The Social Justice and Societal Impact of Public Programs in House Museums

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ABSTRACT

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House museums have been struggling to stay current within their local communities for fifty years. One way to combat this waning interest in these institutions is by creating new programs and reconnecting with the students and families in their communities. The purpose of this research was to describe the ways that house museums develop and implement public programs for school groups and families that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues together. This research explored ideas of public and private memory, house museums as a 'community sense of place', and their impact on society. Three leading historic house museums were examined to understand these questions and to provide implications for the future. This research suggests that there are three lasting impacts that historic house museums hope to have on their community: appreciation of local heritage, create activists in local communities, and to educate citizens about social issues. It is the hope that these three sites can be used an example for other historic house museums in the field looking to incorporate public programs into their institution.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Historic house museums have been struggling for relevance within society for the past fifty years, driving these institutions to invent and implement certain types of educational, interpretive, and public programming to better serve their audiences. Perhaps the biggest challenge that many historic house museums face is that they deal with inadequate resources such as; a small staff and volunteer corps, a lack of financial stability, and an overall waning interest within their local community. One way that historic house museums combat this fading interest is by connecting past and contemporary social and societal issues as a way to engage with their local community.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation survey in 1999, there are at least "5,000 house museums concentrated largely in the East Coast and the Midwest, in the United States," (Harris, 2007). Within that same survey, the National Trust found that "54 percent of house museums, have no more than 5,000 visitors a year," (Harris, 2007). Unfortunately, this is the most recent national that could be found through an extensive online search on historic house museums, which suggests there is a definite need to fill the field with more research. Historic house museums are "rich and diverse learning environments," that create real tangible spaces and reminders to its visitors of the past, while also creating an environment that becomes part of the collective memory and a sense of place in society (Harris, 2007).

In the past decade, historic house museums have increasingly looked to public programming as a way to stay relevant and sustainable (Kanawait, 2006; Creedle, 2002; Levey, 2002). Historic house museums receive funding from the private sector, government funding sources and other grant opportunities to support their programming. Many house museums that have received both state and federal grants in the past utilize at least one or more education and

public programs to educate their audiences. Historic house museums do many things in the field, but most importantly they connect past and contemporary social and societal issues together. It is because of this overall fading interest in historic house museums that has led those institutions to redesign and implement new and innovative public programs that focus on important social issues as a means to reignite the interest in historic house museums. For instance, the Jane Addams Hull-House located in Chicago IL, is a historic house museum that deals with past and contemporary social issues which aims to actively discuss issues surrounding women's rights and the human experience through education and social engagement.

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) does not offer best practices for house museums specifically, but their standards are still followed by historic house museums (American Alliance of Museums, 2015). However, the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) discusses programming implementation and intended impacts for history organizations, which is applicable to house museums (Association of State and Local History, 2015).

The purpose of this research was to describe the ways in which historic house museums develop and implement public programs for families and school groups that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What do public programs in historic house museums that connect past and contemporary social issues together look like?
2. How do these programs operate and function on a daily basis, and can they be used as a guide for other historic house museums?
3. What is the overall societal impact and social justice that historic house museums hope to have on their community and intended audiences?

The results of this research may be beneficial to other historic house museums, historical societies, small history museums, and museum professionals alike because this research highlights three sustaining institutions and how their public programming can be used as a guide for other sites. This research is primarily focused on the intentions and design patterns of the public programs that connect past and current social issues by museum professionals in the field. In other words, this research is concerned with *how* these programs are designed and currently implemented into these host case house museum sites.

Chapter Two: Literate Review

Historic House Museums Today

"One of the great challenges to historic house museums is finding ways to narrate stories that matter", said Patricia West – a notable figure in the historic museum field (Cabral, 2001). Historic house museums are typically furnished homes that have been restored to period of time that highlights and tells the stories of the people who lived in them. Historic house museums are usually community driven that have the desire to tell local stories (Levin, 2007). Historic house museums are preserved for many different reasons, but there are three different types of house museums; *documentary house museums, representative house museums,* and *aesthetic house museums* (Butcher-Younghans, 1993). A *documentary house museum* recounts a persons or place of historical and/or cultural interest containing the original objects. A *representative house museum* documents a way of life which many not have the original objects. Lastly, an *aesthetic house museum* exhibits a private collection of period objects that are not the original objects of the house itself (Butcher-Younghans, 1993).

Museums as a whole serve three important functions; to preserve, to investigate, and to communicate (Cabral, 2001). Historic house museums have an overwhelming power to evoke history and put the visitor in direct contact with history. This is significant because this places higher meaning on the objects in house museums, as well as the different stories that house museums are able to tell (Pinna, 2001). Historic house museums suffer from the stigma of being 'fossilized' or 'stuck in time' as they are unable to modify or alter the physical space without falsifying history (Pinna, 2001).

Two master theses discuss the overall history and struggles that historic house museums are currently facing and how programming will help those institutions; *Founding or Funding: Are Historic House Museums in Trouble?* (Kanawait, 2006) and *Telling It Slant: Historic House Museums and the Re-Creation of the Past* (Quinn, 2001). Kanawait describes the processes of how historic house museums come to be or are 'founded', and explores the ideas of how these institutions are able to stay funded (2006). Quinn argues that historic house museums are authentic because they harness and depend on both history and the representation of the past (2001). Creedle (2002) and Levy (2002) discuss the importance of programs in historic house museums and how those programs can make a site effective in educating their desired audiences, which typically are families and school groups. Lloyd (2002) and Cabral (2001) dive deeply into the impacts of interpretative planning and public programs and the importance of communication in historic house museums. Lowe suggests that by revisiting the history of the narrative in the context of historic house museums, museums as a whole have a better chance of understanding and finding ways to tell stories that matter to the visitors (2015).

Current Trends

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) prohibits historic sites from being modified or altered (achp.gov, 2015). Richard Moe, the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) describes historic house museums as:

> "[f]or many people, the terms 'historic preservation' and 'house museum' are virtually synonymous. While this perception unquestionably represents a narrow and inaccurate view of what preservation today is all about, there can be no

> question that house museums constitute the bedrock of the American preservation movement." (Moe, 2002)

The most recent survey on historic house museums, conducted by American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), created the *Directory of Historic House Museums in the United States*, and it was published in 1999. It found that there are now more than 8,000 historic house museums in the country (Harris, 2007). House museums can be found in rural counties across the country, as well as larger metropolitan cities. There have been no attempts since 1999 to account for all of the historic house museums in the country, which implies that more research is needed for historic house museums. For example, Philadelphia has more than 275 historic house museums in five counties (Harris and Silberman, 2005). A survey conducted by the Philadelphia-based Heritage Investment Program in 2000 found some staggering results about their 275 historic house museums. Nearly 40 percent of these house museums do not have a professional staff, more than 50 percent of their budgets were under $100,000, and less than 10 percent of these house museums have an endowment of at least $250,000 to sustain themselves for future generations (Harris and Silberman, 2005).

Visitors

Research suggests that a large number of visitors arrive at museums with preconceived expectations, "[t]hey use the museum to satisfy those expectations and then remember the visit as an experience that did just that – satisfied their specific expectations," (Falk, 2010). Falk outlines five different types of museum visitors in his article *The Museum Visitor Experience*; explorers - visitors who are curiosity driven, facilitators - visitors who are socially motivated, professional/hobbyists - visitors who feel a tie between the museum and themselves, experience

seekers - visitors who see the museum as an important destination, and rechargers - visitors who are seeking to have a relaxing experience (2010).

Many times historic house museums are staffed by volunteers, and these museums run the risk of the stigma of being 'by appointment only' (Harris, 2007). Some historic house museums located in rural cities across the country are likely to have non-regular hours. "Sites that are open irregular hours are almost bound to face the self-fulfilling prophecy – no one visits, because no one really knows when they are open." (Harris, 2007). Historic house museums focus their visitors' attention to the concept of 'home'. The idea of 'home' can be thought of as a universal experience that all visitors would like to see in historic house museums (Piatt, 2002). One of the most significant lasting memories that historic house museums have on their audiences is when a visitor can recall a memory about visiting a historic site as part of a school field trip.

Piatt, an experienced tour guide at historic house museums, provides a model of communication that she uses when making connections with visitors in her article *Engaging Visitors Through Effective Communication* (2002). Essentially the 'sender', or the tour guide, will send messages containing meaningful information through a channel to the receiver, or the visitor (2002). Then either positive or negative feedback will be sent back to the sender to reinforce whether the information was received or not (2002). This may seem like a simple process, but messages can get misinterpreted easily. Piatt suggests that nonverbal communication and gestures can sometimes be more important in communicating with visitors than the actual words in the messages themselves (2002). Museum staff that interact with the public frequently have a direct impact on the visitors' experience, which is precisely why effective communication is imperative.

Levy states, "[t]ours are among the most common interpretation tools used in historic house museums in the United States,", however depending on the institution, the tour type will vary from site to site as will the overall tour experience (2002). Levy outlines six common tour types that currently are used in historic house museums, tours that are; "based on thorough knowledge of history, organized around the site's important themes, the museum supports the theme(s), the interpretation is tied to primary resources which include historical context, and tours are carefully thought-out and create a positive visitor experience," (2002).

In historic house museums there are two primary types of tours that visitors can participate in, guided tours and self-guided tours. A guided tour is the most common type of tour that are available at historic house museums - they offer the expertise of the educator and the ability for visitors to actively ask questions (Levy, 2002). A self-guided tour is utilized in historic house museums because they guarantee that the visitors' experience will be different every time. However, a major drawback to a self-guided tour is that it restricts the visitors' ability to engage with the space and ask questions with an interpreter (Levy, 2002).

Museum Education

Learning Theory

John Dewey is considered one of America's greatest education philosophers who stressed that education begins with experiences, and also considered museums to be of "central importance to public education," (Hein and Alexander, 1998). Constructivist learning theory may be the most notable learning theory that affects historic house museums. It is hard for scholars to define 'learning', because it is subjective. However, learning can be thought of as "an enduring

change in behavior, or in the capacity to behave in a similar fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience," (Schunk, 2012).

Constructivist learning requires the learner to use both their hands and minds to interact with the world in order to experiment, to reach conclusions, and to increase their understanding of the world around them (Hein and Alexander, 1998). Constructivist learning theory stems from Jean Piaget, who suggests that learners construct knowledge out of their own experiences (Brainerd, 1978). This learning model promotes active learning through hands-on activities, in which the learner has physical interactions with the world and it requires the learner to struggle with ideas and create solutions (Hein and Alexander, 1998). According to Hein and Alexander, learning involves not just new material (Piaget would refer to as *assimilation*), but constant reorganization of what is already known, or accommodation (1998). "The constructivist museum acknowledges that knowledge is created in the mind of the learner using personal learning methods, and it allows us to accommodate all ages of learning," (Hein, 1995).

The idea of visitors finding out information for themselves and to learn through activities is becoming an increasingly more popular trend in museums today. Learning occurs in museums through the interaction of visitors with objects and programs (Hein and Alexander, 1998). However, the challenge for museums and museum educators is to convert the many "lively, vivid, and interesting experiences" into meaningful experiences that promote learning in museums (Hein and Alexander, 1998). Echoing Dewey, Duckworth has stressed the need for 'minds-on' and 'hands-on' engagement of learners in order to fully comprehend the material they are trying to learn (1990).

Other learning theories that can be applied to education trends in historic house museums include: Bandura's *Social Cognitive Learning Theory,* Vygotsky's *Social Constructivism*

Learning Theory, and possibly Lave and Wenger's *Social Practice Learning Theory*. Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory suggests that learning occurs from observation and doing (1971). However, whether or not we perform what we learn through observation will depend on own personal motivations (Bandura, 1971). Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Learning Theory states that learning occurs in the social environment and influences cognition through its tools such as cultural objects, language, and social institutions (Vygotsky, 1978). Lastly, Lave and Wenger's Social Practice Learning may be applicable to historic house museums, which states that knowledge is held in the community sector and active learning is shared as a group (Lave and Wenger, 2002).

How do we learn in museums?

Csikszentimilhalyi and Hermanson outline the development of learning through intrinsic motivations in a museum setting; curiosity is spiked which leads to interest from the visitor in the museum setting (1999). Next, the visitor has three different opportunities for involvement – sensory experiences, intellectual interactions, and emotional feelings. Then the visitor will experience challenges, gain skills, and this will eventually lead the visitor to "grow the complexity in consciousness" (1999). Human actions are motivated by a combination of two types of rewards: extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivations are rewards that are coming from outside of the activity to obtain praise or to avoid punishment, and to a certain degree to live up to societal expectations (Csikszentimilhalyi and Hermanson, 1999). On the other hand, intrinsic motivations stem from rewards that are gathered from the activity itself and whether or not it is worth doing for its own sake (Csikszentimilhalyi and Hermanson, 1999).

By the end of this path the visitor will arrive at the last stage of their own consciousness. The visitor will become motivated to explore the museum itself for their own personal reasons, and in doing so he or she learns more (Csikszentimilhalyi and Hermanson, 1999). "Perhaps one of the major underdeveloped functions of museums is to provide opportunities for individually meaningful experiences that also connect with the experiences of visitors," (Csikszentimilhalyi and Hermanson, 1999). By using intrinsic motivations, visitors are able to a fully express themselves and create meaningful experiences within a museum setting.

Education Standards

"Knowledge and understanding of most educational content are greatly enhanced by the process of communicating that content to others," (Krishnaswami, 2002). The 'other' can be thought of as the school community, and the wider community. According to Castrillon-Vizcarra "the museum is a large centre where one can produce diversified cultural information through language, whether oral or written (guides, recordings, technical cards) or through codified signals (semiology)," (Cabral, 2001). Therefore, the museum is a place of education and communication. The educational role of the museum is to be "consubstantiated in the discourse that the museum produces to articulate the cultural assets," (Cabral, 2001).

As educational institutions, museums comply with both state and national education standards to serve their students and visitors. For example, many museums in the field will follow best practices and education standards that the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) provides for their affiliates (see Appendix B). Historic house museums follow education standards that often are used in the school district curriculum such as: Common Core Standards and STEM.

Curriculum theorist Joseph Schwab, proposed a framework for thinking about curricular decisions which he called “commonplace of schooling”. Schwab proposes that there are four elements in any educational moment: education happens in a setting of some kind (in which he calls ‘milieu’) with a subject matter to be taught by a teacher to students (1969). Schwab’s commonplaces allow educators to see the ways in which teaching and the learning experiences can be understood in museums today (Vallance, 2007). Vallance suggest that “[m]useums’ dynamics are different from those of schools, but it is instructive to analyze museums congruent with our traditional definitions and expectations of educational institutions,” (2007).

Dwayne Huebner proposed a model for understanding the way in which society values education and found that there were five criteria for valuing teaching and/or learning experiences, which he called rationales (1960). The *technical* - did the students learning anything? The *scientific* - what did the educators learn about teaching? The *political* - what is the value of the curriculum for the power structure of the community? The *aesthetic* – was the lesson artfully done? Lastly, the *ethical* - was the relationship between teacher and student respectable? (Huebner, 1966). According to Vallance, museums routinely use the aesthetic rationale when thinking about their exhibitions and programming (2007). Huebner’s five rationales show that museums emphasize different qualities in their evaluations than traditional educational institutions. By applying both Huebner’s and Schwab’s curriculum models to museums we can assess what the museum’s values are, what their impacts are, and their potential as a community resource. “Local museums offer an instructive test of traditional educational curriculum theory,” (Vallance, 2007).

Impact on Society

Community Sense of Place

"People who visit heritage organizations are 'looking for a sense of place'" (Christopher, 2007). In environmental psychology a 'sense of place' is defined as "the particular experience of a person in a particular setting (feeling excited, joyous, expansive etc.)," (Steele, 1988). Historic house museums can be thought as a 'community sense of place'. By this one can make the assumption that a sense of place is where someone will have a sense of belonging and have a positive experience. A 'community sense of place' typically is in reference to a community institution is which citizens are able to come to have meaningful conversations in a safe and non-threatening environment (Gable and Handler, 2007). As local heritage sites, historic house museums are a perfect vessel to have conversations around social issues for their community (Cabral, 2001).

Historic house museums are grounded in education as a foundation, but they are also cultural institutions that deal in historical contexts to serve their immediate community. "They [historic sites] have to constantly be telling a new story. There has to be a reason for people to come back. 'Been there, seen that' is the death knell of these places," (Christopher, 2007). But society is constantly changing, as well as historic house museums community needs, and these institutions should be flexible and adapt to America's ever changing communities (Levin, 2007). Christopher explains further, "history alters because the market for history changes. Society's needs for history change over time, and historic sites adjust to meet these societal needs," (2007).

Local Heritage

"For us, local museums are museums of influence, deserving critical and public attention, because they may tell scholars more about contemporary life than all of the branches of the Smithsonian put together," (Levin, 2007). Why do local museums matter? Many times local museums, such as historic house museums, can be thought of as a communities' identity, "museums have to become more conscious of their role defining communities, as well as of the importance of inclusiveness," (Levin, 2007). Local museums also offer a glimpse of the contradictions and dilemmas evident in the efforts to present and represent culture. According to Levin, museums reflect the spirit of the times they represent (2007). This is especially true for historic house museums.

In Ron Chew's article *In Praise of the Small Museum,* "since September 11th, small museums, especially those that have thrived on strong grassroots ties, have become natural focus points for community groups struggling with issues of cross-cultural tolerance and seeking healing and reflection," (2002). In modern times, local citizens highly value the importance of community and family, and because of this they are finding solace in the kinds of exhibits and programs available at smaller locally focused museums (Levin, 2007). Small historic house museums ultimately are "demonstrating how telling the story of one individual illustrates the history of many, and how shared experiences establish or reestablish links between social groups," (D'Oney, 2007).

Public history v. Private Memory

History refers to the results of the work of professional historians and is distinguishable from memory (Gable and Handler, 2007). "Memory" is known as the individual's recounting of

a personal experience that historians may or may not consider to be historical (Gable and Handler, 2007). Memory is simply another term for 'experience'. The visitors experience brings the history alive in historical sites and historic house museums. Gable and Handler suggest to transform public history into private memory "is done by collapsing the distance between the reconstructed past (the museum's history lesson) and the visitor's touristic or familial experience on the site." (2007).

Some would argue that those memories become 'communal' and are part of "collective memory," but there is little agreement on what the term actually refers to (Gable and Handler, 2007). Gable and Handler propose one definition,

> "collective memory fosters in socially complex interactions involving written documents and orally transmitted stories occurring in a variety of contexts from a sole individual, to a school group listening to a teacher to a group of tourists experience a tour," (2007).

In other words, collective memory can simply be thought of as documented history being shared by telling stories about those experiences. Cabral discusses the idea of memory and history further by mentioning "[m]useums are a place of memory and a place of power. Thus, the museum is the 'house of memory," (2001). Historic house museums can become part of our 'collective memory of place' which is similar to the idea of house museums being a 'community sense of place' (Gable and Handler, 2007).

Social Problems

There are two ways to describe what a social problem is in society. The objectivist way is to focus on the factual aspect of the problem itself, and whether or not the problem affects a large

number of individuals (Harris, 2013). However sometimes social problems are not factual, but are more subjective and can be interpreted in multiple ways. The second way to understand social problems is through the lens of constructionism. In this framework, human beings create social problems themselves by assigning a specific meaning to these conditions. In other words, "social problems are ambiguous situations that can be viewed in different ways by different people, and that are defined as troubling to some people," (Harris, 2013). Harris and Best, argue that there is no 'one size fits all' framework to utilize when analyzing and thinking about social problems – a constructionism framework may not work for every social problem (2013).

Every framework has its biases and blind spots, and constructivism is no different (Harris, 2013). But it is the most accepted framework used when understanding social problems (Harris, 2013). One of the reasons why the constructionist approach is so widely used for addressing social issues in the world is that it offers a single coherent perspective for making sense of the social issues that require attention (Harris, 2013). A constructivist perspective puts more emphasize on meaning than factual information, which allows researchers to think in grey areas that arise with social problems (Harris, 2013). It is the process of calling attention to a troubling condition, not the actual condition itself, that makes something into a social problem in today's society. Social problems are not just a single persons' issues, but is it is a problem for society at large (Harris, 2013).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to describe the ways in which historic house museums develop and implement public programs for families and school groups that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What do public programs in historic house museums that connect past and contemporary social issues together look like?
2. How do these programs operate and function on a daily basis, and can they be used as a guide for other historic house museums?
3. What is the overall societal impact and social justice that historic house museums hope to have on their community and intended audiences?

Research Design

The researcher used a qualitative approach that included interviews with museum professionals at historic house museums known for their work with social issues. The data from the interviews was contextualized with information collected about the historic house museum sites and the public programs offered by the site(s).

Sampling:

Sites selected for this study met the following criteria: must have at least one public problem currently implemented, the program(s) should focus on a particular social issue, and the

site's target audience should be school groups and/or families. Sites were found by reviewing the literature or by recommendations from other museums professionals in the field.

The Tenement Museum, located in New York City NY, was first selected as a site as an institution that publically deals with immigration in the United States. The Molly Brown House was the next chosen site as a small historic house that heavily discusses the life of Margaret Brown and the issue of women's suffrage and activism in Denver, CO. The third and final site, The Hermann-Grima and Gallier Houses were identified by other museum professionals in the field as being an institution that focuses on women's suffrage during the late 1800's in New Orleans, Louisiana. These three historic house museums are diverse in geography, budget and focuses. Two are located in the Midwest – one site in the Southwest and the other in the South - and one is located on the East Coast. The house museum sites also vary in terms of the number of programs they put out to the public, operating budgets, staff size, and overall size of their institution. The historic house museum sites' education and teacher plans are available online for school groups and families before they come to the museum. All of these house museums sites incorporated either state or national curriculum, and/or were affiliated or followed the museum education standards by American Alliance of Museums (AAM).

Sampling: Professional Participants

Once the sites were chosen, the museum professionals for this research were identified and asked to be part of this study. The criteria for this selection were that the participants were currently working for the house museum, and the participants must be the one (or part of the team) who makes the decisions for the direction of the content and the approach of the public programs that focus on a particular social issue. The researcher contacted all of the potential

house museum sites by email and explained the nature of the study and asked for their consent in the study. All the museum professionals contacted agreed to be part of this research (see Figure 1).

Sites	# of students per year	Location	Person Interviewed
The Molly Brown House	4,000 students	Denver, CO	Education Director
Hermann-Grima and Gallier House	4,000-5,000 students	New Orleans, LA	Education Coordinator
Tenement House	44,000 students	New York, NY	Evening Events Manager

Figure 1: Professional Participants Data

Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

All three interviews were conducted over the phone and were audio recorded. The interview questions were opened ended and organized into three categories: programming, mission/visitor impact, take-away for other house museums. For example, this question was asked during the programming section of the interview "*what are the key elements in these programs, or in other words the overall structure of the program that make them ideal for visitors?"* (see Appendix A). On average, the interviews lasted 46 minutes.

Preceding each interview, the researcher provided a definition of a social issue to create an understanding that both parties could agree on. A social issue was defined as "a condition, or set of conditions that influences the wellbeing – physical, emotional or otherwise – of a considerable number of individuals within a society, and is largely beyond an individual's control, and is disputed or considered problematic by some segment of society," (McCreery,

2015). Participants were also welcome to add suggestions or make alterations to the definition if they wished, however none did so. Every participant agreed that the above listed definition of a social issue applied to their programming at their respectable institution.

Data Analysis: Interviews

The interviews were transcribed and key trends and themes were identified through iterative readings looking for general categories of understanding that fell within the domain of each research question (Yin, 2009) (see Appendix D). Finally, the researcher compared data from the three house museum sites and examined the themes that emerged on individual levels and compare that collectively with the other sites. For example, to understand the importance of visitor engagement in historic house museums the researcher pulled data from the following interview quotes (see Appendix D); “We need to know that we are getting through to our public and what we are doing is appropriate and what they want to see in our museum,” and “[w]hat is really unique about our institution is that connecting to your own personal life and there’s always a story to tell.”

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

This chapter begins with a description of each of the three institutions that encompasses historical and contemporary information to provide context. The three sites are diverse in many ways: budget, staff size, programs set in place and geographical regions. The remainder of the chapter is organized into three sections to answer the following questions. What do these programs look like? How do these public programs operate? What kind of impacts do they intend to have on students and their community?

Site Descriptions

The Molly Brown House

The Molly Brown House was originally built in 1889, in the vibrant Capitol Hill neighborhood at 1340 Pennsylvania Avenue, in Denver Colorado (see Figure 2). It was commissioned by well-known architect William Lang who combined classic architectural styles such as Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, and refined neoclassical styles. The Molly Brown House is a classic example of a Victorian era home. Margaret Brown and her husband James Joseph "J.J" were sold the house in April 1894, and it remained in Margaret's possession until her death in 1932. Margaret "Molly" Brown, also known by her nickname "the Unsinkable Molly Brown" from the Titanic tragedy in 1912, is most well-known for her activism in women's rights, children's rights, passion for the Denver community, and her humanitarian endeavors across the globe.

In 1958, the house was purchased by Art Leisenring and used as a boarding house for men until it was leased to the city in 1960. For the next decade the city of Denver underwent an urban renewal process and sought to demolish many Victorian era homes to create space for high-rise apartments in the local community. In 1970 local citizens of Denver formed "Historic Denver Inc." which eventually saved the Molly Brown House from demolition. Through massive media coverage and fund raising, Historic Denver Inc. was able to purchase the property and restore it back to its original nature.

Since its opening to the public in 1970, the staff at the Molly Brown House have served over two million visitors. The Molly Brown House explores "the dynamic between past and present, [to] shape a stronger community for the future to inspire engaged citizens" (Mollybrown.org, 2011). The Molly Brown House is a nonprofit entity that promotes to "preserve, educate, and advocate," to their community for the greater good of society (Mollybrown.org, 2011). Like many historic house museums in the country, the Molly Brown House has a small staff of only five full-time individuals, and a limited budget. But they offer both on-site and off-site programming for their students and visitors.

The off-site programs allow educational programs to go to schools, libraries, and other after-school programs. Other larger institutions offer off-site programming for their patrons, but the Molly Brown House's outreach is unusual for small historic house museums. The Molly Brown House has made a substantial effort to make their resources accessible to all. Currently, nearly 50% of the schools served at the Molly Brown House includes students that receive free and reduced lunch (Mollybrown.org, 2011). Every program at the Molly Brown House aligns with Colorado State Standards for education and incorporate interactive hands-on 'sensory' learning experiences to their students. Additionally, the Molly Brown House is a Tier III

Organization associated with "SCFD: Citizens of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District," meaning that they receive annual state funding (Mollybrown.org, 2011). The museum is focused on and driven by their community, as can be seen in their mission:

> "The Molly Brown House Museum is committed to enhancing the city's unique identity by telling the story of Margaret 'Molly' Brown's activism, philanthropy and passion through educational programs, exhibits and stewardship by the dynamic between *past and present*, we shape a stronger community for the future to inspire engaged citizens," (mollybrown.org, 2011).

Figure 2: The Molly Brown House. *Photo Courtesy of Historic Denver Inc.*

Hermann-Grima & Gallier House

The Hermann-Grima was built in 1831 in the historic and renowned French Quarter at 820 St. Louis Street in New Orleans Louisiana (see Figure 3). The Gallier House was built in 1860 and is located ten minutes from the Hermann-Grima House, at 1132 Royal Street. The Hermann-Grima House was built with Federal and Georgian styles of architecture, which was uncommon during the 19th century in the French Quarter. The Hermann-Grima House is thought to be one of the earliest examples of American architecture in the French Quarter. Similar to the Hermann-Grima House, the Gallier House was designed by James Gallier Jr., a notable architect during the 1800's, which combines both Georgian styles and Italianate features. Both of these historic house museums were originally built by the 'Free People of Color' by a majority of women, and are both accredited National Historic Landmarks.

The Christian Women's Exchange, now known as the *Women's Exchange,* is a benevolent nonprofit organization which seeks to empower women, bought the Hermann-Grima House in 1920 to utilize the space as a boarding house for women until the early 1970's. In 1975, the building was restored and reopened as a museum and is owned and operated by the Women's Exchange. Similarly, the Gallier House was acquired from Tulane University by the Women's Exchange in 1996 and opened to the public as a historic house museum. The entire building of the Gallier House represents the time period of the 1850's. However, at the Hermann-Grima House each room inside of the building explores different time periods of the French Quarter, ranging from the 1860's until the 1920's in a 'timeline' flow.

The Hermann-Grima House is where all of the school tours and public programs occur because it is the larger of the two sites. A major part of the Hermann-Grima House's mission is to educate its visitors,

> "[w]e are dedicated to sharing the history of our great city with our student visitors. We believe that dynamic, content-rich programming has the power to inspire a lifelong love for our diverse and unique New Orleans culture," (hgghh.org, 2015)

The Hermann-Grima House is focused on sharing more of a story than just the house alone: "they work to tell the stories of the enslaved workers who lived and worked there, the Free People of Color that built the property, but most importantly to tell the story why New Orleans was built and rebuilt," (hgghh.org, 2015) and the value of community.

In addition to history, the public programs at the Hermann-Grima House focus on math, science, archaeology, art, and geography. The Hermann-Grima House follows American Alliance of Museum (AAM) Education Standards (see Appendix B), Common Core Standards (see Appendix C), as well as Louisiana State Curriculum Standards. Hermann-Grima House is an AAM accredited museum. The Hermann-Grima House serves private and public schools for students aged from pre-k through 12th grade, universities, while also serving students of all socio-economic circumstances. All programs at the Hermann-Grima House include interactive, hands-on type of experiences for their students so they will get the full immersion educational experience. The historic house museum operates with a relatively low budget, and small staff of only about ten full-time staff members.

The Hermann-Grima house museum connects its patrons with the past by utilizing the space of the historic building to give a historical context, but then the Exchange Shop is used as a means to bring their visitors back to present day society. *The Exchange Shop* is affiliated with the Women's Exchange organization to help support women and the Hermann-Grima House

only allows local women artists to sell their artwork in the shop to support the community and women artists.

Figure 3: Hermann-Grima House Museum. *Photo Courtesy of www.hgghh.org.*

The Tenement Museum

The Tenement Museum was built in 1863, located in Manhattan in New York City and resides at 97 Orchard Street (see Figure 4). Originally, the five story building was used as an apartment complex for 7,000 immigrants from over 20 nations between 1863 and 1935. Now the tenement building is used to educate over 44,000 annual students on tolerance and working class immigrant experiences at the National Historic Site (Tenement.org, 2015). When the tenement was housing immigrants in the 19th and 20th century, there were originally 20 apartments available for rent – over time some apartments were converted into retail shops and basement space, eventually leaving only 16 apartments. However, in 1935, the owner of the tenement was

unable to keep the building open to its boarders and was shut down and left in this 'time capsule' state. This preserved the tenement living conditions during the late 19th and early 20th century. For the next 50 years, the apartments remained in ruins. Ruth J. Abram and co-founder by Anita Jacobson, founded the Tenement in 1988. They restored the building and eventually reopened the space to the public as a museum. As a historian and social activist, Abram wanted to build a museum that focused on working-class immigrants to tell their stories.

The founders of the Tenement Museum recognized "the importance of this seemingly ordinary building, the Tenement Museum has re-imagined the role that museums can play in our lives," (Tenement.org, 2015). After researching the lives of those individuals who lived in the tenement during the early 20th century, the museum was able to open its first restored apartment in the tenement building in 1992 - which was lastly inhabited by the German-Jewish family Gumpertz (Tenement.org, 2015). In 2007 the museum was able to purchase additional property on 103 Orchard Street and converted that space into a visitor center, exhibition space, as well as space for classrooms and education night programs.

The Tenement Museum is dedicated to connecting past and present to their visitors which can be seen in their mission:

> "[t]he Tenement Museum preserves and interprets the history of immigration through the personal experiences of the generation of newcomers who settled in and built lives on Manhattan's Lower East Side; forges emotional connections between visitors and immigrants *past and present*; and enhances appreciation for the profound role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America's evolving national identity," (Tenement.org, 2016).

The Tenement Museum offers both on-site and off-site programming to their visitors, which range from K-12 students and adult programming in the evenings. Through tour programs visitors are able to get a glance into the past while the "tours offer insights into current debates about immigration," (Tenement.org, 2016) which has always been a part of the vision the Abram wanted.

All of the on-site programs follow AAM standards and New York State Standards, and the Tenement Museum is an AAM accredited museum, and a member of the National Park Service (NPS), and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The educators at the Tenement Museum wish to create interactive hands on environments for their tours and students. Currently there are six apartments restored inside the Tenement Museum – the most recent highlights the apartment life of the 'Moores' Irish immigrants who were living at 97 Orchard Street in 1869.

The Tenement Museum is still considered a 'small' historic house museum with a relatively low annual budget, and a somewhat small staff of over 10 full-time staff members. The Tenement Museum is a member of the *International Coalition of Sites of Conscience* which is an organization that has a mission to "activate the power of places of memory to engage the public in connecting past and present in order to envision and shape a more humane future," (Sitesofconscience.org, 2016). However, the Tenement Museum has received multiple private and federal grants over the years for their work with immigration issues in New York City and historic preservation.

Figure 4: The Tenement Museum. *Photo Courtesy of www.tenement.org*

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What do public programs in historic house museums that connect past and contemporary social issues together look like?

To answer this question, the researcher asked the participants to discuss in detail the actual programs currently implemented at the historic house museum they currently reside, as well as the target audience for these programs. The researcher asked each of the professional participants two specific questions; *What kinds of public programs are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues currently implemented at your institution?* And secondly; *Please explain how your institution decides to choose particular programs to implement. Is there a*

criteria that you look for when deciding which programs would be most appropriate at this museum? These questions were asked to get a better understanding of what kinds of social issues are being discussed at each site, as well understanding the criteria that each site uses when determining which program to implement or continue to facilitate.

a) Programs at the Molly Brown House

The Molly Brown House has a lot programs and most, if not all, use Margaret's life as an example for others to follow. The age range for school groups varies, from 1st grade to 9th grade and higher, although typically on average the Molly Brown House serves children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade. Like other educational institutions, the Molly Brown House follows state education standards – such as Common Core and Colorado State curriculum.

The most substantial program that deals with connecting social issues from past to present is the '*Legacy Program*', which focuses on historic preservation and urban renewal. Denver Colorado is one of the fastest growing cities in the Midwest to the Southwest and the program teaches, typically to younger students, the importance of preserving the past through historic preservation and being more active about it. Students are encouraged to design and build a town in the time period of the 1850's to the 1950's so they can explore this idea of activism and preservation. The other program that deals with social issues is called *'Molly the Activist'*, which looks at Margaret's life under a fine microscope and explores her activism with women's rights, miner's rights, children's rights, animal rights, and historic preservation. The program encourages students to use Margaret's life as an example, and to understand what she did for her community in the hopes that the students will want to become an activist for their own causes in the Denver community.

Many of the programs focus on historic preservation and urban renewal such as: *Denver Grows!*, Lego City, and Mining Lab. Other programs discuss Margaret's experiences on the Titanic in Uncovering the Titanic: An artifact exploration, and Titanic Shuffleboard. There are three new programs that have opened at the Molly Brown House in 2016 that discuss social issues in the turn on the century in Denver Colorado. The three new programs that center around the theme of women's history and are called *Fops, Frocks, and Fashion at the Turn of the Century*, *Women in Colorado: From Pioneers to Engineers, and Speaker's Bureau* (which is directed to 6th grade students and older).

"We work off of Margaret's life, so we look at what she did in her lifetime and how we can evolve those into today," one interviewee explains how all of the programs are brought back into the context of Margaret's life and how her passion and activism can be used to educate students about their importance to society. The program *Molly the Activist* looks finely into this concept of shaping students to eventually turn into good citizens of Denver to preserve the city and the culture through the lens of Margaret Brown. The overarching themes of the programs at the Molly Brown House is women's history, historic preservation, urban renewal in the city of Denver, community based history and activism for human rights. Each program is specifically designed to make a lasting impact on its students, in the hopes that once they leave the historic house the students will become more active citizens in their communities.

b) Programs at the Hermann-Grima House

The Hermann-Grima House focuses on two particular social issues in their programming with students: women's suffrage and slavery. This institution serves a diverse range of students, from elementary aged children to the University level, but typically they serve students in 3rd, 4th,

and 5th grade in their public programs. The Hermann-Grima offers both on-site and off-site programming for their students that range from a variety of subjects to highlight the two social issues that they wish to focus on. There is some adult programming done at the Hermann-Grima House, but those programs are less focused on social issues.

All of the programming is based on tiered system which relies on the intellectual interactions of students that are connecting the past with the present. The programs at the Hermann-Grima House uses the following guidelines to stay current with their students: STEM, Common Core, AAM standards, as well as the Louisiana Association of Museum Standards. They also look at other historical house museums in the region for advice on what works for them, or what may not work well. Most important to these programs is the idea of sharing the history of New Orleans to their visitors and students, and to make that lasting impact on the students as they continue their education. Education and programming is built into the mission of the Hermann-Grima House.

Sometimes these programs are designed specifically for what a teacher may need for his or her class at the time. For instance, if the class is exclusively studying the geography of Louisiana then the Hermann-Grima House may re-develop a program that is particularly focused on geography in New Orleans for the optimal learning experience for students. But the overarching themes that are addressed at the Hermann-Grima House are the issues of slavery and women, and how that relates to today's society and community within Louisiana and students.

c) Programs at the Tenement Museum

Every year the Tenement Museum serves approximately 44,000 students (tenement.org, 2016). The Tenement Museum offers two different kinds of public programs. Guided tours

during the day, which are designed for school groups. In the evening the Tenement Museum offers night public programs called *'Tenement Talks'* which are a 'free series of lectures by historian, storytellers – focusing on larger issues of immigration, NY history and culture'. The day tours at the Tenement Museum are led by an educator and are catered to school groups, and sometimes private night groups (available on Thursdays). The visitors come through the museum and the programs discuss about a wide range of social issues, but mostly deal with the idea of community, labor, minorities, and immigration in the United States.

These day tours specifically explore social issues through the lens of the people that used to live in the tenement, as well as explore their histories and stories. Most programs begin at the visitor center at 103 Orchard where the students and/or groups will begin by understanding the building itself and exploring who used to live in the tenement. Through examination of primary documents that piece together the past, students will then better understand the broader sense of who was living in the tenement and what they were contributing to society. The guided tour typically lasts for about 60 minutes.

The Tenement Museum facilitates both on-site programs and off-site walking tours of the space around the historic house museum. Additionally, the Tenement Museum offers both private and public programs in the evening that have a range of topics that are discussed. Typically, *Tenement Talks* are aimed towards adults and university students, but sometimes younger students and children will come with their parents or school groups. The Tenement Museum does try to connect with this younger demographic for programs, but this can be challenging because *Tenement Talks* are held in the evenings. The night programs discuss further the social issues that are brought up in the day tours in the Tenement building through storytelling and expanding upon the museum's mission to discuss contemporary issues about

immigration in New York City. The *Tenement Talks* are used as a 'forum for ideas' and have a variety of topics, some of which may include food culture in New York City and others might dive even deeper into immigration in the United States as a whole.

Ideally, the tenement tours are meant to be combined with the neighborhood walking tours to get the full effect of life and times of immigrants on the Lower East Side of New York City. Specifically, the neighborhood walking tours highlight how the neighborhoods have changed drastically within in the past hundred years. Then to wrap up the visitor experience, the *Tenement Talks* are a great way to explore further discussion about social issues that may have been brought up during the day on either of these programs. "The issues that we are discussing is what human beings deal with on a daily basis," said one educator.

Research Question 2: How do these programs operate and function on a daily basis, and can they be used as a guide for other historic house museums?

This section will answer the question of 'how' these public programs are structured in these historic house museum sites and examine more specifically what the actual elements, design features, methods, and structure of the programs that are used to create effective communication. To answer this question, the researcher asked the professional participants at each site to expand upon their descriptions of their current programs and discuss the elements, design features, methods, and structure of those programs. The researcher asked if there had been any evaluation done for their programs, and what the overall public perception was.

The idea behind this research question was to understand the programs themselves and to see if each site's programming model(s) can be used as a guide for other historic house museums in the field that may not currently have public programs implemented at their institution. Each

site operates a little bit differently based on the overall visitor size of the institution, but the programs are similar in the following ways: every program incorporates an interactive sensory experiences, hands-on activities, visitor engagement, entice thought provoking discussion, and in some form, have a very out there 'active' programming model. The researcher asked four questions to each of the professional participants about their institutions program design and implementation processes. For instance, *what are the methods and design features of these programs. What works well for the intended audiences?* and *what are the key elements, or in other words, what is structure of the programs?*

a) Interactive sensory experiences

One interviewee commented on the importance of incorporating hands-on activities into public programs in house museums, "a lot of people just don't want to do a tour any longer, they want to have that interactive sensory experience." An 'interactive sensory experience' in the context of public programs in museums can be thought of as an experience that includes all of the human senses in a structured learning environment, usually but not always, this excludes the sense of taste (sometimes taste is incorporated into cooking classes). Both interactive sensory experiences are combined with hands-on activities for students to grasp the program concepts and learning goals. It is important for students to really immerge themselves in these sensory learning environments so they can get the full in-depth experience of the concepts that the students are learning through these programs. By gathering this content through the hands-on approach, students will be able to retain that information more effectively and that information becomes memorable to them.

> **“**The things that work are the interactive hands-on sensory learning experiences. So using everything, expect taste of course, to give them that in-depth experiences because, if we are just standing up there and lecturing at them for an hour they aren’t going to take anything away. But if they have that interactive experience with you, where you’re passing around artifacts or you’re building towns or they get to look at a railroad up close, these are the experiences that they are going to thrive from. I don’t do any of my programs without something hands-on.”

All three sites incorporate hands-on interactive sensory experiences into their programming, because it has proven to be most effective at these sites. For example, at the Tenement Museum one of the key elements to their programming staff is to keep a consistent theme throughout an entire tour. Each student that goes through the program is able to use what they have learned on the tour and incorporate into their own school curriculum. “With all of these programs there is always some kind of activity component to it, I love that,” one manager commented. One educator comments on the importance of sensory experiences to learn new materials, “there always must be something interactive and hands-on that the students can do, I don’t do a program without it.”

b) Visitor engagement

The results suggest it is important for historic house museums who are currently struggling with a waning interest in them to be actively present in their communities. Public programs are a necessary element to balance this, one educator comments: “[w]e need to know that we are getting through to our public and what we are doing is appropriate and what they want to see in our museum.” By keeping visitors engaged with the content at these house museums, the visitors are more likely to return which is vital for historic house museums. House museums struggle with this issue of ‘seen it once and done’ dilemma, that there is not a lot of incentive for visitors to return once they have already been through the house museum. Public

school programs are a way for house museums to alleviate this by creating new programs to support the education of students that come to their property on a class field trip. One interviewee comments on this struggle and the programming model that she uses when designing programs for students:

> "What we didn't want to do was to walk people through our house museum and give them the feeling of the 'glass crystal house' where you can't touch anything or experience anything. We wanted to get away from that all together. But we have a collection, so you can't touch everything. But we found that if you have just a few things in each room, a few things in each place that people can touch, that they can wear, they can smell, just engage with their other senses, at any age, makes a big difference – they get more out of it than just following someone around who is just talking."

> "We base it all [programming] on a of course some really basic principles which are: we make it personally appealing to young people, and families as well because we do have family groups, which is a whole family affair – parents, siblings will participate as well. So we like to make sure, no matter what it is, a narrative or a hands-on activity, that it is appealing to them personally and they are able to relate to it, and they are engaged."

By creating customizable programs for students and teachers that follow certain principles and standards, house museums are able to better understand their audiences needs and give them exactly what they ask for. At the Hermann-Grima House, each tour is modified to fit a certain school groups' needs. The programs at this site are set up in a very precise way, in which there is a three tiered system set in place to engage students who participate in these programs. The first tier is called 'narrative', in which students learn the content through visual aids as well as through the context of storytelling, and hands-on activities.

The second tier is called 'creating', and it mainly has students creating and constructing things that are relevant to the history that they are learning about. It is very interactive and hands-on, but differs from the next tier slightly. The third tier is called 'adventure' where students can use this opportunity to participate in even more hands-on activities such as doing mock

archaeology digs to learn more about the local histories at the Hermann-Grima House. One coordinator commented, “we like to provide an environment where, usually younger people, can walk into a museum and not feel like they’re in a time capsule and they have to put their hands in the pockets, we want them to feel like they are experiencing it not just with their eyes.”

c) Thought provoking discussion

Like other museums that wish to discuss social issues, this does come with some risks when the subject matter becomes too sensitive. However, none of these three sites have had serious issues and each site agreed without a doubt, that integrating social issues into their programming aligns specifically with their mission as an institution. Each of them already had social content weaved into their programs since the inception of the institution, however one site had recently undergone a ‘refresher’ within the past ten years and had to update their programs to make them more current.

However, this does not mean that these sites shy away from dealing with sensitive social issues in their programming – but rather they have adapted a new approach to get their message across to their students and visitors. One interviewee commented, “[w]e do our best not to get too controversial because we don’t want to polarize our public, but it does open up that conversation for folks.” Historic house museums can be thought of as a ‘community sense of place’, because these institutions are so community driven and are beacons for local heritage, many times house museums are considered a ‘safe place’ to have these social, and sometimes controversial, conversations in a safe structured environment.

“Smaller group dynamics work better, the visitors feel more confident to speak,” one manager explains how group dynamics can affect the flow of conversation on a tour at the

Tenement Museum. Ideally, the smaller the group the more likely people are willing to honestly speak their minds – but this of course is not always the case. Evening Tenement Talks are a way for young adults and adults alike, who freely decide to attend, to start discussing the social issues that are brought up during the program. The topics vary, but they generally have a reference point to discuss local New York history in some capacity. At the very least visitors who attended these day tours and night programs will become encouraged and inspired to continue the conversation with their friends, family, or coworkers, once they leave the building.

Research Question 3: What is the overall societal impact and social justice that historic house museums hope to have on their community and intended audiences?

This section of the chapter will seek to answer the question of 'why' historic house museums are incorporating new and innovative public programs for their audiences, and what this means for their communities and the school groups and students that they hope to reach out to. To answer this question, the researcher asked questions to the professional participants about their institutions overall mission and impact that they wish to have on their student visitors. For example, *what kinds of impacts does your institution like to have on school groups or families that participate in your public programs?* and *Does the idea of addressing social issues fit into your museum's mission?*

The idea behind this research question was to understand the institution's mission in more detail and the specific reasoning for incorporating social issues into their programming – and any particular issues that they have faced bringing social issues into their programs. But most importantly, this research question sought to answer what kind of impacts that each of the sites wish to have on their students and community. There are two goals to this research

question: first is to understand the societal impact that these programs hope to have on their communities and what implications that has for the future, and secondly, is to recognize the social justice within these programs and what visitors and students will take away from the programs that they attend. There are three main categories that were described:

1. Appreciate the heritage and history of their local community.
2. Become better citizens in their community by becoming activists for causes that are important to them.
3. Educating students to become more socially aware.

a) Appreciation of local heritage

Typically, historic house museums are small community driven institutions that preserve, interpret, and share local heritage. House museums can be thought as a piece of a communities' identity. In small communities, sometimes people do not understand or know of the cities local history. Historic house museums are a vessel to grow a deeper appreciation of local heritage and continue the community's legacy. This appreciation to learn more about local heritage, is bridge between connecting the past with the present - historic house museums are more than able to connect with their visitors. "We want to take the younger generation and interest them enough that as adults they'll come back and bring their children. To give it a bit of that legacy," said one educator on the importance of continuing the legacy of local history. This relates to the public perception of what 'memory' means to people, both on a privately and publicly.

b) Create more 'active' citizens

One of the most crucial parts of the public programs at these three sites is that they wish to create more active citizens within their own communities. The word 'active' can be thought of as someone who is more enthusiastically involved in their community and pursues opportunities to change society for the greater good. At the Molly Brown House, programming is centered around using Margaret's life as an example for their students to go and get out in their local communities to make a difference.

> "As far as our school groups go, through our programming we want them to understand how they can be better citizens to their community, become involved in their community and how when you're learning about Margaret's story you learn how she just jumped in there. She just did things, she wanted to make a change and how we can still do that today. Granted yes there are a lot more people in the world, it might seem a lot more daunting to make a difference today but there is still that opportunity for you change things. So there is that, you can become an activist citizen in your community and that's one of the biggest things that we want to portray through all of our school programs."

All of the programs at the Molly Brown House are designed to connect students to Margaret's life, and what they can learn from her experiences of being an activist for women. "She had a passion for the area, the world actually, why can't you? That's one of the biggest things that we try to get through," said one educator. Ultimately, the programs at the Molly Brown House would like to create passion for students in the hopes that can become better 'active' citizens in their community of the city of Denver. They also hope those students will find a cause that is that personally important to them and create change within their own community.

The staff at the Tenement Museum like to think of the museum as a storytelling museum, "Personal narratives and social issues fall naturally into each other when we are talking about a human story," said one interviewee,

> "You have your own story to tell. Your family has their own story to tell and that's a way to create connections between the people that lived at 106 Orchard St. to the visitor. Emotional connection and making people aware that people are still experiencing this today [immigration]. Creating empathy, look at things with a new lens and they can incorporate that into their own community - the impact is to hope to make that connection. It's important to make visitors more aware

Tenement Talks, which are nightly, "are used as a means to connect with more modern stories," said one interviewee. Tenement Talks piece together stories of the people that used to live in the tenement to talk about a variety of current social issues through the lens of the people's lives, their experiences, and what the visitors can learn from it now. If for example, one person sitting in a Tenement Talk lecture feels inspired to take action within their own community then they may tell their friends about it and they might feel inspired to advocate for social change. Word of mouth can be a powerful technique to spread awareness about a particular social issue, or even just information as a whole, and the Tenement Museum relies heavily on this to draw in more crowds for their programs. Through the process of telling stories about human beings, "social issues arise naturally and organically" said one educator.

c) Education

All three of the sites hold very high standards of how they educate the students that participate in their programs, and for the overall lasting impact that they wish to have on them. At the Hermann-Grima House, they focus heavily on educating their students to best of their ability about a variety of subjects, but mostly women's issues and slavery.

> "Our mission, part of our mission, is education. We are part of a women's exchange. So education as it relates to New Orleans, as it relates to women, African Americans, history. We really have always wanted to have people leave with more knowledge on those subjects then what they came in with. Or maybe asking more questions about those things then they came in, or at least thinking about them. We also have restoration and preservation as part of our mission, we try to tie that in as well. But education is really at the top of the list, always has been. Because we are

> art of a women's exchange, it ties in heavily. Bringing it to light and having people think about it, question, learn about it, just be interested."

The Hermann-Grima House states that education is the top priority. "We want them [students] to feel like they feel are experiencing it not just with their eyes. They [teachers] want to see that a visit to our property isn't just go out and play." That it actually is going to be a learning experience, as well as fun," said one interviewee.

Evaluation and Partnerships

Two of the sites have had formal evaluation done on their programs to understand the effectiveness. Many times informal evaluation is executed by giving teachers, students, and other museum visitors in the form of an exit survey that asks the participants to give feedback about the program. Most of the feedback at all three of these sites is positive. Only a handful of times there have been negative comments about the programs or that the subject matter was not appropriate for the institution. The Molly Brown House is a part of the Denver Evaluation Network, which is a membership of 15 museums in the Denver region that promotes 'evaluation capacity' to better understand the effectives of programs.

Partnerships with other institutions are popular with historic house museums. Each of the three sites discussed how much they enjoy partnering with other entities to reach a common goal of serving their community in new and creative ways. Many times these partnerships are with other historic house museums, other museums in the region, nonprofit organizations, and sometimes corporate entities to reach their goals.

> "I've found that most of the time, whether we're working with another house museum or another nonprofit or even a corporate entity, I've found that most of the time it is a positive experience. We are showing the community that we care, we are offering them what we can together and it just kind of gives you a little more solidarity. We're pretty active we like to get out there."

Sometimes these partnerships will include collaborating with libraries, local nonprofits that focus on social issues, as well as community organizations that sponsor local heritage festivals. Each site reported that they partner with at least one other organization every year to be present in their community. However, while speaking to the professional participants each gave the same word of caution - partnering with too many other entities can complicate how programs operate effectively and the host site reaching their goal to better serve their community. Like anything else, if there are too many variables in play there may be some grey area that will emerge when these historic house museums are simply trying to connect with their communities and engage their students and visitors. "We're pretty active, we like to go out there. We are showing the community that we care, we are offering them what we can do together and it just kind of gives you a little more solidarity," said one educator when asked about partnering with other organizations to connect with their community members in beneficial ways.

Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of understanding the results of this research is that there is not a good way to measure whether or not that these site's impacts on students and communities are effective and carry through to adulthood. However, one positive indicator that these programs are productive is by examining whether or not the same school groups re-book a tour or program at the site. The hope is that by going through their programs the students will become two things:

1) more socially aware of the world around them

2) to become an activist themselves, discover something that they are passionate about and to take action about it.

The final portion of the semi-structured interviews with the participants the researcher asked them to expand on their ideas and give advice to other historic house museums in the field that are looking to improve or at the beginning stages of incorporating socially aware public programs into their intuitions. The researcher asked the following question; *what can other historic house museums learn from your institution, in terms of the type of programming and outreach that you do with your visitors?* The final portion of this chapter will discuss what other historic house museums can take away from understanding the programs the sites in this research.

Implications

As this research points out, one way for historic house museums to stay relevant and current in today's changing society is to incorporate new and innovative public programs into their curriculum. One interviewee pointed out, "[s]ometimes the buildings are preserved, but why? Why should the visitor care? Sometimes making those connections to the community will make them [house museums] more current and relevant." Making connections to their visitors and students is critical in making these institutions more engaging to their intended audiences. If historic house museums could tighten their message, or their mission, this could help them connect better with their audiences and even change the impact that these institutions have on their local community and society as a whole. One educator also pointed out the vital piece of information that other house museum should consider for themselves, by "[c]reating context in your historic house goes such a long way, and making sure the community around you has a similar care for that space."

Historic house museums that are looking to incorporate public programs should also the needs of the students that they would like to serve. When thinking about the students' needs first, it is more likely that these programs will generate the institutions mission and message effectively. If these institutions are able to do so, they should use creative and fun programming models while keeping in mind state and national education standards. Sometimes this might mean that house museums may have to come out of their comfort zone, in terms of what they may think is socially appropriate or not. One educator comments on the importance of creating unique and customizable programming for house museums:

> "Designing your programming with the needs of each group in mind so you're not giving a blanket root experience to anyone that just walks in the door. So being more creative if you have the resources. Being flexible if you can do so that you are not getting just this dry repetitive experience, you are appealing to not every individual, that's impossible. But to a little more specific subjects, age groups, a family vs. your retired community."

House museums are unique institutions. They are easily able to connect past social issues to correlating present social issues that are occurring into today's society. The Molly Brown House uses a very specific programming model, which they tend to think of themselves as an institution that has a strategic 'outside of the box' thought process when designing their programs to meet the students' educational needs. Other house museums looking to incorporate social issues in their programs cannot be afraid of doing so. One manager explains:

> "Even with the young professional programs the tagline and topics to talk about during the daylight, so we've talked about prostitution, burlesque, Victorian sex. All of these things that people are afraid to touch with a ten-foot pole because it's controversial. But we are happy to put that right in your face. We're not afraid to talk about those topics. Obviously, we're not going to do that with 3rd graders but with our adult set we can open that up a little bit more."

It is important for museums, as a field, to incorporate programs into their institutions that promote education, advocacy, and discuss social issues – but especially historic house museums

because they have that historical context to feed from and connect it back into modern times. As a ‘community sense of place’, historic house museums are a perfect vessel to begin these discussions with their students and visitors to become activists that will hopefully advocate for social change in the world today.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to describe the ways in which historic house museums develop and implement public programs for school groups and families that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with museum professionals who currently are employed at historic house museums. It is the hope that this research can be used as a guide for other historic house museums that are in the beginning phases of incorporating socially aware public programs into their organization.

The researcher was intrigued by understanding the specific elements, frameworks, and structures of the public programs set in place. It is with this understanding that other historic house museums in the field may begin to understand the importance of 'how' and 'why' these programs are vital for the survival of house museums. Each site in this research offered a different approach to how they handle and discuss social issues in their programs, but each site shares commonalities in their programming models.

The second part of this research explored how these public programs function on a daily basis, and how they operate to serve the students that attend these programs every year. This research suggests that house museums that wish to include public programs into their institution might benefit from the follow strategies: include multiple hands-on activities for students, incorporate interactive sensory experiences, employ visitor engagement as high priority, create thought provoking discussion, and lastly, to adapt an 'active' out in the community programming model to make connections. They should also address state and national educational standards - such as STEM, Common Core, and AAM. It is strategic to create effective programs that will

send the message of the mission of the organization. This is why it is important for any educational organization to incorporate these standards, but especially house museums because those institutions struggle with the idea that many community members face of 'seen it once and done'.

The last part of this research sought to answer what the importance of socially aware public programs is to society, communities, students and visitors alike. The research shows that these sites hope to have three important impacts on the students and visitors that participate in their programs:

1) They hope that students will gain a better appreciation of their local heritage and community

2) They hope that students will feel inspired and empowered to become activists themselves by finding a passion and create social change within their own community

3) They hope to educate students and visitors to become more aware of social issues present in society today.

This research may be beneficial for other historic house museums because it gives concrete examples of institutions who are actively creating and implementing public programs that have a social context element to them. Students, as well as other members of local communities, can benefit from programs that are socially aware and actively seek to make connections with their communities. This can in turn help make communities more conscious about social issues, and hopefully will encourage them to go out there a make a difference in the world.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Script

University of Washington
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Consent Script:

I am asking you to participate in a semi-structured interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to be able to describe and understand public programs aimed for families and school groups in the house museums that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues together. Specifically, how do these institutions approach, develop, and eventually implement these programs into their institution. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. As a reminder, the identities of both you and your museum will be revealed in the final results of this study. This interview will be recorded, and I may quote you in my final paper. I will give you the opportunity to review any direct quotes before publication. If you have any questions at any time, you may contact either me or my advisor using the contact information provided above.
Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Interview Script:

Thank you all for taking the time to speak with me today. Before we begin, I'd like to be sure that we are all on the same page with our terminology. For the purposes of this interview, a "social issue" or "social aspect" may be understood as a condition or set of conditions that: influences the wellbeing –physical, emotional, or otherwise– of a considerable number of individuals within a society, is largely beyond an individual's control, and is disputed or considered problematic by some segment of society. Do you have any questions about the definition that I am using today? Do you want to add or suggest any changes to the definition?

Great, now I would like to begin the interview by discussing and describing the programming at [insert site's name] that is used to talk about past and contemporary social issues. This museum has been identified either in the professional literature, or by other museum professionals in the field, as an institution that works on addressing social issues in its programming. With this in mind:

1) What kinds of public programs that are designed to connect past and contemporary social issues are currently implemented at [insert site name]?
2) Please explain how [insert site name] decides to choose particular programs to implement. Is there a criteria that you look for when deciding which programs would be the most appropriate at this museum?

3) What are the key elements in these programs, or in other words the structure of the program, that make them ideal for visitors? Are these programs more directed towards a specific audience, such as school groups and/or families?

4) Please explain the methods and design features of these programs. What works for the intended audiences? What doesn't?

5) Describe the process – who suggested that [insert site name] take action to create a public program, where did the idea stem from, how did the staff respond? What is the typical procedure for introducing social context into your public programs?

6) Has [insert site name] ever evaluated the public response to such programs, and their overall perceived perspective?

Now I would like to explore the museum's overall mission and impact goals on the visitors:

7) What kinds of impacts, or intended impacts, would [insert site name] like to have on school groups or families that participate in your public programs?

8) Does [insert site name] have a procedure set in place to measure impacts, or intended impacts in these programs? What challenges do you face?

9) Does the idea of addressing social issues fit into [insert site name] mission? In what ways?

10) How does [insert site name] choose which social issue(s) to pursue and discuss in your public programs(s)?

11) Has [insert site name] encountered any difficulties in bringing social issues into your programs? In what ways?

Lastly I would like to gather some information on your opinions on what other institutions may be able to take away from understanding your programs:

12) What can other Historic House Museums learn from [insert site name], in terms of the type of programming and outreach that you do with your visitors?

13) Has [insert site name] ever considered partnering with another institution to collaborate with other to improve your programs in any way? Were there any lessons learned?

14) Do you see any relevancy in these programs at [insert site name] compared to a more traditional structured tour-like program at other house museums?

Appendix B: AAM Museum Education Principles and Standards

Professional Standards for Museum Educators:

Accessibility

1. **Focus on audiences and community**
    - Museum educators have knowledge of and respect for the audiences their museums serves. They promote museums' public service role within our changing society.

2. **Diversity of perspectives**
    - Museum educators use interpretive practice and acknowledge the variety of cultural, scientific, and aesthetic points of view that contribute to visitors' understanding. They create opportunities that enable informed viewpoints to receive judicious consideration.

Accountability

3. **Excellence in content and methodology**
    - Museum educate have a solid ground in the history, theory, and practice of the disciplines relevant to their institutions. They demonstrate knowledge of human development, educational theories, and teaching practices related to the personal and group learning that takes place in museums.

Advocacy

4. **Advocacy for audiences**
    - Museum educators facilitate a spirit of teamwork and collaboration within the museum to promote the best interest of audiences.

5. **Advocacy of education**
    - Museum educators promote education as central to advancing the mission and goals of the museum.

6. **Advocacy to learning**
    - Museum educators possess a love of learning and a commitment to nurture and develop an informed and humane citizenry.

Principles of Best Practice for Education in Museums:

Accessibility

1. **Engage the community and serve the museum's audience**

- Develop and maintain sound relationships with community organizations, schools, cultural institutions, universities, other museums, and the general public.
- Reflect the needs and complexities of a changing society.
- Shape content and interpretation toward relevant issues and create a broad dialogue.

2. **Address and employ a diversity of perspectives**
    - Acknowledge that a variety of interpretive perspectives – cultural, scientific, historic, and aesthetic – can promote greater understanding and engagement.
    - Provide multiple levels and points of entry into content, including intellectual, physical, cultural, individual, group, and intergenerational.
    - Engage members of diverse communities to contribute their perspectives to museum collections and interpretation.
    - Promote the elimination of physical, socio-economic, and cultural barriers to museums.

Accountability

3. **Demonstrate excellence in content knowledge**
    - Master the content related to the museum's collections, exhibitions, and mission.
    - Collaborate with scholars and specialists.
    - Conduct research to advance and improve the museum profession.
    - Provide professional development and training for new and established staff to share current education methods, new media, developments in scholarship related to learning theory and evaluation, and best practices in the field.

4. **Incorporate learning theory and educational research into practice**
    - Base methods and design of interpretation on museum and educational learning theories.
    - Apply knowledge of cognitive development, educational theory, and teaching practices to the types of voluntary, personal, and lifelong learning that occur in museums.

5. **Employ a variety of appropriate educational tools to promote learning**
    - Demonstrate a broad understanding of communication strategies and media.
    - Use techniques and technology appropriate to educational goals, content, concepts, and audience.
    - Involve education staff in the design and use of technology to advance learning.
    - Evaluate the educational tools used by the institution.

Advocacy

6. **Promote education as central to the museum's mission**
    - Ensure that education is clearly incorporated into the mission, goals, and financial strategy of the museum.

- Include educational considerations in interdepartmental discussion involving planning, development, and implementation from conception to completion.
- Integrate educational expertise into exhibition design and interpretation.
- Contribute museum education expertise to a broad array of institutional efforts to discover and address the needs of the community.
- Share responsibility for the economic health of the institution and demonstrate management skills related to fiscal and human resources.

7. **Set goals and measurable objectives and adopt strategies to achieve and document them**
    - Develop interpretation with specific educational goals supported by integrating content and learning objectives for targeted audiences.
    - Develop interpretation to serve the academic mandates of school, college, and university standards or mandated state education frameworks for schools.
    - In an ongoing and ethical manner, collect data from and about visitors to measure learning and document the impact of the museum experience.
    - Collect data from visitors and non-visitors to determine the best education services to meet their needs and interest.
    - Incorporate evaluation findings into the planning and/or revision of interpretation.
    - Distribute research results to the learner, the museum community, relevant academic institutions, funders, and the greater public to strengthen the field of museum education.

8. **Promote professional development within the museum community**
    - Recognize and share the value of continuous learning with colleagues.
    - Persistently seek opportunities to expand the knowledge of learning theory, education methods, evaluation, media, management, scholarship related to the museum's collections, and best practices in the field.
    - Foster an institutional atmosphere that encourages professional development.
    - Disseminate current ideas through publications and other appropriate media.

9. **Promote a spirit of inquiry and openness to new ideas and approaches**
    - Recognize and share the joys of learning with all people.
    - Promote the complementary nature of formal and informal learning at every stage of life.

10. **Influence public policy in support of museum learning**
    - Work individually and with professional associations to influence public policy at the regional, state, and national levels.
    - Demonstrate to public policy decision-makers the importance of museum learning in a pluralistic society.

More information can be found at http://www.aam-us.org/

Appendix C: Common Core Standards used at Hermann-Grima House

Common Core Standards (Grades 3-5)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2: Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C: Ask questions to check understanding of information present, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D: Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.3: Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.6: Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification. (See grade 3 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.3: Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own identity.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

More information can be found at http://www.corestandards.org/

Appendix D: Coding Book

Facilitator Responses: **How do the programs operate and function?**		
Categories & Themes	*Definition/In Reference to…*	*Examples*:
Interactive sensory experiences	Hands on activities, interactive experiences, in-depth learning, immersion, environment, learning through senses, education, education, programming, customized programs, student needs	"A lot of people just don't want to do a tour any longer, they want to have that interactive sensory experience." "The things that work are the interactive hands-on sensory learning experiences. So using everything expect taste of course to give them that in-depth experiences because, if we are just standing up there and lecturing at them for an hour they aren't going to take anything away." "There always must be something interactive and hands on that students can do; I don't do a program without it." "With all of these programs there is always some kind of activity component to it, I love that." "We found that if you have just a few things in each room, a few things in each place that people can touch, that they can wear, they can smell, just engage with their other senses, at any age, makes a big difference – they get more out of it than just following someone around who is just talking."
Visitor engagement	Engagement with students, learning material, active learning, education, engagement with community, connections, present, active, represent, mission	"We need to know that we are getting through to our public and what we are doing is appropriate and what they want to see in our museum." "We like to provide an environment where, usually younger people, can walk into a museum and not feel like they're in a time capsule and they have to put their hands in the pockets, we want them to feel like they are experiencing it not just with their eyes."

		"What is really unique about our institution is that connecting to your own personal life and there's always a story to tell."
Discussion	Thought provoking discussion, conversations, dialog, social issues, connections, community driven, socially aware, 'word of mouth', storytelling, narratives	"We do our best not to get too controversial because we don't want to polarize our public, but it does open up that conversation for folks." "Smaller group dynamics work better; the visitors feel more confident to speak." "Ultimately we are a storytelling museum, one of the things that we try to reinforce is that 'you have your own story to tell. Your family has their own story' and that's a way to create connections between the people that lived at 106 Orchard St. to the visitor."
Programming Model	Community outreach, connection, partnerships, collaborations, active, present in communities, public programs, mission	"Creating context in your historic house goes such a long way, and making sure the community around you has a similar care for that space." "We're pretty active, we like to go out there. We are showing the community that we care, we are offering them what we can do together and it just kind of gives you a little more solidarity."

Facilitator Responses: **Intended Impacts for students**		
Categories & Themes	*Definition/In Reference to…*	*Examples*:
Heritage Appreciation	Community identity, awareness of local history, heritage, memory, legacy, appreciation of community heritage	"We want the younger generation and to interest them enough that as adults they'll come back and bring their children. That would give us a bit of that legacy."
Become 'active' citizens	Proactively think about the future, involved, active, citizen, member, community needs, connections, activism, students and their community, mission	"Through our programming we want them [school groups] to understand how they can be better citizens to their community, become involved in their community." "So there is that, you can become an activist citizen in your community and that's one of the biggest things that we want to portray through all of our school programs." "The program 'Molly the Activist' looks at Margaret's activism with women's rights, miners, children, animals, historic preservation, and how students can use her as an example of her life and what she did to be an activist today for our cause."
Education	Socially aware, environment, social change, community, 'word of mouth' technique to spread awareness, student needs, education standards, connection, mission, storytelling.	"Social issues arise naturally and organically." "Bringing it [education] to light and having people think about it, question, and learn about it." "Personal narratives and social issues fall naturally into each other when we are talking about a human story. Creating empathy, looking at things with a new lens and they can incorporate that into their community – the impact is the hope to make that connection. It's important to make a visitor more aware." "The most important standard is going to be the education standards, because the majority of students that are visiting us are

		coming from schools and we are kind of designing each program when they come onto the property when the teachers need at the moment.”