

Gone Haunting: Exploring the Use of Mission-based Ghost Tours  
in Historic House Museums

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**Abstract**

Struggling historic house museums (HHMs) are in need of tailored, innovative programs to increase visitation rates and maintain financial solvency. The purpose of this study was to explore the use of mission-based ghost tours for revenue in various HHMs to determine guiding practices for this type of museum programming. In-depth interviews with museum professionals involved with creating and administering ghost tours, participant observations of the tours, and document analysis of promotional materials and internal reports provided insight into the logistical considerations, motivations, and ways of connecting ghost tours to mission from three HHMs. Study results suggested that ghost tour programs have the potential to be designed for museums of different sizes, and that they can be designed with multiple types of educational content. Additionally, this study suggested that ghost tour programs can be financially lucrative for HHMs, they can help sustain visitorship through reaching new audiences, and it is possible to ensure that ghost tours in HHMs are reflective of their educational mission. The results of this study offer house museum professionals some suggestions on designing and implementing their own ghost tours—one type of innovative programming.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Stanley Hotel in Estes, Colorado, a rumored-to-be haunted historic hotel and the one which inspired Stephen King's iconic novel *The Shining*, hosts as many as 24 sold-out ghost tours every day in their summer season and as many as 14 per day during their off-season.<sup>1</sup> At \$28 a person, these tours bring in a significant amount of revenue for The Stanley while educating tour-goers on the hotel's past. The tours intertwine local legends and spooky stories from past guests and staff with the history of the hotel's founder, F.O. Stanley, famous guests who have stayed there throughout the hotel's years of operation, and its importance to the history of Colorado.

As a whole, historic house museums are struggling to remain financially secure.<sup>2</sup> Like The Stanley in a few key ways, historic house museums are typically sites that have some sort of historic significance, and are opened to the public for the purposes of conveying the stories of the sites' former occupants. The two differ in that unlike places like The Stanley, most house museums are nonprofits which manage their institutions under an overarching mission statement, and for historic houses the scope of history from which to draw from for programming tends to be even narrower, often focused primarily on one specific family, unlike The Stanley which can draw from the histories of its larger population of guests. While writing about historic site visitation, Max van Balgooy writes that between 2002 and 2008, visitation rates for historic

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Lattanzio, "Stanley Ghost Tour Popular with Park Visitors," *Our National Parks*, published May 6, 2011, [http://www.ournationalparks.us/west/rocky-mountain/stanley\\_hotel\\_ghost\\_tour\\_popular\\_with\\_park\\_visitors/](http://www.ournationalparks.us/west/rocky-mountain/stanley_hotel_ghost_tour_popular_with_park_visitors/).

<sup>2</sup> See Max van Balgooy, "NEA Survey Reveals Patterns in Historic Site Visitation," *Engaging Places*, published March 5, 2013; Michelle Zupan, "The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses," *American Association for State and Local History*, published October 28, 2015; J. Freedom du Lac, "Struggling to attract visitors, historic houses may face day of reckoning," *The Washington Post*, published December 22, 2012.

houses dropped by nearly 10 million individuals.<sup>3</sup> Michelle Zupan, Chair of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) Historic House Committee, wrote that while the number of house museums is up, attendance numbers and revenue are down.<sup>4</sup> She goes on to write about the need for “innovative options and alternatives for historic house museums.”<sup>5</sup> In this increasingly globalized society, these museums—which by nature are more intimately focused on the personal stories of their past occupants—are in need of programs that are exciting enough to draw in visitors while at the same time staying tied to their missions. Tailored, customized programming is one such way that historic houses are trying to address this problem. Offering mission-based ghost tours is an increasingly popular option for historic houses looking to strike a balance between the needs of their mission and their need for crowd-drawing programs.

From the literature, we know that house museums are struggling economically from decreased visitorship. Many sources are recommending conflicting solutions, mainly disagreeing on how to maintain the mission of conveying the personal histories of the houses, while at the same time coming up with innovative programs that entice visitors to come. We also know that many house museums have added ghost tours as a revenue stream. From works in the sociology field, we know that forming ghost stories is a way that people attempt to connect to the history of particular sites, and that they are a popular form of entertainment. From literature on intersections of education and entertainment, we know that combining the two can help people to remember learned material. We also know that the specific histories of the sites are very

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<sup>3</sup> Max van Balgooy, “NEA Survey Reveals Patterns in Historic Site Visitation,” *Engaging Places*, published March 5, 2013, <https://engagingplaces.net/2013/03/05/nea-survey-reveals-patterns-in-historic-site-visitation/>.

<sup>4</sup> Michelle Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses,” *American Association for State and Local History*, published October 28, 2015, <http://blogs.aaslh.org/the-scary-truth-facing-historic-houses/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

important to this form of connection-making, from sources studying dark tourism. However, we do not know how museums have decided on this type of programming, how the tours are structured, or what the best practices are.

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of mission-based ghost tours for revenue in various historic house museums in order to determine guiding practices for this type of museum programming. The study is driven by three research questions:

1. What is the nature of ghost tours in historic house museums, and how are they implemented?
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?

### **Significance**

This research is significant both for historic houses that are not currently offering this type of programming, as well as for those that are. For historic houses that are struggling with declining visitorship and are searching for new programming options, this research could provide them with models from the top examples in the field of historic ghost tours used by similar organizations. For historic houses that are already utilizing this type of programming, this research could provide them with insight into the practices of others in the field, in order to begin establishing some idea of best practices for the use of historic ghost tours. Because the study focuses on institutions that claim to possess ghost tours that are specifically linked to mission,

this research demonstrates how organizations can craft ghost tours that tie a popular form of entertainment with mission.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review seeks to establish the context for understanding ghost tours offered within historic house museums (HHMs). This will be done by examining sources within four main topics—the struggle within many house museums to maintain visitation rates that are financially viable while preserving mission; the creation and consumption of ghost stories as explored within a wide variety of fields including sociology, literature, and psychology; museum and historic site tourism; and the mechanics of the ghost tourism business.

Due to field-wide concerns for the future of many HHMs, much has been written on possible causes and solutions to the house museum problem. Gaining a wide variety of perspectives on how this troubling issue might be mitigated gives the field more information for professionals of struggling institutions to draw on. This research offers potential help and guidance for the future health of the house museum industry.

Literature on why people tell and consume ghost stories can offer insight into the recent rise in public fascination with ghosts and ghost-centered entertainment. This can work to increase understanding of why and how engaging in ghost tourism has come to be a lucrative option for many institutions.

Exploring the body of research on museum and historic site tourism provides information on important aspects of this field, such as connection to an educational mission within museums and the significance of site authenticity for tourists to historic sites. This allows for the later relation to be made on how these aspects apply to ghost tourism within institutions such as HHMs which serve as both museums and historic sites.

The final section seeks to describe the history and characteristics of ghost tourism as seen by people within the tourism field. This is particularly important to this study because literature on these subjects help to establish common practices within ghost tourism, so that they can be properly identified within the cases researched.

### **House Museum Attendance and Financial Issues**

HHMs are struggling to remain financially secure due to decreases in visitorship.<sup>6</sup> While writing about historic site visitation, Max van Balgooy stated that between 2002 and 2008, visitation rates dropped by nearly 10 million people, and that participation rates have “steadily fallen since 1982, perhaps even accelerating.”<sup>7</sup> Michelle Zupan, Chair of the AASLH Historic House Committee writes that while the number of house museums is up, attendance numbers and revenue are down.<sup>8</sup> There are over 15,000 house museums estimated to exist in the United States today, which is more than four to every county.<sup>9</sup> According to J. Freedom du Lac, a reporter researching house museums in Virginia, house museum visitation rates have been in a sharp decline for many years, all across the country.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Max van Balgooy, “NEA Survey Reveals Patterns in Historic Site Visitation,” *Engaging Places*, published March 5, 2013; Michelle Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses,” *American Association for State and Local History*, published October 28, 2015; J. Freedom du Lac, “Struggling to attract visitors, historic houses may face day of reckoning,” *The Washington Post*, published December 22, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Max van Balgooy, “NEA Survey Reveals Patterns in Historic Site Visitation,” *Engaging Places*, published March 5, 2013, <https://engagingplaces.net/2013/03/05/nea-survey-reveals-patterns-in-historic-site-visitation/>.

<sup>8</sup> Michelle Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses,” *American Association for State and Local History*, published October 28, 2015, <http://blogs.aaslh.org/the-scary-truth-facing-historic-houses/>.

<sup>9</sup> Marian Godfrey, Barbara Silberman, and Tanya Barrientos, “What to Do With These Old Houses,” *The Pew Charitable Trust*, published April 30, 2008, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2008/04/30/what-to-do-with-these-old-houses-spring-2008-trust-magazine-briefing>.

<sup>10</sup> J. Freedom du Lac, “Struggling to attract visitors, historic houses may face day of reckoning,” *The Washington Post*, published December 22, 2012, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/struggling-to-attract-visitors-historic-houses-may-face-day-of-reckoning/2012/12/22/349116b6-4b93-11e2-a6a6-aabac85e8036\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.e907692c9d5f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/struggling-to-attract-visitors-historic-houses-may-face-day-of-reckoning/2012/12/22/349116b6-4b93-11e2-a6a6-aabac85e8036_story.html?utm_term=.e907692c9d5f).

One example of a house museum closing due to a decline in numbers of visitors, rendering its foundation no longer able to afford the preservation costs of the building, is the Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee.<sup>11</sup> According to a statement released by the Kington Management Corporation, the Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee in Alexandria, Virginia was operated as a museum for thirty years by the Lee-Jackson Foundation, before being closed and sold to private owners in 2000.<sup>12</sup> In a similar situation, Carter's Grove, a plantation near Williamsburg, Virginia that was formerly open to tourists by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, was closed and sold to private owners in 2006. Carter's Grove was then neglected to the point of some deterioration before being sold again to another private owner who now plans to restore the building.<sup>13</sup> After years of its preservation needs being unmet because the museum who leased it was unable to raise the required funds, the Polhemus House in Newark, New Jersey was declared structurally unstable and torn down in 2011.<sup>14</sup>

Many explanations have been offered by professionals in the field for the cause of this decline in participation. Three of the most commonly reported causes are outlined in detail in the book *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* by Franklin Vagnone and Deborah Ryan. For much of the research behind *Anarchist's Guide*, Vagnone and Ryan facilitated discussions with over a thousand museum professionals and visitors of HHMs, reached through social

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<sup>11</sup> PR Newswire, "Kington Family Seeks Non-Profit Organization To Purchase Robert E. Lee's Boyhood Home," *PR Newswire*, published May 11, 2000, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/kington-family-seeks-non-profit-organization-to-purchase-robert-e-lees-boyhood-home-73137872.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Susan Svrluga, "Colonial Williamsburg sells Carter's Grove Plantation after bankruptcy," *The Washington Post*, published September 19, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/colonial-williamsburg-sells-carters-grove-plantation-after-bankruptcy/2014/09/19/ebe79418-403b-11e4-b0ea-8141703bbf6f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.537e9cdb4a77](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/colonial-williamsburg-sells-carters-grove-plantation-after-bankruptcy/2014/09/19/ebe79418-403b-11e4-b0ea-8141703bbf6f_story.html?utm_term=.537e9cdb4a77).

<sup>14</sup> Stephanie Cherry-Farmer, "A Landmark Loss In Newark: Polhemus House to be Razed," *Preserve NJ*, published October 21, 2011, <https://preservationnj.wordpress.com/2011/10/21/a-landmark-loss-in-newark-polhemus-house-to-be-razed/>.

media.<sup>15</sup> From their data, they argue that two primary explanations for declining visitorship to HHMs are a lack of belief, on the part of the public, of the modern connection or relevance of HHMs to their own lives; and the public's idea that HHMs are stagnant with never anything new to see.<sup>16</sup>

Speaking to the first of these explanations, Vagnone and Ryan write that HHMs fail because of their “inability to draw connections between the real-life, quirky, and emotional experiences from the house's past and the same sorts of feelings in the visitors' own homes.”<sup>17</sup> Here, Vagnone and Ryan speak to an often unrealized opportunity for HHMs to draw in a wide range of visitors through telling stories that the public can relate to. They then quote Paul Reber, Executive Director of Stratford Hall, as saying, “Historic House Museums are important for the very reason that they are domestic dwellings, and through that personal space, we can learn about real people, lives and history.”<sup>18</sup> Vagnone and Ryan go on to say that HHMs should be aware that visitors want to “make a personal connection with the people and spirit of earlier times.”<sup>19</sup>

*Anarchist's Guide* later proposes stagnancy of subject matter and displays as a second reason for the decline in visitation to HHMs, stating that, “Museums cannot remain stagnant as visitors, technologies, interests, and the world around us change.”<sup>20</sup> Vagnone and Ryan say that

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<sup>15</sup> Franklin Vagnone and Deborah Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> See Max van Balgooy, “NEA Survey Reveals Patterns in Historic Site Visitation;” Michelle Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses;” J. Freedom du Lac, “Struggling to attract visitors, historic houses may face day of reckoning.”

<sup>17</sup> Vagnone and Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Reber quoted in Franklin Vagnone and Deborah Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

many HHMs function more like staged dollhouses than the former homes of real, live people.<sup>21</sup> By this, they mean that in many HHMs, furniture and objects remain displayed in the same precise locations throughout the years, as if frozen in time. This gives the rooms in these historic houses a more impersonal impression, and diminishes the ability of visitors to imagine families living their daily lives within them, thus not allowing visitors to make connections between their own lives and the history of the house.

Experts in the field are conflicted on the best solution to the issue of declining HHM visitation. One group posits that house museums should move away from the common mission of conveying their properties' histories altogether, and move more toward the broader focus typically found in other types of museums.<sup>22</sup> In his article, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" Richard Moe writes that HHMs need to "rethink and expand their purpose."<sup>23</sup> Peter Linett, in his article, "Haunted, Happily: Why the Barnes Case Matters," protests the Barnes Foundation's separation of Albert Barnes' personal history from his art collection by moving his collection out of his historic house.<sup>24</sup> During his critique, he writes about the recent push by some in the field away from the personal stories that have been characteristic of house museums in the past.<sup>25</sup>

Some sources even make the argument that house museums that are in financial trouble should consider more extreme solutions such as closing their doors and moving their collections

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>22</sup> See Richard Moe, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" (2012); Peter Linnett, "Haunted, Happily: Why the Barnes Case Matters," (2004).

<sup>23</sup> Richard Moe, "Are There Too Many House Museums?" *Forum Journal* 27, no. 1 (2012), retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/494513>.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Linett, "Haunted, Happily: Why the Barnes Case Matters," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 47, no. 2, April 2004, retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2004.tb00112.x/abstract>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

to buildings that are easier to maintain, or selling their properties to private owners who can afford the preservation costs.<sup>26</sup> Moe writes that in order to do right by the historic buildings they hold in trust, house museums that are struggling to financially provide the care their properties need should consider selling to private owners.<sup>27</sup> Donna Harris echoes this sentiment in her book, *New Solutions for House Museums*.<sup>28</sup> Harris writes about legal methods historic sites can use to ensure the future safety of their properties after they have been sold into private ownership, such as obtaining legal assurances from the buyers that the site will be protected.<sup>29</sup>

Another side of this debate, however, maintains that the mission of house museums should be preserved, and that the best solution is to make more innovative programming to attract new audiences.<sup>30</sup> Zupan writes about the need for “innovative options and alternatives for historic house museums” in order to remain sustainable.<sup>31</sup> Vagnone and Ryan echo this sentiment, suggesting that HHMs “build into their experiences and narratives both changeable and complex environments.”<sup>32</sup> They also state that HHMs should “tease them with mentions of new stories and upcoming experiences.”<sup>33</sup>

*In Anarchist’s Guide*, Vagnone and Ryan speak at length on creative programming options that utilize as much of the historic house as possible. During their research for *Anarchist’s Guide*, they established several sites within architectural studios, graduate classes,

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<sup>26</sup> See Richard Moe, “Are There Too Many House Museums?”; Donna Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums* (2007).

<sup>27</sup> Moe, “Are There Too Many House Museums?”

<sup>28</sup> Donna Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums* (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2007)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> See Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses”; Vagnone and Ryan, *Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums*.

<sup>31</sup> Zupan, “The Scary Truth Facing Historic Houses.”

<sup>32</sup> Vagnone and Ryan, *Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums*, 137.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 108.

workshops, and HHMs in order to test methods of creating “experiential habitation” for visitors to experience. From experimenting with these different methods, they determined a few key suggestions for HHMs. One of their main suggestions is to allow visitors access to usually denied spaces; to let them peek into the sometimes less polished, generally hidden areas within the house such as basements, servants’ quarters, closets, and attics.<sup>34</sup> Vagnone and Ryan argue that this strategy provides HHMs with a way to engage visitors further using the physical resources already present within their properties. The authors also suggest that HHMs focus more of their funds on new programming options, and less on fully restoring and preserving their buildings.<sup>35</sup> Although Vagnone and Ryan do not directly call out ghost tours as a programming option for HHMs, it seems to meet their criteria for innovative experiences that connect visitors on a personal level to the past inhabitants of historic house museums.

### **The Creation and Enjoyment of Ghost Stories**

People have written about the formation of ghost stories in human cultures from within several different fields including sociology, folklore studies, psychology, and literary theory. Michael Bell, place sociologist, demonstrates the history of this topic in the sociology field when he writes that, “Sociologists have long recognized the widespread sense among the peoples of the world that things are often imbued with spirits and personified sentiments.”<sup>36</sup> Much of this literature claims that forming ghost stories is a way people attempt to connect to the history and past occupants of particular sites.<sup>37</sup> Bell writes that the sensing of ghosts in particular places is a

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Bell, “Ghosts of Place,” *Community and Environment Sociology* 26, no. 6 (1997), retrieved from <http://dces.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2013/08/bell-1997-ghosts.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> See Bell, “Ghosts of Place” (1997); Lottes, *In Search of Maryland’s Ghosts: Montgomery County*; King, *Danse Macabre*.

natural way that humans connect to a place.<sup>38</sup> He says, “What I am describing is, I believe, a common feature of the human experience of place... We constitute a place in large measure by the ghosts we sense inhabit and possess it.”<sup>39</sup> Bell goes on to explain that people imagining locations in which a lot of human interaction has taken place over time as being haunted is related to the idea of a person having a soul.<sup>40</sup> He writes, “We also experience objects and places as having ghosts. We do so because we experience objects and places socially; we experience them as we do people. Through ghosts, we re-encounter the aura of social life in the aura of place.”<sup>41</sup> Christopher Gordon, Director of Missouri History Museum’s Library and Collections, echoed these ideas when he was quoted as saying, “Ghost stories exist because most people want some kind of tangible connection to the past.”<sup>42</sup> So legends about the existence of ghosts can often arise from a desire of people to access the past.

In his analysis of the horror genre, *Danse Macabre*, author Stephen King writes on the connections people make through ghost stories when he says, “Ghosts, in the end, adopt the motivations and perhaps the very souls of those who behold them... What is the ghost, after all, that it should frighten us so, but our own face?”<sup>43</sup> He goes on to explain that in a famous ghost story of the literature realm, *Ghost Story* by Peter Straub, “the book suggests we need ghost stories because we, in fact, are the ghosts.”<sup>44</sup> He then explains the reasons for this to be the contradiction between the human belief in the importance of souls and our awareness of the

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<sup>38</sup> Bell, “Ghosts of Place.”

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Gordon quoted by Naomi Eide in “From History to Haunted: Past Events, Lore can Become Today’s Ghost Stories,” Capital News Service, published October 29, 2015, <http://cnsmaryland.org/2015/10/29/from-history-to-haunted-past-events-lore-can-become-todays-ghost-stories/>.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), 272.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

shortness of our life spans.<sup>45</sup> King writes, “Is this really such a difficult or paradoxical idea when you consider how short our lives are in a wider life-scheme where redwoods live two thousand years and the Galapagos sea turtles may live for a thousand?”<sup>46</sup> Throughout his analysis of the ghost story archetype he continues to highlight these types of stories as a way that humans connect both to themselves and the past. This can be seen once again in the quote, “The past is a ghost which haunts our present lives constantly,” which attempts to show that humans represent the past through the belief in present ghosts.<sup>47</sup>

We also know that the specific histories of sites are very important to this form of connection making. When writing about haunted houses in particular, King says that houses are uniquely good environments for the inspiration of ghost stories because of the nature of homes.<sup>48</sup> This is explained when he writes, “Our homes are the places where we allow ourselves the ultimate vulnerability.”<sup>49</sup> King follows this with a description of the importance of the history of a specific place to the development of ghost stories about it, in which he says, “One might even say that the truest definition of a haunted house would be a house with an unsavory history...the haunted house tale demands a historical context.” Bell also writes about the importance of a particular site and its authenticity to each ghost story. An example of this can be found in this quote: “The experience of ghosts in particular places...is not happenstance. Ghosts have good reason to haunt the specific places they do. These reasons derive ultimately from the character of our social experience.”<sup>50</sup> This importance of connecting to specific places in ghost stories is also

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 279.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*, 281.

<sup>50</sup> Bell, “Ghosts of Place.”

agreed upon by Karen Yaffe Lottes. Yaffe Lottes, author of *In Search of Maryland's Ghosts: Montgomery County*, gathered ghost stories in order to use them to connect a younger audience to the history of her county. In the article, "From History to Haunted: Past Events, Lore can Become Today's Ghost Stories," by Naomi Eide, Yaffe Lottes was quoted as saying, "Oral history, the process of recording an individual's memories from the past, can connect and ground someone to the local community."<sup>51</sup> Damon Talbot, a special collections archivist at the Maryland Historical Society reiterates this concept when he says that, "Ghost stories are more akin to an oral tradition."<sup>52</sup> Meaning that, according to Yaffe Lottes' description of oral tradition, ghost stories are a way for people to connect to the past of specific communities.

Ghost stories are a popular form of entertainment because they appeal to several different aspects of human nature.<sup>53</sup> On the topic of why people are attracted to stories that scare them, Stephen King writes that it is a way for people to face unknown horrors in a safe medium, in order to prove to them that they can come out the other side of it having survived.<sup>54</sup> He describes this feeling when he writes, "For a moment—just for a moment—the paradoxical trick has worked. We have taken horror in hand and used it to destroy itself... For now, the worst has been faced and it wasn't so bad after all."<sup>55</sup> King goes on to explain that the confrontation of ghosts, and, as a result, death, that happens through the formation of ghost stories is a way for people to

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<sup>51</sup> Lottes quoted by Naomi Eide in "From History to Haunted: Past Events, Lore can Become Today's Ghost Stories."

<sup>52</sup> Talbot quoted by Naomi Eide in "From History to Haunted: Past Events, Lore can Become Today's Ghost Stories."

<sup>53</sup> See Bell, "Ghosts of Place" (1997); Lottes, *In Search of Maryland's Ghosts: Montgomery County*; King, *Danse Macabre*.

<sup>54</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

celebrate that they themselves are alive.<sup>56</sup> This reasoning was echoed in a TED talk in which author Neil Gaiman made a speech on why scary stories can have such a powerful impact. He states that, “We have been telling each other tales of otherness, of life beyond the grave, for a long time; stories that prickle the flesh and make the shadows deeper and, most important, remind us that we live, and that there is something special, something unique and remarkable about the state of being alive.”<sup>57</sup> Gaiman follows this by saying fear in small doses, about things that cannot really hurt you, is reassuring.<sup>58</sup>

Margee Kerr, a sociologist who studies fear, has conducted studies on the causes and effects of fear in humans. She says that being scared in controlled environments can be fun because of processes in the human brain.<sup>59</sup> When people are afraid, “neurotransmitters like dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin can be activated—thus the highs from riding roller coasters, watching scary movies, and, of course, walking through haunted houses.”<sup>60</sup> Meaning that slight scares in non-threatening situations, such as listening to scary stories, can actually provide people with the chemicals needed in their brains for them to have fun. The pursuance of visitor entertainment, like the fun found in activities studied by Kerr, is one that is shared across the tourism industry, including the fields of museum and historic site tourism.

## **Museums and Tourism, Historic Site Interpretation, and the Importance of Site**

### **Authenticity**

In the introduction of their book, *Horror and Human Tragedy Revisited: The Management of Sites of Atrocities for Tourism*, Gregory Ashworth and Rudi Hartmann define

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Neil Gaiman, TED2014, presentation, Vancouver, March 21, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Margee Kerr, *Scream: Chilling Adventures in the Science of Fear* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

tourism as “a discretionary leisure time activity freely indulged in for the pleasure it conveys.” For most museums, activities offered to visitors have to include a consideration in addition to the public’s pleasure—connection to their educational mission.<sup>61</sup> Because most museums are mission-based nonprofits, their mission statements are meant to be the guiding, overarching concept for their institutions from which all of their programming is conceived. In their book, *The Manual of Museum Management*, Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord explain that, “Getting the mission right may take time, but it is essential to the long-range direction of the institution because the mission is the core around which policies should be formed.”<sup>62</sup> The formation of these statements is important, not just for the legal incorporation process necessary for museums to be given federal non-profit status, but also for the success of their programming. Lord and Lord go on to expand on the use of mission within the managerial direction of a museum by stating that, “A good museum manager has a clear sense of the museum’s mission and inspires others to join in the fulfillment of that mission.”<sup>63</sup> This is accomplished first through setting clear definitions of who they are and what they do in their mission statement, and then diligently working to ensure that all of the museum’s activities reflect those ideas.

For museums located at specific historic sites, the mission statement usually includes goals related to educating visitors about the site and its surrounding areas. This site-specific focus for museums based around historic sites is paralleled by an evident concern with site authenticity found within visitors engaging in historic site tourism.<sup>64</sup> In their study, “Authenticity

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<sup>61</sup> Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management* (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Yael Ram, Peter Bjork, and Adi Weidenfeld, “Authenticity and Place Attachment of Major Visitor Attractions,” *Tourism Management*, published February 2016, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026151771500134X>.

and Place Attachment of Major Visitor Attractions,” on the impact of place attachment on the experience of visitors to historic sites, professors of tourism Yael Ram, Peter Bjork, and Adi Weidenfeld found a positive correlation between place attachment and perceptions of authenticity. They argue that this perception of authenticity can bring value to a region or a place, implying that authenticity is a characteristic valued by tourists. When defining their use of the word authenticity, Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld wrote that “Authenticity is communicated through heritage and links with past events, resulting in the continuance of myths.” Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld’s study analyzed five areas of theoretical framework on authenticity in tourism, including: authentic authenticity; place attachment—the self and the place; perceived tourism destination experience value and authenticity; authenticity and iconicity of major visitor attractions; and iconicity, heritage, place attachment and authenticity. For the study, they used a self-reporting questionnaire at four different sites, with 373 participants. The questionnaire was composed of fifteen questions about the participants’ experiences at the site, focusing mostly on the connections they felt between the places and the histories of the places.

Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld’s study concluded that for their research question on the relation between place attachment and authenticity, their data analysis found a high and significant correlation.<sup>65</sup> When describing their study in the conclusions section, they write, “It particularly focused on place attachment as an antecedent of the tourism experience and on the tourists’ seeking ‘genuineness’ in the context of perceived authenticity of major visitor attractions.”<sup>66</sup> They define the potential benefit of their study to the tourism field as being, “...the empirically significant close relations that had been found between two theoretical

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<sup>65</sup> Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld, “Authenticity and Place Attachment of Major Visitor Attractions.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

constructs: authenticity and place attachment.”<sup>67</sup> Finally, when providing recommendations for best utilizing perceptions of authenticity by historic sites, the researchers write that sites can “enliven attractions through uncovering stories in a unique and authentic way.”<sup>68</sup> Ashworth and Hartmann echoed the conclusions of Ram, Bjork, and Weidenfeld’s study on the importance of place attachment to visitor perceptions of authenticity when they said, “The distinctive identity of a place is ascribed to it by people largely through place-bound heritage.” According to the literature, for historic site interpretation, site authenticity is a key element for visitors.

### **Ghost Tourism**

Much investigative work has been done to contribute to the scholarly understanding of a piece of the tourism industry known as “dark tourism.”<sup>69</sup> According to Mark Johanson with the *International Business Times*, dark tourism is tourism to “sites where death or suffering has occurred or been memorialized.”<sup>70</sup> In her article, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions: The Case of Ghost Tours in Edinburgh and Toledo,” Beatriz Garcia gave the more specified definition that dark tourism is “visitation to places that are related to death, war, the macabre, or the paranormal.”<sup>71</sup> Dark tourism has been a human practice for hundreds of years, experienced by peoples of many cultures for numerous diverse reasons. Examples of historical dark tourism include spectators watching gladiator games in Ancient Rome, visits to catacombs,

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> See Mark Johanson, “Dark Tourism: Understanding the Attraction of Death and Disaster,” (2012); Beatriz Garcia, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions: the Case of Ghost Tours in Edinburgh and Toledo,” (2012); Robert Reid, “Is Dark Tourism Ok?” (2016); Lexie Waite, “Alcatraz Island,” (2011).

<sup>70</sup> Mark Johanson, “Dark Tourism: Understanding the Attraction of Death and Disaster,” *International Business Times*, published May 5, 2012, <http://www.ibtimes.com/dark-tourism-understanding-attraction-death-and-disaster-696604>.

<sup>71</sup> Beatriz Garcia, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions: the Case of Ghost Tours in Edinburgh and Toledo,” *Journal of Unconventional Parks, Tourism and Recreation Research* 4, no. 1 (2012), retrieved from <http://juptrr.asp.radford.edu/Volume4/Management%20Issues.pdf>.

and public executions.<sup>72</sup> Much like what has been said about the enjoyment of ghost stories, Lexie Waite, a reviewer of the Alcatraz Island, said of dark tourism attractions that humans desire to experience and face the “unknown” so that they can then experience safely leaving it behind them.<sup>73</sup>

One large industry that is often considered to be a subset of dark tourism is ghost tourism. Garcia defines ghost tourism as “the desire to encounter ghosts, interest in the supernatural, and visitation of places associated with the spirit world.”<sup>74</sup> Holloway expands on this definition in her explanation of how ghost tourism relates to other subsets within the larger dark tourism industry.<sup>75</sup> She explains that ghost tourism “tends towards the lighter end of the dark tourism spectrum, with entertainment being a key orientation, especially for ghost tours...this does not preclude moments of solemn reflection and genuine belief and attempts at providing historically accurate portrayals.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, according to Holloway, because of the focus on visitor entertainment ghost tourism is a lighter form of dark tourism, although ghost tourism can still maintain the seriousness of historical subject matters seen on the “darker” side of the dark tourism spectrum. When speaking on motivations for participants of ghost tourism, Garcia writes that many consumers partake for the build-up of anticipation they experience when faced with the possibility of being frightened or disturbed by the tour performance. This idea echoes the conclusions of Margee Kerr’s studies on fear as well as King and Gaiman’s theories on the

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Reid, “Is Dark Tourism Ok?” *National Geographic*, published April 26, 2016, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/features/is-dark-tourism-ok-chernobyl-pripyat-disaster-sites/>.

<sup>73</sup> Lexie Waite, “Alcatraz Island,” *Museums and Social Issues* 6, no. 1 (2011), retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/msi.2011.6.1.99>.

<sup>74</sup> Garcia, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions: The Case of Ghost Tours in Edinburgh and Toledo.”

<sup>75</sup> Julian Holloway, “Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces: Ghost Tourism and Infrastructures of Enchantment,” *Environment and Planning*, published November 11, 2009, retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1068/d9909>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

popular consumption of ghost stories—that people enjoy being scared in small doses within controlled environments.

Julian Holloway, in her article, “Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces: Ghost Tourism and Infrastructures of Enchantment,” outlines three main types of ghost tourism—hotels and other lodging places seeking guests through claiming they are haunted, companies that offer ghost hunting opportunities, and ghost walking tours.<sup>77</sup> Michele Hanks, author of *Haunted Heritage: The Cultural Politics of Ghost Tourism, Populism, and the Past*, echoes Holloway’s description of the vastness of the ghost tourism industry in her own definition, stating that ghost tourism is made up of a “wide range of touristic engagements.” She likewise identified and analyzed three very similar types in her own research; terming them “haunted destinations,” “ghost hunts,” and “ghost walks” and investigating the components of each.<sup>78</sup> The three types identified separately by both Holloway and Hanks differ in design and visitor interest. In the effort of succinctness, this review uses Hanks’ terms for the three identified categories.

The first of the three is haunted destinations, for which Holloway focuses on lodging destinations in particular but Hanks adds museums and historic sites. For this type of ghost tourism, tourists travel to places marketed as haunted in order to experience the feel of a potentially haunted area for themselves through spending time in the actual location. These experiences can include tours, séances, and other presentations related to the haunted history of a particular location. The ghost-related experiences marketed at The Stanley make the infamous hotel belong to this category of ghost tourism. This is also the category that the majority of

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<sup>77</sup> Holloway, “Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces.”

<sup>78</sup> Michele Hanks, *Haunted Heritage: The Cultural Politics of Ghost Tourism, Populism, and the Past* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2015).

historic sites and houses possessing their own haunted programming would be included within.

The second kind of ghost tourism, ghost hunts, features activities during which the tourists actually attempt to find evidence of ghosts within a location. Ghost hunts, sometimes referred to as ghost investigations, differ from haunted destinations and ghost walking tours in that they focus less on the ghost lore of sites and more on the readings and results from equipment believed to pick up the presence of spirits, such as EVP recorders and infrared lights.<sup>79</sup> These activities in particular have been popularized by ghost hunting television shows such as *Ghost Hunters*, and due to their popularity many historic sites have begun to offer ghost hunting nights with equipment available to be rented out by tourists. One such program is the Underground Paranormal Experience of the Seattle underground offered by Bill Speidel's Underground Tour.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, the third category of ghost tourism as described by Holloway and Hanks is ghost walking tours.<sup>81</sup> In these a commercial company typically plans a tour involving walking between several haunted locations within a city or town, with a guide telling one or two ghost stories outside of each site. Although some involve entering the sites themselves, most ghost walking tours are conducted almost entirely outside. For ghost walking tours, the focus is more broadly about famous ghost stories of the area, and therefore less in depth about the history of each location.

Although Holloway acknowledges a long history of ghost tourism, she credits ghost stories seen in popular media, in part, for the rise of "commercial marketing of haunted sites" in

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> "Underground Paranormal Experience," *Bill Speidel's Underground Tour*, accessed February 26, 2017, <http://undergroundtour.com/about/paranormal.html>.

<sup>81</sup> See Bell, "Ghosts of Place"; Lottes, *In Search of Maryland's Ghosts: Montgomery County*; King, *Danse Macabre*.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>82</sup> Hanks likewise agrees with Holloway in naming popular ghost hunting television shows such as *Ghost Hunters*, *Ghost Adventures*, *Paranormal Witness*, and *The Other Side*, and supernatural horror movies like *The Sixth Sense*, the *Ring* series, *Haunted in Connecticut*, and *The Conjuring*, as contributing forces to the ghost tourism industry's recent growth in popularity and success.<sup>83</sup> As evidence of the financial success of these types of films, at a box office gross of \$672,806,292, *The Sixth Sense* is the highest grossing horror movie of all time.<sup>84</sup> An article in *USA Today* revealed that after IMBD calculated the frequency of each type of horror movie monster over ten decades, when compared to zombies, slashers, vampires, demons, witches, creatures, and aliens, ghost movies were far more frequent than any other type with the highest percentage in five decades and the second highest in the remaining five.<sup>85</sup> Both Holloway and Hanks also cite a wide-spread belief in the supernatural as a reason for the public's fascination with the various forms of ghost tourism.<sup>86</sup> As evidence towards this claim, a Gallup poll in 2005 found that almost 75% of Americans believe in some form of paranormal activity and approximately 37% of Americans believe that haunted structures may exist.<sup>87</sup>

There is a wealth of literature on the financial success of ghost tours and the reasons that they have become such a lucrative business. Bell writes that the “ghosts of place” are widely

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<sup>82</sup> Holloway, “Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces.”

<sup>83</sup> Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*.

<sup>84</sup> Hayley Cuccinello, “15 Highest Grossing Scary Movies of All-Time,” published October 27, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hayleycuccinello/2015/10/27/15-highest-grossing-scary-movies-of-all-time/#7a6c604582d7>.

<sup>85</sup> Nick Schwartz, “Awesome Infographic Breaks Down the Popularity of Different Horror Movie Types Decade-by-Decade,” *USA Today*, Published October 31, 2015, <http://ftw.usatoday.com/2015/10/imdb-horror-movie-infographic>.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> David Moore, “Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal,” *Gallup*, published June 16, 2005, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/16915/three-four-americans-believe-paranormal.aspx>.

available to be summoned for tourists as commodities by heritage sites.<sup>88</sup> As an example of this, Bell mentions The Tower of London’s “hugely successful version of this same commodification of ghosts.”<sup>89</sup> He goes on to comment on the rise in the number of heritage sites when he says, “What the rise of the heritage industry may suggest is that we are coming to miss our old ghosts, to resist the loss of sentimental and social connections to place.”<sup>90</sup>

In an article entitled, “Ghost Tours are Scary Big Business,” the tour company, ThunderTix, writes about its experience with the popularity of these types of tours. The article says, “As an alternative to the haunted house, many families, as well as those who appreciate history, turn to a more subtle and sophisticated scare – ghost tours.”<sup>91</sup> In her blog, “Ghost Tourism—The Scary Side of Tourism,” Maya Jairam points to some of the numbers on the lucrateness of the ghost tour industry when she says that, “According to one recent report in the Orlando Sentinel, an estimated \$300 million in profits are made from ghost tourism and associated industries.”<sup>92</sup> ThunderTix goes on to write that because of the large profits that some ghost tours have been bringing in, it has become a popular avenue for many communities to turn to for a source of new revenue.<sup>93</sup>

In his article, “Retailers Welcome Ghost Boosters; Ghost Tourism is Alive and Well Throughout North America,” Tristin Hopper writes on a recent surge in the success of ghost tourism that, “Now, in an age when a haunted reputation can make the difference between profit

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<sup>88</sup> Bell, “Ghosts of Place.”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> ThunderTix, “Ghost Tours Are Scary Big Business,” *ThunderTix*, published October 11, 2012, <http://www.thundertix.com/tours/ghost-tours-are-scary-big-business/>.

<sup>92</sup> Maya Jairam, “Ghost Tourism—The Scary Side of Tourism,” *Spiritual Research Foundation*, published October 31, 2012, <http://www.spiritualresearchfoundation.org/spiritual-blog/ghost-tourism-scary-side-tourism/>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

and bankruptcy, hotels, restaurants and even entire Canadian cities are clamoring to prove that they are swarming with the lost souls of the dead.”<sup>94</sup> The article goes on to provide examples of once struggling and near bankrupt businesses that have since revived themselves through the use of ghost tourism, naming the Stanley Hotel and the RMS Queen Mary as just a couple of notable instances of this.<sup>95</sup>

### Summary

Further research into the practice of house museums offering ghost tours is needed in order to determine how and why certain institutions have implemented this type of programming, possibly leading to the establishment of best practice suggestions for house museums wanting to create their own ghost tour programs. While an increase in the popularity of dark tourism has led to more research on the ethics and appeal of these types of activities to tourists within the field of tourism studies, and the rise in the public’s fascination with ghosts has steered some researchers to focus on the mechanics of ghost tourism in particular, research in this area is still relatively thin and is even scarcer on the subject of ghost tourism within HHMs specifically.

On house museum ghost tourism, research has remained largely definitional. Although methods of ghost tourism vary, as a subsection of dark tourism and one that is implemented mainly in historic sites and is therefore subject to the characteristics of dark tourism and historic site interpretation, ghost tourism almost always involves strong ties to specific locations, often but not always sites of documented deaths, made legendary through either elements of tragedy and suffering or the level of local fame held by the departed. This is a characteristic that ghost

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<sup>94</sup> Tristin Hopper, “Retailers Welcome Ghost Boosters; Ghost Tourism is Alive and Well Throughout North America,” *National Post*, published October 31, 2014, retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/docview/1619164912/4D458DFCA0A74D7BPQ/10?accountid=14784>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

tourism shares with house museum tourism as a whole, and is one that uniquely separates them both from many types of museum tours, which can tend to encompass broader and less site-specific material. The literature on the creation and consumption of ghost stories also supports this importance of site authenticity to their success in regards to the public's enjoyment and satisfaction with them.

One aspect that is within the field's agreement of best practices shared between all types of museum tours is connection to educational mission. There is a strong consensus within the museum field that museums should be mission-based organizations, and that all programming offered within each institution should include some relation to that mission. Therefore, struggling institutions often have to balance their financial need to attract visitors with their organizational need to maintain their educational mission while entertaining the public. The literature has suggested that one of the biggest areas of struggle within the museum field has increasingly been HHMs. Because of the revenue potential linked in with the growing popularity of ghosts and ghost legends, several institutions have begun turning the local ghost stories surrounding their buildings into material for ghost-focused historical programs.

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Problem Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of mission-based ghost tours for revenue in various historic house museums in order to determine guiding practices for this type of museum programming. The study is driven by three research questions:

1. What is the nature of ghost tours in historic house museums, and how are they implemented?
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?

This study used a case study design,<sup>96</sup> comparing the practices of three house museum sites and collecting data through semi-structured interviews with museum professionals, document analysis of promotional materials, and participant observation during the ghost tours. This chapter describes the research sites, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and methodological limitations.

### Research Sites

Data were collected at the Woodruff-Fontaine House Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, the John Wornall House Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Whaley House Museum in San Diego, California. Sites were selected using the following criteria: 1) their ghost tour seemed to fit with their mission statement, based on cursory comparisons between the wording of their mission and the description of the ghost tours within promotional materials; 2) the year-round

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008).

availability of their ghost tours, either through scheduled events or group reservations; and 3) how well known they seemed to be for their ghost tours to the public, as indicated by the high frequency of links referring to their ghost tours found in internet searches of the museums.

The sites are from three different regions of the country—one in the South, one the Midwest, and one the West—and utilize three different tour implementation methods—the Woodruff-Fontaine uses monthly public tours run with a tour company partner, the John Wornall House offers private group tours year-round as well as public themed ghost tours every October that are run by staff and docents of the museum, and the Whaley House uses weekly public tours run by museum staff.

### **Woodruff-Fontaine House Museum**



Images 1, 2, and 3: Photos of the Woodruff-Fontaine House Museum, Emily Alvey 2017

### **John Wornall House Museum**



Images 4 and 5: Photos of the John Wornall House Museum, Emily Alvey 2017

### Whaley House Museum



Images 6 and 7: Photos of the Whaley House Museum, Emily Alvey 2017

### Description of Sample and Data Collection

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with museum professionals in this study, specifically the museum director and the ghost tour guide at the Woodruff-Fontaine House, the weekend program director and the ghost tour creator at the John Wornall House, and the museum director and museum historian at the Whaley House. Documents pertaining to the ghost tour were collected at each site, including advertisements and participant evaluations. The researcher conducted participant observations at each site by attending the ghost tours and recording observations through field notes.

In-person interviews were conducted over three weekends, one per site, with one in February and two in March 2016 (see Appendix A for the interview guide). The researcher contacted two professionals at each site prior to visiting in order to request their permission to interview them and schedule the interviews once permission was obtained. The interviews were recorded with the researcher's cell phone and lasted anywhere between 20 and 40 minutes.

Two staff members were interviewed at both the John Wornall House and the Whaley House. Because the Woodruff-Fontaine ghost tour is implemented by a third-party tour

company, one staff member of the museum and the tour guide from the tour company were both interviewed. The interviews were structured in three parts—logistics, design, and benefits. The logistics section included questions about the founding of the tour, the tour's average length, its target audience, and the average number of participants. For the design section, the researcher asked questions pertaining to how the tour was designed and who all contributed to it. Finally, the benefits section was composed of questions about the tour's perceived benefits to the museum and its visitors, including relation to mission, visitor education, and revenue.

### **Data Analysis**

Data from the various sources (interviews, documents, and researcher observations) were analyzed both within cases and across cases, in keeping with case study analytical practice (Yin, 2009). In the case of all three data sets, content analysis was used to identify emergent themes and patterns.

### **Ethics**

One of the methods used to collect data was through interviews. In order to conduct these interviews, the researcher submitted her work to an Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Washington. This research was categorized as exempt by IRB because all of the interview subjects were adults and the interview questions were non-invasive.

### **Limitations**

Limitations in this study include the number of documents from each site available to be analyzed, and the types of sites selected. Six house museums offering ghost tours were contacted and four replied. Of those four, three sites were visited and two staff members were interviewed at each site, resulting in six interviews in total. Many internal institutional documents on the

original planning of the tours have been lost over time, limiting the amount available to be analyzed. The sites selected to be contacted were all those with well-established and well-known ghost tours. Sites with well-established ghost tour programs were chosen both because of a lack of available information on house museums that are currently in the process of forming ghost tours as well as in an effort to focus on sites that have already worked out the potential kinks of their programs. However this could limit the results of the study to be less applicable for programs still in the early stages of their development.

## **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

The following chapter describes the results of the study. First, each site's ghost tour is described in detail from the researcher's field notes. The three participating institutions differed in geographical region and ghost tour implementation, although all of them possess well-established ghost tour programs. The results of this research are organized according to the research questions of the study.

### **Research Site 1**

Research Site 1 is a house museum in an urban city in the South. The house museum is located in what was once the home of two prominent families in the city's society. The ghost tour at Research Site 1 is facilitated by a haunted tour company which partners with the museum. Once a month, every third Friday, one of the company's tour guides leads a tour group through the house after hours. Visitors are advised that tickets for this experience often sell out and so they are recommended to reserve their spots online beforehand.

The experience began at the house's back entrance. With the tour guide and the tour guide in-training, a total of about 14 people were gathered in the room. At 7:30, the tour guide locked the door and led the tour group through one of the interior doors and into the main front hallway of the house. After going over a couple of house rules, such as not touching the objects or furniture and staying with her throughout the tour, she began telling us the history of how the house was built. She pointed out the two portraits that hang around the front door and explained the history of the two main owners of the house. The guide talked about the French Victorian architecture of the house and about how the style required symmetry, which was the reason why a door to nowhere was built on the side of the stairs directly opposite the door to the kitchen.

After the first family fell into a financial decline, they traded houses with another prominent family of the area who needed a larger house for their many children.

The guide led us into the parlor room, and told a ghost story about a paranormal investigation that had been done in the house, in which one of the investigators had a large scratch appear on their arm while asking the spirit of one of the children a question. In the corner of the parlor is a curiosity cabinet of macabre objects. After the parlor the guide led us into the ballroom. The guide explained that after falling ill with a mysterious sickness, the second owner underwent exploratory surgery in the ballroom and died on the operating table. She tried to use paranormal investigative equipment to get his spirit to respond to her, first asking her own questions before allowing the tour-goers to give it a try.

On the second floor we were led into the room of the house's most famous ghost, one of the first family's daughters. The tour guide explained the daughter's story, how she lost two children very young to unknown causes and her first husband to a fishing accident, dying with no living children. Although she had moved out of the house by the time of her death, legend says that the daughter's ghost returned to the house because it was where she was happiest in life. Part of the daughter's rooms is a small room meant to be a nursery and play area for the children she never had. Now the room is arranged with a crib, a toy box, and several Victorian-era dolls.

On the third floor the guide told a story of one of the docents seeing the ghost of one of the boys sitting in a chair at the top of the stairs. The tour guide explained that when the second family lived in the house, the third floor would have been where the boys and their nurses were kept. In one of the boy's rooms the guide once again set up the equipment, asking questions to see if a reply could be heard from the radio frequencies or if the electrical meter would move. No

replies could be audibly distinguished, but when she asked if the boy wanted us to leave the electrical meter jumped all the way to red. This was the end of the guided part of the tour although visitors were encouraged to explore the house freely for several minutes afterward.

### **Research Site 2**

The second research site is a house museum in the Midwest which was once used as a hospital during the Civil War. The museum offers two types of ghost tours to their visitors, public ghost tours held during two weekends in October and privately scheduled ghost tours throughout the rest of the year. The tour in October is structured to include different vignettes featuring topics such as Civil War battlefield surgeries, mourning practices, and family ghost stories put on by numerous docents, staff, and partner performance groups in each room of the house. The private ghost tours follow a more traditional guided tour model, with one docent or staff member leading a group of visitors through each room of the house, telling the history of the family and common ghost stories that surround them.

During my visit, I was only able to attend a private ghost tour. The tour started in the parlor room, with basic background about who the original owner was, how he came to be in the area, and how his family changed over the years. We were told the owner had three wives throughout his lifetime, and that the third wife lived in the house until her death in the 1920's. The guide showed us a large piano in the corner of the room that the family owned and told us stories of docents hearing it play from the second floor when the house is supposed to be empty.

In the entranceway the guide began telling about the house's use in the Civil War as a hospital. She talked about docents and visitors seeing soldiers walking up and down the stairs. The guide told a story about one girl scout troupe that ran screaming from the house after

reportedly seeing a strange man in uniform appear at the top of the stairs and begin to walk down towards them. Next to the entranceway in the games room we were told that the room was once used to hold wounded soldiers. The guide told a story of one visitor to the house reporting seeing an injured man in the room begging her for help. We were also told of the kinds of activities that might have been held in there at one time, such as the owner hosting billiards games with other high society men.

In the dining room, the guide talked about how the room was used for more serious medical care, such as surgeries, in the Civil War. The guide told us that some visitors had reported seeing faces looking out of the pass way connecting the dining room to the empty kitchen. She also told us a ghost story about when the current director started there. For the first few weeks, many times when the director came to open the house in the morning she would find the door to the house off of the dining room wide open, with the alarm on the doorway somehow un-tripped. As soon as she would step through the doorway the alarm would go off, alerting the local police to a possible break-in on the property. Every night the door was dead bolted and there was never any sign of intruders in the house. Finally, the director yelled in exasperation for the ghosts to stop playing with the door. After that, the problems with the door stopped.

On the second floor the guide told us that before the museum had changed the wiring, staff had to lean far over the stair railing to turn the chandelier lights on and off. On two separate occasions, staff members reported feeling an invisible someone holding onto them to steady them as they leaned over the railing. In the children's room, the guide told us that although the family had 9 children, only 4 lived beyond infancy. She told us there had been reports of people in the neighborhood seeing children playing in the room when the museum was closed, and of

children asking their parents if they could play with the little girls in the room. This was the end of the tour, the experience lasted for about an hour.

### **Research Site 3**

Research Site 3 is a house museum located on a busy street in a West Coast city. The museum hosts weekly evening guided tours in which they combine historical knowledge about the house with the ghostly legends. These tours are held Thursday through Saturday during the non-summer season and daily during the summer season. Four docents each night are responsible for giving the tours, along with a few staff members for security purposes.

The tour group gathered on the front porch outside with a few of the guides. It was clear from the guides' conversation that there were several tours going at once, with the tour planned to last between 35 and 40 minutes. When our time came, we were led through the door into the courthouse. Here, the guide explained to us that originally the land the house was built on was used for hangings. One legendary hanging in particular was botched because of the man's height, causing him to slowly suffocate to death in front of the whole town. Because of this incident, the hangings were stopped and the house's owner bought the property for \$1.50 because of its bad history. Because of this history, after a couple of years of living in the house, the owner reported his belief that the house was haunted. He reported hearing loud footsteps coming up the stairs every night.

Next the guide led us from the court room and into the general store. She explained that the owner was a business man who originally built the house with the intention for spaces in the first floor to be used for profit. The guide then led us over to a case filled with family pictures and small objects owned by the family. She used this moment to point out the children in the

different pictures to tell us about the tragic deaths that the family had and some of the ghost stories related to them. One of the most well-known of these is one of the family's daughters, who committed suicide by shooting herself in the heart with her father's gun. Her father heard the gun go off, found her dying and carried her into the study where he held her until she died. Because of the length of time it took, doctor's concluded that she had missed her heart and instead hit her lung, leading to it filling with blood which slowly killed her. The guide said that after her death, her father built another house in the city that the family lived in until his death. He died five years later due to ill health.

Next, in the dining room the guide spoke about the owner's wife. She said that the wife's ghost had often been reported seen in the dining room serving visitors. She also talked more about some of the children who had stayed in the home and the family's dog. This was because people had reported seeing a child's face and feeling a small animal against their legs under the dining room table. On the second floor by the bedrooms, the guide spoke more about the other family members who lived and died in the house, before leading us into the theatre and encouraging us to take a seat. In the theatre room, the guide explained the history behind the theatre performances that were held in the house, finishing by telling us that the first director for the theatre died within the house from fever within the first few weeks working there. After the theatre, the group was led back down the stairs and to the first floor study, which they were told was the room the daughter who committed suicide was carried into and where she ultimately died. This room was the end of the tour. The experience lasted about 35 minutes.

**Research Question 1: What is the nature of ghost tours in historic house museums and how are they implemented?**

To answer this question, the researcher interviewed study participants on aspects such as their method of staffing their ghost tours, and how this staff is trained, and the length, intended audience, structure, and content of their ghost tours. This line of questioning attempted to paint a picture of the logistical considerations involved in the daily operations of three ghost tour programs at historic house museums.

***Staff***

The three research sites reportedly use varying staffing models for ghost tours that seemed to have a correlation with the frequency of the tours. All three tours include only one tour guide per tour, but the three models vary in their relationship to the museum, the size of the team who conducts the ghost tours, and whether paid staff or volunteers are used. At Research Site 1, the ghost tours are facilitated by a staff member from an outside tour company which is paid through a portion of the tour profits. At Site 2, there are two different types of tours, private group tours that are offered throughout the year and involve one docent or staff member to lead the tour and another staff member present for security purposes, and public ghost tours which are offered on two weekends in October, with several docents and staff members offering a number of tours every fifteen minutes each night. At Site 3, the ghost tours are staffed by 12 to 15 people per night with a mixture of staff and volunteers.

While Research Sites 2 and 3 both reportedly use a mixture of docents and payed staff members from within their museums to facilitate their tours, Research Site 1's partnership with an outside tour company helps to relieve their need to find staff and allows them to offer a

regular monthly ghost tour. Research Site 2 only holds public tours in October, and privately scheduled ghost tours throughout the rest of the year. A large part of the reason they cannot offer more regularly scheduled public ghost tours, according to the participants, is because of the number of staff they require. One participant from Site 2 stated, “We have a hard time staffing our regular ghost tours throughout the year because it’s in the evening and a lot of our volunteers aren’t available.” At Research Site 2 they require that at least two staff or volunteer members are present when opening the house at night for safety reasons, and they do not have enough people available on weekend nights to be able to hold the tours on a regular basis. Research Site 3 has several, about 12-15, volunteers and staff members able to work weekend evenings to run the tours. This allows them the capacity to offer their evening tours at several different times every weekend during the non-summer season and daily during the summer.

### ***Training***

Just as the staffing models varied for the three sites, so too did the level of training provided for the ghost tours. Both Research Site 1 and Research Site 2 indicated that staff and docents receive little formal training for their ghost tours. For Research Site 1, the partner company they use to run ghost tours about the house uses one main staff member to guide that particular tour, although they are expanding and training new members who might someday be more involved with it. Because the staff member who currently guides the tour is a former volunteer of the house museum, and helped to originally construct the ghost tour, she did not require formal training in conducting the tour. She explained her part in the creation of the tour with, “So I think they sort of came up with it and I was, especially on this tour, I’m sort of the

historian so I got to go and fact check everything. But being involved here at the museum, I was heavily involved in doing this particular tour.”

In the case of Research Site 2’s private ghost tours, most of the tours are led by experienced docents and staff, who are taught the history of the house, family, and related time period in a formal training session, but then have learned the ghost stories associated with the house over their time working there. The docents are then allowed to guide the ghost tours based more on the stories they find most interesting than a formal script. One example of this can be found in this quote,

But for the ghost tours it’s really more based on their interest, so if they’ve had any experiences we encourage them to share them, if they’ve talked to their other friends who are docents and they’ve had experiences we want them to share them, and really kind of base it on what the visitors are interested in. It’s much more free form than our typical tours.

Some of the staff involved with Site 2’s public tours in October received more formal scripts and practice sessions, because those events involve so many more people working, but this is dependent on their experience. One participant explained,

So the way that we do our tours (the public tours) every single room is sort of its own vignette, and so each room...it depends on who the person is. So some of these presenters in the rooms are kind of experts on their topic, so they don’t really get much training from us. Like we have some medical reenactors come out and so we don’t really dictate what they do at all, we just want them to do some medical reenactment because that’s a huge part of why there are so many ghost stories that are associated with this house, so they just do their own medical reenactments and we don’t really give them a script, we don’t train them...but we’ve worked with them for a long time so we just kind of let them do what they want. And then on the other hand, we have other presenters where we’ll write a script for them and we’ll practice with them and we’ll kind of do more handholding with them. So it really depends on which person it is.

Research Site 2 reportedly does staff training a little differently for their two models of ghost tour programming, but for each, experienced staff and docents are involved who are allowed to express their own interests through the ghost tours.

Research Site 3, however, stated that their administrative team provides their docents who lead the tours with formal training orientations and reading material. This can be seen in this quote from one participant:

For example, when they first come on, orientations are given by the staff coordinator, but at least for understanding and learning the information inside the house they get it from our head docents. Information, whether it's updated or new information is provided by administration, a lot of time it comes through our historian right over here and then is communicated through. And they also have a training folder that they can add information, whether it's on, for example, we'll have docent education such as something on period clothing or they'll have something in regards to the family, or an artifact, or something that ties in to the time period.

The varying levels of training provided across the three sites - with Site 1 having little formal training, Site 2 having some formal training for less experienced staff on the seasonal public tours, but little training for the year-round private tours, and Site 3 providing formal training - could relate to the number of staff and volunteers involved with the ghost tours. At Site 1, where there is only one person who does ghost tours, training can be more ad-hoc and one-on-one between this person and any new staff members; large formal training sessions or formal scripts are not required. At Site 2, the private ghost tours require less regular staff and docents because they are scheduled by request for each individual group, thus there is little to no formal training. However, for their public tours in October, which are much larger events, drawing bigger crowds and requiring a large number of staff and docents on hand, there is formal training

for the less experienced people involved. At Site 3, there are 12-15 staff regularly involved in the ghost tours, and their training appears to be the most extensive and formalized of the three sites.

### *Length*

The ghost tours at all three research sites varied in length. Site 1 offered the longest of the three ghost tours at two hours in length; the tour at Site 2 is half the length of the tour at Site 1 at an average of one hour; and Site 3's tour was the shortest at 35 to 40 minutes. These differences in length may be due to content and logistical considerations on behalf of the museums, such as the size of the house, the number of rooms open to the public, and the number of overall tours running on the same night.

The tour at Research Site 1 is by far the longest of the three ghost tours, however the tour also includes the most amount of rooms, all of which are open to the public, as well as a guide that consistently uses paranormal investigation equipment throughout the tour which adds time to the storytelling elements. The tour at Research Site 1 also starts with the same information as the day tours, which are an hour in length, and adds the ghost stories in. One Site 1 participant explained, "It's two hours, 7:30 to 9:30. And a lot of that is because not only does she talk about the history and the architecture, but she's got to throw in the death stories and the experiences. And she brings out the spirit boxes and the K2s and all that kind of stuff." All of this combines to make this the longest tour in the study.

Site 2's tour is only half as long as the tour at Site 1, but includes less rooms because the house is smaller in comparison to the size of Site 1. In addition, the tour involves no paranormal investigation equipment.

The tour at Site 3 is the shortest in length at 35 to 40 minutes, and also includes the least amount of rooms of all three houses. Many of the rooms at this site are closed off by glass panels, making it difficult for groups to see into some of them as the guide tells about them, which limits the rooms included. Site 3 also has the strictest schedule, because they have several tours going per night, all of which have to end and clear the museum at a specific time. This causes the guides to shorten the length somewhat to be sure they are not delaying the next group.

The length of the three tours is reflected in their respective prices as well. The tour at Research Site 1 is the most expensive at 25 dollars per participant, while the tour at Research Site 2 is 15 dollars per person and Research Site 3 costs each tour goer 13 dollars.

### *Audience*

All three sites reportedly developed their ghost tours with adults in mind. Sites 2 and 3 allow children, but made it clear that the information may be scary or disturbing to younger children and then leave the decision to the parents: “Definitely adults. We even kind of put a little caveat on our seasonal ghost tours...they’re probably not appropriate for children under ten. We leave it up to the parents, some of the kids really do like it, but it’s definitely adult-focused.”

Site 1 required all of the tour goers for its ghost tour be over the age of 18. This limitation could affect the visitors who are reached by their ghost tour program, because families would be unable to bring children with them on the tour, unlike the tours at Sites 2 and 3, which leave age of participation up to the parents. However, the limitation at Site 1 does ensure that visitors are mature enough to be allowed more freedom than is seen in the other ghost tours, such as the freedom to explore all of the rooms on their own after the guided tour portion. It could also help to prevent potential issues with children becoming too disturbed and upset by the material on the

tour. All three tours allowed between 10 and 20 people on each tour group, with Research Site 1 limiting their groups to below 15, Site 2 to between 10 and 15, and Site 3 as the largest with 15 to 20.

### *Structure*

All three sites shared similar formats for their year-round ghost tours, with a story-based approach that moves through the rooms of the historic house. For all three, each tour had one guide who begins with a short historical introduction about the site and then leads tour groups through multiple rooms in each house, stopping to tell more history and at least one ghost story that relates to each room. This structure is described in this quote from Research Site 2:

So throughout the year, for our regular private ghost tours, the visitors will go through each room of the house, learn a little bit about the family who used the house, and...we do focus on death and mourning practices, just to teach them a little bit about the history of that and then they'll learn about the more dark periods of history in the house here. So they'll talk about all of the family members who passed away and how the house was used as a field hospital, but then also just kind of what the life was like for people who lived here and how hard it was, cause that does inform the sorts of sightings and other experiences that they have here. And then in each room, the docent will talk about what's happened there, the things that other people have experienced or even if it's just lore, but there's some kind of experience that's happened to somebody in each room.

The public October ghost tour at Research Site 2 is the only exception to this structure within this study. For this tour, Site 2 has different vignettes set up in each room of the house involving different historical facts about medical practices and mourning during the Civil War as well as various ghost stories related to each room. Groups are led between the rooms by docents or staff members. A participant from Research Site 2 explained,

So the public ghost tours are a one-hour tour of the house where we focus on some of the ghost stories that have taken place in the house as well as some of the history that's related to those ghost stories. So every room in the house has a

different kind of vignette. Some of the rooms are just straight ghost stories and storytelling and some are reenactments, and then others are slightly more educational kind of like a...not a lecture exactly but kind of like a mini fact dump. Last year we had a woman that just talked about Civil War mourning practices and we have some artifacts in the house that are related to that—some mourning costumes, and jewelry made of human hair and things like that—so it's kind of a mix of all of those elements.

Because their October public tours are so popular, this vignette-style model allows them to maximize the number of people that can be in the house at any given time, with a group in each room.

### *Content*

All three sites included similar types of content within their ghost tours, including historical facts about their respective houses, the families who lived there, and death and mourning practices of the times that the families occupied the houses. This is reflected in the ghost tour advertisements produced by the three sites, all of which reference the history of the houses and the families who occupied them in some way. For example, an advertisement for Site 1 reads, “Enjoy a unique tour of the dimly lit home with special emphasis on the family members who lived and died in the mansion.” When talking about the kinds of stories told on the tour a participant at Site 1 said,

We try to keep them semi-historical, like things that are related to the history in some way. We want people to learn things on the ghost tours, whether or not you believe in ghosts or not is kind of your own deal, but we want to definitely make sure people leave with at least learning something on the tour. We try to choose some of the ghost stories that directly tie back to something historical, so like the things about the soldiers, then we can talk about the Battle of Westport that was here and how this was a field hospital, and then some of the stories that relate directly to members of the family as well. So we try to keep it somewhat connected to the history, so if there was like a story that didn't seem to have anything to do with anything we probably wouldn't include it.

While sites shared similar story-based, room-by-room tour structures, they differed in the ways in which they used paranormal equipment during the tour. Two of the three sites made some use of this equipment during their ghost tours, but to varying degrees and in different ways. One of the sites excluded the use of this equipment during their historical ghost tours, but do offer the chance for visitors to explore the house with paranormal investigators from an outside company during a separate experience. Paranormal investigation equipment includes a variety of electronic devices meant to collect evidence that paranormal investigators, also called ghost hunters, see as supportive of paranormal activity. Some of these devices include EMF meters to detect electromagnetic energy, thermographic cameras to record the presence of thermal energy, and “ghost boxes” which pick up audio fragments from radio waves in the air.

The use of paranormal investigative equipment consistently by the tour guide at Site 1 made their tour a more outwardly paranormal experience for their visitors, in comparison to Sites 2 and 3 who do not regularly incorporate investigative equipment on their historical ghost tours. The tour guide at Site 1 carries around a few different devices to each room on the tour to try to detect the presence of spirits. The guide is the only person on the tour that directly handles this equipment, although visitors are encouraged to interact with it at several points by asking the spirits questions and pausing to see if the equipment responds.

For Site 2, docents sometimes encourage visitors to download applications on their cell phones in order to utilize this kind of equipment on the tour but do not always include this option. In addition, the museum does not own physical equipment to be used in this way, and the docents do not use the apps themselves. One example of these cell phone ghost hunting apps is the Ghost Hunter M2, which costs \$0.99 on iTunes. The Ghost Hunter M2 is marketed as a cell

phone paranormal investigation toolkit, and includes features such as an EMF meter, an audio detection instrument which analyzes audio signals, and a special displacement instrument. At Site 3, their regular evening tour in which they combine historical knowledge with ghost stories does not include any use of paranormal investigation equipment. They do, however, offer a separate monthly ghost-hunting experience, not included in this study, to visitors interested in doing a paranormal investigation of the house, which is facilitated by an outside paranormal investigation group. This clearly separates the historical and ghost storytelling experience of their evening ghost tour from the paranormal experience of their ghost-hunting tour. A participant explained this difference:

We do include the history in there, it's all tied in, but we have a specific route and it's timed, so it does have a lot more of the ghostly legends that people are looking for. But even during the day people ask about it too. And then the ghost hunts, those last for about an hour and a half, and those are pretty much strictly about ghosts. So you've got history, ghosts and history, and ghosts.

### **Research Question 2: Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?**

All three sites made statements regarding the use of ghost tours to stay relevant for historic house museums in today's world. This overall concept of relevance was discussed in terms of three main sub-themes: 1) revenue; 2) public demand; and 3) outreach.

#### ***Revenue***

One of the major motivations all three sites indicated in answer to questions about why they offer ghost tours was the revenue they bring in. At Site 1, one participant explained that part of the monetary concern is because they are a small non-profit, so a successful tour that brings in extra revenue is important. This was further elaborated on by another participant at Site 1 who

said, “It does bring in some extra revenue for the museum, and we kind of have our own little attraction going here at the house. It’s one of our best-selling tours, and so we do those on a regular basis.” The potential financial concerns of a house museum were also brought up when one participant from Site 2 stated,

Now for the past two years, I believe we have expanded it and we offer it for two weekends rather than one, and I know that was probably a really fiscal decision. We made a decent amount of money, and we are completely dependent on admission and donated revenue. So that’s why they just decided, and honestly there was so much interest that we were turning dozens and dozens of people away and we minimized our marketing because we had to turn so many away, that the decision to increase it and to add more tour times which we’ve done has been based on public interest and then money.

Here, the participant pointed out that part of the reason why the revenue from the ghost tours is so beneficial to the museum is because they are “completely dependent on admission and donated revenue.” It was indicated at both Sites 2 and 3 that the ghost tours bring in a significant amount of revenue for the annual budgets of the two museums. From documents provided by Site 2, it was shown that their public ghost tours in October have brought in more than 5,000 dollars annually for the last two years. At Site 3, one of the participants stated that the ghost tours have an average of twenty people per tour, and they give at least 26 ghost tours each weekend during the non-summer season (13 evening tour hours and tours every half hour) and at least 58 tours each week in the summer (29 evening tour hours and tours every half hour), which at \$13 per person is a substantial amount of money from evening ghost tours alone.

### ***Public Demand***

All three sites quoted public demand as one of their main reasons for ultimately deciding to offer ghost tour programs to their visitors. Answering this public demand was important for the respective museums’ need to stay relevant to their visitor base. In the interviews, this public

demand was related both to interest in already existing local ghost legends about the houses, as well as just the general public popularity of ghosts.

The participants at Site 3 indicated that the house was already well-known as haunted by the local community before the current organization took over the operation of the museum and decided to offer ghost tours. They stated that the public demand for the ghost tours originally arose from public interest in these already locally known legends. This can be seen in this quote from one participant:

Of course you know, the demand of it. But even before our organization managed the (house name), it pretty much always had some sort of like haunted legacy. I mean it's had a haunted legacy for the longest time. And so we approach it with...again with that whole 'history/mystery' thing, so we want to make sure that people understand those stories and why it may be haunted.

The other two sites referenced mostly general public interest in ghosts and ghost stories as the main source of public demand for offering ghost tour programs at their historic house museums.

One participant at Site 1 said,

Historic houses, if they don't change with the times, you know we could be a dying breed really. There's only...certain kinds of people that visit them really, it's not for everybody. It's not like a zoo, where everybody loves animals, you know it's people who are interested in history or a lot of times it's old people who have retired, you know just traveling the country and they love it. So you have to constantly change, with museums and with other things because we could be a dying breed in itself and so that's the...the ghost tours have...ghosts in general have just really captured people's attention over the last few years.

When asked about the original decision to offer ghost tour programs, one participant from Site 2 also quoted public interest in the paranormal:

I think they realized that there was an interest there. And so, if anything I think it might be more about why they finally decided to give into that. I think they were probably resistant to it for a while. But so many visitors ask if it's haunted or ask about the paranormal, so it was very clear that there was an interest there."

### *Outreach*

The third main motivation referenced by all three sites for offering ghost tour programming was public outreach. All three participating sites made statements about how beneficial their ghost tours have been in widening their audience base. This can be seen in this quote about continuing to offer ghost tours each year by one participant from Site 2:

I think, as a small nonprofit we're always looking for ways to get our numbers up, so I think originally they probably saw that it was a way to bring in a new pool of people that were not coming for just history tours or educational events...and probably saw that there was fundraising potential, and you know just to increase the reach because as a nonprofit we're responsible for justifying its existence by how many people it serves.

The use of the ghost tours in order to achieve more relevance by widening their visitor base was also stated in another interview with a Site 2 participant: "I think it really widens our visitor base. I think there are a lot of people who wouldn't normally come otherwise that come to these. And it's good visibility for the museum. It allows us to partner with and work with organizations and people that we wouldn't be able to otherwise."

Both Sites 1 and 2 indicated that the ghost tours have increased and diversified their regular visitorship by causing people who may not have normally decided to visit a historic house museum for the regular historical education programs to not only visit the museum for a ghost tour, but also become interested in learning more about the house's history after the tour.

One participant at Site 1 talked about visitors deciding to revisit the museum for regular programming after attending a ghost tour:

I think that it has benefitted us, just with more exposure like I said earlier with those people who never would have thought about coming to our house as a museum, but they would come to our house if it's a haunted house. Like I said earlier, they've come back for a historical tour, they've been so intrigued they

want to get all of it and not just the ghost stuff, you know, so they come back for a daily tour.

This effect that holding ghost tours had on participating sites' regular program attendance was repeated by the participants at Site 2, one of which said,

In the past, I would say two or three years, the ghost tours have become bigger and bigger. We sold out like two weeks in advance this year, and we've noticed that we've also had an uptick in just public tours...normal educational tours...as well. And I think part of that is because we're kind of just becoming more well-known, and part of that is because of the ghost tours. So we like that element as well, even though it's not only what we want to be known for, it helps get us on people's radar and they kind of think about us as a place that they could go.

Although the goal of widening visitor bases was not emphasized as much by the participants of Site 3, when asked about the main benefits for the evening ghost tours, one participant did say a benefit was to "increase visitorship."

**Research Question 3: How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?**

All three sites said that it was important for their ghost tour to reflect the historical focus of their museum and to connect to their institutional mission, although all three sites also mentioned possible concerns with achieving this connection. In the answers to questions about the relation of the ghost tours to mission, two main themes emerged: 1) connection of ghost tour material to educational mission; and 2) potential concerns with this same history education and ghost story balance.

***How ghost tours achieve educational mission***

Interviews, tour advertisements, and researcher observations all demonstrated the strong connection that these sites attempt to make between their ghost tours and their institutional

mission and historical focus. One participant at Site 1 described the connection they try to achieve between history education and ghost-related material:

They are connected, it's pretty much the same family history of course, the same architectural history because you can't change that, the same information about daily life in you know Victorian times, all of that is the same. We just touch more on...who died here, you know, what spirit could be here.

The importance of linking ghost tours with the history of the museum was something emphasized equally by all three sites. A participant at Site 3 said,

I feel like all of our programs need to focus on our mission, they need to help us meet our mission and relate to our mission, and I think if we didn't have a historical tie we would just be like a haunted house you know or something where stuff jumps out at you or whatever. So I think it would just be totally wildly off mission if we didn't connect it to the history.

This explanation was echoed in responses from other participants at Site 3: "We're a historical organization so that's our primary focus, to operate a historical house museum and not a haunted house, so I think that's why that's really important. And like I said, even if people just come to ghost hunt, we try to send them home with some of the history."

The idea of "sneaking" history education to visitors who might not otherwise be interested was also a theme that emerged during the questions about connection to mission. All three sites referenced this as something they try to achieve on their ghost tour programs. As one participant from Site 2 said,

I mean I think it's a pretty innovative program, so you know as I said just bringing in people who would never come to learn about the history, I think that really helps to achieve its mission. We have to be really sneaky these days, right? People don't just come to house museums anymore, so we try to sneak the history in with the ghost tour.

This idea of surprising ghost tour participants with history education weaved in with the ghost stories was also demonstrated in this quote from Site 1:

I like the ghost tours, I think that they are very entertaining, but then they also have that historical aspect where it...it educates people, people who may not have been interested in this time period or an old stuffy house museum. They come here and they're surprised, you know, because at the same time they're learning about a spirit that walks through the dining room they're also learning about dining room etiquette in Victorian times.

Another idea that emerged within the overall theme of connection to mission was the goal of having visitors form connections to historic figures. This can be seen in quotes from all three participating sites, although it was emphasized in answers from Sites 1 and 3 more than with Site 2. A participant from Site 2 said, "Well, our mission is to bring history to life through innovative hands-on programs and events. And I think we're really doing that for people hopefully. We do bring history to life with our reenactors during these events, and people are hopefully...I mean it's maybe slightly morbid, but people are hopefully connecting with these stories and with these people. Sometimes it's the story of how they died, unfortunately, but that's a part of their life story too." Possibly this idea was less emphasized in interviews with Site 2 because their ghost tours focus a lot on Civil War history in general, as well as the history of the family and the house, while Sites 1 and 3 really focus more intensely on their respective families.

A participant from Site 1 said, "We do try to talk more about the families and the lives, and try to get you emotionally involved in it. And I think it's important to kind of, or interesting at least, to learn about how others lived." The participants from Site 3 really emphasized this idea of helping the visitors of their ghost tours to connect with the house's historic family members as humans:

Well, they have a better understanding of, not just the house, but of the family themselves. We see a lot, whether it's TV shows or books, they make it seem so much darker...or they put the family on this pedestal. And I always like to tell folks, in a joking way, they were just as dysfunctional as we all are, they were very human. But the things that they had done, the struggles they went through,

which is a lot like other people, this is their lasting legacy here. Not just the paranormal stuff, but of course the history that they left behind. So that's what we'd like to make sure people understand.

A final point that emerged on the use of ghost tours to support mission was the importance of staying financially healthy to maintaining mission. This can be seen in this quote from one participant, "We make a pretty significant amount of money off of ghost tours, to be honest. It supports our educational programs. We don't want to get rid of them because it really does support all of these great things that we want to do that might be slightly more educational." In this quote, the participant indicates how significant a financially successful program, like their ghost tour, can be for an institution's ability to continue to fund other educational programs and preserve their mission. This idea of the revenue from the ghost tours helping to achieve mission is echoed in this quote from Research Site 3, "The education factor of it is very important to our mission. The increased revenue from night tours helps the whole organization, even with the preservation of other historic buildings, which is really important."

### ***Potential Issues in Integrating Ghost Tours with History Education***

While all three sites felt strongly that their ghost tours needed to align with their institutional missions and historical focus, they also expressed tensions in maintaining a balance between historical knowledge and ghostly legends on their tours. This concern was emphasized most by participants from Site 2, who were especially worried about the potential for mission drift:

I do think we talk about history on all of our tours, so I think it's well within the range of something we should do. But it wanders pretty quickly, I think, in which the thing that bothers me the most is that I think as a museum we have a responsibility to tell accurate stories, even if those are ghost stories, and it's so hard to substantiate anything or know that even just the source or the person who experienced they become so mythified so quickly that it kind of muddies a little

bit everything that we do, to have so much probably untruths floating around out there.

Although this concern was particularly stressed by Site 2, all three sites referenced it in some way, and indicated throughout the interviews that they worked hard to prevent it. Another example of this can be found in this statement from a participant at Site 1:

We've always been careful, you know, there's a fine line, we don't want to be known as a haunted house. You know, we're a museum first, and we're just a historic property that just happens to have ghosts, you know, so yes let's play on that but...those are issues, it's one of the main things we've been careful with—to make sure that we don't come off as a haunted attraction, I guess, always stick to the history, the history of (city name) with this our organization the Association of Preservation of Tennessee Antiquation fought together and saved the historic property that just happens to have a hidden gem, of the ghosts, you know that's something that we've always been very careful about.

One concern that was mentioned only by one site, Site 3, was the potential for historical inaccuracies about the history of the house and its family to arise in the public sphere. One participant related,

It is difficult, everybody has their own agenda. We have to...in fact, we have a lot of what we call our ghost partners, they're other touring companies that either come into the house or onto the property, or they just are on the outskirts of it depending on what their agreement is. But we will constantly hear a lot of their stories and their versions of what happened. And so again, just like with some of the productions, we have to give them the corrected and updated information and resources, and well it is up to them if they use it, because all we know is that when people enter inside the (house name) they get the correct version.

Site 3 has been nationally famous for being a potentially haunted property for many years, which might be why this concern was particularly relevant to the participants from Site 3. It has been highlighted on Syfy and Travel Channel shows related to the supernatural, as well as on the movie *Hellboy: Blood and Iron*, which featured one of the house's most famous spirits. Because of this very publicized status, Site 3 has to be particularly diligent about correcting any

historically inaccurate rumors that the public can find through the internet or independent publications. They try to mitigate this issue by informing tour companies in the area of the historically accurate information about the house and its former occupants, as researched by their museum historian, as well as by ensuring that all of their staff and volunteers are trained to only give verifiably factual information to visitors.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this case study was to explore the use of mission-based ghost tours for revenue in various historic house museums in order to determine guiding practices for this type of museum programming. Data were derived from in-depth interviews with staff involved with the operation of the ghost tour programs; document analysis of promotional materials, surveys, and end of activity reports after the tours were completed; and participant observation. This chapter first describes conclusions from the study, before proposing implications for both practitioners working within the museum field and researchers.

### Conclusions

*What is the nature of ghost tours in historic house museums and how are they implemented?*

The results of this study suggest ghost tour programs have the potential to be successfully designed to fit the capacities of smaller or larger house museums as needed. Although the size of staff available for the ghost tours varied for each site, all sites were able to design a ghost tour program that fit their capabilities and the demand of their audiences. Examples of the different models seen in this study include partnering with an outside ghost tour company to have the ghost tours facilitated by external staff; only offering private, individually scheduled ghost tours for most of the year; and offering frequent public tours of which several are held per night. As Vagnone and Ryan suggested in their book, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*, because many historic house museums are small in terms of staff, in order to offer programs that are successful for the museum it is important to be able to creatively tailor the design of whatever program is offered to the capacity of the museum's resources.<sup>97</sup> With the museums

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<sup>97</sup> Vagnone and Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*, 29.

included in this study, this consideration was seen mostly in the size of staff and available space with how frequently the ghost tours were scheduled and in their layout and length.

The ghost tours studied here were also reflective of the literature on ghost tourism. All of the ghost tour programs included in this study adhered most closely to the haunted destinations ghost tourism design as referenced by Hanks and Holloway.<sup>98</sup> In this type of ghost tourism, in the hopes of fully experiencing and learning about a potentially haunted location through spending time there, tourists travel to historic sites advertised as haunted.<sup>99</sup> The sites included in this study reflect this type of ghost tourism and not the other two kinds—either ghost hunts or ghost walks—due to a few key features, although they do show similarities to both.

During ghost hunts, participants use paranormal investigation equipment around places rumored to be haunted, often without being given much in-depth knowledge of the history of the locations.<sup>100</sup> Although, as seen in the sites in this study, historical sites sometimes include paranormal investigation techniques in their historical ghost tours, such as with the tour guide using K2 meters to detect electromagnetic energy at Research Site 1 and the guides at Research Site 2 encouraging participants to download ghost hunting apps on their phones, ghost hunts tend to focus more on the active investigations they perform instead of imparting historical education. This separates them from the historical ghost tours offered at many house museums. For ghost walks, tours generally involve walking to many different supposedly haunted locations within a specific area, with the guide focusing on the region's ghost-related history as a whole.<sup>101</sup>

Although the ghost tours at this study's research sites included history more general to the cities

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<sup>98</sup> See Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*; Holloway, "Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces."

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*.

they were located in, the focus was much more heavily on the histories of the particular sites. They also all remained inside the one specific house, while on ghost walks participants travel between several sites and spend most of the duration of the tour outside.

The results of this study also suggest that ghost tours in house museums can be designed with multiple types of educational content. This is seen in the fact that all three research sites include information such as battlefield medical practices, and death and mourning customs of the nineteenth century, along with the history of each specific house. The expansion of the content of each tour from just ghost lore to a more general education about the grimmer sides to each house's history shows Holloway's definition of ghost tourism as a part of the wider dark tourism industry.<sup>102</sup> Holloway positions ghost tourism on the lighter end of what she termed the "dark tourism spectrum," saying that ghost tourism combines lighter-feeling entertainment with the solemn reflection and historical education seen typical of dark tourism.

*Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?*

Study results indicate that ghost tours can be financially lucrative for historic house museums. Interview participants at all three sites stated that revenue was a primary reason for offering the ghost tour programs each year, and documents suggested they are successful in increasing revenue for relatively little cost. This finding supports conclusions from the literature on the financial success of the ghost tourism industry. As Hopper suggested in his article, "Retailers Welcome Ghost Boosters; Ghost Tourism is Alive and Well Throughout North America," ghost tourism can make a big difference in the financial health of an institution.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Holloway, "Legend-tripping in Spooky Spaces."

<sup>103</sup> Hopper, "Retailers Welcome Ghost Boosters; Ghost Tourism is Alive and Well Throughout North America."

The findings of this study also suggest that ghost tour programs in historic house museums can help sustain visitorship through public outreach to new audiences and by meeting public demand. All three sites included in the study indicated that two of the primary motivations for offering the ghost tours are public outreach and demand. The ability of the ghost tours to bring in repeat visitors who might not have otherwise engaged with the regular programming of the different house museums was stated as one of the primary benefits of the programs. The success that the participating sites found with their ghost tours in this area could be reflective of the suggestion of Vagnone and Ryan that house museums might attract more visitation through innovative programming.<sup>104</sup> It could also be connected back to the literature on why ghost stories are a popular form of entertainment. As sociologist Margee Kerr found in her book, *Scream*, people enjoy being scared in safe environments because chemicals are released in the brain causing them to feel pleasure.<sup>105</sup> And as King wrote in his book, *Danse Macabre*, hearing ghost stories is a safe way for audiences to survive horror and then celebrate that they are alive.<sup>106</sup> This could help to explain the attraction of new visitors to the study's sites for the ghost tours. The three sites' success in public outreach could also be connected to conclusions in the literature on ghost tourism about the increase of ghost tour participation due to the popularity of ghost-related TV shows and films. As both Hanks and Holloway suggest, the rise in popularity of ghost hunting shows like *Ghost Hunters* and supernatural horror movies like the *Ring* series have contributed to the ghost tourism industry's growth.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Vagnone and Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums*, 29.

<sup>105</sup> Kerr, *Scream*.

<sup>106</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*.

<sup>107</sup> Kerr, *Scream*.

*How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?*

The results of this study suggest that it is both possible, and important, to ensure that ghost tours in historic house museums are reflective of their educational mission. For the sites that participated in this study this included drawing materials for the tours as much as possible from documented history—such as long-held local legends, tragic historical events, and reports from visitors and staff. This is important because as stated by Lord and Lord in *The Manual of Museum Management*, it is essential for the long-term direction of a museum that all programming is created around the museum’s mission.<sup>108</sup> It is possible for ghost tour programs to be designed to meet the educational missions of historic house museums because, as the literature on the enjoyment of ghost stories suggests, ghost stories can be a way for people to form personal connections with the past. This can be seen in King’s idea that audiences enjoy ghost stories because they allow them to feel like they can overcome the short life spans of humans and reach someone from the past.<sup>109</sup> Michael Bell, in his article, “Ghosts of Place,” echoes this concept with his idea that the notion of ghosts allows people to “re-encounter” the past.<sup>110</sup>

### **Implications**

The three cases included in this study offer the field examples of ghost tours held by historic house museums in practice. As was shown in the literature on the issues of decreased visitation rates in house museums, many in the field have increasingly found themselves

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<sup>108</sup> Lord and Lord, *The Manual of Museum Management*.

<sup>109</sup> King, *Danse Macabre*.

<sup>110</sup> Bell, “Ghosts of Place.”

struggling with this decline and with the resultant financial difficulties. Much of the literature also suggested that one solution to these issues could be the creation of innovative programming. This study has explored how ghost tours could be one such type of program currently being used by several historic house museums.

However, there are still questions left unanswered to be explored further by future study. One question still to be resolved is whether or not the findings of this study are reflective of ghost tour programming in the field as a whole. Because this study focused on three cases in depth, it is not clear if the results are indicative of wider trends in the field. Further research could expand the scope to study more ghost tour programs offered by house museums.

There is also the entire area of visitor experience with house museum ghost tours still left to be explored. This study focused its attention almost solely on the operational side of the ghost tours, examining the views of museum practitioners involved with creating and facilitating the programs for the public. Future studies could look more specifically to the visitor's experience with the ghost tours, by questioning the visitors who have participated in the programs for what they liked or disliked, what improvements they might make, what drew them to participating, and if they planned on visiting the museum again in the future. Further research could also explore visitors' perceptions of the ghost tours' focus on historical content, and if and in what ways visitors learn from these tours. Because all three sites in this study emphasized the importance of keeping the tours related to the historical focus of the museum, it would be interesting to see in future studies if visitors are learning the material the museums hope they are learning from the tours.

The findings of this study can be utilized to offer practitioners suggestions and considerations to be used when designing their own historical ghost tour. The first two of these are about the content of the tours. Firstly, it was clear that all three sites involved in this study considered it essential for offering ghost tour programs that there be previously existing ghost lore about the historic house, whether this be from the local community or from past staff and visitors. This helps to maintain the historical accuracy and connection to their educational mission. Organizations that do not already have these types of stories surrounding their historic house might perhaps consider other types of innovative programming. Also, for historic house museums that are designing new ghost tour programs, in order to augment the historical knowledge of the tours, museums should keep in mind that the content can be expanded into other subjects as long as they have some connection to the ghost stories told on the tour. In the cases that participated in this study, these subjects included Civil War battlefield surgeries, nineteenth century medical practices, and Victorian death and mourning customs.

A third consideration for house museums contemplating designing their own ghost tour programs is the possible impact of the popularity of ghosts in the media on the historical knowledge of their house that is portrayed to the public. As seen with Research Site 3, historic houses might have to consider how to mitigate the false stories and rumors that might arise in popular TV shows and films from encouraging ghost tourism at their institutions by offering ghost tours. Solutions to this potential issue can be found in Site 3's method of focusing on dispelling false rumors within their own program by being very clear on the historically documented facts throughout all of their messaging to the public. By taking these suggestions and considerations into account when designing ghost tour programs, it is possible for many

historic house museums in the field to institute a type of innovative programming that can be successful in increasing revenue, visitation, and achieving mission.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Guide**

### **House Museum Ghost Tours**

**Emily Alvey  
Museology Graduate Program**

#### **Tour Logistics**

1. In what year did your museum begin offering ghost tours?
2. What is the average length of this tour?
3. Does the tour target a particular audience? (i.e., families, adults, kids)
4. On a typical tour, how many visitors participate?
5. Who facilitates the tour - staff, volunteers or both?
6. What kind of training, if any, are staff/volunteers given for this tour?

#### **Tour Design**

7. Why did your museum decide to add a ghost tour to its programming options?
8. Who all contributed to the design of this tour as it looks now?
9. What considerations were involved in the decision to offer this tour?
10. What were the qualifications used for determining which stories to tell in this tour?
11. What, if any, methods, reference materials, or examples from other institutions were used when designing this tour?
12. What is your view of the tour?
13. Will you describe the tour, step by step, in your own words?
14. What do you believe is the most interesting story told on this tour?

15. What connections are made between the stories told on the tour and the historical focus of your museum as a whole?
16. On a scale from 1-5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is completely, how important do you think it is that the stories told on the tour connect to the historical focus of your museum?  
Explain your rating.

### **Tour Benefits**

17. What are the goals of this tour?
18. How do you think visitors benefit from this tour? What do they get out of it?
19. Specifically, what do you think visitors learn from this tour?
20. In what ways do you believe your museum benefits from offering this tour?
21. Do you believe this tour is a popular option for visitors?
22. In what ways do you believe this tour helps your organization to achieve its mission?
23. On a scale from 1-5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is completely, how connected is this tour to your organization's mission? Explain your rating.
24. Does your organization have any documents (evaluations, talking points, schedules, advertisements) from the planning of the ghost tours that would be available for me to look at?

## Appendix B: Interview Quotes

## Research Question 1

Research Question	Theme	Sub-Theme	Institution	Quote/Example
<b>Interviews</b>				
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Tour Length	1	It's two hours, 7:30 to 9:30. And a lot of that is because not only does she talk about the history and the architecture, but she's got to throw in the death stories and the experiences. And she brings out the spirit boxes and the K2s and all that kind of stuff. Now a historical daily tour, if you want it, I can give you a four-hour tour of the house, I can, and we can talk about all that stuff, we can talk about every single piece of furniture in the room, antiques, who donated it, where they came from, you know, the gowns. Of course we do the different exhibitions throughout the year so right now we're in timeless romance, so I can talk about that. I mean, so it can be that long, but we try to keep the daily house tours to a little over an hour. But the ghost tours—two hours.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Tour Length	1	We try to keep it to two hours.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Tour Length	2	An hour. Even for our themed ghost tours in October, they still tend to be about an hour.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Tour Length	2	Typically an hour. An hour with the public, and then the private kind of depends on the level of the people's interest, how many questions they have so sometime they can take a little longer or shorter.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Tour Length	3	The nighttime tours are about 35 minutes.
1. How are	Logistics	Tour	3	Yeah, they're about 35 to 40 minutes, and again that's a timed tour.

ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?		Length		
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Staff	1	It's usually just one, unless they're sold out with like 25 people, then maybe two, but it's usually just Emily.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Staff	2	It's mostly volunteers. The staff will do them as backup when we schedule something we can't get volunteers for. We have a hard time staffing our regular ghost tours throughout the year because it's in the evening and a lot of our volunteers aren't available. So generally it's volunteer docents, and the same with the October ones. The majority of them are given by volunteer docents, and then usually staff fills in when needed.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Staff	2	It's a mixture of both (staff and volunteers) and we also have community groups that participate with us, like the Kansas City Shakespeare Festival actually does some presentations for us as well.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Staff	3	Generally we run an average of 4 docents who perform the evening guided tours each night. Generally we are only open in the evening Thursdays through Saturdays so generally about 12-15 people actually perform the tours. This does not include extra staff members (whether paid or volunteer) who shadow the tours or who work as extra security during events.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Training	1	So that is a whole lot of showing up and helping. I actually have a lady here tonight that...we just hired two new tour guides and she's going to be sort of my backup here. And so we want her to show up and follow me around, you know, hear how I do it, see what we do. In her case, we don't have a script for this tour except for one we sort of put together in our heads. And we want our tour guides to stick to our script. Now that doesn't mean that they can't put their own spin on it but we don't want anyone telling a story that is not in the script or you know doing something like that. So I gave her an outline tonight, that's the only thing we had cause we don't have a script, we learned that recently. So we'll do some of that, have her just tag along like I've got her sort of helping me tonight to get used to what you have to do. So she's upstairs with the people that want to go to the tower and she said she'd turn off the lights as she comes down which is usually what we do so we don't have to go up and down. So a lot of just tagging along.
1. How are ghost tours in	Logistics	Training	2	Actually, a lot of the ghost tours are generated by volunteer interest. So we don't have...the script for the tours was made by one of the volunteers who will give you the tour today, her name is Alice, because it

historic house museums implemented?				is this interesting thing...you know they're going to talk about the history too, and we have a very formal kind of training for that, and a set script, and certain things we want them to talk about. But for the ghost tours it's really more based on their interest, so if they've had any experiences we encourage them to share them, if they've talked to their other friends who are docents and they've had experiences we want them to share them, and really kind of base it on what the visitors are interested in. It's much more free form than our typical tours. So I would say there's actually not formal training, and we don't require...you know our regular volunteers, some of them don't like the paranormal aspect and so they don't give those tours, we don't require anyone to. So those who are interested generally come with their own kind of ideas and knowledge and stories they've collected themselves. In October, the training is pretty minimal because each room kind of has a vignette and they have...there's a presenter. So there'll be a short bit of talking, but for the most part they're just leading people through, and so we just give them a little 20 minute walk-through and send them the script ahead of time.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Training	2	So the way that we do our tours (the public tours) every single room is sort of its own vignette, and so each room...it depends on who the person is. So some of these presenters in the rooms are kind of experts on their topic, so they don't really get much training from us. Like we have some medical reenactors come out and so we don't really dictate what they do at all, we just want them to do some medical reenactment because that's a huge part of why there are so many ghost stories that are associated with this house, so they just do their own medical reenactments and we don't really give them a script, we don't train them...but we've worked with them for a long time so we just kind of let them do what they want. And then on the other hand, we have other presenters where we'll write a script for them and we'll practice with them and we'll kind of do more handholding with them. So it really depends on which person it is.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Training	3	Occasionally we'll have staff meetings and some additional training in there where I handle the history part of the house.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Training	3	For example, when they first come on orientations are given by the staff coordinator, but at least for understanding and learning the information inside the house they get it from our head docents. Information, whether it's updated or new information is provided by administrative, a lot of time it comes through our historian right over here and then communicated through. And they also have a training folder that they can add information, whether it's on, for example, we'll have docent education such as something on period clothing or they'll have something in regards to the family, or an artifact, or something that ties in to the time period. So we give them an all-encompassing, not just Whaley specific, but for the time period or for the region or the county.
1. How are ghost tours in	Logistics	Audience	1	Adults...we don't do minors on this particular tour. There's just too many things that could go wrong. But other than that we're pretty open. This tour in particular seems to get a lot of locals. Our other tours

historic house museums implemented?				have much more tourists, but for whatever reason we do get lots of locals on this one. Typically, people that are like, "I came here when I was in high school for a field trip," you know, I think I was one of those people. You know, people that are like, "I've lived here my whole life but I've never been here before, so I thought I'd come."
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	2	Definitely adults. We even kind of put a little caveat on our seasonal ghost tours...they're probably not appropriate for children under ten. We leave it up to the parents, some of the kids really do like it, but it's definitely adult-focused.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	2	Typically adults, and I would say younger adults...kind of more millennial I would say. We do have some kids that come with their parents, but for the most part it's pretty much all adults.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	3	We try to recommend that kids take the daytime tour, but we don't disallow them on the nighttime tour or anything like that.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	3	It does depend on how they take that type of subject matter. And we always have that...not really a clause but it's not recommended for kids of a certain age group and younger. But sometimes you get adults who just can't handle it.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	1	We try to keep this one under 16 people.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	2	Well for our yearly...like throughout the year our ghost tour that you're going on today, we generally have about ten people, cause those are just private tours that people can schedule. They're structured much like our regular public tours, but focusing on the paranormal and ghost stories that people have experienced. In October, when we hold our big ghost tours, I think each night...I think we cap...each tour has about twelve people, and then we have I think seven tours a night, so I think we end up with about 75 people each night and we do four nights, so that's 300.
1. How are ghost tours in	Logistics	Audience	2	Around anywhere from a hundred to a hundred and thirty typically and for each individual group, we kind of break those up every fifteen minutes, those groups tend to have ten to fifteen people.

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1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Audience	3	Each guided tour we try to cap at twenty, sometimes they go a little over and sometimes they don't sell out. And the ghost hunts are the same, twenty also.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	Stephen, he's on the Board of Directors so he knows the history of the house and so he, you know, he can give just a regular basic tour, um but it was kind of whole in everybody's experiences, people who have been here for a long time grabbing their experiences that they've had with some of the spirits just were things to insert in with the normal historical tour that we have. And then of course adding in the very sad things—like the deaths, you know, Mr. Fontaine died in the ballroom, so of course when you're in the ballroom giving the tour you've got to insert that kind of stuff. That stuff is not, you know, what we really talk about on a normal historic tour, unless somebody asks. So it's just really emphasizing the reasons why there could be spirits here, I guess. So it's kind of everybody, um Stephen with his knowledge and then all the other docents, you know, the board members, we just kinda all kinda put it together to create the tour.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	Myself and one of the founders of our tour company, Stephen, and if I believe... his co-founder at the time Tonya. So I think they sort of came up with it and I was, especially on this tour, I'm sort of the historian so I got to go and fact check everything. But being involved here at the museum, I was heavily involved in doing this particular tour.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	2	The program director, Sara. So she certainly built on what they did in the past, she determines the content pretty solely, she gets ideas from the docents and the staff...we all kind of contribute to brainstorming what kind of things we can do...but she's in charge of the content.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	2	Right now it's pretty much just me. I'm the program director so I do the majority of it. And then of course there's input from staff members, and then kind of looking at our volunteer resources as well. So, for example, with the medical reenactors I might say, "Hey what do you guys have for me this year, what can you guys do?" But ultimately I'm the one who's kind of in charge of the programming for it.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	3	We also take suggestions from the staff, how things could work better or make it more interesting, we've added along the way.

implemented?				
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	3	I think it was...it's always been evolving, but it's mainly the administrative. Just tweaks here and there to see what works best for both our audience as well as our mission here for the Whaley House.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	For daily house tours, we always tell Mollie's story because everyone knows about Mollie, and we always tell Elliot's story when we get to the third floor. I don't talk about Mr. Fontaine dying in the ballroom, unless someone asks, I don't talk about Mrs. Fontaine dying up in her bedroom, or the deaths of the other children or how they might have died around the house or things like that unless someone asks. For the ghost tour I know they talk about that stuff. You want to add that on there, because people will ask why there are ghosts here. Well you want to tell these people that they died here, that's why. As far as I know, for the ghost tour they might leave out just a few other things maybe just trying to keep it a little bit more macabre and sad, I guess. They're gonna make sure they touch on the deaths and the ghost experiences.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	The ones that we tell are ones that we have documentation on. And that's something that as a company what we generally want to stick to is...we're not making up stuff, we're not trying to create something that's not there. Everything that we talk about actually happened, and there's proof of it somewhere. So we have, you know, documents from the family, legal paperwork and sort of things that we have proof of, that we can kind of build the story around. And there's you know, a few personal experiences thrown into that as well.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	2	It's a little bit different each year. Original ideas are just generated in house but then we alter every year kind of based on feedback we're getting from the visitors. We usually send out a survey to each participant, because they sign up online we have their email address. And for instance two years ago, we really wanted to make it a little bit more historically focused than it had been in the past and we talked a lot more about Victorian mourning and, you know, about when this was a field hospital and about how medicine was, and people enjoyed it but we got a lot of feedback which was like, "I want more ghost stories." So this past year, although we still kept the history elements in there, we definitely focused more just on the ghost stories and we brought in paranormal investigators to talk about what they do and stuff. So we do tweak it each year based on guest feedback primarily.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	2	We try to keep them semi-historical, like things that are related to the history in some way. We want people to learn things on the ghost tours, whether or not you believe in ghosts or not is kind of your own deal, but we want to definitely make sure people leave with at least learning something on the tour. We try to choose some of the ghost stories that directly tie back to something historical, so like the things about the soldiers, then we can talk about the Battle of Westport that was here and how this was a field hospital, and then some of the stories that relate directly to members of the family as well. So we try to keep it somewhat connected to the history, so if there was like a story that didn't seem to have anything

				to do with anything we probably wouldn't include it.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	3	The main point is that they must be factual. We don't like...a lot of times legends and fictional stories will crop up. We try to squash them down and have staff tell really true stories, and any related to why some of the ghosts might be here take more prominence over some stories they could tell that don't really relate.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	3	In fact, when we kind of first started doing the tours, a lot of the information that we had kind of came from the previous organization, and then with our historian here doing more research and realizing there's different information...it was always being updated, and even to this day we're still kind of updating a lot of those legends and stories. So we want to make sure we have something correct for the guests, so they understand we're not just repeating everything that other groups, or books, or even movies or TV shows are saying. This is the information we have and it is correct.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	As far as I know we didn't use anything that wasn't related to our house. Everything stays consistent and true with a normal house tour, that you know history of the house. I mean we've...we go through the archives up here. Like um, some of the past directors were really clever and kept record of people's experiences when they were giving tours, like guests that came in. And then, like I said earlier, art students who kept record and stuff. I mean I know we dug through those, just to have those stories to be able to tell people. But then we all just kinda really relied on each other and our experiences so that we could share those with people about the paranormal activity that's happened around here in the house. So as far as I know it's been nothing from the outside.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	1	We have a friend who lives in New Orleans, and she and her ex-husband now...they created the first ghost tour company in New Orleans. And somehow when all of this started we went to her and we were like, "Hey you've been doing this for twenty years, how do we do this." So she gave us a few pointers, but my husband Stephen, who was one of the founders, he's been a business man his whole life. So kind of between his sense of business and me in entertaining, we sort of have a theatrical entertainment background. So between that and consulting with haunted history tours in New Orleans, that's really all we've done.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Content	2	The research comes from various places. All of the ghost tours or paranormal-focused things generally just come from things that have happened in the house or you know with the paranormal investigators that we bring in. When we do any sort of research about mourning practices or funeral practices it's generally secondary source and internet research depending on what...we have a lot of information in our files, but then we do try to revisit each year and make sure we're telling accurate stories. So generally...like I know this last year Sarah had wanted to incorporate some sort of letter, you know, home from written by a soldier who dies or something, and so she had read...there's a book called <i>This Republic of Suffering</i> and she used that book for a template for how to tell those stories. So Sarah does a good job at doing research.
1. How are	Logistics	Content	2	For the most part, not a whole lot. I do really like the book <i>This Republic of Suffering</i> , which is a book

ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?				about death and mourning during the Civil War and I've used that to inform a lot of the educational components of the tour, cause again we do really want it to be educational. And then some of our other experts. We have a volunteer who has done a lot of research on Civil War era mourning practices, and so we kind of take a lot of her knowledge as well. So we kind of just try to use the collective knowledge that we have in our network.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Structure	1	I don't, the group tours are so large, I don't think they normally let people into the tower. We normally let people into the tower on the day tour. But that's the only difference between them I think. So the entrance that you came in, right, that's the tour entrance. We always start back there on the back porch. Just because we created that entrance back in the 60's when they restored it so you wouldn't have to use the front doors for a tour, cause it's a lot of wear and tear on the front doors. So we always start back there, of course we tell people about the porch, but we bring them in, we take them straight to the front door. So we always start with family history and Memphis history, architectural history right there at the front door, kinda like if you have come in, you know, as a guest. I know...I have docents who go either way when they get on...they either go...like, I like to go right into the small parlor to talk about the small parlor, because if I was a guest coming to call on the Fontaines or whatever that's where I'd be taken, was right into the small parlor area. I have some docents who like to just go to the room next to it which is the ballroom because they just want to wow everybody right off the bat. But we just...we go one floor at a time, kinda make a circle...I'm a take you through whenever we're done I'll show you...kinda make a circle and then go up the stairs, make another circle. And of course the tour changes a little bit cause downstairs the tour...it takes a little bit longer because you're getting all the family history, Memphis history, architectural history, but then when you get up to the second and third floor it's bedrooms, so you're getting a little bit more of the personal side of it...a little bit more about family life and stuff. Just the little inserts about, you know, "Well this was Mrs. Fontaine's room and she liked to do this, this, and this," you know. Same thing up there on the third floor. And it's the same thing for the ghost tour.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Structure	2	So throughout the year, for our regular private ghost tours, the visitors will go through each room of the house, learn a little bit about the family who used the house, and really focus on really any kind of...we do focus on death and mourning practices, just to teach them a little bit about the history of that and then they'll learn about kind of the more dark periods of history in the house here. So they'll talk about all of the family members who passed away and how the house was used as a field hospital, but then also just kind of what the life was like for people who lived here and how hard it was, cause that does kind of inform the sorts of sightings and other experiences that they have here. And then in each room, the docent will talk about what's happened there, the things that other people have experienced or kind of even if it's just lore, but there's some kind of experience that's happened to somebody in each room. And then depending on the docent, some of them don't, at the end of the tour sometimes we will pull up EVP readings or images for them that people have captured. And, on that note, most of the docents do encourage people to use technology so if they want to download any of the ghost hunting apps that they have or anything like that, sometimes they incorporate that too.

1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Structure	2	So the public ghost tours are a one-hour tour of the house where we focus on some of the ghost stories that have taken place in the house as well as some of the history that's related to those ghost stories. So every room in the house has a different kind of vignette. Some of the rooms are just straight ghost stories and storytelling and some are reenactments, and then others are slightly more educational kind of like a...not a lecture exactly but kind of like a mini fact dump. Last year we had a woman that just talked about Civil War mourning practices and we have some artifacts in the house that are related to that—some mourning costumes, and jewelry made of human hair and things like that—so it's kind of a mix of all of those elements.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Structure	3	At night it's much more structured, you have to get in on time and the docent leads the tour, so they don't have flexibility...once they're downstairs they can't go back upstairs, that sort of thing.
1. How are ghost tours in historic house museums implemented?	Logistics	Structure	3	And it's at least for the evening, it's structured...so it's timed. So those people that do want to take the time inside the house, like you know when people call up and ask what's better, evening or daytime...like, "Oh, is evening when the ghosts come out?" No, it's anytime. In the daytime, you can take as long as you like, in the evening it's at least a 35 to 40 minute tour, so you have to take into account that you'll be with a docent going room by room.

**Research Question 2**

Research Question	Theme	Institution	Quote/Example
Interviews			
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	1	Just to add a little bit more onto it I guess. You know, we're a nonprofit. Historic houses, if they don't change with the times, you know we could be a dying breed really. There's only...certain kinds of people that visit them really it's not for everybody. It's not like a zoo, where everybody loves animals, you know it's people who are interested in history or a lot of times it's old people who have retired, you know just traveling the country and they love it. So you have to constantly change, with museums and with other things cause we could be a dying breed in itself and so that's the...the ghost tours have...ghosts in general have just really captured people's attention over the last few years. So we just thought "We are haunted, we should tell people you know. People who have had experiences of course know, and it's kind of been out there a little bit but, let's just really...really get into it."
2. Why do historic	Revenue	1	Of course we're close with the museum and we don't want to do anything to step on their

house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?			toes, so there was lots of discussions back and forth on, you know, what was acceptable, what sort of representation they wanted to have or to be presented as. And again, you know, very strict on don't break things, what's the house rules for them as well. And so they kind of came to the conclusion after we did a few of the tours that this was good for the museum. It brings them quite a bit of extra revenue to help maintain the property. But this being a haunted location, we eventually decided was actually beneficial. We're still, you know, we're still back and forth a bit, and we still communicate with them about things. They do not talk about ghosts during their daily tours, they leave that to us.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	2	Now for the past two years, I believe we have expanded it and we offer it for two weekends rather than one, and I know that was probably a really fiscal decision. We made a decent amount of money, and we are completely dependent on admission and donated revenue. So that's why they just decided, and honestly there was so much interest that we were turning dozens and dozens of people away and we minimized our marketing because we had to turn so many away, that the decision to increase it and to add more tour times which we've done has been based on public interest and then money.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	2	Kind of the blunt answer is money, and publicity would be the second. We make a pretty significant amount of money off of ghost tours, to be honest. It supports our educational programs. We don't want to get rid of them because it really does support all of these great things that we want to do that might be slightly more educational.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	2	And then secondary is fundraising. So although we do want people to learn more history on that one, it's really about bringing in people to have a good time and fundraising to support the museum.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	3	If they would be profitable, which they are, and just if we could manage the staffing needs to have the extra hours and that sort of thing all were factored into that.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue	1	It does bring in some extra revenue for the museum, and we kind of have our own little attraction going here at the house. It's one of our best-selling tours, and so we do those on a regular basis. We also, as a company, sort of help out with their other fundraising and big events, so that's sort of a separate draw. But I think it's pretty much monetary.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue and Outreach	2	The goals are to make money, to increase publicity for the house, and then also to get new audiences into the house.
2. Why do historic	Revenue and Outreach	2	I kind of mentioned it before, but again we do make a decent amount of money off of this

house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?			program, and then we also just benefit off of the publicity and hopefully it leads people to come back. Even if they only come for the ghost tours, every year they're still going to learn something a little bit different every year, so hopefully they'll still be learning something.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Revenue and Outreach	3	Increase in visitorship and income. And it keeps the vandals and troublemakers away while we're open those hours.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	1	We, I cannot speak for other historical houses cause that all goes along with, you know, are they really haunted, you know, are they doing it just to make a little extra money cause people are really into the ghost stuff lately, you know, in the last few years people have gotten really into the ghost stuff, so that's something they can tap into, you know like "Oh I have this really creepy historic house, we could push that it's haunted," you know. So we, we always want to be known as a museum first, we've been a museum since 1964, course we've been haunted probably since long before that. You know, we just saw a market for it, we were like, "People are really into this, the ghost stuff." We've got, um docent reports since the 60's, even when the art school was here in the 30's 40's and 50's, we've got reports and stuff from the students how different rooms felt weird, maybe they were afraid to go someplace at night on one of the floors. So we were like, "We are a haunted property, we could really bring this to the house." But we, we've always been careful, you know, there's a fine line, we don't want to be known as a haunted house. You know, we're a museum first, and we're just a historic property that just happens to have ghosts, you know, so yes let's play on that but...those are issues, it's one of the main things we've been careful with—to make sure that we don't come off as a haunted attraction, I guess, always stick to the history, the history of Memphis with this our organization the Association of Preservation of Tennessee Antiquation fought together and saved the historic property that just happens to have a hidden gem, of the ghosts, you know that's something that we've always been very careful about.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	2	I think, as a small nonprofit we're always looking for ways to get our numbers up, so I think originally they probably saw that it was a way to bring in a new pool of people that were not coming for just history tours or educational events...and probably saw that there was fundraising potential, and you know just to increase the reach because as a nonprofit we're responsible for justifying its existence by how many people it serves. So I imagine that was the original one.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	2	And it's also just really good publicity for the house. In the past, I would say two or three years, the ghost tours have become bigger and bigger, we sold out like two weeks in advance this year, and we've noticed that we've also had an uptick in just public

programming?			tours...normal educational tours...as well. And I think part of that is because we're kind of just becoming more well-known, and part of that is because of the ghost tours. So we like that element as well, even though it's not only what we want to be known for, it helps get us on people's radar and they kind of think about us as a place that they could go.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	2	You know honestly I think, for our regular private ghost tours, it's really just for the visitors to have a good time and learn a little bit of history. We really do make those, you know, we just want people to enjoy themselves appropriately. And then for our October ghost tours, I really think it's about growing our visibility as an organization, because we get so much PR from events that it really does help with seeing an increase in our visitors afterwards because people are hearing about us.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	1	I think that it has benefitted us, just with more exposure like I said earlier with those people who never would have thought about coming to our house as a museum, but they would come to our house if it's a haunted house. Like I said earlier, they've come back for a historical tour, they've been so intrigued they want to get all of it and not just the ghost stuff, you know, so they come back for a daily tour. Also for our events, like people who come to the ghost tours, Stephen and them are always pushing, you know, "Woodruff-Fontiane's having this speakeasy event," you know, "they're having something on the first Friday of the month," or something. It pushes our events as well, cause they promote us and we promote them, so it really brings more people here, more people who get to experience something other than ghosts. I've even had some weddings come out of them, cause we're a big wedding venue, you know, people come for a ghost tour and they're like, "Oh, what an awesome place to get married!" you know, so they come and book a wedding with me. So I think it's been good.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	2	I think it really widens our visitor base. I think there are a lot of people who wouldn't normally come otherwise that come to these. And it's good visibility for the museum. It allows us to partner with and work with organizations and people that we wouldn't be able to otherwise.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	1	Yes, I do. One of the things I always notice, you saw that ghost tour sign hanging by the admission desk, so these people come in and they're just here for a historical tour, you know, they don't know anything about the ghosts, and they'll look up and go, "Oh, you have ghost tours here. Is this house haunted?" And all the sudden they are intrigued. And we're like "Yes, and you can buy your tickets here and go to the historical haunts website. We have a ghost tour tonight and you can get on it. Or if you just want to do the historical tour we can give you some ghost history as well."
2. Why do historic	Outreach	1	This one, yes. This one is especially, in particular, and it may be because we keep this

house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?			one a little bit smaller than some of the other groups. But this one does seem to sell-out.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Outreach	2	Yes. The October ghost tours are <i>incredibly</i> popular, to the point that we're looking at limiting our marketing a little bit because we feel bad that we turn so many people away but we're at the limit of our capabilities of staff and volunteers. For our regular just private ghost tours, you know it's not a big draw for people. We probably do one every couple of months. Leading up to October we'll do a couple a month. It's not a big draw, it's just something in addition that we offer, because we do make clear that on your regular public tour you're welcome to ask about ghost stories and we will absolutely share them with you. If there are other people on the tour who don't like that, or there's a volunteer who's not comfortable telling those stories, then it's not a given that you're gonna be able to make it a ghost tour. So the private tours are an option for those people that that's really why they're coming, they want to learn the ghost stories, and we have a separate tour for them in which they can just focus on that.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Public Demand	3	Public demand. A lot of people were asking for tours like that, "Why don't you stay open at night? Why don't you guys have ghost hunts?" So we listened and added those to the schedule. Plus the San Diego Ghost Hunters became available, and they volunteer their time to facilitate the ghost hunts for us.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Public Demand	3	Of course you know, the demand of it. But even before our organization managed the (name), it pretty much always had some sort of like haunted legacy. I mean it's had a haunted legacy for the longest time. And so we approach it with... again with that whole "history/mystery" thing, so we want to make sure that people understand those stories and why it may be haunted.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Public Demand	2	Yes, it is super super popular. And I've just been talking about the public ghost tours, we do have the private ghost tours which you're going to get to do. And the private ghost tours are also extremely popular. We get people all the time that just kind of call us up out of the blue and say, "Hey, can we do a ghost tour with you?" So it's obviously something that people like, and something that people connect with for whatever reason.
2. Why do historic house museums offer ghost tours as a type of programming?	Public Demand	3	Yeah. Definitely. You know, for myself, I like taking my time in a museum and reading over things, but there are a lot of people, you know they want to be told, they want to be entertained, and they want to be taught, and so you can definitely get that on the evening guided tour.

## Research Question 3

Research Question	Theme	Institution	Quote/Example
<b>Interviews</b>			
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	I like the ghost tours, I think that they are very entertaining, but then they also have that historical aspect where it...it educates people, people who may not have been interested in this time period or an old stuffy house museum. They come here and they're surprised, you know, because at the same time they're learning about a spirit that walks through the dining room they're also learning about dining room etiquette in Victorian times. You know, so they...me personally I think it was a very cool, smart decision for us. And the fact that Stephen can do such a great job making sure they keep it historical and not a haunted attraction. I think that they're great, because it gives the people a little bit more something to think about, I guess, something more than just the ghosts, and it definitely gets people involved who wouldn't have come here otherwise. So I think they're great. Me, I love them!
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	For me it's really about getting into the family, sort of meeting the family and finding out who these people were and who they still sort of are. And it's also to bring awareness to the historic property and the preservation that Memphis doesn't seem to be really respectful of when it comes to places like this.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	My personal opinion is...I am pretty skeptical when it comes to the ghost stuff and ghost stories, but I think the ghost tours are super fun, they're a very very fun event, and I love programming them because again they're super fun, but you see so many people in the house that you wouldn't normally ever see in the house. So, I have a very positive view of the ghost tours, partly because it's a very fun Halloween thing to do, but also because I can see they have a real tangible benefit to the house. I know some museums are very anti-ghosts and anti-ghost stories and I understand that completely, but for us I think we would actually lose something I think if we lost the ghost tours because we're so well-known for it. People come to us...news organizations will come to us sometimes to feature the ghost stories and then we get on those reporters' radars and then they'll come back for another program like a more educational program. So I have very positive feelings about the ghost tours and I would hate to see them ever leave the museum.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	3	But in general my view of the tours...like the daytime is great because we get a lot of people who come in there and have no idea what the Whaley House is about. And that is a blessing because they're not tainted with all the haunted stories, they appreciate the museum for its historical aspects and then they learn, "Oh, what is this about with all of this ghost stuff?" And then we tell them about it. And so they don't go in with a tainted view like they're going to see a ghost. At nighttime, it's definitely a different attitude. Very rock and roll. People who go on those are specifically, not all the time but, they're there for the paranormal. And so it's fun loving, and strangely enough people

			identify a lot with the hauntings. They start telling us their ghost stories. So it's a different level that we kind of get in touch with for the guests in the evening. So it's different levels to see how people interact with the house.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	It...They are connected, it's pretty much the same family history of course, the same architectural history because you can't change that, the same information about daily life in you know Victorian times, all of that is the same. We just touch more on...who died here, you know, what spirit could be here. As you get in each room, cause I've been on the tours with Emily, you know like say you walk into the dining room, of course she tells you—she doesn't know everything, like we may say “oh, well this was the butler's pantry, and they would come in through this way and go out that way” and “these closets were used for china and linen” and she's not really gonna touch on that. She's gonna touch a little bit on the restoration, probably in the room and what they would have used it for but then she's gonna say, you know, “in this room we have felt Victoria Burley's presence. Victoria was the cook for the Fontaines for almost forty-six years.” She'll go into different experiences from docents and when we've brought different mediums to here and what they have felt and different things like that. And that goes for all the rooms, because we've kinda had experiences in all the rooms. Like Mollie(sp?), Mollie Woodruff, she's our most notorious ghost on the property. And then we have probably about thirteen or so. Up in her room, Emily really focuses on her story, about how her first baby died and then her husband died a few months later, and how she had another baby and it died also, and so she never had any children, she's very sad, it's probably one of the reasons why she's back here on the property. Same thing with Elliot, our ghost on the third floor. So, there are those differences, she still gives, you know, the history but more ghost stuff. Course during the day, just reading your group, you know people who have come here for the ghost stories, to be scared, so you always try to throw in the history stuff, you know, but they want to hear the ghost stories, they want to hear your experiences. So, daytime it just depends on your group, you know, you can throw it in there if you want but nighttime it's a little bit more about the ghosts but absolutely there is the history stuff in there as well.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	They are all pretty much related to a historical event or person. So, because it was a field hospital most of the ghosts or activity are attributed to soldiers who died here, or some of the children who died. There are very few stories that aren't somehow connected to the family or the history of the area. Although there are certainly some things where you don't know what the spirit or thing may have been. But they are generally pretty connected.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	I would say our biggest focus of the museum here is general is kind of the Civil War connection, so that's kind of the biggest ghost connection we try to make as well, that's really the focus of the ghost stories. People have a lot of stories about seeing soldiers on the stairs or on the lawn and various parts of the house. So we really try to tie it closely in with this house being a field hospital during the Battle of Westport. Because that's a really interesting story and the story of Civil War medicine is very interesting, so we're kind of able to hook those two things together.

<p>3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?</p>	<p>Connection to Mission</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>As long as the...we try to, even if they come for the ghosts we try to send them home with the history too, in how the ghosts relate to that history and vice versa.</p>
<p>3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?</p>	<p>Connection to Mission</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>It's all of it, the history is the biggest connection. Again, whether it's the daytime, nighttime, or even the ghost hunting tour, as long as that history being told is correct...you know people hear the ghostly legends, they hear the stories from the docents. And I always say, we leave it for the guests to decide about the hauntings. But it's the history that connects it all, it really does.</p>
<p>3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?</p>	<p>Connection to Mission</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>I think that, the fact that we...Like you'll see tonight when you go on the ghost tour, um it's not scary, you know we're always speaking about the history and keeping it true to the um the house script—the history of the house, the history of the families. Of course we bring out the K2 meters, the spirit boxes and stuff on these things but it's always always about the history, and Victorian life, and Victorian life...the Victorian era in the South, you know, Victorian America I guess you could say. So I think it draws people who wouldn't normally come to a historical tour, uh they are more into the ghost thing, they're like "aw, let's go check this out, it's going to be awesome," you know, and they get a huge dose of history while they're here as well but it's interesting and it's entertaining at the same time so they leave with something, you know, it's not just like sitting in a boring history class. And we've actually had people who have gone to the ghost tours, and then they'll come a couple weeks later for a regular historical tour, you know cause they're like, "we've seen the house at night, we want to see it in the day time and have a normal historical tour of the property." So, they go both ways, whenever we have our normal tours during the day, you know we have people who come in the door, they've seen us online and are like, "I've heard there's a ghost tour," you know, like "oh, it's gonna be one of those tours," you know when we're like come back tonight for the ghost tour. It goes both ways...they come for both, you know, so it's educational both ways I think.</p>
<p>3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?</p>	<p>Connection to Mission</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Since we kind of take a different view...we don't necessarily cover the same things that they do during their daytime tours or some of their other events. And so we...we talk more I think about the families and like their lives. You know, daytime is a little...I'm not going to say dry but more factual, historical, more architectural...so we bring sort of the family element, the emotional part to it...as well as the ghosts.</p>
<p>3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?</p>	<p>Connection to Mission</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>I think for the ones that come for a ghost tour, they actually do learn some appreciation of history because their entry point was probably the ghost tours and, you know, the ghost stories, but then they realize that those are always connected to a historical figure of some sort. So I would think an appreciation of history, absolutely.</p>
<p>3. How are the ghost tours</p>	<p>Connection</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>They always learn something they didn't know before, and are always really appreciative. Because</p>

offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	to Mission		although learning the different ghost stories that a different property has is interesting, you know that's not really the big take away so much.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	I think they get a better knowledge of the historic story of this house, I think they understand more why this house is significant. Hopefully they also have a good time and think, "Ok, well now I want to come back to the house and take a normal tour and learn all of the history of the house. So hopefully that's their takeaway sort of like, "Oh, this is a cool place I should come back to sometime."
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	Hopefully they learn a lot about Civil War medicine, a lot about the family and their importance to the Kansas City area, the Civil War in general, mourning practices—hopefully they're just taking away at least something about life in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as this house's importance.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	3	Well they have a better understanding of, not just the house, but of the family themselves. We see a lot, whether it's TV shows or books, they make it seem so much darker...or they put the family on this pedestal. And I always like to tell folks, in a joking way, they were just as dysfunctional as we all are, they were very human. But the things that they had done, the struggles they went through, which is a lot like other people, this is their lasting legacy here. Not just the paranormal stuff, but of course the history that they left behind. So that's what we'd like to make sure people understand.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	Yes, I do. They do a really good job of that. Because even before the ghost tour stuff, Emily and Stephen were really involved in the house just the historical aspects of the house and just, you know, our mission just to keep it preserved and share the history of it. So, I think it's been good.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	Without the historical things that happened, there wouldn't be anything else, and so that's the bulk of the ghost tour.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	I think it's just because we are a museum and our mission...I personally fear too much mission drift...and so our mission is to expose our visitors to history first and foremost, however the second part of our mission is through innovative hands-on programs and experiences. So I think it can fit with the second part of our mission, but that part of the mission is as it relates back to the history. So I can see it as an innovative program absolutely, but I think it's absolutely dependent on that first part. Current staff has done a really good job of keeping it focused on the history.
3. How are the ghost tours	Connection	2	I feel like all of our programs need to focus on our mission, they need to help us meet our mission

offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	to Mission		and relate to our mission, and I think if we didn't have a historical tie we would just be like a haunted house you know or something where stuff jumps out at you or whatever. So I think it would just be totally wildly off mission if we didn't connect it to the history.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	3	We're a historical organization so that's our primary focus, to operate a historical house museum and not a haunted house, so I think that's why that's really important. And like I said, even if people just come to ghost hunt, we try to send them home with some of the history.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	3	That way they have a better understanding, you know I've had guests that have said, which is the greatest thing possible, "Oh my god I think I just learned something." And you know what if they did then we have done our job. And of course, not just to repeat the history, but to have people understand why the family and the building itself is important to the community. One reason, as a preservation organization, that this is one reason why this building still stands. And we want to make sure that people all over, whether they're in San Diego or they're visiting internationally, this is important to our community, this is important to our local history, so this is one reason why it's still standing today. And hopefully it still stands for a long, long time.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	1	We do try to talk more about the families and the lives, and try to get you emotionally involved in it. And I think it's important to kind of, or interesting at least, to learn about how others lived. I think it's very beneficial to us, and even though it's in the past to see how Victorian life lived. Because of Elliot and his diaries we have first-hand account of that, and so I think it's important to us and to the house in particular that we share some of those little things that we can that other people are never going to find out if we don't.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	I mean I think it's a pretty innovative program, so you know as I said just bringing in people who would never come to learn about the history, I think that really helps to achieve its mission. We have to be really sneaky these days, right? People don't just come to house museums anymore, so we try to sneak the history in with the ghost tour.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	2	Well our mission is to bring history to life through innovative hands-on programs and events. And I think we're really doing that for people hopefully. We do bring history to life with our reenactors during these events, and people are hopefully...I mean it's maybe slightly morbid, but people are hopefully connecting with these stories and with these people. Sometimes it's the story of how they died, unfortunately, but that's a part of their life story too. So I think it is allowing us to meet our mission goals, because I do think they're innovative, I do think they're interesting ghost tours, and I think the public ghost tours are something very unique that a lot of places don't offer.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house	Connection to Mission	2	I would say a four, knock a point off of it for the ghost stuff. I do think it connects, because we do a very careful job to make sure that we're telling historically accurate things, but I mean a lot of the

museums related to the mission of the institutions?			ghost stories are secondhand third-hand stories that have kind of been passed down so those are maybe not historically accurate, but I think the spirit of it is historical accuracy.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Connection to Mission	3	If it's done right, five. We constantly have to evaluate and reevaluate how tours are done, what's being said on them. And definitely it's happened in the past where some information gets strayed, but again that's where the evaluation comes in, so it goes back to the focus on the history, and to make sure that the information that's going out is correct. We want to make sure people have that understanding of why it's important to the house, and to the community. It all plays in line with helping to preserve the house.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Potential Issues	3	There will occasionally be a docent who hears a rumor and starts to incorporate that rumor on the tour, and we have to say no, because it's not true or we don't know that's true or where did you get this.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Potential Issues	3	It is difficult, everybody has their own agenda. We have to...in fact, we have a lot of what we call our ghost partners, they're other touring companies that either come into the house or onto the property, or they just are on the outskirts of it depending on what their agreement is. But we will constantly hear a lot of their stories and their versions of what happened. And so again, just like with some of the productions, we have to give them the corrected and updated information and resources, and well it is up to them if they use it, because all we know is that when people enter inside the Whaley House they get the correct version.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Potential Issues	2	I find the tours are very interesting. I will eventually say this anyway, I am not...I am not sure that I believe in the paranormal. I also, my degree is in history, so occasionally I do think that it distracts from the real mission which is to talk about history. But having said that, I do see, having done this more and more that it is a really good entry point for people that are somewhat interested in history but won't come out just for that. So I do see that it's really useful in that way, and we do try to keep some historical elements in every program we do, so it's won me over a little bit over the years. I do think that it comes with a host of problems that you don't always encounter when you don't engage the paranormal. So I'm less sold on it than other members of the staff, but I absolutely think we should do it, and I think people are really interested, and I'm impressed by all of the people that come out and are really truly interested in the history when that's not why they came.
3. How are the ghost tours offered by historic house museums related to the mission of the institutions?	Potential Issues	2	I do think we talk about history on all of our tours, so I think it's well within the range of something we should do. But it wanders pretty quickly, I think, in which I think that the thing that bothers me the most is that I think as a museum we have a responsibility to tell accurate stories, even if those are ghost stories, and it's so hard to substantiate anything or know that even just the source or the person who experienced they become so mythified so quickly that it kind of muddies a little bit everything that we do, to have so much probably untruths floating around out there.

Appendix C: Document Quotes

Documents			
Evaluations	2	Museum emailed a survey to participants, yielding 52 responses. One question asked, "How did you hear about ghost tours?" 27% answered "Online search for Halloween/ghost events," 27% answered "Facebook/Twitter," 14% answered "From a Friend," 14% answered "Banner outside Wornall House," 8% answered "Online/Print Community Calendar," 6% answered "Wornall/Majors email," and 4% answered "Other."	
Evaluations	2	Museum emailed a survey to participants, yielding 52 responses. One question asked, "We like to keep a balance between creepy and educational--How did we maintain that balance?" 81% answered "Good balance between creepy and educational," 11% answered "Would like tours to be scarier," 5% answered "Other," 3% answered "Would like tours to be less scary/more educational."	
Evaluations	2	Museum emailed a survey to participants, yielding 52 responses. Some additional comments offered by participants were: 1. "More people in character," 2. "It was perfect!!!!" 3. "Just making it a little scarier would be nice. I'd like to actually hear the recordings from the paranormal investigations." 4. "Nothing...you did a great job. We look forward to coming back for the regular tours now!" 5. I really enjoyed the ghost tour overall! I wasn't expecting the different events, but I actually like the combination of history, re-enactments, and educational information. I learned a lot." 6. "Add more history about Wornall House and its inhabitants. 7. "There was a lot of standing. Chairs people can sit in, if needed, would be nice." 8. "Give more specific stories about the house/Civil War in area. Actors all did a great job." 9. "Tour was and overall great experience!" 10. "It would be nice to have a place to sit for a moment in some of the rooms."	
Advertisements	1	"As Seen On SyFy's Ghost Hunters! Tour this historic mansion completed in 1871. We will share the stories of the families who lived and died here. \$25.00 per person ages 18 and over."--Flyer from Historical Haunts of Memphis tour company	
Advertisements	1	<b>"Woodruff-Fontaine Ghost Tours.</b> This is a fantastic and spooky tour of our landmark historic Victorian mansion. Enjoy a unique tour of the dimly lit home with special emphasis on the family members who lived and died in the mansion. The stunning architecture and priceless collection of furniture, artwork, and textiles set the mood for this special tour. Your guide will be an experienced paranormal investigator and they will share the experiences, stories, and evidence which has led many visitors to believe that there are still folks at home here at 680 Adams Avenue. Your tour guide will have investigation equipment and we may have activity happen during your tour."--From Woodruff-Fontaine House Museum website	

Advertisements	2	"Participate in a private, docent-led Ghost Tour of the John Wornall House and hear all about the strange events and ghosts who are said to haunt the rooms of this historic house. We will open up the house at night just for you and your party! This is the perfect outing for a birthday, family fun night, or girl's night out. Ghost Tours last approximately one hour."--From Wornall Majors House Museums website	
Advertisements	2	"The John Wornall House is often regarded as one of the most haunted locations in Kansas City. Join us for one of our popular Ghost Tours to find out why! Take a one-hour tour of the house and hear about some of the spookiest sightings in the house, learn about the gruesome Civil War history that gave the house its haunted reputation, and end the evening with a special presentation from the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival."--From Wornall Majors House Museums website	
Advertisements	3	"Let our staff be your guide for an informative, fun and entertaining tour of one of the most interesting, important, and historically valuable structures in the city, the Whaley House. Rub shoulders with the spirits as you hear tales of the Whaley Family and their famously haunted house. Come for the mystery and learn some history too. Each nighttime tour, which runs on the half hour, lasts approximately 35 minutes and is limited to 20 people to ensure a quality and personal experience."--From Whaley House website	
End of Activity Report	2	"Ghost Tours & Paranormal Investigations are an annual tradition at the Wornall House. Ghost Tours are one-hour tours of the house with thematic vignettes in each room. Room descriptions below. Ghost Tour rooms-- Front Lawn: Reenactor Ghost Stories, Parlor: Ghosts of the Wornall House, Sitting Room: The Victorian Way of Death, Dining Room: "Walking Wounded" --Civil War Surgery Demonstration, Kitchen: Investigating the Paranormal, Children's Room: From Soldiers to Children -- More Ghosts of the Wornall House, Master Bedroom: The Tell-Tale Heart"	
End of Activity Report	2	Volunteer Hours--Ghost Tours: 87 hours per night x 4 = 348 hours	