview to closure. This was apparent only in telephone interviews (a medium which conveniently covered the miles, but interfered somewhat with the personal rapport.) Frequently, where the interviewee or the researcher did perceive a change in the interviewee's perspective, it was in relation to one theme, not necessarily the planners' theme of a free press. However, because the topic of this year's forum was concerned with a free press, this theme was used whenever possible. Each audience interviewee will be presented below, in alphabetical order, some very briefly, depending on the outcome of the interview and the circumstances that appear to be pertinent in discussing change. The purpose here will be to describe the change, not necessarily to categorize it.

Audience-Interviewee Profiles

Alice. Alice described "meaningful" as something that leads to activity, that leads to change, even to start thinking more about a subject. She said she "might never have" focused on thinking about the forum without the researcher's questions. After the forum Alice said, "I am more optimistic than I was when I realized that things were more the same back then [particularly in regard to the news media and politics and religion] as they are now." Alice linked the issue of freedom of the press to the ugly political campaigns preceding the 1996 elections, of which she got "so tired," so that she "turned them off, if not literally than

mentally.” Alice didn’t think the forum would have any effect on her actions. She described herself as always voting and writing her congressmen and participating in conversations and reading. She didn’t think that “at my age [possibly late sixties] there’s anything I could do to change it, except live the way we do.” Alice continues to urge her children to be flexible and open minded as possible, to evaluate “the exception that proves the rule,” because “it would be awful if we were all the same, absolutely. What a lopsided world it would be.” Alice’s experience with life has brought her to a stage where she appreciates difference, but sees little change. Her experience with the forum made this more obvious. She came with the hope of evaluating news reporting, particularly investigative, and left with the thought that things were as ugly back then as they are today.

Ann. Ann talked about the “unfortunate collisions of fate” epitomized by the trial of a slave woman in a previous HF which left Ann disempowered and which she found “we still have echoes of in contemporary society.” In general, the feeling that really nothing is new was constantly reinforced by this year’s forum. Her perspective that over and over again people are so similar is one that she has had for a long time.

Ann is committed to free expression and thinks that the best one can hope for in terms of controlling free expression is each person’s stated distaste for what they consider objectionable. Nevertheless, she spoke about a recent trip to the Far East where “all sorts of rules that would be considered here as an infringement on public liberty” actually produced an orderly city that was a pleasure to visit. She was chagrined by a *Time* magazine article in which a columnist from whom she would have expected more was lambasting that government.

The meaning Ann came away with from the forum was a great sense of continuity, and she did not feel the need to check out the accuracy of her perspective. She did say that the forum increased her awareness to analyze “fact, falsehood, and innuendo,” and that our interview gave her an opportunity to consider the events more analytically and critically than she would have done otherwise. The researcher’s impression was that Ann’s thoughts on controls in a society were reformulated by her trip to the far east, but her long-time perspective on continuity was not challenged nor was her commitment to a free press necessarily reinforced by the forum.

Bill. Bill wrote on his pre-forum questionnaire that he was coming to the forum for “the opportunity to reflect on what our founding fathers thought about ‘free speech,’ etc. -- and how 220 years has changed our perspective.” However, during much of his interview he talked about a question that arose in his mind as a result of the program: “How in the world, with lack of any type of communication and what they had was so terrible, could the Revolution be organized?” Bill remembered bits of information from the speakers about mail being opened, news being generated in England, and the lack of newspaper communication between the colonies. He reflected on his question several times during the course of the forum. During the Evening Program, where clippings were read from colonial newspapers circa 1773, the lack of newspaper clippings being read about the Revolution gave him no sense of the tension that must have been present at that time, and made him wonder even more how the war got started and the logistical operations were managed to carry it out. The Henley event added to his perplexity. “Most of Jefferson’s and Madison’s friends were Baptists,” a “very revolutionary church.” When asked, Bill imagined that the answer to his question of how the Revolution was

organized lie in a network of oral communication, politically-persuasive travelers, runners, and spies who exchanged information personally.

Because Bill posed this thematic question to himself it was easier for the researcher to follow some of the functions Mezirow (1991) described as part of the interpretive process. However, Bill did not mention delving into the question further, and he thought his actions might be changed by incorporating “anecdotes” and “information” he had learned into his speaking and writing. He did not mention an understanding or impact of the news media at that time, an issue that would be relevant to his professional life. Bill’s definition of “meaningful” is something enlightening, a new perspective or new information, terms he used to describe the experience he had at the forum.

Bill mentioned both similarities and differences between the eighteenth century and today, but did not dwell on either. The program obviously provoked “new thoughts,” but just how extensive or sustained they might have been is impossible to ascertain. Furthermore the impact of his thoughts might have been influenced by several factors. 1) Bill said the most meaningful part of the program was meeting and talking to people, the researcher being one of those. However, the researcher, by design, was limited to the role of an interviewer, not a conversationalist. 2) The different time periods spanned by the speakers was great and could easily have been confused. 3) The Evening Program, although set just before the Revolution (a time period frequently interpreted by CW) was meant to be entertaining and did not deal with the background contextuality of the time, nor did the Henley incident. Thus, leaving Bill wondering what it all meant in terms of the larger picture.

Frank. During our first interview Frank spoke of being ambivalent about a free press. He saw no difference between the eighteenth-century press and that of today except in the amount of people being reached by it. He described himself as inherently against censorship, but he discussed national and local cases where he felt the press overstepped its boundaries -- one was in the Jewel case regarding the bombing at the Olympic Games, and in another the press revealed information simply to support an anti-union position. Frank was also ambivalent about the role of education: "I think within me there's a conflict that I would like to believe in the ideal that the common man if given the right tools; that is, education, that out of that will come the ultimate truth, for lack of a better word. ... Yet I look out there and I see -- in my classes I see the growth of absolute ignorance." Then Frank described situations involving racism and "ultra right-wing" conservatives "disseminating unbelievable information." No questions were raised in Frank's mind about the subject matter of the forum, but he did not have a chance to "digest it." However, he did joke about Jefferson being a hero of his and then said he was serious about that and wanted to check out the accuracy of the press attacks on Jefferson.

Months later Frank said he was still ambivalent about a free press, did not get a chance to read about Jefferson, but did make a return visit to CW at which time he sought out a character interpreter from the 1996 HF and "did try to get a meaning established." Frank said, "I think that the Henley-Carter type of controversy was the crux of the forum and how the press was manipulated or how the press was used by both sides. I think the paper was prove that the eighteenth-century press was indeed an open forum." Excitedly he talked about an eighteenth-century press project that was evolving in his classroom.

For Frank two critical issues were unresolved -- the benefits of a free press and equal educational opportunities for all. He reached a point of doubting some information given by a speaker during the forum, but had not sought to verify the information through his reading as he said he would. However, his visit with the interpreter resolved his view of the eighteenth-century press as being much freer than the one we have today (a view that was much different than the one he initially held). This led him to create the class newspaper project in which he hoped the CW interpreter would become involved. Frank underwent what he called and “insightful experience,” which was meaningful to him.

Holden. During our interview, Holden expressed his negative views of today’s press which probably “has Jefferson spinning in his grave.” While at the forum he was “trying to listen carefully to the seeds of this abuse of power.” Speaking of his role as a teacher he said, “Naturally, we do teach a profound distrust for what’s in the newspapers.” The Jefferson-Bradlee interview impressed Holden; it reaffirmed his idea of the eighteenth-century mind, which was well born out in Jefferson. He thought Jefferson was “predisposed to an optimism ... he never veered from the idea of the inevitability of truth.” According to Holden, Bradlee, on the other hand, did not understand the eighteenth-century point of view -- for Bradlee truth was subjective. Bradlee’s position was: “You get even. You use your power to niggle and just get in there and pump and penetrate your own enemy and create hearings and all that. Then you report on this.” A reinterview with Holden was not possible to see if his incoming position, which was reconfirmed by the forum up to the time of our talk, was further ensconced or changed.

One of the planners, Toby, laughingly remarked that he was prepared to hear anyone's view including one in which people would come away from the forum with a view opposite to his own: "that it's time to burn the books and close the presses." But this perspective would leave him wondering "just what connections they'd made that he hadn't counted on or failed to make." While not burning the books, Holden's view and some of the other interviewee's negative views of the press came pretty close to setting the torch. This certainly is the thematic issue in which some planners had hoped to make a change, but they were unsure that any members of the audience held such views.

Please note that Holden spoke extensively about a change in perspective after the 1995 forum on immigration. In his words:

I came up thinking that I would get enough fodder to really reinforce the idea of the White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant business -- the strict quotas and so forth -- that the corruption of the world is going to be because of all the Hispanic folk coming in from Latin America. And I thought I could bring some of that information back with me because we were under attack even last year. Well, I left with a different point of view. (Holden)

Holden's new understanding of immigrants' problems led him into organizing paid internships for immigrants at his place of business. The researcher did not probe further because the previous forum was out of the range of this project; however it indicates that future studies could benefit from a long-term approach.

Ishmael. Ishmael left the forum with a negative view of today's press but a better understanding of how it was used in the eighteenth century. In her view, during post-Revolutionary time until present day the press has been used to maintain the status quo and influence (or at least try to) public opinion. Before the Revolution, it was a vehicle for individuals to express their own opinions. Ishmael crossed out a paragraph explicating

this view on her interview transcript and substituted: “Meaning may therefore be that human nature has not changed.” The presentation of speaker Freeman, to whom she referred, influenced her somewhat in arriving at this view.

Although this is how the “press” theme impacted this visitor, during most of our interviews Ishmael spoke of the question raised by CW: was a free press the founding fathers’ first mistake? Ishmael wondered “what is the original intent; have we worked it or have we just changed it, or do we understand what it really means or should mean for us as a free people.” Ishmael imagined that in formulating the question the planners meant to ask if allowing Joe Public to make his own decision as to where the truth lies was the founding fathers’ mistake. The program left her prompted to read more about the press, when she got a chance, but not to delve into the question of original intent. Ishmael said she was disappointed that the question was not dealt with directly, but she dismissed this by saying CW has every right to assume we will be interpreting for ourselves. On the evaluation form, Ishmael gave the highest rating, 5, for overall program satisfaction.

The researcher questions whether Ishmael’s coming to closure on her view of today’s press and the similarities in human nature between then and now were made in an effort to rationalize CW’s position in how the forum evolved -- namely in not dealing with the question of original intent, which she tried to prepare herself to address with pre-forum reading. Certainly, Ishmael’s involvement with one thematic element made it difficult to evaluate another thematic element in terms of change in interpretation. This may have occurred to Ishmael as well.

Jethro. Jethro’s view that Jefferson did not have an affair with Sally Hemmings dates back to his days as a student at William and Mary and the University of Virginia,

“where many people consider Mr. Jefferson as an American saint or the closest thing to it.” This view was reconfirmed by the 1996 HF. No questions were raised in Jethro’s mind about the content of the forum and he had answered the question of the founding fathers’ original intent before he came: “The first amendment was not a mistake, though like many things it turned out to be something quite different from what it’s initial supporters thought.” Jethro left with his knowledge expanded “somewhat.”

Mezirow (1991) claims that our perspectives are frequently colored by life experiences. He speaks of distortion through selective perception in which we see only what we prefer to see. It is not the researcher’s intent to classify Jethro’s view of Jefferson as a distortion, but it was a view to which he was culturally predisposed and not open to any other consideration. Because the Sally Hemmings relationship was a small part of the Jefferson-Bradlee interview, one would question why Jethro even felt it necessary to defend his view of Jefferson.

Jethro’s interviews also contained thematic content from a previous forum that was not a “turning point” in his life, but had an effect on his thinking and his becoming “less judgmental.” He reached a new understanding of slaves as chattel and of indentured servants who might have been even less cared for because they were not owned, they were not a property investment. He remembered his grandfather, a Confederate, and his hero, a native of Virginia who fought for the Union. In the case of a previous forum, Jethro did experience some change, on which he was prepared to act: “It’s a very good thing for me that I did not have to make that choice [on which side to fight] because I would have undoubtedly ended up like one of my heroes,” who lost all contact with his family as a result of his choice.

Jo. It is impossible to evaluate any change in Jo's thought. She talked and wrote a great deal about her understanding of what the topic was suppose to be in contrast to what it turned out to be as a result of the Henley interpretation. She had no doubt about the accuracy of the program's information, no need to check it out, and no inclination to research her questions which were numerous: "why all the fuss about selecting a church leader [the Henley incident] ... what led to the controversy ... what was the role of women ... why all the unanswered questions on the part of Jefferson?" Jo spoke about being confused by the character interpretations which seemed out of context. It may have been the confusion in the program's topic and certain program elements that kept Jo wondering a great deal about what it all was suppose to mean. In any event, she came away with an overall meaning from the program: "things are more the same than different." This is a perspective that she arrived at as a result of the enactments and speaker presentations, and she spoke of it in the context of different themes.

In the case of Jo, although the researcher spoke to her on three occasions and also corresponded, it was impossible to detect any change in thought before in contrast to after the program beyond that of which she spoke, namely the similarity with the past. (With regard to prevailing perception of similarity, the researcher noted that the interviewee's inability to discriminate or describe change, does affect the researcher's also being able to detect it.) However, Jo spoke of incorporating new information in her professional role, and said she would like to return to CW to see more interpretations of the female role. Obviously, an interest was sparked.

Joe. Joe came to the forum with an interest in our government and its function and hoped to understand "how opinions are established by the general electorate now and in

the past.” With his hand gently clasped, he said, “While the newspaper was the vehicle that was used, the end result was that we got a considerable picture of the intimate workings of the politics, the home life, and the realities of the government and the development of government over the period that we were talking about.” He felt that the diversity of opinion of the “professors” especially Gross and Lienesch was “thought provoking and challenging,” and led him “to feel that the answers are not easy.” There were no questions raised in his mind however that he would have liked to ask, but he felt Gross made it clear that the questions asked back then by the founders were different because they had no place to turn for the answers, they were truly “trail blazing.” For Joe these were “new thoughts” which he had not considered until the researcher’s questions were posed because he didn’t have time to stop and reflect “or might never had.” Possibly Joe would pick up another book by Gross if he came across one, but he would not seek it out because he has “so much reading to do.” As far as doing things differently, he couldn’t visualize that. “It wasn’t that kind of discussion ... the concretes weren’t there.” Joe felt the program is aimed at helping teachers expand their knowledge and make the teaching of history more interesting.

For Joe, something “meaningful” is “a cornerstone in logic or major piece in a logic string where you’re developing [a] course. A meaningful piece of it determines part of the course.” Through “interpretation” one decides how something relates to one’s experience. Sometimes it does and comes full circle; other times, said Joe, “you get halfway around, and it falls down, it breaks apart from either new information or another experience that changes the interpretation.” Joe had “new thoughts,” but from his definitions they did not change his interpretation and put him on a new course.

Joe said, “we haven’t changed people very much ... although we could all stand a little bit of improvement.” While he said he was not always comfortable with his premise, he added, “I don’t think it’s necessary to convince myself beyond a question of a doubt that that’s the way it is.”

Mary. Mary “was surprised and certainly didn’t know that newspapers, as such, were developed as late as they were. “The news was apparently disseminated by word of mouth, sheets, announcements put on the courthouse door or something like that.” The forum made Mary, like Bill, wonder how “the independence movement went along with as much momentum and as broadly based as it was with the lack of newspapers.” Mary came with the idea that today’s press is biased and left “a little bit more critical of the information that is published in the newspapers.” At her age (82), she didn’t think that what she learned at the forum would change her actions in any way, but she did, in the following months, read some early issues of the paper in her community and commented: “[Mr. X’s] five reasons for starting the [*X Press*] were very practical and interesting [names left out to protect interviewee’s anonymity]. When I contrast them with much of the sensationalism, over emphasis on sports, etc. of today, I fear we suffer regression.” Because other audience interviewees spoke of positive elements in the colonial press, the researcher wonders if this may be due to the focus on early times and the lack of discussion as to what happens today. Certainly, innuendoes of an idealized press in the past begin to emerge in the audiences’ dialogues. One theoretician’s work comes to mind. Arthur Levine (1983) described the college generation of the 1970s as being critical and distrustful of societal institutions. However, many of the audience members, especially

Mary, were educated in earlier times. Thus the attitude may be due to the prevailing culture rather than a generational disposition.

Miriam. Miriam was impressed with Jefferson beginning to feel ambivalent about a free press even though he continued to support it. “I can’t imagine anyone from then on really having questioned a free press in this country too much.” However, Miriam wondered who does control the press today. Miriam came to the forum for mental stimulation and she couldn’t see as anybody would attempt to draw any conclusions from it. She said, “one thing that it’ll probably do is send me back into a review of Jefferson’s presidency.” Miriam did not speak of a change in perspective about the press, nor was a perspective change on this topic discernible. If anything, Jefferson’s ambivalence reinforced her mistrust of “news” organizations.

Miriam saw similarity in the past and today especially in religion, which was brought up in connection with the Henley incident, but a good deal of her conversation dealt with prejudice she felt against her as a young woman from the North working in the South, and the prejudice she witnessed against Blacks. She vividly remembered the Black portrayal in the Henley incident, which she linked to a religious theme: “If they had a soul, they were human and therefore you had no right to hold them as a slave.” Miriam talked about an excellent Black interpreter at Carter’s Grove and the Black cab driver who assured her that the Black community in Williamsburg was no longer against the Black program at CW. Based on the emotional intensity with which she spoke, the researcher would say that Miriam found the Black interpretations more meaningful than any press issue. And, if there was a change in perspective, it might be regarding how she

perceived racial relations in Williamsburg today in comparison to her personal experience in the South and her knowledge of Williamsburg in colonial times.

Terry. Terry was attracted to the program because of her interest in the origins of a press and its meaning in the eighteenth century. During our first interview she said her “gut feeling” was that it was important to “determine what the original intentions of the writers of the Constitution had in their minds in order to better understand the documents.” Immediately after the program, Terry thought the “broad theme” of the forum was not the original intention of the framers but “whether or not freedom of the press has opened a can of worms that no one expected.” Terry was motivated to read more about the colonial press, but had not gotten around to do so at the time of our second interview in January.

During our second interview, Terry said, “I got to thinking that, at the end of this, when I filled out some notes, that perhaps original intention is too enigmatic to understand.” She had concluded: “I think it may be possible to try and -- people want to try to get into the mind of the eighteenth-century framers, and I will always try to do that too, but we can’t get there a hundred percent, so take the document, let it breathe, let it grow, and read it again.” Later, after saying that the speakers did not deal with original intent or whether or not it was important, Terry said, “I think I was seeing a picture that would help to support both sides [whether or not it was important to understand the framers’ intentions], and that maybe made me a little bit more open-minded in that discussion. I think it’s a very academic discussion. I don’t think as a practical means, it’s totally important.”

Although Terry described herself as being more open-minded on this issue, the researcher interpreted her quest to understand the mindset of the eighteenth-century framers as one that was either forestalled or foreshortened. Terry certainly was engaged with other themes, but this question ran throughout her dialogues. Especially in the case of Terry, it was unfortunate that the topic was not explicitly discussed, so that various opinions could stimulate her quest.

Tom Jones. Tom expected to develop an understanding of the freedom of the press in America. He came with the “hypothesis” that nothing had changed very much in 200 years. All aspects of the forum confirmed his hypothesis, especially the agreement between the four speakers. Concerning the speakers, Tom said, “I don’t think that was their theme necessarily, but that emerged as a theme for me. ... I guess I do now have a personal bias that nothing really changes.” This idea which is linked to the importance of continuity for Tom has been apparent to him since his high-school days. Although he asked a question during a discussion period following one of the speaker’s presentations, the answer left Tom reconfirmed in his conviction. As for any other questions to pursue as a result of the forum, Tom had none. During our second phone interview Tom expressed a willingness to meet for another interview, but said about the transcript of his interview, “That was pretty accurate in terms of what I thought then and of what I think now. I still feel the same way as when we talked.”

The researcher did not discern any change in Tom’s thought. However, the strong predisposition toward no change occurring in history, which was so pervasive, can be thought of as an epistemic premise distortion (Mezirow, 1991). An epistemic premise distortion is an assumption about the nature and use of knowledge that prevents a person

from acquiring a more inclusive and discriminating integration of knowledge. Mezirow (1991) referred to the work of Guess (1981) who claimed that the blurring and merging of similar objects and events in memory or defining categories too broadly or too narrowly results in distorted epistemic premises which act on filtering one's perception. In the case of Tom, his personal bias that nothing has changed may very well have prevented him from perceiving any change.

The lack of disagreement between the speakers was pointed out by another interviewee. If there was more diversity in opinion (in contrast to personality as two audience interviewees noted), Tom may have been able to discern more difference. Unfortunately, the lack of diversity he saw in the speakers influenced a long-standing assumption because he cited this as another reason for confirming his hypothesis that nothing changes.

Tom Smith. Tom Smith was impressed by the interaction between Jefferson and Bradlee, but the performance did not change his thinking about either person. The character enactor reconfirmed his view of Jefferson, on whom Tom had written a master's thesis. Tom said, "his [Jefferson's] attitude towards truth and the capacity of the citizenry to weigh the evidence and arrive at reasonable judgments strikes me as incredibly optimistic and very naive." Tom felt that Bradlee, whose work he admired, fared better in the interplay because Bradlee placed the control of the press in the hands of the editor. Tom was convinced before coming to the forum that the historian must recapitulate the mind of person so that we can infer in some orderly way and can begin to appreciate the way people thought about matters in their own time. This, Tom felt, the character enactor did very well.

Tom came to the forum with a question that he has been addressing for some time; namely, how is the conscience formed as a result of an interaction between the sect and the commons (he was referring to any religious sect). He said: “Education within the sect is almost never dealt with. We’re always trying to struggle with how the state or the public deals with education in the commons.” For Tom, the question of conscience is linked to one of governance of either assemblies or societies. As it turns out, Tom was looking forward to our interview because of the similarity between his interest and the researcher’s project. He had problems with the constructivists’ way of framing how meaning is made. Three months after our first interview, Tom thought that the forum:

[Although] not the most effective, is one way of forming norms upon which the conscience acts in reflexive judgment. It gives people a sense or a concrete sense of their own past. That is, in a way what you’re doing is shaping people’s memory, and probably making it possible for them to make judgments about whether or not their society lives up to its promise, lives up to its past. ... And that is a form of reflexive judgment. (Tom Smith)

This is why Tom thought history is so important because it has that kind of effect. Then Tom said that his trip to Williamsburg had that effect on him. He said, “I was impressed all over again by the ingenuity and the astonishing originality of the institutions that emerged out of that period. That is, I don’t think Americans typically appreciate what radical transformation it was to think of a government along lines that the Constitutional Convention followed.” Following an open line of inquiry with his questions led Tom to reframe them in a more “current” way of expression -- the constructivists’ view; however, his description of this view is his own. This reframing is an example of what Mezirow (1991) refers to as a change in meaning scheme or the rules for interpreting.

William Tell. The growth and development of civil liberties and the history of racism were the most meaningful elements of past History Forums for William Tell. He was attracted to the topic of the 1996 Forum because: “having lived through the McCarthy era, I am very sensitive to the issue. It is especially important now when the Christian Coalition, et al, seek to limit civil liberties in the name of their concept of ‘morality.’” Neither of the themes that emerged over a four-month period of talks and correspondence however were related to the First Amendment. As an indirect result of the Jefferson-Bradlee interview, William Tell developed more of an interest in the mindset of Jefferson and his compatriots. The other theme was racism, something that has “bothered” him.

During our first interview, William Tell vividly remembered the dramatic presentation when the slave spoke (for a few minutes). That struck him as being significant in the seminal development of race relations in this country. He went on to explain his logic: the people who were held in a minority status were ignored; they really did learn a great deal simply by observation; they kept it to themselves and developed their own past and subculture. During the second interview, William Tell said that the scene brought home to him the fact that there was an underclass of people who were invisible to us. They always told us what we wanted to hear, but we never knew what they thought. For William Tell this scene provided an “enlightening” experience. He believes that invisibility is at the heart of some of our race problems today. William Tell talked about his community where race is not visible and some of his neighbors are prejudiced, and then said, “I just never had any difficulty in that respect in my head.” For Tell it seems the problem centers on not being able to understand or identify the culture

of a Black person. He offered the analogy of a professional sign that might read “J. K. Wong, Dentist,” in which case you would know the person is Oriental; whereas, a Black person’s sign might read “J. K. Harrison, Dentist.” So said Tell, “you have no idea what he is or how he is.” While not prejudiced, William Tell became aware of what invisibility can do.

A month later, William Tell wrote again about the scene and the “profound” effect it had on him. He felt the “superior conduct by the White people helps to account for some of the attitude of Black people today”; and then “some White people still act that way.”

Whereas the researcher is not interested in specifically labeling a “transformational experience” this interviewee’s account, which shows some reflective thought, strikes a strong resemblance to the transformational experience Carr (1995) described concerning the holocaust. (Please refer back to Chapter 2, the end of Relevant Adult Education and Evaluation Literature.) This theme gained momentum for William Tell over a course of four months, which was just about at the end of the data-collection phase. The researcher did want to pursue it further to find out if the insight became more integrated with life experiences or produced action on the interviewee’s part, but that might have skewed the research sample. Undoubtedly, the researcher’s questions and interest in all of the interviewees’ remarks somewhat affected the interviewees’ desire to continue their trains of thought. This may have been the case with William Tell. This phenomenon and its relationship to Mezirow’s argument concerning how people make meaning together will be addressed in the next chapter.

Section 4. The Grand Questions

What differences and similarities in meaning are there between those intended by the planners of the 1996 History Forum and those reported by various audience interviewees?

First of all the planners were speaking of what was meaningful to them, but not so much in a personal sense as in their role as historians or active interpreters to the HF audience. This was consistent with the way in which they defined the words “meaningful” and “interpretation.” Whereas the audience interviewees interpreted both words in a more personal context; and unlike the planners, spoke of “meaningful” in terms of usefulness to them in their future thinking or actions.

The planners chose speakers and presented materials that concentrated on the colonial press. They hoped to provide diverse opinions that would lead the audience to gain an enlightened or enlarged perspective. Their goal was not inconsistent with Mezirow’s (1991) suggestions for an adult audience. However, Mezirow’s theory encompasses dramatic change, change that will free one from premise distortions that could interfere with adult functioning and learning. While dramatic change was not specified, it was not ruled out by the planners’ remarks. The planners spoke of their goals in a very general way. There were no specific facts or views except they wanted audience members to come away with support for a free-press.

The audience interviewees were pleased with the understanding they obtained of the early press, but they expected to explore present-day press issues that were relevant to their lives. In this respect their needs are similar to those outlined by Cross (1981) and Knowles (1980) who specified adults’ need for practical, useful, and relative information. The interviewees were disappointed that the CW-posed question -- Was a free press the

founding fathers' first mistake? -- was not dealt with because they were seeking to understand the intentions and mindset of people at that time.

Most of the interviewees described “meaningful” as something that was personally important to them. What they found “meaningful” concerning the press reflects a diversity of opinion. One person was glad that it was as ugly back then; some were relieved or disheartened to see that nothing has really changed; several saw differences in the purposes the press served; and some wondered how the Revolution ever got started or continued successfully with such poor sources of communication. In at least a few cases they were ambivalent about a free press or convinced there was no such thing. Consistent with their definition of “meaningful” (that is, of personal importance), the audience-interviewees’ conversations, analogies, and related life experiences went far beyond issues related to the press or the First Amendment. The other themes that emerged as meaningful, and sometimes more meaningful, to them during the interviews included gender and racial issues, religion and the eighteenth-century mindset. However, throughout the audience interviewees’ discussions of various themes, comparisons were made as to what is different and what remains the same in eighteenth-century life and life today. For the majority of the audience interviewees, a grand theme took shape over the course of their interviews and correspondence. For various reasons and in various situations they saw little if any change in the last two hundred years.

How do the meanings reported by the audience interviewees change as a result of their experience with the program?

Mezirow’s (1991) theory provided a good framework to guide the exploration of what change in meaning was occurring to the audience interviewees. The functions he

described as part of the interpretive process helped establish a before, during, and after as did the pre-forum questionnaire, the multiple interviews, and the evaluation form.

However, each participant discussed multiple themes, which sometimes made it difficult to ascertain if change in a particular perspective had occurred. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that some visitors arrived with a predisposition that relatively little change has taken place since the colonial period, especially with regard to human relations. More dramatically, some audience interviewees reported arriving at this perception as a result of the HF. This perspective regarding change was brought up in their dialogues about race and gender relations, religion and the press. Because audience interviewees defined “meaningful” in a way that was consistent with the constructivist view used in this study (that is, building new knowledge upon earlier constructs) this perspective about change may have influenced their reports that their action would not change because of the forum. Additionally, almost all of the audience interviewees talked about their change in perception of what the topic was suppose to be.

Nevertheless, change in thought was perceived by some audience interviewees and by the researcher. Most frequently, this involved an acquisition of information concerning the role of the eighteenth-century press. Those who were actively engaged in teaching or museum interpretation or research projects reported using their new knowledge of the eighteenth-century press in their professions. However, the understanding the audience interviewees acquired seemed to have little if any effect on their opinions regarding press bias today.

In some cases the change, in what was meaningful, which was described by the interviewee and interpreted by the researcher, was more profound. Such changes

approximated Mezirow's descriptions of a reorganization in meaning schemes and even perspectives. Although the speakers' presentations led to changes in thought, the more substantial changes could be traced to the dramatic interpretations which provoked vivid memories, reflective thought, and an insightful reassessment -- a type of change that Mezirow would probably consider "transformational."

The next chapter deals with the suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of the study and the researcher's analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER VI. BEYOND THE GRAND QUESTIONS TO SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

I have written this chapter in the first person because it was easier to speak in this voice about assumptions I had brought to this study. Furthermore, I wanted to remind the reader of the inherently subjective nature of this project. The interviewees spoke subjectively of their personal views and experiences, which I have taken the utmost care to present, but even so I made a subjective selection of their comments. I did this to present a holistic view of their experiences with the forum that was filtered through my experiences leading to the culminating recommendations.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents some of the assumptions I had about the topic of this year's History Forum (HF), the research project, and the participants in the study. I have gained many new perspectives as a result of the study. The uncovered assumptions and the new insights go beyond the findings related to the grand questions, and include topics involving the use of discussion, a description of a self-learner, and some attitudes toward the word "critical." Section 2 contains four flow charts that begin with the planners' aims, include interviewees' comments and my analysis and interpretation, and culminate in my subsequent recommendations. This section also includes suggestions and recommendations regarding the process, content, promotion, and evaluation of future programs for adult learners. Many of these have emanated from the audience interviewees themselves. Finally, in Section 3, I present

some of the problems encountered in this study and suggestions for future research. I conclude with the advantages I discovered in the chosen methodology.

Section 1. Beyond the Grand Questions

Researcher Assumptions

Assumptions about the program. When I first became privy to the planning meetings and the promotional literature, I was concerned with the associations made to the 1996 election events, which directly preceded the forum, and the content of the Henley incident which was primarily religious. My concern for the political references came out of my understanding of the establishment of a nonprofit under Section 501(c)(3), which prohibits any participation in any political campaign on behalf of a candidate or party (Bryce, 1992). However these concerns were unfounded. The subject matter was not of a political nature, and where associations were made by the audience interviewees it was to their already established choices.

The religious content drew concern because it required an understanding of church politics and/or the history of religion in the colonies. It took me more than one discussion and several readings in the field to begin to fathom the religious issues involved. Knowing that Colonial Williamsburg (CW) concentrates its interpretive program on the time of the Revolution added further doubt about using a topic that was not directly related to the Revolution. These concerns were well founded. In such cases where the audience interviewees did not arrive with an understanding of the contextuality of the issue, or were not able to talk about it (to either CW staff or other visitors) confusion did take place and also bewilderment as to why the issue was not connected to the larger revolutionary theme. Several audience interviewees indicated throughout their

interviews that they did have a substantial historical background on which to draw, however, the connections were not explicitly made in the program.

Assumptions about the research project. Having increased my sample from seven to fifteen, I feared the sheer volume of material that I would have to sort and merge manually. Being so close to my data sources however, and revisiting them over so many times led me to better understand the participants. Eventually, I really heard them explaining themselves. During the interviews the participants openly displayed generosity and patience in presenting their thoughts; during the analysis their voices became those of colleagues in search of meaning. Instead of just looking for codes, I found myself reading sections over and over again, each time seeing associations in their thoughts to things they had talked about at different times.

Assumptions about the planner interviewees. With regard to the responses from the planners, I had expected much more specificity about the program's meaningfulness to them and their intentions for the audience. As was reported in Chapter 4, the planners are professionally trained historians and/or are actively engaged in their own research. The interpretive activities of CW are limited to a certain time period and a certain place, but they encompass a relatively complete fabric of the social structure of the historical site. With so much to draw on, I had expected the planners to have gained certain insights from their work that they wanted to share with the audience. Granted the planners said they do not mandate what the chosen speakers will bring to the program, but I had expected to hear more of the planners' wishes about what they hoped would be presented, and more expressed planning for the enactments. I even expected to hear some talk about what the audience might find meaningful. At one point I thought I might not have gained

their trust as an interviewer. I felt somewhat shut off from the planning process, wondering if I had been left out of something, but then was reassured by one of the planners that I had observed pretty much of what does go on, that the planning process has become “streamlined” over the years. Furthermore, I was reassured by the responses from some of the planners who made remarks such as:

- Your questions ... cause me to sharpen the approach I’d take toward what the goals of such a presentation or a series of presentations are, and how we can reach those goals and what we want people to come out of the end with. (Louise)
- I think it’s been a wonderful preparation for History Forum, so that when I attend sessions, I’m going to be much more aware of trying to perceive at the same time, how this program is being interpreted by the participants and what effect it has. And certainly when I meet with these people at forum it would be something that I could hopefully explore, not in a direct -- through interrogation so to speak but through conversation. (Mario)

Assumptions about the audience interviewees. From past experiences with interviewing audience members, I had expected to be given information above and beyond the responses to my questions. I had not anticipated to what extent this would occur or how pertinent some of this information would ultimately be to my study. I had heeded my proposal readers’ advice to focus my questions, and although the questions were opened ended, many probes were formulated before I entered the field to help me keep on target. Slowly I realized that my interviewees had their own agenda to convey information that they felt was essential to my study. In one case, I received a multipage resume and published materials before our interview, in another case the interviewee started off by giving me a short biography. In which case, I graciously accepted what was given and responded by providing a resume or bibliography. Many interviewees offered stories or analogies that, at first, seemed irrelevant. But after emerging myself, bit by bit,

deeper into the materials, I began to see where the relevance laid in their philosophy, their mindset, and their constructed frameworks. I learned a great deal from the interviewees, not only about them as people, but how their experiences shaped their perspective, interest, and concerns about the topics which emanated from the HF.

I also learned to listen more closely than I had in the past. With each interview I was conscious of being extremely attentive to what the interviewees said and how it was said. I made every effort not to show any signs of being judgmental. Usually I nodded in agreement, said “yes” with a question mark signaling I wanted the interviewee to proceed, or simply asked for clarification of their terms or thoughts. As the interviews continued I realized that I had gained their trust, and I also realized that I had entered into their process of making meaning. By asking the questions I had relating to what they remembered, what they questioned, what they imagined, what they wanted to verify, and how they might act accordingly, by probing what I did not understand, I was leading them into a process of articulating and forming their interpretations. There was evidence of this in their conversations, by pausing, rephrasing sentences, taking back what they had said to start again; by asking me if I agreed or by interjecting the familiar “you know” with the inflection of a question mark. However, the interviewees also said that I had helped them focus their thoughts, that I had made them think about the conference which they had not yet had a chance to do or might never have done. I had entered into this study committed to a view of constructivism, first of all that we interpret the world and our experiences in the light of interpretations (or constructions) that we have already formed, and second, we use a system of communication to enter into an interpretive or meaning-making process with other individuals. In other words, we make meaning

together. Having read the works of Falk and Dierking (1992) and Silverman (1990, 1993, 1995) who emphasized that the meaning-making process takes place between the people who come together as a group to visit a museum, I was prepared to observe this, but I was not expecting to become part of it. The experience was exhilarating. With some audience interviews I entered dimly-lit landscape of ideas and became aware of the light filtering through the shadow. I was able to also appreciate the enlightening realization when it occurred. In the absence of argument or confrontation for having an idea, the harmony of thought that accompanies understanding moves in peacefully, taking root in the mind, producing contentment and joy.

Many interviewees mentioned the discussions they had or did not have with others at the HF. They also spoke about asking questions or having difficulty in framing questions during the question-and-answer sessions following the speakers' presentations and the lunchtime discussion groups. Their difficulty was due to trying to speak from an eighteenth-century perspective (they had contemporary questions), trying to formulate their questions within the context of the speakers' presentations, and trying to discuss issues where the moderator of their discussion group had taken a strong stand on a view contrary to their own. Thinking that some dialogue about the program's meaning might have taken place between the audience interviewees and the planners during the forum, I decided to pose the following question to the visitors during the second interview: At the forum did you talk to any employees from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation about the program's meaning? The question revealed that overall no one had talked to the planners about the program's meaning. One individual mentioned pursuing a contemporary issue that was not touched on during the forum that was meaningful to him,

and one individual returned to CW months after to talk to an enactor from the Henley incident at which point he did “get a meaning established with at least one of the enactors.” He then saw the Henley incident as the main crux of the 1996 HF. Some interviewees however did mention talking to the planners socially and thanking them in as much as they would thank a host or hostess. Table 2 summarizes the number of audience interviewees who talked about each discussion-type activity listed. Please keep in mind that the information was offered, not directly solicited (except the question regarding their talking to the planners about the program’s meaning), and may therefore not be completely representative. (In fact, two interviewees were not interviewed a second time.)

Table 2: Number of audience interviewees reporting each discussion-type activity that took place during the 1996 History Forum.

DISCUSSION-TYPE ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES REPORTING OUT OF 15
Asking questions during question-and-answer sessions	4
Not asking questions during question-and-answer sessions or lunchtime discussions	6
Talking to speakers	2
Talking to costumed interpreters	3
	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES REPORTING OUT OF 13
Talking to planners about program’s meaning ^a	0
Talking to planners socially	5

^aNote: this was the only activity that was directly questioned; the other activities were volunteered by the respondents. Therefore, the other numbers may not be completely representative.

Many interviewees reported that they would or already had talked about the program’s meaning with significant others during or after the program, but many added

not to the extent they had during the interview. Several interviewees indicated they had casual, social conversations with other participants of the program. Thus, meaning is made together with other people, but according to their reports, not much of this type of activity took place with participants during the HF itself.

However, in going over the interviews, I noted there were many indications that, on some level, interpretations were already formed. The interviewees often grappled as though through a fog to find the right words. In some cases, after articulating a few thoughts, they would say, “no, that’s not what I mean,” and they would start over again. After revisiting the transcripts for just such shifts in thought and connecting this to their definitions of interpretation -- that is, making meaning to themselves -- I became more aware of the interactivity the audience interviewees had with their own thoughts, of their being in a self-reflective mode. Noting also that many of the interviewees not only claimed to be, but displayed through their numerous references having been, avid readers, I did not doubt that much of their meaning-making activities were carried out with their own and others thoughts, from the voices within.

Thus, the audience interviewees were making meaning with another person, but they were also making meaning by themselves. Judging from the length of the interviews (sometimes 2 hours) and the gratitude for the interview, making meaning together is important and needs somehow to be further facilitated during the HF. In light of what I had heard the interviewees say and what I had read of prominent adult educators, making meaning for oneself brought me to rethink the concept of a self-directed learner.

Some of the audience interviewees talked about themselves enthusiastically as life-long learners; some reported pursuing adult educational programs offered at other

museums and institutions of higher education. Except for those members who were actively seeking to resolve the CW posed question about the founding fathers' intent however, the audience interviewees did not come with stated learning objectives.

Knowles (1981a) noted that Tough (in 1971 and again in 1979) stressed adults' internal motivation to pursue not only a teacher's objectives but also their own objectives. "In its broadest meaning," Knowles (1984) said, " 'self-directed learning' describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (pp. 300-301). P. Cross (1981) also defined self-directed learning as "deliberate learning in which the person's primary intention is to gain certain definite knowledge or skills" (pp. 186-187). Borun (1992), a museum educator, took the concept a step further when she defined the museum visit as a self-directed learning sequence.

In fact, although he is presently pursuing a research project, Tom Smith, one of the audience interviewees and a retired adult educator, said, "I have no intention on my behalf. I don't think learning occurs that way." Tom along with Joe and Alice stated they came to the forum with an open attitude, to see what's going to happen. They are self-directed learners in that they pick learning programs, they choose to read suggested materials or materials they think pertinent to the topic presented, and they choose to accept information that relates to their incoming hypothesis (Tom Jones). Even more, in keeping with a constructivist view, they are the ones who are interpreting to themselves in order to reframe their interpretations (Ishmael).

My experience with the audience interviewees led me to see them as a group of people who are actively seeking educational events in which they can make meaning which is relative to their lives. They are self-directed in that it is their “self” that is directing the choices given the options that are open to them, but they are not setting up a plan and trying to create options. However, they also welcome a facilitator in the process, someone with whom they can sort out the subject matter issues at hand, acquire more, especially primary, reading sources, and even talk about the learning process itself. This had led me to envision a much more active role for the adult museum educator -- one that would stimulate more activity on the part of the learner. This person should be well aware of the literature available in adult education, but be prepared to hold fundamental concepts loosely. The differences pointed out in Knowles model (Table 1) between pedagogical and androgical learning may be encountered on any point of a continuum; and various concepts, including those associated with constructivism are in operation simultaneously. The adult educator must be aware of multiple possibilities and get in tune with the learners. Furthermore, these audience interviewees had a great deal of experience on which to draw. Some of their expertise lay in the subject matter of the 1996 HF; whereas, other domains of knowledge were contingent to the topic. Thus, the juggling act of communication lies in finding a level playing field on which to exchange information that can lead to further defining similarities and differences between the eighteenth century and today, and finding relevance to contemporary problems.

Mezirow said this about a self-directed learner:

There is probably no such thing as a self-directed learner, except in the sense that there is a learner who can participate fully and freely in the dialogue through which we test our interests and perspectives against those of others and

accordingly modify them and our learning goals. Inasmuch as all other ideas and ideals in life are amenable to modification through experience, it seems gratuitous to fix learning objectives at the outset as criteria against which learning gains are to be assessed. (Mezirow, 1985, p. 27)

In dealing with any students, but especially a group of educated, older adults, the main objective for an educator is to help the learner prepare to go beyond the expectations of the educator. Otherwise we would be left with a class of learners that were arbitrarily confined to the terminal expectations of the educator.

Certainly another factor that bears consideration by museum educators is the fact that most of the HF audience probably completed their formal learning when pedagogical methods were inappropriately used in dealing with adults (Knowles, 1984). This may account for their generally accepting and not seeking to verify the information given them during the speakers' lectures. When asked if they had any questions about the subject matter, 6 out of 15 audience interviewees said, "No." (However, later in the interviews, questions did arise.) Seven out of 15 interviewees also said they had no need to check out the validity of what was being presented. The audience was there to be taught, to have something done to them. This passive mode may also have affected their recall, which was greater when they experienced the enactments because they personally became involved in the drama.

Several factors also emerged from the study involving the word "critical" that are important to consider because critical reflection is seen as the very process through which we challenge and transform our assumptions (Brookfield, 1987a; Mezirow 1990, 1991). First of all many of the audience interviewees indicated hesitancy when criticizing the program. Bill, Terry, Marcia, and Mary overtly said they did not want to be critical about

the HF. Then, they indicated that overall it was a wonderful experience. When “critical” remarks were made they were often followed by comments such as: “They [CW] always does a good job,” and “The performers did well in their roles.” Thoughts of criticism obviously held negative connotations for these individuals.

I also noted that whereas Ishmael brought up, several times, the fact that the questions relating to the founding fathers’ intent was not developed, Ishmael rated overall satisfaction with the entire HF experience with a five, the highest number possible on the evaluation form. The three lines provided for comments were left blank. This form of question on the evaluation, that is one that asks for a rating (which has also been used with past History Forums) may obscure the difference between judging a performance and analyzing its content.

Only one planner, Ellen, openly expressed her negative reactions to the use of the word “critical” such as it would be used in “critical thinking.” She said, “It sounds negative, so it’s judgmental. ... just as historical interpretation is jargon in my field.”

Brookfield, a protégé of Mezirow (Brookfield, 1987a), shares Mezirow’s views about fostering critical abilities. Mezirow used the phrase “critical reflection” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 12); whereas Brookfield’s choice of phraseology was “critical thinking” (Brookfield, 1987a, p. 7). Mezirow defined various forms of reflection depending on whether we are reflecting on the “what” or “when” of a situation or the “how” or “how to” of an action. Critical reflection however deals with the “why” of our thoughts and action, the reasons and the consequences of what we do (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). These are higher-level questions involving higher-levels of thinking. Both educators claim that it is through the process of critical reflection that the validity of assumptions

from prior learning are challenged and it is, therefore, most important in adult education.

Brookfield wrote:

Thinking critically -- reflecting on the assumptions underlying our and others' ideas and actions, and contemplating alternative ways of thinking and living -- is one of the important ways in which we become adults. When we think critically, we come to our judgments, choices, and decisions for ourselves, instead of letting others do this on our behalf. We refuse to relinquish the responsibility for making the choices that determine our individual and collective futures to those who presume to know what is in our own best interests. We become actively engaged in creating our personal and social worlds. In short, we take the reality of democracy seriously. (Brookfield, 1987a, p. x)

Brookfield's thoughts about the importance of coming to one's own judgments in order to sustain a healthy democracy are in harmony with the planners' stated program intentions.

Brookfield (1987a, 1990) specifically mentioned the problems inherent in mass media -- television, radio, and the press -- the means by which we presently gain so much of the information that affects our lives. Too often ordinary citizens (those not belonging to a professionally lobbied and well-financed interest group) see themselves as passive viewers of a drama enacted on the stage of life or on the stage of a media broadcast that is wholly inaccessible to them. Certainly, enough of the interviewed participants spoke of the press as being controlled and biased and of themselves as being "fed up" with the media to indicate that they were experiencing difficulty and frustration with their information sources. It is especially under these circumstances that the ability to exercise one's critical thinking skills and consequently take appropriate, decisive action becomes a challenge.

Several of Brookfield's thoughts are especially worth mentioning in light of comments from the participants of this study. First of all, the audience participants mentioned having difficulty in understanding the contextuality of the Henley scenes.

They also spoke of finding a great deal of similarity between the past and the present. Brookfield (1987a) noted that when we become aware of how hidden and uncritically assimilated assumptions are important to shaping our habitual perceptions, understandings, and interpretation of the world, “we become aware of how context influences thoughts and actions” (p. 8). Thus, if the audience can be directed in uncovering and exploring their own cultural assumptions, they will become more aware that practices, structures, and actions are never context free and they will be in a better position to understand their own assumptions and those of eighteenth-century characters.

Considering the audience participants’ and a planner’s negative connotations of the word “critical,” Brookfield’s (1987a) remarks concerning a perceived negativity are especially fitting. Critical thinkers, because they see themselves as recreating their own interpretations, have a positive and productive view of critical thinking, and the diversity of their own thoughts helps them appreciate diversity of thought in general. Furthermore, critical thinking can be triggered by positive as well as negative emotion. “Asking critical questions about our previously accepted values, ideas, and behaviors is anxiety-producing. ... [But,] as we abandon assumptions that had been inhibiting our development, we experience a sense of liberation” (pp. 6-7).

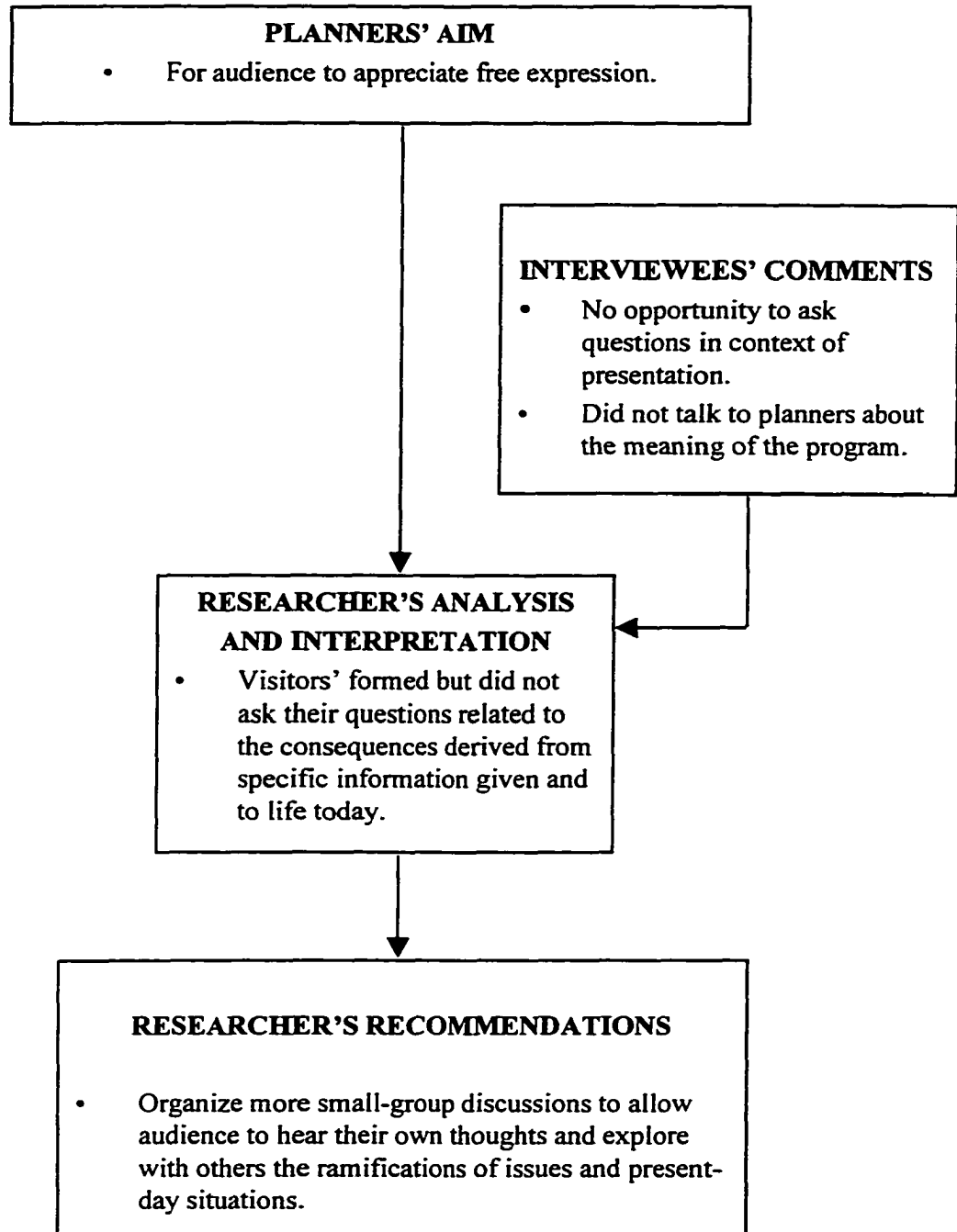
Although Brookfield’s work includes words of caution to educators who facilitate critical thinking, these dangers can be overcome with sensitivity to the learners’ needs and a willingness on the part of the educator to share openly from their own experiences. In any event, the benefits outweigh the pitfalls and it would definitely seem that exploration of Brookfield’s and Mezirow’s work would be beneficial not only to the planners but also to the visitors.

Section 2. Suggestions and Recommendations Regarding the History Forum

Even among those audience interviewees who were critical of certain elements of the 1996 HF or who left somewhat dissatisfied that certain aspects were not covered more fully, comments were made about the experience being worthwhile. As a participant observer, I found the program elements less integrated than in some previous years; but as in the past, I was stimulated by the educational quality, provoked by the issues presented, and delighted that I had attended. Undoubtedly, it is because I became more deeply involved in analyzing the program and the participants that ideas for how the program might better serve the planners' and visitors' needs slowly evolved. However, I also had access to the visitors' comments, many of which are enfolded into the following suggestions. I hope this section will be read in the spirit of generosity with which the interviewees shared their thoughts, that is to make the HF an even better educational experience.

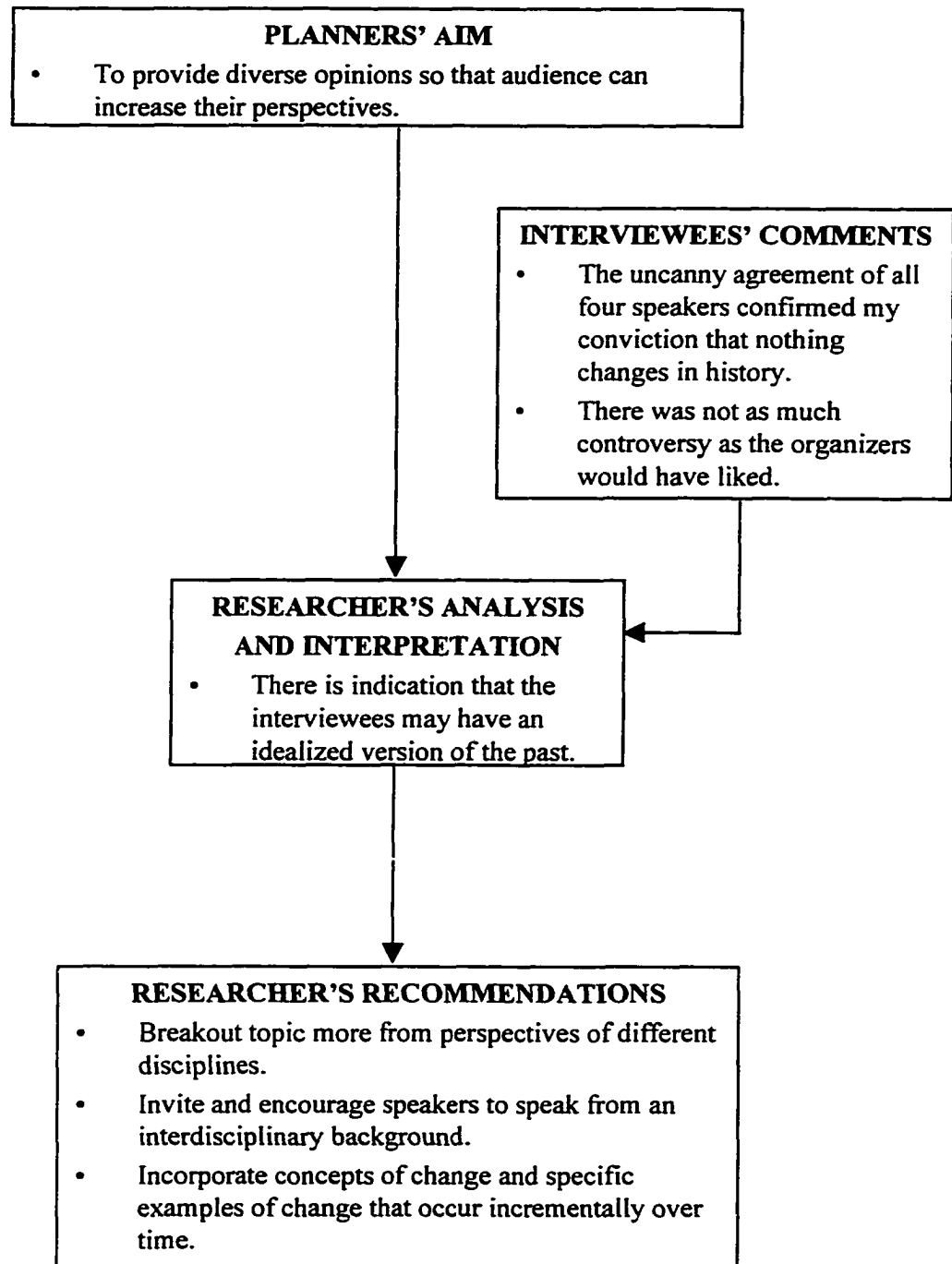
Many of the suggestions enumerated below, such as opportunities for discussion and providing diverse opinions, are already part of the HF. These suggestions emanate from the planners' thoughtful aims. These are the elements that make the HF a good educational experience. The point is these elements are *very* important in adult educational theory, and they are *very* important to the participants. They can be developed even further. Thus, some suggestions should be seen as ways of providing more of the good techniques already incorporated into the program. Flow Charts 1 - 4 are provided in order to see how the researcher's recommendations relate to the planners' aims, the audience interviewee's comments, and the researcher's analysis and interpretation.

Flow Chart 1. Based on planners' aim for audience to appreciate free expression.



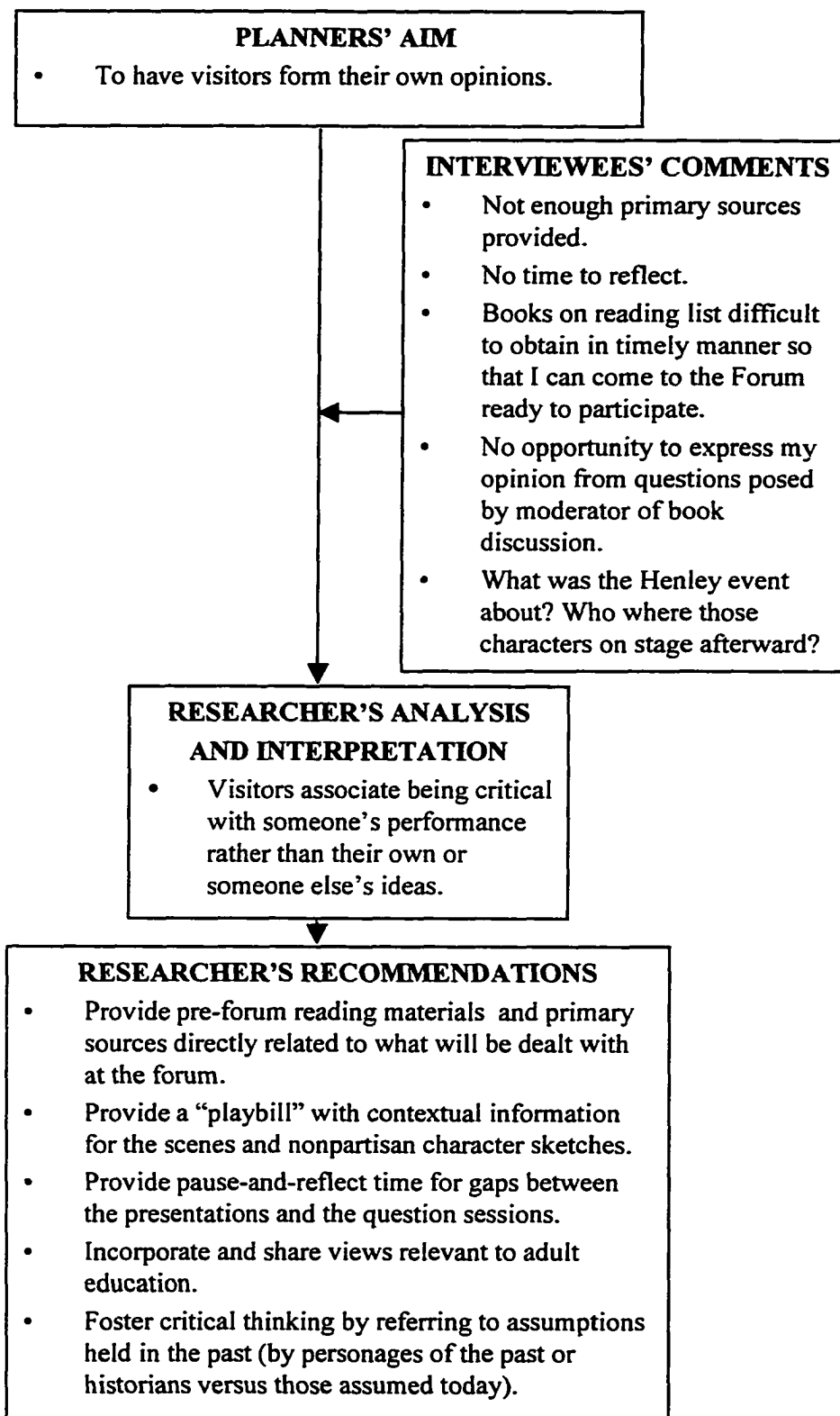
Note: arrows to not indicate importance, but they do indicate sequence of occurrence.

Flow Chart 2. Based on planners' aim to provide diverse opinions.

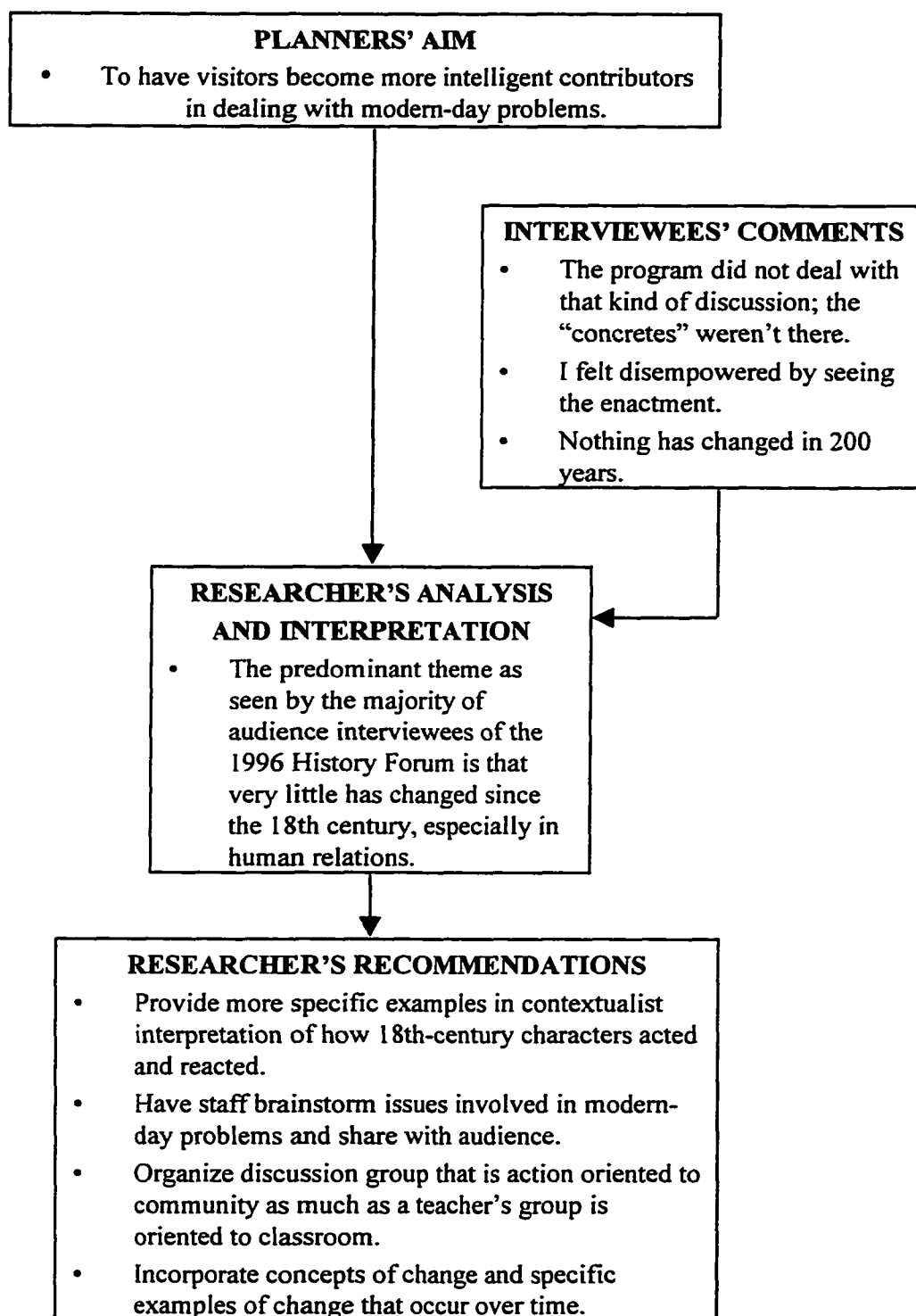


Note: arrows do no indicate importance, but they do indicate sequence of occurrence.

Flow Chart 3. Based on planners' aim to have visitors form their own opinions.
 Note: arrows do not indicate importance, but they do indicate sequence of occurrence.



Flow Chart 4. Based on planners' aim to have visitors become more intelligent contributors in dealing with modern-day problems.



Note: arrows do no indicate importance, but they do indicate sequence of occurrence.

The following list of suggestions emanates from the thoughts of the interviewees, adult educators, and the researcher. The suggestions regard process, program, promotion, and evaluation which can be related to any educational event such as the HF, however, specific examples are used from the 1996 HF in order to provide clarification.

PROCESS

- Encourage and provide more opportunities for small-group discussion.
- Incorporate strategies of historical analysis, interpretation, and adult education into different program elements.
- Use more visual aids.

PROGRAM

- Better integrate the program elements.
- Introduce more diverse opinions.
- Address the concept of change.

PROMOTION

- Match the promotional literature more closely with the program.
- Advertise the program in journals or trade magazines that will reach professionals interested in the topic.

EVALUATION

- Alter the evaluation techniques.

Process

1) Encourage and provide more opportunities for small-group discussions. The box-lunch discussions, with a stated maximum of fifteen are already large and frequently grow beyond the size in which each person has enough time to speak or be seated in an

intimate circle (6-8 may be more ideal). A moderator, who is conversant in many disciplines would be ideal, and preferably someone whose aim is to draw out other people's experiential perspectives rather than be eager to share their own. Each participant needs time to talk their thoughts, to hear their own thoughts, and to have other people respond to those thoughts. Knowles (1984) noted that "Adults are themselves the richest resources for one another" (p. 10). In as much as a brainstorming session is valuable to team players planning an event, a "rap" session is valuable in an educational experience because it brings different associations and assumptions to the foreground and promotes questions, imaginative thought, and the clarification of issues, and most of all involvement. Some people like to explore a topic and diverge to contingent subject matter, whereas others prefer to take a position and argue its value. Both approaches are worthwhile, but the moderator should be able to help the participants navigate between the two.

Explore the potential that is present with different staff members attending the forum. Visitors welcome the opportunity to interact with the staff, especially when they are generous with their time and speak from their personal experiences. Some visitors, like Frank, are more straightforward in making contact. Frank returned months later to talk to one of the enactors at the 1996 HF, at which time he made meaning of the program, but from the perspective of only one enactor. Others need help in making contact. Possibly a staff member could be assigned to a group of people and also lead them through the walking tour. This person could also organize small-group discussions during other free-time periods for interested members. All could benefit from opportunities to chat with more staff members.

Explore the potential that is available with frequent attendees of the HF. One audience interviewee suggested a debate between audience participants, of which he would welcome being a part. I am sure other participants as well would enjoy being facilitators of discussion groups. Possibly, these can be conducted after scheduled events, over dinner or in visitors' rooms, creating a collegial atmosphere in the on-site hotels.

The moderators of sessions provide an example during the question-and-answer period following a speaker's presentation. This is good, but frequently the type of question, namely what can be asked of this particular historian's specialty, becomes a model for the type of question that can be asked (as do the comments made). Some visitors found difficulty in framing their questions within the context of the presentation. Also, the dialogue between the speakers is often lengthy, leaving the audience in the passive role of observers. According to Alice, the best forums are those with more audience participation. Being actively engaged makes the program more memorable.

2) Incorporate strategies of historical analysis, interpretation, and adult education into different program elements. The process of analysis that is pursued in order to arrive at an historical interpretation is similar to that which the visitors use to frame and reframe their own interpretations. Once beyond the mystique of "interpretation" as it is used by museum professionals, the word is similarly defined by staff and visitors. The six functions enumerated by Mezirow in the interpretive process helped the audience interviewees move through the analytic process. What they said they benefited from was someone with whom to work through this process plus primary sources, pertinent reading materials and presenter's synopses received in a timely manner, more contextual explanation for the enactments, and time to reflect. These visitors want to be drawn into

the process and to understand the process itself. In a way, understanding the analytic process is probably more transferable to present-day life situations than learning specific facts. I suggest reading the following authors: Mezirow (1991) for an understanding of the interpretative process; Brookfield (1987a) for his conceptual development of critical thinking and how to foster it; and Cross (1981) for her explication of adults' needs.

Strategies, specific to adult education, can be talked about with the visitors and incorporated into the program in various simple ways such as suggesting the audience reflect on their thoughts and frame questions while the speakers' take their places after a presentation.

Two planners may also have been heavily involved with children's or family programming. Their comments included many references to surveys concerning what children know about history and how children respond to interactive programs such as "Prime Time History." Adult education is distinctly different; thus, staff dealing with an adult audience, especially those audience members who are well educated, must implement different strategies.

3) Use more visual aids. Even the audience interviewees were referring to the research that has indicated the importance of visual aids. Slides and handouts are helpful, but they must be presented in a large enough typefaces to be easily read. The type size and the print quality made some of the handouts impossible for some members to read.

Program

4) Invite the audience to uncover and explore some of their assumptions about the forum's subject matter. Becoming aware of assumptions can be problematic because familiar ideas often seen second nature or common sense to us. However, the quest can be

made easier if it is made specific. Taking for example the topic of the 1996 HF, the promotional material or an introductory remark could be used to ask audience members to jot down the gist of a particular newspaper article that impressed them either negatively or positively. They could be prompted to include some specifics such as surrounding events, the writer, and/or newspaper. After performing the exercise, they could be asked what questions arose about the eighteenth-century press? Members of the audience could then be encouraged to revisit their own comments in private or even with other participants during the HF to see if their own ideas have changed in any way.

5) Better integrate the program elements. There were various comments made by the audience interviewees regarding all of the enactments. People suggested changing the sequences, providing a cast of characters and a description of their roles, and some context for the scenes or reading materials that could help them understand what was happening. They wondered what a particular scene had to do with another, and why it was being introduced. I also noted that some confusion resulted from simply knowing what time period was involved in the scenes versus the presentations. The findings of this study indicate that the enactments are very important to the visitors, but the connection of the enactments to the topic being discussed needs to be made more explicit.

6) Introduce more diverse opinions. Exposing the audience to various interpretations will impact them in several ways. It will make them more comfortable with expressing their opinions that might be different from the conformity of opinion some of them perceived among the presenters. The process of considering different perspectives will enhance critical thinking and the educational purposes of the program, which is specifically designed as a “forum,” a place for self-expression. More diversity of

thought, even if it needs to be clearly differentiated by a moderator or contextualist, will help the audience define their own discriminations, especially with regard to similarities and differences between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Without further research, it is difficult to determine if the large number of audience interviewees who left with the idea that nothing has changed, especially with regard to human relations, does not have consequences for the future of democracy. There are clearly challenges the country needs to face in terms of race, gender, and authority relations. If the past is idealized, the “Becoming Americans” theme may be interpreted as a quest to return to the perceived eighteenth-century way of doing things instead of facing the challenges of today.

One way of insuring more diversity of opinion in the program would be to include more speakers who would draw on their interdisciplinary backgrounds. Having someone who is primarily a political scientist or sociologist or whatever specialty, but who also has a good historical background could provide different insights and perspectives. The forum wisely attempts to include a non-historian, a popular figure in contemporary thought. It is unfortunate that Ben Bradlee could not remain to be a part of further discussion. Although the audience interviewees have a keen interest in history, they are also interested in making connections to contemporary life.

7) Address the concept of change. Undoubtedly, there may be some difficulties the audience interviewees are experiencing in perceiving similarities and differences between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the complexity of the issues may result in their wanting to come to early closure in terms of what was happening now and then. This may be part of the underlying reason for finding that “nothing has changed in 200 years.” Granted the interpretive period of CW is predominately the eighteenth

century, but it may help the audience to also deal with change from an evolutionary point of view, from a perspective of gradual, incremental change over time. I think talking about change, defining what kind of change is involved, would also be useful.

Promotion

8) Match the promotional literature more closely with the program. Based on the audience participants' responses (both to the questionnaire and the interview), there was great appeal in the question: "Was a free press the founding fathers' first mistake." In a way it served the purpose of a pre-organizer. The audience began to think about the question before they came, and in some cases they even sought out literature to read beyond what was suggested in order to participate more fully in the 1996 HF.

Unfortunately, once at the forum, they also looked for presentations that directly dealt with the question, and this quest may have led to some confusion as to what the enactments and the program were all about. In any case, once deciding what the topic was, some people expressed disappointment that the question was not discussed. Ishmael wanted to bring the question to the floor during a question-and-answer period, but didn't feel it was appropriate to address it to other than CW staff; but Ishmael never did that either.

Other references in the promotional brochure, to a "media-saturated society" and "concerns about politicians' manipulation of the media and the capacity of ordinary citizens to learn the truth about candidates and the issues that divide them" were also provocative and raised interest in the Internet and press bias. Having no outlet for expressing and exploring some of these topics left some people dissatisfied. Using such questions and references to contemporary life as topics for small-group discussion would

be appropriate. It would enable the audience to express themselves on some issues that are meaningful to them and of concern to them, and enable the facilitator of such a group to better understand the audience members.

9) Advertise the program in journals or trade magazines that will reach professionals interested in the topic (if not already done). Four out of the fifteen people in the interview sample attended the 1996 Forum because of their past or present professional activities. If there is an interest in expanding the list of attendees and reaching a more diverse group, announcements in journals targeted to different professional groups should be considered.

Evaluation

10) Alter the evaluation techniques. Considering the number of people who did not want to be critical about the program or the performers, the use of Leikert-Scale ratings raises some doubt about the evaluation information that is gathered. In addition, several people mentioned their displeasure with questionnaires requesting that information be given in an abbreviated manner to which they could not respond. From my experience with the responses to my questionnaires, I've noted there are some people who like to write and some that don't. Given the problems in acquiring accurate feedback, this study indicates it is essential to receive feedback from the visitors. From the interview experience it is apparent that the visitors' articulated thoughts are not only useful to the staff, they can provide a capsule of what the visitors will take home with them and remember. In light of the above, I recommend using phrases such as: "What did you like best and/or least about the History Forum and why?" or "What ideas that were presented impressed you most and/or least and why?" I also recommend using exit

interviews after the last event. Some people prefer talking one-on-one and it helps them focus their thoughts about the experience.

Section 3. Research Problems and Suggestions for Future Research Suggestions Based on Problems Encountered

1) Change distribution of researcher evaluation forms. Since 8 of 15 interviews took place immediately after the forum, some of the interviewees had already handed in their researcher evaluation forms, and thus could no longer put an anonymous code on the forms by which I could identify them. In hindsight, it would have been better to personally distribute them to the interviewees along with return, self-addressed envelopes.

2) Schedule three interviews and reword questions. Ideally, three interviews (one before, one during, and one after the forum) would have better served the purpose of trying to understand what change in meaning had taken place for the audience participants, particularly regarding the theme that “nothing changes.” I would also have included the word “assumption” in some of my questions and probed more for “why”: for example, How has the program made you question any of your previously held assumptions about the founding fathers’ intentions for a free press and why?

3) Schedule convenient but quiet places for interviews. I also ran into some difficulties with background noise by scheduling audience interviews in lobbies and restaurants. This had a positive effect in that it created a casual atmosphere for the interview to take place over a meal or beverage. However, the clanking of dishes and the piped-in music made it difficult to transcribe the tapes, and the other customers’ chatter

was distracting to two of my participants. In the future I would seek to establish a quiet, restful place and avoid public places at busy times.

Suggestions Based on Outcomes of the Study for Future Research

4) Capitalize on the museum environment for studies on adult education. A good number of visitors volunteered to be interviewed (55 out of 84 questionnaire respondents). The audience interviewees were very gracious with their time and very interested in both the HF and adult education. A couple of people spoke of having had already participated in research projects. They and the others were eager to help and were favorably disposed to the research process. The interviewees indicated they benefited from the interviews, and several people have kept in contact after the data-collection period for this study was completed. For all of these reasons I would strongly urge researchers to consider the museum environment for studies related to adult learning. I would also strongly urge museum staff members to encourage and initiate on-site projects whenever possible. For many people, this research project offered a way of helping and also a way of becoming more involved in the program and the institution. Furthermore, so much can be learned about the audience that aids in the program-planning process. It is truly a “win-win” situation.

5) Plan long-range studies to ascertain change in participants due to programs.

About half of the audience interviewees were return visitors to the program and the other half were returnees to CW. Since these people do return over the years, a long-time study would certainly be feasible. It would also be very valuable to ascertain and document change. As it now stands, this study has future historical value. It has documented what themes are meaningful to a group of people from mid-life and beyond in 1996. Looking

over materials in the archives of CW made me realize how wonderful it would have been to have at least one in-depth qualitative study that indicated what was of concern, from their perspective, to participants in previous years.

6) Include the emotional domain. After some deliberation with a staff member of CW and my committee, we had reached a decision to leave out the word “feelings” from questions in case it might be objectionable to the participants. It was also agreed that the word “feeling” could be used in subsequent probes to a question if the interviewee introduced the word. Many of the interviewees talked about feelings; they talked about feelings being aroused primarily by the enactments. They also interchanged the words “feel” and “think.” Mezirow (1991) noted: “Behavioral intentions involve conative, cognitive, and affective dimensions.” He said of conation that it involves both desire and volition, the intensity with which one wants to do something. He added: “Intuition -- the ability to have immediate, direct knowledge without the use of language or reason -- also plays a key role” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 14). I believe it was in the last context that the word “feel” was substituted for the word “think.” In any event, the participants freely referred to the affective domain, and their comments were valuable in understanding them and their understanding themselves. Feelings help us penetrate the mist that surrounds the indefinable; they help us probe for clarity where direction is only hinted. I would recommend using the word “feeling” because it also helps the reader understand what the participant is experiencing.

7) Design studies to deal with each of the themes developed by the audience interviewees, for example about race. The number of themes that were meaningful to the audience participants is far more extensive than I imagined, especially in relation to the

topic – a free press. The wealth of the thematic material indicates how much information can be gathered from a group and how much tacit learning takes place concerning issues that are timely and important. Studies such as this can be used to understand visitors' concerns about race for example. Considering CW's African-American Interpretive Program and President Clinton's desire to have the American people discuss racial issues, a future study designed particularly to deal with that issue would certainly be feasible and valuable. Qualitative studies of this nature help planners and educators to understand the audience's perspective, the changes they encounter as a result of different program elements, and the motivation they have to continue their pursuits. With such understanding, one can better anticipate problems that might occur, plan ahead for contingencies, and provide for more teachable moments.

8) Conduct a study that deals with the importance of continuity and change from the perspective of variously aged adults. The emergence of the theme regarding how little change has taken place in the last two hundred years struck me as being particularly significant. How much of this perspective is related to a previously held perspective, how much of it is due to program presentations or planners' views, can it be changed by teaching about change? I noted that some of the younger audience interviewees were more involved in the similarities they found between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries than some of the older members. However, this study was not designed to deal with that issue specifically. The question remains: Is the similarity or difference issue age related or due to life experiences? These are just some of the many questions that have arisen as a result of this study. There is certainly a great deal that can be learned from a group of variously aged adults visiting museums.

9) Conduct a study that deals linearly with the effect of this study. How will this study be received by the host institution? Will it be implemented? Will it produce institutional change? What kind of change? Will there be training to enlarge staff perspective? In 1993 the American Association of Museums launched a major National Research Demonstration Project to expand education and public service in American museums based on goals expressed in the policy statement “Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums” (AAM, *Excellence and Equity*, 1993). Unlike any of those case studies, this project has been conducted at grass-roots, with the adults who are frequent visitors, who are interested in learning, and who are interested in the vitality of the institution. How this study impacts the staff will have an effect on the relationship between staff and adult visitors. What will that effect be? Can what is learned aid other museums in processes of change?

Closing Statement

As this research evolved I worried about getting enough interviewees to participate in the project, being able to gather meaningful data on a complex subject with my questions, how to handle probes, and then finally what to do with the vast amount of information I collected. Driving home after the HF, I missed not one but two highway exits. My thoughts were filled with the voices of the interviewees who eagerly spoke to my research interests. The variety and the richness of their comments infused me first with an excitement and then a responsibility to cogently present their thoughts and needs. It was the interests displayed in the research by the host institution and the respondents that helped carry me through the time-consuming analytic process.

In hindsight the choice of the qualitative methodology was a perfect match for the nature of this study. The fore thoughts and familiarity with the program and the host institution provided me with ease in circumventing the few problems that arose. The willingness of the participants continually reminded me of the efficacy of the research. I wholeheartedly urge other researchers to consider duplicating this project with different programs and institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what is meaningful to adult learners.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Audience-participant pre-forum questionnaire.

1. Have you attended a History Forum previously?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. If yes, in what year(s)? _____

If yes, describe what elements were most meaningful to you.

3. (Please answer both parts of this question.)

- What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is meaningful to you? Please explain.

- What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is not meaningful to you? Please explain.

4. What meaning, if any, do you expect to acquire by attending this History Forum? Please explain.

5. Have you been, or are you presently, an employee of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Would you be willing to participate in this research?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, will you please indicate the following:

- Name _____
- Most convenient time and place for you to participate in an interview:
Time _____
Place _____
- Telephone number where I may contact you to arrange for an interview:
Telephone number _____

Appendix B

Planner-participant interview format.

time of interview _____
 place _____
 pseudonym _____

a) Introduction

Thank you for offering to participate in this research. (Repeat purpose and protection of participant as stated in covering letter.) Every precaution will be taken to protect your identity, which will be known only to my chairperson at The College of William and Mary. If you have questions concerning this research you may call her at the number provided on the permission form. What pseudonym would you like me to use for you to help protect your identity?

I would like to have an accurate record of your responses to this interview. From past experiences, I have realized how important it is to get every word written down, but how difficult it is with my shorthand. Would you mind my using a tape recorder? Would you please indicate your permission for an interview on this form. Would you please indicate your permission for the interview to be taped.

After our interview, I will transcribe my notes and submit them to you for your verification. Please indicate to what address I should send my notes on the permission form.

In order to make sure I have understood your responses and to clarify any further questions I may have, I would like to call you after you return the notes. Will you please indicate a telephone number and the best time to reach you on the permission form.

b) Questions

1. (This first question has two parts. What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is meaningful to you, and what is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is not meaningful to you? First...)

- What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is meaningful to you? Please explain.
- What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that is not meaningful to you? Please explain.

2. How would you define the word "meaningful"?

3. How would you define the word "interpretation"?

4. What meaning do you wish the audience to get or come away with?
(Note if definitions given for responses to questions #2 and #3 are different, then also...)
What interpretation do you wish to impart to the audience?
5. How do you expect to do this through your involvement at the History Forum?
6. What effect do you want your interpretation to have on the audiences' future actions?
7. What else would you like to tell me that you think would be useful to this study?
8. What effect has my asking these questions had on you?

c) Follow-up

I plan to send you a transcription of this interview within a few weeks. After reading over the transcription and making whatever changes you like, please sign and return it in the enclosed envelope. Then, in order to make sure I have understood your responses and to clarify any further questions I may have, I will call you.

Appendix C

Audience-participant interview format.

time of interview _____
 place _____
 pseudonym _____
 code for evaluation form _____

a) Introduction

Thank you for offering to participate in this research. (Repeat purpose and protection of participant as stated in covering letter.) Every precaution will be taken to protect your identity, which will be known only to my chairperson at The College of Williams and Mary. If you have questions concerning this research you may call her at the number provided on the permission form. What pseudonym would you like me to use for you to protect your identity?

I would like to have an accurate record of your responses to this interview. From past experiences, I have realized how important it is to get every word written down, but how difficult it is with my shorthand. Would you mind my using a tape recorder? Would you please indicate your permission for an interview on this form. Would you please indicate your permission for the interview to be taped.

After our interview, I will transcribe my notes and submit them to you for your verification. Please indicate to what address I should send my notes on the permission form.

In order to make sure I have understood your responses and to clarify any further questions I may have, I would like to call you after you return the notes. Will you please indicate a telephone number and the best time to reach you on the permission form.

b) Questions (possible probes are indented below)

1. Do you have any further comments to make on your written response to the questionnaire?

Would you like me to go over your responses?

You wrote Would you please elaborate on that.

2. What do you remember from the History Forum program so far that is meaningful to you?

Why is this (refers back to participant's response) meaningful to you?

When did this become meaningful to you?

How would you describe your reaction to this?

3. So far, what question(s), if any, have been raised in your mind about the program's meaning? Please explain.

What activities were you involved in when the questions occurred?

How did you react?

What do you think might be the answer to your question(s)?

4. Before I asked these questions, had you thought about this matter?

Yes___ No___ Please explain.

5. What effect or impact might these thoughts have on your future actions?

6. How would you define the word "meaningful"?

7. How would you define the word "interpretation"?

8. What meaning(s) did you gain by attending this History Forum? If none, please explain.

(Note, if definitions given for responses to questions #6 and #7 are different, then also...)

What interpretation(s) did you gain by coming to this History Forum? If none, please explain.

Note: questions #9 will consider the participant's response to question #8.

9. How might you check out the accuracy of the meaning (interpretation) you have formed?

10. How has your understanding of the topic of this year's History Forum changed as a result of your being here? Please explain. If it has not changed, please explain.

11. What, if anything, most influenced the meaning (interpretation) you have made from your experiences at this History Forum? Please explain.

12. What meaning do you think the program planners of this year's History Forum had in mind?

13. What else would you like to tell me that you think would be useful to this study?

14. What effect has my asking these questions had on you?

c) Follow-up

At the end of the History Forum, you will be given an evaluation form with three questions relating to this research. I would like to be able to identify your comments. How would you like to mark the evaluation form so that I will know it is yours?

I plan to send you a transcription of this interview within a few weeks. After reading over the transcription and making whatever changes you like, please sign and return it in the enclosed mailer. Then, in order to make sure I have understood your responses and to clarify any further questions I may have, I will call you.

Appendix D

Researcher questions for History Forum evaluation form.

1. (Please answer both parts of this question.)

- **What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that was meaningful to you? Please explain.**

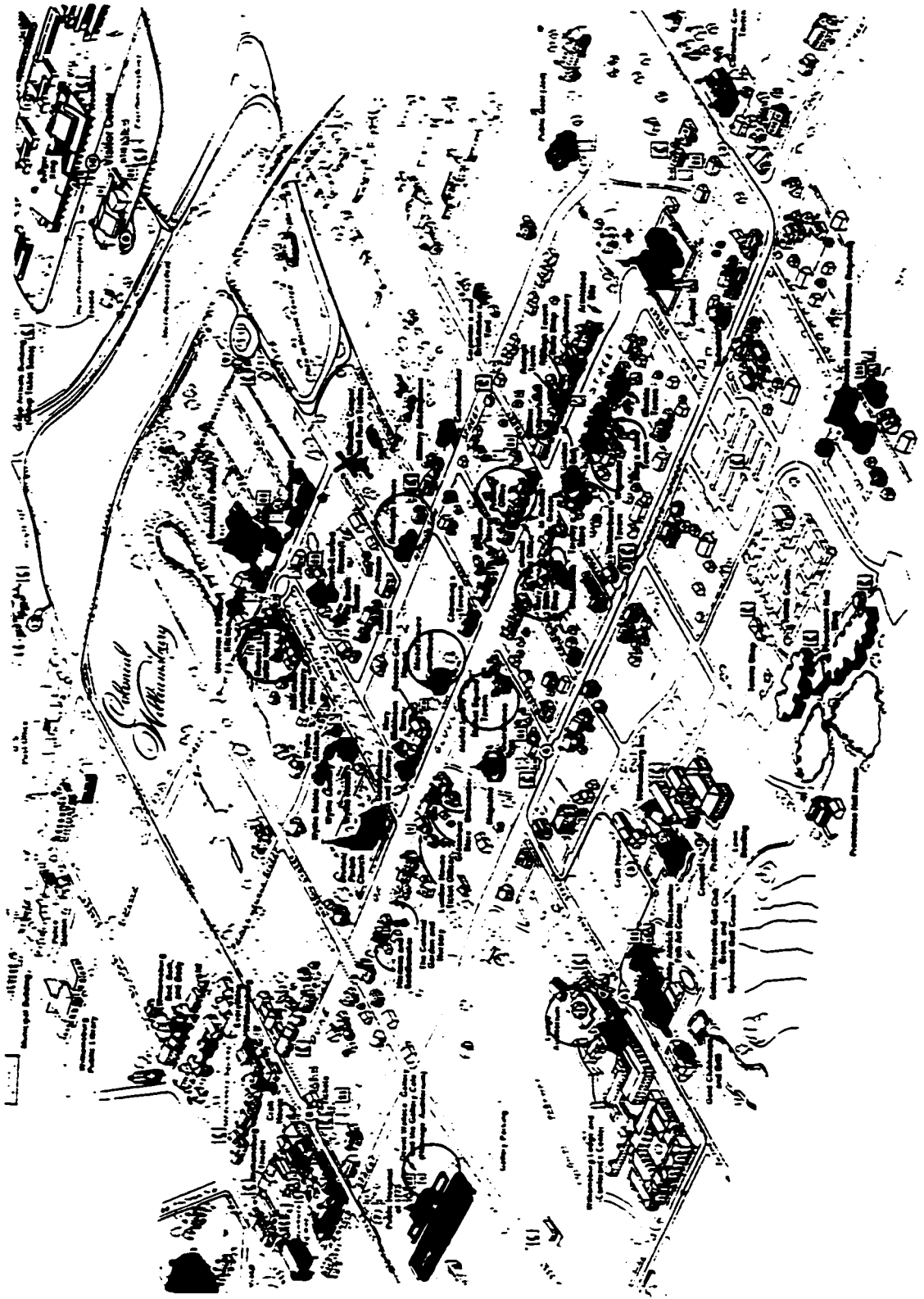
- **What is it about the subject of this year's History Forum that was not meaningful to you? Please explain.**

2. What meaning(s), if any, did you acquire by attending this History Forum? Please explain.

3. What effect, if any, will the interpretation of the subject matter have on your future actions? Please explain.

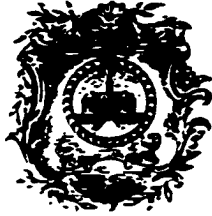
Appendix E

Map of historic area.



Appendix F

Colonial Williamsburg approval of research.



The
Colonial Williamsburg
Foundation

P. O. BOX 1776
 WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA 23187-1776

Telephone: 804-229-1000

October 16, 1996

To whom it may concern:

I have read and approved the proposal presented to me by Joan Casey to carry on a research project at the 1996 History Forum at Colonial Williamsburg. I will grant her access to the program planners, patrons, and facilities.

Sincerely

Cary Carson
 Vice President for Research

Appendix G

Introduction for telephone contact with audience participants.

Introduce myself and thank for response.

During our interview, I will go over some of the questions on the Questionnaire in order to better understand your responses. And I will also ask a few more questions related to the research. Would you be available to meet for approximately one hour on (give date)? Where would you like to meet?

Appendix H

Introductory letter for audience participants.

Dear History Forum Participant:

I am a student at the College of William and Mary and currently pursuing my doctoral research in the field of Adult Education in Museums. I have attended History Forums in the past and found that they attract an adult audience and provide an atmosphere of an open forum of ideas. I am specifically interested in the meaning adults derive from a program such as the History Forum. Deborah Chapman, the coordinator of the History Forum at Colonial Williamsburg, told me you will be attending the event in a few weeks.

I would greatly appreciate your help in this research. It will provide you with a chance to articulate your thoughts and your needs and provide Colonial Williamsburg and the educational community with the valuable information needed to create future programs. Your identity will remain strictly confidential, and the time you commit to an interview (about one hour) will be up to you. You may withdraw your participation or refuse to answer any questions at any time without any consequence to your participation in future events at Colonial Williamsburg, and no ill feeling will be engendered. Whatever you can contribute of your time will add value to the research results.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, not all attendees at the History Forum can be interviewed. For this reason please indicate your willingness to participate and your availability for an interview in the space provided on the enclosed questionnaire. Your response to the enclosed questionnaire would be most helpful. Please take a few moments to complete it and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided.

Thank you so much. I look forward to seeing you at the History Forum.

Sincerely yours,

Joan E. Casey

Appendix I

Permission for interview form. (A copy was provided for each participant.)

I have been informed by the researcher about the purpose of this study, and the approximate duration of my involvement. I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time or refuse to answer any question(s), in which case my future involvement with Colonial Williamsburg will not be endangered and no ill feeling will be engendered. I have been informed that my identity will be held in the strictest confidence and be known only to the academic chair of the student's research committee at the College of William & Mary. I may contact the academic chair, Dr. Jill Burruss [at (757) 221-2361], or the researcher, Joan Casey [at (757) 249-3846], if I have any questions related to this research project.

I give permission for an interview to take place:

Signature _____

I give permission for the interview to be taped:

Signature _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Best time to receive a call for follow-up questions related to this interview:

Day _____

Hour _____

Appendix J

Introductory letter to planner participants.

Dear ... :

I am a student at the College of William and Mary and currently pursuing my doctoral research in the field of Adult Education in Museums. I have attended History Forums in the past and found that they attract an adult audience and provide the atmosphere of an open forum of ideas. With the permission of Cary Carson, I will focus my dissertation on the 1996 History Forum. I am specifically interested in the meaning adult participants derive from the program and how those meanings compare to those intended by planners such as yourself.

I would greatly appreciate your help. I will ask you to articulate your thoughts and thus provide the educational community with the valuable information needed to create future programs.

Your participation and identity will remain strictly confidential, and the time you commit to an interview (about one hour) will be up to you. You may withdraw your participation or refuse to answer any questions at any time without any consequence to your position at Colonial Williamsburg, and no ill feeling will be engendered. Whatever you can contribute of your time will add value to the research results.

Will you please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed form and return it in the self-addressed envelope provided. Thank you so much. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Joan E. Casey

Appendix K

Enclosure for planner participants to indicate their interest in participating in the research.

Dear Ms. Casey:

(Please indicate either of the following.)

_____ Yes, I am willing to participate in an interview.

or

_____ No, I am not interested in participating.

Name _____

Telephone Number _____

Best time to receive a call to arrange for an interview:

Day _____

Hour _____

Appendix L

1996 History Forum recommended readings.

Michael Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought* (Princeton University Press, 1990), paper, \$9.95.

Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1976), paper, \$9.95.

Robert A. Gross, *Printing, Politics, and the People: 1989 James Russel Wiggins Lecture* (American Antiquarian Society, 1990), paper, \$8.95.

Charles E. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610-1763* (University Press of New England, 1983), paper, \$19.95.

Charles E. Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740* (Oxford University Press, 1994), trade, \$49.95. [This book most closely relates to Professor Clark's presentation.]

Benjamin Bradlee, *A Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures* (Simon and Schuster, 1995), trade, \$27.50.

Appendix M

Brochure advertising the program.

8388

FIRST AMENDMENT/SECOND THIRTIETHS

Was a Free Press the Founding Fathers' First Mistake?

A flood of newspapers, pamphlets, broadsides, maps, prints, cartoons, and sermons and not-so-serious books rolled off the presses in the eighteenth century. They filled a million minds with new ideas. They challenged the way Americans understood their country and how they viewed the wider world. They preached that conventional wisdom learned from old fashioned authorities was no longer sufficient to navigate the swiftly moving political and commercial currents that propelled the country into an uncharted Revolutionary age.

The printing press became the tool of choice for spreading the new print culture. With information came knowledge, and with knowledge came the power to select, control, and direct public opinion, a brand new arbiter of civic behavior in the fledgling American republic. The consequences could hardly be more far reaching or (to many) more alarming than they have become in our media saturated society today.

The 1996 History Forum will explore the rise of American newspapers before and after the Revolution and the birth of public opinion as a new force to be reckoned with in American political life. Four guest historians will join registrants and Colonial Williamsburg educators to discuss the principle and practice of our First Amendment freedoms.

Participants may look forward to special tours of the Historic Area in the company of character interpreters, thought provoking evening programs, book talk, and informal conversations with our historians.

Dear Friends:

Exactly ten years ago, David Brinkley, then a trustee at Colonial Williamsburg, asked my predecessor a pointed question: "Williamsburg has presented successful Antiques Forums and Garden Symposiums for decades. Why not a history forum as well? After all," he added with his famous wry smile, "you are the nation's history teacher."

Brinkley's suggestion came to life in 1987. In 1996 we want to celebrate the History Forum's tenth anniversary by welcoming back everyone who has attended past programs and by issuing a special invitation to newcomers to help us ring in a new decade. Regular attendees already know to expect a lively exchange of ideas between an audience of history lovers and a faculty of distinguished historians and public figures. If you haven't already treated yourself to a History Forum, let this anniversary be the year we show you how Colonial Williamsburg's historical perspective gives new dimensions to some of the most important issues we face as American citizens today.

The 1996 Forum explores the origins of David Brinkley's profession—the popular press—and weighs its influence, for better or worse, on the early American republic of letters.

A special celebration calls for something out of the ordinary. So don't miss the opening program on Thursday afternoon, November 7! We've invited Ben Bradlee, the redoubtable editor of the Washington Post, to interview Thomas Jefferson immediately following Jefferson's whisker-thin victory as the third president of the United States in the bitterly fought election of 1800. Jefferson had been followed by the press. Opposition newspapers called him a crook, a coward, "another Bonaparte," an atheist, and a liberally institutionally protected free press on the morning after. You will have to be there to hear his answers.

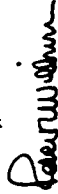
The Bradlee-Jefferson interview will introduce the topics we have chosen for discussion on Friday and Saturday—the rise of American newspapers and the credit of public opinion. The topic could hardly be more timely. History Forum will follow the November election by only two days. The campaign and its coverage are likely to raise anew concerns about politicians' manipulation of the media and the capacity of ordinary citizens to learn the truth about candidates and the issues that divide them.

Americans were debating the wisdom of free speech and an unbridled press even before both were enshrined in the First Amendment. That guarantee, however, has not quieted the fears of many who believe that freedom of expression, carried to excess, threatens the very democracy that the Constitution was written to protect. Defenders of free speech counter with the question, who should exercise the authority to say when enough is enough? Most new ideas, even good ones, are unpopular at first. How can we give them a chance to be heard without protecting free speech and a free press?

As always, we will bring several leading scholars of early America together with Colonial Williamsburg's own historians to explore these critical issues in American history and American life. Learning at Colonial Williamsburg is never confined to a classroom. Special programs and walking tours bring History Forum themes to life on the streets of the restored city. Participants may also look forward to luncheon book discussions, history chats, and, for teachers, a special opportunity to talk with the guest historians about teaching American history in the classroom.

Please join us in Williamsburg for the tenth annual History Forum starting late Thursday afternoon, November 7, and running through Saturday lunch, November 9. Detach and mail the registration form provided with the folder as soon as you can.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Willbourn
President

7:30-8:00 p.m. - Free time to visit Colonial Williamsburg's exhibition buildings, historic trade sites, Carter's Grove, Bassett Hall, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Art Center, and the Williamsburg Executive Arts Gallery. Please make arrangements with the Registrar to pick up your packet and name badge if you plan to be in town early Thursday. Registrants arriving on Wednesday at Colonial Williamsburg hotels can pick up our packets at their hotel. Please ask for your packet when you register.

7:00 p.m. - Registration. First Gallery, Williamsburg College.

6:30 p.m. - Welcome, Robert C. Wilburn, president, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

5:30 p.m. - Program introduced by the moderator, Cary Carson, vice president for research, Colonial Williamsburg. "Are Newspapers the Fourth Estate of the Democratic Republic?" an interview with Thomas Jefferson, president elect of the United States by Benjamin C. Bradlee, vice president at large, *The Washington Post*.

6:00 p.m. - Reception hosted by Mr. and Mrs. William Wallace Gallery & etc.

Friday, November 6

8:00 a.m. - Continental breakfast. Wallace Gallery & etc.

8:45 a.m. - Program introduction and announcements by the moderator, Cary Carson.

9:00 a.m. - "America's First Communionists" 10:30 a.m.

9:00 a.m. - "Table Talk," luncheon conducted by the Williamsburg History and Historic Forum faculty. Limited to groups of 15 at a cost of \$16.50 per person.

7:30-8:00 p.m. - An outdoor walking experience in the Historic Area.

4:30-5:00 p.m. - Informal reception with presenters from Abby, Williamsburg College.

3:30-4:00 p.m. - Free time for dinner.

2:30-3:00 p.m. - "Purple Haze from a Printer's Head," evening program by the staff of Colonial Williamsburg's Education Division.

Saturday, November 7

8:00 a.m. - Continental breakfast. Wallace Gallery & etc.

8:30 a.m. - Announcements.

9:00-9:30 a.m. - Moderator: Kevin Kelly, historian, Colonial Williamsburg.

10:30 a.m. - "The Birth of Public Opinion," Joanne H. Freeman, University of Virginia. Comments and questions by the presenters and the audience.

11:00 a.m. - Lunch on your own, or three luncheon alternatives that include a hot lunch.

12:45-2:15 p.m. - "Food for Thought," a book discussion over a hot lunch. Program is limited to 15 people and the cost is \$16.50 per person. "Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865" by Richard H. Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Paperback, \$17.95.

or

1:00 p.m. - Moderator: Kevin Kelly, historian, Colonial Williamsburg.

12:30 p.m. - "The Birth of Public Opinion," Joanne H. Freeman, University of Virginia. Comments and questions by the presenters and the audience.

Lunch on your own, or three luncheon alternatives that include a hot lunch.

1:45-2:15 p.m. - "Food for Thought," a book discussion over a hot lunch. Program is limited to 15 people and the cost is \$16.50 per person. "Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865" by Richard H. Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Paperback, \$17.95.

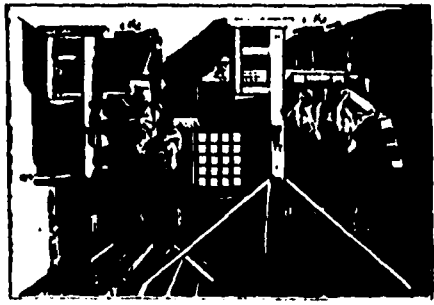
or

1:00 p.m. - "School Lunch Program," a luncheon conversation with historians about teaching history in our schools. The program is limited to 15 people and the cost is \$16.50 per person.

or

1:00-1:30 p.m. - Luncheon and large-scale Virginia History, Williamsburg College.

2:00 p.m. - Free time for touring. Your name badge is your ticket and is good through the end of the day on Sunday, November 10, 1976.



ALL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE WALKER AUDITORIUM OF THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA.

Thursday, November 7

9:00 a.m. - Free time to visit Colonial Williamsburg's exhibition buildings, historic trade sites, Carter's Grove, Bassett Hall, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Art Center, and the Williamsburg Executive Arts Gallery. Please make arrangements with the Registrar to pick up your packet and name badge if you plan to be in town early Thursday. Registrants arriving on Wednesday at Colonial Williamsburg hotels can pick up our packets at their hotel. Please ask for your packet when you register.

7:00 p.m. - Registration. First Gallery, Williamsburg College.

6:30 p.m. - Welcome, Robert C. Wilburn, president, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

5:30 p.m. - Program introduced by the moderator, Cary Carson, vice president for research, Colonial Williamsburg. "Are Newspapers the Fourth Estate of the Democratic Republic?" an interview with Thomas Jefferson, president elect of the United States by Benjamin C. Bradlee, vice president at large, *The Washington Post*.

6:00 p.m. - Reception hosted by Mr. and Mrs. William Wallace Gallery & etc.

Friday, November 8

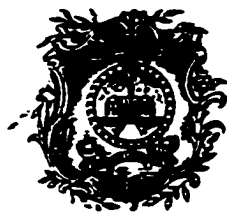
8:00 a.m. - Continental breakfast. Wallace Gallery & etc.

8:45 a.m. - Program introduction and announcements by the moderator, Cary Carson.

9:00 a.m. - "America's First Communionists" 10:30 a.m.

Appendix N

Sample letter sent to presenter. (Particulars removed to protect privacy.)



Telephone: 804-229-1000

*The
Colonial Williamsburg
Foundation*

P. O. BOX 1776
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA 23187-1776
June 21, 1996

Thank you for your patience in waiting so long for this letter confirming and explaining your participation in the Colonial Williamsburg History Forum next November 7-9.

To start at the beginning, every year Colonial Williamsburg holds a popular seminar that we call the History Forum. Not a conference for scholars, it attracts a national audience of intelligent lay men and women who relish the opportunity to explore public issues in historical perspective. Over the years, History Forums have dealt with a variety of themes—the paradox of slavery, American wealth and American welfare, the changing meaning of the Bill of Rights, and other unfinished business on our national agenda.

The topic this year is one we are calling "First Amendment / Second Thoughts: Was a Free Press the Founding Fathers' First Mistake?" Both as students of history and as citizens, we want to take this occasion to explore the communications revolution of the eighteenth century, the rise of American newspapers and the creation of public opinion, and the tension that has existed ever since between a free press and the press excesses that some have always feared will undermine the foundations of democracy.

Each year we invite four distinguished historians and a journalist or other commentator on the contemporary American scene to be our visiting faculty. They join me and two or three historians from our own staff at Colonial Williamsburg. This year the presenters will include

today after he interviews Thomas Jefferson concerning the newly elected President's treatment by opposition newspapers during the election of 1800.

I explained when we talked on the phone that History Forums follow a format that encourages open discussion. We ask the presenters not to give papers as they would at a scholarly conference. Instead each speaker lectures informally on his or her subject for thirty or forty minutes. Forum participants, not unlike bright, eager undergraduates, appreciate big ideas thoughtfully and engagingly presented. After each talk, all four guests historians join me on the auditorium stage for a lively conversation that quickly spreads into the audience. This dialogue between history enthusiasts and professional historians is the heart of the History Forum program and the reason why presenters and participants alike have so much fun.

We chatted briefly about the subject of your talk when I called. Perhaps I can say a little more to help you organize your thoughts without imposing undue and unwanted constraints. Your presentation will follow the information revolution of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. has promised to tell us how an explosion of newspapers, books, pamphlets, prints, and other public media opened vast new stores of information to an increasingly literate audience. may also comment on what knowledge was thought to be worth knowing.

presentation will set up yours. We would like you to help us see how a better informed citizenry employed this new knowledge in private and public life. Your work qualifies you to trace the rise of public opinion. It will surprise most members of the History Forum audience to learn that ordinary people's opinions had routinely been discounted as vulgar, irrational, and irrelevant as a basis for political action before the early eighteenth century. A hundred years later political leaders not only courted public opinion, they were actively engaged in shaping it to their own purposes. Your presentation might also explain how this transformation required the creation of a public arena and the redefinition of what it meant to be a citizen. As passive subjects increasingly became active participants in affairs of the colonies and the nation, they saw public consequences in their leaders' private actions. Your talk about public opinion, the civic sphere, and an informed populous may also raise the issue of publicity and lead to the session on the rise of the early American

I have tentatively assigned your talk a title: You may retitile it any way you like as long as you send me a new one by early September when the final program goes to press.

History Forum mornings are devoted to presentations by the guest historians. They are held in the Hennage Auditorium, which resembles a medical theater and gives everyone in the audience the feeling of having a front row seat. That intimacy contributes to the spirited discussions that inevitably break out between members of the audience and those of us on the stage.

Starting with lunch on Friday, we offer registrants a variety of participatory activities: a lunchtime book discussion and conversations about teaching history in schools. Both are programs in which we hope you too will take part. About 2:30 we set out on a special walking tour through the Historic Area in the company of Colonial Williamsburg's extraordinarily skilled character interpreters. All parts of the program will be custom-made to the Forum theme.

My colleagues and I are delighted that you have agreed to participate. The Forum will start Thursday afternoon, November 7, at 5 o'clock, continue all day Friday, and conclude with lunch on Saturday, November 9.

If this letter raises any questions, call me right away. My number is 804/220-7436. Should I not be in when you call, ask to be transferred to Ms. Deborah Chapman, the History Forum registrar.

Please fax me a copy of your current résumé at your earliest convenience. Our fax number is 804/220-7778. You may return the enclosed contract at your leisure.

I look forward to welcoming you to Williamsburg for what promises to be another stimulating exchange of ideas between working historians and working citizens.

Yours sincerely,



Cary Carson
Vice President for Research

enclosure (contract)

Appendix O

Presentation summaries prepared by the speakers.

Friday, November 8, 9:00 a.m.

America's First Communications Revolution

Professor Robert Gross
College of William and Mary

The American Revolution not only brought independence to thirteen colonies along the Atlantic Coast of North America but propelled the inhabitants of the new nation into an expanding world of international communications. In 1750, the continental colonies remained cultural provinces of England, dependent on the mother country for imported books and magazines. Though every colony had one or more newspapers, the press did not sustain vigorous debate about public life. Eager for governmental patronage, printers were solicitous of official approval and fearful of punishment for seditious libel. They were equally determined not to alienate powerful politicians and potential advertisers. In these circumstances, newspapers proclaimed neutrality in politics and foreswore opinions of their own.

By 1775, many editors had become partisans of the colonial cause in the imperial dispute with Britain. The Stamp Act, threatening the livelihood of printers, had driven many into opposition, which the gathering Revolutionary movement had expanded the popular audience for an Opposition press. Amidst the polarization between Patriots and Loyalists, old-style "neutral" printers were branded as Tories and driven into silence. At the same time, Patriots forged a common cause through newspapers and articulated a new mission for the press. In the public sphere of print, men like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson held citizens would fulfill their duties to the republic. With the coming of independence and the making of the Constitution, the federal government put this principle into practice. Through copyright laws, postal subsidies, and most importantly, the First Amendment, it promoted the circulation of newspapers and the diffusion of "intelligence."

The goal was to foster an informed citizenry, and it succeeded remarkably. Federalists and Jeffersonians sponsored newspapers to win over the public; schools and libraries promoted literacy; printers and booksellers cultivated an expanding audience for print. Thanks to this communications revolution, the small, educated elite that had once dominated colonial life lost its hold over public information, and ordinary people gained their own access to the news. Though women were excluded from suffrage, they gained citizenship in the republic of letters by patronizing the new genre of the novel and making it their own. In sum, if the American Revolution was a revolution in "the hearts and minds of men," as

John Adams put, that transformation came in good measure from the workings of the press. From America's First Communications Revolution would issue a democratization of natural life.

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Friday, November 8, 11:00 a.m.

The Birth of Public Opinion

Joanne B. Freeman
University of Virginia

The concept of "public opinion" is so familiar—so quantifiable with gauging mechanisms such as polls and questionnaires—that we forget its relatively recent invention. When the Founders devised the American republic, they did so with a self-conscious realization that such a polity relied on an active and informed citizenry able to express their opinions with their votes; yet the reality of such a concept was undetermined. What part of the populace constituted the "public" and what was their place in the political process? How, precisely, was a politician to determine and influence their opinions? Politicians and public alike were unsure of their precise role in the political process, and their struggle to determine their political identity resulted in the creation of an American form of governance.

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Saturday, November 9, 9:00 a.m.

Our Weekly Readers

Professor Charles E. Clark
University of New Hampshire

Successful American newspaper publishing began in 1704 as a remarkably early extension of English provincial newspaper publishing, which in turn had begun in imitation of the dominant medium of printed news in London. The first provincial publishers, whether in England or in America, understood their job primarily as providing a link for their readers with the cultural and public affairs of the imperial metropolis, which most Americans would never see. Contrary to the arguments of some, therefore, the copied news reports from Europe that made up the heaviest content of American newspapers for several decades were not understood merely as safe—and dull—alternatives to more local and more controversial content that might have gotten printers in trouble with provincial authorities. The first newspaper voice in explicit opposition to the local establishment, James Franklin's New-England Courant, did evoke official wrath and an unsuccessful attempt at silencing, but the provocation in this instance was at least as severe as the response. The experience of the Courant, combined with the somewhat comparable experience of John Peter Zenger's New-York Weekly Journal in the following decade, demonstrated that official attempts at restraining the press in America would never work very well, though neither the law nor any established legal principle was changed in the process.

By 1740, American newspapers in general had become more "Americanized," though never completely so until the Revolutionary era, and the practices of publishers—who except in one case were all printers by now—relatively standardized. The greatest editorial challenge of the middle years of the century was how to moderate the forum that consisted of letters and other contributions of readers, which by now were a significant, and occasionally overwhelming, segment of newspaper content. With virtual unanimity, printers proclaimed themselves impartial and their newspapers open to expressions of opinion from all sides. This was what was meant at the time by a "free" press. Printers did, however, establish more positive control over content than the phrase implies by a self-conscious application of the contemporary ideal of "politeness," and in fact the printers' profession of complete neutrality on public issues was easily compromised. By the 1750s, when a new generation of printers was beginning to emerge, the older standard of "politeness" was being replaced by the more explicitly political ideal of "civic virtue."

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Saturday, November 9, 11:00 a.m.

The Press, Partisanship, and Public Life in the 1790s and 1990s

Professor Michael Lienesch
University of North Carolina

In this Saturday morning session, Michael Lienesch will look at the role of the press in the highly partisan politics of the 1790s. Beginning with a review of what has been called America's "age of political passion," he will consider how political leaders such as Jefferson and Hamilton created a partisan press and how they used it to build the first political parties and to mobilize early public opinion. Describing the personalized and polarized politics that resulted, he will discuss the reaction of many Americans, Republicans as well as Federalists, who became disillusioned with a free press at this time, and who demanded that its liberty be controlled before it became license. Focusing on the Sedition Act of 1798, he shows how their efforts failed, and how through this experience Americans came to realize that the power of the press was less a threat to freedom than the power that came from controlling it. In concluding, Professor Lienesch will offer opinions on the role of the press in today's politics, suggesting that while the press is stronger than ever, American politics is weaker, and he will suggest some possible solutions.

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Appendix P

Outline of walking tour.

"Heresies Fit to Print"

History Forum 1996

Friday afternoon tour (11/8/96)

Revised 10/28/96

2:30 All participants meet at Bruton Parish Church

(The Church will remain open to the public, but the guides will explain that it is in use for a special program.)

- + Samuel Henley - B. J. Pryor
John Randolph - Jack Flintom
Richard Bland - John Greenman
- + Anne Nicholas - Diane Landon
Mary Ambler - Roseanne Christy
John Bracken - Tom Hay
William Russell - Nathan Betz ~~Tom Russell?~~
vestryman (calls witnesses) - John Mitchell
- + * Joseph Kidd - Bob Chandler
* Joshua Kendall - Garland Wood
* John Page - Ron Carnegie
* Johnny, P. Randolph slave - Harvey Bakan
- + * Robert Carter Nicholas - Bill Weldon
* Alexander Purdie - Dennis Watson
* anonymous pansioner - John Hamant

(* Not needed for scene in church but for other scenes elsewhere afterward.)

(+ Also in 4:45 interview at Hennage.)

Participants in by south or north door? [North door would mean participants could be grouped until actors in place, then enter all together.] Stay in east end of the nave, looking toward west [tower] gallery. Most of the action takes place in the west gallery (adjacent to the tower) for entrance to the second-story tower room where the vestry met.

Two groups of actors talking quietly among themselves, one halfway down the aisle and the other (Randolph and Russell) in west gallery near railing (Bland, Bracken and the two women). Each group studiously avoids the other. We don't see Henley, but he's inside the vestry room waiting for his "big moment."

2:35 Begins when vestryman in the gallery asks Mrs. Nicholas, Mrs. Ambler, and Mr. Bland to speak with the vestry; they go into the vestry meeting.

Bracken fidgets nervously, skulking around; Randolph and Russell talk quietly but nervously.

Bland leaves vestry room, rejoins Bracken, tells what went on. Randolph and Russell pretend to ignore them but are trying hard to hear what happened.

The women leave the vestry.

Henley storms out of the vestry, slamming the door behind him. Joins Randolph and Russell and tells them about the outrage he's just experienced. Bracken looks alarmed and then pleased.

Vestryman calls Bracken up; Mrs. Nicholas and Mrs. Ambler rejoin Bland. Henley, Randolph, and Russell leave the church briskly. Bland and the ladies leave leisurely, quite pleased with themselves.

(end of actors' scene)

2:45 Five to seven minutes of Dave de Simone as contextualist explains what just saw and the center of controversy without revealing content of the scenes.

Conversation at Peyton Randolph House concerning the interpretation of the first chapter of Hebrews, Trinity, Henley's position, why colonial Virginians cared so fiercely about this topic, established church, dissenters, latitudinarianism, etc. Clearly define heresy, orthodoxy, heterodoxy. Explain that in the 18th century men of comparable education came to different conclusions about religious matters, science, other kinds of knowledge. Also mention dividing into groups and mechanics of the tour.

2:50/2:52 Six group leaders (Linda Hamric, Berry Hoak, Sue Smith, Clip Carson, Cathy Edmonds, and Lamont Ferguson) pass out letters (varying color cover-sheets with typescript abstracts from the Gazette letters). Colors indicate which group participants tour with. Groups leave the church for four out of six Historic Area scenes, each about 7 minutes long. 4th wall. No questions from participants. Leave on cues listed below.

Group I (Linda Hamric)

3:00 Peyton Randolph House parlor (enter by SW door; exit by back door)
 3:15 Robert Carter House breezeway (Wythe South Office in case of foul weather)
 3:30 Mary Stith Shop
 3:45 Printing Office, ext. behind print. complex (press room in case of foul weather)

Group II (Berry Hoak)

3:00 Robert Carter House breezeway (Wythe South Office in case of foul weather)
 3:15 Peyton Randolph House parlor (enter by SW door; exit by back door)
 3:30 Printing Office, ext. behind print. complex (press room in case of foul weather)
 3:45 Mary Stith Shop

Group III (Sue Smith)

3:00 Courthouse east steps (Courthouse interior in case of foul weather)
 3:15 Market Square Tavern (parlor to left when entering by front door)
 3:30 Robert Carter House breezeway (Wythe South Office in case of foul weather)
 3:45 Peyton Randolph House parlor (enter by SW door; exit by back door)

Group IV (Cliff Carson)

3:00 Market Square Tavern (parlor to left when entering by front door)
 [When arrive, please attach sign from Linda Rowe to parlor (interior) door?]
 3:15 Courthouse east steps (Courthouse interior in case of foul weather)
 3:30 Peyton Randolph House parlor (enter by SW door; exit by back door)
 3:45 Robert Carter House breezeway (Wythe South Office in case of foul weather)

Group V (Cathy Edmonds)

3:00 Mary Stith Shop
 3:15 Printing Office, ext. behind print. complex (press room in case of foul weather)
 3:30 Market Square Tavern (parlor to left when entering by front door)
 3:45 Courthouse east steps (Courthouse interior in case of foul weather)

Group VI (Lamont Ferguson)

3:00 Printing Office, ext. behind print. complex (press room in case of foul weather)
 3:15 Mary Stith Shop
 3:30 Courthouse east steps (Courthouse interior in case of foul weather)
 3:45 Market Square Tavern (parlor to left when entering by front door)

Contents of each scene:

Randolph House (Parlor) – enter by west (side) door; exit through Mrs. Randolph's closet. Group leader shows the group in; actors are in place; then leader runs around the building and enters by the back door in order to be in place for leading the group out by the back door. (Cue to end scene are from John Randolph? "Blue sky")

John Randolph and Richard Bland.

Date ~~at~~ right after the vestry meeting

~~Props: Books, music, fiddle/guitar, wine glasses? Chairs they can sit in?~~

Bland apologizing for abusing Peyton's hospitality; driven to reveal what went on in a private house; Henley a dangerous heretic. First chapter of Hebrews. Bland has a kind of simple, trusting piety.

John Randolph, on the other hand, is much more accepting, tries not to offend Bland, but has a carefree/careless attitude. Learning matters, not doctrine: sees Henley as an ornament to Wmbg society because of his mind and education. Religion and learning are part of being refined and sociable.

Bland's threatening to publish the truth about Henley, that viper. Randolph's tries to talk him out of it—it's not that big a deal, not in a common newspaper!

Robert Carter House breezeway (exterior) [foul weather plan: Wythe South Office]

Anne Nicholas and Mary Ambler.

(Group exits on cue from Mrs. Nicholas: ~~Read to prayer:~~ *Read to prayer:*)

Time: On their way home from vestry meeting.

Props: Bench(es) if breezeway; two chairs if S. Office.

Mrs. Nicholas is very pious; Mrs. Ambler much less involved with religious issues—more about people's behavior and social standing. Also Mrs. Ambler only knows what her sister told her went on. Also Ambler much less concerned about theology per se, views religion as a strictly personal matter.

Here's "the rub" Mrs. Nicholas was originally fond of Henley; they had sometimes engaged in serious, detailed conversations about church doctrine, liturgy, etc.—she's now disappointed and hurt.

Market Square Tavern (parlor just to the left when enter the building)

Building will be unlocked as usual.

Sign on parlor door (interior): "History Forum/Private Session/3-4 pm today"

Henley and John Page.

Time 1774

Props: Prayerbook ^{& Gazette} ~~Other books?~~
~~Paper and quills and inkstand?~~ ~~Chairs and table?~~

Cue to end scene?? "Enough of this, Mr. Page." *John as he is reading gazette*

Concerns the way in which Anglican litany is read. Disagreement over how Henley's doing it now versus the way he did before. These two men think the congregation is influenced by how the litany is read.

Henley's dissenting background revealed. Ordained to get a job. His liberal views would be fine if he were a layman, not a clergyman.

Printing Complex Exterior--if foul weather, inside Press Room.

Alexander Purdie and Robert Carter Nicholas.

(Cue word for group to exit ~~to~~ Purdie)

~~to~~ March 1773

"I will print a supplement."

Props: RCN's multi-page manuscript. ~~Purdie with pen and ink, spectacles?~~

RCN bringing a very long piece to be published revealing all of Henley's unorthodox opinions and bizarre behaviors. Purdie is suprised at the detail and length of the piece, but, knowing about the local furor, is very pleased to print it. They're editing the piece. Purdie questioning RCN about certain passages to make sure that he wants to include everything.

Purdie knows his readers want to know more about the situation that they're already aware of. There's only one reason he'd hesitation: Purdie could allude to the paper war about the American bishop; eventually he had to stop printing all the submissions he got about it because his customers were heartily sick of it.

Courthouse Steps –arrange group on east end of stairs looking toward Capitol & street.
(in case of rain, use Courthouse interior)

William Russell and anonymous parshioner
Johnny, Peyton Randolph's man

Date? (What's been published so far?)

Props?

Cue to end scene? Johnny ~~see~~ walks away.

Two parshioners encounter each other on the street and begin discussing problems in the parish. As they talk, the African is unpacking vegetables, or whatever. ... not acknowledged by the two white men, but in clear sight, and not spoken to.

The white men both bemoan the parish's notoriety, resorting to common newspaper. Russell maintains that Henley's opinions are those of a highly educated clergyman—he's a graduate of Cambridge University after all! The other maintains that Henley is a dangerous heretic whose awful behavior and worse beliefs must be exposed for the good of the church and of the colony! They disagree in a gentlemanly manner, not arguing or raising voices. When (in a couple of minutes) they find they cannot reach common ground, they agree to disagree and continue on their separate ways.

When they're out of earshot, Johnny moves to "center stage" and tells us they have no idea of the circumstances, whereas he, as Peyton's body servant, was an eyewitness to Henley's statements that evening. Johnny is a dedicated Anglican, avid Bible reader, and while he of course isn't formally education, he knows quite a lot about the church and her doctrines.

Mary Stith Shop (CI's have key; ck Weldon)

Joseph Kidd and Joshua Kendall

~~Props~~

"Simple mechanic" dragged into situation he's not able to hold his own. Smear-campaign in papers. Kendall is an old friend, sure to sympathize with him, so Kidd tells everything [even revealing the identity of his mentor?]. Kendall certainly sympathizes but wonders that Kidd didn't ask his advice earlier, before letter appeared in the Gazette.

Cue to end scene?

After scenes on rotation, free time until 4:15 reception, followed by 4:45 interview/discussion in Hennage.

4:45-5:30 Hennage. On stage area, 5 chairs for participants plus a cordless mike for the moderator. Cordless mikes for audience-participation section. (Plants, table, water glasses, etc., if possible.)

(Pass out a brief chronology of the furor?)

CAST: Mark Howell, moderator (in modern dress)

Samuel Henley - B. J. Pryor
 Alexander Purdie - Dennis Watson
 Joseph Kidd - Bob Chandler
 Robert Carter Nicholas - Bill Weldon
 Anne Nicholas - Diane Landon

Moderator asks the CI's questions for 20 minutes, then opens up for questions from the floor.

With Henley, Kidd, and Nicholas, who had their letters printed in the paper, the real question is why go public with this controversy? Except Mrs. Nicholas who didn't, but who's husband certainly did! She's not a feminist in any way but has opinions about religion and orthodoxy and correct behavior. Purdie speaks to what his readers want to read and how to keep his business going.

Basically, the issues are:

Is the press neutral?
 Who are the readers of the Gazette?
 Who is that great entity called "the Public"?
 Is the writer's motive to change their readers' minds?
 How many readers did they hope to persuade?
 Was anyone hurt by this exchange in so public a forum?
 How did the affair affect the community as a whole?

At about 5:25, on cue from Mark Howell, Henley delivers the "Finale," standing and reading his final paragraph from Gazette. (Prop—folded manuscript of ELP's writing.)

Appendix Q

Colonial Williamsburg evaluation form.

1996 History Forum Program Evaluation

The Williamsburg Institute has prepared this questionnaire to seek your opinions of the 1996 program and your suggestions for future History Forums. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions and leave the sheet at your table following the closing lunch. Additional comments are welcome: letters should be addressed to Manager of Programs, Williamsburg Institute, Colonial Williamsburg, PO Box 1776, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776.

Please answer this group of questions by circling the number which best describes your feelings and perception: "5" means you strongly agree and were very satisfied and "1" means you strongly disagree and were not at all satisfied. Please use numbers in between 5 and 1 for less strong feelings. Add any comments you want to share in the space provided.

1. The History Forum registration process was organized and efficient
5 4 3 2 1
Any comments? _____

2. The Colonial Williamsburg hotel accommodations met my expectations
5 4 3 2 1
Any comments? _____

3. The Colonial Williamsburg restaurants and food met my expectations
5 4 3 2 1
Any comments? _____

4. Please circle the optional lunch program you attended:
Food for Thought School Lunch Program Table Talk
Rate the overall effectiveness of the lunch program you attended
5 4 3 2 1
Any comments? _____

5. Rate your overall satisfaction, when you consider your entire History Forum experience
5 4 3 2 1
Any comments? _____

Please feel free to openly comment on these questions:

6. What Forum experience did you find most valuable?

7. What did you like least about the Forum?

8. Could you suggest topics for future Forums?

9. How did you learn about the History Forum?

10. What topics in early American history would bring you back to future History Forums?

Appendix R

Conference Evaluations Summary

CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS SUMMARY

"1996 History Forum"
8-10 November 1996

The 1996 History Forum, based upon the evaluations received, appears to have been an altogether highly successful effort as viewed by Forum attendees. While there were a few negative reactions/responses, the evaluations overall were quite favorable in almost all categories. The most notable exception was that accorded the *Optional Lunch Program*. Otherwise, of the forty-five (45) evaluations submitted, the *Registration Process (Question 1)* received an overall grade-average of 4.6 on a scale of 5 (or 92%) satisfaction level by the attendees. *Hotel Accommodations (Question 2)* were also evaluated highly, with the exception of the Governor's Inn which received several negative evaluations, with an overall grade average of 4.5 (or 90%) including 11 non-respondents. Twenty-two of the attendees (circa 50%) rated this category at a 5 (or 100%) satisfaction level. Similarly, *Restaurants and Food (Question 3)* received an overall 4.5 (or 90%) satisfaction rating, with 24 participants (or 56%) rating this category at a 5 (or 100%) level.

As noted above, the *Optional Lunch Programs (Question 4)* received the lowest overall ratings and the most negative comments, with a combined average rating by the 26 respondents (or 58%) to this question of 3.2 (or 64%). Of these, the School Lunch Programs portion scored highest with a 3.8 (or 76%) effectiveness rating by 5 participant respondents. The other two programs, "Food for Thought" and "Table Talk" each scored but 2.8 (or 56%) by 8 attendees, and 3.0 (or 60%) by 12 participants respectively. (See Comments Section below.)

Despite the relatively low ratings for the lunch programs, *Overall Satisfaction (Question 5)* with the 1996 History Forum experience received a resounding 4.5 (or 90%) overall average rating by the attendees. Twenty-two of 41 respondents (circa 54%) rated this question at the 5 (or 100%) level, suggesting a well received program altogether. While many favorable comments were received from Forum attendees, poor bus service, non-availability of lunch program, and lack of suggested reading list books were the more cited complaints by several of the participants. (See other Comments below).

Forum Experiences Cited to be the Most Valuable (Question 6) focused mainly on the quality and variety of learning experiences, ranging from the much praised Bradlee-Jefferson Free Press discussion (although Bradlee did receive some negative comments), to outstanding speakers overall, and the walking tour of Colonial Williamsburg. *Least Liked About the Forum (Question 7)* respondents cited the Friday evening program as being too short, also interrupted with the DeWitt Wallace Gallery visit. Other comments were received, several alleging the Free Press discussion as not brought to closure, and pro's and con's not fully elaborated. (See Comments below).

How Learned of the Forum (Question 8) - respondents cited their being on the Colonial Williamsburg mailing list, and their attendance at previous Forums as the principal source of their information on the Forums. *American History Topics for Future Forums (Question 9)* elicited a number of suggestions including the role of religion, politics, taxes, role of women, colonial medicine, and farming all suggesting a broad range of interest by Forum participants.

Comments:

- A. Organized and Efficient (Question 1). Excellent overall; some packet material missing, including reading list and 10th anniversary pamphlet; transportation could be better coordinated, otherwise all exceptional and quality sessions.
- B. Hotel Accommodations (Question 2). Colonial House: stayed in and satisfied with Colonial House; Lodge: great; very nice; efficient as usual; hotel staff went out of way to welcome and meet requests; room very pleasant, people warm and helpful; always a pleasurable experience; Governor's Inn: "horrible", moved to Lodge; going up in price & rooms going down in quality; Woodlands: very pleasant, staff helpful.
- C. Food and Restaurants (Question 3). Kings Arms and Shields Taverns both excellent; had good meal at Kings Arms; Shields Tavern was fantastic; Lodge Dining Room was superb; enjoyed buffet; Cascades breakfast was terrific; box lunches expensive, too much food; excellent help making reservations, food good, more selections needed.
- D. Lunch Programs (Question 4). "Table Talk" (received the most positive comments): Food not very good, conversation was great; enjoyed more open format; ideas and questions raised and discussed openly and easily; make suggested readings available for mail order; moderator needed to start group off with directed questions; discussion had "zero" to do with subject, totally disappointing; great to talk to historians directly in informal setting. "Food for Thought" (most negative comments): guest lecturer (Clark) was major asset, but moderator (Kelly) leadership was questionable; (topic) interesting, seemed to have trouble getting started, had to work hard to get going; (Kelly) organized but failed to elicit meaningful discussion of book; (leader) very efficient, well informed. Charles Clark was a surprise and positive addition to the group. "School Lunch Program": Wayne Hughes conducted superbly, involved all participants in meaningful dialogue; not long enough, needed more time; pleased with handout; Hughes did a very good job.
- E. Overall Satisfaction (Question 5): One of smoothest and best have attended; experience extremely rewarding; speakers individually excellent, round table discussions were best in 5 years; opening lecture (Robert Gross) was most delightful and instructive experience; Joanna Freeman's use of detail was engaging; Michael Lienesch's contrast of "Constitution" and "Country" was absolutely wonderful; Charles Clark was more engaging than his book; well organized, excellent presentations, great walking tour, particularly good one this year; generally excellent planning; best experience, never wanted it to end; 4th (Forum) attended speaks for itself. Negatives included: bus schedule as erratic, late for pickups, arrived at the Lodge, and perhaps a too full schedule on Friday. Other comments included: not enough handouts, poor quality of Virginia Gazette copies; arrangements needed for walking tour and transportation of handicapped attendees; and include recommended book reading list, ISBN, and publisher information handout.

- F. Most Valuable Sessions (Question 6): Outstanding speakers, including Robert Gross, Charles Clark, Bill Barker; variety of learning experiences; table talk; lectures different ways information presented, variety of approaches to topics; participation of speakers in all discussions and social events; Jefferson-Ben Bradlee discussion, and excellent summary session.
- G. Least Like (Question 7): Jefferson-Bradlee topic not brought to closure, wanted to hear pros and cons of subject, Bradlee not prepared; lack of time Friday program too short; poor bus service, but drivers were unfailingly pleasant; lunch program on Friday; walking tour not paced to slower people.
- H. Future Forum topics (Question 8):
1. The real George Washington; Washington in Williamsburg
 2. The Church and Religion, impact on Williamsburg residents
 3. Role of religion in shaping American institutions, behavior, thought
 4. Voting rights for women; role of women, education, ethics; women's world
 5. Influence of lifestyles on other social classes, women, ethnic groups, behaviors, thought patterns
 6. Education-wealthy whites, poor whites, slaves
 7. Development, growth of political parties; development of national culture
 8. Colonial Farming, how farming has changed in two centuries; planters vs. town living
 9. Organization, deployment, legitimate action of Colonial military forces
 10. Native American and black topics
 11. Speech and language patterns of 18th Century gentry, commoners and how it evolved
 12. Taxes: who pays, what purpose, best way to spend, then and now
 13. Exchange between Jefferson and Madison
- I. Early American History Topics (Question 9):
1. First Amendment Issues; Social and Cultural History
 2. Topics beyond Virginia; other social classes, women, ethnic groups' influences
 3. Diversity Programs; costumes and crafts, women, children, African Americans
 4. Lives of ordinary 18th century people; American psyche
 5. Propaganda of Revolution, how and when England lost the colonies
 6. Crime and punishment in the Colonies before the Revolution
 7. First encounters; myths and reality of Native Americans
 8. Life and experiences on frontier margin before the Revolution
 9. Economics of the Colonies; triangular trade - England, Colonies and the Caribbean area
 10. Education and family life; middling and lower classes
 11. Specific individuals who played leading role in the Nation's development - real George Washington
 12. Politics, diplomacy, evolution of U.S. as world power

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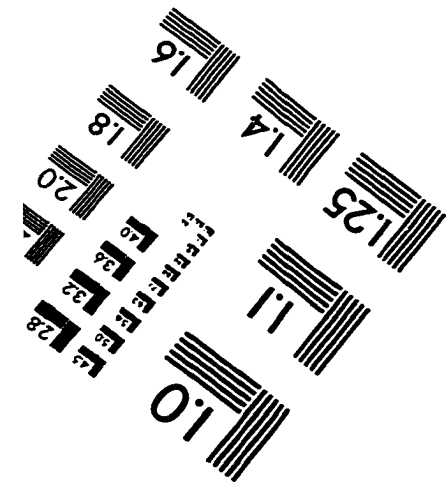
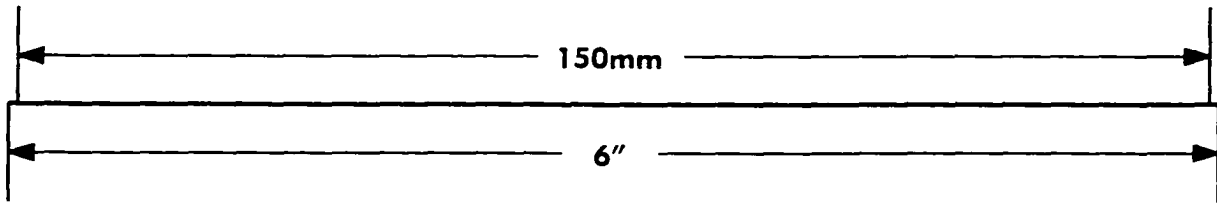
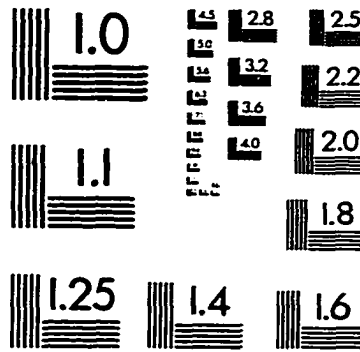
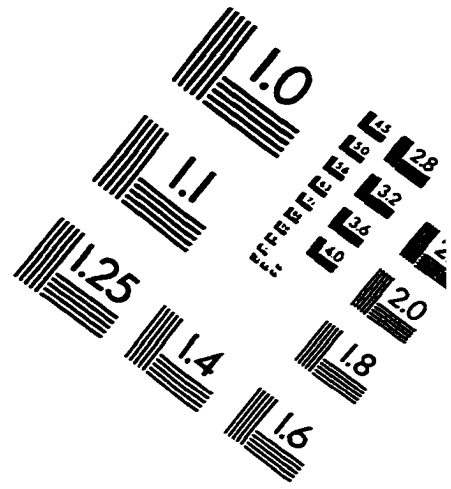
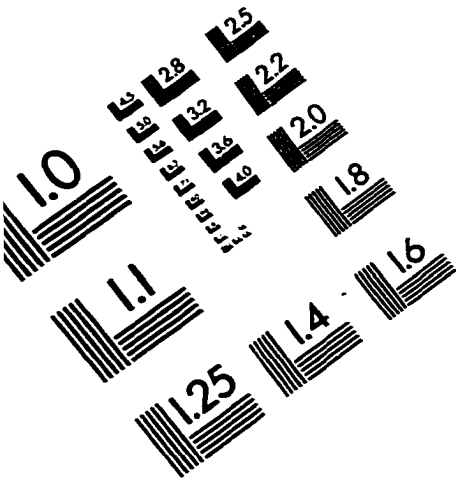
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