

*Public History and the
Freedom Struggle*

Doing Public History at the
National Civil Rights Museum:
A Conversation with
Juanita Moore

MICHAEL HONEY

THE TRAGIC ASSASSINATION of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis on April 4, 1968, dashed many people's hopes for peaceful change in the United States. Twenty-five years later, on the April 4, 1993 anniversary of King's death, thousands gathered at Mason Temple, the site of his last speech, singing and preaching about regeneration and hope. Posters announcing three days of commemorative events, which included a two-day symposium evaluating the King legacy, graced the city's buses. Professor Cornell West opened the events with a keynote address linking King to African-American freedom struggles in the past and present. Young people gathered to learn about King but also to discuss their own pressing concerns with older activists from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Talk shows discussed the significance of King and the movement he led; clergy, union leaders, and everyday people talked about the sanitation strike that brought King to Memphis.

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National Civil Rights Museum Director Juanita Moore.

The “March On!” commemoration and re-dedication to the King legacy, along with many other events in Memphis that carry forward the history of the civil rights struggle, are the result of a new experiment in public history—the National Civil Rights Museum. With state funds providing half and county and city governments each providing one-fourth of the initial budget, the museum now surrounds the old Lorraine Motel, the site of King’s assassination. Juanita Moore directs the museum. Benjamin Hooks is president of the Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation (following Judge D’Army Bailey, the first president of the foundation and one of its key initiators), and various community and business leaders play an active role in museum programs. The facility opened in September 1991, but the struggle for its creation took nearly 20 years, as Memphis tried to decide whether to cover up or draw lessons from the triumphs and the crimes of the 1960s.

King’s death cast a pall over Memphis. How he should be remembered, or whether he should be remembered at all, became a point of contention between the city’s white leaders and its majority-black population. The Lorraine Motel continued to be the site of this contention. Many whites wanted to tear it down and blot out the memory of King, while most African Americans insisted that the motel carried a defining significance for the city. Located in one of the most run-down parts of Memphis, the Lorraine site displayed the poverty King had struggled to end. The owner of the dilapidated hotel created his own shrine to the fallen civil rights leader in the room where King had last resided, while a resident of the hotel led people on informal tours. Ultimately, the black-run radio station WDIA, along with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), launched a campaign to save it. AFSCME pledged \$25,000, while hundreds of ordinary people in the city raised another \$128,000 to buy it in 1982. After seven more years of activities, backers of the museum convinced governmental authorities to fund construction (at initial costs of \$9.2 million), begun in 1989.

The National Civil Rights Museum is one of the first efforts to put the history of the southern civil rights struggle into the tourist books. It has done so without trivializing or oversimplifying that history. Museum displays developed by Ben Wallace, former head of exhibits at the Smithsonian Institution, in collaboration with other historical consultants, offer visitors a living memory of the southern civil rights struggle. The exhibits include highly interactive sets which produce a feeling of “being there” and participating in various struggles. Displays include jarring and disconcerting exhibits of confrontations among the police, supporters, and opponents of segregation; the lethal sterility of a prison cell; and full-sized garbage trucks and sculpted National Guard troops pointing bayonets toward black strikers who hold picket signs saying “I Am a Man.” At the end of the exhibits, one can simply look out on the balcony where an assassin cut Dr. King down, an experience which brings back many of the feelings of pain, grief, and rage many people felt 25 years ago.

The museum's displays recreate the brutality of segregation so graphically that visitors can scarcely avoid their emotional impact. Even those unfamiliar with the events of the 1960s feel the drama and significance of that era and the black freedom movement that propelled it forward. Scholarly historical notes support the exhibits themselves, and an introductory film provides thematic structure, allowing visitors to obtain an overall sense of the history of the movement for equality and justice in the United States.

This kind of public history provides a space for people from all national and ethnic backgrounds to consider together the meaning of the words *democracy* and *equality*. It brings history into the present, forcing us to think about current issues as well as the past. What role does each of us play in upholding or tearing down the kinds of oppression that the civil rights movement struggled to end? How can we emulate the successful efforts of this movement, and how can we understand and know its failures so we don't have to fail that way again? What role should government play in the struggle for decency in the world? Can we all get along, or must we repeat the brutish and sordid racism of the past? These and other questions are surely among those the museum's creators intended for people to ask.

Other such public history efforts are under way. One of them is the Civil Rights Institute, which opened in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1993. It is across the street from the Sixteenth Street Baptist church, where a bomb planted by white supremacists killed four black girls on a Sunday in 1963. Like the Memphis museum, it resulted from an active campaign by members of an enfranchised African-American community. Its location provides an equally poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by men and women who struggled for freedom in the South. Similarly, the memorial to slain civil rights martyrs outside of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery reminds local and out-of-state visitors that many people have fought and died to attain the freedoms, imperfect as they are, that we exercise today. Such public history projects begin to give the searing events of the 1960s and the long struggles for freedom and social justice the kind of representation they deserve. They give tangible expression to the social and public history scholarship so many historians are engaged in today. They also express the work of many ordinary citizens who are demanding a history relevant to their lives, one that will help their children to understand the heritage of the past.

"The thing about this whole project is that you have a lot of people . . . who feel some part of this, that they helped make this happen," according to Memphis museum director Juanita Moore. "I think that people in Memphis are very proud of the fact that they have moved past thinking of Memphis as the place where King was assassinated to a place where you can come and learn more about the civil rights movement itself, as you pay your respects to King and his memory. They have turned that tragedy into a positive for themselves and a lot of people." The museum "is a memorial to all of the people [who] participated in that movement," she said. "It is not just about a few great people, or a few people everybody knows, it is about a lot of folks."

The experiences and observations related by Moore in the interview below suggest how important our history, and the history of the civil rights movement in particular, continues to be, not only for Memphis, but for the world.

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Honey: How did you get into museum work?

Moore: I have worked in museums for about 17 years. I started as a curator at the Ohio Historical Society. Before that, I got a master's in history from North Carolina Central University. I also went to North Carolina for my undergraduate study, except I was a math major (just don't tell anybody!). I did the history because I thought I was going to go to law school. The last place [that I] worked was at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. I worked on that project from basically the beginning. We were three people in an office in charge of planning and building the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center.

With that project came my understanding of what museums could do and what kind of role museums could really play in having people understand their lives and take their participation in community very seriously, because museums can determine how you present history, particularly in a way that masses see it. You have thousands of folks who go through museum doors every day. What they see, and how they determine what is important in history and what is not, and what is significant about someone's life and how the world changes [—] all of those things are presented in museums. I have found that in museums it is much easier to teach people how they can determine those things and how they could help make those decisions about what is presented, people who thought that they could never play a role in that. I think that kind of empowerment to people was something different than most everyday folks and the community felt was possible. As to the content of museums, you always thought that just going and seeing what someone determined should be there was just it. That was history. Particularly with twentieth century history, that is just not true at all because the kinds of objects and the kinds of artifacts and archives that people save and give to you, and what people come in and demand to see, and the stories that they bring to it when they come, really make a difference in what museums can do. People can have input into museums now, whereas before they never thought that they could, so they never bothered.

Honey: You mean the actual visitors have input? By doing what?

Moore: Absolutely. By making sure that their things are there, that the

stories and things in their lives that are important are there, that what makes up their world and their community is there. When public programs are done in museums, it is important that part of those programs include their stories, their lives, and them personally. It is important that they want to participate and become very active in museums.

What happened most of the time, particularly in black communities, was if you have a state historical society or city history museum, blacks never went in there because they knew that it didn't reflect them. Instead of just going in there and saying it doesn't reflect you, you should absolutely demand that they do reflect you and make sure that you are part of their planning. Most of the times these museums are run with public dollars, so this is their obligation. When you have an exhibition on the history of the city or whatever, make sure that history reflects all of the folks that were there. If it is not done, make sure they go back and do it. Go in and say, these are the things you want in there, you want them right there. Make sure that you are very much involved in the dialogues about the history of the city, even the arts.

Museums play a major role in all kinds of issues, particularly in terms of having people understand what is significant about history and the way people perceive it. Most museums insist that all fifth graders or whatever come to their museum. Students see what's in there, and for the rest of their lives they think that is the way it is, unless they are lucky enough to take some other courses somewhere else or explore more on their own. If the museum does not show the whole picture, they are going to go through their entire lives with this perverted view of what this history is about. Those kinds of very biased views . . . are very strong kinds of messages that people in those communities should make sure don't continue.

Honey: To what extent are people around the country beginning to use museums in this more interactive way with communities and really trying to change the falsified images of the past?

Moore: I think much more than before, because in terms of academicians the social history is starting to hit you from the bottom up, and it . . . filters out to the . . . people who walk into museums. It is also true because museums have to compete with the Disneylands and movies and theaters that play for the public's attention. Museums therefore have to make things a lot more accessible and a lot more relevant . . . , so that people will come in and view it. If there is nothing in there for them, they won't come. There is no choice. I think that with much more television you can't leave those same old stories up there because people are getting an inkling that it isn't true. Most groups are speaking out for themselves, in some way or another, so you have many more people who are actively watching to make sure that they are being included. . . .

The other side of the picture is the whole slant in this country to multiculturalism. You know every now and again you get these . . . movements or fads . . . that everybody . . . buys into on some level or another. The multiculturalism thing has been one—one that I think has really helped . . . in terms of having museums change their focus to be more inclusive. You only get a certain audience to look at seventeenth-century silverware so long. That group of people is becoming smaller and smaller that is interested in traveling across the country just to see that.

Honey: Could you tell me a little bit about how the National Civil Rights Museum got started? It is pretty surprising to me that this is here in Memphis.

Moore: Memphis has the dubious distinction of being the site of the assassination of Dr. King. Every time they [people] would say “they killed Dr. King” it sounded like “they” was Memphis. The city itself, always pretty much divided along racial lines, was further divided by the assassination. It had been left with not only the scorn of the world but also this dividedness within the city.

This entire area where the Lorraine Motel is located became very economically depressed once the assassination took place. In fact, a lot of the businesses in the area closed down. The site up the street that had been a hotel, for example, had just been given to the Church of God In Christ because the former owner couldn’t sustain it. Although the Lorraine Motel had not closed down, it became less and less used by out-of-town guests, which was happening to all black-owned hotels anyway because people were able to go into more places, like the Holiday Inn, the Peabody Inn, the Days Inn and so forth . . . and that was happening all over the country.

But because the area became very economically depressed, it became a place of drugs, prostitution, and crime, so people did not want to come into the area; they did not feel it was safe. Even folks that lived in the city didn’t feel it was safe. The rooms became rented out by the month, you know, poor people stayed and rented the rooms out like apartments. It became more like a place of monthly residences as opposed to a motel.

But Mr. Bailey, who owned the motel, was about to lose the motel for lack of paying taxes. So he called the local radio station, WDIA, and said that he was about to lose the motel and he felt that it should be saved and not torn down and made into a parking lot. So he wanted them to do something to help save it.

[So] they got together a committee and then they went on the air trying to raise money all over the city to save the motel. They were able to raise some money, but not enough money to purchase the motel. They then formed a nonprofit group called “The Lorraine Motel Foundation of the Martin Luther King Foundation.” It [the foundation] has had several names

over its life. This nonprofit group set about helping to raise the money to buy the motel. They really had a long tough road.

Finally they were able to raise enough money, and they bought the Lorraine Motel when it went up for auction on the courthouse steps. They got money from numerous individuals throughout the city but also from the AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees] Union. The AFSCME Union gave them a large sum of money. Lucky Hearts Cosmetics also gave them a large sum of money.

The thing about this whole project is that you have a lot of people in Memphis who feel some part of this, that they helped make this happen. [This is] because when the radio station went live, asking for dollars, people gave five dollars, one dollar, two dollars, ten dollars. So you have a lot of people throughout the city that did that. They remember it, so they have history with this project and some sort of commitment to it. I think that this project is very different than any other museum in the country in that way. Not only did local individuals help to fund it, but the AFSCME union put \$25,000 into it. [Total purchase price of the hotel was \$128,000.]

Problem was, once they purchased the motel, they did not have any money to do anything else with it. So they allowed Mr. Bailey to continue to operate it as a motel. The agreement was that he was going to continue to operate it as a motel until they were able to get money to do something else with it. At the same time though, Mr. Bailey had preserved the room in which King had stayed, it was sort of a display, and people did come to see it. Particularly out-of-town visitors, they always came by—if they came to Memphis, they came to the site. Which was even more of an embarrassment to the city of Memphis and a divisive factor among the races of Memphis because it showed the worst, seedy side of Memphis. And people did not want out-of-town visitors to come and see this side of Memphis. Everybody insisted on coming to pay tribute to King, but at the same time black Memphians felt that something should have been done to preserve the site and not let it get into such a state of disrepair. White Memphians felt that you just tear it down and put a marker up and that would be it—and not try to keep dredging up the past—they wanted to let it die.

So you had these people who felt that doing something with the motel and creating a museum would open up so many old wounds and bring up so many other topics that it was best to let that die and not bring it up. Black Memphians at the same time felt that something should be done and that the city should do something. Then the foundation that owned the motel finally got the city, the state, and the county to agree to put up the money for the museum. At that time, Mr. Bailey moved out of the motel, and it was closed down and they started to build the museum. They actually purchased the motel in 1982, and we opened as a museum in September of 1991. The state paid one-half, the county one-fourth, and the city one-fourth. The total project cost \$9.2 million.

Honey: I notice there is a woman across the street from the motel who is protesting, and I understand she has been camping out there in opposition for a long time. Were there others in the black community who felt that the museum shouldn't be built?

Moore: No, I don't think so. I think that Jackie [Smith] was different because she lived in the motel. She has always been here. She was the person that actually did the tours of Dr. King's room for Mr. Bailey. So it was a little different for her. I think that the real thing that got Jackie a lot of public sentiment was that they ended up having to evict her. They put her out on the street because she would not relocate, and she would not be relocated. All of the people that lived there were relocated. I talked to the state architect, and they got places to live for everybody that lived here. They didn't just say, "OK—get out."

Jackie did not want to be relocated. It was agreed that everybody would move out on a specific day. That day Jackie said she would not go, that she wasn't going to move. Of course, then they turned off the electricity to the building, because she wouldn't leave. Then they decided that it was a health risk and turned it back on. Once that kind of stuff started, she absolutely refused to move. They finally just had to evict her from the site. Then she set up camp on the site.

Honey: Did she camp there during the construction?

Moore: Yes. Once they put her out, of course, there was actually quite a bit of public sentiment in her favor because she was saying that it was really a mockery to King's memory to be spending the money doing this. [She felt] the hotel could either be a homeless shelter or a city college. But that was the first time that those ideas came up about it being a homeless shelter or city college. They always knew that they were going to build something to commemorate King. The whole idea about raising this money to build a museum had been going around for years.

Honey: How did that finally shake down in the public mind, especially in terms of the African-American community? That the money was used to do this as opposed to doing a college or something?

Moore: Memphis has Shelby State College, so they have . . . a city college and you already have four colleges in this city. So it is not like there are not plenty of schools here. There are four or five old motels in this area alone. So it is not like there aren't plenty of sites to use for a homeless shelter. Within five minutes walking from here you have that many. At the time, the number of abandoned buildings in this area was staggering. You have lots of places that you can do homeless shelters in this area. In fact, there is one motel right up the street that they are starting to renovate for low-income or homeless [people].

Honey: So what was the next phase? You came into this when?

Moore: The building was under construction when I came into it. Once they had the money, they started building it and working with the exhibit designs, the historians, and so forth. I was not in it at that point. That part was all done by the time I got involved. Ben Wallace, former head of the exhibits at the Smithsonian, and Eister Hold Associates . . . of Kansas City, were the designer consultants. The historical consultants were Spencer Crew of the Smithsonian, and Jim Horton of George Washington University. Those were the ones that were hired. They talked to thousands of other people. The state actually owns the building and it is operated by the Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation. (This is the title that it has now.) The board of that is all local, with the exception of Ben Hooks, chair of the board. Judge D'Army Bailey held this position in the formative years of the foundation. The board meets quarterly. They have executive committee meetings monthly. A lot of the work is done by volunteers, particularly on weekends. We do have a staff, but the volunteers run the museum on weekends.

Honey: What is your estimation of what kind of effect the museum is having?

Moore: It has really created a sense of pride and community for Memphis. I think that people in Memphis are very proud of the fact that they have moved past thinking of Memphis as just the place where King was assassinated to a place where you can come and learn more about the civil rights movement . . . as you actually pay your respects to King and his memory. They feel that [although] there is nothing that they can do about the fact that it is the site of the assassination, they have turned that tragedy into a positive for themselves and a lot of people.

The museum allows them the opportunity to understand more about who King was, what his message was about, what his contribution has been to the country and the world. People just don't dwell on the negative side of it anymore. They don't think of it as "us" and "they." When they think of the civil rights museum, they think of *our* civil rights museum. Everybody takes pride in that, as opposed to feeling guilt or shame about the assassination. You get that sense from talking to people as they come in, or as other things happen around the museum where there have been public statements. You get this sense even from the city officials. As the city publicizes it at the Visitor's Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, any of these places, the museum gives them something to say, like "we are the home of the civil rights museum." It is much more of a "we" kind of thing. Even the Peabody Hotel, in . . . its marketing and publicity publicizes it. Like Graceland [Elvis Presley's home]. We get a great many of the international visitors from Graceland. That's because at Graceland they give out our brochure to all of the visitors.

I have talked to many Memphians, and they used to say "I haven't been

down to that Lorraine Motel in years, I wouldn't take any visitors past there." Because they were ashamed to bring them down here, even though everyone wanted to come. Now it is the place to bring visitors when they come into town.

You talk about the fact that this is where Dr. King was assassinated, but you don't dwell on it. You also talk about what is beyond that. So they do in a sense bring up the positives of the movement, or what needs to go on beyond that, as opposed to the death.

Honey: It would seem like this would have repercussions in terms of people in the South trying to assimilate what happened in the sixties and early seventies. Do you get any sense of that happening among people coming from out of state or from around the region?

Moore: Yes, you get a sense of that. A lot of people from around the region came religiously to the Lorraine Motel every year no matter what condition the site was in. These people have been back since the museum [and] they are proud of Memphis for what Memphis has done with the site and with the fact that they are showing some respect for the memory of King. And [not] just [to] the memory of King. It is the site of the assassination of King, but it is not a memorial to King. It is a civil rights museum. It is a memorial to all of the people that participated in the movement.

This gives most people a much broader picture of what the civil rights movement was about and what was accomplished and who participated. Many of those people that came to pay their respects were in the movement. Now they [can] come back to something in their honor as well, and they see themselves in a lot of the pictures. They see marches or events in which they were major participants. It is a lot more than just coming back to the site of the assassination now—it is coming to a remembrance of a major part of their lives and a major event they were a part of. It becomes much broader, much more for them too, definitely a place of pride.

It is not just about remembering one incident, it is about remembering a whole period of their lives and a whole period of history that changed things quite a bit for them and a lot of other people. I can't tell you how many people come here and talk about the kind of pride that they feel in being able to come to a place where they can remember and they can feel that this is their story being told. And it is not about just a few great people, or a few people everybody knows, it is about a lot of folks. It really puts their remembrance of King into context. It puts it much more into perspective.

Honey: What other things do you do besides having the exhibits? Can you tell about what other things happen here?

Moore: We do public programs, changing exhibitions, and live interpretations within the exhibitions themselves. We do collaborative programs, with

other organizations from within the community that we think fit into the mission of what we are trying to accomplish. We don't do everything on site, either. We do some things off site.

Honey: That brings me to the April Fourth, 1993 conference on the legacy of Dr. King 25 years since his death, which Julian Bond, Linda Reed, I, and a number of others collaborated with you in organizing. What did it do that maybe is different than you might normally experience in a museum?

Moore: I think that the April Fourth conference did two things. First, it helped bring scholars together with activists, and also activists on a lot of different levels, to help tell the story of what went on during that time. When I say activists on a lot of different levels, I mean people who are active today as well as people who were active then.

Secondly, the conference sort of blended those messages and talked about what happened and what the lessons were from that period. It followed through with what is happening and what is going on today, what the problems are and what the solutions are as well; . . . where do you go from here and how do we continue to utilize the results of the movement; as well as [discussing] the things left undone and how do we go forth from this point. [It helps to] bring a whole host of people together to talk about and think about these things as well as to have the resources there that can add perspective, historical perspective as well as present-day perspective.

Honey: So would it be fair to say that not only do you have people coming in here from outside who find that this is a place that helps them to understand the history and make the best and most positive use of it, but you could also use the historical museum as a way to put present issues into some kind of working relationship with this past?

Moore: Absolutely. Yes, I think that you help put present problems into context, because people understand how it got to be how it is. Therefore it helps them deal somewhat with the solutions that are coming before them now or else helps them come up with better solutions. It also helps them to not go back and do the same thing, the old solutions that did not work before. I have found that people, particularly like those dealing with the Memphis schools right now, are coming up with solutions partly by saying "we tried that but it didn't work before," and trying something new. All of that history comes back up and it stops them from going through the same kinds of problems from old solutions that didn't work before. You have a lot of people who understand how things got to be the way they are and then how that fits in with the rest of the world and the rest of the country. As they talk about how to make things different, and do things different and how to make things better, they have history to draw from.

Among the younger people you have people whose knowledge of those

struggles is basically nonexistent, and now you have the opportunity for them to come and learn from the lessons of the civil rights movement. Then they can be a part of the new solutions. They are the ones who are probably going to have to implement them in the future.

A lot of times when you talk about King and you talk about “the movement,” we talk about it as if we think everybody understood it, that everybody knows everything there is to know about it and that everybody heard King’s speeches and read them and listened to them through and through. But that is not true. Most people have heard excerpts from the “I Have a Dream” speech, and that is about it for the majority of people. Or they may have heard an excerpt from the “Mountain Top” speech. Having only heard excerpts from those two major speeches, they don’t understand that a lot of the issues that we talk about today are the same issues that King dealt with and that they are not new. . . . the kind of solutions that he was offering would be very helpful to them now. I think coming here to get a better sense of understanding about the message of King and the movement overall is much more important than just paying your respects to the memory of the man. At that point you get a sense of how far we’ve come but how so much further we have to go. Our bookstore also makes much of the new literature on the civil rights movement available to them.

Honey: I know there is the monument to the civil rights martyrs in Montgomery, Alabama, and there is the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Ohio, and that they are talking about making one at the Smithsonian. Now there is the Memphis National Civil Rights Museum and the newly-built Civil Rights Institute and museum in Birmingham. I bet years ago nobody would have been able to envision this happening, especially when the struggles were going on, or even ten years ago.

Moore: Absolutely not. I think that for one thing, . . . tourism . . . has played a major part; black tourism and the number of dollars, and this whole international interest in southern history. There is a major interest by international visitors in southern history. The kinds of tourism dollars that come out of that is phenomenal. A major part of southern history is . . . guess what? Civil rights. We see people from everywhere, Japan, Germany, England, France, Belgium, Australia, Korea, Italy, Africa, South America. Tourism has played a major part in folks being interested.

Honey: What might you tell other people that are thinking of trying to do something similar in their own communities? You’ve told us a lot already about what you have learned through this process, what works and why it works, but what are the things to watch out for? What doesn’t work? I think there are a lot of people doing public history now and there are a lot of social historians, who like myself, spend years and years trying to dig up the story

of a community and then it gets published in a book, and they go on to something else. I don't know if anyone ever accesses this stuff or not.

Moore: I think part of it is that sometimes historians want to do their own thing. But if that institution already exists within your community, you can make that institution much more accountable and much more involved in making sure that the entire story is told. Make sure that they give [your work] the kind of space and attention that it deserves.

Needless to say, it is really tough to develop a space, and maintaining collections is very expensive. So if there is an opportunity to collaborate with something that is already there, and I mean a true collaboration, not you just give everybody your stuff and then you walk away from it, then take advantage of that opportunity. A true collaboration is a . . . good way to go.

Honey: It sounds like one thing that you are saying is that it is not very effective for a historian to write a book, come in and give the museum the book, and say “that’s my contribution.” There is more to be done than that. Maybe the historian has more responsibility than that.

Moore: I would like to think that a historian would want to get much more involved and to agree to do lectures. I would really like to see historians much more involved with museums. In learning how to do exhibitions, and how to utilize the objects, not just in the written form, but also making use of the objects in helping to tell the story. Because you’ll get many more people to hear that story and also help to make sure that it is a complete and truthful story.

Honey: I think there is often a real gap between people who write and research history and people who put it out into the public realm, through a museum or in some other way.

Moore: I think it is sort of a separateness between the history and the culture. Even in terms of theater and dance, all of these forms are all available and there is not this sort of separate side. That is what I think museums need to do too, to be much more involved in terms of the whole cultural interpretation as opposed to just the exhibit. And you know we do that here too. We do have a “Culture and Courtyard” program. . . . We did concerts, theater, festivals, etc. . . . You present the information in a layered form [so] that there is something for everybody. Not everyone is going to come and read all of these labels we have. Some people will not watch all of the audiovisual that is here.

Through interpretation, a character, somebody will get a . . . good feeling of what it was like to be a part of that Little Rock incident, in a way that they would never get from reading the exhibit labels. I think that there are all

kinds of ways in which we can present that information to the public. We have to utilize all of that. The research that is used in developing the script, creating the dance, producing the art, all of those things, allows the work of a historian to be utilized and gives the historian an opportunity to be a much more involved part of it.

Honey: At the beginning you told us you had gone to law school and intended to become a lawyer. How did you shift over to museum work? That is kind of a drastic shift from law school.

Moore: No, not really. Both are public. The law idea was because I used to like constitutional history. So the museum stuff is not that different except that it is much more involvement with people, much much more public, more product-oriented. It is interdisciplinary, and I always loved the arts. In history we never talked about the arts at all. I liked dance, drama, and theater. I liked talking to those people, and I liked what they did. I liked their viewpoints, their thinking, how they saw the world. They never tried to rationalize things too much. They saw things that way and that was it. They didn't have to agree with what was going on. They were sort of looking for change most of the time, looking for ways to change things, or ways to express something in a different way with a different group of people. I like that a lot. . . .

History gives you a background and a basis so that you can talk about anything. You can add all kinds of stuff to that. It puts things into perspective for you because you understand where it comes from. History prepares you for learning. That is exactly what it does, it prepares you to learn. If you believe that learning is a life-long process, you should major in history because it allows you to add layers and layers of stuff on to it and makes it easy to put things into perspective. I think that anybody that is in any position to create solutions for people's lives needs to have a major in history.