

# Living History Guidebook



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## Background & Purpose

Most Living History organizations have little to no resources to establish and improve their living history programming offered by reenactors and organizations. This particularly applies to resources for much-needed programming improvements for numerous Living history organizations in the areas of creating effective displays, educational programming, approaching museums and other organizations for collaborative events, and much more.

This project aimed to develop an online resource guide featuring museological practices to enhance living history programming and community engagement. This content was initially developed to support the efforts of the Northwest Viking Alliance but is being made publicly available to help other groups implement these practices locally and on national and international scales.

Using the resource guide, living history participants inside and outside of the Northwest Viking Alliance will learn about integrating museological practices into their demonstrations and practices. Such information has not been compiled in a readily usable online resource guide before. In addition, it will allow for organizations and reenactors to further improve their abilities to educate and engage with their audiences both in person and potentially online through the usage of their website(s) and social media presences.

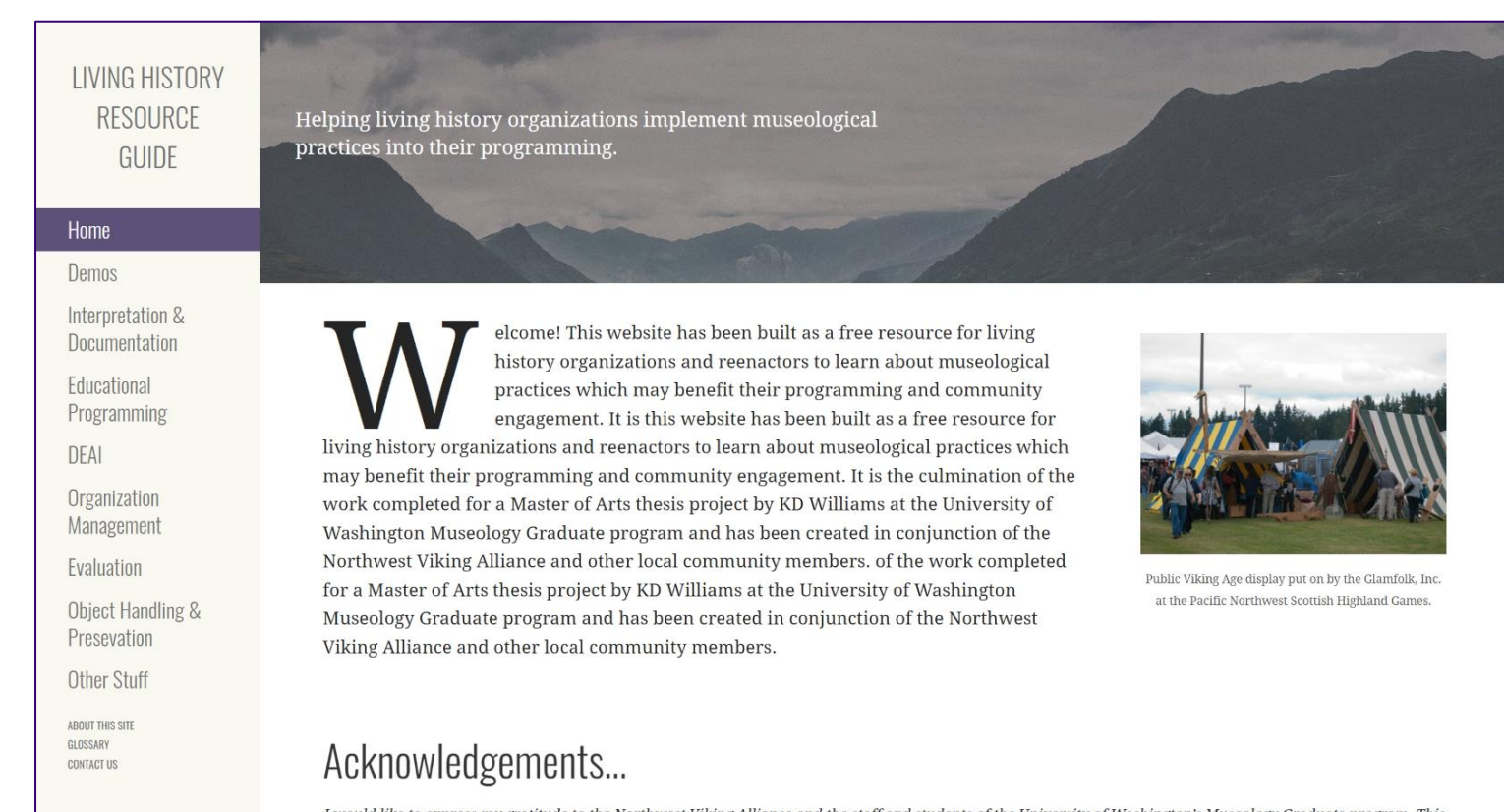
Additionally, by highlighting the skills and services available to museums, schools, and other organizations by the Northwest Viking Alliance, more individuals and groups will be able to engage with the Northwest Viking Alliance not just locally but on a global scale as well.

[www.LHRG.org](http://www.LHRG.org)

## Deliverables:

Through a partnership with the Northwest Viking Alliance, the following products have been developed for this project:

- > *Content brief* with articles that will be posted for the initial public release of the website.
  - > Articles in the brief feature museological practices that can enhance living history demos and programming offered by reenactors and organizations both inside and outside of the Northwest Viking Alliance.
- > *Proof-of-concept content page* on Grant writing which shows how the material from the content brief will appear on the website.
- > *Website framework* on WordPress which shows the structure of how the resource guide will look:



The Living History Resource Guide website: <http://www.lhrg.org>

## Process & Activities

In order to accomplish the goals of this project, a multifaceted approach to museological research was required to compile the most helpful information into articles for the guidebook.

- > An informal front-end evaluation was used to reach out to the living history community at large via a voluntary online survey
  - > The results of this survey helped to guide and prioritize content creation to fit what living history communities all over the world want to learn from the museology field.
- > Living History Museum museological resources were studied to pull out a wide assortment of valuable information for the guidebook with minimal need for significant reframing to make the content applicable to living history organizations.
- > Resources concerning pop-up museums, exhibit design, grant writing, and more were also studied to draw out valuable museological knowledge which can be applied to help run living history organizations efficiently, set up more effective temporary living history demonstrations, and more.



An annual public demo put on by the Northwest Viking Alliance at the Poulsbo Viking Fest in Poulsbo Washington.

## Implications

The communities served by the Living History resource guide reach far beyond the narrow focus and service area of the Northwest Viking Alliance, which is an “alliance of living history, experimental archaeology, Viking and pre-Viking age reenactment groups in Washington, Oregon Idaho, and British Columbia.”

- > When presented with the concept of learning about how to integrate museological practices into Living history programs, many individuals and organizations expressed interest in learning more.
- > By making Living History museum resources which historically only served a subsector of the museology industry available to non-museums, programming can be improved upon, and best practices established for organizations that set up pop-up living history displays.

## Final Thoughts & Acknowledgements:

- > This project is just the founding of something that will genuinely help many living history organizations improve their educational programming, public displays, organizational operations, and more.
- > None of this would have been possible without the support and input given by my host site, The Northwest Viking Alliance. It is an honor to help continue the organizations' outreach and teachings and outreach by creating this resource with the generous intention of sharing it beyond their membership and freely helping living history organizations worldwide.
- > I would also like to thank everyone at the University of Washington Museology Graduate program. This project would not have been possible without your teachings and support. Getting through all of this during a pandemic was hard, but we did it!
- > Finally, I would like to thank my thesis committee, Angie Ong, Dena Cowlshaw, and Troy Storfjell. You all have taught me so much over the years I have known you. Many of these lessons have helped make me a better person. Thank you for all your guidance and support!



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